Scientific concepts as meaning-making resources for young EFL learners in the learning of pragmatics

ANDERS MYRSET

University of Stavanger, Norway
anders.myrset@uis.no

Abstract

This article reports on a study investigating the role of scientific concepts in the metapragmatic awareness of Norwegian primary EFL learners following a four-week instructional intervention on requesting informed by sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 2012/1934). Through introducing pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic dimensions of requesting, the intervention aimed to develop metapragmatic awareness and foster learner agency by teaching pragmalinguistic resources related to request strategies, raising awareness of contextual considerations, and drawing attention to individual perceptions of appropriateness. The instruction focused on scientific concepts, that is, systematic and abstract objects of study which facilitate learner reflections. This article draws on data collected during group interviews to analyse whether learners used scientific concepts introduced during the instruction—for example, directness of the head act and attention getters—and if so, how these were used to express metapragmatic understandings. The analysis shows how such scientific concepts were internalised and used by learners to express their understandings of the importance of linguistic variation and the communicative functions of requests, as well as compare request strategies in English and Norwegian. Lived experiences, contextual considerations, and prior knowledge were also used as frames of reference for interpreting the appropriateness of requests. Adding to pragmatics research using concept-based approaches with (young) adults (e.g., van Compernolle, 2014), this study reveals that internalising a conceptual understanding of pragmatic phenomena in a foreign language is possible even for young language learners, thus contributing to knowledge about how learners come to understand pragmatic phenomena and how pragmatics can be taught with these age groups.

Keywords: EFL pragmatics instruction, sociocultural theory, scientific concepts, young language learners, agency, metapragmatic awareness

Introduction

This article explores young English as a foreign language (EFL) learners' (aged 12-13) metapragmatic awareness following four weeks of pragmatics instruction focusing on requests. Pragmatics involves the construction and interpretation of meaning in communication, and is an increasingly important area of focus within language pedagogy that aims to develop learners' awareness of the role of linguistic and cultural diversity in interaction (McConachy & Liddicoat, Forthcoming). In this development, particular importance is attributed to metapragmatic awareness – the learner's ability to articulate interpretations of language use – and the role that such awareness plays in interactional decision making (McConachy & Liddicoat, 2016; Morollón Martí, Forthcoming; van Compernolle, 2014). Developing metapragmatic awareness entails providing classroom opportunities for learners to "reflect, notice and compare aspects of pragmatics across cultures" (McConachy, 2018, p. 159), and is therefore a crucial step in supporting L2 learners to become interculturally competent communicators.

Despite the increasing attention to pragmatics, young language learners (YLLs) are largely overlooked in pragmatics research, with sparse evidence about their metapragmatic awareness and the impact of instruction (Myrset & Savić, 2021; Plonsky & Zhuang, 2019). The paucity of pragmatics research with YLLs – a trend in applied linguistics more generally (Pinter, 2014) – leaves knowledge gaps regarding various target languages (e.g., English), pragmatic foci (e.g., speech acts), and effective teaching approaches with these age groups.

This article contributes to this knowledge gap by investigating YLLs' internalisation of conceptual knowledge related to EFL requests following four hours of instruction informed by sociocultural theory (SCT). Specifically, it focuses on whether and how learners use scientific concepts to articulate their metapragmatic understandings. Metapragmatic awareness is here viewed as being displayed through verbalised reflections about language use, contextual considerations, or their interplay, to varying degrees of sophistication (McConachy & Liddicoat, 2016; Myrset & Savić, 2021). The learners' use of scientific concepts is analysed in relation to metapragmatic episodes from group interviews. Drawing on previous literature (e.g., Fortune & Thorp, 2001; Verschueren, 2000), metapragmatic episodes are here viewed as identifiable units of collaborative dialogue in which learners display metapragmatic awareness, with or without the researcher as a mediator. Exploring YLLs' internalisation of conceptual knowledge is highly relevant for the field of instructional pragmatics by providing insights into the role of explicit instruction with younger age groups. Furthermore, it advances our limited knowledge of how YLLs employ scientific concepts as a resource for their metapragmatic understanding, providing a conceptual foundation for agency in communication.

Literature Review

Metapragmatic awareness in instruction

In instructional pragmatics research, the consensus is that providing learners with metapragmatic information to raise awareness through explicit input is more conducive to learning than implicit input (Plonsky & Zhuang, 2019). However, the evidence underpinning this consensus has largely derived from studies on (young) adult learners, and the sparse research on YLLs has led to uncertainties regarding the effectiveness of explicit instruction with these age groups (Ishihara, 2010), with claims often based on general YLL characteristics or on findings from studies with adults. Furthermore, the metapragmatic information provided has traditionally been limited to target language norms, in which metapragmatic awareness is "knowledge of *what* is considered

(in)appropriate language use in a given context rather than *why*" (McConachy & Liddicoat, 2016, p. 16), that is, metapragmatic awareness has tended to focus on the acquisition of simplified rule-based knowledge known as "rules of thumb" (van Compernolle, 2014). This has led scholars to reconceptualise metapragmatic awareness within a more holistic perspective which focuses on how learners come to understand and (co-)construct knowledge about pragmatic phenomena such as self-representation and politeness, with a view to develop learner agency (e.g., McConachy, 2018; McConachy & Liddicoat, 2016; Morollón Martí, Forthcoming; van Compernolle, 2014; see also Ishihara, 2010). Within such a perspective, metapragmatic awareness is closely associated with learners' own explicit interpretations and evaluations of language use.

Sociocultural theory and pragmatics instruction

The fundamental tenet of SCT is that learner development is a unity between biological conditions and the social environment (Vygotsky, 2012/1934). Within SCT, conceptual knowledge is central for development, specifically spontaneous and scientific concepts, the latter being more prevalent in L2 teaching and acquisition where learners internalise conceptual knowledge by making it their own (van Compernolle, 2014; Vygotsky, 2012/1934). These concepts are characterised by their developmental trajectories: a spontaneous concept develops without "systematicity and goes from the phenomena upward toward generalization," whereas a scientific concept "evolve[s] under the conditions of systematic cooperation between the child and the teacher" (Vygotsky, 2012/1934, p. 157). Thus, spontaneous concepts are acquired through lived experiences and socialising with the environment, whilst scientific concepts require focused attention through systematised mediation. In the case of requesting, L1 request strategies are acquired through exposure; they are learnt and produced in their social environment without conscious attention. In an L2, the language is often acquired through systematic attention and learnt to be performed in foreign contexts, culturally different from learners' lived experiences, requiring a heightened need for reflection. From this perspective, the strength of scientific concepts lies in their capacity to develop deeper insights into language meanings and restructuring their knowledge about spontaneous concepts acquired through lived experiences (Vygotsky, 2012/1934). Thus, the relationship between the two form a dialectic in which one feeds the other – from lived experiences to theoretical knowledge, and vice versa.

In SCT-informed pragmatics instruction, concept-based approaches have gained momentum (e.g., Morollón Martí, Forthcoming; van Compernolle, 2014). This approach aligns with traditional views of favouring explicit input, but foregrounds a vital mediating role of learners' own interpretations of language use and the role of metapragmatic awareness in developing agency. Agency is "the socioculturally mediated capacity to act and to assign meaning to one's actions," which occurs in a relationship between two key dimensions when performing social action: pragmalinguistics, that is, the link between pragmatics and grammar or the available linguistic resources, and sociopragmatics, namely, the link between pragmatics and culture such as knowledge about behaviours (van Compernolle, 2014, p. 21). With the explicit input placing emphasis on overarching concepts within these dimensions, concept-based instruction aims to move away from teaching pragmatic rules of thumb, that is, focusing on *what* to say to *whom,* thus considering the contextual nature of communication (Spencer-Oatey, 2008). The aim is to provide learners with systematic and generalisable knowledge, applicable to any communicative situation (Morollón Martí, Forthcoming; van Compernolle, 2014).

From the pragmalinguistic dimension, Figure 1 illustrates scientific concepts related to directness of requests. Such concepts provide abstract knowledge focusing on the (intended) meaning of strategies, for example, *hints,* rather than specific forms, such as *"Do you have a pencil?"* Such conceptual knowledge provides an orienting basis for interpretations and reflections about learners'

own choices rather than assigning specific forms to given contexts. These reflections about language use allow learners to go beyond specific communicative situations, which is particularly important in classroom-based L2 learning, providing a foundation for social encounters, including those with people from other L1 and cultural backgrounds.
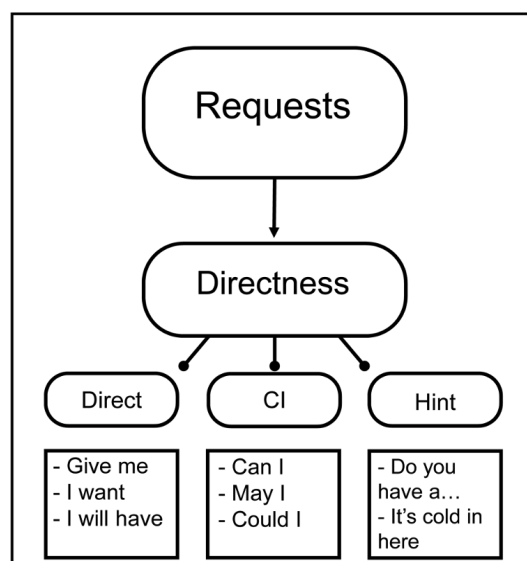

Figure 1 *Scientific concepts relating to requests, with sub-concepts for directness, and examples of pragmalinguistic resources within each sub-concept*

In the sociopragmatic dimension, van Compernolle's concept-based approach (e.g., van Compernolle, 2014) focused on French, and later Spanish (van Compernolle *et al.*, 2016), by introducing concepts of "presenting oneself as tee-shirt-and-jeans or as suit-and-tie" in various social contexts to describe formality and social distance (van Compernolle, 2014, p. 77). Through these concepts, the learners were provided with tools to reflect on self-representation, which they could employ in dialogues with the researcher. For instance, the learners were provided with the label "suit-and-tie" to support reflections on the situational use of available pragmalinguistic resources, for example, the second person pronouns *tu* and *vous*.

It is important to note, however, some marked differences between previous concept-based instruction studies and the one presented herein, with age being the most salient. Following van Compernolle (2014), agency relates to the choices used in communication by drawing on sociopragmatic knowledge to employ available pragmalinguistic resources (e.g., *tu* and *vous*) to perform social actions. However, a prerequisite is that these resources are indeed available. With this in mind, as opposed to previous studies starting from sociopragmatic concepts, the current study first focused on the pragmalinguistic dimension, ensuring that the learners had a range of pragmalinguistic resources at hand, before introducing the sociopragmatic dimension.

Metapragmatic awareness and young language learners

Previous research indicates that YLLs can reflect on language, contexts, and their interplay in their L1 from the age of five and six (Bernicot, 1991; Hsieh & Hsu, 2010). Although Myrset & Savić's (2021) systematic review revealed that research on YLLs' metapragmatic awareness is sparse (especially in EFL settings), some studies provide insights into young EFL learners' metapragmatic awareness (e.g., Ishihara, 2013; Lee, 2010; Savić & Myrset, Forthcoming-a, Forthcoming-b). Such

studies reveal different pragmatic phenomena that these learners are capable of reflecting on, and various frames of reference that support these reflections, such as L1 and L2 stereotypes, cultural knowledge, and lived experiences.

In a cross-sectional study, Lee (2010) focused on YLLs' (aged 7, 9, and 12) comprehension of direct and indirect speech acts. Whereas the term "metapragmatic awareness" was not employed per se, 60 learners responded along with a think-aloud protocol, thus verbalising their choices. Lee identified comprehension processes where learners attended to semantic structures of utterances, for example, identifying keywords or linking the cause and result. The learners also displayed contextual considerations to various extents, such as speaker feelings or intentions, drew on their L1 (Cantonese) by comparing it with English, or used their world knowledge to provide their reasoning. Thus, Lee's study revealed that YLLs employ diverse processing strategies to comprehend and explain their choices. The study did not show clear developmental trajectories with age, which could derive from "unknown socio-cultural factors such as school instruction" (Lee, 2010, p. 363), but displayed that YLLs draw on a range of experiences and knowledge to make sense of pragmatic phenomena.

Ishihara (2013) studied three Japanese learners (aged nine) in an instructional setting. The instruction focused on pragmatic phenomena, such as formality, politeness, and request behaviours, using picture books and class discussions mediated by the teacher. In the study, the learners spontaneously identified non-verbal cues, for example the lowering of a hat, and made judgements about the situational formality with the help of a formality scale. The learners also questioned the appropriateness of utterances, such as "[i]s it rude language" (Ishihara, 2013, p. 142). Furthermore, the learners' L1 was used, like translating English requests, to scaffold understandings of the interplay between pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics. Although the study focused on a small group of learners, it showed that YLLs making sense of pragmatics involves various frames of reference, such as use of the L1, identifying verbal and non-verbal cues, and valency, that is, various evaluative "scales ranging from good to bad, appropriate to inappropriate" (Kádár & Haugh, 2013, pp. 62-63), mediated by visual stimuli and the teacher.

In studies investigating young Norwegian EFL learners' metapragmatic awareness, learners in third, fifth, and seventh grade (aged roughly 9, 11, and 13) discussed the (in)appropriateness of requests and ranked features they found important when requesting (Savić & Myrset, Forthcoming-a, Forthcoming-b). These studies took a dialogic approach, in which the learners collaboratively discussed topics in groups, accompanied by tasks and visual stimuli to facilitate discussions (see Myrset & Savić, 2021, for the data elicitation techniques). The learners adopted various positions to make sense of EFL pragmatics. When exploring requests (Savić & Myrset, Forthcoming-b), the discussions became increasingly nuanced with age. The learners drew attention to pragmalinguistics, for example, word choice; sociopragmatics, such as interlocutor characteristics (age and familiarity) and the situation; or their interplay. Furthermore, the learners brought attention to speaker intentions. Hints functioning as requests appeared difficult to make sense of. Indeed, learners in all grades produced hints, but displayed uncertainties about their communicative function. When exploring pragmatic practices (Savić & Myrset, Forthcoming-a), the learners displayed a range of evaluative stances. Furthermore, the learners used their L1 or lived experiences as a scaffold. Cultural knowledge and stereotypical views about the L1 and L2 were discussed and contested in groups, with positive evaluations often assigned to L2 practices. Both studies revealed that the learners drew on a range of reference points, including knowledge about language itself, as well as its effects in the context of its production. Collaboration facilitated co-construction, with learners drawing on each other's ideas to further expand on discussion topics.

In sum, previous research on young EFL learners' metapragmatic awareness reveals various frames of reference and topics that occur in learner reflections. These were often grounded not only in their L1 lived experiences but also include, for instance, perceptions about feelings, stereotypes, and contextual understandings. Such verbalisations generate insights into learners' understandings and their meaning-making processes. This awareness is vital for agency and provides a springboard for language teaching (Morollón Martí, Forthcoming; Savić & Myrset, Forthcoming-a). Furthermore, from an SCT perspective, understandings deriving from scientific concepts can guide learner choice-making in an informed and flexible way. However, to the best of the author's knowledge, no prior studies have explored YLLs' use of scientific concepts as a resource for expressing metapragmatic understandings.

The Study

This article aims to investigate whether and how YLLs used scientific concepts to express their metapragmatic understandings during group interviews. The interviews were conducted after four weeks of instruction (four hours total), focusing on pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics related to requesting. The researcher taught the material. The data presented derives from a larger study that included data collection in pre-, post-, and delayed post-tests (Myrset, In review), two cycles of Readers Theatre (RT) (Myrset & Savić, 2021), and group interviews (see Figure 2). The overall fieldwork lasted for three months and followed two intact classes of Norwegian seventh graders (aged 12-13). A group interview in the week following RT cycle 2 generated the data presented in this article. The research question is:

> Do young language learners employ scientific concepts to express metapragmatic understandings following a period of concept-based instruction? If so, how?
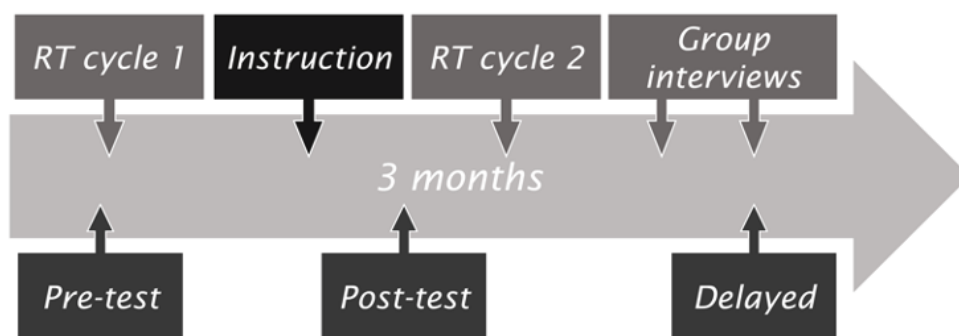

Figure 2 *An overview of the fieldwork*

Sampling

The sampling strategy was homogenous convenience sampling (Dörnyei, 2007), in which the researcher used his network to contact EFL teachers in a specific grade (seventh grade), resulting in the participation of two intact classes in one school (51 learners). Of these, 46 were included in the analyses. They were divided into 11 friendship groups of 4-5 (Pinter & Zandian, 2014), which remained permanent for the data collection.

In Norway, seventh graders are expected to be within the range of A2-B1 in English, following the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Hasselgreen, 2005), and

Norwegian learners are currently ranked fifth on the English Proficiency Index (Education First, 2020). Thus, the learners' mastery of English was considered appropriate for the project, which was approved by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD), ensuring that the treatment of participants, including information about the study and parental consent, and data was in accordance with the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Instruction

The instruction was informed by SCT (Vygotsky, 2012/1934). Aiming to foster agency (Morollón Martí, Forthcoming; van Compernolle, 2014), the instruction introduced the pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic dimensions of requesting by teaching request strategies, raising awareness of the interplay between language use and the context, and drawing attention to individual perceptions of appropriateness. The instruction was carried out over four weeks (four hours total), with each week comprising one session lasting 30 minutes and two sessions lasting 15 minutes as part of the regular English lessons. The first two weeks focused on the pragmalinguistic dimension with scientific concepts adapted from Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) (see Table 1), and the last two weeks on the sociopragmatic dimension. Thus, the learners would first be given opportunities to broaden their linguistic repertoire through scientific concepts. These scientific concepts and the pragmalinguistic resources could then be employed when discussing and working with the sociopragmatic dimension, such as familiarity and age.

Table 1 *Scientific concepts for pragmalinguistic strategies employed during the instruction*

	Terminology	
	Blum-Kulka *et al*. (1989)	**Adapted**
Directness levels		
	Direct	Direct [a]
	Conventionally indirect	In-between
	Non-conventionally indirect/hints	Hint [a]
Internal modification [b]		
	Attention getters	Attention getters
	Title/role	Address term
	Lexical downgraders	Polite words [c]
External modification		
	Grounder	Reason
	Sweetener	Compliment
	Promise of reward	Promise

[a] The terms "direct" and "hint" were employed due to similarities to their Norwegian equivalents (*direkte* and *hint*).
[b] Although modal verbs can function as syntactic downgraders (Blum-Kulka *et al*., 1989), these were introduced in relation to directness levels, and were thus not in focus as a separate topic during the instruction.
[c] The term "polite" was used for three reasons: 1) Considering the learners' age, the term itself was one that they were familiar with and could attach meaning to. 2) It was grounded in learning aims from the national curriculum, namely an ability to "use expressions of politeness and appropriate expressions for the situation" (Udir, 2006). 3) The term functioned as a starting point for raising the pupils' awareness about the contextually situated and sometimes idiosyncratic interpretations of the term (Watts, 2003).

During the first two weeks, each session introduced a new concept along with its functions and linguistic resources, followed by activities for practising their use. After introducing a concept (e.g.,

"attention getters"), its label was employed whenever it was discussed. The concepts were revisited in succeeding sessions when appropriate to facilitate internalisation and encouraging externalisations in discussions. Whereas English was the target language, the learners' L1 served as a foundation for the meaning-making process (Chavarría & Bonany, 2006; McConachy, 2018), and as a resource for making sense of pragmatic behaviours (Savić & Myrset, Forthcoming-a). In other words, the L1 served as scaffolding with the learners being invited to use it when needed in the discussions and draw on their lived experiences as part of their reflections. To facilitate the co-construction of meaning (Swain, 1997), the discussions were organised in pairs, groups, or as a whole class.

Group interviews and visual stimuli

During the week following RT cycle 2, the groups were interviewed. Semi-structured, open-ended questions were employed to guide the participants whilst maintaining the opportunity for elaborating on topics (Dörnyei, 2007). A combination of visual stimuli and questions was used to prompt learner reflections. The interviews, lasting 30-40 minutes per group, were conducted in the learners' L1 to enable them to share their thoughts more freely. They were later transcribed verbatim (see Appendix for transcription guidelines) and translated into English by the researcher and an independent translator to ensure reliability. The participants were assigned pseudonyms.

Visual stimuli were used to facilitate the discussions, including an Emoticon task for appraising requests (adapted from Myrset & Savić, 2021). The learners appraised requests produced by the researcher and were familiar with the contexts in which the requests took place through their group work in RT cycle 2 (see Myrset & Savić, 2021). For the Emoticon task, the learners were provided with a sheet accompanied with a request (Figure 3) and asked whether they thought it was a "nice" (😊), a "so-so" (😐), or a "not so nice" (☹) way to ask. Each group member was provided with a marker of a different colour and asked to place a mark on the emoticon reflecting their appraisal. Thus, the individual learners' appraisal could be identified during the analysis. Following the task, the learners were invited to explain their choices.
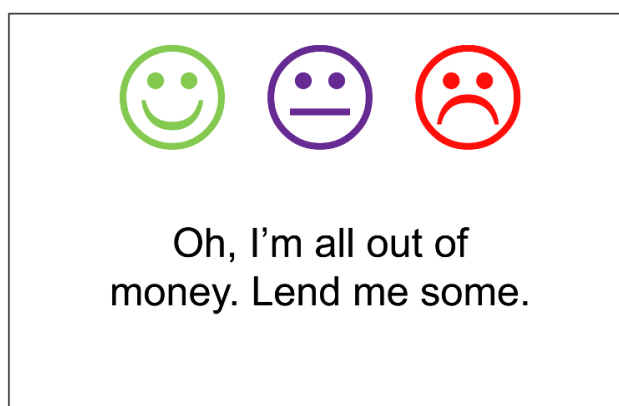
Figure 3 *Appraisal sheet*

Identifying episodes and analysis

To explore whether and how the learners employed scientific concepts to express metapragmatic understandings, the interviews (approx. 5.5 hours of audio) were transcribed verbatim and coded in NVivo 12 (QSR International) for episodes, namely, multiple turns concerning one topic, in which the learners reflected on the language, the context, or their interplay relating to requests. These episodes were identified using a framework adapted from Fortune and Thorp (2001). Since Fortune

and Thorp investigated episodes relating to grammar, their framework has hereby been adapted for pragmatics (Table 2).

Table 2 *Coding framework, adapted from Fortune and Thorp (2001)*

Code	Meaning	Explanation
P	Scientific concepts for pragmatics	Instances in which learners were able to identify linguistic resources by using scientific concepts.
Metapragmatics		
M+R	Metapragmatics and rule	Episodes in which the learners took a firm stance, or resorted to evaluations, such as valency.
M+L	Metapragmatics and pragmalinguistics	Episodes in which the learners reflected on language use.
M+C	Metapragmatics and sociopragmatics	Episodes in which the learners reflected on the context.
M+EX	Metapragmatics and example	Episodes in which the learners used an example of a specific linguistic resource, e.g., excuse me, or provided a request.
M+P	Metapragmatics and scientific concepts for pragmatics	Episodes in which the learners used scientific concepts in their reflections.

The coding provided an overview of the frequencies of metapragmatic episodes occurring in the interviews. These frequencies enabled the researcher to explore whether the learners used scientific concepts to express their understandings, and subsequently how these were used. In addition to highlighting metapragmatic episodes, a code (P – Scientific concepts for pragmatics) was used when learners identified and labelled scientific concepts for request strategies, for example, "attention getters." While this category does not suggest that the learners engaged in metapragmatic reflections, it was considered useful to provide insights into whether the learners had started internalising the scientific concepts.

In line with SCT, knowledge is constructed in dialogic collaboration (Swain, 1997; Vygotsky, 2012/1934), that is, individuals developing understandings of the (social) world through interaction with others (Marková *et al*., 2007), for instance between peers and researcher. Since this paper aims to investigate how learners used scientific concepts to express metapragmatic understandings, this study includes an in-depth analysis of the content and discursive practices in the dialogues, namely, how learners act and react to each other as well as the topics themselves (Bloome *et al*., 2008; Marková *et al*., 2007).

Results and Discussion

To investigate whether the YLLs employed scientific concepts to express metapragmatic understandings following the instruction, the interviews were coded to identify metapragmatic episodes. Table 3 presents the results of the analysis.

Table 3 *Frequencies of metapragmatic episodes, including scientific concepts*

	P [a]	M+R	M+L	M+C	M+EX	M+P	Total
Group 1	6	19	19	15	19	0	**72**
Group 2	6	5	18	11	14	3	**51**
Group 3	6	15	20	17	21	2	**75**
Group 4	3	12	16	13	15	0	**56**
Group 5	7	13	15	10	10	1	**49**
Group 6	2	2	8	4	7	0	**21**
Group 7	8	10	19	15	17	4	**65**
Group 8	3	9	17	10	6	2	**44**
Group 9	7	13	24	13	16	3	**69**
Group 10	5	4	8	8	5	2	**27**
Group 11	5	8	12	7	6	3	**36**
Total	58	**110**	**176**	**123**	**136**	**20**	**565**

[a] Instances coded as "P" are not included in the overall frequencies of metapragmatic episodes.

Table 3 shows how learners employed scientific concepts to express their metapragmatic understandings. It can be noted that the episodes coded as "M+P" occurred much less frequently (n=20) than the other categories, comprising 3.5% of the metapragmatic episodes (n=565). Indeed, the learners were more prone to using scientific concepts when identifying request strategies ("P"), which indicates that they had internalised the concepts, yet did not readily externalise them in their reflections. Internalising concepts is important for L2 development (van Compernolle, 2014), but is also a long and complex process (Vygotsky, 2012/1934). Consequently, it suggests that the explicit instruction had provided the learners with a foundation for conceptual knowledge, which could have provided them with further insights arising from this knowledge had the instruction continued.

Regarding how the learners used scientific concepts, three excerpts were selected as they present episodes where a) the learners collaboratively engaged in the discussion and b) the scientific concepts served different purposes for the discussion, that is, concluding remarks, a springboard for the discussion, and as prompts introduced by the researcher. The excerpts are extracted from interviews with Group 3 and 7 and divided into sub-sections relating to the topics discussed in the episodes. These are: to highlight request choices (Example 1), to discuss the communicative value of hints (Example 2), and to raise awareness of requesting in the L1 (Example 3). Examples 1 and 2 were prompted by the Emoticon task, while Example 3 developed from an impromptu question by the researcher. Each excerpt is discussed separately.

Promoting agency in requesting

Group 3 appraised a request "Oh, I'm all out of money. Lend me some.," where a boy, Arthur, asks

his friend, Tom, for money. The appraisals were divided evenly between neutral and negative (Table 4). Example 1 presents the ensuing discussion.

Table 4 *Appraisal of the request*

	😊	😐	🙁
Emily			X
Leo		X	
Oliver		X	
Sophia			X

Example 1

1	Int:	"*Oh, I'm all out of money. Lend me some.*" What do you think about this one?
		[…]
2	Leo:	But it really (.) depends on whom one is saying it to.
3	Oliver:	Uh-huh
4	Leo:	If it had been a FRIEND, I still think it would be quite impolite.
5	Int:	[Yes]
6	Oliver:	[What] is – it's a friend. It's still impoLITE, but it's not as bad as for example if one is saying it to someone one doesn't know that well.
7	Int:	Uh-huh.
8	Oliver:	But it's not exactly positive to just say like, "*lend me so:me*" (.) "*Lend me some.*"
9	Int:	[No]
10	Oliver:	[It must be]
11	Emily:	[Just say "*give me some*"] lend me something.
12	Leo:	[But he must have a]
13	Emily:	[You don't say] "can you lend me something?" [You say] "give me something – lend it to me" ((laughs))
14	Oliver:	[One must have –]
15	Int:	Yes.
16	Oliver:	One must have a little bit more of a reason than just that one.
17	Int:	Uh-huh
18	Oliver:	One doesn't have to have a reason all the time, but it depends on how, like, the sentence is in the first place.
19	Int:	Yes.
20	Oliver:	Before, one can then like, "oh, but you don't have to be so nice there."
21	Int:	Yes.
22	Oliver:	Like that.
23	Int:	So – so: what you're saying is that, like, such as (.) THIS one, it was sort of fine – you didn't need to say more (.) whilst here the:n, "can I have a go?" then it was – then it was fine?
24	Emily:	[Uh-huh]
25	Oliver:	[Yes], sort of like the context has something to do with it.
26	Int:	Yes. The context?

27	Oliver:	Uh-huh.
		[…]
28	Oliver:	Had it been "*can I – Can you lend me some? I'll pay you back.*" or just "*can you lend me some*?" it would certainly have been much better.
29	Emily:	Yes.
30	Int:	Yes.
31	Emily:	Just like, "LEND me money."
32	Int:	Uh-huh
33	Oliver:	It's like, two words can make it much better.
		[…]
34	Int:	Yes (2.5) great (2.0) Do you have something else that you – or uhm (.) that you would like to say, or has Oliver kind of said what-
35	Emily:	Yes, it's sort of (.) it's RUDE if you say "lend me money," but if you say "can you lend me money?" then it's, like, much better.
36	Int:	Yes.
37	Sophia:	But (.) you could've, like, said the entire (.) "I don't have more (.) money left. Can I please borrow?" You could've said that.
		[…]
38	Int:	That we should've had "*can I – can you lend me some*?" (.) or "*can I borrow*?"
39	Oliver:	Yes, because it's not always good when one can use *direct*.
40	Int:	No.
41	Oliver:	Sometimes you must – you must be able to know the difference between *direct* and *in-between*.

Leo initiates the discussion by introducing the context as a force for judging the appropriateness of the request (turn 2), whilst putting himself in a generic position with the pronoun "one" (Norwegian: *man*) (Marková *et al.*, 2007), a position both Leo and Oliver use somewhat consistently throughout. Leo is supported by Oliver's backchanneling (Marková *et al.*, 2007) in turn 3 before Leo elaborates by providing an example of a virtual interlocutor ("If it had been a friend"), followed by a valenced statement ("I still think it would be quite impolite") (Kádár & Haugh, 2013). Oliver lends support to Leo, and provides nuances by contrasting a friend with "someone one doesn't know that well" (turn 6). Oliver also resorts to valency, which continues when returning to the request discussed (turn 8).

In turns 11 and 13, Emily contrasts direct and conventionally indirect requests by jokingly (marked by the subsequent laughter) taking a personal position presented as a rule (Bloome *et al.*, 2008), that is, "You say" and "You don't say." Meanwhile, Oliver's overlapping speech in turns 10 and 14 suggests that he is thinking aloud and not paying attention to the others' contributions (Marková *et al.*, 2007), as he attempts to ground his position (turns 16 and 18). He also proposes providing a reason for the request, which he in turn 18 seemingly connects with the requestive force ("depends on how, like, the sentence is in the first place"). Whereas this was produced in Norwegian (reason = *grunn*), *reason* was also used as a scientific concept for grounders, namely, "reasons, explanations, or justifications" external to the request itself (Blum-Kulka *et al.*, 1989, p. 287), during instruction. Thus, it is possible that Oliver drew on his conceptual knowledge, and his comment could be interpreted as a call for softening the force of direct requests by employing grounders. In turn 20, Oliver produces a virtual voice (Marková *et al.*, 2007), which brings in a notion of choice when requesting.

Thus far, Oliver has largely directed the discussion, the researcher mainly backchanneling and

employing monosyllabic utterances, allowing the learners to (co-)construct their reflections. However, in turn 23, the researcher becomes involved by attempting to clarify. This is confirmed by Emily and then Oliver, who argues that "the context has something to do with" request choice (turn 25). Oliver then takes a personal position (Bloome *et al.*, 2008), reverting to the pragmalinguistics of requesting (turn 28) by demonstrating how to make the request "better": opting for a conventionally indirect request. This is supported by Emily (turns 29 and 31), who also provides an example of a direct request as a contrast, emphasising the verb "lend." Oliver subsequently makes a pragmalinguistic observation that "two words can make it much better" (turn 33), referring to the modal verb and second person pronoun ("can you").

Once again, the researcher becomes involved by attempting to include the others (turn 34), upon which both Emily and Sophia further support Oliver's notion. Emily (turn 35) makes a firm negative stance towards the request "Lend me money" as "rude," marked by emphatic stress, and suggests a conventionally indirect request to make it "much better". Sophia modifies a conventionally indirect request with a grounder (turn 37). Their stances are supported by Oliver, who employs scientific concepts relating to directness. First, he once again brings in the context, namely that direct requests are "not always good" (turn 39). Then, almost presented as a rule, he points out the importance of having a wide repertoire of request strategies, possibly to make informed choices in communication.

In Example, 1 the learners spend a considerable time working with the request, indicated by the number of turns before the episode reaches a conclusion. After revisiting and building on each other's ideas, scientific concepts are employed following a discussion about the contextually situated nature of requesting (Spencer-Oatey, 2008), that is, through a relational lens exemplified with a particular group of interlocutors, namely "friend." This is contrasted with a distant interlocutor and the valenced term *impoliteness* is used as an evaluative frame (Kádár & Haugh, 2013). The learners seemed to opt for conventionally indirect requests as more appropriate than direct ones and used examples to ground their discussion. Conventionally indirect requests, namely, requests containing suggestions or referencing preparatory conditions (e.g., "Could you give me a lift?") (Blum-Kulka *et al.*, 1989), are common in both Norwegian and English (Barron, 2008; Fretheim, 2005) and in EFL requests produced by young Norwegian learners (Savić, 2015; Savić & Myrset, Forthcoming-b).

Towards the end of the discussion (turns 39 and 41), Oliver employs scientific concepts, pointing to direct requests as not always being preferable, thus demonstrating an awareness of the interplay between pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics (Ishihara, 2013; Savić & Myrset, Forthcoming-b). More importantly, his comment may be interpreted such that knowing the difference between direct and conventionally indirect (referred to as *in-between*) requests is an important factor for requesting. This displays an awareness of agency related to requestive behaviour. By incorporating conceptual vocabulary to articulate their understanding (van Compernolle, 2014), the learners make explicit references to knowledge about—and the choices related to—requesting in communication by elevating the discussion to an abstract realm (Vygotsky, 2012/1934). This indicates that exposure to and engagement with these concepts become driving forces towards making informed choices in communication, with the scientific concepts thus making the learners capable of self-regulating their behaviours (Morollón Martí, Forthcoming; van Compernolle, 2014). Furthermore, such comments suggest that the learners had internalised the scientific concepts to the extent of using them in their verbalised reflections and recognising their implications in use (Vygotsky, 2012/1934).

The communicative value of hints

In a similar vein, Group 7 appraised a request taking place in a supermarket. In this request John and Alex ask a stranger to help them: "Excuse me, we can't reach the chopped tomatoes." All the group

members had a neutral assessment of the request (Table 5). Example 2 presents the ensuing discussion.

Table 5 *Appraisal of the request*

	😊	😐	🙁
Archie		X	
Charlotte		X	
Ethan		X	
Isabelle		X	

Example 2

1	Int:	What do you think about this one? Here you thought it was in the middle { 😐 }
2	Isabelle:	[Yes]
3	Archie:	[Uhm]
4	Int:	[What] is it that makes it end up in the middle?
5	Isabelle:	You could perhaps s- (.) ask if like (.) if he could help them.
6	Archie:	*Hint* is actually quite okay, but I don't think it's that polite.
7	Charlotte:	They could perhaps have said
8	Int:	[No]
9	Charlotte:	['can you] please help?'
10	Archie:	Yes, because-
11	Int:	They could've said ['can you please help?']
12	Archie:	[Then he must, sort of – he] – then, like, HE has to ask if he should do it.
13	Int:	[Uh-huh]
14	Charlotte:	[That is], he has to {say} "Shall I help you?"
15	Archie:	Must you, like, bother him with it?

In Example 2, Isabelle and Archie respond to the researcher's question, signalling their involvement in the discussion (Marková *et al*., 2007), with Isabelle confirming their appraisal (turn 2). The researcher then redirects his question towards the appraisal. Afterwards, there is minimal researcher involvement apart from backchanneling and the validation of the learners' points through repetition in turn 11 (Bloome *et al*., 2008). Displaying uncertainty through an adverb ("perhaps"), Isabelle (turn 5) points to the pragmalinguistics of the request, suggesting changing it into a question focusing on the hearer's availability. Isabelle's comment prompts Archie to use the scientific concept *hint* (turn 6), pointing to the communicative function of hints as requests ("actually quite okay"), whilst taking a valenced position (Kádár & Haugh, 2013). Charlotte (turns 7 and 9) suggests improving the requests by producing a conventionally indirect request, thus supporting Isabelle's previous statement. Archie (turn 12) then elaborates on the group's position by taking the hearer's perspective, marked by emphatic stress; the request in question is an added imposition as it forces the hearer's action, that is, offering to help. This is further developed by Charlotte (turn 14), who produces a virtual response (Marková *et al*., 2007). Finally, Archie asks a rhetorical question, grounding the learners' view that the speaker should attempt to minimise the imposition on the hearer.

After appraising the request, the learners make an explicit reference to its directness using an internalised scientific concept, namely *hint*, followed by a valenced statement (Kádár & Haugh, 2013) as not "that polite." Compared with a previous study with YLLs (Savić & Myrset, Forthcoming-b), this focus on the communicative function of hints is noteworthy. Savić and Myrset found that although Norwegian EFL learners produced hints in third, fifth, and seventh grade, they seemed insecure when appraising such requests. This insecurity was confirmed when they explained their choices. They seemed uncertain about the communicative function of hints as requests, which can be explained by YLLs' ability to comprehend hints preceding metapragmatic understandings (Bernicot *et al.*, 2007). Considering this, the concept-based approach to instruction seems to have provided the learners with tools for reflection. Deriving from an understanding about their functions as requests, the scientific concepts enabled a more nuanced discussion, focusing on the communicative value, or appropriateness, of hints for the specific situation rather than the communicative intent. In this case, the learners clearly state their position about hints and the imposition on the hearer by putting themselves in "the other person's shoes as a means of understanding the situation and their feelings toward it" (Thomas, 2006, p. 85), stating that the request requires an unnecessary response to complete the "transaction." Their ability to see the request from the other's perspective is a sign of metapragmatic awareness, also identified by Lee (2010).

Furthermore, as found in previous research with YLLs (e.g., Ishihara, 2013; Savić & Myrset, Forthcoming-a), the L1 may have served as a scaffold for metapragmatic awareness (Chavarría & Bonany, 2006; McConachy, 2018). In this case, the learners may have considered a Norwegian ethos as the rationale for their judgment: "'self-sufficiency, independence' are key notions of Norwegian individualism, and that this is connected with values of self-control (not to bother others/manage on one's own) and the belief that people need 'peace and quiet'" (Rygg, 2017, p. 10). Consequently, the learners' appraisals derive from a sociocultural frame of reference with which they view the request through their lived empirical experiences (van Compernolle, 2014), using an internalised scientific concept to generalise. In other words, the scientific concept *hint* had made the learners aware of their function as requests, allowing them to reflect on the appropriateness of hints in such situations from an abstract position.

Scientific concepts as an awareness-raising tool in the L1

Example 3 shows a discussion by Group 3. Developing from an impromptu question on directness, the learners compare strategies in Norwegian and English. The learners had already employed these scientific concepts prior to the question.

Example 3

1	Int:	Yes (.) Ehm. Now I'll – I'll ask a question that MIGHT be difficult to answer, uhm, but I'll ask anyway. (.) We've talked about (.) *direct*, (.) *in-between*, (.) and *HINT*.
2	Emily:	Uh-uh.
3	Int:	Do we have them in Norwegian? (1.5)
4	Emily:	[Hmm]
5	Int:	[Do we] have the same three in Norwegian?
6	Oliver:	YES!
7	Int:	Do we?

8	Leo:	[No.]
9	Emily:	[Wait a minute,] I just need to think a little bit.
10	Leo:	Or (1.2) not really.
11	Emily:	Yes, ACTually.
12	Int:	What would be (.) if you were *direct* in Norwegian?
13	Sophia:	Then it's like (.)
14	Oliver:	Then it's (.)
15	Int:	If we say – if we have – [if we say-]
16	Leo:	["Gi meg penger. "] {Give me money}
17	Oliver:	Yes. "Give me money."
18	Int:	"Give me money."
19	Oliver:	"Gi meg den kontrolleren, eller så knekker jeg den i to. " {Give me that controller, or I'll snap it in two.}
20	All:	((laughter))
21	Int:	Yes, that's with a threat.
22	Emily:	Yes.
23	Oliver:	A threat.
24	Int:	But *direct*, "give me that controller." (.) Uhm what would that be as *in-between* then?
25	Oliver:	*In-between* ehm (1.4) Uhm. "Jeg vil ha- Kan jeg kanskje få" {I will have – Can I perhaps have} (.) uhm
26	Emily:	Pizza.
27	Oliver:	"Kan vi ha pizza til middag?" {Can we have pizza for dinner?}
28	Int:	"Can we have pizza [for] dinner? "
29	Emily:	[Yes]
30	Int:	*Hint* then?
31	Oliver:	[*Hint*. Then it's like]
32	Emily:	[Then it's like] "Åh, jeg er sulten." {Oh, I am hungry.}
33	Oliver:	That one is a little more diffic-
34	Int:	"Oh, I am hungry. "
35	Oliver:	Yes, that exists in Norway too.

Initiated by the question (turn 1), the learners attempt to compare requesting in Norwegian and English. Initially the learners' responses differ. Oliver and Leo respond categorically (turns 6 and 8), whereas Emily seems uncertain (turn 9). Oliver displays most certainty, marked by the emphatic stress (turn 6). Leo then modifies his response (turn 10), the pause suggesting a more hesitant position. Emily then comes to a realisation marked by the added stress ("ACTually"). Using scientific concepts, the researcher mediates the discussion by prompting the learners to produce requests in their L1, with both Sophia and Oliver pausing mid-sentence when responding (turns 13 and 14), possibly showing uncertainty or taking time to think. Leo then produces a direct request (turn 16), which Oliver confirms and lends support to through reiteration (Marková *et al.*, 2007). Prompted by the example, Oliver produces his own example by adding a threat. Using Oliver's example, the researcher turns to conventionally indirect requests, which Oliver and Emily co-construct (turns 25 and 26) before Oliver presents the final product (turn 27). This is validated through the researcher's repetition (Bloome *et al.*, 2008), and supported by Emily (turn 29). The researcher then redirects the attention towards hints (turn 30). Using the example of asking for dinner (turns 25-27), Emily produces a hint in turn 32 ("Oh, I am hungry"). Interestingly, Emily's example

is framed by Oliver's comment on the difficulty regarding Norwegian hints, which is interrupted by the researcher reiterating the request (turn 34), before Oliver reaches a conclusion about L1 request strategies, supporting his initial response in turn 6.

In Example 3, the learners compare their L1 and the target language, prompted by the researcher's questions and use of scientific concepts. More specifically, this example shows how knowledge about the L1 is co-constructed, with the researcher as mediator, by using the scientific concepts as scaffolding for gaining deeper understandings. This is in line with Vygotsky's (2012/1934, p. 207) view that "a foreign language facilitates mastering the higher forms of the native language" which leads to awareness in the L1. This suggests that not only can the learners' L1 lived experiences serve as a framework for developing an awareness in the target language (Chavarría & Bonany, 2006; McConachy, 2018; Savić & Myrset, Forthcoming-b), but the target language may generate deeper insights into the L1. Thus, in addition to internalising concepts to be used in various situations (Morollón Martí, Forthcoming; van Compernolle, 2014), in this excerpt the concepts transcended languages, rendering it possible for the learners to transfer their systematic and abstract knowledge into their L1. Whereas these findings stem from an impromptu question, they suggest that concept-based approaches may also have a washback effect for language development. Rather than maintaining a dichotomy between languages in the classroom, or unidirectional pragmatics instruction from L1 to L2, concept-based approaches provide a foundation for developing an awareness in both languages.

Summary

The overall coding of metapragmatic episodes revealed a limited number in which the learners employed scientific concepts as part of their reflections. This is in line with Vygotsky (2012/1934, p. 161), who holds that "the path from the first encounter with a new concept to the point where the concept and the corresponding word are fully appropriated by the child is long and complex." What this suggests is that learners need to work with such concepts over time before they become internalised resources for reflection and action.

In contrast to previous research with learners of a similar background who had not received pragmatics instruction (Savić & Myrset, Forthcoming-a, Forthcoming-b), this study shows how scientific concepts provided the learners with tools for elevating their discussions to an abstract sense. Consequently, the explicit input of concepts enabled the learners to explore phenomena related to requests, that is, choices, communicative intent, and comparisons between the L1 and the target language, in a more generalised sense (Vygotsky, 2012/1934). Considering that metapragmatic awareness develops on a continuum of increased sophistication (McConachy & Liddicoat, 2016), one could argue that the reflections provide examples of how this sophistication increased with the help of scientific concepts.

Implications and Future Research

This study provides pedagogical and methodological insights. Pragmatic behaviours are already (un)consciously acquired in YLLs' L1 and developing in their L2. In this L2 development, the study has revealed that scientific concepts can provide learners with knowledge that is generalisable beyond the strategies themselves and has a washback effect on their L1. Thus, both concept-based approaches and the conscious use of the L1 during instruction may serve as powerful tools for reflection (e.g., Chavarría & Bonany, 2006; McConachy, 2018; Savić & Myrset, Forthcoming-a), in which instruction provides insights into the target language and charts new paths of knowledge about the learners' L1 through mediation (Vygotsky, 2012/1934).

The discussions and use of scientific concepts presented herein highlight the potential for using concept-based approaches when teaching pragmatics with YLLs. As Ishihara (2010, p. 946) holds, "[w]hile adults have been found to benefit from explicit instruction of pragmatics, the same approach is unlikely to serve young children in the same manner." Thus, the current study shows that explicit input does indeed facilitate YLLs' pragmatic development. Furthermore, the discussions revealed an awareness of the resources available when requesting, which serves a basis for moving away from misconceptions about one-on-one mappings of language resources, or rules of thumb (McConachy & Liddicoat, 2016; van Compernolle, 2014), also found with older language learners (e.g., Savić, 2014).

Interestingly, whilst scientific concepts were introduced to move away from teaching rules of thumb, the learners resorted to valency (e.g., "rude," "impolite") as frames to comment on specific linguistic resources. Still, the learners showed a heightened awareness of choices related to requesting, both relating to context and strategies. This suggests that the instruction had provided the learners with a foundation in which further instruction could have facilitated more nuanced discussions about the language, context, and their interplay, thus fostering additional development towards agency. From the perspective of L2 teaching, in which learners are not necessarily able to engage with the target language in everyday settings outside the classroom, such reflections, mediated by scientific concepts and their lived experiences, may serve as a powerful foundation for gaining an understanding of the complexities of language in context.

The findings from this study provide potential research avenues. Future instructional pragmatics research could employ concept-based approaches with YLLs to: 1) provide further evidence of the overall impact for pragmatics instruction; 2) investigate how scientific concepts can support learner reflections in classroom settings, that is, conceptual development with peers and the teacher; and 3) explore the teachability of other pragmatic targets, for example, other speech acts. Since YLLs remain under-researched, such explorations would provide evidence to answer which pedagogical approaches and pragmatic targets are suitable for this group of learners (Ishihara, 2010; Plonsky & Zhuang, 2019). Furthermore, the framework used to identify the metapragmatic episodes could be employed in future studies of YLLs' metapragmatic awareness, another under-explored area (Myrset & Savić, 2021).

Conclusion

This article has explored whether and how YLLs used scientific concepts to express their metapragmatic understandings. It shows that the learners had appropriated the scientific concepts to various extents, evidenced by their appearance during the interviews. The in-depth analysis of excerpts revealed that these were employed as a point of departure and a conclusion for discussions in which the learners drew on various frames of reference and topics, such as lived experiences, valency, and contextual considerations. In addition, the appropriation of scientific concepts enabled the learners to gain new insights into their L1. The data indicates that conscious use of scientific concepts in mediation may facilitate learners' (meta)pragmatic development. By providing insights from intact classes of YLLs, thus adding to previous research (e.g., Morollón Martí, Forthcoming; van Compernolle, 2014; van Compernolle *et al.*, 2016), this study reveals the potential for concept-based pragmatics instruction with these age groups. Furthermore, it suggests that these learners benefit from explicit input, thus providing insights into previous claims about the feasibility of explicit pragmatics instruction with YLLs (e.g., Ishihara, 2010).

It is, however, important to consider these findings in the light of their limitations. This was a small-scale study with the researcher teaching the material. Although the prolonged engagement

influenced the instruction, with an expert mediator giving the treatment, it facilitated rapport-building, reducing a learner-researcher power imbalance during the interviews (Pinter & Zandian, 2014). Furthermore, the data is limited in scope, but presents detailed accounts of how the discussions developed. Providing children with a voice and opportunities to share their perspectives is important in YLL research. However, a potential pitfall is misinterpretations of their formulations (Pinter, 2014). Consequently, the author has attempted to be transparent in the procedures for identifying and selecting the examples, and by providing thick descriptions (Tracy, 2010). Given the small sample and limited data pool, generalisations are not possible. However, these findings may be transferrable to other contexts.

This study shows that beyond "plant[ing] pragmatic seeds in young learners of pragmatics" (Ishihara, 2013, p. 146), explicit pragmatics instruction through scientific concepts provides YLLs with a foundation for metapragmatic reflections. Thus, language teachers should aim to develop YLLs' metapragmatic awareness, and explicit input through scientific concepts can support this development. Reflections and deeper insights into the target language may facilitate the learners' ability to make informed choices in language use, thus preparing them for communication outside the classroom. This is relevant for any language, but particularly in English, considering its position as a global language. Introducing a conceptual foundation that can be employed in any communicative situation fosters YLLs' agency mediated by their metapragmatic awareness. Ultimately, this foundation enables them to regulate their own learning and prepares them to confidently and reflexively engage in communication with people of diverse L1 and cultural backgrounds.

References

Barron, A. (2008). Contrasting requests in Inner Circle Englishes: A study in variational pragmatics. In M. Pütz & J. Neff-van Aertselaer (Eds.), *Developing contrastive pragmatics: Interlanguage and cross-cultural perspectives* (pp. 355–402). Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Bernicot, J. (1991). French children's conception of requesting: the development of metapragmatic knowledge. *International Journal of Behavioral Development, 14*(3), 285–304.

Bernicot, J., Laval, V., & Chaminaud, S. (2007). Nonliteral language forms in children: In what order are they acquired in pragmatics and metapragmatics? *Journal of Pragmatics, 39*, 2115–2132. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2007.05.009

Bloome, D., Carter, S. P., Christian, B. M., Madrid, S., Otto, S., Shuart-Faris, N., & Smith, M. (2008). *Discourse analysis in classrooms: Approaches to language and literacy research*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Blum-Kulka, S., House, J., & Kasper, G. (1989). *Cross-cultural pragmatics: Requests and apologies*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Company.

Chavarría, M. I., & Bonany, E. B. (2006). Raising awareness of pragmatics in the EFL classroom: A proposal. *Cultura, Lenguaje y Representación/Culture, Language and Representation, 3*(3), 133–144.

Dörnyei, Z. (2007). *Research methods in applied linguistics: Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methodologies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Drew, I., & Hasselgreen, A. (2008). Young language learner (YLL) research: An overview of some international and national approaches. *Acta Didactica Norge, 2*(1), Art. 5, 18 pages. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.5617/adno.1024

Education First. (2020). *English proficiency index*. Retrieved from https://www.ef.no/epi/

Fortune, A., & Thorp, D. (2001). Knotted and entangled: New light on the identification, classification and value of language related episodes in collaborative output tasks. *Language Awareness, 10*(2), 143–160. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/09658410108667031

Fretheim, T. (2005). Politeness in Norway; How can you be polite and sincere? In L. Hickey & M. Stewart (Eds.), *Politeness in Europe* (pp. 145–158). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, Ltd.

Hasselgreen, A. (2005). The new læreplan proposal for English: reading between the lines. *Språk og språkundervisning, 2*, 7–10.

Hsieh, S. C.-Y., & Hsu, C.-C. N. (2010). Idiom comprehension in mandarin-speaking children. *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research, 39*, 505–522. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1007/s10936-009-9145-z

Ishihara, N. (2010). Instructional pragmatics: Bridging teaching, research, and teacher education. *Language and Linguistics Compass, 4*(10), 938–953. https://doi.org/ https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-818X.2010.00242.x

Ishihara, N. (2013). Is it rude language? Children learning pragmatics through visual narratives. *TESL Canada Journal, 30*(7), 135–149. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.18806/tesl.v30i7.1157

Kádár, D. Z., & Haugh, M. (2013). *Understanding politeness*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lee, C. (2010). An exploratory study of the interlanguage pragmatic comprehension of young learners of English. *Pragmatics, 20*(3), 343–373. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1075/prag.20.3.03lee

Marková, I., Linell, P., Grossen, M., & Orvig, A. S. (2007). *Dialogue in focus groups: Exploring socially shared knowledge*. London: Equinox.

Myrset, A. (In review). "You could win Masterchef with this soup. Can I get some more?" Request production and the impact of instruction on young EFL learners. *Journal of Pragmatics*.

Myrset, A., & Savić, M. (2021). "If an astronaut were on the moon…": Eliciting metapragmatic data from young L2 learners. *Applied Pragmatics, 3*(2), 163–196.

McConachy, T. (2018). *Developing intercultural perspectives on language use: Exploring pragmatics and culture in foreign language learning*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

McConachy, T., & Liddicoat, A. J. (2016). Meta-pragmatic awareness and intercultural competence: The role of reflection and interpretation in intercultural mediation. In F. Dervin & Z. Gross (Eds.), *Intercultural competence in education: Alternative approaches for different times* (pp. 13–30). London: Palgrave Macmillan.

McConachy, T., & Liddicoat, A. J., (Eds.) (Forthcoming). *Teaching and learning second language pragmatics for intercultural understanding*. New York: Routledge.

Morollón Martí, N. (Forthcoming). Concept-based instruction for teaching and learning L2 (im)politeness In T. McConachy & A. J. Liddicoat (Eds.), *Teaching and learning L2 pragmatics for intercultural understanding*. New York: Routledge.

Pinter, A. (2014). Child participant roles in applied linguistics research. *Applied Linguistics, 35*(2), 168–183. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amt008

Pinter, A., & Zandian, S. (2014). "I don't ever want to leave this room": benefits of researching "with" children. *ELT Journal, 68*(1), 64–74. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/cct057

Plonsky, L., & Zhuang, J. (2019). A meta-analysis of L2 pragmatics instruction. In N. Taguchi (Ed.), *The Routledge handbook of second language acquisition and pragmatics* (pp. 287–307). New

York: Routledge.

Rygg, K. (2017). Typically Norwegian to be impolite. Impoliteness according to whom? *(Im)politeness in Intercultural Encounters 4*(No. 1), 1–15.

Savić, M. (2014). *Politeness through the prism of requests, apologies and refusals: A case of advanced Serbian EFL learners*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Savić, M. (2015). "Can I very please borrow it?": Request development in young Norwegian EFL learners. *Intercultural Pragmatics, 12*(4), 443–480. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1515/ip-2015-0023

Savić, M., & Myrset, A. (Forthcoming-a). "But in England they're certainly very polite, so you mustn't forget that": Young EFL learners making sense of pragmatic practices. In T. McConachy & A. J. Liddicoat (Eds.), *Teaching and learning second language pragmatics for intercultural understanding*. New York: Routledge.

Savić, M., & Myrset, A. (Forthcoming-b). "Hey, you, can I loan your yellow pencil?" Young Norwegian EFL learners' metapragmatic appraisal of requests. In N. Halenko & J. Wang (Eds.), *Pragmatics in English language learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Spencer-Oatey, H. (2008). Face, (im)politeness and rapport. In H. Spencer-Oatey (Ed.), *Culturally speaking: Culture, communication and politeness theory* (pp. 11–47). London: Continuum.

Swain, M. (1997). Collaborative dialogue: Its contribution to second language learning. *Revista Canaria de Estudios Ingleses, 34*, 115–132.

Thomas, D. C. (2006). Domain and development of cultural intelligence: The importance of mindfulness. *Group & Organization Management, 31*(1). https://doi.org/10.1177/1059601105275266

Tracy, S. J. (2010). Qualitative quality: Eight "big-tent" criteria for excellent qualitative research. *Qualitative Inquiry 16*(10), 837–851. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800410383121

Udir. (2006). *English subject curriculum*. Retrieved from https://www.udir.no/kl06/ENG1-03?lplang=eng

van Compernolle, R. A. (2014). *Sociocultural theory and L2 instructional pragmatics*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

van Compernolle, R. A., Gomez-Laich, M. P., & Weber, A. (2016). Teaching L2 Spanish sociopragmatics through concepts: A classroom-based study. *The Modern Language Journal, 100*(1), 341–361. https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12318

Verschueren, J. (2000). Notes on the role of metapragmatic awareness in language use. *Pragmatics, 10*(4), 439–456. https://doi.org/10.1075/prag.10.4.02ver

Vygotsky, L. S. (2012/1934). *Thought and language*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Watts, R. J. (2003). *Politeness*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Author biodata

Anders Myrset is a doctoral research fellow in English at the Department of Education and Sports Science, Faculty of Arts and Education, University of Stavanger, Norway. He holds a BA in Creative Writing and Journalism from Middlesex University, London, and a BA and MA in English Literacy Studies with teacher training from the University of Stavanger. His research interests are (meta)pragmatic development, foreign language teaching, and research with children. In addition, he is the co-author of the EFL textbook series *link*, aimed at Norwegian primary school learners in Grades 1–4.

Appendix – Transcription guidelines

Meaning	Symbol	Example
Language used		
English	Italics	*"Oh, I'm all out of money. Lend me some."*
Norwegian	Roman	What do you think about this one?
Overlapping speech	word [word]	[Yes]
	[word]	[What] is – it's a friend
Pauses		
Brief pause	(.)	But it really (.) depends on whom one is saying it to.
Pause of indicated length in seconds	(1.2)	Or (1.2) not really.
Prominence		
Lengthened segment	wo:rd	*"lend me so:me"*
Emphasised syllable	WORD	If it had been a FRIEND
Relevant additional information		
Comments on verbal and non-verbal communication	((comment))	[You say] "give me something – lend it to me" ((laughs))
Clarification	{comment}	[That is], he has to {say} "Shall I help you?"