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# **'May I have a donut, please?'**

The Impact of L2 Pragmatics Instruction on Request Strategies with Third-Grade Norwegian EFL Learners

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## Abstract

This study aimed to explore the effects of L2 pragmatics instruction on the request production abilities of Norwegian third-grade EFL learners. It explores how targeted teaching influences their use of request strategies and the employment of internal and external modification. Conducted within Norway's educational system, this research fills a gap in the pragmatic development of Young Language Learners (YLLs) following structured instructional intervention. Over three weeks, the instructional approach combined *Input*, *Awareness Raising*, and *Practice*, utilizing resources such as picture books and role play exercises. The study's methodology centered around a pre- and post-test, which employed an analysis using Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) CCSARP coding manual. The findings showed progress in the YLLs' transition from naming and L1 reliance to the use of a variety of conventionally indirect requests and modal verbs. The outcomes demonstrate the potential benefits of L2 pragmatics instruction for enhancing the communicative competencies of YLLs, underscoring its value in early language education.

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## List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Full form
CCSARP	A Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project
CI	Conventionally Indirect
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
L1	First Language, Native Language, or Mother Tongue
L2	Second or Foreign Language
LK06	The 2006 National Curriculum of Norway
LK20	The 2020 National Curriculum of Norway
NCI	Non-Conventionally Indirect
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
ZPD	The Zone of Proximal Development

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# 1. Introduction

Effective communication in a second language (L2) extends beyond mere grammatical accuracy; it requires the L2 speaker to communicate effectively and appropriately, using, for example, different registers, language formulae, and body language in a given situation (Hymes, 1972). This is referred to as L2 pragmatics, which has been defined as “the study of how learners come to know how-to-say-what-to-whom-when” (Bardovi-Harlig, 2013, pp. 68–69). Whereas this is intended as a simplified definition, it highlights some aspects of L2 pragmatics, including selecting appropriate language forms and understanding sociocultural norms.

This thesis explores whether L2 pragmatics instruction impacts the request production of Norwegian third-grade English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. This topic is particularly relevant under Norway’s current national curriculum, LK20, which highlights the practical application of language skills in social interactions within the English subject. Savić (2015) emphasizes the importance of this educational focus, stating that “investigating the effects of [L2] pragmatics instruction with young learners and determining which types of instruction yield the best results are certainly promising areas for further research” (p. 465). Numerous studies support this emphasis, indicating that diverse instructional approaches can significantly enhance the acquisition of L2 pragmatics across various cultural and educational contexts, even among Young Language Learners (YLLs) (Alemi & Haeri, 2020; Canbolat et al., 2021; Ishihara, 2013; Ishihara & Chiba, 2014; Myrset, 2021, 2022; Rajabia et al., 2015; Taguchi & Kim, 2016).

Before discussing this study in detail, it is important to introduce and define a few key terms within the field of L2 pragmatics. This thesis explores pragmalinguistics, which refers to the systematic study of the linguistic strategies used for performing various communicative acts and how these strategies are applied to achieve specific communicative goals (Kasper & Rose, 2002).

Additionally, requests are communicative acts where the speaker seeks to get the hearer to do something (Haverkate, 1984). Requests can be framed using different forms to achieve the same communicative goal, which is referred to as request strategies. The directness of these strategies ranges from direct to conventionally indirect (CI) and non-conventionally indirect

(NCI) (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989). For example, a speaker who is thirsty might use different directness strategies to request water: direct, ‘*Give me a glass of water,*’ CI, ‘*Could I have a glass of water?*’ or NCI, ‘*I haven’t had any water today.*’

Further exploring various request strategies, the study examines the use of modal verbs and head act forms such as *Can*, *May*, and *Could*, exemplified by ‘*Can I have a glass of water?*’ or ‘*May I have a glass of water?*’. Additionally, the inclusion of the marker *Please* is examined, as shown in ‘*Can I please have a glass of water?*’. The study also looks at internal modifiers, such as *Perhaps* and *Maybe*, evident in requests like ‘*Could I perhaps have a glass of water?*’ or ‘*Maybe I could have some water?*’. Furthermore, supportive moves that justify the request, such as ‘*I’m really thirsty. Could I have a glass of water?*’ along with alerters that capture the listener’s attention, like the attention getter *Hi* in, ‘*Hi, may I have a glass of water?*’ will be discussed. These elements illustrate a range of strategies that can be employed to modify requests.

While considerable research exists on L2 pragmatics instruction for adult EFL learners, the specific needs of younger learners, particularly those in early grades, have received less attention. YLLs represent a distinctive group of learners, typically between five and thirteen years old, aligning with Europe’s elementary school education age range (Drew & Hasselgreen, 2008). As the world undergoes rapid globalization, these YLLs find themselves in an environment where exposure to multiple languages is common, creating a unique environment for language acquisition and development (Hasselgreen, 2005a). This oversight is significant in the Norwegian context, where English language education begins early but lacks a focus on pragmatic competence with the younger ages. Studies such as Myrset (2021, 2022) have provided valuable insights into teaching pragmatic strategies to older elementary learners. Additionally, Savić (2015) has begun to shed light on the pragmalinguistic development of YLLs within a Norwegian elementary school setting. However, there remains a gap in our understanding of how these strategies can be adapted and taught to younger, less experienced learners.

This study aims to contribute to this research gap with the overarching aim: Does L2 pragmatics instruction have an impact on third-grade Norwegian EFL learners’ request production? It explores this through the following research questions:

- 1) To what extent does instruction influence the learners' ability to produce English requests?
- 2) To what extent does instruction influence the learners' ability to vary within and between request head act strategies?
- 3) To what extent does instruction influence the learners' ability to use internal and external modification strategies?

To address these questions, the present research project employed a quantitative methodology, utilizing a pre- and post-test to gather empirical data on the impact of targeted L2 pragmatics instruction over a carefully designed and interactive three-week instruction period.

The study involved 36 third-grade learners in an elementary school in Western Norway. The instructional framework, developed based on the theories proposed by experts in the field (Glaser, Forthcoming; Schauer, 2019), included structured lessons that integrated *Input*, *Awareness Raising*, and *Practice* – each designed to scaffold the YLLs' pragmatic development. The data collection method consisted of a setting that utilized role play scenarios, adopted from Savić (2015), where two learners worked with the researcher. The role plays aimed to prompt the production of L2 requests, which were subsequently transcribed and analyzed using the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project's (CCSARP) coding manual, developed by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989). This analysis focused on the request strategies previously outlined, capturing the shifts in the YLLs' pragmatic competencies.

The researcher's engagement with this topic is rooted in a professional interest in the L2 pragmatic development of YLLs and how instruction can foster this development. Seeing how YLLs in Norway learn English intrigued the researcher, presenting a challenge to equip these learners with grammatical proficiency and the pragmatic competencies necessary for effective communication. This interest is driven by recognizing a significant gap in our current understanding of how early L2 pragmatics instruction can influence language development. The researcher's commitment to this area of study is fueled by a desire to enhance language education practices, contribute to the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA), and support educators. Through this thesis, the researcher aims to provide empirical evidence on the teachability of L2 pragmatics, fostering the development of L2

pragmatic competence, and offering practical recommendations for integrating these essential skills into the EFL curriculum for young learners.

The Norwegian curriculum, LK20, recognizes the importance of pragmatics in developing communicative competence in EFL. It includes explicit learning aims that encourage the use of polite expressions and appropriate language in various social contexts, demonstrating a progression from second to seventh grade (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019a, 2019b, 2019c). For instance, by the end of second grade, learners are expected to “ask and answer simple questions, follow simple instructions and use some polite expressions” (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019a), and by seventh grade, they should “express oneself in an understandable way with a varied vocabulary and polite expressions adapted to the receiver and situation” (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019c). Additionally, the curriculum emphasizes the transformative potential of learning English as a means to experience and communicate across different societies and cultural backgrounds, stating, “[b]y learning English, the pupils can experience different societies and cultures by communicating with others around the world” (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017). Despite these aims, research on the practical integration of L2 pragmatics into the English curriculum remains limited, particularly for younger learners.

In light of the curriculum’s aims, this thesis seeks to contribute to the field by exploring how structured L2 pragmatics instruction can support the request production abilities of third-grade Norwegian EFL learners. Through this research, the study aims to bridge the gap between curriculum goals and instructional practice by providing insights into the teachability of L2 pragmatics and its potential impact on young learners.

This thesis aims to contribute to the field of L2 language education by exploring whether pragmatic aspects of language are teachable and how they impact YLLs’ communicative competence. It investigates the applicability of L2 pragmatics instruction to help learners effectively use “common small words, polite expressions and simple phrases and sentences,” key elements emphasized by the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research (2019b) for effective communication. By offering practical insights for educators in EFL contexts, this study aligns with and seeks to support the broader educational goals and competence aims set forth by Norway’s educational authorities.

The organization of this thesis is detailed in the following way: Chapter 2, Literature Review, reviews relevant literature on pragmatics and previous research, including L2 pragmatics instruction with YLLs internationally and in Norway. Chapter 3, Methodology, details the methodology, describing the participant selection, instruction period, data collection, and analysis methods. Chapter 4, Results, presents the results, highlighting significant shifts in the use of conventional indirectness and modal verbs in request production. Finally, Chapters 5, Discussion, and 6, Conclusion, will discuss these results and conclude the study, contributing to the academic discussion on the pedagogical implications of integrating L2 pragmatics into elementary EFL classrooms.



## 2. Literature Review

The literature review chapter of this study serves as a foundational platform, weaving together various scholarly research to construct a comprehensive backdrop against the current research. This chapter looks at the existing knowledge, exploring the dynamics of L2 pragmatics and request production within the context of young EFL learners.

The chapter begins with Section 2.1, which looks at the core principles of pragmatics within applied linguistics, highlighting its significance in effective communication and the complex choices L2 speakers must make. Section 2.2 discusses the various strategies involved in request production, categorizing them by levels of directness and internal and external modification. Following this, Section 2.3 addresses the concept of collaborative dialogue, illustrating its role in facilitating the development of L2 pragmatic competence. Concluding the chapter, Section 2.4 reviews previous research on YLLs' development in request production and L2 pragmatics instructional studies with YLLs.

### 2.1 Pragmatics

Pragmatics serves as a fundamental pillar within applied linguistics, emphasizing the interplay between language structure and social context to pursue effective communication. Crystal (1997) defines pragmatics as:

The study of language from the point of view of *users*, especially of the *choices* they make, the *constraints* they encounter in using language in *social interaction* and the *effects* their use of language has on other *participants* in the *act of communication*.  
(Crystal, 1997, p. 301, italics added, as cited in Kasper & Rose, 2002, p. 2)

This definition places pivotal importance on the term *choices*, which encompasses a range of strategies speakers use during communicative acts, also known as speech acts. Speech acts represent the “ways in which people carry out specific social functions in speaking such as apologizing, complaining, [and] making requests” (Ishihara & Cohen, 2014, p. 6). For L2 speakers, these choices become inherently more complex. L2 users often have to navigate not only the linguistic structures of an additional language but also the pragmatic norms that may

diverge significantly from those in their first language (L1). L2 pragmatics research thus delves into the active role that YLLs play as they negotiate meaning and attempt to align their L1 communicative practices with the sociopragmatic conventions of the L2 (Taguchi & Roever, 2017).

Consequently, the field of L2 pragmatics addresses language aspects conditional upon the speaker, the listener, and the context of communication, underlining the multifaceted nature of language use within a social context to perform a communicative act (Taguchi & Roever, 2017). In light of this, speakers must navigate the intricacies of formality and informality, politeness and impoliteness, and directness and indirectness in various communicative situations. This task becomes more complex when a speaker is operating in their L2, as they must adapt strategies to convey their intentions effectively and align their communication with the sociopragmatic norms of a different cultural and linguistic background (Taguchi & Roever, 2017).

These challenges highlight the critical role of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competencies, which form two fundamental dimensions of L2 pragmatic competence. Kasper and Rose (2002) define pragmalinguistic competence as the understanding “of the strategies and linguistic forms by which communicative acts can be implemented” and sociopragmatic competence as the knowledge “of the context factors under which particular strategic and linguistic choices are appropriate” (p. 96). Although these dimensions are distinct, they are deeply intertwined. Effective communication in an L2 relies on the correct use of linguistic forms (pragmalinguistics) and on the appropriateness of these forms in specific social contexts (sociopragmatics). For instance, knowing the correct phrasing or terminology, i.e., pragmalinguistic competence, is only part of communication. Understanding when and where such phrasing is suitable, i.e., sociopragmatic competence, completes the communicative act (Hymes, 1972).

In exploring the pragmalinguistic dimension of L2 competence, YLLs are tasked with understanding the complex relationship between language forms, meanings, and social functions within various contexts. Kasper and Rose (2002) describe this as involving “mappings of form, meaning, force, and context” (p. 259), which means that aspects need to be not just shown but also deeply understood to see how language works in social situations. McConachy (2018) presents a more nuanced view, arguing that in intercultural

communication, learners must construct representations that go beyond simple mappings. He emphasized the importance of recognizing subtle semantic differences used in performing speech acts that are not explicitly marked in a learner's L1. This perspective encourages a deeper exploration of how YLLs compare and contrast the strategies used for requesting in their L2 with those in their L1, thereby fostering the development of a sophisticated, contextually informed pragmatic competence. To facilitate this learning, awareness-raising activities can equip YLLs with insights into the pragmatic aspects of language use, thus enhancing their understanding of the intricate dynamics in intercultural settings (McConachy, 2018).

Understanding social norms is crucial for YLLs as it guides their communicative behavior, helping them to engage in cross-cultural exchanges effectively. According to Ishihara and Cohen (2014), these norms can be regarded as shared rules that outline how and when specific speech acts are expected to occur within a community. Sociopragmatics, as described by Kasper and Rose (2002), links context factors crucial to communication without necessarily tying to specific linguistic forms, making it a complex aspect of language learning that often extends beyond the focus on form. This complexity is deeply intertwined with cultural and personal beliefs, and it presents distinct challenges to YLLs depending on whether they are in an L2 or EFL learning environment (Kasper & Rose, 2002). Therefore, educators must consider the cultural backgrounds, ages, genders, social classes, occupations, and social roles of individuals to guide YLLs in making appropriate speech choices that are aligned with actual language use in various contexts (Ishihara & Cohen, 2014).

Making informed choices in communication underscores the importance of metapragmatic awareness, a critical cognitive ability not only in YLLs but in all language users, enabling them to reflect upon and analyze the use of their language in social interactions. McConachy (2018) suggests that this awareness entails understanding specific pragmatic norms and develops into a reflective capacity that allows YLLs to contemplate the interactional consequences of their linguistic choices. Myrset and Savić (2021) define metapragmatic awareness as “the ability to verbalize reflections on linguistic forms, contextual features, and/or their interplay” (p. 165). This reflection is important, as it empowers YLLs to navigate communication more effectively, fostering an understanding of how language functions in various contexts.

However, developing such awareness in YLLs, especially those under eight years old, presents challenges. As Ishihara and Chiba (2014) noted, “they are still in the process of acquiring logical reasoning and abstract concepts, [and] their access to metalanguage remains limited” (p. 86). Despite these developmental constraints, it is not to suggest that YLLs are “incapable of reflecting on and discussing language use” (Savić & Myrset, 2022, p. 115). As they mature, this awareness can blossom into an analytical ability that extends beyond classroom learning, allowing them to make more informed pragmatic decisions during interactions (McConachy, 2018).

## 2.2 Requests

Within speech act theory, requests are considered acts where the speaker attempts to shape the hearer’s actions to perform a task, typically to the speaker’s advantage, either explicitly stated or hinted at in the message (Haverkate, 1984). The realization of a request involves choosing the directness of the request, or the head act, which is the minimal linguistic unit that can be employed for the utterance to perform its function as a request. In this context, “*directness* is meant the degree to which the speaker’s illocutionary intent<sup>1</sup> is apparent from the locution<sup>2</sup>” (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989, p. 278). In other words, directness refers to how transparent the speaker’s intentions are, in this case making a request to the hearer. It is about how easily the hearer can understand the speaker’s wants based on what they say. On one side, a request can be very clear and explicit where the speaker’s intent is evident from their words (e.g., ‘Give me a glass of water’). On the other end, indirect requests are where the speaker’s intentions might not be immediately apparent (e.g., ‘I haven’t had anything to drink today’) and may require some interpretation and contextual cues by the listener for it to be interpreted as a request. In other words, directness is essentially about how much the speaker spells out their request versus leaving room for the listener to infer or guess the intended action.

Table 1 categorizes various request strategies, describing them based on their level of directness, ranging from the most to the least direct. The strategies introduced in this table are

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<sup>1</sup> Illocutionary intent refers to what the speaker intends to achieve with their utterance (Kissine, 2009).

<sup>2</sup> Locution refers to the actual words or expressions used by the speaker (Kissine, 2009).

those relevant to this study<sup>3</sup>. Each strategy is briefly introduced in the table and will be discussed in further detail in the subsequent subsections to provide a comprehensive understanding of how each operates.

*Table 1 – Categorization and Examples of Request Strategies – Directness Levels*

Blum-Kulka et. al. (1989)	Example formulations	Meaning	Utterances
Head act			
Mood derivable [Direct request]	Give me	The speaker’s intent is explicit in the mood of the verb, typically in the imperative form (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989).	“Leave me alone” “Please move your car” (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989, p. 279).
Want statement [Direct request]	I want	Requests that are made by explicitly stating a want or need. The speaker’s desire for the hearer to perform a task is clearly articulated (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989).	“I’d like to borrow your notes for a little while” (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989, p. 279).
Preparatory [CI request]	Can I	These requests include modal verbs by implying a question about the ability or possibility to do something (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989).	“Can I borrow your notes?” “Could you possibly get your assignment done this week?” (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989, p. 280).
Strong hint [NCI request]	Do you have	These are statements or questions that indirectly hint at the request; leaving the hearer to infer the actual request (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989).	“(Intent: getting a lift home) Will you be going home now?” (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989, p. 280).

<sup>3</sup> For a comprehensive list of strategies, refer to pages 277-289 in Blum-Kulka et al.’s (1989) coding manual.

## 2.2.1 Request Strategies

### 2.2.1.1 Head Acts

As presented in Table 1, requests fall into three main categories of directness: direct, CI, and NCI, forming the core components of the request (Usó-Juan & Martinez-Flor, 2008). Understanding these strategies is crucial for comprehending the nuances of linguistic interaction. The request strategies, as outlined by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989), “are ordered according to decreasing degree[s] of directness. [Importantly, these strategies] are mutually exclusive, [meaning] a Head Act can only be realized through one specific Request strategy” (p. 278).

Direct requests form a distinctive category where the speaker explicitly expresses the desire for the hearer to undertake a specific action. The grammatical mood plays a pivotal role in signaling the directness of these requests. Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) explain that “[t]he grammatical mood of the locution conventionally determines its illocutionary force as a Request. The prototypical form [of a direct request] is the imperative [mood]” (pp. 278-279). Examples include imperatives such as “Leave me alone” or “Please move your car” (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989, p. 279), which clearly convey the speaker’s intentions. However, findings from Savić and Myrset (2022) indicate that third graders often view direct requests negatively, with none deemed appropriate. This suggests that this age group may not favor the perceived harshness or directness.

CI requests are characterized by including a preparatory condition that establishes the feasibility of the requested action. Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) highlight the pivotal role of modal verbs in these requests, as they refer to the topicalized preparatory condition and represent the unmarked form of reference in the languages under discussion. They further argue that the effectiveness of these modal verbs in softening requests is rooted in their conventionalization within the language. When “modal verbs are replaced by nonmodal semantic equivalents, the utterance becomes more explicit, more marked, and more formal” (Faerch & Kasper, 1989, p. 228). This change underscores the importance of conventionalized practices in maintaining the subtlety and indirectness of requests. Speakers can navigate social interactions more smoothly by embedding these practices within a language’s cultural and communicative norms.

In Norwegian culture, requests often utilize conventionalized indirectness, typically involving the modal verb *Can* (Norwegian: 'Kan'). The subtle approach, where the speaker's proposition is framed as a question, allows for a more polite and less imposing interaction (Fretheim, 2005). Furthermore, "when *få* [(which means 'get' in English)] combines with a 'Can I' request, it normally enhances our feeling that the communicator is being polite" (Fretheim, 2005, p. 148).

CI requests, often involving phrases like *Can I/you*, are generally seen by young learners as acceptable. Savić and Myrset (2022) note that while third graders favor these requests, older learners start to view direct requests more positively and become more critical of CI requests. This reflects the influence of age and developmental stage on the perception of politeness and appropriateness in request strategies.

The notion of a preparatory condition primarily pertains to the feasibility of the request. It is commonly linked to the speaker's ability, willingness, or the potential for the action to be carried out (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989). These conditions introduce a layer of indirectness to the request, requiring the listener to infer the speaker's intentions. CI requests are characterized by the absence of an explicit statement of the preparatory condition (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989). Examples include requests such as, "*Can I borrow your notes?*" or "*Could you possibly get your assignment done this week?*" (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989, p. 280). These requests are formulated in a way that subtly implies the request, giving the listener the flexibility to consider their ability, willingness, or suitability to fulfill the request based on their current circumstances.

NCI requests diverge from conventional patterns, introducing a level of indirectness that requires more inferencing activity on the hearer's part (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989). They challenge the hearer to navigate through layers of implied meaning and contextual cues. In other words, this means that the speaker relies on the hearer to interpret and understand the utterance as a request through the context in which it appears. For example, "*Will you be going home now?*" (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989, p. 280) can be interpreted as a strong hint, potentially aiming to secure a lift home.

Non-conventional indirectness is associated primarily with ambiguity by the speaker. This form of indirectness displays multiple meanings and tends to be nonspecific, embodying what Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) refer to as pragmatic vagueness. The speaker's intentions are not explicitly stated, necessitating a nuanced understanding of the context and additional cues for interpretation. In practice, this complexity is evident in younger learners' responses; for instance, third graders showed uncertainty regarding the communicative function of NCI requests, with almost all such requests being evaluated as 'so-so' (Savić & Myrset, 2022). This may indicate a level of insecurity about their communicative function. However, it may also suggest a developing understanding of how requests can be produced, reflecting their struggle with the subtleties of NCI requests.

As displayed in the examples of CI requests above, requests can be framed from different perspectives, i.e., focusing on the person asking, the person being asked, both together, or without directly mentioning anyone. A listener-oriented request has an "emphasis on the role of the listener. [For example,] *Could you clean up the kitchen, please?*" (Ishihara & Cohen, 2014, p. 69). A speaker-oriented request places "emphasis on the speaker's role as the requester. [For example,] *Can I borrow your notes from yesterday?*" (Ishihara & Cohen, 2014, p. 69). These different approaches reveal the speaker's intent and relationship with the listener, subtly influencing the likelihood of compliance through the strategic use of perspective.

### 2.2.1.2 *Internal and External Modification*

In addition to choosing the directness of requests, other strategies can be employed to further alter the force of a request. Table 2 outlines various strategies used for internal and external modification. The modifications and examples listed in this table are selected based on their relevance to this study<sup>4</sup>. Each strategy is briefly described within the table and will be explored further in this section.

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<sup>4</sup> For a comprehensive list of strategies, refer to pages 277-289 in Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) coding manual.



*Table 2 – Categorization and Examples of Request Strategies – Internal and External Modification*

<b>Blum-Kulka et. al. (1989)</b>	<b>Example formulations</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Utterances</b>
<b>Downgraders</b>			
Politeness markers	<i>Please</i>	An additional element that is used to encourage the listener to respond favorably to the request (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989).	“Clean the kitchen, <i>please</i> ” (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989, p. 283).
Downtoners	<i>Perhaps</i>	Words that reduce the forcefulness of a request (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989).	“Could you [...] <i>perhaps</i> lend me your notes?” (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989, p. 284).
	<i>Maybe</i>		<i>Maybe</i> I could borrow a pencil.
<b>Supportive moves</b>			
Grounders	<i>I am thirsty.</i> Could I have a glass of water?	These provide justifications or reasons for the request (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989).	“Judith, <i>I missed class yesterday.</i> Could I borrow your notes?” (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989, p. 287).
<b>Alerters</b>			
Attention getter	<i>Hi</i>	An additional element that is used to alert the hearer (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989).	“Hey” (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989, p. 277).
First name	<i>Mathilde</i>		“Judith” (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989, p. 277).

Downgraders are pragmalinguistic tools employed to reduce the forcefulness of a request, making it less imposing for the listener. According to Blum-Kulka et al. (1989), lexical downgraders are a form of mitigation that alters the head act’s internal structure. These choices vary from language to language. For instance, “there is no Norwegian word or phrase that can be said to correspond directly to the English *please*” (Fretheim, 2005, p. 146). Fretheim (2005) pointed out, “small children in Norway find it natural to experiment with a politeness particle resembling English *please* (even before they have acquired any English)”

(p. 154), and this behavior may reflect cultural norms. Adding markers like *Please* is “[a]n optional element added to a request to bid for cooperative behavior” (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989, p. 283), as in the example “Clean the kitchen, *please*” (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989, p. 283).

Downtoners are another type of lexical downgrader; these modifiers adjust the speaker’s request to lessen the potential impact on the hearer (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989). An example provided is “Could you [...] *perhaps* lend me your notes,” (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989, p. 284), where the word *Perhaps* functions to dampen the directness of the request.

Supportive moves are strategies that surround the head act, either preceding or following it, aiming to mitigate or aggravate the tone of the request (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989). Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) describe one strategy as grounders, where “[t]he speaker gives reasons, explanations, or justifications for his or her request” (p. 287). Grounders can occur before or after the head act, helping to contextualize it and make it more reasonable or acceptable to the listener. For example, by saying, “Judith, *I missed class yesterday*. Could I borrow your notes?” (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989, p. 287), the speaker explains the circumstance behind the request, which can invoke the listener’s understanding and willingness to help (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989).

Alerters are components of speech acts that occur before the head acts in a request sequence (Ishihara & Cohen, 2014). Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) define an alerter as “an element whose function is to alert the Hearer’s attention to the ensuing speech act” (p. 277). In other words, they are designed to capture the hearer’s attention and signal the initiation of a speech act. Such elements may range from using the hearer’s name to employing a greeting or both to engage the listener’s focus<sup>5</sup>. Openers such as greetings like *Hi* can function as attention getters, preparing the listener for the request that is about to follow (Ishihara & Cohen, 2014).

Research by Savić and Myrset (2022) highlight that while young learners recognize the importance of modal verbs and politeness markers, other elements such as alerters or supportive moves did not seem to influence their appraisal of requests. These results suggest

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<sup>5</sup> It is important to note that Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) identify a broader array of alerters in their work.

that, for YLLs, certain features may stand out more in formulating a request than others (Savić & Myrset, 2022).

### 2.2.2 Five Stages of L2 Request Development

In an attempt to outline learners' speech act trajectories, Kasper and Rose (2002) outline the development of request speech acts as a five-stage developmental sequence, transitioning from minimalistic expressions to more sophisticated strategies. Table 3 provides a breakdown of each stage, offering explanations alongside examples.

*Table 3 – Kasper and Rose's (2002) Five Stages of L2 Request Development*

Stage	Explanation	Example
<i>Pre-basic</i>	“Highly context-dependent, no syntax, no relational goals” (Kasper & Rose, 2002, p. 140).	“[B]ig circle” (Kasper & Rose, 2002, p. 136).
<i>Formulaic</i>	“Reliance on unanalyzed formulas and imperatives” (Kasper & Rose, 2002, p. 140).	“Can I have this?” (Kasper & Rose, 2002, p. 136).
<i>Unpacking</i>	“Formulas incorporated into productive language use, shift to conventional indirectness” (Kasper & Rose, 2002, p. 140).	“Can you pass the pencil please?” (Kasper & Rose, 2002, p. 140).
<i>Pragmatic expansion</i>	“Addition of new forms to pragmalinguistic repertoire, increased use of mitigation, more complex syntax” (Kasper & Rose, 2002, p. 140).	“Can I see it so I can copy it?” (Kasper & Rose, 2002, p. 140).
<i>Fine-tuning</i>	“Fine-tuning of requestive force to participants, goals and contexts” (Kasper & Rose, 2002, p. 140).	“Is there any more white?” (Kasper & Rose, 2002, p. 140).

At the initial stage, labeled *pre-basic*, YLLs exhibit a high dependence on context, lacking syntactic structures and relational goals. Communication at this stage is characterized by a lack of formalized language use, with YLLs relying on immediate contextual cues such as limited vocabulary and body language cues like pointing (Kasper & Rose, 2002). The YLLs may use simple expressions like “*big circle*” (Kasper & Rose, 2002, p. 136) and supplement the communication with pointing or gestures to convey their needs. Transitioning from the *pre-basic* stage, the *formulaic* stage sees YLLs leaning heavily on unanalyzed formulas, i.e., language chunks memorized and used as single units without understanding their composition. Language use becomes more patterned, relying on established expressions like “Don’t look” (Kasper & Rose, 2002, p. 140) and phrases to convey requests, “Can I have this?” (Kasper & Rose, 2002, p. 136).

As YLLs progress, they enter the *unpacking* stage, where previously memorized formulas become integrated into more productive language use. This stage marks a shift toward conventional indirectness, reflecting an increased awareness of social and contextual factors in language expression. For instance, they might say, “Can you pass the pencil please?” (Kasper & Rose, 2002, p. 140). The *pragmatic expansion* stage witnesses a substantial growth in linguistic complexity. Now equipped with a broader pragmalinguistic repertoire, YLLs incorporate new linguistic forms, such as grounders, into their requests. Mitigation strategies have become more prevalent, and a noticeable uptick in using complex syntax to convey nuanced meanings is evident. This stage is marked by a noticeable growth in linguistic complexity, as seen in expressions like “Can I see it so I can copy it?” (Kasper & Rose, 2002, p. 140).

The final stage, *fine-tuning*, highlights the YLLs’ ability to precisely adapt their requests. At this point, the YLLs fine-tune the requestive force of their language, aligning it with the specific participants, their communicative goals, and the context in which the interaction occurs. This stage is not just a demonstration of pragmalinguistic competence but also a reflection of sociopragmatic development. YLLs display an increased awareness of how to modulate their language to align with various sociocultural expectations and communicative norms, a skill crucial for effective communication, as evidenced by expressions like “Is there any more white?” (Kasper & Rose, 2002, p. 140).

This five-stage model serves as a roadmap for understanding the YLLs' journey as they navigate the complexities of acquiring request production proficiency in an L2.

## 2.3 Collaborative Dialogue

Learning a language, particularly its pragmatics aspects, is not merely an exercise in memorization but a process deeply rooted in social interaction. This socialization occurs not only through communication with native speakers but within educational settings, through interactions with peers and teachers. These interactions are pivotal for acquiring L2 pragmatic competence, as they provide real-life contexts for practicing and understanding the nuanced use of language (Lyle, 2008; Swain, 1997; Vygotsky, 1934/2012). Collaborative dialogue, defined as “the joint construction of language –or knowledge about language– by two or more individuals” (Swain, 1997, p. 115), plays a fundamental role in this process. Through such collaborative efforts, learners are socialized into using language pragmatically and appropriately in diverse situations.

Rooted in socio-cultural theories, particularly those of Vygotsky (1934/2012), collaborative dialogue acknowledges that learning is inherently social and knowledge is constructed through interaction and discourse (Lyle, 2008). In the context of SLA, collaborative talk among YLLs is recognized as a tool for meaning-making and cognitive development (Lyle, 2008). It creates an environment where YLLs jointly push beyond their current cognitive and linguistic levels, enhancing their abilities and understanding to achieve greater proficiency (Swain, 1997). Vygotsky's (1934/2012) belief that “[w]hat the child can do in cooperation today he can do alone tomorrow” (p. 199), underpins the transformative power of collaborative dialogue in fostering independence and proficiency.

Furthermore, Vygotsky's (1934/2012) observation that “instruction precedes development” (p. 196) underscores the essential role of EFL instruction in aligning with YLLs' current abilities while guiding their future linguistic development. This instructional approach effectively promotes analytical, critical, and creative thinking skills through collaborative dialogue involving YLLs in meaningful exchanges. These interactions are crucial for teachers to scaffold and create opportunities for metapragmatic discussions, thereby enhancing YLLs'

ability to reflect on language use in complex ways (McConachy, 2018, as cited in Savić, 2021).

Collaborative dialogue transcends peer interactions, encompassing conversations between teachers and YLLs and between YLLs and native speakers, effectively externalizing cognitive processes and providing insights into the dynamics of language acquisition (Swain, 1997). It is the relational aspect of instruction and the mental development of the child that Vygotsky (1934/2012) captures when he notes “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” (Vygotsky, 1934/2012, p. 161).

Vygotsky’s (1978) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), is defined as “*the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers*” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86), further emphasizes the intricate relationship between instruction and development. This concept underscores the importance of collaborative dialogue as a space where YLLs are guided by a more capable person to reach their potential.

Finally, Vygotsky’s (1978) work links internal speech and reflective thought with social interactions, which “provide the source of development of a child’s voluntary behavior” (p. 90), suggesting that the reflective and interactive nature of collaborative dialogue in EFL instruction indeed prompts behavior and agency in YLLs. “Overall research calls for teachers to engage with children as co-collaborators in meaning making” (Lyle, 2008, p. 286), a practice informed by Vygotsky’s (1978) insights into learning and development.

## 2.4 Previous Research in L2 Pragmatics with YLLs

Teaching L2 pragmatics to YLLs is increasingly recognized as an essential component of language education. Scholars such as Kasper and Rose (2002) have shifted the perspective from the conversation of the possibility of learning pragmatics in the classroom to the most effective ways to structure classrooms to support pragmatic development. They state, “the right question to ask is not *whether* pragmatics can be learned in the classroom but *how*

classrooms can be arranged to most effectively support pragmatic development” (Kasper & Rose, 2002, p. 309). This assertion is echoed by a breadth of recent studies that show diverse instructional approaches that can effectively enhance the learning of L2 pragmatics with YLLs (Alemi & Haeri, 2020; Canbolat et al., 2021; Ishihara, 2013; Ishihara & Chiba, 2014; Myrset, 2021, 2022; Rajabia et al., 2015; Taguchi & Kim, 2016).

This section will explore research that has studied the progression of request production competence in YLLs and examine a variety of instructional approaches that have been employed to foster pragmatic competence. By exploring studies spanning diverse cultural and instructional contexts, this section aims to shed light on the interplay between teaching methodologies and the pragmatic development of YLLs, offering insights into effective strategies for enhancing their pragmatic competence.

#### *2.4.1 YLLs’ Development in Request Production*

Rose (2000) investigated the pragmatic development of speech acts in young EFL learners in Hong Kong. The research examined how YLLs aged 7, 9, and 11 navigated and developed the ability to perform speech acts such as requests, apologies, and compliments in English.

To explore his research questions, Rose (2000) employed a “cartoon oral production task (COPT)” (p. 36), which was developed based on the input from a group of YLLs who provided potential real-life scenarios. These scenarios covered a range of contexts, social status, and degrees of imposition. The study involved a second group of YLLs across three age levels (7, 9, and 11 years old) to participate in the main data collection, which was conducted in both English and Cantonese. Approximately half of each class participated, with English responses gathered from 20 second graders (P-2s), 14 fourth graders (P-4s), and 19 sixth graders (P-6s). The cartoon-based task offered a range of contexts for the YLLs to demonstrate their pragmatic competencies (Rose, 2000).

Analysis of the English request strategies in Rose (2000) revealed a developmental trend. Specifically, the P-2s demonstrated the usage of CI requests in 35.4% of the request scenarios and chose not to respond at all in 49% of the request scenarios. In contrast, the P-4s and P-6s showed an increase in their use of CI requests, accounting for 85% and 96.8% of their total

responses. These CI requests mainly took the form of *Can I* or *Can you* (Rose, 2000), reflecting a preference for the modal verb *Can*. Additionally, there was an increase in the use of supportive moves as the YLLs grew older. The oldest group, P-6, incorporated supportive moves in 11.4% of their requests, a significant rise compared to the roughly 3% observed in the responses of both the P-2s and P-4s (Rose, 2000).

Rose's (2000) findings indicated that while there was clear evidence of pragmalinguistic development, shown with the shift from direct to CI requests, there was little variation based on situational context. This points to the possibility that younger EFL learners may initially focus on the structural aspects of the language before fully integrating the sociopragmatic factors (Rose, 2000).

Transitioning from Rose's (2000) study to Savić's (2015) study, a consistent thread of development in YLLs' pragmatic competencies becomes apparent, albeit in different cultural and educational settings. Rose's (2000) findings in Hong Kong present a picture where YLLs exhibit a developing understanding of pragmalinguistics, which Savić (2015) further builds upon within a Norwegian context.

Savić's (2015) study took place within a Norwegian elementary school and involved fifty-eight YLLs aged 8 to 12 years from second, fourth, and sixth grade. These YLLs had begun receiving English language instruction from the first grade, accumulating between 70 and 290 hours of English exposure by the time of this research (Savić, 2015). Moreover, their exposure to English extended beyond the classroom through media consumption in English (Savić, 2015). Although the national curriculum at that time, LK06, included aims like using "some polite expressions and simple phrases to obtain help in understanding and being understood" (Ministry of Education and Research, 2013), it is unclear whether these learners had received targeted instruction in pragmatic competence. This study provided insight into the natural development of learners' pragmatic abilities in a context where specific pragmatic training may not have been explicitly emphasized.

The study employed role play as its core methodological approach, drawing on the YLLs' authentic experiences and linguistic abilities, which correlated with the objectives outlined in their English curriculum and textbooks (Savić, 2015). This approach was tailored to produce requests in interactions with peers and a teacher, ensuring relevance to the YLLs' daily lives.



The role plays were conducted with visual support for the younger learners and visual and written cues for the older ones. For the younger learners, the role play exercises included two key activities: a ‘dress-the-boy-and-girl’ task where a child was given a handout of two dolls and had to request various clothing items from the researcher and the other participant. The second activity required the YLLs to fill a pencil case using a provided list, where they had to ask for the missing items from their peer and the researcher. The scenarios for the older learners involved planning a school party and borrowing necessary school items (Savić, 2015).

The requests produced in the study were coded using Blum-Kulka et al.’s (1989) CCSARP coding manual, analyzing the levels of directness and internal and external modification of the head act. The results revealed significant pragmatic development across the age groups. While the second graders predominantly used simpler language forms, such as naming (54.7% of the requests), they also employed CI requests in 42.9% of their responses. The fourth and sixth graders demonstrated an increased use of conventional indirectness, with over 80% of their responses being CI. Additionally, the oldest group began using NCI requests (Savić, 2015).

For internal modification, the modal verb *Can* remained the predominant choice across all age groups. However, its usage decreased with age, where 94.6% of head acts included *Can* with the second-graders, whereas the fourth- and sixth-graders also employed *Could* and *Would*. None of the YLLs used *May* in their requests (Savić, 2015). *Please* was used by all the groups as a politeness marker but was most frequently used by the fourth graders, where it appeared in 34.7% of their requests, compared to only 12.8% among the second graders. Interestingly, the oldest learners used *Please* less frequently than the fourth graders, possibly reflecting their increased language competence or different instructional emphases (Savić, 2015).

The external modification of requests showed developmental patterns as well, with the use of alerters such as attention getters and address terms increasing with age, indicating an increase in pragmatic features utilized. Supportive moves like grounders were predominantly employed, especially among the oldest group, who used them in over 20% of requests, while the second graders did not include grounders in their requests. When it comes to downtoners,

*Perhaps* was not used by any of the YLLs, and only a few fourth graders used *Maybe* (Savić, 2015).

The detailed results illustrated a clear path of pragmalinguistic development. While younger learners often relied on the context to produce requests, the older learners displayed a growing preference for CI requests with various modifications (Savić, 2015).

Building on Savić (2015), which examined request strategy development through role play in second, fourth, and sixth grade, the study by Savić et al. (2021) extend the scope to include third, fifth, and seventh graders through Video-Oral Discourse Completion Tasks (VODCT).

The research conducted by Savić et al. (2021) explored the development of request production strategies within a selection of Norwegian and Cypriot Greek learners of English spanning the ages of nine, eleven, and thirteen. The Norwegian nine-year-old participants, who had received English language instruction from their first year of elementary school, exhibited proficiency levels ranging from pre-A1 to A1 according to the framework established by Hasselgreen (2005b). The language background of the Norwegian nine-year-old learners in Savić et al. (2021) closely matches those of the YLLs in the current research.

Savić et al. (2021) utilized a VODCT to elicit the YLLs' request production. The YLL's responses were prompted by a selection of cartoon videos from a child-oriented English language learning channel. The videos portrayed various scenarios involving child characters interacting with adults and peers in both familiar and unfamiliar settings. The YLLs were asked to anticipate the characters' requests in eleven different request scenarios. The requests provided the basis for the analysis (Savić et al., 2021). The analysis adhered to a framework established by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) and Woodfield and Economidou-Kogetsidis (2010). It classified requests by directness levels and further categorized them based on head act strategies and internal and external modifications (Savić et al., 2021).

The results for the Norwegian nine-year-olds indicated a significant reliance on CI requests, accounting for 75.0% of the responses, examples of which include utterances like “[c]an I have the yellow pencil?” (Savić et al., 2021, p. 21) Direct requests and NCI requests were less common, each making up 12.5% of the total, with examples like “[d]o you have a yellow pencil?” (Savić et al., 2021, p. 21) and “Give me this hat” (Savić et al., 2021, p. 21). The

analysis of the internal modifications revealed a predominant use of the modal verb *Can* (89.6%), with only slight appearances of other modal verbs like *May* (0.9%) and *Will* (8.5%). The marker *Please* was featured in 33.6% of the requests, while supportive moves like grounders were present in 3.9% of the requests (Savić et al., 2021).

The study's findings indicated that while Norwegian learners consistently favored CI requests, in all three age groups, there was a slight pragmatic development in the use of modal verbs and understaters/hedges (Savić et al., 2021).

Transitioning from the empirical analysis of Savić et al. (2021), which focused on the production of requests by YLLs, Savić's (2021) study delved into the cognitive processes underpinning these produced requests. Where Savić et al. (2021) captured the YLLs' ability to produce requests, Savić (2021) shifted focus towards the YLLs' metapragmatic awareness of request formulations. Savić (2021) looked at the YLLs' internal thought process of how they think about and decided what to say when producing requests.

The study conducted by Savić (2021) explored the metapragmatic understanding among Norwegian EFL learners, particularly how 9- and 11-year-old learners constructed understanding through dialogue about requesting behaviors. Seventy-nine YLLs' from two primary schools participated, spread across third, fifth, and seventh grade. These YLLs had begun learning English in the first grade with progressive exposure. The third graders were approaching the A1 level, the fifth-graders were at an A1-A2, while the seventh-graders were at an A2-B1 level in the CEFR (Savić, 2021).

The data collection involved multiple tasks performed in groups formed based on friendship rather than proficiency level (Pinter & Zandian, 2014). Of these tasks, only the data from the Ranking circle was detailed in Savić (2021). This task prompted the YLLs to discuss and prioritize factors they considered important when producing requests in English. The discussions were primarily in Norwegian, allowing for free expression, with English examples interjected sporadically. Two researchers facilitated the task, "one introducing the tasks and facilitating discussions and the other taking notes [and] re-introducing the learner-generated discussion topics in the second part of the task, and occasionally asking clarification questions" (Savić, 2021, p. 156).

The analysis identified different themes, such as “Language features, Contextual features, Intonation, Politeness, and Non-verbal behaviour” (Savić, 2021, p. 158), each distributed variably across the grade levels. The analysis showed that the YLLs from all grades brought up the same themes, with frequencies increasing from the third to fifth grade and stabilizing from the fifth to seventh grade (Savić, 2021).

The research applied a dialogical approach to evaluate the communicative devices the YLLs used to activate and circulate ideas (Savić, 2021). The devices analyzed included storytelling, quotes, hypothetical scenarios, and communicative activity types. The analysis revealed that YLLs actively “build and expand on each other’s ideas” (Savić, 2021, p. 160), reflecting the collaborative nature of understanding request behaviors. Through collaborative utterances, positioning, and the use of personal and hypothetical stories, the 9- and 11-year-old learners could co-construct group understandings of the pragmatic aspects involved in producing requests. This process reflected the collaborative nature of understanding request behavior and underscored the effectiveness of collaborative dialogue in fostering deeper linguistic and pragmatic comprehension. The interactions among the YLLs effectively utilized collaborative dialogue as a medium for reflecting and elaborating on language use, thus providing a practical application of collaborative dialogue in nurturing metapragmatic awareness (Savić, 2021).

In analyzing the YLLs’ dialogue, specific attention was paid to the linguistic and non-linguistic elements they deemed vital in formulating requests. The third graders, for instance, highlighted “intonation (voice quality), contextual features related to the interlocutor (respect and reception), language features (the marker *please*, directness: [...], alerter *hi*), and non-verbal behaviour (eye contact, smile)” (Savić, 2021, p. 160). This demonstrated their emerging awareness of how various factors can influence request delivery. For example, the comparison between ‘[t]wo cokes’ and ‘[c]an I have two cokes?’ illustrated their understanding of direct versus CI request forms, showcasing their grasp of the spectrum of directness in request strategies (Savić, 2021).

In their discussions, the fifth graders articulated an understanding of different strategies involved in producing requests, particularly concerning the politeness and context of their speech. “The themes and codes identified here include: intonation (modelling different tones and pitch ranges), language features (*please, may*), politeness, and contextual features

(situation)” (Savić, 2021, p. 162). They emphasized modal verbs, particularly *May I*, suggesting an understanding of varying degrees of formality in producing requests. This indicated a progression from the more straightforward *Can I* requests typically associated with the CI requests of younger learners to the use of *May I* (Savić, 2021).

The study highlighted the essential role of the teacher in initiating and scaffolding metapragmatic discussions. By using the request strategies familiar to YLLs and modeling their application, teachers can guide YLLs from expressing simple metapragmatic insights to engaging in more complex reflections on language use, progressively shaping their pragmatic competence (Savić, 2021).

#### 2.4.2 L2 Pragmatics Instructional Studies with YLLs

In examining L2 pragmatics instruction and assessment among YLLs, it becomes evident that research in this domain is relatively limited. While a few studies have delved into this area, they span diverse geographical and cultural contexts, including Iran, Japan, Turkey, South Korea, China, Hong Kong, and Norway (e.g., Alemi & Haeri, 2020; Canbolat et al., 2021; Ishihara, 2013; Ishihara & Chiba, 2014; Myrset, 2021, 2022; Rajabia et al., 2015; Taguchi & Kim, 2016). These studies collectively encompass the entire age range defined as YLLs in the present study, ranging from early childhood to teenage years. This broad spectrum of research settings and participant demographics makes it difficult to make any firm claims regarding the effectiveness of L2 pragmatics instruction for YLLs. However, despite the limited number of studies, they consistently demonstrate, to varying extents, a positive impact of L2 pragmatics instruction on YLLs. This suggests that L2 pragmatic competence is indeed teachable within the YLL populations. In the subsequent sections, each of these studies will be examined in detail to explore the specific methodologies, findings, and implications for teaching and learning in the realm of L2 pragmatics among YLLs.

In a series of studies aimed at exploring L2 pragmatics instruction and assessment, Ishihara (2013) and Ishihara and Chiba (2014) contributed to the understanding of pragmatic learning among YLLs. Both studies emerged from a “larger project, for which they designed pragmatics-focused instruction and assessment using five picture books written in English [...], and each implemented a selected subset in their individual contexts” (Ishihara & Chiba,

2014, p. 90). This instruction was not intended to generalize findings to larger populations but to identify preliminary insights that could inform future instruction and research in pragmatics for young EFL learners (Ishihara, 2013). In both studies, assessments such as discourse completion tasks (DCTs) and student-generated visual discourse completion tasks (SVDCTs) were pivotal in evaluating the YLLs' pragmatic output (Ishihara & Chiba, 2014). These tools revealed the YLLs' ability to generate socially appropriate request strategies, employing a range of politeness forms and modal verbs (Ishihara, 2013; Ishihara & Chiba, 2014).

Ishihara (2013) focused on three 9-year-olds with varied exposure to English: one had almost no prior experience with the language, another had been taking private lessons for eight years, and the third had been learning English at home. The study employed a series of three pragmatics lessons over six weeks, totaling 120 minutes. The lessons, designed around target pragmatic features such as levels of directness, politeness and appropriateness of behaviors in varying social contexts, utilized three English picture books as a core component. These books served to introduce and explore pragmatic language use. Instruction was delivered in the learners' L1 to accommodate their ages and L2 proficiency, which facilitated metapragmatic discussions and allowed the YLLs to engage deeply with the content. Various visual aids supplemented the books, serving dual pedagogical and evaluative purposes. The instructional sequence, documented through video recording and transcription, provided a dataset for analyzing the interactional dynamics and the YLLs' pragmatic development (Ishihara, 2013).

The results from Ishihara (2013) highlighted a marked increase in YLLs' pragmatic awareness and metapragmatic judgments, particularly in recognizing and employing politeness markers and understanding the social nuances of request-making. Despite these gains, "the learners' pragmatic development seemed to be less fruitful in terms of language production" (Ishihara, 2013, p. 143). The YLLs could replicate new pragmatic formulas immediately after teacher modeling but struggled with recall and application in novel contexts. This indicated a gap between the development of metapragmatic understanding and the practical ability to self-regulate learned language (Ishihara, 2013).

Building on Ishihara (2013), Ishihara and Chiba's (2014) study further investigated the development of pragmatic competence, particularly in the area of request strategies among

young EFL learners. Ishihara and Chiba's (2014) study involved five Japanese EFL learners aged 7-12, each with a background of receiving English instruction ranging from six months to two years. The YLLs took part in three pragmatics-focused lessons over 180 minutes. This study aimed to deepen understanding of how YLLs develop pragmatic competence through engagement with three English picture books and contextually grounded discussions. The instructional design mirrored that of the 2013 study, with a strong emphasis on interactive learning, visual aids, and task-based assessments tailored to the YLLs' cognitive and linguistic levels (Ishihara & Chiba, 2014).

Interestingly, the findings underscored a dynamic interplay between scaffolding by the teacher and the YLLs' collaborative construction of knowledge, particularly in recalling and applying request expressions. Despite some linguistic inaccuracies, the YLLs demonstrated generally appropriate use of mitigated requests. "The modals and the request perspective (i.e., the personal pronoun) used were: *can you*, *can I*, *could you*, and *may I*, with both speaker-oriented and hearer-oriented perspective" (Ishihara & Chiba, 2014, p. 94). The conversation analysis revealed that all participants were successfully able to articulate requests in manners that are generally considered polite and socially appropriate, exemplified by phrases such as "[c]ould you pass the salt, please?" (Ishihara & Chiba, 2014, p. 100) This indicates that the YLLs had effectively learned the request forms, negating the need for further scaffolding from the teacher. In the final parts of the lessons, it was observed that the older YLLs, aged 12, displayed a broader range of request forms, incorporating various modal verbs into their speech, in contrast to their younger peers. For instance, while one of the older YLLs adeptly used a mix of *Can you*, *Could you*, and *May I* in their requests, the younger YLLs tended to rely on a more limited set of expressions, with one using *May I* exclusively and another favoring *Can I*. Despite these differences, all the YLLs consistently concluded their requests with *Please* (Ishihara & Chiba, 2014).

Collectively, these studies underscore the critical role of contextualized instruction and the potential of visual and narrative resources in facilitating YLLs' pragmatic development. By focusing on the co-construction of knowledge in an interactive learning environment, Ishihara (2013) and Ishihara and Chiba (2014) shed light on the complexities of teaching pragmatics to YLLs. They highlighted the importance of incorporating metapragmatic awareness into language instruction, suggesting that while the YLLs can show significant improvements in understanding and applying pragmatic knowledge, ongoing support, and

authentic language use opportunities are essential for translating this knowledge into spontaneous language production (Ishihara & Chiba, 2014).

Taguchi and Kim's (2016) research complements the previous studies by examining the impact of task-based instruction on pragmatic competence, albeit with older learners, particularly focusing on producing requests among young EFL learners.

In the study conducted by Taguchi and Kim (2016), seventy-four participants aged 13-14 years from South Korea were engaged in a study designed to evaluate the effectiveness of task-based instruction on learning request-making expressions in English. These YLLs had already been exposed to five years of formal English education and were, at the time of the study, receiving four hours of English instruction per week. The study divided the participants into three groups: collaborative, individual, and control. The participants went through a six-week instructional period that included both a pretest and posttests to gauge learning outcomes (Taguchi & Kim, 2016).

The research focused on the speech act of requests in formal situations, drawing from the contextual factors of power, distance, and degree of imposition (referred to as PDR) outlined by Brown and Levinson (1987) (Taguchi & Kim, 2016). This focus was operationalized into high-imposition requests (PDR-high), “[a]n example is asking a professor to reschedule a test” (Taguchi & Kim, 2016, p. 420), contrasting with low-imposition requests (PDR-low), “such as asking your sister to pass you a TV remote” (Taguchi & Kim, 2016, p. 420). A pilot study was conducted to ensure the relevance and authenticity of the task situations to the YLLs’ cultural and everyday context, which aided in selecting appropriate request scenarios for the main instructional tasks (Taguchi & Kim, 2016).

Taguchi and Kim's (2016) methodological approach integrated direct instruction on pragmalinguistic forms, such as CI requests, external modifications like preparators, and internal modifications, including hedging and amplifiers. Amplifiers are “[w]ords that strengthen self-expression [examples include] *really* [and] *very*” (Taguchi & Kim, 2016, p. 421). This instructional approach was complemented by practical application through dialogue construction tasks. These tasks were designed to mirror real-life scenarios and captivate the YLLs’ interest, allowing the YLLs to apply newly acquired pragmatic



knowledge in creating dialogues that featured both PDR-high and PDR-low requests (Taguchi & Kim, 2016).

The outcomes of this instructional intervention were assessed using a written DCT, which measured the YLLs' ability to produce pragmatically appropriate request forms. The results highlighted an immediate improvement in the treatment groups' ability to produce the targeted request forms. Particularly, the collaborative group surpassed both the individual and control groups in employing mitigated preparatory forms. However, the advantage observed in the immediate post-test was not sustained in the delayed post-test, indicating that while the instruction had an immediate effect, these improvements were not retained over time (Taguchi & Kim, 2016). Additionally, while the study observed increased use of certain request modifications, such as preparators and hedging, immediately after instruction, these effects were not consistently maintained over time, presenting a mixed picture of the long-term efficacy of task-based L2 pragmatics instruction (Taguchi & Kim, 2016).

Taguchi and Kim's (2016) findings contribute to the discussion on the effectiveness of collaborative versus individual learning modalities in enhancing EFL learners' pragmatic competence. Despite the advantages observed in collaborative task engagement, the research underscores the complexity of sustaining these gains and the interplay between instructional methods and pragmatic language development. This study set a precedent for future research to explore sustainable strategies for integrating pragmatic awareness into EFL learning contexts (Taguchi & Kim, 2016).

In the domain of instructional approaches to pragmatic development, Taguchi and Kim's (2016) study of task-based learning provided valuable insights into how structured tasks and collaborative activities shaped YLLs' pragmatic competence. Rajabia et al.'s (2015) study transitioned the focus from the task-based method and looked at the impact of explicit instruction on the pragmatic development of YLLs.

Rajabia et al. (2015) investigated the impact of explicit instruction on the pragmatic development of requests among Iranian EFL learners at different proficiency levels. The study was conducted within the context of 73 female learners aged 10 to 18 across four EFL classes in a private English institute in Iran (Rajabia et al., 2015). These participants, divided into intermediate and advanced groups based on the Oxford Placement Test (OPT) results,

engaged in a structured study comprising a pre-test, instructional treatment, and post-test phases to assess the effects of explicit L2 pragmatics instruction (Rajabia et al., 2015).

The methodology employed in Rajabia et al.'s (2015) study was designed to capture changes in pragmatic awareness and competence. Initially, a DCT served as a pre-test to gauge the YLLs' existing knowledge of requesting strategies. The "DCT used in the pre-test consisted of four requests [... where] the students were asked to write desired speech acts" (Rajabia et al., 2015, p. 234). Following this, the experimental groups received targeted instruction to enhance their understanding and application of requests, focusing on appropriacy in various social contexts. This instruction was delivered in half-hour sessions, dedicating ten minutes to each speech act. In contrast, the control group did not receive any specific treatment related to pragmatic requests (Rajabia et al., 2015). The study's post-test phase involved administering DCTs, which expanded to include 12 situations, to the control and experimental groups, aiming to measure the effectiveness of the instructional intervention (Rajabia et al., 2015).

Analysis of the collected data involved a scoring process adapted from Farhadian, Rezaee, and Gholami (2012), utilizing a five-point Likert scale to evaluate the appropriacy of request speech acts based on the CCSARP Coding Scheme by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989). This approach allowed for an assessment of the YLLs' pragmatic performance in requesting situations. Statistical analysis revealed no significant difference in pragmatic knowledge between control and experimental groups in their pre-tests. However, post-intervention results indicated a significant improvement in the experimental groups' ability to perform request speech acts appropriately, underscoring the effectiveness of explicit L2 pragmatics instruction (Rajabia et al., 2015).

The study's findings emphasize the importance of incorporating consciousness-raising activities within EFL classrooms to enhance YLLs' pragmatic competence. Rajabia et al. (2015) concluded that explicit instruction positively impacted the realization of request strategies and suggested that pragmatic knowledge is essential for comprehensive language development. This research reinforced the notion that pragmatics, including the nuanced use of request speech acts, "is teachable and it should be taught in hand with grammatical knowledge" (Rajabia et al., 2015, p. 238) across varying proficiency levels.

Expanding on Rajabia et al.'s (2015) study with its focus on explicit teaching, Canbolat et al. (2021) further investigated the significance of explicit L2 pragmatics instruction by extending the research to a younger demographic.

The study by Canbolat et al. (2021) investigated the impact of explicit L2 pragmatics instruction on the awareness of request strategies among second-grade learners. The research, situated within a quasi-experimental framework, focused on twenty-two Turkish learners, aged 7-8, attending a private school in Istanbul. These YLLs, who had received two years of extensive English instruction totaling fifteen hours weekly, were divided into an experimental group, which received explicit pragmatic teaching, and a control group, which followed the conventional curriculum (Canbolat et al., 2021).

To address the research questions regarding the impact of explicit pragmatic instruction on second-grade learners, Canbolat et al. (2021) asked if there was “any difference in second-grade learners’ pragmatic awareness before and after” (p. 4) instruction and how it affects “awareness in terms of power, distance and imposition factors?” (p. 4). DCTs were employed as the main method to gather data pre- and post-intervention. The study was further enriched by incorporating teacher observations and semi-structured interviews, allowing for a comprehensive triangulation of the results to enhance the study’s validity (Canbolat et al., 2021).

The explicit instruction delivered to the experimental group concentrated on the features of producing requests in the target language, aiming to elevate YLLs’ sensitivity to the pragmatic elements of power, distance, and imposition. The lessons were designed around everyday situations, requiring the YLLs to navigate various social dynamics to request help, food, and materials, thereby mirroring authentic interactions (Canbolat et al., 2021).

Upon completing the four instructional interventions, the researchers analyzed pre- and post-test scores, looking for statistically significant differences that attest to the effectiveness of explicit pragmatic teaching. Despite the quantitative data revealing no substantial difference between the post-test results of the experimental and control groups, qualitative insights painted a more detailed picture. Teacher observations and interviews indicated an improvement in the experimental group’s ability to employ and justify appropriate request strategies, particularly regarding social power dynamics (Canbolat et al., 2021).

The YLLs demonstrated an increased ability to recognize and apply appropriate speech acts across different social contexts, with a noticeable preference for using polite forms such as *Can*, *Please*, *May*, *Would*, and *Would you mind* in their requests (Canbolat et al., 2021). This understanding was further evident during interviews, where the YLLs displayed varying levels of sensitivity towards the social power of their addressees. For instance, one YLL remarked, “[c]ould’ is more appropriate while addressing a teacher,” (Canbolat et al., 2021, p. 8), highlighting a grasp of formality in teacher-learner interactions. Another YLL emphasized the importance of politeness in teacher interactions by stating, “[p]lease’ should be used to make the speech act appropriate while talking to a teacher” (Canbolat et al., 2021, p. 8). These comments suggest a gradual enhancement of pragmatic awareness influenced by explicit instruction. Despite the absence of significant quantitative findings, the qualitative data revealed a mild but positive shift towards a more sophisticated pragmatic use of requests among the YLLs. This shift underscores the potential benefits of explicit pragmatic teaching in enhancing the pragmatic competence of YLLs (Canbolat et al., 2021).

Adding to the spectrum of instructional approaches, Alemi and Haeri’s (2020) study highlighted the potential of robotic assistance in fostering pragmatic competence among young EFL learners. This transition underscored the continuum of instructional approaches, demonstrating the versatility of explicit instruction and innovative approaches in nurturing pragmatic language development across various age groups and educational settings.

Alemi and Haeri’s (2020) research explored robotic-assisted language learning (RALL) to assess its effectiveness in enhancing the acquisition of thanking and requesting among young Iranian EFL learners. Conducted with 38 children aged 3 to 6 years from a private kindergarten in Tehran, Iran, this study aimed to explore whether the incorporation of a humanoid robot in language instruction could significantly improve YLLs acquisition of thanking and request production, compared to traditional, non-robotic-assisted methods (Alemi & Haeri, 2020).

Participants with little English background and pre-existing knowledge limited to a few English words were evenly divided into RALL and non-RALL groups (Alemi & Haeri, 2020). The RALL group was introduced to a child-sized humanoid robot named NIMA, “[f]or this study the voice pitch was designed to be a 7-year-old boy with a medium pace so its speech would be understandable for the children” (Alemi & Haeri, 2020, p. 90). NIMA

was utilized as a teacher assistant to facilitate interactive learning sessions, “such as playing games, singing songs, dancing, talking, and interacting with children” (Alemi & Haeri, 2020, p. 90).

Over eight sessions spanning four weeks, both groups engaged in structured activities designed around pragmatic sentences for making requests, such as “[w]ater please [and] [m]ay I go to the bathroom please?” (Alemi & Haeri, 2020, p. 92). Teaching materials were drawn from the *Functional Communication in English* textbook and supplemented with stories, adapted to the children’s existing vocabulary, and contextualized within engaging narratives involving NIMA. Activities ranged from straightforward verbal interactions with NIMA to games and scenarios requiring the use of the targeted speech acts, thereby aiming to embed these linguistic structures within meaningful communicative practices. For instance, the children were encouraged to bring their toys to class in session six. The teacher then invited the YLLs to share their toys with NIMA, simulating a scenario where NIMA had forgotten his toys. When NIMA requested, “Give me your car or doll please!” (Alemi & Haeri, 2020, p. 95) from a YLL, this initiated a dialogue between the child and NIMA. Following each sharing interaction, NIMA would dance and make kissing sounds, fostering a lively atmosphere that promoted further interaction (Alemi & Haeri, 2020). This example illustrates how the children practiced producing requests in a practical context, further enhancing their understanding and ability to use them appropriately (Alemi & Haeri, 2020).

The study employed a pre- and post-test with a pictorial approach assessing pragmatic ability before and after the intervention. For the pre- and post-tests, the YLLs were shown an image to establish context and were then tasked with producing the appropriate speech act. An independent samples t-test complemented this to analyze the differences between groups’ in pre- and post-test performances. The pre-tests revealed no pre-existing differences in the YLLs’ pragmatic abilities between the two groups, ensuring a balanced baseline (Alemi & Haeri, 2020).

Alemi and Haeri (2020) build upon the pedagogical principles of Oxford (1997) and Vygotsky (1978), suggesting that the use of engaging scaffolding strategies, which included games, singing, and physical activities, likely supported the level of engagement and interaction in both the RALL and non-RALL groups. This assertion is supported by the observed improvements in both groups post-intervention, indicating the potential of such

strategies to elevate the learning outcomes. Specifically, the RALL group exhibited a marked advancement in their ability to produce requests, outperforming the non-RALL group, as reflected in their higher mean scores (Alemi & Haeri, 2020). These results highlight the positive influence of the RALL method on the pragmatic progression of young Iranian EFL learners, especially regarding their ability to produce requests. The humanoid robot, NIMA, combined with interactive activities, played a role in the YLLs' abilities to produce requests (Alemi & Haeri, 2020).

Alemi and Haeri's (2020) findings highlight the potential of robotic assistance in language learning, especially in the early years of education. The study underscored the need for innovative teaching methods that captivate YLLs' interest and cater to their developmental stages, suggesting that robots like NIMA can offer a valuable addition to traditional instructional techniques by enhancing engagement and, consequently, pragmatic language acquisition (Alemi & Haeri, 2020).

Expanding on the groundwork laid by previous studies, Myrset (2022) explored the impact of L2 pragmatics instruction with EFL learners in Norway. More specifically, he adopted a concept-based approach to teaching L2 request strategies to YLLs aged 12-13.

The instructional study conducted by Myrset (2022) examined the impact of L2 pragmatics instruction on YLLs, specifically focusing on their ability to formulate requests. Myrset's (2022) research aimed to bridge the knowledge gap in how YLLs internalize and externalize request strategies in EFL settings by applying a sociocultural theoretical framework and concept-based instructional approaches (Myrset, 2022).

The instructional method emphasized the dual aspects of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic dimensions in requesting (Myrset, 2022). This approach was designed to introduce and deepen YLLs' understanding and application of request strategies through a mix of theoretical concepts and practical exercises. The instruction was given over four weeks, beginning with foundational pragmalinguistic concepts and progressively incorporating sociopragmatic considerations, thus facilitating a layered comprehension and application of requesting in varied contexts (Myrset, 2022). Activities ranged from analyzing request strategies in television shows to engaging in reflective practices to evaluate the appropriateness of direct and indirect request forms (Myrset, 2022).

Myrset's (2022) study looked at request production to examine changes in YLLs' request strategies over time. The study analyzed 2180 requests generated by the YLLs in the pre-, post-, and delayed post-test using Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) coding manual. The delayed post-test revealed that "[t]he directness levels employed were somewhat consistent longer-term" (Myrset, 2022, p. 67). However, there was a decrease in the use of CI requests from 69.7% in the pre-test to 65.3% in the delayed post-test. In contrast, there was an increase from 18.2% direct requests in the pre-test to 21.4% in the delayed post-test. NCI requests maintained a nearly stable presence, rising slightly from 12.2% in the pre-test to 13.3% in the delayed post-test (Myrset, 2022). Previous research has shown that NCI requests are challenging for young learners (Savić & Myrset, 2022). However, according to Myrset (2022), some YLLs were able to "comment[...] on their request production by externalizing their conceptual understanding [...] suggest[ing] that the concept-based instruction facilitated comprehension" (Myrset, 2022, p. 71). For instance, one YLL was able to accompany an NCI request with a conceptual label, which "showed that, beyond production, he had grasped their communicative function" (Myrset, 2022, p. 71).

The study also examined the use of modal verbs in the requests, finding that *Can* was the predominant modal verb used across all three tests, comprising 81.9% of instances in the pre-test and decreasing to 68.1% in the delayed post-test. On the other hand, the use of *May* saw an increase from 8.0% in the pre-test to 12.8% in the delayed post-test. The use of *Could* was minimal in the pre-test at only 1.1%, but it rose to 15.8% in the delayed post-test (Myrset, 2022). These changes reflected the instruction's impact on YLLs' pragmatic choices and signified the development of a more flexible and contextually responsive communication style, and a deepening understanding of pragmatic strategies post-instruction (Myrset, 2022).

In addition to request production, Myrset (2021) explored how the same YLLs used concepts as part of their reflections, displaying metapragmatic understandings, i.e., their ability to verbalize reflections about language, contexts, and/or their interplay. His study reveals that YLLs became more able to identify request strategies through the lens of scientific concepts and demonstrated a marked preference for CI requests over direct ones. This preference underscored a critical awareness of the nuanced "interplay between pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics" (Myrset, 2021, p. 203). Furthermore, the YLLs' ability to employ conceptual vocabulary in discussions about request strategies illustrates a deep internalization

of the taught concepts, enabling them to navigate and articulate complex communicative choices with greater confidence and insight (Myrset, 2021).

Throughout this chapter, Section 2.4.1 explored the natural developmental stages of YLLs' L2 pragmatic competence in the absence of specific targeted instruction. Studies by Rose (2000), Savić (2015), and Savić et al. (2021) showed how YLLs naturally progressed in their pragmatic abilities as they aged. Transitioning to Section 2.4.2, the focus shifted to how various teaching methods, as discussed in studies by Myrset (2022), Ishihara and Chiba (2014), Taguchi and Kim (2016), and others, enhanced these L2 pragmatic competencies. This analysis underscored the transformative impact of educational interventions that accelerated and refined the pragmatic development that the YLLs underwent.

Research on L2 pragmatics instruction in EFL settings has provided educators and researchers with valuable strategies for enhancing pragmatic competence among older learners, as evidenced by studies such as those conducted by Myrset (2021, 2022). However, there remains a notable gap in Norway regarding younger EFL learners, particularly those in the third grade. This oversight presents a critical research opportunity, as early exposure to pragmatics may lay a stronger foundation for language development. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, the distinct pedagogical approaches suitable for third-grade learners in the Norwegian EFL context, particularly regarding request strategies, have not been the focus of in-depth research within the realm of EFL request strategies. This study, therefore, seeks to occupy this niche by investigating the effectiveness of L2 pragmatics instruction tailored to this younger demographic. The subsequent methodology chapter will outline the research design, including participant selection, instructional materials, and assessment tools employed to illustrate how third-grade EFL learners in Norway can develop their requestive speech acts.



## 3. Methodology

The methodology chapter of this study serves as a detailed guide to the methodological framework utilized, offering the readers a comprehensive understanding of the research approach. Central to this is the study's overarching aim, which seeks to answer the question: Does L2 pragmatics instruction have an impact on third-grade Norwegian EFL learners' request production? In pursuit of this aim, the study is guided by the following research questions:

- 1) To what extent does instruction influence the learners' ability to produce English requests?
- 2) To what extent does instruction influence the learners' ability to vary within and between request head act strategies?
- 3) To what extent does instruction influence the learners' ability to use internal and external modification strategies?

These research questions frame the subsequent sections, which begin with an introduction to the methodological approach in Section 3.1. Following this, the description of the participant selection process is presented in Section 3.2. Section 3.3 delves into the structure of the instruction period. Furthermore, Section 3.4 provides insights into the data collection methods, including the pre- and post-test. Additionally, the chapter explores the data analysis process in Section 3.5. Section 3.6 outlines the quality criteria established to ensure the quality of the study. Lastly, Section 3.7 emphasizes the ethical considerations underpinning the research, particularly regarding protecting the rights and well-being of child participants.

### 3.1 Methodological Approach

The methodological approach adopted for this study was quantitative, aiming to systematically investigate the impact of L2 pragmatics instruction on third-grade EFL learners. Quantitative research emphasizes “systematic, rigorous, focused, and tightly controlled [quantitative inquiry], involving precise measurement and producing reliable and replicable data” (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 34). The research process followed the scientific method, comprising three key stages: observation or problem identification, hypothesis generation,

and hypothesis testing by collecting and analyzing empirical data using standardized procedures (Dörnyei, 2007).

Data collection methods in quantitative research typically involve instruments such as tests or objective measurements obtained through controlled means (Dörnyei, 2007). This study's primary data collection method included the pre- and post-tests, which utilized role play scenarios adapted from previous research designed to assess the YLLs' request strategies. Quantitative researchers define variables in advance and assign them a logical scale of values, often expressed in numerical form (Dörnyei, 2007). This study focused on variables such as request strategies among the YLLs.

Quantitative data analysis relies heavily on statistics to identify patterns, relationships, and trends within the data (Dörnyei, 2007). The collected data was analyzed using Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) CCSARP coding manual to categorize and assess requests. Using the pre-decided categories, the data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, which are “used to describe the characteristics of a particular dataset or to describe patterns of development” (Lowie & Seton, 2013, p. 25), thereby providing the raw frequencies of each category.

This study adopted a case study as a form of inquiry to provide an in-depth look at the impact of L2 pragmatics instruction on language learning outcomes (Simons, 2009). Specifically, the case examined in this study is the instructional context itself, focusing on how L2 pragmatics instruction influences YLLs' request production. By immersing in the instructional environment and incorporating various forms of data collection before and after instruction, the case study framework facilitated a nuanced understanding of the instructional process and its effects on YLLs' pragmatic development.

Adopting these methodological principles ensured a comprehensive examination of the impact of L2 pragmatics instruction on third-grade EFL learners. Embracing the complexities of language learning within authentic classroom settings, the case study aimed “to provide a holistic description of language learning” (Mackey & Gass, 2022, p. 308), emphasizing request production. This study aimed to shed light on the intricate dynamics between L2 pragmatics instruction and language learning outcomes among YLLs by focusing on the instructional context as the case.

## 3.2 Sample

The participants in this study consisted of 36 third-grade EFL learners from an elementary school located in Western Norway. The YLLs were aged between 8 and 9 years, reflecting the typical age range for third-grade learners. Since first grade, these YLLs had received one hour of English instruction per week. The participants, recruited from two classes in the same school, represented diverse cultural backgrounds and linguistic experiences. Although the study involved 47 YLLs during the instruction phase to ensure inclusivity and adherence to curriculum standards, the focused sample was comprised of 36 learners. This approach ensured there were no consequences for those who did not consent to participate in the data collection, as the instructional content aligned with the curriculum's competence aims and learning outcomes.

The sample for this study was derived through a convenience sampling approach, where the researcher utilized YLLs that were available and accessible through their professional network. Dörnyei (2007) notes that this method “usually results in willing participants, which is a prerequisite to having a rich dataset” (p. 129). However, he also cautions about the limitations of this method, particularly its impact on the generalizability of findings, “the extent of generalizability in this type of sample is often negligible” (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 99). This method's practical advantages facilitated efficient recruitment and engagement in the research activities, offering a solution to the inherent challenge of participant selection, which Dörnyei (2007) described as “we can never examine all the people whose answers would be relevant to our research question” (p. 27).

Statistical considerations were paramount in determining the sample size. According to Dörnyei (2007), “[a] basic requirement in quantitative research is that the sample should exhibit a ‘normal distribution,’ and Hatch and Lazaraton (1991) argue to achieve this the sample needs to include 30 or more people” (p.100). This benchmark aligns with the selected sample size for this study.

The YLLs included in the study demonstrated a range of English language proficiency levels, spanning from the CEFR pre-A1 to A2 level, as anticipated based on the framework established by Hasselgreen (2005b). According to Hasselgreen's (2005b) framework, by the

end of second grade, YLLs are expected to be “approaching A1 on the CEF, especially in oral skills” (Hasselgreen, 2005b, p. 8), and progressing to the A1 to A2 range by the end of fourth grade (Hasselgreen, 2005b). Since this research focused on third-grade learners, they were positioned between these two benchmarks.

In the CEFR, “[p]re-A1 represents a “milestone” halfway towards Level A1” (Europarat, 2020, p. 243), indicating a reliance on a repertoire of words and formulaic expressions for basic communication (Europarat, 2020). The YLLs that are at the pre-A1 level demonstrate overall oral comprehension by understanding short, straightforward questions and statements, recognizing familiar words and signs within a defined context, and producing basic personal information about themselves (Europarat, 2020). As the YLLs progress to the A1 level, they can comprehend slow and carefully articulated language, primarily on familiar topics encountered in everyday life. However, communication may require repetition and rephrasing (Europarat, 2020). At the A2 level of English proficiency, YLLs demonstrate an increased ability to comprehend and engage in everyday communication. They can understand enough to meet concrete needs and engage in structured conversations, although occasional assistance may be required (Europarat, 2020).

These CEFR levels provided a framework for understanding the early language development of third-grade EFL learners and served as a basis for investigating the impact of L2 pragmatics instruction on their request production competence.

### 3.3 Instruction

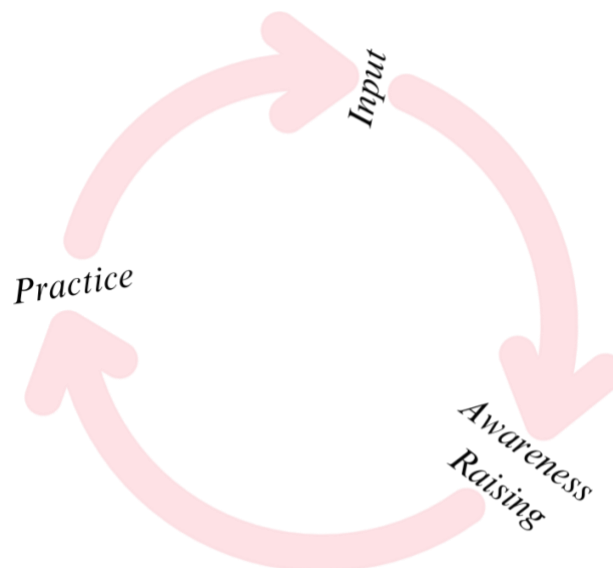
The instruction period (see Table 4) was designed to maximize the YLLs’ engagement, interaction, and skill acquisition. Over three lessons, each lasting 60 minutes, the YLLs were exposed to a structured yet dynamic learning environment. YLLs are characterized by specific traits that set them apart from adult learners. They “have a particular need and capacity for play, fantasy, and fun, have a relatively short attention span [and] are at a stage when daring to use their language is vital” (Hasselgreen, 2000, p. 262). Their developmental stage emphasized the vitality of daring to use language, a crucial aspect in fostering early language skills. However, many YLLs may have limited exposure to written language (Hasselgreen, 2000). Schauer (2019) advocates for a multi-faceted approach, asserting that

“teaching a foreign language to children [... should] offer much variety with regard to how the target language is presented (e.g., games, songs, stories)” (p. 72). In alignment with these principles, both the L1 and L2 were used during the instruction. While English served as the primary language of instruction, Norwegian was strategically employed to facilitate meaning-making and comprehension for the YLLs encountering difficulties in expressing their thoughts or understanding concepts (Myrset, 2022).

*Table 4 – Overview of the Lessons in the Instruction Period*

#	<b><i>Lesson One (Appendix 2.1)</i></b>	<b><i>Lesson Two (Appendix 3.1)</i></b>	<b><i>Lesson Three (Appendix 4.1)</i></b>
1	<b><i>Input 1.1</i></b>	<b><i>Input 2.1</i></b>	<b><i>Input 3.1</i></b>
	<i>Please, Mr. Panda</i>	<i>George and the Dragon</i>	<i>The Spiffiest Giant in Town</i>
2	<b><i>Awareness Raising 1.1</i></b>	<b><i>Awareness Raising 2.1</i></b>	<b><i>Awareness Raising 3.1</i></b>
	What are they trying to achieve?	What are they trying to achieve?	What are they trying to achieve?
3	<b><i>Practice 1.1a</i></b>	<b><i>Practice 2.1a</i></b>	<b><i>Practice 3.1a</i></b>
	Choral reading	Choral reading	Choral reading
4	<b><i>Input 1.2</i></b>	<b><i>Input 2.2</i></b>	<b><i>Input 3.2</i></b>
	Modal verbs – <i>Request donuts</i>	Modifiers – <i>Request donuts</i>	Grounders – <i>Request donuts</i>
5	<b><i>Awareness Raising 1.2</i></b>	<b><i>Awareness Raising 2.2</i></b>	<b><i>Awareness Raising 3.2</i></b>
	What are we trying to achieve?	What are we trying to achieve?	What are we trying to achieve?
6	<b><i>Practice 1.2a</i></b>	<b><i>Practice 2.2a</i></b>	<b><i>Practice 3.2a</i></b>
	Choral reading	Choral reading	Choral reading
7	<b><i>Practice 1.2b</i></b>	<b><i>Practice 2.2b</i></b>	<b><i>Practice 3.2b</i></b>
	Miniature <i>request donuts</i>	Miniature <i>request donuts</i>	Miniature <i>request donuts</i>
8	<b><i>Practice 1.2c</i></b>	<b><i>Practice 2.2c</i></b>	<b><i>Practice 3.2c</i></b>
	Role play	<i>Donut sharing</i>	Role play

The overall structure, which is described in detail below, was consistent across the three lessons; each followed sequences of *Input*, *Awareness Raising*, and *Practice* (see Figure 1), repeated twice within each lesson. This structure aimed to facilitate a progressive and effective learning experience. The overall structure, as outlined, was influenced by the work of Glaser (Forthcoming), who implemented a similar framework with L2 pragmatics instruction among a group of third graders in Germany. Glaser’s study demonstrated the effectiveness of this structure in facilitating meaningful learning experiences for YLLs. Through this approach, the third graders in the present study could benefit from each lesson, which indicated the potential for this format to enhance the YLLs’ engagement and pragmatic development.



*Figure 1 – Lesson Structure Sequence*

### *3.3.1 Input*

The lessons opened by providing *Input* and establishing a foundation for the lesson. In each lesson, a new picture book was introduced (*Input 1*), which involved presenting and reading the selected children’s books. This aimed to enrich the language learning experience.

Building on the methodologies of Ishihara (2013) and Ishihara and Chiba (2014), who explored L2 pragmatics instruction using picture books, the current study similarly employed

picture books (*Input 1*) as a primary instructional tool. This approach aligns with the age and proficiency level of the YLLs, offering authentic and engaging language and cultural exposure (Williams & Normann, 2021). Picture books provide a rich context for language learning and align with the curriculum's competence aims by offering varied pragmatic content often missing in traditional textbooks (Schauer, 2019). This methodological alignment is supported by research from Williams and Normann (2021) and Schauer (2019), who highlight the effectiveness of children's books in filling gaps identified in conventional language instruction materials. Schauer (2019) further notes that requests, the focus of this study, feature prominently in children's books, varying widely across different texts and providing an excellent resource for exploring diverse request strategies. Thus, by integrating these methodologies, the study addresses a noted deficiency in pragmatic content within the classroom and enhances pragmatic learning outcomes among EFL learners.

The three picture books were selected to illustrate the different directness levels of requests, the use of modifiers, and the use of supportive moves. Below is a summary of each book.

*Input 1.1* was the picture book *Please, Mr. Panda* (Antony, 2015). *Please, Mr. Panda*, written and illustrated by Steve Antony, revolves around a panda who offers donuts to various animals, asking them if they would like one. The narrative highlights the contrast between the direct requests employed by all the animals, except the lemur, which uses a CI request when interacting with Mr. Panda. This story provided the context for exploring requests with different levels of directness.

*Input 2.1* was the picture book *George and the Dragon* (Wormell, 2006). *George and the Dragon* tells the story of a tiny mouse named George. One day, while making tea, George realizes he has run out of sugar. To solve this predicament, George approaches his neighbor, the dragon, to ask for some sugar. This story provided the context for exploring the use of modifiers in request formulations.

*Input 3.1* was the picture book *The Spiffiest Giant in Town* (Donaldson, 2003). *The Spiffiest Giant in Town* by Julia Donaldson follows the story of George, a giant with a kind heart and a penchant for helping others. The story begins with George, who buys a new outfit, including a tie, shirt, pants, socks, and shoes. However, as George continues his journey, he encounters various animals in need. Despite his desire to be the spiffiest giant, George helps each animal

by giving away pieces of his new outfit. NCI requests characterize the requests made by the animals to George. Unlike direct requests, the animals employ subtlety and cleverness to communicate their needs to George. In addition, grounders are integrated into the narrative. Grounders encourage the characters to provide context and details about their needs before requesting them.

For each lesson, the YLLs were introduced to new sets of *request donuts* (see Appendix 2.2, Appendix 3.2, and Appendix 4.2), thereby increasing the strategies available for the YLLs to employ. *Inputs 1.2, 2.2, and 3.2* introduced the concepts of modal verbs, modifiers, and grounders through these new materials. These visuals provided a concrete context for exploring different functions and strategies for making requests. The constant use of the *request donuts* was grounded in Bruner's (1983) theory of routines, which emphasized the significance of routines in language and cognitive development. "Routines then can provide opportunities for meaningful language development; they allow the child to actively make sense of new language from familiar experience and provide a space for language growth. Routines will open up many possibilities for developing language skills" (Cameron, 2019, p. 11). Furthermore, the inclusion of *request donuts* in every lesson aimed to support the gradual progression of language acquisition, with each lesson building upon the foundation laid in the previous one. At first, the focus was on the head act, gradually incorporating more complex concepts such as modifiers and grounders as the lessons advanced.

The instruction period progressively introduced and reinforced language concepts across the lessons. For instance, *Input 1.1* focused on request formulations in the picture books, while *Input 1.2* delved into modal verbs. This thematic progression aimed to build a scaffolded learning experience, allowing the YLLs to consolidate their understanding of language structures over time.

### 3.3.2 Awareness Raising

Following both rounds of *Input*, *Awareness Raising* was included to deepen the YLLs' comprehension of request strategies, incorporating elements of collaborative dialogue. Collaborative dialogue, as previously defined, is "the joint construction of language—or knowledge about language—by two or more individuals" (Swain, 1997, p. 115). In this



interactive space, the YLLs engaged in the joint construction of language knowledge, aligning with Vygotsky's (1934/2012) socio-cultural theory that learning is socially mediated and that understanding is built through interaction (Lyle, 2008).

For instance, in Lesson Three, the YLLs reflected critically on the requests made by the characters in *The Spiffiest Giant in Town* while comparing them to the requests they had produced. These dialogues provided a platform for the YLLs to collectively negotiate meaning and question the effectiveness of various request strategies, thereby moving beyond mere comprehension towards a more analytical and critical engagement with language, a process fundamental to the collaborative dialogue framework (Bruner, 1996, as cited in Lyle, 2008; McConachy, 2018, as cited in Savić, 2021). This method of instruction resonates with the principles outlined by Lyle (2008), where the teacher “engage[s] with [the] children as co-collaborators in meaning making” (p. 286).

By participating in these discussions, the YLLs gained insight into how language choices influence the effectiveness of requests. These discussions fostered a deeper understanding of pragmatic language use and encouraged the YLLs to apply these insights to their communication.

### 3.3.3 Practice

Each cycle concluded with *Practice*, which allowed the YLLs to apply the newly acquired language skills actively. This hands-on approach involved various activities, such as choral reading, interactive exercises using learner sets of the *request donuts* (see Appendix 2.3, Appendix 3.3, and Appendix 4.3), and various role play scenarios. Open role plays provided a unique window into studying conversational dynamics as they “allow researchers to observe those aspects of conversation that are fairly independent of particular contexts and goals but, unlike authentic discourse and elicited conversation, they also allow contexts and roles that are likely to elicit specific communicative [...] acts” (Kasper & Rose, 2002, p. 87). The goal of the practice activities was to reinforce language patterns, promote fluency, and encourage the YLLs to actively apply and experiment with the request strategies introduced during the *Input*.

### 3.3.4 Lesson One

In the first cycle of lesson one, the session began with *Input 1.1*, a collective reading of *Please, Mr. Panda*, accompanied by a series of interactive questions dispersed throughout the reading to engage the YLLs. Sample questions included: ‘*Do you think Mr. Panda will give the penguin a donut?*’, ‘*Do we know why Mr. Panda changed his mind?*’, and ‘*Do we know why Mr. Panda gave the lemur the donuts?*’ (see Appendix 2.1 for the full list of questions). These questions were strategically posed to actively involve the YLLs and prompt them to consider the various requests presented in the book.

Subsequently, in *Awareness Raising 1.1*, the researcher guided the YLLs through two distinct requests present in the book. Initially, attention was directed to pages 11 and 12, featuring the whale’s request to Mr. Panda “I want them all! Then bring me some more” (Antony, 2015, p. 12), prompting a discussion on what the whale aimed to achieve. Then, the focus shifted to pages 18 to 20, showcasing the lemur’s request, “Hello! May I have a donut? Please, Mr. Panda” (Antony, 2015, pp. 18–20), inviting the YLLs to analyze the lemur’s intentions. Finally, both pages were compared side by side to highlight that although both characters sought the same outcome, they employed different language forms, i.e., request strategies.

Following this, *Practice 1.1a* involved the YLLs actively participating in speaking exercises. During this phase, the researcher articulated Mr. Panda’s lines, prompting the YLLs to collectively respond with the corresponding lines of the different characters (see Appendix 2.1). This interactive approach aimed not only to enhance fluency but also to instill confidence among the YLLs.

The second cycle began with *Input 1.2*, an introduction to the modal verbs *Can*, *Could*, and *May*, through creating requests utilizing the *request donuts*. The researcher initiated the activity by hanging up five different requests: ‘*Can I have a donut?*’, ‘*Can you give me a donut?*’, ‘*Could I have a donut?*’, ‘*Could you give me a donut?*’ and ‘*May I have a donut?*’ (see Figure 2). Following each request, the researcher paused to gauge understanding. This interactive approach aimed to facilitate a clear understanding of how different modal verbs contribute to different formulations but maintain the same intention.



*Figure 2 – Request Donuts Used During Input 1.2*

Following *Input 1.2*, the YLLs explored the purpose of employing various modal verbs in requests. The goal was for the YLLs to become aware of the subtle differences conveyed by each modal verb, reinforcing the concept that there are diverse ways of requesting.

Additionally, the class discussed the difference between ‘*Can I have a donut?*’ and ‘*Can you give me a donut?*’. The researcher showed how the speaker can adjust a request by varying the perspective from which it is made, whether listener- or speaker-oriented. This pattern of discussion recurred after the third and fourth requests.

In *Practice 1.2a*, the YLLs actively practiced the request formulations introduced during *Input 1.2*. They practiced articulating multiple requests through choral reading, fostering fluency and confidence. In *Practice 1.2b*, the YLLs produced their own requests using a set of *request donuts* provided to each pair (as detailed in Appendix 2.3). Some examples of requests generated by the YLLs are presented in Figure 3. Working in pairs, the YLLs received a bag containing ten donuts that included words that the YLLs could use to create requests. The YLLs also had to read their request to an adult in the classroom before creating a new request.



*Figure 3 – Requests Generated by the YLLs*

The final activity for this lesson, *Practice 1.2c*, involved a role play. In groups of four, the YLLs took on the roles of Mr. Panda, the penguin, the skunk, and the lemur (see Appendix 2.5 for a detailed explanation of the rotation). The YLL portraying Mr. Panda had a set of donuts (see Appendix 2.4). Meanwhile, the remaining YLLs took turns producing requests. These varied activities enhanced practical application, allowing YLLs to internalize the use of modal verbs in producing requests.

### 3.3.5 Lesson Two

The first cycle of Lesson Two began with an interactive reading of *George and the Dragon*. Throughout the reading, pivotal moments, such as George's request for sugar on page 23, "I say, you couldn't loan me a couple lumps of sugar, could you?" (Wormell, 2006, p. 23), sparked a discussion regarding alternative ways George could have asked for sugar. Eagerly, the YLLs proposed alternative requests for George, which the researcher recorded for later use in *Awareness Raising 2.1*, such as:

*'Hello Mr. Dragon. Can I have some sugar?'*

*'May I borrow some sugar, please?'*

*'Give me the sugar!'*

*'Can I maybe have some sugar?'*

*'Can you give me some sugar?'*

In *Awareness Raising 2.1*, the request from page 23 was displayed on the board, initiating discussions on how this request contrasted with those produced by the YLLs during the read-aloud session. For example, one YLL formulated the request as: *'Hello Mr. Dragon. Can I have some sugar?'*. In contrast, the request on page 23 took a different form. Such comparisons provided a foundation for exploring the variations in language use and illustrating how different request strategies could be employed to achieve the same goal.

The last activity of Cycle One, *Practice 2.1a*, involved the class practicing the request formulation demonstrated in the book. Assuming the role of the narrator, the researcher portrayed George's predicament: *'George had no sugar for his tea. He went over to his neighbor to ask for some.'* Meanwhile, the YLLs embodied George himself, articulating the

request, “I say, you couldn’t loan me a couple lumps of sugar, could you?” (Wormell, 2006, p. 23). This request was rehearsed in unison three times.

The second cycle of Lesson Two began with *Input 2.2*, which introduced the modifiers *Please* and *Perhaps*. Utilizing *request donuts* displayed on the whiteboard (see Figure 4), the researcher crafted four requests: ‘*Can I have a ball?*’, ‘*Can I please have a ball?*’, ‘*Could you give me a ball?*’, and ‘*Could you perhaps give me a ball?*’. The class collectively discussed these various formulations and explored their meaning.



*Figure 4 – Request Donuts Used During Input 2.2*

In *Awareness Raising 2.2*, the researcher emphasized the impact of incorporating words like *Perhaps* and *Please* into requests. The class then engaged in a discussion guided by the researcher on the modifiers’ purpose and their impact on requests. This served to solidify the connection between modifiers and requests, with parallels drawn to the narrative of *Please, Mr. Panda*.

In *Practice 2.2a*, the YLLs actively participated in choral readings of the requests featuring modifiers, thereby reinforcing language patterns. Additionally, working in pairs, YLLs utilized learner sets of the *request donuts* (see Appendix 3.3) to generate requests. Figure 5 shows two of the requests produced by the YLLs.



*Figure 5 – Requests Generated by the YLLs*

Afterward, the YLLs participated in an interactive role play exercise called *Donut Sharing* (Pardy-Comber et al., 2004). This collaborative exercise promoted interactive communication, allowing the YLLs to practice producing requests within a contextual setting. The structure involved the formation of two circles: an inner circle and an outer circle.



*Figure 6 – Donut Circle Items*

The YLLs in the outer circle held various items, as pictured in Figure 6. Meanwhile, the YLLs in the inner circle were paired with a counterpart from the outer circle. First, the YLLs in the inner circle requested the item held by their partner, using phrases such as ‘*Can I please have a bow?*’ or ‘*Can you please give me the boots?*’. Following this, the YLLs in the outer circle requested their items back. Finally, the YLLs in the inner circle rotated clockwise, repeating the process with their new partner.

### 3.3.6 Lesson Three

The first cycle of the third lesson began with the introduction of the picture book *The Spiffiest Giant in Town*. This story provided a platform for exploring NCI requests and grounders. To maximize classroom efficiency, the researcher provided an adapted version of the book to retain key elements of the storyline, ensure comprehension, and preserve the original requests and request responses. Throughout the reading, interactive engagement was maintained by targeted questioning and encouraging reflections on how requests were produced in the previously explored picture books in contrast to the current narrative. At the end of the reading, the YLLs proposed alternative requests, which the researcher recorded for later use in *Awareness Raising 3.1*. Some examples of the requests produced by the YLLs include:

*‘Can I please get a scarf?’*

*‘Could I have your shirt?’*

*‘My house burnt down, so can I use your shoe for a house?’*

*‘Can I borrow your shoe for a house?’*

*‘My house burned down. I really wish I had a new one. I think your shoes could do the job if you’re willing to give them to me.’*

After the reading session, *Awareness Raising 3.1*, the class analyzed how the request patterns observed in *The Spiffiest Giant in Town* compared to the previous lessons and the requests produced by the YLLs post-reading. Requests extracted from page 6, “It’s my neck, said the giraffe. It’s so very long and so very cold. I wish I had a long, warm scarf,” (Donaldson, 2003, p. 6) and page 9, “It’s my sail, said the goat. It blew away in a storm. I wish I had a strong new sail for my boat” (Donaldson, 2003, p. 9), were displayed on the board, prompting discussions centered on the requests made by the giraffe and the goat and the potential effects of different phrasing.

At the end of *Cycle One*, the class participated in *Practice 3.1a*, which centered around the request formulations featured in the book. During choral readings, the researcher took on the role of the Giant, asking, “What’s the matter?” (Donaldson, 2003, p. 5,13). Meanwhile, the YLLs portrayed different characters, each presenting unique requests. The giraffe, for instance, said, “It’s my neck [...]. It’s so very long and so very cold. I wish I had a long, warm scarf,” (Donaldson, 2003, p. 6). Similarly, the mouse expressed, “It’s our house [...]. It

burned down, and now we have nowhere to live. I wish we had a nice new house” (Donaldson, 2003, p. 14). This exercise allowed the YLLs to practice articulating two distinct requests.

The lesson transitioned to *Input 3.2*, where the concept of grounders was introduced to the YLLs through *request donuts* (see Appendix 4.2). Requests such as ‘*I am thirsty. Can I have a drink?*’, ‘*I am cold. Could you give me a scarf?*’, and ‘*I am hungry. May I have a donut?*’ were created to underscore the use of grounders in the production of requests (see Figure 7).



**Figure 7** – *Request Donuts Used During Input 3.2*

During *Awareness Raising 3.2*, the class delved into discussions regarding the significance of grounders. Through exploration and analysis, the YLLs gained a deeper understanding of how grounders play a crucial role in shaping the intent and tone of requests. By examining various scenarios and examples, the YLLs understood the subtle differences in using grounders.

*Practice 3.2a* began with a choral reading of the *request donuts* generated during *Input 3.2*. Following this, in *Practice 3.2b*, the YLLs used their sets of *request donuts* (see Appendix 4.3) to craft their own requests in pairs. See Figure 8 for two examples of requests they produced.





*Figure 8 – Requests Generated by the YLLs*

Lastly, in *Practice 3.2c*, the YLLs were paired up, where each pair focused on one of three scenarios derived from *The Spiffiest Giant in Town*, corresponding to pages 6, 9, and 13. For each scenario, there were four pairs. Within these pairs, one YLL assumed the role of the Giant, i.e., the character receiving requests, while the other played an animal, i.e., the one producing requests. The YLLs formulated requests specific to their scenarios, incorporating grounders and varying the levels of directness. Ultimately, they performed mini role plays, adhering to the book’s structure, showcasing the diverse approaches available for request production.

## 3.4 Data Collection Methods

### 3.4.1 Pre- and Post-Test

The data collection for this research adopted the methods used in Savić’s (2015) study, primarily focusing on utilizing role play as the principal method. Closed role plays, which are described as “similar to discourse completion tasks but in an oral mode” (Mackey & Gass, 2022, p. 125), were particularly valuable in this context due to their ability to foster dynamic interaction and facilitate real-life observation of request production. To ensure that the role play scenarios were relevant and appropriate for this age group, two paired role play scenarios were adapted from Savić’s (2015) work, allowing the participants to maintain their identities throughout the activity (Mackey & Gass, 2022).

Savić (2015) developed two sets of tasks in her study: one tailored for second graders and another for fourth and sixth graders. For this study, the decision was made to utilize the role play scenarios designed for second-grade participants. This choice was based on the recognition that these tasks, originally crafted for younger learners, were well-suited to the

developmental capabilities of the third-grade learners involved in the present study. The data collection procedures were piloted twice for the current study, initially with fellow MA students role-playing as third-grade learners, followed by a pilot study that involved two third-grade learners acquainted with the researcher, to validate and refine the procedures before implementation in the main study.

The pre- and post-test took place in a meeting room, where an intentional seating arrangement was implemented to promote a safe and comfortable environment during the interview (Pinter & Zandian, 2014). The YLLs were positioned in a semi-circle alongside the researcher, a setup designed to shift the focus onto the tasks rather than individual interactions and mirroring their typical group work dynamics (Myrset & Savić, 2021). This method was chosen to mitigate any power differences between the researcher and the YLLs. Furthermore, including groups based on friendship rather than proficiency level aimed to foster a supportive and comfortable atmosphere beneficial to active participation and meaningful engagement (Pinter & Zandian, 2014). Building on the methodology outlined in Savić's (2015), oral instructions were delivered in the YLLs' L1 for optimal understanding and to maintain consistency despite the YLLs' varying proficiency levels (see Appendix 5). The role plays, where the YLLs produced requests in English, were audio recorded.

The first task focused on dressing dolls in either summer or winter clothing. The YLLs were equipped with designated envelopes marked with roles such as *Learner A*, *Learner B*, and *Researcher*. These envelopes contained the materials needed for the activity. First, *Learner A* was provided with the summer dolls handout (see Appendix 6.1). At the same time, *Learner B* and the researcher received a pre-selected selection of summer clothing items (as shown in Appendix 6.3.1 and Appendix 6.3.2). *Learner A* was then tasked with dressing the dolls in summer attire by requesting clothing items in English from both *Learner B* and the researcher. After the completion of part A of the first task, *Learner B* assumed the role of the primary participant for the second part and was provided with the winter dolls handout (see Appendix 6.2). At the same time, *Learner A* and the researcher received a pre-selected selection of winter clothing items (as shown in Appendix 6.3.3 and Appendix 6.3.4). *Learner B* was then tasked with dressing the dolls in winter attire by requesting clothing items in English from both *Learner A* and the researcher. Both YLLs were instructed to only ask for one item at a time to ensure the production of an equal number of requests from each learner.

The YLLs assembled a pencil case with specified items in the second role play. Both the YLLs received a detailed list that included an overview of the contents they needed to fill their pencil case (see Appendix 7.1 and Appendix 7.2), a pencil case (see Appendix 7.4 and Appendix 7.5), and a selection of supplies enclosed in individual envelopes (see Appendix 7.6, Appendix 7.7, and Appendix 7.8). The YLLs were instructed to take turns requesting, in English, the items they were missing from their pencil case from either their peer or the researcher.

The post-test, conducted six weeks after the pre-test to ensure that the YLLs would not remember how they answered the first time (Brown et al., 2008), adhered to the same framework to ensure consistency and comparability of data to “determine the immediate effect of treatment” (Mackey & Gass, 2022, p. 272). Notably, the post-test was administered about three weeks following the completion of the last lesson. All the requests produced in the pre- and post-test (n= 906) were transcribed verbatim for the analysis.

### 3.5 Data Analysis

The analysis of the collected data employed a deductive approach, utilizing established frameworks and coding schemes to systematically categorize and assess the language proficiency and pragmatic development of the YLLs (McKinley & Rose, 2019). McKinley and Rose (2019) underline the applicability of the deductive approach for theory testing, particularly when the analysis is structured based on existing knowledge. The choice to utilize the CCSARP coding manual developed by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) was grounded in its widespread usage and established reliability in pragmatics research. This coding manual has been employed in various studies (e.g., Myrset, 2022; Rose, 2000; Savić, 2015; Savić et al., 2021), allowing for comparisons across different contexts and populations. Moreover, the decision to adopt this coding manual was influenced by its previous application in similar research contexts. Savić (2015), whose study involved participants from a comparable demographic and utilized the same data collection methods as this study, also employed the CCSARP coding manual. By aligning with Savić’s (2015) methodology, including using the same coding manual, the present study was able to facilitate meaningful comparisons with Savić’s (2015) findings.

Before presenting the detailed analysis, it is essential to outline the characteristics of the dataset. The sample consisted of a total of 906 requests elicited from the YLLs throughout the pre- and post-tests. Of these, 99 requests fell into the Naming/L1 category; these were analyzed based on the head act but not further examined. Additionally, 26 requests were not included in the analysis because the YLL involved did not attend at least two of the instructional lessons, resulting in a final sample size of 781 requests for analysis.

Requests were initially classified into four main categories based on their directness levels, distinguishing between direct, NCI requests, CI requests, and Naming/L1. Additionally, request perspectives, including listener-oriented and speaker-oriented approaches, were also considered during the classification process. CI requests were further sorted into subcategories such as *Can*, *Could*, and *May*, while direct requests were categorized as *I need*, *I will have*, *I want*, and imperative forms. Additionally, internal modifications such as downgraders (e.g., *Please*, *Perhaps*, and *Maybe*) were identified and coded, particularly if they were attached to specific request forms. Furthermore, supportive moves, grounders, and alerters within the requests were examined as part of the coding process. Table 5 provides an overview of the categories and sub-categories in the study with examples from the transcriptions.

**Table 5 – Request Coding**

Directness level		
Conventionally indirect request	<i>Can</i>	Learner A1: ‘ <b>Can</b> I have the glasses?’
	<i>May</i>	Learner A4: ‘ <b>May</b> I have a sunhat?’
	<i>Could</i>	Learner B12: ‘ <b>Could</b> I have a brown ruler?’
Direct request	<i>I will have</i>	Learner B18: ‘ <b>I will have</b> the brown hat.’
	<i>I need</i>	Learner B3: ‘ <b>I need</b> a ruler.’
	<i>I want</i>	Learner A15: ‘ <b>I want</b> the scissors.’

	Imperative forms	Learner B2: ' <b>Give me a pink eraser.</b> '
<i>Non-conventionally indirect request</i>	<i>Do you have...</i>	Learner B2: ' <b>Do you have a brown wool hat?</b> '
<i>Naming/L1</i>		Learner B1: ' <i>Pants</i> ' Learner B1: ' <i>Kan eg ha blyanten?</i> ' [ <i>Can I have the pencil?</i> ]
<b>Request perspectives</b>		
<i>Listener-oriented</i>	<i>Can you</i>	Learner B2: ' <b>Can you give me the last sweater?</b> '
	<i>Could you</i>	N/A
	<i>Do you have</i>	Learner B2: ' <b>Do you have a brown wool hat?</b> '
<i>Speaker-oriented</i>	<i>Can I</i>	Learner A14: ' <b>Can I have a marker?</b> '
	<i>May I</i>	Learner A14: ' <b>May I have a dress?</b> '
	<i>Could I</i>	Learner B12: ' <b>Could I have a pen?</b> '
	<i>I need</i>	Learner A13: ' <b>I need sunglasses.</b> '
	<i>I will have</i>	Learner B18: ' <b>I will have the pants.</b> '
	<i>I want</i>	Learner A15: ' <b>I want the marker.</b> '
<b>Internal modifications</b>		
<i>Politeness marker</i>	<i>Please- Can</i>	Learner A3: ' <b>Can I please get the scissors?</b> '

	<i>Please- May</i>	Learner B2: ‘ <i>May I please have some boots?</i> ’
	<i>Please- Could</i>	Learner A3: ‘ <i>Could I please have the blue T-shirt?</i> ’
<i>Downtoners</i>	<i>Perhaps</i>	Learner B10: ‘ <i>Can I perhaps have the sweater please?</i> ’
	<i>Maybe</i>	Learner B8: ‘ <i>Maybe I can have the ruler?</i> ’
<b>Supportive moves</b>		
<i>Grounders</i>		N/A
<b>Alerters</b>		
<i>First name</i>	*Researcher*	Learner A7: ‘ <i>*Researcher*, can I have the sunhat?</i> ’
<i>Attention getters</i>	<i>Hi</i>	Learner B7: ‘ <i>Hi, *Researcher*, can I have one marker?</i> ’

The same procedure was repeated for the post-test data, ensuring consistency in the analysis approach across both test points. Once the coding was completed, the data was transferred to an Excel spreadsheet for further analysis. Each type of request, including its subcategories, was represented in rows, while the YLLs’ numbers (e.g., A<sub>1</sub> and B<sub>1</sub>) were assigned to columns. Raw frequencies of each type of request were recorded for both the pre- and post-tests. Additionally, tables were generated to present the coded data, providing a clear overview of the distribution of request types among the YLLs at different test points. These tables included raw frequencies and descriptive statistics of each category and sub-category for the pre- and post-tests.

This detailed approach allowed for a comprehensive analysis of the identification patterns and changes in request strategies over time, with the quantitative analysis of raw frequencies providing a more detailed overview of the YLLs’ performance.

### 3.6 Quality Criteria

In any research study, it is important to evaluate the scientific rigor of the methods. Given the sample size in the current study, the rigor is described here through qualitative criteria (e.g., Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Such a framework describes the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of a study’s findings. These criteria are essential for maintaining the integrity of the research process and enhancing its trustworthiness. Table 6 provides an overview of each variable.

*Table 6 – Quality Criteria Employed in the Study.*

Criteria	Strategy employed
Credibility	Participant attrition Researchers’ positionality
Transferability	Thick description
Dependability	Rater reliability Instrument reliability Pilot testing
Confirmability	Raw data Audit trail

Firstly, credibility, defined as “the ‘truth value’ of a study” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, as cited in Dörnyei, 2007, p. 57), was upheld through various steps. Participant attrition was managed by implementing strict criteria whereby the data from the YLLs who were absent for more than one session were excluded from the analysis to maintain consistency in participant engagement (Mackey & Gass, 2022). Additionally, credibility was supported by the researcher’s methodical engagement with the participants (Mackey & Gass, 2022). These measures minimized potential biases and enhanced the authenticity of the data collected, thereby contributing to the credibility of the results.

Secondly, transferability, “the ‘applicability’ of the results to other contexts” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, as cited in Dörnyei, 2007, p. 57), was ensured by providing detailed descriptions of the research methods, context, and descriptions of the instructions. By offering detailed descriptions of the research methods, this study enhanced the transferability of its findings, enabling other researchers to assess the relevance of applying the research in similar educational settings.

Thirdly, dependability, “the ‘consistency’ of the findings” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, as cited in Dörnyei, 2007, p. 57), was achieved through attention to rater and instrument reliability. Rater reliability was ensured by employing established coding systems, enabling consistent identification and classification of request strategies and the classification of YLLs’ developmental stage (Mackey & Gass, 2022). Instrument reliability was addressed by utilizing pre- and post-test instruments previously used, i.e., Savić’s (2015) study (Mackey & Gass, 2022). Additionally, acknowledging the significance of conducting pilot studies as an integral part of methodological refinement is imperative. Mackey and Gass (2022) explain that “pilot testing is carried out to uncover any problems, and to address them before the main study is carried out” (p. 132). Furthermore, Mackey and Gass (2022) argue that “it is crucial for researchers to allocate time for conducting pilot tests” (p. 132) to mitigate unforeseen issues and optimize the quality of data collected. In the present study, piloting was a crucial step for testing and refining the proposed procedures, materials, and methods before their implementation. The present study incorporated pilot testing to validate and refine the data collection procedures twice. Initially, a pilot study was conducted with fellow MA students, where two individuals role-played as third-grade learners while three others were observers. This initial pilot facilitated valuable feedback from participants and observers, enabling adjustments to the activity instructions as needed. Secondly, a pilot was conducted with two third-grade learners, acquaintances of the researcher, to assess the flow of the activities and the clarity of instructions with the target age group. These pilot studies were valuable in identifying and addressing any potential challenges in the data collection process, ensuring its smooth execution in the main study. These measures enhanced the dependability of the analysis, allowing for consistent interpretation and replication of the study’s findings.

Finally, confirmability, “the neutrality of the findings,” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, as cited in Dörnyei, 2007, p. 57) was upheld by presenting raw data alongside the analysis and maintaining an audit trail. This audit trail, which included interview transcripts, analysis notes, and decision-making processes, minimized the researcher’s influence on the interpretations and allowed for independent verification and interpretation by others (Cope, 2014). By systematically documenting the research process in this way, the study enhances the confirmability of its findings, thereby contributing to the trustworthiness of the results (Mackey & Gass, 2022).



### 3.7 Ethical Considerations

In adherence to ethical principles and guidelines outlined by national and international regulatory bodies, the present study aimed to protect the rights, well-being, and confidentiality of the research participants. “The Research Ethics Act (*forskningsetikkloven*) presupposes that research conducted by public or private actors takes place in accordance with recognized norms of research ethics” (The Norwegian National Research Ethics Committees, 2022, p. 6). Accordingly, parental consent (see Appendix 1.1) was obtained for the child participants, ensuring their protection and rights in line with specific regulations concerning children in research. Additionally, participants were informed of their right to refuse participation, with their capacity to do so respected throughout the study (The Norwegian National Research Ethics Committees, 2022).

To safeguard participants’ privacy and confidentiality, all data was securely stored on the university’s approved research storage platform. Participants were anonymized using identifiers like Learner A<sub>1</sub>, Learner A<sub>2</sub>, Learner B<sub>1</sub>, and Learner B<sub>2</sub>, preserving their identities throughout the research process. This approach aligns with established ethical standards and regulations aimed at protecting participant confidentiality and privacy (The Norwegian National Research Ethics Committees, 2022).

Transparency and accountability in reporting research findings were prioritized, ensuring participants were fully informed about the study outcomes and implications. By committing to honest and unbiased reporting, the researcher upheld professional codes of conduct and ethical guidelines, fostering trust in the research process and maintaining the integrity of the findings (The Norwegian National Research Ethics Committees, 2022).

Throughout the research process, ongoing ethical reflection and dialogue were undertaken to address emerging ethical concerns and dilemmas. This approach, rooted in ethical guidelines and principles, aimed to ensure that ethical considerations remained central to all aspects of the research. The practice of engaging in ethical reflection aligns with recommendations from Pinter and Kuchah (2021) on the importance of addressing power differentials between researchers and participants and ethically allocating participants’ time and involvement in the study.

Moreover, considering the vulnerable nature of the YLLs involved in the study and the inclusion of audio recordings, the project was reported to and approved by Sikt (see Appendix 1.2), ensuring compliance with ethical standards and regulatory requirements. This step underscores the commitment to safeguarding the rights and well-being of the participants, as well as adhering to the ethical standards established for research involving vulnerable populations (The Norwegian National Research Ethics Committees, 2022).

Acknowledging the dual roles as both teacher for the instructional intervention and researcher, this study took careful steps to clarify the boundaries of the research relationship, as recommended by The Norwegian National Research Ethics Committees (2022). These roles bring inherent challenges and benefits, necessitating consistent awareness and transparency. Maintaining rapport with participants was crucial, especially given the temporary instructional context. This approach, founded on trust and familiarity, aligns with Murphy and Macaro (2017), as cited in Pinter and Kuchah (2021), which emphasizes the importance of strong relational foundations for eliciting authentic responses from YLLs.

Simultaneously, the need to balance an objective research stance while providing a supportive educational setting during the research phases was paramount. As Pinter and Kuchah (2021) point out, the ethical dimensions of this dual role require careful management to amplify the YLLs' voices and ensure transparency in the research process. This approach ensures the ethical integrity of the study and fosters the well-being and academic development of the YLLs within the research framework.

In conclusion, this study adhered to ethical standards and regulatory guidelines to safeguard the rights, dignity, and welfare of all participants. By effectively navigating the complexities of the researcher's dual roles, the study upheld ethical integrity, which in turn promoted trust and transparency throughout the research process.

## 4. Results

The results chapter outlines the findings from the pre- and post-tests, focusing on the impact of L2 pragmatics instruction on the request strategies employed by third-grade Norwegian EFL learners. This research addresses the overarching question: Does L2 pragmatics instruction have an impact on third-grade Norwegian EFL learners' request production? The analysis is structured around the research questions designed to guide this research:

- 1) To what extent does instruction influence the learners' ability to produce English requests?
- 2) To what extent does instruction influence the learners' ability to vary within and between request head act strategies?
- 3) To what extent does instruction influence the learners' ability to use internal and external modification strategies?

This chapter is divided into several sections, each dedicated to a different aspect of the YLLs' request strategies, as observed in the pre- and post-tests. Section 4.1 presents the directness levels of the YLLs' requests. Following this, Section 4.2 explores the request perspectives utilized by the YLLs. The learners' use of modal verbs and direct head acts are highlighted in Section 4.3, whereas Section 4.4 focuses on their use of the marker *Please*. Downtoners and supportive moves are detailed in Section 4.5, and the frequency of alerters is presented in Section 4.6. Finally, Section 4.7 provides qualitative examples of learner development.

This chapter combines raw frequencies, descriptive statistics, and qualitative examples to detail and illustrate the progression of the YLLs' pragmatic abilities and assess the instructional intervention's influence on the YLLs' request strategies used to produce requests.

### 4.1 Directness Levels

The YLLs' requests were first analyzed in relation to their level of directness to explore their development in request production. The results, detailed in Table 7, reflect the changes in using these strategies between the pre- and post-test.

**Table 7** – Frequencies of the Directness Levels of the YLLs’ Requests

Directness	Raw frequencies			
	Pre		Post	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Conventionally indirect	333	76.7	424	95.1
Direct	11	2.5	12	2.7
Non-conventionally indirect	0	0.0	1	0.2
Naming/L1	90	20.7	9	2.0
Total	434		446	

*Note.* The percentages have been rounded up to the nearest tenth.

The analysis revealed that CI requests remained the preferred strategy, increasing from 333 instances (76.7%) in the pre-test to 424 (95.1%) in the post-test. For example, Learner A<sub>3</sub> evolved from making a CI request in the pre-test (Example 1 below) to a more detailed request post-instruction (Example 2). This marked increase in CI requests suggests that YLLs are becoming more proficient at using the target language.

(1) Learner A<sub>3</sub> Pre-test: ‘*Can I get a T-shirt?*’

(2) Learner A<sub>3</sub> Post-test: ‘*Could I please have the blue T-shirt?*’

Direct requests remained consistent in frequency, evidenced by the raw frequencies barely changing from 11 (2.5%) in the pre-test to 12 (2.7%) in the post-test. For instance, Learner B<sub>5</sub>’s direct request in the pre-test (Example 3) to another in the post-test (Example 4) captures the YLLs’ continued use of direct requests.

(3) Learner B<sub>5</sub> Pre-test: ‘*I need some shoes.*’

(4) Learner B<sub>5</sub> Post-test: ‘*Give me that blue pen.*’

The occurrence of NCI requests was scarce, with only one instance found in the post-test, which Learner B<sub>2</sub> made with ‘*Do you have a brown wool hat?*’ (Example 5, Post-test). This rare usage highlights the overwhelming preference for CI requests.

Naming/L1 decreased substantially, from 90 instances (20.7%) in the pre-test to only 9 (2.0%) in the post-test. Learner B<sub>15</sub>’s utterances provide clear examples of this category, with

a single-word response in both the pre-test (Example 6) and post-test (Example 7). Additionally, Learner B<sub>1</sub>'s use of L1 in the pre-test demonstrates some YLLs' initial reliance on their L1 (Example 8).

(6) Learner B<sub>15</sub> Pre-test: '*Boots*'

(7) Learner B<sub>15</sub> Post-test: '*Sweater*'

(8) Learner B<sub>1</sub> Pre-test: '*Kan eg ha blyanten? [Can I have the pencil?]*'<sup>6</sup>

## 4.2 Request Perspectives

The analysis of head acts included examining the request perspectives employed by the YLLs and distinguishing between listener-oriented and speaker-oriented strategies (see Table 8). While speaker-oriented requests remained the dominant strategy across both tests, the study observed the emergence of listener-oriented requests in the post-test.

**Table 8** – Frequencies of the Request Perspectives Present in the YLLs' Requests

Request perspectives	Raw frequencies			
	Pre		Post	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Listener-oriented	0	0.0	4	0.9
Speaker-oriented	344	100	433	99.1
Total	344		437	

Speaker-oriented requests were the only strategy used in the pre-test, totaling 344 instances. In the post-test, there was a slight yet noticeable presence of listener-oriented requests, accounting for four instances (0.9% of the total). This new occurrence in the post-test represents a variation in the YLLs' request strategies, albeit modest. The shift towards a listener-oriented approach in Learner B<sub>2</sub>'s requests is illustrated in the post-test examples (Examples 9 and 10).

(9) Learner B<sub>2</sub> Post-test: '*Can you give me the gray pants?*'

<sup>6</sup> Requests in the YLLs' L1 were only produced during the pre-test.

(10) Learner B2 Post-test: ‘Do you have a brown wool hat?’

### 4.3 Modal Verbs and Head Act Forms

Moving to the YLLs’ use of modal verbs, the data illustrates a shift in the choice of request strategies from pre- to post-test, signaling a development in the YLLs’ pragmatic competence. The YLLs’ use of modal verbs is presented in Table 9.

**Table 9** – Frequencies of the Request Head Acts and Modal Verbs Present in the YLLs’ Requests

Request head acts and modal verbs	Raw frequencies			
	Pre		Post	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Can	317	92.2	325	74.5
May	15	4.4	81	18.6
Could	1	0.3	18	4.1
Imperative	1	0.3	9	2.1
I will have	2	0.6	0	0.0
I need/ I want	8	2.3	3	0.7
Total	344		436	

As presented in Table 9, there was a noticeable change in the YLLs’ use of modal verbs in CI requests, illustrating a post-instructional evolution in preferences. Before the instruction, *Can* was used 317 times, representing 92.2% of all CI requests. After the instruction, the usage of *Can* slightly increased to 325 instances; however, its percentage of the total CI requests decreased to 74.5%. In contrast, the use of *May* increased noticeably from 15 instances (4.4%) in the pre-test to 81 (18.6%) in the post-test. Similarly, *Could* demonstrated a substantial increase from one instance (0.3%) prior to instruction to 18 instances (4.1%) following the instruction. These results suggest the YLLs’ expanded repertoire of modal verbs when formulating requests, moving towards more varied language use.

Learner A<sub>12</sub>’s responses exemplify the shift in modal verb preferences from the pre- to the post-test. Initially, Learner A<sub>12</sub> favored the use of *Can* for requests, as seen when requesting shorts (Example 11) and a marker (Example 13) in the pre-test. However, in the post-test,

there was a noticeable shift in the modal verbs utilized, with *May* used to request the shorts (Example 12) and *Could* for requesting a marker (Example 14).

(11) Learner A<sub>12</sub> Pre-test: ‘*Can I have a shorts?*’

(12) Learner A<sub>12</sub> Post-test: ‘*May I have a blue shorts?*’

(13) Learner A<sub>12</sub> Pre-test: ‘*Can I have a marker?*’

(14) Learner A<sub>12</sub> Post-test: ‘*Could I have a pink marker?*’

Table 9 also summarizes the change in direct request forms employed by the YLLs from the pre- to the post-test. While the total number of direct requests remained relatively stable, with a minor increase from 11 instances in the pre-test to 12 in the post-test, the distribution of the different forms used by the YLLs changed, suggesting a shift in their request-making strategies.

In the pre-test, the imperative form was used in one instance (0.3%), as in Learner A<sub>18</sub>’s request, ‘*Give me, give me.*’ (Example 15, Pre-test). The imperative form increased to nine instances (2.1%) in the post-test, illustrated by Learner A<sub>5</sub>’s request, ‘*Give me a pencil.*’ (Example 16, Post-test). In the pre-test, *I need* was employed in eight instances (2.3%). Learner B<sub>3</sub>’s request, ‘*I need a ruler.*’ (Example 17, Pre-test), shows how the head act was utilized in the direct request. Similarly, *I will have* appeared in the pre-test in two instances (0.6%): Learner B<sub>18</sub>’s request, ‘*I will have the brown hat.*’ (Example 18, Pre-test). Both these forms were absent in the post-test. Interestingly, a new form, *I want* appeared in the post-test, occurring in three instances (0.7%), such as in Learner A<sub>15</sub>’s request, ‘*I want the marker.*’ (Example 19, Post-test).

## 4.4 Please

The use of the marker *Please* alongside various modal verbs in CI requests and with the other directness levels, NCI requests and direct requests, was another focus of the study. The details of the analysis are presented in Table 10.

**Table 10** – Frequencies of the Marker *Please* Present in the YLLs' Requests

Please	Raw frequencies			
	Pre		Post	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Can you/I	17	4.9	24	5.5
Could you/I	0	0.0	2	0.5
May I	1	0.3	3	0.7
Direct	0	0.0	0	0.0
Non-conventionally indirect	0	0.0	0	0.0
None	326	94.8	408	93.4
Total	344		437	

The analysis revealed subtle changes in the use of the marker *Please* by the YLLs across different request forms. In the pre-test, *Please* was combined with *Can you/I* in 17 instances (4.9%). This usage slightly increased in the post-test to 24 instances (5.5%). The post-test also marked the introduction of *Please* with *Could you/I*, which was used in two instances (0.5%), and with *May I*, which increased from a single instance (0.3%) in the pre-test to three instances (0.7%) in the post-test. Notably, there were no occurrences of *Please* in direct or NCI requests in either test period.

For example, in the pre-test, Learner A<sub>10</sub> used *Please* in a request with *Can you/I*: ‘*Can I have the ruler, please?*’ (Example 20, Pre-test). A similar request form was observed in the post-test when Learner A<sub>3</sub> asked, ‘*Can I please get the hat?*’ (Example 21, Post-test). In addition, the post-test introduced *Could you/I* with *Please*, as Learner A<sub>3</sub> used it in the requests ‘*Could I please use the eraser?*’ (Example 22, Post-test) and ‘*Could I please have the blue T-shirt?*’ (Example 23, Post-test). The use of *Please* with *May I* also saw an increase, as seen in Learner B<sub>2</sub>’s ‘*May I please have some boots?*’ (Example 24, Post-test) and Learner A<sub>13</sub>’s ‘*May I have the scissors, please?*’ (Example 25, Post-test) in the post-test. These subtle changes indicate that while the use of *Please* remains relatively stable, the YLLs are beginning to explore a variety of expressions to produce requests, indicating a slight expansion in their language use over time.



## 4.5 Downtoners and Supportive Moves

The data from the pre-test showed that the downtoners, *Perhaps* and *Maybe*, were absent from the requests produced by the YLLs. However, this changed in the post-test, where three YLLs utilized these terms in their requests. *Perhaps* was used in one single CI request, which constituted 0.2% of the total post-test requests, as seen in Learner B<sub>10</sub>'s request (Example 26). The term *Maybe* was utilized in three of the requests produced in the post-test, demonstrated by Learner A<sub>8</sub> (Example 27) and Learner B<sub>8</sub> (Example 28). The introduction of downtoners like *Perhaps* and *Maybe* in the post-test suggests that the YLLs are beginning to grasp and apply subtle language aspects that soften the tone of their requests.

(26) Learner B<sub>10</sub> Post-test: ‘*Can I perhaps have a sweater, please?*’

(27) Learner A<sub>8</sub> Post-test: ‘*Maybe I can have a eraser?*’

(28) Learner B<sub>8</sub> Post-test: ‘*Maybe I can have a pen?*’

In addition to downtoners, the presence of supportive moves was analyzed. However, the analysis across both the pre- and post-test showed that these were not employed in the tests.

## 4.6 Alerters

Another focus of the analysis was the use of alerters in the YLLs' requests. However, it is important to note that alerters were not an explicit part of the instructional content.

**Table 11** – Frequencies of Alerters Present in the YLLs' Requests

Alerters	Raw frequencies			
	Pre		Post	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
First name	24	7.0	25	5.7
Attention getters	0	0.0	14	3.2
None	320	93.0	398	91.1
Total	344		437	

As presented in Table 11, there was a shift in the use of alerters from the pre- to the post-test. Initially, first names<sup>7</sup> were used as alerters in 24 instances (7.0%) of requests. This usage saw a slight decrease to 25 instances (5.7%) post-instruction, suggesting a proportional decline considering the increased total number of requests. In contrast, attention getters marked a change, from no instances in the pre-test to 14 occurrences (3.2%) in the post-test. The requests produced by Learner B<sub>7</sub> exemplify this shift. In the pre-test, Learner B<sub>7</sub>'s request employed the first name of the interlocutor as an alerter: '\*A<sub>7</sub>\*, *can I have this blue sweater?*' (Example 29, Pre-test). In the post-test, Learner B<sub>7</sub> included the attention getter *Hi* as an additional strategy for requesting the same item as in the pre-test: '*Hi, \*A<sub>7</sub>\*, can I have the blue sweater?*' (Example 30, Post-test). This shift towards using attention getters such as *Hi* may indicate an increasing awareness and implementation of conversational norms that engage the listener before making a request.

## 4.7 Examples of Learner Development

This section presents a selection of the requests produced by various individual learners to complement the quantitative findings. The examples show the requests produced in the pre- and post-test, thereby aiming to highlight the progression in their request production strategies. The learners included here were those who moved from using single-word utterances to constructing complete CI requests and those who have broadened their use of modal verbs, thus indicating distinct and different traces of development.

The requests produced by three pairs of YLLs and one individual display progress, as detailed in Tables 11, 12, 13, and 14. These tables document the specific changes in request strategies for each pair from the pre- to the post-test.

Learner A<sub>14</sub>, demonstrated a leap from single-word utterances in the pre-test, such as '*T-shirt*' and '*Ruler*' to complete CI requests in the post-test incorporating modal verbs: '*May I have a blue T-shirt?*' and '*Can I have a ruler?*' (Table 12). Similarly, Learner B<sub>14</sub>, who in the pre-test used single-word utterances, such as '*Hat*' and '*Eraser*,' transitioned to using CI requests, such as '*Can I have a hat?*' and '*May I have eraser?*' in the post-test (Table 12).

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<sup>7</sup> Note: In the following examples, the YLL used the name of their peer. For purposes of anonymization, their name has been replaced with \*A<sub>7</sub>\*

These examples underscore the YLLs' advancement from basic to more complex request strategies, reflecting their growing language use proficiency and ability to employ different request strategies.

**Table 12** – Request Strategy Outcomes for Learners A<sub>14</sub> and B<sub>14</sub>: Pre- and Post-Test

Learner A <sub>14</sub> – Pre-test	Learner A <sub>14</sub> – Post-test
A <sub>14</sub> : 'T-shirt'	A <sub>14</sub> : 'May I have a dress?'
A <sub>14</sub> : 'Shorts'	A <sub>14</sub> : 'May I have shorts?'
A <sub>14</sub> : 'Sunhat'	A <sub>14</sub> : 'May I have a blue t-shirt?'
A <sub>14</sub> : 'Skirt'	A <sub>14</sub> : 'May I have a hat?'
A <sub>14</sub> : 'T-shirt'	A <sub>14</sub> : 'May I have some shoes?'
A <sub>14</sub> : 'Sunglasses'	A <sub>14</sub> : 'May I have sunglasses?'
<i>Role play #2</i>	<i>Role play #2</i>
A <sub>14</sub> : 'Marker'	A <sub>14</sub> : 'Can I have a eraser?'
A <sub>14</sub> : 'Eraser'	A <sub>14</sub> : 'Can I have a ruler?'
A <sub>14</sub> : 'Scissors'	A <sub>14</sub> : 'Can I have a marker?'
A <sub>14</sub> : 'Marker'	A <sub>14</sub> : 'Can I have a scissors?'
A <sub>14</sub> : 'Ruler'	A <sub>14</sub> : 'Can I have a pencil?'
A <sub>14</sub> : 'Pencil'	A <sub>14</sub> : 'Can I have a marker?'
Learner B <sub>14</sub> – Pre-test	Learner B <sub>14</sub> – Post-test
B <sub>14</sub> : 'Hat'	B <sub>14</sub> : 'Can I have a hat?'
B <sub>14</sub> : 'Pants'	B <sub>14</sub> : 'Can I have a pants?'
B <sub>14</sub> : 'Sweater'	B <sub>14</sub> : 'Can I have a boots?'
B <sub>14</sub> : 'Pants'	B <sub>14</sub> : 'Can I have sweater?'
B <sub>14</sub> : 'Boots'	B <sub>14</sub> : 'Can I have a shoes?'
B <sub>14</sub> : 'Hat'	B <sub>14</sub> : 'Can I have pants?'
B <sub>14</sub> : 'Sweater'	B <sub>14</sub> : 'Can I have a sweater?'
B <sub>14</sub> : 'Shoes'	B <sub>14</sub> : 'Can I have a hat?'
<i>Role play #2</i>	<i>Role play #2</i>
B <sub>14</sub> : 'Pen'	B <sub>14</sub> : 'Can I have a pen?'
B <sub>14</sub> : 'Eraser'	B <sub>14</sub> : 'May I have eraser?'
B <sub>14</sub> : 'Pencil'	B <sub>14</sub> : 'Can I have eraser?'

B <sub>14</sub> : ‘Eraser’	B <sub>14</sub> : ‘Can I have a ruler?’
B <sub>14</sub> : ‘Ruler’	B <sub>14</sub> : ‘Can I have a pencil?’

Demonstrating a different form of development, namely a broader variation in request strategies, Learner A<sub>4</sub> (see Table 13) demonstrated growth in their request formulations between the pre- and post-test. In the pre-test Learner A<sub>4</sub> produced requests such as ‘Can I get a hat?’ and ‘Can I get a pink ruler?’. In the post-test, Learner A<sub>4</sub> displayed an expanded repertoire with more varied request strategies, including ‘May I have a sunhat?’ and ‘May I have a pink ruler?’. Similarly, Learner B<sub>4</sub> progressed from making single-word requests, such as ‘Wool hat’ in the first role play, to using CI requests in the second role play: ‘Can I get the eraser?’ (Table 13). Building on this, the post-test showed that Learner B<sub>4</sub> further adapted their requests by consistently employing modal verbs, as illustrated in the requests ‘May I have a wool hat?’ and ‘Can I have a blue eraser?’. The expansion in Learners A<sub>4</sub> and B<sub>4</sub>’s ability to employ a broader range of modal verbs and construct complete requests signifies individual language acquisition and highlights the effect of the instructional intervention.

**Table 13** – Request Strategy Outcomes for Learners A<sub>4</sub> and B<sub>4</sub>: Pre- and Post-Test

Learner A <sub>4</sub> – Pre-test	Learner A <sub>4</sub> – Post-test
A <sub>4</sub> : ‘Can I get a hat?’	A <sub>4</sub> : ‘May I have a shirt?’
A <sub>4</sub> : ‘Can I get some glasses?’	A <sub>4</sub> : ‘May I have some sunglasses?’
A <sub>4</sub> : ‘Can I get a T-shirt?’	A <sub>4</sub> : ‘May I have a sunhat?’
A <sub>4</sub> : ‘Can I get a skirt?’	A <sub>4</sub> : ‘May I have some gray shorts?’
A <sub>4</sub> : ‘Can I get a T-shirt?’	A <sub>4</sub> : ‘May I have a purple t-shirt?’
A <sub>4</sub> : ‘Can I get some pants?’	A <sub>4</sub> : ‘May I have a blue T-shirt?’
<i>Role play #2</i>	<i>Role play #2</i>
A <sub>4</sub> : ‘Can I get a pencil?’	A <sub>4</sub> : ‘Can I get a marker?’
A <sub>4</sub> : ‘Can I get the marker?’	A <sub>4</sub> : ‘May I have a marker?’
A <sub>4</sub> : ‘Can I get a marker?’	A <sub>4</sub> : ‘May I have a pencil?’
A <sub>4</sub> : ‘Can I get the eraser?’	A <sub>4</sub> : ‘Can I have a pink eraser?’
A <sub>4</sub> : ‘Can I get the scissors?’	A <sub>4</sub> : ‘May I have some scissors?’
A <sub>4</sub> : ‘Can I get a pink ruler?’	A <sub>4</sub> : ‘May I have a pink ruler?’

Learner B <sub>4</sub> – Pre-test	Learner B <sub>4</sub> – Post-test
B <sub>4</sub> : <i>‘Wool hat’</i>	B <sub>4</sub> : <i>‘May I have a boots?’</i>
B <sub>4</sub> : <i>‘Wool hat’</i>	B <sub>4</sub> : <i>‘May I have shoes?’</i>
B <sub>4</sub> : <i>‘Sweater’</i>	B <sub>4</sub> : <i>‘May I have a pants?’</i>
B <sub>4</sub> : <i>‘Sweater blue’</i>	B <sub>4</sub> : <i>‘May I have a pants?’</i>
B <sub>4</sub> : <i>‘Shoes’</i>	B <sub>4</sub> : <i>‘Sweater’</i>
B <sub>4</sub> : <i>‘Pants’</i>	B <sub>4</sub> : <i>‘May I have a sweater?’</i>
B <sub>4</sub> : <i>‘Shoes, eller boots’</i>	B <sub>4</sub> : <i>‘May I have a wool hat?’</i>
	B <sub>4</sub> : <i>‘May I have a wool hat?’</i>
<i>Role play #2</i>	<i>Role play #2</i>
B <sub>4</sub> : <i>‘Can I get the pencil?’</i>	B <sub>4</sub> : <i>‘Can I have a ruler?’</i>
B <sub>4</sub> : <i>‘Can I get a ruler?’</i>	B <sub>4</sub> : <i>‘Can I have a pencil?’</i>
B <sub>4</sub> : <i>‘Can I get the eraser?’</i>	B <sub>4</sub> : <i>‘Can I have a eraser?’</i>
B <sub>4</sub> : <i>‘Can I get the eraser?’</i>	B <sub>4</sub> : <i>‘Can I have a blue eraser?’</i>
B <sub>4</sub> : <i>‘Can I get the pen?’</i>	B <sub>4</sub> : <i>‘Can I have a pen?’</i>

In a similar vein to Learner A<sub>4</sub>, Learner A<sub>12</sub>’s pre-test requests consistently employed the modal verb *Can*, as shown in the requests *‘Can I have a blue T-shirt?’* and *‘Can I have a marker?’* (see Table 14). However, in the post-test, Learner A<sub>12</sub> started incorporating a range of modal verbs introduced in the lessons. This is evident in more varied requests such as *‘May I have a blue T-shirt?’* and *‘Could I have a pink marker?’*.

Such patterns were also evident in Learner B<sub>12</sub>’s initial requests in the pre-test, which featured solely the modal verb *Can*, as seen in the requests *‘Can I have a eraser?’* and *‘Can I have some green shoes?’* (Table 14). The post-test, however, marked a shift in Learner B<sub>12</sub>’s use of modal verbs, with *Could* becoming the preferred choice. This shift is illustrated in the requests *‘Could I have the one pencil?’* and *‘Could I have some shoes?’* (Table 14). The transition observed in Learners A<sub>12</sub> and B<sub>12</sub> from a limited use of modal verbs to a broader, more varied application underscores the influence of targeted instruction on the YLLs’ ability to diversify their request strategies.

**Table 14** – Request Strategy Outcomes for Learners A<sub>12</sub> and B<sub>12</sub>: Pre- and Post-Test

Learner A <sub>12</sub> – Pre-test	Learner A <sub>12</sub> – Post-test
A <sub>12</sub> : ‘Can I have a skirt?’	A <sub>12</sub> : ‘May I have a dress?’
A <sub>12</sub> : ‘Can I have a T-shirt?’	A <sub>12</sub> : ‘May I have the sunglasses?’
A <sub>12</sub> : ‘Can I have sunglasses?’	A <sub>12</sub> : ‘May I have a blue T-shirt?’
A <sub>12</sub> : ‘Can I have sunhat?’	A <sub>12</sub> : ‘May I have a sunhat?’
A <sub>12</sub> : ‘Can I have a blue T-shirt?’	A <sub>12</sub> : ‘May I have a blue shorts?’
A <sub>12</sub> : ‘Can I have a shorts?’	
<i>Role play #2</i>	<i>Role play #2</i>
A <sub>12</sub> : ‘Can I have a marker?’	A <sub>12</sub> : ‘Could I have a pink ruler?’
A <sub>12</sub> : ‘Can I have a pencil?’	A <sub>12</sub> : ‘Could I have a pink marker?’
A <sub>12</sub> : ‘Can I have a pink ruler?’	A <sub>12</sub> : ‘Can I have a pink marker?’
A <sub>12</sub> : ‘Can I have a pink marker?’	A <sub>12</sub> : ‘Could I have a pencil?’
A <sub>12</sub> : ‘Can I have a pink eraser?’	A <sub>12</sub> : ‘Can I have a pink eraser?’
A <sub>12</sub> : ‘Can I have a scissors?’	A <sub>12</sub> : ‘Could I have a scissors?’
Learner B <sub>12</sub> – Pre-test	Learner B <sub>12</sub> – Post-test
B <sub>12</sub> : ‘Can I have a a pink shirt?’	B <sub>12</sub> : ‘Could I have some pink wool hats?’
B <sub>12</sub> : ‘Can I have umm green pants?’	B <sub>12</sub> : ‘Can I have a brown wool hat?’
B <sub>12</sub> : ‘Can I have a pink hat?’	B <sub>12</sub> : ‘Could I have some blue pants?’
B <sub>12</sub> : ‘Can I have some green shoes?’	B <sub>12</sub> : ‘Could I have some green pants?’
B <sub>12</sub> : ‘Can I have a blue sweater?’	B <sub>12</sub> : ‘Could I have some pink shirt?’
B <sub>12</sub> : ‘Can I have blue pants?’	B <sub>12</sub> : ‘Can I get a blue sweater?’
B <sub>12</sub> : ‘Can I have some boots?’	B <sub>12</sub> : ‘Can I get some boots?’
B <sub>12</sub> : ‘Can I have umm like the brown hat?’	B <sub>12</sub> : ‘Could I have some shoes?’
<i>Role play #2</i>	<i>Role play #2</i>
B <sub>12</sub> : ‘Can I have a pencil?’	B <sub>12</sub> : ‘Could I have a brown ruler?’
B <sub>12</sub> : ‘Can I have a eraser?’	B <sub>12</sub> : ‘Could I have a pen?’
B <sub>12</sub> : ‘Can I have a pen?’	B <sub>12</sub> : ‘Could I have the one pencil?’
B <sub>12</sub> : ‘Can I have a brown ruler?’	B <sub>12</sub> : ‘Could I have a pencil?’
B <sub>12</sub> : ‘Can I have a blue eraser?’	B <sub>12</sub> : ‘Could I have a pink eraser?’
	B <sub>12</sub> : ‘Could I have a blue eraser?’

During the pre-test, Learner A<sub>10</sub> predominantly relied on *Can I* requests, consistently incorporating the marker *Please* in nearly all instances (see Table 15). For example, ‘*Can I have a T-shirt please?*’ and ‘*Can I have the ruler please?*’. During the pre-test, Learner A<sub>10</sub> even remarked, ‘*Nå er jeg høflig [Now I am polite]*’, suggesting an emerging awareness of the force of requests. However, in the post-test, Learner A<sub>10</sub> expanded their repertoire by incorporating *May I* requests, such as ‘*May I have a T-shirt?*’. While *May I* requests were used frequently in the post-test, the marker *Please* was omitted entirely from the *May I* requests. Despite this, Learner A<sub>10</sub> continued to include *Please* in all *Can I* requests, such as, ‘*Can I have the pink ruler please?*’. This distinction highlights Learner A<sub>10</sub>’s ability to vary their request strategies, as shown in Table 15.

**Table 15** – Request Strategy Outcomes for Learner A<sub>10</sub>: Pre- and Post-Test

Learner A <sub>10</sub> – Pre-test	Learner A <sub>10</sub> – Post-test
A <sub>10</sub> : ‘ <i>Can I have a T-shirt please?</i> ’	A <sub>10</sub> : ‘ <i>May I have a swimsuit?</i> ’
A <sub>10</sub> : ‘ <i>Can I have the skirt please?</i> ’	A <sub>10</sub> : ‘ <i>May I have some sunglasses?</i> ’
A <sub>10</sub> : ‘ <i>Can I have the dress please?</i> ’	A <sub>10</sub> : ‘ <i>May I have a shorts?</i> ’
A <sub>10</sub> : ‘ <i>Can I have the sunhat please?</i> ’	A <sub>10</sub> : ‘ <i>May I have a t-shirt?</i> ’
A <sub>10</sub> : ‘ <i>Can I have sunglasses please?</i> ’	A <sub>10</sub> : ‘ <i>May I have a sunhat?</i> ’
A <sub>10</sub> : ‘ <i>Can I have the sandals please?</i> ’	A <sub>10</sub> : ‘ <i>May I have some sandals?</i> ’
	A <sub>10</sub> : ‘ <i>May I have a skirt?</i> ’
<i>Role play #2</i>	<i>Role play #2</i>
A <sub>10</sub> : ‘ <i>Can I have the ruler please?</i> ’	A <sub>10</sub> : ‘ <i>Can I have the pink ruler please?</i> ’
A <sub>10</sub> : ‘ <i>Can I have the marker please?</i> ’	A <sub>10</sub> : ‘ <i>Can I have the marker please?</i> ’
A <sub>10</sub> : ‘ <i>Can I get the eraser?</i> ’	A <sub>10</sub> : ‘ <i>Can I have the scissors please?</i> ’
A <sub>10</sub> : ‘ <i>Can I get a scissor please?</i> ’	A <sub>10</sub> : ‘ <i>Can I have the pencil please?</i> ’
A <sub>10</sub> : ‘ <i>Can I get the marker please?</i> ’	A <sub>10</sub> : ‘ <i>Can I have the marker please?</i> ’
A <sub>10</sub> : ‘ <i>Can I get the pencil?</i> ’	A <sub>10</sub> : ‘ <i>Can I have a pink eraser?</i> ’

## 5. Discussion

The discussion chapter looks at the impact of L2 pragmatics instruction on third-grade Norwegian EFL learners' request production, addressing the overarching research question: Does L2 pragmatics instruction have an impact on third-grade Norwegian EFL learners' request production? This chapter is structured around the following research questions:

- 1) To what extent does instruction influence the learners' ability to produce English requests?
- 2) To what extent does instruction influence the learners' ability to vary within and between request head act strategies?
- 3) To what extent does instruction influence the learners' ability to use internal and external modification strategies?

This chapter unfolds the YLLs' pragmalinguistic development by comparing their pre-test performances, indicative of their abilities prior to the instructional intervention, with their post-test performances to highlight any observable progress. In compiling these findings, the study draws comparisons with prior research to situate the YLLs' progress in pragmatic acquisition.

This discussion is structured to address each research question, focusing on the observed developments in the YLLs' pragmatic competencies. Section 5.1 evaluates how the instruction influenced the YLLs' ability to produce English requests, drawing on individual learners' quantitative data and observations. Section 5.2 expands on the YLLs' abilities to navigate and vary their request head act strategies, while Section 5.3 assesses their use of modification strategies. Finally, Section 5.4 discusses the limitations of the current study. This chapter aims to highlight the strides made by the YLLs in their L2 pragmatic development and examine the impact of targeted instructional interventions on their communicative competence.



## 5.1 YLLs' Ability to Produce English Requests

The requests produced by the YLLs were analyzed according to directness levels to answer the first research question. The results indicate a development in the YLLs' ability to produce English requests, moving from simpler strategies like naming and L1, noted in 20.7% of instances in the pre-test, to more complex linguistic forms. This trend aligns with findings from Savić's (2015) study, which observed that second graders frequently relied on naming and non-verbal language, such as pointing, reflecting an age-characteristic limitation in accessing L2 formulae. In addition, following the findings from Ishihara (2013), YLLs at this age, who had a different proficiency level than the present study's participants, often relied on teacher scaffolding to produce L2 formulae, even after instruction. In contrast, the present study's post-test results show a decrease in the use of naming and L1 strategies to 2.0%, suggesting that early elementary education is an opportune time to introduce L2 pragmatics, as the YLLs in the present study were able to rely more on verbal language, without teacher scaffolding.

The observed progress in the YLLs' ability to produce English requests from pre- to post-test reflects the trajectories outlined in Kasper and Rose's (2002) framework for L2 request development. This framework helps illustrate the pathways through which YLLs can progress from simpler to more complex request strategies with the aid of instructional intervention. The collaborative nature of the classroom activities, as evidenced in both Lyle (2008) and Savić (2021), was grounded in the principles of collaborative dialogue, creating a rich, interactive context that facilitated linguistic development. By engaging in the joint construction of language, a process detailed by Swain (1997), the YLLs could explore and expand their linguistic capabilities in a nurturing environment.

The role of collaborative dialogue in enhancing the YLLs' pragmatic development, as illustrated by Lyle (2008), is evident as they engage in dialogic exchanges that mirror the interplay between instruction and cognitive development, particularly within Vygotsky's (1934/2012) framework of ZPD. In these interactions, YLLs supported each other's learning, utilizing a scaffolding process that reflects both Vygotsky's (1934/2012) insights and Savić's (2021) observations on guided metapragmatic discussions, enriching their pragmatic competencies.

Furthermore, the role of the teacher, as discussed by Savić (2021) and Savić and Myrset (2022), in scaffolding these interactions and raising awareness about communicative goals was instrumental. The guidance helped illuminate the purposes of requests, enabling a deeper understanding and application of learned strategies.

For instance, Learner A<sub>14</sub> and Learner B<sub>14</sub> showed significant progress in producing English requests (see Table 12). Learner A<sub>14</sub> moved from using single-word utterances, such as ‘*T-shirt*’ and ‘*Ruler,*’ to producing complete CI requests that included modal verbs, such as ‘*May I have a blue T-shirt?*’ and ‘*Can I have a ruler?*’. This change suggests a shift from the *pre-basic* stage, which relies on naming and L1 usage, to the *unpacking* stage, characterized by a repertoire of CI requests (Kasper & Rose, 2002). Learner B<sub>14</sub> transitioned from single-word utterances (*pre-basic* stage) to producing CI requests (Between the *formulaic* and *unpacking* stages, as defined by Kasper and Rose (2002)), primarily using ‘*Can I have ...*’ with a single instance of ‘*May I have an eraser?*’ in the post-test. The classroom activities that promoted collaborative dialogue allowed Learner A<sub>14</sub> and Learner B<sub>14</sub> to practice and refine their request strategies in interactions.

In addition to expanding the learners’ pragmalinguistic repertoire through routines (Bruner, 1983; Cameron, 2019), the *request donuts* activity demonstrates how collaborative dialogue and scaffolding contributed to the YLLs’ pragmatic development. During this activity, the YLLs worked in pairs to create requests using modal verbs and external modifications. When challenges arose, partners offered support, fostering a co-construction of language as described by Swain (1997).

In summary, the combination of collaborative dialogue, teacher-led scaffolding, and targeted L2 pragmatics instruction created an environment conducive to the development of the YLLs’ ability to produce English requests. This progression aligns with Swain’s (1997) view of language learning as a socially mediated process and Vygotsky’s (1934/2012) belief that “instruction precedes development” (p. 196).

## 5.2 YLLs' Ability to Vary Within and Between Request Head Act Strategies

In order to answer the second research question, the requests produced were analyzed based on the head act strategies utilized. Building on the observed development in the YLLs' ability to produce English requests, further analysis revealed changes in their head act strategies. After the instruction, the study's YLLs demonstrated a more frequent use of CI requests, increasing from 76.7% to 95.1%, and showed an expanded use of modal verbs, such as *Can*, *May*, and *Could*. In Savić's (2015) study, second graders produced CI requests 42.9% of the time and fourth graders 81.6% of the time. In the present study, the YLLs showed an improvement between pre- and post-test, and also compared to the YLLs in Savić's (2015) study, which suggests that the instruction impacted the YLLs' ability to produce requests.

The shift also reflects the YLLs' ability to vary their use of modal verbs within their request strategies. Initially, Learner A<sub>4</sub> (see Table 13) relied exclusively on *Can* to frame their CI requests, suggesting that they were navigating between the *formulaic* and the *unpacking* stages of request development (Kasper & Rose, 2002). On the other hand, Learner B<sub>4</sub> (see Table 13), began with naming responses in the first role play and subsequently appeared to replicate CI request forms for the second role play. This suggests that Learner B<sub>4</sub> was at a place between the *pre-basic* and *formulaic* stages of request development before the intervention. However, after the intervention, in the post-test, both Learner A<sub>4</sub> and Learner B<sub>4</sub> utilized CI requests across almost all their interactions and displayed an enhanced understanding of how to vary their requests with modal verbs. The use of *May* alongside *Can* indicates a leap into the *unpacking* stage of request development.

Learners A<sub>12</sub> and B<sub>12</sub>'s progression from the pre- to the post-test (see Table 14) reflects the growth within the *unpacking* stage. Initially, both YLLs primarily utilized *Can* in their CI requests. This consistent use suggests a solid understanding and comfort with this modal verb, which is often one of the first modal verbs young learners acquire due to its frequency. The frequency of *Can* in their requests may also reflect the transfer from their L1, where the phrase '*Kan jeg få?*' [Can I have] is often used when requesting (Fretheim, 2005). The post-test shows a clear expansion in their use of modal verbs. Learner A<sub>12</sub> incorporates *May* and *Could* alongside *Can*, indicating the ability to vary language. Learner B<sub>12</sub> also exhibits this

advancement. While *Can* remains a part of their requests, the introduction of *Could* into their linguistic repertoire is notable. This is a significant step within the *unpacking* stage, moving from reliance on a single modal verb to a more strategic use of language (Kasper & Rose, 2002).

The development is further highlighted by the overall shift in modal verbs post-instruction. While still the preferred modal verb, *Can* decreased from 92.2% to 74.5%, *May* increased from 4.4% to 18.6%, and *Could* from 0.3% to 4.1%. This suggests not just an understanding of the function of modal verbs but a growing proficiency in applying them in their requests.

In contrast, Savić et al. (2021), where the YLLs had most likely not received L2 pragmatics instruction, the use of *May* and *Could* was primarily observed among fifth graders (7.7% and 6.4%, respectively) and less frequently among seventh graders (2.9% and 1.5%, respectively). Similarly, in Savić (2015), fourth graders predominantly used *Can* in 75.1% of CI requests and *Could* in 6.1%, while her sixth graders used *Can* for 73.1% and *Could* for 2.9% of their produced requests. Despite being younger than the learners in both studies, the YLLs in the present study showed a comparable or higher frequency of *May* and *Could* usage after instruction, indicating a significant increase in modal verb variation that even older learners without L2 pragmatics instruction did not achieve.

These results reinforce the notion that structured L2 pragmatics instruction can positively impact the development of request strategies, even in younger learners, leading to greater diversity and use of modal verbs.

Findings from Myrset (2022) support the impact of instruction on the use of modal verbs. Albeit older than the YLLs in the present study, the YLLs in Myrset's (2022) study demonstrated a marked increase in the variety of modal verbs after the instruction. *Can* decreased to 68.1% in the delayed post-test from an initial 81.9% in the pre-test, while *May* saw an increase from 8% in the pre-test to 12.8% in the delayed post-test and *Could* increased from 1.1% in the pre-test to 15.8% in the delayed post-test. This improvement, observed among 12 and 13-year-olds who share an educational context with the participants in the current study, underscores the positive influence that systematic instruction can have on the pragmatic abilities of YLLs, regardless of their age. Furthermore, these findings resonate with those from instructional studies focused on modal verb usage and pragmatic

development in other educational contexts globally, which collectively highlight the beneficial effects of structured language instruction on the pragmatic development of YLLs (Canbolat et al., 2021; Ishihara & Chiba, 2014). This wider perspective supports the main argument that the positive outcomes observed in Norway are consistent with global educational trends in L2 pragmatics instruction.

The findings indicate that the YLLs in the current study could, with structured L2 pragmatics instruction, reach a proficiency in request strategies that meets or exceeds that of older learners without such targeted intervention (Savić, 2015). This aligns with Bruner's (1983) theory on the importance of repetition for learning, suggesting that repeated exposure to language forms is essential for their assimilation into the YLLs' linguistic repertoire (Cameron, 2019). This was evident as *Can*, *Could*, *May*, and CI requests were introduced from the first lesson and revisited in all subsequent lessons.

The minimal use of NCI and direct requests observed in the post-test, accounting for 0.2% and 2.7%, respectively, may reflect the YLLs' perceptions of their appropriateness, influenced perhaps by the structured nature of the test environment or the instructional focus. The setting, designed as a role play activity with predetermined scenarios, potentially led the YLLs to select more straightforward CI requests to navigate these interactions. Additionally, the instructional focus on CI forms of requesting may have encouraged the YLLs to prioritize CI requests over more direct or NCI strategies.

This limited employment of specific strategies echoes findings by Savić and Myrset (2022), who noted that third graders often viewed direct requests negatively, with none being considered entirely appropriate. The third graders in Savić and Myrset's (2022) study showed uncertainty about the communicative function of NCI requests, with nearly all being appraised as *so-so*, signifying possible insecurity about their communicative value. This aligns with Myrset (2021), who argued that concept-based instruction provided the YLLs with tools to reflect on NCI requests as a communicative function, allowing them to recognize the appropriateness of these requests in context. Moreover, Myrset (2022) found that concept-based instruction facilitated the comprehension of NCI requests among young learners. For instance, one YLL's use of a hint, accompanied by the conceptual label 'Hint,' demonstrated that he had grasped their communicative function. While previous studies indicate that NCI requests can be challenging for YLLs to comprehend (Savić & Myrset,

2022), concept-based instruction enabled learners to reflect on NCI requests and their appropriateness.

Therefore, this pattern suggests that, while instructional intervention may enhance the use of specific request strategies, a more comprehensive approach that encourages the practical application of NCI requests could be instrumental in helping the YLLs recognize and appreciate the full range of strategies available.

### 5.3 YLLs' Ability to Use Internal and External Modification Strategies

The instruction during this study included a structured introduction and practice of internal and external modification strategies, such as the marker *Please*, the downtoner *Perhaps*, and grounders. Despite these efforts, these elements saw limited use among the YLLs. This could point to a possible barrier in integrating these into language use. The modest use of these strategies could be attributed to factors such as the YLLs' age, the short duration of the instructional period, or possibly the YLLs' perception that these features were not essential within the controlled test environment. Similar results were found by Myrset (2022), where downtoners and other modification strategies were also used sparingly after instruction.

Regarding instructional design, *Please* and *Perhaps* were introduced in the second lesson and revisited in the third lesson, providing two opportunities for practice. However, grounders were introduced in the last lesson and only practiced within that same session. This variance in exposure may have influenced the YLLs' ability to internalize and utilize them. The differing amounts of repetition for these elements, higher for modal verbs and lower for grounders, may explain some observed differences in their use. The same applies for Myrset (2022), where these elements were introduced later in the sequence of lessons. According to Bruner's (1983) theory on the importance of repetition for learning, these findings suggest that systematic instruction and more repetition may be necessary to effectively integrate these pragmatic elements into YLLs' communicative strategies (Cameron, 2019).

Moreover, Ishihara's (2013) study supports this perspective by demonstrating that learners often continued to rely on teacher scaffolding to produce the target linguistic formulae, even after multiple exposures. This reliance underscores the necessity for more sustained instructional efforts to ensure that YLLs can internalize such strategies. As learners require time and repeated practice to fully assimilate new linguistic forms and functions, the findings from both the current and Ishihara's (2013) study highlight the need for repetition and reinforcement in learning environments (Bruner, 1983, Cameron, 2019).

Furthermore, the test environment itself may not have necessitated the production of *Please*, given that the YLLs solved tasks with the researcher and a classmate, playing the role of themselves. These scenarios contrast with the scenarios in Savić et al. (2021), where YLLs produced requests on behalf of someone else ("What do you think she says?" (Savić et al., 2021, p. 120)) and based on situations presented in cartoon videos. As a result, sociopragmatic factors, such as the situatedness of request production, could have played a role in the limited use of *Please*.

L2 pragmatic competence consists of two fundamental dimensions: pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence. According to Kasper and Rose (2002), sociopragmatic competence refers to the knowledge "of the context factors under which particular strategic and linguistic choices are appropriate" (p.96). Understanding social norms, a key aspect of sociopragmatic competence, guides communicative behavior, helping YLLs effectively engage in cross-cultural exchanges (Ishihara & Cohen, 2014). For instance, conventionalized indirect requests with modal verbs are more common in Norwegian culture than explicit politeness markers like *Please* (Fretheim, 2005). This may explain why the YLLs did not perceive the necessity of using *Please* in the test. These reflections highlight the intertwined nature of pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics in request production. While the instructional period effectively introduces various linguistic forms, including the marker *Please*, sociopragmatic awareness is equally crucial for recognizing the appropriateness of these forms in specific contexts.

The marker *Please* in the produced requests was notably low throughout this study. In the pre-test, 94.8% of the requests did not feature *Please*, and this remained almost unchanged in the post-test at 93.4%. When *Please* was used, it primarily appeared with a *Can you/I* phrase, accounting for 4.9% of the requests in the pre-test and slightly increasing to 5.5% in the post-

test. Its combination with *May I* was minimal, seen in only 0.3% of pre-test requests and 0.7% in the post-test. This data indicates a minimal change in the usage of *Please* following the instructional period, which may relate to the timing of its introduction during the lessons, providing less repetition throughout the instruction or the test environment, where the contextual situatedness of requests may not have necessitated its use.

The use of *Please* contrasts with findings from Savić (2015), where it was used in 12.8% of the requests by second graders, solely in combination with *Can you/I*. Furthermore, in Savić et al. (2021) *Please* was used in 33.6% of the requests by the third graders, with its usage decreasing with age. Third graders highlighted the marker *Please* as a significant component in formulating requests in a separate study focusing on metapragmatic awareness (Savić, 2021). This reflects an awareness of its use in enhancing requests, aligning with the perspective of Canbolat et al. (2021), where a YLL noted, “[p]lease’ should be used to make the speech act appropriate while addressing a teacher” (p. 8). Interestingly, even without specific instruction on politeness or the marker *Please*, Learner A<sub>10</sub> in the pre-test remarked, ‘*Nå er jeg høflig [Now I am polite]*’ after using *Please* in almost all their *Can I* requests (see Table 15). This comment indicates a spontaneous application of social norms associated with politeness, maybe even reflective of their everyday language use. As Fretheim (2005) pointed out, “small children in Norway find it natural to experiment with a politeness particle resembling English *please* (even before they have acquired any English)” (p. 154). This behavior may reflect cultural norms. In the post-test, Learner A<sub>10</sub> used *May I* for half of their requests without including *Please*, while the other half were *Can I* requests where they continued to use the marker *Please*. This might suggest a perception of *May I* as inherently more polite than *Can I*.

The lower occurrence of *Please* in this study compared to Savić (2015) and Savić et al. (2021) might be influenced by several factors. The instructional emphasis in the current study may not have strongly highlighted the use of *Please*, or perhaps the YLLs did not perceive its necessity in the controlled test scenarios. Additionally, variations in the contextual settings of different studies could have contributed to the differing results, as the tasks in the current study involved solving them with the researcher and a classmate rather than producing requests on behalf of a character in cartoon videos. Furthermore, while the YLLs in the various studies (Savić, 2015, 2021; Savić et al., 2021) all come from the same country, differences in their educational experiences, including individual teaching styles and



instructional focus, could also play a significant role in their varying use of the marker *Please*. Exposure to English outside the classroom, through media, interaction with native speakers, or other extracurricular activities could also affect their familiarity and comfort with using this marker.

The results from this study revealed that *Perhaps* and *Maybe* were not present in the pre-test, aligning with the findings from Savić (2015), where second graders did not use downtoners and did not start to use *Maybe* before the fourth grade. Similarly, the third graders in Savić et al. (2021) did not utilize downtoners. In the current study, *Perhaps* was introduced during the second lesson alongside *Please*, while *Maybe* was not a part of the instruction, yet the post-test showed a slight emergence of these terms, with *Perhaps* appearing once and *Maybe* three times.

Among older learners, as mentioned in Myrset (2022), there was a limited use of downtoners, such as *Perhaps*, despite their inclusion in instruction. This pattern suggests that the introduction and contextual application of downtoners is a complex aspect of language learning that might require more constant and focused instructional efforts to be internalized effectively by YLLs of various ages. According to Bruner's (1983) theory on the importance of repetition of learning, repeated exposure to linguistic forms is essential for their assimilation into the YLLs' active language use (Cameron, 2019). The limited use of *Perhaps* and the emergence of *Maybe* without direct instruction in the current study could indicate a beginning awareness and experimental exploration of these forms by the YLLs. The incidental appearance of *Maybe* might also reflect the YLLs' attempts to experiment with language forms they encounter in naturalistic settings outside of the classroom.

These observations highlight that while young learners can recognize and experiment with new linguistic forms, effectively embedding them into their active language use may require more exposure and explicit reinforcement. This aligns with Vygotsky's (1934/2012) concept of the ZPD, which emphasizes that "instruction precedes development" (p. 196) and that collaborative dialogue between YLLs and more capable peers or adults is crucial for guiding them to reach their full potential. Classroom interactions where the YLLs were able to use *Perhaps* during scaffolded activities, such as when creating their own requests with the *request donuts*, further support this notion. This activity demonstrates the YLLs' capacity to apply new language tools when supported by instructional scaffolding. Similarly, Ishihara

(2013) observed that YLLs continued to need scaffolding to produce request forms, indicating a need for guided practice to obtain pragmatic competence. Bruner's (1983) theory on the importance of repetition for learning (Cameron, 2019) and Vygotsky's (1934/2012) insights into collaborative dialogue emphasize that structured activities play a role in this process. However, the limited use in the post-test suggests that transitioning these forms from structured activities to independent usage remains challenging.

The complete absence of grounders among the YLLs in this study suggests that task context and instructional timing can impact language use. Similar to findings in Savić's (2015) study, where second graders did not employ grounders, this may reflect the nature of the tasks involved. For example, the task involved dressing dolls, a scenario where explicitly justifying each clothing request (e.g., stating a need for a shirt before requesting one) might not seem necessary or natural. The data collection for both Savić (2015) and the present study may not have prompted the use of grounders, highlighting how task design can influence these choices. In contrast, the data collection methods used by Savić et al. (2021) might have been more conducive to the use of grounders in the requests produced by the YLLs as they were producing requests on behalf of a character in a cartoon, which may explain the presence of grounders among the third graders in their study.

The introduction of grounders only in the last instructional session further restricted opportunities for practice and repetition. This timing could explain the YLLs' minimal use of this strategy. This suggests that more consistent and earlier exposure may be necessary for effectively integrating these pragmatic elements into YLLs' communicative strategies.

The use of alerters among YLLs in this study may stem from indirect exposure or prior knowledge acquired from everyday interactions. Despite the absence of direct teaching in the use of alerters, there is evidence of their spontaneous adoption. A first name was present in 7% of the pre-test requests, while most of the requests produced, i.e., 93%, did not include an alerter. This initial usage might imply that the YLLs drew from social practices encountered in other contexts.

In the post-test, the use of the first name alerter slightly decreased to 5.7%, while the attention getter *Hi* emerged in 3.2% of the requests. This subtle introduction of *Hi* suggests that the YLLs might be assimilating forms they encountered through implicit instructional

cues, i.e., formulations they were exposed to in the input but were not the focus of instruction. This is exemplified in the picture book *Please, Mr. Panda*, where an interaction includes the phrase “Hello! May I have a donut?” (Antony, 2015, p. 18), as well as another YLL’s recreation of a similar request, ‘*Hello, Mr. Dragon. Can I have some sugar?*’, during a class activity in lesson two, which may have acted as an indirect model.

Comparatively, in Savić’s (2015) work, alerters were notably absent among second graders, with only a minimal emergence in the fourth graders’ requests. The presence of alerters in the present study’s pre-test data suggests a potential difference in the YLLs’ prior exposure. Furthermore, the third graders in Savić (2021) identified the alerter *Hi* as a significant element when producing requests, indicating a metapragmatic recognition of its communicative value.

Considering that two YLLs began to use *Hi* after being indirectly exposed to it during classroom activities suggests that indirect exposure can influence language use patterns. Therefore, incorporating structured instruction of alerters might be beneficial for a broader range of YLLs. This selective uptake by some YLLs underscores the potential of targeted teaching to enhance pragmatic competence more uniformly across the class. The YLLs’ uses of *Hello* in structured classroom activities and the third graders’ emphasis on the importance of *Hi* in formulating requests, as reported by Savić (2021), support the idea that strategic instruction on alerters could contribute positively to their communicative skill set.

## 5.4 Limitations

This study provides valuable insights into the instructional impact on the pragmalinguistic development of third-grade Norwegian EFL learners, but its findings must be interpreted in light of its limitations. Firstly, the small sample size limits the generalization of these results across a broader population (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, as cited in Dörnyei, 2007). Without a control group, it is also challenging to conclusively attribute the observed improvements solely to the instructional interventions. The relatively short duration of the study and the absence of longitudinal follow-up restrict the understanding of the long-term effects and sustainability of the instruction provided (Mackey & Gass, 2022).

Additionally, the results are influenced by the cultural and educational context of Norway, which may not be representative of YLLs from different backgrounds. This can impact the transferability of the findings to other educational systems or cultural settings. Variations in instructional methods and the effectiveness of individual teachers, which were not accounted for in this study, can significantly influence the YLLs' outcomes. Furthermore, the participant group's homogeneity and the task design's specificity might not fully represent the diverse capabilities and scenarios encountered in broader educational settings.

In terms of methodological limitations, using a single data collection instrument (role play) may not have provided a comprehensive insight into the YLLs' pragmatic competence, especially their sociopragmatic choices. Savić (2015) highlighted the importance of using various data sources, including qualitative ones, to better understand participants' sociopragmatic choices and pragmatic development. The role play situations used for data collection were limited in scope, focusing primarily on dressing dolls and selecting school supplies, which may not comprehensively capture the full range of request strategies that the YLLs could potentially employ. The controlled nature of these scenarios and the specific classroom dynamics could have influenced the YLLs' responses, potentially leading to an underrepresentation of their broader pragmatic abilities.

Lastly, potential influences from the YLLs' L1 must be considered when evaluating the results. For instance, in Norwegian culture, requests often utilize conventionalized indirectness, typically involving the modal verb corresponding to *Can* in English (Fretheim, 2005). Furthermore, there is no direct Norwegian equivalent to the English *Please* (Fretheim, 2005), and this cultural norm may have impacted the YLLs' request strategies during the study.

In acknowledging these limitations, this study does not diminish its value but rather frames its contribution within a realistic scope, suggesting pathways for future research to explore. By addressing these gaps, future studies can enhance our understanding of how different variables influence language acquisition and pragmalinguistic competence in young EFL learners.

## 6. Conclusion

This research study has aimed to explore the teachability of English requests to learners in the third year of elementary school. By investigating the impact of L2 pragmatics instruction on these learners' ability to produce requests, this study contributes to the relatively small number of studies exploring L2 pragmatics instruction with YLLs in Norway (Myrset, 2021, 2022). The overarching aim was to determine the effectiveness of L2 pragmatics instruction on third-grade Norwegian EFL learners' request production capabilities. Savić (2015) called for future research into “the effects of [L2] pragmatics instruction with young [Norwegian] learners and determining which types of instruction yield the best results” (p. 465). In response, this study was guided by aims to assess the influence of instruction on learners' abilities to produce English requests, to vary their use of request head act strategies, and to employ internal and external modification strategies effectively. The findings synthesize how these instructional interventions influenced the YLLs' pragmatic development, offering valuable insights into the dynamics of language learning and pragmatic development within a classroom setting.

### 6.1 Summary of Findings

The instructional intervention designed for this study enhanced the YLLs' ability to produce and vary English request strategies, as evidenced by the progress observed from the pre- to the post-test results. In the pre-test, the YLLs predominantly used simpler request forms, such as naming and L1 or CI requests utilizing *Can*. However, in the post-test, the use of naming and L1 had decreased and only appeared in a few instances. Additionally, there was an expansion in the variety of modal verbs employed in the CI requests. The findings underscore the benefits of a structured, repetitive, and contextually rich instructional approach in fostering pragmatic competence among young Norwegian EFL learners.

The increase in the use of CI requests and the variety of modal verbs such as *Can*, *May*, and *Could* underscore a development in the YLLs' pragmatic abilities. This progression aligns with the finding of Myrset (2022), where targeted instruction led to a greater diversity in request strategies among YLLs' pragmatic abilities. In contrast, the YLLs in Savić (2015), who had not undergone any targeted instruction in L2 pragmatics, primarily relied on CI

requests with *Can you/I* phrases. Despite being younger than Savić's (2015) older learners, the YLLs in the present study demonstrated a more diverse range of request strategies, including modal verbs like *May* and *Could*.

The findings from this study underscore the impact that L2 pragmatics instruction can have within EFL curricula, particularly when implemented from an early age. While previous curricula, like LK06, have set similar learning objectives, the success of these goals largely hinges on the teachers' understanding and execution of targeted instructional strategies. This study demonstrated that with systematic and nuanced teaching approaches, even young learners, such as third graders, can enhance their ability to employ diverse request strategies. Therefore, the effectiveness of these instructional efforts confirms the need for integrating L2 pragmatics into early education and highlights the essential role of teacher competence and training. Ensuring that educators are well-prepared to focus on pragmatic elements in their teaching could significantly influence the outcomes of these educational initiatives. Moreover, research indicates that teachers often find pragmatics a challenging area to navigate, leading to a theory-practice gap where they possess theoretical knowledge but struggle with practical application (Myrset & McConachy, 2023). Myrset and McConachy (2023) argue "that teacher education should probe teachers' own beliefs about pragmatics and its instruction" (p. 310). Therefore, future efforts should consider the importance of teacher training in L2 pragmatics to maximize the potential benefits of L2 pragmatics instruction for young learners.

## 6.2 Pedagogical Implications

The findings from this study support the inclusion of targeted L2 pragmatics instruction within EFL curricula, aligning with the curriculum aims stated in LK20. This curriculum recognizes the importance of pragmatics in developing communicative competence. For instance, by the end of second grade, YLLs are expected to "ask and answer simple questions, follow simple instructions and use some polite expressions" (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019a) and advance to more complex communicative skills by seventh grade (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019c). This progression underscores the need for early and structured interventions in pragmatic elements to enhance young learners' ability to employ various request strategies effectively.

However, the practical integration of L2 pragmatics into English curricula remains limited, particularly for younger learners. The results of this study suggest that even third graders can benefit from L2 pragmatics instruction. The early exposure not only meets but also extends the curricular goals by fostering an understanding of language use that enhances the YLLs' real-world communicative interactions.

Moreover, teachers' interest in this study's outcomes suggests the potential for developing sharing cultures within educational communities, often called communities of practice (Wenger, 1998). Establishing such communities can facilitate ongoing professional development and the exchange of pedagogical strategies, particularly in the domain of L2 pragmatics. This collaborative approach can contribute to the evolution of teaching methodologies and help embed L2 pragmatics instruction more deeply within EFL teaching practices.

In conclusion, this thesis contributes to the field of language education by demonstrating that pragmatic aspects of the L2 are teachable and are critical for enhancing YLLs' communicative competence. This aligns with and advances the curriculum goals set by Norway's educational authorities, highlighting the potential for instructional interventions to influence language acquisition.

## 6.3 Potential Avenues for Future Research

While this study has provided valuable insights into the influence of L2 pragmatics instruction on the request strategies of third-grade Norwegian EFL learners, it has primarily addressed pragmalinguistic competence. An area that warrants further investigation is the sociopragmatic dimension of L2 pragmatic competence. Sociopragmatic competence involves a deeper understanding of the social norms and context factors that dictate the appropriateness of communicative acts within a community (Ishihara & Cohen, 2014). This competence is important for YLLs, especially when engaging in cross-cultural communication, where the nuances of social norms can greatly influence the effectiveness of language use (Kasper & Rose, 2002). Future research could explore how instruction can explicitly integrate sociopragmatic competence into classroom activities. This could include

developing teaching materials and activities that challenge the YLLs to consider the social contexts and their impact on language choice, thereby enhancing their ability to navigate social interactions more effectively.

In particular, research could examine the interplay of sociopragmatic variables such as age, gender, social status, and intensity of social interactions in the development of YLLs' sociopragmatic competence (Ishihara & Cohen, 2014). This research could build upon foundational studies like the one by Taguchi and Kim (2016), who demonstrated how contextual factors like power, distance, and the degree of imposition influence request production. They categorized requests based on the level of imposition, ranging from high to low. Given that pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatic competencies are intertwined (Kasper & Rose, 2002), each influencing the realization and reception of communicative acts, a more focused investigation into the sociopragmatic aspects could provide a fuller understanding of the challenges and opportunities in EFL learning environments. A particularly valuable approach could be to encourage learners to explain their linguistic choices during these activities. This practice would allow them to verbalize their understanding of sociopragmatic context, deepening their metapragmatic awareness, a key aspect defined as “the ability to verbalize reflections on linguistic forms, contextual features, and/or their interplay” (Myrset & Savić, 2021, p. 165). This could greatly enhance their ability to navigate social interaction more effectively by explicitly linking theory with practical application.

Exploring these dimensions might also reveal how sociocultural norms like social status, distance, and intensity affect language use (Ishihara & Cohen, 2014). Such research could contribute by supporting the development of more effective, contextually sensitive L2 pragmatics instruction. As suggested by studies like Savić (2021), targeted sociopragmatic interventions have the potential to enrich language education, making a compelling case for their inclusion in future research.

As discussed in the literature review, the final stage of L2 request development, *fine-tuning*, highlights the YLLs' ability to adapt their requests. At this point, the YLLs fine-tune the requestive force of their language, aligning it with the specific participants, their goals, and the context in which the interaction occurs (Kasper & Rose, 2002). This stage is not just a demonstration of pragmalinguistic competence but also a reflection of sociopragmatic development. Savić (2021) suggests that YLLs as young as nine are able to verbalize their



reflections on the relationship between language and context, albeit in simple terms, thus evidencing the emergence of metapragmatic awareness. This finding supports the potential for introducing the sociopragmatic dimension in L2 pragmatics instruction in the early years of elementary education. Therefore, future research could explore how sociopragmatic instruction might affect the appropriateness and effectiveness of request strategies in various sociocultural contexts, with a particular focus on early elementary education.

Metapragmatic awareness, the ability to reflect on and analyze the pragmatic aspects of language (Myrset & Savić, 2021), is important for effective communication. McConachy (2018) suggests that this awareness entails understanding specific pragmatic norms and develops into a reflective capacity that allows learners to contemplate the interactional consequences of their linguistic choices. However, developing such awareness in YLLs, especially those under eight years old, can be challenging due to their limited logical reasoning and abstract concepts (Ishihara & Chiba, 2014). Despite these developmental constraints, YLLs are still capable “of reflecting on and discussing language use” (Savić & Myrset, 2022, p. 115). This capability implies that introducing such complex topics in the classroom could be beneficial, aiding in the early development of metapragmatic awareness.

Although this study incorporated awareness raising activities as part of the instruction, it did not test metapragmatic awareness. Future research could investigate how instruction affects metapragmatic awareness and L2 pragmatic competence development. Researchers could examine how awareness raising activities, such as guided reflections and discussions about pragmatic forms, could complement instruction to enhance YLLs’ understanding and application of request strategies. This dual approach might reveal new insights into how structured instruction can foster a deeper understanding of the social norms that guide language use.

## 6.4 Final Thoughts

In conclusion, this thesis underscores the role of structured L2 pragmatics instruction in enhancing the communicative competencies of young EFL learners. It highlights the potential for instructional interventions to influence language acquisition and points towards the necessity for pragmatic awareness in early language education. As EFL instruction continues

to evolve, the integration of pragmatic competence into teaching methodologies remains a critical area for ongoing research and curriculum design.

Building on the suggestions for future research, further research into L2 pragmatics could provide essential insights for enhancing second/foreign language teaching. The present study provides evidence that L2 pragmatics can indeed be effectively taught to young learners. By engaging them in discussions and activities focused on pragmatic aspects of communication, such as request strategies that range from direct to indirect, the YLLs gain opportunities for meaningful language development.

Reflecting on the pivotal role of English as a global language, this thesis aligns with the current pedagogical focus on preparing the YLLs for intercultural communication. This theme is increasingly relevant given the diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds encountered in global interactions. Heggernes (2022) emphasizes that the objective of language teaching is evolving to facilitate the YLLs' ability to engage effectively across cultural boundaries. This prepares them for the globalized interactions that define modern communication. The Norwegian curriculum further supports this, stating, “[b]y learning English, the pupils can experience different societies and cultures by communicating with others around the world, regardless of linguistic or cultural background” (Ministry of Education and Research, 2017). By integrating L2 pragmatics instruction, the YLLs are equipped to understand and actively participate in such multicultural settings.

Finally, teaching L2 pragmatics plants what Ishihara (2013) refers to as “pragmatic seeds” (p. 146), laying the foundational understanding and using English as an L2 in sensitive and nuanced ways. This study has demonstrated how structured instruction enhances third graders' pragmalinguistic competencies, specifically in their ability to produce, vary, and modify English requests, addressing the research questions set forth. Such early instruction meets the curriculum's objectives for after Year 4 and prepares YLLs for effective communication across diverse cultural contexts. By highlighting the teachability of pragmatic elements to young Norwegian EFL learners, this study fills a gap in existing research and opens avenues for further research into integrating this competence in early language education.

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## 8. Appendices

### Appendix 1 – Sikt

#### Appendix 1.1 – Consent Form

##### Vil ditt barn delta i forskningsprosjektet

###### *Undervisning for å Utvikle Elevers Kompetanse i Andrespråkpragmatikk*

Dette er et spørsmål til deg om å delta i et forskningsprosjekt hvor formålet er å undersøke og forstå påvirkningen av undervisning for å utvikle språkferdigheter blant elever i engelsk som fremmedspråk. I dette skrevet gir vi deg informasjon om målene for prosjektet og hva deltakelse vil innebære for deg.

###### **Formål**

Prosjektet mitt handler om hvordan barn i tredje klasse lærer å kommunisere på engelsk, mer spesifikt hvordan elevene ordlegger seg avhengig av hva de ønsker å oppnå og hvem de snakker til. Vi skal se på om og hvordan et undervisningsopplegg, som fokuserer på hvordan man bruker høflighets-uttrykk og høflighets-fraser på engelsk, hjelper barna til å gjøre dette på egenhånd.

Studien er begrenset til tredjeklassinger og er satt innenfor rammene av det norske skolesystemet og kompetansemålene i Kunnskapsløftet 2020, for eksempel at eleven skal kunne «bruke noen vanlige småord, høflighetsuttrykk og enkle fraser og setninger for å få hjelp til å forstå og bli forstått» etter 4. trinn. Prosjektets fokus er en viktig del av elevenes kompetanse innen kommunikasjon og har som mål å fylle et gap i eksisterende kunnskap knyttet til undervisning på hvordan man bruker språket i ulike situasjoner. Dette er en tematikk som har blitt enda mer tydeliggjort etter den nye læreplanen kom i 2020.

Prosjektet inneholder tre uker med undervisning som vil foregå i engelsktimen. Som pedagogiske verktøy vil det bli brukt engelske bildebøker, interaktive aktiviteter og rollespill. I tillegg vil det foregå en før- og etter-vurdering. I denne før- og etter-vurderingen vil elevene i par ha et rollespill sammen med meg. Dette rollespillet vil tas opp på lydbånd, og det er kun jeg og min veileder som vil ha tilgang til disse dataene.

Problemstillingen for prosjektet er: *Hvilken innflytelse har undervisning i andrespråkpragmatikk på ferdighetene i å lage forespørsler blant tredjeklasseelever som har engelsk som fremmedspråk?*

Prosjektet er knyttet til en masteroppgave i engelsk, som en del av min lærerutdanning.

###### **Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?**

*Anders Otterbech Jølbo Myrset, Universitetet i Stavanger*, er veileder på masteroppgaven og ansvarlig for prosjektet.

###### **Hvorfor får du spørsmål om å delta?**

Du får spørsmål om å delta da ditt barn er innenfor den utvalgte elevgruppen for dette masterprosjektet.

###### **Hva innebærer det for deg å delta?**

Hvis barnet ditt velger å delta i prosjektet, innebærer det at ditt barn vil delta i et rollespill sammen med meg og en medelev ditt barn er trygg på. Det vil bli tatt lydopptak av rollespillet, mer informasjon om dette vil komme.

Foreldre kan få tilgang til å se rollespillet på forhånd ved å ta kontakt med masterstudenten eller veileder.

###### **Det er frivillig å delta**

Det er frivillig å delta i prosjektet. Hvis du velger å delta, kan du når som helst trekke samtykket

tilbake uten å oppgi noen grunn. Alle dine personopplysninger vil da bli slettet. Det vil ikke ha noen negative konsekvenser for deg hvis du ikke vil delta eller senere velger å trekke deg. Det vil ikke påvirke ditt barns forhold til klassen eller læreren.

Forskningen jeg gjennomfører er utformet slik at den ikke vil påvirke den ordinære undervisningen i engelskfaget. Alle elever forventes å delta fullt ut i undervisningen, uavhengig av om de velger å samtykke til forskningsdelen eller ikke. Det vil ikke bli samlet inn data i selve undervisningssituasjonen, og de som ikke ønsker å delta i forskningsaktivitetene vil bli tilbudt et alternativt opplegg etter undervisningens slutt. Dette sikrer at alle elever kan dra nytte av undervisningen, samtidig som det respekteres dersom noen velger å ikke delta i forskningsdelen av prosjektet. Jeg håper likevel at flest mulig vil delta, både fordi det vil gjøre prosjektet enda mer lærerikt, men også fordi dette vil kunne gjøre det mulig å vurdere hver enkelt elevs muntlige ferdigheter og fordi hver enkelt elev vil ha utbytte av å delta.

### **Ditt personvern – hvordan vi oppbevarer og bruker dine opplysninger**

Vi vil bare bruke opplysningene om deg til formålene vi har fortalt om i dette skrevet. Vi behandler opplysningene konfidensielt og i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

- Det er kun *Vibeke Klovning* og veileder, *Anders Otterbech Jølbo Myrset*, som vil ha tilgang til opplysninger.
- Tiltak jeg vil gjøre for å sikre at ingen uvedkommende får tilgang til personopplysningene:
  - Jeg vil erstatte ditt barns navn med en kode som lagres på egen navneliste adskilt fra øvrige data.
  - Jeg vil lagre lydopptak på en godkjent forskningsserver, *Nettskjema* og *Nettskjema-Diktafon*.
  - Jeg vil lagre alt datamaterialet på en godkjent forskningsserver, *Nettskjema* som er en løsning som tilbyr en sikker innsamling og lagring av data.
  - Alt av datamaterialet vil være innelåst/kryptert.

Deltakerne vil ikke kunne gjenkjennes i publikasjoner. Ingen personopplysninger vil bli publisert.

Vi er underlagt taushetsplikt og opplysningene vil bli behandlet konfidensielt.

### **Hva skjer med personopplysningene dine når forskningsprosjektet avsluttes?**

Prosjektet vil etter planen avsluttes 31. desember, 2024. Datamaterialet med ditt barns personopplysninger vil bli slettet etter prosjektet er godkjent.

### **Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?**

Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke.

På oppdrag fra *Universitetet i Stavanger* har Sikt – Kunnskapssektorens tjenesteleverandør vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

### **Dine rettigheter**

Så lenge du kan identifiseres i datamaterialet, har du rett til:

- innsyn i hvilke opplysninger vi behandler om deg, og å få utlevert en kopi av opplysningene
- å få rettet opplysninger om deg som er feil eller misvisende
- å få slettet personopplysninger om deg
- å sende klage til Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger

Hvis du har spørsmål til studien, eller ønsker å vite mer om eller benytte deg av dine rettigheter, ta kontakt med:

- *Universitetet i Stavanger* ved *Anders Otterbech Jølbo Myrset*, [anders.myrset@uis.no](mailto:anders.myrset@uis.no) og *Vibeke Klovning*, [v.klovning@stud.uis.no](mailto:v.klovning@stud.uis.no)
  - Vårt personvernombud: *Rolf Jegervatn*, e-post: [rolf.jegervatn@uis.no](mailto:rolf.jegervatn@uis.no) eller telefon: 51 83 30 81
- Hvis du har spørsmål knyttet til vurderingen som er gjort av personverntjenestene fra Sikt, kan du ta kontakt via:
- Epost: [personverntjenester@sikt.no](mailto:personverntjenester@sikt.no) eller telefon: 73 98 40 40.

Med vennlig hilsen,

*Anders Myrset*  
(Veileder)

*Vibeke Klovning*

---

## Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om prosjektet *Undervisning for å Utvikle Elevers Kompetanse i Andrespråkspragmatikk* og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål. Jeg samtykker for barnet mitt:

- å delta i *rollespill med lydopptak*

Jeg samtykker til at mine opplysninger behandles frem til prosjektet er avsluttet

---

(Signert av foresatte, dato)

(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

## Appendix 1.2 – Sikt Approval



### Vurdering av behandling av personopplysninger

**Referansenummer**  
264871

**Vurderingstype**  
Standard

**Dato**  
22.12.2023

**Tittel**

Exploring the influence of instruction on request production for third grade EFL students

**Behandlingsansvarlig institusjon**

Universitetet i Stavanger / Fakultet for utdanningsvitenskap og humaniora / Institutt for grunnskolelærerutdanning, idrett og spesialpedagogikk

**Prosjektansvarlig**

Anders Otterbech Jølbo Myrset

**Student**

Vibeke Klovning

**Prosjektperiode**

29.11.2023 - 31.12.2024

**Kategorier personopplysninger**

Alminnelige

**Lovlig grunnlag**

Samtykke (Personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 bokstav a)

Behandlingen av personopplysningene er lovlig så fremt den gjennomføres som oppgitt i meldeskjemaet. Det lovlige grunnlaget gjelder til 31.12.2024.

[Meldeskjema](#)

**Kommentar**

OM VURDERINGEN

Sikt har en avtale med institusjonen du studerer ved. Denne avtalen innebærer at vi skal gi deg råd slik at behandlingen av personopplysninger i prosjektet ditt er lovlig etter personvernregelverket. Vi har nå vurdert at du har lovlig grunnlag til å behandle personopplysningene.

**SAMTYKKE SOM BEHANDLINGSGRUNNLAG**

Lovlig grunnlag for behandlingen av personopplysninger vil være den registrertes samtykke, jf. personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 a).

**KOMMENTAR TIL INFORMASJONSSKRIV**

Ber deg om å legge til oppdatert og korrekt kontaktinformasjon til UiS sitt personvernombud: Rolf Jegervatn. e-post: [rolf.jegervatn@uis.no](mailto:rolf.jegervatn@uis.no). tlf: 51833081. Du trenger ikke laste opp nytt informasjonsskriv når du har gjort dette.

**FØLG DIN INSTITUSJONS RETNINGSLINJER**

Det er institusjonen du er student ved som avgjør hvordan du må lagre og sikre data i ditt prosjekt og hvilke databehandlere du kan bruke. Husk å bruke leverandører som din institusjon har avtale med (f.eks. ved skylagring, nettspørreskjema, videosamtale el.).

Personverntjenester legger til grunn at behandlingen oppfyller kravene i personvernforordningen om riktighet (art. 5.1 d), integritet og konfidensialitet (art. 5.1 f) og sikkerhet (art. 32).

**MELD VESENTLIGE ENDRINGER**

Dersom det skjer vesentlige endringer i behandlingen av personopplysninger, kan det være nødvendig å melde dette til oss ved å oppdatere meldeskjemaet. Se våre nettsider om hvilke endringer du må melde: <https://sikt.no/melde-endringer-i-meldeskjema>

**OPPFØLGING AV PROSJEKTET**

Vi vil følge opp ved planlagt avslutning for å avklare om behandlingen av personopplysningene er avsluttet.

Lykke til med prosjektet!

## Appendix 2 – Lesson One

### Appendix 2.1 – Lesson Plan

<b>Subject:</b> English			
<b>Grade:</b> 3 <sup>rd</sup> grade			
<b>Timing:</b> 1 hour per week for 3 weeks			
<b>Competence aims:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- “Use a number of common small words, polite expressions, and simple phrases and sentences to obtain help to understand and be understood.”</li> </ul> (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019b)			
<b>Learning aims:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I can ask for things using <i>Can, May, and Could</i></li> </ul>			
<b>Week:</b>	<b>Time:</b>	<b>Activity:</b>	<b>Materials:</b>
1	10 min	<b><u>Input 1.1: Read aloud</u></b> 1. Introduce the book: <i>Please, Mr. Panda</i> . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Look at the cover: What do we see? What do we think is going to happen in the book?</li> <li>- Look at the endpapers. What do we see?</li> </ul> 2. Read the book aloud. Make the book interactive throughout the reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Page 2: ‘Do you think Mr. Panda will give the penguin the donut, and why?’</li> <li>- Page 4: ‘Do we know why Mr. Panda changed his mind?’</li> <li>- Page 8: ‘Why do you think Mr. Panda changed his mind after the skunk answered?’</li> <li>- Page 12: ‘Do you think Mr. Panda will give the whale a donut, and why?’</li> <li>- Page 21: ‘Do we know why Mr. Panda gave the lemur the donuts?’</li> </ul>	<i>Please Mr. Panda</i> by Steve Antony
	5 min	<b><u>Awareness Raising 1.1: Post-reading questions</u></b> 1. Show pages 11-12: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What is the whale trying to achieve?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>The whale wants a donut.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul> 2. Show pages 17-18: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What is the lemur trying to achieve?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>The lemur wants a donut.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul> 3. Show pages 12 and 18 side by side.	<i>Please, Mr. Panda:</i> Pages 11-12 and 17-18

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Both the whale and the lemur want donuts, but they have different approaches to requesting them.</li> </ul>	
3 min	<p><b><u>Practice 1.1a:</u></b></p> <p>Practice the request formulations shown in the book.</p> <p>1. Show pages 1-2: The teacher reads Mr. Panda’s line, the learners read the penguin’s line.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teacher: “Would you like a donut?” (Antony, 2015, p. 1).</li> <li>- Learners: “Give me the pink one” (Antony, 2015, p. 2).</li> </ul> <p>2. Show pages 5-6: The teacher reads Mr. Panda’s line, the learners read the skunk’s line.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teacher: “Would you like a donut?” (Antony, 2015, p. 5)</li> <li>- Learners: “I want the blue one and the yellow one” (Antony, 2015, p. 6).</li> </ul> <p>3. Show pages 11-12 The teacher reads Mr. Panda’s line, the learners read the whale’s line.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teacher: “Would you like a donut?” (Antony, 2015, p. 11)</li> <li>- Learners: “I want them all! Then bring me some more” (Antony, 2015, p. 12).</li> </ul> <p>4. Show pages 16-20: The teacher reads Mr. Panda’s line, the learners read the lemur’s line.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teacher: “Would anyone else like a donut?” (Antony, 2015, p. 16)</li> <li>- Learners: “Hello! May I have a donut? Please Mr. Panda” (Antony, 2015 pp. 18 - 20).</li> </ul>	<p><i>Please, Mr. Panda:</i></p> <p>Pages 1-2, 5-6, 11-12, and 16-20</p>	
3 min	<p><b><u>Input 1.2: Modal verbs</u></b></p> <p>Introduce five conventionally indirect requests, employing the modal verbs <i>can</i>, <i>could</i>, and <i>may</i>.</p> <p>1. Put up the donuts on the white board.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Create the first request: ‘Can I have a donut?’</li> <li>- Create the second request: ‘Can you give me a donut?’</li> <li>- Create the third request: ‘Could I have a donut?’</li> <li>- Create the fourth request: ‘Could you give me a donut?’</li> <li>- Create the fifth request: ‘May I have a donut?’</li> </ul>	<p><i>Request donuts</i></p> <p>– Teacher set (Appendix 2.2)</p>	

5 min	<p><b><u>Awareness Raising 1.2:</u></b></p> <p>What are we trying to achieve with all these different formulations?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- They all want a donut, but there are different ways to ask for one.</li> <li>- <i>Can I</i> or <i>Could I</i> (speaker or hearer dominance)</li> </ul>	<p><i>Request donuts</i></p> <p>– Teacher set (Appendix 2.2)</p>
2 min	<p><b><u>Practice 1.2a: Practice reading out the words and the utterances</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In unison, say the first request two times.</li> <li>- In unison, say the second request two times.</li> <li>- In unison, say the third request two times.</li> <li>- In unison, say the fourth request two times.</li> <li>- In unison, say the fifth request two times.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Request donuts</i></p> <p>– Teacher set (Appendix 2.2)</p>
10 min	<p><b><u>Practice 1.2b: Request production</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In pairs, the learners will receive a bag with 10 <i>request donuts</i>.</li> <li>2. The learners will produce requests with the words that are written on the donuts.</li> <li>3. Both learners will read their request to an adult in the classroom. The adult will take a picture of their request.</li> <li>4. The learners will repeat this process for 5-10 minutes</li> </ol>	<p><i>Request donuts</i></p> <p>– learner set (Appendix 2.3)</p>
10 min	<p><b><u>Practice 1.2c: Role play</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Split the class into groups of 4.</li> <li>2. One learner is Mr. Panda, one learner is a whale, one learner is a penguin, and the last learner is a lemur.</li> <li>3. The different animals take turns requesting a donut from Mr. Panda.</li> <li>4. Mr. Panda produces request responses. E.g. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1: ‘Could I have a donut?’</li> <li>2: ‘Of Course! Here you go.’</li> <li>1: ‘Thank you.’</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<p>Donuts (Appendix 2.4)</p> <p>Group rotation (Appendix 2.5)</p>



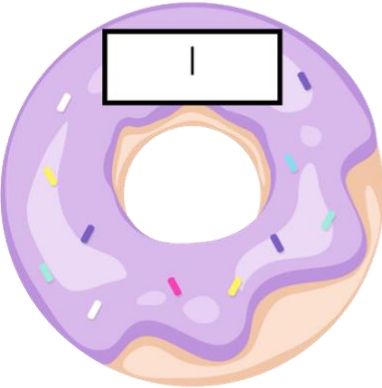
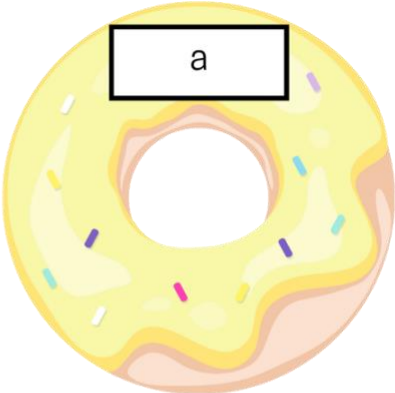
Appendix 2.2 – Request Donuts – Teacher set<sup>8</sup>



<sup>8</sup> The images of the donuts have been scaled down to a diameter of 4,2 cm from the original 20 cm, with a scale factor of 0.21.

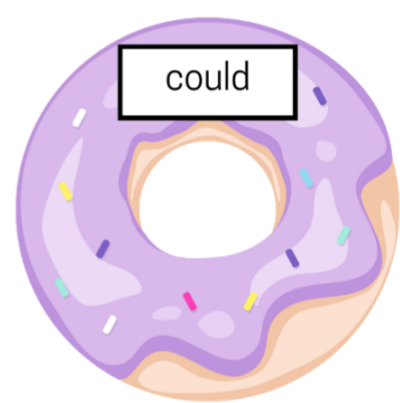


*Appendix 2.3 – Request Donuts – Learner set<sup>9</sup>*



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<sup>9</sup>Images resized from A4 dimensions to a height of 18.39 cm and a width of 13 cm, with a uniform scale factor of approximately 0.619.



















*Appendix 2.4 – Donuts for Role Play<sup>10</sup>*



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<sup>10</sup> Image resized from A4 dimensions to a height of 18.39 cm and a width of 13 cm, with a uniform scale factor of approximately 0.619.

## Appendix 2.5 – Role Play – Group Rotation

<p><b>Roles:</b></p>  1  2  3  4	<p><b>Roles:</b></p>  1  2  3  4
<p><b>Roles:</b></p>  1  2  3  4	<p><b>Roles:</b></p>  1  2  3  4

11

<sup>11</sup> Illustrations from Antony (2015). Used with permission.

## Appendix 3 – Lesson Two

### Appendix 3.1 – Lesson Plan

<b>Subject:</b> English				
<b>Grade:</b> 3 <sup>rd</sup> grade				
<b>Timing:</b> 1 hour per week for 3 weeks				
<b>Competence aims:</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- “Use a number of common small words, polite expressions, and simple phrases and sentences to obtain help to understand and be understood.”</li> </ul> (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019b)				
<b>Learning aims:</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I can ask for things using <i>Can, May, Could, Perhaps, and Please</i></li> </ul>				
<b>Week:</b>	<b>Time:</b>	<b>Activity:</b>	<b>Materials:</b>	
2	10 min	<b><u>Input 2.1:</u> Read aloud</b> 1. Introduce the book: <i>George and the Dragon</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Look at the cover:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What do we see?</li> <li>- What do we think will happen in the book?</li> </ul> </li> </ul> 2. Read the book aloud. Make the book interactive throughout the reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Page 23: ‘Do you think the dragon will give George some sugar?’</li> <li>- Page 24: ‘Think back to the last two weeks, what other ways could George have asked the dragon for sugar?’ Write down some of the requests the learners produce.</li> </ul>	<i>George and the Dragon</i> by Chris Wormell	
	5 min	<b><u>Awareness Raising 2.1:</u> Post-reading questions</b> Compare how a request was made in <i>George and the Dragon</i> to the requests the learners previously produced. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Show page 23 and on the board write two of the requests the learners produced.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What is George trying to achieve?</li> <li>- Do you think George would have gotten the same response if he would have asked the dragon the way we said?</li> </ul> </li> </ol>		<i>George and the Dragon:</i> Page 23
	3 min	<b><u>Practice 2.1a:</u></b> Practice the request formulations shown in the book. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Show page 23. The teacher is a narrator, the learners read George’s line.</li> </ol>		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teacher: “George had no sugar for his tea. He went over to his neighbor to ask for some.” (Wormell, 2006, p. 23)</li> <li>- Learners: “I say, you couldn’t loan me a couple lumps of sugar, could you?” (Wormell, 2006, p. 23).</li> </ul>	
5 min	<p><b><u>Input 2.2: Modifiers</u></b></p> <p>1. Pull up the <i>request donuts</i> on the white board.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Create the first request: ‘Can I have a ball?’</li> <li>- Create the second request: ‘Can I please have a ball?’</li> <li>- Create the third request: ‘Could you give me a ball?’</li> <li>- Create the fourth request: ‘Could you perhaps give me a ball?’</li> <li>- Show how we can add <i>May</i> and <i>Can</i> to these requests</li> </ul>	<p><i>Request donuts</i></p> <p>– Teacher set (Appendix 3.2)</p>
3 min	<p><b><u>Awareness Raising 2.2:</u></b></p> <p>What are we trying to achieve?</p> <p>What does adding the word <i>perhaps</i> and <i>please</i> do to the request?</p> <p>Do we remember how in <i>Please, Mr. Panda</i>, the lemur said “Please, Mr. Panda” (Antony, 2015, p. 20)?</p>	<p><i>Request donuts</i></p> <p>– Teacher set (Appendix 3.2)</p>
3 min	<p><b><u>Practice 2.2a: Practice reading out the words and the utterances</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In unison, say the first request two times.</li> <li>- In unison, say the second request two times.</li> <li>- In unison, say the third request two times.</li> <li>- In unison, say the fourth request two times.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Request donuts</i></p> <p>– Teacher set (Appendix 3.2)</p>
10 min	<p><b><u>Practice 2.2b: Request production</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In pairs, the learners will receive a bag with 16 <i>request donuts</i>.</li> <li>2. The learners will produce requests with the words that are written on the donuts.</li> <li>3. Both learners will read their request to an adult in the classroom. The adult will take a picture of their request.</li> <li>4. The learners will repeat this process for 5-10 minutes</li> </ol>	<p><i>Request donuts</i></p> <p>– Learner set (Appendix 3.3)</p>
15 min	<p><b><u>Practice 2.2c: Donut sharing</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Split the class into two groups, creating an outer and inner circle.</li> <li>2. Each learner in the outer circle will receive an item. E.g. a ball, a donut, a toy car, a pair of boots, a hat, a tomato, a book, a teddy bear, a cup, a pencil, a bow, or a box.</li> </ol>	<p>A ball, a donut, a toy car, boots, a hat, a tomato, a book, a teddy bear, a</p>



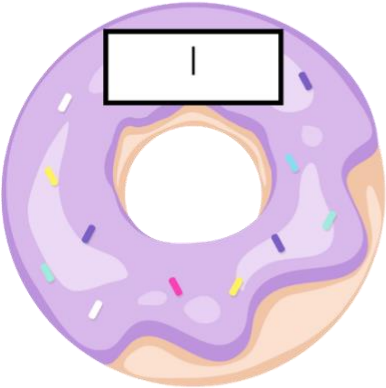
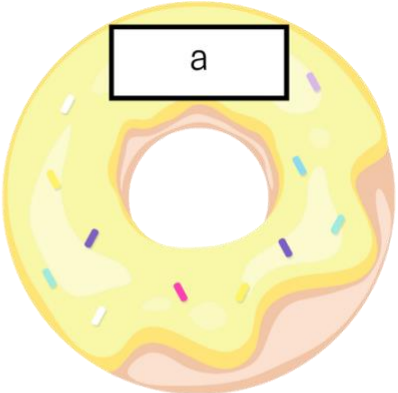
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>3. Pair each learner in the inner circle with a learner in the outer circle.</li><li>4. The learner in the inner circle requests the item that the learner in the outer circle is holding.</li><li>5. The learner in the outer circle hands the item to the learner in the inner circle.</li><li>6. The learner in the outer circle then requests the item back.</li><li>7. The learner in the inner circle hands the item back.</li><li>8. The learners in the inner circle move one position to their right.</li><li>9. Repeat the process.</li></ol>	cup, a pencil, a bow, and a box.
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Appendix 3.2 – Request Donuts – Teacher set<sup>12</sup>



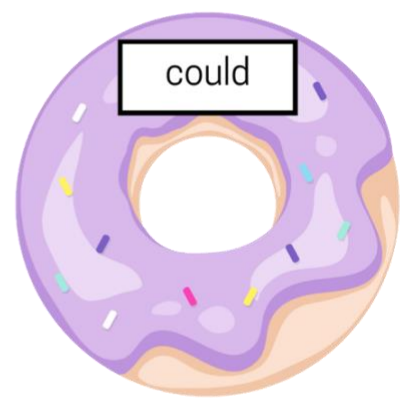
<sup>12</sup> The images of the donuts have been scaled down to a diameter of 4,2 cm from the original 20 cm, with a scale factor of 0.21.

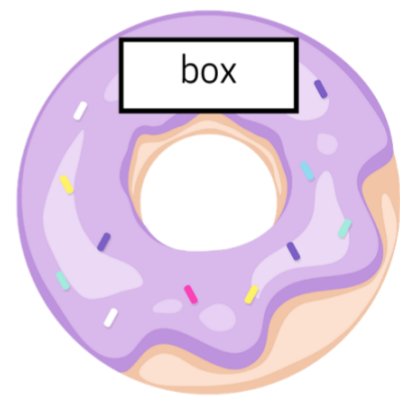
*Appendix 3.3 – Request Donuts – Learner set<sup>13</sup>*



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<sup>13</sup> Images resized from A4 dimensions to a height of 18.39 cm and a width of 13 cm, with a uniform scale factor of approximately 0.619.





## Appendix 4 – Lesson Three

### Appendix 4.1 – Lesson Plan

<b>Subject:</b> English			
<b>Grade:</b> 3 <sup>rd</sup> grade			
<b>Timing:</b> 1 hour per week for 3 weeks			
<b>Competence aims:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- “Use a number of common small words, polite expressions, and simple phrases and sentences to obtain help to understand and be understood.”</li> </ul> (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019b)			
<b>Learning aims:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I can ask for things using <i>Can, May, Could, Perhaps, Please</i>, and the reason for the request.</li> </ul>			
<b>Week:</b>	<b>Time:</b>	<b>Activity:</b>	<b>Materials:</b>
3	10 min	<b><u>Input 3.1: Read aloud</u></b> 1. Introduce the book: <i>The Spiffiest Giant in Town</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Look at the cover:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What do we see?</li> <li>- What do we think will happen in the book?</li> </ul> </li> </ul> 2. Read a condensed version of the book aloud <sup>1</sup> . Make the book interactive throughout the reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Page 6: ‘Think about how the animals in <i>Please, Mr. Panda</i> asked for donuts. How can the giraffe ask the Giant for his tie?’ Write down some of the examples the learners come up with.</li> <li>- Page 10: ‘If we think back to last week, what other ways could the goat ask the giant for his shirt?’ Write down some of the examples the learners come up with.</li> </ul>	<i>The Spiffiest Giant in Town</i> by Julia Donaldson
	5 min	<b><u>Awareness Raising 3.1: Post-reading questions</u></b> Compare how a request was made in <i>The Spiffiest Giant in Town</i> to the requests the learners previously produced. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Show page 6 and on the board, write two of the requests the learners produced, and a request that was produced the week before.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What is the giraffe trying to achieve?</li> <li>- Do you think the giraffe would have gotten the same response if he would have asked the giant the way we said?</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	

	<p>2. Show page 9 and on the board write two of the requests the learners produced.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What is the goat trying to achieve?</li> <li>- Do you think the goat would have gotten the same response if he would have asked the giant the way we said?</li> </ul>	
3 min	<p><b><u>Practice 3.1a:</u></b> Practice the request formulations shown in the book.</p> <p>1. Show pages 5-6: The teacher reads the giant's line, the learners read the giraffe's line.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teacher: "What's the matter?" (Donaldson, 2003, p. 5).</li> <li>- Learners: "It's my neck [...]. It's so very long and so very cold. I wish I had a long, warm scarf" (Donaldson, 2003, p. 6).</li> </ul> <p>2. Show pages 13-14: The teacher reads the giant's line, the learners read the mouse's line.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teacher: "What's the matter?" (Donaldson, 2003, p. 13)</li> <li>- Learners: "It's our house [...]. It burned down, and now we have nowhere to live. I wish we had a nice new house." (Donaldson, 2003, p. 14)</li> </ul>	<p><i>The Spiffiest Giant in Town:</i> Pages 5-6 and 13-14</p>
5 min	<p><b><u>Input 3.2: Grounders</u></b></p> <p>1. Pull up the <i>request donuts</i> on the white board.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Create the first request: 'I am thirsty. Can I have a drink?'</li> <li>- Create the second request: 'I am hungry. May I have a donut?'</li> <li>- Create the third request: 'I am cold. Could you give me a scarf?'</li> </ul>	<p><i>Request donuts</i> – Teacher set (Appendix 4.2)</p>
3 min	<p><b><u>Awareness Raising 3.2:</u></b> What are we trying to achieve? They explain why they need what they are asking for before asking for it.</p>	<p><i>Request donuts</i> – Teacher set (Appendix 4.2)</p>
3 min	<p><b><u>Practice 3.2a: Practice reading out the words and the utterances</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In unison, say the first request two times.</li> <li>- In unison, say the second request two times.</li> <li>- In unison, say the third request two times.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Request donuts</i> – Teacher set (Appendix 4.2)</p>
10 min	<p><b><u>Practice 3.2b: Request production</u></b></p> <p>1. In pairs, the learners will receive a bag with 19 <i>request donuts</i>.</p>	<p><i>Request donuts</i> – Learner set (Appendix 4.3)</p>

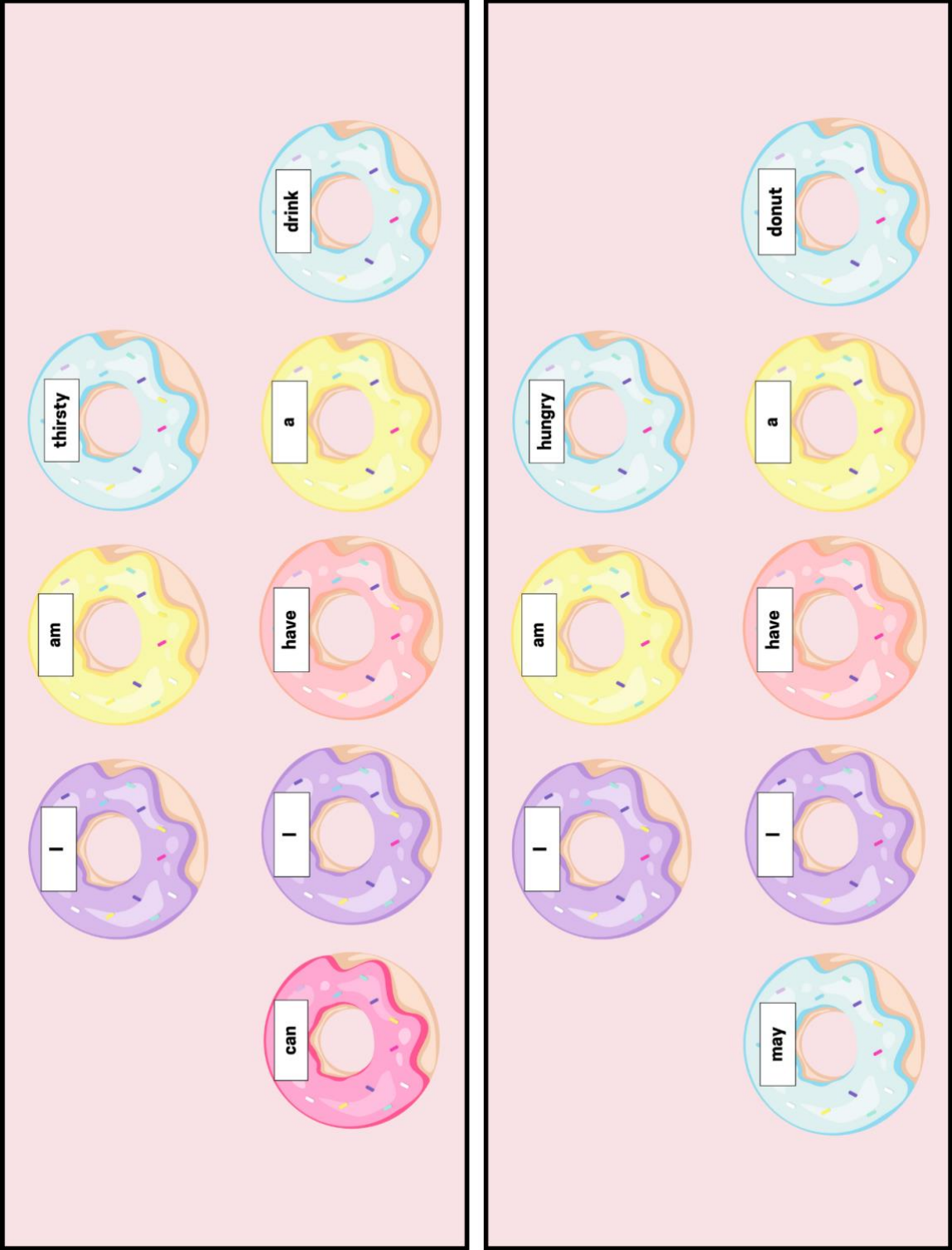
	<p>2. The learners will produce requests with the words that are written on the donuts.</p> <p>3. Both learners will read their request to an adult in the classroom. The adult will take a picture of their request.</p> <p>4. The learners will repeat this process for 5-10 minutes</p>	
15 min	<p><b><u>Practice 3.2c: Role play</u></b></p> <p>1. In the same pairs, the learners will be assigned a specific scene from the book.</p> <p>2. The learners will produce requests for that scene. e.g. You are the giraffe, and you are cold. How can you ask the Giant for his tie so that you can use it as a scarf?</p> <p>3. The learners will create a role play for their scene with one of the requests they created.</p> <p>4. In the book order, the learners will perform their scene.</p>	Print out of the scenes from the book, pages 6, 9, and 13.

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<sup>1</sup> The version presented to the learners was adapted by the researcher to reduce the time spent reading in class. The adapted version aimed to keep the important parts of the narrative (to ensure comprehension) and to keep the original requests and request responses.



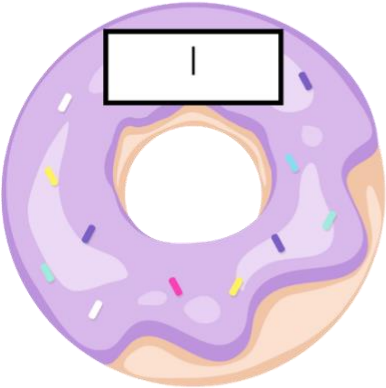
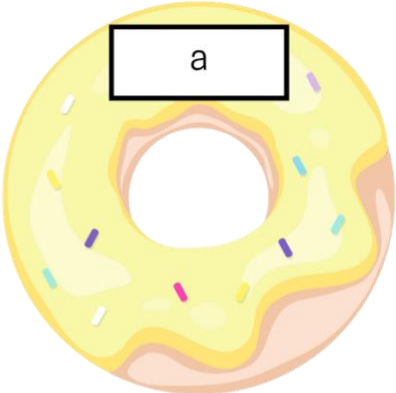
Appendix 4.2 – Request Donuts – Teacher set<sup>14</sup>



<sup>14</sup> The images of the donuts have been scaled down to a diameter of 4,2 cm from the original 20 cm, with a scale factor of 0.21.

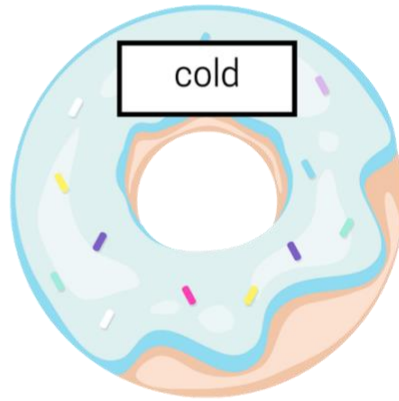
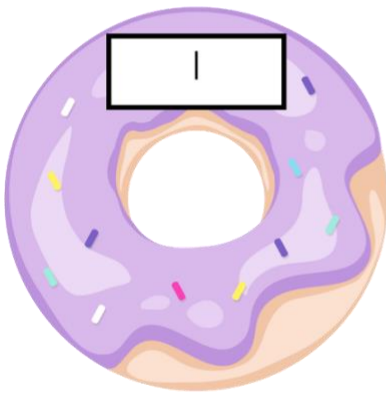


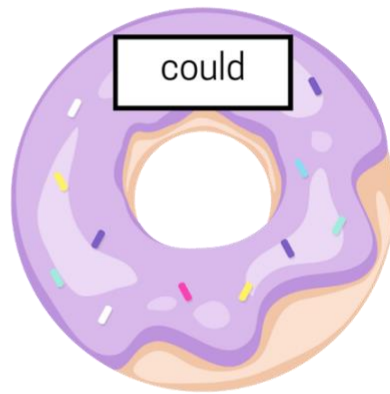
Appendix 4.3 – Request Donuts – Learner set<sup>15</sup>

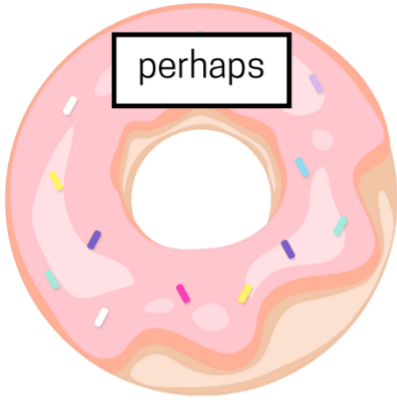


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<sup>15</sup> Images resized from A4 dimensions to a height of 18.39 cm and a width of 13 cm, with a uniform scale factor of approximately 0.619.







## Appendix 5 – Instructions

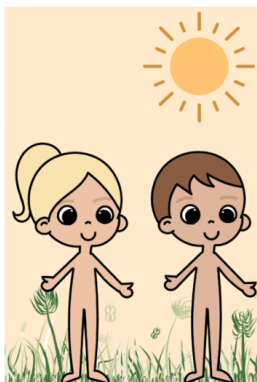
**Instructions were given in Norwegian- translations are given in brackets.**

Two learners enter the room and sit at the group table.

‘Velkommen! I dag skal vi gjøre to ulike aktiviteter. Den første aktiviteten handler om at dere skal kle på to dukker. En av dere skal ta på dem vinterklær, *vis vinterdukkene*, og den andre skal ta på dem sommerklær, *vis sommerdukkene*. Vi starter med at elev A har sommerdukkene, mens elev B og jeg selv har sommerklær. Det du, elev A, må gjøre, er å spørre meg eller elev B om klesplagg, slik at du kan kle begge dukkene. Du må ikke bruke alle klærne som vi har. Og når du spør, er det viktig at du spør på engelsk. Når du er ferdig med å kle på begge dukkene, rydder vi vekk alt av sommerklær og gjør det motsatte. Da får Elev B vinterdukkene, og Elev A og jeg får vinterklær. Da skal du, elev B, spørre meg og elev A om klær, slik at du kan kle dine to dukker. Dere får kun lov til å spør om ett klesplagg om gangen og husk at dette skal gjøres på engelsk. Har dere noen spørsmål før vi starter?’

[‘Welcome! Today we are going to do two different activities. The first one revolves around dressing up two dolls. One of you will put winter clothes on them, *show the winter dolls*, and the other will put summer clothes on them, *show the summer dolls*. We start with learner A having the summer dolls, while learner B and I have the summer clothes. What you, learner A, need to do, is to ask me or learner B for clothes so that you can dress both dolls. You do not have to use all the clothes we have. And when you ask, it’s important that you ask in English. When you are finished dressing both dolls, we will clear away all the summer clothes and do the opposite. Then Learner B gets the winter dolls, and Learner A and I get the winter clothes. Then you, learner B, will ask me and learner A for clothes so that you can dress your two dolls. You are only allowed to ask for one clothing item at a time and remember that this must be done in English. Do you have any questions before we start?']

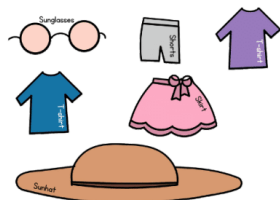
*All of this is already prepared in envelopes marked with learners A and B and researcher. Give learner A the summer dolls handout.*



Give learner B: sandals, swimsuit, pink T-shirt, black shorts, purple dress, and sundress.



Researcher: Sunglasses, sunhat, purple T-shirt, blue T-shirt, pink skirt, and gray shorts.



‘Nå har alle det de trenger for å starte. Da kan du, elev A, spørre oss på engelsk om å få klesplagg, slik at du kan kle dukkene dine.’ [‘Now everyone has what they need to start. Then you, learner A, can ask us in English for clothes so that you can dress your dolls.’]

*Learner A dresses both dolls.*

*Learner A finishes.*

‘Fint, nå skal vi rydde vekk alt av sommerklær. Elev B får nå vinterdukkene, og elev A får vinterklær. Elev B, husker du hva du skal gjøre nå? Og har du noen spørsmål?’



[‘Great, now we will clear away all the summer clothes. Learner B now gets the winter dolls, and learner A gets the winter clothes. Learner B, do you remember what to do now? And do you have any questions?’]

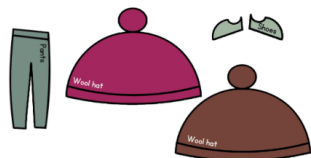
*Give learner B the winter dolls handout.*



*Give learner A: pink sweater, blue sweater, blue pants, and boots.*



*Researcher: Brown hat, pink hat, green pants, and shoes.*



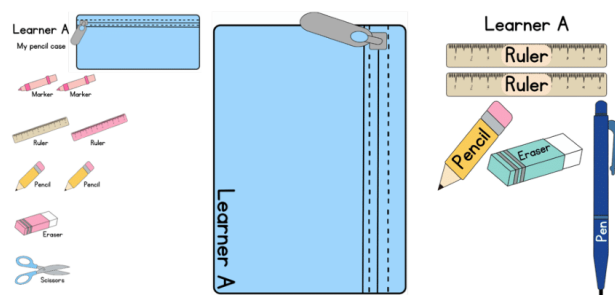
‘Nå har alle det de trenger for å starte. Da kan du, elev B, spørre oss på engelsk om å få klesplagg, slik at du kan kle dukkene dine.’ [‘Now everyone has what they need to start. Then you, learner B, can ask us in English for clothes so that you can dress your dolls.’]

*Learner B dresses both dolls.*

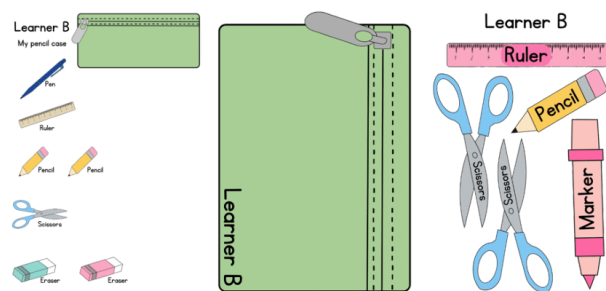
‘Fint, nå skal vi rydde vekk alt av vinterklær og starte på neste aktivitet.’ [‘Great, now we will clear away all the winter clothes and start on the next activity.’]

‘Den neste aktiviteten handler om at dere skal fylle pennalene deres. Hver av dere får en liste over hva dere skal ha i pennalene deres. I tillegg får dere litt utstyr. Dere skal da spørre hverandre, eller meg, om utstyret dere trenger til pennalene. Husk at dere skal spørre på engelsk og kan kun spør om en ting om gangen.’ [‘The next activity is about filling your pencil cases. Each of you will get a list of what you should have in your pencil cases. In addition, you'll get some equipment. You will then ask each other, or me, for the equipment you need for the pencil cases. Remember that you have to ask in English and can only ask for one thing at a time.’]

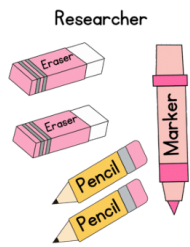
*Learner A gets a content sheet, a pencil case, 2 beige rulers, a pencil, a pen, and a blue eraser.*



*Learner B gets: a content sheet, a pencil case, a pink ruler, two scissors, a marker, and a pencil.*



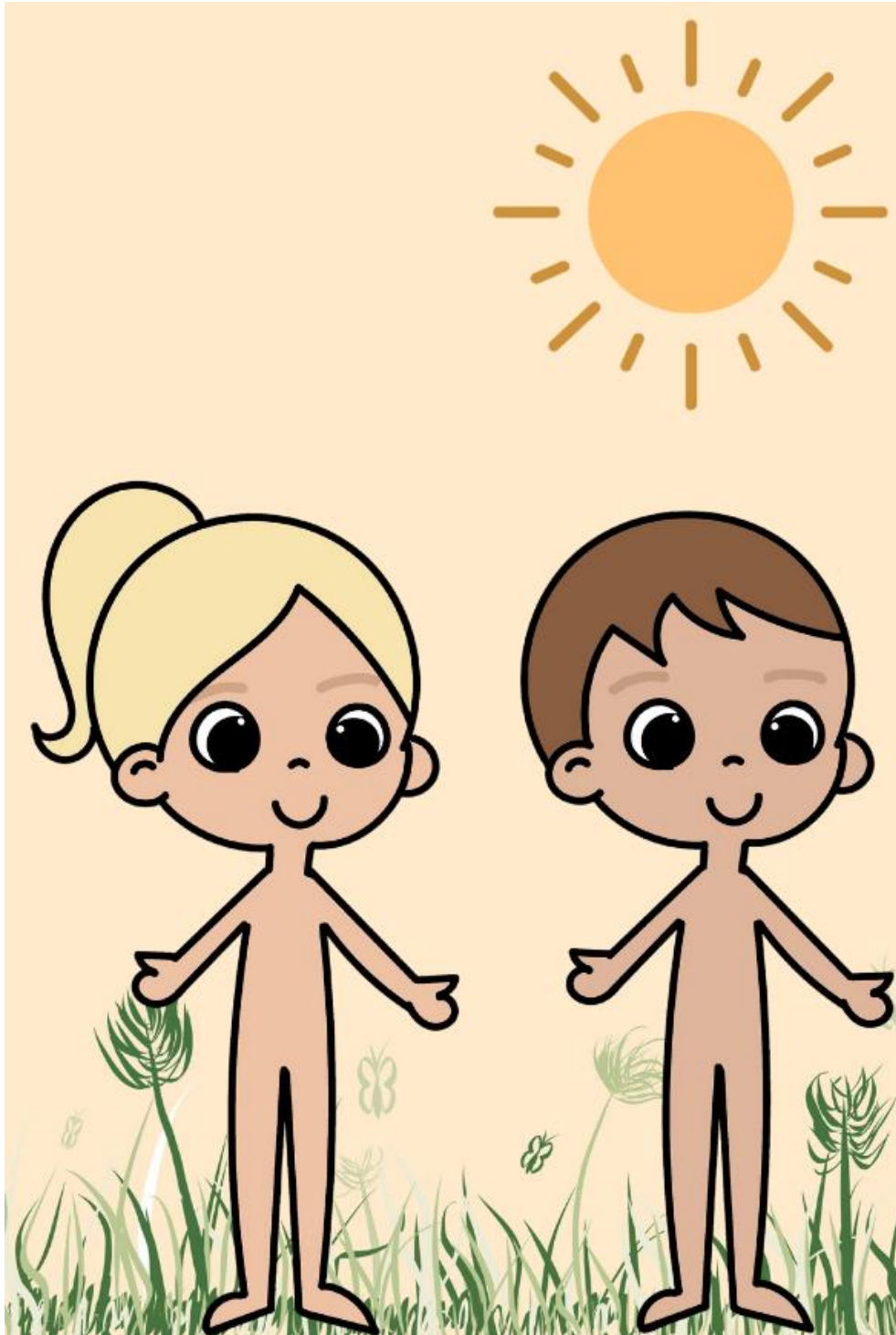
*Researcher: a marker, two pencils, and two pink erasers.*



‘Takk for at dere ble med på dette.’ [‘Thank you for participating.’]

## Appendix 6 – Role Play Task #1<sup>16</sup>

### *Appendix 6.1 – Summer Dolls*



<sup>16</sup> Images resized from A4 dimensions to a height of 19.32 cm and a width of 13 cm, with scale factors of approximately 0.651 for the height and 0.619 for the width.

*Appendix 6.2 – Winter Dolls*



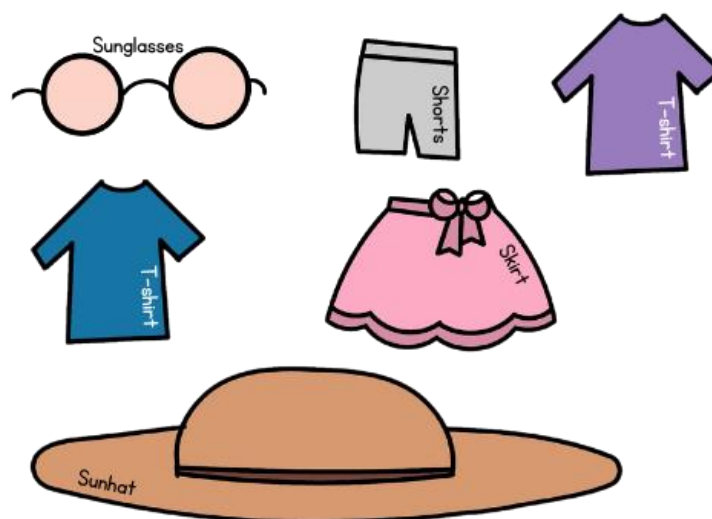
Appendix 6.3 – Clothes



# Learner B Summer

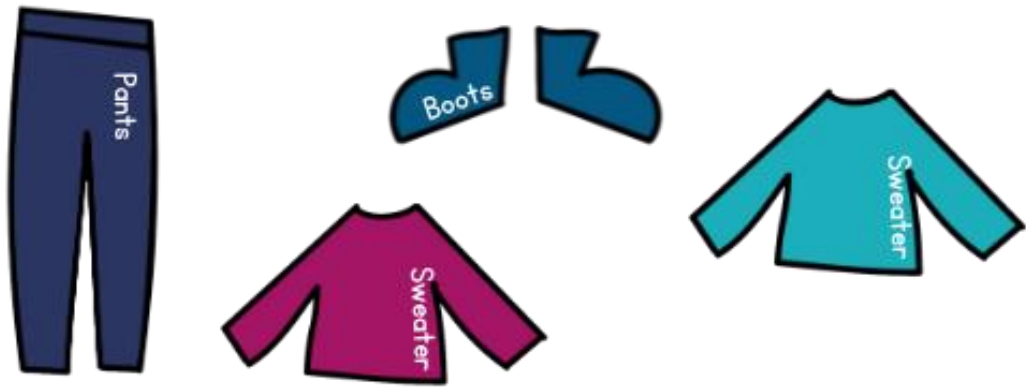


# Researcher Summer



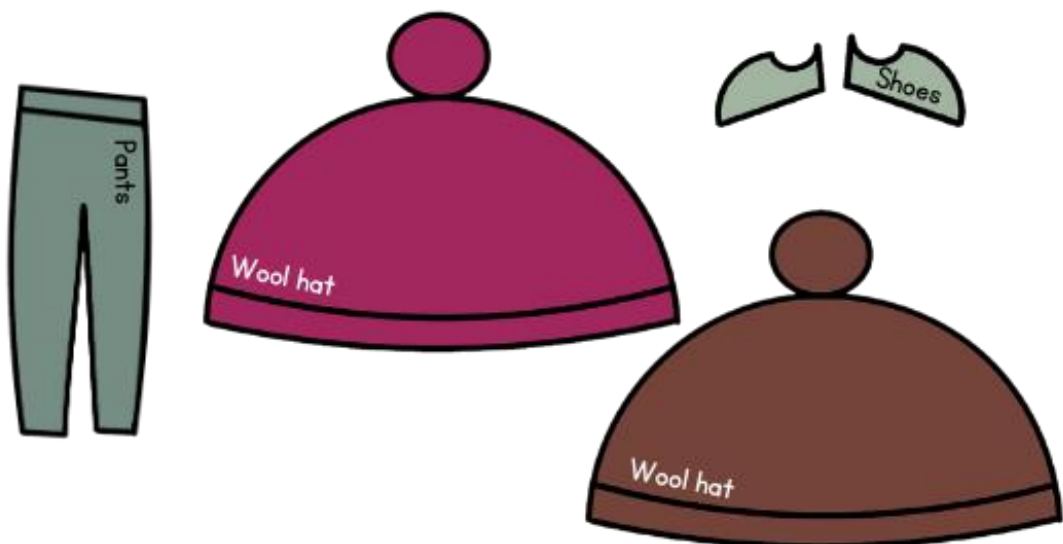
# Learner A

## Winter



# Researcher

## Winter



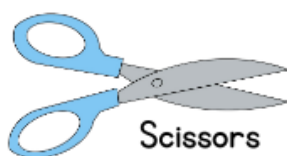
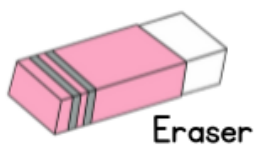
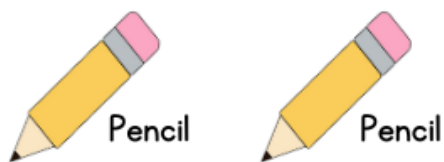
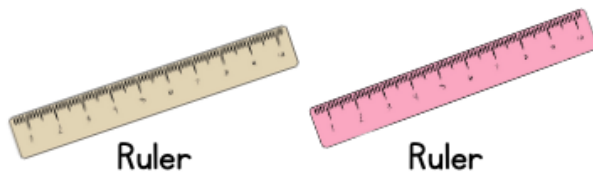
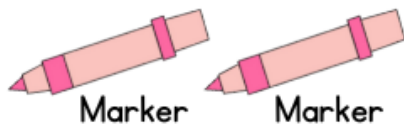


## Appendix 7 – Role Play Task #2<sup>17</sup>

### Appendix 7.1 – Pencil Case List – Learner A

**Learner A**

My pencil case



<sup>17</sup> Images resized from A4 dimensions to a height of 19.32 cm and a width of 13 cm, with scale factors of approximately 0.651 for the height and 0.619 for the width.

*Appendix 7.2 – Pencil Case List – Learner B*

**Learner B**

My pencil case



Pen



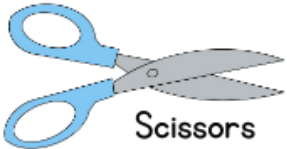
Ruler



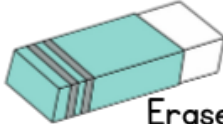
Pencil



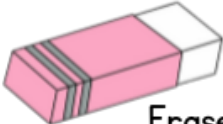
Pencil



Scissors

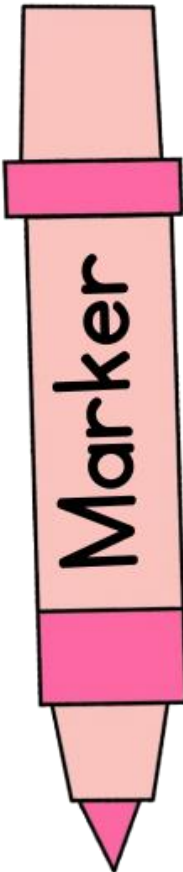
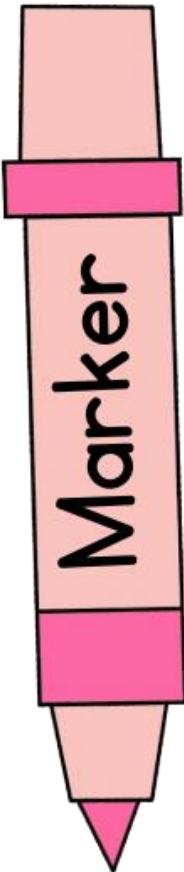
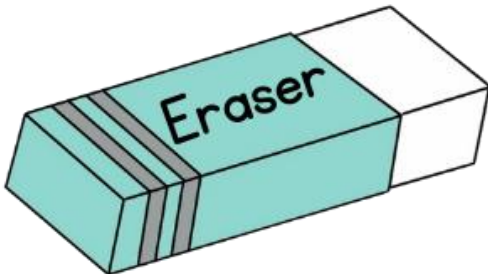
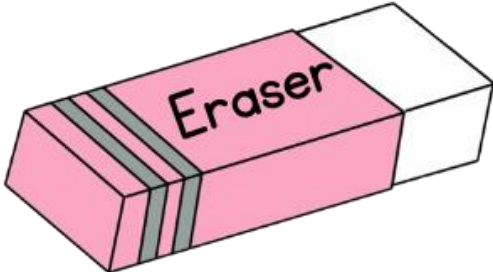
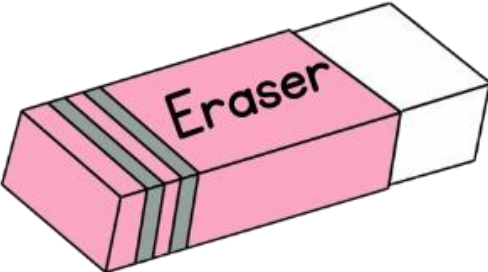


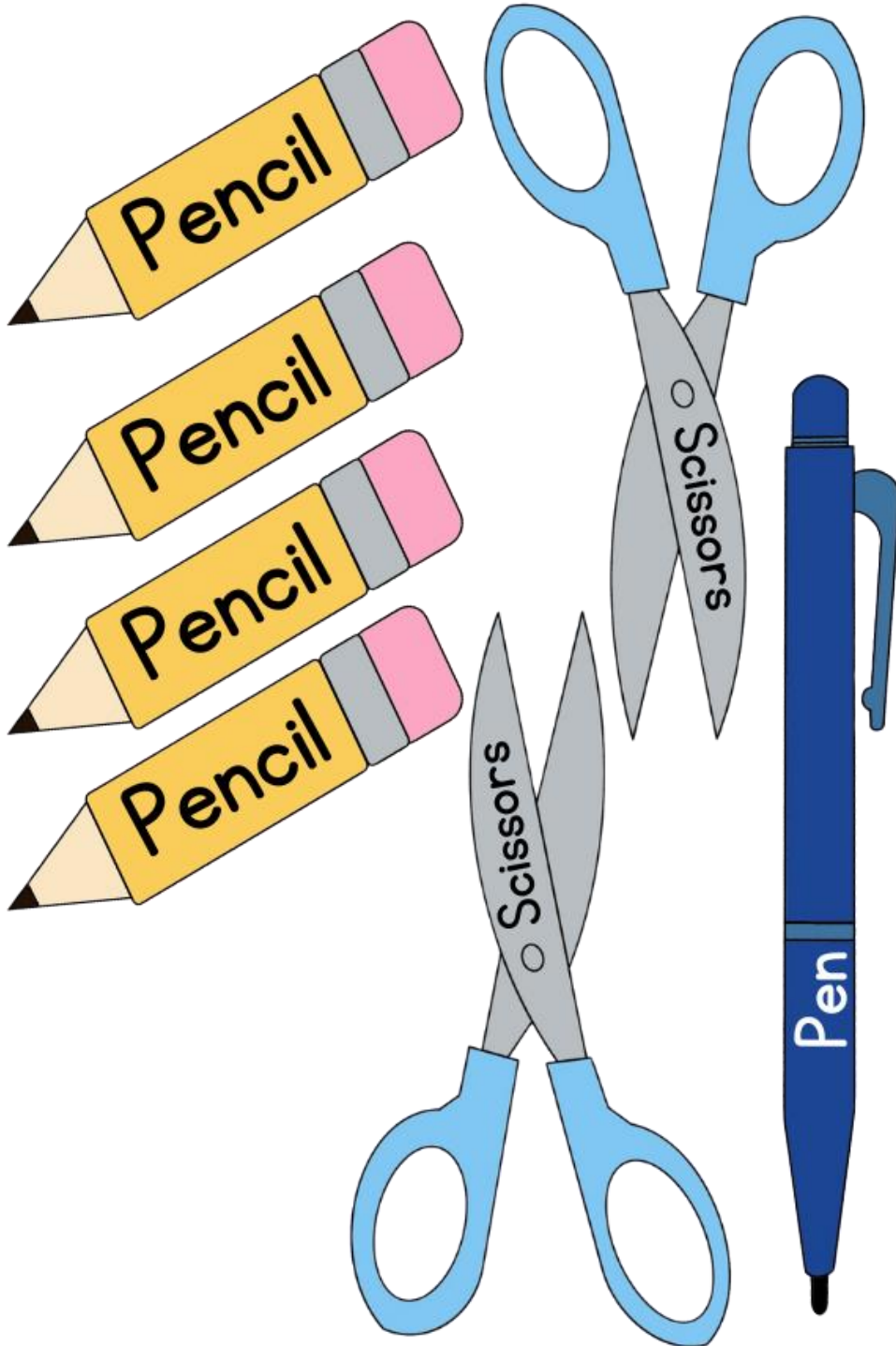
Eraser



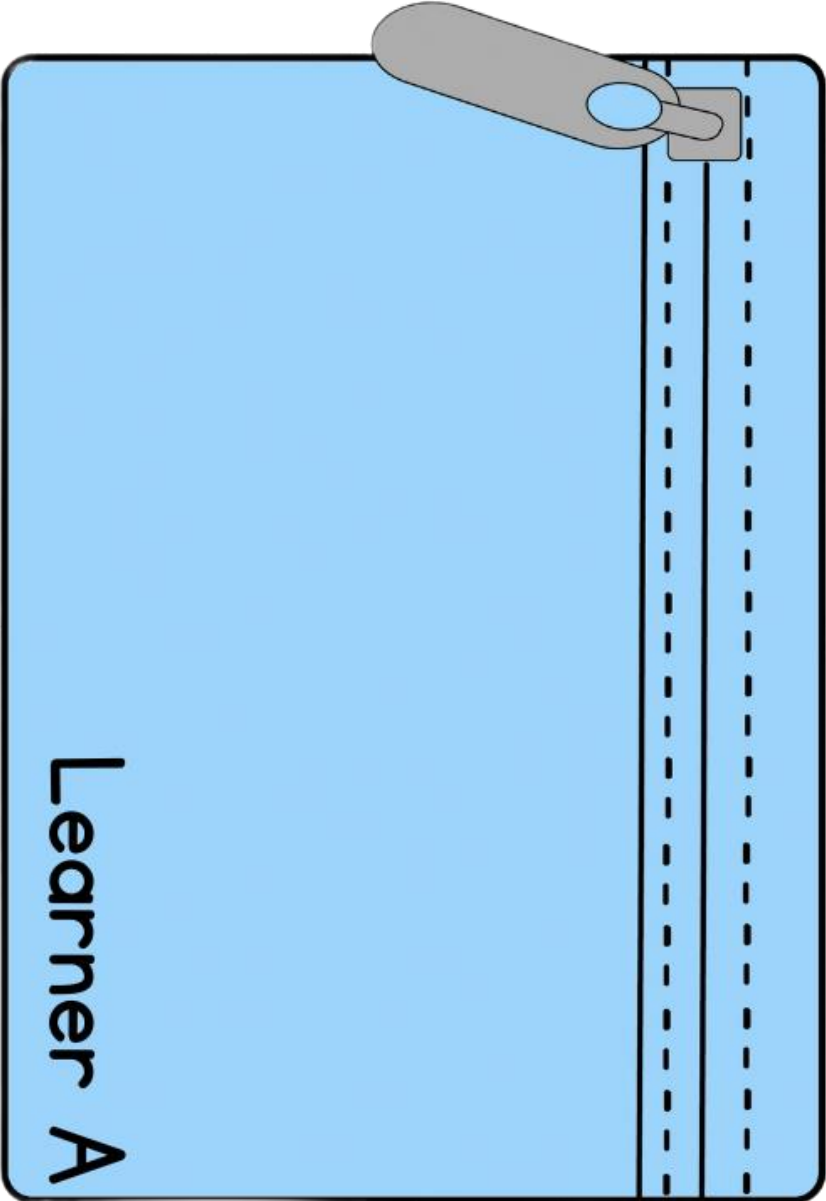
Eraser

Appendix 7.3 – Supplies

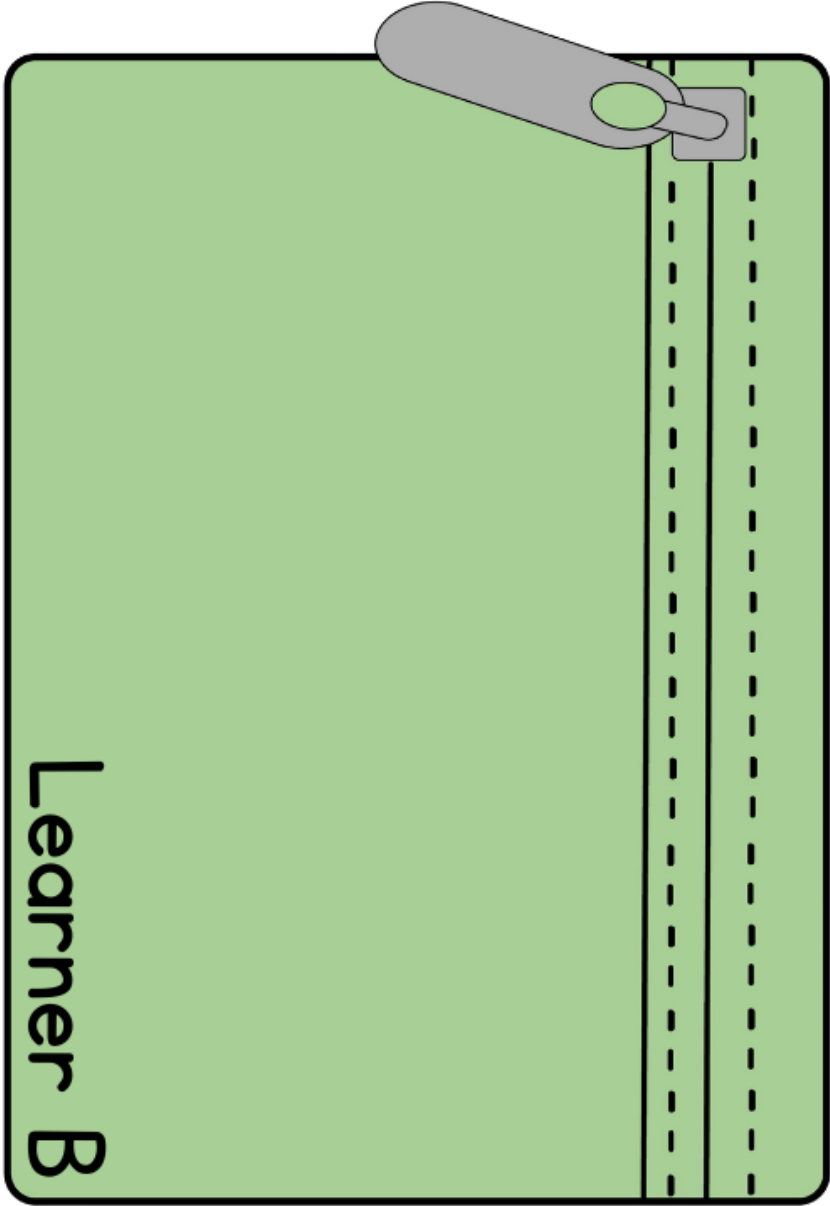




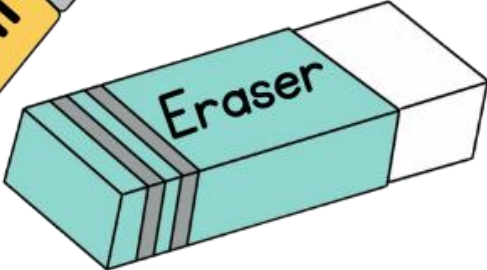
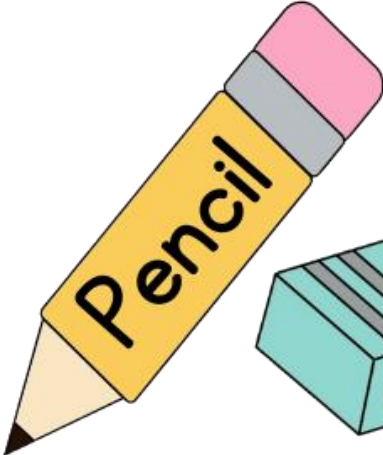
*Appendix 7.4 – Pencil Case – Learner A*



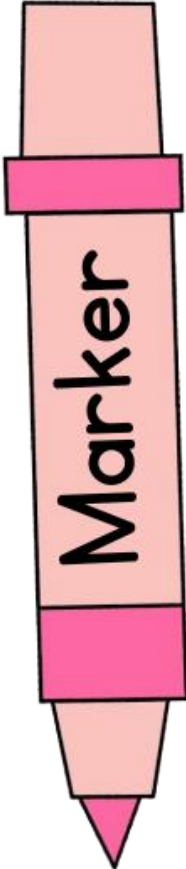
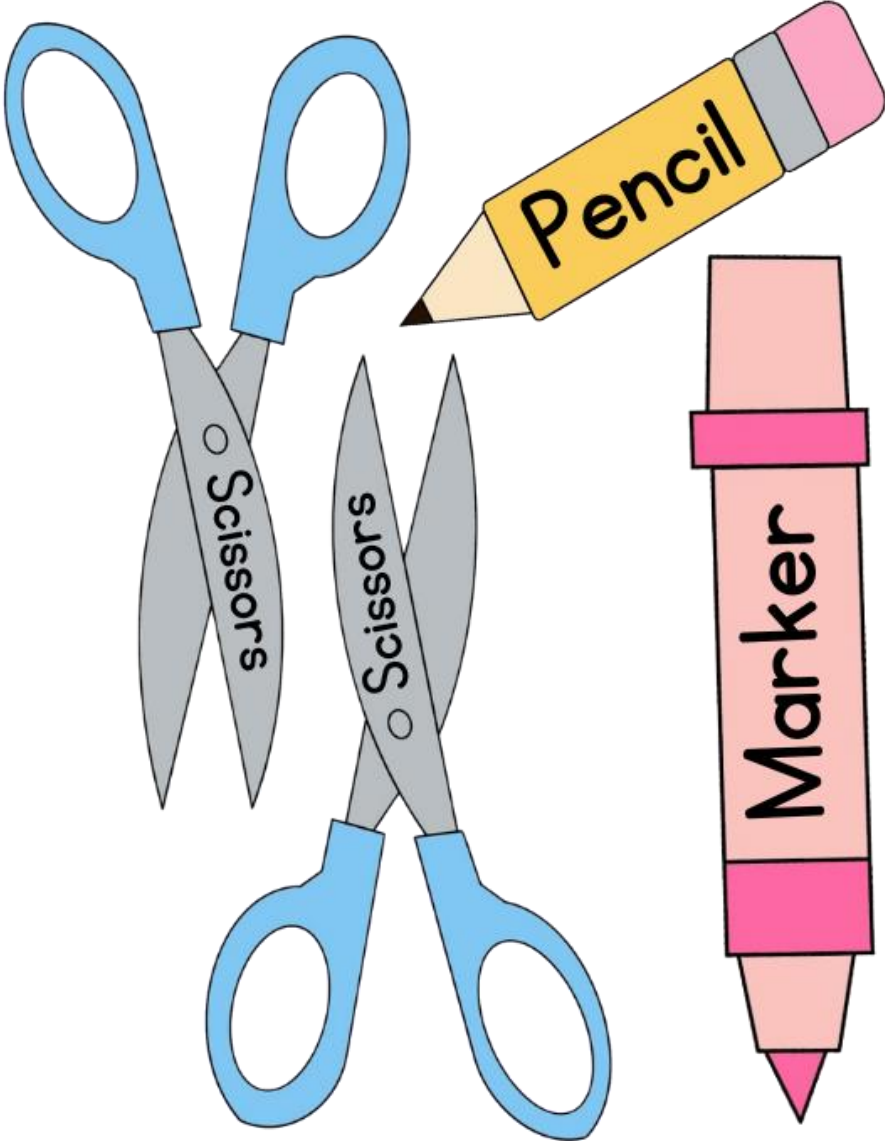
*Appendix 7.5 – Pencil Case – Learner B*



# Learner A

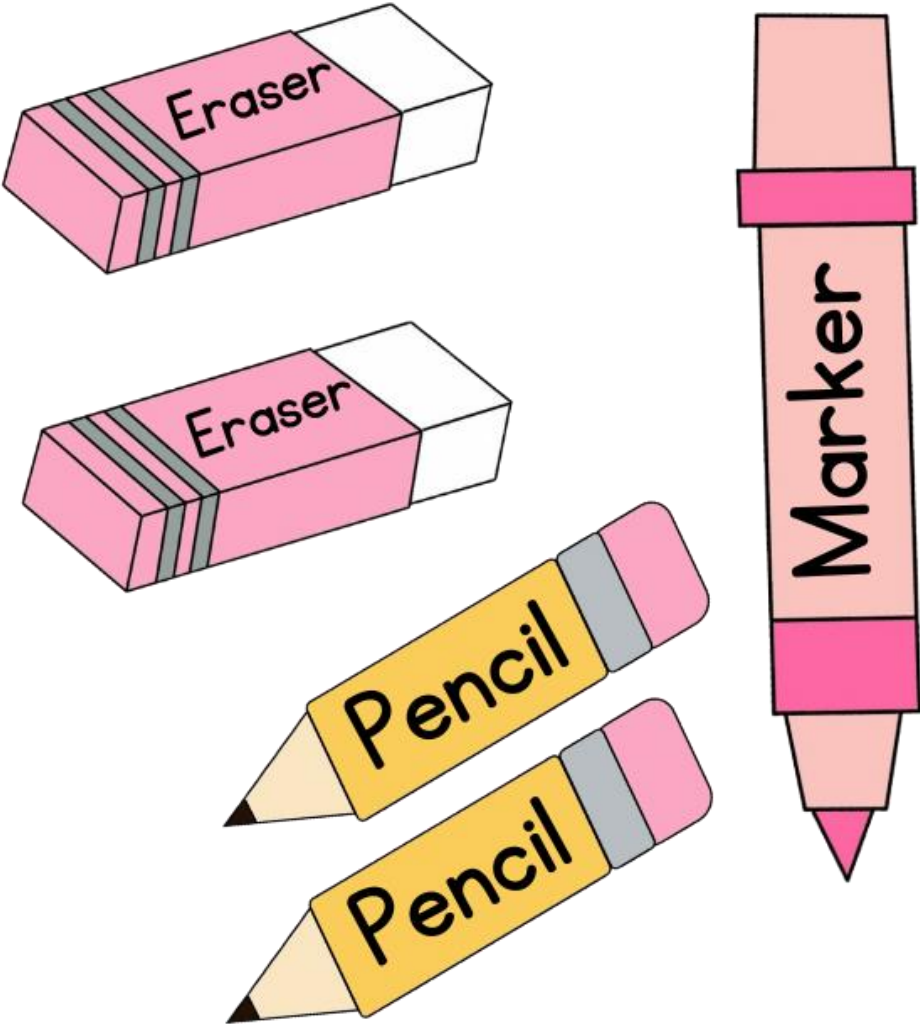


# Learner B





# Researcher





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# Universitetet i Stavanger

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The Impact of L2 Pragmatics Instruction on Request Strategies  
with Third-Grade Norwegian EFL Learners

Vibeke Klovning

June, 2024