

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

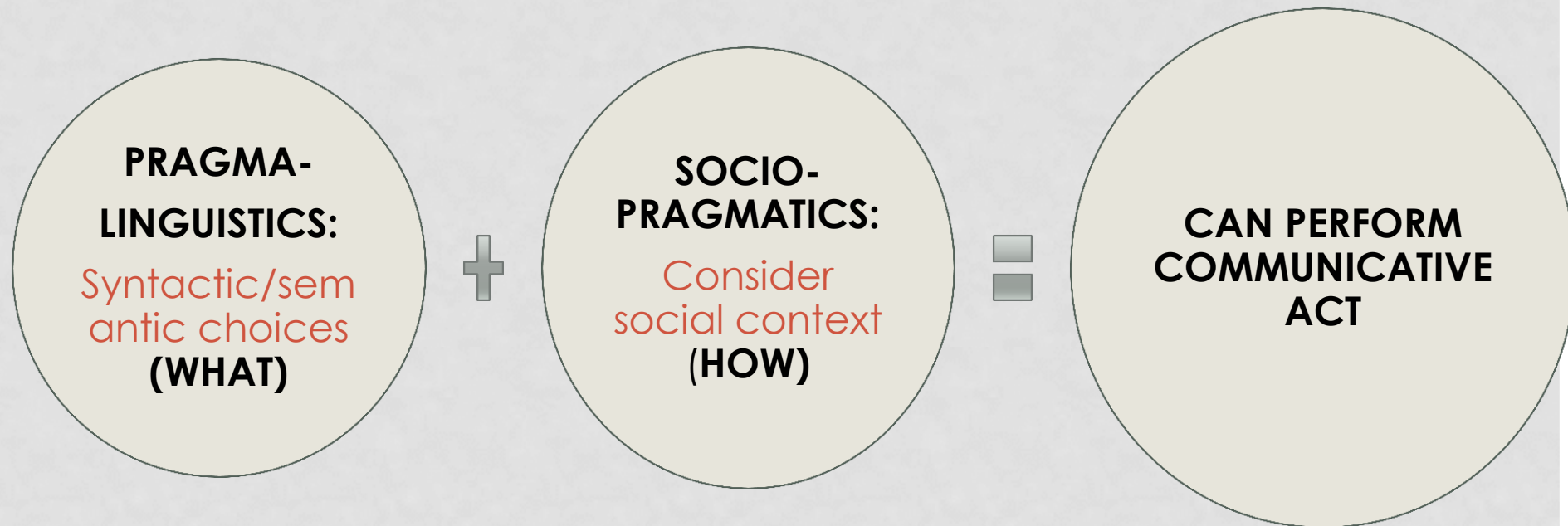
EDIT FICZERE-WILLCOX
CRELLA, UNIVERSITY OF BEDFORDSHIRE
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PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE?

- *'Excuse me.*
- *I was wondering*
- *if I could*
- *possibly have*
- *a kit kat please?'*



WHAT IS PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE (LEECH 1983)



Adjusting language?

FRAMEWORK FOR TESTING: Speech Act Theory

(CCSARP, 1989)

INSTRUMENT: DCT

S/active
H/passive?

Discursive side?
(Roever, 2011)

Framework:
CA?

**Sequential
organization?**
(Kasper, 2006)

**Online processing
skills?**

Instrument:
monologic/dial
ogic tasks?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

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

METHODOLOGY

Research instrument

Monologic and dialogic tasks.

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

Semi-structured interviews

Learners' perceptions of task situations

Analysis

QUALITATIVE:

CA (*Schegloff, 2007*)

QUANTITATIVE:

categories from CCSARP (*Blum-Kulka et al., 1989*)

conversational routines (*Myles et al., 1998:325*)

PARTICIPANTS

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

TASKS

	Tasks
Task 1 (monologic)	request (+ <i>apology</i>) – professor (S<H)
Task 2 (monologic)	request (+ <i>apology</i>) – classmate (S=H)
Task 3 (monologic)	request – professor (S<H)
Task 4 (monologic)	request – classmate (S=H)
Task 5 (dialogic)	request - professor (S<H)
Task 6 (dialogic)	request – flatmate (S=H)

DISAPPOINTMENT WITH ESSAY RESULT (S<H)

B2 SAMPLE

- **S2:** Good morning Professor Willson.

Account

- **S2:** I have (.) I've got my feedback

Account + request(?)

- **S2:** from you? for (.) about my essay? would like to ask you how (.) could you like (.) marking crite::ria?

Problem statement

- **S2:** Because (.) like (.) my grade (0.1) is (.) a bit (.) lo::w?

Request

- **S2:** Can you give me like your criteria of marking my essay?

- **I:** Good morning. How can I help you?

- **I:** Yes.

- **I:** Yes?

- **I:** Mmm.

DISAPPOINTMENT WITH ESSAY RESULT

C2 SAMPLE

Projecting upcoming request

- **S29:** Hi professor Willson. >I was wondering if you have a couple of minutes to talk to me< about the (.) assignment tha::t (.) we had to give in=
- **S29:** =yesterday.

Problem statement + request + account

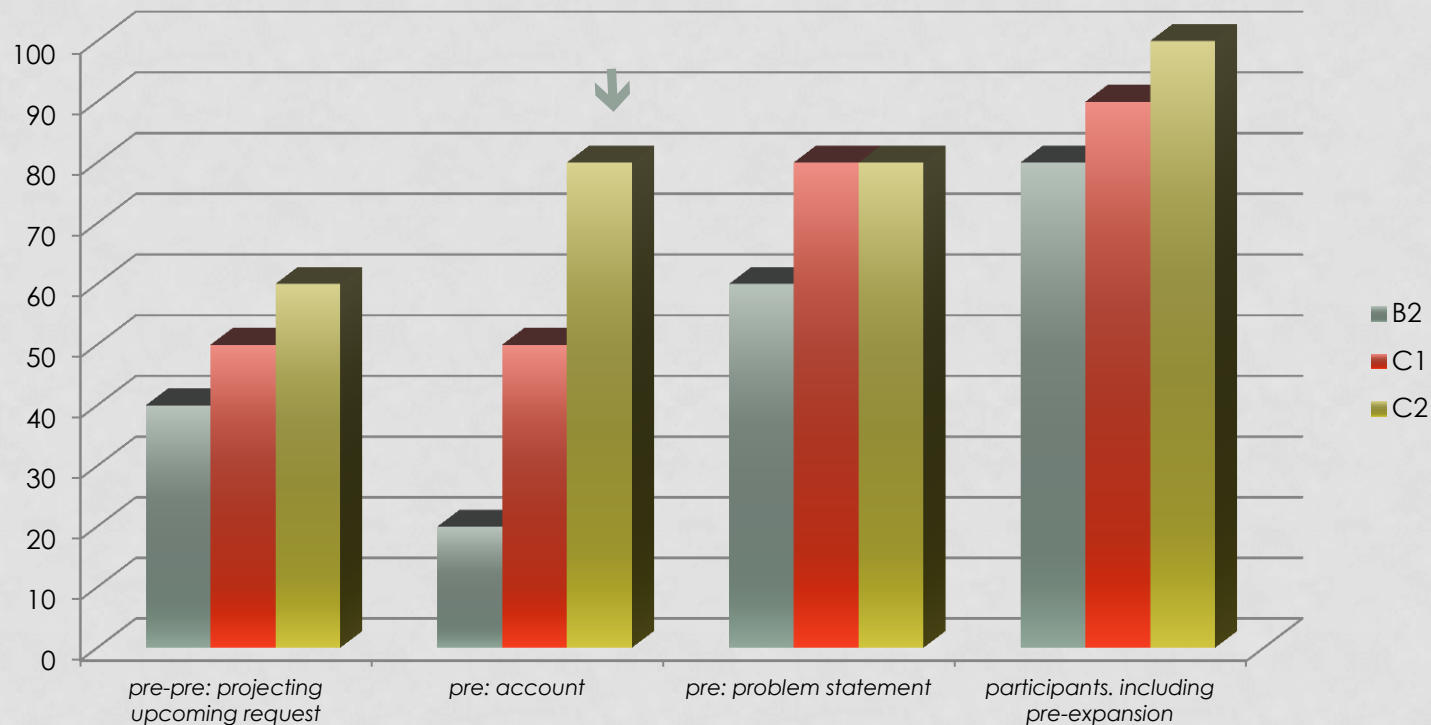
- **S29:** So:: I I've noticed that you gave me a:: (0.1) pretty low mark?
And >I was just kind of wondering<why that is (0.1) as I:: do think that I've kind of () all the instructions that you gave us? So::

Request for clarification

- **S29:** Did I go:: (.) did I do something wrong? Did I not follow the right instructions o::r (0.2)

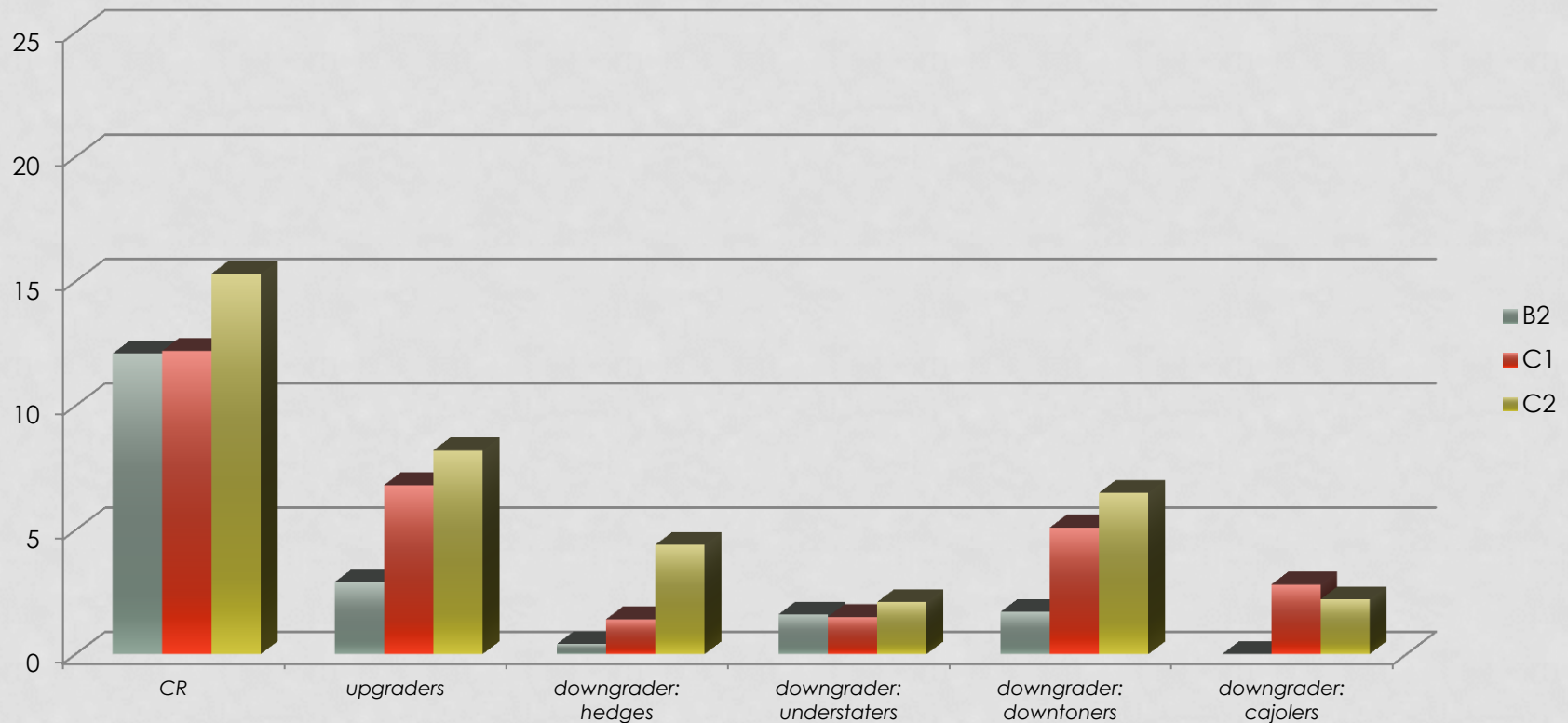
- **I:** Yea:::h, okay.
- **I:** Of course. Go ahead.
- **I:** Mmm]

SEQUENTIAL ORGANISATION: DIALOGIC TASK 5 (S<H)



Percentage of participants including features of pre-expansion in Task 5 (dialogic task)

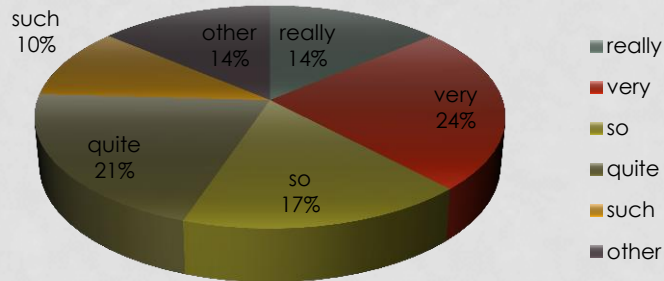
PRAGMALINGUISTIC DEVICES: DIALOGIC TASKS



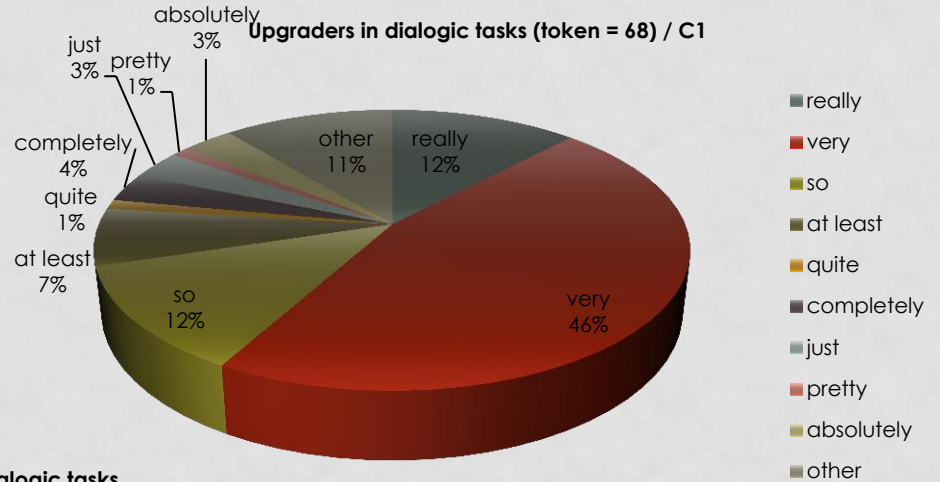
mean of occurrence per person

RANGE OF upgraders (dialogic tasks)

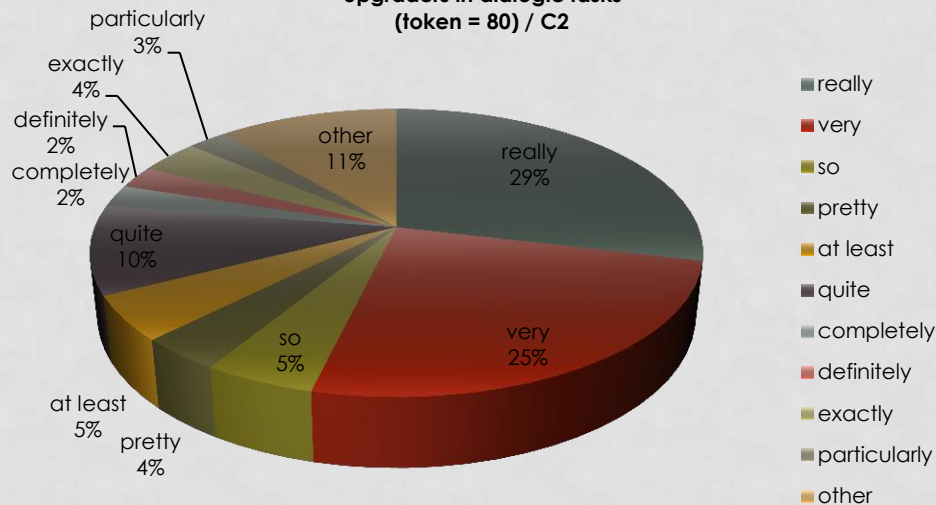
Upgraders in dialogic tasks
(token = 29) / B2



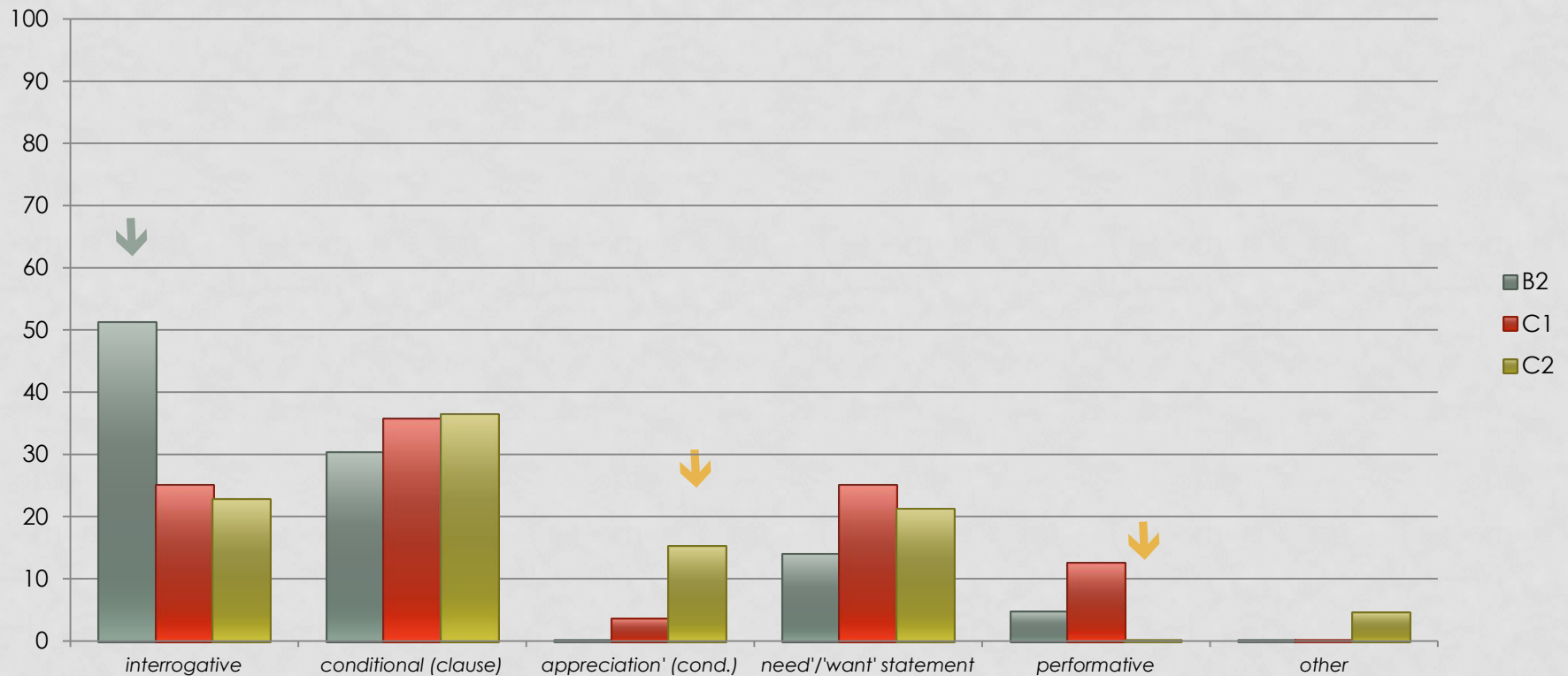
Upgraders in dialogic tasks (token = 68) / C1



Upgraders in dialogic tasks
(token = 80) / C2



Syntactic variation in formulating requests



Distribution of request formulation strategies in dialogic tasks

Linguistic competence?

	B2	C1	C2
Interrogative	<i>Could you...?</i>	<i>Could you possibly...?</i>	<i>Do you think in that case you could maybe...?</i>
Conditional	<i>I would like to...</i>	<i>I'd really like you to...</i>	<i>I would just like to be given...</i>
Conditional (appreciation)	<i>Would you mind if you can...?</i>	<i>I would appreciate it if you could at least...</i>	<i>I would appreciate it next time if you wouldn't...</i>
'need' statement	<i>I need...</i>	<i>I just need...</i>	<i>We definitely need to...</i>

ADJUSTING LANGUAGE?

(APPROPRIACY?)

B2

- ::, if you don't mind (0.2) I will (.) I will ask you to (0.1) explain it to me more. (S<H)
- if you don't mind, I'll ask you to be **a little bit** more tidy and clean. (S=H)

C1

- So:: would it be possible to (.) to check my mark again? (S<H)
- I think you should be **a bit a bit** teamworker. (S=H)

C2

- for a:::nd we:::ll if you could **just** explain why my mark is **so** low? (S<H)
- **maybe** if we could all (.) work **a bit** better o:::n keeping the house tidy that'll be that'd be great (S=H)

OVERALL:

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

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

B2:

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

C1:

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

C2:

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

AN INTERCULTURAL SPEAKER...

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



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THANK YOU!

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e.ficzere@brookes.ac.uk