FUNCTIONAL ADEQUACY:

THE INFLUENCE OF ENGLISH MEDIUM INSTRUCTION, ENGLISH PROFICIENCY, AND PREVIOUS LANGUAGE LEARNING EXPERIENCES

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

Presented by:
Ana Herraiz Martínez
Supervised by:
Dr. Eva Alcón Soler
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**FUNCTIONAL ADEQUACY:
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ENGLISH PROFICIENCY, AND PREVIOUS LANGUAGE LEARNING EXPERIENCES**

Memoria presentada por Ana Herraiz Martinez para optar al grado de doctora
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Ana Herraiz Martinez

Eva Alcón Soler

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To my family

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AL	Applied Linguistics
BICS	Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills
CA	Communicative Approach
CAF	Complexity, Accuracy and Fluency
CALC	Communicative Adequacy and Linguistic Complexity
CALP	Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference
CLA	Communicative Language Ability
CLIL	Content Language Integrated Learning
DCT	Discourse Completion Task
EAP	English for Academic Purposes
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
ELT	English Language Teaching
EMI	English-medium Instruction
ESL	English as a Second Language
EU	European Union
FA	Functional Adequacy
FL	Foreign Language
H1	Hypothesis 1
H2	Hypothesis 2
H3	Hypothesis 3
H4	Hypothesis 4
H5	Hypothesis 5
HE	Higher Education
HEA	Higher Education Area
ILP	Interlanguage Pragmatics
LS	Language Socialization
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language

MMR	Mixed-Method Research
NS	Native Speaker
NNS	Non-Native Speaker
QPT	Quick Oxford Placement Test
PM	Pragmatic Marker
RQ1	Research Question 1
RQ2	Research Question 2
RQ3	Research Question 3
SA	Study Abroad
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
TL	Target Language
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language
WISP	What Is Speaking Proficiency
WTC	Willingness to Communicate
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

INTRODUCTION

The reader of this dissertation may be familiar with experiences such as Jose's, Carolina's and Luis':

"I had a problem with my English because I was not good and did not like it. I want to put something in the paper but ...emm... I do not know the words in English. I do not understand the "enunciado" I cannot continue and write. This is a mistake for me, the EMI class..." (Carolina).

"At the beginning I felt bad because I did not understand most things in English. The vocabulary was really hard but I decided to interact in English and read papers. At the beginning I thought I would not cope with it all, but when I emm... passed the exams I realized my English was not bad at all. When English was better in the second semester, my grades improved because I could mean what I wanted to say" (Jose).

"You know, I was not comfortable in the lessons because I made mistakes all the time and I even failed two of my papers because of grammar. So I can say English affected my grades. However, I decided to fight and made an effort so that English was not the problem"... (Luis).

As participants in English-medium instruction (EMI) programs in Spain, they faced diverse problems in dealing with English in the classroom. Carolina experienced demotivation and frustration derived from her lack of proficiency. Jose and Luis, both low-proficient learners, consider self-motivation as the factor that helped them improve their academic performance during the EMI experience.

The conversations with these students made me reflect on the benefits of current language learning programs. More specifically, in the present study we address how pragmatic competence develops in EMI contexts. EMI scholars have acknowledged that the fundamental factor that has influenced the adoption of EMI programs is the so-called “English language fever” (Le, 2007, p. 172) and the new educational agenda set by the European Union in 1999. In contrast to previous years, universities encouraged the mobility of students and employees in order to create a space for intercultural dialogue and international cooperation. In this respect, universities began to offer degree programs in English, to such an extent that, during the academic year 2007-2008, 400 institutions provided more than 2,400 English-medium programs (Wächter & Maiworm, 2008). This is not surprising if one considers that participants in these programs expect to develop their language abilities and to thus gain an advantage in the market labor.

Given the increasing popularity of EMI programs, studies on second language (L2) learning development by different EMI groups is in need of additional research. With this in mind, the present study adopts the “pragmatics-as-perspective” approach (Kasper & Rose, 2002, p. 5) to examine how (1) intensity of exposure of EMI, (2) language proficiency, and (3) previous language contact experiences influence learners’ pragmatic competence.

There is general scholarly agreement on the close relationship between language learning and intensity of exposure to the target language (TL). Indeed, a main trait of language learning is contact with the TL, albeit in verbal or written form, or in formal or informal registers. Although research findings have pointed out that intensity of instruction enhances the development of pragmatic competence (Zhang & Yang, 2012), research on how the intensity of instruction through English influences pragmatic learning is still in its infancy. With the above in mind, the present study explores how different intensities of EMI at universities affect learners’ pragmatic development over one academic year. In particular, the analysis is focused on three intensities of EMI: 50%, 75%, and 100%.

In addition, research has started to examine the effect of language

proficiency in EMI settings. In this regard, findings suggest that English proficiency has a direct effect on learners' performance (e.g., Butler & Castellon-Wellington, 2000; Kang, 2005; Vidanapathirana & Gamini, 2009). However, some other studies provide evidence that language proficiency does not play a role in students' success in EMI classes (e.g., Byum et al., 2011; Clapham, 1996; Joe, 2010). Taking into consideration these inconclusive findings, the present investigation explores how learners' proficiency level influences pragmatic performance.

Finally, another dimension influencing pragmatic development is related to claims that study abroad (SA) programs, language showers, and sojourns offer learners opportunities to develop pragmatic competence. The main focus has been the effect of length of stay on pragmatic development, with studies revealing inconclusive findings (e.g., Achiba, 2003; Kondo, 1991; Matsumara, 2001; Röver, 1996; Vilar-Beltrán, 2014). Bearing all the above in mind, the present study also explores the effect of learners' previous language experiences in terms of length of stays in English-speaking countries on pragmatic performance.

To operationalize pragmatic competence, the construct of functional adequacy (FA) is used as the reference framework. According to Kuiken and Vedder (2016), FA is an interpersonal construct which measures L2 writing in terms of successful task fulfillment (p. 3). Although the FA construct has recently been applied in some studies (e.g., Revesz et al., 2016), research into the functional dimension of language performance is still rather limited. In this sense, this investigation contributes to this field of research by adapting the scale to assess the FA of learners' written production in EMI contexts.

In light of all that has been mentioned above, the purpose of the present study is to examine the influence of EMI on the development of the FA of the students participating in different EMI programs. More specifically, the objectives of the investigation are:

- 1) To determine whether EMI affects the development of learners' FA over one academic year.
- 2) To determine whether different intensities of EMI influence the development

of FA.

- 3) To explore whether the initial level of proficiency in English influences FA in EMI students.
- 4) To explore the effect of previous language experiences on learners' FA.

The current study contributes to the field of interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) in five notable ways. Firstly, it is a longitudinal investigation that explores the trajectory of pragmatic development over one academic year. Secondly, its focus of FA involves going beyond speech acts to approach pragmatic competence from a holistic perspective. Thirdly, it explores the influence of intensity of exposure on pragmatic development. Fourthly, it explores pragmatic development in the EMI setting, which constitutes a context in need of further research. Finally, it considers not only learners' pragmatic learning but it also presents an in-depth account of their academic adaptation and perceptions, as well as the common difficulties EMI students encounter in the classroom. Therefore, the research findings of the present investigation will be of great importance for ILP and EMI scholars, EMI instructors, and EMI program directors and coordinators.

This dissertation is divided into two main parts, which are made up of nine chapters in total. The first part (Chapters 1, 2, and 3) provides a review of the theoretical background that guides the study. The second part (Chapter 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9) presents the empirical study itself, and includes the methodology, the results, the discussion of findings, and the conclusions.

Chapter 1 presents a review of classroom-oriented research on pragmatics. It starts with a definition of pragmatics (section 1.1), before narrowing the scope to Interlanguage Pragmatics (section 1.2). Following this, section 1.3 addresses classroom pragmatics by giving an overview of research in this area (section 1.3.1), of target pragmatic features (section 1.3.2), and of methods employed in previous classroom research on pragmatics (section 1.3.3). Next, section 1.4 addresses the core theoretical framework on which this investigation is based, and provides a review of studies related to the functional level of language (section 1.4.1). Section 1.5 concludes the chapter with a summary of the main ideas covered.

Chapter 2 focuses on pragmatics in the EMI context. The chapter opens with the conceptualization of the EMI context (section 2.1). In particular, section 2.1.1 presents a definition of English-mediated education and narrows the focus of enquiry to EMI in higher education (HE) settings (2.1.2). The role of this context as a facilitator of pragmatic learning is explored in section 2.1.2.1. Following this, section 2.2 provides an overview of studies on L2 pragmatics in learners' oral production (section 2.2.1) and written production (section 2.2.2), which allows us to highlight the most relevant findings for the purposes of the current study. Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary (section 2.3).

Chapter 3 explores factors affecting pragmatic learning. First, section 3.1 provides a general overview on the effect of learning context, input, feedback, and individual differences on pragmatic learning. The chapter then narrows its focus to the role of language proficiency (section 3.2), with a particular focus on students and practitioners. Following this, section 3.2 addresses one of the main aspects of the study, that is, the role of intensity of exposure in English-mediated education contexts. Subsequently, section 3.4 reviews research findings on the role of previous language experiences, with an emphasis on length of stay (section 3.4.1). Finally, section 3.5 closes the chapter with a summary of the main ideas provided.

Chapter 4 presents the research gaps and motivation underlying the present study. More specifically, section 4.1 explains the objectives of the present investigation, and section 4.2 outlines the 3 research questions with the corresponding hypotheses that guide the present investigation.

Chapter 5 deals with the research method followed in order to conduct our study. This chapter consists of four main sections. Section 5.1 provides an overview of the educational context of the present study, the Valencian Community. Section 5.2 details the participants of the study: 102 undergraduate students participating in three EMI programs. Section 5.3 reviews the instruments employed in our study. These include 3 quantitative instruments (section 5.3.1) — a background questionnaire (section 5.3.1.1), a quick placement test (section

5.3.1.2), and a pragmatic-focused task (section 5.3.1.3) — and 3 qualitative instruments, conducted with a subset of 8 participants — semi-structured interviews (section 5.3.2.1), a Can-do scale (section 5.3.2.2), and a Willingness to communicate (WTC) scale (section 5.3.2.3). The data collection procedure and analysis is then explained in section 5.4. Special attention is paid to justifying the rating scales employed (section 5.4.1) and the data coding analysis (section 5.4.2), which explains the statistical tests used to explore each research question. Finally, section 5.5 offers a summary of the chapter.

The study findings are presented in Chapters 6, 7 and 8. Each chapter addresses one of the research questions presented in chapter 4 by presenting quantitative and qualitative findings, a discussion of these findings, and a summary. To begin, chapter 6 presents the results and discussion related to research question 1 (RQ1). RQ1 explores the effect of EMI on learners' FA and, as such, constitutes the bulk of the present investigation. The quantitative findings (section 6.1) reveal the development of FA by EMI students (section 6.1.1), and explore these gains across EMI groups (section 6.1.2). Following this, section 6.2 presents qualitative findings in order to complement the quantitative ones. These findings are further discussed in section 6.3, and the chapter is summarized in section 6.4.

Chapter 7 presents the results and discussion related to research question 2 (RQ2), which addresses the effect of level of proficiency on learners' pragmatic competence. Firstly, section 7.1 presents the quantitative findings regarding the effects of language proficiency on pragmatic performance (section 7.1.1), and how the initial proficiency level influences pragmatic performance over time (section 7.1.2). Following this, section 7.2 illustrates the qualitative findings, which provide details of individual trajectories and also about the importance of self-perceived English ability in relation to pragmatic performance. Both quantitative and qualitative findings are discussed in section 7.3, and summarized in section 7.4.

Chapter 8 addresses the results and discussion related to research question 3 (RQ3), which explores the effect of previous language contact experiences in terms of length of stay on learners' pragmatic performance. Section 8.1 presents the quantitative findings, dealing with the effect of length of stay on students' written pragmatic performance (section 8.1.1). This section is complemented with qualitative findings from semi-structured interviews conducted with some of the learners and the WTC scale performed by 7 informants (section 8.2).

Finally, section 8.3 presents a discussion of findings (section 8.3), and section 8.4 concludes the chapter with a summary of the main ideas presented.

The study closes with Chapter 9, which outlines the originality of the present investigation, and presents a summary of the main findings relating to each of the 3 research questions (section 9.1). The limitations of our study and possible points of departure for future research are then addressed in section 9.2. Finally, section 9.3 considers the pedagogical implications. This section is followed by a list of references and appendices, which provide examples of the data collection instruments used in the present study and the additional data obtained from our analysis on FA.

PART I: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

CHAPTER 1.

CLASSROOM-ORIENTED RESEARCH ON PRAGMATICS

Chapter 1 is devoted to laying the theoretical framework for classroom-oriented research on pragmatics and the acquisition of second language (L2) pragmatics. Section 1.1 presents the definition of pragmatics and its relevance in order to understand the peculiarities of native speaker (NS) speech performance in different contexts. Next, section 1.2 deals with the subfield of ILP and frames pragmatics within the model of communicative competence. Section 1.3 introduces the main research findings from classroom pragmatics research by providing the preeminent target pragmatic features (subsection 1.3.2) and methods explored in previous investigations (subsection 1.3.3). Following this, section 1.4 explores the functional adequacy (FA) perspective to approaching communicative-pragmatic written development (1.6); the area to which the current study makes the greatest contribution. Section 1.5 concludes with a summary of the central ideas considered throughout the chapter.

1.1 Defining Pragmatics

Over the years, the definition of pragmatics has been modified and developed parallel to the growth of applied linguistics (AL) as a result of the relationship between language form and language use. Even though pragmatics is generally understood as the making of continuous linguistic choices to maintain effective communication, a historical background is required to comprehend why present-day pragmatics is approached as “the study of communicative action in its sociocultural context” (Kasper & Rose, 2001, p. 2).

The term pragmatics was coined by Morris (1938), a philosopher of language who provided a classical definition by outlining the interrelation between

signs and interpreters (1938, p. 6). The emergence of semiotics, the meaning of symbols, was the first attempt to consolidate pragmatics as a social discipline. In fact, it was Morris (1938) who suggested that signs have their interpreters in living organisms, accounting thus for the social dimension of languages. However, for the following thirty years, structural paradigms (Saussure, 1959) and generative-transformational grammar (Chomsky, 1965) would account for languages as static systems of interconnected units. Under this view, languages were studied in isolation and utterances were analyzed as sets of clearly differentiated modules, which were classified at different linguistic levels such as phonemes, morphemes and verb phrases. Accordingly, these prominent paradigms advocated for corpus-based perspectives in order to analyze real world language use, leaving aside the contribution of social and contextual factors.

The inextricable link between language and context was acknowledged by philosophers such as Austin (1962), Grice (1975), Searle (1969) and Wittgenstein (1953), who contributed to the consolidation of pragmatics as a discipline in the 1970s. Wittgenstein (1953), influenced by the linguistic movement in Europe, suggested that the act of speaking was closely associated to factors such as context, culture and history. However, the two most relevant theories underlying the current understanding of the field of pragmatics were Speech Act Theory (Austin, 1962) and Logic of Conversation (Grice, 1975). The former points out the relevance of speakers' intention in communicating the intended content. In other words, the act of saying something, the actions that speakers perform in saying it, and the effect that the speaker is trying to produce on an audience. The latter attempts to describe how effective communication is achieved by introducing the idea of communication as cooperative action in which "the meaning of a sentence is different from the speaker's meaning" (Grice, 1975, p. 51).

Based on the idea of delimiting a group of rules or principles to be followed by participants in conversation (Grice, 1975), the Relevance Theory (Deirdre & Sperber, 1981) claimed that successful communication is not achieved by the mere application of certain principles. On the contrary, it is a combination of

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participants' efforts to reach an agreement between what is said and the intended meaning.

Leech (1983) and Thomas (1983) went a step further and distinguished two interrelated subcomponents of pragmatics: pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics. Pragmalinguistics refers to the linguistic manifestations for conveying communicative acts, such as direct and indirect strategies or specific pragmatic routines for a given context. The second subcomponent has been defined by Leech (1983) as "the sociological interface of pragmatics" (p. 10), referring to social perceptions or knowledge about the appropriate linguistic forms. As Alcón-Soler and Safont-Jordà (2007) put it, the sociopragmatic component is related to culture and "to implicit social meaning" (p. 126), which refers to the existing social distance between the speaker and the audience. Hence, a new approximation to the study of pragmatics was proposed: the dynamics of conversational interaction.

Despite having already been shaped as a discipline, the complexity of the dynamics of communication continued to attract the interest of researchers and new subtle nuances were added to the term pragmatics. Considering the division of the term into pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics, the Politeness theory by Brown and Levinson (1987) accounted for the impact of face threatening facts towards the listener. According to the authors, there exists a universal concept, that of face, which refers to (i) the approval that individuals expect from an audience, and (ii) the rejection of our actions or thoughts by others. The theory was constructed on the premise that speech acts such as accusations, promises and apologies are threatening by nature. For this reason, face needs to be saved since it is "something that is emotionally invested, and can be lost, maintained, or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 66).

Pragmatically appropriate language in interaction thus became the main focus of interest in the 1990s. Although the preceding approaches adopted a broader view of pragmatics as part of the process of communication, no reference

was made to the cognitive processes performed in real interaction, such as the negotiation of meaning. It was Thomas (1995) who adopted this unexplored perspective of analysis based on participants' interactional adjustments to respond appropriately and to understand what was not overtly communicated. These adjustments include all-inclusive strategies, such as clarification requests, as well as comprehension and confirmation checks, which facilitate the course of conversations and trigger the resolution of problems when breakdowns occur (Alcón-Soler, 2008a). The growing power of interaction in the study of pragmatics reinforced Vygotsky's (1978a) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) in defining interaction with peers as an effective way of developing skills and strategies for successfully advancing individual social learning.

In line with the notion of social learning, LoCastro (2012) claims that the foci of interest of pragmatics should include a social dimension, what has also been referred to as "the art of the analysis of the unsaid" (Mey, 1991, p. 245). Therefore, depending on the situational context, the participants involved, the cultural background and cognitive aspects, the relationship between form and function is played out. Thus, pragmatics prioritizes variables such as perceived intended meanings, the purpose of the talk and social distance over the analysis of language as a static system. In this study, the view of pragmatics as an interpersonal construct is adopted, considering that language is inevitably a social activity and that real communication involves two participants, those being the speaker or writer and the listener or reader.

As a result, it could be said that meaning is the core element within pragmatics. However, meaning derives from the basic units of communication together with the appropriate contextual features. In other words, a combination of language form and language forms is required in order to develop pragmatic knowledge. In this respect, Bachman and Palmer (1996) placed pragmatic knowledge alongside grammatical knowledge and assigned both an equal weight in achieving pragmatic proficiency. Similarly, Bardovi-Harlig (2003) has taken up this suggestion and claims that "[...] pragmatic development cannot

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proceed completely independently of grammatical development” (p. 25). Lastly, Kecskes (2014) reinforces the necessity to approach communication as a dualistic process by defending that there is a difference in how speakers say something and how they actually mean what they want to say (pp. 23-24).

Taking the above into account, the definition of pragmatics adopted in this study is the one provided by Crystal (1985), since it is widely recognized and accepted among researchers in this field of study. According to Crystal (1985, p. 240), pragmatics is:

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.

Determining the scope of pragmatics is a complex exercise since its focus of interest coincides with other linguistic disciplines. Thanks to the evolution of research, pragmatics is considered an umbrella term which encompasses different subfields depending on research concerns. According to LoCastro (2012) the main domains are ILP, cross-cultural pragmatics, institutional talk, politeness, the role of power and gender, and classroom pragmatics. However, Placencia and Garcia (2012) suggest the alternative subfields of historical pragmatics, variational pragmatics, cross-cultural pragmatics, intercultural pragmatics, and ILP. Even though present-day pragmatics cannot be said to be a categorical and unified discipline, both approaches consider cross-cultural studies and ILP in the subdivision of the field, a classification that may explain the importance that researchers and educators have placed on these two areas over the past three to four decades. For instance, cross-cultural pragmatics emphasizes the role that cultures play in the development of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic aspects. ILP, on the other hand, is devoted to the study of pragmatic development by L2 learners, and constitutes the research area where the present study makes its

main contribution, as will now be seen.

1.2 Interlanguage Pragmatics

Assuming that pragmatics is the study of language from the point of view of users (Crystal, 1985; Kasper & Rose, 2002), ILP expands the term user to non-native speakers (NNSs), narrowing the scope of inquiry to Second Language Acquisition (SLA). The Interlanguage theory, often credited to Selinker (1972)¹, emphasized the difference between the utterances produced in the native language and in the TL. Accordingly, the theory illustrates the development of a linguistic system by L2 learners in order to convey meaning in a given context, advocating the need of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge in any socio-cultural encounter. This ability to know “how-to-say-what-to-whom-when” (Bardovi-Harlig, 2013, p. 68) by second/foreign language learners led researchers to place an increasing emphasis on the role of pragmatic competence within the broader framework of communicative competence as the core feature of ILP (Hymes, 1972).

Hymes’ (1972) notion of communicative competence represents a major focus of current SLA research and theory, and it has been in circulation for more than 40 years. Even though competence is still a controversial term in AL, the scholar, who was pioneering in expressing his disagreement with the long-established formalist approaches to language, challenged Chomsky’s (1957, 1965) linguistic view of competence by considering the sociolinguistic perspective. Thus, Hymes (1972) interpreted the competence to communicate not only as the grammatical knowledge of linguistic resources but also as the ability to use appropriate language in any communicative event, referring to both structural and functional aspects of language. Hymes’ suggestion has been further integrated into other scholars’ language communicative approaches, the most representative models of which being the ones developed by Canale and Swain (1980), Canale (1983), Savignon (1983), Bachman (1990), and Bachman and Palmer (1996).

¹ Although the term was coined by Larry Selinker (1972), Uriel Weinreich is credited for providing the basis of Selinker’s research. See Selinker (2013) for a discussion on “interlanguage”.

Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983) understood communicative competence as the knowledge system that speakers need in order to perform language in conversational events. However, this influential model did not distinguish between pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge. On the contrary, communicative competence was conceived as resulting from the combination of three main sub-components: (i) grammatical, (ii) sociolinguistic, and (iii) strategic sub-competencies. These components refer to knowledge of how to use language in social activities and how to combine utterances according to discourse principles. However, in a later version of the model, Canale (1984) introduced a fourth sub-component, namely discourse competence, which is described as the ability to create meaningful units of written or oral text. As Stubbs (1983) explains, "discourse competence attempts to study the organization of language above the sentence or above the clause and larger linguistics units, such as conversational exchanges or written text" (p.1). Hence, discourse competence reflects on the importance of producing coherent and cohesive texts for the development of L2 communicative competence, dimensions which are addressed in the present investigation as indicators of pragmatic development in instructional settings.

The nature of the sub-components of communicative competence proposed by Canale and Swain (1980) was adapted by Savignon (1983) in her 'inverted pyramid' classroom model. Apart from equating communicative competence to the concept of language proficiency, the scholar claimed that strategic competence is present in the learner's repertoire, and it should not be learnt separately from the rest of the sub-components. Hence, an interaction-based approach is adopted in order to explain that sociocultural, strategic, discourse and grammatical sub-competencies depend upon each other, as it happens with interlocutors in conversation. Due to this dependence, Savignon (1983) places context as the core element of the process of communication. The framework proposed by Savignon (1983) is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Savignon's communicative competence model
(adapted from Savignon 1983, p 46.).

In addition to defining the nature of communicative competence as both interpersonal and intrapersonal, Canale and Swain (1980) made the distinction between competence (the capacity to use language) and actual performance² (the real manifestation of knowledge in real communication). Despite having addressed the complex task of approaching languages within a communicative approach (CA), applied linguists interested in SLA contributed to the further development of the concept of communicative competence introduced by Hymes (1972). For instance, Widdowson (1983) introduced the distinction between competence and capacity, which he described as a potential factor in creating meaning in language. More specifically, he suggested that performance

² Canale used this term in order to avoid misunderstandings with Chomsky's (1965) concept of performance.

is not sufficient since there may exist a lack of meaning in real language use.

Taking into consideration earlier definitions of communicative competence (Canale, 1983; Canale & Swain, 1980; Hymes, 1972) and language proficiency (Savignon, 1983), Bachman (1990) and Bachman and Palmer (1996) proposed the term communicative language ability (CLA) to replace communicative competence. By reorganizing its definition, Bachman (1990) is credited for including pragmatic competence as a component of language ability. Pragmatic competence included sociolinguistic and functional (illocutionary) knowledge, which mainly refers to the necessary knowledge to produce appropriate language functions. In this respect, Alcón-Soler's (2000) model places discourse competence as the core element, which is comprised of psychomotor skills and strategic competence. Psychomotor skills, which are explicitly referred to as listening, reading, writing and speaking, influence the ability to perform discourse in any communicative context.

Drawing from Canale's (1984) incorporation of discourse competence, Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei & Thurrell (1995) suggested a more comprehensive communicative competence model. These researchers distinguished five sub-competences of language ability: linguistic, actional, discourse, strategic and sociocultural. The groundbreaking concept of actional competence is employed to refer to the notion of pragmatic competence introduced by Bachman (1990), as it involves the ability to express and understand communicative intent. However, the term actional competence plays a distinctive role in Celce-Murcia's (2007) revised version of the model, which provides a new perspective on how practitioners should approach L2 teaching.

As can be observed in Figure 2, the proposed model maintains the central role of discourse competence, which is comprised of four main sub-areas: (i) cohesion, (ii) deixis, (iii) coherence, and (iv) generic structure. The rest of the competences, sociocultural, linguistic, formulaic, interactional and strategic, contribute to communication effectiveness. The sociocultural competence refers to the ability to express messages appropriately by taking into consideration

social contextual factors (e.g., age, gender, status) and cultural factors (e.g., dialects, regional differences). The linguistic component includes phonological, lexical, morphological and syntactic knowledge, being the counterbalance to formulaic competence, which refers to “those fixed and prefabricated chunks of language that speakers use heavily in everyday interactions” (Celce-Murcia, 2007, p. 47). These interactions include routines, collocations, adjectives, idioms and lexical frames. The fourth aspect, interactional competence, aims at providing L2 learners with knowledge on general rules in the TL, such as how to open and close conversations, and the importance of interpreting body language. Finally, strategic competence is described as behaviors that facilitate L2 learning, such as self-monitoring and memory-related strategies.

Figure 2. Celce-Murcia's (2007, p. 45) communicative competence model (adapted from Celce-Murcia et al., p. 10).

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As ILP deals with interlanguage studies and L2/foreign pragmatic development, Celce-Murcia (2007, p. 51), assumes that this model:

[...] suggests a number of principles for the design and implementation of language courses that aim at giving learners the knowledge and skills they need to be linguistically and culturally competent in a second or foreign language.

The conceptualization of discourse competence as the core element in order to develop CLA (Celce-Murcia, 2007; Celce-Murcia et al., 1995) encouraged other researchers to further develop earlier models of communicative competence. For instance, itemizing discourse competence into the four language skills (Alcón-Soler, 2000) inspired Usó-Juan and Martínez-Flor's (2006) model, which included a separate sub-area: intercultural competence. The framework proposed by Usó-Juan and Martínez-Flor (2006) is presented in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Usó-Juan and Martínez Flor's communicative competence model (adapted from Usó-Juan and Martínez-Flor, 2006, p.16).

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As can be seen in the figure, this CA model consists of five main components: discourse, linguistic, strategic, pragmatic, and intercultural competences. As in earlier models (Bachman, 1990; Bachman & Palmer, 1996; Celce-Murcia et al., 1995), pragmatic competence is included as an independent sub-area within the model. However, despite advancing the majority of the components of CA, Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983) did not consider intercultural competence, which is described by Usó-Juan and Martínez-Flor (2006) as key in order to communicate successfully. Ultimately, the model shows the existing relationship amongst the five competences and special attention is given to the function of core academic standards (language skills) in creating discourse from the CA perspective. The interdependence of intercultural competence and situational context proposed in this model has been widely accepted due to its culture and context-bound nature. In regards to this interrelation, Berns (2006, p. 718) asserts:

As each setting is shaped by local cultural and social values, local norms of use develop consistent with these values, norms that specify what, when, where and how something can be said at all linguistic levels from the phonological to the pragmatic. The determination of what is or is not 'normal' cannot be made without accounting for local norms of the users of English in a particular socio-cultural setting.

Following Berns' (2006) emphasis on cultural and social values, Vilar-Beltrán (2013) enhances the role of intercultural competence by giving the same importance to discourse and intercultural components. Thus, the four language skills are separate from discourse, which mainly addresses linguistic and textual knowledge. Moreover, the pragmatic component is not a component on its own but part of intercultural competence, which also includes sociocultural knowledge of the language the learner is attempting to learn.

Hence, assessment of the communicative competence framework remains

complex due to the fact that it is comprised of distinctive and interdependent areas. The present investigation mainly draws from Usó-Juan and Martínez-Flor's (2006) CA model of communicative competence, since it considers the four language skills as the main constituents of discourse, which is influenced by pragmatic, intercultural, linguistic and strategic competences. In line with these authors, we view discourse as a conceptual generalization of each modality and pragmatics as an independent and influential field of enquiry.

On these theoretical grounds, the notion of pragmatic competence (Bachman, 1990) rapidly became the main focus of ILP. Considering pragmatics as "the study of how utterances have meaning in the context of situations" (LoCastro, 2003, p. 12), pragmatic competence is referred to as "the ability to convey and interpret meaning appropriately in a social situation" (Taguchi, 2012, p. 6). However, ILP, as its name suggests, belongs to the domain of SLA and pragmatics (Schauer, 2009). This interdisciplinarity is defined by Kasper and Rose (2002, p. 5) in the following way:

As the study of second language use, interlanguage pragmatics examines how nonnative speakers comprehend and produce action in a target language. As the study of second language learning, interlanguage pragmatics investigates how L2 learners develop the ability to understand and perform action in a target language.

As a branch of pragmatics, ILP thus focuses on L2³ learners' pragmatic development, although it was originally restricted to "the investigation of non-native speakers' comprehension and production of speech acts, and the acquisition of L2-related speech act knowledge" (Kasper & Dahl, 1991, p. 215). As a matter of fact, speech acts together with particular pragmatic behaviors, such as requests, apologies and pragmatic routines, have been predominant aspects

³ Unless otherwise specified, we will use the term L2 to refer to both second and additional languages.

in the study of pragmatic learning and development (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig, 1999; Bardovi-Harlig, 2000; Bardovi-Harlig, 2010a; Kasper & Schmidt, 1996; Taguchi, 2010). Besides, Kasper and Schmidt (1996) point out that the majority of research has examined differences in language use between NSs and NNSs, claiming that there is a lack of longitudinal research on pragmatic competence. Moreover, Foreign Language (FL) contexts have been the learning environments where most ILP research has been conducted. Given the emergence of new contexts such as EMI or Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), there is a need to conduct research across new contexts (Bardovi-Harlig, 2013).

In conclusion, the necessity of conducting longitudinal research and exploring new English language learning environments in order to examine pragmatic development over time has been highlighted. Therefore, in this study, we will address pragmatic development over one academic year in a recent emerging instructional setting; namely, the EMI context.

1.3. Classroom pragmatics

Noticing that the majority of students apparently do not develop pragmatic competence (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Bouton, 1988, 1990, 1992, 1994a; Kasper, 2001), scholars working in the area of ILP addressed how instructional contexts provide conditions for language learning. These contexts, also referred to as language classrooms, are generally understood as well-suited learning environments to provide extra opportunities for exposure and interaction in the FL in order to compensate for the somewhat limited exposure language learners receive outside the classroom (Muñoz, 1997).

The idea of conducting classroom research in natural contexts finds its inspiration in the research conducted by Lewin (1920, 1946) in the United States. This social psychologist and educator is “credited with coining the term ‘action research’ to describe the work that did not separate the investigation from the

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action needed to solve the problem” (McFarland & Stansell, 1993, p. 14, emphasis in original). However, the first educator to use this methodology in education was Corey (1953), a teacher who believed that researchers and practitioners needed to work together in order to implement improvements to everyday practices. For this reason, after conducting several investigations, he declared (Corey, 1953, p. 70):

We are convinced that the disposition to study...the consequences of our own teaching is more likely to change and improve our practices than is reading about what someone else has discovered of his teaching.

Within classrooms, action research bridges the gap between research and practice by promoting the empowerment of educative processes (Hensen, 1996; Johnson, 2012; McTaggart, 1997). This reflective process may be approached from an individual, collaborative, school-wide and district-wide perspective depending on the focus, the support needed, and the potential impact and side effects (Ferrance, 2000).

The enthusiastic discussion on practical research management and control led Dunkin and Biddle (1975), Van Lier (1988), and Williams (2012) develop the framework of classroom research. In this respect, Dunkin and Biddle (1975, p. 38) identified four main variables that need to be taken into consideration when conducting classroom research: (i) presage, (ii) context, (iii) process, and (iv) product. Presage variables concern teachers’ formative experiences and characteristics such as skills and personality. Focusing on learners, context variables address students’ formative experiences and their abilities and attitudes in the school context. On the contrary, process variables focus on teachers’ and pupils’ behavior traits in the classroom and how they may affect the learning process. These outcomes are referred to as product variables and measure language proficiency and competence. Dunkin and Biddle’s (1975) model was the first attempt to critically approach classroom techniques as a co-operative

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process between the two main protagonists in the teaching and learning process.

Having reflected on the main variables that may have a direct or indirect effect in the classroom, Van Lier (1988) provided a more complete picture by delimiting the scope of classroom research. According to Van Lier (1988, p. 27), the central topics to research are: (i) the development of students' interlanguage, (ii) the communication that takes place in the classroom, that is the role of interaction, (iii) students' strategies, (iv) cognitive styles, and (v) assessment practices. In this respect, harsh criticism rapidly emerged based on the premise that classroom research did not provide generalizable results about language learning. However, as Parrot (1996) asserts, "the aim of action research is not to arrive at universal truths but only to learn more about ourselves (at the moment), our teaching (at the moment), our learners (at the moment) and their learning (at the moment)" (p. 6).

Being aware of the influence that classroom contextual variables exert on student achievement (Scriven, 1990), Williams (2012, p. 541) argues that pure classroom research is mainly characterized by a clearly defined educational purpose, and the dynamics of teacher-learners interaction. The author also distinguishes between classroom research and classroom-oriented research (p. 545), the aim of which being to examine out-of-school factors and the implication they may have for learning in the classroom. On this subject, scholars such as Benson and Samarawickrema (2007), Li (2010), and Fenwick and Cooper (2013) conclude that the research context has an effect on learning. On the contrary, Gass, Mackey & Ross-Feldman (2005) demonstrate that the learning environment (laboratory vs. classroom) does not exert much influence on learner interaction. In fact, their results were consistent with Hymes' (1972) observation that in order to understand what goes in the classroom, researchers should also examine what goes on outside the school setting. In the same vein, Batstone (2002) reminded researchers that students confront both communicative and learning contexts. Communicative contexts are those situations where learners "use the L2 as a tool for exchanging information and participating in important social and interpersonal

functions” (Collentine & Freed, 2004, p. 155), while learning contexts are approached as “those in which input and learner output are fashioned normally with the assistance of a teacher...” (Collentine & Freed, 2004, p. 155).

As a corollary to this research methodology, classroom pragmatics research narrows its focus of interest to the specific examination of the development of pragmatic competence in educational contexts. In the next section (1.3.1) we explore studies that have examined pragmatics following classroom research approaches.

1.3.1. Overview of research on classroom pragmatics

Research on classroom teaching and learning of pragmatics has increased greatly in the last three decades due to educators and researchers’ efforts to integrate pragmatics into language educational syllabi. In this regard, observational and interventional studies (Kasper, 2001, p. 34) have been conducted since the 1970s in order to examine the teachability and learnability of pragmatics in instructional settings, mainly addressing the effects of instructional contexts, classroom organization, the relationship between students’ comprehension and production of specific pragmatic features, and task classroom processes (Kasper, 1997).

Until the 1990s, research was concerned with pragmatic input, learners’ opportunities to interact in the TL in classroom contexts (House, 1986; Kasper, 1985) and language classroom organization (Kasper, 1989; Lörcher, 1986). Despite the large impact of Input Hypothesis (Krashen, 1982) in all areas of research and teaching since the 1980s, studies conducted on teacher-fronted interaction concluded that input was not sufficient since it restricts learners’ opportunities to perform language (Lörcher, 1986; Lörcher & Schulze, 1988). This shift in language classroom organization from teacher-fronted to more interactive techniques such as group work to develop pragmatic competence received a growing amount of theoretical and empirical support (e.g., Long, 1985; Long, Adams, McLean &

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Castaños, 1976; Pica & Doughty, 1985).

The emergence of language socialization (LS) theory (Ochs, 1996) and sociocognitive theory (Vygotsky, 1978b) addressed the limitations of teacher-fronted interaction for pragmatic learning by relating language acquisition to culture acquisition. In this respect, LS theory approaches language learning as the process students undergo in becoming members of a particular cultural community. Similarly, sociocognitive theory analyses pragmatic development as regards the ZPD, thereby encouraging individual learning within peer interaction (e.g., Hall, 1998; Ohta, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2001a). In the years following the foundation of the field, a large number of comprehensive overviews have been produced in order to outline the impact of social and cultural factors on language development across distinct cultural contexts (e.g., Garrett, 2008; Garrett & Baquedano-López, 2002; Kulick & Schieffelin, 2004; Ochs & Schieffelin, 1984, 1995, 2012). However, it was the emergence of Schmidt's noticing hypothesis (Schmidt, 1995), Swain's output hypothesis (Swain, 1996) and Long's interaction hypothesis (Long, 1996) that marked a shift towards two main aspects in classroom pragmatic research: the teaching and learning of pragmatics in the classroom.

The central question of whether pragmatics can be learned and taught in instructional contexts (Alcón-Soler, 2005; Kasper, 1997) has resulted in a large body of empirical papers since 2000. In fact, it was Kasper's (1997) plenary talk entitled "Can Pragmatic Competence be Taught?" that inspired further research on the effect of certain teaching methods (e.g., Kasper, 2001; Kasper & Roever, 2005; Martínez-Flor & Alcón-Soler, 2005) and the effect of pragmatic instruction together with the advantages of explicit and implicit approaches (e.g., Alcón-Soler, 2005; Alcón-Soler & Guzmán, 2010; see also studies in Alcón-Soler, 2008b; Martínez-Flor, Usó-Juan & Fernández-Guerra, 2003; see also Barron, 2012; and Taguchi 2011b, 2014).

According to Brock and Nagasaka (2005, p. 20), classroom pragmatics should aim at helping students to be pragmatically S.U.R.E, an acronym used to exemplify that learners need to See, Use, Review and Experience pragmatics in the

classroom. These opportunities to experience pragmatics and the corresponding instruction may be provided explicitly or implicitly. Explicit instruction involves a direct explanation of the target pragmatic features, while implicit instruction does not provide explanations but opportunities for learners to reflect upon pragmatic functions and uses (Kasper & Rose, 2002). In this respect, Takahashi (2010) reviews 49 intervention studies examining the effectiveness of implicit intervention, explicit intervention and a comparison of both teaching approaches. The major findings suggest that even though the explicit treatment seems to have a positive effect on students' L2 pragmatic development (Alcón-Soler, 2005; Eslami-Rasekh, Eslami-Rasekh & Fatahi, 2004; Kasper & Rose, 1999, 2002; Koike & Pearson, 2005; Norris & Ortega, 2000; Rose & Ng, 2001; Tateyama, Kasper, Mui, Tay & Thananart, 1997), the implicit intervention seems to be as effective (Martínez-Flor, 2006). In the same line, other interventional studies also showed that pragmatic features can be taught explicitly or implicitly (e.g., Martínez-Flor & Soler, 2007; House, 1996; Tateyama, 2001) together with input enhancement techniques (e.g., Fukuya & Clark, 1999; Takahashi, 2001, 2005; Takimoto, 2006).

Much attention has been paid to explicit and implicit teaching (see Taguchi, 2014; Takahashi, 2010), whereas other instructional approaches have been investigated to a much lesser extent. Two such approaches are the intention-oriented input-based approach and the incidental learning-induced instruction. Since Schmidt (1993) addressed attention, awareness and intention as necessary conditions for L2 learning, researchers have started to investigate the effectiveness of consciousness-raising instruction on L2 pragmatics (e.g., Abolfathiasl & Abdullah, 2015; Alcón, 2005, 2012; Martínez-Flor & Fukuya, 2005; Mwinyelle, 2005; Narita, 2012; Takimoto, 2012; Wilder-Basset, 1984).

Similarly to consciousness-raising activities to enhance pragmatic development, the intention-oriented theory examines how intention oriented and incidental learning instruction affect learners' pragmatic competence. While intention-oriented input learning refers to the attempt to commit words or expressions by memory for specific purposes (Hulstijn, 2011), Schmidt (2010)

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approaches incidental learning as how learners learn things without having any particular interest in or intention to learn them (cited in Ellis, 2008). Similarly, Takimoto (2013) asserts that intentional learning is “goal directed learning with a deliberate attempt to learn the target features, while incidental learning is learning without a deliberate attempt to learn the target features and with attention focused on other features” (p. 43).

In spite of these different conceptualizations, there is some consensus in the literature that classroom contexts are not ideal settings for learners to develop L2 pragmatic competence due to the lack of pragmatic input in L2 textbooks (Kasper, 2001; Vellenga, 2004). As stated by O’Keeffe, Clancy and Adolphs (2011), traditional textbooks cannot be counted on as profitable materials since “they often contain insufficient specific input or insufficient interpretation of language use” (p. 139).

In the middle of the controversy between incidental learning and the lack of pragmatic communication in the classroom, Ohta (2001b) and Taguchi (2012) explicitly relate classroom interaction to incidental L2 pragmatic learning. Ohta’s (2001b) study on Japanese listeners responses concluded that learners picked up pragmatic features in interaction without explicit instruction. In a similar vein, Taguchi (2012) examined the effect of classroom discourse on pragmatic comprehension and production in an immersion setting. Quantitative and qualitative results revealed that jokes and sarcastic expressions between teachers and students contributed to pragmatic comprehension development, findings that indicate that “naturalistic development of pragmatic competence is possible in a formal classroom without explicit instruction” (Taguchi, 2011b, p. 31). However, the evidences of the development of pragmatic competence in incidental learning-induced instruction are scarce⁴ (e.g., Ellis, 1992; Kanagy, 1999; Nikula, 2008; Ohta, 2001b; Taguchi, 2012; Tateyama & Kasper, 2008). The majority of studies conducted so far are limited to examining the possibility of incidental learning of L2 grammar (e.g., Hulstijn, 1989) and vocabulary (e.g., Robinson, 2005).

⁴See Taguchi (2011b) for a review of studies on incidental learning.

Regarding the intention-oriented theory, Takahashi's (2001, 2005) studies have explicitly addressed pragmatic learning with intention-oriented learning approaches, reporting interesting findings cast into doubt the lasting effect of L2 pragmatic attainment under the explicit treatment. In addition, there is no evidence to show that sociopragmatic competence develops in isolation. This highlights the necessity to learn not only sociopragmatic aspects but also pragmalinguistic knowledge in order to develop L2 pragmatic proficiency (Takahashi, 2001).

On the whole, research has proven that pragmatic competence is teachable under different methodologies (e.g., Billmyer, 1990a, b; Liddicoat & Crozet, 2001; Lyster, 1994; Morrow, 1995, Yoshimi, 2001). However, the vast majority of published research focus on the realisation of pragmatics in terms of specific target pragmatic features, whereas holistic perspectives approaching L2 pragmatic development remain under-examined. In the next section we examine studies that have investigated specific pragmatic features in order to assess pragmatic learning in the classroom.

1.3.2. Target pragmatic features

Since the early 1990s, speech acts, implicatures, and pragmatic routines have been the main foci of interest in classroom pragmatics research. This traditional interest in analyzing different speech acts has been the major concern of authors such as Kasper and Dahl (1991), who clearly identify the investigation of speech acts as the core element in ILP. The predominance of speech acts in the literature is clearly illustrated by Bardovi-Harlig's (2010b) review of 152 ILP studies between 1979 and 2008. The author concludes that 99 studies on pragmatics (65.4%) focus on the performance of speech acts. Despite Austin's (1962) former classification of speech acts into verdictives, exercitives, commissives, behabitives, and expositives, the large body of research mainly addresses the performance of requests, refusals, apologies and greetings.

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The greatest deal of scrutiny both in ILP and cross-cultural pragmatics corresponds to the speech act of requesting, defined as the act in which the speaker will benefit from the action performed by the hearer (Sifianou, 1992; Trosborg 1995). Regarding ILP, a large body of research has been conducted on learners' use and learning of the pragmalinguistic formulae employed to perform the request itself (e.g., Alcón-Soler, 2005; Anani Sarab & Alikhani, 2016; Ebadi & Seidi, 2015; Ellis, 1992, 1997; Fukuya, 1998; Fukuya & Zhang, 2002; Fukuya, Reeve, Gisi & Christianson, 1998; García, 1993; Hassall, 2003; Hill, 1997; Martínez-Flor, 2007; Safont-Jordà, 2003; Salazar, 2003; Scarcella, 1979; Svanes, 1992; Takahashi, 1996, 2001; Takahashi & Dufon, 1989; Trosborg, 1995; Usó-Juan, 2007; Yoshinori & Zhang, 2002). Cross-cultural research, on the contrary, compares NSs and NNSs' request strategies, types and frequencies. The major findings indicate that cultural norms and contextual factors exert an influence on the content of a request (e.g., Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper, 1989; Carrell & Konneker, 1981; Faerch & Kasper, 1989; Kasper, 1981; Kobayashi & Rinnert, 2003; Rinnert & Kobayashi, 1999; Weizman, 1989).

The second pragmatic feature that has aroused a great research interest in the field of ILP is the speech act "by which a speaker denies to engage in an action proposed by the interlocutor" (Chen, Ye & Zhang, 1995, p. 121), namely refusals. Since the early 1970s, the acquisition of refusals in instructional settings has also been examined in an attempt to assess L2 pragmatics at different proficiency levels⁵(e.g., Gass & Houck, 1999; Geyang, 2007; King & Silver, 1993; Kondo, 2001; Liao & Bresnahan, 1996; Morrow, 1995; Silva, 2003; Taguchi, 2006; Zhang, 2012), and has varied widely regarding the types of refusals and the data collection methods employed. Starting with the types, many scholars have examined refusals to invitations, suggestions, offers and requests (e.g., Al-Issa, 1998; Beebe, Takahashi & Uliss-Weltz, 1990; Gass & Houck, 1999; Takahashi & Beebe, 1987; VonCanon, 2006). Other authors have investigated more specific types of refusals such as refusals to dates (e.g., Widjaja, 1997), and refusals to academic sessions

⁵ See Félix-Brasdefer (2008) for a review of interlanguage refusals studies.

(e.g., Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1993), and the effect of gender on the realization of refusals (e.g., Hedayatnejad & Rahbar, 2014). Regarding the data collection methods employed, researchers have opted for using discourse completion tasks (DCTs) and role-plays (RPs) (e.g., Margalef-Boada, 1993), RPs together with verbal reports (e.g., Alcón-Soler, 2012; Félix-Brasdefer, 2003; Widjaja, 1997), and DCTs with verbal reports (e.g., Henstock, 2003).

ILP research has also addressed the effects of teachability on the speech act of apologizing. Previous studies have reported positive effects from instruction (e.g., Billmyer, 1990a,b; Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984; Trosborg, 1995). With respect to learners' use of apology strategies, research has also investigated the performance of different levels of apologies according to the modifications used to soften the situation (e.g., Al-Zumor, 2011; Blum-Kulka et al., 1989; Cohen & Olshtain, 1985; Erçetin, 1995; Istifçi, 2009; Olshtain & Cohen, 1983; Qorina, 2012; Trosborg, 1987; Tunçel, 1999). Findings reveal that English as a second language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners apologize according to the norms of their first language (L1) culture (Olshtain & Cohen, 1983; Suszczynska, 1999; Qorina, 2012; Parsa & Mohd, 2015). Another controversial issue within ILP apologies research is the effect that language proficiency may have on the performance of certain apologies in a given L2. In this respect, some studies conclude that proficiency does not enhance the use of apologies (e.g., Cedar, 2017; Cohen & Olshtain, 1993; Mohebbali & Salehi, 2016) while others have demonstrated that higher-level learners manage linguistic apologies more accurately than lower-level learners (e.g., Blum-Kulka et al., 1989; Istifçi, 2009; Qorina, 2012; Rastegar & Yasami, 2014; Turgut, 2010).

Cross-cultural and interlanguage perspectives have also considered, to a lesser extent, the speech act of complaining. According to Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 60), complaints are influenced by social aspects such as power since participants need to take the risk of threatening others' face. As a result, contributions to this field of study have addressed learners' exploitation of strategies in an attempt to see the differences among cultures and, in particular,

the social aspects that interact with speakers' selection of complaint strategies (e.g., Morrow, 1995; Olshtain & Weinbach, 1987, 1993; Trosborg, 1995). Research findings support the claim by many scholars that some cultures, such as Chinese, are more indirect and negative politeness oriented than others (Foley, 1997; Trosborg, 1995), and that L2 learners have difficulty in handling complaints in interaction, since they do not support their complaints convincingly (Trosborg, 1995). Similarly, greetings (e.g., Omar, 1991), and compliments (e.g., Jiang, 2005; Rose & Ng, 2001) have been approached both in formal and informal contexts as part of the social code of behavioral norms shared by both speakers and hearers.

Moving to another pragmatic feature that has motivated research within ILP, we will mention implicatures. They are generally understood as speakers' ability to convey and interpret non-literal meaning. The inferencing process between what speakers say and what they actually intend to communicate in daily interactions is said to operate differently across societies (Keenan, 1976, cited in Bouton, 1994a), and among social groups (Leech, 1983), posing an obstacle to cross-cultural communication. Empirical evidence on implicatures in English NNSs suggests that the interpretations vary from those of NSs (Bouton, 1988). In a later study, Bouton (1994a) examines the teachability of implicatures in an immersion context and concludes that students receiving explicit instruction do better than those who do not. Other studies have also indicated that stress, intonation and tone of voice are sources of potential implicatures (e.g., Gabrielatos, 2002).

The importance of conventionality has also consolidated the role of formulaic language in L2 pragmatics as a rapidly growing area of investigation. Formulaic language units, which are "ready-made chunks and sequences of words" (Wood, 2002, p. 1), include fixed-expressions, lexical metaphors, idioms and situation-bound utterances (Howarth, 1998; Kecskes, 2000; Wray, 1999, 2002, 2005). Due to the presumable easiness to perform pre-patterned utterances and use them in any social context, many scholars have noted the link between formulaic language and pragmatic competence (e.g., Coulmas, 1981; Kecskes, 2000, 2003; Overstreet & Yule, 2001; Van Lancker-Sidtis, 2003, 2004; Wray, 2002).

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Kasper and Schmidt (1996) go further and claim that formulas are the central part of NSs' pragmatic competence and that language learners need to acquire a range of pragmatic routines in order to achieve social functions in interaction. In this regard, research on pragmatic routines highlights that these facilitators of communication help L2 learners to sound native-like (Yorio, 1980), and understand foreign cultures due to their distinctiveness (Barron, 2003). Similar findings emphasizing the importance of learning pragmatic routines for societal knowledge and behavior are reported in House (1996), Tateyama et al. (1997), and Wilder-Basset (1984, 1986, 1994).

As reviewed above, a current concern in ILP research is that the majority of ILP studies have compared data from L2 learners with NSs' performance of speech acts (Barron, 2003; Schauer, 2009; Takahashi & Beebe, 1987; Woodfield, 2011). This native-like proficiency for L2 pragmatic learners has been critiqued by many scholars (e.g., Dewaele, 2007; Yates, 2010) and challenged by empirical findings (e.g., Barron, 2003). The main assumption is that L2 learners display a noticeably different L2 pragmatic system than NSs and that deviations from the NSs' usages and performances should not be considered pragmatic failure (Dewaele, 2007; Hassall, 2004; Siegal, 1996). In this respect, Ortega (2005) questions whether it is ethical to assess L2 development taking NSs as references.

Also, the significance of L2 pragmatic knowledge beyond the domain of speech acts, formulaic language and conversational implicatures seems to be neglected in ILP research to date. Although research has shown that understanding and performing speech acts is indispensable in order to use utterances appropriately in the TL (Bella, 2011), the scope of SLA pragmatics does not necessarily have to be narrowly devoted to the domain of speech acts. In fact, the operationalization of pragmatic knowledge as specific target features restricts the evaluation of learners' pragmatic competence to "a narrower range of pragmatic performance than learners are actually capable of" (Chaudron, 2003, p. 781). The examination of isolated features limits the evaluation of learners' pragmatic repertoire due to the fact that learners without proper

knowledge of isolated pragmatic aspects, such as pragmatic routines, may still be pragmatically competent speakers of the TL. This idea is reinforced by Barron (2003), who suggests that in order to measure pragmatic knowledge, "it is necessary to concentrate on a number of subsets of pragmatic competence" (p. 264) rather than specific and isolated features. Similarly, Kasper and Rose (2002) suggest the concept of "pragmatics-as-perspective", a research approach that "has the advantage of being inclusive and open to study new research objects as pragmatics, without precluding them from being examined from a different angle as well" (p. 5). The need to readjust the scope of inquiry is also reported by LoCastro (2011), who observes "a movement away from an almost inclusive focus on speech acts, particularly apologies, requests, refusals, and compliments, and formulaic language to a much broader view of language in use" (p. 333).

So far, the limitations of previous research methodologies have been presented. Mainly, the need to readjust the scope of ILP research by adopting broader and more holistic perspectives to approach pragmatic learning and assessment. Despite the complexity of determining the scope of pragmatics, which was metaphorically referred to as "a garbage can" (Leech, 1983), restricting the operationalization of pragmatic knowledge to specific pragmatic features limits the understanding of learners' pragmatic competence.

1.3.3. Methods for classroom research on pragmatics

Research procedures in SLA have been employed since the early 1980s in order to obtain samples of learners' performance and thereby assess their potential achievement. Influenced by studies of child language acquisition from the 1950s and 1960s, data-collection procedures in SLA have been concerned about achieving valid and reliable interpretations that contribute to both theory and practice. Within the area of ILP, researchers have displayed different methodologies, individually or combined, in an attempt to best approach and research a specific area of SLA.

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Regarding the research approach, mono-method research (purely quantitative or qualitative) has been traditionally adopted to assess pragmatic development. By definition, the quantitative approach refers to experimental studies in which the data are quantified and expressed in numerical terms in order to use statistical tests, which aim at testing a specific hypothesis and examining the relationships among variables. This approach has been applied widely in cross-sectional studies that have compared pragmatic competence and development between learners in different contexts (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998; Barron, 2003; Ren, 2012; Schauer & Adolphs, 2006; Shimizu, 2009). On the other hand, the qualitative approach provides the researcher with naturalistic, descriptive and interpretive data, since further information about learners' behavior, knowledge and perceptions about the learning experience can be uncovered. However, the importance of combining quantitative and qualitative research methodologies has witnessed a sharp increase in the last 10 years. This newly developed research paradigm, namely mixed-method research (MMR), consolidates both methods and provides a more complete understanding than either approach alone. Consequently, recent research has adopted this interdisciplinary perspective in order to enhance our understanding of how individual differences, contextual factors, and learners' experiences affect the acquisition of pragmatic aspects (e.g., Alcón-Soler, 2015, 2017; Taguchi, 2011a, 2012). However, despite the importance of quantitative results (Slethei, 1990), Kasper and Dahl (1991, p. 216) assert that

Problems with coding and quantification can, in principle, be remedied upon detection: however, if raw data are flawed because the instrument or observation procedure was inadequate, repair is often not feasible, and the value of the study is questionable.

Taking into consideration the crucial importance of measurement instruments, a wide variety of data collection methods, such as DCTs, RPs, verbal

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protocols and multiple-choice Discourse Completion Tests (MDCTs) have been developed and recurrently employed in pragmatics research.

DCTs have been a much used elicitation format in ILP pragmatics due to the fact that they allow researchers to collect large amounts of data in short periods of time (Johnson et al., 1998). In this regard, a series of studies have employed written DCTs (WDCTs) in order to assess request realizations (e.g., Blum-Kulka, 1982; Blum-Kulka, et al., 1989; Blum-Kulka & Olsthain, 1984; Faerch & Kasper, 1989; House & Kasper, 1987), complaint strategies (e.g., Olshtain & Weinbach, 1987), refusals (e.g., Beebe et al., 1990), and suggestions (e.g., Banerjee & Carrell, 1988). However, the validity of DCTs has been widely questioned for three main reasons: (i) responses are prototypical, (ii) they do not reflect real communication processes, since there is no interaction, and (iii) learners are required to articulate what they believe they would say in an imaginary situation. According to Jucker (2009), “some dialogues put the informant into roles with which they are unfamiliar. This may create unnatural utterances” (p. 1618). Also, Barron (2003) argues that participants have time to think and plan their responses, making the data obtained less spontaneous than real-life oral interactions.

Due to the difficulty in collecting naturally occurring data, researchers have used RPs to collect pragmatics data by simulating communicative encounters in both formal and informal settings between two or more interlocutors (e.g., Bataller, 2010; Bataller & Shively, 2011; Félix-Brasdefer, 2003; García, 1989, 1993, 1999; Márquez-Reiter, 2000). Findings from research suggest their effectiveness in developing group-decision making (Bos & Shami, 2006; Pata, Sarapuu & Lehtinen, 2005), motivating learners (Wishart, Oades & Morris, 2007), and improving communication skills (Chien, Muthitacharoen & Frolick, 2003). However, Golato (2003) argues that learners know there are no pragmatic consequences in performing the role play as RP may elicit fictitious language samples. Consequently, as Martínez-Flor & Usó-Juan (2011) point out, “not only what is linguistically said in the role-plays but how it is pragmatically said may not reflect real speech” (p. 52, emphasis in original). If pragmatic competence

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concerns pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge, RPs do not take into consideration the influence that societal conventions in real interaction (e.g., power of imposition, social distance, context or feelings) exert on speakers' linguistic performance.

Along with DCTs and RPs, multiple-choice questionnaires (MCQs) have been prevailing instruments in pragmatic awareness research (e.g., Bouton, 1988, 1994b; Cook & Liddicoat, 2002; Hinkel, 1997). Over the last decades, computerized versions of MCQs have been used in order to provide not only written instructions but also audio input, thereby enabling learners to listen to speakers' prosody (e.g., Taguchi, 2005, 2008a). Within multiple-choice instruments, MDCTs have been mostly used. They consist of a given number of descriptions of particular scenarios followed by possible interpretations or responses to be addressed by learners (e.g., Salehi & Isavi, 2013). However, despite providing a great deal of contextual information, the reliability of these tests is affected by the fact that students may obtain a certain number of points purely by guessing the right answers. In a similar vein, Roediger and Marsh (2005) argue that this instrument may have a detrimental effect on learning, since the selection of items can lead students to acquire false knowledge.

Qualitative research instruments became increasingly important in order to gain insights into learners' cognitive processes, which enables researchers to focus on participants' immediate awareness rather than delayed explanations for their actions (Cooper, 1999; Olson, Duffy & Mack, 1984). For this reason, researchers have used verbal protocols in combination with production questionnaires (e.g., Robinson, 1992), and RPs (e.g., Alcón-Soler, 2012; Widjaja, 1997) to examine pragmatic development, while gaining insights into learners' thought processes, together with a detailed explanation of the difficulties encountered in the learning process. However, verbal reporting has a potential problem since, as Kasper and Roever (2005) point out, they "may produce reactivity, that is, they may interfere with doing the task" (p. 329).

Finally, an additional aspect to consider is the lack of longitudinal studies.

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In fact, the body of longitudinal research assessing pragmatic development over time is, to date, still scarce (Bardovi-Harlig, 1999; Kasper & Schmidt, 1996; Taguchi, 2010). In this respect, Kasper and Schmidt (1996, p.150, cited in Taguchi 2010, p. 333) provide a clear explanation regarding this limitation:

Unlike other areas of second language study, which are primarily concerned with acquisitional patterns of interlanguage knowledge over time, the great majority of studies in ILP has not been developmental. Rather, focus is given to the ways NNS' pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge differs from that of native speakers (NSs) and among learners with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds [...].

To sum up, widely recognized data collection methods such as DCTs or RPs have been reported to present limitations regarding the validity of the data obtained, as they do not resemble naturally occurring processes in real-life interaction. In addition, it has also been pointed out that further studies should analyze learners' pragmatic development following longitudinal designs. In an attempt to address the above-mentioned limitations, the present investigation approaches the development of pragmatic competence from a much broader and completely holistic perspective, namely FA, which will be described in the following sections.

1.4 Functional adequacy and pragmatics

One of the questions at the heart of much research in SLA is what makes a L2 learner a proficient language user of the TL, and consequently, the dimensions to measure global proficiency. Since the 1990s, the concepts of complexity, accuracy, and fluency (CAF) have appeared predominantly in SLA research to assess linguistic performance in L2 production. However, these three principal proficiency dimensions were originally approached separately as dependent

indicators to assess L2 oral and written language performance.

Despite the fact that research into CAF suggests the triad to capture relevant aspects of language performance, authors such as Pallotti (2009), Kuiken, Vedder and Gilabert (2010) and De Jong, Steinel, Florijn, Schoonen and Hulstijn (2012a, b) have noticed the importance of FA in assessing linguistic performance in L2. Recent studies have employed different terms to label the construct, such as communicative adequacy (Kuiken et al., 2010; Pallotti, 2009), communicative competence (McNamara & Roever, 2007), intercultural competence (Hismanoglu, 2011), communicative effectiveness (Sato, 2012), or communicative functionality (Fragai, 2001, 2003).

The definition of FA⁶ has also varied greatly as it has been interpreted in terms of coherence and cohesion of text (Knoch, 2009), success of transfer of information (Upshur & Turner, 1995), socio-pragmatic appropriateness (McNamara & Roever, 2007), as well as on the basis of successful task performance (Kuiken & Vedder, 2016; Pallotti, 2009). Pallotti (2009) defines the construct of communicate adequacy as “the degree to which a learners’ performance is more or less successful in achieving the task’s goals efficiently” (p. 596). This task-related perspective is also shared by Kuiken and Vedder (2016), who prefer to use the term FA due to the existing relationship between the participants involved in the task and the adequacy of the L2 output in particular language tasks. Specifically, these scholars (2016) define FA as an interpersonal construct which measures L2 writing “in terms of successful task fulfillment” (p. 3).

Bearing in mind that FA is a task-related construct, Pallotti (2009) argues for maintaining clear distinctions between CAF and the functional dimension of the language, and suggests considering adequacy as a separate dimension in assessing L2 performance. CAF, as reviewed above, measures complexity as an indicator of L2 proficiency. However, as Ortega (2003) argues, higher levels of complexity do not necessarily mean higher proficiency levels, as the outcomes may be determined by personal choices. In fact, the author claims that being

⁶See Leung (2005) for a discussion of definitions of FA.

competent in a language also entails pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge to be adapted according to the particular communication situation and demands. In the same line, the importance of considering FA as a separate construct is made more evident by Kuiken and Vedder (2016) when asserting that “the mere fact that an L2 utterance is accurate with respect to L1 standard norms does not necessarily imply that it is adequate and pragmatically appropriate; conversely, non-standard, ‘incorrect’ forms may be pragmatically more adequate” (p. 3, emphasis in original). Regarding pragmatics, using CAF measures to assess performance seems not to be sufficient, as performance may also be evaluated in terms of the accomplishment of the pragmatic outcomes of the task (De Jong et al., 2012a; Robinson, 2011).

As reviewed above, Kuiken and Vedder’s definition focuses on the importance of FA as an essential component in the assessment of L2 pragmatics. Thus, some observations should be made regarding this definition. Firstly, we understand the term L2 in Kuiken and Vedder’s (2016) definition as referring to any language, be it L1, L2, or any additionally acquired language, given that FA is considered an interpersonal construct involving participants’ linguistic repertoires. Secondly, taking into account the varied contexts in which language learning can take place, such as CLIL or EMI, we understand that such particular tasks may be performed in any instructional setting, and that FA is also a context-dependent construct. Giving due consideration to these specification, we have attempted to re-elaborate the definition suggested by Kuiken and Vedder (2016, p. 3) which is as follows:

Functional adequacy is viewed as a task-related, interpersonal construct, involving two participants (the writer A, and the reader B). Functional adequacy is thus considered in terms of successful task fulfillment, in which the focus is on the specific task to be carried out by A, and on the reception of the message by B. What is considered pragmatically ‘adequate’ in the TL, will depend on the particular

language task and the context where it is performed.

In the present study, the focus will be on approaching the FA of L2 writing in order to assess L2 pragmatic development in the EMI setting. Since FA is the main focus of interest in the present study, research assessing this construct is examined in the next section.

1.4.1 Studies assessing the functional dimension of the language

Due to the complexity of providing a clear-cut definition of the construct of FA, research into the functional dimension of language performance is still rather limited. Indeed, as the first working definitions of communicative adequacy (Pallotti, 2009) and FA (Kuiken & Vedder, 2016) were related to “what a person does together with others” (Young, 2011, p. 430), and consequently to tasks, the last two decades have seen a flourishing body of research investigating L2 performance, together with language tasks, which promote and assess communicative adequacy (Revesz, Ekiert & Torgersen, 2016). Studies examining communicative adequacy with respect to linguistics measures have mainly been generated by two projects: (1) the What is Speaking Proficiency (WISP) project, and the Communicative Adequacy and Linguistic Complexity (CALC) study.

As regards the WISP project, two recent studies are worth mentioning. De Jong et al. (2012a) investigated to what extent L2 knowledge skills and L2 processing skills could explain L2 speaking proficiency (specifically FA). By administering eight speaking tasks and nine tests of linguistic skills to 181 learners of Dutch, the researchers examined grammatical and vocabulary knowledge along with speed of lexical retrieval, articulation and sentence building. Results showed that vocabulary knowledge and intonation were the strongest indicators of communicatively adequate speech, as they predicted 75% of speaking proficiency. These findings were consistent with Iwashita, Brown, McNamara and O’Hagan’s (2008), who found that vocabulary measures (token frequencies) had

a strong impact on spoken proficiency. In a similar vein, Hulstijn, Schoonen, de Jong, Steinel and Florijn (2012) explored communicative adequacy in relation to proficiency levels and linguistic competences. All the objective measures of linguistic knowledge were found to discriminate between levels of proficiency (B1 and B2), except for articulation speed. Thus, level of proficiency was reported to be a good predictor of learners' communicative adequacy (FA).

Bridgeman, Powers, Stone and Mollaun (2012) tested the validity of assessing FA in oral proficiency by analyzing speech samples performed by L2 learners of English. The production of speech acts was rated by experienced Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) raters, undergraduate students, and by a spoken-response scoring application, namely the SpeechRater engine. Speech samples were rated according to their FA, which was operationalized in terms of the amount of effort required in order to understand learners' performance. Findings revealed that there existed correlational effects, between the scores provided by the expert raters and the undergraduate raters, and were substantially higher than the ones assigned by the automated scoring system. These differences may be due to the fact that listeners in real-life interaction are aware of the context-effects whereas computer-rating systems may not account for the differences of speech rate depending on the speakers' culture, gender, emotional states, fluency, social status and imposition.

The importance of fluency regarding FA in oral proficiency was also reported by Sato (2012), who investigated the contributions of FA and linguistic criteria to intuitive judgments in an oral exam of English for academic purposes (EAP). In the study, 30 Japanese students at university were asked to perform the oral test, which was rated by 9 teachers of English according to their FA, vocabulary, pronunciation, grammatical accuracy and fluency. Additionally, as the oral test was audio-recorded, the raters were required to write an open-ended comment on the given performances. The results were in line with Bridgeman's et al. (2012) study regarding the validity of assessing FA, as findings suggested that FA was assessed consistently with the overall speaking proficiency judgements.

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Both investigations (Bridgeman et al., 2012; Sato, 2012) supported Pallotti's (2009) approach to adequacy, on the one hand, as a separate measure, and, on the other, as a decisive dimension to interpret CAF measures.

Conceiving adequacy as a separate measure, Revesz et al. (2016) recently examined the influence of the type of task on adequacy and linguistic outcomes. The dataset of the investigation included 80 ESL learners and 20 NSs of English, who performed a total of 500 oral tasks. In order to divide learners into proficiency levels, a placement test, including a listening, speaking, grammar, reading and writing section, was performed by the ESL participants. As the main aim of the research was to assess the communicative adequacy of the performances, learners were asked to respond orally to the following computer-delivered testing tasks: (i) a complaint about a catering, (ii) a refusal of a teacher's suggestion, (iii) a story-telling, (iv) some advice on a radio commentary, and (v) a summary of a lecture. The main results indicated that task type did not have an effect on adequacy and CAF measures, and that the dominant predictor of communicative adequacy was the frequency of filled pauses (fluency).

Regarding the CALC project, the study conducted by Kuiken et al. (2010) is one of the few investigations on FA focusing on written rather than oral production. This ambitious research project involved 94 L2 learners of Dutch, Italian and Spanish, whose proficiency level ranged from A2 to B1 according to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). All participants completed two open-ended decision making tasks, which were rated by NSs and L2 teachers of the corresponding TL. They rated FA and linguistic complexity by using a six-point global Likert scale in order to measure each writer's ability to fulfill the communicative goal of the task as well as the impact of the task on the reader. Results, which were obtained both holistically and by using standardized measures, indicated that FA and linguistic complexity seemed to develop at an equal pace, and that higher correlations tended to come from more advanced learners. However, the most relevant findings were related to the development of a valid and reliable rating scale. The CALC-study revealed that FA should be

assessed by both expert and-non expert raters “since experienced raters/L2 teachers may be ‘biased’ and more lenient or more strict, compared to ‘naive’ speakers” (Kuiken & Vedder, 2014, emphasis in original, cited in Kuiken & Vedder, 2016).

The studies discussed here demonstrate the importance of considering communicative adequacy as a crucial dimension of L2 proficiency (Fulcher, 1987; Knoch, 2011), and the need to assess the FA of learners’ language separately from CAF measures. In this respect, Kuiken and Vedder (2016), inspired by Grice’s (1975) maxims of quantity, quantity, relevance, manner and quality of the message, have proposed a new rating scale of FA to assess the written performance of L2 learners. Based on the general L2 proficiency descriptors provided by the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001), and the rating scale suggested by De Jong et al. (2012a, b), Kuiken & Vedder’s (2016) scale is based on four main dimensions: (i) content, (ii) task requirements, (iii) comprehensibility, and (iv) coherence and cohesion. The researchers tested the reliability of the scale by relying on the data collected in the CALC-project (above-mentioned), and non-expert raters evaluated the two writing tasks according to the four dimensions mentioned above. However, as the researchers argue, the scale should be tested with other participants, types of tasks, and languages other than Dutch and Italian (Kuiken & Vedder, 2016). In this regard, the present investigation contributes to this field of research, by adapting the scale to assess the FA of learners’ written production in EMI contexts.

1.5 Chapter summary

In this chapter, we have established the theoretical framework for the present investigation on pragmatics in instructional settings. Firstly, the evolution of the field of pragmatics was introduced. Taking the definition of pragmatics as a starting point (section 1.1), pragmatic competence is defined as a sub-discipline within the framework of communicative competence, which entails pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge. After narrowing our focus of

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interest to ILP (section 1.2), and pointing out the working definition of ILP in the current research, an overview of classroom pragmatics research was provided (section 1.3.1). One of the dimensions discussed concerns incidental learning in instructional contexts (section 1.3.1), because we will be examining the effect of incidental learning instruction on pragmatic development. In addition, specific pragmatic features (section 1.3.2) and recurrent methods for classroom research on pragmatics (section 1.3.3) were addressed, pointing out that there is a need to approach ILP from a holistic perspective and to conduct longitudinal investigations with reliable and valid data collection techniques (section 1.3.4). In section 1.4, we also explored a recent construct to approach learners' pragmatic competence (that is, FA), and pointed out the need to contribute to this body of research with a new dimension that, to our knowledge, has not yet been examined (that is, the application of FA to an EMI context). In particular, we aim to examine the FA of EMI students as an essential aspect in assessing their pragmatic development. In the following chapter, we shall advance this aim by dealing with the EMI context as a setting where pragmatic competence is learned.

CHAPTER 2.

PRAGMATICS IN THE ENGLISH-MEDIUM INSTRUCTION CONTEXT

Chapter 2 addresses the setting in which the present investigation takes place: the EMI context. Due to the importance of context in developing pragmatics, a review of the nature of EMI programs and the opportunities for input and output available within this context is necessary to gain an understanding of how pragmatic competence is developed by learners of English as an additional language. Section 2.1 introduces the main characteristics of English-mediated education and its role in tertiary education. Then, section 2.2 deals with previous studies that have examined L2 pragmatics in EMI settings. In particular, section 2.2.1 presents an overview of studies on learners' oral production, while section 2.2.2 presents results from studies assessing learners' written production. The chapter concludes with section 2.3, which summarizes the main ideas addressed.

2.1. Conceptualizing English-medium Instruction

2.1.1. Definition of English-medium Instruction

Generally speaking, EMI is understood as a means of delivering course content in English. The early story of EMI programs dates back to the mid-1960s, when the pioneering Canadian models of immersion learning began to be exported to the wider world (Lambert & Tucker, 1972). Since then, the growing need for English as a key to global communications, relations and information has been noticeable in the educational settings of non-anglophone countries. In this respect, there was a worldwide shift from English being taught as a FL to English being the medium of instruction for academic disciplines.

The fundamental factor that has influenced the adoption of EMI programs at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels is the so-called “English language fever” (Le, 2007, p. 172). This “fever” created a great demand for English due to the dramatic change that societies experienced as they began to lean towards globalization, which implied a centralized market economy, foreign investments, and mobility around the world. The ability to communicate in English was seen as key to access “knowledge about the miracles of science and technology” (Denham, 1992, p. 64) and as “an unquestionable asset” (Le, 2007, p. 172) to have better standards of living and future career opportunities. Accordingly, the educational sector, also affected by the new linguistic reality, increased the presence of the language by offering courses, modules and whole degree programs in English.

The British Council defines EMI as “the use of the English language to teach academic subjects in countries or jurisdictions where the L1 of the majority of the population is not English” (Dearden, 2014, p. 2, emphasis in original). Thus, the goal of EMI is to foster and improve overall English competence, especially students’ speaking skills as it triggers communication among teachers and learners and among learners themselves (Lasagabaster, 2008, p. 32).

As regards linguistic outcomes, EMI has been embraced as the best solution to improve English proficiency across Europe because teachers and learners are able to devote time to English without including specific outcomes in the curriculum. As Lasagabaster (2016) indicates, “In EMI programs, English is used as a medium for learning content, and the content is used in turn to learn English” (p. 99). In this respect, the use of English in the classroom to teach academic content is believed not only to motivate students to learn the language and to improve their specific language terminology, but also to foster incidental learning while focusing on communication and meaning.

The nomenclature and definition of EMI has traditionally been confused with other teaching practices, such as ESP, and even used as a synonym for CLIL. Regarding ESP, the most important difference lies in the learner’s profile

and purposes for learning the language. While EMI describes the teaching of academic subjects through English, ESP students combine subject matter and English language teaching by acquiring a set of professional skills in order to perform particular job-related functions. Indeed, the term “specific” in ESP approaches the study of a concrete field of enquiry which is relevant to the learners. As for CLIL, the controversy may arise due to the similar educational objectives of both approaches, which are knowledge-based goals (cognitive domain), skills-based goals (psychomotor domain) and affective goals (attitudinal domain) (Bloom, 1956). Accordingly, Bloom’s (1956) taxonomy of Educational Objectives is applied in both educational settings, which aims at promoting higher forms of thinking in HE, such as analyzing and evaluating concepts, processes, procedures, and principles rather than just remembering facts. As such, the goals of the learning process are enhancing learners’ knowledge of specifics and universals, comprehension of the materials and ideas being communicated, use of abstract language in particular and concrete situations, ability to represent the relationships between ideas, putting together elements and parts so as to form a whole, and ability to judge real life activities (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Bloom’s taxonomy of Educational Objectives for higher education (adapted from Bloom, 1956).

However, the main difference lies in the fact that CLIL is considered an educational approach with a dual educational objective, which is the enhancement of both content and language. This content-driven pedagogical practice differs from EMI since EMI prioritizes content over language whereas language and content are integrated in CLIL methodology (see Figure 5). Furthermore, CLIL, apart from requiring students to learn a FL by studying subject-matter content, provides support for language production.

Figure 5. Counterbalance between CLIL and EMI outcomes.

In addition, various-supportive methodologies are also used in CLIL settings in order to achieve the amalgam of language and subject learning. The development of supportive methodologies is claimed by the Eurydice network (2006, p. 8) when asserting:

. . . Achieving this twofold aim calls for the development of a special approach to teaching in that the non-language subject is not taught in a foreign language but with and through a foreign language.

Taking into consideration such an approach in institutionalized teaching and learning, the differences between EMI and CLIL lie in methodological and acquisitional processes, as well as linguistic perspectives. Regarding

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methodological discussions, educationalists and practicing teachers have realized that CLIL requires a specific methodology (Abendroth-Timmer et al., 2004; Thürmann, 1999; Wolff, 1997), whereas EMI is the mere transmission of content through English and no further materials such as tasks or activities need to be developed. Secondly, the acquisitional processes in the CLIL classroom are mainly related to reading and written comprehension, and specific processing strategies need to be acquired in order for students to understand the information contained in the course materials. As a consequence, CLIL approaches the whole learning process as more skill-orientated than EMI programs.

Finally, scholars who conceptualize CLIL as nonexchangeable with EMI argue that the main point against this controversy is the language of instruction. According to Lasagabaster & Sierra (2010), the distinctive feature is that the language used for instruction in CLIL is not a local language to which students can be exposed besides formal instruction. In the same line, Marsh (2002) and Wolff (2007) pointed out that this local language should be any "additional" language that is not included in the students' linguistic repertoire. In other words, the language is not restricted to English, as in the case of EMI.

Despite having acknowledged that English-medium education plays a vital role in society in order to succeed in today's global workforce, the turning point in the emergence and further implementation of EMI programs was the Bologna Process, initiated by the European Union in 1999. The trend for individual mobility rates and students' level of engagement in internationalization activities motivated educational reforms that have radically changed HE. Among the main milestones and commitments within the Bologna Process, the processes of mobility of students and staff, quality assurance, and the development of Europe as an attractive region motivated the promotion of EMI projects in an attempt to develop a more coherent and cohesive European Higher Education Area (EHEA). As the context of the present investigation is the EMI classroom in HE, the implementation of EMI at universities will now be discussed in more detail.

2.1.2. English-medium Instruction in Higher Education

The driving force behind the rise of English in HE was the new agenda set by the European Union in 1999, which highlighted the need for more centralized policy tools on multilingual and intercultural practices at European universities. In contrast to previous years, most HE institutions increasingly encouraged the mobility of students and employers by including internationalization activities such as SA programs in order to develop cultural, economic and professional collaboration with other countries. In step with promoting globalization and linguistic diversity, the European Commission (2008) stressed the importance of improving basic language skills and advanced the ambitious goal of enabling citizens to communicate in two languages other than their mother tongue. Considering that more than 1.000 million people were studying EFL already in the year 2000 (Crystal, 2003), the status of English as a Lingua Franca was even reinforced (House, 2013). Accordingly, HE institutions encouraged national policies to support the integration of programs such as EMI in order to address students' aspirations and improve the quality of tertiary education, which, at the same time, strengthened the position of English across Europe (Ament & Pérez-Vidal, 2015; Juan-Garau & Salazar-Norguera, 2015; Pérez-Vidal, 2014a; Smit & Dafouz, 2012).

The Bologna Process signed in 1999, which created a space for intercultural dialogue and international cooperation, also reflected the values that needed to be shared by the HE sector. Accordingly, the response of universities aimed at ensuring fundamental principles such as freedom of expression, tolerance, freedom of research and free movement (European Commission, 2015). However, although European countries were moving in the same direction, such policies were executed at a widely varying pace due to the increasing overall participation in the HE arena. According to The European Higher Education Area in 2015 Implementation Report, there were, approximately, 37.2 million students enrolled in universities in the academic year 2011/2012. The large composition

of the student body at universities is distributed across 4.000 institutions around Europe, with the highest number, more than 900, to be found in Russia. Figure 6 shows the total number of HE institutions operating in EHEA countries. This is crucial to understand the promotion of English in order to facilitate dialogues and mobility among such countries, and the emergence of EMI programs as a response to both globalization and internalization.

Figure 6. Number of recognized institutions in the EHEA
(adapted from The European Commission, 2015, p. 36).

Internationalization and globalization processes at the tertiary level are defined as “the policies and practices undertaken by academic systems and institutions – and even– individuals to cope with the global academic environment” (Altbach & Knight, 2007, pp. 290-291). One of the outcomes of this harmonization was the implementation of FL programs and practices in accordance with the promotion of intercultural dialogue and multilingualism.

In this respect, universities began to offer degree programs in English, to such extent that 400 HE institutions already provided more than 2,400 English-medium programs in 2007 (Wächter & Maiworm, 2008). The implementation of EMI programs differed between institutions in terms of the amount of credit hours offered in English. Accordingly, universities opted for one of the three existing models: programs in which the amount of credit hours in English remained the same throughout the degree, programs that gradually increased the credit hours offered in English, and programs that gradually decreased the amount of those credit hours (Nastanksy, 2004).

The growth of this established trend throughout Europe has continued due to practical, survival, financial, idealist, and educational motives (Wilkinson, 2005, 2008). One of the principal motives for the large-scale adoption of EMI programs is the recruitment of international and exchange students. This practical reason aims at attracting the most knowledgeable students and scholars from all over the world in order to cope with growing competition and to keep up with locally produced university rankings. Before the Bologna Process, a third of all international students decided to continue their studies in the “major English-speaking destination countries” (Graddol 2006, p. 76). However, the implementation of EMI at non-English-speaking HE destinations represented a turning point, since international students were provided with English academic offers across Asia and Europe. This international atmosphere, which is achieved by both attracting students and offering degrees, Master’s and Bachelor’s programs in English, coincides with the urge of universities to provide their institutions with an international profile (the survival motive). As Ritzen (2004) points out “an international university cannot be considered truly international if it does not recruit its students from a wide range of cultures and nationalities” (p. 36). However, despite the European Commission’s attempts to boost multilingualism, English seems to be the passport that students need to enter global academic communities, which in turn, reinforces the establishment of EMI programs.

The financial motive has also been fundamental in the strengthening

of English as a teaching medium. Although universities began to offer more language-oriented programs such as CLIL, ESP, EAP, language showers and immersion programs, the heavy weight of these programs on national budgets led most universities to opt for the EMI version. Despite restricting the academic options to a single program, the demand for EMI reached figures previously unheard of (Wilkinson, 2004), leading Wilkinson & Zegers (2006) to claim that “the growth in English-medium education is not confined to Europe” (p. 26). Finally, the establishment of EMI in HE institutions has also been stimulated by the promotion of internationalization at home and preparation of domestic students. Teaching through English also aims at facilitating the integration of national students into the international market and workforce, who reap the benefits of EMI by interacting with international students. Thus, they are exposed to the internationalization process while studying at their home universities (Llurda, Cots & Armengo, 2013; Strotmann et al., 2014).

As a whole, the emergence and spread of EMI is attributed to the efforts of HE institutions in striving for internationalization. In this regard, Alexander (2008a, 2008b) argues that EMI acts as the gatekeeper for globalization. This idea is reinforced by Coleman (2006) who approaches the increasing proliferation of English as the sole medium of instruction through a cyclical process in which “the recruitments of international students and international staff, which English facilitates, leads to the enhanced institutional prestige, greater success in attracting research and development funding, and enhanced employability for domestic graduates” (p. 5).

Similarly, but dealing with students’ academic preferences, Costa and Coleman (2013) claim that students enroll in EMI because of “the near-necessity of English proficiency for graduate employability” (p. 2), and they consider English as the antecedent to career opportunities (Byun et al., 2011). In this regard, several non-European studies have reported that employment advantages are a main reason for choosing EMI (Byun et al., 2011; Diab, 2006; Tung, Lam & Tsang, 1997; Yang & Lau, 2003), and English proficiency is considered a source of self-esteem

for young graduates (Andrade, 2009; Ball & Chik, 2001; Tsai, Ying & Lee, 2001), as they believe that English will be an important asset in their professional setting.

2.1.2.1. The role of English-medium Instruction

The influence of EMI, not only in language learning in general but also in pragmatics, has been emphasized by a number of linguists. In fact, according to Wong (2010), EMI contexts are ideal teaching environments since “students will become more comfortable in an English-rich communication forum, helping them to perceive English less as a dry ‘theoretical’ subject and more as a vibrant, living means of dialogue” (p. 126, emphasis in original). In the same vein, Taguchi (2012) and Ohta (2001b) explain that, although the distinguishing feature of EMI is the non-existence of clearly defined linguistic outcomes, incidental learning may occur in these contexts due to the large amount of exposure students receive. Similarly, Melati & Arief (2015) suggest that EMI is anchored on best practices in English Language Teaching (ELT), and that communication and interaction are key in acquiring a language under Communicative Approaches to Language Teaching (CLT) such as EMI. The role of EMI in providing ample opportunities to use the language on an everyday basis in different communicative situations is also expressed by Ibrahim (2001, p. 124), who claims:

The opportunity to engage in meaningful oral exchanges (in the classroom or in the community) is also a factor necessary for second language acquisition, because it allows learners to test their hypotheses about their interlanguage system, receive feedback on it, and develop fluency and accuracy. The fact that EMI offers students and teachers more opportunities to speak English (e.g. in lectures, comments, discussion, presentations, interactions, tests, etc.) means that it is a source of comprehensible output, another component responsible for second language acquisition.

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With this in mind, it might be inferred that EMI contexts have one main advantage: their role as facilitators of language learning and communication. More specifically, several benefits of using English as a medium of instruction at universities have been pointed out. Firstly, EMI provides students with much more exposure to English than EFL contexts, which facilitates the learning process for those students who have scarce exposure to English outside the classroom (Hengsadeekul, Hengsadeekul, Koul & Kaewkuekool, 2010). Furthermore, the adoption of English as the medium of instruction also saves time, since the majority of English language learners require additional extra-curricular support in different activities of interest in order to practice the language and make language development more meaningful (Ortmeier-Hooper, 2012).

Secondly, the promotion of English makes students active in their own learning since they need to develop language competences and interact with teachers and other students in the classroom (Cannon, 2000). In addition, it helps students gain confidence as they get used to using English in daily communication; indeed, this is why EMI settings are often referred to as contexts “that simulate target situations in real life” (Young, 2006, p. 35). Within the L2 context, the enrollment in EMI programs facilitates students familiarity with language use for real communicative purposes, leading to future admissions from post-abroad education, as well as the possibility of finding a better job in the employment market, since English is a prerequisite to ensure a better life in today’s world (Gao, 2008).

Thirdly, English-mediated programs help learners’ cognitive development. Research has found that bilingualism correlates with creative thinking, and suggests that bilingual students are better in fluency, originality and elaboration in thinking than their monolingual counterparts (Baker & Jones, 1998, p. 67). Considering that EMI represents a weak form of bilingual education (Baker & Jones, 1998), it also heightens learners’ metalinguistic awareness as they are more sensitive to intentions and more analytical towards language (Ibrahim, 2001).

Ultimately, EMI is also beneficial for the development of the two types

of language students should have in order to succeed in acquiring a language: conversational fluency and decontextualized academic language (Cummins, 1979). Being aware of the disparity between students' language use for conversation and the one used for academic purposes, Cummins (1979) outlines Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) as key conditions to develop language proficiency. On the one hand, BICS refer to social and conversational language used for oral communication, which occur in conjunction with contextual support, such as non-verbal behavior. On the other hand, CALP is described as the ability to cope with academic language demands, which includes much more formal, technical and specialized language, and implies higher-order thinking skills, such as analysis, synthesis and evaluation. In other words, BICS are acquired in context-embedded situations while CALP is achieved in specific reduced contexts such as classrooms. Accordingly, EMI contexts are supportive environments for acquiring both BICS and CALP, due to the daily opportunities to engage in meaningful interactions, and the context-reduced nature of classroom communication when it comes to developing adequate L2 literacy skills. This is exemplified by Cummins' Dual Iceberg Model (1984), which represents the interdependence of language processes and cognitive domains in order to develop linguistic competence (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Cummins' Dual Iceberg Model of Language Interdependence (adapted from Cummins, 1984).

Thus, EMI classrooms promote effective learning of English as there are opportunities to use language that develops from social activities, which is cognitively undemanding, and academic discourse, which is cognitively demanding. In this regard, Echevarria & Graves (2007, p. 50) conclude:

Effective language learning takes place in well-organized classrooms where there are opportunities for interaction with the teacher and peers and adequate practice in the target language. Interactive instruction allows students to use elaborated language around relevant topics, building English skills while at the same time developing content knowledge.

Following these approaches to effective language teaching and learning, the present study explores pragmatic development in learners of English as an additional language. We will also address the influence of intensity of EMI as a result of the implementation of different EMI programs in the context of the Valencian Community. As the present study is classroom-based, our aim in the next section is to determine whether existing research shows that pragmatic development is possible when English is adopted as the medium of instruction.

2.2. Studies of English-medium Instruction in L2 pragmatics

Over the past few years, research has shed light on the powerful effect of the learning context in the development of L2 pragmatic abilities (e.g., Atsuzawa-Windley & Noguchi, 1995; Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1993; Cohen & Shively, 2007; Kinginger & Blatter, 2008; Marriot, 1995; Pérez-Vidal, 2014b; Röver, 2005; Sanz, 2014; Taguchi, 2008a; Warga & Scholmberger, 2007). The role of the learning environment is considered particularly important in pragmatic development due to the fact that being pragmatically competent entails the ability to control the interplay of language, language users, and the context of

language use (Kasper, 1992; Levinson, 1983; Thomas, 1983, 1995). In this regard, research has documented the superiority of L2 contexts over FL environments in the production and perception of speech act expressions (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998; Barron, 2003; Hoffman-Hicks, 1992; Schauer, 2006a; Takahashi & Beebe, 1987). The facilitative effect of contexts on the development of pragmatic competence has often been attributed to input-based explanations, which argue that pragmatic development will occur if there is a sufficient amount of input containing exemplars of the target feature (Bialystok, 1993). In this respect, based on the limited opportunities for input and interaction in the classroom, the impact of EMI on students' linguistic abilities has been addressed (e.g., Ament & Pérez-Vidal, 2015; Loranc-Paszyk, 2007), although pragmatics has not received much attention. In this section, a discussion of the main findings and research gaps in the studies dealing with pragmatic learning and development is provided. Since our focus is on written production, a thorough review of studies examining L2 pragmatic development in learners' oral production falls outside the scope of this dissertation, however a brief overview is provided here because of the relevance of the findings for pragmatic learning in the EMI setting.

2.2.1. Studies on learners' oral production

Although the area of ILP in English-mediated education is relatively under-researched, a number of studies have included a focus on pragmatics in the university context (e.g., Martí-Arnándiz, 2008; Martínez-Flor & Usó-Juan, 2006; Taguchi, 2012; Taguchi, Naganuma & Budding, 2015). Based on the assumption that immersion education seems to create a pragmatic mask effect that leads students to speak more (Maillat, 2010, p. 55), studies have focused on pragmatic competence as a learning outcome in the EMI setting.

One of the first attempts to explore pragmatic learning in tertiary education was Martínez-Flor and Usó-Juan (2006), who investigated learners' peripheral modification devices when requesting. They looked at two disciplines

with different exposure to EMI, namely those of English Philology and Computer Science Engineering. A total number of 64 participants performed spontaneous oral RPs which elicited request use which allowed the researchers to analyze the amount and type of internal and external modifiers employed. Results showed that learners engaged in the English Philology degree employed greater amounts of peripheral modification devices when requesting. The researchers concluded that their findings could be related to increased exposure to the language “[...] since the first group of learners majored in English and, consequently, the English language was both an object and a tool of study for them” (Martínez-Flor & Usó-Juan, 2006, p. 29). Thus, this study shed light to the implications that employing English as the means of communication in the classroom may have on pragmatic development.

In a similar vein, Martí-Arnándiz (2008) compared the speech act of requesting in university students of English Philology, Psychology, Law, Industrial Engineering and Continuing Education. The researcher used a DCT with 16 situations in order to explore the use of request modifiers in terms of quantity and variety. As in the previous study, results showed that English Philology students outperformed the other students by producing more external and internal modifiers. Consequently, the increased amount of EMI exposure, such as English Philology, seemed to be an indicator of the development of pragmatic competence, represented by the improved modification of the speech act of requests.

As we have seen, the studies reviewed above have generally shown that students with more exposure to the English language through content and language-based instruction show advantages over students who only have English as a specific subject. However, these studies have compared the pragmatic outcomes of students participating in EMI classrooms (mainly English Philology) with that of students who participate in ESP courses rather than considering the role of EMI contexts in promoting students’ pragmatic competence. In this respect, Ament, Pérez-Vidal and Baron (2016), Taguchi (2012), and Taguchi et al.

(2015) have examined the effect of EMI on learners' pragmatic development, revealing interesting findings about learning processes in this context.

Taguchi's (2012) longitudinal study addressed the pragmatic development of English students in an EMI university. 48 Japanese ESL learners completed an oral DCT in order to assess the production of the speech acts of requesting and giving opinions. The items were categorized as low imposition, situations in an equal power relationship, and high imposition, situations in a different power relationship. Results revealed considerable advancement in the production of low-imposition speech acts after one academic year, but the use of mitigated preparatory expressions in requesting did not show any progress. The lack of internal modifications, such as hedging and amplifiers, was found in the participants' daily interaction with class instructors since the students used direct forms of requests and expressions of dislike.

Based on the absence of these pragmalinguistic forms, Taguchi et al. (2015) implemented explicit instruction on the speech act of requests at the same EMI university. In this study, 23 first-semester students performed the same oral DCT to assess mitigated preparatory forms (preparatory conditions), hedging (words to minimize self-expression) and amplifiers (words that strengthen self-expression). The participants completed the test three times during the academic year, following a pre-test, immediate post-test and delayed post-test design. Although results revealed a strong instructional effect on participants' learning of requests and expressions, the most important finding was incidental learning occurring through instruction. Although the production of one specific preparator was not part of the instructional targets, participants' use went up from 10% to over 45% at immediate post-test, suggesting that they had learned it incidentally by listening to the conversations in the video clips provided. Thus, this study suggests that pragmatic learning is possible in EMI settings.

Finally, Ament et al. (2016) examined the effect of the EMI learning context along with foreign language and enjoyment (FLAE) on ILP development. Pragmatic competence was measured through the production of pragmatic markers (PMs) in

speech due to their role in interpreting an utterance and expressing the speakers' intention. 15 second-year Economics undergraduate students, who were split into an immersion group and a control group, were recruited because they were considered to be fully adapted to the EMI context after one year of instruction. Participants were required to complete an oral DCT and a conversation task in order to elicit PMs across speech acts such as giving opinions, giving a suggestion, requesting and apologizing. Results showed that immersion students produced significantly more PMs on the whole than the control group, supporting the claim that higher intensity immersion programs lead to gains in L2 (Muñoz, 2012).

In summary, although the studies mentioned above focus on oral rather than written production, they reveal the importance of EMI contexts regarding the amount of exposure to English for pragmatic learning. Relevant contributions were made in terms of acknowledging the benefits of higher intensity of EMI, and of pointing out differences in the pragmatic performance by ESP and EMI learners. In the next section, studies on learners' written production are reviewed in order to observe whether EMI triggers pragmatic gains in written performance.

2.2.2 Studies on learners' written production

Research conducted at university levels reveal that the majority of learners often have difficulty in writing in a L2, especially when performing the cognitive and discursive operations involved in both the comprehension and production of written texts (e.g., Atienza & López, 1997; Carlino, 2005, 2007; Castellani, 1998). As García (2009) points out, the development of language competence is more evident in receptive skills due to the fact that productive skills (writing) are given less priority. Accordingly, Dalton-Puffer (2009) claims that language learning in bilingual programs such as EMI is usually understood as communicative competence, albeit in the limited sense of oral fluency (Hüttner, 2009). For such reason, writing should also be approached in EMI research, since it is a fundamental aspect of language competence (Coetzee-Lachmann, 2009; Zwiers,

2008). On these grounds, researchers seem to agree that a competent writer needs to have good language competence, textual competence, and pragmatic competence; defined as the ability to use language appropriately in accordance with the context (Jexenflicker & Dalton-Puffer, 2010). In this regard, the few studies conducted on learners' written production in bilingual programs have been carried out mainly at secondary levels by comparing CLIL and traditional ELT contexts (e.g., Lasagabaster, 2008; Llinares & Whittaker, 2006; Ruiz de Zarobe, 2010; Sánchez-Pérez & Salaberri, 2015; Whittaker & Llinares, 2009). Regarding HE, to the best of our knowledge, only two studies have addressed written development in EMI contexts: Salaberri and Sánchez-Pérez (2015) and Ament and Pérez-Vidal (2015).

Salaberri and Sánchez-Pérez (2015) analyzed the L2 written production of 67 learners studying specific English courses in the Agricultural Engineering degree. Participants were required to produce, in written English, a specific assignment based on an experiment task in the laboratory, as well as a final lab report. The rating scale employed considered task fulfillment, organization of content, grammar and vocabulary. Task fulfillment analyzed the degree of appropriateness and register while text organization assessed the extent to which the communicative purpose of the reports was achieved (discourse markers, the use of paragraphs and the overall structure). Results showed differences in the performance of certain areas of written language competence, that is, acceptable results were found regarding the command of grammar and vocabulary but weaknesses were found in aspects related to the pragmatic aspects under analysis. Research findings also indicated that there was a relationship between academic performance and linguistic awareness since the higher scores in the written assignments corresponded to the best linguistic performances. Accordingly, the researchers argue for "the need to incorporate in EMI classrooms new methodologies that help students integrate the global features of the writing ability within their own course contents in a second language [...]" (Salaberri & Sánchez-Pérez, 2015, p. 55).

The study conducted by Ament & Pérez-Vidal (2015) constitutes an attempt

to assess the pragmatic dimension of language through a written composition. Although the investigation examines overall linguistic gains (listening and lexicogrammatical abilities), the written task was analyzed according to coordination, accuracy and fluency measures. Accordingly, pragmatic errors included problems with referents, incorrect use of idioms, expressions and formulaic language. Sixteen students participated in this longitudinal pre-test-post-test experimental study over one academic year. They were split into an immersion group (entire degree in English) and a semi-immersion group (half of their degree through EMI). Results suggested that, although statistically significant gains were not detected, there was a trend towards improvement in the writing tasks both in immersion students and semi-immersion students, with higher means for the immersion group. These results are consistent with Matsumura's (2003), who reported that increased exposure to English has a positive effect on Japanese University students' pragmatic development.

The studies reported above seem to agree on the effect that EMI exerts on learners' pragmatic competence. However, the few studies that have analyzed the effect of the EMI context on pragmatics in the classroom have examined specific target pragmatic features. Bearing this in mind, we can identify a research gap; namely, how pragmatic learning may differ among learners with different exposure to EMI and the role of proficiency level. We believe that these are factors that need further investigation and this will be addressed in the present study.

2.3. Chapter summary

The objective of this chapter was to explore the context of the present study, i.e. EMI programs. In section 2.1, we introduced the definition of EMI and its role in tertiary education, which differs notably from other methodologies such as CLIL. Illustrating this setting, EMI was approached as a context that enhances learners' exposure to the TL and promotes the development of learners' pragmatic

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competence (section 2.1.2.1). Finally, we reviewed the studies that have addressed the EMI setting in tertiary education (section 2.2). More specifically, we explored findings from English-mediated education research in L2 pragmatics in both oral (section 2.2.1) and written production (section 2.2.2). In the following chapter, we will be dealing with factors that may affect pragmatic learning in the EMI context. In particular, we examine the role that the amount of exposure to the TL, learners' proficiency levels and previous language experiences play in the development of learners' pragmatic competence.

Chapter 3.

Factors influencing pragmatic learning

Individual differences, increased exposure to the TL and learning context are the three factors that have received most attention in ILP research. In order to provide a base for the current study regarding the influence of these factors on pragmatic learning, this chapter begins with a general overview of research on the impact of learning context, input, feedback and individual differences (section 3.1). We then deal with the role of language proficiency in the TL on pragmatic learning and development, before narrowing the scope to EMI settings (section 3.2). This section is followed by an in-depth examination of the role of increased exposure to English, specifically the effect of the amount of exposure on pragmatic learning and development (section 3.3). Next, section 3.4 deals with the role that language experiences play in promoting pragmatic learning, paying particular attention to the role of length of stay. The chapter concludes with a summary of the main ideas provided in section 3.5.

3.1 A general overview

Previous empirical works have investigated the factors that are considered to influence pragmatic learning. Among these factors, learning context, input, feedback, and individual differences have been the main foci of research. The present study addresses three of these variables, since it examines the role of intensity in EMI, level of proficiency, and previous language experiences on pragmatic development by learners of English as an additional language.

With respect to the learning context, a main tenet of existing research is that the type of input learners receive determines pragmatic use and development. In this regard, Meibauer (2012) claims that pragmatic evidence is essentially related to the context in which utterances are formed and perceived. Also, the educational setting facilitates improvement in learners' conversational skills

improvement and gains in pragmatic competence (Nikula, 2005). Within ELT, two main contexts are distinguished: FL, where the most important and accessible input for learners is that of the teacher in the classroom, and SL settings, in which the L2 is used on a daily basis for communication and academic purposes, as in EMI programs. As these contexts offer different learning opportunities due to the amount and quality of the input provided, some studies have examined the impact of input on the development of pragmatic competence (e.g., Koike & Pearson, 2005; Takimoto, 2006, 2009). As reviewed in Chapter 2, EMI learners have rich exposure to the TL in the classroom together with a plethora of opportunities to use the language for real purposes. In this respect, a body of ILP research already exists on the extent to which different intensities of the TL (hours of instruction or number of credit hours) trigger the development of pragmatic learning (e.g., Martínez-Flor & Alcón-Soler, 2004; Taguchi, 2012; Taguchi et al., 2015).

Considering this finding, one can infer that language experiences also influence pragmatic development due to the exposure to the TL outside formal settings. In this regard, one of the most examined SL contexts is SA, which seems to promote the acquisition of pragmatics (e.g., Barron, 2003; Cohen & Shively, 2007; Ren, 2015; Schauer, 2006a; Taguchi, 2008a). Additionally, other experiences such as traveling abroad, short-term English courses, intensive language showers, trainee programs, and work experiences, such as au-pair activities, have recently attracted the attention of scholars. The main motivation for these studies is that learners are also exposed to the sociopragmatic norms of the TL community, which facilitates the identification with the standards, beliefs and values of the existing members.

In addition to the learning context, studies investigating the impact of feedback and instruction on teaching pragmatic aspects have given mixed results. On the one hand, research findings in this sense suggest that instruction and feedback have a positive impact on the development of learners' pragmatic competence, specifically input-based instruction methods (e.g., Takimoto 2009). On the other hand, other studies revealed the positive impact of explicit feedback

on consciousness-raising tasks (e.g., Takimoto, 2006).

Additionally, ILP research has also examined the role of individual differences on pragmatic development, and this is also addressed in the present study. Learners' individual differences include, among others, learning styles, learning strategies, learning aptitude, and other demographic variables⁷. Regarding learning strategies, results have suggested that learners learn best when they are provided with opportunities to create their own learning styles (e.g., Ehrman, Leaver & Oxford, 2003). Similarly, motivation and attitudes towards the TL have been reported to play a role in learners' adaptation to pragmatic norms in the target community (LoCastro, 2001). Another factor that has attracted the interest of scholars is gender, specifically in the speech acts of males and females. In this regard, Macaulay (2001) concludes that women prefer to use indirect requests and more provocative speech forms in their overall speech acts.

The individual difference that has attracted the most attention is language proficiency (e.g., Al-Gahtani & Roever, 2012; Bardovi-Harlig, 2009; Pinto, 2005). In fact, the effect of different proficiency levels on L2 pragmatics is one of the most examined topics in ILP (Li, 2014). Research findings on the effect of proficiency on pragmatic learning suggest that advanced learners seem to employ more learning strategies (Pressley & Associates, 1990), complex requests (Al-Gahtani & Roever, 2012), and enjoy a high level of self-efficacy (Zimmerman & Martinez-Pons, 1986). However, results are mixed since lower proficiency learners have also been observed to produce the same rate of speech acts in demanding social situations (e.g., Taguchi, 2006), and to perform similarly to advanced learners (Kasper & Roever, 2005; Kasper & Rose, 2002).

The present investigation focuses on the individual variable of proficiency, which accounts for the pragmatic performance in the EMI classroom. In doing so, this study represents a notable contribution to the ILP field, since, to the best of our knowledge, ILP studies considering intensities of EMI, different levels of proficiency and the effect of previous language experiences are rather scarce. In

⁷ See Robinson (2002) and Skehan (1989) for a review of these variables and major areas.

fact, Ament & Vidal (2015) provide the only empirical evidence of how intensity of exposure in EMI students in the Higher Education Area (HEA) may affect overall language development.

Regarding language experiences, research has acknowledged the potential influence of the factors that affect pragmatic acquisition while abroad. In order to provide a classification of the factors affecting pragmatic learning, Pérez-Vidal (2014b) suggests that there are 3 groups of factors to be analyzed when examining stays abroad. As can be observed in Figure 8, these factors have been categorized into internal and external factors in order to gain a better understanding of the effect of these predictors on language learning. On the one hand, external factors include those related to the learning context, such as instruction, intensity of interaction and length of stay. On the other hand, internal factors include variables such as motivation, proficiency level, attitudes towards languages and nationality.

Figure 8. Features of specific learning contexts
(adapted from Pérez-Vidal, 2014b, p. 22).

Taking the findings from this general review into consideration, the following three sections will look at previous research on the role of language proficiency, intensity of exposure, and length of stay on learners' pragmatic competence.

3.2 The role of language proficiency in the target language

The relationship between TL proficiency⁸ and immersion contexts has received a great deal of attention in SLA research, possibly due to the fact that the primary goal of many institutions in promoting EMI is to increase learners' language competence.

As previously mentioned, growing dissatisfaction with the quality of instruction found in the traditional English classroom (Hu, 2007) and the failure of the educational system to meet the anticipated demands for English learners (Hu & McKay, 2012; Zhang, 2002) has led researchers to start examining the effect that English-mediated education has on language competence. Dealing with L2 pragmatics, Hughes (2003) defines proficiency as "having sufficient command of the language for a particular purpose" (p. 11). In other words, language proficiency refers to communicative linguistic ability whereby the user must have knowledge of the language and the capacity to use it competently in any given context (Bachman, 1990). According to the Spanish Ministry of Education and the corresponding linguistic policies adopted, the role of EMI in the HEA is unquestionable as "the English proficiency of faculty and students is an important indicator of a university's competitiveness and quality of education" (Zhang, 2002, p. 5).

As regards HE, the acquisition of L2 proficiency has been examined extensively (e.g., Collier, 1989; Vázquez, Vázquez, López & Ward, 1997; Yang &

⁸ Unless otherwise specified, the term language proficiency is used synonymously to refer to language ability and language competence. See Bachman (1990) and Canale & Swain (1980) for a further discussion on CLA.

Meyen, 2003). The scope of these studies includes language learning performance, difficulties, and how individual, social and institutional factors affect acquisition (Vidanapathirana & Wickramasinghe, 2005). Within individual factors, 'baseline proficiency' (Lambert, 1991) is considered to have profound effects on learners' performance, which include learners' styles (Warschauer, 1998), inter-learner interactions (Moore & Kearsley, 1996), and learning environment (Krashen, 1985). Accordingly, a good baseline knowledge of English ensures learners' capacity to pursue studies through English, which also facilitates the retrieval of information and comprehension of study materials (Vidanapathirana & Gamini, 2009, p. 45). However, the effect of English proficiency is cumulative, as it may stimulate but also frustrate the learning process due to the fact that learners who have high levels of English proficiency are more self-confident and assertive, whereas those who lack competence remain reticent and more uncommunicative.

Taking into consideration that proficiency is an indicator of readiness to engage in intensive input and output exchanges (Chen, 2014), a number of studies have reported the effects of language proficiency in EMI settings (e.g., Butler & Castellon-Wellington, 2000; Chen, 2014; Kang, 2005; Kym & Kym, 2014; Vidanapathirana & Gamini, 2009). Butler and Castellon-Wellington (2000) compared students' performance in content areas to their performance in language proficiency and found that English proficiency was a significant predictor of academic achievement. Regarding content comprehension, Kang (2005) noticed that students proficient in English showed a higher level of comprehension with lower anxiety. The study also concluded that advanced learners were also less likely to resort to materials translated into Korean since they were more concerned about subject content than lower level students, as reported in Bang's study (2013).

Similarly, Vidanapathirana and Gamini (2009) examined whether the level of English language proficiency influenced the performance of learners following an EMI degree program. There were three sources of data which compared the average mark levels with the weighted average marks from 126 participants:

(i) questionnaire surveys, (ii) focus group discussions, and (iii) secondary data obtained from the official records. The findings showed positive correlations between the English marks and the final examination scores of the modules, suggesting that English language proficiency had a direct effect on learners' performance.

By means of language-related episodes, Chen (2014) investigated the feasibility of EMI for high and low proficiency learners. The researcher found that, although higher proficiency learners performed better in grammar-related test items, learners of both proficiency levels were able to generate similar amounts of language episodes. Finally, Kym and Kym (2014) analyzed how language proficiency influenced students' instruction comprehension. Findings concluded that more proficient students benefited more from EMI classes as low proficient students had difficulty comprehending and handling the content. Based on these findings, researchers suggested that in order for EMI to be successful, participants should have a certain level of English proficiency (p. 55). These results support the findings of previous studies reporting a correlation between proficiency in the language of instruction and the overall academic achievement of learners (e.g., Ajibade, 1993; Fakeye & Yemi, 2009; Feast, 2002). However, some other studies provide evidence that language proficiency does not play a key role in students' success in EMI classes (e.g., Byun et al., 2011; Clapham, 1996; Joe, 2010). Moreover, Clapham (1996) concludes that knowledge of field-specific content is more important in determining academic achievement than language proficiency. Similar results were found in Joe (2010). This researcher examined the relationship between Korean students' English level and ability to comprehend EMI lectures, and showed that proficiency did not influence such comprehension. In line with Clapham (1996), background knowledge was considered more influential in determining the ability to comprehend lectures, as participants belonged to the medical school and specific knowledge was required. Byun et al.'s (2011) study articulated similar concerns regarding whether students had the necessary level of English to follow the lessons at the beginning of the course.

Moving to the field of students' perceptions, another concern in the EMI setting has been the assessment of learners' self-perceived level of English. In this regard, Takahashi (2005) explored the relationship between self-perception of English ability and proficiency and class performance. The subjects were 98 freshmen Japanese students enrolled in two English courses at two universities in Japan. By means of a Can-do scale and final examinations, the researcher explored whether perceived competence was related to actual English ability. Results suggested that the students who perceived themselves as having higher level of ability in English scored higher in the proficiency test and in the final examinations. As the author concludes, perception of high levels of ability might have led to better performance and vice versa. However, the author claims that the reciprocal relationship needs to be explored in a longitudinal study in order to explore the cause-and-effect relationship between the two variables. This concern is addressed in the present study by following a case-study design, which explores whether self-perceived English ability rather than actual ability influences learners' pragmatic performance.

With a focus on English proficiency in practitioners, a comprehensive body of research has addressed the role of teaching competencies which allow for the use of English as the medium of instruction. Due to their leading role in providing learners with knowledge, understanding and skills, previous research suggests that EMI teachers should have a minimum level of proficiency of C1 according to the CEFR (Klaassen, 2001; Klaassen & Bos, 2010). Apart from this linguistic requirement, they should also have academic language abilities and specific content knowledge, which has been referred to as 'teaching proficiency' (Elder, 2001). Regarding language competence, research suggests that the oral competency of teachers is directly linked with students' success as it represents the greatest source of input (Davies & Pearse, 2000). Similarly, Maley (2009) claims that those teachers who have good speaking skills are more likely to have students who, in turn, interact more in the classroom. However, Bel & Luis (2010) argue that practitioners require not only speaking fluency but proficiency

in the four fundamental competencies (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). Accordingly, drawing on the language and discourse skills involved in teaching English through English, Elder (1994, p. 9) suggests 'four aspects of language and language-related ability' that determine teachers' ability to teach a language effectively (p. 11):

1. The ability to use the target language as both the medium and target of instruction
2. The ability to modify target language input to render it comprehensible to learners
3. The ability to produce well-formed input for learners
4. The ability to draw learners' attention to features of the language

In this regard, Anstrom (1999), Al-Ansari (2000), and Short (2002) claim that students' probability of attaining academic literacy is higher if EMI teachers receive training that enables them to teach the four language skills in the content classroom. Accordingly, Cullen (2002) describes teachers' command of English as the basic dimension of teaching due to the opportunities it provides for noticing how language is used, experimenting with language use, and restructuring existing language knowledge:

A teacher with a poor or hesitant command of spoken English will have difficulty with essential classroom teaching procedures such as giving instructions, asking questions on text, explaining the meaning of a word or replying to a student's question or remark A teacher without the requisite language skills will crucially lack authority and self-confidence in the classroom, and this will affect all aspects of his or her performance. (Cullen, 2002, p. 220)

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As a result of this close connection between teaching procedures and command of the language, Freeman, Katz, Garcia and Burns (2015) have recently proposed a construct which rethinks the role of teachers' proficiency across instructional settings. Figure 9 shows the ideal teachers' language proficiency, which includes classroom management skills to connect with students in the classroom, practice of both communication and content, and further assessment of students in order for them to progress in the language.

Figure 9. Key language knowledge of teachers' TL proficiency
(adapted from Freeman et al., 2015, p. 6).

Taking the above into consideration, research has examined the role of teachers' competence in English language teaching in EMI contexts. For instance, Jochems (1991) claims that teaching through English may have a detrimental effect on learners due to the limited linguistic capacity of practitioners. Similarly,

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Sesek (2007) provides a number of examples of how limitations in teachers' use of English leads to misunderstandings and confusions on the part of the learners by not employing transition words between activities and mispronouncing vowel sounds.

Uys, Van der Walt, Van der Berg and Botha (2007) explored EMI in the African setting and concluded that, due to the teachers' inability to meet the language-related needs of students, their communicative competence did not improve, as they were unable to understand the lectures and classes. More recently, Richards, Conway, Roskvist and Harvey (2013) conducted a case study on teachers with different levels of proficiency by examining seven aspects of teaching: exploration of TL resources, provision of appropriate language models, provision of corrective feedback, use of the TL to manage the class, provision of accurate explanations, provision of rich language input and the ability to improvise. Results revealed that the two teachers with advanced TL proficiency operated in all seven aspects whereas the remaining five, with limited proficiency, only addressed the first four aspects of teaching. These results are in line with those that focus on the inadequacy of teachers' TL proficiency and emphasize the need for language improvement and FL teacher training programs (e.g., Berry, 1990; Cullen, 1994; Fahmy & Bilton, 1992; Lima, 2001; Murdoch, 1994).

As previously reviewed, research has shown that the ability to teach in English is influenced by language proficiency. Hence, it is commonly assumed that English native teachers are at an advantage compared to teachers who are not NSs of the language. This assumption has been referred to in language teaching as "the valuing of 'nativeness' as a criterion for being a 'good' language teacher" (Freeman, 2016, p. 182, emphasis in original). Authors such as Murdoch (1994) argue that "for non-native English teachers, language proficiency will always represent the bedrock of their professional confidence" (p. 254). On the contrary, Richards (2017, p. 3) argues that EMI teachers do not need a native-like ability in teaching because they need to be able to teach with the language and not the language itself.

Dealing with the relationship between EMI, proficiency and academic achievement, recent research has also examined the intensity of the instruction to which students are exposed in the classrooms as a factor influencing their development. In the next section, we explore the importance of the amount of EMI instruction in language learning.

3.3. The role of intensity of exposure in English-medium Instruction

As previously suggested (see section 2.2.1), there is scholarly agreement on the close relationship between language learning and intensity of exposure. For instance, Sheela & Ravikumar (2016) claim that “students with more exposure to the TL are expected to acquire greater familiarity with the target language” (p. 772). This implies that while L2 learners are in the process of learning the TL, they will inevitably acquire more aspects of the language if they have more contact with it, albeit in verbal or written form, or in formal or informal ways of communication. In the case of EMI, the relationship seems to be stronger given that the exposure to English is the main trait of this approach (see section 2.1.1). Indeed, since EMI provides a very suitable environment to enhance learners’ exposure to English, one may hypothesize differences in learners’ outcomes regarding the amount of exposure students receive in this formal setting. For example, a program offering 270 hours of EMI would not provide students with the same opportunities as one of 600 hours of instruction through English; that is, more exposure to the language equates to opportunities to express ideas in English and to acquire specific knowledge.

Despite that evidence, the reality is that ILP research on how the intensity of English instruction influences pragmatic learning is still in its infancy. To the best of our knowledge, only one study, Zhang and Yang (2012), has addressed this concern. These authors analyzed the impact of the amount of hours of English language instruction on 128 Chinese ESL learners’ sociopragmatic awareness. Overall, they observed that learners who had studied five main subjects through

English showed significant differences in developing pragmatic competence. In particular, there was a significant effect of intensity of instruction in the request scenario task. The researchers attributed these findings to the natural imitative social environment in the EMI lessons, in which learners were encouraged to use English for communicative purposes through activities such as games and chants. Moreover, as teachers were required to speak only in English, the researchers claim that the learning of pragmatic norms is more likely to take place due to the learners' interaction with meaningful contents. Even though Schmidt (1993) argues that mere exposure to the TL does not result in FL/L2 learners' pragmatic learning, the results of this study seem to contradict such an assumption.

Further studies have explored the role of increased exposure to the TL in general language development (Ament & Pérez-Vidal, 2015; Housen, 2012; Lightbown & Spada, 1991; Loranc-Paszyk, 2007; Serrano & Muñoz, 2007). This last group of studies has explored how intensive exposure experiences affect language learning in formal settings. Although these studies do not have a focus on pragmatic learning at the tertiary level, they have reported relevant findings for the purpose of the present study. As a matter of fact, they contribute to our understanding of how the amount of EMI exposure influences linguistic outcomes in structured and purposeful classroom-based learning contexts.

Lightbown and Spada (1991) investigated the effect of the amount of hours children in an immersion program in Quebec were exposed to English by comparing a group exposed to an intensive block of hours and a group with a lesser amount of hours. Findings suggested that learners with increased input performed better on all tasks than learners who received less exposure to the language. In a similar vein, Serrano and Muñoz (2007) examined the performance of adults in three types of programs: extensive, semi-intensive and intensive courses. Results revealed that the group exposed to the intensive program (25 hours per week) experienced greater gains in all linguistic domains in comparison to the other groups of learners, who received 10 and 4 hours of instruction per week.

Loranc-Paszyk (2007) examined the development of the linguistic abilities of undergraduate students after an EMI treatment. By means of a reading task, the researcher compared the performance of two programs with EMI, specifically English Philology and International Relations (60% less exposure to English). Although results revealed that the performance of both groups was comparable, a correlational effect was found between the scores obtained on the reading task and written performance. These findings contradict the study conducted by Housen (2012), who found an increase of language development when the amount of input was also increased in formal and intensive instructional settings.

Acknowledging the lack of studies examining the effects of EMI on linguistic performance, Ament and Pérez-Vidal (2015) have recently addressed this research gap by measuring linguistic gains through an oral comprehension task, a written composition, a cloze task, and a grammar task. This preliminary study, which adopted a longitudinal pre-test-post-test experimental design over one academic year, involved two groups of participants: the immersion group, students who had an exposure of 100% of their course through EMI (1500 hours by the end of the academic year), and the semi-immersion group, receiving 18% to 41% of their courses in the TL (275-625 hours). Findings suggested that although both groups showed similar mean gains, the mean values reflect more average improvement in the group that took the entire degree through EMI.

Further evidence on the influence of exposure on language advancement is provided by studies that have pointed to significant differences between different types of immersion programs. Regarding the role of increased intensity in bilingual education, three studies have analyzed the effect of “intensive doses” of French (Bournot-Trites & Reeder, 2001; Burmeister & Daniel, 2002; Wesche et al., 1994).

It was in the mid-1990s when the former Ottawa Board of Education decided to implement the so-called bain linguistique (language baths) as an attempt to improve the French oral skills of students. This experimental design increased exposure to French from the regular 120 hour programs to 450 hours

for one school year, after which the students would return to the regular classes. Wesche et al. (1994) reported that the students' French listening and speaking skills improved notably, as well as their self-confidence in using the language to communicate in the classroom.

Similarly, Bournot-Trites, and Reeder (2001) analyzed mathematics achievement in the context of French immersion at the intermediate level. The treatment group received 80% of the academic curriculum in English, whereas the comparison group received 50% of the subject in French and the other 50% in English, including mathematics. Results showed an advantage in mathematics for the 80% group, thus suggesting the benefits of total immersion over partial immersion programs.

By eliciting oral and written data in a communicative test, Burmeister and Daniel (2002) examined the effect of partial immersion programs. The researchers analyzed the influence of input on the length of learners contributions in terms of the number of clauses, the absolute frequency of cohesive elements as well as their density. In the partial immersion program, subjects were provided with 30% English exposure, which represented an increase of about 15% compared to the regular curriculum. Results showed that immersion students scored higher with respect to the number of clauses and the frequency of cohesive devices in interaction. Accordingly, these findings seem to confirm the value of more intensive use of the number of hours in the TL for language learning.

In addition to intensive doses of languages, the role of intensity of exposure has also been examined in accordance with short and long-term effects. In this respect, Lightbown and Spada (1994) claim that students who have experienced linguistic gains in language programs continue to perform better than students who have not. In other words, students undergoing a substantial period of intensive TL exposure build fluency which is maintained when they return to regular classrooms (Lightbown & Spada, 1994). In this regard, research on the delayed effect of English immersion programs has shown the success of these programs on students' English language outcomes (Burmeister, 1994, 1998;

Wode, 1994a,b, 1995, 1999; Wode, Kickler, Knust & Pries 1994; Wode, Burmeister, Daniel, Kickler & Knust, 1996).

In summary, it seems that L2 learners in EMI programs may experience language learning to different extents with regard to the intensity of exposure to the TL. Despite the fact that studies have reported findings on the role of exposure in immersion, partial immersion and English-only programs, there is still an important research gap to cover, since, with the exception of Zhang and Yang (2012), ILP acquisitional studies have disregarded the role of intensity of EMI in pragmatic learning and development. The present study addresses this concern by exploring how different intensities of EMI at universities affect learners' pragmatic development over one academic year.

3.4. The role of language experiences

Another dimension influencing pragmatic development is related to claims that SA programs, language showers and sojourns offer learners opportunities to participate in "socioculturally-organized activities" (Taguchi, 2014, p. 2) in which members of the target community interact. When the TL is involved, learners are exposed to patterns of interaction, local norms of the community, and, consequently, contextualized pragmatic behaviors. In this vein, in comparison with traditional contexts such as EFL, it has been claimed that temporary stays in foreign countries have important effects on language development (de Bot, 2008; Ellis & Larsen-Freeman, 2006; Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2009; Verspoor, de Bot, & Lowie, 2011). The relation between individual learning and context has been defined as follows:

The content-dependence of complex applied linguistic systems is three-fold: language is developed in context, as use in context shapes language resources; language is applied in context, as context selects the language action to be performed; language is adapted for context,

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as the experience of past language use is fitted to the here and now.

(Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008, p. 69, cited in Taguchi, 2014)

Taking the above into account, ILP shares this perspective by considering context as the core element in developing pragmatic competence. As Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008) suggest, learners experience pragmatic behaviors in a variety of contexts, and the patterns and features that have been learnt in previous experiences may still be part of their current linguistic repertoire. Drawing from this assumption, the present study analyzes the effect of previous language experiences on learners' pragmatic competence.

With regard to the transformation of HE in Europe by introducing EMI education (see section 2.1.2), mobility was the main structural reform introduced by The Bologna Process in an attempt to construct solid foundations for the EHEA. In this regard, the European Union (EU) has been working closely with countries to support the principles of the Bologna Process through internationalization programs such as the Erasmus+ Program. This program aims to provide opportunities for European students to train, study, gain experience and volunteer abroad, while they develop their knowledge by fostering transferable skills such as problem-solving, reflective thinking and enhancing responsibility, critical abilities and autonomy. However, although the majority of research has been focused on SA programs, learning experiences are not restricted to this educational setting. In fact, other experiences such as working abroad, living with host families or holiday trips also provide learners with exposure to the TL and opportunities to be involved and interact with members of the target community.

Most ILP research studies have examined the role of SA programs on the acquisition of FLs in terms of the daily exposure students receive in different communicative situations, and the opportunities to attain high levels of cultural knowledge. These assumptions have been further explored since Carroll's (1967) widely cited study, in which the researcher investigated the development of the language skills of 2,872 college seniors who spent time abroad. Although the

participants did not spend the same amount of time in the target countries, it was observed that even short-term stays influenced and had a positive effect on participants' proficiency. Similar results regarding improvements in global oral proficiency were reported by Segalowitz and Freed (2004). The researchers examined at home and SA learners and found significant improvement from the pre-test to the post-test in the SA group, as they increased one level of proficiency after the sojourn. These results were in line with previous studies that noted global oral proficiency gains after the SA (Guntermann 1992a,b).

Looking at different areas of proficiency, development of phonetic and phonological abilities has been examined in relation with experiences abroad. For instance, Simões (1996) found that participants improved their vowel quality after five weeks abroad. In a similar vein, Stevens (2001) and Díaz-Campos (2004, 2006) reported better phonological abilities in SA than in at home learners.

One of the areas that has been subject to the most examination in the SA field has been the development of grammatical abilities (e.g., Collentine, 2004; DeKeyser 1986, 1990, 1991; Isabelli, 2001; Ryan & Lafford, 1992; Schell, 2001). Using SA data, Lafford and Ryan (1995) concluded that learners in the SA context improved on the use of the Spanish prepositions *por/para*. Similarly, Isabelli (2001) studied the progress of L2 intermediate learners over a twenty-week period in a SA setting and found improvement in grammatical abilities. Isabelli and Nishida (2005) also revealed a significant advantage of SA with respect to development of the subjunctive. However, DeKeyser (1986, 1990, 1991) and Collentine (2004) found the opposite results when examining SA learners and their at home counterparts. DeKeyser (1986, 1990, 1991) found that residence abroad had little impact on the development of grammatical abilities and that at home learners were equal or superior in their use of grammar. Collentine's (2004) study reported similar results when observing the acquisition of a variety of morphosyntactic features by showing that SA learners did not make as much progress as at home learners.

Focusing on pragmatic abilities, ILP research has analyzed the features

that may affect the development of pragmatic competence while abroad. These features include input, feedback, types of experience, living arrangements, length of study, and learners' individual characteristics, investment and identity (Taguchi, 2014, p. 2). Accordingly, two groups of studies are found in the literature. The first group includes cross-sectional studies that have compared pragmatic performance between at home learners and learners in a host country (Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998; Barron, 2003; Matsumura, 2001; Olshtain & Blum-Kulka, 1985; Schauer, 2006a; Shimizu, 2009; Taguchi, 2011b, c) while the second group includes longitudinal studies examining pragmatic development over the course of the stays (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1993; Barron, 2006, 2007; Bataller, 2010; Bouton, 1992, 1994a; Cook, 2008; Ishida, 2009, 2011; Iwasaki, 2010; Kinginger & Farrell, 2004; Masuda, 2011; Nguyen, 2011; Warga & Scholmberger, 2007).

Several cross-sectional studies have reported the superiority of SL learning conditions over domestic FL learning environments in the production, recognition and production of speech acts (e.g., Matsumura, 2001; Olshtain & Blum-Kulka, 1985; Schauer, 2006a). For instance, Matsumura (2001) found that after a four-month period abroad, the SA group performed more appropriate advice-giving expressions than the at home participants. Similarly, Schauer (2006a) noted that SA participants detected a higher number of pragmatic errors than their counterparts. However, the superiority of domestic learning contexts on the development of pragmatic and communicative abilities abroad has also been reported in ILP research (e.g., DeKeyser, 1991; Lafford, 1995, 2004; Niezgoda & Röver, 2001; Rodríguez, 2001). DeKeyser (1991) investigated the use of communication strategies by SA and at home learners and found no significant differences in the number and type of strategies employed by learners who had been abroad. Lafford (1995, 2004) studied the effects of language experiences abroad on learners' use of conscious strategies, performance problems and interactional problems in accordance with a lack of L2 knowledge. By comparing abroad and at home learners, the researcher concludes that the at home experience seems to enhance the use of strategies since the communicative difficulties encountered

in the host countries may discourage their use (see Lafford, 2004, 2006). Similar results are reported by Rodríguez (2001) when examining the recognition and use of request formulas, who found no advantage for the SA group.

Regarding the second group of ILP studies, several longitudinal studies have used mixed-methods designs in order to provide more precise information on pragmatic performance and learning contexts. For instance, Iwasaki (2010, 2011) studied the acquisition of speech style of American learners of Japanese during one year abroad. By analyzing pre- and post-stay oral proficiency, findings revealed that there was a pragmatic change from more polite forms to informal forms at the end of the sojourn. However, the most important finding was that learners struggled with conforming to the target community norms, since they wanted to maintain their own identity. The acquisition of pragmatic features in different social activities while abroad has also been studied in relation to learners' interaction with community members (e.g., Cook, 2008; McMeekin, 2011; Nguyen, 2011; Shively, 2011, 2013).

Although the majority of ILP studies have focused on the effect of SA programs on pragmatic development, other forms of language experiences have also been examined. Kinginger's (2008) investigation is an example of this line of study. The researcher analyzed the awareness of sociolinguistic forms in L2 French learners in a semester abroad. Results revealed that although SA programs are generally conceived of as opportunities for learning, the interactions maintained with their respective host families in France played an important role in learners' progress. In the same vein, Cook (2008) examined the use of polite speech style when interacting with host families. During a year-long program the researcher recorded the conversations between the participants and their host families and observed that socialization occurred through feedback, spontaneous discussions, self-presentation stances, playfulness, and quoting others' speech. Similarly, McMeekin (2011) also analyzed the acquisition of Japanese speech style through interaction in the host family setting. In line with Cook (2008), results showed that pragmatic learning and development occurred thanks to participation in

conversations together with the repetition of information provided. Finally, Shively (2011) illustrated how learners socialized thanks to the practices of the community members. Pragmatic learning was observed through the acquisition of service encounter routines, and findings showed that pragmatic socialization occurred when learners first entered the target community and participated in the recurrent practice of service encounter interaction.

Some gaps in the studies reviewed above must be pointed out. These concern the settings addressed, the target features analyzed, and the study design. Firstly, the studies reviewed above cover SA programs (e.g., Matsumura, 2001; Olshtain & Blum-Kulka, 1985; Schauer, 2006a) and only four of them have considered home family experiences as contexts affecting pragmatic growth (Cook, 2008; Kinginger, 2008; McMeekin, 2011; Shively, 2011). There appears to be a research gap in the type of stays (e.g., holiday trips, working experiences) in the study of pragmatic learning and language experiences.

Secondly, these studies have focused on specific pragmatic features, specifically speech acts, such as advice-giving expressions (Matsumura, 2001), indirect refusals and opinions (Taguchi, 2008b). However, none of them have approached pragmatic development from a holistic perspective in order to assess general gains. As Taguchi (2015) suggests, "future research should continue investigating this construct-context interaction by analyzing learners' mastery over multiple pragmatic targets" (p. 5). In the present study, we would like to shed light on pragmatic performance and learning experiences by approaching pragmatics from a completely holistic perspective in an attempt to assess learners' overall pragmatic gains.

Thirdly, there is a preference for cross-sectional studies over longitudinal designs. As previously stated, longitudinal research seems to be an adequate means to have more detailed information about how pragmatic competence develops over time. Finally, the studies reviewed above have been focused on the traditional category of SA and at home learners (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998; Schauer, 2006a; Shimizu, 2009). In this study, we would like to

explore pragmatics beyond the traditional context of SA and at home learners, focusing on various types of stays, which also provide learners with opportunities to interact in the target community.

To sum up, the studies reviewed above in this section seem to suggest that learners in the SA context do not always outperform their counterparts in pragmatic growth. Also, the relation between language experiences and pragmatic gains is affected by features such as input, length of stay, and learners' individual characteristics (Taguchi, 2014). As the present study analyzes length of stay, the following section will present an overview of the effect of this factor on pragmatic learning.

3.4.1 Length of stay

Another variable that has received attention in ILP research is the effect of time on pragmatic development. Although duration of stays seems to have a smaller impact on pragmatic learning than other variables such as interaction or proficiency level, length of stay has been demonstrated to have a positive impact on students' pragmatic abilities. Researchers are also aware that foreign students are placed in a new learning environment where they have to communicate with other people, even though they do not have the necessary means to do so (Beltrán, 2014, p. 81). In this respect, some studies have dealt with length of stay abroad (days/months spent abroad; also referred to in the literature as length of residence) in an attempt to explore whether the time of the sojourn affects students' pragmatic competence. In this respect, Segalowitz and Freed (2004) claim that it is reasonable to assume that longer lengths of residence would lead to better outcomes in L2 pragmatics due to the widespread opportunities to use the language and the exposure to the greater availability of input in the L2.

The role of length of stay has been corroborated by some cross-sectional studies comparing the pragmatic performance of SA students with their at home counterparts (e.g., Matsumura, 2001, 2003; Röver, 1996; Takahashi &

Beebe, 1987). This group of studies have suggested that longer residence in the TL community yield greater L2 pragmatic attainment. For instance, Röver (1996) found that German EFL students who spent six weeks in English-speaking countries outperformed learners who did not in the use of pragmatic routines. Similarly, Bouton (1999) observed the effect of length of residence on NNSs' understanding of implicature in American English, and Churchill (2001) made similar observations on direct want statements in the English request realizations over a month in target country.

Matsumura (2001) compared the pragmatic development of 97 Japanese university students in a student exchange program in Canada. Pragmatic development was assessed by means of questionnaires with regard to sociocultural perceptions of social status when providing advice in the L2 to three different levels of social status: (i) low social status, (ii) equal status, and (iii) higher status. Findings showed that learners changed their perception of social status during the three-first months and that before that period no changes occurred. As a matter of fact, length of stay was the single factor that determined pragmatic gains as proficiency only had an indirect effect. Thus, results suggest that living for a short period in the target speech community might be effective in developing pragmatic competence. In a similar study, Matsumura (2003) also stresses the effect of time abroad over proficiency level on pragmatic development. In this study, the researcher observed the developmental change in the pragmatic competence of 137 university-level Japanese students who spent eight months in Canada and 72 native speakers of English who studied at the same university. Results were in line with Matsumura (2001), as results showed that students who received a greater amount of exposure (4 months) became more pragmatically competent than those who had only spent 1 month abroad. Both studies (Matsumura, 2001, 2003) indicate that the first three months are of significant importance for learners' pragmatic development in their L2 in the SA context and that shorter stays may not lead to pragmatic gains.

Achiba (2003) also showed how length of stay affects the pragmatic

development of requests over a period of seventeen months. The researcher observed her seven-year old daughter, Yao, and showed how she refined her means of requesting in a L2 after a period in Australia. At early stages, Yao used more internal modifiers whereas at the end of the observation she employed more varied forms and strategies for requesting. Similar results are found in Olshtain and Blum-Kulka's (1985) study on perceptions of requests and apologies. Different lengths of stay in Israel were examined, which ranged from two to ten years. It was found that those learners who had stayed abroad for ten years or longer displayed appropriate levels of directness and had developed greater tolerance for positive politeness strategies.

The length of residence was also addressed by Félix-Brasdefer (2004), who analyzed the sequential organization of politeness strategies and the ability to negotiate of 24 L2 Spanish learners at the university level, whose length of residence abroad ranged from 1.5 to 30 months. By means of verbal protocols and RPs, results revealed that those learners who spent nine months or more in the target community showed greater attempts at negotiation of refusals, and also higher degrees of politeness than those who spent less than five months in the community. These results are in line with Schauer (2006b), who concluded that length of residence significantly determined awareness of pragmatic errors and production of request modifiers. Contrary to Matsumura (2001, 2003), these findings seemed to suggest that progress in learners' pragmatic competence is made in the latter stages of learners' residence in the target community, and that extended periods of time abroad might lead to more considerable pragmatic gains than shorter stays.

Notwithstanding these findings, some scholars have found that length of residence in the target country is not a reliable predictor for the attainment of increased pragmatic proficiency in the L2 (Kasper & Rose, 2002). For instance, Kondo (1997) examined Japanese EFL learners' apology performance before and after a one-year stay in America and concluded that not all participants became more target-like. Rodriguez (2001) studied the effect of a semester abroad on

learners' request strategies and found no advantage at all after spending six months in the target country. Roever (2001) also observed that length of stay did not have an effect on learners' comprehension of implicatures or performance of speech acts in English.

Vilar-Beltrán's (2014) study examined the effects of length of stay abroad on awareness and production of requests acts and production of request mitigators. 104 NNSs of English were divided into three groups according to the time they had spent in the United Kingdom: (i) 4 to 6 months, (ii) 7 months to 5 years, and (iii) 5 and a half years to 16 years. The researcher used a DCT and a Discourse Elicitation Test in order to evaluate the appropriateness and correctness of the request formulations. Regarding the appropriate evaluation of requests acts, findings suggest that longer periods in the TL community do not lead to an improvement in learners' pragmatic awareness. In fact, the opposite was found: learners who had stayed in the United Kingdom for less time performed better than those who had stayed for more than 5 years. As for the production of request acts, findings showed no significant differences between the three groups.

Additionally, a number of studies have considered length of stays together with other variables, finding that length of residence alone cannot be said to account for pragmatic development (e.g., Alcón-Soler, 2015; Bardovi-Harlig & Bastos, 2011; Bella, 2011, 2012; Klein, Dietrich & Noyau, 1995). For instance, Kellin, Dietrich and Noyau (1995) concluded that the predictor of pragmatic learning is intensity of interaction and not length of stay. Similarly, Bella's (2011) study on invitation refusals by L2 learners of Greek showed that the amount of opportunities for interaction are much more critical than the length of residence in terms of learners' acquisition of pragmatic aspects. In a similar vein, Bardovi-Harlig and Bastos (2011) examined the interaction of proficiency, length of stay, and intensity of interaction with regard to recognition and use of conventional expressions by host-environment learners at four different levels. Findings revealed that both proficiency and intensity of interaction had significant effects on the production of conventional expressions, whereas length of residence was not a significant

factor affecting either recognition or production.

In a later study, Bella (2012) found similar results, showing that the impact of both intensity of interaction and length of residence needs to be further explored. In a similar vein, Xu, Case and Wang (2009) examined the influence of length of stay and level of proficiency on pragmatic awareness reporting that proficiency had a higher impact, advanced students being able to identify more pragmatic errors than low-proficiency students. Similarly, Alcón-Soler (2015) analyzed the effect of the teachability of requests and length of residence on 60 Spanish ESL learners' ability to mitigate requests when communicating with their teachers through emails. Findings revealed that length of stay and instructional treatment seemed to interact and influence the development of pragmatic awareness, suggesting that length of stay alone was not sufficient to enhance learners' production of requests.

Another factor that might interact with length of stay is willingness to communicate (WTC), which is defined as "the intention to initiate communication, given a choice" (MacIntyre, Baker, Clément & Conrod, 2001, p. 369). Although the concept was originally conceptualized as a construct to measure how predisposed NSs were to engage in communication in the L1 (McCroskey & Baer, 1985), WTC has also been investigated by L2 researchers (e.g., MacIntyre, Dörnyei, Clément & Noels, 1998) and in the SA context (e.g., Yashima, Zenuk-Nishide & Shimizu, 2004). These authors explored the communication behavior exhibited by Japanese learners of English while abroad and found that pre-SA WTC correlated significantly with their involvement in L2 interactions. In other words, WTC reinforced language development in the L2 since learners sought opportunities to interact⁹ with host nationals, who, in turn, communicated more extensively with the sojourner. Moreover, results suggested that it was students' perception of FL ability rather than their proficiency level that could have interacted with WTC, thus emphasizing the importance of individual variation in the SA context.

⁹ See also MacIntyre's (2007) complex relationship between WTC and variables affecting L2 abilities.

To sum up, taking into consideration the inconclusive findings on the effect of length of residence, some studies have provided evidence of the relationship between pragmatic development and learners' length of stay in the TL community, (e.g., Achiba, 2003; Matsumura, 2001, 2003; Röver, 1996) whereas others conclude that length of stay is not an important factor influencing pragmatic ability (e.g., Kondo, 1991; Roever, 2001; Vilar-Beltrán, 2014). For this reason, Félix-Brasdefer (2004) suggests that these studies should be interpreted with care due to the variation regarding the pragmatic measure used and the time span proposed for pragmatic learning to take place. The inconsistency of the findings regarding the impact that length of stay might have on learners' pragmatic development necessitates further research. For that reason, the present study focuses on learners' previous language experiences in terms of length of stays in English-speaking countries, and follows a case-study design to explore whether WTC may influence learners' pragmatic competence.

3.5. Chapter summary

Chapter 3 has reviewed the potential factors influencing pragmatic learning. Firstly, factors that affect pragmatic acquisition were introduced (section 3.1). After narrowing our focus of interest to EMI contexts, an overview of the role of proficiency level in the TL was given (section 3.2). In section 3.3, we explored the role of the intensity of EMI, pointing out the need to contribute to this area of research. In particular, we aim to examine whether different intensities of EMI affect learners' pragmatic development in tertiary education. In addition, the role of previous language experiences (section 3.4) was addressed, specifically length of stay (section 3.4.1).

Part I of this study, which includes the first three chapters, has consolidated our knowledge of the relevant research in how pragmatic competence is acquired in the EMI context and during stays abroad. Part II will present the study itself, beginning with an overview of the research questions and hypotheses that motivated this investigation. This will be the focus of the following chapter.

PART II: THE STUDY

CHAPTER 4.

MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

The present study deals with pragmatic learning in the EMI context at the university level. It explores the role of intensity of exposure, the role of proficiency level and the effect that previous language experiences may have on learners' pragmatic competence. Chapters 1, 2, and 3 have reviewed previous research on how different factors influence pragmatic learning, with a focus on the variables of role of language proficiency, intensity of exposure to the TL and previous language contact experiences. In section 4.1, we will present the motivation, the aims and the research gaps addressed in the current investigation. Section 4.2 introduces the research questions and hypotheses that are explored in the present investigation.

4.1. Rationale for the study

Three ideas inspired this research project. Firstly, the researcher's interest in and willingness to investigate pragmatic learning and development has risen from being part of the LAELA (Applied Linguistics to the Teaching of the English Language) research group. Specifically, the LAELA research group has explored pragmatic learning in a variety of contexts such as EFL (e.g., Alcón-Soler, 2005), ESP (e.g., Martínez-Flor & Usó-Juan, 2006), SA (e.g., Alcón-Soler, 2015) and multilingual instructional contexts (e.g., Portolés, 2015; Safont-Jordà, 2005). The present study expands this body of research addressing pragmatic development in English-mediated education in tertiary educational contexts.

Secondly, the study of context, which has been gaining popularity in recent years in many interdisciplinary subjects such as semantics, discourse analysis and pragmatics, has been another source of motivation. Traditionally, the idea of language learning context has been researched by comparing different contexts such as EFL vs. ESL, or SA vs. at home programs. In this regard, and

taking into consideration that pragmatics is “the study of linguistic acts and the contexts in which they are performed” (Stalnaker, 1972, p. 383), there is a need to explore language learning, and specifically pragmatics, across different learning environments (Bardovi-Harlig, 2013). One such context is the English-mediated learning environment. Because of the influence that context may exert on the results of the study (Li, 2010), we are interested in exploring what happens in our universities. The present investigation is carried out in authentic classroom contexts, using a pragmatic-focused task to elicit learners’ pragmatic performance.

Thirdly, this study has also been motivated by the “pragmatics-as-perspective” approach (Kasper & Rose, 2002, p. 5), which further claims the need to readjust the scope of inquiry of ILP studies (LoCastro, 2011). Traditionally, ILP research has concentrated on specific pragmatic features in order to assess learners’ pragmatic competence, whereas more holistic perspectives have not been adopted in the evaluation of learners’ pragmatic outcomes. Thus, in the present research, learners’ pragmatic competence is studied from a much broader view of language in use, that is FA. As Patton (1990) claims, “How you study the world determines what you learn about the world” (p. 67). For this reason, we will analyze five different and general pragmatic subsets to assess learners’ pragmatic development over one academic year in the HEA. Expanding the focus in this way will not restrict or limit learners’ pragmatic knowledge to the mere production of and reaction to speech acts.

With due consideration to the literature reviewed in the first three chapters, below we summarize the main aims of the current study together with the research gaps that we consider are in need of investigation.

Our first aim is to conduct longitudinal research that examines pragmatic development over time in different classroom contexts. Despite having acknowledged that longitudinal studies are the optimum approaches to examine ILP development, there is a scarcity of investigations on learners’ pragmatic competence using longitudinal data (e.g., Alcón-Soler, 2015; Barron,

2003; Schauer, 2009). So far, the majority of ILP studies are cross-sectional and explore pragmatic learning by comparing groups of learners and considering the influence of diverse factors, such as role of proficiency, or instructional settings such as SA, EFL and ESP. In the present study, we analyze a classroom context that has not received much attention to date: the EMI classroom.

Our second aim is to analyze learners' pragmatic competence in written production. The core of this study moves beyond the traditional focus on oral production that has long characterized the field of ILP research (e.g., Martí-Arnándiz, 2008; Martínez-Flor & Alcón-Soler, 2004; Taguchi, 2012; Taguchi et al., 2015). Salaberri and Sánchez-Pérez's (2015) study on L2 written production in university learners is an exception. According to the view presented in their study, writing is a fundamental aspect of language competence (Coetzee-Lachmann, 2009; Zwiers, 2008) due to its importance in using language appropriately according to the context (Jexenflicker & Dalton-Puffer, 2010). However, to our knowledge, no studies on English-mediated programs have investigated the written dimension of the language to assess learners' pragmatic competence.

Our third aim is to explore pragmatic learning from a holistic perspective which goes beyond speech acts. Since the early 1990s, the main foci of interest of classroom pragmatics research have been speech acts (e.g., Alcón-Soler, 2005; Fukuya et al., 1998; Safont, 2003), implicatures (e.g., Bouton, 1988, 1994a), and formulaic language (e.g., Coulmas, 1981; Kecskes, 2000; Van Lancker-Sidtis, 2003, 2004; Wray, 2002). Although research has shown that the performance of certain target pragmatic features is indispensable to use the language appropriately (Bella, 2011), one aspect that deserves attention is the evaluation of learners' overall pragmatic competence in the TL. However, to our knowledge, no studies on pragmatic learning have investigated pragmatics from a more open and inclusive perspective in the EMI setting. Taking into consideration learners' overall expectations regarding their enrollment in English-mediated programs, adopting a general research perspective to assess pragmatic development is worthy of attention.

Our fourth aim is to cover the tertiary education stage in the study of pragmatic learning. So far, research on pragmatic learning has been conducted in secondary education (e.g., Lasagabaster, 2008; Llinares & Whittaker, 2006; Ruiz de Zarobe, 2010). To our knowledge, the only studies that investigate pragmatic learning in university learners are Salaberri and Sánchez-Pérez (2015) and the exploratory study by Ament et al. (2016) on the production of PMs.

Our fifth aim is to explore the role of intensity of exposure on pragmatic development. The results from previous empirical research on different intensities of exposure in the TL have suggested that increased exposure has a positive effect on pragmatic learning and performance (e.g., Martínez-Flor & Fukuya, 2005; Takimoto, 2009) and overall language development (e.g., Ament & Vidal, 2015). However, to our knowledge, the effect of intensity of exposure in the TL on learners' pragmatic competence has not been explicitly addressed in English-mediated classroom-based studies.

Our sixth aim is to determine the role of proficiency level on pragmatic performance. So far, there seems to be no consensus regarding whether the level of proficiency in the TL exerts an influence on learners' overall academic achievement and success in EMI classes (Butler & Castellon-Wellington, 2000; Byuen et al., 2011; Chen, 2014; Joe, 2010; Kang, 2005; Kym & Kym, 2014).

Our seventh aim is to analyze the effects of previous language experiences on learners' pragmatic competence. Scholars have mainly analyzed the role of SA programs on the acquisition of FLs in terms of the opportunities students have to attain high levels of linguistic proficiency. In this regard, ILP studies have examined the development of phonetic and phonological abilities (e.g., Simões, 1996; Stevens, 2001), grammatical abilities (e.g., Collentine, 2004; DeKeyser, 1986, 1990, 1991; Isabelli, 2001; Ryan & Lafford, 1992; Schell, 2001), and pragmatic abilities over the course of the stays (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998; Barron, 2003, 2006, 2007; Ishida, 2009, 2011; Masuda, 2011; Matsumura, 2001; Nguyen, 2011; Olshtain & Blum-Kulka, 1985; Schauer, 2006a; Shimizu, 2009; Taguchi, 2011b,c). However, to our knowledge, only Muñoz and Llanes (2009) have explored the

effect of learners' previous language experiences on L2 proficiency.

In summary, there exist a number of research gaps within the ILP field, which the present study intends to cover: 1) there is a need to conduct more longitudinal investigations; 2) learners' pragmatic competence should be assessed through gains in written production; 3) pragmatic learning should be approached from a more holistic and open perspective in order not to restrict our understanding of learners' pragmatic competence to the domain of speech acts or specific target features; 4) further investigations should be conducted at the university level; 5) more studies on the factors that potentially affect pragmatic development such as intensity of exposure in the TL, proficiency level and previous language experiences are needed. The present study contributes to our understanding of how pragmatic competence is developed over one academic year in EMI classrooms, and it expands and consolidates existing studies in the field of ILP and EMI by addressing the research gaps mentioned above.

4.2. Research questions and hypotheses

The aim of the present study is to analyze the influence of exposure in EMI, linguistic proficiency and previous language experiences on learners' pragmatic competence. Considering the existing literature (discussed in chapters 1, 2 and 3) and the research gaps mentioned above, the research questions and hypotheses of the present study are presented below.

Research Question 1 (RQ1): *does EMI affect the development of learners' pragmatic competence in terms of written production over one academic year?*

On the one hand, previous research on pragmatic learning in tertiary education has shown that EMI seems to promote students' pragmatic competence (Taguchi, 2012; Taguchi et al., 2015). On the other hand, research suggests that increased amounts of EMI promote students' pragmatic competence to a greater

extent (e.g., Martí-Arnándiz, 2008; Martínez-Flor & Usó-Juan, 2006; Zhang & Yang, 2012). However, only two studies have addressed written performance in the EMI setting in HE: Salaberri and Sánchez-Pérez (2015), and Ament and Pérez-Vidal (2016). The main foci of interest of these studies, however, has not been the development of pragmatic competence from a holistic perspective but on specific pragmatic features. To contribute to this research area, we formulated the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): there will be differences in learners' pragmatic performance during the EMI experience over one academic year (Salaberri & Sánchez-Pérez, 2015; Taguchi, 2012; Taguchi et al., 2015).

Hypothesis 2 (H2): learners' pragmatic performance and development will be different across groups with different intensities of EMI (Ament et al., 2016; Martí-Arnándiz, 2008; Martínez-Flor & Usó-Juan, 2006).

Some studies on classroom pragmatics research have also revealed that English language proficiency has a direct effect on learners' performance (e.g., Butler & Castellon-Wellington, 2000; Chen, 2014; Kang, 2005; Kym & Kym, 2014; Vidanapathirana & Gamini, 2009), whereas other studies suggest that language proficiency does not play a key role in students' achievement (Byun et al., 2011; Clapham, 1996; Joe, 2010). As a result of these inconclusive results, there seems to be a need to further explore the effect of proficiency on pragmatic learning. Moreover, to the best of our knowledge, no study has analyzed the effect of English proficiency on pragmatic development in EMI students at the university level. To contribute to this debate, and taking into consideration previous investigations, the following research question and hypotheses guide the present study:

Research Question 2 (RQ2): *does the initial level of proficiency in English influence pragmatic performance in EMI students?*

This question triggered the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 3 (H3): Proficiency level in English will make a difference in EMI learners' performance (Butler & Castellon-Wellington, 2000; Kang, 2005; Vidanapathirana & Gamini, 2009)

Hypothesis 4 (H4): Level of proficiency in English will not influence performance over time in EMI students (Chen, 2014).

Moreover, the present investigation examines how previous language contact experiences influence learners' pragmatic competence. In this regard, research has shown the impact of length of stay on students' pragmatic abilities (e.g., Bouton, 1999; Churchill, 2001; Félix-Brasdefer, 2004; Matsumura, 2001, 2003; Röver, 1996). This idea is reinforced by the longitudinal study conducted by Muñoz and Llanes (2009). As mentioned in the literature review, the authors conclude that the factor that exerted the highest impact on learners' language development was the length of stay of their previous experiences abroad. However, some scholars have found that length of residence in the target country does not have a significant effect on learners' pragmatic competence (e.g., Alcón-Soler, 2015; Kondo, 1997; Rodriguez, 2001; Vilar-Beltrán, 2014). To the best of our knowledge, no study has analyzed the effect of previous experiences abroad on learners' pragmatic performance in EMI students. To shed light on how previous language experiences have an impact on learners' pragmatic competence, the following research question and corresponding hypothesis are addressed:

Research Question 3 (RQ3): *is there any relationship between learners' pragmatic competence and their previous language contact experiences in terms of length of stay?*

Hypothesis 5 (H5): There will be a positive influence of length of previous stay(s) abroad on learners' pragmatic competence (Matsumura, 2001, 2003; Muñoz & Llanes, 2009; Röver, 1996).

CHAPTER 5.

METHOD

In this chapter, we explain the research methodology of the present study. In section 5.1, dealing with the setting, the EMI contexts of the Valencian Community are introduced, including the target institutions in which the study was carried out. Section 5.2 provides detailed information about the learners who participated in the present study. Next, section 5.3 gives a description of the data collection instruments, and how they were designed and piloted, while section 5.4 presents the data collection procedure that was carried out. The following sections deal with the steps taken to code and analyse the data, specifically the rating scales employed (section 5.5) and the problems presented and the solutions adopted (section 5.5.1). The chapter concludes with a summary (section 5.7).

5.1. The English-medium Instruction setting

Data were collected during the academic year 2016/2017 from two public HE institutions in Spain which included EMI programs for specific degrees. The reason for choosing these two universities from the Valencian Community was the accessibility of data. Moreover, they are in close geographical proximity, which was an important factor to take into account to make sure the institutions, apart from sharing the same linguistic values, operated under the decrees issued by the Valencian Department of Education, Research, Culture and Sports, which are different from the rest of the regions or Autonomous Communities of Spain. These decrees determine, for instance, the basic rules and procedures for admission to Valencian HE institutions (Royal Decree 412/2014), the final evaluation of Baccalaureate students (Royal Decree 310/2016), the characteristics, design, and content of the Baccalaureate assessment for university access, together with the dates for the resolution of the procedures for reviewing the grades obtained for

the academic year (Order ECD/1941/2016), and the incorporation of Catalan at all levels of the Valencian education system (Law 4/1983). Figure 10 illustrates Spain, and the 17 Autonomous Communities within it. Although Spanish is the official language throughout the country, it coexists with many languages, such as Basque, Catalan, Aranese, and Galician. The research sites of the current study are located in the Valencian Community, one university in the province of Castelló (Universitat Jaume I), and the other one in València (Universitat Politècnica de València).

Figure 10. Research sites

So far, we have seen that, in the Valencian Community, English as a FL coexists with Catalan and Spanish in the educational curriculum. In this regard, several measures have been taken to improve learners' English skills in the

Valencian educational system, adding English as the medium of instruction with the implementation of programs such as CLIL at primary and secondary levels. Regarding tertiary education, several Spanish universities started to offer multilingual and intercultural practices, encouraged by the Bologna Process approved in 1999 (see section 2.1.2).

Taking the above into consideration, the two universities included in this study offered several English-mediated programs at undergraduate levels in specific bachelor's degrees in the academic year 2016/2017. Table 1 illustrates the EMI courses offered by both higher institutions for first-year students, which differ in terms of the amount of credit hours offered in English. Hence, students may enroll in full-time, or part-time English-mediated programs. The degrees that are in bold are those considered in the present investigation.

University	EMI academic offer for first-year students	Intensity of instruction (percentage of credit hours offered in English over the first academic year)
Universitat Jaume I	Economics	75 %
Universitat Jaume I	Business Administration	75 %
Universitat Jaume I	English Studies	50 %
Universitat Jaume I	Translation studies	40 %
Universitat Politècnica de València	Business Administration	At least 50 %
Universitat Politècnica de València	Biotechnology	100 %
Universitat Politècnica de València	Computer Science	At least 50 %
Universitat Politècnica de València	Telecommunication	At least 50 %
Universitat Politècnica de València	Aerospace	At least 50 %

Table 1. EMI programs offered by Universitat Jaume I and Universitat Politècnica de València in the academic year 2016/2017.

Apart from the programs offered, Universitat Jaume I and Universitat Politècnica de València also differ in the linguistic requirements imposed on EMI students. Although neither of the universities require students to take an initial entrance-exam to demonstrate their language proficiency, Universitat Politècnica de València gives students a deadline of eight months to prepare and obtain a B2 certificate in order to ensure continuity of enrollment. If the certificate is not submitted and validated by the university before the deadline, students are not allowed to enroll in the EMI version of the degree the following academic year. On the contrary, Universitat Jaume I does not consider linguistic requirements either at the beginning or at the end of the academic year.

In addition to the English-mediated education, the Language Centers of both universities offer extra EFL courses to enhance students' English skills and integration to the EMI programs. However, these courses are open to all university members and are not specific for those EMI students who require take extra lessons.

5.2. Participants

The final sample consisted of 102¹⁰ first-year participants from 2 state-run HE institutions in the Valencian Community, Spain, who completed all of the participants measurement instruments of the current study. Students enrolled in EMI programs were asked to participate in the project. The main reason for choosing first-year students was to ensure that data collection coincided with the participants' first exposure to EMI and that results would, therefore, not be influenced by previous formal instruction through English. In particular, students were asked to participate at the beginning of the academic year (September 2016), at the beginning of the second semester (February 2017) and at the end of the semester (June 2017). The main researcher contacted 86 professors who were teaching in 9 EMI programs in the Valencian Community (see Table 1), seeking

¹⁰ The real final sample consisted of 127 participants since 25 were part of the control group. As we will see in the data analysis, the control group (0% EMI) was not considered in the analysis.

permission to ask participants to complete the study instruments during their lessons in order to have access to whole groups. Unfortunately, only 5 professors were willing to collaborate in the project and provided all the necessary facilities for data collection. For such reason, the participants in this study were enrolled in 3 EMI groups, namely Biotechnology, English Studies and Economics. At the beginning of the first semester, once the participants were informed about confidentiality issues, they completed the questionnaires and the task required. At the beginning of the second semester, in February, the professors were contacted again to arrange a session in June in which to administer the post-test instruments and the delayed-post-test instruments. In order to obtain more reliable data, the tasks and questionnaires were provided without notifying the students in advance.

By means of this recruitment procedure, a total sample of 148 learners was gathered. However, one of the risks of longitudinal studies is losing participants, and this study, which was conducted in naturalistic instructional settings, was no exception. The initial number of participants was 148, however, several reasons beyond the researchers control contributed to a decline in participation: (i) participants dropping out of university, since the tertiary educational stage covered by this study is non-compulsory; (ii) non-attendance to lessons, since assistance is not mandatory; (iii) participants who had attended private schools with English as the medium of instruction in some subjects; and (iv) other unexpected events (e.g., lack of information in the questionnaires provided). Besides, there were a few participants ($n=6$) that did not write anything in the writing task, wrote only a couple of lines ($n=7$) or were English native speakers ($n=2$).

After discarding these participants, the final sample consisted of 102 participants. The group consisted of 56.90% females ($n=58$) and 43.10% males ($n=44$), and their mean age was 18.29, ranging from 17 to 25 years old. Although they all were Spanish citizens, 25% did not have any knowledge of Catalan since they were not from Catalan-speaking areas (mainly Aragon, Seville, Madrid), and 35% reported Spanish as their L1. Regarding the participants' characteristics,

we will refer to their language proficiency in English, the program of EMI followed (Biotechnology, English Studies, or Economics), and previous language experiences, mainly length of stay. As for the participants' language proficiency in English, at the beginning of the study, it ranged from A2 to C1¹¹, as measured by the Oxford Quick Placement Test (QPT). As shown in Figure 11, 7.8 % (n=8) of the learners had an A2 level of English, 40.2% (n=41) had a B1 level, 49% (n=50) had a B2 level, and 2.9% (n=3) had a C1 level.

Figure 11. Participants' language proficiency in English according to the CEFR

The two universities are state-run and offer EMI programs at the undergraduate level with different exposure to English as the medium of instruction. At Universitat Jaume I (Castelló), the English Studies degree (50% of the credit hours in English, i.e. 900 hours) and Economics (75% of the credit hours in English, i.e. 1350 hours) were chosen. The participants enrolled in the Biotechnology degree at Universitat Politècnica de València (València) were exposed to 100% EMI during the academic year (1800 hours). In the present study, 30.4% (n=31) of the participants were studying Biotechnology, 31.4% (n=32) were enrolled in the Economics degree, whereas 38.2% of learners (n=39) were

¹⁰ Following the levels established by the CEFR.

enrolled in the English Studies academic degree (see Figure 12).

Figure 12. Participants' enrollment in EMI programs

Regarding the participants' previous language experiences, length of stay was taken into account and controlled for. The participants' distribution by duration of stays (amount of total days) is presented in Figure 13. This variable needed to be coded in four sub-categories since 32.4% (n=33) of the participants indicated that they had never been abroad. In order to see the effect of length of stay, we consider short stays (1-10 days), medium stays (11-49 days) and long stays (50 days or more). In the present study, 15.7% (n=16) of the learners had short-term previous experiences, 29.4% (n=30) had medium-term previous experiences, and 22.5% (n=23) had long-term experiences in English-speaking countries.

Figure 13. Participants' previous language experiences in English-speaking countries.

From the 102 subjects, a subset of 8, representing 7.8% of the sample, participated as informants for the qualitative analysis. These participants, who were chosen on the basis of maximum variation sampling, were asked to participate in interviews upon completion of the instruments at the beginning and at the end of the academic year. Although the initial subset of case studies included 12 students, 8 were chosen since they represented the most varied cases from the overall sample in terms of FA (the addition of the scores obtained in coherence, cohesion, content, task fulfillment, and comprehensibility measures) and EMI program enrollment. Table 2 illustrates this performance, and reveals that 2 of the participants scored below the means in overall pragmatic production (participants¹² 1 and 4), 1 of them showed average pragmatic performance (participant 6) and 4 of them obtained high scores (participants 2, 3, 5, 7 and 8).

¹² Anonymity and confidentiality of participants are preserved for reasons of ethical research practice.

Participant	EMI program	Overall pragmatic performance	Average
Participant 1	English Studies	9	11.21
Participant 2	English Studies	20	11.21
Participant 3	Economics	13	9.91
Participant 4	Economics	9	9.91
Participant 5	Economics	17	9.91
Participant 6	Biotechnology	14	13.87
Participant 7	Biotechnology	24	13.87
Participant 8	Biotechnology	20	13.87

Table 2. Overall pragmatic performance by case-study informants in pre-test instrument.

5.3. Research instruments

The present investigation employs a mixed-methods research approach: that is, it combines qualitative and quantitative approaches in order to overcome the limitations of a single design. Mixed-method research, which has been widely accepted and employed for the last decade, is a growing methodological choice for many researchers across a variety of disciplines, such as ILP. However, despite this relative growth spurt, the definition of MMR remains controversial. In this respect, Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner (2007) asked 21 researchers for a definition of mixed methodologies and obtained diverse and differentiated interpretations in terms of the factors being mixed, the stage in which the mixing occurred and the purpose of such mixing. For instance, Tashakkori and Teddlie (2010) refer to MMR as the “broad inquiry logic that guides the selection of specific methods [...]” (p. 5), whereas the Journal of Mixed Methods (2006) defines it as the process of collecting triangulated data and drawing inferences from both qualitative and quantitative data. More specifically, MMR has been defined as

follows:

Mixed methods research is a research design with philosophical assumptions as well as methods of inquiry. As a methodology, it involves philosophical assumptions that guide the direction of the collection and analysis of data and the mixture of qualitative and quantitative data in a single study or series of studies. Its central premise is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007, p. 5).

The advantages of mixed-method designs, which have been referred to as “[...] the de facto third alternative, or third methodological movement” (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010, pp. 803-804), have been acknowledged by several MMR proponents. For instance, Bazeley (2003) outlines three benefits: (i) sufficient understanding of the bases of research; (ii) knowledge of the implications of different sampling methods, and (iii) the ability to interpret and integrate data meaningfully, and to ask questions of the data. However, one should be careful with the integration of both paradigms at the level of data analysis and interpretation, since there is a tendency to apply mixed methods labels to studies that only mix methods superficially (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). In this regard, Bryman (2008) conducted a study on published social science journal articles from 1994-2003 that employed MMR and concluded that half of those studies did so by presenting the qualitative and quantitative data in parallel, and that only 18% of the articles integrated the two sets of findings. These findings were in line with Hurmerinta-Peltomäki and Nummela (2006) and Cameron (2008), who found that there exists an over reliance of MMR which maintains the division between quantitative and qualitative data.

According to Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003), there are more than forty mixed-methods designs employed in the literature. Taking into consideration the six most often used designs (three concurrent and three sequential) identified

by Creswell, Plano-Clark, Gutmann and Hanson (2003), this investigation adopts a mixed methods approach with a sequential explanatory design. This design, which is highly popular among researchers, implies collecting and analyzing first quantitative data and then, in the second phase, qualitative data. The rationale for this approach is that the qualitative analyses refine and further explain the statistical results obtained in the first stage of the study (quantitative data collection and analysis) by exploring participants' experiences and views in more depth (Creswell, 2003; Rossman & Wilson, 1985). In addition, the sequential explanatory design¹³ is specially useful in order to analyse unexpected results from the quantitative study (Morse, 1991), which clearly requires triangulation and integration of data.

More particularly, Morgan (1998) and Creswell et al. (2003) argue that researchers need to consider methodological issues such as the priority or weight given to the quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. With this in mind, the present study, despite prioritizing the quantitative approach, integrates the two types of data during the interpretation of results. The procedure for data collection in a sequential explanatory design method is illustrated in Figure 14. In the present study, three main instruments (a placement test, a background questionnaire and a pragmatic-focused task) are used to collect data for quantitative analysis, which are complemented by the instruments used to collect qualitative data (background information and stay abroad questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, a "Can-do scale" and a WTC scale).

¹³ See Creswell (2003), and Creswell et al. (2003) for the characteristics of this design.

Figure 14. Mixed methods sequential explanatory design
(adapted from Creswell et al., 2003, p. 180).

Taking this into account, the three main types of data coded are information about participants' previous language experiences (length), language proficiency in English, and their pragmatic performance in terms of cohesion, coherence, content, comprehensibility and task fulfillment. Data for the first type of information was obtained by means of a background information and stay abroad questionnaire, which was given to the participants in paper format during the first face-to-face session at the beginning of the academic year. Moreover, this questionnaire included additional information about participants, such as language use, preferences, purpose of the stay or exposure to the language in the Anglophone countries in order to control if they could have an effect on the results. Data for the second type of information (participants' language proficiency in English), was collected through a placement test at the beginning of the first semester. Data for the third type of information (information about learners' FA in terms of cohesion, coherence, content, comprehensibility and task fulfillment)

was collected through a pragmatic-focused task, which was specifically designed for the purpose of this study. These three types of quantitative information were complemented by qualitative information from digitally recorded semi-structured interviews with 7.8% of the total sample of participants. The interviews lasted about 25 minutes each, and were conducted orally and individually at the beginning and at the end of the academic year. At the beginning of the academic year, a WTC scale was used to complement these interviews in order to explore participants' predisposition toward initiating communication abroad. Finally, a "Can-do scale" was used in the pre-test and post-test, which is a self-report instrument that measures the extent to which participants consider their self-perceived English ability. In what follows, the quantitative and qualitative instruments are further addressed.

5.3.1. Quantitative instruments

5.3.1.1. Background Information and Stay Abroad questionnaire

The Background Information questionnaire asked for information about the following issues: name, age, gender, nationality, academic achievement, previous enrollment in EMI education, language use, previous experiences in English-speaking countries (length of stay, type and purpose of the trip), and exposure to English both in Spain and in the previous sojourns. With the aim of controlling factors that could influence the results, parents' use of languages, knowledge of second and additional languages and language preferences were also considered in the questionnaire. The questionnaire included both checklist and open-ended items (such as self-assessment after the sojourn) in order for the data to be analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively (see Appendix A). First, students completed the demographic information, academic achievement and language use. Then, if they had been in English-speaking countries, they

were encouraged to complete the stay abroad part, which elicited information about the purpose of the stay, length, accommodation, language use and self-assessment of previous stays.

5.3.1.2. The Oxford Quick Placement Test

A QPT (UCLES, 2001) was administered to assess the current language proficiency of the participants (see Figure 11, p. 127). As a proficiency test, this instrument was intended to “measure global language abilities” (Brown, 2005, p. 2). As it is a norm-referenced test, the QPT allowed the researcher relative interpretations of the scores, since they fell into a normal distribution. As Brown (2005) claims, “the test must provide scores that form a wide distribution, so that interpretations of the differences among students will be as fair as possible” (p. 8). The two versions of the test that were administered consisted of 40 items with different question formats comprising grammar, vocabulary, and reading texts, which tested learners’ language proficiency. Ideally, the 102 participants should have been asked to complete another version at the end of the academic year, but June was a very busy month for both professors and students due to the final examination period. To make up for this limitation, a subsample of 15 students were asked to do the test in order to determine whether there was a noticeable improvement. However, it was counter-productive because the participants were nervous and under pressure and this impeded them from being focused, meaning those tests could not be considered for further analyses. The only tests that could be considered were the ones performed by the 8 informants at the end of the academic year.

5.3.1.3. Pragmatic-focused task for the present study

As stated in section 1.3.3, research on ILP has used a variety of data elicitation techniques, such as DCTs and RPs. However, these techniques present

several limitations regarding authenticity and reliability of data since they seem not to reflect real-life language use. Since the aim of this research is to explore pragmatic learning in an authentic classroom context, we created a task to collect data that would be part of the activities that participants would conduct in English, which would also elicit pragmatic performance. To the best of our knowledge, the step of creating a task in order to assess overall pragmatic development in learners' written production in the EMI setting has so far not been taken. Taking all this into account, and after a long process of class observation and interviews with some professors, we realized that there was one task that students would need to perform in the university context and would meet these requirements: a written motivation letter. Bardovi-Harlig and Shin (2014) have claimed that research should stimulate "written communication in written-for-written format" (p. 38) in order to gain the advantage of authenticity in real written events. This idea reinforces the fact that this task is part of the bachelors' program activities, which makes it a suitable target of investigation in classroom research. In fact, the type of text involved is a requirement for those learners wishing to participate in Erasmus programs or making an application to a specific company in order to carry out the internships. Instead of using "'typical' writing tasks" (Kuiken & Vedder, 2013, p. 370, emphasis in original) such as argumentative tasks (e.g., Markkanen, Steffensen & Crismore, 1993; Rica, 2010; Simin, 2004; Simin & Tavangar, 2009), we also decided to use a motivation letter in order to avoid familiarity with other types of tasks such as for and against essays or opinion essays, since these texts have been practiced at high school in order to take the university entrance examinations.

Another reason for using a motivation letter is that, being a persuasive text, the focus is on the specific task to be carried out by the writer (learner), and on the reception of the message by the reader (International office, management team or researcher). What is new in this study in comparison with previous research on pragmatic development to date is that, rather than eliciting a specific pragmatic feature (e.g., PMs or pragmatic routines), we created a task that allows

the evaluation of overall pragmatic performance, specifically the effect that the text has on a real audience, thus imitating real-life language use.

With the aim of eliciting natural classroom data, we considered two aspects: (i) that it simulated an authentic situation learners would face in the foreseeable future, and (ii) that it allowed the assessment of the pragmatic aspects under analysis (content, coherence, cohesion, comprehensibility and task fulfillment, which represent the FA of a written text). The pragmatic aspects under analysis were considered taking into account the educational requirements issued by the Spanish Ministry of Education and Science (Royal Decree 1629/2006, Law 2/2006).

Regarding the simulation of an authentic situation, following Ellis (2003), the task was “unfocused” because it was designed to provide learners with opportunities to perform general language rather than using specific target pragmatic aspects. This decision was taken for two reasons. Firstly, in the Spanish language teaching curriculum¹⁴ (Royal Decree 1629/2006), one of the valued aspects is to “develop and perform general language competences” (see Example 1, our translation):

Example 1

Development and performance of general language competences (linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic):

- Write simple texts on ordinary topics or on specific personal interests
- Transmit information
- Describe personal experiences (real or imaginary) or expectations
- Justify personal opinions

More specifically, the Royal Decree 1629/2006 specifies the functional aspects to be developed by language learners, which are included in the objectives of pragmatic competences. As stated by Ädel (2006), language

¹⁴The basic aspects of formal language teaching are available at:

<https://www.boe.es/buscar/doc.php?id=BOE-A-2007-184> (last accessed: 30/09/2017).

learning involves “the knowledge of how to present facts effectively, how to argue one’s case convincingly, and how to manage writer and reader visibility” (p. 4). Since this study explores pragmatic development in terms of learners’ written FA, the following issues have been taken into consideration in order to manipulate the task and perform analysis on pragmatic development based on the aspects regulated by the Spanish Ministry of Education. Accordingly, learners of English (as well as any additional language) are expected to acquire the following pragmatic competences at an intermediate level (our translation):

Functional aspects (Royal Decree 1629/2006, article 3.2.3.1)

- Express the intention or will to do something; invite, offer something; offer help; compromise; or promise
- Functions or acts of managerial speech, whose purpose is for the addressee to do or not to do something
- Expressive functions in certain situations such as admiration, happiness, interest, hope, preference and satisfaction

Discursive aspects (Royal Decree 1629/2006, article 3.2.3.2)

- An approach centered on the use of the language considers the texts as the minimum unit of communication
- For a text to be communicatively valid, it must be coherent with respect to the context in which it is produced or interpreted, and has to facilitate the understanding as well as the reflection of the dynamics of communication in which it is developed
- Learners should therefore be able to perform discursive skills that enable them to produce and comprehend texts based on their coherence and cohesion

Textual coherence (Royal Decree 1629/2006, article 3.2.3.2.1)

- Adequacy of the text to the communicative context
- Type and format of text
- Variety of language
- Register
- Selection of theme, focus and content

Textual cohesion (Royal Decree 1629/2006, article 3.2.3.2.2)

- Internal organization of the text: beginning, development and conclusion of the textual unit
- Starting mechanisms (contact)
- Introduction of the theme, and thematization

Thematic development (Royal Decree 1629/2006, article 3.2.3.2.2.2)

- Thematic expansion: exemplification, reinforcement, contrast
- Introduction of new subtopics
- Digression and recovery of the main topic
- Conclusion of the discourse: summary and indication of textual closing features

Accordingly, in the marking criteria of language learning (Royal Decree 1629/2006, article 4), one of the required aspects for learners to demonstrate that they have acquired the above-mentioned pragmatic competencies is by showing "written fragments in which simple information is conveyed" (see Example 2):

Example 2

Marking criteria of pragmatic competences:

- Write different types of texts that transmit or require simple information of an immediate nature and highlight important aspects
- Write about feelings and events in a certain detail, and in which information and ideas are exchanged on both abstract and concrete subjects by showing important aspects
- Write brief reports in conventional format with information on common facts and motives for taking certain actions

Secondly, the task was designed in order to simulate a target situation in real life, so it was manipulated to meet the following requirements of a real task according to Ellis' criteria (2003, cited in Ellis, 2009, p. 223):

1. The primary focus should be on 'meaning' (by which is meant that learners should be mainly concerned with processing the semantic and pragmatic meaning of utterances).
2. There should be some kind of 'gap' (i.e. need to convey information, to express an opinion or to infer meaning).
3. Learners should largely have to rely on their own resources (linguistic and non-linguistic) in order to complete the activity.
4. There is a clearly defined outcome other than the use of language (i.e. the language serves as the means for achieving the outcome, not as an end in its own right).

These four criteria (Ellis, 2003) were met in the task, designed as follows:

- 1. Primary focus on 'meaning':** the participants were not told how the written letters were to be assessed so that they would focus on meaning, i.e. stating their motives to apply for a specific company to conduct their mandatory internship procedure.
- 2. Existence of some kind of 'gap':** There was a reader to be persuaded and a need to know learners' motives, personal background and academic experiences, because they

would be directly affected by the information they decided to include.

3. Learners' reliance of their own resources: Learners needed to rely on their own linguistic and pragmatic resources in order to write the letter since no explicit instructions were provided. They were given freedom to write and there was no pre-determined solution.

4. Existence of a non-linguistic outcome: As previously stated, the ultimate outcome of the task was to persuade the reader (i.e. the management team and the company owner) in order to get the position of intern in a given company. Even though students were given the type of text, they were free to choose the devices to be included and also the style of writing.

Bearing in mind the above considerations, the pragmatic-focused task was piloted with 33 undergraduate EMI students in order to determine the choice of companies, and task procedure (e.g., time limit and number of words). There were two universities involved (Universitat Jaume I and Universitat Politècnica de València), and the same EMI groups under analysis in the present investigation: (i) Biotechnology (n=11); (ii) English Studies (n=10); and (iii) Economics (n=12). This pilot study, which was carried out the academic year before the main study was conducted (September 2015) and played a key role in the implementation of the task, involved three main phases.

In the **first phase**, the aim was to pilot the task design and choice of companies¹⁵. As shown in Example 3, students from the three groups were asked to state their opinion about their preferred companies to work for as well as their specific fields of expertise and give reasons for such choices.

¹⁵ The Background Information and Stay Abroad questionnaire and the QPT were also piloted to make sure that the instructions were clear.

Example 3

Complete the following table about your preferred future professional workplace. First, fill in the first column of the table with the name of your preferred company, institution or organization (minimum 5, maximum 10). Then, in the second column, justify your answers.

Name of the company, organisation, institution	Reasons

This phase of the pilot study was crucial in order to implement the design of the task. As the principal aim of the task was to simulate real world activities, it was necessary to consider students' professional preferences and motivations. After analyzing students' answers, this phase revealed the following issues: (i) students enrolled in English Studies preferred to work as FL teachers in universities such as Harvard or Oxford, (ii) Biotechnology students preferred working as researchers in public institutions such as *Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC)* or *Centro Nacional de Biotecnología (CNB)*, and (iii) students enrolled in the Economics bachelor opted for international institutions (i.e. Eurosystem) or national banks such as Santander or Bankia.

The information provided by students served the purpose of designing the task according to students' opinions and expectations of their future professional careers. Although it would have been ideal to let students decide the target

institution or company at the moment of data collection, the limitations and constraints of classroom-research prevented this. As a result, three main tasks were designed and provided to the three EMI groups, making sure that the companies to be addressed were relevant and familiar to them.

The selection of topics for the motivation letters in English leads us to the **second phase** of the pilot study, which involved the performance of the tasks. The task was performed once in one of the groups (Biotechnology), with no time limit and with a required length around 200-225 words, which is the amount required by the International Office in order to apply for an Erasmus course or to apply for an internship. In this phase, two main issues had to be considered. Firstly, timing the task was necessary to ensure task performance and completion since students got distracted, and some of them spent more than 45 minutes writing the letter. In order to control the variable of time as a variable, students from the second group (English Studies) were asked to complete the task in 20 minutes. As they were working under pressure, the students were more focused, but some of them reported that they required more time to finish the letter. Finally, it was decided that 25 minutes was the time they would need.

Secondly, the word limit needed to be reconsidered after observing that the majority of students from one of the groups could not write more than 130-160 words. This length was expected since learners are used to writing essays around 130-150 words in the university entrance exams and the essays at secondary education are of this length. As a result, it was decided that 130-150 words was the length that would be required. In order to control this variable, learners from the second group (English Studies) were asked to write 130-150-word motivation letters. This time all learners, except one, achieved the amount required. Although it may be argued that the fact there was a word limit would add pressure on the students, the statistical analysis required a minimum word count in order to obtain consistent and accurate results.

This second phase also revealed that students were not motivated to write the letter, since there was no real purpose for them to write it. As a result, in order

to ensure the real outcome of the task, it was decided to include an invitation letter from the president of each of the companies addressed in the letters, with a brief description of the company (i.e. number of employees and location of the headquarters), and provide a given number of available internships places. Accordingly, the president encouraged learners to write a motivation letter to the recruitment team who would examine the possibility of engaging their services.

The **third phase** of the pilot study involved asking learners to actually write the motivation letters after having considered the above-mentioned issues (see Figure 15). These letters were used to pilot the analysis and to ensure the viability of analyzing pragmatic competence in terms of FA.

PILOT STUDY	20 min		200-225 words		No motivating factor
MAIN STUDY	25 min		130-150 words		Letter from the president

Figure 15. Task design implementation.

The task (see Appendix B, Appendix C, and Appendix D) was performed three times over the academic year 2016-2017, and the design features such as goal of the task, input, conditions and predicted outcomes were kept constant. According to Ellis' (2003) framework, the task followed the following design

features:

- **Goal:** The general purpose of the task in terms of aspects of communicative competence was to provide students with the opportunity to ask for an internship in a relevant company or institution belonging to their corresponding field of expertise. Regarding authenticity, the task is related to the real world (Skehan, 1996; Long, 1985) since it corresponds to a real-world activity for university students (i.e. the topic was real in their university context, and also in real life, since students may be asked to write a motivation letter to apply for a specific course, master's degree or job position).

- **Input:** The task materials were supplied through verbal information (i.e. task instructions) and non-verbal information (i.e. pictures). Regarding task instructions, a letter from the President of each of the companies selected introduced the topic and aimed at focusing participants' attention to the task. In this sense, learners believed that the ultimate reader would be the President or the recruitment team rather than the language teacher, as happens in regular classrooms tasks. Although the President's letter already provided instructions about writing a motivation letter, clear instructions for the task were provided regarding word length (in a box, in bold). Example 5 illustrates the context of the task of one of the groups (English Studies) and Example 6 shows the specific instructions provided.

Example 5

Welcome to Harvard University.

Harvard University, which is based in Cambridge and Boston, Massachusetts, is devoted to excellence in teaching, learning, and research, and to developing leaders in many disciplines who make a difference globally. Established in 1636, Harvard is the oldest institution of higher education in The United States aimed at enhancing teaching and research in order to push the boundaries of human knowledge.

Despite having more than 2,400 faculty members coming from across the country and all over the world, Harvard University still looks for candidates who bring a diverse wealth of knowledge in order to have a friendly and supportive multicultural team. For this reason, we would like to recruit young Spanish students and make use of their great potential to teach Spanish as a foreign language while offering them a unique experience when conducting their internships as well as the possibility of becoming a member of our team. In the process of selecting the 25 best candidates, we are interested in your previous experiences abroad, your level of English and your motivations to join our team. In order to obtain this information, we provide you with an English Proficiency test, a questionnaire on previous language experiences and require from you a letter to express your interests and motivations.

There are three main stages in this process of application. When we receive all your information, our Corporate Human Resources team will examine it in detail. If the main requirements are met, you will be asked to write another motivation letter for the Admission team and a final one for the President's team. This motivation letter must be around 130-150 words.

If your letter is selected, you will be notified in order to make an interview appointment and get to know all the details of the internship process. We hope to meet you soon.

Good luck!

Example 6

MOTIVATION LETTER

Please, remember that the motivation letter must be 130-150 words long.

You have 25 minutes to plan, write and revise your composition.

You are not allowed to use your phones or ask your professor/classmates for help.

As regards as pictures and non-verbal information, the presence of illustrations and the signature of the President made the task more reader-friendly and seem as real as possible. As there were three versions of the tasks for each group of EMI students, the illustrations represented the three companies and institutions addressed in the tasks (see Figure 16).

Figure 16. Companies and institutions addressed in the tasks.

- **Conditions:** Regarding the conditions for performing the task (see Example 6), students were given 10 minutes to go over all the information and details provided in the President's letter. As for their letter, there was a limit of 25 minutes and a length around 130-150 words. As mentioned above, the decision about time and word limits was made taking into consideration the results of pilot study.
- **Predicted outcomes:** The product that resulted from performing the task was a motivation letter in which applicants requested an opportunity to conduct internships in a given company. Accordingly, the task was hypothesized to generate linguistic and cognitive processes such as selecting the information to be provided, reasoning, students evaluating themselves as applicants and justifying their opinions.

5.3.2. Qualitative instruments

5.3.2.1. Students' semi-structured interviews

The Background Information and Stay Abroad questionnaire included all information about educational background, English use, previous language experiences, exposure to the language, and perceptions about self-improvement after the sojourns. In addition, a subset of 8 students (7.8%) participated in case studies by means of a semi-structured interview at the beginning and at the end of the academic year, one week after the administration of the pre-test and delayed post-test instrument. The interviews were conducted in the principal researchers' office and lasted about half an hour. Although they were conducted initially through English, Spanish and Catalan were allowed since the main goal was to explore pragmatic learning from the students' perspectives over the academic year and their previous experiences abroad. The researcher guided the interview and listened to the respondents, without interrupting them. The interviews were semi-structured so as to include flexibility and allow space for more details on the selected themes. They were video recorded and transcribed to extract relevant information. The preselected items were the following:

Pre-test interviews:

-Stays abroad:

1. Background information (further information about purpose of stay, context)
2. English use (interaction with English speakers)
3. Adjustment
4. Outcomes of stays abroad

-EMI experience:

1. Goal of EMI enrollment
2. English use (interaction with professors and other students)

-Delayed post-test interviews:

-EMI experience:

1. Outcomes of the EMI experience (e.g., self-improvement)
2. English use (e.g., interaction with professors and students outside the classroom)
3. Adjustment
4. Suggestions for future EMI programs

Details of the questions that were asked for each item during the pre-test and post-test interviews are included in Appendix E and Appendix F.

5.3.2.2. Can-do scale

The Can-do Scale (Clark, 1981) is a self-report instrument that measures the extent to which respondents consider their self-perceived English ability. Specifically, the scale assesses both cognitive and moral dimensions of English proficiency, allowing researchers to measure the difficulty learners encounter in real-life situations. In the present study, Kitano's scale (2001) is used (see Appendix G), which is an adaptation of Clark's (1981) original scale. Kitano's (2001) version includes 15 items, that is, 15 tasks learners would encounter in real situations. Among them, 14 are considered for research purposes. The 8 informants were provided with the scales at the beginning (one week after administration of pre-test) and at the end of the academic year (one week after administration of delayed post-test), to which they responded by rating on a three-point Likert scale how they would perform linguistically in each situation: "quite easily" (3), "with some difficulty" (2), and "with great difficulty" (1). Average scores ranged from 14 to 42 points.

5.3.2.3. Willingness to communicate scale

The Willingness to communicate test (McCroskey & Richmond, 1987) is a probability-estimate scale that measures the respondents' predisposition toward approaching or avoiding communication. Specifically, the scale assesses three type of receivers (strangers, acquaintances and friends) and four types of communication contexts (public speaking, meetings, interpersonal and group discussion). In the present study, McCroskey and Richmond's (1987) scale is used (see Appendix H), which includes 20 situations, that is, 20 situations learners would encounter. Among them, 8 items are fillers in order to distract learners' attention and obtain more reliable results. The 8 respondents were provided with the scale at the beginning of the academic year (one week after administration of pre-test), to which they responded by indicating the percentage of times they would choose to communicate in each type of situation (0 = never, 100 = always). Average scores ranged from 0 to 1200.

5.4. Data collection procedure and analysis

The present study employed a longitudinal pre-test/post-test and delayed post-test design that allowed us to explore pragmatic development over one academic year. Results from the pre-test, post-test and delayed post-test were complemented by a qualitative analysis on the EMI experience. The process of collecting the data took one academic year (2016/1017), during which time the students in the two universities described at the beginning of the chapter were enrolled in the EMI programs. Prior to the main study, the pilot study was conducted (September 2015) in order to ensure the clarity of the instruments.

Regarding the pre-test, the professors that agreed to collaborate in the project suggested a day and time in order for the researcher to ask participants to complete the paper-format instruments. Specifically, three days and times were established, one for each of the groups that participated in the study. In order to

avoid issues of non-attendance and recruit the maximum number of participants, the professors who agreed on collaborating did not notify participants about the special sessions in which they would perform the task and complete the questionnaires. These first sessions lasted for about an hour and a half, in which the participants read the President's letter (10 minutes), wrote the motivation letter (25 minutes), completed the QPT (30 minutes), and the background information and stay abroad questionnaire (15 minutes). At the meeting, the principal researcher helped with questions while students completed the hard copies of the instruments, which were handed in to the researcher upon completion. At the end of the sessions, the students were given USB memory sticks in appreciation of their contribution. Once participants had finished the motivation letter, the researcher asked students to voluntarily participate in the semi-structured interviews. Out of 102 participants, only five students agreed to a meeting at the principal researcher's office in order to perform the recorded semi-structured interviews (with previous consent from the participants). However, after analyzing data, seven more participants were contacted in order to participate in the case study on the basis of maximum variation sampling. After explaining the purpose of such interviews, they all accepted. Out of these twelve participants, eight students were chosen to participate in the case study since they represented the most varied cases from the overall sample in terms of FA, previous stays abroad and EMI enrollment.

For the post-test, the EMI professors and the principal researcher established a day and time during February for the completion of the pragmatic-focused task. Following the same protocol, students were not notified about the special session in order to have the same students in the classrooms, and avoid pre-preparation of the letter. This time, the participants only performed the motivation letter (25 minutes). The researcher was also present in order to clarify doubts and control the data collection procedure. At the end of the session, students were given a portable mobile phone charger to thank them for their cooperation.

For the delayed post-test (June 2017), the same protocol was followed. This time, sweets and some drinks were served. The timeline of the data collection procedure is shown Figure 17.

Figure 17. Data collection timeline

5.4.1. The rating scales

There was a total of 405 motivation letters in English (306 from the main study and 99 from the pilot study). The essays were typed up exactly as they were written in the paper format by learners (leaving mistakes untouched) in order to facilitate further analysis (e.g., word length). They were graded based on a rating scale, which contained separate analytical rubrics to assess learners' FA through the holistic scoring of specified dimensions. The decision to use analytical rubrics was based on five main aspects: (i) there is no single correct answer/response to the task, (ii) the focus is on overall adequacy, (iii) the number of motivation letters

to be assessed is significant ($n=405$), (iv) they consider qualities or aspects that teachers/professors may not anticipate, and (v) they decrease subjectivity since specific criteria are explicitly stated.

Kuiken and Vedder's (2016) rating scale¹⁶ was used to measure learners' FA, which was developed taking into consideration the following requirements (p. 6):

1. Deconstruction of relevant components of FA
2. Independence of FA descriptors from linguistic descriptors in terms of CAF
3. 'Objective' and 'countable' scale descriptors
4. Applicability to both expert and non-expert raters
5. The possibility of using the scale in both L2 and L1

The scale proposed by the researchers (a six-point Likert scale) was inspired by the conversational maxims of Grice (1975), which focused on quantity, relevance, manner, and quality of the message of the writer A to be transmitted to the reader B. Accordingly, the scale dimensions comprised in the rating scale are (i) content, (ii) task requirements, (iii) comprehensibility, and (iv) coherence and cohesion. The relation of these dimensions with the maxims proposed by Grice (1975) is illustrated in Table 3.

Kuiken and Vedder's (2016) FA scale dimensions	Grice's maxims (1975)
Content	Maxims of quantity and relation
Task requirements	Maxim of quality
Comprehensibility	Maxim of manner
Coherence and Cohesion	Adequacy of the message

Table 3. Dimensions and maxims considered in Kuiken and Vedder's (2016) FA rating scale

¹⁶ The new rating scale is an adaptation of Kuiken et al. (2010), Kuiken and Vedder (2014) and DeJong et al. (2012).

Regarding the content dimension, the scale takes into consideration both the adequacy of the number and type of information units and the consistency and relevance of the ideas expressed (see Figure 18). As exemplified by Kuiken and Vedder (2016), if learners “have to write an argumentative text on the importance of physical exercise, information units could concern ideas expressed as ‘increase of obesity,’ ‘risk of a heart attack,’ ‘a sedentary lifestyle,’ and so on” (p. 6, emphasis in original).

Content: Is the number of information units provided in the text adequate and relevant?

0	1	2	3	4	5
The number of ideas is not at all adequate and insufficient and the ideas are unrelated to each other.	The number of ideas is scarcely adequate and the ideas lack consistency.	The number of ideas is somewhat adequate, even though they are not very consistent.	The number of ideas is adequate and they are sufficiently consistent.	The number of ideas is very adequate and they are very consistent to each other.	The number of ideas is extremely adequate and they are very consistent to each other.

Figure 18. Content scale dimension of the FA rating scale developed by Kuiken and Vedder (2016) (adapted from Kuiken & Vedder, 2016)

As for the task requirements, this dimension focuses on the completion of the specific instructions and requirements of the task provided, together with the adequacy of the message transmitted to the reader (see Figure 19).

Task requirements: Have the tasks requirements been fulfilled successfully (e.g. genre, speech acts, register)?

0	1	2	3	4	5
<i>None of the questions and the requirements of the task have been answered.</i>	<i>Some (less than half) of the questions and the requirements have been answered.</i>	<i>Approximately half of the questions and requirements of the task have been answered.</i>	<i>Most (more than half) of the questions and requirements of the task have been answered.</i>	<i>Almost all the questions and the requirements of the task have been answered.</i>	<i>All the questions and the requirements of the task have been answered.</i>

Figure 19. Task requirements scale dimension of the FA rating scale developed by Kuiken and Vedder (2016) (adapted from Kuiken & Vedder, 2016)

The third dimension, namely comprehensibility, focuses on the effort required by the reader in order to understand the purpose of the written assignment and the ideas expressed. The scale used to measure the extent to which the message of the writer is adequate is shown in Figure 20.

Comprehensibility: How much effort is required to understand text purpose and ideas?

0	1	2	3	4	5
<i>The text is not at all comprehensible. Ideas and purposes are unclearly stated and the efforts of the reader to understand the text are ineffective.</i>	<i>The text is scarcely comprehensible. Its purposes are not clearly stated and the reader struggles to understand the ideas of the writer. The reader has to guess most of the ideas and purposes.</i>	<i>The text is somewhat comprehensible. Some sentences are hard to understand at a first reading. A second reading helps to clarify the purposes of the text and the ideas conveyed, but some doubts persist.</i>	<i>The text is comprehensible. Only a few sentences are unclear but are understood, without too much effort, after a second reading.</i>	<i>The text is easily comprehensible and reads smoothly. Comprehensibility is not an issue.</i>	<i>The text is very easily comprehensible and highly readable. The ideas and the purpose are clearly stated.</i>

Figure 20. Comprehensibility scale dimension of the FA rating scale developed by Kuiken and Vedder (2016) (adapted from Kuiken & Vedder, 2016)

Finally, the last dimension takes into account the occurrence of cohesive ties such as deictic elements, anaphoric references, use of conjunctions and coherence breaks (see Figure 21).

Coherence and cohesion: Is the text coherent and cohesive (e.g. cohesive devices, strategies)

0	1	2	3	4	5
The text is <i>not at all coherent</i> . Unrelated progressions and coherence breaks are very common. The writer does not use any anaphoric device. The text is not at all cohesive. Connectives are hardly ever used and ideas are unrelated.	The text is <i>scarcely coherent</i> . The writer often uses unrelated progressions; when coherence is achieved, it is often done through repetitions. Only a few anaphoric devices are used. There are some coherence breaks. The text is not very cohesive. Ideas are not well linked by connectives, which are rarely used.	The text is <i>somewhat coherent</i> . Unrelated progressions and/or repetitions are frequent. More than two sentences in a row can have the same subject (even when the subject is understood). Some anaphoric devices are used. There can be a few coherence breaks. The text is somewhat cohesive. Some connectives are used, but they are mostly conjunctions.	The text is <i>coherent</i> . Unrelated progressions are somewhat rare, but the writer sometimes relies on repetitions to achieve coherence. A sufficient number of anaphoric devices is used. There may be some coherence breaks. The text is cohesive. The writer makes good use of connectives, sometimes not limiting this to conjunctions.	The text is <i>very coherent</i> : when the writer introduces a new topic, it is usually done by using connectives or connective phrases. Repetitions are very infrequent. Anaphoric devices are numerous. There are no coherence breaks. The text is very cohesive and ideas are well linked by adverbial and/or verbal connectives.	The writer ensures <i>extreme coherence</i> by integrating new ideas in the text with connectives or connective phrases. Anaphoric devices are used regularly. There are few incidences of unrelated progressions and no coherence breaks. The structure of the text is extremely cohesive, thanks to a skillful use of connectives (especially linking chunks, verbal constructions and adverbials), often used to describe relationships between ideas.

Figure 21. Coherence and cohesion scale dimension of the FA rating scale developed by Kuiken and Vedder (2016) (adapted from Kuiken & Vedder, 2016)

However, we encountered some difficulties when grading the writings and several decisions needed to be made in order to solve them, starting with the dimensions addressed in the FA rating scale (Kuiken & Vedder, 2016) and finishing with the scoring system.

The main problem regarding the FA rating scale was the overlap of two dimensions. In some cases, some utterances were considered coherent, but not cohesive and vice-versa. Although no agreement exists regarding the relationship between coherence and cohesion due to the distinct operationalizations of the two variables, we agree with Charolles (1995), who claims that coherence and cohesion are two separate fundamental dimensions of written texts, since cohesive markers are not mandatory elements to obtain coherent texts. Although we acknowledge that cohesion and coherence are two properties of texts that contribute to the overall text interpretation, in the present study we will consider coherence and cohesion as two separate dimensions in order to explore FA and adopt a solution when some letters are not cohesive or coherent. For example, some paragraphs were readable and understandable, but did not have any cohesive devices (see Example 7). On the other hand, some sentences were connected with several discourse markers but were not coherent (see Example 8).

Example 7

I'm (name of participant)¹⁷. I'm 23 years old. I live in Petrer (Alicante). I have two sisters. Their names are X and Y. (#68/EMI2/PRE#)

Example 8

To conclude, I want to say that I'm different teacher. I don't use books in my Spanish classes **because** I think that doesn't the good option for children to learn and be. (#13/EMI0/PRE#)

¹⁷ Omitted for reasons of confidentiality

As shown in Examples 7 and 8, a solution needed to be adopted in order to be fair and objective when grading the motivation letters performed by the learners. Following Charolles' (1995) approach to coherence and cohesion, the dimension of coherence and cohesion included in the FA rating scale developed by Kuiken and Vedder (2016) was divided into two separate sub-scales in order to measure, on the one hand, the cohesive devices employed, and on the other, the coherence of the motivation letters. As a result, the present study measures FA in terms of five separate scale dimensions (Appendix I). Figure 22 shows the extent to which Kuiken and Vedder's (2016) FA rating scale was implemented.

Figure 22. Implementation of Kuiken and Vedder's (2016) FA rating scale

We also modified the scoring system adopted in the original rating scale. As Likert items are ordinal and there is a sum of five scale dimensions (cohesion, coherence, task requirements, content and comprehensibility) to compute a total score to reflect the level of FA achievement, we decided to use a six-point Likert scale ranging from 0 to 5 instead of 1 to 6. The decision was made taking into consideration the clarity of scale point meanings. Regarding clarity, ratings

are considered to be reliable when people have a clear understanding of the meaning of the points on the scale (Krosnick & Presser, 2010). In this respect, as the motivation letters were graded by the principal researcher and two external raters (secondary-school English teachers), it was decided to establish a minimum score of 0 due to graders' familiarity with the Spanish educational scoring system (from 0 to 10), and to avoid ambiguous interpretations that might compromise the reliability and validity of the scale.

5.4.2. Data coding and analysis

In the present investigation, pragmatic competence was operationalized as the FA of written texts, which was assessed by adding together the score obtained in five distinct dimensions. The first step was carried out by means of the background information and stay abroad questionnaire, in which a demographic profile for each of the participants (age, gender and previous language experiences) was created. Regarding previous language experiences, participants were categorized according to length of previous stays (no stays, short-term, medium-term and long-term stays). Although the questionnaires provided more information about participants such as types of stay(s), language preferences, language use and background education, these data were not analyzed in the present study.

The second step was to score the data from the QPT, and categorize students according to their proficiency level based on the measures provided by the CEFR: A1 (beginner), A2 (elementary), B1 (lower intermediate), B2 (upper intermediate), and C1 (advanced). The proficiency levels correspond to the following scores: A1 (0-15), A2 (16-23), B1 (24-30), B2 (31-40), and C1 (more than 40).

Coding the performance of FA dimensions was the next phase. To obtain performance scores in each of the dimensions considered in the present study, each dimension in the written motivation letters received a point value: 0, 1, 2, 3,

4 or 5. For instance, when grading coherence, 0 points were given when the text was not at all coherent, 1 point to scarcely coherent, 2 to somewhat coherent, 3 to coherent, 4 to very coherent, and 5 to extremely coherent. For each participant, the scores were added and divided by 5 (number of dimensions in the scale), to obtain the average score for FA. This coding system was applied in the pre-test, post-test and delayed post-test, with a total amount of 405 motivation letters. A database was created in order to perform the corresponding analyses and to explore both learners' development in each of the dimensions (content, coherence, cohesion, comprehensibility and task requirements) and overall performance over the academic year 2016/2017. As previously mentioned (section 5.4.1), the motivation letters were rated by the principal researcher and two secondary-school English teachers in order to ensure consistency and objectivity in coding learners' FA performance. These raters went through six training sessions of coding in order to become familiar with the rating scale and to provide them with specific instructions on how the letters should be assessed (holistically). They coded, independently, 60% of the data from the main study (243 letters). The agreement rate was 88% for coherence, 87% for cohesion, 91% for comprehensibility, 90% for task requirements, and 89% for content.

The final step was to code qualitative data obtained from the students' semi-structured interviews, WTC scale and Can-do scale, in which several topics were elicited (see section 5.3.2.1 and 5.3.2.2). Since the present study explores gains in pragmatic competence in terms of FA, the qualitative data was used to hypothesize potential factors that could have influenced pragmatic development, and complement the quantitative results.

Finally, in order to explore the relationships among the variables at play, statistical analysis by means of t-tests, multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA), and analysis of variance (ANOVA) were conducted. Series of t-tests were used to examine differences between the level of proficiency and FA performance in pre-test, post-test and delayed-post-test. In order to perform the t-test, the Levene's test was previously performed to verify and assume homoscedasticity.

These allowed for the determination of the effect of English language proficiency on learners' FA. MANOVA and ANOVA were used to explore pragmatic development across the three EMI groups and to determine the effect of previous language experiences (length) on students' pragmatic performance. In other words, MANOVA and ANOVA allowed the examination of how students enrolled in different EMI programs differ in their gains in pragmatic competence, and whether previous language experiences affect their competence. In addition to MANOVA and ANOVA, Levene's test, Games-Howell, Greenhouse-Geisser, Mauchly, Bonferroni and post-hoc Tukey tests were performed. These statistical analyses were conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.

Table 4 presents a summary of the data collection instruments and data analysis in relation to the hypothesis investigated in the present study.

Chapter 5 *Method*

RQ	Data collection instruments	Data analysis
<p>RQ1</p> <p>Does intensity of English-medium instruction affect the development of learners' pragmatic competence in terms of written production over one academic year?</p>	<p>Pragmatic-focused task Learners' semi-structured interviews</p>	<p>Quantitative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MANOVA ANOVA Cohen's d Levene's test Games-Howell Mauchly Greenhouse-Geisser Post-hoc Tukey HSD (honestly significant difference) Post-hoc Bonferroni <p>Qualitative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners' interviews
<p>RQ2</p> <p>Does the level of proficiency in English influence pragmatic performance and development in English-medium instruction students?</p>	<p>QPT (UCLES, 2001) Pragmatic-focused task Can-do Scale (Kitano, 2001)</p>	<p>Quantitative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> T-tests Levene's test <p>Qualitative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kitano's (2001) Can-do scale
<p>RQ3</p> <p>Is there any relationship between learners' pragmatic competence and their previous language contact experiences in terms of length of stay?</p>	<p>Pragmatic-focused task Background Information and Stay Abroad Questionnaire</p> <p>Learners' semi-structured interviews and WTC scale (McCroskey & Richmond, 1987).</p>	<p>Quantitative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MANOVA Levene's test Cohen's d <p>Qualitative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Background Information and Stay Abroad Questionnaire McCroskey and Richmond's (1987) WTC Scale Learners' interviews

Table 4. Summary of the data collection instruments and data analysis

5.5. Chapter summary

Chapter 5 has presented the research methodology used in the present investigation. It is a longitudinal mixed-method study in which 102 participants enrolled in three EMI programs at two different universities completed a pragmatic-focused task, a QPT and a background information questionnaire. In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted at the beginning and at the end of the academic year with 8 participants. The information provided in the interviews was used to complement the quantitative results, thus following an exploratory sequential design. The following chapters, 6, 7 and 8 will present and discuss the results of the present investigation.

Chapter 6.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION RELATED TO RESEARCH QUESTION 1

Chapter 6 presents the research outcomes regarding the first research question of the study and its corresponding hypothesis, as laid out in chapter 4. Previous research suggests that increased amounts of EMI seem to promote students' pragmatic competence (e.g., Martí-Arnándiz, 2008; Martínez-Flor & Usó-Juan, 2006; Taguchi, 2012; Zhang & Yang, 2012). To the best of our knowledge, only two studies have analyzed gains in learners' written pragmatic performance, and they have focused on the development of specific pragmatic features together with overall linguistic gains (Ament & Pérez-Vidal, 2016; Salaberri & Sánchez, 2015). To date, no claim has been made on whether increased amounts of EMI trigger the development of pragmatic competence over time. The present study addresses this research gap by analyzing gains in FA during one academic year of EMI. Additionally, it explores whether FA gains are different across groups with different exposure to the TL. Following these ideas, research question one and hypotheses 1 and 2 were formulated as follows:

RQ1: does English-medium instruction affect the development of learners' pragmatic competence in terms of written production over one academic year?

- H1: there will be differences in learners' pragmatic performance during the EMI experience over one academic year (Salaberri & Sánchez, 2015; Taguchi, 2012; Taguchi et al., 2015).
- H2: learners' pragmatic performance will be different across groups with different intensities to English in instructional settings over one academic year (Ament & Pérez-Vidal, 2015; Ament et al., 2016; Martí-Arnándiz, 2008; Martínez-Flor & Usó-Juan, 2006).

Chapter 6 is divided into 3 main sections. Section 6.1 presents the quantitative results in relation to RQ1 and its corresponding hypothesis. In this

regard, a quantitative analysis of the motivation letters designed for the purpose of this study is presented. In addition to this, the development of pragmatic competence in EMI students and differences in FA gains across groups are pointed out in sections 6.1.1 and 6.1.2. In section 6.2 qualitative results are presented in order to complement the quantitative analyses. A subset of 8 participants were interviewed at the beginning and at the end of the academic year. These interviews focused on the participants' use of English in the academic setting, their reason for enrolling and subsequent expectations of the course, their professors' English skills, self-improvement and suggestions for their own self-improvement as well as future EMI programs.

6.1. Quantitative results

The first step in the quantitative analysis was to carry out a descriptive analysis of the data in order to examine data distributions and check for underlying assumptions of homoscedasticity. Table 5 shows descriptive statistics of performance of coherence, cohesion, task requirements, comprehensibility, and content, as well as overall FA, understood as the sum of the five dimensions. There is a large difference between the performance of all dimensions and overall performance for all three measures at all time points: pre-test (Time 1; henceforth T1), post-test (Time 2; henceforth T2), and delayed post-test (Time 3; henceforth T3).

Table 5. Descriptive statistics of FA performance

		Mean	SD	Levene: F (2.99) (p)	n
Coherence	T1	2.51	1.14	2.734 (.070)	102
	T2	3.78	1.05	0.924 (.400)	102
	T3	4.36	0.79	3.896 (.024)	102
Cohesion	T1	2.16	1.26	3.720 (.028)	102
	T2	3.45	1.09	1.291 (.280)	102
	T3	4.19	0.87	0.402 (.670)	102
Task requirements	T1	2.40	1.56	0.512 (.661)	102
	T2	4.02	1.13	0.764 (.468)	102
	T3	4.34	1.05	1.482 (.232)	102
Comprehensibility	T1	2.83	1.06	1.047 (.355)	102
	T2	3.92	0.93	0.741 (.479)	102
	T3	4.42	0.75	3.052 (.052)	102
Content	T1	1.71	0.97	1.399 (.252)	102
	T2	2.33	0.99	0.818 (.444)	102
	T3	2.84	0.97	2.040 (.135)	102
Overall performance (sum)	T1	11.61	5.05	2.696 (.072)	102
	T2	17.51	4.04	0.938 (.395)	102
	T3	20.16	3.10	3.877 (.024)	102

As can be seen, variation in the performance of all dimensions was moderate, as evident in the low standard deviations. Assuming the normal distribution of the data ($n > 50$), parametric statistical tests were used to obtain more significant results and make stronger assumptions. In order to assess the equality of variances, Levene's test was used for the six variables calculated for the three groups. Homoscedasticity ($p > .05$) was verified for all dimensions at all points in time except for coherence and overall FA in T3, for which non-parametric post hoc Games-Howell tests were used.

The following sections present the results related to hypothesis 1 and 2 of the study.

6.1.1. Development of pragmatic competence in EMI students

In order to examine development of pragmatic competence, paired-samples t-tests were conducted for each of the dimensions: cohesion, coherence, task requirements, comprehensibility and content, and for overall FA. The effect size was calculated using Cohen's *d* (Cohen, 1988¹⁸) and the statistical power using $1 - \beta$. Table 6 displays the T1 and T2 means, standard deviations, and differences – which indicate gains – for each of the five aspects and overall FA. Maximum FA scores are 25 points (5 points for each of the five dimensions). As stated before, overall scores are the sum of the scores obtained in coherence, cohesion, task requirements, comprehensibility, and content.

Table 6. Pre-test/Post-test means and differences in FA

	n	T1		T2		Difference	Difference (%)	t	df
		M	SD	M	SD				
Coherence	102	2.51	1.141	3.78	1.050	1.27	25.4	-13.765*	101
Cohesion	102	2.16	1.264	3.45	1.096	1.29	25.8	-12.688*	101
Task requirements	102	2.40	1.562	4.02	1.134	1.62	32.4	-11.607*	101
Comprehensibility	102	2.83	1.063	3.92	0.930	1.09	21.8	-11.380*	101
Content	102	1.71	0.971	2.33	0.998	0.62	12.4	-5.677*	101
Overall	102	11.61	5.053	17.51	4.044	5.9	23.6	-15.514*	101

Note: the values for the difference column are the changes from the pre-test to the post-test.

* $p < .005$ (paired-samples T-test)

The inferential statistical analysis indicates that changes between pre- and post-test means are statistically significant for coherence [$t(102) = -13.765$, $p < .005$, $d = -1.363$], for cohesion [$t(102) = -12.688$, $p < .005$, $d = -1.256$], for task requirements [$t(102) = -11.607$, $p < .005$, $d = -1.149$], for comprehensibility [$t(102) = -11.380$, $p < .005$, $d = -1.126$], for content [$t(102) = -5.677$, $p < .005$, $d = -0.561$], and for overall FA [$t(102) = -15.514$, $p < .005$, $d = -1.536$], suggesting that an EMI

¹⁸ See Cohen (1988) for an explanation on effect size in regression analysis. A small effect size is indicated by an R^2 of .02 (meaning that X explains 2% of the variance of Y). R^2 of .15 accounts for a medium-size effect, and R^2 of .35 indicates a large effect size.

Chapter 6: Results and discussion related to RQ1

semester affords significant pragmatic gains in FA.

Figure 23 illustrates the results from Table 6; that is, performance and changes in learners' FA during the first period of EMI.

Figure 23. Average pre-test and post-test scores for FA dimensions

In Figure 23, we can observe that learners scored higher on comprehensibility in the pre-test ($M = 2.83$, $SD = 1.06$) and on task requirements in the post-test ($M = 4.02$, $SD = 1.13$). As for the low scores, learners scored lower on the content dimension, both in the pre-test ($M = 1.71$, $SD = 0.97$) and in the post-test ($M = 2.33$, $SD = 0.99$). This means that learners seemed to have more difficulty in writing content than in any other dimension, both at the beginning and at the end of the first semester.

Table 7 displays T2 and T3 means, critical values and differences for each of the five aspects and overall FA in order to examine the development of learners' pragmatic competence during the second semester of the academic year.

Table 7. Post-test/Delayed post-test means and differences in FA

	n	T2		T3		Difference	Difference (%)	t	df
		M	SD	M	SD				
Coherence	102	3.78	1.050	4.36	0.793	0.58	11.6	-5.788*	101
Cohesion	102	3.45	1.096	4.19	0.876	0.74	14.8	-7.395*	101
Task requirements	102	4.02	1.134	4.34	1.058	0.32	6.4	-2.678*	101
Comprehensibility	102	3.92	0.930	4.42	0.750	0.5	10	-5.621*	101
Content	102	2.33	0.998	2.84	0.972	0.51	10.2	-4.774*	101
Overall	102	17.51	4.044	20.16	3.104	2.65	10.6	-7.245*	101

Note: the values for the difference column are the changes from the post-test to the delayed post-test.

* $p < .005$ (paired-samples T-test)

Results from the statistical analysis between T2 and T3 indicate changes between post-test and delayed post-test means, which are statistically significant for all dimensions: coherence [$t(102) = -5.788$, $p < .005$, $d = -0.572$], cohesion [$t(102) = -7.395$, $p < .005$, $d = -0.732$], task requirements [$t(102) = -2.678$, $p < .005$, $d = -0.265$], comprehensibility [$t(102) = -5.621$, $p < .005$, $d = -0.556$], content [$t(102) = -4.774$, $p < .005$, $d = -0.472$], and overall FA [$t(102) = -7.245$, $p < .005$, $d = -0.717$]. Taking into consideration the results from T1 and T2, and those from T2 and T3, it seems that an academic year of EMI can afford significant pragmatic gains in

learners' FA.

Figure 24 illustrates the results from Table 7; that is, performance and changes in learners' FA during the second semester of EMI.

Figure 24. Average post-test and delayed post-test scores for FA dimensions

Figure 24 displays differences between post-test and delayed post-test performance in FA. As can be observed, learners scored higher on task requirements in the post-test ($M = 4.02$, $SD = 1.134$) and on comprehensibility in the delayed post-test ($M = 4.42$, $SD = 0.750$). On the other hand, they scored lower in content, both in the post-test ($M = 2.33$, $SD = 0.998$) and in the delayed post-test ($M = 2.84$, $SD = 0.972$).

Finally, inferential statistical analysis between T1 and T3 indicates significant changes for all dimensions: coherence [$t(102) = -15.418$, $p < .005$, $d = -1.526$], cohesion [$t(102) = -17.604$, $p < .005$, $d = -1.743$], task requirements [$t(102) = -11.577$, $p < .005$, $d = -1.146$], comprehensibility [$t(102) = -14.796$, $p < .005$, $d = -1.464$], content [$t(102) = -8.602$, $p < .005$, $d = -0.851$], and overall FA [$t(102) = -17.700$, $p < .005$, $d = -1.752$].

Figure 25 shows a complete picture of gain percentages in FA over the academic year; that is, between T1, T2 and T3.

Figure 25. Gain percentages in FA by EMI students.

To sum up, the results presented above support hypothesis 1, which predicted differences in learners' written pragmatic performance during the EMI experience over one academic year. Furthermore, these results add the following findings to the existing literature on EMI: (i) learners show greater gains in coherence and task

requirements over the EMI experience and (ii) greater gains in FA were observed on the first semester of the academic year. Consequently, the EMI context was found to be beneficial in terms of written pragmatic performance, and particularly in producing more coherent written texts and in meeting the requirements of the task.

6.1.2. Influence of intensity of English-medium instruction on pragmatic competence

This section addresses hypothesis 2, which predicted that learners' pragmatic performance would be different across groups with different exposure to EMI (Ament & Pérez-Vidal, 2015; Ament et al., 2016; Martí-Arnándiz, 2008; Martínez-Flor & Usó-Juan, 2006). These studies focused on the performance of specific target pragmatic features such as production of PMs (Ament et al., 2016), peripheral modification devices (Martínez-Flor & Usó-Juan, 2006) and request modifiers (Martí-Arnándiz, 2008). The present study adopts a developmental approach by exploring how different groups with three intensities of EMI make progress in pragmatic performance in terms of FA. Hence, this section addresses the following question: does intensity of EMI affect the development of learners' written pragmatic competence over one academic year?

As indicated in chapter 5, the EMI students that constitute the sample of the present study were enrolled in three different undergraduate EMI groups with different intensities of contact with English: English Studies ($n=39$, 50% EMI), Economics ($n=32$, 75% EMI) and Biotechnology ($n=31$, 100% EMI). Statistical analyses by means of MANOVA tests were conducted for each of the dimensions under analysis and each of the groups. In order to address gains in FA across the three EMI groups, this section provides information about gains in each dimension and in overall FA.

Table 8 includes the descriptive data of average gains in coherence experienced by each EMI group.

Table 8. Descriptive statistics of coherence gains by EMI group

	<i>n</i>	T1		T2		T3	
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
50% EMI	39	2.49	0.823	3.72	0.944	4.33	0.772
75% EMI	32	2.13	1.040	3.34	0.902	4.13	0.907
100% EMI	31	2.94	1.436	4.32	1.107	4.65	0.608

Figure 26 further illustrates the descriptive findings from Table 8.

Figure 26. Gains in coherence across groups

By observing Table 8 and Figure 26, we may discern differences in the development of the dimension of coherence across groups. Although the 100% group outperformed the other groups in the pre-test ($M = 2.94$), post-test ($M = 4.32$) and delayed post-test ($M = 4.65$), the other groups showed similar learning trajectories in their ability to produce more coherent texts over the academic year.

In order to provide further support to the descriptive report on coherence

across the three groups, a statistical analysis by means of MANOVA was conducted. The test revealed significant differences among at least two of the groups in coherence in the pre-test [$F(2, 99) = 4.241$; $p = .017$], post-test [$F(2, 99) = 7.931$; $p = .001$] and delayed post-test [$F(2, 99) = 3.604$; $p = .031$].

Table 9 illustrates post-hoc Tukey and Games-Howell comparisons among the three EMI groups between T1, T2 and T3. Values in bold are statistically significant at an alpha of .05.

Table 9. Post-hoc comparisons on coherence

Moment	Test	Comparison	MD	p	CI (95%) for MD	
					Lower limit	Upper limit
PRE-TEST	Tukey	1 - 2	0.81	.012	0.15	1.47
		1 - 3	0.45	.216	-0.18	1.08
		2 - 3	-0.36	.359	-0.99	0.27
POST-TEST	Tukey	1 - 2	0.98	<.001	0.39	1.57
		1 - 3	0.60	.032	0.04	1.17
		2 - 3	-0.37	.253	-0.93	0.18
DELAYED POST-TEST	Games-Howell	1 - 2	0.52	.026	0.05	0.99
		1 - 3	0.31	.149	-0.08	0.71
		2 - 3	-0.21	.562	-0.69	0.28

Note: 1: Biotechnology; 2: Economics; 3: English Studies; CI: Confidence Interval. MD: Mean

As can be observed in Table 9, the analysis evidenced significant gains in T1, T2 and T3. Group 1 significantly differed with group 2 in their first pragmatic performance (mean difference = 0.81, $p = .012$). After one semester of EMI, the differences between these two groups increased (mean difference = 0.98, $p = <.001$) and significant differences were observed between groups 2 and 3 in T2 (mean difference = 0.60, $p = .032$). This means that learners with more exposure to English developed the ability to write coherent texts to a much greater extent than the group with less exposure over the first period of EMI. In the last period, the second semester, the Biotechnology students significantly differed with the

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Economics students in their gains in coherence (mean difference = 0.52, $p = .026$).

Table 10 includes the descriptive data of average gains in cohesion experienced by each EMI group.

Table 10. Descriptive statistics of cohesion gains by EMI group

		T1		T2		T3	
	n	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
50% EMI	39	2.26	0.938	3.46	1.097	4.23	0.931
75% EMI	32	1.66	1.181	2.91	0.928	4.03	0.897
100% EMI	31	2.55	1.546	4.00	1.000	4.29	0.783

Figure 27 further illustrates the descriptive findings from Table 10.

Figure 27. Gains in cohesion across groups

By examining Table 10 and Figure 27, we can observe that there seems to be a tendency for gains in cohesion over time. While the Biotechnology students outperformed the other groups in cohesion in T1 ($M = 2.55$) and T2 ($M = 4.00$), the means of the three groups are similar in the last period measured. This means that EMI students, despite the intensity of the program, appear to increase their written-pragmatic performance as far as this dimension is concerned.

The statistical analysis by means of MANOVA revealed significant differences in cohesion gains among at least two of the groups in the pre-test [$F(2, 99) = 4.391$; $p = .015$] and post-test [$F(2, 99) = 9.108$; $p = <.001$], although such difference was not observed at the end of the academic year [$F(2, 99) = 0.767$; $p = .467$].

Table 11 illustrates post-hoc Tukey and Games-Howell comparisons among the three EMI groups between T1, T2 and T3. Values in bold are statistically significant at an alpha of .05.

Table 11. Post-hoc comparisons on cohesion

Moment	Test	Comparison	MD	p	CI (95%) for MD	
					Lower limit	Upper limit
PRE-TEST	Games-Howell	1 - 2	0.89	.034	0.06	1.73
		1 - 3	0.29	.627	-0.47	1.06
		2 - 3	-0.60	.059	-1.22	0.02
POST-TEST	Tukey	1 - 2	1.09	<.001	0.48	1.70
		1 - 3	0.54	.076	-0.04	1.12
		2 - 3	-0.56	.062	-1.13	0.02
DELAYED POST-TEST	Tukey	1 - 2	0.26	.473	-0.27	0.79
		1 - 3	0.06	.957	-0.44	0.56
		2 - 3	-0.20	.608	-0.70	0.30

Note: 1: Biotechnology; 2: Economics; 3: English Studies; CI: Confidence Interval. MD: Mean

Post-hoc comparisons reveal that there are significant differences between group 1 and 2 in the pre-test (mean difference = 0.89, $p = .034$) and in the post-

test (mean difference = 1.09, $p = <.001$). We may conclude that learners did not improve in their ability to perform cohesive texts (significant differences between these groups are observed before the EMI experience). However, caution must be taken with the interpretation of this finding, since the difference of means is higher in T2, which suggests gains in this dimension by the 100% group over the first semester.

Dealing with the third sub-component of FA, Table 12 includes the descriptive data of the average gains in comprehensibility experienced by the three groups.

Table 12. Descriptive statistics of comprehensibility gains

	n	T1		T2		T3	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
50% EMI	39	2.87	0.923	3.95	0.887	4.59	0.595
75% EMI	32	2.50	0.984	3.50	0.842	4.09	0.928
100% EMI	31	3.13	1.231	4.32	0.909	4.55	0.624

Figure 28 further illustrates the descriptive findings from Table 12.

Figure 28. Gains in comprehensibility across groups

From Table 12 and Figure 28, we can observe the changes in comprehensibility at each time by each of the EMI groups. Biotechnology students, Economics students and English students scored higher in the delayed post-test ($M = 4.55, 4.09$ and 4.59 , respectively) than in their previous performances. Inferential analysis by means of MANOVA revealed significant differences among at least two of the groups both in the post-test [$F(2, 99) = 6.909; p = .002$] and delayed post-test [$F(2, 99) = 4.814; p = .010$].

More specifically, a post-hoc Tukey multiple-comparison test revealed significant differences in T1, T2 and T3 (see Table 13). Although MANOVA results did not evidence significant differences in the pre-test among the groups, post-hoc comparisons concluded that group 1 significantly differed with group 2 in their gains in comprehensibility (mean difference = $0.63, p = .049$). This is so because the critical value in T1 for this dimension across groups was [$F(2, 99) = 2.903; p = .060$], and the critical value was very close to significance with a medium effect size ($\eta^2_p = .055$). This test also revealed that group 1 significantly differed with group 2 in T2 (mean difference = $0.82, p = .001$) and T3 (mean difference = $0.45, p = .038$), meaning that the most significant gains were in T2. Also, significant results were found in the post-test between groups 2 and 3 (mean difference = $-0.50, p = .014$), in favor of the former group, which had more exposure to EMI.

Table 13. Post-hoc comparisons on comprehensibility

Moment	Test	Comparison	MD	p	CI (95%) for MD	
					Lower limit	Upper limit
PRE-TEST	Tukey	1 - 2	0.63	.049	0.00	1.25
		1 - 3	0.26	.563	-0.34	0.85
		2 - 3	-0.37	.298	-0.96	0.22
POST-TEST	Tukey	1 - 2	0.82	.001	0.29	1.35
		1 - 3	0.37	.187	-0.13	0.88
		2 - 3	-0.45	.087	-0.95	0.05
DELAYED POST-TEST	Tukey	1 - 2	0.45	.038	0.02	0.89
		1 - 3	-0.04	.969	-0.46	0.37
		2 - 3	-0.50	.014	-0.91	-0.09

Note: 1: Biotechnology; 2: Economics; 3: English Studies; CI: Confidence Interval. MD: Mean

Regarding the content dimension, Table 14 includes the descriptive data of the average gains experienced by the three groups.

Table 14. Descriptive statistics of content gains

	<i>n</i>	T1		T2		T3	
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
50% EMI	39	1.62	0.907	2.26	0.850	2.77	0.872
75% EMI	32	1.44	0.801	2.09	1.118	2.94	1.134
100% EMI	31	2.10	1.106	2.68	0.979	2.84	0.934

Figure 29 further illustrates the descriptive findings from Table 14.

Figure 29. Gains in content across groups

By observing Table 14 and Figure 29, we can see that the three groups experienced gains over the academic year, since the means in T3 are higher than those obtained in T1 and T2. This means that the three groups scored higher on the content dimension after the EMI experience, which suggests similar

learning trajectories. However, significant results by means of MANOVA could only be observed in T1 [$F(2, 99) = 4.149$; $p = .019$]. In particular, a post-hoc Tukey multiple-comparison revealed that the Biotechnology students differed from the Economics students (mean difference = 0.66, $p = .018$). Although the analysis did not evidence significant results in any group in T2 and T3 (see Table 15), findings suggest that there is a tendency towards improvement at all time points in all groups.

Table 15. Post-hoc comparisons on content

Moment	Test	Comparison	MD	p	CI (95%) for MD	
					Lower limit	Upper limit
PRE-TEST	Tukey	1 - 2	0.66	.018	0.09	1.22
		1 - 3	0.48	.090	-0.06	1.02
		2 - 3	-0.18	.709	-0.71	0.36
POST-TEST	Tukey	1 - 2	0.58	.052	0.00	1.17
		1 - 3	0.42	.179	-0.14	0.98
		2 - 3	-0.16	.766	-0.72	0.39
DELAYED POST-TEST	Tukey	1 - 2	-0.10	.916	-0.69	0.49
		1 - 3	0.07	.953	-0.49	0.63
		2 - 3	0.17	.752	-0.39	0.72

Note: 1: Biotechnology; 2: Economics; 3: English Studies; CI: Confidence Interval. MD: Mean

As for the last dimension of FA, Table 16 shows the descriptive data of average gains in task requirements experienced by the three groups.

Table 16. Descriptive statistics of task requirements gains

	<i>n</i>	T1		T2		T3	
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
50% EMI	39	1.97	1.405	3.82	1.233	4.13	1.031
75% EMI	32	2.19	1.635	4.00	1.016	4.31	1.148
100% EMI	31	3.16	1.440	4.29	1.101	4.65	0.950

Figure 30 further illustrates the descriptive findings from Table 16.

Figure 30. Gains in task requirements across groups

Table 16 and Figure 30 illustrate that the ability to meet task requirements increases in the three groups over the academic year. The mean difference between T1 and T3 is evident in group 1 (mean difference = 1.49), group 2 (mean difference = 2.12) and group 3 (mean difference = 2.16). However, the highest gains in all groups can be seen between T1 and T2 (mean difference = 1.13, 1.81 and 1.85, respectively). These results show that the three EMI groups followed similar developmental paths with respect to task requirements, all obtaining the

highest scores in T2; that is, their second written-pragmatic performance. On conducting a post-hoc Tukey test (see Table 17), it was revealed that group 1 significantly differed with group 2 (mean difference = 0.97, $p = .029$) and group 3 (mean difference = 1.19, $p = .004$) in T1, although no such differences were observed in T2 and T3, where there seems to be steady progress.

Table 17. Post-hoc comparisons on task requirements

Moment	Test	Comparison	MD	p	CI (95%) for MD	
					Lower limit	Upper limit
PRE-TEST	Tukey	1 - 2	0.97	.029	0.08	1.87
		1 - 3	1.19	.004	0.33	2.04
		2 - 3	0.21	.821	-0.63	1.06
POST-TEST	Tukey	1 - 2	0.29	.566	-0.39	0.97
		1 - 3	0.47	.199	-0.18	1.12
		2 - 3	0.18	.783	-0.46	0.82
DELAYED POST-TEST	Tukey	1 - 2	0.33	.420	-0.29	0.96
		1 - 3	0.52	.105	-0.08	1.12
		2 - 3	0.18	.741	-0.41	0.78

Note: 1: Biotechnology; 2: Economics; 3: English Studies; CI: Confidence Interval. MD: Mean

Finally, in order to have a complete picture of learners' performance, Table 18 illustrates the descriptive data of average gains in overall FA experienced by the three groups.

Table 18. Descriptive statistics of overall FA gains

		T1		T2		T3	
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
50% EMI	39	11.21	4.073	17.21	3.948	20.05	3.077
75% EMI	32	9.91	4.489	15.84	3.303	19.50	3.583
100% EMI	31	13.87	5.960	19.61	4.047	20.97	2.456

Figure 31 further illustrates the descriptive findings from Table 18.

Figure 31. Gains in overall FA across groups

By observing Table 18 and Figure 31, changes in overall performance across groups can be observed. While the Biotechnology group is the one that scores the highest after the EMI experience ($M = 20.97$), the Economics students benefited the most from the EMI academic year from T1 to T3 (mean difference = 9.59), since the Biotechnology students' mean differences are the lowest (mean difference = 7.1). MANOVA results concluded that there existed significant differences among at least two of the groups in overall performance in T1 [$F(2,$

99) = 5.498; $p = .005$] and T2 [$F(2, 99) = 7.991$; $p = .001$]. More particularly, post-hoc findings revealed that group 1 significantly differed with group 2 in the pre-test (mean difference = 3.96, $p = .004$) and in the post-test (mean difference = 3.77, $p = <.001$). In addition, group 1 differed with group 3 in the post-test (mean difference = 2.41, $p = .026$), thus suggesting that students with more exposure to EMI made the greatest gains in overall FA in the first period measured (see Table 19).

Table 19. Post-hoc comparisons on overall FA

Moment	Test	Comparison	MD	p	CI (95%) for MD	
					Lower limit	Upper limit
PRE-TEST	Tukey	1 - 2	3.96	.004	1.06	6.87
		1 - 3	2.67	.062	-0.11	5.44
		2 - 3	-1.30	.501	-4.05	1.45
POST-TEST	Tukey	1 - 2	3.77	<.001	1.50	6.04
		1 - 3	2.41	.026	0.24	4.58
		2 - 3	-1.36	.292	-3.51	0.79
DELAYED POST-TEST	Games-Howell	1 - 2	1.47	.148	-0.39	3.33
		1 - 3	0.92	.354	-0.67	2.50
		2 - 3	0.55	.772	-1.38	2.48

Note: 1: Biotechnology; 2: Economics; 3: English Studies; CI: Confidence Interval. MD: Mean

6.2. Qualitative results

This section provides qualitative insights in order to complement and consolidate the quantitative findings presented above. As the quantitative analysis revealed, the participants in this study significantly improved the FA of written texts during an academic year in the EMI context. As shown in the second analysis, this increase was different across the three EMI groups. From the sample

of 102 EMI students, a subset of 8 learners was interviewed (see section 5.3.2.1. for an overview of the semi-structured interviews). Although they were asked about their reasons for enrolling in EMI programs and the role of English as the medium of instruction, they were also asked about whether they felt they had improved the FA of written texts and everyday English in general. Additionally, the interviews also served as discussions to identify factors that shaped individual and group trajectories.

Table 20 includes descriptive data on the 8 participants' FA of written texts. The participants were chosen on the basis of maximum variation sampling. In this way, the principal researcher aimed at gathering a subsample that represented the most varied cases from the overall sample in terms of not only pragmatic performance but also further demographic factors. Accordingly, their EMI program is also included in the table, since this variable was found to play a role in the students' pragmatic development.

Table 20. EMI group, and gains in overall FA by 8 informants.

	Participant	EMI group	Pre-test overall FA scores	Post-test overall FA scores	Delayed post-test overall FA scores	Overall gains
Gainers	1	50%	9	16	16	77.8
	2	50%	20	23	23	15
	3	75%	13	14	18	38.4
	4	75%	9	13	17	88.9
	5	75%	17	24	24	41.17
	6	100%	14	18	18	28.75
Non - gainers	7	100%	24	24	24	0
	8	100%	20	20	16	-20
Average			11.61	17.51	20.16	77.51

In the table above, the following trends can be observed. Six of the informants are “gainers” while two of them are “non-gainers”, according to whether they experienced average gains in overall FA of written texts during the EMI experience. Among the gainers, participant 4, a student enrolled in Economics (75% EMI over the academic year), showed the highest overall FA gains (88.9%), followed by participant 1 (77.8%). At the other end of the scale, participant 8, a Biotechnology student, had the highest negative gains (-20%), followed by participant 7, also a Biotechnology student, who did not experience gains over the academic year (0%).

When asked about whether they felt they had improved their writing skills and performance, most of the informants were highly aware of their increase. Five of the participants (participants 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6) explained that they had improved their writing skills due to daily exposure to English in the university context. For instance, participant 4 was aware of having learned some polite expressions, such as “*Dear*”, “*Kind regards*”, and “*Looking forward to hearing from you*”, as well as discourse markers such as “*Additionally*”, “*Taking into consideration*”, and “*Thus*”. In particular, he expresses that email communication and the virtual learning platform (e.g.: forums, feedback on assignments) helped him improve the performance of written texts. According to this participant, in high school, he only got feedback on his essays in terms of grammar mistakes, and he could not learn from others’ assignments. The EMI context and virtual platform allowed him to read his classmates’ comments and learn new discourse markers in order to produce more cohesive texts. Similarly, participant 5 explains that he had improved his writing skills thanks to daily exposure to English. As he had 75% of the credit hours in English, he was given a lot of written materials dealing with current issues, such as globalization, macroeconomics, investments, business and pensions. Thus, he was exposed to different text typologies, such as informative, scientific, legal and administrative texts. As he claims¹⁹, “I learned to write introductions from reading thousands of introductions and ...ehm... for

¹⁹ Learners’ utterances were typed verbatim as in the interviews.

instance... I know that they use formal words to give a good impression all the time".

Participant 3 was excited to explain that not having traditional language sessions, as in at high school, helped her gain confidence with her L2 use and feel more comfortable communicating in English. She explained that at the beginning of the academic year she did not learn any English because one of her professors had a high level of proficiency and used technical language when providing explanations on content matters. As it was difficult for her to follow the lessons and she wanted to pass the exams, she noted down the words she did not understand and looked for the translation at home. She claims to have learned "much more formal vocabulary words" and mentions "*claim*", "*suggest*", "*caution*", "*quotation*" and "*currency*" as examples. According to this participant, the vocabulary acquired would facilitate her inclusion in the job market, as improving English proficiency was her main motivation for enrolling in English- mediated educational programs.

Participant 1, a student with a low initial proficiency level, claimed that she was confused at the beginning of the first semester because her teachers had different "writing styles". In high school, she was only exposed to the British variety of English, and her professors at university used the American variety as well. She provides the example *theatre* and *theater* and the verbs *learned* and *learnt*. According to this participant, she used to limit her interactions in the classrooms and on the virtual platform because she did not know which variety she had to use in certain situations. At the end of the semester, she claims to have understood that she can use whichever she prefers by interacting with two Erasmus students in the classroom, who came from England and Italy and were enrolled in the same EMI program.

Interestingly, four of the participants revealed some teaching strategies that facilitated their learning process. Participant 2, for instance, explains that one of her professors created a low-stress environment for English language performance by incorporating cooperative learning in the classroom. She claims

that her professor required them to discuss a piece of news in peer-groups of three or four. Thus, students engaged in meaningful discussion and promoted English in a large amount of interactions with their peers. In a similar vein, participant 6 explains that, in order to promote teamwork, two of his professors let students revise and edit a peer's project before uploading the final draft to the virtual platform. The student explains that they were also encouraged to choose their own reading materials (e.g.: news, research papers) in order to summarize the main findings and discuss them in class. According to this participant:

"We worked in the...ehm... ehm...online and correct each other. One person in my group knew a lot of writing, I did the grammar revision...for instance when you look the first draft and the last one you can see the improvement because... because we are a team."

Participants 7 and 8, however, expressed that they did not learn any English over the course of the EMI experience. Despite enrolling in the EMI programme in order to have more job opportunities at both international and national level because of the prestige of EMI, these two participants felt disappointed with the educational program. Participant 7, for instance, a Spanish student who showed no gains in the FA of written texts, explained that she had a high proficiency level and that her professors' level was very poor. Thus, she claimed that the EMI experience was not satisfactory for her because she felt she could not improve her communicative skills. According to this participant, she felt ashamed to correct her own professors when they made grammar mistakes or used inappropriate expressions, such as *"give me five minutes more"*. Conversely, participant 8 claimed that he did not have a high proficiency level, and the EMI lessons were very difficult for him. According to this participant, *"Teachers did not help me with English...ehm...I feel lost"*. When asked about the outcomes (final marks) he lamented that language was an impediment to passing some of the exams. As a consequence, he regretted having enrolled in the EMI program.

To sum up, most of the participants reported being aware of their written pragmatic learning, and the reasons for either learning or not making progress. Taking into consideration these learners' perspectives, we may hypothesize that they have acquired knowledge of written FA implicitly (in the case of participant 4, a gainer), or that they have indeed not learned anything over the academic year (in the case of participants 7 and 8, non-gainers). The main factor that enhances learning seems to be frequent exposure to written texts and peer-review practices. In contrast, some limitations of pragmatic development are the level of proficiency (either low or high) and motivational factors, such as autonomous learning. Additionally, the qualitative report elicited some factors for further analysis such as teaching strategies and teachers' proficiency level in the EMI context.

6.3. Discussion of findings

Research question 1 examined whether EMI affects the development of learners' pragmatic competence in terms of written production. Previous research in tertiary education has shown that EMI seems to promote students' pragmatic competence (Taguchi, 2012; Taguchi et al., 2015) and that increased amounts of EMI promote students' pragmatic competence to a greater extent (Martí-Arnándiz, 2008; Martínez-Flor & Usó-Juan, 2006; Zhang & Yang, 2012). Taking into consideration previous research, hypothesis 1 stated that there would be an increase in learners' pragmatic competence after the EMI experience. Moreover, the study above examined whether learners showed greater gains in coherence, cohesion, task requirements, comprehensibility, and content dimensions. Secondly, hypothesis 2 investigated whether gains in FA were different across groups with different intensities of EMI.

Results from the quantitative analysis showed that: 1) students improve their FA during an EMI academic year; 2) they experience more pragmatic gains in the first semester than in the second; 3) they succeed in all dimensions, but show

less pragmatic gains in content than in the rest of the dimensions considered; and 4) gains in FA are different across groups with different intensities of EMI. Additionally, these quantitative findings were complemented with learners' perspectives about the EMI experience and the reasons behind their pragmatic learning.

As previously mentioned, the first hypothesis of the study was supported, since results showed significant differences in learners' FA during the EMI experience. Kuiken and Vedder (2016) pointed out the need to test the scales with different participants, different types of tasks and languages other than Dutch and Italian. The current study directly addresses this research gap, and supports previous findings about the validity of assessing learners' FA (e.g., Bridgeman et al., 2012; Sato, 2012; Revesz et al., 2016). Additionally, it complements existing research on pragmatic learning in the university context (Martí-Arnándiz, 2008; Martínez-Flor & Usó-Juan, 2006; Taguchi, 2012; Taguchi et al., 2015). In this respect, this study accounts for pragmatic gains rather than pragmatic knowledge. Regarding the process of pragmatic acquisition, in the present study all dimensions seem to develop to a similar extent, although students showed slightly poorer gains in content.

In an attempt to provide an explanation as to why the content dimension presents more difficulties than any other FA dimension, the definition of English-mediated education needs to be considered. As stated in Chapter 2, EMI in HE refers to teaching university courses through the medium of English. However, although EMI may facilitate incidental learning for dimensions such as coherence, cohesion and task requirements, content performance implies students' literacy. To determine content performance, as for the rest of the FA dimensions, students wrote a motivation letter in order to carry out an internship in a given company. In order to achieve a high score on this dimension, participants needed to provide an adequate and relevant number of information units together with consistent ideas. Thus, knowledge of which arguments are more accurate to submit in a motivation letter is required. For instance, stating why they had opted to apply

for a specific company, reflecting personal approaches as much as possible and mentioning their educational or professional accomplishments were key issues in order to meet the requirements of this dimension. In this respect, we need to consider that the students' written assignments were aimed at a single reader - the teacher- and they were produced specifically to obtain a grade in secondary education. The grade was mainly conditioned by the complexity of grammatical structures; that is, the form of the texts was valued over the meaning students were trying to convey. This tendency to impress the reader by means of language command may explain why the three raters in the present study observed a tendency among the participants to overuse some linguistic structures, such as passives, modal verbs, conditionals and the perfect indicative, to enrich their writings. In a similar vein, although there was a consensus among the raters that the content dimension had improved in the delayed post-task version, it was concluded that this improvement was due to applying knowledge of the content-related vocabulary of students' field of expertise. In other words, the EMI experience seems to help students in acquiring specific content knowledge, but participants' critical thinking was only enhanced to a certain extent, since more consistent ideas were not observed throughout the academic year. These results are in line with Salaberri and Sánchez (2015), who highlight the need to incorporate new methodologies that help EMI students integrate their writing abilities with the content of the courses.

Indeed, without strategies to foster content learning, the performance of content may be limited. This may explain the slightly poor performance in this dimension after an EMI academic year. The two additional raters attributed this little improvement to the low level of English proficiency. However, students' progress in English at different rates depends on a number of variables, such as their literacy skills in their native language. The problems that learners may encounter in written communication experiences are twofold: (1) they know the message to be conveyed, but they do not know "how" to express it because of their English level, or (2) they are proficient users, but they do not know "what" to

convey. It is possible that a number of the participants did not obtain a high score on content and relied on their knowledge of grammatical structures and limited new vocabulary to express their ideas because they had difficulties conveying the message even in their L1. Taking this into consideration, we suggest that Bloom's (1956) taxonomy of Educational Objectives for HE should be reconsidered in the EMI context, since two objectives are not met: (1) applying information in new situations, and (2) creating and producing new or original work. With this in mind, research on both content teaching and the effect of students' L1 literacy skills on L2 writing seems to be necessary in order to understand how writing skills develop in the EMI context.

Results related to the first hypothesis also showed that learners experienced significant gains in the rest of the FA dimensions; that is, coherence, cohesion, task requirements, and comprehensibility. Despite the fact that there are no previous studies examining FA in the EMI context, results from the present study echo Taguchi et al.'s (2015) findings on the speech act of requesting. In an investigation of EMI students, these authors found that incidental learning of pragmatic forms occurred through instruction. Our findings are in line with Taguchi et al. (2015) in that incidental learning occurred in our EMI contexts without explicit instruction on the dimensions considered in the analysis of FA.

Regarding task requirements, the positive gains observed may be justified by the wide range of assignment types that students are asked to produce during their academic year at university. Some assignments might require students to write laboratory or practical reports, analyses, summaries, self-learning diaries, and even more extended written creations such as research proposals or literature reviews. In this respect, learners are encouraged to submit assignments in different formats and according to different word limits. In addition to this, they are expected to perform oral presentations, which are assessment items they did not undertake during secondary education. As a result of these changes from secondary to tertiary education, learners become familiarized with different tasks and sub-tasks and their corresponding requirements. In the present study,

the delayed post-test was performed at the end of the academic year, which implies that learners had already taken 10 different subjects and had been subjected to the associated evaluations. Indeed, all students had performed oral presentations and different types of assignments by the end of the academic year 2016-2017. At the beginning of the semester, learners reported low scores for task requirements, however, they seem to have gained knowledge in this dimension during the year, as is evident in their reported scores in the post-test and delayed post-test versions. Based on these findings, we propose the tentative hypothesis that students enrolled in EMI programs in HE will develop pragmatic awareness regarding task requirements during an academic year, or even during a shorter period such as a semester.

Three other FA dimensions characterize the pragmatic development observed in the present study: coherence, cohesion and comprehensibility. Firstly, changes in the performance of written texts seem to be influenced by exposure to the language. In the case of EMI contexts, students are exposed to oral and written English on a daily basis. However, although oral exposure seems to be as important as written communication, qualitative findings revealed a higher influence of written source texts in the development of this dimension. More specifically, students reflected on the importance of three source texts in producing more coherent and cohesive written creations: (1) course materials, (2) the virtual platform, which include forums, debates and open spaces for discussion, and (3) email communication. In addition to this, cooperative learning and peer-editing activities were also reported to be beneficial for students' pragmatic development. As explained in section 6.2, students claimed that they learned from reading their partners' projects, and when working collaboratively they could see the improvement from the very first draft to the final version. As a result of these practices, the motivation letters were more comprehensible at the end of the academic year. Thus, the EMI context may be beneficial for improving the performance of written texts, given that students have recurrent opportunities to encounter written communication in daily situations.

The findings related to H1 also indicate that the reported pragmatic development was higher in the first semester. Indeed, results on the analysis of gains in learners' FA revealed that students seemed to be undergoing a process of academic adaptation. In addition, students may have also experienced the need to reconstruct and renegotiate their identities to fit into an EMI environment, which implies extra academic stress (Huizhu, 2012). Increases in the performance of learners' FA may be explained by the fact that they made a huge effort in order to cope with their academic difficulties and linguistic challenges. In other words, they were so concerned about meeting the EMI academic goals and requirements of the first semester that they put a lot of energy into independent efforts to achieve good academic performance. Accordingly, the transition and adaptation process may also explain why learners experience less pragmatic development in the second semester. Once students had made the necessary adjustments to adapt to the new setting (Gu, 2009), they did not feel great amounts of stress and academic pressure because they were already familiar with the EMI context and assessment practices.

In addition, a qualitative analysis on students' perspectives and awareness of self-improvement supported our quantitative results, since students reported being aware of their increase in pragmatic performance or lack thereof. Additionally, the learners' comments revealed some of their views on their pragmatic learning. On the one hand, students attributed their improvement to the exposure to English. A second factor that fostered pragmatic development was the application of specific teaching strategies in order to promote communication among students (e.g.: participant 6). In addition, students who were aware of their pragmatic improvement claimed that having a low-stress atmosphere in some of the courses enhanced their speaking fluency and ability to communicate in English (e.g.: participant 2). In contrast, participants who did not show significant gains in FA, and were aware of that fact, blamed it on the low level of English proficiency of both the teachers and the students themselves (e.g.: participants 7 and 8). Students' perspectives on the reasons for a lack of pragmatic

development reveal a necessity to explore the negative impact of designing EMI programs without linguistic requirements. Since EMI programs assume students and teaching staff have a good command of the language (Coyle et al., 2010), a potential solution to alleviate language and educational inequalities among EMI students and teachers would be to test linguistic proficiency.

In addition to this, qualitative reports revealed a concern for future employability. In EMI programs, students study the field-specific content of their professions while presumably acquiring the language needed for graduate employability. In this regard, students argued that the main motivation to enroll in EMI programs was that they facilitate future inclusion in the labor market. For this reason, more research is encouraged on analyzing recruitment selection processes to explore whether EMI programs lead to higher employability.

Moving on to H2, which stated that learners' pragmatic performance would be different across groups, the present analysis revealed an influence of intensity of exposure on the reported gains in FA. In other words, students showed different pragmatic developmental paths across groups. More specifically, students in the 100% group showed significantly greater gains in all dimensions than students in the 75% and 50% groups.

One possible explanation for our findings related to H2 is that intensity of EMI may enhance pragmatic learning. In the present study, the 100% group, which completed the whole academic year in English, outperformed the other groups in all the dimensions considered. Their performance was significantly different from students in the 50% group, who experienced great pragmatic gains, but did not experience a significant improvement. In this respect, to the best of our knowledge, only one investigation has examined pragmatic learning across groups with different intensities of EMI (Ament et al., 2016). In this study, Ament et al. (2016) observed that the immersion group produced significantly more PMs, supporting the claim by Muñoz (2012) that higher intensity immersion programs lead to gains in L2.

Some reasons as to why the 50% group did not experience a significant

improvement could be that these participants may have reached a plateau. That is, the students may feel that they have reached a sufficient level of proficiency in order to meet the academic requirements of the five EMI courses they take during the academic year, thus giving them little incentive to improve their linguistic skills (Ament & Pérez-Vidal, 2015). As Wilkinson (2004, p. 453) points out, “language is a tool”, therefore once the students reach the minimum they need, “there is little incentive to enhance skills”. On the contrary, the 100% group took the entire year through EMI, which implied putting in much more effort in order to succeed in getting through five additional courses than the 50% EMI group.

The second factor that may have either promoted or inhibited pragmatic gains in the EMI groups is the question of appropriate input. As we saw earlier in section 3.2, research has shown that the ability to teach in English is influenced by language proficiency, and Freeman et al. (2015) have suggested a construct to rethink the role of teachers’ proficiency across instructional settings such as the EMI context. In this respect, the participants’ development of pragmatic competence may have been influenced by the input provided by the EMI professors, since they are lecturing in their L2 and are not language specialists. As revealed in the interviews, students’ were aware of the positive effects of teaching strategies, such as peer-editing or teamwork, on their linguistic improvement during the academic year. In this respect, more research is needed in order to explore the role of teaching strategies in fostering interaction in the EMI classroom. As Sercu (2004, p. 548) concludes:

If lecturers cannot provide appropriate language input, if students are not provided with adequate opportunities for interaction in the foreign language, if students do not already possess a command of the language that allows them to benefit from English-medium instruction, the hoped for enhancement of students language skills may remain forthcoming.

6.4. Chapter summary

In summary, RQ1 addressed whether EMI affected learners' pragmatic development in terms of written production, specifically FA. Findings from the study presented in that chapter show that learners improve their pragmatic performance during an academic year, and thus H1 was confirmed. Hypothesis 2 was also confirmed in the study, since significant differences in FA were observed across groups.

In the present study, we are interested in how the development of FA is influenced by learners' initial level of English proficiency. This aspect is explored in next chapter, which relates to RQ2.

Chapter 7.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION RELATED TO RESEARCH QUESTION 2

After reviewing the pragmatic development experienced by learners in the present study, chapter 7 presents results related to the effect of English proficiency. Earlier studies have reported that English proficiency seems to be a significant predictor of academic achievement in EMI settings (Butler & Castellon-Wellington, 2000; Kang, 2005; Kym & Hyum, 2014; Vidanapathirana & Gamini, 2009). However, some other studies suggest that language proficiency is not considered to play a key role in students' success in EMI classes (Byun et al., 2011; Chen, 2014; Clapham, 1996; Joe, 2010). To the best of our knowledge, no study has explored the effect of English proficiency on pragmatic development in EMI students at the university level. To address this concern and contribute to this body of literature, chapter 7 presents the results of this analysis, which draws from the second research question of the study and its corresponding hypothesis, formulated as follows:

RQ2: does the initial level of proficiency in English influence pragmatic performance in EMI students?

- H3: Proficiency level in English will make a difference in EMI learners' performance (Butler & Castellon-Wellington, 2000; Kang, 2005; Vidanapathirana & Gamini, 2009)
- H4: Level of proficiency in English will not influence performance over time in EMI students (Chen, 2014).

RQ2, together with H3, and H4 are addressed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Section 7.1 includes quantitative analysis of English proficiency and pragmatic performance and development, which was conducted with data from the written motivation letters and the QPT. Section 7.2 presents

qualitative information in order to provide reasons behind the learners' trajectories.

7.1. Quantitative results

Firstly, a descriptive analysis of pragmatic gains regarding learners' level of English proficiency is shown in Table 21²⁰. For this analysis, the variable of English proficiency was coded into 5 categories according to the scores obtained in the QPT: A1 (0-15 points), A2 (16-23 points), B1 (24-30 points), B2 (31-40) and C1 (more than 40). Taking into consideration that two of these categories, A2 ($n=8$; 7.80%) and C1 ($n=3$; 2.90%) were sparsely represented and that categories B1 and B2 accounted for almost 90% of the total sample, only these two categories were considered. Accordingly, the sample consisted of 91 students, divided into the B1 group ($n=41$) and the B2 group ($n=50$). In order to assess the equality of variances, Levene's test was used for the six variables. Homoscedasticity ($p > .05$) was verified for all dimensions at all points in time, accepting thus the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal throughout all the groups (B1 and B2). In addition to this, variation in all dimensions was moderate, as indicated by the low standard deviations.

²⁰ Visual information from Table 21 is displayed in Appendix J.

Table 21. Descriptive statistics of FA performance and participants' English proficiency

		English Proficiency	Mean	SD	n
Coherence	T1	B1	2.12	0.872	41
		B2	2.86	1.229	50
	T2	B1	3.68	0.986	41
		B2	3.96	1.087	50
	T3	B1	4.39	0.737	41
		B2	4.48	0.762	50
Cohesion	T1	B1	1.80	1.123	41
		B2	2.50	1.359	50
	T2	B1	3.34	1.109	41
		B2	3.64	1.045	50
	T3	B1	4.17	0.892	41
		B2	4.30	0.789	50
Task requirements	T1	B1	1.78	1.351	41
		B2	3.08	1.455	50
	T2	B1	4.07	1.034	41
		B2	4.10	1.216	50
	T3	B1	4.44	0.896	41
		B2	4.36	1.156	50
Comprehensibility	T1	B1	2.51	1.003	41
		B2	3.14	1.050	50
	T2	B1	3.80	0.872	41
		B2	4.04	0.968	50
	T3	B1	4.37	0.799	41
		B2	4.52	0.677	50
Content	T1	B1	1.37	0.915	41
		B2	1.98	0.958	50
	T2	B1	2.05	1.071	41
		B2	2.54	0.973	50
	T3	B1	2.63	1.019	41
		B2	3.04	0.968	50
Overall performance (sum)	T1	B1	9.59	4.074	41
		B2	13.56	5.151	50
	T2	B1	16.95	3.801	41
		B2	18.28	4.228	50
	T3	B1	20.00	3.317	41
		B2	20.70	2.636	50

7.1.1. Pragmatic performance and English proficiency in EMI students

This section addresses H3, which predicted that proficiency level in English would influence learners' performance. Results of the quantitative analysis are presented using a top-down approach, moving from the most general information to the most specific findings. Hence, whether students performed better regarding their proficiency level will be addressed first.

To determine the differences in learners' performance means, a series of unpaired-samples t-tests were conducted for each dimension and for overall FA. Moreover, effect sizes were calculated using Cohen's *d*. Table 22 shows the performance means, standard deviations, and differences for each of the five dimensions.

Table 22. B1 and B2 pre-test means and differences in FA

	B1			B2			Difference	Difference (%)	t
	n	M	SD	n	M	SD			
Coherence	41	2.12	0.872	50	2.86	1.229	0.738	14.76	-3.234*
Cohesion	41	1.80	1.123	50	2.50	1.359	0.695	13.9	-2.622*
Task requirements	41	1.78	1.351	50	3.08	1.455	1.3	26	-4.377**
Comprehensibility	41	2.51	1.003	50	3.14	1.050	0.628	12.56	-2.895*
Content	41	1.37	0.915	50	1.98	0.958	0.614	12.28	-3.104*
Overall FA (sum)	41	9.59	4.074	50	13.56	5.151	3.975	15.9	-4.016**

Note: the values for the difference column are the changes in performance between B1 and B2 groups.

* $p < .005$, ** $p < .001$ (unpaired-samples T-test)

The inferential statistics revealed that the difference in performance between B1 and B2 groups was statistically significant in favor of the B2 group in all dimensions: coherence [$t(91) = -3.234$, $p < .005$, $d = -0.339$], for cohesion [$t(91) = -2.622$, $p < .005$, $d = -0.274$], for task requirements [$t(91) = -4.377$, $p < .001$, $d = -0.458$], for comprehensibility [$t(91) = -2.895$, $p < .005$, $d = -0.303$], for content

[$t(91) = -3.104, p < .005, d = -0.325$], and for overall FA [$t(91) = -4.016, p < .001, d = -0.421$]. These results suggest that the level of English proficiency influences pragmatic performance in EMI students.

In addition to this, a test of correlation between learners' performance and proficiency level was carried out. Results indicate positive correlations between proficiency and coherence [$r(91) = .324, p = .002$], cohesion [$r(91) = .268, p = .010$], task requirements [$r(91) = .421, p = .000$], comprehensibility [$r(91) = .293, p = .005$], content [$r(91) = .313, p = .003$], and overall FA performance [$r(91) = .392, p = .000$]. In other words, learners who had a higher level of proficiency (B2) tended to perform better in all the dimensions considered, and vice versa.

Figure 32 illustrates the results from Table 22 on the comparison between learners' performance and their English proficiency.

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Figure 32. Average pre-test scores for FA dimensions

In Figure 32, we can observe that both groups, B1 and B2, show higher comprehensibility scores respectively ($M = 2.51$; $SD = 1.003$, and $M = 3.14$; $SD = 1.050$). On the other hand, both groups scored the lowest in the content dimension ($M = 1.37$; $SD = 0.915$, and $M = 1.98$; $SD = 0.958$). These results indicate that proficiency particularly enhances the performance of written comprehensible texts, while it does not seem to enhance content performance to such a great extent.

To sum up, the results presented above support H1 of the study, which predicted differences in learners' pragmatic performance in accordance with their level of English proficiency. A question that arises from the reported pragmatic performance is whether these differences among proficiency groups were maintained over time. That is to say, whether both groups of students performed higher in the comprehensibility dimension at the end of the academic year. In order to gain more insights, a quantitative analysis of the students' pragmatic performance over one academic year and their English proficiency is presented in the next section.

7.1.2. Pragmatic performance over time and English proficiency in EMI students

This section addresses H4 of the study, which predicted that proficiency level would not influence learners' pragmatic performance over time in EMI contexts. In order to determine post-test and delayed post-test pragmatic performance, unpaired-samples t-tests were conducted for each of the dimensions and for overall FA. The effect size was calculated using Cohen's d . As results obtained in T1 were addressed in the previous section, Table 23 displays post-test means, standard deviations and differences for each of the five aspects and overall FA.

Table 23. B1 and B2 post-test means and differences in FA

	B1			B2			Difference	Difference (%)	t
	n	M	SD	n	M	SD			
Coherence	41	3.68	0.986	50	3.96	1.087	0.277	5.54	-1.261
Cohesion	41	3.34	1.109	50	3.64	1.045	0.299	5.98	-1.319
Task requirements	41	4.07	1.034	50	4.10	1.216	0.027	0.54	-0.112
Comprehensibility	41	3.80	0.872	50	4.04	0.986	0.235	4.7	-1.205
Content	41	2.05	1.071	50	2.54	0.973	0.491	9.82	-2.289*
Overall FA (sum)	41	16.95	3.801	50	18.28	4.228	1.329	5.316	-1.560

Note: the values for the difference column are the changes in performance between B1 and B2 groups.

* $p < .05$ (unpaired-samples T-test)

The inferential statistical analysis revealed that the difference in performance between B1 and B2 groups was statistically significant in favor of the B2 group in the content dimension [$t(91) = -2.289$, $p < .05$, $d = -0.239$]. Following the analysis performed in section 7.1.1, a correlation test between learners' performance and proficiency level was carried out. Results indicate positive correlations between proficiency and content [$r(91) = .236$, $p = .024$], suggesting that more proficient learners performed better in the content dimension in T2, and vice versa.

Figure 33 illustrates results from Table 23 on the effect of English proficiency on learners' pragmatic performance in T2.

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COHERENCE

COHESION

TASK REQUIREMENTS

COMPREHENSIBILITY

CONTENT

OVERALL FA

Figure 33. Average post-test scores for FA dimensions

As can be observed, the B2 group obtained the highest means in all dimensions, which indicates that more proficient students performed better in T2. Regarding the highest and lowest scores, B1 and B2 students scored the highest in the dimension of task requirements ($M = 4.07$; $SD = 1.034$, and $M = 4.10$; $SD = 1.216$). As in the first performance, both groups scored the lowest in the content dimension ($M = 2.05$; $SD = 1.071$, and $M = 2.54$; $SD = 0.973$).

Finally, Table 24 displays differences between learners' delayed post-test performance, standard deviations and critical values.

Table 24. B1 and B2 delayed post-test means and differences in FA

	B1			B2			Difference	Difference (%)	t
	n	M	SD	n	M	SD			
Coherence	41	4.39	0.737	50	4.48	0.762	0.90	18	-0.567
Cohesion	41	4.17	0.892	50	4.30	0.789	0.129	2.58	-0.733
Task requirements	41	4.44	0.896	50	4.36	1.156	0.079	1.58	0.358
Comprehensibility	41	4.37	0.799	50	4.52	0.677	0.154	3.08	-0.996
Content	41	2.63	1.019	50	3.04	0.968	0.406	8.12	-1.944
Overall FA (sum)	41	20.00	3.317	50	20.70	2.636	0.700	14	-1.122

Note: the values for the difference column are the changes in performance between B1 and B2 groups. * $p < .05$ (unpaired-samples T-test)

The inferential statistical analysis showed that performance was not statistically significant for any group in any dimension: coherence [$t(91) = -0.567$, $p > .05$, $d = -0.05$], cohesion [$t(91) = -0.733$, $p > .05$, $d = -0.07$], task requirements [$t(91) = 0.358$, $p > .05$, $d = 0.03$], comprehensibility [$t(91) = -0.996$, $p > .05$, $d = -0.10$], content [$t(91) = -1.944$, $p > .05$, $d = -0.20$], and overall FA [$t(91) = -1.122$, $p > .05$, $d = -0.11$]. Accordingly, no correlational effects were found between FA and English proficiency at this time (T3). These results seem to suggest that the level of English proficiency did not influence learners' pragmatic performance at the

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end of the academic year. In other words, the influence of English proficiency on learners' pragmatic performance was not maintained over time.

Figure 34 illustrates the results from Table 24 on the effect of English proficiency on learners' pragmatic performance at T3.

Figure 34. Average delayed post-test scores for FA dimensions

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In order to have a complete picture on the effect of proficiency on learners' performance over the academic year, Figure 35 and Figure 36 display changes in FA by proficiency group over time.

Figure 35. Learners' pragmatic performance over time by proficiency group.

In Figure 35, it can be observed that performance increased in all dimensions from T1 to T3 in both groups. Although the scores obtained in T3 were higher than those obtained in T1 and T2, significant differences were only found at the beginning of the academic year (T1). However, we can observe a tendency for more proficient students (B2 group) to score higher throughout the year. This tendency is also observed in Figure 36, which displays information about the learners' overall performance by proficiency group in T1, T2 and T3.

Figure 36. Learners' overall performance over time by proficiency group.

In conclusion, the results presented above partially support H2 of the study, which predicted that English proficiency would not influence learners' pragmatic performance over time. Even though English proficiency could be said to be a predictor of pragmatic development, the B2 group only performed significantly differently compared to the B1 group in terms of coherence, cohesion, task requirements, comprehensibility, content and overall FA at the beginning of the semester. Thus, the overall results seem to show that pragmatic development took place regardless of the learners' proficiency level.

The next section provides qualitative insights into the results reported in sections 7.1.1 and 7.1.2, and also presents results relating to learners' perceptions on their proficiency level.

7.2. Qualitative results

English language proficiency is the individual difference that has attracted the most attention in ILP (see section 3.2). Section 7.1 of this chapter has presented the quantitative analysis of English proficiency level at the group level. Results show that pragmatic performance by 91 EMI students is influenced by proficiency level at the beginning of the semester (T1). Moreover, findings point out that there is a tendency of more proficient learners to perform better throughout the academic year. With the above in mind, this section addresses the effect of proficiency level following a case-study research design, by presenting individual performance trajectories. More specifically, section 7.2.1 includes the learners' perspectives on their English ability and actual performance.

In order to reach a complete understanding on the role of self-perceived English ability on learners' pragmatic performance, a modified version of the Can-do Scale (Clark, 1981) was used in order to establish a coding scheme. The Can-do Scale was chosen because it has an especially high level of face validity and is representative of the types of language-use tasks learners would be expected to encounter in real-life situations (Clark, 1981). Moreover, it involves both cognitive and moral components. As pointed out by Heidt (1979), self-evaluation tests have an important advantage over regular proficiency tests in that they involve the ability of the learner to make an adequate judgement of knowledge and skills (cognitive) and also the willingness to be honest, independent of the outcome (moral). Clark's Can-do scales, however, have been criticised because they have seldom been tested in empirical investigations other than comparisons with proficiency tests and academic achievement. The present study addresses this concern by exploring whether the different variables proposed by the author explain pragmatic performance and English ability.

Clark's Can-do scales (1981) have also been criticised because they included many variables and they were time-consuming for participants. In the current analysis, Kitano's (2001) version²¹ was used because it includes 15 items. However, it has

²¹ The reliability of the scale was high (Cronbach's alpha = .92, N = 212).

been slightly modified for research purposes, such as replacing the term “Japanese language” with “English language”, since Kitano’s version was originally designed to measure self-perceived Japanese language ability in the United States. A similar adaptation was previously performed by Takahashi (2009).

Kitano (2001) distinguished 15 tasks learners would encounter in real situations. Among them, fourteen are considered in the present analysis as determiners of actual ability, since they depend on the individual learner. The one that has not been considered—I can say the days of the week in English—is not of assistance, since all participants had previously learnt the days of the week in primary and secondary education and would therefore have reported to be confident in this specific item. Thus, the 8 informants were provided with 14 items to which they had to respond by rating on a three-point Likert scale how difficult each situation would be language-wise for them. Students’ endorsement of “quite easily” was equated with a numerical value of 3, “with some difficulty” with a value of 2, and “with great difficulty” with a value of 1. Accordingly, the possible scores on the scale ranged from 14 to 42, and a higher score on the scale indicated a higher level of self-perception of English ability. The Can-do scale was completed by the 8 informants at T1 and T3. Table 25 presents the Can-do scale adopted in this study.

Table 25. Can-do-scale situations performed by 8 informants

Situation
1 I can give the current date (month, day, year) in English.
2 I can order a simple meal in a restaurant in English.
3 I can ask for directions on the street in English.
4 I can buy clothes in a department store in English.
5 I can introduce myself in social situations, and use appropriate greetings and leave-taking expressions in English.
6 I can talk about my favorite hobby at some length in English.
7 I can describe my present job, studies, or other major life activities in English.
8 I can explain what I did last weekend at some length in English.
9 I can explain what I plan to be doing 5 years from now at some length in English.
10 I can sustain everyday conversation in very polite style in English with a person much older than I am.
11 I can sustain everyday conversation in casual style English with my native-English-speaking friend.
12 I can describe the educational system of my own country in some detail in English.
13 I can state and support with reasons my position on a conversational topic (for example, cigarette smoking) in English
14 I can describe in English the role played by Japanese business corporations in the world market.

7.2.1. English proficiency level and performance: learners' perspectives

This section presents a qualitative analysis that complements the quantitative results related to H3 and H4. An analysis of the participants' comments in the interviews allowed for the eliciting of the difficulties students faced during the EMI experiences as well as aspects that enhanced their progress. Firstly, some information about the 8 informants is presented. Table 26 includes descriptive data about their pragmatic performance and proficiency level at T1 and T3²².

²² Considering the limited availability of time, it was considered that asking all participants to complete the QPT at the end of the academic year would have been counter-productive. To make up for this limitation, the 8 informants in the case-study were asked to do the test in order to determine whether there was a noticeable improvement.

Table 26. Pragmatic performance and English proficiency by 8 informants

Participant	Proficiency level T1	Proficiency level T3	Pre-test overall FA scores	Post-test overall FA scores	Delayed post-test overall FA scores	Overall gains
1	A2	B1	9	16	16	77.8
2	B2	B2	20	23	23	15
3	B1	B2	13	14	18	38.4
4	B1	B2	9	13	17	88.9
5	B1	B1	17	24	24	41.17
6	B2	B2	14	18	18	28.75
7	B2	B2	24	24	24	0
8	B2	B2	20	20	16	-20
Average			11.61	17.51	20.16	77.51

As shown in Table 26, the case studies constitute a varied sample in terms of proficiency level and pragmatic performance. Regarding pre-test overall scores, the highest scores are obtained by participants 2, 7 and 8, who were at the B2 level at the beginning of the academic year. Accordingly, the lowest scores are obtained by participants 1 and 4, who had an A2 and B1 level, respectively. However, the influence of proficiency level on learners' pragmatic performance is not observed at T3. In the delayed post-test, it can be observed that the highest score, 24, is obtained by participants 5 and 7, who have different proficiency levels at the end of the academic year. In the same vein, participants 1 and 8 scored the lowest, one of them being at a lower-proficiency level (B1) and the other one at a higher-proficiency level (B2). As can be observed, the results are inconclusive, since high scores are obtained by both proficiency levels, presenting mixed results

on the influence of proficiency (measured by the QPT) on pragmatic performance at the individual level.

In what follows, a descriptive analysis on learners' perceived English ability/proficiency is reported. As mentioned above, the Can-do-scale was used to explore the relationship between the participants' self-perception of TL ability and their actual performance.

Table 27 displays information on the participants' overall pre-test and delayed post-test scores.

Table 27. Learners' pre-test and delayed post-test scores in the Can-do-scale

Participant	Pre-test Can-do-scale	Delayed Post-test Can-do-scale
1	15	19
2	23	28
3	16	20
4	14	20
5	17	27
6	19	25
7	32	32
8	30	18
Average	20.75	23.63

Table 27 shows that 6 of the participants increased their self-perceived language ability, while for 1 this ability remained the same and for 1 other it decreased. There are only two informants that increased their self-perception to a similar extent: participants 2 and 7 obtained the highest scores in the

Can-do-scale in the pre-test and delayed post-test. The rest of the informants made progress from the pre-test to the delayed post-test, whereas participant 8 decreased self-perception to a great extent (from 30 to 18). However, interesting findings were obtained when comparing participants' self-perception and pragmatic performance. Table 28 includes the participants' scores in both pragmatic performance and Can-do-scale, with the aim of displaying preliminary findings on whether the two aspects develop correspondingly.

Table 28. Pragmatic and Can-do-scale scores by 8 participants

Participant	Pre-test Can-do-scale	Pre-test overall FA	Delayed post-test Can-do-scale	Delayed post-test overall FA
1	LOWEST	LOWEST	LOWEST	LOWEST
2	HIGHEST	HIGHEST	HIGHEST	HIGHEST
3	LOW	LOW	HIGH	HIGH
4	LOWEST	LOWEST	HIGH	HIGH
5	LOW	LOW	HIGHEST	HIGHEST
6	LOW	LOW	HIGH	HIGH
7	HIGHEST	HIGHEST	HIGHEST	HIGHEST
8	HIGHEST	HIGHEST	LOWEST	LOWEST

As shown in Table 28, results reveal a relationship between pragmatic performance and scores on the Can-do-scale at T1 and T3, since the two variables move in tandem. When a student obtained a low score in written performance, a low score was also reported in self-perceived ability and vice versa. Accordingly, when participants achieve a successful pragmatic performance, high levels of self-perception of English proficiency were indicated on the scale. Hence, these

preliminary findings suggest that a learner whose perceived ability is high may be experiencing high levels of pragmatic performance. On the contrary, learners whose self-perception of English ability was lower tended to show poor pragmatic performance in the written motivation letter. In fact, these results seem to suggest that learners' written pragmatic performance is influenced by self-perceived English ability and not actual proficiency (QPT), and that self-perceived ability reflects actual ability. Figure 37 displays a visual representation of such findings.

Figure 37. Representation of English proficiency and pragmatic performance over the academic year

The interviews conducted also reveal interesting insights into learners' individual trajectories. In fact, the role of self-perception of English ability was the first sign observed in the case of participants 1 and 2. Participant 1 explained that at the beginning of the semester she felt that her English proficiency (A2) was not good enough to be enrolled in EMI lessons and that she was afraid that her English level would impede her from achieving the expected academic performance. However, by the end of the semester, she reported an improvement

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in her English ability, especially in writing and reading. She considered herself a high-proficient learner thanks to EMI, and she was even considering taking the Cambridge English exam in order to obtain the B1 certificate. These reflections coincide with the results obtained in the qualitative analysis on her performance and self-perception of English ability: in the pre-test she scored very low in the Can-do-scale (14 points out of 42) and performed very badly in the pragmatic task, while, in the delayed post-test, she increased this performance and indicated a higher level of self-perceived ability.

According to this participant:

“At the beginning of the year I was lost and did really bad exams because of my English level, but now I can say that my results have improved and my English too.”

Similarly, participant 2 showed a better performance in both aspects at the end of the academic year. According to her, she learned a lot during the EMI experience although the language was an impediment to academic outcomes. For instance, she reported having failed two term papers because of her English level, one in October and another in December. Hence, she decided to put more emphasis on language in the lessons by trying to interact with her classmates and asking professors to give her more feedback in the assignments. In her words:

“You know, I was not comfortable in the lessons because I made mistakes all the time and I even failed two of my papers because of grammar. So I can say English affected my grades. However, I decided to fight and made an effort so that English was not the problem. When I was in April, I realized that I did better papers and even exams because I felt I improved.”

A second aspect affecting learners' performance was demotivation, as reported by participants 7 and 8. At the beginning of the semester, both informants had a B2 level, a really high level of self-perception of English proficiency, and a successful written pragmatic performance. However, their individual trajectories over the academic year were different. Participant 7 remained the same throughout the year, without gains in pragmatic performance, proficiency level or self-perceived proficiency level, whereas participant 8 experienced a decrease in all of these aspects by the end of the year. In the interview, participant 7 claimed that she was very demotivated with the EMI experience because her expectations were not met. She expected to improve her English skills and to have proficient teachers, but that was not the case. As she explains:

"I knew I had a good level because I have always liked English but I found a really demotivating situation in the EMI classes. For instance, I realized that teachers did not correct my English in the written papers and exams, only focused on content. For this reason, I started to forget about my English and made the basic to pass the subjects. I will not go into the EMI classes next year."

From a different perspective but sharing similar arguments on the effect of English on academic performance, participant 8 reflected on how demotivating and frustrating the EMI experience was for him. In his words:

"I had a problem with my English because I was not good and did not like it. I want to put something in the paper but ...emm... I do not know the words in English. I do not understand the "enunciado"... I cannot continue and write. This is a mistake for me, the EMI class. It's impossible to write all I know in English at the end of the year and exams are most difficult. And I know that I am bad English learner now at the end."

Academic pressure was also a factor reported by participants 3, 4, 5 and 6 by the end of the semester. Participant 3 claimed not to have obtained really good results in the first exams. He considered that going on a SA with an Erasmus grant was his main goal, and he wanted to obtain a high GPA in order to be able to choose a good university the following academic year. For this reason, he made a huge effort in the second semester in order to obtain good results and improve his proficiency and academic performance. In fact, he explains that he improved his English skills by interacting with professors and attending seminars and online modules taught by English teachers. When asked about whether he felt he had improved and the effect that it had on his overall performance, he expressed the following:

“At the beginning I felt bad because I did not understand most things in English. The vocabulary was really hard but I decided to interact in English and read papers. At the beginning I thought I would not cope with it all, but when I emm... passed the exams I realized my English was not bad at all. When English was better in the second semester, my grades improved because I could mean what I wanted to say.”

Self-esteem, usually connected with the students' proficiency, was another variable identified in the interviews. In fact, participant 4 had a low self-concept at the beginning of the semester as regards his English ability. In the interview, he claimed to have changed the self-perception of his English skills thanks to the EMI experience. In fact, he explicitly stated that he learned more when he started to believe in himself. In his words:

“I wasn't a good student in high school and I started university because my parents wanted. They told me that the English class would be better, so I was not motivated. I had a low level. However, I observed that I

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followed the lessons without any problem and started to think that I could learn both themes and language. I decided to believe in myself.”

Finally, participants 5 and 6 reflected on language attitudes, which are considered essential factors influencing language performance. In the interviews conducted at the end of the academic year, these two informants (Catalan speakers) reported to have positive attitudes towards English. For instance, participant 5 believed that EMI had influence his behaviour, such as selecting and reading books, speaking in the classrooms and interacting with English speakers at the university. For him, being enthusiastic in language learning was an essential aspect that influenced his performance. According to this participant, “When I felt low because of my English, I did not think this was a problem but an opportunity to do it better in the next exam and assignment and to learn the most spoken language around the world”. Similarly, participant 6 showed a positive attitude toward the culture of the English-speaking world. He claimed that sometimes his performance was not as expected, but he kept trying and learning from his own mistakes in order to write, speak and understand better. In fact, he claims to have improved his general knowledge and linguistic ability thanks to being passionate about the language and also about self-learning. In fact, when asked about the relationship between English proficiency and performance, he explained that:

“Performance depends on your English level. If you are not good in English, you will not be able to do a good essay or exam because the teacher will not understand you and you will not understand what you have to do. But, well, em... I think it is also about you. I mean, I think that it depends if you are motivated, you have a good day, if you like the language, and if you are good.”

Having ascertained the reasons behind the informants’ individual trajectories, the next section discusses quantitative and qualitative findings.

7.3. Discussion of findings

Research question 2 explored whether proficiency level makes a difference in learners' pragmatic performance. Since previous studies have observed the role of proficiency in performance (Butler & Castellon-Wellington, 2000; Kang, 2005; Vidanapathirana & Gamini, 2009), hypothesis 2 predicted that students with a high level of English proficiency would perform better in the EMI setting. In addition to this, hypothesis 3 stated that level of proficiency would not influence pragmatic performance over time.

A first analysis of the influence of English proficiency was focused on learners' pragmatic performance. In this sense, hypothesis 3 of the study suggested that proficiency level would make a difference in learners' performance. This hypothesis was supported in this study, since results revealed that higher-proficiency learners outperformed lower-proficiency learners. These findings are in line with previous studies reporting that, despite the challenges found in immersing oneself in EMI lessons, English proficiency was a significant predictor of learners' performance (Butler & Castellon-Wellington, 2000; Kang, 2005; Vidanapathirana & Gamini, 2009). Moreover, pragmatic performance was measured in terms of five dimensions: coherence, cohesion, task requirements, content, comprehensibility and overall FA, with findings indicating significant differences for the B2 group in all dimensions.

In what follows, a discussion of the results related to H3 is presented, addressing the impact of learners' English proficiency on pragmatic performance, and pragmatic performance over time in EMI students. Firstly, results revealed that high-proficiency learners performed better in all dimensions of FA. Consequently, findings suggest that English proficiency influences L2 students' overall FA. In this sense, the current study is in line with previous research that points out the effect of proficiency on L2 learners' pragmatic production at discourse level. For instance, Al-Gahtani and Roever (2012) examined sequential organisation of requests in learners of Australian English, who were divided into beginner,

lower- and upper-intermediate, and advanced groups. Pragmatic production was measured by means of three role-play tasks conducted individually and audio-taped. Findings showed that there was a positive proficiency effect on learners' sequential organisation of requests, suggesting that higher proficiency learners had better pragmatic performance at discourse level. However, in terms of sensitivity to the power relationship in target situations, the performance of high proficiency learners was not significantly better than that of lower proficiency learners. Since the present study does not include information about learners' production of specific speech acts, it is difficult to compare our results with those reported by Al-Gahtani and Roever (2012). However, considering their findings, English proficiency seems not to influence intercultural understanding, an issue worth exploring in future research. Intercultural understanding implies sharing the values and behaviour of the TL community, but also seeing things from different perspectives, and hence understanding cultural and social differences.

The results related to H3 reported above also support the assumption that general proficiency is a precondition of pragmatic competence. In other words, L2 pragmatics requires learners to achieve a threshold level of proficiency (for a review, see Bardovi-Harlig, 1999, 2001, 2013; Kasper & Rose, 1999, 2002). English language proficiency is referred to as the ability of an individual to perform in a given language. Accordingly, proficiency tests are norm-referenced and are intended to "measure global language abilities" (Brown, 2005, p. 2). In this regard, a possible explanation for the above-mentioned results is that pragmatic competence was also measured from a global and holistic perspective. The QPT administered in the present study provided information about the learners' knowledge of grammar, semantics, coherence and cohesion, since they needed to complete two different texts with appropriate discourse markers and vocabulary items. The pragmatic-written task was also evaluated from a holistic perspective, since the rubrics we employed aimed at examining learners' pragmatic performance in terms of coherence, cohesion, content and overall comprehensibility. Thus, a possible explanation for the results obtained is that both assessments measured

global English ability. For instance, an accurate use of discourse markers would affect the task requirements dimension. In the same vein, a high-proficiency user with a wide range of vocabulary would obtain a higher score in the content dimension and also the comprehensibility of the text. On the contrary, a lower-proficiency learner with limited knowledge of grammar and vocabulary would not obtain a high score in dimensions such as comprehensibility, content, coherence and cohesion. With this in mind, we propose that there is a need for further exploration of the role of English proficiency in overall pragmatic performance. In other words, if students' proficiency is measured by global abilities, the operationalisation of pragmatic competence should then be performed as such in order to provide more coherent and conclusive results on the role of English proficiency.

Moving on to hypothesis 4, research findings revealed that English proficiency did not influence learners' performance over time. In this sense, English proficiency did not seem to play a role in learners' pragmatic performance in the EMI context. More specifically, the B2 group only outperformed the B1 group in content in the post-test performance, while no statistically significant differences between the two groups were observed in the delayed post-test. Results showed, however, a tendency for more proficient students to score higher throughout the academic year, therefore providing partial support for the hypothesis.

The results related to hypothesis 4 reported above were supported by a qualitative exploration of the effect of English proficiency and self-perception of English ability on pragmatic performance as well as reasons why learners increased or decreased their performance over the academic year. As for self-perception of ability, a modified version of Kitano's (2001) Can-do-scale was adopted in order to evaluate the pragmatic performance of a subset of 8 participants in the pre-test and delayed post-test. Learner's self-perceptions indicated that performance was mainly related to the ability in English reported by each student both in the pre-test and delayed post-test. This was evident in the case of the 8 informants, whose scores on pragmatic performance and self-perceived ability were correlated. On

the other hand, results on the influence of proficiency in the pre-test were in line with the quantitative results reported above since the highest scores were obtained by higher-proficiency learners. However, this tendency was not observed at the end of the academic year, since high and low scores were obtained by learners in the B1 and B2 group. Drawing from these qualitative findings, it is possible that self-perceived English ability and not actual English proficiency had an impact on their pragmatic performance.

The comparison between pragmatic performance and self-perceived English ability also revealed that although both aspects seem to be related, they develop to different extents. In fact, some learners experienced gains in self-perception and pragmatic performance (as was the case of participants 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6). Other students maintained the levels of both (participant 7), while one participant's levels decreased in both respects (participant 8). These changes in the students' self-perception, English proficiency and pragmatic performance were examined taking into account their comments in the interviews conducted at the end of the academic year.

The interviews revealed different aspects associated with the participants' individual trajectories. These include the importance of self-perception, demotivation, academic pressure, self-esteem and attitudes towards the English language. Increases in pragmatic performance were related to changes during the academic year regarding self-perception (participants 1, 2 and 3). These students emphasised the importance of feeling that they were good at English in obtaining better academic results. In a similar vein, self-esteem seems to have played a role for participant 4, who claimed to have changed his self-concept thanks to the EMI lessons, and claimed to have started believing in himself when he observed that English was not an obstacle to communication in the classroom, but, rather, the means to achieve it. Similar reflections were reported by participants 5 and 6, who showed positive attitudes towards both the English language and the culture. Accordingly, when the performance was not as expected, they saw an opportunity to learn the language rather than considering it an impediment.

Furthermore, limited and negative gains in pragmatic performance and self-perception were attributed to a lack of motivation (participants 7 and 8).

Previous studies have reported similar findings on the association between individual differences and self-perception of English ability. For instance, Takahashi (2005) reported that self-perceived competence and facilitating anxiety were positively related. Results suggested that those students who perceived themselves as having higher English ability scored higher in the anxiety scale. In addition, perceived competence was positively related to actual ability. However, it is difficult to compare these results with our research outcomes given that Takahashi (2005) explored the influence of the self-perception of 98 students quantitatively, while the present analysis does this qualitatively and only focuses on 8 informants. Nevertheless, results from this study are in line with Takahashi (2005) in indicating that affective factors such as motivation, anxiety and confidence need to be explored further in order to investigate the true nature of self-perceived FL ability.

In addition, a further possible explanation for the differences between pre-test, post-test and delayed post-test performances by higher- and lower-proficiency students may be the role of attention, as a variable influencing learners' progress; that is, language attrition. As reported in the previous chapter, learners' pragmatic development was significant over the academic year. However, it may be possible that due to the low English proficiency of the professors, higher-proficiency learners underwent periods of not using English in the classrooms and, together with demotivation, they experienced the loss of certain skills. On the contrary, low-proficiency learners had room to learn and improve their English skills although their professors' proficiency was not very high. This would be a possible explanation for the limited and negative gains observed in participants 7 and 8, who reported that they would not enroll in EMI again due to the lack of English skills on behalf of the teaching staff. It would also explain why English proficiency only influenced students' first performance. With this in mind, we suggest that there is a need for further research on the role of

teachers' proficiency levels in student motivation in the EMI context.

To sum up, results on the effect of proficiency and performance revealed valuable insights into general trends in EMI contexts, as well as individual and group-level trajectories. These findings provide evidence that the EMI context needs further research that explores both environmental and individual variables.

7.4. Chapter summary

In summary, RQ2 addressed whether proficiency level would make a difference in EMI learners' pragmatic performance regarding FA, as well as that performance over time. Findings from the present investigation show that higher-proficiency learners outperformed lower-proficiency learners, therefore confirming hypothesis 3. Hypothesis 4, which predicted that the level of proficiency would not influence pragmatic performance over time, was partially confirmed, since there was a tendency of high-proficiency learners to score higher in FA.

In the present study, we are interested in how previous language experiences influence learners' pragmatic performance. This aspect is further explored in the following chapter, which relates to RQ3.

Chapter 8.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION RELATED TO RESEARCH QUESTION 3

Stays abroad are particularly relevant in the field of ILP due to the daily exposure learners receive in different communicative situations, as well as wide-ranging opportunities to attain high levels of cultural knowledge. Consequently, it may be predicted that the more time an individual spends abroad, the more he/she will develop pragmatic competence. Despite this assumption, research on the relationship between concepts such as length of residence and pragmatic learning/development yields mixed results. On the one hand, some studies suggest that extended periods of time in the TL community result in enhanced L2 pragmatic attainment (e.g., Matsumura, 2001, 2003; Röver, 1996; Takahashi & Beebe, 1987). While on the other hand, certain scholars have found that length of residence is not a predictor of increased pragmatic proficiency (e.g., Kasper & Rose, 2002; Kondo, 1997; Rodriguez, 2001; Roever, 2001). Bearing in mind the existing findings, the present study seeks to answer a third research question, which investigates the relationship between previous language contact experiences and pragmatic performance. Therefore, chapter 8 presents the results and a discussion of findings from data analysis regarding RQ3 and its corresponding hypothesis, which were formulated as follows:

RQ3: is there any relationship between learners' pragmatic performance and their previous language contact experiences in terms of length of stay?

- H5: There will be a positive influence of length of previous stay(s) abroad on learners' pragmatic competence (Matsumura, 2001, 2003; Muñoz & Llanes, 2009; Röver, 1996).

To answer RQ3, section 8.1 addresses quantitative findings, which compare data from the background questionnaire and results from learners' pragmatic performance. Subsequently, section 8.2 presents qualitative information in order to provide details on how previous language contact experiences in English-speaking countries determine learners' pragmatic performance. Furthermore, the qualitative analysis includes information about the participants' WTC while abroad, which is an aspect of their pragmatic development that cannot be revealed by quantitative analysis.

8.1. Quantitative results

Firstly, Figure 38 displays the distribution of the learners in terms of the amount of total days spent abroad at the time of data collection. Throughout the coding process, this variable was coded into four main categories in order to facilitate statistical analysis: 0 days (no stays), 1-10 days (short stays), 11-49 days (medium stays), and 50 or more days (long stays). As can be observed in Figure 38, the most representative category was no stays ($n=33$), followed by medium-term stays ($n=30$), long-term stays ($n=23$) and short stays ($n=16$).

Figure 38. Representation of days spent abroad by 102 informants

The descriptive data of learners' length of previous language contact experiences and their pragmatic performance is presented in Table 29. In the current study, we explore the effect of length of stay(s) on learners' initial performance (T1) for the following reason: participants could have travelled to English-speaking countries during the academic year, and therefore the results obtained would not have been coherent with our research purposes. For this reason, length of previous stay(s) is explored in relation to participants' pre-test performance and not to their pragmatic development over the academic year.

Table 29. Descriptive statistics of pragmatic performance and length of previous language contact experiences.

DV	Stay	Mean	SD	Levene: F (3,98) (p)
Coherence	1	2.58	1.146	0.077 (.972)
	2	2.50	1.095	
	3	2.67	1.155	
	4	2.22	1.166	
	Total	2.51	1.141	
Cohesion	1	2.18	1.131	0.913 (.438)
	2	2.50	0.966	
	3	2.20	1.375	
	4	1.83	1.466	
	Total	2.16	1.264	
Comprehensibility	1	2.97	1.159	0.435 (.729)
	2	2.88	0.957	
	3	2.87	1.137	
	4	2.57	0.896	
	Total	2.83	1.063	
Content	1	1.64	0.859	1.121 (.345)
	2	1.81	0.911	
	3	1.90	0.995	
	4	1.48	1.123	
	Total	1.71	0.971	
Task requirements	1	2.06	1.478	2.092 (.106)
	2	3.06	1.237	
	3	2.60	1.734	
	4	2.17	1.557	
	Total	2.40	1.562	
Overall performance (sum)	1	11.42	4.963	0.964 (.413)
	2	12.75	4.008	
	3	12.23	5.519	
	4	10.26	5.181	
	Total	11.61	5.053	

Note: 1: no stays, 2: short stays; 3: medium-term stays; and 4: long-term stays

As can be observed, variation in the performance of all dimensions at T1 was moderate, as evident in the low standard deviations. In order to assess the equality of variances among the four lengths of stays and the six dependent variables, a Levene's test was used for the six variables calculated for the four groups. Homoscedasticity ($p > 0.5$) was verified for all dimensions in the pre-test.

The following sections present the results related to hypothesis 5 of the study.

8.1.1. Effect of length of previous language experiences on pragmatic performance

In order to examine the effect of previous language experience(s), a MANOVA analysis was conducted for each of the dimensions: cohesion, coherence, task requirements, comprehensibility, content, and for overall FA. The effect size was calculated using the partial Eta squared (η^2_p) and the statistical power was calculated using $1 - \beta$. Table 30 displays homoscedasticity values (F), the significance value (p), the effect size and the statistical power for each of the dimensions.

Table 30. MANOVA results on FA and length of previous language experiences in the pre-test

	n	F(3.98)	p	η^2_p	1 - β
Coherence	102	0.724	.540	.022	.199
Cohesion	102	0.931	.429	.028	.248
Comprehensibility	102	0.680	.566	.020	.189
Content	102	0.940	.424	.028	.251
Task requirements	102	1.848	.144	.054	.467
Overall performance (sum)	102	0.985	.403	.029	.261

Note:* $p < .05$ (MANOVA)

The inferential statistical analysis indicates that length of previous stay(s) is not statistically significant for coherence [$F(3, 98) = 0.724, p = .540$], for cohesion [$F(3, 98) = 0.931, p = .429$], for comprehensibility [$F(3, 98) = 0.680, p = .566$], for content [$F(3, 98) = 0.940, p = .424$], for task requirements [$F(3, 98) = 1.848, p = .144$], or for overall FA [$F(3, 98) = 0.985, p = .403$]. As can be observed in Table 30, the effect size (η^2) and statistical power ($1 - \beta$) revealed small effects in both tests of statistical significance, since the values obtained were lower than .08 for the partial Eta squared (η^2) and lower than .80 for the statistical power ($1 - \beta$).

Figure 39 illustrates the results from Table 30; that is, learners' performance and length of previous stay(s) at T1.

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Figure 39. Average scores for FA and length of previous stays at T1

Figure 39 displays differences between learners' pragmatic performance in FA according to the number of days spent abroad. As can be observed, the highest scores on coherence ($M = 2.67$, $SD = 1.155$) and content ($M = 1.90$, $SD = 0.995$) were obtained by learners who reported medium previous experiences; that is, between 11 and 49 days. As regards cohesion and task requirements, learners with short stays (1-10 days) scored higher in both dimensions ($M = 2.50$, $SD = 0.966$, and $M = 3.06$, $SD = 1.237$, respectively). As for the last dimension, learners with no previous stays scored higher on comprehensibility ($M = 2.97$, $SD = 1.159$). On the other hand, learners with previous extended periods abroad, that is, 50 days or more, scored lower on coherence ($M = 2.22$, $SD = 1.166$), on cohesion ($M = 1.83$, $SD = 1.466$), on comprehensibility ($M = 2.57$, $SD = 0.896$), on content ($M = 1.48$, $SD = 1.123$), and on overall FA ($M = 10.26$, $SD = 5.181$). The lowest scores on task requirements were obtained by learners with no previous stay(s) ($M = 2.06$, $SD = 1.478$).

Figure 40 shows learners' higher pragmatic performance in each of the dimensions according to length of previous stay(s).

Figure 40. Relationship between pragmatic performance and length of previous stay(s)

In order to have a complete picture on the effect of length of previous stay(s) on learners' pragmatic performance at T1, Figure 41 displays information about the learners' overall performance according to the days spent abroad.

Figure 41. Overall pragmatic performance and length of stay

In Figure 41, it can be observed that learners who experienced short periods abroad scored higher on overall FA ($M = 12.75$, $SD = 4.008$). This was followed by medium stay(s) ($M = 12.23$, $SD = 5.519$), no stay(s) ($M = 11.42$, $SD = 4.964$) and long stays ($M = 10.26$, $SD = 5.181$).

In conclusion, the results presented above do not support H5 of the study, which predicted that length of previous stay(s) abroad would influence learners' pragmatic performance. Even though stays abroad could be said to enhance pragmatic competence due to the daily exposure learners receive, learners who experienced extended periods abroad did not perform better than the rest of the participants in any of the dimensions. In addition to these findings, no effect of length was found in comprehensibility, since learners with no previous stay(s) scored higher in this dimension. Although these results suggest that medium stays are beneficial for coherence and content, overall they show that pragmatic performance was not influenced by length of previous stay(s).

The next section provides qualitative insights into the results reported in section 8.1.1, and also presents results relating to the learners' individual variation

while abroad in terms of their WTC.

8.2. Qualitative results

The effect of time abroad on pragmatic competence has received much attention in ILP due to its positive impact on students' pragmatic abilities (see section 3.4.1). Section 8.1 of this chapter has presented the quantitative analysis of length of previous stay(s) and learners' pragmatic performance. Results show that pragmatic performance at the beginning of the semester by 102 students is not influenced by the number of days spent abroad. Moreover, findings suggest that there is a negative correlation between days spent abroad and learners' FA. Considering these findings, this section addresses the effect of length of stay(s) following a case-study research design and presenting individual performance trajectories. More specifically, section 8.2.1 includes the relationship between pragmatic performance and the learners' WTC while abroad, which is defined as "readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using a L2" (MacIntyre et al., 1998, p. 547). The decision to explore the effect of learners' WTC on pragmatic performance was made based on the differences observed in the interviews regarding exposure to the language while abroad.

In order to reach a complete understanding of the role of WTC on learners' previous stay(s) and pragmatic performance, McCroskey and Richmond's (1987) WTC scale (see Appendix H) was used in order to establish a coding scheme. The WTC scale was chosen because it is a reliable and valid²³ instrument to measure participants' predisposition toward approaching or avoiding communication (McCroskey, 1992). Moreover, it involves awareness, since the respondents are usually aware of their communicative tendencies. This probability-estimate scale yields a total score of WTC but also three sub-scores based on types of receivers (strangers, acquaintances, and friends), and four context-type subscores (group

²³ Alpha reliability estimates for this scale have ranged from .85 to .90. See McCroskey (1992) for studies testing the validity of the scale.

discussion, meetings, interpersonal, and public speaking). WTC scales have seldom been tested in empirical investigations other than comparisons with overall linguistic competence. The present study addresses this concern by exploring whether WTC exerts an influence on learners' pragmatic performance.

McCroskey and Richmond's (1987) WTC scale includes 20 situations respondents would encounter while abroad (see Table 31). Eight of those situations are fillers to distract students' attention (items 1, 2, 5, 7, 10, 13, 16, and 18). The other 12 items (items 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15, 17, 19, and 20) relate to WTC in four communication contexts and three types of audience. Thus, the 8 informants were provided with 20 situations to which they had to respond by indicating the percentage of times (0= never, 100= always) they would choose to communicate. Accordingly, the possible scores on the scale ranged from 0 to 1200, and a higher score on the scale²⁴ indicated a higher predisposition to communicate. The WTC scale was completed by 7 informants at T1.

²⁴ Items 1, 2, 5, 7, 10, 13, 16, and 18 (fillers) were not included in the analyses.

Table 31. WTC scale performed by 7 informants

Situation	
—%	1 Talk with a service station attendant.
—%	2 Talk with a physician.
—%	3 Present a talk to a group of strangers.
—%	4 Talk with an acquaintance while standing in line.
—%	5 Talk with a salesperson in a store.
—%	6 Talk in a large meeting of friends.
—%	7 Talk with a police officer.
—%	8 Talk in a small group of strangers.
—%	9 Talk with a friend while standing in line.
—%	10 Talk with a waiter/waitress in a restaurant.
—%	11 Talk in a large meeting of acquaintances.
—%	12 Talk with a stranger while standing in line.
—%	13 Talk with a secretary.
—%	14 Present a talk to a group of friends.
—%	15 Talk in a small group of acquaintances.
—%	16 Talk with a garbage collector.
—%	17 Talk in a large meeting of strangers.
—%	18 Talk with a spouse (or girl/boyfriend).
—%	19 Talk in a small group of friends.
—%	20 Present a talk to a group of acquaintances.

The WTC presented above permits computation of one total score and seven subscores. As previously stated, the seven subscores relate to WTC in each

of the four communication contexts and three types of audience. To compute the total WTC score, the subscores for stranger, acquaintance and friend are added together and then divided by 3. In the current study, we are interested in exploring the effect of overall WTC rather than analyzing the specific context and audience in which learners are most predisposed to initiate communication. Nevertheless, the scores of the 12 situations are necessary to calculate the total WTC score.

Figure 42 shows the scoring system by including the desired subscore and the corresponding scoring formula.

<i>Desired Subscore</i>	<i>Scoring Formula</i>
Group discussion	Add scores for item 8 + item 15 + item 19 = <input type="text"/> → <input type="text"/> / 3
Meetings	Add scores for item 6 + item 11 + item 17 = <input type="text"/> → <input type="text"/> / 3
Interpersonal conversations	Add scores for item 4 + item 9 + item 12 = <input type="text"/> → <input type="text"/> / 3
Public speaking	Add scores for item 3 + item 14 + item 20 = <input type="text"/> → <input type="text"/> / 3
Stranger	Add scores for item 3 + item 8 + item 12 + item 17 = <input type="text"/> → <input type="text"/> / 4
Acquaintance	Add scores for item 4 + item 11 + item 15 + item 19 = <input type="text"/> → <input type="text"/> / 4
Friend	Add scores for item 6 + item 9 + item 14 + item 19 = <input type="text"/> → <input type="text"/> / 4
To compute the total WTC scores	Add the subscores for stranger + acquaintance + friend = <input type="text"/> → <input type="text"/> / 3

Figure 42. WTC scoring

8.2.1. Pragmatic performance and willingness to communicate: individual's tendencies

This section provides qualitative insights in order to further understand the quantitative findings related to H5. An analysis of the participants' questionnaires and pragmatic performance was used to explore the relationship between length of previous stay(s) and learners' FA. Firstly, some information about the 8 informants is presented. Table 32 includes descriptive data on the 8 participants'

overall FA of written texts and days spent abroad at the time of data collection.

Table 32. Pragmatic performance and length of previous stay(s) by 8 informants

Participant	Pre-test overall FA scores	Length of previous stay(s)
1	9	No previous stay(s)
2	20	42
3	13	70
4	9	90
5	17	90
6	14	215
7	24	40
8	20	64
Average	11.61	87.28

As shown in Table 32, the case studies constitute a varied sample in terms of pragmatic performance and length of previous language experiences. Regarding pretest overall scores, the highest scores are obtained by participants 2, 7 and 8, who reported medium stays and a long stay abroad, respectively, at the beginning of the academic year. Accordingly, the lowest scores are obtained by participants 1 (no previous stay(s) abroad) and 4 (long period abroad). As can be observed, the only case that shows a positive relationship between performance and length of stay is that of participant 8, since the longest period abroad was reported by participant 6 who scored 14 out of 25 in FA. Thus, the results are inconclusive, since high scores are obtained by learners with different length of stay(s), resulting in mixed results on the influence of previous stay(s) on pragmatic performance at the individual level.

In what follows, a descriptive analysis of learners' WTC is reported. As mentioned above, the WTC scale was used to explore the relationship between the participants' predisposition toward communication and FA. The following analysis considers 7 informants, since participant 1 reported no previous language experiences and had to be discarded from the analysis.

Table 33 presents WTC scores²⁵ for the 20 items.

²⁵ As mentioned in section 8.2, fillers were not included in the analysis. However, they are included in the table in order to display learners' scores on the WTC scale.

Situation	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3	Participant 4	Participant 5	Participant 6	Participant 7	Average
1 Talk with a service station attendant	85	70	56	77	45	95	86	73.43
2 Talk with a physician	80	70	55	70	60	95	90	74.29
3 Present a talk to a group of strangers	75	52	32	45	30	84	70	55.43
4 Talk with an acquaintance while standing in line	95	45	71	80	65	94	95	77.86
5 Talk with a salesperson in a store	85	60	50	65	50	85	80	67.86
6 Talk in a large meeting of friends	100	75	45	85	50	100	96	78.71
7 Talk with a police officer	80	70	50	65	40	85	80	67.14
8 Talk in a small group of strangers	75	50	44	65	36	82	75	61.00
9 Talk with a friend while standing in line	100	60	85	100	80	100	100	89.29
10 Talk with a waiter/waitress in a restaurant	75	70	48	70	40	89	75	66.71
11 Talk in a large meeting of acquaintances	90	40	34	60	30	91	90	62.14
12 Talk with a stranger while standing in line	76	40	55	70	40	85	70	62.29
13 Talk with a secretary	80	65	45	65	35	80	70	62.86
14 Present a talk to a group of friends	100	50	55	85	40	100	100	75.71
15 Talk in a small group of acquaintances	95	40	64	78	60	93	94	74.86
16 Talk with a garbage collector	75	65	50	70	45	85	80	67.14
17 Talk in a large meeting of strangers	55	40	20	40	20	74	50	42.71
18 Talk with a spouse (or girl/boyfriend)	80	70	50	70	30	85	80	67.14
19 Talk in a small group of friends	100	50	65	92	50	100	100	79.57
20 Present a talk to a group of acquaintances	92	63	50	70	50	92	90	72.43
Total WTC	87.75	50.42	51.67	72.50	45.92	91.25	85.83	

Table 33. Learners' scores on the WTC scale

Visual information from Table 33 about WTC average scores is displayed in Figure 43.

Figure 43. WTC average scores by 7 informants.

Learners reported a greater predisposition toward initiation of communication in some situations, as indicated by the mean scores. In particular, the data indicate that respondents were most willing to communicate in situation 9 “talk with a friend while standing in line” ($M = 89.29$). Overall, situations with the highest average scores – in which it thus seemed easy for learners to initiate conversation – are: “talk in a small group of friends” ($M = 79.57$), “talk in a large meeting of friends” ($M = 78.71$), “talk with an acquaintance while standing in line” ($M = 77.86$), and “present a talk to a group of friends” ($M = 75.71$). In contrast, situation 17, “talk in a large meeting of strangers”, obtained the lowest score ($M = 42.71$). Another difficulty that participants experienced was “present a talk to a group of strangers”, since the score obtained was scarcely higher than 50 ($M = 55.42$). These findings provide an account of the main difficulties that learners experience in stay(s) in English-speaking countries.

With respect to overall WTC, it can be observed that the greatest willingness was reported by participant 6 (91.25), participant 1 (87.75), and participant 7 (85.83), who scored above the mean in each of the situations. In contrast, the

least willingness was reported by participant 5 (45.92), who scored below the mean in each of the 20 situations. However, interesting findings were obtained when comparing learners' WTC and pragmatic performance. Table 34 includes the participants' scores in both FA and WTC scales, with the aim of displaying preliminary findings on whether WTC in situations experienced abroad influences learners' FA. Total overall WTC values range from high (> 82) to low (< 52), with the average being between 53 and 82.

Table 34. Overall FA and WTC scores by 7 participants

Participant	Pre-test overall FA scores	Overall WTC
1	HIGHEST	HIGH
2	LOW	LOW
3	LOWEST	LOW
4	LOW	AVERAGE
5	LOW	LOW
6	HIGHEST	HIGH
7	HIGHEST	HIGH

As shown in Table 34, results reveal a relationship between WTC abroad and overall FA scores at T1, since the two variables move in tandem in participants 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 and 7. When these students obtained low scores in written performance, a low score was also reported in overall WTC and vice versa. Accordingly, when participants achieved a successful pragmatic performance, high levels of WTC were indicated on the scale. Although it is not a positive correlation, participant 4 also obtained a low score in overall FA and reported an average level of WTC abroad. Hence, these preliminary findings suggest that a learner whose level of WTC abroad is high may experience high levels of FA. On the contrary, those

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learners who were reluctant to engage in communication while abroad tended to show poor pragmatic performance in the written motivation letter. In fact, these results seem to suggest that learners' FA is influenced by WTC abroad and not by length of stay.

Figure 44 displays a visual representation of such findings.

Figure 44. Representation of length of previous stay(s), WTC abroad and pragmatic performance in the pre-test

The interviews conducted also reveal interesting insights into learners' perspectives on their previous stay(s). In fact, the role of predisposition to communicate was the first sign observed in the case of participants 2, 3, 4, and 5. Participant 5 explained that he had spent long periods abroad and in different English-speaking countries, such as Australia, Austria, Ireland, and Germany, and that he felt he had not improved his English skills by being immersed because he was very shy and did not feel like engaging in conversation with unknown people. In addition, he admitted avoiding social encounters in order to avoid situations in which he had to speak in English. These reflections coincide with the results obtained in both the quantitative and the qualitative analysis on his performance: he spent 215 abroad but he scored very low in both the pre-test and total WTC.

In his own words:

"I have travelled a lot, but it doesn't matter because I never talk with people I do not know, especially with native speakers. I feel I am bad English speaker and I do not like when I have to explain things or speak about me, my studies etc. I remember that when one of my Spanish friends decided to go to a party or speak with strangers, I always avoided those situations. I do not feel comfortable in those situations. English is not my language and I feel I am not good".

Similarly, participant 4 showed a poor pragmatic performance and an average score regarding WTC. At the time of data collection, he reported just having come back from a two-month stay in England and feeling disappointed by the experience. For him, not being understood at the beginning of the stay was an essential aspect that influenced his willingness to interact. According to this participant, "I tried to talk and improve my English but people from London, from there, looked at me and asked all the time what was I saying. Although I wanted to talk, I felt ashamed and decided just to listen, especially with native speakers". Hence, we can observe that despite having spent abroad approximately 90 days, predisposition to communicate played a role regarding this participant.

Length of stay(s) was also a factor reported by participants 2 and 3 in the interviews. Participant 3 claimed not to have had enough time to improve and participate in the target culture (Ireland). He took part in a three-month intensive course in Ireland in order to achieve a good command of English before starting the EMI semester at university. However, he laments:

"I did not have time to talk or know more people. I think you need a long period to internalize things in your head and then you can practice. When I felt I was ready to talk even with native speakers or strangers like, asking something in a supermarket, I had to come back to Spain and start the lessons".

A similar experience was reported by participant 2, who spent 70 days abroad but scored low on both overall FA and total WTC. In fact, he was convinced that the more time an individual spends abroad, the more he/she learns. According to this participant:

“From my point of view, you need a lot of time in another country to feel part of it and interact. I went to different countries and the last one was one month in London in a university. I do not think you can do something in one month. I do not think it is a question of native or not natives but time. If you have more time abroad you know more people, start to know how people talk in a bar, restaurant or library. If you only are there four weeks or five you do not talk because you can’t. Your level is not high to talk”.

From a similar perspective, participant 1 reflected on how important willingness to initiate conversation was for her. In her words:

“I can tell you I learned a lot from starting conversation. English people are, like more shy, and when I got on the bus or went to the supermarket I was not shy to ask for help, for prices.. I did not mind making mistakes. I think it is the way you learn. I have been abroad a few times but I think it is your attitude and not time what matters and plays a role in your improvement. For instance, I think I learned more English in one week in Germany than in one month in Scotland. In Scotland I did not start conversation or talk to people because I was younger and felt I was wrong, but in Germany I talked with Chinese, Russian people in English and I think it was much more beneficial for me”.

Finally, group size was another variable identified in the interviews. In fact, participants 6 and 7 emphasized the necessity of being with large groups of people while abroad. For instance, participant 7 believed that interacting in large groups influenced her one-month stay in Canada. Similarly, participant 6 showed a positive attitude toward communication in large meetings. According to this participant:

“I spent one month in an English course and after that teachers did a lot of activities to be together. We were students from a lot of countries and after the lessons we went to see the city, tell stories or play in the parks. I went to all activities because it was a great opportunity to be with a lot of people of different cultures and speak English. I think if I went home I only interacted with other Spanish students and I would have not learned. When I go to Erasmus, I want to go where I can’t find no Spanish students”.

These results coincide with the results obtained in the analysis of these students’ performance: participant 6 spent 64 days abroad while participant 7 spent 40. As we can observe, both participants scored higher on overall FA and WTC despite the days spent abroad, suggesting that pragmatic learning abroad may be influenced by WTC rather than length of stay.

Having ascertained the reasons behind the informants’ trajectories, the next section discusses quantitative and qualitative findings.

8.3. Discussion of findings

Research question 3 explored whether length of previous language experiences influenced learners’ pragmatic performance. Since previous studies have reported the impact of length of residence/stay in pragmatic competence (Matsumura, 2001, 2003; Muñoz & Llanes, 2009; Röver, 1996), hypothesis 5

predicted that students who had spent more time abroad would perform better in the written motivation letters.

A first analysis on the influence of length of stay was focused on learners' pragmatic performance at T1. In this sense, hypothesis 5 of the study suggested that length of stay would have a positive impact on students' pragmatic abilities. The hypothesis was not confirmed in this study, since results reveal that students who spent longer periods abroad did not outperform learners who spent shorter periods. These findings are in line with previous studies reporting that length of residence in the target country is not a reliable predictor for the attainment of increased pragmatic proficiency in the L2 (Kondo, 1997; Kasper & Rose, 2002; Rodriguez, 2001; Roever, 2001). Moreover, pragmatic performance was measured in terms of coherence, cohesion, task requirements, content, comprehensibility, and overall FA, with findings indicating that longer periods abroad do not seem to influence the performance of any of those dimensions. In fact, those students who spent long periods abroad obtained lower scores in their motivation letters, and in each of the dimensions.

In what follows, a discussion of the results related to H5, addressing the impact of previous language experiences on learners' pragmatic performance, is presented. Firstly, results suggest that length of stay does not determine learners' performance of FA. In this sense, the current study is in line with previous research that concludes that length of stay did not have an effect on learners' apology performance (Kondo, 1997), request strategies (Rodriguez, 2001), or comprehension of implicatures and performance of speech acts (Roever, 2001). Since the present study does not explore learners' production of specific speech acts, it is difficult to compare our results with those reported by Kondo (1997), Rodriguez (2001) and Roever (2001). However, considering their results, length of stay does not seem to influence pragmatic competence.

Secondly, the results related to H5 reported above also support the assumption that short stays abroad may enhance learners' pragmatic competence. In others words, there is no effect of time on pragmatic development. In this

regard, results from the present study are in line with those reported by Vilar-Beltrán (2014) in the sense that the results of the present study also suggest that shorter periods may be beneficial, since students who had spent 1-10 days abroad performed better in cohesion and task requirements than those who had spent more than 50 days. These findings seem to contradict Segalowitz and Freed (2004), who claimed that longer periods of residence would lead to better L2 pragmatic outcomes due to the greater opportunities to use the language and the widespread availability of input.

A possible explanation for the results obtained is that length of residence alone cannot account for pragmatic development (e.g., Alcón-Soler, 2015; Bardovi-Harlig & Bastos, 2011; Bella, 2011, 2012; Klein, Dietrich & Noyau, 1995). For instance, Bardovi-Harlig and Bastos (2011) examined the effect of proficiency, intensity of interaction and length of stay in learners' recognition and use of conventional expressions. Findings suggested that length of residence was not a predictor affecting either recognition or production and that proficiency and intensity of interaction had significant effects on the production of conventional expressions. In a similar vein, Alcón-Soler (2015) concluded that length of stay alone was not sufficient to enhance learners' production of requests, since length of stay and instructional treatment seemed to interact and influence the development of pragmatic awareness. This interplay of variables was also found in the present study. Drawing from our qualitative findings, it is possible that WTC had an impact on learners' experiences and, consequently, on their pragmatic performance.

WTC is referred to as the intention to initiate communication in a given context. Accordingly, the WTC scale administered in the present study measured the respondents' willingness to communicate in a given number of situations while abroad. The comparison between overall FA and WTC revealed that both aspects move in tandem. When learners obtained a low score in total WTC, a low score was also reported in overall FA, and vice versa (as was the case of participants 1, 6 and 7). Other students obtained low scores in both aspects (participants 2,

3 and 5) while one participant reported a poor pragmatic performance and an average level of WTC (participant 4).

The interviews conducted revealed different aspects associated with the participants' perspectives on their previous stay(s). These include the importance of predisposition to communicate, length of stay and group size. Poor pragmatic performance was related to a low predisposition to initiate communication (participants 4 and 5). These students emphasized the importance of personality and feedback when engaging in conversation. Specifically, participant 4 claimed that he felt he was not understood by NSs and that his willingness to interact had been very low since the very beginning of the stay. Along the same line, WTC seems to have played a role for participants 2 and 3. However, these students emphasized the importance of length of stay in developing linguistic competence. In fact, participant 2 reflected upon the importance of spending long periods abroad by saying that the more time abroad, the better the results. Similar reflections were reported by participant 3, who claimed that just when he felt most willing to communicate, his three-month stay in Ireland was over and he had to come back, losing further opportunities to interact and become involved in the target culture. Finally, participants 6 and 7 emphasized the importance of communication in large groups, such as large meetings with international or national students. In fact, interesting findings were observed in the learning trajectories of these two students: participant 6 spent 64 days abroad while participant 7 spent 40. Despite the difference in days spent abroad, both participants achieved a successful pragmatic performance and reported a high WTC score, thus suggesting that pragmatic performance was influenced by WTC and not by length of stay.

Previous studies have reported similar findings on the association between learners' WTC and their engagement while abroad. For instance, Yashima et al. (2004) analyzed the communication behavior exhibited by Japanese learners abroad. Their findings seemed to suggest that WTC reinforced language development, since positive correlations were found between predisposition to

communicate and involvement in L2 interactions. It is difficult to compare these results with our research outcomes given that Yashima et al. (2004) did not explore the relationship between WTC and pragmatic performance. Nevertheless, we propose that the results from this study are in line with Yashima et al. (2004) in that they indicate that individual variation such as WTC needs to be explored further in order to investigate the true nature of communication while abroad.

To sum up, results on the effect of length of previous language experiences and pragmatic performance reveal valuable insights into general trends in the stay abroad context, as well as individual trajectories. These findings make evident that the stay abroad context needs further research that explores individual variables.

8.4. Chapter summary

In summary, RQ5 addressed whether length of previous language contact experiences would make a differences in learners' pragmatic performance regarding FA. Findings from the present investigation show that length of stay is not a reliable predictor of pragmatic attainment, since students who spent long periods abroad did not outperform the rest of the participants in any of the dimensions. Therefore, hypothesis 5 was not confirmed. In addition, the role of WTC was explored and a positive relationship between learners' FA and predisposition to initiate communication abroad was observed.

In what follows, chapter 9 presents the final conclusions of the present study, including a summary of findings, pedagogical implications, limitations of the study and suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSIONS

In this final chapter, the main outcomes and contributions of the present study are discussed. First, we overview the key contributions of this research endeavour and summarize the main findings of the study. We then point out the limitations and suggest lines for further investigation. Finally, we present the pedagogical implications of the study with regards to teaching and learning pragmatics in EMI contexts.

9.1. Originality of the study and summary of main findings

The main purpose of the present study was to explore pragmatic learning in undergraduate learners of L2 English in EMI settings. In particular, two main aspects have been investigated: (i) FA learning trajectories, and (ii) development of FA among three EMI programs (50%, 75% and 100%).

The study was motivated by the need to expand the body of research on pragmatics across learning settings (Bardovi-Harlig, 2013). Previous research on pragmatics in EMI contexts has explored tertiary education, with a focus on speech acts (Martínez-Flor & Usó-Juan, 2006; Martí-Arnándiz, 2008; Taguchi, 2008; Taguchi et al., 2015; Ament et al., 2016). Our research was carried out in a context that, to our knowledge, has so far not received attention in classroom pragmatics research: EMI contexts with different intensities of English as the medium of instruction. In an attempt to expand the target pragmatic aspects investigated beyond the existing focus on speech acts, we analyzed a pragmatic target that has up to now not received attention in the EMI setting, that of FA.

The need to readjust the scope of ILP pragmatics research has been pointed out recently (LoCastro, 2011). This claim has been inspired by current trends which approach the analysis of pragmatic competence from a much broader perspective (Barron, 2003; Chaudron, 2003; Kasper & Rose, 2002). Taking

the ideas above into account, our primary concern has been to explore pragmatic competence from a holistic perspective, including five dimensions: (i) coherence, (ii) cohesion, (iii) task requirements, (iv) content, and (v) comprehensibility.

An aspect related to ecologically oriented studies is the need to use valid instruments. Although the implementation of tasks is a growing area of research in language learning, very few studies have adopted this framework in the investigation of pragmatics in EMI contexts (e.g., Ament et al., 2016; Taguchi et al., 2015). Bearing these aspects in mind, we created a task, as part of the bachelor's program activities, which followed the TBLT criteria (Ellis, 2003).

Moreover, this study represents, to the best of our knowledge, the first longitudinal investigation that has explored the role of language proficiency on learners' pragmatic performance in EMI contexts. Previous research has pointed out that language proficiency has a direct effect on learners' performance in the EMI context (e.g., Bang, 2013; Butler & Castellon-Wellington, 2000; Kang, 2005). However, these studies focused on content comprehension, performance in content areas, and overall achievement. In order to fill this gap, the present study explored whether learners' level of proficiency influence pragmatic performance and performance over time in EMI students.

The present investigation also represents, to the best of our knowledge, the first analysis that has taken into consideration the effect of previous stays abroad on EMI learners' pragmatic competence. Existing research has addressed the role of the length of previous experiences abroad, suggesting that the length of stays influences aspects such as error free clauses (Muñoz & Llanes, 2009). However, the focus of Muñoz and Llanes (2009) was on accuracy and oral fluency measures. In an attempt to expand our understanding of how previous stays influence pragmatic competence, we analyzed the effect of time on written pragmatic performance, adopting a holistic perspective.

The present study was intended to contribute to classroom pragmatics research with the following specific aims:

Chapter 9: *Conclusions*

1. To investigate pragmatic learning trajectories in which learners in an EMI context receive instruction.
2. To investigate the relationship between pragmatic development and intensity of exposure to English as the medium of instruction.
3. To investigate the relationship between language proficiency and pragmatic competence.
4. To investigate the relationship between previous language experiences and pragmatic competence.

Taking into account the motivation and specific aims set out above, the present study has investigated pragmatic learning in 102 undergraduate learners of English as an additional language in EMI contexts. Pragmatic competence was operationalized as the ability to produce functionally adequate texts when learners performed a pragmatic-focused written task. We analyzed a total of 405 motivation letters, in the language in which those learners receive instruction (English), which were collected at three data collection points. The longitudinal data in English were collected from the same learners. The coding of FA was based on a rating scale proposed by Kuiken and Vedder (2016). Following a mixed-method approach, we triangulated our findings with qualitative data from interviews with students to gain deeper insight into the process of pragmatic learning. With the above in mind, we will now summarize the main outcomes of each hypothesis.

The first hypothesis predicted that EMI would lead to the development of learners' pragmatic competence (Salaberri & Sánchez, 2015; Taguchi, 2012; Taguchi et al., 2015). In this part of the study the goal was to obtain empirical evidence that contact with the TL has a positive impact on learners' pragmatic competence. Taking into consideration the results, we may claim that the hypothesis is confirmed because significant gains were observed during the EMI experience. These findings support previous pragmatics research showing the positive effects of immersion on incidental pragmatic learning (Ohta, 2012;

Taguchi, 2012).

Despite observing significant differences during the academic year, initial results from T-tests showed that pragmatic development was higher in the first semester of English instruction. These results may provide evidence that students underwent a process of academic adaptation (Huizhu, 2012) since they needed to reconstruct and renegotiate their identities to fit into an EMI environment (Gu, 2009). These results are of great importance given the implementation of EMI programs in Spain because results suggest that just one semester of EMI can afford the development of pragmatic competence.

To provide additional details to these initial results, a second set of inferential statistical analyses were performed that explored the dimensions considered (coherence, cohesion, task requirements, content and comprehensibility). Results reveal that the content dimension is more sensitive to development since students scored lower in this dimension both in the post-test and in the delayed post-test. A related aspect that may have contributed to these results is the students' literacy. Our findings suggest that the poor improvement experienced in this dimension was mainly attributed to the application of content-related vocabulary from students' field of expertise and not to the development of their literacy. In other words, the EMI experience seems to help students in acquiring specific content knowledge, but their critical thinking was enhanced to a lesser extent. These results are in line with Salaberri and Sánchez (2015) in highlighting the need to incorporate new methodologies that help EMI students integrate their writing abilities with the content of the courses.

Explaining the reasons behind this variation, qualitative analysis showed that learners' development of FA was influenced by the teaching strategies employed in the classroom, such as collaborative writing. Similar to Taguchi's (2011b) study, it was found that interacting in a low-stress classroom environment contributed to pragmatic development. A related aspect that may have also contributed to these results is the teachers' engagement with technology-mediated communication (i.e.: email communication and the virtual platform for

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educational purposes), which provide a rich source of written pragmatic input to students on a daily basis.

The second hypothesis proposed that there would be differences in FA development at the group level, influenced by intensity of exposure to English as the medium of instruction (Ament & Pérez-Vidal, 2015; Ament et al., 2016; Martí-Arnándiz, 2008; Usó-Juan, 2006). An important contribution of this study is related to the uniqueness of the classroom contexts under study (50%, 75%, and 100% EMI), and the attempt to look at pragmatic learning trajectories over an academic year. Our results suggest that intensity of exposure may have affected the development of FA in English and therefore provide evidence confirming H2. In line with Ament et al. (2016), learners with a higher intensity of exposure to English tended to outperform the other groups, evincing the importance of intensity of exposure in instructional settings for L2 pragmatics. Further discussion of the results has also indicated the importance of both learners' language proficiency (Ament & Pérez-Vidal, 2015) and instructors' command of the language in order for learners to benefit from EMI (Sercu, 2004, p. 548).

Another important contribution of this study is related to the attempt to look at the effect of proficiency in the context under study. Although earlier studies have reported inconclusive findings on the effect of English proficiency in the EMI context (Butler & Castellon-Wellington, 2000; Byuen et al., 2011; Chen, 2014; Joe, 2010; Kang, 2005; Kym & Hyum, 2014), to the best of our knowledge, no study has explored the effect of English proficiency on pragmatic development in EMI students at the tertiary level. The present study has addressed this concern by investigating H3 and H4. On the one hand, Hypothesis 3 established that proficiency level in English would influence EMI learners' performance (Butler & Castellon-Wellington, 2000; Kang, 2005; Vidanapathirana & Gamini, 2009). Our results confirm H3 and corroborate previous studies on proficiency in the EMI context (Butler & Castellon-Wellington, 2000; Kang, 2005; Vidanapathirana & Gamini, 2009). We make this claim due to the significant differences observed in all dimensions of FA in favor of higher-proficiency learners. For the above reason,

we can claim that general proficiency is a precondition of pragmatic competence and that L2 pragmatics requires learners to achieve a threshold of proficiency (Bardovi-Harlig, 1999, 2001, 2013; Kasper & Rose, 1999, 2002).

On the other hand, Hypothesis 4 predicted that proficiency level would not influence pragmatic performance over time in EMI contexts (Chen, 2014). While the overall findings do not support this, analysis over time lends to partially support H4 depending on the dimension of FA investigated. Moreover, our results show a tendency for more proficient students to score higher throughout the year.

Additional evidence has been provided by qualitative analyses, which reveal interesting findings about individual trajectories. Firstly, our results seem to indicate that proficiency in the EMI setting is influenced by factors such as (i) demotivation, (ii) academic pressure, and (iii) language attrition. Moreover, learners' written pragmatic performance is influenced by self-perceived English ability and not actual proficiency. In this sense, the current study lends support to the results obtained by Takahashi (2005).

Finally, Hypothesis 5 suggested that previous language contact experiences in terms of length of stay would influence learners' pragmatic performance (Matsumara, 2001, 2003; Muñoz & Llanes, 2009; Röver, 1996). This hypothesis was not confirmed, because it was shown that length of stay(s) did not have an effect on learners' FA. On the one hand, learners with no previous experiences abroad scored higher on comprehensibility. On the other hand, learners with previous extended periods abroad scored lower on coherence, cohesion, comprehensibility, content, and overall FA. These results provide evidence supporting previous research which indicates that length of residence alone cannot account for pragmatic development (Alcón-Soler, 2015; Bardovi-Harlig & Bastos, 2011; Bella, 2011, 2012). This interplay of variables was also found in the present study. Further examination of individual trajectories revealed a positive correlational effect between learners' pragmatic performance and willingness to communicate while abroad. In other words, FA is influenced by WTC abroad and

not by length of stay: when learners obtained a low score in total WTC, a low score was also reported in overall FA. These results support previous research indicating that “the intention to initiate communication, given a choice” (MacIntyre et al., 2001, p. 369) is a relevant aspect to consider when exploring recent contexts such as the SA setting (Yashima et al., 2004), and that individual variation needs to be further explored in order to investigate the true nature of communication while abroad.

Having outlined the main findings of this study, the limitations and future lines of research are discussed in the following section.

9.2. Limitations of the study and directions for future research

The present study also has some limitations that need to be acknowledged, some of which may open up lines for further research.

Firstly, the elicitation tasks were performed as day-to-day activities in university classrooms. However, we did not consider the effect of instructors’ individual variation and teaching style due to impossibility of conducting classroom observation. Due to this factor, we have relied on students’ interviews to explore what happens in the EMI classroom. In this regard, more research is needed in order to explore the effect of lecturers’ attitudes towards EMI, language and literacy knowledge and skills, reflection of teaching practices, and teaching strategies, such as the type of compensatory strategies, employed in order to counteract a lack of proficiency.

Secondly, the present study elicited three samples from the same students over time. Following the TBLT framework proposed by Ellis (2003), the data collection process simulated a real-world recruitment process in which learners requested an opportunity to conduct an internship in a company related to their field of expertise. To this end, the structure of the task, topic, and type of text were kept constant over the academic year (for a detailed description of the task design see section 5.3.1.3). However, we acknowledge that the effect of task

repetition may have influenced the results. In this regard, we encourage further research to explore the variables determining pragmatic performance, such as familiarity with the research instrument.

The third limitation is related to the fact that two external raters and the main researcher corrected learners' samples. Although the rating scales were put into practice in different training sessions and interrater reliability was considered in the analyses, we acknowledge that some aspects may have been left out by the raters due to subjectivity and individual variation. However, because this was a classroom-based study, we have relied on the teachers' corrections to grant it ecological validity. In this regard, more research is needed to explore the grading system of written tasks.

Furthermore, the originality and broad scope of the present study, involving the operationalization of pragmatic competence in terms of FA, entailed limitations regarding the number of dimensions addressed. We have implemented the original rating scale by Kuiken and Vedder (2015), and we have analyzed FA in terms of coherence, cohesion, content, task requirements, and compressibility measures. Future research analyzing additional measures, such as sociopragmatic aspects of written discourse may shed light on other dimensions of language performance.

An additional limitation of the present study concern learners' language background, since we have only taken into consideration the language in which participants receive instruction; that is English. It needs to be acknowledged that we have not considered other languages in which learners may receive instruction, such as Catalan and Spanish. For this reason, further research should take into account the presence of other languages in the EMI classroom in order to gain an understanding of the nature of communication in this context and the effect of other languages on pragmatic outcomes in English as an additional language. In fact, this would add a potential new dimension to emerging research on multilingual pragmatics.

Moreover, in this longitudinal investigation, a post-test or delayed post-

test on language proficiency were not administered. The study employs a pre-test-post-test-delayed-post-test design with the aim of examining changes in learners' FA over an academic year. However, when analyzing the effect of language proficiency, no post-test or delayed post-test were administered due to certain classroom-based university research limitations, such as optional attendance, subgroups of students, and lack of time. While our idea was to explore the effect of language proficiency on learners' pragmatic performance and not language gains over the academic year, this is an area that further research should address in order to achieve a clearer view on learners' linguistic progress in the EMI setting.

Finally, the last limitation of the study is related to the nature of the data gathered. This includes the language background questionnaire provided to learners at the beginning of the study, in which they had to report information about their previous language experiences abroad, operationalized as length of stay. We acknowledge that participants self-reported the amount of days spent abroad and that this information may not be 100% valid in order to establish generalizations.

In conclusion, despite the limitations mentioned above, the present study has contributed to further understanding pragmatic learning in the EMI setting. It is the first longitudinal study analyzing the effect of intensity of exposure to EMI, language proficiency and previous language experiences on students' FA. In this sense, we have taken a holistic approach in order to analyze pragmatic competence from a much broad perspective. The present study lends support to previous research evidencing the complexity of pragmatic learning in the EMI setting (Ament & Pérez-Vidal, 2015; Ament et al., 2016; Butler & Castellon-Wellington, 2000; Byuen et al., 2011; Chen, 2014; Joe, 2010; Kang, 2005; Kym & Hyum, 2014; Martí-Arnándiz, 2008; Usó-Juan, 2006), and suggests some pedagogical implications directly derived from our findings. These are discussed in the next section.

9.3 Pedagogical implications

The main finding of the present study is that, in the EMI context, pragmatic learning can be described as a complex dynamic system (Ament & Pérez-Vidal, 2015; Ament et al., 2016; Martí-Arnándiz, 2008; Usó-Juan, 2006; Salaberri & Sánchez, 2015; Taguchi, 2012; Taguchi et al., 2015). During the process of learning pragmatics in the EMI context, some issues have been shown to have an influence. Among these, the present study has pointed out the following: (i) intensity of exposure to English, and (ii) level of proficiency.

Since, on the one hand, intensity of exposure to English influences pragmatic learning trajectories, and on the other hand, level of proficiency seems to influence pragmatic performance, two pedagogical implications may be pointed out. Firstly, the present study has revealed the importance of designing EMI programs with higher intensities of exposure to English at the university level (Ament et al., 2016). Secondly, some pedagogical innovations are needed when we teach through English. Dealing with instruction, in their construct of teachers' proficiency, Freeman et al. (2015) highlight the need to reevaluate the role of teachers' proficiency across instructional settings. In this sense, an important aspect that needs to be taken into account is teacher training in the EMI setting. From a pedagogical point of view, it is worth noting that revising the linguistic policies of such programs, i.e. teachers' linguistic requirements, is needed. This does not require a dramatic and potentially unattainable change in English-mediated education programs but rather a different focus in order to ensure the quality of such programs. Parallel to this, institutional policies and EMI coordinators could consider the introduction of minimum linguistic requirements for students to be able to enroll in these educational programs and achieve an adequate learning process.

Dealing with the area of pragmatics, an important pedagogical implication can be drawn from the present study: learners can learn pragmatics incidentally; in other words, it is possible to learn TL pragmatic features without a deliberate

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attempt to do so (Takimoto, 2013).

In conclusion, the fundamental pedagogical contribution of this study is that it provides evidence supporting the fact that learners can benefit from EMI programs. The benefits of instruction to enhance learners' pragmatic awareness and performance in the classroom have been addressed in ESL contexts, but this study deals with the benefits of EMI for pragmatic learning. Findings from the present study might shed light on the benefits of incidental learning for teaching pragmatics in the EMI context.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A. Background information and Stay abroad questionnaire

QUESTIONNAIRE ON PREVIOUS LANGUAGE EXPERIENCES ABROAD

NAME: _____

SURNAME: _____

Hello! As you already know, we are interested in your level of English and your previous experiences in English speaking countries. To this end, we would appreciate if you could take some time to answer the following questions. Please, be as open as possible in providing your responses. We recommend you not to spend too much time pondering each answer. Remember! Be sincere! They will corroborate your experiences and your level of English in an interview if you are offered an internship in the company. We recommend you to complete the questionnaire in 15 minutes. **Thank you and good luck!**

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Home Country:

Mother tongue:

Mother's nationality:

Father's nationality:

Language/s I use at home:

QUESTIONNAIRE ON PREVIOUS LANGUAGE EXPERIENCES ABROAD

ACADEMIC INFORMATION

1 How long have you been learning English in formal instruction (school, high school)?
_____ (months, years)

2 Have you attended English schools and high schools before entering the University? Yes _____
No _____. If so, for how long? Please, specify the school years and the school:

3 Have you ever studied a subject, that is to say, content, through English?
Yes _____ No _____
If so, please specify:
Maths _____ Geography _____ Biology _____ Chemistry _____ History _____ Music _____
Physical Education _____
Others, please specify _____

4 Have you ever attended language private classes (academies, language centers)? _____ If so,
for how long (months, years)? _____
Why?(Personal achievement, reinforcement) _____

5 How many languages do you speak/use? _____ Please, specify.
I speak/use _____, _____, _____, _____, _____,

QUESTIONNAIRE ON PREVIOUS LANGUAGE EXPERIENCES ABROAD

LANGUAGE USE

6 In which of the following contexts do you use English in your home country?

- ☐ At University
- ☐ At work
- ☐ At home
- ☐ At private lessons/ language schools
- ☐ With friends
- ☐ I do not use English in my home country
- ☐ Other, please specify _____

*If you do not use English, please do not answer question number 7.

7 Specifically, do you conduct any of the following activities in English?

- ☐ Watch TV/videos
- ☐ Study from notes
- ☐ Look for information
- ☐ Talk with friends
- ☐ Talk to professors
- ☐ Official/Private schools of languages
- ☐ Meet new people
- ☐ Listen to music/radio
- ☐ Read books/magazines/newspapers
- ☐ Other, please specify _____

QUESTIONNAIRE ON PREVIOUS LANGUAGE EXPERIENCES ABROAD

LANGUAGE USE (II)

Before continuing, please answer the following question:

Have you ever been to English speaking countries*?

***REMEMBER:** we do not only consider English-speaking countries as such (England, Australia) but also countries where you had to use English to communicate (Germany, Austria).

☐ Yes

☐ No

If the answer is **NO**, you have already finished this questionnaire. Thank you!

If the answer is **YES**, you are now encouraged to go on with the questionnaire in order to know your previous language experiences. There are 10 questions and a brief conclusion in the questionnaire. Please, complete them according to your previous experience/s abroad.

QUESTIONNAIRE ON PREVIOUS LANGUAGE EXPERIENCES ABROAD

PREVIOUS LANGUAGE EXPERIENCES

QUESTIONS

1 How many times have you been abroad?

0 ___ / 1 ___ / 2 ___ / 3 ___ / 4 ___ / 5 ___ More than five? Please, specify

State the name of the countries and the length of the stays (e.g. 3 days, 2 weeks, 1 month.):

	Country	Length	Reason for the stay (holidays, job, post, English course, exchange)
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			

More, please specify _____

QUESTIONNAIRE ON PREVIOUS LANGUAGE EXPERIENCES ABROAD

PREVIOUS LANGUAGE EXPERIENCES (II)

- 2 Did you meet English speakers? (we understand by English speakers people who use English to communicate)

___ Yes ___ No

- 3 How often did you use English?

___ Most of the time ___ Quite often ___ Hardly ever ___ Never

- 4 Did you study English in formal instruction (, university, high school, language schools, job sessions, private classes)?

___ Yes ___ No

If so, please specify:

Setting (university, school, job):

Classes, sessions, seminars per week:

Number of lessons: _____

Total amount of hours: _____

Length of the lessons, language practice (2 weeks, 1 month): _____

Did you use English?

___ Most of the time ___ Quite often ___ Hardly ever ___ Never

QUESTIONNAIRE ON PREVIOUS LANGUAGE EXPERIENCES ABROAD

PREVIOUS LANGUAGE EXPERIENCES (III)

5 Did you work while you were abroad?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If so, please specify:

☐ Full time

☐ Part time

☐ Less than part time

Kind of job: _____

Days and hours worked per week:

Number of days: _____

Total amount of hours: _____

Length of the job (2 weeks, 1 month): _____

Did you use English at work?

☐ Most of the time

☐ A little bit

☐ Little

☐ No

6 How often did you?

1. Very often 2. Often

3. Sometimes 4. Seldom

5. Never

☐ Read books/ newspapers

☐ Listen to the radio/music

☐ Watch television/videos/films

☐ Go to the theatre

☐ Write emails or letters

☐ Ask for information

☐ Other English learning activities, please specify:

QUESTIONNAIRE ON PREVIOUS LANGUAGE EXPERIENCES ABROAD

PREVIOUS LANGUAGE EXPERIENCES (IV)

7 Relationships:

How often did you carry out any of the following activities in your leisure time during your stay abroad?

1. Very often 2. Often 3. Sometimes 4. Seldom 5. Never

- ___ Studying, doing class work of any sort of work in English on your own
- ___ Working
- ___ Studying with someone else
- ___ Being with English-speaking people in general
- ___ Being with English-speaking friends
- ___ Being with friends of a variety of nationalities who spoke English
- ___ Having a love relationship with an English speaker

8 Where did you stay?

___ Hotel ___ Apartment ___ Residence ___ Home-stay

9 In what ways did you try to improve your English?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

QUESTIONNAIRE ON PREVIOUS LANGUAGE EXPERIENCES ABROAD

PREVIOUS LANGUAGE EXPERIENCES (V)

10 Self-assessment

Write one number from 0 (no satisfaction) to 5 (great satisfaction).

I am more confident in English than I was before traveling abroad _____

I think that going abroad is highly beneficial to improve English _____

I have improved my English skills _____

Thank you again **for your collaboration**

APPENDIX B. English Studies degree task

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Welcome to Harvard University.

Harvard University, which is based in Cambridge and Boston, Massachusetts, is devoted to excellence in teaching, learning, and research, and to developing leaders in many disciplines who make a difference globally. Established in 1636, Harvard is the oldest institution of higher education in The United States aimed at enhancing teaching and research in order to push the boundaries of human knowledge.

Despite having more than 2,400 faculty members coming from across the country and all over the world, Harvard University still looks for candidates who bring a diverse wealth of knowledge in order to have a friendly and supportive multicultural team. For this reason, we would like to recruit young Spanish students and make use of their great potential to teach Spanish as a foreign language while offering them a unique experience when conducting their internships as well as the possibility of becoming a member of our team.

In the process of selecting the 25 best candidates, we are interested in your previous experiences abroad, your level of English and your motivations to join our team. In order to have this information, we provide you an English Proficiency test, a questionnaire on previous language experiences and a letter to express your interests and motivations.

There are three main stages in this process of application. When we receive all your information, our Corporate Human Resources team will examine it in detail. If the main requirements are met, you will be asked to write another motivation letter for the Admission team and a final one for the President's team. **This motivation letter must be 250 words long.**

If your letter is selected, you will be notified in order to make an interview appointment to know all the details of the internship process. We hope to meet you soon.

Good luck!

HARVARD
UNIVERSITY

MOTIVATION LETTER

Name and Surname:

Please, remember that the motivation letter must be 130-150 words long.
You have 25 minutes to plan, write and revise your composition.
You are not allowed to use your phones or ask your professor/classmates for help.

APPENDIX C. Biotechnology degree task

CSIC

CONSEJO SUPERIOR DE INVESTIGACIONES CIENTÍFICAS

Welcome to the Spanish Council of Research,

The Spanish National Research Council (CSIC) is the largest public institution dedicated to research in Spain and the third largest in Europe. Belonging to the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness, its main objective is to develop and promote research that will help bring about scientific and technological progress, and it is prepared to collaborate with Spanish and foreign entities in order to achieve this aim.

Despite having more than 15,000 professionals, of whom more than 3,000 are researchers and the same number again are doctors and scientists who are still training, we are still expanding our horizons in order to have a friendly and supportive multicultural team. For this reason, we would like to recruit young Spanish students and make use of their great potential to teach Spanish as a foreign language while offering them a unique experience when conducting their internships as well as the possibility of becoming a member of our team.

In the process of selecting the 25 best candidates, we are interested in your previous experiences abroad, your level of English and your motivations to join our team. In order to have this information, we provide you an English Proficiency test, a questionnaire on previous language experiences and a letter to express your interests and motivations.

There are three main stages in this process of application. When we receive all your information, our Corporate Human Resources team will examine it in detail. If the main requirements are met, you will be asked to write another motivation letter for the Admission team and a final one for the President's team. This motivation letter must be 250 words long.

If your letter is selected, you will be notified in order to make an interview appointment to know all the details of the internship process.

We hope to meet you soon.

MOTIVATION LETTER

Name and Surname:

Please, remember that the motivation letter must be 130-150 words long.

You have 25 minutes to plan, write and revise your composition.

You are not allowed to use your phones or ask your professor/classmates for help.

APPENDIX D. Economics degree task

EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK
EUROSYSTEM

Welcome to the European Central Bank.

The European Central Bank (ECB) is the central bank of the 19 European Union countries that have adopted the euro. It is thus an official EU institution at the heart of the Eurosystem as well as the Single Supervisory Mechanism for banking supervision. Our main task is to serve the people of Europe by safeguarding and maintaining price stability while preserving the purchasing power of the single currency.

Despite having more than 2600 professionals working in our central office in Frankfurt, we are still expanding our horizons in order to have a friendly and supportive multicultural team. For this reason, we would like to recruit young Spanish students and make use of their great potential to teach Spanish as a foreign language while offering them a unique experience when conducting their internships as well as the possibility of becoming a member of our team.

In the process of selecting the 25 best candidates, we are interested in your previous experiences abroad, your level of English and your motivations to join our team. In order to have this information, we provide you an English Proficiency test, a questionnaire on previous language experiences and a letter to express your interests and motivations.

There are three main stages in this process of application. When we receive all your information, our Corporate Human Resources team will examine it in detail. If the main requirements are met, you will be asked to write another motivation letter for the Admission team and a final one for the President's team. This motivation letter must be 250 words long.

If your letter is selected, you will be notified in order to make an interview appointment to know all the details of the internship process. We hope to meet you soon.

Good luck!

EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK
EUROSYSTEM

MOTIVATION LETTER

Name and Surname:

Please, remember that the motivation letter must be 130-150 words long.

You have 25 minutes to plan, write and revise your composition.

You are not allowed to use your phones or ask your professor/classmates for help.

APPENDIX E. Guidelines for semi-structured pre-test interviews

Stays abroad

1. Background information: When did you go? English use in target country (home, holidays, academic stays) / Why did you decide to go there? / What did you think about that culture before going? / Why did you decide to stay in a hotel / apartment / residence?

2. English use (interaction with English speakers): British or American English? (use of English on a daily basis) / Contact with English speakers while abroad / Did you make many friends? Are they English native speakers? / Did you have enough opportunities to practice English? / Did you engage in activities? Which ones? / Where did you find the most opportunities to practice your English?

3. Adjustment: Did you have any difficulties adjusting to the culture? / What did you like the most about the target culture? And the least? / Did you have opportunities to use English? / What did you like about life in the target country? And the least? / Did your view about that culture change after being there?

4. Outcomes of stays abroad: What did you gain from the stay? / Did you improve your English skills? / Do you feel you have learned? / Will you go abroad again? / Would you like to go to the same place? / Would you like to stay longer? / Will you continue learning English here in Spain? / Would you recommend other students to go abroad? / If so, for how long?

EMI experience

1. Goal of enrollment: Why did you decide to enroll in an EMI program? / What do you expect to gain from it (academically, personally, socially)? / Why do you think EMI education is important? / Why do you want to take the subjects in English? / Do you think you will improve your English skills? / Do you expect to have any difficulties adjusting to the EMI program?

2. English Use (interaction with professors and other students): Do you expect to use English on a daily basis in the classroom? / Do you think your teachers will use English all the time? / Would you like to interact with your classmates in English? Spanish? Catalan? / Would you like your professors to be native English speakers? Why? Why not? / Do you think the exams will be performed in English? And the written assignments?

APPENDIX F. Guidelines for semi-structured delayed post-test interviews

1. Outcomes of the EMI experience: What have you gained from the EMI experience? / Would you recommend your friends to enroll in EMI courses? Why? Why not? / Do you want to continue in the EMI program? / Did you improve your English skills? / Was it easier or more difficult than you expected? / Are you satisfied with the experience?

2. English use in the academic setting: Did you use English in the classroom (students, professors)? / Did you have opportunities to practice English? / Skills (speaking, listening, writing, reading) / Did professors use English in the classroom? And outside? How often? / Did you understand their explanations in English? / Were they proficient in the language? / Language of assessment (presentations, assignments, office hours) / Was English an obstacle for your academic achievement?

3. Adjustment: Did you have any difficulties adjusting to the context (socially, academically, personally)? / What did you like the most about the EMI classroom? And the least? / Did you have opportunities to use English? / What did you like about the experience? And the least? / Has your view about EMI changed after one academic year?

4. Suggestions for future EMI programs: Are there any improvements you would like to suggest that we make in the EMI program?

APPENDIX G. Can-do scale employed in the present study

As part of the study, we would like to ask you to judge your self-perceived English ability. Please read each description carefully and circle the appropriate number to indicate whether, at the present time, you would be able to carry out each task “quite easily” (3), “with some difficulty” (2), or “with great difficulty” (1). Circle only one response for each task.

Situation

1 I can give the current date (month, day, year) in English.	1	2	3
2 I can order a simple meal in a restaurant in English.	1	2	3
3 I can ask for directions on the street in English.	1	2	3
4 I can buy clothes in a department store in English.	1	2	3
5 I can introduce myself in social situations, and use appropriate greetings and leave-taking expressions in English.	1	2	3
6 I can talk about my favorite hobby at some length in English.	1	2	3
7 I can describe my present job, studies, or other major life activities in English.	1	2	3
8 I can explain what I did last weekend at some length in English.	1	2	3
9 I can explain what I plan to be doing 5 years from now at some length in English.	1	2	3
10 I can sustain everyday conversation in very polite style in English with a person much older than I am.	1	2	3
11 I can sustain everyday conversation in casual style English with my native-English-speaking friend.	1	2	3
12 I can describe the educational system of my own country in some detail in English.	1	2	3
13 I can state and support with reasons my position on a conversational topic (for example, cigarette smoking) in English.	1	2	3
14 I can describe the role played by Japanese business corporations in the world market.	1	2	3

APPENDIX H. WTC scale employed in the present study

Below are 20 situations in which a person might choose to communicate or not to communicate. Presume you have completely free choice. Indicate the percentage of times you would choose to communicate in each type of situation. Indicate in the space at the left of the item what percent of the time you would choose to communicate. (0 = Never to 100 = Always)

Situation

—%	1	Talk with a service station attendant.
—%	2	Talk with a physician.
—%	3	Present a talk to a group of strangers.
—%	4	Talk with an acquaintance while standing in line.
—%	5	Talk with a salesperson in a store.
—%	6	Talk in a large meeting of friends.
—%	7	Talk with a police officer.
—%	8	Talk in a small group of strangers.
—%	9	Talk with a friend while standing in line.
—%	10	Talk with a waiter/waitress in a restaurant.
—%	11	Talk in a large meeting of acquaintances.
—%	12	Talk with a stranger while standing in line.
—%	13	Talk with a secretary.
—%	14	Present a talk to a group of friends.
—%	15	Talk in a small group of acquaintances.
—%	16	Talk with a garbage collector.
—%	17	Talk in a large meeting of strangers.
—%	18	Talk with a spouse (or girl/boyfriend).
—%	19	Talk in a small group of friends.
—%	20	Present a talk to a group of acquaintances.

APPENDIX I. Ratings scales employed in the present study

Coherence: Is the text coherent (e.g. organization, structure, topic, structure)?

0	1	2	3	4	5
The text is <i>not at all coherent</i> . Unrelated progressions and coherence break are very common. The writer does not use any anaphoric device. It does not have global sense.	The text is <i>scarcely</i> coherent. The writer often uses unrelated progressions; when coherence is achieved it is often done through repetitions. Only a few anaphoric references are used. There are some coherence breaks. It is really difficult to reconstruct its global sense.	The text is <i>somewhat coherent</i> . Unrelated progressions and/or repetitions are frequent. More than two sentences in a row can have the same subject (even if the subject is understood). Some anaphoric devices are used. There can be a few coherence breaks. It is possible to reconstruct its global sense with some difficulty.	The text is <i>coherent</i> . Unrelated progressions are somewhat rare, but the writer sometimes replies on repetitions to achieve coherence. A sufficient number of anaphoric devices is used. There may be some coherence breaks. The text has global sense.	The text is <i>very coherent</i> : when the writer introduces a new topic, it is usually done by using connectives phrases. Repetitions are very infrequent. Anaphoric devices are numerous. There are no coherence breaks. Its global sense can easily be appreciated.	The writer ensures <i>extreme coherence</i> by integrating new ideas in the text with connectives or connective phrases. Anaphoric devices are used regularly. There are a few incidences of unrelated progressions and no coherence breaks. The text has a complete and total global sense.

Cohesion: Is the text cohesive (e.g. conjunctions, linking chunks, verbal constructions)?

0	1	2	3	4	5
The text is <i>not at all cohesive</i> . Connectives are hardly ever used and ideas are unrelated.	The text is <i>not very cohesive</i> . Ideas are not linked by connectives, which are rarely used.	The text is <i>somewhat cohesive</i> . Some connectives are used, but they are mostly conjunctions.	The text is <i>cohesive</i> . The writer makes good use of connectives, sometimes not limiting this to conjunctions.	The text is <i>very cohesive</i> and ideas are well linked by adverbial and/or verbal connectives.	The structure of the text is <i>extremely cohesive</i> thanks to a skillful use of connectives (especially linking chunks, verbal constructions and adverbials), often used to describe relationships between ideas.

Comprehensibility: How much effort is required to understand text purpose and ideas?

0	1	2	3	4	5
The text is <i>not at all comprehensible</i> . Ideas and purposes are unclearly stated and the efforts of the reader to understand the text are ineffective.	The text is <i>scarcely comprehensible</i> . Its purposes are not clearly stated and the reader struggles to understand the ideas of the writer. The reader has to guess most of the ideas and purposes.	The text is <i>somewhat comprehensible</i> . Some sentences are hard to understand at a first reading. A second reading helps to clarify the purposes of the text and the ideas conveyed, but some doubts persist.	The text is <i>comprehensible</i> . Only a few sentences are unclear but are understood, without too much effort, after a second reading.	The text is <i>easily comprehensible</i> and reads smoothly. Comprehensibility is not an issue.	The text is very <i>easily comprehensible</i> and highly readable. The ideas and the purpose are clearly stated.

Content: Is the number of information units provided in the text adequate and relevant?

0	1	2	3	4	5
The number of ideas is not at all <i>adequate</i> and insufficient and the ideas are unrelated to each other.	The number of ideas is <i>scarcely</i> adequate and the ideas lack consistency.	The number of ideas is <i>somewhat adequate</i> , even though they are not very consistent.	The number of ideas is <i>adequate</i> and they are sufficiently consistent.	The number of ideas is <i>very adequate</i> and they are very consistent to each other.	The number of ideas is <i>extremely adequate</i> and they are very consistent to each other.

Task requirements: Have the tasks requirements been fulfilled successfully (e.g. genre, speech acts, register)?

0	1	2	3	4	5
<i>None</i> of the questions and the requirements of the task have been answered.	<i>Some (less than half)</i> of the questions and the requirements have been answered.	<i>Approximately half</i> of the questions and requirements of the task have been answered.	<i>Most (more than half)</i> of the questions and requirements of the task have been answered.	<i>Almost all</i> the questions and the requirements of the task have been answered.	<i>All</i> the questions and the requirements of the task have been answered.

APPENDIX J. Average scores for FA and English proficiency at T1, T2 and T3