Pragmatic variables in role-play design for the context validity of assessing interactional competence

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Assessment task design influences the elicitation of targeted linguistic and communicative demands by creating the conditions under which the task is performed. Through the task design, plausible language use contexts are also created. In this study, I examined the role of pragmatic variables in role-play design to ensure the context validity of assessment of interactional competence. Using conversation analysis (CA), I qualitatively analyzed high-level L2 English learners' performances elicited from five role-plays that measure pragmatic abilities in interaction. I examined how the learners oriented to the pragmatic variables embedded in the role-plays. The elicited role-play performances shared action sequences (e.g., opening) and generic interactional features. However, the learners utilized sequential organizations and grammatical resources differently to accomplish context-specific actions. For example, the length of turns tended to be longer and sequential organizations were more extended when the learners were engaged in the role-plays of formal pragmatic functions with an interlocutor with more social distance. The learners utilized diverse grammatical formats in a non-uniform manner specific to sequential positions of pragmatic actions. I discuss the importance of assessment task design for context validity and eliciting evidence of interactional competence. Further, I argue how CA's analytical attention to real-time details of interaction captures the evidence of interactional competence.

Key words: context validity, role-play design, interactional competence, pragmatics, CA

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Introduction

The currently expanding body of research on second language (L2) interactional competence (IC) is, by-and-large, informed by the rich theoretical frameworks of Conversation Analysis (CA) and ethnomethodology (Hall & Pekarek Doehler, 2011), serving as the foundations for a construct definition of IC for assessment. Notable development of various assessment practices of IC has been observed in recent years (e.g., Galaczi & Taylor, 2018; Plough et al., 2018). This study examines ways in which assessment task design influences the elicitation of an intended scope of IC. When designing assessment tasks, we are concerned with the extent to which a test elicits learners' knowledge and abilities in a particular language use domain. Accordingly, the test format plays a fundamental role in aligning an intended construct definition with students' language performances to be elicited from assessment tasks. In relation to the theoretically-rich and multi-dimensional nature of IC, the issue of how assessment task design allows measurement of context-specific achievements is instrumental to ensure construct representation. To this end, this study focuses on a range of pragmatic variables used to design role-plays intended to ensure meaningful contexts by analyzing ways in which L2 English learners orient to the pragmatic variables. In order to achieve this goal, selected high-level role-play performances are sequentially analyzed using CA.

Context validity and assessment task design

Testing is essentially concerned with evidence-based validity in terms of *what* and *how* we assess (Chapelle et al., 2008; Weir, 2005). In terms of *what* we assess with regard to IC, this study focuses on the construct of L2 learners' abilities to accomplish pragmatic actions jointly in organized sequences as part of members' interactional competence (Kasper, 2006). Being pragmatically appropriate in spoken interaction requires various linguistic and interactional resources and procedures, including, but not limited to, turn-taking, sequential competence, and grammar for interaction. Speakers also need to have good control of linguistic resources while attending to mappings of linguistic form, meaning, and function that are appropriate for the sociocultural context (Taguchi & Roever, 2017). With this conceptual basis, CA contributes to expanding the analytical objects of pragmatic competence in spoken interaction (Mori & Nguyen, 2019). Competent speakers accomplish actions in various sequences of the conversation while utilizing interactional resources, such as organizing turns in a context-fitting manner. IC plays a central role in pragmatic interaction.

The theoretical and empirical basis for the construct of IC is well-established. Recent renewed discussions of IC advance our understandings of the nature and diversity of the semiotic resources used in social interaction (e.g., Hall, 2018). However, the issue of *how*

we assess the targeted construct needs further attention, which directly relates to test design among other related assessment practices (e.g., developing rating criteria, rater training). Assessment tasks for IC should be representative of real-life situations and meaningful contexts. However, a testing situation will never be the same as a real-life situation. Considering that delineating the multi-dimensional scope of IC is closely dependent upon assessment tasks, an explicit understanding of how assessment tasks influence the elicitation of the intended scope of the construct is warranted. For this conceptual link, Weir (2005) emphasizes context validity, which is defined as,

> "concerned with the extent to which the choice of tasks in a test is representative of the larger universe of tasks of which the test is assumed to be a sample. This coverage relates to linguistic and interlocutor demands made by the task(s) as well as the conditions under which the task is performed arising from both the task itself and its administrative setting" (Weir, 2005, p. 19).

As noted in Weir's definition, assessment tasks are central to ensuring context validity. Weir emphasizes that context validity is a priori evidence collected before administering the test. Variables to consider to create plausible contexts when we design assessment tasks for IC include interlocutors, communicative functions, and settings. Since the construct definition for this study is grounded in L2 pragmatic research, this study draws on variables from pragmatic theories to create contexts for role-plays, which are further discussed in the next section of literature review.

Various test formats are available to measure IC, ranging from Oral Proficiency Interviews (e.g., Kasper & Ross, 2007), group speaking tasks (e.g., Gan, 2010; Lam, 2018), paired discussion tasks (e.g., Galaczi, 2014), and role-plays (e.g., Al-Gahtani & Roever, 2012, 2018; Youn, 2015), each with its own strengths and limitations. Of them, this study focuses on role-plays, which have been widely used due to their capacities to elicit learners' abilities to accomplish a range of social functions in interaction (Kasper & Rose, 2002). Well-designed role-plays are known to elicit learners' interactional competence in meaningful contexts (Al-Gahtani & Roever, 2012, 2018), especially as evidence suggests that participants orient to a normative turn-taking structure in role-play interaction (e.g., Nguyen, 2018). Despite its popularity, however, the authenticity of simulated role-play interaction has been questioned. Toward this, Stokoe (2013) contends that participants' previous experience with a range of situations can serve as a basis for recreating socially realistic conditions in role-plays. Therefore, just having learners play a certain role would not necessarily result in meaningful interaction. A systematic approach to creating meaningful contexts and eliciting an assessable scope of IC in relation to the construct definition is important. The extent to which variables included in the role-play task design impact the nature of elicited interactional competence needs further scrutiny. The

remaining question is how assessment tasks, in the case of role-plays in this study, influence elicited interactional and grammatical resources, and accordingly the degree to which the construct is represented. In the next section, empirical research, both quantitative and qualitative, on pragmatic variables in assessment task design is discussed.

The role of pragmatic variables in assessment

Creating meaningful contexts is one of the central concerns underlying the development of L2 pragmatic tests. For this, a range of contextual variables, informed by pragmatic theories, such as Searle's speech act theory (Searle, 1976) and politeness theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987), have been deliberately utilized (Kasper & Rose, 2002; Taguchi & Roever, 2017). Politeness theory conceptualizes three contextual variables: power difference between a speaker and a hearer, social distance, and absolute ranking of imposition. Speech act researchers have relied on these variables to examine how speakers choose to select diverse linguistic means and strategies to produce an intended pragmatic effect in the hearer depending on context. In their pioneering research on assessing L2 pragmatic competence, Hudson et al. (1992, 1995) systematically varied these pragmatic variables in eliciting various contexts in developing six prototype pragmatic measures: multiple-choice discourse completion tests (DCTs), open-ended written DCTs, oral DCTs, role-play, self-assessment for the DCT, self-assessment for role-play. For example, they manipulated the degree of the three contextual variables from politeness theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987) in three speech acts (request, refusal, apology), when developing the instruments. This way, their instruments represented a varying degree of context to elicit learners' distinct language use and pragmatic strategies. It should be noted that these variables not only ensured the necessary context in which learners' knowledge, skills, and functional use was being elicited but also generated a varying range of item difficulty to secure reliability. In other words, some items that entailed a specific set of pragmatic variables were more challenging for learners, as they required a higher level of pragmatic knowledge. For example, Hudson (2001) reported that apologies were scored relatively higher than other speech acts. This is explained by the highly formulaic nature of apologies that takes relatively less online processing. This finding has been consistently reported elsewhere as well, such as in Taguchi (2007).

The qualitative investigation of pragmatic interaction, particularly using CA, also reveals ways in which participants orient to context-specific pragmatic actions, which result in distinct sequential organizations. In the case of requests, the design of turns and selection of request formats are explained by the degree of a speaker's right to tell an interlocutor to do something (i.e., entitlement) and the extent to which a speaker expects an unknown factor which influences the grantability of the request (i.e., contingency) (Curl & Drew,

2008). For example, in the case of low entitlement, a speaker uses a *I wonder (if)* preface rather than imperative forms (Thompson et al., 2015). L2 learners' abilities to organize turns when making a request are different depending on their proficiency levels (Al-Gahtani & Roever, 2012). High-level learners prefaced their requests with pre-requests (e.g., *can I ask a question?*), which are preliminary turns that are placed before an actual request turn, while request turns found in low-level performance tended to be more direct. This finding indicates that L2 learners' abilities to organize turns at different performance levels need to be considered as key evidence for assessing IC.

Furthermore, CA findings help us understand how fluency operates in pragmatic interaction. Of various dimensions, fluency, from the speaker's viewpoint, refers to the ability to speak smoothly and easily with few pauses (De Jong, 2018). Thus, a lower occurrence of pauses is often associated with being more fluent. However, delays observed between and within turns function as a meaningful interactional resource in pragmatic interaction. For example, dispreferred actions, such as refusals, and disagreements, are not affiliative in terms of social solidarity, therefore involving between-turn delays, discourse markers, and an account to minimize the degree of disaffiliation (Pomerantz & Heritage, 2013). This indicates that delays between and within turns are interactionally meaningful rather than indicators of disfluency. Taken together, CA research allows us to examine turn-by-turn details of pragmatic interaction, as well as to identify key resources, both interactional and linguistic, for an empirical basis for assessing IC. Extending CA's analytical strengths to the issue of assessment task design, this study investigates turn-by-turn details of how learners orient to the pragmatic variables in role-play assessment interaction.

The present study

The purpose of this study is to examine how a range of pragmatic variables (e.g., speech act, relationship between interlocutors, formality of pragmatic functions) in role-play tasks impact the nature of elicited interactional and linguistic resources in the context of pragmatic speaking assessment using CA. The following research questions were investigated.

1. What interactional resources do high-level L2 English learners utilize to manage pragmatic role-play assessment interaction?
2. What grammatical resources do high-level L2 English learners utilize to manage pragmatic role-play assessment interaction?

Methods

Data overview

The data for this study came from a database of 102 transcribed learners' role-play performances in a larger study. The role-plays were developed to assess L2 learners' pragmatic interaction in a previous research project (Youn, 2015, see Appendix A), based on task-based pragmatic needs analysis conducted in an English for academic purpose setting (Youn, 2018). 102 L2 English learners at various proficiency levels with different first language backgrounds voluntarily completed the tasks. The learners' performances were scored by trained 12 raters using analytical rating categories that reflect diverse dimensions of L2 pragmatic interaction.

Participants

Test takers

In the larger study, 102 L2 English learners voluntarily participated. They were either graduate or undergraduate students enrolled in public universities in North America. Their TOEFL® iBT scores ranged from 65 to 111 (approximately in the upper B1 to lower C1 CEFR band). For the purpose of this study, 13 high-level learners' performances, whose TOEFL® scores were higher than 90, were selected from the corpus to examine the effect of task design while controlling learners' levels. Furthermore, trained raters' scores from a previous study (Youn, 2015) were considered in selecting the participants. This way, the data in this study represent high-level learners in terms of both language proficiency and pragmatic interaction.

Interlocutors

For the role-play scenario with a professor, four native English speakers familiar with university-level teaching participated as professors. The test takers took the role of university students. The professor interlocutors were trained to standardize their conversations with the test takers.

Raters

The learners' performances were scored by 12 trained raters using analytical rating criteria (See Appendix B). Seven were native English speakers and five raters were non-native English speakers, who had at least two to five years of university-level teaching experience. The raters maintained internal consistency with different degrees of severity (see Youn, 2015 for more details).

Role-plays

Table 1 lists the five role-play tasks (see Appendix A), consisting of professor-student and classmate-classmate conversations in university-level contexts. For the classmate role-plays, two learners were paired to complete them. For the professor role-plays, each learner met with the professor interlocutor to complete the three sub-situations.

Table 1. Descriptions of role-plays

Role-plays	Description	Pragmatic variables
Role-play with a classmate working on a class project (RP1)	RP1-1: Deciding on an agreeable meeting time when the third group member is absent RP1-2: Deciding on a meeting mode (face-to-face vs. online discussion) to discuss an upcoming group project	· Primary speech acts: Agreement, disagreement · Degree of imposition: neutral · Relationship between interlocutors: neutral · Contingencies: class schedules, preference of meeting mode, the third member Tom's absence
Role-play with a professor during the office hour (RP2)	RP2-1: Requesting a recommendation letter for scholarship application with a short due date RP2-2: Requesting additional advising time to discuss a class project RP2-3: Responding to a professor's request to change a presentation schedule	· Primary speech acts: request, refusal · Degree of imposition: high · Relationship between interlocutors: high · Contingencies: professor's schedule, professor's request

The classmate role-plays were distinctly different from the professor role-plays in terms of formality, speech act, the degree of imposition, and the relationship between interlocutors. These pragmatic variables were utilized to create varying degrees of formality and communicative demands. Each role-play situation included an intended primary speech act (e.g., request, refusal). At the same time, the elicited role-play interaction entailed various action sequences (e.g., opening, closing) that naturally arise from participants' orientations to natural interaction. In terms of designing the test, an open role-play design was adopted (Kasper & Rose, 2002), in which interactional outcomes were not imposed on the participants and contingencies were embedded in the role-play cards given to each participant to ensure some degree of authenticity. For example, when scheduling the time, the contingencies included each speaker's schedule which was not shared; when discussing the meeting mode, each participant was allowed to express his or her own preference on how they want to meet. Furthermore, in order to achieve standardization among the participants, each speaker had equal opportunities for contributing to the role-play interaction in terms of initiating, shifting, and developing topics, as specified in the role-play cards (see Appendix A). For example, when two learners completed the two role-plays, one of them initiated the conversation in the first

role-play (i.e., negotiating the agreeable meeting time); the other had an opportunity to initiate the conversation in the second role-play (i.e., negotiating a meeting mode). This way, the dominance of one speaker during the role-play interaction was minimized (see Appendix C for an example of a full transcript of a role-play interaction).

Data Analysis

The methodology employed in this study is CA. The audio-recorded test-takers' role-play performances were transcribed following the Atkinson and Heritage (1984) transcription style (see Appendix D). The advanced-level learners' data in the database were analyzed focusing on fundamental interactional organizations (e.g., sequence organization, preference organization) and explored for emerging patterns in the different role-play scenarios.

Results

This section is organized in terms of three distinct features that collectively characterize the construct (action sequence, interactional fluency, linguistic resource). It should be noted that the following sections are not exclusive of each other. Representative extracts are provided to substantiate the findings. Each extract represents a different learner, noted with each participant's unique ID. The extracts represent 13 participants' performances, except for Extracts 7 and 8 which feature the same participants.

Action sequence: The case of opening sequence

Action sequences were closely tied with each role-play situation, affording every role-play interaction to consist of an opening sequence, a sequence that contains the pragmatic action specific to a role-play scenario, and a closing. Of them, this section focuses on opening sequences, which are omnipresent in terms of preparing the grounds for upcoming actions, but with distinct grammatical formats.

In the classmate role-plays, the learners, who acted out as classmates, first negotiated an agreeable meeting time for an upcoming group project without the third group member (Tom). P and J indicate Phoenix and Jessie, names given to two learners who completed the classmate role-play together. Extracts 1 and 2 show typical opening sequences that include pre-sequences before proposing the meeting time. Pre-sequences refer to the preliminary turns that come before a specific action (e.g., invitation, request) that initiate the possibility of the upcoming action (Schegloff, 2007).

Extract 1 (P: Phoenix, J: Jesse, ID69&70RP1-1, time negotiation with a classmate)

```
1  P: hi Jessie (.) [how are you
2  J:               [hi Phoenix
3  J: £yeah it's good£
4  P: hey ahm (0.4) ahm remember we have e:h article
5     presentation on Friday [about our project
6  J:                        [yeah
7  P: uh huh
8  P: a:hm I think we should meet up before the (0.4)
9     project presentations on Friday=
10 J: =yeah of course sounds good yeah=
```

Extract 2 (P: Phoenix, J: Jesse, ID99&ID100RP1-1, time negotiation with a classmate)

```
1  P: yeah hi Jessie↑
2     (0.6)
3  P: how's it going?
4  J: hey Phoenix hh[hh
5  P:               [hhh
6  P: so ah about the article presentation that's coming up
7     next week↑ (0.8) uh (0.4) .hh (.) do you- you have time
8     to discuss about it? I know Tom's not here today but .hh
9     I want to get ahead and start
10    (0.6)
11 P: so a:hm (0.3) if you're free some time tomorrow .hh
12    Thursday afternoon (.) that will be great↑
13    (1.0)
14 P: °what do you think°?
15 J: a:h I: a- actually I'm n:ot I won't be free tomorrow↑
16    (0.3) [or afternoon↑
```

In Extract 1, P first initiates a greeting exchange in line 1. Upon J's greeting turn, P then formulates the shared knowledge of an upcoming presentation in lines 4 and 5, which serve as a topic proffering sequence (Schegloff, 2007). Here, P prepares a ground for an upcoming action. P then launches a meeting proposal sequence using the modal verb *should* in line 8, which is endorsed by J in line 9. Extract 2 presents a similar sequential environment where a greeting sequence (lines 1 to 4) is followed by P's topic proffering sequence in lines 6 to 9 which entails a question and an explanation of Tom being absent. What is noteworthy is P's orientation to the contingency in the role-play situation (i.e., third member's absence) and the linguistic choice in a meeting proposal sequence, such as *want to*, orienting to the context and the shared responsibility as a classmate. After a short gap in line 10, P launches a *so*-prefaced turn in line 11. P orients to the absence of J's response by asking a question in line 14, followed by J's immediate response that contains hesitation and the evidence of misalignment due to unavailability (e.g., discourse marker *actually*). Although Extracts 1 and 2 slightly differ in terms of the alignment between P

and J, both extracts illustrate how P opens the conversation with a greeting sequence and a preliminary sequence that prepares an upcoming action.

Professor role-plays involved three sub-situations: (a) making a request for a recommendation letter, (b) requesting additional meeting time, and (c) refusing a professor's request. Extracts 3, 4, and 5 illustrate a typical opening sequence when they make a recommendation letter request to a professor.

Extract 3 (P: Professor, J: Jessie, ID46RP2-1, professor recommendation letter request)

```
J: hi
P: hi how are you
J: I'm good how are you?
P: good thank you what can I do for you today?
J: uhm I actually have uh uh uhm little of a
   big favor for you (.) [uhm (.) I'm: uh applying for this
P:                       [°mmhmm°
J: uhm department scholarship↑ (.) [and uhm I need a (.)
P:                                 [°mmhmm°
J: letter of recommendation and I was wondering if you
   are .hh uhm able to write one for me
   (0.8)
P: sure I'd be happy to write the letter for you=
```

Extract 4 (P: Professor, J: Jessie, ID30RP2-1, professor recommendation letter request)

```
P: hi
   (0.3)
J: oh Hi
P: come on in
J: hi professor how are you doing?
P: I'm okay how are you doing
J: I'm very goo↑d
P: °good good°
   (0.3)
J: mmm (0.4) so today I'm coming (0.3) uh actually I would
   like to ask you do me a favor?
P: yes
J: because now I'd like to apply the scholarship?
P: oh
J: yeah but it requires (0.4) professor's recommendation letter?
P: oh °okay°=
J: =so yeah if you can do me the favor I would be very (.)
   appreciative hh=
P: =of course
```

Extract 5 (P: Professor; J: Jesse, ID10RP2-1, professor recommendation letter request)

```
1  P: Hi
2  J: hi how are you?
3  P: I'm okay what can I do for you today=
4  J: =uhm I have a big favor to ask you
5  P: yes?
6  J: I'm thinking about applying for a scholarship↑
7     for international student[s↑ in our department↑ [so I
8  P:                          [uh huh↑                [mmm
9  J: wanted to write a letter of recommendation for me
10 P: oh↑ okay of course
11 J: oh
12    (0.4)
13 P: yes=
14 J: =would it be okay for you?
15 P: Yeah [yeah not a problem
```

Extracts 3 to 5 reveal recurrent opening sequences consisting of a greeting, a pre-request, and a request turn. The greeting exchange in lines 1 to 4 (Extract 3), lines 1 to 8 (Extract 4), and lines 1 to 3 (Extract 5) is first presented. Then, with the prefaces (e.g., *uh(m)*, *actually*), J launches the pre-sequence (lines 5-6 in Extract 3; lines 10-11 in Extract 4; lines 4-5 in Extract 5) before the main request action. This pre-sequence serves as an alert to the recipient that a request is to follow. Also, the pre-request turn creates room for J to explain the background information before launching a request sequence. By doing so, J orients to the higher degree of imposition involved in requesting a recommendation letter from a professor. In Extract 3, after a 0.8 second delay in line 12, P completes the adjacency pair by accepting J's request in line 13. Extract 4 also displays a similar sequential environment. In all extracts, J provides an explanation for the request. For example, in lines 6 to 9 in Extract 5, J explains the situation to a professor and prepares an upcoming request using various grammatical formats, such as present progressive (*I'm thinking*) and past tense (*I wanted*). P treats this as a request and launches a preferred response (i.e., acceptance) in line 10. But J still issues another confirmation sequence that is designed to seek an explicit answer from P in line 14. This post-expansion further confirms J's orientation to the lack of entitlement of the request without assuming the professor's availability. In all extracts, J uses quite diverse grammatical choices, including present progressives and bi-clausals (e.g., *I'm wondering if*). These extracts also illustrate the learners' orientation toward contextualizing the upcoming action by inserting sequences before and after the main request turn.

Interactional fluency

The evidence of participants' interactional fluency is found in features both within and between turns. However, depending on the role-play situation, the degree to which learners are engaged in the interaction is distinct in terms of the turn length, inter-turn, and between-turn delays. Such differences are associated with the formality of pragmatic

action in the role-play situation. Extracts 6 and 7 demonstrate various features of interactional fluency in the classmate role-play interaction on negotiating a meeting time.

Extract 6 (P: Phoenix, J: Jesse, ID69&70RP1-1, time negotiation with a classmate)

```
20 P: what about if we meet up (.) u:hm tomorrow morning?
21    (0.4) before ten am?
22 J: o:h tomorrow morning would be Wednesday?
23    (0.3)
24 P: yes↑
25 J: ah actually Wednesday I have a class nine to one↑
26 P: uh huh↑
27 J: so you also have a class ten to a:h one [a:h (.)
28 P:                                         [uh huh↑
29 J: I can meet you: after (.) ten o'clock yeah tomorrow
30    Wednesday .hh but (.) I wondering↑ you know so the
31    Tom is absent↑ [so (.) I mean I'm not sure he will
32 P:                [uh huh↑
33 J: be available tomorrow to meet after ten or not
34    (0.5)
35 P: [a:h
36 J: [that's why yeah (.) do you know (.) his uh phone
37    number or any [any contact?
38 P:               [yep
39    (0.3)
40 P: ahm (0.4) I'm friends with him on facebook so
41    I'[ll- I'll message him what if we do it on Wednesday
42 J:   [oh >okay okay<
43 P: after one (.) pm?
```

Extract 7 (P: Phoenix, J: Jesse, ID93&94RP1-1, time negotiation with a classmate)

```
38 P: my class is from ten to three so .hh before ten is it
39    okay?
40    (0.3)
41 J: yeah we can
42 P: okay so: how about (0.5) °ten°
43 J: .hh yeah let's a:h ah I actually have to leave for
44    class (.) soon↑ .hh ah I: (.) also think we have a
45    third (.) partner↑ (.) Tom↑
46 P: oh yeah [yeah
47 J:         [yeah so maybe: uh let's see a:hm we have (.)
48    negotiated ah for Thursday before ten am↑ (.) [on
49 P:                                                [okay
50 J: Friday from one to two .hh a:nd maybe I'll ask
51    the teacher for Tom's email and ahm email Tom .hh
52    a:hm and [see
53 P:          [oh thank you
```

In Extracts 6 and 7, both P and J actively orient to members' shared responsibility of deciding an agreeable meeting time. This is evident in various question formats with a rising intonation (e.g., *what about if we meet up* in line 20 Extract 6; *is it okay?* in line 38 Extract 7), the recipients' responses to the questions followed with little inter-turn delay, and several overlapping turns. It is noteworthy to observe the high-level of interactivity between two participants when negotiating an agreeable meeting time. Each turn serves

to seek schedule-related information, followed by either acknowledgement tokens or confirmation tokens. Thus, the turn length tends to be short (e.g., lines 25-26, Extract 6; lines 45-46, Extract 7), compared to the professor role-play interaction as seen in the extracts below. The conversation consists of multiple question-answer pairs. For example, in Extract 7, P in lines 38 to 39 proposes a specific time without an elaborate account, followed by a 0.3 second gap and J's confirmation in line 41. Another question-answer sequence immediately follows in lines 42 and 43. Here, the question turn in line 42 is relatively short without further explanation. No one treats this exchange as a departure from the normally expected sequential organization. Such interactivity continues until one of the learners orients to the contingency (i.e., the third member Tom's absence), which results in a slightly longer turn compared to previous sequences. In both Extracts 6 and 7, J acknowledges the uncertainty of the third member Tom's time availability after establishing the agreeable time between P and J (lines 29 to 33, Extract 6; lines 44 to 48, Extract 7), and thus instantiate a degree of contingency (Thompson et al., 2015). Various grammatical constructions that indicate a varying degree of uncertainty are used (e.g., *I'm not sure xx or not* in lines 31 to 33, Extract 6; *maybe xx let's see* in line 47, Extract 7). In both extracts, the recipient also orients to the contingency by coming up with solutions (lines 40 to 42, Extract 6; lines 50 to 52, Extract 7).

On the other hand, the features of interactional fluency in the professor role-plays, especially in the refusal role-play, play out differently. During the test administration, the learner was instructed to respond to the professor's question regarding a presentation schedule without expecting to hear the professor's request to change a presentation schedule. The role-play card did not specify what the learner was supposed to say, but contained a mid-term schedule in a different class. Thus, the learners typically refused the professor's request due to the schedule conflict, although some complied with the professor's request. Recurrent sequential environments are illustrated in Extracts 8 and 9. Extract 8 shows how the same learner (ID93) that appears in Extract 7 above is engaged in refusing the professor's request of changing a presentation schedule. Extract 8 presents how the learner orients to refusing as a dispreferred action in sequential organizations.

Extract 8 (P: Professor, J: Jessie, ID93RP2-3, professor refusal)

```
8  P: ahm I was wo↑ndering if maybe we could (.) bump up
9     your presentation to (.) next week (0.4) because
10    the student who is supposed to present next week
11    (0.4) is sick and she can't make it (0.4) so would
12    you be able to present next week↑ instead of two
13    weeks from now?
14    (0.6)
15 J: a:h (1.2) I thi↑nk (0.2) ahm actually I have eh a
16    mid-term exam next Friday↑ for my history class↑
17 P: uh huh
18 J: so: (0.9) u:hm (0.3) I was thinking about to
19    prepare it for next week↑ (0.6) and then after the
20    (.) history co- m- history mid-term↑ (0.4) I
21    would start present the (0.3) presentation for your
22    class (0.7) so next week will be a little bit↑ (1.4)
23    yeah maybe a little bit unconvenient to me↑
24 P: u:hm
25 J: I don't know if the schedule is very tied up↑
26 P: uh huh
27 J: if (0.3) you are really not convenient maybe I could
28    try but
29 P: uh huh
30 J: yeah I'd prefer to prepare my (0.4) history cl-
31    history mid-term next week
```

In lines 8 to 13, P (professor) initiates a lengthy request of changing the presentation scheduled with an explanation. After a 0.6 second gap in line 14, J displays the possibility of refusal with a preface (*a:h*) followed by an inter-turn 1.2 second pause, a discourse marker (*actually*), and an account in lines 15 to 23. It should be noted that J's turn in lines 18 to 23 is quite lengthy with inter-turn, between-turn delays, and detailed accounts. This is noticeably different from relatively short turns observed in Extract 7 that features the same learner (ID93). With P's neutral acknowledgement token in line 24, J further orients to the less desired nature of refusal by providing contingent details and the possibility of complying with the professor's request in subsequent turns (lines 25, 27) using if-clausal formats.

A similar sequential environment is also found in Extract 9. P launches a request sequence with an account. With a noticeable 0.9 second between-turn gap and hesitation markers (*uhm*, *actually*) in line 14, J formulates the inability of complying with the request in lines 14 to 20. Again, here this J's turn is noticeably long. J's refusal sequence includes an explicit account with various grammatical formats, *I wish I could but* and bi-clausal formats. In response to P's turn to find another solution in lines 21 to 22, J provides an explicit apology sequence in line 23.

Extract 9 (P: Professor, J: Jessie, ID44RP2-3, professor refusal)

```
P: but (.) the student who's supposed to (0.3) present
   next week is (0.3) very sick and unfortunately won't
   be able to do the presentation .hh so I was wondering
   if we could bump you up a week and have you present
   next week instead
   (0.9)
J: Uhm (0.7) .tsh actually I wish I could: but I will be
   really busy next week especially because I have uhm (0.8)
   I have a midterm exam next Friday for another class
P: mmm:
   (0.3)
J: so: uhm: (0.3) unfortunately I don't think I have
   extra time (0.5) to do: (0.7) the presentation earlier
P: mmkay (0.3) that's fine I'll go ahead and ask another
   student=
J: =okay (.) I'm sorry
P: okay
```

In sum, these extracts illustrate how the learners' orientation to the contexts and contingencies result in a different degree of interactional fluency. Extracts 6 and 7 illustrate how the same learner (ID93) organizes turns differently depending on the classmate and professor. It is not always expected to see that high-level learners use a longer turn with less frequent inter-turn and between-turn delays. A relatively short turn is also present if speakers are simply engaged in information-exchange sequences in a less formal conversation. On the other hand, as seen in Extracts 7 and 8, the high-level learners accomplish context-appropriate sequences by producing longer turns with normatively expected explanations (accounts) and by placing the turns after appropriate delays (Pomerantz & Heritage, 2013).

Grammatical resource: The case of if-clausal construction

In this section, I present additional extracts that demonstrate how the if-clausal construction is sequentially placed depending on the role-plays. The following extracts illustrate how the adverbial *if*-clausal construction is sequentially placed in the role-play interaction. They are found in diverse sequential organizations which serve a range of functions, such as displaying a sense of high-level imposition and conveying a hypothetical account to acknowledge an unknown factor. It should be noted that only a handful of cases of the if-clausal are identified in the entire database of classmate role-plays. This contrasts with the common if-clausal found in the professor role-plays among the high-level learners' performances.

Extract 10 (P: Professor, J: Jessie, ID101RP2-3, professor refusal)

```
7  J: a:hm (0.3) I was wondering >I'm I'm< applying for ahm
8     (0.5) department scholarship and I was wondering if
9     you could write a letter of recommenda-tion?
10 P: uh huh↑=
11 J: =though ahm: (1.0) I was s- (.) eh I should have
12    asked you earlier cause the deadline is in (.) one
13    week [from now (0.4) but a:hm (.) if you (0.2) could
14 P:      [uhm::
15 J: that'd be (0.3) great ahm=
16 P: =uh huh
17    (0.6)
18 J: but if you too busy that's (0.4) °I understand°
19    (0.6)
20 P: yea:h one wee:k >I'd be I'd be happy to write a r-<
21    a recommendation letter for you
```

In Extract 10, J first explains the situation and requests the letter using the *I wonder if*-clausal construction in lines 8 and 9. This *I wonder if* preface indicates J's lack of entitlement to the request. Such a grammatical construction indicates that the requester does not make any presumptions as he or she does not know whether this particular course of action is appropriate or not (Curl & Drew, 2008). Upon P's acknowledgement token *uh huh* with a rising intonation in line 10, J further provides additional information with regard to the short deadline in lines 11 to 13 which ends with another if-clausal construction (*if you (0.2) could*) in line 13. Here, the preferred response to J's request (granting the request) does not come immediately, as seen in P's acknowledgement token (*uh huh*). After a 0.6 second gap in line 17, J initiates another if-clause to acknowledge the possibility that the professor is being busy in line 18. Here, J prefaces this clause with *but*, displaying orientation to the delay. This post-expansion shows that J orients to the absence of an immediate confirmative response from P by inserting the if-clause. Such context-specific turn design illustrates both parties' recipient-design conducts. The use of if-clausal construction to acknowledge the hypothetical situation is also found in the refusal role-play with the professor in Extract 11.

Extract 11 (P: Professor, J: Jessie, ID61RP2-3, professor refusal)

```
6  P: ahm I was wondering <if you could move> your
7     presentation up to do it one week earlier↑ next week↑
8     (0.3) because the student who is supposed to present
9     next week↑ (0.3) has [gotten sick and won't be here
10 J:                      [yeah
11 P: at all
12    (0.5)
13 J: o↑h (0.8) I mean (0.4) I could try↑ but the thing is
14    that I have (0.2) eh midterm exam-↑ exam↑ that Friday↑
15 P: u:hm
16 J: and it's really difficult and I may have to study
17    really hard↑ so I'm not gonna have that much time
18    prepare the presentation↑ and (0.3) if I do it on
19    Friday it's n- it's not going to: look as good as it
20    should be (.) for next week
21 P: u:hm
22 J: so: (.) I dunno if there's any other student who
23    could do it↑ (.) that day?
24 P: yeah [that's fine I'll ask another student [to do it
25 J:      [o:r                                  [okay
26    thank you hhh
27 P: okay (.) sure
```

In Extract 11, P formulates a request followed by an account in lines 6 to 11. After a 0.5 second gap in line 12, prefaced with the change of state token *oh* (Heritage, 1984) and a discourse marker (*I mean*), J launches an *I could but* structure that initiates the refusal in line 13, followed by an explanation of a schedule in line 14. J continues to explain the schedule conflict in lines 16 to 20. In doing so, J employs the if-clausal format in line 18 to convey a hypothetical condition and possible consequence in line 19. After P's acknowledgement token (*u:hm*) in line 21, J offers an alternative solution using the if-clausal format in lines 22 to 23. In line 24, P responds by complying with J's solution. A closing sequence that includes J's thanking and P's *okay* signal is shown in lines 26 to 27. In both Extracts 10 and 11, J (ID101, ID61) sequences the if-clausal formats in a context-specific manner to display the awareness of high-level imposition to a professor and an unknown factor without assuming what is due or should happen.

The following extract illustrates how the if-clausal formats are sequentially placed in the classmate role-play interaction. Again, the if-clausal construction in general is not common in the classmate role-play. In the entire database, only a few learners recurrently use the if-clausal construction and they are placed when the participants orient to the contingency of the third group member Tom's availability.

Extract 12 (P: Phoenix, J: Jesse, ID29&30RP1-1, time negotiation with a classmate)

```
61 J: but (.) is that the whole afternoon on Friday you are
62    free?
63    (0.7)
64 P: yeah I think after three pm.
65    (0.4)
66 J: yeah then maybe: (.) how about at night? (.) if (0.4)
67    Tom is not available at afternoon [before
68 P:                                   [right right he is
69    absent today maybe we can call him later
70    (0.4)
71 J: [so let's
72 P: [yeah I think uhm=
73 J: =at Friday first?
```

P and J exchange the possible time slots for the meeting to discuss the upcoming group project. After establishing the possibility of meeting on Friday in lines 61 to 64, J suggests to meet at night on Friday in line 66, followed by the if-clausal construction orienting to Tom's possible unavailability in the afternoon. P also endorses J's idea with overlap in line 68 and offers a solution to call Tom.

Discussion

When we design assessment tasks for IC, we artificially create contexts in which test takers can engage. The elicited performances from the assessment tasks become the evidential basis for making an inference about the learners' language abilities. Considering this crucial link, in this study, I analyzed elicited role-play performances using CA focusing on how high-level learners oriented to the external pragmatic variables embedded in role-play design that were intended to assess abilities to accomplish pragmatic actions in spoken interaction.

First of all, of the various action sequences, opening sequences were examined across the role-plays, focusing on sequences that prefaced main actions specific to the role-play situation. These opening sequences typically functioned as preliminaries that either prepared the upcoming context for the recipient or displayed the speaker's orientation to the degree of imposition. The high-level learners rarely moved onto main action sequences without preliminary turns. The opening sequences tended to be more elaborate for the professor role-plays. For example, the typical opening sequences for the recommendation letter request included an account, in addition to a greeting and a pre-request. The use of pre-request (e.g., *do you have time*), which indicates the speaker's lack of entitlement without assuming the professor's availability, was designed to elicit a professor's confirmation to a preliminary turn and to ask for professor's availability. On the other hand, in the classmate role-plays, preliminaries to establish shared context were

included in the initial turn, but designed to orient to the participants' shared responsibilities. It is noteworthy to emphasize that various grammatical formats of opening sequences were intertwined with the opening sequences specific to the sequential context. In the case of request, the learners either used a statement (*I have a question*) or a question format (*Do you have time?*) using varying tense markers (e.g., *I'm applying for* xx). It is not to argue that each role-play interaction does not share fundamental and general interactional organizations, such as the adjacency pair as the fundamental building block of interaction. Rather, depending on the sequential contexts, the learners were differently attuned to the temporal and sequential details of interactional conduct by organizing interactional and linguistic resources in a context-fitting manner.

The empirical findings on the developmental pattern of L2 learners' abilities to utilize resources for initiating interaction add further significance and importance. Opening sequences in the conversation require the abilities to respond to a previous turn, understand the relationship to upcoming talk, select appropriate linguistic resources, and organize turns to signal specific actions (Lee & Hellermann, 2014; Pekarek Doehler & Berger, 2018). The high-level learners in this study demonstrated their abilities to utilize *diverse* interactional and grammatical resources in opening sequences specific to the context (Hall, 2018). In other words, the abilities to initiate a conversation cannot be taken for granted, and require the skill to manage interactional resources. Youn (2020) adds quantitative evidence that learners' sequential competence (i.e., the ability to organize a series of turns in context-fitting ways) is distinctively different depending on learners' levels and importantly explains the variance found in raters' scores. These findings further emphasize that the ability to initiate actions using various resources should be considered as a measurable sub-construct of IC.

Secondly, the findings further shed light on how grammatical resources are intertwined with building and organizing turns in talk-in-interaction (Pekarek Doehler, 2018). As discussed above, various grammatical formats were identified in opening sequences, ranging from an interrogative format (e.g., *do you have time?*) to a present progressive format (e.g., *I'm applying*). In addition, the learners did not use the if-clausal construction in a uniform manner. They placed the if-clausal format in specific sequential organizations to illustrate their orientation to unknown factors in high-level imposition requests to a professor or to orient to the contingency embedded in the classmate role-play interaction that is closely tied with accomplishing a given task. In other words, they utilized grammatical resources fitting to the sequential context. It is worthwhile to note the lack of if-clausal construction in the classmate role-play interaction even among high-level performances. This can be explained by the rather informal nature of interaction between classmates. These findings support Pekarek Doehler's (2018) argument for

understanding of grammar as an adaptive set of resources for participants to accomplish actions in spoken interaction. Extending this argument for the evidence of interactional competence, current practices of assessing grammar in interactive speaking performance need to be revisited. L2 learners' grammatical resources, particularly complexity, have been predominantly considered as an important proxy for different levels of language proficiency (e.g., Iwashita et al., 2008) and therefore prominently included in rating criteria. A separate score on learners' grammatical abilities has been assigned. Despite the predominant reliance on grammatical features in assessment practices, rating descriptors in speaking assessment do not necessarily represent the nature of spoken grammar specific to sequential contexts. As seen in this study, complex grammatical constructions, such as the if-clausal, are not ubiquitously observed. Further research on how other grammatical features are used in interaction, such as various response formats ranging from particle (e.g., *sure*) to clausal response (e.g., *I will, Does he?*) (Couper-Kuhlen & Selting, 2018; Thompson et al., 2015) is in order.

Lastly, the findings indicated that the learners displayed a different degree of interactional fluency depending on the pragmatic variables in the role-play design. The degree to which learners are interactionally fluent in speaking has been greatly emphasized in both pedagogy and assessment (e.g., De Jong et al., 2013; McCarthy, 2010). Being interactionally fluent concerns features both within and between turns. In other words, fluent speakers may produce more words per turn without false starts and hesitation markers; they can also produce a next turn without undue between-turn gaps. The findings revealed that the high-level of interactivity in terms of speakers' contribution to the interaction is observed in the classmate role-play with fewer between-turn pauses and a shorter turn length. In contrast, for refusals in interactions with a professor, a dispreferred pragmatic action (Pomerantz & Heritage, 2013), the high-level learners produced a longer turn to orient to the refusal to provide normatively expected accounts. Interactionally meaningful between-turn delays were also found. The findings shed light on how pragmatic variables in the role-play design influence learners' interactional fluency both within and between turns. Fluency undoubtedly concerns a degree of automaticity, smoothness, and ease of spoken delivery. However, as reflected in McCarthy's (2010) critique of the heavy focus on fluency from the perspective of monologic speaking, there has been relatively little attention on how learners smoothly interact across turn-boundaries in spoken interaction. To this end, as De Jong (2018) rightly argues, fluency should be conceptualized from different disciplines, such as CA.

Extending the discussion of interactional fluency, the findings present an argument for being cautious about what measures to rely on and how to assess interactional fluency in spoken interaction. The length of turn is commonly used as an indicator for fluency in speaking assessment literature, for example the oral proficiency interview (e.g.,

Seedhouse, 2012) and monologic speaking performance (e.g., Iwashita et al., 2008). The longer turn evidently indicates that learners are fluent by producing more words per turn. However, as seen in the classmate role-play interaction, the turns produced by the high-level learners were not necessarily long. In terms of interactional fluency in relation to between-turn delays, the data in this study, especially the professor role-play of refusal, illustrate that learners utilized delays as a mitigation resource. Thus, the measures of interactional fluency need to be discussed in relation to the context of role-play interaction.

Taken together, I argue that the pragmatic variables used in designing a range of role-play assessment tasks contributed to ensuring the necessary context for assessing IC. The CA findings of this study reveal that the participants oriented to the different role-play situations by utilizing interactional and grammatical resources in a context-fitting way, serving as concrete evidence of context validity. The findings further illuminate ways in which varying context impacts the elicited scope of IC. In assessment, we have to artificially create context and ask participants to perform in controlled and comparable settings using social variables from a rationalist theory of social action, like the present study. This externally-imposed way of creating context for assessment is inevitable yet presents an epistemological challenge from a CA standpoint. In CA, context is interaction-internally located in the sequential structure in which a particular action is located as participants co-construct conducts in a mutually recognizable way. Despite the incommensurable assumptions about context, however, the common interest between CA and context validity in assessment still share the common ground, that is to examine ways in which participants orient to context and the evidence of interactional competence to be investigated. Thus, rather than trying to define sharp borders between CA and assessment, utilizing the CA findings with caution can strengthen assessment practices.

The limitations of the study should be noted. The lack of video-recorded data in this study underrepresents embodied resources and the ways in which learners utilize such resources are unknown, thereby risking construct underrepresentation. With video-recorded data, delays could have been explained more fully. It is possible that the participants attended to the role-play cards, which may have resulted in gaps between turns. Furthermore, the pragmatic variables used for the role-plays in this study are limited for generalization. The role-plays examined in this study represent real-life communicative scenarios in an academic context which were informed by a task-based pragmatic needs analysis (Youn, 2018). However, it still remains an empirical question of how other assessment task types with additional pragmatic variables enable the elicitation of interactional and grammatical resources observed in this study.

Nonetheless, the findings still offer implications for designing assessment tasks and rating criteria for assessing IC. The findings illustrate that we can systematically create necessary contexts where it is hypothesized that learners use *diverse* and *different* interactional and grammatical resources. We can then rely on these resources for evidence of learners' IC. Creating authentic communicative contexts to elicit various sub-constructs of IC is a fundamental condition of assessment tasks for assessing IC. A range of pragmatic variables will help capture distinct interactional organizations and grammatical resources, thereby ensuring construct representation of IC. To this end, the findings of this study can strengthen the descriptors for rating criteria by including task-specific interactional features. Concrete examples reflective of context-specific interactional achievements can be included when developing rating criteria and training raters.

Conclusion

In order to assess L2 learners' context-specific achievements in social interaction, ensuring meaningful contexts in which participants engage and perform via assessment tasks is crucial. The issue of *how* to assess the construct is as important as the issue of *what* to assess (i.e., construct validity). To this end, this study examined ways in which learners oriented to the external pragmatic variables used to create meaningful contexts of role-play speaking assessment. Toward the concern of authenticity of role-play interaction, this study illustrates that carefully designed role-plays that reflect participants' previous experience can be used as valid assessment tasks for IC. CA allows us to illuminate how learners accomplish context-specific achievements turn-by-turn according to the role-play situation. The findings clearly illustrate that role-play interactions entail distinct types of interactional and grammatical resources depending on the role-play design, while sharing a fundamental infrastructure of interactional organizations. What this implies is one needs to carefully consider contextual variables and understand the consequences in terms of types of evidence of learner competence elicited from assessment tasks. Learners will likely utilize a range of interactional and grammatical resources differently depending on the communicative context. In order to fully capture learners' IC in various contexts, it is critical to systematically vary communicative contexts of assessment tasks in which learners are engaged.

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Appendix A: Example role-play assessment task and rating criteria

Situation: You have an appointment with a professor Morgan Brown today to ask for a recommendation letter for a scholarship for international students from your department and to ask a few questions about a course project. Your professor is meeting with you outside of the office hour since you have a class during the office hour. Now you're about to visit your professor. You just enter to a professor's room.
Task: You will receive role-play cards that describe what you're going to tell your professor. Please have a conversation with your professor naturally.

For undergraduate participants: This professor teaches Economy 101 that you're taking this semester.
For graduate participants: This professor is one of the faculty members in your department. Although he/she is not your advisor, you've known this professor for about 1 year and you're currently taking a course from this professor.

A role-play card for requesting a recommendation letter

Jessie	Professor
1. After greeting, **ask for a recommendation letter** for the department scholarship that you will apply. The letter is due in one week.	
Jessie	**Professor**
	Respond to the request. Inform the student that you will write a letter and ask when the due date is, if the student doesn't tell you. Inform students that you have a conference next week and you're leaving tonight. Tell him/her that you will do your best to submit the letter by the deadline, but ask the student if the letter can be submitted a bit late.
Jessie	**Professor**
2. Respond to what the professor says and **tell the professor that you will check with your department office**.	
Jessie	**Professor**
3. Inform the professor of two options of providing a letter, **hard copy or electronic submissions** through a website. **Ask for the professor's preference**.	Prefer an electronic submission as you will be traveling.

Classmate role-play task and cards

Situation: After class, you're going to talk with your classmate who is doing a class project (article presentation) regarding **when and how your group members will meet** to discuss the project. The third member (Tom) is absent today in class. Your presentation is next Friday.

Task: You will receive role-play cards that describe what you are going to tell your classmate. Please have a conversation with your classmate naturally.

Role-play Card (Meeting time)

Jessie
Jessie
1. **Look at your schedule.** Respond to a Phoenix' question.
Jessie
Jessie
2. You need to leave soon since you have another class soon. So, whether you found a good time or not, **suggest** asking the third member (Tom)'s opinion to make a final decision.
Jessie
3. Respond what Phoenix says

Phoenix
1. As approaching to Jessie, start a conversation about an upcoming class project (article presentation). **Suggest** discussing an appropriate meeting time. Propose one available time slot based on your schedule.
Phoenix
Phoenix
2. Respond to Jessie's time availability **based on your own schedule**.
Phoenix
Phoenix
3. Respond what Jessie says

Jessie's Schedule

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
9am-1pm: Classes	Part-time Work (10am-5pm)	9am-1pm: Classes	Part-time Work (10am-5pm)	9am-1pm: Classes		Part-time Work (2-9pm)

Phoenix' Schedule

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
10am-3pm: Classes	No class	10am-1pm: Classes	10am-3pm: Classes	Meeting with an advisor at 2pm	BBQ party with friends at 5pm	

Role-play Card (Discussion mode)

Jessie	Phoenix
1. Move the discussion to a discussion mode. **Suggest** discussing how you will meet all together to discuss a project. Propose one option between **face-to-face discussion** and **online discussion (e.g., chatting)** that you personally prefer.	
Jessie	**Phoenix**
	1. Respond to what Jessie proposes. **Choose one option that you prefer** and express your own opinion.
Jessie	**Phoenix**
2. Respond to Phoenix' opinion.	2. Respond to Jessie's opinion. **Suggest** that you want to ask the third group member (Tom) who is absent today to make a final decision about how members will meet.
Jessie	**Phoenix**
3. Wrap up the conversation	3. Wrap up the conversation

Appendix B: Rating criteria for role-play with a professor

Score	Contents Delivery	Language Use	Sensitivity to Situation	Engaging with Interaction	Turn Organization
3	• Clear, concise, fluent (esp. speech act delivery) • Smooth topic initiations with appropriate transitional markers and clear intonations (i.e., smooth turn initiation) #1: a letter request & letter submission option #2: need for a meeting & decide a time #3: respond to professor's request & explain a situation	• Pragmatically appropriate linguistic expressions (**bi-clausal, conditional**: I was wondering if, I don't think I can; **modal verbs**, would, could, might) • Good control of grammar and vocabulary that doesn't obscure meaning	• Consistent evidence of awareness and sensitivity to situations exists in contents or tone #1: request along with explanations about the scholarship; acknowledge a short letter due #2: explanations for a meeting request #3: handle a face-threatening refusal with acceptable reasons or accept a request	• A next turn shows understandings of a previous turn throughout the interaction (i.e., shared understanding) • Evidence of engaging with conversation exists (e.g., clarification questions, backchannel, acknowledgement tokens) ***Note***: Non-verbal cues also serve as acknowledgement, so no need to heavily rely on the amount of discourse markers.	• Complete adjacency pairs (e.g., question & answer, granting a request & thank) • Interactionally fluid **without awkward pauses** or **abrupt overlap** ***Note***: Interactionally meaningful pauses include those before refusal and between disagreements
2	• Generally smooth, but **occasionally unclear**, or unnecessarily wordy • **Abrupt** topic initiation (in terms of contents) • Unclear transitional cues (e.g., unclear intonation and stress)	• Able to use modal verbs in **mono-clausal** (e.g., could, can, might), but doesn't or inconsistently use complex structures for pragmatic meaning • Linguistic expressions are occasionally inaccurate and a bit limited that sometimes obscure meaning	• Inconsistent evidence of awareness and sensitivity to situations (e.g., explain the letter request, but not acknowledge a short letter due)	• Some evidence of engaging with the conversation, but not consistent • A next turn doesn't sometimes show understandings of previous turns	• Some turns are **delayed** and a next turn is **absent** in adjacency pairs (e.g., absence of answers & thank) • Sometimes **abruptly cut off** a previous turn
1	• Delivery is choppy, fragmented, and minimal (due to lack of language competence)	• Expressions sound **abrupt, direct,** or **not polite enough** (e.g., I need, I want, I can't) • Linguistic expressions are inaccurate and quite limited that obscure meaning	• Little evidence of situational sensitivity (e.g., not acknowledge a short letter due, insist turning in the letter on time, lack of explanations for refusal)	• Noticeable absence of discourse markers • Evidence of not achieving a shared understanding	• Noticeably abrupt overlap or no pauses between disagreements and refusal • **Noticeably long pauses** or **noticeable cutoff** between turns

Rating Criteria for Role-play with a Classmate

Score	Content Delivery	Language Use	Sensitivity to Situation	Engaging with Interaction	Turn Organization
3	• Clear, concise, fluent • Smooth topic initiations with transitional markers (i.e., smooth turn initiation) **Rating Phoenix**: *asking time for a meeting* & Phoenix' responses to Jessie's questions **Rating Jessie**: *asking how to meet* & Jessie's responses to Phoenix' questions ***Note***: Who initiates 'Asking Tom for a final decision' is not a crucial rating point, but focus more on delivery of follow-up contents.	• Pragmatically appropriate linguistic expressions (**bi-clausal, conditional, past progressive tense**: I was thinking, I don't think I can; **modal verbs**: would, could, might) • Good control of grammar and vocabulary that doesn't obscure meaning **Focus**: **asking questions, expressing different opinions** and **suggestions** ***Note***: No need to heavily rely on elaborated complex structures, but diverse grammatical structures for pragmatic meaning need to be observed for '3'.	• Consistent evidence of awareness and sensitivity to situations exists in an appropriate sequence **Examples**: what is needed for a team project (e.g., time negotiation, back up time slots for Tom), accounts for disagreement, explanations (at least brief) for time and meeting mode preference, pay attention to classmate's opinions ***Note***: Although not all examples need to be observed, a substantial amount of evidence needs to be observed for '3'	• A next turn shows understandings of a previous turn throughout the interaction (i.e., shared understanding) • Evidence of engaging with conversation exists (e.g., clarification questions, backchannel, acknowledgement tokens) ***Note***: Non-verbal cues also serve as acknowledgement, so no need to heavily rely on the amount of discourse markers.	• Complete adjacency pairs (e.g., question & answer) • Interactionally fluid **without awkward pauses** or **abrupt overlap (**especially between disagreement**)** ***Note***: Interactionally meaningful pauses include those before refusal and between disagreements ***Note***: Even with the elaborated language use ('3' in Language Use), this may not necessarily be done properly with a pause (esp. disagreement). Then, '3' in Turn Organization may not necessarily be awarded.
2	• Generally smooth, but **occasionally unclear** (which confuse a classmate), or **unnecessarily wordy** • **Abrupt** topic initiation (in terms of contents) • **Unclear transitional cues** (e.g., unclear intonation and stress)	• Able to use modal verbs in **mono-clausal** (e.g., could, can, might), but doesn't use various grammatical structures for pragmatic meaning • Linguistic expressions are occasionally inaccurate and a bit limited that sometimes obscure meaning	• Inconsistent evidence of awareness and sensitivity to situations (e.g., provide accounts for opinions, but do not necessarily handle the disagreement situation properly)	• Some evidence of engaging with the conversation, but not consistent (e.g., literally read the role-play card), • A next turn does not sometime show understanding of a previous turn	• Some turns are **delayed** and a next turn is **absent** in adjacency pairs (e.g., absence of answers) • Sometimes **abruptly cutoff** previous turns
1	• Delivery is choppy, fragmented, and minimal (due to a lack of language competence)	• Expressions sound **abrupt** or **not polite enough** (e.g., I'm busy, I can't) • Linguistic expressions are inaccurate and quite limited that obscure meaning	• Little evidence of situational sensitivity (e.g., absence of providing accounts for *disagreements in particular*, handle disagreement awkwardly)	• Noticeable absence of discourse markers • Evidence of not achieving a shared understanding	• Noticeably abrupt overlap or no pauses between disagreements and refusal • **Noticeably long pauses** or **noticeable cutoff** between turns

Appendix C: Full transcript, Extract 3

Extract 3 (P: High, J: High, ID69&70RP1-1)

```
1  P: hi Jessie (.) [how are you
2  J:               [hi Phoenix
3  J: yeah it's good
4  P: hey ahm (0.4) ahm remember we have e:h article
5     presentation on Friday [with our project
6  J:                        [yeah
7  P: [.hh a:hm I think we should meet up before the (0.4)
8  J: [uh huh
9  P: project presentation on Friday=
10 J: =yeah of course sounds good yeah=
11 P: =a:h (0.3) well even though Tom is not coming today↑
12    [to the class↑ but (0.3) ah let me suggest you one
13 J: [yeah I know
14 P: of my schedule that I'm free of .hh I- I have on
15    Wednesday: from ten am until one pm .hh a:nd also
16    Thursday from ten am until three pm so I will be
17    free (1.0) o:n Wednesday or Thursday in the morning↑
18    or after (0.3) three pm
19    (0.5)
20 P: what about if we meet up (.) u:hm tomorrow morning?
21    (0.4) before ten am?
22 J: o:h tomorrow morning will be Wednesday?
23    (0.3)
24 P: yes↑
25 J: ah actually Wednesday I have a class nine to one↑
26 P: uh huh↑
27 J: so you also have a class ten to a:h one [a:h (.)
28 P:                                         [uh huh↑
29 J: I can meet you: after (.) ten o'clock yeah
30    tomorrow Wednesday .hh but (.) I'm wondering↑ you
31    know the Tom is absent↑ [so (.) I mean I'm not sure
32 P:                         [uh huh↑
33 J: he will be available tomorrow to meet after ten or not
34    (0.5)
35 J: [that's why yeah (.) do you know (.) his eh phone number
36 P: [a:h
37 J: or any [any contact?
38 P:        [yep
39    (0.3)
40 P: ahm (0.4) I'm friends with him on facebook so
41    I'[ll- I'll message him what if we do it on Wednesday
42 J:   [oh >okay okay<
43 P: after one (.) pm?
44    (0.4)
45 J: Oh Yeah I'm- I'm fi[ne yeah yeah I'm fine
46 P:                    [are you free on Wed-
```

```
47 P: yeah [let's meet up around two pm
48 J:      [yeah
49 J: >yeah yeah< [it's good
50 P:             [is it okay for you?
51 J: yeah it's good
52 P: okay
53 P: [I will↑ (0.3) I will message Tom and (.) [yeah
54 J: [so we                                    [Tom
55 P: hopefully he [gonna get
56 J:              [yeah yeah
57 P: [I'll let you know
58 J: [so (.) yeah I'll give you my phone number↑ [and email↑
59 P:                                             [oh yeah sure
60 J: yeah jus- if- (0.4) Tom is available↑ yeah please call me
61 P: yes of course I'll let you know then
62 P: see ya
63 J: yeah bye
```

Appendix D: Transcription symbols

:	Lengthening of the preceding sound
-	Abrupt cutoff
(.)	Very short untimed pause
>word<	Speech delivery that is quicker than the surrounding talk
<word>	Speech delivery that is slower than the surrounding talk
w(h)ord	A parenthesized *h* within a word indicates breathiness as in laughter
[	Point of overlap onset
=	No gap between adjacent utterances
<u>word</u>	Speaker emphasis
CAPITALS	Especially loud sounds relative to surrounding talk
° °	Utterances between degree signs are noticeably quieter than surrounding talk
(3.5)	Intervals between utterances (in seconds)