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International Teaching Assistants in the US University Classroom: A Mixed-Methods Study of Individual Differences and L2 Pragmatic Competence

by

Erhan Aslan

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
Second Language Acquisition & Instructional Technology
College of Arts & Sciences
and
College of Education
University of South Florida

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Keywords: international teaching assistants, pragmatic competence, speech acts, communication anxiety, willingness to communicate

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ABSTRACT

International teaching assistants (ITAs) are considered advanced English users with relatively high standardized language proficiency test scores. However, they may experience difficulties during their interactions with undergraduate students. Some of these difficulties may arise from affective factors such as ambiguity, stress, and adjustment and can impact language use. From an individual differences perspective, a second language user with high communication anxiety may have difficulty comprehending or producing appropriate pragmalinguistic forms. Using a mixed-methods approach, this study examined the underlying factors in ITAs communication anxiety and willingness to communicate in the US classroom and how these factors explained their pragmatic competence, which refers to the ability to use language in socially appropriate ways. A total of 289 ITAs participated in the study. To measure their judgement of appropriateness, a pragmatic appropriateness test was designed. The speech act production was elicited through a discourse completion test. Two survey instruments were designed to measure ITAs' classroom communication anxiety and willingness to communicate. The major underlying factors from the exploratory factor analysis performed on the survey responses were 'ease of communication,' classroom management anxiety,' 'fear of warning,' and 'willingness to interact with students'. A six-predictor multiple regression analysis revealed that linguistic competence was the most important factor contributing to pragmatic competence. Other factors such as ease of communication and willingness to communicate positively correlated with pragmatic competence. In addition to quantitative data, qualitative data were collected in the form of classroom observations, field notes, and interviews from a group of ITAs

(N = 4) who had also participated in the quantitative part of the study. The analysis of the qualitative data revealed that the situational context of instruction determined the particular communication patterns in different disciplines, specifically the impact of threat posed to the negative and positive face of the discourse participants. Additionally, in conjunction with the quantitative findings, while the ITAs seemed to be generally willing to interact with students, teacher-fronted talk in the form of delivering lectures and self-talk especially in large classes was found to be anxiety-inducing for some of them. Length of residence and opportunities for communication seemed to influence the process of adjustment and acquisition of the classroom pragmatic norms. Finally, ITAs' perceptions and beliefs about appropriateness seemed to affect their pragmatic performance in the classroom. More specifically, ITAs' perspectives on education and communication such as moderating the power variable in class and building rapport and interpersonal relationships with students through casual talk seemed to guide their choices of pragmalinguistic forms and politeness strategies. The study offered a number of implications for ITA research and training.

CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

International Teaching Assistants

International teaching assistants (ITAs) are graduate degree seeking individuals studying mainly in the United States (US) and Canada in various academic fields such as engineering, physics, math, social sciences, education, and many others. During their course of studies, ITAs are generally funded by academic institutions through assistantships which can be in the form of teaching introductory level undergraduate courses in their fields of study, assisting and advising students in science labs or during office hours.

In order to keep up with their goals and departmental missions, particularly large research-one universities rely on ITAs to fulfill the growing instructional needs of undergraduate education in the US (Fox & Gay, 1994), and they offer ITAs teaching assistantships as financial support. Since the early 1980s, the number of universities employing ITAs to teach undergraduate courses has increased (Gorsuch, 2003), and ITAs now constitute an important component of undergraduate education in the US (Gorsuch, 2011). Statistics show that, between 2007 and 2008, more than one quarter of Ph.D. students in fields other than education were international students, and seventy-seven percent of these students had an assistantship or work-study award requiring them to work (Choy & Cataldi, 2011).

Many scholars agree that ITAs' command of the English language plays a vital role in their success in the US instructional settings (Hoekje & Williams, 1992). ITAs are expected to have an advanced command of the English language since the medium of instruction in the US context is English. Therefore, ITAs' admission to graduate programs and appointment to teaching assistant positions require proof of advanced proficiency in English in the spoken mode. Most ITAs possess high lexical and grammatical competence in their second language (L2) English, mostly evidenced by standardized English proficiency tests, such as the Internet-based Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL iBT) and International English Language Testing System (IELTS). Despite their proficiency in the formal areas of language and test scores that meet the minimum language proficiency requirements of universities for admission purposes, some ITAs may not possess advanced communicative competence necessary for successful interactions with undergraduate students in different instructional settings. More specifically, ITAs' spoken English may lack advanced competence in certain discourse and pragmatic areas (Tyler, 1992; Chiang, 2011) such as sequencing activities, managing time and student turn-taking, or interacting with students in the expected levels of politeness, appropriateness, formality, or (in)directness. As a result, ITAs may fail to successfully communicate with students during their teaching or advising (Shaw & Bailey, 1990; Tyler, 1995; Tyler & Davies, 1990). To illustrate, Hoekje and Williams (1994) report a sociopragmatic failure an ITA displayed in a chemistry lab. When the ITA was circulating around the students, she approached each student work group using the phrase "What are you doing?" While the ITA's actual intention was to check on students' work, the phrase she used was perceived to have an accusatory implicature and alarmed the students. Misunderstandings caused by such pragmatic failures may happen when minority group members fail to conform to the pragmatic and linguistic norms and expectations of the majority group culture (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1990; 1993).

Due to such pragmatic failures or other language proficiency-related issues, some ITAs receive negative evaluations from undergraduate students (Fitch & Morgan, 2003). In fact, complaints from students and parents to university administrators regarding ITAs' poor linguistic performance in the classroom led some state legislatures to pass bills requiring ITAs to pass oral proficiency tests before they can be assigned teaching duties (Rounds, 1987). For instance, in 2005, a bill was proposed by the North Dakota legislature that stated "if a student complained in writing that his or her instructor did not 'speak English clearly and with good pronunciation,' that student would then be entitled to withdraw from the class with no academic or financial penalty and would even get a refund," and "if 10 percent of the students in a class came forward with such complaints, the university would be obliged to move the instructor into a 'non-teaching position,' thus losing that instructor's classroom labor" (Gravois, 2005, A10).

Motivated by the above-mentioned linguistic issues, a new research area that focuses on ITAs' language use, training, and assessment emerged in the early 1990s. *Communicative competence* as a theoretical framework was proposed in preconference symposia on ITA training at TESOL conventions for the investigation of issues related to ITAs (Davies, 1991; Myers, 1991; Rounds, 1990; Tyler, 1990). Communicative competence refers to "the synthesis of knowledge of basic grammatical principles, knowledge of how language is used in social contexts to perform communicative functions, and knowledge of how utterances and communicative functions can be combined according to the principle of discourse" (Canale & Swain, 1980, p. 20). According to Canale and Swain's (1980) model, communicative competence consists of grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence. Grammatical competence involves areas such as morphology, phonology, syntax, lexical items, and semantics. Sociolinguistic competence refers to the knowledge of sociocultural rules of speaking and appropriateness, style, and register in using language in specific contexts. Pragmatic competence is subsumed in the sociolinguistic component of Canale and Swain's (1980) model. Cultural differences in the classroom, power differentials, and receptive skills pertaining to the expression and interpretation of speech acts are among the factors that determine ITAs' sociolinguistic or pragmatic competence. Discourse competence has to do with coherence which refers to the ways in which utterances are logically connected in both spoken and written discourse. In the ITA domain, discourse competence involves the appropriate and effective use of discourse markers, naming important steps, marking junctures explicitly, or using lexical, syntactic, and prosodic cues. Finally, strategic competence refers to the verbal and non-verbal strategies to compensate for deficiencies or to increase communicative effectiveness. In this area, ITAs use compensatory strategies to in order to fill the gaps in their communicative skills, knowledge, or abilities.

In addition to the linguistic areas that are defined in Canale and Swain's (1980) communicative competence model, some scholars have underscored the importance of non-linguistic or affective factors which can arguably influence ITAs' communication skills and performance in instructional settings. For instance, Ross and Krider (1992) contend that in a new culture, international visitors are faced with the task of reducing uncertainty and may experience stress and anxiety induced by trying to adjust to the norms of the new culture and learning to cope with and embrace the differences between the home and host cultures. In addition to the individual cultural challenges, ITAs might also have to deal with cross-cultural differences as a result of their interactions with the US students in the university classroom, which could potentially lead to communication problems (Landa & Perry, 1984). Hoekje and Williams (1994) discuss that ITAs may have difficulty in getting accustomed to the US classroom setting, even though they may have held teaching positions in their home countries before. In addition, they contend that different educational systems and cultures may affect language behavior in the classroom as well as the role of relationships between ITAs and students.

In this state of affairs, it seems that the so called ‘foreign TA problem’ (Bailey, Pilaorsi, & Zuikowski-Faust, 1984) which encompasses communication issues between ITAs and US undergraduate students may result from an amalgam of linguistic and affective factors. More precisely, there might be a possible relationship between ITAs’ overall communicative competence and individual factors such as anxiety and willingness to communicate in a new cultural or educational setting. The next section provides a detailed account for the motivation of the present study.

Motivation for the Present Study

Pragmatic competence, which comprises one of the most fundamental levels of Canale and Swain’s (1980) communicative competence model, is one of the understudied areas in the ITA literature. Pragmatic competence enables speakers in any speech community to conform to the sociocultural norms of a speech event. Violations of these norms are assessed negatively and can cause irritation among speakers. For example, in the US college classroom context, possible communication breakdowns caused by ITAs’ pragmatic violations in the comprehension or production of speech acts (e.g. giving directions, advice, requesting, etc.) as well as the failure to conform to the expected degrees of formality, directness and politeness may cause students to develop negative attitudes towards ITAs. Since ITAs are adult L2 English users who grew up in one ‘linguaculture’ and were socialized into ways of interacting relevant to their first language

(L1) culture (Yates, 2010), they may not easily notice or identify sociopragmatic norms and pragmalinguistic forms in the L2 culture (Cook & Liddicoat, 2002).

What factors affect L2 pragmatic competence (L2PC) has been a major research question in the field of interlanguage pragmatics (ILP). Research has shown that high levels of grammatical competence do not guarantee full L2PC (Kasper & Schmidt, 1996; Bardovi-Harlig, 1999). Therefore, the need to account for the complex nature of L2PC has led researchers to think about factors other than L2 proficiency. As of the early 2000s, second language acquisition (SLA) scholars have become more interested in investigating the interface between individual differences (IDs) and L2PC along with the increasing emphasis on L2PC being a very important component of successful language learning (LoCastro, 2001). The attempts to investigate the interface between L2PC and IDs were motivated by the social turn in SLA. More specifically, there has been a shift in L2 learning and teaching research from linguistic or formal perspectives towards more social and cultural perspectives (Franson & Holliday, 2009) that include the personal voice, identity, individual differences such as motivation and anxiety, as well as lived experiences and beliefs of L2 learners, teachers or communities (Duff, 2008).

Along with the emphasis on the possible effects of the social and individual factors affecting L2PC, the relationships between L2PC and a number of IDs have been addressed. Kasper and Schmidt (1996) suggested that L2 learners' attitudes towards the target language community and their motivation to learn L2 could possibly impact their willingness to adopt L2 pragmatic norms. Takahashi (2005) found a relationship between Japanese English as a foreign language (EFL) learners' intrinsic motivation and pragmalinguistic awareness. Dewaele (2007) suggested that L2 users' perceptions and affective states are related to their long-term communicative experiences in different languages, meaning that L2PC is an intra-individual phenomenon. In other words, since language learning and use is influenced by the self-identity of the learner as an individual, L2 learners' backgrounds, beliefs, values, attitudes, feelings, as well as the impact of the socio-cultural context can determine the varying levels of L2 pragmatic ability (LoCastro, 2001). In addition, Verhoeven and Vermeer (2002) found that openness to experience, conscientiousness, and extraversion as personality features correlated with L2PC and acquisition skills.

In the domain of L2PC, two major IDs remain unexplored: L2 communication anxiety (CA) and willingness to communicate (WTC). No attempts have been made yet to investigate the interface between these two IDs and L2PC. WTC "represents the intention to speak or to remain silent that can be considered the most immediate determinant of L2 use, reflecting the culmination of a variety of proximal influences (in particular state anxiety and perceived communication competence) and distal influences including personality traits such as extraversion" (MacIntyre & Legatto, 2011, p. 150). WTC is considered to be a predictor of a stable predisposition to communicate in different social situations and primarily a personality trait (MacIntyre, Dörnyei, Clément, & Noels, 1998).

Furthermore, WTC has been shown to be linked to other IDs such as communication apprehension, perceived communication competence, introversion/extraversion, and self-esteem (McCroskey & Baer, 1985; McCroskey & Richmond, 1990). Among the many variables that can affect a person's WTC are the level of acquaintance between communicators, the number of participants in the communication situation, the degree of formality in the situation, and the topic of discussion (MacIntyre et al., 1998). By the same token, L2PC is also related to the situational features of the communication context, the location of the interaction, age and social status of the interlocutor, level of familiarity with the interlocutor, and individual-level variables such as personality, motivation, and proficiency level (Billmyer & Varghese, 2000; Félix-Brasdefer, 2002). More specifically, WTC can possibly be related to such variables as the power/distance differentials between the interlocutors, the face-threatening speech acts, and degrees of politeness, indirectness, and appropriateness in the communicative situation. Therefore, whether or not there is a possible relationship between WTC and L2PC needs to be investigated.

According to Roach and Olaniran (2001), the major reason for an individual to be not willing to communicate is fear or anxiety. A person's level of fear or anxiety caused by or related to actual or imagined communication with another person or a group of people is called communication apprehension or anxiety (Richmond & McCroskey, 1998). The fear that causes communication anxiety (CA) may result from a trait-like predisposition or a state anxiety in a certain context (Roach, 1999). Those who have high CA are likely to avoid situations where they have to interact with others through verbal communication (Roach, 1998). The most observable outcome of CA is a reduced desire to communicate (Beatty, 1987).

MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) defined CA in a second or foreign language as "the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with L2 contexts, including speaking, listening, and learning" (p. 284). The negative effects of language anxiety include self-focused attention, distraction, and cognitive disruption (Eysenck, 1979). It should be noted here that the CA caused by having to use an L2 in a natural context is different from foreign language learning anxiety. While the former occurs in authentic and naturalistic communication situations with other speakers, the latter is generally induced by the classroom learning environment of a second or foreign language (Horwitz, 1986). In other words, the type of anxiety experienced by an L2 user during interactions with other speakers in naturalistic contexts is different from the type of anxiety L2 learners might feel in the language classroom. The latter type of anxiety is usually related to test taking, success in language learning, and negative evaluations by others in the language classroom. Therefore, ITAs' communication anxiety in the US classroom setting can be viewed as L2 CA induced by having to use language to interact with the members of the target culture, specifically US undergraduate students.

The interface between WTC and CA is noted in MacIntyre's (1994) WTC model which is based on a combination of greater perceived communicative competence and a lack of communication apprehension. Furthermore, WTC and CA can also be considered in the context of culture because "one's communication norms and competencies are culture-bound" (McCroskey & Richmond, 1990, as cited in Roach & Olaniran, 2001). In this respect, there might a possible link between CA, WTC, and L2PC. More specifically, an L2 learner who is not familiar with the cultural norms of the target culture, or has difficulty adopting these norms may experience CA and have low WTC.

As defined above, both CA and WTC are IDs that tap into cognitive, affective, and psychological factors that might influence L2 learners' decisions, actions, and performance in L2. More specifically, with respect to L2PC, these two IDs might be related to learners' choices to use L2, their efforts to interact and identify with the target language community, and their ability to pay attention to the linguistic input (Kuriscak, 2010). For instance, avoidance of certain pragmalinguistic features could potentially be linked to high CA or low WTC with the interlocutors in the target language community. Avoidance of L2 forms and functions has been noted in the ILP literature. The causes of avoidance are varied. Most studies conducted on this topic indicate that L1 influence is the main cause of avoidance (Bou-Franch, 1998). However, avoidance might also be caused by low willingness to communicate in certain social situations.

Similarly, an L2 user who experiences high CA due to the cognitive load caused by the processing of pragmalinguistic forms or unfamiliarity with the sociopragmatic norms may opt to be silent in communication situations. As explained earlier, L2PC has been found to correlate with several IDs such as motivation, personality, and attitudes and beliefs. Therefore, the examination of the two unexplored IDs, specifically CA and WTC as they relate to L2PC can enhance our understanding of L2 speech act comprehension and production in settings where adult L2 users interact with the members of the target community.

Based on the above discussion of the possible interface between IDs and L2PC, there might be a link between non-linguistic or affective factors characterized as IDs and ITAs' L2PC in the US university setting. As they operate in a different educational setting that consists of different disciplinary cultures, ITAs can experience difficulties in adjusting their communication styles and routines shaped in their L1 culture to the US university classroom setting (Roach & Olaniran, 2001). Particularly in the classroom environment, ITAs need to adopt several instructional roles which require them to be active, facilitative, and interactive with their students. In addition, they need to make sure that students understand the course content. In this vein, interactions in the classroom could involve face-threatening acts for ITAs (e.g. asking students to be quiet; giving directions, advice, suggestions, managing time) and can increase their CA. In these face-threatening acts, ITAs must be familiar with the new power/distance differentials between the interlocutors and the particular sociopragmatic norms of the classroom setting in the US higher education context, and adopt new roles that might require them to change or adjust their communication style. Furthermore, ITAs may have difficulty in providing linguistically appropriate and effective responses and can experience CA. As a result, an ITA who experiences a high level of CA may not be willing to communicate and can even opt to be silent in several interactions in the classroom. As much as the inappropriate use of language, the use of silence can also be interpreted by students as an indication of rejection, indifference, or criticism (Nakane, 2007), which can potentially create a negative and unsafe learning environment for students in the classroom.

Purpose of the Study

In this introduction, issues related to ITAs recruited in US universities to fulfill the basic instructional needs of undergraduate education have been briefly described. Additionally, these issues were situated within the L2PC component of Canale and Swain's (1980) communicative competence model. Finally, informed by the relationships between IDs (e.g. motivation, personality, attitudes) and L2PC noted in the literature, the investigation of the possible links between CA, WTC and L2PC of ITAs in the US higher education context has been proposed.

In the present study, ITAs' L2PC is operationalized as their ability to perceive and produce speech acts related to the university classroom context. In this vein, utilizing a mixed-methods approach consisting of quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis, the main purpose of this study is to explore the relationships between ITAs' L2PC in the US classroom setting and IDs. More specifically, this study accounts for the variables contributing to ITAs L2PC as measured by the comprehension and production of speech acts. As discussed earlier in this chapter, factors affecting L2PC are quite varied. Among the most important ones are linguistic competence, exposure to the target language socio-pragmatic norms during residence in the L2 community, and attitudes and beliefs about the members of the target language community. The specific research questions of the study are listed in the next section.

Research Questions

Based on the motivation and purpose of the present study, the following research questions were investigated in this study:

1) What are the underlying dimensions of ITAs' individual differences with respect to CA and WTC in the US classroom?
2) How much of the variance in ITAs' L2PC in the US classroom can be accounted for by the dimensions of CA and WTC as well as other factors such as linguistic proficiency and length of residence in the US?
3) What do ITAs' observed interactions with undergraduate students in the classroom context reveal about the relationship between CA and WTC and L2PC as demonstrated by the use of speech acts and politeness strategies?
4) What do ITAs' self-reported perceptions or beliefs about their interactions with students in the US classroom reveal about the relationship between CA, WTC, and L2PC?

Significance of the Study

The present study fills an important gap in ITA research by integrating IDs into the realm of L2PC. Additionally, the study utilizes a mixed-methods research design with multiple data sources, thereby offering a unique approach to the analysis of ITA L2PC. Another contribution of the present study is that it is the first study to investigate the relationship between L2PC with two unexplored IDs (CA and WTC) in a different adult L2 user population (ITAs in the US). Finally, the findings of this study address the challenges faced by ITAs and contribute to the development ITA training programs by providing empirically validated insights.

Definition of Terms

International teaching assistant (ITA) – The term international teaching assistant can broadly refer to the foreign-born and non-native English speaking graduate students whose prime source of financial support is a teaching assistantship as an instructor, discussion leader, laboratory supervisor, grader, and tutor for many undergraduate courses, especially in the large public universities in the US (Rounds, 1987). In the present study, however, the participant population will be restricted to ITAs whose teaching assistantship is that of an instructor or discussion leader and requires face-to-face contact with US undergraduate students in the classroom setting.

L2 Pragmatic competence (L2PC) – Pragmatic competence broadly refers to the speakers' ability to exploit different linguistic resources in an appropriate way in a certain social context (Kasper, 2001). More specifically, in the present study, L2PC refers to "the speaker's knowledge and use of rules of appropriateness and politeness which dictate the way the speaker will understand and formulate speech acts" (Koike, 1989, p. 279)

Speech acts – Forming the basis of the speech act theory introduced by Austin (1962), speech acts are, in general, utterances in which speakers perform an action more than just uttering words or sentences. In other words, speech acts are "utterance sequences that serve a specific function in a communicative situation (e.g. greetings, requests, or apologies)" (Kuriscak, 2010). In the present study, speech acts pertaining to the US classroom setting constitute the major unit of analysis of ITAs' L2PC.

Individual differences (IDs) - Individual differences in applied linguistics and second language acquisition refer to the "attributes that mark a person as a distinct and unique human being" (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 231). In other words, IDs are particular personal characteristics that apply to everybody in varying degrees. The present study focuses on communicative anxiety (CA) and willingness to communicate (WTC) as they relate to ITAs' L2PC.

CHAPTER TWO:

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Pragmatic Competence

Bardovi-Harlig (2013) defines pragmatics as "the study of how-to-say-what-to-whom-when" (p. 68). Although several other definitions have been proposed in the last two decades, Crystal's (1997) definition appears to be inclusive of the major components of pragmatics:

> "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" (p. 301).

Broadly speaking, pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that investigates language use in communication and the interface between speaker's utterances and intentions in specific situations (Martinez-Flor & Usó-Juan, 2010). Pragmatics takes meaning in use into its core and considers language as a communication tool. In this respect, pragmatic competence differs from Chomsky's (1965) linguistic competence approach which views language as an abstract set of grammatical rules. In other words, pragmatics is concerned with linguistic performance and highlights *communicative competence* (Campbell & Wales, 1970; Hymes, 1972) which takes into account sociocultural and contextual factors in language use. Hymes' (1972) conceptualization of communicative competence incorporated not only the grammatical accuracy, but also acceptability and appropriateness in different contexts of language use.

Grounded in Hymes' (1972) conceptualization of communicative competence, Canale and Swain (1980) defined communicative competence (as outlined in Chapter one) as the combination of system knowledge of formal features and knowledge of use informed by the context.

Canale and Swain's (1980) model of communicative competence was problematized and revised by a number of scholars in later years. Schachter (1990) argued that major constructs of Canale and Swain's (1980) model were not adequately defined, which led to assessment difficulties due to the ambiguities that the constructs of the model displayed. Therefore, another model of communicative competence was proposed by Bachman (1990). This model consisted of two main categories, namely organizational knowledge and pragmatic knowledge. Organizational knowledge encompasses grammatical and textual knowledge similar to Canale and Swain's (1980) grammatical and discourse competence. Pragmatic knowledge, which consists of lexical and functional knowledge, establishes a connection between utterances and their meanings and meets the communicative purposes of language. In an attempt to further revise the models of Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983), in addition to discourse, linguistic, and sociocultural competence, Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei, and Thurrell (1995) included *actional competence*, which was conceptualized as conveying and understanding communicative intent by performing and interpreting speech acts. Their contribution to the communicative competence model was significant in that they introduced a functional-relational approach which not only defined the individual components in the previous models but elaborated how the components were related to each other (Compernolle, 2014).

The emergence and gradual development of communicative competence models has had important implications in the field of L2 acquisition and pedagogy, particularly in L2 pragmatics. Firstly, the communicative aspect of language use which determines how language is manipulated by its users to perform speech acts in spoken interactions based on a range of phenomena such as social status, relationships, politeness, and conventions of form was emphasized (Ifantidou, 2014). Secondly, these models enforced a shift from a merely grammar-based approach to a form-and-function approach, which led to the early emergence of communicative language learning and teaching (Timpe, 2014). Consequently, when language learning began to be viewed not only as a cognitive phenomenon, but also as a social construct which requires the ability to interpret and generate meaning in social situations, the construct of *pragmatic competence* emerged.

Kasper (2001) defines pragmatic competence as the speaker's ability to exploit different linguistic resources in an appropriate way in a certain social context. Pragmatic competence and development involves the mastery of two knowledge bases, namely *pragmalinguistics* and *sociopragmatics* (Leech, 1983; Thomas, 1983). Pragmalinguistics refers to linguistic resources used to perform language functions using such strategies as directness and indirectness, pragmatic routines, mitigation devices or softeners. Sociopragmatics, on the other hand, refers to the language user's knowledge and competence in identifying the relationship between linguistic actions and social norms which are informed by such factors as face, power differentials, imposition, politeness, and so forth. To illustrate, a learner needs to know the grammar and lexis of the phrase "I was wondering if…" as well as the knowledge that it is a less direct and more polite form of making a request. If a learner performs a speech act of request that violates the pragmalinguistic or sociopragmatic norms of a certain social situation, he or she is likely to encounter a communication breakdown or be judged negatively by other interlocutors.

As previously mentioned in Chapter one, ITAs' performance of speech acts in the US classroom context constitutes an important part of their L2 English pragmatic competence. If an

ITA does not adequately acknowledge a student contribution in the classroom, disagrees with a student response or comment without using any mitigation strategies, or interrupts a student without conforming to the politeness norms of US culture, he or she might be negatively evaluated by the students. In addition, an ITA who is fully competent in the grammar and lexis of English, as evidenced by English proficiency test scores, may not have yet mastered the sociopragmatic norms of the target culture, specifically in the US university classroom context, and therefore, may experience communication problems or anxiety in his or her daily encounters with students. Therefore, it can be posited that the mastery of the grammar and lexis in an L2 does not guarantee successful communication in L2 (Bardovi-Harlig, 1999).

As mentioned above, pragmatic competence is a multi-faceted construct that encompasses such notions as appropriateness, face, politeness, (in)directness, and speech act performance. Therefore, in order to provide a better description of ITAs' pragmatic competence in the US classroom context, in what follows, each notion is unpacked within the realm of L2PC with examples pertaining specifically to the ITA population in the US higher education setting.

Appropriateness

The notion of appropriateness has long been discussed in several disciplines including pragmatics, discourse analysis, sociolinguistics and anthropology. According to Compernolle (2014) appropriateness refers to "a social judgment of the acceptability of some instance of language in context" (p. 29). It has commonly been associated with acceptability, well-formedness, and grammaticality (Fetzer, 2007). This concept was essentially derived from Hymes' (1972) argument against the formalist linguists with regard to the communicative aspect of language use. More specifically, Hymes (1972) argued that appropriateness determines the social and pragmatic impact of an utterance in its natural context of use. Additionally, this notion has frequently been used in most definitions of pragmatics and was included in the sociolinguistic component of the communicative competence model proposed by Canale (1983). Some scholars have noted that the assessment of a particular sentence, utterance, or expression as appropriate or inappropriate depends on the context of use (Levinson, 1983; Mey, 1993) and the receiver of the message. Similarly, appropriateness has also been conceptualized as the process of forming a link between a communicative act and its linguistic and sociocultural context (Fetzer, 2007).

As can be seen from the above definitions, appropriateness is a complex notion to define. It seems that appropriateness entails three main constructs: context, use, and communicative intent. The emergence of appropriateness as a pragmatic construct in early communicative competence models offered important implications for L2 pedagogy and research. For instance, appropriateness has become a widely discussed topic in communicative approaches to language teaching (Compernolle, 2014). Communicative competence as promoted by Hymes (1972) and others superseded traditional grammar-based approaches to L2 pedagogy. Social context and social rules of use rather than rules of grammar were emphasized. Crandall and Basturkmen (2004) suggest that foreign language teachers make use of authentic samples of spoken discourse to raise learners' pragmatic awareness and to improve their perceptions of appropriateness.

With respect to research, Dewaele (2007) contends that appropriateness must be negotiated and assessed in particular situated communicative activities by L2 users. Additionally, since judgments on appropriateness are dynamic and dependent on the contexts of language use as well as the participants in communicative acts, there has been a push in the field of SLA to stop promoting idealized appropriateness based on what native speakers may say and do in particular contexts. To this end, Dewaele (2007) suggests an emic perspective in pragmatic competence research in order to account for L2 users' views on appropriateness, communicative intentions, and successful performance.

For successful interactions with US undergraduate students, ITAs must have an awareness of appropriateness with respect to the use of various speech acts in the classroom. For example, if an ITA uses a directive form such as "Erase the board" to request a student to actually erase the board, the effect of the utterance can be perceived as that of a command, and therefore, evaluated negatively by the student. Therefore, in the present study, appropriateness constitutes an important part of the investigation of ITAs' pragmatic competence with respect to their perceptions or awareness of appropriateness in the interpretation and realization of speech acts in the classroom.

Face, Politeness, and (In)directness

There are several factors to be taken into account in the investigation of pragmatic competence. Verbal communication involves both linguistic factors such as form choice, articulation, and intonation and social factors such as individual variables and relationships between interlocutors. The social factors that influence the interaction between the participants are categorized as *internal* and *external* (LoCastro, 2003). Internal factors consist of the weight of imposition, the degree of intimacy, and the attitudes of the interlocutors, whereas external ones include social status, age, gender, and power. The main difference between internal and external factors is that the internal ones are dynamic and change during interaction, whereas external ones are usually more static and can influence interaction. With respect to pragmatic competence, an important factor in the investigation of the effects of social factors on language use in communicative acts is the notion of *face*.

Face is “the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself... [and assume] that all competent adult members of a society have (and know each other to have)” (Brown & Levinson, 1987/2014, p. 299). The notion of face is originally derived from the work of Goffman (1963; 1967/2014) who studied interactions between people at mental institutions and public places. According to Brown and Levinson’s (1987/2014) politeness theory, there are two types of face: *Negative face* refers to the people’s desire to be independent and to function unimpeded by others, whereas *positive face* shows their desire to be approved, appreciated by others through interactional involvement. Acts that oppose to the face wants or needs of the interlocutors in an interaction are called *face-threatening acts* (FTA). Speech acts usually involve different types of threats to the interlocutors that interact with one another. Typical examples of speech acts that threaten the addressee’s or hearer’s negative face are orders, requests, suggestions, advice, reminders, threats, warnings, dares, offers, promises, and compliments. Speech acts that threaten the positive face of the addressee/hearer are expressions of disapproval, criticism, contempt, complaints, accusations, insults, disagreements, and challenges. Similarly, some speech acts primarily threaten the speakers’ face. Acts that threaten speaker’s negative face are expressions of gratitude, accepting an apology, excuses, accepting offers, and showing unwillingness. Apologies, acceptance of compliments, losing control of bodily actions (e.g. falling), self-humiliation, and confessions are among the acts that threaten the positive face of the speaker.

Participants involved in an interaction employ certain strategies to either avoid FTAs or minimize the negative impact of the speech act that threatens the addressee/hearer. To this end, the Brown and Levinson framework offers three macro-strategies:

1) Do the act on-record:

   a) badly or without redressive action (doing it the most direct, clear, unambiguous or concise way possible without saving the face of the hearer)

   b) with redressive action (doing it with modifications or additions to soften the force of the act)

      i. positive politeness redress (saving the positive face of the hearer)

      ii. negative politeness redress (saving the negative face of the hearer)

2) Do the act off-record (doing it via hints or indirect suggestions)

3) Don't do the act (no linguistic action or avoidance)

Redressive actions enable the speaker to counteract the impact of the threat posed by the speech act, and therefore, are for the benefit of the hearer. In this vein, redressing can be accomplished in two ways. In order to save the hearer's positive face, speakers may employ *positive politeness strategies* which include noticing or attending to the hearer, seeking agreement or avoiding disagreement, joking, being optimistic, and asking for reasons. *Negative politeness strategies*, on the other hand, include being conventionally indirect, hedging, minimizing the imposition, giving deference, apologizing, and nominalizing.

One notion that is usually associated with politeness is (*in)directness* (LoCastro, 2003). (In)directness is usually considered to be a universal feature of human communication in all languages, and speakers can purposefully use it as a strategy to accomplish different purposes.

For instance, in situations where being direct can hurt the hearer's feelings, the speaker may choose to resort to indirect forms:

A: That is an interesting shirt on you.

B: It's my grandma's birthday present. You don't like it?

Instead of directly expressing the true opinion of the clothing article that (B) is wearing, (A) employs an indirect strategy by focusing on the color attribute and avoiding his/her dislike of the shirt. In addition, indirectness can also provide a means to avoid conflict or lower the weight of imposition of a requestive act.

Using indirectness strategies can present some risks and/or costs for the speakers. For example, indirectness is usually conveyed by cognitively more demanding linguistic forms (e.g. passive voice), and therefore, can bring cognitive challenges to the communication task with respect to processing time. Furthermore, the choice between being direct and indirect is determined by the power and social distance differentials between the speaker and hearer (Brown & Gilman, 1960), the weight of imposition in the given context of the culture (Lakoff, 1973), and the levels of involvement in the interaction.

Goffman's (1967/2014) and Brown and Levinson's (1987/2014) face and politeness works described here have been approached from a critical perspective (Leech, 2014, for a detailed discussion). Bargiela-Chiappini (2003) argues that researchers from non-Anglophone cultures find Brown and Levinson's operationalization of 'face' difficult to apply in their own cultures, which poses concerns for the universality of their politeness framework. Additionally, the cultural subjectivity of Brown and Levinson's face notion has led researchers to revisit Goffman's notion of face (e.g. Mao, 1994). It has been found that Brown and Levinson's conceptualization of polite behavior was essentially strategic in Western cultures, whereas

Goffman's notion of face was typical of hierarchical societies in which social status influences the politeness norms in interpersonal relationships. In addition, even though it proves to be a rigorous framework, Brown and Levinson's theory is mainly informed by the notion of face and focuses on strategies to be employed to mitigate the force of FTAs (Locher & Watts, 2005). Furthermore, some scholars contend that Brown and Levinson's theory does not emphasize the impact of context on interactions, specifically interlocutors' perceptions of particular social situations (Dippold, 2009; Mao, 1994). Thus, it may be argued that the absence of the contextual dimension as well as cultural, individual, linguistic factors restrict Brown and Levinson's model to the so-called Anglophone cultures.

Overall, it seems that the concept of face is intricately related to linguistic politeness, meaning that face plays an important role in interlocutors' adjustment of language use in particular interactions. Although, Goffman (1967/2014), and Brown and Levinson (1987/2014) frameworks of face and politeness have been extensively criticized, they still remain to be at the center of most discussions of linguistic politeness (LoCastro, 2003). Additionally, (in)directness, with its various forms of strategies, has been closely related to politeness and face frameworks and regarded as negative politeness in Brown and Levinson's theory (Leech, 2014).

As explained above, the notions of face, politeness, and in(directness) are related to one another and comprise the basic tenets of pragmatic competence of an individual. In the realm of L2 acquisition and research, Kasper (1990) underscored the importance of the acquisition of appropriate linguistic norms of the target language culture in order to eliminate the risk of involuntarily violating politeness norms. In this respect, particularly in the present study, the investigation of ITAs' L2PC context requires special attention because ITAs encounter several FTAs in the US classroom where they have to conform to politeness norms of the US culture.

More specifically, ITAs' comprehension of appropriate and polite language forms, as well as their ability to successfully produce them during their interactions with US undergraduate students can indicate their level of L2PC.

Speech Acts

Since the basic unit of analysis in the investigation of ITAs' pragmatic competence in the present study is their comprehension and production of speech acts in the US classroom, the notion of speech acts is described in this section.

The speech act theory was first introduced by Austin (1962) in his study *How to Do Things with Words*. Initially called 'performative sentences' or 'performatives,' speech acts are those in which speakers perform an action, more than just uttering words or sentences. In that sense, performative utterances are different from 'constative' utterances which Austin classified as utterances that describe situations and are either true or false (e.g. 'My name is John.'). On the other hand, rather than describing, performatives or speech acts require a performance (e.g. 'I do' during the proceedings of a marriage ceremony). The performance of a speech act involves the performance of three types of act; a locutionary act (the conveyance of propositional meaning), an illocutionary act (the performance of a particular language function), and a perlocutionary act (the achieving of some kind of effect on the addressee).

Austin (1962) introduced five categories of speech acts: *verdictives, exercitives, commisssives*, *expositives*, and *behavitives*. Later, Searle (1969) further distinguished five basic speech acts: representatives (or assertives), directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations. He identified speech acts as the minimal units of human communication that have form and function. Introducing a more subjective, individual and cognitive view of context, Searle (1979) reconceptualized the illocutionary classes by focusing on three selected dimensions of the speech act (illocutionary point, direction of fit, expressed inner state), thus emphasized the impact of external social circumstances on the illocutionary acts. External factors involve the participants in the communicative event and are based on various types of status such as gender, age, power, and etc. (LoCastro, 2003). In this vein, CA and WTC, which are major constructs of the present study, can be considered to encompass features of such external factors. More specifically, an individual's CA or WTC can be influenced by the relative status of the participants in an interaction (e.g. student vs. teacher conversation where the teacher possesses power and/or a higher social rank).

Within a politeness framework, Leech (2014) categorizes various speech acts into different maxims. Based on Gricean pragmatic account of politeness, Leech (1977) proposed a *Tact Maxim* and, more generally, a *Politeness Principle* (PP) (1983) as complementary to Grice's Cooperative Principle (CP). According to PP, polite beliefs expressed by the speaker (S) are favorable to the other person (O) or hearer (and/or unfavorable to oneself), while impolite beliefs are unfavorable to O (and/or favorable to S). To account for polite linguistic behavior, Leech (2014) groups typical speech acts into different maxims: *generosity* (offering, inviting, promising), *tact* (requesting, ordering, entreating), *approbation* (complimenting, praising), modesty (responding to compliments), *obligation* (thanking, responding to thanks, apologizing, responding to apologies) and *agreement and opinion-reticence* (agreeing, disagreeing, advising), sympathy (congratulating, comforting, well-wishing).

The pioneer study in the realm of speech act production is that of Blum Kulka, House, and Kasper (1989) who investigated the realization of requests and apologies by means of discourse completion tests taking into account three context variables such as power relations, social distance, and the degree of imposition between the interlocutors. Known as the Cross-cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP), their project has inspired several other studies, and the scope of speech acts research now includes suggestions, refusals, compliments, complaints, gratitude, etc. One such study is Cohen and Olshtain's (1993) investigation of advanced EFL learners' encoding of speech acts of apologies, complaints and requests. Their study lent support for the cognitive processing demands in the production of speech acts. Similar findings were reported by Trosborg (1995) who investigated the same speech acts with three different proficiency groups of Danish EFL learners. It was found that approximation to native speaker level in the production of speech acts was dependent upon the proficiency level.

In short, a large number of studies in the field of cross-cultural pragmatics and interlanguage pragmatics have focused on how groups of learners differed from each other in their performance of speech acts. However, a prominent gap in research focusing on L2 speech act performance pertains to investigation of the possible interactions between L2 learners' IDs such as motivation, anxiety, attitudes, or willingness to communicate in different situations in the target culture and their pragmatic competence with respect to the comprehension and production of speech acts. Informed by this gap, the present study particularly focuses on ITAs' comprehension and production of various speech acts in the US classroom in conjunction with their L2 communication anxiety and willingness to communicate.

Review of Literature

Individual Differences: Willingness to Communicate and Communication Anxiety

IDs in applied linguistics and SLA refer to the “attributes that mark a person as a distinct and unique human being” (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 231). IDs have been investigated from various perspectives including social-psychological (e.g. Gardner, Temblay, & Masgoret, 1997), and social constructionist (e.g. Peirce, 1995) approaches. The most commonly investigated IDs in the SLA literature are motivation, language aptitude, learning styles, learning strategies, foreign language anxiety, and learner beliefs. In the anxiety domain, two names are prominent: Elaine Horwitz and Peter MacIntrye. While Horwitz (1986, 2000) specifically focused on classroom-related foreign language anxiety, MacIntyre (1995, 1999) explored the impact of social attitudes and behavioral communication correlates on L2 CA in naturalistic settings. Later, the L2 CA was studied under the construct of WTC which was originally developed in the field of communication in 1980s and later used in SLA by Richard Clément and Peter MacIntyre. Specifically, researchers have tried to account for the interplay between IDs such as attitudes, motivation and learners’ willingness to adopt target norms and standards in their L2 use. In what follows, the basic premise of WTC and CA is described and relevant research specifically focusing on ITAs in the US is reported.

WTC is a social-psychological construct which was developed in the field of communication in the 1980s (McCroskey & Baer, 1985; McCroskey & Richmond, 1990). The origins of the WTC construct lie in the first language literature and is particularly linked to Burgoon’s (1976) work on “unwillingness to communicate.” However, the conceptualization of WTC in L2 is different from that in L1 communication. Unlike L1 communication in which

WTC bears a trait-like characteristic, WTC in L2 is viewed as “a state of mind, a willingness to engage in a conversation with a specific person at a specific moment, given a state of self-confidence as a communicator” (MacIntyre & Legatto, 2011). In other words, while L1 WTC is a stable disposition or personality trait associated with willingness to use language in particular situations, L2 WTC is more transient in nature and dependent on the contextual conditions of a communicative situation (MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, & Donovan, 2002). For instance, while an L1 speaker may have the same level of WTC with other speakers who share the same L1, L2 learners may experience various levels of WTC with native or non-native speakers of the L2. Therefore, the communication situation and the participants involved can determine an L2 learner’s degree of WTC. In addition, perceived competence of L2 users and their anxiety levels are also among the contributing factors to their initiation of an L2 conversation.

Previous research has shown that prior experiences in social situations can influence WTC in L1 communication (McCroskey & Richmond, 1991). Additionally, personality characteristics such as anxiety, perceived competence were found to affect communication behavior (MacIntyre, Babin, & Clément, 1999). The same factors were found to be influential in L2 WTC (MacIntyre & Charos, 1996). Other variables such as gender, age, L2 instruction, immersion program experience caused variation in the level of WTC among young learners (MacIntyre et al., 2002). MacIntyre et al. (2002) suggest that even though motivation facilitates communication initiation for the most part, the relationship between WTC and motivation is not direct. It is argued that in situations where L2 learners tend to avoid interacting with others, the anxiety arousal can override the effects of motivation. Additionally, social support from friends, parents, and teachers gives learners the chance to practice L2 in natural contexts, particularly outside the classroom. Without the opportunities to practice outside the classroom, the WTC level of a learner would be relatively low (MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, R., & Conrod, 2001).

The interface between WTC and communicative competence has been noted in the IDs literature (MacIntyre et al., 1998). According to the revised communicative competence model proposed by Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei, and Thurrell (1995), there are five major sub-competences, namely, linguistic, discourse, actional, sociocultural, and strategic, each of which is a major precursor to the WTC construct (MacIntyre et al., 1998). Knowledge of formal features of a language (linguistic competence) including grammar, phonology, and morphology is a precondition for WTC, meaning that a learner who does not have the basic knowledge of the formal features of an L2 is less likely to initiate or carry on a conversation. Sequencing and organizing sentences or utterances in both spoken and written texts (discourse competence) are skills that are indispensable for engagement in the act of communication. The (in)ability to match communicative intent with linguistic form and identify, comprehend, and use speech acts (actional or pragmalinguistic competence) can also determine one's WTC. For instance, an ITA who is not able to use the appropriate pragmalinguistic forms to express a communicative intent in the classroom might encounter a communication breakdown, and this negative experience might cause him or her to be less willing to interact with students in the classroom. Therefore, using language appropriately in different social situations in accordance with the pragmatic norms (sociocultural or sociopragmatic competence) is important in identifying situational variation in actual communication. Finally, the knowledge of communication strategies and the ability to handle linguistic problems when engaged in communication (strategic competence) plays an important role in one's overall communicative competence. Therefore, it can be posited that an L2 learner's pragmatic competence level can be related to his or her WTC.

MacIntyre et al. (2002) argues that in situations where L2 learners tend to avoid interacting with others, the anxiety arousal can be high. In other words, high levels of fear or anxiety about communicating with others might cause L2 learners to be less willing to initiate communication. In the IDs literature, a number of reasons have been proposed for L2 learners' experiences of CA including perfectionism, procrastination, fear of evaluation, and fear of errors (Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002). Several socio-biographical and affective factors were found to be related to CA. Age, academic achievement, prior history of visiting foreign countries, prior education, experience with foreign languages, expected overall average for current language course, perceived scholastic competence, and perceived self-worth were among the factors noted by Onwuegbuzie, Biley, and Daley (1999).

Dewaele, Petrides, and Furnham (2008) argue that research in the realm of CA must focus on adult learners as they constitute a larger population, and their experiences in multilingual environments and linguistic strategies can contribute to our understanding of CA in L2. In addition, since several affective factors are involved in adult SLA, self-reported trajectories in L2 communication can enhance our understanding of the complex nature of anxiety in communicative situations. Responding to this call for research in field of IDs, the present study focuses on ITAs in the US who are adult L2 English learners interacting with members of L2 target culture in academic settings. Having to operate in a new culture with little or no exposure to and knowledge of the social and cultural norms of the US classroom setting, coupled with the linguistic challenges, may significantly impact ITAs' performance as instructors in the classroom. To this end, ITAs' WTC and CA emerge as two important areas of IDs in the investigation of ITAs' pragmatic competence.

Though limited, there is existing research focusing on teaching assistants (both local US TAs and ITAs) in the US university context. Althen (1991) found that an ITA's successful performance depended both on culturally acceptable behavior and native-like English pronunciation ability. In this vein, an ITA's awareness of the sociopragmatic norms of the US culture as well as the communication patterns and individual affective states might influence the success of his or her interactions with US students in different instructional settings. MacIntyre and Thivierge (1995) found that audience pleasantness and audience familiarity greatly influence public speaking anxiety and WTC. In this vein, ITAs that come from cultures dissimilar to the host culture are likely to experience more uncertainty about social situations (Gudykunst, 1985). Also, living and communicating in a different culture could present challenges for ITAs, and they can experience high levels of social and communicative ambiguity, thus leading them to avoid uncertainty (Hofstede & Bond, 1984). Therefore, a novice ITA beginning his graduate studies in a new culture and educational setting is likely to experience CA and WTC problems due to unfamiliarity, uncertainty, and ambiguity factors.

Research has shown that WTC and CA experienced by TAs can influence the university classroom dynamics. In terms of classroom management, Roach (1995) found that TA argumentativeness strongly correlated with student perceptions of instructor power use. Roach (1998) found negative correlations between TA CA and TA teaching experience, training in content, and training in teaching. Additionally, Roach (1999) found a negative correlation between TAs' CA and student perceptions of TA nonverbal immediacy. On the contrary, TAs' WTC was positively correlated to student affective/cognitive learning, and ratings of instruction as well as TA nonverbal immediacy. TA anxiety about teaching and teaching competence was fostered by anticipation of negative student evaluation increases TAs' CA. For instance, Zimmerman (1995) found that interacting with American students was a strong predictor of student perceptions of communicative competence and cultural adjustment. Perceptions of self-esteem and competence were also related to ITAs' high level of CA. Yook (1999) showed that ITAs' fear of being judged about their communication competence by students whose L1 is English increases their CA.

As indicated by the review of literature, the relationship between several IDs and different L2 competences has been noted. However, more research is needed to fill the gap in research to account for the possible relationships between L2PC and two unexplored IDs such as CA and WTC. Additionally, existing research focusing on ITAs in the US classroom setting has shown that there are several non-language related factors affecting ITAs' classroom performance. Although there have been attempts to explore the interface between WTC and CA and ITAs' classroom teaching performance, no research to date has focused on the ITA's L2 pragmatic competence from a social-psychological perspective.

Research in Interlanguage Pragmatics

Due to the importance of the place it occupies in existing communicative competence models as well as its close interaction with several IDs discussed previously in this chapter (and in Chapter one), pragmatic competence has received special attention in the fields of SLA, applied linguistics, and TESOL. The pragmatics research conducted in these fields is known as *interlanguage pragmatics* (ILP), which Kasper and Dahl (1991) defines as the study of "nonnative speakers' (NNS) comprehension and production of speech acts, and how that L2-related knowledge is acquired" (p. 216). The main objective of ILP research is to account for language learners' acquisition of pragmatic norms and forms, which have been operationalized as sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic competence, respectively (Leech, 1983; Thomas, 1983). The ILP research encompasses a variety of theoretical and methodological perspectives that account for the acquisition of pragmatic competence specifically in the field of SLA. The basic assumptions of each perspective and their contributions to our ILP knowledge are described below.

Two major theoretical perspectives have formed the basis of the existing ILP research, namely, cognitive and social (Soler & Martínez-Flor, 2008). The cognitive approach presupposes that pragmatic competence is an individual mental process, and research in this area consists of experimental/quasi-experimental designs and spoken and written data elicitation techniques such as discourse completion tests (DCT). The most popular hypotheses in this realm relevant to pragmatic competence are Sperber and Wilson's (1986) *relevance theory*, Schmidt's (1993) *noticing hypothesis*, Bialystok's (1993) *two-dimensional model of L2 proficiency*, and Long's (1996*) interaction hypothesis*. Relevance theory posits that meaning-making does not only involve the decoding of linguistic forms, but it also necessitates a listener's ability to process the contextual cues in order to arrive at the intended meaning. With respect to pragmatic competence, Timpe (2014) argues that the mismatches between expectations, assumptions, and world knowledge between NS and NNS interlocutors may cause greater cognitive demands for both groups, which might lead to problems in intercultural communication. The noticing hypothesis distinguishes between noticing and understanding and has been mainly used to account for the impact of awareness in pragmatic acquisition (Soler & Martínez-Flor, 2008). According to this theory noticing entails paying conscious attention to linguistic forms and pragmatic functions as well as specific constraints these forms encompass with regard to usage. Bialystok's two-dimensional model for pragmatic development is based on two predictions.

First, adult L2 learners are considered to have completed forming representations of pragmatic knowledge. Research supports this prediction in that adult learners usually rely on their L1-based pragmatic knowledge (Kasper & Rose, 1999; Bardovi-Harlig, 2001). The second prediction is that adult learners mainly attempt to gain control over effective allocation of attentional resources which are related to conversational features such as intonation, appropriate responses, and sequencing constraints with regard to the formulation and production of linguistic forms. Finally, Long's interaction hypothesis, which underlies task-based language teaching, underscores the role of interaction in cognitive and language development. Specifically, this perspective is concerned with how learners map form, meaning and context and create their pragmatic knowledge through specific interactional arrangements.

Unlike the cognitivists, proponents of the social approach to pragmatic development do not view interaction merely as a means to acquire grammar; rather, to them, interaction is essentially social (Kasper, 2001). *Sociocultural theory* and *language socialization* have been the prominent theories in the social view of pragmatic competence in the last decade. The key notions in both theories are context, process of acquisition, interaction, and language use. In that vein, both theories focus on the developmental issues in pragmatics (Soler & Martínez-Flor, 2008). That said, the two perspectives differ from each other in their historical origins and disciplinary orientations. Within the sociocultural theory framework, human cognition is symbolically mediated, and the activity is the crucial condition that motivates L2 use and development, which is the underlying premise of the Vygotsky's theoretical construct *Zone of Proximal Development* (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). Some studies that are framed within sociocultural theory have focused on the interactions between advanced nonnative speakers in second language environments outside the class (e.g. Shea, 1994). Most studies, however, focused on classroom interactions. For instance, Ohta (1995) found that peer interaction enabled learners to use L2 at more advanced levels of communicative ability than their actual pragmatic competence. It can be concluded that the sociocultural account of pragmatic development holds that opportunities for interaction either inside or outside the classroom facilitate pragmatic learning.

Language socialization, on the other hand, integrates culture and language and enables individuals to use language in meaningful, appropriate and effective ways (Ochs, 1996). In the famous study of Wes, a Japanese artist living in Hawaii, Schmidt (1983) conducted the first longitudinal study to test Schumann's (1978) acculturation model and the impact of social-affective factors such as motivation on the development of adult L2 learner's pragmatic and discourse competence. The unique finding about this study was that an adult L2 learner can gradually attain pragmatic competence with limited or poor grammatical competence. Applying the socialization construct into pragmatic acquisition, Blum-Kulka (1997) arrives at 'pragmatic socialization,' a process in which learners learn to use rules of conversation including topic choice, turn-taking, storytelling, and politeness. Research within the framework of language socialization has focused on a variety of topics. Teachers' implicit and explicit socialization goals in their interactions with learners, particularly expert-novice convergence in task completion were investigated by Poole (1992). Falsgraf and Majors (1995) examined the directness of teacher directives and found that high directness style indicated teacher's authority in order to sustain a sense of diligence, responsibility and conformity. Duff's (1995) investigation of language learning in secondary schools in Hungary after the collapse of the Soviet Union reveals that discourse socialization evolves and may contradict the existing cultural norms or practices.

In the last two decades, the ILP field has witnessed an abundance of studies, and several researchers have published overviews and meta-analyses of ILP studies focusing on the development of pragmatic competence of second or foreign language learners. Prominent areas covered in recent overviews include developmental issues in ILP (Kasper & Schmidt, 1996), pragmatics and SLA (Kasper & Rose, 1999), the acquisition of pragmatics (Bardovi-Harlig, 1999), the effects of explicit instruction on interlanguage development (Jeon & Kaya, 2006), acquisition and pedagogy in ILP (Barron, 2011), longitudinal studies in ILP (Taguchi, 2010), teaching pragmatics (Taguchi, 2011a), and pragmatics in foreign language contexts (Soler & Martínez-Flor, 2008). Since the present study focuses on ITAs' pragmatic comprehension and production of speech acts in the US classroom context, major studies that focus on comprehension and production skills of L2 learners are described below.

Pragmatic comprehension. In ILP research, an L2 learner's ability to infer the intended meaning of an utterance correctly in a specific context has been called *pragmatic comprehension* (Kasper, 1984; Taguchi, 2007), *pragmatic awareness* (Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998; Schauer, 2009), and *receptive pragmatic competence* (O'Keeffe, Clancy, & Adolphs, 2011). Kasper (1984) considers the general/specific social context, social variables (e.g. status, role, relationship) and norms to be the essential factors in effective pragmatic comprehension. Schauer (2009) contends that communication between the participants of a conversation may break down due to a pragmatic failure which could result from either L2 learners' L1 background or insufficient knowledge of L2 target pragmatic forms.

A number of studies investigated the comprehension abilities of L2 learners. Assessing six groups (German, Japanese, Korean, Chinese, Spanish/Portuguese, and Taiwanese) of ESL learners' comprehension of indirect utterances at a US university via a multiple choice test three times over a period of 2.5 years, Bouton (1988) found that exposure to implicatures (i.e. idiomatic, formulaic, and predictable discourse patterns conveying indirect meanings) in naturalistic contexts improved learners' scores. Taguchi (2002) investigated the inferential abilities and use of comprehension strategies of Japanese L2 learners. Contrary to Bouton's findings, Taguchi's study showed that, rather than implicit input in context, higher-proficiency in L2 enabled learners to identify the purpose of an implicature. Taguchi's conclusion that proficiency facilitates comprehension of implicatures was also supported in her later studies. Examining the relationships among general L2 proficiency, speed of lexical judgment, and pragmatic comprehension ability of twenty native speakers and 92 Japanese college students of English, Taguchi (2007) found a significant relationship between proficiency and accuracy, as well as between lexical access speed and comprehension speed. However, there was no correlation between L2 proficiency and comprehension speed. Moreover, accuracy and comprehension speed were not related to each other. Based on these findings, Taguchi (2007) argued that the development of pragmatic knowledge and processing capacity of using the knowledge are not related to one another in L2 development.

The impact of pragmatic and grammatical awareness of English as a foreign and second language (EFL/ESL) learners on their pragmatic and grammatical competence was investigated by Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei (1998). Using videotaped scenarios, the researchers compared the pragmatic and grammatical awareness of advanced ESL teachers and learners from different L1s in the US with Hungarian and Italian advanced EFL teachers and learners. The scenarios featured typical interactions of a male and a female student and ended with request, suggestion, apology, or refusal. It was shown that ESL learners in the US academic context were more sensitive to pragmatic felicities than EFL learners. On the contrary, EFL learners performed significantly better than ESL learners in the ratings of grammatical errors. Additionally, both ESL and EFL teachers recognized more grammatical errors than pragmatic violations. These findings suggest that pragmatic and grammatical awareness do not seem to develop at the same rate.

To replicate Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei's (1998) work, Schauer (2006) examined differences in ESL and EFL learners' pragmatic awareness. The data were elicited using Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei's (1998) video and questionnaire instrument accompanied by post hoc interviews. The 53 participants in the study included 16 German learners of English studying at a British university, 17 German students enrolled in a higher education institution in Germany, and 20 British English native-speaking controls. It was found that the German EFL learners were less aware of pragmatic violations than the German ESL learners. Also, L2 residence in Great Britain enabled the ESL learners to increase their pragmatic awareness at a significant level.

In the domain of pragmatic comprehension, it seems that L2 proficiency is a significant predictor in the success of pragmatic comprehension. Along with proficiency, due to the rich amount of implicit input available in the environment, L2 residence or exposure to the target language community improves learners' pragmatic comprehension and awareness. Existing research in the realm of pragmatic comprehension reveals important gaps which the present study aims to fill in. Firstly, the present study brings two IDs, specifically CA and WTC, into the realm of pragmatic competence focusing on a new adult L2 learner/user population (i.e. ITAs in the US). Secondly, the study explores whether or not ITAs' pragmatic comprehension abilities with respect to classroom speech acts are related to their communication anxiety and willingness to communicate levels in the target L2 culture. Finally, the present study aims to contribute to the existing research on L2 pragmatic comprehension by focusing on ITAs' judgments and perceptions of appropriateness with respect to classroom speech acts.

Pragmatic production. In general, L2 production is one of the most easily observable indicators of a learner's overall proficiency, particularly in the realm of pragmatic competence. Due to its inclusion of both sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic knowledge, pragmatic production necessitates more processing demands than comprehension (Taguchi, 2012) and is, therefore, particularly more challenging for L2 learners. In other words, L2 learners' production of a pragmatically appropriate utterance requires them to first encode the lexical and morphosyntactic features and then align these features with the sociocultural and contextual constraints. Incorrect encoding may result in miscommunication or irritation (Taguchi, 2012). Failure to encode the linguistic features may delay the response time in a conversation or failure to abide by the sociocultural or situational constraints may result in inappropriate utterances.

Similar to the comprehension domain, the ILP literature contains a variety of studies focusing on the development of pragmatic production. In of the earliest studies in this realm, Scarcella (1979) investigated the development of pragmatic and discourse competence of ten beginner and ten advanced Arabic L1 learners of English in inviting and requesting. The analysis of videotaped open role plays revealed that beginner level learners relied on imperatives, whereas advanced learners displayed a restricted use of imperatives only in contexts of either equal or low power communication. Eventually, learners gradually adopted most of the native speaker speech act strategies and gained proficiency.

Similarly, using role play situations, Trosborg (1987) compared the realization of the speech act of apologies of native English speakers, Danish L1 speakers, and Danish EFL learners. It was found that the use of lexical downgraders, specifically downtoners, hedges, subjectivizers, intensifiers improved at a level close to that of native speakers. Trosborg (1995) further examined the requests, complaints, and apologies of three groups of Danish learners of English and found that with increased proficiency in the L2, learners performed at levels close to native-like in request strategies. Only slight differences across groups for apology and complaint strategies were observed. The results of Scarcella (1979) and Trosborg (1987; 1995) indicate that pragmatic development is positively proportional to the increase in proficiency in the L2.

In an institutional setting, Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1993) conducted a longitudinal study on the development of suggestions and rejections by advanced ESL learners with high grammatical competence in academic advising sessions. It was found that ESL learners gradually approximated to native speaker (NS) use of speech acts in the academic context. As the length of stay increased in the target community, they began to use fewer speech acts that are not favored by NSs. Similarly, the importance of output opportunities for the development of L2 pragmatic competence was shown by Marriot (1995) who investigated eight low proficiency Australian learners of Japanese in Japan. Due to lack of input and output opportunities for polite style, the learners' acquisition of formulas and honorifics was not successful over time. Focusing on the interface between pragmatic and grammatical competence, Salsbury and Bardovi-Harlig (2000) showed that modality expressions such as 'could' and 'would' emerged later than lexical items such as 'maybe' and 'think' in the conversational production data of a learner group.

Allami and Naeimi (2011) investigated the production of refusals by Iranian EFL learners specifically focusing on the frequency, shift, and content of semantic formulas with regard to learners' language proficiency, status of interlocutors (lower, equal and higher) and types of eliciting acts (requests, invitations, offers, and suggestions) on realization of the strategies. A baseline consisting of responses of thirty-seven American native speakers was used for comparison purposes. It was found that while both groups used providing excuse/reason for the refusal, the American participants' excuses were more specific, concrete and to the point in both place and time. On the other hand, native speakers of Persian displayed a nearly high level of frequency shift in their use of several semantic formulas, whereas American patterns for refusals were quite consistent regardless of status level.

With a similar conceptual design, Bella (2012) investigated developmental patterns in the requestive behavior (head acts and external/internal modification devices) of three different proficiency level (lower intermediate, intermediate and advanced) foreign language learners of Greek. Similar to previous studies, it was found that several aspects of the learners' pragmatic competence developed as their proficiency increased. However, the advanced learners' approximation to native-like performance was minimal. In a very recent study, Youn (2014) examined the relationship among pragmatic competence, grammar, and proficiency by comparing the syntactic complexity of ESL learners' written pragmatic production across two independent criterion measures: proficiency and pragmatic performance. It was found that written pragmatic competence of learners did not correlate with their proficiency levels but with the syntactic complexity of their pragmatic production. That is, pragmatically advanced learners produced longer utterances, more complex sub-clausal structures at the phrasal level, and more subordination, demonstrating the crucial roles played by syntactically complex structures in expressing pragmatic functions. Overall, this study also lends support for the interface between pragmatic competence and grammatical competence.

Within the production realm of ILP research, the studies reviewed above mainly adopted cross-sectional designs and largely focused on the interface between proficiency and pragmatic competence in advanced adult NNS learner groups in a comparative fashion. Although most longitudinal ILP research has mainly focused on the pragmatic development of beginner level learners (Kasper & Rose, 1999), a number of studies investigated advanced adult learners with relatively high proficiency levels in order to better understand the interface between pragmatic competence and L2 proficiency, which has repeatedly been shown to be positively correlated in the existing research findings. However, it has been also repeatedly shown in the ILP literature that high levels of grammatical competence do not guarantee high levels of pragmatic competence. L2 learners have been found to fail to attain native communicative competence even at the advanced stages of their learning (Olshtain & Blum-Kulka, 1985). More specifically, Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1990) showed that advanced NNS speakers with high interlanguage grammatical competence do not perform pragmatically at optimal levels. Conversely, an L2 learner’s pragmatics can be ahead of his or her grammar. The well-known example of this scenario is the participant Wes in Schmidt’s (1983) study in which it was shown that Wes had advanced pragmatic and discourse skills whereas his grammar lagged behind. Therefore, it could be posited that grammatical competence may not mirror pragmatic and interactional competence (Kasper, 2001).

Based on the motivation of the present study explained in Chapter one, some ITAs who are usually considered advanced L2 learners with high grammatical competence or linguistic proficiency experience communication breakdowns during their interactions with the US students in the classroom. Additionally, as previously proposed earlier in this chapter, in order to gain a better understanding of L2 pragmatic competence, more research is needed to explore non-linguistic factors, particularly such individual differences such as CA and WTC levels of learners. In an attempt to respond to this need, the present study focuses on ITAs’ speech act production performance in various classroom situations and explores the possible interface between their pragmatic production competence and the aforementioned individual differences.

International Teaching Assistants and Communicative Competence

The origins of ITA research date back to early 1980s, and research in this field has flourished since the1990s due to the increasing number of ITAs being recruited in US universities. The communication problems of ITAs in the US universities were first articulated by Kathleen Bailey (1982, 1984). Together with her colleagues, she introduced the concept "the foreign TA problem" (Bailey, Pialorsi, & Zuikowski-Faust, 1984) which encompasses a variety of topics including ITAs' communication difficulties that result from cross-cultural and linguistic barriers, inefficient academic performance of undergraduate students, and social/cultural isolation of foreign students, the types of ITA training programs, and instruments for assessing the oral English proficiency of foreign TAs.

Along with the empirical recognition of the "foreign TA problem," several issues related to ITAs have been investigated. In general, among the main issues investigated are ITA training programs (Briggs, 1994; Briggs & Hofer, 1991; Stevenson & Jenkins, 1994; Tang & Sandell, 2000), improving ITAs' oral language proficiency with special emphasis on pronunciation and communicative competence (Anderson-Hsieh, Johnson, & Kohler, 1988; Hoekje & Williams, 1992, 1994; Neves & Sanyal, 1991; Rubin, 1992; Tyler, Jefferies, & Davies, 1988), the attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions of US undergraduate students about ITAs (Plakans, 1995, 1997; Rubin & Smith, 1990; Yook & Albert, 1999), ITAs' teaching skills (Bailey, 1982; Nelson, 1992; Smith & Simpson, 1993; Tyler & Davies, 1990), non-linguistic and cross-cultural factors pertaining to ITAs' communication skills and strategies (Althen, 1991; Bresnahan & Cai, 2000; Gorsuch, 2003; Numrich, 1991), and ITAs' own points of view (Mascoop, 1993; Meesuwan, 1992; Ross & Krider, 1992; Tavana, 2005). Main strands of ITA research are briefly described below. Due to the scope of the present study, a more comprehensive review and synthesis of the research on ITAs' communicative competence is provided.

The ITA communicative competence research is largely motivated by the communication issues ITAs experience in their interactions with US undergraduate students. Therefore, the impact of student perceptions about ITAs on the relationship dynamics in the classroom has been investigated in numerous studies. Some studies focused on the effects of perceptions that students have of ITAs about communication and student success in the class. For instance, characteristics such as rapport, approachability, and ethnicity have been found to influence students' perceptions as they consider these factors to be the most important for the effectiveness of ITAs. In Briggs and Hofer's (1991) study undergraduate students rated ITAs lower than US TAs on rapport. However, Davis (1991) did not find much difference in the ratings of ITAs and US TAs on rapport, approachability, enthusiasm, and fairness. Research has also shown that undergraduate students are happy with the performance of ITAs (Oppenheim, 1996; Ouzts, 1991). In a survey study administered to 700 students, McKeachie, Lin, and Mann (1971) found that high achieving students tend to be more successful with ITAs. Additionally, advanced students were found to perform better with ITAs when compared with students in beginning level classes and do not perceive differences between ITAs and US TAs in overall effectiveness (Oppenheim, 1996).

Along with the increasing institutional demands that ITAs' oral proficiency be screened before they are appointed as instructional staff and ITAs with low English proficiency be given training in oral communication skills (Bailey, 1984; Halleck & Moder, 1995; Hoekje &

Williams, 1992), most research has focused on ITAs' oral skills and pronunciation. Among the most common problems discovered in this realm were stress and intonation (Anderson-Hsieh, Johnson, & Kohler, 1992). Tyler, Jefferies, and Davies (1988) found that the stress and intonation patterns of Chinese and Korean teaching ITAs caused their lectures to be perceived as lacking organization and focus. Furthermore, Tyler and Davies (1990) found that a Korean ITA's production and interpretation of intonational cues led to a communication failure between the ITA and an undergraduate student. The typical tonal composition of the ITAs' presentations was found to obscure the information structure and often characterize these speakers as unsympathetic and uninvolved (Pickering, 2001).

In addition to the linguistic issues pertaining to suprasegmental features in L2 phonology, several studies also focused on how ITAs employ different communication strategies and patterns. In this vein, non-linguistic factors such as different cultural assumptions, social norms and practices in the educational systems of the L1 culture were proposed. In addition, ITAs' communication patterns have been investigated in three major instructional settings, namely, the lab, the office hour, and the classroom. In what follows, research that focuses on the lab and office hour settings are briefly described. Since the present study investigates ITAs' pragmatic competence in the classroom setting, a more comprehensive review of this setting is provided later in this chapter.

ITAs in different instructional settings. The interactions between ITAs and students in the lab setting are usually related to issues of safety, guidelines for experiments, and time management. The major discourse functions exploited by ITAs include giving instructions, answering questions, and warning (Axelson & Madden, 1994). Myers (1994) state that ITAs with low English proficiency are usually given lab assistant positions because lab teaching is generally considered to be less arduous for ITAs than classroom teaching. The studies described below give a general overview of the main discourse features and pragmatic functions pertaining to ITA communication in the lab setting.

Tanner (1991) investigated TA-student interaction in the lab by analyzing six chemistry lab TAs' (3 ITAs and 3 US TAs) questions and students' responses. Significant differences were found in the NS TAs' and NNS TAs' use of questions, particularly the referential, display, and echoic questions. Additionally, the use of "probing sequences" and the syntactic form of questions used to assess students' progress were found to differ in both groups of TAs. In a study focusing on ITAs' question patterns in lab communication in eight different departments, Myers (1994) found that the most common question type used to negotiate communication and check confirmation was echoic questions. The use, quantity, and type of questions were found to be different between effective ITAs and less effective ITAs. In addition, ITAs differed in how active they were in initiating interaction with the students as well as their ability to use questions effectively. In a more recent study, Gourlay (2008) investigated the communication between three experienced ITAs and their undergraduate students in introductory chemistry labs. It was found that students initiated nearly two-thirds of lab communication, often employing deixis in questions and requiring ITAs to disambiguate discourse. The ITAs' listening comprehension skills and coordination of visual and verbal sources of information were found to be important in successful communication.

It can be concluded from the findings of the existing research that the lab setting requires ITAs to be able to perform a limited range of speech acts. Additionally, the major pragmatic function utilized by ITAs in this setting is the act of asking questions and responding to student questions. Additionally, communication is mainly initiated by students and ITAs' main role is to execute interactions rather than initiate them.

The characteristics of office hours with regard to the roles of ITAs and general interaction patterns, sources of miscommunication, and communication strategies have been investigated. With respect to the strategies that are exploited by ITAs to remedy communication breakdowns during office hours, Chiang and Mi (2008) found that various types of reformulation were used by ITAs to display a tentative understanding of what was said. In addition, problematic understanding was not exclusively attributable to poor linguistic competence; rather, ineffective production of communicative acts and inappropriate presentation of instructional discourse were found to be the main sources of trouble in understanding uncertainty. In a similar study, Chiang (2009) discovered that cultural differences were found to implicitly influence the procedures of interactions. Furthermore, investigating question and answer exchanges during office hours, Chiang (2011) found that problems in exchanges were caused by participants' failure in accessing the same adequate social, pragmatic, and interactional knowledge. Additionally, students were usually more inquisitive, whereas ITAs were expected to more responsive during office hours. From a more pragmalinguistic perspective, Reinhardt (2010) compared two corpora, namely ITAcorp, a learner corpus comprised of the transcribed classroom activities from advanced ESL and ITA preparation courses at a large northeastern American university and the sub-corpus of office hours from the Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English (MICASE) as expert user corpus. The findings revealed that learners showed evidence of over-reliance on smaller repertoires. In addition, contextual or socio-cultural factors including relevant experience, length of sojourn, vocation, instructional history, gender, and the development of identity as an academic professional were found to influence usage patterns.

Studies reviewed in the office hour domain indicate that non-linguistic factors such as socio-cultural and individual differences affect not only the levels of uncertainty and understanding during interactions, but also the complexity of language usage and patterns exploited by ITAs. Therefore, it could be posited that socio-cultural and individual differences influence L2 pragmatic competence, and linguistic proficiency or grammatical competence is not always positively proportional to pragmatic competence. Overall, the research conducted in both the lab and the office hour settings contributes to our understanding of ITA pragmatic competence especially when ITAs' interactions with US students are investigated in the classroom setting, which is described in detail below.

Discourse categories and pragmatics in the US university classroom. Teacher-student interaction constitutes the basic premise of educational discourse in higher education classrooms. Participation and negotiation structures in the classroom are determined by prior educational experiences, cultural backgrounds, and individual interaction styles (Buehl & Fives, 2009). In the US higher educational system, the role of the teacher is to facilitate and monitor learning, guide students in a flexible, supportive, and interactive learning environment, and develop teacher presence in the classroom (Axelson & Madden, 1994; Kim, 2006; Langer, 2010). These roles bring forth several classroom discourse and pragmatic norms to which ITAs are expected to conform.

Facilitating learning involves sequencing activities, emphasizing important points and keywords, using examples, and providing transitional information to help students make connections between chunks of information. Monitoring learning refers to the ability to start and end lectures, make announcements in the class, manage time and student turn-taking effectively. In order to establish an interactive and safe learning environment, the teacher must build rapport with the students. Finally, creating teacher presence entails the management of teacher and student roles (Rine & Hall, 2011). That said, ITAs who come from countries where the teacher is the mere transmitter of content information and students are the passive absorbers of knowledge may find it challenging to conform to the norms of the classroom dynamics in the US university context (Sarkisian, 2006). Therefore, it is essential for ITAs to be cognizant of the teaching practices, discourse patterns, and pragmatic norms in the US university classroom.

The pragmatics of classroom communication is influenced by several sociocultural phenomena. Interactions in academia are also determined by status differentials between teachers and students (Jenkins, 2000). Conceptualizations of politeness, appropriateness, and formality are subject to cultural variation and may affect the dynamics of interactions in the classroom. For instance, the use of silence as a politeness strategy may be negatively interpreted by the participants of a speech community where silence is viewed as disruption in the flow of a conversation (Scollon, 1985).

In order to understand the attitudes and beliefs that create a disciplinary culture in a university teaching setting, Gorsuch (2003) designed a questionnaire to elicit ITAs' attitudes about teaching and classroom communication practices, teachers' and students' roles. The questionnaire consisted of four main operationalizations of culture, namely sociolinguistic, textual, nonverbal communication competence, and ITAs' awareness of significant mores in a university educational culture. The items in the sociolinguistic competence section of the survey aimed at ITAs' attitudes regarding their ability to use language appropriate to specific social settings, particularly in the university context. Some of these items were "A good teacher is easy for students to talk to," "A good teacher has late students ask permission to enter the classroom," "A good teacher will scold students if needed." An interesting finding of the study is that there were differences in ITA responses with respect to gender, particularly in the area of authority and communication. Female ITAs were found to more likely agree that late students should ask permission to enter a classroom. That being said, female ITAs were less likely to agree that students should obey them because teachers have a higher position. The significance of this study is that it shows that ITAs pragmatic competence is not only related to linguistic proficiency, but it is also related to sociocultural factors such as age, culture, and gender as well as the disciplinary cultures.

In addition to being pragmatically competent in the classroom, Rounds (1987) contends that ITAs still need to familiarize themselves with the specific pedagogical or instructional language of the US university context, even if they have a good level of daily language proficiency. Therefore, she suggests the English for specific purposes (ESP) approach to ITA training which provides ITAs with pedagogical and discipline-specific classroom discourse knowledge and language use. In support of this view, Gorsuch (2006) holds that discipline-specific practica can provide ITAs with specific language learning opportunities for appropriate language use in US classrooms.

Every academic discipline has its own cultural context in which faculty members conduct research, teach, and interact with students (Austin, 1996). Therefore, disciplinary cultures have a direct influence on the patterns of teaching (Becher, 1994). For instance, Rounds (1987) discovered the basic instructional characteristics of Mathematics discourse. They were “naming processes,” “overtly marking major point,” “both to evaluate and reinforce student achievement,” “developing cohesion and continuity within and between classes by repetition and linking talk,” “explicitly organizing topics and marking topic change,” “stating the scope of the students’ responsibility,” “using questions in a timely fashion,” and “using persuasive techniques” (p.

666). In addition, disciplinary cultures influence instructors' attitudes, values, and personal characteristics in teaching (Kuh & Whitt, 1988) and determine the particular problems and concerns experienced by TAs (Luo, Bellows, & Grady, 2000). Therefore, it can be posited that academic discipline might influence how TAs perceive and respond to instructional issues (Luo, Grady, & Bellows, 2001).

Effective content delivery and communication in the classroom requires ITAs to have high levels of discourse and pragmatic competence, which comprise two sub-components of the communicative competence models (e.g. Canale & Swain, 1980) introduced in Chapter one. Discourse competence refers to the ways in which utterances logically connected in both spoken and written discourse, whereas pragmatic competence has to do with sociocultural rules of speaking and appropriateness, style, and register in using language in specific contexts. ITAs' development of effective communicative competence in the US classroom can be facilitated by the particular training programs.

In one such program that is based on a competency-based approach, Douglas and Myers (1989) described three sets of strategies. First, *pedagogical strategies* pertain to the use of the board and visual materials, outlining lesson content and writing the main terms and concepts on the board, checking with students before erasing the board, correcting errors, using illustrations and diagrams to facilitate understanding, giving directions and advice. Second, *organizational and exploratory strategies* include the use of organizational markers and examples, relating new work to old work, and summarizing. Third, *interaction with students* involves using limited check questions, student names, encouraging student responses, accepting student responses, asking open questions, and asking for clarification. Below are some utterances of a communicatively competent Lebanese ITA from a computer science class giving directions for a complex project:

Table 1. Giving Directions

Form	Description
"So, you could put a hundred here."	second person pronoun + modal
"Now 'getmem' in the message passing system now has to be changed to take care of this."	passive
". . . after you've worked on Part A of the project, you wanna go back and change it a little bit."	second person pronoun + "want to do"
"Something else -- please make sure that you do not stick your routines directly in Zeno."	"please" + imperative
"Test your routines one-by-one."	imperative
"Plus, if you want to print a debugging statement in Zeno, do not use 'print F', use 'K print F'."	conditional + [negative] imperative
"Do not -- please do not use any assembly language in your project unless you clear it with me..."	"please" + imperative + "unless"
"We do not want you to start working on assembly language."	first person plural pronoun + [negative] + "want you to"
"And you need to start on it as soon as possible."	second person pronoun +"need to")
"If you wanna switch from this design to a completely new design, please talk to me first."	conditional + "please" + imperative
"We'll discuss it. There may be better designs. We will discuss anything you have."	first person plural pronoun + modal
"But if you want to stick to it or change course, feel free to change it a little bit here and there."	conditional + "feel free to"

Douglas and Myers (1989, p. 174)

As can be seen from the utterances in Table 1, the ITA uses a variety of grammatical forms to give directions to students. The use of modality in the form of modal verbs, conditionals and passive voice softens the tone of directions and reduces the use of the imperative form in the language of giving directions. The ITA also makes use of effective interaction strategies with the use of various pronouns. Particularly the use of plural pronouns establishes solidarity in the class, thus creating a collective and shared responsibility for participation.

The major content delivery method in the US undergraduate classroom is lecturing. Facilitation of learning is usually sustained through examples, explanations, analogies, and metaphors. The classroom teaching discourse consists of restating, paraphrasing, summarizing, and giving instructions (Axelson & Madden, 1994). Along with the discipline-specific approach, the goal of instruction in the classroom is connected to the specific discipline area. The language used in the classroom is usually characterized as more direct, content-heavy, and more receptive than other university instructional settings. The major discourse categories in the classroom accompanied by relevant pedagogical objectives are listed by Axelson and Madden (1994, p. 159):

1. ***Creating the right atmosphere***
   a. Greeting and making small talk before class.
   b. Using informal, narrative style, humor, local references
   c. Using student names
   d. Using inclusive pronouns (atmosphere of equality)
   e. Handling students' wrong answers: softening the blow, praising, reassuring
   f. Maintaining contact while writing on the board
   g. Using body language
2. ***Facilitating student understanding of material***
   a. Giving interesting, clear introductions
   b. Restating, paraphrasing, using synonyms

c. Using examples, leading to examples, analogies, metaphors

d. Using informal, narrative references

e. Linking: relating new and old work

f. Emphasizing important points

g. Using transitions, moving to the next point, motivating the next step, labeling the steps

h. Provoking students to think

i. Eliciting opinions, guesses, ideas

j. Simplifying questions

k. Presenting information

l. Offering warnings, reminders

m. Giving advice

n. Concluding, wrapping up, summarizing

o. Encouraging students to handle their own mistakes

3. ***Managing the classroom***

a. Making announcements

b. Running out of time, revising your plan as you go

c. Deferring response to student questions (also contributes to the right atmosphere)

d. Managing student turn taking

The first study focusing on discipline-specific investigation of ITA communicative competence was conducted in the field of Mathematics. Rounds (1987) analyzed a corpus of five 50-minute videotapes of a select group of NS and NNS TAs' class sessions in a Mathematics department along with her observations of other classes taught by other TAs. She also incorporated student and TA supervisor comments on the tapes in different review sessions, providing a rich retrospective interpretation of the data. One of the major findings was that the pronoun ‘we’ occurred more frequently than ‘I’ or ‘you’ for all the TAs, suggesting that the use of ‘we’ as an egalitarian pronominal choice can help teachers avoid reminding their students of their relative differential status and promote solidarity with their students. Also, three types of silence were identified: administrative, strategic, and empty. Discourse features specific to mathematics classrooms were related to naming functions, marking of mathematical junctures, information chunking, questions, and persuasion strategies.

The act of questioning as a discourse phenomenon in the university classroom with respect to student questions was investigated by Rounds (1994). She compared data from five different Mathematics classes taught by TAs with data based on a corpus of 244 student questions recorded during 33 phonetics lectures taught by a professor (McKenna, 1987). She found that student questions constitute relatively a minor part of the Mathematics classroom discourse due to peer pressure and the fear of losing face in the classroom or causing the teacher to lose face. Clarifications, interpretation checks, and digressions were the main categories of student questions. The most frequent question type in both sets of data was clarification, which means students ask for information to be repeated. The content being presented in the classroom was also found to be influential on student question types.

Liao (2009) investigated the production of English discourse markers (DMs) by six male and female Chinese L1 ITAs. Each ITA was audio-recorded when they were leading a discussion section of a large lecture class and during sociolinguistic interviews conducted by the researcher. The DMs examined were ‘yeah,’ ‘oh,’ ‘you know,’ ‘like,’ ‘well,’ ‘I mean,’ ‘ok,’ ‘right,’ and ‘actually.’ The study revealed the relationship between L2 speakers’ multifaceted social identities, language attitude, and participation in the local community with their individual repertoires and frequency of DM use. The findings revealed that ITAs' use of DMs showed discrepancy from NSs in the usage of the individual function of DM and variation in the frequency. Also, the two different types of discourse, namely classroom discussions and interviews, led to stylistic differences and preferences in the use and function of particular DMs. Finally, different individual variables and lived experiences with respect to access to second language learning resources were found to affect the DM use.

Intonation structure within a discourse intonation framework in ITA classroom teaching situation was investigated by Pickering (2001). In the study, tone choice in 12 parallel presentations given by six Chinese and six North American male TAs teaching math discussion sections, or introductory labs in physics, chemistry, or electrical engineering. The analysis involved the description of falling, rising, and level tones and their functions and comparisons between ITAs and US TAs. The findings showed significant differences in the number of tone choices between ITAs and US TAs. US TAs tonal structure was more informational and involved social convergence with hearers, whereas ITAs used a limited number of negotiation moves towards students in their presentations. This study underscores the importance of tonal choice in teachers' performance of pragmatic and informational functions in classroom discourse.

ITAs' classroom communication strategies were investigated by Williams (2011). In a narrative study from a constructivist point of view, Williams analyzed how ITAs negotiated with US undergraduate students. The analysis of two individual interviews with twenty participants along with classroom observations revealed that ITAs' lack of or insufficient knowledge of the US students' background caused them to struggle with negotiating with the students. Negotiation enabled teachers to establish their teacher authority and students to engage in autonomous learning. ITAs' recognition of their students' zone of proximal development also enabled them to provide instruction that was meaningful to them. In addition, experience and confidence in teaching helped ITAs become more willing to negotiate with their students as they began to find it less threatening to their identity.

The review of research on ITAs in the classroom setting shows different aspects of ITAs' communicative competence with special emphasis on discourse competence. Pronominal choice in the classroom indicates power and solidarity in the classroom discourse. Similarly, tonal choice can indicate the proximity between the ITA and the students, and therefore, ITA awareness of this important discursive strategy proves to be important and offers implications for ITA curricula and training programs. Additionally, ITA discourse competence has been investigated from cultural, educational, and pedagogical perspectives with a focus on sociocultural roles of teachers and students, pedagogical structure of the US undergraduate classroom, and disciplinary cultures in different academic fields on ITA development. Most research in this domain has been conducted specifically in the field of Mathematics discourse. However, more research is needed to explore the discursive features of different academic disciplines in order to better equip ITAs with the discipline-specific pedagogical knowledge and discourse competence.

Furthermore, research in this domain is largely restricted to discourse features, and ITAs' pragmatic competence in the classroom setting is understudied. Therefore, ITAs' pragmatic competence in the US classroom with special emphasis on functional language use or speech act performance needs to be investigated within an L2 pragmatics framework. More specifically, pragmatic competence as operationalized through face, speech acts, appropriateness, politeness and (in)directness should be investigated within the realm of individual differences to explore possible relationships between non-linguistic, affective, or individual factors and ITAs' pragmatic competence as it relates to the US classroom context. Such an empirical effort can potentially contribute to our understanding of ITA pragmatic competence, L2 competences, and socio-cultural factors, and can better inform ITA training programs.

CHAPTER THREE:

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

As described in the previous chapters, L2PC is a multi-faceted construct, encompassing a range of functions and attributes such as appropriateness, face, politeness, (in)directness, and speech act performance. In addition, L2PC has been found to be related to a number of IDs, such as motivation (Takahashi, 2005), attitudes (Lo Castro, 2001), personality (Verhoeven & Vermeer, 2002), and experience (Dewaele, 2007). In this vein, the perennial issue of ITAs' communicative competence which includes ITAs' abilities to understand and conform to the pragmatic functions in the US classroom setting can be investigated within the realm of L2PC and IDs. Specifically, in the present study, the relationships between ITAs' L2PC as conceptualized as their comprehension and production of speech acts in the US classroom context and individual factors such as their communication anxiety and willingness to communicate are explored.

To this end, this proposed study adopted a mixed-methods design aiming to fill the gap in research on ITAs' communicative competence by taking into account individual and contextual factors that might be related to ITAs' communicative competence in the classroom setting and synthesizing an extensive body of triangulated data. Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, and Turner (2007) defines mixed-methods research as "the type of research in which a researcher… combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches (e.g. use of qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, analysis inference techniques) for the broad purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration" (p. 123). Therefore, a mixed-methods design is thought to strengthen the interpretation of both quantitative and qualitative data sets by establishing connections and triangulating different data sources. Additionally, such triangulation and interrelation provided by multiple data sources increases the validity of research. As presented in Chapter one, the research questions investigated in this study are:

1) What are the underlying dimensions of ITAs' individual differences with respect to CA and WTC in the US classroom?
2) How much of the variance in ITAs' L2PC in the US classroom can be accounted for by the dimensions of CA and WTC as well as other factors such as linguistic proficiency and length of residence in the US?
3) What do ITAs' observed interactions with undergraduate students in the classroom context reveal about the relationship between CA and WTC and L2PC as demonstrated by the use of speech acts and politeness strategies?
4) What do ITAs' self-reported perceptions or beliefs about their interactions with students in the US classroom reveal about the relationship between CA and WTC and L2PC?

Research Context and Participants

International students whose first language is not English must demonstrate proficiency in English in order to be appointed as teaching assistants at US universities. In most universities, the required language proficiency to be appointed as a graduate assistant with classroom teaching duties has been established as minimum scores of 26 on the spoken portion of the internet-administered TOEFL iBT or 160 on the spoken portion of the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC). ITAs who fail to meet these minimum language proficiency requirements are usually not assigned TA positions that require them to directly interact with students.

In the present study, the participants were international students who met the minimum English proficiency requirements and were appointed as a graduate assistant by their graduate degree programs at different US universities nationwide. In this respect, the participant pool was a relatively homogenous L2 English speaker group in that ITAs are adult L2 users with similar English language proficiency evidenced by the TOEFL iBT scores. The homogeneity of the participants was crucial in this study because the inclusion of participants that differ from one another in major ways might obscure the interaction between variables (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 2003). Additionally, the participant pool included ITAs from a variety of academic disciplines such as natural/physical sciences, engineering, social sciences, humanities, education, business, and fine arts, expanding the scope of ITA research which mainly focused on the discourse pragmatic features of the Math teaching settings in previous research.

In order to provide a general description of the international student population in the North American university setting, some descriptive statistics from the main research site are presented. At the time of the study, the research site where main data collection was completed had over 240 degree programs at the undergraduate, graduate, specialty, and doctoral levels. According to the Fall 2015 statistics retrieved from the international student services at this institution, out of the 3975 enrolled international students, 1112 (28%) were master’s level and 584 (15%) were doctoral level graduate students. The top three countries making up the largest part of the international graduate student population were India (609), China (339), and Saudi

Arabia (88), followed by Iran (54), Turkey (46), Taiwan (40), Bangladesh (31), Nigeria (28), and South Korea (28). With regard to the academic majors, the majority of the international graduate students study Electrical Engineering (271) followed by Management Information Systems (192), Public Health (86), Business Administration (76), Mechanical Engineering (61), Computer Science (58), Finance (56), Curriculum and Instruction (56), Computer Science and Engineering (56), and Civil Engineering (55).

Data Collection Instruments

For this study, a number of qualitative and quantitative data instruments were utilized to investigate the relationships between ITAs' L2PC and individual differences and other variables. The quantitative data consisted of two survey instruments measuring ITAs' CA and WTC in the US classroom setting. In order to assess ITAs' L2PC, a pragmatic appropriateness test (PAT) as a comprehension measure and discourse completion test (DCT) as a pragmatic production measure were created. The qualitative data instruments were semi-structured interviews, classroom observations and field notes. The rationale and specific procedures followed during the creation of data instruments in the present study are described in the following sections.

ITA Classroom Communication Anxiety and Willingness to Communicate Scales

Before describing the specific scales created for the study, a discussion pertaining to the use of surveys in SLA research will be provided. As widely known, surveys are quite common in social science research as they provide cheap, easy, and fast data collection from a large sample, thereby making it possible for researchers to make inferences about larger populations. Specifically in SLA, surveys can inform us about language users' or learners intended or imagined linguistic behaviors, their attitudes and beliefs and feelings about language learning (Dörnyei & Csizer, 2012). Additionally, surveys are very useful in obtaining demographic data that can be utilized for further statistical analysis through careful analysis and coding (Révész, 2012). Despite these advantages, the survey research also presents some caveats as noted by Wright (2005). One of these caveats has to do with sampling. Since very little may be known about those who participate in online surveys, the accuracy of the information provided can be questionable. Another limitation is related to who responds to the survey, especially when the researcher has no access to the participants. Therefore, having no information about the identity of the survey takers may pose questions about the reliability of the responses. Another issue that might cast doubt on the reliability of responses has to do with the possible mismatches between what participants believe to be correct or desired response and what they may say or do in real situations. Finally, access to the potential participants can be challenging when surveys are conducted online. Participation request emails can be annoying for some people and these requests can be ignored without being forwarded to the potential participants. Since there are both advantages and disadvantages in all data collection methods, the rationale for the selection of surveys in this study was mainly based on the easy and fast administration of surveys and the ease of statistical analyses that is afforded by numerical survey data.

After the brief discussion of the survey methodology in research, issues related to the existing surveys measuring communication anxiety and willingness to communicate in teaching contexts. There are a number of anxiety scales measuring different constructs related to teaching assistants in the literature. One of the earliest scales is the Teaching Anxiety Scale (TCHAS) originally developed by Parsons (1973) to assess teachers' reactions to a variety of situations related to teaching as well as their attitudes towards teaching as a profession. A modified version of this scale was used by Williams (1991) to investigate the effects of a comprehensive teaching assistant training program on teaching anxiety and effectiveness.

The Personal Report of Intercultural Communication Apprehension (PRICA) scale is another instrument that was developed to assess intercultural communication apprehension (Neuliep & McCroskey, 1997). This instrument was motivated by the idea that the multicultural structure of the US necessitates intercultural communication in everyday life, and a considerable number of people suffer from intercultural communication apprehension. PRICA was used in studies examining teaching assistants' communication apprehension with respect to teaching in the US classroom (Roach, 1995, 1998, 1999; Roach & Olaniran, 2001). However, neither TCHAS nor PRICA included items that specifically focused on ITAs and their classroom communication with the US students. In addition, to date, there are no existing scales to measure ITAs' communication anxiety with respect to the use of face-threatening speech acts in the US college classroom. To this end, in this proposed study, a Classroom Communication Anxiety Scale (CCAS) was designed and described in detail in the following sections.

It has been noted in the previous chapters that CA is related WTC in that (un)willingness to communicate might be dependent on the level of CA experienced by an individual. In order to measure this construct, the first known WTC scale was developed by McCroskey and Richmond (1985, 1987) to measure an individual's predisposition toward approaching or avoiding the initiation of communication (McCroskey, 1992). This scale consists of 20 items and is based on probability estimates. Eight of the items are fillers, and twelve are scored as part of the scale. When scored, it yields a total score, three subscores based on types of receivers (strangers, acquaintances, friends), and four subscores based on types of communication contexts (public, meeting, group, dyad). McCroskey (1992) states that "the need for a representative sample of receiver/context items is important for establishing meaningful norms for the WTC instrument" (p. 18).

That said, a focused WTC scale with one particular receiver and context could explain more efficiently the particular inclinations or tendencies with respect to communication with a particular group in a particular context. Due to the inclusive scope of the original WTC scale, and the focused scope of the present study with respect to classroom communication participants, a new WTC scale which specifically measures ITAs' WTC with US undergraduate students (the receiver) in the US classroom (context) was created.

In Chapter two, CA and WTC were defined and explained in the realms of SLA and ITA communicative competence. The kind of anxiety measured in the present study is situation-specific anxiety. More precisely, it is the anxiety that ITAs might experience in having to communicate with US undergraduate students in the classroom setting and is possibly caused by ITAs' having to perform a variety of face-threatening L2 speech acts such as refusing, disagreeing, suggesting, apologizing, to name a few. By the same token, ITAs' inclination to perform these speech acts in the classroom performance when they have the chance or opportunity to do so is conceptualized as their WTC. To this end, the content of the items of the CCAS and WTC scales focuses on the functional classroom language use typically observed in the US college classroom.

Item creation. As the first step in the process of item creation for the CCAS and WTC scales, an item pool for each scale was created. Two main sources were utilized at this stage. Firstly, the researcher attended professional development course offered at the main research site in the summer of 2014 in order to enhance his understanding of the common concerns, feelings, attitudes, and experiences of US TAs and ITAs about teaching undergraduate courses. In addition to the classroom discussions that lasted for a period of eight weeks, notes were taken based on the informal communications with several TAs and their micro-teaching demonstrations in the classroom. This experience raised the researcher's awareness of the patterns ITAs employed in their language use when they gave brief lectures about their academic disciplines. For instance, it was observed that the interaction level of an ITA in the field of Economics was quite high compared to an ITA who was in the field of Statistics. The former ITA was able to ask students more questions and elicit responses because the topic was about running a business and making profit, while the other ITA explained a statistical formula on the board. Additionally, classroom discussions about effective language use and communication strategies in instructional settings were informative in terms of the different views and styles of teaching in different disciplines.

Secondly, existing questionnaires such as TCHAS and PRICA were reviewed with regard to the wording and content of the items. Even though borrowing items from existing questionnaires could be useful because they usually have undergone extensive scrutiny and piloting, no items were borrowed from these questionnaires due to the major differences in the constructs of these instruments as mentioned above.

In addition to the abovementioned two sources, several books about ITA training and development of communicative competence were reviewed to find out what basic functional language pertaining to the classroom context is presented in them. Examples of such books were *Teaching American students: A guide for international faculty and teaching assistants in colleges and universities* by Ellen Sarkisian (2006) and *Communicate: Strategies for international teaching assistants* by Jan Smith, Colleen M. Meyers, and Amy J. Burkhalter (1992). From the former book, major functional language use patterns were selected. These patterns were considered as face-threatening speech acts for ITAs, such as responding to student questions, acknowledging student participation, and warning students. Based on several other speech act patterns presented in these books, items were created accordingly for both the CCAS and WTC scales.

During the item writing and refinement stage, the guidelines listed in Dörnyei and Taguchi (2009, p. 41) about writing questionnaire items were followed. First, simple and natural language was used in all items and acronyms, abbreviations, colloquialisms, jargon, and technical words as well as ambiguous sentences or words with multiple meanings were avoided. Second, in order to facilitate ease of interpretation, items were worded in simple and positive constructions, and cognitively demanding negative constructions were avoided. Third, all the items ask only one question, and there are no compound questions in any of the items. Additionally, both the CCAS and WTC scales are classroom-specific and focus on individual perceptions and experiences about CA and WTC. Finally, each item on the CCAS was worded both positively and negatively in order to eliminate the risk of 'acquiescence bias' which is a tendency of responding to items too quickly without carefully reading them. Skehan (2014) argues that some respondents tend to answer items in questionnaires positively more often than negatively. Therefore, only positively or negatively worded items may create a 'response bias' which may lead respondents to get a high score for certain items. For this reason, providing two forms of each item, one positive and one negative, can encourage respondents to evaluate two sides of a situation or construct, thereby increasing the reliability of their responses.

Description and scoring of the scales. Both the CCAS and WTC were based on rating scales. The CCAS consists of a total of twenty-six positively and negatively worded items. The scaling technique used in this questionnaire is *Likert-scale* (1-6). Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with questionnaire items. Below is an example from the CCAS (see Appendix B for the full questionnaire):

Disagreeing with a student's response or comment during a class discussion is easy for me.

Once the questionnaire was administered, each response was assigned a number from 1 to 6 for scoring purposes (e.g. strongly disagree = 1, disagree = 2, slightly disagree = 3, agree = 4, slightly agree = 5, strongly agree = 6). During the scoring of the negatively worded items which indicate the opposite of the target concept, a reverse analysis was conducted before the reliability analysis. For instance, if a respondent rated a negatively worded item like "I don't like apples" as 'strongly agree', the score 6 will be reversed to 1 because what the respondent rated is the opposite of the concept of 'liking apples.'

The WTC questionnaire consisted of twenty-two items each representing a different speech act or function related to the US classroom setting. The items are presented in the questionnaire in a random order. Due to the nature of the items in the WTC scale, the scaling technique used in this questionnaire is a variation on a Likert-scale. Dörnyei and Taguchi (2009) contend that the set responses on a Likert scale can be replaced by other descriptive terms that are relevant to the target. Specifically, in the WTC scale, respondents are asked to answer the question "How relaxed and comfortable would you be to communicate in the following classroom situations as a teaching assistant?" by indicating the extent to which they feel relaxed and comfortable in the given situations. Below is an example from the WTC scale (see Appendix D for the complete scale):

Asking students to hold their questions for office hours.

Once the questionnaire was administered, each response was assigned a number from 1 to 6 for scoring purposes (e.g. not at all = 1, not very much = 2, slightly not = 3, slightly = 4, very much = 5, extremely = 6). The same procedures as in the CCAS were followed during scoring.

Piloting the scales. According to Dörnyei and Taguchi (2009), the 'field testing' or piloting a questionnaire at various stages of its development on a sample of people that could be representative of the target population is an essential part of constructing a questionnaire. Piloting a questionnaire can help a researcher identify issues related to the wording and comprehensibility of the items, and whether or not the items are relevant to the target construct being measured or the target population. In addition, piloting can be useful in the identification of problems related to the administration of the questionnaire, scoring and processing of answers, and the clarity of instructions. Omission of the piloting stage can seriously decrease the psychometric quality of a questionnaire which involves the validity and reliability of the instruments.

As recommended by Dörnyei and Taguchi (2009), a two-stage piloting process was followed for both the CCAS and the WTCS. During the initial piloting stage, the questionnaires were reviewed by two people. One was an applied linguist and SLA specialist who had extensive experience with survey research and departmental TA training programs. The second reviewer was an ESL specialist with limited research experience, knowledge, and insights about the ITA population. Both reviewers were asked to review the items in both questionnaires and provide general comments about the clarity and well-formedness of the items. During this initial stage, several amendments were made in the questionnaires. For instance, four items were removed from the CCAS item pool as one reviewer believed that they did not measure communication anxiety. In addition, per a reviewer comment on some word choice issues in the WTC item pool, the wording in some of the items was revised.

The final piloting stage involved the administration of the questionnaires to a group of ITAs attending a professional development course at the main research site. The course consisted of both US TAs and ITAs, and questionnaires were completed by both groups of participants via a paper-pencil method. The total number of participants who completed the CCAS was 22 and the WTCS was completed by 13 participants. Before they started filling out the surveys, the participants were given specific instructions, such as marking or underlining any items or instructions that are not clear and writing down any other comments they had. The quick overview of the answers the respondents provided revealed that no items were skipped in the questionnaires, meaning that respondents did not have difficulty comprehending the items and rating them. Furthermore, respondents did not note any issues regarding word choice, ambiguity, or clarity of the items.

The internal consistency reliability of the scales. The purpose of conducting reliability analyses for multi-scale items is to check the coherence of the items and identify items that do not fit in with the others and eventually removing them from the scales (Dörnyei & Csizér, 2012). In order to determine whether the items within both the CCAS and WTCS were internally consistent or not, a reliability analysis was conducted. Specifically, Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficients were calculated using the latest version of SPSS (22) using the data obtained from the piloted instruments.

Before the reliability analysis was conducted for the CCAS scale, the scores of all the negatively worded items (3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 18, 20, 21, and 23) were reverse-coded. The initial reliability analysis of the CCAS scale including all 26 items generated a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of .756. Even though this coefficient was high enough to say that the scale is reliable, to improve the overall reliability of the scale, two items were excluded from the scale. These items were 15 and 20, which asked about participants' anxiety about speaking English as a second language. The item was both negatively and positively worded ("The fact that English is not my first language makes me feel very self-conscious" and "I feel comfortable about the fact that English is not my first language") Since the majority of the respondents who filled out the surveys were US TAs (n=13), and the remaining were ITAs (n=9), these items were mainly skipped by US TAs as English is their first language. Removing these two items increased the reliability of the scale. The improved Cronbach Alpha coefficient was .869, which is higher than the original coefficient without the deleted two items. These two items were included in the survey during the actual data collection process.

The WTC scale did not include any negatively worded items due to the different rating scale used in it. Therefore, no reverse-coding was necessary before the reliability analysis. The initial reliability analysis of the WTC including all 22 items generated a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of .830, which made the scale adequately reliable. Since adequate reliability was achieved after the initial analysis, no items were excluded from the scale.

ITA Classroom Pragmatic Competence Assessment Tests

Kasper and Ross (2013) contend that "speech act and politeness theories have an excellent match with psychometric concerns to enable inferences on the cognitive abilities of individual test takers in a target domain" (p. 15). As reviewed in Chapter two, numerous studies have measured a wide range of constructs related to these theories and other pragmatic constructs. In addition, the assessment of pragmatic abilities in most studies focused on both receptive skills (e.g. understanding implicatures, appropriateness or acceptability judgment) and productive skills (e.g. speech act performance).

A variety of methods and tools for assessing pragmatic ability have been proposed in the literature and used in several research studies. Among the most popular measures are discourse completion tests (DCTs), multiple choice tests, picture prompts, video prompts and role-plays (Yamashita, 2008). In interlanguage pragmatics assessment, construct selection is crucial. Yamashita (2008) proposes that "a language for specific purposes" approach could include such areas as daily life, college life, the workforce, or medical encounters. In this respect, the pragmatic construct measured in this study is 'ITA's classroom communication' which involves the receptive and productive abilities of ITAs with respect to classroom speech acts. More specifically, this study measured ITAs' pragmatic comprehension through an appropriateness judgment test where ITAs were asked to rate the level of appropriateness of classroom speech acts. Similarly, ITAs' pragmatic production was measured via a DCT where ITAs responded to undergraduate students in a set of classroom situations using various speech acts in the written mode. In what follows, the procedures followed in the creation of these two assessment tools are described in detail.

Pragmatic appropriateness test (PAT). As described in Chapter two, in several pragmatic awareness or comprehension studies, appropriateness judgment tests have been used as an assessment tool. According to Compernolle (2014), "appropriateness judgment tasks serve to link learners' emerging conceptual knowledge of indexical meanings, and the illustrative pragmalinguistic forms that can instantiate them, with concrete communicative contexts" (p. 120). Since limited amount of contextual information is provided for the test takers in multiple choice assessment tools like pragmatic appropriateness tests, Schauer (2009) argues that test takers may rely on a high level of imagination due to the lack of aural and visual cues in the specific contexts described. That said, Oller (1979, as cited in Timpe, 2014) argues that the language used on pragmatic competence tests must include meaningful sentences or utterances that would be used in authentic or real-life communicative situations. Thus, it can be posited that the appropriateness and validity of a pragmatic test is positively proportional to the authenticity displayed by the test.

In light of Compernolle's (2014) definition, a pragmatic appropriateness judgment (PAT) test was created for the present study in order to measure ITAs' comprehension of particular speech acts usually encountered or realized in the US undergraduate classroom setting. The first stage of test creation was scenario generation. Trosborg (2010) advises that scenario generation should be the first thing that test designers should consider since the performance of test takers is largely dependent on the carefully selected scenarios or communication situations. There are a number of methods described in the ILP literature for creating scenarios for pragmatic tests. Examples include inventing situations depending on the scope of the study, adopting or adapting situations from existing tests used in previous studies, and exemplar generation which consists of a questionnaire in which participants are asked to describe the most currently occurring pragmatic events like requesting, apologizing, complimenting, etc.

For the present study, scenarios and target items were created based on the existing situations and the content of the books that focus on ITA training, teaching in the US, and strategies for college and university teachers (e.g. Hutchison, 2005; McKeachie & Svinicki, 2006; Sarkisian, 2006; Smith, Meyers, & Burkhalter, 1992). Informed by these books, several situations were created related to ITAs' classroom communication problems with US undergraduate students. For example, a number of speech act situations were created based on the ‘discussion leading’ section of Sarkisian (2006) which included giving advice, disagreeing politely with student comments or answers, acknowledging or praising an intellectual contribution of a student, directing students’ attention, refusing a suggestion or idea, reminding, apologizing, giving opinion, and interrupting, to name a few.

Each classroom speech act scenario is followed by a certain response at differential levels of directness, politeness, and appropriateness. Both appropriate and inappropriate responses to each scenario were created modelling on the communication strategies, appropriateness criteria, and non-targetlike language use in the sources referenced above as well as previous appropriateness judgment tests used in existing ILP research (e.g. Martinez-Flor & Soler, 2007; Takimoto, 2009). The test consisted of fifteen classroom situations in total. Eight of these situations were provided with responses that would be perceived pragmatically appropriate, meaning that they were indirect, softened, and polite responses. The situations for which appropriate responses were created included the following speech acts: requesting, suggesting, expressing opinion, apologizing, responding to an incorrect answer, acknowledging an intellectual contribution, asking permission, and giving permission. Seven situations were followed by responses that could be perceived pragmatically inappropriate, meaning that they were direct, unmitigated, and off-record responses. These responses were for the following speech acts: refusing a suggestion or idea, warning, giving advice, asking for clarification, interrupting, offering a solution or alternative, and expressing hesitation. The accuracy of both appropriate and inappropriate responses was confirmed by two native English speakers who reviewed the situations and responses provided in each situation. Below is an example classroom situation which includes an appropriate response (see Appendix E for the complete test):

In order to receive feedback from her professor on her teaching performance, Heba wants to video record one of her class sessions. So, she needs her students' consent for the recording. She says:

"Would you guys be O.K. if I video-recorded our next class session?"

A rating scale was used in the PAT. Following the given responses to situations was a six-point Likert rating scale (not appropriate at all =1, inappropriate = 2, somewhat inappropriate = 3, appropriate = 4, somewhat appropriate = 5, completely appropriate = 6). The respondents were asked to use to make a judgment as to how appropriate the given responses which are proportionally higher or lower in accordance with the degree of perceived appropriateness based on the given situations.

Scoring of the PAT consisted of two stages. The first stage was to justify how the provided responses were labeled as appropriate or inappropriate. For this purpose, a class of undergraduate students (N = 19) from various majors at the primary research site were asked to complete this test as part of a course assignment. Their responses provided the basis for the scoring. Next, ITA PAT rating scores were compared to those of the undergraduate students. If an ITA rating for an item corresponded to the same range as the mean rating score of the undergraduate students, that rating received a score of 1. If the same rating did not correspond to the mean score of the undergraduate students that rating received 0. Based on this scoring a possible highest score that could be received from the PAT was 15 (see Chapter four for a detailed description for the scoring of the test).

The PAT was administered to a mixed group of US TAs and ITAs who attended a professional development course at the main research site. Extensive oral and written feedback was received from the course participants about the applicability of the situations to their experiences as TAs and the appropriateness of the responses provided in the test. The scenario generation and assessment stages proved to be useful in the creation of this test.

Additionally, in order to examine the reliability of this test, a Cronbach Alpha coefficient was calculated on the scores of all the participants including US TAs and ITAs who took the PAT. The analysis was conducted via the ‘reliability analysis’ function of the SPSS 22. The initial analysis generated a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of .640, which is usually considered to be a questionable value (George & Mallery, 2013) in terms of the reliability. The reason why the reliability of the test was somewhat in the lower acceptability range after the initial analysis could be that the US TAs, who are L1 English speakers, were included in the sample pool of test takers in the pilot data, although the test was specifically designed for ITAs who are L2 English speakers. To this end, a new correlation coefficient was calculated on the scores of respondents who were ITAs (n=9), and only their responses were included in the analysis. The new Cronbach Alpha coefficient obtained from this analysis was .722, which is a fairly acceptable reliability value (George & Mallery, 2013).

Discourse completion test (DCT). In this study, ITAs’ pragmatic production competence was measured through a written discourse completion test (DCT). A DCT is a questionnaire designed to elicit a particular written response based on a briefly described situation (Billmyer & Varghese, 2000). The given situation is usually followed by a space where test takers write what they would say if they were in that situation. Production questionnaires like DCTs are frequently used in interlanguage pragmatic studies (Kasper, 2000; Kasper & Rose, 2002; Kreutel, 2007).

One major advantage of using DCTs as a pragmatic production measure is that they facilitate language production within the context of a given scenario (Schauer, 2009). In addition, like multiple choice assessment tools, they are easy to administer and suitable for quick and large amounts of data collection. However, DCTs have also been problematized by scholars in the field of ILP. The most common criticism has been that DCTs lead to artificial but not authentic language production only reflecting the test taker's imaginary response in a given situation (Leech, 2014). Another issue noted in the literature concerns the mode of DCTs. DCTs usually provide learners' written language production which may differ when learners are asked to produce the same response in the spoken form. Furthermore, Schauer (2009) argues that the familiarity of test takers with the situations included in the test (e.g. a college student in the role of a medical doctor) is important in the authenticity of the language produced by respondents. Therefore, it is an important consideration that the target group of respondents in a DCT should be able to identify or be familiar with the contexts and roles described in the situations.

Informed by the abovementioned critics with regard to the design of DCTs noted in the ILP literature, a DCT that specifically focuses on the classroom communication situations in which ITAs interact with US undergraduate students was created for the present study. In so doing, the present study eliminated the problem of respondents' unfamiliarity with the situations mentioned above. Additionally, the fact that all situations in the DCT take place in the US college classroom context strengthens the argument that participants wish to maintain a relationship due to the status differences, and therefore try to save face (Kreutel, 2007). Accordingly, the speaker in each situation is an ITA, and the hearers are assumed to be mainly L1 English speaker American undergraduate students.

The DCT created in this study consisted of fifteen scenarios (see Appendix C for the full test). The number of scenarios was thought to be high enough to elicit ITAs' production skills on a variety of classroom speech acts. The content of the scenarios was restricted to classroom interactions between ITAs and US undergraduate students in the classroom setting. The scenario generation procedures used in the PAT were also followed in the creation of the DCT. Specifically, the pragmatic functions or speech acts to be elicited in each scenario were selected from the "Leading a discussion: Providing Direction and Continuity" chapter of Sarikisian (2006). Examples of the pragmatic functions or speech acts that would be elicited from the situations created in the DCT include asking permission, warning, giving advice, interrupting, refusing, disagreeing, to name a few. Below is an example from this test:

> Speech act: Interrupting a student
>
> In a discussion activity you are leading, a student seems to be going on too long with what he's saying, and you want to give others the opportunity to speak and express their opinions. You need to interrupt this student.
>
> You say: ____

After each situation, a space was provided for the respondents to write what they would say if they were in that situation. Since the pragmatic production test created for this study is an open-ended DCT, creating a rating rubric was necessary. The development of rating rubrics for pragmatic tests has been reported to be a daunting task (Trosborg, 2010) because standards for rating pragmatic skills or abilities are not as clear-cut as other language proficiency areas such as grammar. Therefore, there is a high degree of subjectivity involved in the rating of the appropriateness of test takers' responses. For the present study, a rubric (see Appendix G) was created based on that of Taguchi (2012) with minor changes. The participants' responses to the DCT items were scored on a six-point scale (1 = no response, 2 = very poor, 3 = poor, 4 = fair, 5 = good, and 6 = very good) by four undergraduate students (see Chapter four for detailed description of the scoring of this test).

Qualitative Data Instruments

Interviews. Interviewing is a common qualitative data collection method in which the researcher or interviewer personally interacts with a participant through a series of highly structured, semi-structured or unstructured questions to obtain data (Perry, 2011). In this study, in order to gain a deeper understanding of the perceptions and beliefs of ITAs about CA, WTC, and L2PC, a total of three semi-structured interviews were conducted with four ITAs individually. The rationale behind using semi-structured interviews in the present study was that they allow the flexibility and freedom to generate more questions during the course of the research project (Harklau, 2000). Schauer (2009) contends that semi-structured interviews may include a retrospective report element. Therefore, it was thought that interviews might provide an insider account of ITAs' communication experiences with US undergraduate students.

Guiding questions about the major constructs of the study such as communication anxiety and willingness to communicate in the US classroom setting as well as ITAs' own views of their L2PC were created (see Appendix J for sample questions). These questions were only used to guide the interviews. That is to say, the interviewees were given the chance to initiate topics that they believed were important to them regarding their interactions with students in the classroom. As recommended by previous research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Weinberg, 2002), interviews were conducted in the form of an interaction between the researcher and the participants Therefore, this unique qualitative data instrument was different from questionnaires in that it established an interpersonal connection between the interviewer and interviewee which afforded the researcher the benefit of monitoring comprehension of the questions by the interviewee and modifying questions in the case of misunderstanding (Perry, 2011).

A number of selection criteria were determined to decide who would be interviewed. Firstly, per the two-phase explanatory mixed-methods design of the study, the participants had to be selected from those who voluntarily agreed to complete the online questionnaires and pragmatic tests in the quantitative phase. The purpose behind this criterion was to increase the likelihood that the qualitative interview data might support the findings of the statistical analysis of the quantitative data. Second, in order to preserve the diversity in the quantitative data and eliminate the risk of biased sampling, participants from different academic disciplines, nationalities and genders were selected. Finally, participants were selected via combining a convenience sampling technique with a purposeful random sampling, meaning that based on the abovementioned criteria, eligible cases from the quantitative segment at the main research site who volunteered to take part in the qualitative were selected.

Classroom observations. Observation of authentic discourse is a data collection method which allows researchers to examine naturally occurring data without any intervention or instruments to elicit pieces of discourse (Leech, 2014; Schauer, 2009). Duff (2008) states that in classroom-based studies "observational work can help researchers understand the physical, social/cultural, and linguistic contexts in which language is used, and also collect relevant linguistic and interactional data…" (p.138). Observations as a data collection method have been conducted by relatively few researchers in ILP studies in the past three decades (e.g. Ellis, 1992; Schmidt, 1983; Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1993; Achiba, 2003). Schauer (2009) attributes the unpopularity of observations as a data collection method to the Labov's (1972) observer's paradox, meaning that the presence of a researcher or recording equipment might have an effect on the participants' discourse. In fact, this method has also been problematized in the field of applied linguistics. Perry (2011) states that observational procedures are usually more costly than instrumental data collection tools and take more time. Additionally, there are subjectivity issues such as observer's fatigue, attitude, or emotions. However, Perry (2011) also views these factors as possible advantages. The longer time period might facilitate better quality information. If the observer already focuses on a few subjects, it means that the information to be obtained could be rich and more systematic. Additionally, the subjectivity issue could also be an advantage because the researcher becomes personally more involved with the data collection can gain important insights about the population and the constructs under investigation. Finally, observations also provide naturally occurring data. In other words, the observational data can provide a truly 'situated' view of a phenomenon in its natural context, thereby strengthening ecological validity of the interpretations made about the phenomenon under investigation.

Despite the abovementioned disadvantages, it was thought that observing ITAs' interactions with students in the classroom setting could provide important information about ITAs' L2PC and other individual variables such as communication anxiety and willingness to communicate. Therefore, each ITA who agreed to participate in the qualitative segment of the study was also observed in the classroom during their teaching performance.

Observations for research purposes can be recorded in either field notes and/or with multimedia equipment. Schauer (2009) notes a number of disadvantages and restrictions with respect to both means of data recording tools. Firstly, the presence of multimedia equipment and the researcher in the classroom might cause discomfort both for the ITA and the students and negatively affect the discourse that would otherwise be more naturally occurring. The discomfort might also be experienced by the academic departments where the ITAs teach, therefore, it may be difficult to obtain permission to gain access to the university classrooms in various departments for multimedia recording. In order to minimize the negative effects of these disadvantages, the classroom sessions were audio-recorded, and the researcher took field notes.

Field notes are the recorded observational data that are usually accompanied by the researcher's own interpretations (Perry, 2011). In the present study, field notes were taken as recommended by Leech (2014). In order to supplement and provide contextual information for the audio-recorded interactions of ITAs' production of different classroom speech acts, the researcher took field notes pertaining to ITAs' communication with the students (see Chapter five for the analysis of the field notes).

Background questionnaire. A background questionnaire (see Appendix F) was utilized to collect qualitative information about the participants, such as age, gender, major, nationality, TA appointment, length of residence in the US, language proficiency test scores (e.g. TOEFL iBT), years of studying English, and self-rated proficiency level. This information was used to describe the participant ITA population in the present study and to identify independent variables for statistical analyses. Chapter four provides detailed descriptive statistics about the participant ITAs.

Data Collection Procedures

The present study was approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at USF (see Appendix K for the approval letter). The data collection lasted for about nine months starting as of March 2015 and ending mid-November 2015. The data collection timeline is shown in Table 2. As can be seen, most participants were recruited in fall 2015. There was hardly any recruitment in the summer period as most ITAs usually go home and many programs do not offer classes in the summer. Of the 419 participants who attempted to complete the online survey only 289 complete and valid cases were included in the analyses with a 69% response rate.

The participants in the quantitative segment of the study were recruited from various US universities. The sampling was limited to the researcher's accessibility to ITAs at different US universities and to gatekeepers such as administrators, ITA coordinators, or graduate program directors who can grant the researcher permission to recruit ITAs. To this end, the researcher

Table 2. Timeline for Data Collection

Academic semesters	Number of academic semester weeks	Total number of participants recruited		Number of observations per participant	Number of interviews per participant
		Quantitative data	Qualitative data		
Spring 2015	15	35	2	2	3
Summer 2015	16	3	0	0	0
Fall 2015	13	381	2	2	3
Total	44	419	4	8	12

created a list of individuals who were affiliated with ITA training or workshop programs or graduate program directors or coordinators by visiting the websites of different universities in the US. The selection of universities was based on whether the universities had ITA training programs or units. For this purpose, a list of universities was obtained from the TESOL ITA Interest Section website (http://ita-is.org/links.html) where many institutions with ITA programs are listed. Next, the graduate school website in each institution was visited and graduate program contact person information was retrieved from various programs. Each contact person was then sent a participation request email asking them to share the survey link with the ITAs in their departments. The email included brief information about the study followed by the survey link.

The total number of university websites visited was 44. The number of graduate program coordinators contacted differed from one institution to another. The total number of graduate academic program coordinators contacted from 44 universities was 950.

The selection of the participants for the qualitative segment of the study was based on the availability and consent of ITAs at the main research site. Based on the information obtained from the quantitative data, the participants who completed the surveys were identified and contacted to see if they would be willing to participate in the qualitative segment of the study. In spring 2015, two ITAs volunteered from the Sociology and Chemistry programs. In fall 2015, two more ITAs agreed to participate from the Math Education and Finance programs. The final number for the qualitative section participants was four.

Since the present study recruited participants nationwide in the US, it was considered to be more practical, cheaper, and faster to collect data via an online administration method than a paper and pencil method. Additionally, data collected online would easily be exported to statistical software programs and provide the researcher with ease of running statistical tests and analyzing large sets of quantitative data. Therefore, a Survey Monkey account was purchased and an online survey entitled 'International Teaching Assistants in the US' was created for the study. The quantitative surveys and pragmatic tests were typed into the survey and a survey link was created. The total estimated time for the completion of the questionnaires and pragmatic tests was approximately 30-45 minutes, which is the recommended length of time by Dörnyei and Taguchi (2009).

The guidelines proposed by Dörnyei and Taguchi (2009) in the presentation and administration of questionnaires were followed in the determination of the order of the questionnaires and tests. First, starting with the multiple choice instruments, respondents would feel less challenged to complete the survey at the beginning. Second, open-ended instruments such as the DCT and the background questionnaire were presented at the end of the survey because questionnaires that require respondents to produce substantial and creative writing or share personal information such as age, gender, education, profession might put some people off at the beginning of the survey and might cause them to quit filling out the survey without finishing. In order to increase the readability, the instructions will be graphically enhanced using boldface type. As for specific instructions, each section will include a brief explanation for the survey or test completion procedures. These instructions will include how respondents will answer multiple choice items (e.g. checking an alternative, filling in the blanks, etc.) depending on the rating scale used or complete open-ended items with at least one example showing how an item is answered in each section.

Following the above guidelines, the online survey consisted of a total of seven pages. The first page was an introduction including brief information about the informed consent to participate, the purpose and procedures of the study, benefits, risks and alternatives/withdrawal, compensation ($25 Amazon gift card drawing), and the contact information of the researcher (see Appendix A). The CCAS (items 1-27) was presented on the second page followed the DCT (items 28-43) on the third page. The fourth page was the WTCS (44-66) followed by the PAT items (67-82) on page five. The sixth page was the background questionnaire (items 83-98), and the survey ended on the seventh page with a thank you note for participation and prompts for providing an email address for the Amazon gift card drawing.

As previously described, the selection of the participants for interviews and classroom observations was based on convenience and purposeful random sampling. Due to the researcher's proximity to the participants, the recruitment for the qualitative segment of the study was completed at the main research site. Informed consent procedures were followed with the ITAs who agree to be interviewed and observed during their classroom teaching performance. The researcher determined with the participant ITAs as to which classes would be suitable for observation. The classes where ITAs would have the most interaction with the students were selected for observation (e.g. ITA leading a discussion or presenting content related to the field of study). Prior to the observations, the schedule for each observation was negotiated with each ITA. Each ITA was observed twice at different times. The duration each class session was approximately one hour. The total number of hours observed for all four ITAs was 8.14 hours. Although ITAs voluntarily participated in the segment of the study and signed an informed consent form as required by the IRB, further approval of their participation in the study was necessary by the department or program directors for three ITAs. Therefore, the department coordinators were emailed to notify them of these three ITAs' participation in the study. After providing further details about the study and the IRB approval letter, the coordinators' approval was obtained.

Each classroom session was audio-recorded via a digital voice recorder. The researcher always sat in the front row of the class to be close to the ITA for good quality recording purposes. Only the chemistry lab ITA was asked to carry the voice recorder with her as she was frequently walking around in the lab to help students with their experiments. Therefore, she carried the voice recorder in her pocket during the observed class sessions. After each observation, the sound files were saved in the researcher's password-secured personal laptop and were transcribed and analyzed.

Prior to the first visit to each ITAs' classroom, each ITA informed the students that the researcher would visit the class and audio-record the class. As the researcher was a nonparticipant observer, he was not introduced to the class in order not to interrupt the regular routine of the class. After each observation, the researcher had a very brief informal chat with the ITAs and scheduled the next observation and the interviews.

During the classroom observations, the researcher took detailed field notes focusing mainly on the ITAs' initiation of communication, aspects of behavior that might indicate anxiety, willingness to communicate, volume and tone of voice, responding to student questions or comments, and particular speech acts and politeness strategies used. Due to the nature of the study, ITAs' discourse was the main focus of the observations, specifically the verbal instructions and interactions. After each observation, a brief summary of the class session was created and compared to the transcribed interactions in order to provide context and clarifications for those interactions. In so doing, the objectivity in the interpretation of the data was maintained because two sources of data were used together to supplement each other and eliminate any kind of subjectivity that might have been present in the researcher field notes. Consequently, the observational and interactional data provided an excellent source of data to enrich the understanding of the individual differences and actual L2PC in the authentic classroom context where ITAs interact with undergraduate students.

The interviews consisted of open-ended questions which were flexible based on the issues brought up by the ITAs during the protocol. The interviews with three ITAs were conducted in a private study room in the library of the main research site, and the interviews with one participant were conducted in that ITA's personal office upon his request. It took approximately one hour to interview one participant. The total number of hours transcribed in the interview data was 3.11 hours. All sessions were audio-recorded and transcribed for analysis.

Data Analysis Procedures

An *explanatory two-phase sequential* mixed-methods design was used in the analysis of data in the present study. The main purpose of this design is to use qualitative data in order to build upon initial quantitative results (Creswell & Piano Clark, 2007). In this design, quantitative data collection and analysis is followed by the subsequent collection and analysis of qualitative data. A typical example of this approach is a quantitative survey study with a qualitative follow-up designed to shed more light on some of the findings in greater depth or to better interpret some anomalous findings (Richards, Ross, & Seedhouse, 2012). Therefore, both qualitative and quantitative segments of the present study involved several distinct stages of data preparation, organization, management, and analysis. Each data set was given equal weight, and the researcher reiteratively monitored the data at different intervals to find out what emerges, interpret the initial findings, compare and contrast the findings with previous research, and present relevant discussions of the findings. Table 3 provides a detailed layout of the relationships between research questions, data sources, and analysis procedures.

To bring both qualitative and quantitative data together, a merged/converged approach (Creswell & Piano Clark, 2007) was adopted. According to this approach, there are two options of bringing two sets of data together. First, the researcher can merge both sets of data at the analysis stage by consolidating the data or transforming one set into the other. Second, each set of data is analyzed separately and then merged at the interpretation stage. In this study, the second option was selected. Initially, the data to be elicited from each set was used to answer different research questions. Later, both the qualitative and quantitative data collected separately at different intervals were brought together to bear on the particular research questions of the study in a triangulated fashion. Chapter six is devoted to discussion of findings in this merged/converged fashion.

Table 3. Correspondence of Research Questions, Analysis Procedures, and Data Sources

Research Questions	Analysis Procedures	Data Sources
RQ1: What are the underlying dimensions of ITAs' individual differences with respect to CA and WTC in the US classroom?	Quantitative: Exploratory factor analysis on the CCAS and WTCS	CCAS and WTCS
RQ2: How much of the variance in ITAs' L2PC in the US classroom can be accounted for by the dimensions of CA and WTC as well as other factors such as linguistic proficiency and length of residence in the US?	Quantitative: Standard multiple regression analysis	CCAS and WTCS PAT, DCT, and BQ
RQ3: What do ITAs' observed interactions with undergraduate students in the classroom context reveal about the relationship between CA, WTC and L2PC as demonstrated by the use of speech acts and politeness strategies?	Qualitative: Identifying emerging themes, patterns, and categories in the field notes taken during classroom observations	Audio-recorded classroom observation transcripts Field notes from classroom observations
RQ4: What do ITAs' self-reported perceptions or beliefs about their interactions with students in the US classroom reveal about the relationship between CA and WTC and L2PC?	Qualitative: Identifying emerging themes, patterns, and categories in the interviews	Semi-structured interviews

The Researcher's Role

In this study, the researcher possesses both insider and outsider roles. Pursuing doctoral studies at the research site, he has held positions as an international graduate assistant including teaching and administration. This insider role privileged the researcher with institutional knowledge regarding how graduate programs work, are set up and function as well as how international graduate students are recruited and admitted into programs, the particular admission and language proficiency requirements. Furthermore, being an active employee at the research site provided some privilege related to issues of access to different entities at the institutional level such as academic program coordinators, ITA training programs and workshops, and the ITA population.

Overall, the major motivation for this research comes from the researcher's interactions with fellow ITAs, their stories, and experiences in the US university context as well as his increased awareness and disciplinary expertise in the field of SLA and applied linguistics. More specifically, the researcher's knowledge in ILP and L2PC as well as IDs in SLA brings a unique approach to the investigation of ITAs' communicative competence from a hybrid interdisciplinary perspective including SLA, communication, and social-psychological approaches. Thus, this outsider researcher role coupled with the insider role mentioned above affords the researcher to make reliable and valid interpretations about the constructs investigated in this study.

That being said, the researcher possessed an outsider role with respect to his familiarity and knowledge about the disciplinary cultures in different academic majors, the various communication styles between faculty and students, and the classroom discourse and pragmatics. Thus, this limited knowledge and insights about ITAs' functional language in the classroom setting in academic fields such as mechanical engineering, physics, science education, and economics enabled the researcher to adopt a more objective or an outsider perspective in the present study.

CHAPTER FOUR:

QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

In this chapter, the first two research questions will be addressed based on the quantitative analyses of the survey instruments and pragmatic tests which were presented in the online questionnaire in the following order: The CCAS (items 1-27), DCT (items 28-43), WTCS (items 44-66), PAT items (67-82), BQ (items 83-98). First, the basic descriptive statistics will be provided about the participant pool of the study. Second, the first research question (RQ1) 'What are the underlying dimensions of ITAs' individual differences with respect to CA and WTC in the US classroom?' will be answered via the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) performed on the CCAS and WTCS. Following the EFA will be the scoring of the PAT and DCT. Finally, the RQ2 'How much of the variance in ITAs' L2PC in the US classroom can be accounted for by the dimensions of CA and WTC as well as other factors such as linguistic proficiency and length of residence in the US?' will be addressed via the standard multiple regression analysis that incorporates variables from the survey and pragmatic test analyses. The summary of all the quantitative findings with preliminary interpretations will conclude the chapter.

Demographic Information about the ITAs

The demographic information about the participant ITAs was obtained from the Background Questionnaire (BQ) in order to present the main trends in the data. Specifically, some of this information was used to generate numerical variables for the statistical analyses to answer RQ2, such as the TOEFL scores and length of residence in the US. Table 4 displays the demographic characteristics of the participant ITAs based on country of origin, age, gender, and years lived in the US. This information was obtained from the background questionnaire section of the online survey. As can be seen, the Chinese ITAs constitute the majority in the dataset by 17.6% followed by Indian ITAs by16.6%. China and India are followed by Turkey (6.6%), Iran (5.1%), Korea (4.5%), and Bangladesh (4.1%). The majority of the ITAs are above the age of 25 with 43.2% in the 26-30 age range. The gender profile in the dataset reveals an almost equal balance of male and female participants (47.8% male vs. 51.6% female). Finally, with respect to the length of residence in the US, 30.4% of the ITAs have lived in the US for at least a year. Also, a large number of ITAs reported that they lived in the US for more than five years (29.1%).

Table 5 shows academic information about the ITAs pertaining to degree and discipline of study, assistantship experience and type, the average number of students they teach in a class, and their self-rated English proficiency. As can be seen, 78.2% of the ITAs pursue their doctoral studies in US institutions. A small number of ITAs are enrolled in M.S. (13.1%) and M.A. (6.9%) programs. The majority of the ITAs study and teach in natural and physical sciences programs (31.8%), such as physics, chemistry, biology, genetics, mathematics, and computer science. Engineering and social science fields each constitute 24.6% of the dataset. The most common engineering fields are civil engineering, electrical engineering, industrial engineering, and mechanical engineering. Psychology, sociology, political science, economics are among the most common social science fields. Humanities, which comprises the 12.4% of the data, include programs such as journalism, communications, linguistics, and literature. Education with 3.4% of the dataset includes fields such as adult education, curriculum and instruction, and math education. The business field includes finance and accounting with a small proportion (2.4%).

Table 4. General Descriptive Demographics

Demographic Category	ITAs (N = 289)
Country of origin	
China	51 (17.6%)
India	48 (16.6%)
Turkey	19 (6.6%)
Iran	15 (5.1%)
Korea	13 (4.5%)
Bangladesh	12 (4.1%)
France	9 (3.1%)
Taiwan	9 (3.1%)
Mexico	7 (2.4%)
Colombia	7 (2.4%)
Russia	5 (1.7%)
Japan	4 (1.4%)
Saudi Arabia	4 (1.4%)
Nepal	4 (1.4%)
Sri Lanka	4 (1.4%)
Greece	3 (1.0%)
Italy	3 (1.0%)
Pakistan	3 (1.0%)
Ecuador	3 (1.0%)
Chile	3 (1.0%)
Argentina	2 (0.7%)
Brazil	2 (0.7%)
Germany	2 (0.7%)
Kenya	2 (0.7%)
Romania	2 (0.7%)
Thailand	2 (0.7%)
Ukraine	2 (0.7%)
Venezuela	2 (0.7%)
Vietnam	2 (0.7%)
Peru	2 (0.7%)
Indonesia	2 (0.7%)
Ukraine	2 (0.7%)
Israel	2 (0.7%)
Lebanon	2 (0.7%)
Other[1] (The Bahamas, Togo, St. Kitts and Nevis, Guyana, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mauritius, Hong Kong, Morocco, French Caribbean, Côte d'Ivoire, Estonia, Latvia, Uruguay, Portugal, Georgia, Egypt, Iraq, Uganda, Swaziland, Poland, North Africa, Cyprus, Austria, Nigeria, Croatia, Spain)	28 (9.6%)

[1] There was only one participant from each of these countries in the participant pool.

Table 4 (Continued)

Other[2] (not disclosed)	7 (2.4%)
Age range	
21-25	83 (28.7%)
26-30	125 (43.2%)
31-35	57 (19.7%)
36-52	21 (14.5%)
Gender	
Male	138 (47.8%)
Female	149 (51.6%)
Other (not disclosed)	2 (0.7%)
Years Lived in the US	
Less than 6 months	30 (10.4%)
6 months to less than 1 year	18 (6.2%)
1 year to less than 3 years	88 (30.4%)
3 years to less than 5 years	69 (23.9%)
More than 5 years	84 (29.1%)

Regarding their experience as a teaching assistant in the US, it appears that more than fifty percent of the ITAs have only about one academic year of teaching experience. A little more than one-fourth of the ITAs have teaching experience more than one academic year. The majority of ITAs (44.6%) work as a teaching assistant for a faculty member, while 19.4% teaches their own classes as the sole instructor. In addition, 16.6% of the ITAs work in science labs and 19.4% holds both research and teaching assistantships. About 40.8% of the ITAs teach in small classes with less than 25 students. More than half of the ITAs teach in bigger classes: 34.6% up to 50 students, 10.7% up to 75 students, and 6.6% up to 100 students. A small number of ITAs teach in large classes of more than 100 students (7.3%).

Finally, regarding self-perceived or -rated English proficiency, the majority of ITAs consider themselves to be advanced speakers of English (56.1%). While 21.8% perceive that they have intermediate proficiency, 21.1% consider their English abilities to be superior. Only

[2] These participants selected the category other in the background questionnaire but did not indicate their country of origin. They reported that they speak English as a second language.

1.0% rated their English abilities to be novice. In addition to self-perceived English proficiency, 202 ITAs reported their scores for the TOEFL iBT test in the background questionnaire. The means and standard deviations for all scores of the subsections and the combined overall score

Table 5. Academic Descriptive Demographics

Demographic Category	ITAs (N = 289)
Degree of Study	
Ph.D.	226 (78.2%)
M.S.	38 (13.1%)
M.A.	20 (6.9%)
Other (e.g. MBA, MFA, MPH/MA)	5 (1.7%)
Discipline of Study	
Natural/Physical Sciences (e.g. Chemistry, Physics, Biology, Computer Science, Mathematics)	92 (31.8%)
Engineering (e.g. Electrical, Chemical, Civil, Industrial, Mechanical)	71 (24.6%)
Social Sciences (e.g. Sociology, Psychology, Economics, Political Science, History)	71 (24.6%)
Humanities (e.g. Journalism, Communications, Linguistics, Literature, Religion)	36 (12.4%)
Education (e.g. Science Education, Curriculum and Instruction, Teaching English as a Second Language, Mathematics Education)	10 (3.4%)
Business (e.g. Business Administration, Finance, Accounting, Management Information Systems)	7 (2.4%)
Arts (e.g. Urban and Regional Planning, Music)	2 (0.7%)
Experience as an ITA in the US	
1 to less than 3 semesters	153 (52.9%)
3 to less than 6 semesters	68 (23.5%)
6 to less than 9 semesters	40 (13.8%)
More than 9 semesters	28 (9.7%)
Type of Assistantship	
Teaching Assistant for a Faculty Member	129 (44.6%)
Teaching Assistant in a (Science) Lab	48 (16.6%)
Teaching Assistant as the Sole Instructor	56 (19.4%)
Mixed (research + teaching)	56 (19.4%)
Average Number of Students in a Class	
Less than 25	118 (40.8%)
25 to less than 50	100 (34.6%)
50 to less than 75	31 (10.7%)
75 to less than 100	19 (6.6%)
More than 100	21 (7.3%)

Table 5 (Continued)

Self-rated English speaking proficiency	
Novice	3 (1.0%)
Intermediate	63 (21.8%)
Advanced	162 (56.1%)
Superior	61 (21.1%)

are displayed in Table 6. According to the ETS (www.ets.org) TOEFL score scale, a speaking score within the 18-25 range is considered 'fair.' In some universities a speaking score of 26 is required for international students to be assigned as a teaching assistant. After these descriptive statistics, the chapter will focus on the inferential statistical analyses conducted on the data obtained from the surveys and pragmatic tests in the remainder of this chapter.

Table 6. TOEFL iBT Scores

	N = 202	
Section	*M*	*SD*
Listening	26.52	4.15
Reading	26.91	3.83
Speaking	24.67	3.54
Writing	25.81	3.88
Overall	103.91	12.73

range 0-30

Exploratory Factor Analysis

In order to investigate RQ1, two separate exploratory factor analyses (EFA) were performed on the scores of the CCAS and WTCS which were designed to measure ITAs' classroom communication anxiety and willingness to communicate during their interactions with undergraduate students in the US classroom. EFA is a multivariate statistical technique which is used to uncover the underlying structure of a set of measures (Skehan, 2014) and determine the fewest number of variables accounting for the large amount of variance in the data. EFA can also be used to reduce data which consist of several items or variables to a more manageable size (Field, 2013). In addition, EFA can be used for studies that involve items from questionnaires or a battery of tests in order to arrive at an underlying concept and facilitate interpretations of findings (Rummel, 1970). Thus, subjecting the raw survey data to an EFA revealed underlying groupings (or factors) in ITAs' CA and WTC. Since the present study was the first study to explore the underlying factors in ITAs' CA, WTC, no assumptions or expectations were held about the number and nature of the underlying factors in the questionnaire data. Since both instruments included Likert-scale items, which are considered to be interval data as they measure continuous variables (Larson-Hall, 2010), EFA was considered to be an appropriate statistical method of analysis. In what follows, how the EFA was performed on a matrix of scores from the CCAS and WTCS using the latest version of SPSS (22) are explained in detail and the resulting factors will be described and interpreted.

Classroom Communication Anxiety Scale (CCAS)

The CCAS was designed to measure ITAs' classroom communication anxiety during their interactions with US undergraduate student while performing various speech functions in the US classroom. An EFA was performed on the scores of this scale in order to identify the underlying dimensions of ITAs' communication anxiety (RQ1). Before the EFA was performed on the CCAS, a reliability analysis was conducted to measure the internal consistency of the items. The value measured by Cronbach's alpha was .731, indicating that the instrument had an acceptable internal consistency (George & Mallery, 2013). Next, the initial EFA was performed in a step-by-step fashion. The first step was to consider if the data were appropriate for EFA. In order to determine whether the dataset was suitable for EFA, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure

(KMO) of Sampling Adequacy was checked. The initial KMO was .883 which is considered to be a large value (Field, 2013) and illustrates that the sample size of 289 participants was adequate. Next, in order to test the correlations among the variables to be entered into the EFA, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was checked. A significant result at the $p < .000$ indicated that the variables are correlated and thus suitable for EFA.

Next, as suggested by Loewen and Gonulal (2015), the factor-analytic procedures were followed to reduce the large set of variables in the survey data into a smaller set categories or factors. In so doing, the EFA provided the maximum amount of common variance through the smallest number of explanatory variables (Field, 2013). In order to determine the statistically important underlying dimensions in the data to answer RQ1, the Maximum Likelihood as a factor extraction methods was selected. The rationale behind this selection is that this method increases the maximum likelihood of getting the observed data (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Additionally, the variables in the analysis can be generalizable to the entire population from the small sample of participants (Field, 2013; Loewen & Gonulal, 2015). As a factor rotation method, the direct oblimin technique was used in order to interpret how the data were redistributed or shared out between the factors. This technique is an oblique rotation technique assuming that factors might be correlated (Fabrigar & Weneger, 2012). Since many constructs related to human mind and linguistic processes may potentially be related to one another, oblique rotation is usually recommended in SLA research (Loewen & Gonulal, 2015). In order to decide on the number of factors to retain, Kaiser's criterion was used and only the factors that had an eigenvalue greater than 1 were retained. Additionally, the absolute value for each factor loading was set to .30, which helped identify the variables contributing maximally to each factor. Finally, the Maximum Iterations for Convergence, which indicates the number of times SPSS attempts to find a solution for the data set, was set to 25.

The initial EFA performed on the CCAS scores did not yield interpretable results. A second EFA was performed after excluding items 15 (The fact that English is not my first language makes me feel very self-conscious) and 20 (I feel comfortable about the fact that English is not my first language) since these items were not speech acts related to the classroom communication (e.g. responding to student questions, expressing disagreement). Rather, as can be seen from the content of the items, they were measuring anxiety or self-consciousness about speaking English as a second language. Since these items loaded onto a factor in the initial EFA along with other items measuring anxiety related to performing different speech acts, finding a representative name for the emerging factor was difficult. Additionally, upon inspection of the factor loading scores of these items in the initial EFA, they were not very high. 15 had a loading of .473 and 20 had a loading of -.336. Loewen and Gonulal (2015) suggest that items with low loadings can be excluded as they do not display strong associations with other variables and the analysis can be re-run. Therefore, after excluding 15 and 20, a second EFA was performed following the same factor-analytic methods described above. In the second EFA, items 18 (I have no fear of warning a student who displays disruptive behavior in class) and 19 (I am always afraid of expressing my disagreement with a student answer or opinion) did not load onto any factors. Following Field's (2013) suggestion that items that are not correlated with others should be eliminated, these two items were excluded from the analysis and a third EFA was run. This time item 22 (I find it challenging to respond to students' viewpoints or questions in the class) did not load onto any factors and was therefore removed. The fourth and final EFA performed on the remaining items generated a six-factor solution. Table 6 illustrates the factor loadings for the final six factors.

Overall, the analysis shows the six underlying factors in ITAs' classroom communication. The final six-factor structure with 21 items accounted for 65.68% of the total variance. The first factor (CCAS-F1) 'Ease of communication' contains six items and accounts for 35.34% of the total variance with a Cronbach's alpha of .792. The second factor (CCAS-F2) 'Self-talk anxiety' with two items explained 7.48% of the total variance with a Cronbach's alpha of .849. The third factor (CCAS-F3) 'Fear of warning' included two items with a Cronbach's alpha of .711and accounted for 6.61% of the total variance. 'Classroom management anxiety' with four items constituted the fourth factor (CCAS-F4) and explained 6.46% of the total variance with a Cronbach's alpha of .716. 'Efficacy in Discussion Leading' was the fifth factor (CCAS-F5) with five items, explaining 4.98% of the total variance with a Cronbach's alpha of .761. The sixth factor 'Lecture anxiety' had two items with a Cronbach's alpha of .852 accounted for 4.79% of the total variance.

As can be seen from Table 7, the items that loaded onto the six factors indicate the underlying patterns of ITAs classroom communication with American undergraduate students. As can be seen, 'Ease of communication' involves performing speech acts such as disagreeing, asking for clarification, responding to student questions, and leading a class discussion. However, the specific areas of speech functions that appear to underlie communication anxiety are giving lectures, warning students to moderate behavior, and engaging in self-talk referring to self-introduction or sharing personal information in the classroom. These findings indicate that speech situations in which ITAs take the lead to initiate or moderate communication may be more anxiety-inducing for ITAs. On the other hand, communication situations where ITAs engage in one-on-one encounters with students could induce less anxiety. Therefore, it could be suggested that speaker-initiated, -moderated, or –directed talk can be pragmatically more face-threatening than engaging in mutual interactions with other interlocutors.

Table 7. Classroom Communication Factor Loadings

	Factor						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	h^2
Factor 1: Ease of Communication							
8. Responding to student opinions or questions in class is easy for me.	.645						.715
14. I feel comfortable requesting students to repeat their questions when I don't understand them.	.533						.355
11. I am usually comfortable redirecting a class discussion after an interruption or digression.	.530						.385
12. Giving students a chance to ask me questions during class is easy for me.	.483						.491
4. When I don't understand student questions, I am afraid to ask for clarification.	-.456						.358
6. Disagreeing with a student's response or comment is easy for me.	.370						.376
Factor 2: Self-talk Anxiety							
13. Introducing myself on the first day of class makes me nervous.		.793					.713
21. I feel at ease when I introduce myself to students on the first day of class.		-.791					.789
Factor 3: Fear of Warning							
5. I feel comfortable asking students not to be late for class.			-.818				.647
26. Insisting that students arrive to class on time makes me uncomfortable.			.676				.529
Factor 4: Classroom Management Anxiety							
16. Interrupting a student who speaks too long during class makes me nervous.				.779			.773
23. During class discussions, I feel comfortable interrupting students who go on too long.				-.498			.351
1. Facing students who are disruptive to others in class makes me nervous.				.482			.281

Table 7 (Continued)

17. When students seem distracted, I get nervous and confused about redirecting their attention to the discussion.				.384			.582
Factor 5: Efficacy in Discussion Leading							
10. Leading a group discussion in class is challenging for me.					-.617		.560
3. I find it easy to engage students in a group discussion.					.566		.469
25. Encouraging students to ask questions in class is challenging for me.					-.496		.447
9. Generally, I am comfortable encouraging quiet students to participate more in class activities.					.480		.377
2. I usually find it difficult to ask nonparticipant students to be more active in class activities.				.302	-.437		.378
Factor 6: Lecture Anxiety							
24. I get tense and nervous when I give lectures in class.						.717	.829
7. I feel calm and relaxed when I give lectures in the class.						-.588	.664

Willingness to Communicate Scale (WTCS)

The WTCS was designed to measure ITAs' willingness to communicate during their interactions with US undergraduate student while performing various speech functions in the US classroom. An EFA was performed on the scores of this scale in order to identify the underlying dimensions of ITAs' willingness to communicate (RQ1). The reliability analysis conducted on the WTCS revealed a Cronbach's alpha of .950, indicating that the instrument had a high internal consistency. Next, an EFA was performed on the scores of this scale. The same factor-analytic procedures and methodological choices were followed as in the CCAS while conducting an EFA on the WTCS items. Therefore, in order to avoid repetition, only the findings are reported in this section.

The initial KMO value for the WTCS was .937 which is considered to be a perfect value (Hutcheson & Sobniou, 1999; Field, 2013) and illustrates that the sample size of 289 participants was adequate. The Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant result at the $p < .000$, indicating that the variables are correlated and thus suitable for EFA. The Maximum Likelihood was used as the factor extraction method and the direct oblimin technique was used a rotation method. Kaiser's criterion was used as a factor retention method and only the factors that had an eigenvalue greater than 1 were retained. Finally, the absolute value for each factor loading was set to .30, and the Maximum Iterations for Convergence was left at default value of 25.

In the initial EFA performed on the WTCS scores, three items (65, 59, and 57) cross-loaded onto multiple factors. Specifically, items 65 (Interrupting a student who dominates the class discussion) and 57 (Warning a student who displays disruptive behavior) loaded onto a fourth factor even though they already had higher loadings on two other factors. Item 65 loaded onto three factors. Item 59 (Reminding students that they should complete their homework independently) also loaded onto two factors which made the interpretation of these factors quite difficult. George and Mallery (2013) argues that it is possible for the arithmetic of factor analysis to generate such uninterpretable results. Since such cross-loadings caused interpretation difficulties, following George and Mallery's (2013) recommendation, these three items were removed from the analysis and a second EFA was performed. Similarly, in the second EFA, items 46 (Checking students' comprehension of information) and 47 (Encouraging students to ask questions) cross-loaded onto a third factor even though they had higher loadings on the second factor. Therefore, these two items were also removed and a new EFA was conducted. The final EFA resulted in a two-factor solution with 17 items. Table 7 illustrates the factor loadings for the final two factors of the WTCS.

The analysis shows the two underlying factors in ITAs' willingness to communicate in the US classroom. The two-factor solution with 17 items accounts for 57.75% of the total variance. The first factor (WTC-F1) 'Willingness to interact with students' which had fourteen item loadings explained 50.11% of the total variance with a Cronbach's alpha of .931. The second factor (WTC-F2) 'Reluctance in teacher-fronted talk' with three items accounted for 7.63% of the total variance with a Cronbach's alpha of .777.

As can be seen from Table 8, the items that loaded onto WTC-F1 indicate that ITAs are comfortable interacting with students in a variety of situations, such as praising their contributions, asking for clarification, and encouraging students to come to their office hours. However, as the items in WTC-F2 'Reluctance in teacher-fronted talk' indicate, ITAs do not seem to be much willing to engage in speech acts where they would have to assume authority

Table 8. Willingness to Communicate Factor Loadings

	Factor		
	1	2	h^2
Factor 1: Willingness to Interact with Students			
55. Suggesting that a student make an appointment with you to discuss a particular issue.	.863		.620
52. Requesting students to work in pairs or groups.	.835		.650
63. Praising students for their intellectual contributions in class.	.817		.614
51. Requiring students to submit their assignments by the deadline.	.773		.588
60. Responding to correct, incorrect, or irrelevant student responses.	.737		.656
64. Redirecting discussion after an interruption or digression.	.713		.650
54. Asking permission to show sample student work on the doc cam.	.706		.444
53. Walking around the classroom to interact with students during pair/group work.	.695		.466
62. Asking students to repeat when you don't understand their questions or comments.	.649		.595
61. Giving students oral instructions for completing a task.	.634		.640
56. Asking students to let you know when your pronunciation is not clear to them.	.610		.429
58. Insisting that students arrive to class on time.	.578		.349
50. Disagreeing with a student response or comment.	.525		.377
48. Asking students to hold their questions for office hours.	.447		.191

Table 8 (Continued)

Factor 2: Reluctance in Teacher-fronted Talk		
45. Giving a lecture.	-.920	.775
44. Introducing and talking about myself on the first day of teaching.	-.605	.433
49. Explaining a difficult concept for students to understand.	-.544	.518

such as giving lectures or talking about themselves. This finding resonates with some of the factors that emerged in the CCAS analysis in that ITAs feel more anxious in teacher-fronted communication situations. Therefore, it is reasonable that they would be less inclined or motivated to talk to students while giving a lecture than they would be when they talk to students one-on-one. In other words, it could be that ITAs feel more relaxed when they focus on their students' needs rather than assume power and engage in teacher-talk. Additionally, these findings indicate that the number of participants in a speech event can influence the motivation of speakers to engage in or manage communication.

Scoring of the Classroom Pragmatic Competence Tests

Pragmatic Appropriateness Test (PAT)

The PAT was designed to measure ITAs' ability to comprehend appropriate and inappropriate utterances given in various classroom situations. The scores from this test were used to comprise the overall L2PC of ITAs which was later used in the statistical analyses as a dependent variable to answer RQ2. The reliability analysis conducted on the responses of 289 participants to 15 PAT items revealed an acceptable internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha of .706. The scoring of the PAT was conducted at two stages. The first stage was to justify how the provided responses were labeled as appropriate or inappropriate. As described in

Chapter three, during the creation of appropriate and inappropriate responses for different classroom situations, feedback was received from two language professionals who were native speakers of English on the wording of the appropriate and inappropriate responses. Additionally, in order to create an undergraduate student baseline for the perception of appropriateness for the responses to this test, a class of undergraduate students (N = 19) from various majors at the primary research site were asked to complete this test as part of a course assignment. Their responses provided the basis for the scoring. The rationale for using undergraduate student ratings as the baseline was that they were the primary audience in the classroom context and ITAs interact only with them in this context.

Table 9 shows the means and standard deviations for all items rated by ITAs and undergraduate students for comparison. As can be seen, the mean rating score of undergraduate students for three items were within the inappropriate range (1-3). These items were 68, 74, and 80. Apart from these three items, the mean scores for the rest of the items were within the appropriate range (4-6). It is interesting to note that the mean scores of ITAs for some of the items that were rated more appropriately by the undergraduate students were within the inappropriate range. These items were 70, 72, and 76. This finding shows that there might be differences in the (in)appropriateness perceptions of undergraduate students and ITAs.

Based on the ratings of the undergraduate students which provided the baseline for the scoring of the PAT for ITAs, the second stage was to compute an overall score of all of the PAT items for each participant ITA, which would later be used as a dependent variable for statistical analyses. For this purpose, ITA PAT rating mean scores were compared to those of the undergraduate students. At this stage, similar procedures in Takimoto's (2006) study in scoring appropriateness judgment were followed. Using an 11-point Likert scale, Takimoto (2006) assigned 5 points if a participant rated a request closer to the English native speaker baseline data. Similarly, in this study if an ITA rating for an item corresponded to the same range as the mean rating score of the undergraduate students, that rating received a score of 1 (instead of 5). If the same rating did not correspond to the mean score of the undergraduate students, that rating received 0. To illustrate,

Table 9. ITA and Undergraduate Ratings of the PAT

	ITAs (N =289)		Undergraduates (N=19)	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
PAT items				
PAT 67	4.86	1.12	5.63	.68
PAT 68	2.16	1.13	2.74	.93
PAT 69	4.68	1.10	4.79	1.31
PAT 70	3.82	1.36	4.95	1.07
PAT 71	5.27	.94	5.53	1.02
PAT 72	3.37	1.27	4.21	1.61
PAT 73	4.73	1.17	5.16	1.21
PAT 74	3.06	1.06	3.84	1.30
PAT 75	4.31	1.29	4.32	1.56
PAT 76	2.98	1.28	4.26	1.59
PAT 77	4.95	1.03	5.26	.99
PAT 78	4.54	1.06	5.05	1.07
PAT 79	4.77	1.05	5.21	1.03
PAT 80	2.89	1.29	3.16	1.80
PAT 81	4.47	1.17	5.32	1.05

Range: 1-6 Likert scale (1 = not appropriate at all, 2 = inappropriate, 3 = somewhat inappropriate, 4 = somewhat appropriate, 5 = appropriate, 6 = completely appropriate)

as displayed in Table 9, the mean scores of ITAs and undergraduate students for item 67 are within the 4-6 appropriate range. Therefore, if an ITA rated this item as 4, 5 or 6 (4 = somewhat appropriate, 5 = appropriate, 6 = completely appropriate), they received a score of 1. However, if they rated the same item inappropriate within the 1-3 range (1 = not appropriate at all, 2 = inappropriate, 3 = somewhat inappropriate), they received 0. Similarly, if ITAs rated an item that was perceived inappropriate by the undergraduate students, they still received 1 point. The rationale behind determining the 1-3 range as inappropriate and the 4-6 range as appropriate was that the scores in each range was labeled accordingly. For instance, the scores 1, 2, and 3 were all labeled inappropriate with slight differences between them. If an inappropriate response was given a score within this range, it would mean that the respondent had a more or less good perception of inappropriateness regardless of the strength of this perception. Similarly, if an appropriate response received a score within the 4-5 range, it would indicate that the respondent has a good sense of appropriateness. Since the primary purpose of this test was to understand ITAs' perceptions of appropriateness and inappropriateness in general, the slight qualitative differences in the 6-point Likert scale were not included in the scoring of this test as L2PC measure. Based on this scoring a possible highest score that could be received from the PAT was 15. The descriptive statistics conducted on the PAT scores of ITAs are displayed in Table 10.

Table 10. Descriptive Statistics for the PAT Scores

	N = 289	
Scores	Frequency	Percentage
3	1	.3%
6	2	.7%
7	2	.7%
8	12	4.2%
9	23	8.0%
10	42	14.5%
11	60	20.8%
12	73	25.3%
13	46	15.9%
14	20	6.9%
15	8	2.8%
M	11.37	
SD	1.78	
Variance	3.17	
Range	12	

As can be seen, the mean score of ITAs in this test is 11.37 with a standard deviation of 1.78. The minimum score was 3, and the highest score was 15. It appears that a little more than three-fourths of the ITAs scored within the 10-13 range. Only a very small number of ITAs scored below 8 (1.7%). Overall, it could be concluded that ITAs have relatively accurate perceptions of appropriateness in the US classroom setting.

Discourse Completion Test (DCT)

The DCT was designed to measure ITAs ability to produce appropriate utterances in various classroom situations. The scores from this test were used to comprise the overall L2PC of ITAs which was later used in the statistical analyses as a dependent variable to answer RQ2. As mentioned in Chapter three, the scoring of the DCT is explained in detail in this section. ITAs’ responses to the DCT situations were rated by 4 undergraduate students at the main research site. In what follows, the training session for the DCT rating, the background of the raters, and the scoring of the DCT will be described.

DCT rating training. The DCT training and rating sessions were held on the same day. Previously, in order to recruit raters, a flyer (see Appendix H) was created to be sent to undergraduate students at the university where the primary data collection was executed. The only criterion for inclusion of raters was that they had to be undergraduate students. The flyer was shared with a number of instructors and they were asked to share it with their students. Four students contacted the researcher and expressed their willingness to take part in the DCT rating. A date and time was scheduled to meet with the undergraduate students immediately after the finals week at the university.

The training session began immediately when all the students were present at the conference room. To familiarize the raters with the study context, the researcher briefly explained the purpose of the study. Next, all raters completed the rater survey prior to the training. The purpose of the rater survey was to obtain information about each rater's background such as age, field of study, residence experience, experience with ITAs in the US classrooms, and overseas experience. Once the rater survey was completed, the researcher explained the rubric and scoring by discussing the main terminology used in the rubric, such as directness, politeness, and formality. Each rater shared their opinion about what they believed each concept was and gave some examples. Next, the researcher handed out the sample response sheet which included a number of responses that corresponded to each score in the rubric. The researcher asked the raters what they thought of the responses. They expressed their opinions about appropriateness by giving examples, which created an informative discussion among the raters and the researcher. Once the rubric training was completed, a practice norming session was executed. In this session, the researcher provided a worksheet which included four different scenarios and responses for each scenario taken from the pragmatic appropriateness test designed for this study. The raters were asked to read the scenarios and the corresponding responses and to rate each response based on the rubric. In about five minutes, the raters completed rating the responses for four situations and a debriefing session was held afterwards. The researcher asked each rater what score they gave to each response and what factors contributed to their decisions. The raters were able to refer to the rubric and use some terminology to support their rationale and scoring. The debriefing session was useful in the sense that it enabled the researcher to see the proximity of the raters' scores for each situation. In order to see whether the undergraduate students rated the responses similarly during the practice session, an inter-rater reliability analysis was conducted on the scores of the practice items. This analysis was necessary because, as Larson-Hall (2010) cautions, the variation that might be observed in the raters' scores would cause error and make the rating less reliable. Therefore, as suggested by Larson-Hall (2010) Cronbach's alpha as a measurement of internal consistency estimate was calculated via the SPSS reliability analysis function. The analysis revealed a Cronbach's alpha of .833, indicating that the raters were consistent and there was not much variation in their scores.

The practice/norming session concluded the training. The training procedures described earlier took nearly 40 minutes to complete. The actual rating started at around 12:50pm. In order to accelerate the rating process, the DCT data extracted from Survey Monkey as an Excel sheet were saved as 15 separate situation files. More specifically, 289 responses to each situation were saved in a separate MS Word document to provide ease of reference and speed up the rating. Therefore, 15 MS Word files were created each with 289 responses. For the rating session, these documents were printed. In so doing, the raters could rate multiple responses to a situation without having to refer back to the situation frequently. They were also given the freedom to choose any situation they wanted to rate. The situations and responses were presented in a table that consisted of three columns. Table 11 displays a sample of responses of ITAs to one of the DCT situations (see Appendix J for a sample rating sheet with all responses to a situation).

As can be seen from Table 11, the first column was for the participant number, the second one was for the rater score, and the third one was for the responses. To provide ease of reference, the first row of each table included the situation description and the responses followed that description. Before the rating began, 15 stacks of printed situations and responses were displayed on the table in the conference room. The rating lasted until 5pm the same day. At the end of the rating session, each student rater was paid a total amount of US $50 ($10/hour) for their work.

The undergraduate raters. Four undergraduate students attending classes at the main research site university were recruited for the DCT rating. Three of the raters were female and

Table 11. Sample DCT Rating Sheet

Participant #	Rater Score	During a discussion you are leading, you realized that certain students seem to be participating a lot more than others, and some others remain quite silent. You want to encourage those who are quiet to participate in the discussion. You say:
1		It would be better if you all have an equal chance to talk. I also want to hear from others who haven't talked yet. Please, feel free to share your ideas with us!
3		What do you think? What is your idea?
5		"Let's hear from someone who didn't get a chance to speak"
6		Equal participation of all students is needed in this discussion. Even if you have a single point, that's ok..feel free to talk.
7		Can we start
9		"Well, if you think you talked to much so far, it is time for you to listen to others. If you think you were too quite, then this is time for you to speak up!" - I say this with some sort of humor.
10		Tim, Annie, I noticed you were shaking your heads just now - do you want to challenge us on what we said?
11		Now I would like to hear more form ......

one was a male. All of them were from Florida, US and native speakers of English. They were at the age of 21, 22, 23, and 46, respectively. They were studying different majors such as psychology/behavioral health sciences, anthropology, and geography. They all indicated that they had previously taken a class from a non-native English speaking instructor. Three of the raters had overseas experience for travel purposes such as Egypt and Costa Rica, indicating that they might have had interactions with non-native English speakers before. Two of the raters reported learning foreign languages such as Spanish and German. The other two reported that they had not studied a foreign language before.

DCT scoring. The participants' responses to DCT situations were rated by the undergraduate students on a six-point scale ranging from 1 to 6 based on the descriptions provided in the rubric. If a participant's response to an item in the DCT was rated within the 4-6 range (4 = fair, 5 = good, 6 = very good), that response received a score of 1. However, if the response received a rating within the 1-3 range (1 = no response, 2 = very poor, 3 = poor), it received zero. Based on this scoring, the highest possible score that could be received on this test was 15. This score was used as the overall pragmatic production competence as a dependent variable to be used in statistical analyses to answer RQ2. The descriptive statistics conducted on the DCT scores are displayed in Table 12.

Table 12. Descriptive Statistics for the DCT Scores

	N = 289	
Scores	Frequency	Percentage
0	1	.3%
2	1	.3%
4	2	.7%
6	2	.7%
7	2	.7%
8	9	3.1%
9	15	5.2%
10	18	6.2%
11	42	14.5%
12	47	16.3%
13	56	19.4%
14	60	20.8%
15	34	11.8%
M	12.20	
SD	2.26	
Variance	5.12	
Range	15	

As can be seen, the mean score for this test is 12.20 with a standard deviation of 5.12. The minimum score was 0, and the highest score was 15. It appears that more than half of the ITAs scored within the 10-15 range. Only a very small number of ITAs scored below 10 (11%). Overall, it could be concluded that ITAs exhibit good pragmatic production skills in classroom situations.

Multiple Regression

Building the Multiple Regression Model

As explained in Chapter two, L2PC is conflated with several factors, including but not limited to linguistic proficiency, beliefs about and attitudes towards the L2 culture and its people, L2 learning motivation, L2 learners' long-term communication experiences, personality, and so forth. Since human psychology is complex, there are a multitude of factors affecting various areas of cognitive skills and abilities in different contexts. Given that ITAs have to perform teaching duties in their L2 English in real L2 contexts – i.e. the US classrooms – their L2PC can be influenced by a wide variety of other factors. Especially in the field of individual differences, there are examples of research utilizing multiple regression analyses with several predictors. For instance, Tóth (2007) examined proficiency, foreign language aptitude, strength of motivation, L2-self-concept, perfectionism, and competitiveness as predictors of foreign language anxiety. Therefore, based on the previous research, the standard multiple regression model proposed in this study consisted of six predictors (or independent variables) and one response (or dependent) variable which are described below.

The response variable was the L2PC of ITAs as measured by the classroom pragmatic competence tests. Specifically, L2PC was a score obtained by the sum of the PAT and DCT scores. There were two main considerations in combining the scores of PAT and DCT to create a measure of general L2PC. Firstly, combining scores for the subskills (e.g. listening, speaking, reading, and writing) in standardized tests such as the TOEFL iBT and using it as a general linguistic proficiency measure in research is common and used in applied linguistics research (e.g. Matsuda & Gobel, 2004; Taguchi, 2012). Therefore, combining the PAT – a measure of pragmatic comprehension of speech acts and the DCT – a pragmatic production of speech acts provided a general L2PC score that could be used in statistical analyses. Secondly, creating a general L2PC score was necessary to use a dependent variable in the multiple regression model. Since the purpose of the present study was to explore the relationship between individual differences such as communication anxiety and willingness to communicate, all of the factors from the EFA of CCAS and WTC data described earlier were included in the regression model as predictors. During this initial analysis, some factors were found to be uncorrelated with L2PC and therefore, they were excluded from the model. The factors that were correlated with the dependent variable were retained. These predictors were CCAS-F1 ‘Ease of communication’ (r = .276, $p < .01$), CCAS-F3 ‘Fear of warning’ (r = -.120, $p < .05$), CCAS-F4 ‘Classroom communication anxiety’ (r = -.119, $p < .05$), WTC-F1 ‘Willingness to interact with students’ (r = .272, $p < .01$). The factor scores which were obtained by computing the mean for all the items loaded onto each factors comprised the independent variables in the regression model. The rationale for the inclusion of these particular factors was that they were found to be significantly correlated with L2PC scores during the trial analyses conducted on SPSS while building the regression model. As can be seen from the correlation coefficients, they were not strongly correlated to L2PC, which is an initial condition for predictor variables to be included in a regression model (Larson-Hall, 2010). The correlations between these factors were also not high. There was a moderate positive correlation between CCAS-F1 and WTC-F1 (r = .475, p < .01), a moderate negative correlation between CCAS-F1 and CCAS-F4 (r = .388, p < .01), and a moderate negative correlation between CCAS-F4 and WTC-F1 (r = -.316, p < .01). Additionally, based on previous research described in Chapter one, since linguistic competence and communication experiences of L2 users were found to be related to L2PC, 'Linguistic competence' as measured by the TOEFL iBT scores, and 'Length of residence' as measured by the years lived in the US were also included in the regression model. During the trial analysis, L2PC was found to be positively correlated to TOEFL iBT scores (r = .225, p < .01) and length of residence in the US (r = .120, p < .05). Therefore, the resulting model, as mentioned earlier, consisted of six predictors and the next stage was to perform the regression analysis. Finally, it should be noted that the number of cases included in the regression analysis (N = 191) was high enough for a regression model with six predictors. Field (2013) states that for a medium effect size, a sample of 100 participants with six or less predictors would be enough for the regression model.

Performing the Multiple Regression Analysis

Using SPSS 22, a standard linear multiple regression analysis was performed based on the guidelines provided in Larson-Hall (2010). This type of regression analysis was considered appropriate since the present study uses an explanatory mixed-methods design to explain the factors contributing to ITAs' L2PC. Keith (2015) notes that standard multiple regression "is primarily useful for explanatory research to determine the extent of the influence of one or more variables on some outcome" (p. 80). As described in the previous section, the standard multiple regression model in this study aims to estimate the direct effects of ease of communication, fear of warning, classroom communication anxiety, willingness to interact with students, linguistic proficiency and length of residence on L2PC.

For the analysis, the L2PC variable was placed into the box labeled 'Dependent' and the predictors CCAS-F1 'Ease of communication,' CCAS-F3 'Fear of warning,' CCAS-F4 'Classroom communication anxiety,' WTC-F1 'Willingness to interact with students,' linguistic proficiency, and length of residence were placed into the box labeled 'Independent(s).' From the 'Statistics' menu, estimates, confidence intervals, model fit, descriptives, part and partial correlations, and collinearity diagnostics options were checked. To examine the equality of variances assumption, the normal probability plot option was selected in the 'Plots' menu. From the 'Save' menu Mahalanobis and Cook's diagnostics tests were selected in order to examine the distances of cases. Finally, from the 'Options' menu, exclude cases listwise option was selected to deal with missing data. More specifically, this option was selected to eliminate any participants who had missing scores for any of the variables (Field, 2013). Once all the selections were completed, the regression analysis was performed.

Findings

Table 13 displays the means and standard deviations for all the variables in the regression model. As can be noticed, the number of participants in the model is lower (N = 191). This is because some ITAs were excluded from the analysis as they did not report their TOEFL iBT scores. Since all these variables were measured on different scales, the mean scores are different for each variable. For instance, the linguistic proficiency scores are based on the self-reported

Table 13. Regression Descriptive Statistics

	N = 191	
	M	*SD*
L2 pragmatic competence	23.32	3.251
Linguistic competence	104.51	10.845
Length of residence	3.34	1.278
Ease of communication	4.2016	.60161
Fear of warning	3.4869	.64977
Classroom management anxiety	3.3168	.71345
Willingness to interact with students	4.6088	.80954

TOEFL iBT scores which are combinations of four subsections, namely reading, listening, speaking, and writing. The possible highest score in this test is 120 (30 points for each subsection). The mean score for participant ITAs is 104.51, which is relatively higher than the minimum required score of 80 for most undergraduate or graduate admissions in US universities. The L2PC score is a combination of the PAT and DCT scores with a possible highest score of 30. As shown, the mean score for this variable is 23.32. The length of residence mean is based on the years ITAs have lived in the US. The remaining variables are based on the factor averages from the EFA described earlier in this chapter.

The fact that predictor variables are measured on different scales or have different metrics may seem to make comparisons between the variables difficult. However, as explained by George and Mallery (2013), comparisons of the relative strengths of the relationships between the predictor variables are made via the standardized score of Beta generated by the multiple regression analysis. Using the Beta score, even if the scales used for predictor variables are different, comparisons can still be made.

Table 14 displays the correlations between the variables taken from the correlation matrix in the SPSS output. The interpretation of the strength of the correlations was based on Fiske

(2010). As can be seen, there was a strong correlation between 'Ease of communication' and 'Willingness to interact with students' (r = .564). It is interesting to note that these two predictors were the only ones that moderately correlated with the response variable, L2PC. Specifically, a moderate positive correlation was found between L2PC and ease of communication (r = .365) followed by willingness to interact with students and L2PC (r = .343). There was a weak correlation between linguistic competence and L2PC (r =.281) and length of residence and L2PC (r = .165). The predictors that had weak negative correlations with L2PC were fear of warning (r = -.146) and classroom management anxiety (r = -.157).

Table 14. Correlations between Variables

	L2 pragmatic competence	Linguistic competence	Length of residence	Ease of communication	Fear of warning	Classroom management anxiety	Willingness to interact with students
L2 pragmatic competence	1.0						
Linguistic competence	.281**	1.0					
Length of residence	.165*	.118	1.0				
Ease of communication	.365**	.168*	.034	1.0			
Fear of warning	-.146*	.051	.021	.058	1.0		
Classroom management anxiety	-.157*	.032	-.025	-.398**	.093	1.0	
Willingness to interact with students	.343**	.060	.019	.564**	.036	-.425**	1.0

*p < .05 **p < .01

Table 15 shows the regression model summary which demonstrates how much of the variance in the response variable is accounted by the predictors. More precisely, total variance explained (R square) was used as a measure of the predictive power of the six independent variables. The value in the R square box indicates that the regression model with all the predictors accounts for 26.4% of the variance. Following Larson-Hall's (2010) guidelines, in order to identify the importance of each predictor in the model, the squared semipartial correlations (sr^2) were examined in the SPSS output. Squared partial correlation coefficients were interpreted as an estimate of the unique contributions of the independent variables as a proportion of R square. These coefficients are displayed in Table 16 along with 95% confidence intervals and t-tests for the contribution of each predictor to the model. Finally, to determine whether the obtained values indicated of a small, medium, or large effect, Cohen's (1988) criteria were used. According to Cohen's criteria values between 2% and 12.99% indicate small, values 13% - 25.99% indicate medium, and values of 26% or above indicate large effect sizes for multiple regression models in the behavioral sciences. As can be seen by the R square value in Table 15, the regression model in this study revealed a medium to large effect size (26.4%) indicating that the independent variables in the model had a medium to large predictive power.

Table 15. Regression Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.514[a]	.264	.240	2.834

Predictors: (Constant), Willingness to Interact with Students, Length of Residence, Fear of Warning, Linguistic Competence, Classroom Management Anxiety, Ease of Communication
Dependent Variable: L2 Pragmatic Competence

As can be seen from Table 16, the examination revealed that linguistic competence as measured by the TOEFL iBT scores was the most important factor with an sr^2 of .217. Linguistic competence was followed by fear of warning (sr^2 = -.183), willingness to interact with students (sr^2 = .179), ease of communication (sr^2 = .177), length of residence (sr^2 = .131), and classroom management anxiety (sr^2 = .036).

The results of the standard multiple regression model with six predictors, namely linguistic competence, length of residence, ease of communication, fear of warning, classroom communication anxiety, and willingness to interact with students accounted for a combined 26.4% of the variance (R^2 = .264, $F(6, 184) = 10.986$, $p = .000$ when explaining ITAs' L2PC in the US classroom setting. As demonstrated by the *F*-test, the relationship between the response variable and the model is significant. Even though the regression model proposed accounts for only one-fourth of the variance, it contributes to the understanding of the nature of the relationships between the response variable, L2PC and all the predictors. More specifically, individual differences, as well as linguistic competence, contribute to predicting ITAs' classroom L2PC in English.

Assessing the Multiple Regression Model

In order to assess whether the regression model described above fit the observed data well, a number of diagnostic procedures were followed as outlined by Larson-Hall (2010). The first step was to check the assumption of normality by examining the P-P plot of the standardized residuals. Figure 1 below displays the P-P plot generated by SPSS. As can be seen, though not extreme, there are a few slight curves in the distribution of the residuals. However, overall, it could be said that the distribution is normal for the most part. The second step was to check whether there were any outlier cases for normality of the data because outlier cases can affect the

Table 16. Regression Coefficients

1 Model	Unstandardized coefficients B	Unstandardized coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for B Lower Bound	95% Confidence Interval for B Upper Bound	Correlations Zero-order	Correlations Partial	Correlations Part
(Constant)	8.609	2.987		2.882	.004	2.715	14.503			
Linguistic Competence	.067	.019	.223	3.425	.001	.028	.105	.281	.245	.217
Length of Residence	.335	.162	.132	2.065	.040	.015	.654	.165	.150	.131
Ease of Communication	1.208	.432	.224	2.800	.006	.357	2.060	.365	.202	.177
Fear of Warning	-.927	.320	-.185	-2.897	.004	-1.558	-.296	-.146	-.209	-.183
Classroom Management Anxiety	.186	.330	.041	.564	.574	-.466	.838	-.157	.042	.036
Willingness to Interact with Students	.903	.319	.225	2.828	.005	.273	1.533	.343	.204	.179

Dependent Variable: L2 Pragmatic Competence

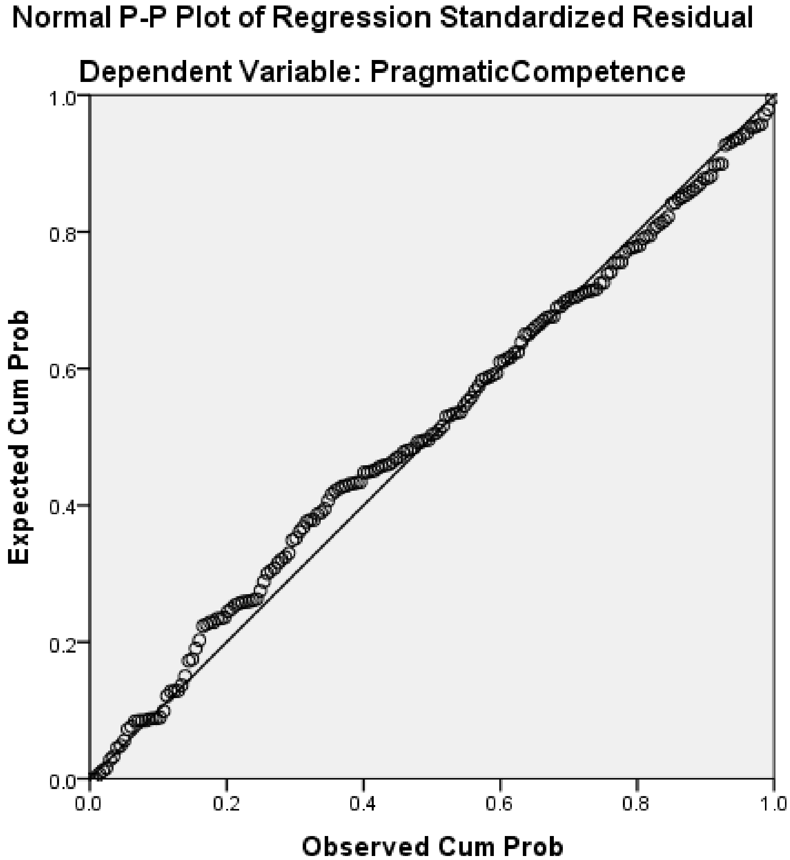

Figure 1. P-P plot for diagnosing normal distribution of data

values of estimated regression coefficients. The examination of the residual statistics on the SPSS output showed that the largest value at the row for Cook’s distance was .417, which is lower than 1.0, and any value over 1.0 would be a point of concern at this row (Larson-Hall, 2010). Another value that was examined in the output was the Mahalanobis distance. According to Barnett and Lewis’s (1978) table of Critical Values for an Outlier in a Multivariate Normal Sample as Judged by Mahalanobis D2, a Mahalanobis distance above 25.82 in a sample size of 200 with 5 predictors would cause worry. The highest value at the Mahalanobis row in the SPSS output was 23.91, indicating that there were no problems with influential points in the data. Furthermore, the Std. Residual row was examined to see whether there were any outliers.

According to Larson-Hall (2010) no points at this row should be above 3.0 or below -3.0. While the maximum value was 2.597, the minimum value was -4.558. Since the latter value was below -3.0, it might indicate a sign of an outlier in the data.

The next assumption to check was homogeneity of variances by examining the scatterplot generated by SPSS. As can be seen by Figure 2 below, the points in the scatterplot are randomly and evenly dispersed in the center of the graph for the most part, centered on zero throughout the range of fitted value. In other words, the residuals follow a symmetrical pattern and have a constant spread throughout the range. This indicates that assumptions of linearity and homoscedasticity are mostly met.

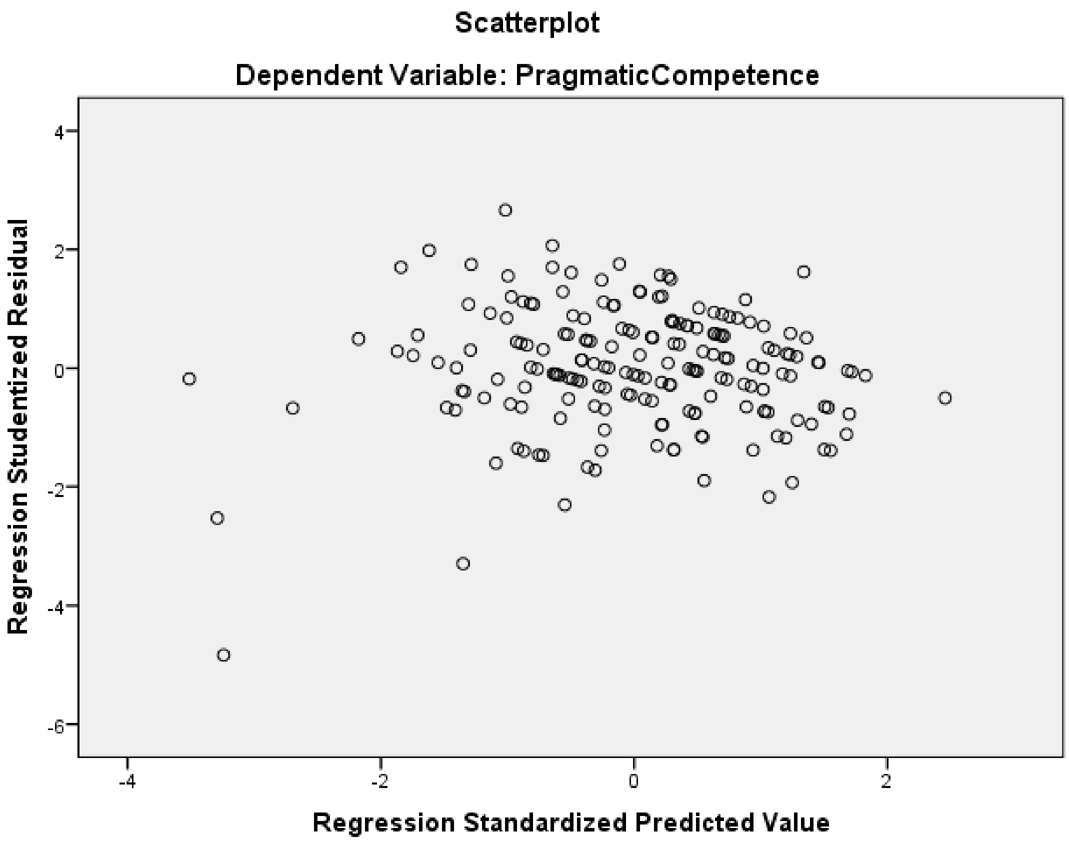

Figure 2 Plot of studentized residuals crossed with fitted values

Finally, the multicollinearity measures were examined to see how much the independent variables varied together. For this purpose, the correlations table in the SPSS output was checked to see if there were any high correlations between the predictors. According to (Tabachnik & Fidell, 2001), any correlations as high as or higher than $r = .70$ would be a point of concern. As can be seen from Table 13, there were no correlations between the variable above this value.

Chapter Summary

At the beginning of this chapter, the quantitative findings of the study were presented. The descriptive statistics performed on the data obtained from the background questionnaire showed that the majority of the participants were from China and India followed by Turkey, Iran, Korea, and Bangladesh. Almost half of the participants were at the age range of 26-30. The average number of years the participant ITAs lived in the USA was 3.34 years. About 80% of the participants were pursuing a Ph.D. degree with a small number of ITAs enrolled in master's level degree programs. Most ITAs in the data pool were in academic fields of natural/physical sciences, engineering, and social sciences. About 50% of the ITAs had experience performing teaching duties at the undergraduate between one to three semesters. More than half of the participants rated their English speaking abilities as advanced. Based on the scores provided by 202 ITAs, the average TOEFL iBT score with all subsections was 103.91.

Following descriptive statistics were the two EFAs conducted on the CCAS and WTCS. The EFA conducted on the CCAS revealed a six-factor structure accounting for 65.68% of the variance. The factors were labeled as 'Ease of communication,' 'Self-talk anxiety,' 'Fear of warning,' 'Classroom management anxiety,' 'Efficacy in discussion leading,' and 'Lecture anxiety.' The EFA conducted on the WTCS revealed a two-factor solution which explained

57.75% of the variance. The factor that emerged were ‘Willingness to interact with students’ and ‘Reluctance in teacher-fronted talk.’

Next, the scoring of the PAT and DCT was described. The PAT, used as a pragmatic comprehension measure, had an internal consistency with a Cronbach’s alpha of .706. For the scoring of this test, the ratings of a small sample of American undergraduate students were utilized. The score range for this test was 0-15. More than 75% of the participant ITAs received a score within the 10-15 range and the mean score was 11.37. Based on a 0-15 range, the scoring of the DCT, completed by four American undergraduate students with a Cronbach’s alpha of .833 as an interrater reliability measure, revealed a mean score of 12.20. More than 50% of the ITAs scored above 10.

Finally, the findings of the standard multiple regression analysis were reported. Based on previous research, a multiple regression based six predictor variables was proposed. The predictors were linguistic competence (based on the TOEFL iBT scores) length of residence (based on the years lived in the US), and factor averages of three CCAS factors (ease of communication, fear of warning, classroom management anxiety) and on WTCS factor (willingness to interact with students). The dependent variable was the L2PC score based on the combined scores of the PAT and DCT. The model accounted for 26.4% of the variance in ITAs’ L2PC in the US classroom. These findings are discussed in depth in Chapter six.

CHAPTER FIVE:

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

This chapter draws on the analysis and findings of the qualitative data instruments such as classroom observations, field notes, and interviews in order to address RQ3 and RQ4 concurrently. More specifically, the chapter will provide a qualitative analysis of four ITAs from different academic disciplines with comprehensive descriptions of their interactions with students and their perceptions and beliefs about appropriateness in classroom communication. Drawing on the qualitative analysis of the surveys, a description of the communication anxiety and willingness to communicate profiles of the four ITAs will be provided within each case analysis. In order to answer the RQ3 ‘What do ITAs’ observed interactions with undergraduate students in the classroom context reveal about the relationship between CA and WTC and L2 pragmatic competence as demonstrated by the use of speech acts and politeness strategies?,’ the chapter will draw on the analysis of the specific interactional exchanges of each ITA with students in the classroom in order to demonstrate the particular speech acts and the accompanying politeness strategies used by ITAs. To answer the RQ4 ‘What do ITAs’ self-reported perceptions or beliefs about their interactions with students in the US classroom reveal about the relationship between CA and WTC and L2 pragmatic competence?’ interpretations will be drawn mainly from the interview data. The chapter will conclude with a cross case analysis focusing on the similarities and differences between the cases with detailed interpretations that will address the research questions.

Data Analysis

The data analysis began after all the data were transcribed verbatim. The transcription details were kept to a minimum since the analysis mainly focused on the content. Therefore, suprasegmental features of speech such as word stress, intonation, and pitch, hesitation markers, fillers, and non-verbal features were excluded. The first step was to analyze each classroom observation and interview transcript for each ITA separately. For each case, interview transcripts were analyzed first to understand what the ITAs said they believed about classroom communication, anxiety, American students, and teaching in the US classroom. Starting with the interview analysis enabled the researcher to become more acquainted with the ITAs, and this, in turn, facilitated the analysis of the classroom observations because it was easier to connect what ITAs stated to what they did in the classroom.

During the analysis of each interview and classroom observation transcript, potential themes, patterns, and categories, and salient points or structures relevant to the scope of the study were noted through highlighting, color-coding, underlining and annotating on the margins of the transcripts. Additionally, some of the ideas were noted on a separate sheet of paper and further comments and observations were written.

An inductive approach (Creswell, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) was used in order to identify the major constructs of the study in the data. Specifically, each transcript was read reiteratively to discover participant ITAs' perceptions and beliefs about CA, WTC and pragmatic competence as supported by their interactions with US undergraduate students in the classroom. After the major data points related to CA, WTC, and pragmatic competence were identified, segments from each data source were extracted in order to exemplify these constructs.

The qualitative analysis of the survey data which involved identifying items in the CCAS and WTCS that demonstrated positive and negative feelings about classroom communication comprised the construct of "communication anxiety and willingness to communicate profile." This construct was part of both RQ3 and RQ4, and each ITA profile was described according to their responses to the survey items. Additionally, after the analysis of the interview data and field notes, relevant extracts were selected to further support this construct. The classroom observation data revealed examples of 'speech acts and politeness strategies' which addressed the L2PC of the ITAs. A discourse analytic technique was used to describe the particular speech acts performed by the ITAs highlighting the particular pragmalinguistic forms used as well as the positive and negative politeness strategies. At this stage, class recordings were reviewed reiteratively as well as the transcripts in order not to miss any details or inaccurately rendered utterances during transcription. In so doing, the researcher was able to reengage with the data and that, in turn, helped interpret the findings. During the analysis, patterns of speech acts, politeness strategies and other recurrent aspects of speech were noted. Finally, ITAs' 'perceptions and beliefs about appropriateness' was the third construct which mainly addressed RQ4. The interview data was primarily used to identify particular perceptions and beliefs about appropriate/inappropriate behavior in the class, cross-cultural differences in teaching and learning, and power/distance dynamics.

The remainder of the chapter is devoted to the in-depth case analyses of the four ITAs based on the abovementioned constructs of the study. RQ3 and RQ4 will be addressed in detail in the chapter summary, which will conclude the chapter.

Case Study: Kyle

Kyle (pseudonym), 34, is originally from Iran pursuing his doctoral studies in the US in the field of Sociology. He earned his BA degree in War and Conflict Journalism and MA degree in Communications and Media Studies in Tehran. He received his second MA degree in Policy and Management in London, England. He has extensive overseas education, living and working experience. He lived in London for five years. In addition to pursuing an MA degree, he also worked for BBC in London for three years. Due to the international nature of the MA program there, he completed part of his studies in Bilbao, Spain and Copenhagen, Denmark. When he came to the US in 2012 to attend a conference, he met a sociology professor who encouraged him to apply to a PhD program in sociology in the US. Even though he was initially reluctant to apply because he had a good job in London as a journalist, he later thought it would be a good opportunity to work with one of the top scholars in the field of sociology. His application to the PhD program was successful and he moved to the US in 2013.

Kyle had lived in the US for about three years at the time of the study. He had worked as an international teaching assistant as the sole instructor of the undergraduate Introduction to Sociology course for more than three semesters. The classes he teaches usually have 25-50 students. He rates his ability to speak English as advanced. Additionally, he has experience learning other foreign languages, such as French, Spanish, and Arabic. The next section describes Kyle’s CA and WTC profile in the US classroom as drawn from the CCAS and WTCS, the interviews conducted with him, and the field notes.

The CA and WTC Profile

Kyle's self-reported responses to the CCAS questions reveal that he does not experience communication anxiety in his interactions with students in the classroom. Specifically, he is comfortable performing several face-threatening speech as acts such as, asking quiet students to participate in class activities, disagreeing with a student response or comment, warning a student who displays disruptive behavior, and asking for clarification. Also, he does not feel any negativity about the fact that English is his second language. Similarly, his responses to the WTC scale show that he is extremely relaxed and comfortable initiating communication with students in the classroom. For instance, he is very willing to encourage students to ask questions, provide explanations for difficult concepts, give oral instructions for completing a task, respond to student answers or comments, and praise student contributions. The data from the field notes taken during observations of Kyle's class also indicate that he is very outspoken and open to communication with students. For instance, in one of the classes observed, he started the class by asking if anyone had any questions or concerns about the course. This indicates that he is willing to let students express their needs. Additionally, he addressed most students by their names, which indicates respect and recognition of students as individuals and also helps him manage and monitor turn-taking during discussions. That being said, he seemed to occasionally pace in the classroom while giving lectures. Specifically, he moved back and forth in front of the white board as he was delivering a lecture. Even though pacing is usually considered to result from anxiety or annoyance, it did not seem to affect Kyle's verbal communication as he successfully delivered lecture content and led discussions.

Kyle's lack of CA and high WTC can be attributed to his extensive study abroad experience in several western countries as described in the previous section. In fact, in one of the interviews, he stated that he was quite familiar with the “western culture.” Therefore, when he moved to the US, he stated that he did not experience any culture shock, and he easily and quickly adjusted to living and studying in the US. He also stated that he had very pleasant experiences in the department with faculty who he thought were very welcoming and supportive. Additionally, he reported that did not find American culture too complicated and he was able to make American friends easily, which indicates that he was open to integrate with the L2 culture and its people. In an interview, he stated that some of his American friends are actually his students:

> “Some of my students are close friends of mine, we hang out. We meet on campus once in a while, and this has been the tradition. I have, like, three generations of students now. We meet on campus sometimes, we hang out-- cool friends now.” (Interview 1, March 2015)

Kyle believes that he must build trust and rapport in order to be able to confidently communicate with others and talk about controversial topics. He also rejects his “power” as an instructor in class and adopts more of a ‘casual’ or ‘ordinary’ teacher image in order to create a safe and open environment for himself and his students to communicate:

> “…one of my students asked me to talk about Charlie Hebdo, Paris and ISIS. So, I told them, it's too earlier in the semester to talk about this… I postponed the discussion-- I briefly touched upon it, but not the real details, but after a couple of sessions said, okay I think now we have established that trust I can talk about this. So we talked about what happened in Paris, and war against terrorism, this kind of stuff… I don't have that conception of authority, that there is a space between students and lecturers… I try to break it constantly. I don't dress up, and that's

intentional… I'm the only one who goes to class in jeans, and not even polo shirts, just t-shirts. I wear my sneakers…That has been successful, so far.” (Interview 1, March 2015)

As can be seen from the above excerpt, instead of owning it, Kyle prefers to bridge the power/distance gap between him and his students through non-linguistic means of teacher attire with the assumption that it would create an open communication environment. He believes that reducing the power/distance gap increases his WTC in the classroom and he gets more eager to teach. These findings suggests that the topics of discussion – especially controversial and sensitive ones – as well as perceptions of power/distance variables between the interlocutors might be related to a speaker’s WTC.

However, one particular group of students Kyle finds it hard to communicate with is student athletes. He attributes this challenge to the attitudes of student athletes towards education. He thinks that student athletes are not passionate about content and they do not have confidence in themselves. He feels that they hesitate to ask a question or make a comment during class. Kyle expresses his unwillingness to confront with these students in class by saying “Thank God this semester, I don’t have a student athlete” (Interview 1, March 2015). Even though Kyle was not observed to avoid communication with a student athlete during a class observation, his perceptions of this particular group of students are suggestive of potential avoidance in interacting with them.

Overall, Kyle’s L2 communication profile in the classroom demonstrates a high desire to communicate with no observable behavior of communication anxiety and high willingness to communicate. How this individual communication profile impacts his pragmatic competence in English during his interactions with students in the classroom is described in the following sections, specifically his speech act performance and politeness strategies and perceptions of appropriateness.

Speech Acts and Politeness Strategies

The data drawn from Kyle's classroom observation recordings show that he is competent in performing various speech acts in the classroom. As described in Chapter two, speech acts can threaten the positive and negative face wants and needs of the interlocutors in a communication event. The particular speech acts commonly observed in Kyle's classroom discourse are described below with examples from the classroom observation data based on the potential threats to interlocutors' negative and positive face.

The data revealed that there were several instances of speech acts that may have posed a potential threat to the hearers' (students) face by the speaker (Kyle). The most common examples of these speech acts were questions, requests, advice, and reminders. Most of these speech acts were related to checking comprehension, asking students to respond to a question or make a comment, giving them advice on how to debate in the classroom, and reminding course assignments. As can be seen, the occurrence of these speech acts in the classroom context may not always pose a threat to others as they are an expected part of classroom interaction discourse.

Exploring examples of speech acts that may threaten hearers' negative face, the interaction displayed below in Extract 1 occurred at the beginning of one of the classes observed. In this interaction, Kyle initiates a conversation with a request to elicit students' opinion, specifically asking students how they felt about the guest speaker talk in the previous class and gives a general outline of what they will be doing in class that day. Later, he reminds students of a class assignment. (K) refers to Kyle and (S) refers to the student Kyle is interacting with:

Extract 1

K: Ok, so, **I wanna ask you about how you felt about your talk on language and power**, and then I wanna talk more about language and power in the media, and then we will do an outdoor activity. And um, and if we have more time, we'll talk about orientalism, concept introduced by Edward Said. And we will talk about the conversation we (inaudible-students coughing). And **don't forget your reflective essays**.
S: (quiet yet audible) F**k!
(other students laughing)
K: (smiling) So, you were absent that day, right?
S: Yeah!
K: So, it's a PowerPoint on Canvas. It's called 'language and power.' I think number one, because number two is gonna be uploaded after the class. **You can go over that and write your reflective essay on that**.

Kyle's request in line 12 is an *explicit performative*, meaning that the request is conventionally direct with respect to its tone, thus maximizing the threat to the students' negative face. Additionally, the request is speaker-oriented due to the use of the first person pronoun *I*, indicating an emphasis on the speaker. That being said, when talking about the outline of the class in lines 14-16, he switches to speaker-hearer perspective, which is evident in the use of the pronoun *we.* This finding supports his attempt to distribute power in class by adopting a less authoritative perspective in his discourse. Therefore, this could potentially minimize the effect of the speech act on the students' negative face. In line 17, Kyle reminds students of an assignment using an imperative form which is also a conventionally direct strategy without a redressive action. This could be due to the fact that assignment reminders are a natural part of classroom discourse and they may not necessarily pose a threat to students when expressed without any redressive politeness strategies. His response to the student remark in line 19 indicates that he is not bothered by the use of the f-word, an expression which would potentially be inappropriate to use in other contexts (e.g. a business meeting or a public speech event). On the contrary, it seems that he is amused by the use of this word and he reacts first by smiling, possibly influenced by the other students laughing at the same time. He then carries on the conversation by giving further explanations and a suggestion in line 25 as to how the student can complete the assignment. These examples illustrate how adopting or rejecting power as an external factor in a communication event can influence the choice of linguistic forms in discourse. However, it should be noted that it is not clear from the data whether Kyle is aware of the linguistic choices he makes or whether these choices are informed by his beliefs and perceptions about power in communication.

Not surprisingly, speech acts that may threaten the hearer's positive face (e.g. disapproval, insult, accusation, etc.) were not common in Kyle's classroom discourse data. The only speech act that was relatively more frequently occurring in the interactions was the speech act of disagreement. This is primarily due to the wide range of controversial topics discussed in the class, such as wars, terrorism, politics, and religion. In Extract 2 below, an exchange between Kyle and one of the students is displayed. In this interaction Kyle slightly disagrees with the student's opinion during a discussion on religions and terrorism (S=Student; K=Kyle):

Extract 2

294: **S:** I have a little remark to make. You just said, or I honestly believe that
295: any terrorist or terrorism has no religion. Now, with that being said, the
296: United States fosters and LOVES blowing out of proportion that all
297: Muslims are terrorists. When you look at Charlie Hebdo, prime example,
298: the prime minister, the president [incomprehensible] said, "Muslims are
299: not terrorists. This is an isolated incident. Do not take out revenge. Do not
300: do anything to Muslims. Don't judge these people just by the actions of a
301: few." Why is it that they can do that in France, they can't do it here in the
302: States?
303: **K: Well, I wouldn't say United States tends to do that...**
304: **S:** (talks over) They purposely do it.

K: ...every nation and state does that. It's every nation and state. If you go to a Muslim country, the way the news are covered about United States, it's out of proportion. It's about having a promiscuous love, broken families... It's about not having a decent culture, it's about carrying guns on the street. It's about being insecure, being not safe for people for young adults. So, I wouldn't say it's only United States. It's the project of every nation and state to create the "other" because they need to justify their very existence.

As can be seen in Extract 2, in lines 294-302, the student questions the political stance of the US towards terrorist actions. Kyle’s response to the student’s argument can be seen in line 303. The speech act of disagreement begins with the pragmatic marker *well*, which serves as a preparatory for an upcoming speech act that may pose a threat to the hearer’s positive face. Since disagreements can clash with interlocutors’ desire to be appreciated and approved, Kyle’s use of this pragmatic marker seems to be an effective politeness strategy that minimizes the effect of the speech act of disagreement and expresses tentativeness. Additionally, the hedged *wouldn’t* in the verb phrase reduces the directness of the of the speech act, thus making it more polite and saves the positive face of the student. In lines 305-312, Kyle elaborates on his point by further explaining why he disagrees with the student on the US being the only country that seems to overgeneralize terrorist actions to all Muslims. This example shows that the speech acts such as disagreement can be performed carefully with appropriate and polite pragmalinguistic forms that help soften the effect of the act on the hearer’s positive face.

Kyle’s classroom discourse displays other forms of politeness strategies. One positive politeness strategy that he uses is noticing and attending to students. He does this primarily by acknowledging student contributions to class discussions. For example, in order to encourage participation, he says “I heard two people talking about legal terms”, “Somebody there said something”, “I saw someone’s hand there. Who was that?” These expressions show that he recognizes the contributions of those students and gives them a chance to express them. He also addresses students by their names when he knows who the contributor is. Knowing and using student names can be a positive politeness strategy in that it shows that the speaker has established a more personal relationship with the hearer and therefore saves the positive face of the hearer during a communication encounter.

Perceptions and Beliefs about Appropriateness

Not only Kyle's actual classroom discourse but also his comments and beliefs about communication as drawn from the interviews and classroom observations indicate that he frequently questions the social conventions and norms and refuses to accept the impact of power on communication. It is likely that this critical perspective is due to his educational background in journalism, media, and sociology. He rejects power/difference differentials in class, and he questions the norms of appropriateness imposed by the society. For instance, he prefers to be called by his first name in the class and he asks his students not to use formal address forms such as teacher or professor. In so doing, he further closes the power/distance gap between him and the students. He believes that this helps him build much stronger relationships with them. Additionally, he believes that students should not be passive consumers of knowledge in class; rather, they should be actively engaged in class discussions by asking questions or making comments. He emphasizes this view in one of the interviews:

> "The first couple of sessions I've made sure, because I think the students should get use in the material, what they are going to cover in the course, and also try to plant the seeds of inquisition in them, somehow. So they can be encouraged, or they would find the topics interesting so they may get involved, but again, I

> noticed it's not the culture here. Just students are students, they listen to lectures, talks, that's it. So I have to challenge that, and that's also challenge for myself. So if there is an awkward moment of silence in the class, I wait. I tell them, 'I'm not going to talk, unless you talk.'" (Interview 2, March 2015)

As much as he wants students to talk in class, he does not put pressure on them to speak. He thinks that there are several reasons why students may not be participating. For instance, they may be just quiet as a person; they may not feel like speaking some days; they might be bored of or feel uncomfortable about the topic. He admits that he sometimes has less willingness to speak and he negotiates with the students about what to do:

> "I say 'Okay, remember that day you had like no momentum or motivation to talk, I'm that one, what shall we do? I'm super tired, I have two deadlines to meet, lots of work to do', so it's how we do. So we discuss, and then usually after like 5-10 minutes, we start chatting and laughing and sharing, I get into the mood to teach usually. But they are like-- two three weeks ago I was teaching, and I said 'I'm not in the mood of teaching, I'm going to stop here. What shall we do?' And then we went over what we have learned throughout the semester. We have learned these so far, these theories, these concepts, these methods, these aspects of social life or social problems. That happens and I think again, they're respecting it." (Interview 2, March 2015)

With respect to the use of potentially offensive or insulting linguistic forms, Kyle seems to be liberal with respect to their appropriateness in the classroom. The relaxed environment in the classroom enables students to use expressions that could be considered inappropriate in other contexts. Examples of such expressions are "people are dumb as rocks" when referring to

American people ‘who cannot even name five states,’ “I don’t care if anybody is listening; that’s not why I speak – I speak to make a point” during a discussion when the student making the remark feels that he was not understood or was not able to make himself clear, “F**k!” when the student realized she had forgotten to submit the assignment, and “Some people got riled up last time, maybe I should keep my mouth shut” when the student was indirectly sending a message to another student due to a conflict that occurred in a previous class. These examples show that the appropriateness norms may change in different contexts and participants of a discourse community – students and teacher in a discussion class – may re- and co-construct norms of appropriateness and use linguistic forms accordingly.

When directing and monitoring discussions in class, Kyle is also able to give students advice and guidance on how to appropriately contribute to class. Referring to a conflict that occurred between two students in a previous class, Kyle advises students on how to constructively and appropriately contribute to class discussions without offending anybody in Extract 3 below taken from one of the class observations:

Extract 3

So, what happened in previous session? There was a conflict among a couple of folks. That was exercising the power. You're fighting over something that was taught to you that is sacred, you should take care of it. So, language, when you use it, bear in mind you're exercising power. No single word is innocent or neutral. You are devaluating their ideological, they carry weight. So, be careful when you use them. And when you disagree with somebody, maybe you can use a **better language**. So, just take the **bitterness** out of it and express it in a way that is more **constructive**. And, again, when you want to disagree with each other, it's totally fine. Do it, raise your hand, and just respect. I'm not talking about specific people. I'm talking about the full process of criticizing each other.

In lines 321-322, Kyle establishes a relationship between conflict and power, meaning that conflicts occur due to power struggles. After this opening, in line 324 he associates language with power by emphasizing the importance of how power struggles can greatly influence linguistic choices and these choices can impact the participants in the conflict. In line 327, he introduces the concept of “better language” which he defines in the next line as “taking the bitterness out it” which likely refers to minimizing the threat or force of the message so that it is more constructive. This indicates that his perception of appropriateness lies in the interface between the external social factor of power and how it manifests itself in the language, which is an internal social factor, as well as his own metalinguistic awareness.

It appears that Kyle’s perceptions of appropriateness regarding classroom discourse is largely determined by his understanding of social norms, acceptability, and context. To him, classroom communication is built on trust and students must feel safe in order to contribute to discussions. Once trust is established, the nature of communication in the classroom takes a different form of appropriateness. This is particularly important in the field of sociology because of the controversial nature of the topics discussed. Additionally, managing conflict during discussions and making sure that students are using appropriate forms while debating is also a pragmatic skill that Kyle seems to have developed as an instructor.

Case Study: Anna

Anna (pseudonym), 27, is originally from China. She is pursuing her doctoral studies in the US in the field of chemistry. She earned a BA degree in medicine in China. Prior to coming to the US in 2011, she was intending to be a doctor in China. During her studies, she was assisting a professor’s undergraduate research project. The professor had earned his PhD in the

US and was telling Anna about his educational experiences in the US and encouraged her to apply to the university where he received his PhD. Receiving her professor's support, Anna's application to the PhD program was successful, and she began her studies in the chemistry program at a US university in 2011.

Anna has lived in the US for about four years now. When she was admitted to the program, she was offered an assistantship by the department. Even though she knew her assistantship appointment would involve some type of teaching, she did not know much about her teaching duties until she actually came to the US. Additionally, this was going to be Anna's first teaching experience as she had never taught before in China. When she came to the department, she found out that she was going to be a teaching assistant in the chemistry lab where she was going to have the responsibility of teaching 12-14 students.

Anna has now worked as a lab teaching assistant for more than six semesters. In addition to lab teaching, she also taught a 30-minute lecture sessions. She rates her English speaking abilities as intermediate, which reflects her self-reported TOEFL iBT speaking subscore of 22 (fair). English is the only second language she has ever learned and she has studied it for more than five years. The summer before she came to the US, she practiced her speaking with an American for about three months in China. The next section describes Anna's CA and WTC profile in the chemistry lab as drawn from the CCAS, WTCS, the interviews conducted with her and the field notes.

The CA and WTC Profile

From the responses to the CCAS items, it appears that Anna experiences CA in managing dominant and quiet students, giving lectures or instructions, and confronting students who display disruptive behavior in class. Additionally, the fact that English is her second language makes her feel uncomfortable. On the other hand, she seems to be comfortable asking for clarification when needed, responding to student questions and comments, and encouraging students to ask questions. It seems that her CA is high when it comes to dealing with problems in the class, whereas she feels more at ease in regular classroom communication situations. Similarly, her responses to the WTC scale items indicate connections to her CA profile. For instance, she reports that she would be extremely relaxed and comfortable initiating communication when reminding students about assignment deadlines, acknowledging and praising student contributions, and walking around the classroom to interact with students. However, she would be less willing to initiate communication to warn students, disagree with a student, or interrupt a dominant student. This could be attributed to the fact that warning, disagreeing, or interrupting are speech acts that may pose a threat to students' face and therefore, Anna might be less willing to perform these speech acts in class.

Anna reported that when she first started teaching, she felt extremely anxious. She describes her first days of teaching in one of the interviews:

> "… I even write up what I'm going to say before I teach for the first time because I just got freaked out. I don't know what to do. I would just basically write up everything and try to remember and practice a few times before I go there, like giving out a presentation. Then gradually you get used to it. You just show up in the classroom. (Interview 1, April 2015)

Having no prior teaching experience coupled with the fact that she was feeling self-conscious about her English level seems to have been anxiety-inducing for Anna during the initial stages of her teaching. Essentially, she started teaching without any formal training or preparation only observing some classes taught by more experienced TAs in the department. She reported that it was not until the end of her first year of teaching that she started to feel more relaxed in the classroom because she gradually got used to teaching. Also, she believes that teaching helped her improve her speaking skills in English:

> "If you are really advanced in English, it's from teaching actually because when you teach, you do have to explain to the students, you have to push yourself to open your mouth and speak. When the students don't understand, you have to manage other ways to tell them. For me, that was quite like a learning procedure." (Interview 1, April 2015)

It appears that Anna is aware of her responsibilities as a TA, especially making sure that students understand her instruction. To this end, she believes in making every effort to facilitate comprehension and resorts to different compensation strategies when she feels that students don't understand her. The field notes taken during Anna's observed lab sessions demonstrate that she is quite active in this instructional environment. Her primary role as a TA is to advise and assist students during experiments. As students work in pairs sharing a fume hood[3], Anna frequently walks around the lab, checks on students' work, makes suggestions, and gives instructions, and explains procedures to be followed in each experiment. A regular lab session starts with Anna writing the instructions for the experiment on the board. Later, she passes out a quiz. Once the students turn in the quiz, they start the experiment. They carefully check the instructions on the board. In order to begin the experiment, everyone must be wearing their lab coats, safety goggles, and gloves. The interactions between Anna and the students tend to get

[3] A device enclosed except for necessary exhaust purposes on three sides and top and bottom, designed to draw air inward by means of mechanical ventilation, operated with insertion of only the hands and arms of the user, and used to control exposure to hazardous substances. These devices are also known as laboratory fume hoods (University of California San Diego, http://blink.ucsd.edu/go/fumehood)

informal and less distant at times. More specifically, interactions can be very open and casual in the sense that joking and laughing can occur at moderate levels. Believing that she comes from a culture where casual interactions with students are not normally observed, Anna describes her cross-cultural experience of “open" and "relaxed" learning in the US as follows:

> "I like this kind of communication - allow the student to ask questions and they are not afraid to ask you questions. For us in China, we would double think the question before we ask, like, 'We don't want to look stupid.' But here they just speak whatever they want....They can still make jokes and we can still be friendly to each other as long as we respect each other. Actually, the open learning system is kind of good." (Interview 1, April 2014)

Anna attributes the casual learning environment in the lab setting to the number of students. She believes that communicating with 12-14 students is not the same as lecturing to a large class of 100 students where the communication style needs to be more formal and distant. In the lecture setting, students tend to listen to the teacher and there are no opportunities for small or casual talk. It seems that Anna is aware of the affordances of different instructional settings with respect to communicating with students and believes in the importance of gaining both types of teaching experience.

The classroom observation findings also indicate that gender might be a variable affecting the initiation of interactions in the classroom. Anna believes that female students in her labs tend to be quieter or shyer and they are less willing to talk. On the other hand, she feels that male students are usually more open and tend to ask more questions. The field notes taken during classroom observations corroborate this finding as Anna seemed to respond to questions of male students more frequently than those of female students. However, it could also be that male students needed more guidance than female students during experimental procedures.

Due to the nature of the lab instruction, students ask a lot of questions during the experiments. Anna believes that the reason why students ask many questions might be because her instructions of the experiment procedures may not be clear to them. Another reason might be that they came to class unprepared. Students usually call her name when they need help and she has to visit each hood to help students. She sometimes feel overwhelmed by the student questions because she has to explain a single procedure multiple times. Since she has to demonstrate a procedure to make it clear to the students, she asks students to come watch her at one hood. However, she feels that some students either do not pay attention or ignore her request.

In summary, Anna seems to have a dynamic CA and WTC profile in the lab setting. Her initial CA at the beginning of her TA appointment gradually declined and she could easily communicate with students during lab sessions. Furthermore, embracing the open and relaxed learning environment of the US higher education setting, Anna believes that teaching improves her communication skills and she learns from her interactions with students. The next section describes the particular speech acts and politeness strategies observed in her interactions with students in the chemistry lab.

Speech Acts and Politeness Strategies

The data revealed that Anna’s interactions with students in the chemistry lab involved various speech acts, such as giving instructions and directions, reminding, warning, responding to student work. Additionally, an interesting finding was that there were several instances of casual or small talk in between instructional exchanges. An example for the most commonly observed speech act will be displayed in this section along with detailed explanations of the politeness strategies.

Giving instructions and directions was one of the most frequently occurring speech act in Anna's classroom discourse. Instructions mainly pertained to setting up the necessary lab equipment, outlining the procedures for experiments, and providing specific amounts of chemicals to be used. Instructions were usually followed by reminders, warnings, or other directions throughout the session. Below is an extract that exemplifies a typical instructional opening at the beginning of class:

Extract 4

Okay **guys**, **we**'re going to set up the reflux first. First of all, the thing you're going to put your reaction inside is the rounded-bottom flask. Which one? Give me the rounded-bottom flask. The rounded-bottom flask, make sure it's dry and clean. **We** don't want any water in it. When you clean it out, make sure it's completely dry. Then go and weigh out 0.91 grams of sodium trichloroacetate. All the other chemicals are put in the group six hood, and I'll add it. Until you are done, put some boiling stone, just grab it to me, and I'll add those liquids. Use the sodium trichloroacetate. After you've completely dried your rounded-bottom flask--

As can be seen in Extract 4, Anna's instructions for the procedures of an experiment consist of direct imperatives forms without any redressive politeness strategies. This could be attributed to the nature of lab discourse which requires the speech acts to be performed to be directly and firmly without any tentativeness. Specifically, any hedges, uncertainty or tentativeness in the instructions might lead to misinterpretation and eventually serious physical damage to students or the lab equipment. Additionally, unlike other speech acts, such requests and suggestions in which redressive actions are necessary to minimize the imposition of the action being requested or suggested, instructions tend to have a fixed direct-imperative pragmalinguistic form that does not require mitigation or redress. Extract 4 also shows that there are instances of hearer-speaker perspective in the instructions, specifically in lines 15 and 18, with the use of the first person plural pronoun *we*, suggesting that Anna is employing a politeness strategy that shows that she is attending to students by acknowledging their presence in the actions to be completed during the experiment. Recognition of students' presence is also demonstrated by the collective vocative (Formentelli, 2009) *guys* used at the beginning of the exchange as an address from. This address form also indicates that Anna is closing the distance gap by using this informal expression during her instructions, providing further evidence that the interactions in this particular lab environment exhibit a casual style.

Warnings also occur frequently in the lab. The classroom observations revealed that they were primarily used to highlight an important experiment procedure and to avoid possible negative consequences. Extract 5 below displays a warning followed by a threat:

Extract 5

23: You guys need to grab your chemicals here, I'll add everything and set up
24: your distillation. Remember! [with high intonation] Set up your distillation
25: at a low temperature. So make sure your thermometer is in the low
26: [incomprehensible] OK? If your thermometer ever goes above 50, I'll take
27: points off. So, be careful about that.

As can be seen, the warning begins in line 24 with a single word opening *remember* followed by a directive specifying the condition to be satisfied for the experiment – i.e. setting up the distillation at a low temperature. The warning is reiterated in line 26 followed by a confirmation seeking *OK*. Later in the same line a conditional clause introduces the temperature condition followed by a threat continuing in line 27– i.e. taking points off – if the condition is not satisfied. Finally, a speech act of advice in the imperative form concludes the warning in the last line. The use of threat in the form of taking points off actually contradicts Anna's self-reported practices in the class as evidenced in the one of the interviews in which she stated "I know some TAs, you can threaten the students to take points off; that really works well. But I never used that strategy before." (Interview 2, April 2015). Overall, this finding indicates that speech acts that pose a threat to hearer's negative face can be used as an instructional strategy in the lab setting to emphasize the importance of experiment procedures and to prevent the negative consequences of any possible mistakes during the execution of the experiments.

Correcting student responses or actions during experiments appeared to be another most frequently occurring speech act during interactions in the lab. Corrections are necessary during experiment procedures as mistakes can cause negative consequences in the lab. Since corrections may threaten the hearer's positive face because hearers expect to be approved and appreciated by the speakers, the choice of pragmalinguistic forms in formulating an appropriate, indirect, and polite corrective response plays an important role in pragmatically successful interactions. The data revealed that Anna tends to use various pragmatic strategies when correcting student mistakes. The extract below displays an exchange in which Anna provides corrective feedback to a student (A=Anna; S=Student):

Extract 6

176: **A:** Wait! Excuse me? Why are you guys doing without the water?
177: You're supposed to keep the water on the all the time.
178: **S:** Even after the ten minutes?
179: **A:** As long as it's hot, otherwise your stuff is [inaudible], right? You want
180: your water [inaudible]

In the above extract, Anna uses an imperative *wait* in line 176 as an attention getter followed by an alerter *excuse me* to initiate the corrective feedback. These two pragmalinguistic forms seem to function as lexical downgraders, meaning that they prepare the hearer for the upcoming correction. These downgraders are followed by the interrogative form *why are you guys doing without the water* in line 176, indicating the initial phase of the correction followed by what the students should be doing in line 177 (keep the water on all the time). This exchange shows that Anna uses various pragmatic strategies to initiate feedback to minimize the impact of the correction.

An interesting discourse pragmatic phenomenon observed in the interactions between Anna and her students in the lab setting was small talk. Two types of small talk were identified in the data: student-initiated and TA-initiated. The data revealed most small talk was initiated by students and occurred between the students during experiments. Topics included lectures, grades, and other non-academic subjects. Additionally, some student-initiated small talk was observed between the students and Anna. There were also a number of instances where Anna initiated small talk during instructional talk. The occurrence of small talk indicated a closer interpersonal relationship between Anna and the students and a more casual teaching and learning environment. In many occurrences of small talk, humor was also observed. More specifically, in interactions where humor was incorporated, banter was exchanged between the TA and a student or a witty remark was made. In Extract 7 below, an example of small talk initiated by a student is shown (A=Anna; S=Student):

Extract 7

72: **A:** It stinks here. What's wrong?
73: **S:** Well…

74: **A:** (smiles) I know it's not you…
75: (another student laughs)
76: **S:** You're so mean!
77: **A:** You are so mean. I'm talking about--
78: **S:** I'm so mean?
79: **A:** I'm talking about the chemical, I'm not talking about you.
80: **S:** You can't come in here insulting my odor.
81: **A:** I'm talking about the chemical, guys (chuckles).

In the above exchange, the student responds to Anna's question in line 72 with a discourse marker *well*, thereby initiating the banter. Interpreting the discourse marker *well* as an indication of the student causing the bad smell, Anna feels that she insulted the student and therefore responds to the student in line 74 by *I know it's not you*, meaning that the student is not causing the smell. The student continues the banter in line 76 by saying *you're so mean,* giving Anna a hard time. Anna defends herself in line 77 but is interrupted by the student who acts as if he were insulted by Anna's question. This humorous exchange ends when Anna understands that the student is joking and they all laugh about it. Small talk was also integrated into instructional talk in the lab. In Extract 8 below, an example of this integration is displayed:

Extract 8

19: **S:** How am I supposed to weigh this? Because I need to weigh it but I
20: can't—
21: **A:** Solid you can take it out. Solid is just a salt, the only thing they are—
22: **Oh! You cut your hair. Finally!**
23: **S: Did you take that long to notice?**
24: **A:** Yeah. Normally, it's the liquid and the volatile solids that we are
25: worried about. So, the solid you can pick up.

As can be seen in the above extract, while Anna is answering the student's question that appears in line 19, she inserts small talk which starts in line 22 to which the student joins with a response in line 23. However, this small talk does not last long and in line 24, Anna goes back to the instructional talk in which she provides further explanations. These findings indicate that small talk seems to function as a discourse pragmatic strategy enabling the discourse participants to establish interpersonal connections between each other in the lab setting. Additionally, these findings corroborate Anna's CA and WTC profile described earlier in this section. Specifically, Anna's perception of open and relaxed learning environment of the US education system seems to help her adjust easily to the communication norms of this new context and adopt new pragmatic conventions. Furthermore, it could be postulated that establishing interpersonal relationships with students in the lab might have contributed to her WTC and reduced her CA. Therefore, it could be concluded that discourse pragmatics might play an important role in L2 speakers' adaptation to and participation in communicative acts in authentic communication situations.

Perceptions and Beliefs about Appropriateness

Anna's perceptions and beliefs about communication and pragmatic competence were mainly observed in the interview data. Her first cross-cultural shock in the US higher education context was the level of respect shown towards instructors. Coming from a culture where teachers are shown utmost respect, Anna had difficulty in adjusting to the 'liberal' classroom setting where students openly express their feelings and opinions:

> "In the Asian culture, you respect the teachers a lot. Even though they are teaching assistants, you see them as teachers, as professors. I remember when I was taking undergrad labs, we respect those teachers a lot. Whatever they said, we listen and we take notes and we won't talk in class. American teaching is quite

like an open area. Everybody can talk in my class and they can have different opinions. I wouldn't say that it was hard for me, but some of students' behaviors in the beginning was hard for me to accept. They won't really behave." (Interview 1, April 2015)

As described in the previous section, Anna's lab sessions include several instances of small talk incorporated into instructional procedures. Anna seems to have embraced this particular discourse pragmatic feature in her class and feels that it is acceptable as long as it does not interfere with the lab procedures. Referring to the student-initiated small talk among students, she says:

> "I have 14 students – I couldn't stop them. If they are really talking, as long as they don't affect the procedure of the class, I'm OK with that. They can even ask me questions if they want, if that keeps the [harmony?] in the lab." (Interview 2, April 2015)

That being said, Anna draws the line at small talk and joking in the lab when it comes to important safety measures. As noted in the classroom interactions, warning and reminding constitute an important part of Anna's classroom discourse. She does not hesitate to adopt a more serious and direct tone when she needs to warn students about safety:

> "I was in [?] that comes to the safety concern, you don't want to make jokes. You can't be strict and serious, you don't want to smile to the students saying this is not appropriate, you're just going to say, 'That's not okay and that's not acceptable. If you do that one more time, you're going to be kicked out.' Because that's serious stuff, we don't want themselves to be hurt and we don't want them to hurt others as well." (Interview 3, April 2015)

Anna’s interactions with students in the lab setting also include linguistic feedback she receives from the students. This feedback usually comes in the form of corrections on Anna’s pronunciation. Although no instances of such correction was observed during lab sessions, Anna reports that she is corrected by students all the time. Also, some of these corrections are made in the manner of joking or making fun of her accent or language use. In the following extract from one of the interviews, Anna describes an instance where students teased her because of her use of a certain expression:

> “Because some of the words I cannot pronounce and they are going to keep repeating like, ‘Oh, that's what you say?’ I remember last year I said ‘cracked’ ice. Even though I said cracked ice, the professional English, it's cracked ice - that means the freshly cracked ice. But, I think in your language, cracked also means get high? Every time I said, ‘cracked,’ two boys going to laugh. I was like, ‘What's your problem?’ And by the end of the semester before they leave, they told me, "Because you said 'cracked,' ‘Because cracked also means high.’ I was like, ‘I didn't mean that. You know it. It's written in the lab manual [chuckles].’ I'm not really offended, but it's fun. Actually, you can learn from them. Sometimes I open the water, I don't know which side to turn. They tell me, "Left to the loose, right to the tight." This is their way to remember it. I thought it was quite interesting and help you to remember.” (Interview 1, April 2015).

It appears that Anna appreciates student feedback with regard to language use even if it sometimes comes in the form of mocking or teasing. Anna does not find such comments inappropriate; on the contrary, she believes that such interactions are excellent learning opportunities for her to improve her English. Additionally, she seems to be able to balance her interpersonal relationship with her students by both establishing solidarity through small talk and authority through direct warnings and reminders to manage student behavior and actions especially in situations where safety concerns are paramount.

Case Study: Marc

Marc (pseudonym), 35, is originally from China pursuing his doctoral studies in the US in the field of Finance. He earned his BA degree in Business Economics and an MA degree in the Netherlands an MS degree in Accountancy in the UK. As can be seen, he has diverse study abroad, residence and work experiences in different countries. He decided to continue his doctoral studies in the US because he thought that the best PhD offering programs in Finance were in the US. For this purpose, Marc moved to the US to begin his doctoral studies in Finance in 2011.

Before arriving to the US, Marc did not know much about the higher education system of the US. Since he had extensive overseas experience in the UK and Europe, he did not experience much of a culture shock when he came, and he had a smooth transition. He has worked as a teaching assistant as the sole instructor of a course for less than six semesters in the department where he is currently enrolled as a PhD student. Additionally, he has also worked as a research assistant at the same institution. Previously, he worked as a business and economics tutor in the Netherlands. He currently teaches International Finance to classes of approximately 50-75 undergraduate students. He rates his ability to speak English as advanced. His self-reported TOEFL iBT speaking subscore is, on the other hand, 22 (fair). As an L1 speaker of Mandarin Chinese, he only studied English as a foreign language for more than five years. He believes that his main linguistic weaknesses in English while teaching are explaining field terminology, discourse organization (or in his own words, “organizing the conversation, so making the conversation more logic, more clear to students” (Interview 1, October 2015)). Marc’s CA and WTC profile is described in the following section.

The CA and WTC Profile

Marc’s responses to the CCAS items indicate that he does not feel much anxiety in performing various speech acts in class. Specifically, he feels comfortable communicating with students in situations where he would have to confront students, such as disagreeing with them, managing disruptive behavior in class, leading a group discussion or activity, or interrupting a student who dominates the class time. The only statements that he agreed with were those that asked whether it made him feel self-conscious to speak English as a second language. In addition, he reported that it would make him uncomfortable to insist that students arrive to class on time.

Marc’s responses to the CCAS corroborate those he gave to the WTC scale where he self-reported slightly less willingness to initiate communication in situations where he would have to disagree with a student, warn a student who displays an inappropriate behavior in class, ask students to arrive to class on time, or interrupt a student who dominates a class discussion. These findings show that Marc’s anxiety to perform particular speech acts reduces his willingness to communicate in situations where those speech acts would have to occur. Furthermore, he seems to be slightly less willing to give oral instructions for an assignment in class. This could be attributed to his self-perceived weakness in discourse organization, and therefore, may induce anxiety when he has to explain the procedures for a problem-solving task.

Marc felt very nervous and shy during the initial stages of his teaching in the US. He believes that it was because he did not know what to expect, as he had no preparation or training for teaching. He slightly became less nervous as he got used to teaching. He usually struggles with encouraging some students to participate in class activities during which they need to be asking Marc questions. When students do not participate, Marc begins to question himself and his teaching:

> "In general, some student[s] are very comfortable asking me questions – some are not – especially when I try to present a kind of question or solution to students, some didn't really ask me questions, even if they're not following. So, this is a kind of difficult situation I'm encountering right now in the class." (Interview 1, October 2015).

Marc believes that the reason why some students do not ask any questions could be because they come to class unprepared, not having read the assigned materials, which could potentially influence the interaction level in the class. According to him, it is possible to understand if a student is unprepared for the class from their faces and expressions. More specifically, when Marc gives his lecture, he expects his students to ask him questions and show willingness to participate in class activities for an efficient learning, teaching, and communication experience in the classroom. Furthermore, he reiterates how student questions increase his WTC:

> "It shows me that students are very curious about my teaching and about accountants. So this makes me have more incentive to give a better explanation to students." (Interview 2, October 2015).

According to Marc, active involvement of students in classroom communication is a necessary condition for him to be more willing to communicate with them. Therefore, it could be postulated that contributions in a discourse event – particularly in the case of classroom communication – must be mutual and both parties are expected to initiate communication. Additionally, the number of participants in a speech event might determine the level of interaction in the classroom. Marc points out that he would have more interactions with students in smaller classes. He feels that he cannot attend to every student's needs individually in classes of about 60 students. Therefore, he may not be able to attend to every student in such large classes.

Marc usually begins his lectures with a warm-up activity in order to prepare students for the lecture. This indicates that he makes efforts to initiate communication in the class and stimulate student interest in the lecture:

> "Normally I ask them a general question before the lecture. Then I try to show them the importance of the lecture, of the actual thing. And then I normally, if I can find a video, like a YouTube video, to represent the contents of the lecture, I will give them eight minutes reading [?] then I will continue with my lecture."
>
> (Interview 3, October 2015)

Marc feels uncomfortable in class when he notices that students do not seem to be paying attention to the lecture by doing other things such as checking their phones, talking to each other, or doing something else on their electronic devices. However, he chooses not to confront students in order not to offend them, thinking that they are adults and they should know what to do and what not to do in class:

> “I think all the students are adults right now. They should be responsible for their own career, or their own decisions. Even though I might point out to a student, it caused the situation to be very awkward. So, I don't want to offend any students. And it's their decision whether they want to study or learn more from my class or not.” (Interview 2, October 2015)

This finding resonates with Marc’s self-reported anxiety and unwillingness to communicate in classroom situations where would have to manage student behavior, such as arriving class on time or warn a student who displays a disruptive behavior. It seems that Marc fears that he would threaten students’ independence by attempting to moderate their behavior in class, which suggests that he attempts to save the negative face of the students by avoiding face-threatening speech acts such as warning or reminding.

The data from the classroom observation field notes indicate that Marc is teaching in a very large classroom, which could potentially make it difficult for him to hear student questions. The most actively participating students were sitting in the front row. Overall, Marc seems to have a quiet disposition and calm communication style in the class. For instance, the classroom observations indicate that there is hardly any small talk between him and the students and lecture delivery is quite formal and serious. It might be postulated that small talk and degrees of formality in a classroom communication could be depend on the number of students. More specifically, the more students there are in the class, the less small talk between the TA and students might occur in the classroom. Additionally, the number of participants in the communication situation might also have an impact on willingness to initiate communication. The next section describes Marc’s classroom discourse, specifically his use of speech acts and politeness strategies during his interactions with students.

Speech Acts and Politeness Strategies

The classroom observation data revealed that the finance class was not rich in terms of the interaction exchanges between Marc and the students. The first class observed was a lecture on interest rate parity, which consisted mainly of definitions of various concepts and specific problem-solving tasks. During the lecture, the most frequently occurring speech act was checking comprehension which required students to respond to Marc. Marc seemed to use various linguistic forms to perform this specific function. Among the forms he used were "You guys good?" "Any questions for that?" "You guys all right with this?" "Make sense?" and "Right?" It appears that since new information is provided in lectures, checking students' comprehension is to be expected. Although this particular speech act may pose a threat to students' negative face in the sense that it requires a response and therefore impedes students' independence in the interaction, it is an essential part of classroom discourse. Additionally, unsatisfactory or lack of response from the students can pose a threat to the speakers' positive face. More specifically, unresponsiveness or lack of response from the students may cause discomfort on Marc's positive face because he might feel that he was not understood or his lecture was unsuccessful. In many instances where Marc checked students' comprehension using the above-listed linguistic forms, at least one student responded by asking a further question or some students nodding their heads to show approval. It seems that non-linguistic cues or signs can also save a speaker's positive face as they might show approval through non-linguistic means and contribute to successful exchanges in communication.

In order to help students understand the lecture content and the steps to follow when solving finance problems, Marc employs a number of positive politeness strategies. Extract 9 below exemplifies an exchange in which Marc supplements a lecture topic with an example and then checks students' comprehension (M=Marc, S=Student):

Extract 9

M: That's our profit we are making by engaging such transaction. That's pretty much-- with that money, you can buy a house in China. Not in big city, but in decent city, yes you can. All right, **you guys have any questions?** You see the logic already. The main thing I want to teach you guys is not really the computation with the underline [inaudible]. **Any questions? You guys good? No? How many of you guys completely lost? You want me to do it again? I'll do it again. We have plenty of time.**

S: It makes sense when you do it. It's just memorizing the steps on our own is really [inconvenient?].

M: You see the logic, with the steps. I'm trying in using the interest rate parity for computing intrinsic value for forward rate. Then I compute the actual rate in determining which currency is under value and which currency is over value.

As can be seen, Marc's explanation of the problem is concluded by the clarification question starting in line 154, "You guys have any questions" indicating that he initiates an exchange in which students would provide a response as to whether or not they understood the explanation. Later in line 155 and 156, Marc gives reasons for what students need to know, thus reducing the weight of the imposition of the comprehension check as it impedes students' independence. In lines 156 and 157, Marc's repeated use of the comprehension check questions, such as "Any questions?" "You guys good?" "No?" and "How many of you guys completely lost?" indicates that he attends to the needs of the students, thus it can be considered a positive politeness strategy because providing further explanations benefits the students. Furthermore, his use of the comprehension check is followed by a help offer in line 158 "You want me to do it again?" and a promise "I'll do it again" followed by a reassurance "We have plenty of time."

Benefiting students' needs and wants and saving their positive face, Marc exemplifies in this extract a combination of different politeness strategies. Considering that checking students' comprehension is not a weighty speech act in terms of the imposition it has on the hearer, Marc seems to exhibit an overuse of politeness strategies. This overuse could be attributed to the fact that comprehension checks might be weighty speech acts in Chinese and Marc might be trying to soften the impact of the imposition it has on the students by using a variety of positive politeness strategies. This finding suggests that the weight of the imposition a speech act might have on the hearer may not always be the same across different individuals, situations, or cultures. The overuse of comprehension checks may also indicate that Marc is not sure whether the students understood the lecture content. Therefore, speakers may opt to use additional politeness strategies where they feel that their positive face is threatened by performing certain speech acts. That being said, it remains a question how students perceive such comprehension checks or whether or not they serve as an effective strategy to determine student comprehension. More specifically, the overuse of certain linguistic forms may also create annoyance and hearers may negatively judge the speaker. The majority of the students in Marc's class were observed to be mainly unresponsive to his comprehension checks and it was not clear whether his attempts in making sure that they understood the content were perceived positively or not.

Even though the finance class is a lecture that does not exhibit rich occurrences of interactional exchanges between Marc and his students, the data revealed a few instances where Marc encountered face-threatening situations that he had to resolve. In one of those instances Marc faced a disagreement from a student while they were playing a jeopardy game as an exam review. After putting students into groups of 4-5 people, Marc used an online random number generator system to determine the turns the groups would take while choosing categories and questions on the game. Based on this system, students would have an equal opportunity or chance to answer questions. However, realizing that some groups got to answer questions multiple times, a student questions the randomness of the system Marc used. This confrontation is displayed in Extract 10 below (M=Marc, S=Student):

Extract 10

265: **S:** I have an idea. Why don't we just go around in order? Because there's
266: some groups, and they haven't even gone and that's not fair.
267: [inaudible], right?
268: **M:** Yeah, [it] misses them. This is based on [that?]. So it's not like you
269: [decide?] which group were-- it's based on a random draw.
[crosstalk]
270: **S:** That’s not even random. There’s a formulae behind it.
271: **M: Just trust me**, random is random. It's based on probability - which one
272: they pick. So it's not-- this is why I told you guys I'm not [favoring?] one
273: or the other. It's based on the computer, right. Let's go through the other
274: one. Group one. No [crosstalk]. It can be used. [Go back?]. All right.

In this exchange, Marc’s positive face is threatened by the students’ disagreement on the turn determining system Marc was using. In line 268 Marc provides explanations and tries to convince the student that the system is randomly selecting group numbers. Not satisfied with Marc’s answer, the student goes on record saying that the system is not random in line 270 which poses a threat to Marc’s positive face and forces him to further defend himself and convince the student. He uses a very direct form in line 271 *Just trust me* without any redressive politeness actions but further explanations to reassure the student that numbers are randomly selected. As of line 273, Marc ends the conflict with the student and continues the game. As can be seen in this example, interactions may pose threats not only to the hearers but also to the speakers in the exchange. Particularly in the classroom setting, there are several potential threats to the TA’s positive face because there are several students in the classroom setting and this might potentially be anxiety-inducing. Furthermore, when a speaker's face is threatened in public or in front of multiple other interlocutors in a setting like the classroom, the impact of the speech act on the hearer might be more anxiety-inducing as it might damage the public self-image of the speakers. As can be seen in Extract 10, Marc did not only have to defend himself to the particular student who posed the threat to him by performing the speech act of disagreement, but also to the other students in the classroom with an attempt to save his positive face. Therefore, it could be concluded from this exchange that the extent to which a threat posed on interlocutors' positive and negative face by a speech act might be affected by the number of participants involved in the discourse event in which the speech act occurred. In other words, the impact of the speech of disagreement on Marc's positive face in the classroom versus in an office hour where the only discourse participants are the student and himself could be different. This finding indicates that the extent to which a speech act is face-threatening depends on the situational context of communication.

Perceptions and Beliefs about Appropriateness

The interview data revealed that Marc observed some cross-cultural differences in his interactions with students in the US classroom setting. One of these differences was the speech act of requesting and refusing. An example of a situation in which Marc finds himself challenged is when students ask him to change or improve their grades or give them extra credit. Given that grade change or extra credit requests are very high-imposition requests which might even be perceived inappropriate by some, Marc does not mind refusing them:

> "In Asian culture, we don't say, 'No.' directly. We say 'No.' indirectly. You know, in my country, it's very difficult to say that directly, but since in the

Western culture, I just say it would be unfair to students, if I increase your grades." (Interview 1, October 2015)

As can be seen from the above excerpt, Marc's perceptions of appropriateness are shaped by the comparisons between his conceptualizations of the two culture groups, namely "Asian" and "Western." According to him, it is unconventional to refuse directly in the "Asian" culture. However, it seems that he does not experience any difficulty doing it directly in the "Western" US context. Viewing it as an issue of fairness, he sets his standards early in the semester and communicates his expectations through the course syllabus. When refusing such requests, he uses the course syllabus as a mitigating or softening strategy. In so doing, he believes that he establishes his principles of appropriateness in the class.

Marc's perceptions about appropriateness in the classroom reveal that certain behaviors can cause distraction for him while he is teaching. As noted earlier, Marc does not like moderating students' behavior – i.e. warning them or insisting that they arrive to class on time, etc. – because he fears that he might offend some students. That being said, when he feels that certain behaviors become distracting for others, he does not hesitate to intervene. In the following excerpt from one of the interviews, he explains how he handles disruptive behavior in the classroom:

> "In some cases, if I think one student was talking with other students, if his action distracts other students, I will just tell him right away…It happens. It happened once last week. I was going straight to the student. I said to him, 'Do you have any questions?" He said, 'No,' but he stopped talking." (Interview 3, October 2015)

It seems that in order to save the positive face of the student, Marc tends to use indirect speech acts as a mitigation strategy when he needs to warn students. More specifically, instead of asking students to stop talking, he interrupts them by asking if they have any questions. This indirect strategy seems to work, as he reports, in situations where he would not normally prefer to direct student behavior. An example of how Marc handles student behavior in the classroom is displayed in Extract 11 below taken from one of the class observations:

Extract 11

375: M: All right, guys. Are you done? Let's solve this one problem together
376: [inaudible] [laughter].
[silence]
377: S: They're here.
[silence]
378: M: So, let's solve this problem here. Guys, let's go. What is very funny
379: solving this problem?
380: S: [I'm sorry?] [inaudible].
381: M: Huh?
382: S: [I'm sorry?] [inaudible].
383: M: £5?
384: S: Yeah, £5.

In the above exchange, Marc is trying to elicit responses from students about a problem they were trying to solve when he found a group of students laughing. As can be seen, Marc again used an interrogative form in lines 378 and 379 by saying “What’s very funny solving this problem?” to which one of the students responded in line 380 by apologizing. In other words, the implicature in Marc’s indirect speech act was interpreted as a warning by the student and Marc, and therefore, Marc’s intended meaning that “stop laughing and solve the problem” was conveyed to the students.

Finally, Marc seems to appreciate it when students come up with different solutions to problems and challenge him or disagree with him during class activities:

> “In general, I like it because he or she presents a different opinion and then I will show them again my logic. If they think it's not reasonable, then maybe they can present different solution.” (Interview 3, October 2015)

Even though Marc sometimes feel overwhelmed by student questions, he still encourages them to ask questions and he is willing to answer them. To him, asking questions or disagreeing with him means that they are students are thinking and he appreciates this negotiation.

It seems that Marc’s perceptions of appropriate behavior in the classroom are guided by his cross-cultural experiences between, as he puts it, the “Asian” and “Western” cultures and undergo adaptation and adjustment. Additionally, he believes that monitoring student behavior at the college level is somewhat inappropriate and unnecessary because college students are adults. That is to say, Marc feels that they should know what actions or behaviors they need to avoid in class and moderating their behavior is not always under his control.

Case Study: Mary

Mary (pseudonym), 29, is originally from Turkey pursuing her doctoral studies in the US in the field of Mathematics Education. She has a BA degree and completed partial coursework in a non-thesis MA degree program in the same field in Turkey. Mary initially had no desire to go to the US to study as she was already enrolled in an MA program in Turkey. She was only considering going to England as an au pair to improve her English and travel. However, her mother was a big influence in her life and convinced her to apply for a study abroad scholarship. Receiving a governmental scholarship to pursue her graduate studies in the US, she moved to the

US in 2009 to begin her MA studies. She is currently enrolled in a PhD program in Mathematics Education.

Mary has lived in the US for over five years now. She has worked as an international teaching assistant as the sole instructor of two sections of an undergraduate Math Education lab course for only a semester. That is, Mary participated in the present study during her very first semester of teaching undergraduate students. The two sections she was teaching each had less than 25 students. She rates her English speaking abilities as advanced. She also has a score of 6.5 on the IELTS exam. Additionally, she studied German as a third language for about five years. The next section describes Mary's CA and WTC profile in the US classroom.

The CA and WTC Profile

Mary's responses to the CCAS statements indicate that she feels quite calm and relaxed in most classroom situations. Specifically, she is comfortable asking students to participate in class activities, asking for clarification when she does not understand a student comment or question, disagreeing with a student response or comment, warning students who display disruptive behavior, interrupting dominant students during class activities. Some of these findings are corroborated by the field notes taken during the observations of Mary's classes. To illustrate, Mary uses several elicitation questions, such as "What about here? Can we find this binominal factor?" "How you can find the least common denominator? Do you remember that?" "What do you think about this number? Square root of 17?" Overall, she displays an active and responsive communication style in the classroom. However, her responses to other statements in the CCAS demonstrate some communication anxiety in other areas. For instance, she reports that facing students who display disruptive behavior in the class makes her nervous. Also, she reports that she feels slightly uncomfortable giving lectures and introducing herself on the first day of class. This could be attributed to the fact that giving lectures and introductions are speech acts that do not require the hearer to participate in the communication act, and thus the speaker is charged with the full responsibility of speaking and that may be anxiety-inducing for some. Specifically referring to the first day of teaching in a US classroom, Mary describes her overall anxiety in one of the interviews as follows:

> “I couldn’t sleep that night [chuckles] because it was my first teaching experience in college level. I just taught elementary and middle, high school because they are younger than you. I checked if my photo booster [roster]. I feel like, ‘They look like pretty old people, and how am I going to make it?’ I see like different – I see like Arabic people, like Mexican, like black, I guess, and different kind of cultures I haven't interacted before as students, so I couldn't sleep that night. And I had to go restroom couple of times before getting in the classroom. I feel so anxious, and I remember that my voice kind of like going up and down. How they say [foreign] [laughing]. But I just stand up in front of them. It was kind of like dizzy moment. I really don't remember what I did, but I just tell them, ‘Okay my name is [Mary]’. Five minutes later, I get little calmer, but it didn't help. It just took me like two weeks or three weeks to make it like, ‘Okay, this is my class. I'm the teacher and they are my students, and I know them’, period. And I need to go to restroom like every time I go to the class during those three weeks. Then I just I get used to it. I was not the first day, it was the whole three weeks. I just kind of nervous, anxious, all the feelings come together just blended.” (Interview 1, November, 2015)

Mary’s self-reflection on her first days of teaching shows a high level of teaching anxiety which was mainly induced by having to interact with students of different age and nationality groups in the classroom. This finding indicates that as much as it might be difficult for undergraduate students to interact with foreign national instructors in the classroom, it might also be difficult for the international TAs to perform teaching duties in diverse classroom settings coupled with the fact that instruction must be delivered in their second language English. More specifically, even though it may be natural for anyone to feel anxious on the first day of teaching, this anxiety may be induced even more due to the insecurities felt by ITAs regarding their English proficiency level. In fact, Mary also reported that speaking English as a second language makes her feel slightly self-conscious in the class. In one of the interviews, she described her feelings about her English proficiency level in the classroom:

> “At the first week, maybe I can say like, beginner level, because I didn't learn teaching math in English. I know teaching math, like if I just want to explain you something in math, I can make it look perfect in Turkish. But since I don't know how to say some specific words, it was like trouble for me, because you cannot learn pronunciation of some words from the text book… So I was always like not sure about how can I pronounce—I just keep thinking out, ‘Okay, am I pronounce it correct way or not?’ I was always worried about pronunciation, if I'm clear, or do they understand me, if they're making fun of my accent, it was kind of in my head. But after that, since I've been used to hearing my accent, and I feel like they stopped making fun of me because they just got my thing. I just keep telling them, "Okay, I make mistakes, you know me-- because I don't know these terms". I ask

them sometimes, ‘What do you call this-- let's say the specific term’” (Interview 1, November 2015)

The above excerpt demonstrates that Mary experienced comprehensibility anxiety during the first week of her teaching which she thought was caused by pronunciation difficulties of some field terms. Furthermore, this language difficulty was intensified by another external factor which was the fear that students were making fun of her pronunciation. That being said, Mary did not hesitate to ask students whenever she needed help with how to say field terms and expressions in English:

> “So if I learn one way, they just tell me a different way, and I need to know it too, these are the same things. I'll just give the example of base and power thing, I just learn it, to the power of five, but they say, ‘to the fifth’. So different things, and I need to know that, to the fifth, is the informal way of saying, base and power, but you cannot learn this from textbooks. I need to interact with students to learn this type of specific things, but I do make mistakes.” (Interview 1, November 2015)

It appears that seeking language support from students increases Mary’s willingness to interact with students. This finding is also supported by Mary’s responses to some of the WTC scale items. Specifically, Mary feels extremely relaxed and comfortable asking students to let her know when her pronunciation is not clear to them. Mary’s apprehension about speaking English as a second language does not seem to be preventing her from initiating communication with students in other areas. For instance, she believes that she is very relaxed and comfortable to initiate communication when she has to warn a student who displays disruptive behavior, which contradicts her self-report anxiety in CCAS about the managing disruptive behavior. She also reported that she is comfortable checking students’ comprehension of lecture content and insisting that students arrive to class on time. However, she would be less willing to introduce herself on the first day of class or ask students to hold their questions for office hours. Mary's unwillingness to initiate communication in the former situation might be attributed to her hesitation to talk about herself in public. In the latter situation, Mary might find it difficult to ask students to hold their questions for later because of her willingness to respond to them during class right when they are asked. In fact, when Mary does not seem to know the answer to a student question, she says that she does not hesitate to ask other students, thereby creating an open discussion environment in which negotiation between students takes place:

> "I always say, 'Okay, do you have a problem?' 'Do you have a question?' 'Any concern?' 'Just ask me the question right now.' If they don't, I'll say to them they can just raise their hand and ask it. And when they ask me a question, I don't feel anything bad. I mean, just like I like them to ask question. If I could answer it, that would be perfect. If I cannot answer it – it didn't happened yet but I can try to make it possible then I can just throw in back to them. They [?] or I can ask others to ask for it if they can't explain. Because this is like kind of tricky thing if you're a teacher and if you don't know the answer, you can just ask the other people in the classroom. This is [real tricky?] [chuckles], so you to learn as a teacher if you don't know, then ask, okay, let's think about what others think about this issue or what they think about this. Hey, class. I can just try to find a way. But I love them when they ask questions." (Interview 2, November, 2015)

As can be seen from these findings, since Mary has not had a long teaching experience in the US higher education context or western cultures, she might have experienced high CA during her initial stages of teaching. It could be said that lack of knowledge or familiarity with the communication situations, context, and participants will likely induce anxiety in new discourse participants. Also, teaching in a relatively small class of approximately 25 students, Mary believes that she had the advantage of being able to learn her students' names, which afforded her the opportunity to establish rapport and intimacy with the students. It is possible that teaching in a small classroom might have been a contributing factor to Mary's adjustment to teaching in a US classroom much more quickly. Finally, Mary embraced the fact English is her second language and used it as a strategy to initiate more communication with students to get linguistic feedback from her students with respect to field terms and vocabulary.

Speech Acts and Politeness Strategies

The data revealed that Mary's classroom language use mainly consisted of instructional talk which included several problem-solving explanations and demonstrations on the board. She started the class by giving announcements about exams, lesson plan for the day, and information about other course related topics. The instructional talk was occasionally interrupted by various exchanges between Mary and her students, usually initiated by Mary to perform a number of speech acts, such as reminding, responding to student answers, acknowledging or praising student contributions, and checking comprehension, among others.

One of the most frequently used speech act was checking students' comprehension. Mary used this function in a variety of comprehension checks, almost after every explanation during her instructional talk. Extracts 12 and 13 below display how Mary inserts multiple comprehension checks into her instructional talk:

Extract 12

272: Just m, because m divides this first term and the second term. So it's going
273: to be m minus n, **right**? If I just factor out this m, BCF out. We got all this
274: stuff here, so how can I just make it simplified? Cross the same factors.
275: Do we have m minus n here and m minus n here? So I can just cross it. Do
276: we have m minus n? We have, but what about bottom part? We don't
277: have, **right**? What about m? Do we have m? We have, so I can just cross it
278: too. So you are going to be left with mn minus n, m plus n. **Do you all get**
279: **it? Any question about this?** Just cross out the same exact factors from
280: the top part and the bottom part. **Okay?** Do not cross with something on
281: the top part and forget this crossing the same exact factor from bottom
282: part. You just need to cross top and the bottom the same factor. **Is that**
283: **clear? Okay?**

Extract 13

196: Y squared plus one. And I just crossed off, and I got two over y minus
197: five. This is your final answer. The simplified version of this rational
198: expression. **Is that clear? You all get it? Any question?**

In both Extract 12 and 13, Mary is explaining the solutions to some equations and at the same time writing them on the board. It appears that Mary exploits several questions during these explanations, some of which are comprehension checks as indicated in bold in several lines. As can be seen in Extract 12, while some of these comprehension checks are spread throughout the instructional talk, they are sometimes used in different forms subsequently, as displayed in Extract 13. While checking students' comprehension is an indication of assessing learning in the classroom, Mary's frequent use of these checks may create annoyance in the classroom. Specifically, in line 198 in Extract 13, three different comprehensions checks are used one after the other. Also, it was observed that Mary does not wait to hear from students after she uses these checks. Students seemed to remain unresponsive to these comprehension checks as Mary swiftly moves on without giving them a chance to respond. This frequent use of comprehension checks and lack of enough time between these checks and upcoming explanations might potentially be perceived negatively by the students. Additionally, it may indicate that Mary is self-conscious about her teaching and she is making extra effort to make sure that the students are learning the lesson content. In that sense, this overuse might also be interpreted as a positive politeness strategy because it might show that Mary attends to her students' needs and wants.

Another strategy Mary uses in her lectures that might be considered as positive politeness is her consistent use of student names while eliciting responses or responding to student comments or suggestions. Indicating that she attends to her students, Mary's use of names might also be considered as attempts to establish authority in the classroom and monitor and moderate student behavior. In Extract 14 below, Mary's use of the student's name can be considered as positive politeness, whereas it may be alarming for the student in Extract 15 (M=Mary, S=Student):

Extract 14

132: M: Do you remember the rest of it? We have one more term. Anyone
133: remembers the last term of this polynomial?
134: S: B squared?
135: M: B squared. You did it, **Jane**[4] [chuckles]. Thank you. So this is the cube
136: formula, if you remember.

Extract 15

251: M: Okay yeah. This is a square number, it will known as x squared means
252: x times x, right? So that means the same thing. We have this term. This
253: whole thing is one term. That means I'm going to just write this m minus n
254: times m minus n, divided by m plus n, because I couldn't find anything.
255: Are you with me? **Joseph**, do [are] you listening?
256: S: Yeah I'm listening.
257: M: Okay. We have this m here and what about here? Is there a GCF here?
258: **Isaac**, what you think?
259: S: 1 over--
260: M: For this bottom part. Just look for here. Do we have any GCF?

[4] All student names used in Extracts 14 and 15 are pseudonyms.

In line 135 in Extract 14, Mary acknowledges the student's contribution by saying "You did it, Jane!" followed by a "thank you" in the same line. Here, referring to the student by her name can be interpreted as encouraging and as a positive politeness strategy. More specifically, by acknowledging a contribution and recognizing the student through identity markers such as personal names can indicate a sense of approval on the hearer's face, thereby satisfying the positive face needs of the hearer. However, the same strategy can create an opposite impact in another exchange as exemplified in Extract 15. In this exchange, Mary pauses her instructional talk in line 255 in order to ensure that students are listening to her by saying "Are you with me?" "Joseph, do [are] you listening?" by referring to a particular student using his name. Similarly, in line 258, Mary asks a student his opinion about the problem solution using his name. In both of these examples, the use of student names can be alarming for the students and they may feel that they are put on the spot. In other words, their negative face – i.e. the desire to be independent or unimpeded by others – might be threatened as they are expected to respond to the instructor's directions or questions. Therefore, it might be suggested that a strategy might lead to two different outcomes in two different speech situations. In situations where the use of names can create a negative impact on the hearer, more indirect strategies might be used. Mary describes her strategy of using student names in one of the interviews as follows:

> "They, kind of, still students, they're not adults yet [chuckles] but I really try to make them participate. I just call their name sometimes if they don't follow, and it makes them stressful because when they do not answer for every question, I'm just talking to myself, and it's, kind of, a crazy thing. You need to [be] crazy to talk to yourself I guess, right? Because, okay, what is this? Oh, this is this and then they don't answer. They don't follow. I know who is following if you're the

first row of the class, that they're following. But the back row, they don't care, and they're just sometimes like, solve some other assignment online or just following other assignment." (Interview 2, November 2015)

It seems from the above excerpt that knowing student names enables Mary to manage student behavior in class. More specifically, when students seem distracted during class, calling on them by using their names could be a strategy to redirect their attention to class. In so doing, Mary also establishes a sense of authority in class by showing that she knows her students and she is monitoring student behavior and learning. Though not frequently, the classroom observation data also revealed that Mary uses small talk as a strategy of initiating communication with students. In the exchange displayed below in Extract 16, Mary is opening the lesson by inquiring about a test that students had taken prior to class:

Extract 16

2: M: How are you doing? Any problems? How was your test? I just noticed
3: some of you didn't take the first attempt. Is there a specific reason that you
4: didn't take the first attempt? Did anyone not take it the first attempt? Did
5: you take the second attempt, too? How was it? It's good? So far? Okay.
6: Are you satisfied with your grade so far? Everyone?
7: S: No.

As can be seen, Mary initiates communication with basic conversation starter forms in line 2, such as "how are you doing?" and "any problems?" Following this conventional pragmatic routine, she asks multiple questions one after another about a test students had previously taken. This indicates that Mary is willing to discuss exams and grades with students in class. The very short response "No" from a student in line 7 ends this exchange, indicating that students were not willing to talk about the exam and their feelings about their grade. Taking students' unwillingness to talk about grades as sign to move forward, Mary proceeds with the lesson plan of the day and makes an announcement about the class right before the Thanksgiving break, which turns into an interesting negotiation between her and the students, as displayed in Extract 17 below:

Extract 17

M: Okay. So I will just solve the plus question from 6.2 chapter as a reminder, and I will give you some exercises. Then we will jump to 7.1 today. I'm going to talk about the Thanksgiving week. So if we cover 7.1, 7.2, and 7.3 next week, including today, and then we have 7.4 and 8.1 and 8.2 before Thanksgiving - if we cover all of these chapters until 23rd of November - I can cancel the Wednesday class. Do you think it's fair?
S: Mm-hmm.
S: Yes.
M: Do you want this?
S: Yes.
M: Okay, do you--
S: Why can't you cancel on my birthday which is the 25th?
M: I cannot do the birthday. I wish can do this, but there's no way that I can…
S: Just skip that day then do it on Wednesday.
M: It's up to you.
S: No, no.
S: Let's skip Wednesday.
S: Well, it's not my birthday.
S: Let's cancel Wednesday.
M: Okay, I'm saying here, if you'll just participate in the class, and if you solve the problems, like first attempt it's supposed to be, plus I want you to participate in all the questions, and just raise your hands. If try to solve the question, then we can go faster and we can cover the chapters we're supposed to be, and we can just cancel the Wednesday class. But actually we have 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4, and 8.1 and 8.3 to cover in two weeks. Can we do this we think?
S: We can.
M: If we can do this, I just trust you. We can just cancel the Wednesday class, but I want you to try to [?]. You're going to make it right? Okay. I trust you.

In the above exchange, Mary gives the outline of the lesson plan for the day. The negotiation of the Thanksgiving week begins in line 9. This negotiation pertains to whether the class on Wednesday before Thanksgiving will be cancelled or not. Opening up such a topic as a discussion in the class indicates that Mary has gained an awareness of this particular North American holiday and student expectations and plans associated with this week. Therefore, in line 9, she begins her suggestion with a condition that has to be met using an *if* structure in lines 10 and 11. Once the suggestion is made, Mary asks the students a follow-up confirmation question in line 12, meaning that she seeks students' approval about this suggestion. In line 18, Mary receives a rather unexpected request from a student wishing that the class would be cancelled on her birthday which is on Tuesday the same week. In line 19, Mary declines this request by expressing her regret that she cannot cancel class on that particular student's birthday. In line 27, Mary proposes further conditions for her promise of cancelling class, such as participating in class by raising hands, helping solve the problems, and covering the necessary content by that Wednesday. As can be seen, a number of speech acts are being performed by Mary in the same exchange. The exchange started as a suggestion of cancelling the class. Later, Mary requested students to participate in class activities and proposed canceling the class as a promise of a reward. Finally, Mary is asking students to promise that they would participate and help her finish lecture content and problem solutions. This exchange demonstrates how Mary utilizes various speech acts while negotiating with her students. This open communication and negotiation with students indicates a closer distance between Mary and her students, suggesting that Mary is willing to negotiate with her students. Additionally, it might show that Mary is attending to students' face needs and wants thereby conforming to positive politeness strategies.

Perceptions and Beliefs about Appropriateness

Mary's perceptions and beliefs about appropriateness with respect to student behaviors and communication style in the classroom have been primarily shaped by her actual lived experiences in the US. Not knowing much about the American culture or American higher education system prior to coming to the US, Mary felt her first culture shock when she experienced American individualism during her first year. Coming from a culture where she believed everybody is used to sharing and maintains closer relationships, Mary stated that she learned about how Americans want to maintain personal space and how they do not easily let people into that space. She also said she made more friends with other international students during this time. When asked whether her perceptions were the same in the classroom when she is teaching, Mary reported the following in of the interview:

> "It didn't just affect my teaching skills actually, I didn't consider, "Okay, they are kind of cold people, then I need to just stay away from them". I don't think that because I'm not that type of person. I'm kind of a close person. I try to be close with them, even the Americans or international students. I treat them like the same equally. I don't need to touch them, but I sometimes like touch them. So it's my thing. I do not shape my identity based on their culture. I know my culture. I try to respect them of course. Touching is bad- I learned this- but it doesn't affect me too much. I don't take it like too serious thing." (Interview 1, November 2015)

Considering herself to be an approachable, warm-hearted, and close person, Mary had to adjust to the norms of the North American culture. As she stated in the above excerpt, maintaining physical contact while she is communicating was something that is considered inappropriate in the US. Therefore, even though she seemed to be reluctant to change her behavior based on the target culture, she realized that she had to establish new boundaries in which she had to maintain a personal space during her interactions with the students.

Handling student laughs was another challenge Mary had to overcome during her first days of teaching in the US classroom. Feeling that her English skills were already not so good coupled with the fact that she had difficulty pronouncing some field words, she believed that students were laughing at her. Initially taking it too personally and feeling bad about it, Mary later embraced this challenge and tried to learn more from the students. In other words, she embraced what she thought to be her weakness and turned into a learning opportunity for herself to improve her English with the help of her students.

Mary encountered another cross-cultural difference in the American college classroom: student attitudes towards learning. To her, American undergraduate students are generally reluctant to participate in class activities and very casual in their interactions with the instructors. Coming from a culture where participation is respected in the eyes of the teachers, Mary found it difficult to get used to this general student behavior:

> “If I ask them questions, they just say, "Okay, I don't know of it," or they're just, "I don't really care about that." They're honest. If they don't want doing anything, they don't do it. But if you ask me, in my culture, we never say, "Okay, I don't know. I don't care," as the answer if our teacher asks us some question. We just try to kill ourselves to find the answer for that question. But even I ask them a really basic question, but I will help them, then I find they do not follow the class, I try to pick specific people who doesn't follow.” (Interview 1, November 2015)

As can be seen, Mary’s perceptions of appropriate learning behavior in the classroom clashes with what she observes in the US classroom. As demonstrated by the previously described interactional exchanges with her students, Mary seems to apply her own learning and teaching philosophy in the US classroom. More specifically, seeing student participation as a core component of learning, she makes every effort to encourage students to participate in class activities, ask questions, or respond to her questions. For instance, when she feels that students don't seem to follow her, she pauses to ask if everything is alright with them or if someone is experiencing a difficulty or problem. She believes that she has to encourage students, or else they never ask questions. However, it may be argued that her frequent and quick comprehension checks without giving students enough time to process information and ask questions does not seem to always facilitate the participation level she expects from the students. She attributes students' reluctance to participate to the fact that students in her class all come from different majors and they do not know each other well enough to feel safe to participate. In some cases, she had to ask some students to come to her office hours to help them because they would hesitate to ask questions in class.

As demonstrated by the findings, Mary paints the portrait of a novice ITA who is trying to adjust to teaching in a new cultural context, bringing with herself all the assumptions and experiences of learning and teaching from her home culture. As well as negotiating the cross-cultural differences in learning and teaching behaviors, she adopts new norms while rejecting others such as touching, and her perceptions of appropriateness undergo dynamic changes.

Validity and Reliability

The analysis of the qualitative data in this study does not provide internal validity of the claims and interpretations because the qualitative analysis did not adopt a positivist approach, which involves establishing causal relationships among different variables (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Yin, 2003). Rather, the qualitative segment of the study adopted a constructionist qualitative research methodology which posits that each individual under investigation in a study constructs his or her own reality, and the researcher assumes the central role in the inquiry process (Gall, Gall, and Borg, 2003). Therefore, the analysis of the qualitative data in this study provides interpretive validity which relies on the researcher's knowledge, interpretations, and claims (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003; Altheide & Johnson, 1994).

In terms of interpretive validity, the analysis presents a triangulation of multiple data sources. Specifically, the interview data was utilized provided at the interpretation stage in order to compare what was observed in the classroom and what the ITAs believed about classroom communication and American undergraduate students. Additionally, researcher field notes taken during class observations provided contextual information which further facilitated the interpretations of findings. Therefore, this triangulation of data sources, specifically, surveys, classroom observations, field notes, and interviews enabled the researcher to increase trustworthiness and credibility of the interpretations.

The external validity or generalizability of the qualitative data analysis was achieved in two ways. First, the qualitative data were obtained from a focal participant group, thus providing multiple case studies from the same research site with a detailed analysis of the different individual case histories and individual trajectories. Second, the data involved participants' own judgments and perceptions about their communication experiences and these helped the researcher arrive at sound and credible interpretations.

Chapter Summary

In this section, the main constructs of the study, namely CA and WTC profile, speech act and politeness strategy use, and perceptions and beliefs about appropriateness will be summarized in a cross-case analysis fashion. Even though similar findings were found in all four cases, there were also differences between the ITAs in each area.

With respect to CA and WTC profile, of the four ITAs, the self-report data (surveys and interviews) indicated that Kyle seemed to exhibit the highest level of WTC and almost no classroom communication anxiety. This might be attributed to the fact that Kyle had extensive overseas living and working experience. His WTC is at a level where he can make friends with his students and interact with them outside of instructional settings. Similarly, having lived overseas in a western country during his undergraduate education, Marc also reported that he easily adapted to the US culture. However, Marc, Anna and Mary reported that they initially experienced anxiety in the US classroom. The reasons for their anxiety were varied. According to them, it was mainly resulting from the fact that they were a bit apprehensive about speaking English during instruction. For Mary, it was also because she was not used to interacting with people of different nationalities and ethnicities. Additionally, both Mary and Anna stated that they experienced lecture anxiety, meaning that giving lectures in the class made them feel anxious. Similarly, for Marc, giving oral instructions in class was particularly anxiety-inducing. Both Mary and Marc also reported that they had difficulty in classroom management, specifically warning students, managing disruptive behavior in the class. Marc stated that particularly in those situations he would be less willing to initiate communication with students. However, he observed that student questions would encourage him to interact more with the students and he expected students to ask him questions. Based on the classroom observation data, Anna, due to the more informal nature of the lab instructional setting, seemed to engage in more casual conversations with students, indicating that she did not hesitate to interact with students. Similarly, Mary's willingness to communicate with students was evident in her frequent comprehension checks during lectures and responsiveness to student questions.

The pragmatic performance of the ITAs, as revealed by the classroom observation data, also showed similarities and differences. The main similarities were the common speech acts observed in each ITA's discourse. They were checking comprehension, giving instructions, reminding, and acknowledging student contributions. Both Marc and Mary seemed to use comprehension checks frequently. Due to the nature of the chemistry lab setting, Anna was observed to use more reminders and warnings, particularly using imperative forms. Also, she did not use much hedging or redressive politeness strategies. Kyle, on the other hand, exhibited more hedging during his interactions with students. All ITAs were found to employ positive politeness strategies by noticing students in different ways, such as acknowledging or praising their contributions, referring to them by their names, or negotiating with them. The use of student names was found to differ between Kyle and Mary. While Kyle was using student names to establish solidarity and Mary was using them in a more authoritative manner to alert students or to elicit responses from them. Another aspect of ITAs' classroom discourse had to do with the level of casual talk occurring between the ITAs and students. Of the four ITAs, Anna was found to use the most small talk with her students.

Finally, ITAs' perceptions and beliefs about appropriateness in classroom communication were also varied. The major similarity in all four ITAs was that they strive to establish and maintain interpersonal connections with the students in various forms. For instance, Kyle does it by minimizing his power in the classroom and making sure that students are actively involved in communication through constant negotiation and exchange of ideas. He believes that being strict, serious, or authoritative in the class or assuming the traditional teacher role in the classroom does not lead to open and safe communication for the students. In so doing, Kyle believes that he establishes solidarity in the classroom and advocates for soft and hedged language in situations where students negotiate ideas in conflict. As demonstrated by the interactional exchanges, these perceptions and beliefs are also evident in Kyle's own use of language in the classroom.

As for Anna, maintaining interpersonal relationships with students manifests itself in the form of casual talk dispersed into the instructional talk. Even though she believes that she comes from a culture where student-teacher interactions are more formal, she seems to have developed a different perception of appropriateness in the US classroom. This shows that Anna is able to understand and adopt cross-cultural differences in communication. Additionally, she appreciates the linguistic feedback that comes from the students in the form of pronunciation corrections or vocabulary choice – even colloquial language. She does not feel offended when such feedback is preceded by student laughs at Anna's language use, and she takes this as a learning opportunity to improve her English.

Teaching a relatively larger class that the other ITAs, Marc does not have as many opportunities to build closer interpersonal relationships with the students. He believes that managing student behavior in the class such as arriving to class late, using electronic devices, talking, and taking attendance, is not something he is comfortable doing at the college level. He feels that students must be responsible for their own behavior, and they are the ones who need to need to decide how to behave as they are adults. Therefore, he usually avoids managing disruptive type of behavior in the class.

Finally, Mary's perceptions and beliefs about appropriateness with respect to maintaining interpersonal relationships with students changed once she was introduced to the American individualism. As she indicated in the interviews, touching students during interactions, which Mary believed to be appropriate in her culture was a personal space rule in the US classroom. Therefore, she adopted this new norm in the US classroom. Another aspect of classroom communication Mary had difficulty in adjusting to was the level of student participation in class activities. Coming from an educational culture where students compete with each other to answer the questions asked by the teacher, Mary found US undergrad students to be less willing to participate. Her use of frequent comprehension checks might indicate her efforts to engage students in active participation.

In a nutshell, the detailed analysis of the four ITAs from different disciplines based on multiple data sources such as surveys, interviews, and classroom observations enhances our understanding of L2 communication in instructional settings. Firstly, individual differences such as CA and WTC among discourse participants might be linked to the observed linguistic performances of L2 users. Specifically, while ITAs as advanced English users may experience high anxiety and low willingness to communicate during their initial stages of teaching, they might become more comfortable and relaxed in the US classroom as they gain more experience and understand the norms and practices of US classroom context. Initial adjustment and gradual acceptance of discourse characteristics of the new instructional setting and authentic encounters with undergraduate students on a daily basis may gradually help ITAs develop their L2PC. Secondly, with respect to L2 speech act performance, the situational context of communication appears to determine if a speech act poses a threat to a discourse participant, what is appropriate or inappropriate to say in the classroom, and whether politeness strategies are needed to redress a speech act. With respect to the situational context, the number of participants in the classroom also seems to have an effect on the communication styles and exchanges between ITAs with undergraduate students. Finally, perceptions and beliefs about cross-cultural differences in the roles of participants (e.g. teacher centered versus student-centered) in the classroom determine the particular practices of ITAs in the classroom such as managing student behavior or encouraging participation.

CHAPTER SIX:

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the findings of the quantitative and qualitative data are discussed in a merged fashion, meaning that the discussion aims to find out how the qualitative data help explain the quantitative findings. In other words, the purpose of this chapter is to show whether the qualitative findings are related to the quantitative findings. In order to do that, a ‘side-by-side comparison for merged data’ (Creswell & Clark, 2011) approach was utilized. According to this approach, the quantitative and qualitative findings are presented together and compared. In addition, findings will be discussed in relation to previous research. Finally, the research questions of the study will be answered based on the compared findings in both data sets. The chapter will also include a discussion of the limitations of the study and conclude with implications related to ITA research and training.

Merging the Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

The purpose of this explanatory two-phase sequential mixed-methods study was to investigate the factors related to the ITAs’ L2PC in the US classroom. In order to answer RQ1 ‘What are the underlying dimensions of ITAs’ individual differences with respect to CA and WTC in the US classroom?’ survey data (CCAS and WTCS) were used. The EFA conducted on the CCAS revealed six factors which explained 65.68% of the variance in ITA’s classroom communication anxiety. The EFA conducted on the WTCS revealed two factors and accounted for the 57.75% of the variance in ITAs' willingness to communicate in the US classroom. In what follows, the factors that emerged from the EFAs will be discussed in comparison to the four ITAs described in the qualitative analysis.

The CCAS factors were (CCAS-F1) 'Ease of communication,' (CCAS-F2) 'Self-talk anxiety,' (CCAS-F3) 'Fear of warning,' (CCAS-F4) 'Classroom management anxiety,' (CCAS-F5) 'Efficacy in Discussion Leading,' and (CCAS-F6) 'Lecture anxiety.' As can be seen, CCAS-F1 and CCAS-F6 are factors that indicate classroom situations in which ITAs are generally comfortable performing various speech acts such as responding to student questions, asking for clarification, encouraging students to participate in class discussions. The fact that these items are positively labeled is largely due to the positively worded items in the questionnaire. Since these items loaded positively onto this particular factor, the factor label also had to be named positively. Overall, the emergence of these factors, though they do not indicate anxiety, still reveals an underlying dimension of classroom communication where ITAs feel at ease or experience little or no anxiety. The remaining factors, on the other hand, indicate specific communication areas in which ITAs experience more anxiety in performing classroom speech acts.

The CCAS factors were also observed in the qualitative analysis of the four ITAs at varying levels. For instance, 'Ease of communication' which refers to the feeling of comfort to respond to students, disagreeing with them, or asking for clarification was evident in Kyle's L2 pragmatic performance in the class. As described in Chapter five, Kyle seemed to be able manage conflicts in the classroom with high efficacy in discussion leading, promote open communication with his students by minimizing his power as the instructor. Similarly, Anna's display of casual talk with her students in the lab as well as her active presence and availability to answer student questions and guide them during experiments also demonstrates ease of communication with students. Additionally, Marc's ease of communication with students was evident in his efforts to check comprehension. Similarly, Mary's use of constant comprehension checks also demonstrated her ease of communication with students along with her attempts to encourage students to participate in problem-solving exercises. As these findings indicate, it can be concluded that ITAs feel more at ease when they communicate with students to provide feedback, answer questions, or engage students in class activities. With respect to 'Fear of warning' Marc seemed to be less reluctant to warn students about arriving to class late or disruptive behavior in the class. His reluctance was partly because of his belief that undergraduate students are adults and they must be responsible for their own learning. Mary, on the other hand, was very comfortable to warn students when distractions occurred and she specifically called on students to manage disruptive behavior. 'Classroom management anxiety' was a factor that manifested itself differently in four cases. While Kyle seemed to be able to manage student turns during discussions well, Marc was mainly hesitant to control disruptive behavior. Marc reported that distractions caused by students negatively affected him during his lectures and he believed that he was not respected. Anna's use of the imperative language forms in the lab environment in the class demonstrated authority and ability to manage student behavior. As indicated before, Mary's strategy to call on students by using their names also indicated comfort in managing students in the class. The last factor from the CCAS that was also observed in the qualitative case analyses was 'Lecture anxiety.' For Anna, giving lectures in the classroom was more anxiety-inducing because she believed that lectures required one to be more serious and professional. Additionally, the number of students in a lecture is usually higher than in a lab. This finding supports Myer's (1994) conclusion that lab teaching is considered to be less overwhelming for ITAs than regular class teaching. Similarly, Mary's anxiety about introducing herself to students on the first day of class as well as giving lectures also reflects the 'Self-talk anxiety' and 'Lecture anxiety.' This finding supports MacIntyre and Thivierge (1995) in that audience pleasantness and familiarity can have an impact of one's public speaking anxiety, given that lecturing is a form of public speaking performed in front of a group of students. As reported by Mary, her anxiety on the first day of class was largely due to having to teach a diverse group of students in a new environment. Therefore, it might be difficult for ITAs to perform teaching duties in their English L2 due to uncertainty, unfamiliarity and ambiguity factors in the new environment. In addition to these factors, as Mary, Anna, and Marc indicated, speaking English as an L2 might have also been anxiety-inducing in the classroom. As Yook (1999) suggested, this might be due to the fear of judgment about language use such as pronunciation or accent by the American undergraduate students. In this vein, findings from both Anna and Mary indicated that student laughs and jokes about language might have contributed to this fear of judgement or evaluation.

In response to RQ1, the underlying dimensions of ITAs' willingness to communicate in the classroom as demonstrated by the quantitative findings were also supported by the qualitative case analyses. The two factors identified in the WTCS were 'Willingness to interact with students,' and 'Reluctance in teacher-fronted talk.' It is interesting to note here that the emergence of 'Reluctance in teacher-fronted talk' validates the 'Self-talk' and 'Lecture anxiety' factors from the CCAS. More specifically, if an ITA experiences anxiety in performing language functions in front of a group of people, they will be less likely to initiate communication. As the qualitative analysis indicate, all four ITAs are highly willing to interact with students in the classroom. More specifically, they are relaxed and comfortable giving suggestions and feedback to students, requiring students to submit their work on time, and asking for clarification when needed. Willingness to interact with students was observed to be at different levels among the four participants. For example, Kyle was more inclined to interact with students in the class due to the nature of the class he was teaching. Specifically, his classes were more open to discussion and student participation and opinion sharing. Therefore, as Kyle also indicated, he was able to establish solidarity in the classroom so much so that he also connected with his students outside the classroom setting. As evidenced by Kyle's background, his extensive overseas education and work experience might have been contributed to his current level of WTC in the US. This finding lends support to McCroskey and Richmond (1991) who purported that previous experiences in social situations can influence one's WTC. Marc' perception of inadequacy about discourse organization, specifically in his own words "organizing the conversation, so making the conversation more logic, more clear to students" indicates that perceived competence in linguistic areas might have an effect on WTC (MacIntyre et al., 1998). Even though Marc, like Kyle, had studied overseas, his WTC seemed to be relatively lower than Kyle's. This might be due to the different disciplines Kyle and Marc were teaching in. In the sociology field, verbal communication skills in debating, exchange of ideas, disagreeing etc. could be more emphasized than they would be in the finance field as the content in finance is more definite and less arguable. In addition, classroom communication in the finance class focuses on problem-solving. Marc's avoidance of warning or displaying less contact with the students could be because of the nature of the discipline area and the teacher-fronted nature of the finance classes. Anna, on the other hand, seemed to be very willing to interact with students in the lab for both instructional and interactional purposes. The instructional WTC was evident in her efforts to help students with experiments, the warnings about equipment use and experiment execution. Anna's use of language functions in her instructional talk, such as giving instructions, reminders, responding to student questions and warning are in line with previous research (Axelson & Madden, 1994). Her interactional WTC was in the form of casual talk with students, sometimes embedded in instructional talk. Similarly, attempts to engage in personal talk with students was also observed in Mary's classes, indicating that she attempted to establish rapport with her students.

With respect to RQ2 'How much of the variance in ITAs' L2PC in the US classroom can be accounted for by the dimensions of communication anxiety and willingness to communicate as well as other factors such as linguistic proficiency and length of residence in the US?' a multiple regression analysis with six predictors (linguistic competence, length of residence, ease of communication, fear of warning, classroom management anxiety, and willingness to interact with students) was performed to understand the factors contributing to ITAs' L2PC. The model accounted for 26.4% of the variance, with linguistic competence, as demonstrated by the TOEFL iBT scores, being the most important factor contributing to the predictability of ITAs' L2PC in the classroom followed by fear of warning, willingness to interact with students, ease of communication, length of residence, and classroom management anxiety. This finding indicates that even though the mastery of grammar and lexis in an L2 does not guarantee successful communication in L2 (Bardovi-Harlig, 1999; Kasper & Schmidt, 1996), it is one of the important factors that explains or predicts L2PC in ITAs. Additionally, linguistic proficiency positively correlated with ease of communication, which indicates that mastery of linguistic forms and functions can facilitate communication. These results support previous research. As indicated in previous studies, linguistic proficiency facilitates the comprehension of pragmalinguistic forms and implicatures (Taguchi, 2002). Furthermore, as noted in Chapter two, general L2 proficiency measured on the Institutional Testing Program TOEFL was found to significantly correlate to speed of lexical judgment and pragmatic comprehension ability and accuracy (Taguchi, 2007). Similarly, both length of residence and overall L2 proficiency as measured by TOEFL scores were found to influence L2 pragmatics significantly with overall L2 proficiency demonstrating a stronger influence (Xu, Case, & Wang, 2009). As can be seen, as well as linguistic proficiency, length of residence as an external factor also seems to contribute to ITAs' L2PC. This might be due to the facilitative effects of immersion or exposure to the L2 community in L2 users' comprehension and awareness of pragmalinguistic forms (Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998).

As can be seen from the results, none of the predictors strongly correlated to L2PC. However, when they are placed in a regression model, among all of the individual differences, linguistic competence was the first predictor contributing to L2PC. More specifically, even if linguistic competence does not explain much of the variance in L2PC, it precedes other individual differences such as communication anxiety and willingness to communicate. However, it should be noted that these findings are limited to the specific variables included in the regression model. The results may vary in different regression models with different predictor variables.

The findings of the regression analysis with reference to the R square value will be further discussed. It is a general tendency in social science research that the higher the value for the R square, the more variance is explained. As the findings of the multiple regression analysis showed, the six-predictor model created in this study accounted for 26.4% of the variance. It might be argued that, since the percentage for the variance explained is low, the proposed model for explaining ITAs' L2PC is weak. In previous studies utilizing multiple regression, the variance explained by the models proposed have been varied. For instance, Tóth (2007) accounted for 64% of the variance of first year English majors' anxiety level by six variables namely, proficiency level, FL aptitude, strength of motivation, L2-selfconcept, competitiveness, and perfectionism. Matsuda and Gobel (2004) found that low self-confidence in English accounted for 14% of the variance in first-year Japanese university students' classroom performance whereas in another class of first year students, low self-confidence accounted for only 11% of the variance in class performance. Onwuegbuzie et al. (1997) accounted for 43.5% of the variance in foreign language anxiety of college students with a combination of fourteen variables in a regression model. These variables were gender, age, academic achievement, semester course load, prior history of visiting foreign countries, prior high school experience with foreign languages, expected overall average for current language course, perceived intellectual ability, perceived scholastic competence, perceived appearance, perceived self-worth, cooperativeness, value placed on competitive learning, and academic locus of control. Chen and Chang (2004) accounted for 36.8% of the variance in foreign language anxiety of college students learning English as a foreign language in Taiwan by English learning difficulties operationalized as language learning history, in classroom learning characteristics, and developmental difficulties in learning. As these findings indicate the specific populations and the number and nature of predictors may have an impact on how much variance is explained in multiple regression designs. In this vein, as emphasized by Baguley (2009), in studies that focus on human psychology and theories, explaining 100% of the variance is not a realistic goal. Additionally, Fichman (1999) argues that "it is not necessarily the case that explaining a great deal of variance is testimony to good theory" (p. 16). In addition, factors affecting human psychology are multifaceted (O'Grady, 1982), and the attribution of a phenomenon to a number of variables is difficult. As such, since pragmatic competence is also multifaceted construct that consists of several cognitive, linguistic, and social aspects, it is difficult to predict the factors affecting it. Therefore, as Keith (2015) argues, “a high R square value is not the most important criterion if we are conducting regression for the purposes of explanation” (p.71). That is to say, if the aim is not to predict but to explain the factors contributing to a construct, the magnitude of the R square is not of much importance. As can be seen from the two-phase explanatory mixed-methods research design used in the present study, the predictors or explanatory variables proposed in the regression model are factors that contribute to L2PC. That being said, according to Cohen’s (1988) values of effect size, R square value of 26.4% indicate a medium to large effect size, suggesting that the variables in the regression model have a good predictive power. Therefore, they contribute to our understanding of L2PC and help us explain the complex factors contributing to L2PC.

The cross-case analysis of the four ITAs shed light on the findings of the regression analysis discussed above. For instance, Kyle’s residence in a number of European cities and the UK may have contributed to his development of L2 pragmatics. In other words, extensive exposure to an L2 as a result of residence in English speaking countries can contribute to pragmatic awareness and development. Additionally, having been exposed to other cultures than English may also increase an individual’s pragmatic awareness through cross-cultural comparisons. Kyle’s ease of communication with the US students and establishing more personal relationships with them also indicates that he has favorable attitudes towards the members of the L2 community. Similarly, the fact that Marc also received his undergraduate education in the Netherlands may have helped him develop an understanding of the western higher education system, and therefore allowed him to easily transition into the US system at the initial stages of his teaching. However, not having any overseas experience before, Anna stated that she at first found it harder to get accustomed to interacting with the students. However, she later observed that the classroom setting was more open than what she was used to before, meaning that students were more casual and active during their interactions with the instructor. Despite this initial adjustment difficulty, Anna also adopted the sociopragmatic norms of the US classroom and engaged in open communication with her students including casual or interpersonal talk. In the case of Mary, American individualism was difficult to understand and process at first. She reported that her communication style was originally more intimate and less distant with the students prior to coming to the US. However, based on her experiences of interactions in the university context, she realized that there is a perceived personal space between the participants of a communicative act. Therefore, she had to adjust herself accordingly by adopting this particular North American social rule of maintaining personal space and avoiding physical contact with the students. These findings indicate that the development of L2PC, as suggested by Cook and Liddicoat (2002), requires one to be able to notice the differences in sociopragmatic norms between L1 and L2 cultures.

Classroom management anxiety and fear of warning as factors contributing to ITAs' L2PC were found to be supported by the qualitative data. Specifically, Marc's tendency to avoid warning students in situations where a student's behavior in the classroom is causing distraction for him or other students might indicate fear of warning. As a speech act, warning poses a threat to hearers' negative face – their desire to be independent or unimpeded by others – and therefore is a face-threatening act. As noted in the previous literature, the causes of avoidance in L2 pragmatics are varied. In Marc's case it appears that it is largely due to his beliefs about classroom communication with students. As he indicated in the interviews, he does not believe in warning students to control their behavior because, to him, students are adults and they should be able to decide how to behave in the classroom. Additionally, the size of his class might also contribute to his decision to avoid warning. Teaching a class of 50-75 students, Marc may not feel comfortable engaging in interactions with his students related to classroom behavior. As opposed to Marc, Anna's communications with students in the chemistry lab where she teaches 12-14 students indicate that she is very comfortable warning students due to the nature of the activities performed in this setting as demonstrated be her use of direct imperatives in her instructional talk, reminders about lab equipment or experimental procedures. Additionally, Mary's efforts to increase student participation and lack of hesitation to warn students when they are not participating seem to be resulting from her previous learning and teaching experiences in her L1 culture. She believes that students must actively participate in class activities. These findings indicate that linguistic choices, avoidance or use of particular speech functions are largely dependent on the contextual circumstances of the speech communication as well as the personal communication style and/or cultural orientations to communication (McCroskey & Richmond, 1990).

In order to answer RQ3 'What do ITAs' observed interactions with undergraduate students in the classroom context reveal about the relationship between CA and WTC and L2PC as demonstrated by the use of speech acts and politeness strategies?' the findings of the qualitative cases were interpreted. In this section, the qualitative findings will discussed in comparison to the quantitative results. As shown by the findings of the quantitative regression analysis, linguistic proficiency is an important factor contributing to L2PC. The qualitative findings offer a number of examples that support this finding. For instance, Kyle's use of hedging and pragmatic markers as in "Well, I wouldn't say that…" to save hearers' positive face when sharing his opinion indicates a good command of the use of pragmalinguistic forms.

However, this finding needs to be interpreted with caution. Kyle's advanced pragmatic competence may also be related to the disciplinary nature of the field of sociology. More specifically, Kyle's classes were more open to discussion and opinion-sharing than other ITAs' classes. In addition to the disciplinary teaching styles, the context of language use, the topic of conversation, and the purpose of communication seem to affect the use of language forms and perceived appropriateness of those forms by the hearers. For instance, 'Fear of warning' which emerged as a communication anxiety factor in the quantitative findings does not appear to hold true in the chemistry lab environment. More specifically, Anna's use of direct imperatives without any redressive politeness strategies during instructional talk to warn or remind students about the possible negative consequences of wrong actions indicates lack of fear of warning. However, as shown in Marc's case, in classes with a large number of students, warning was seen as face-threatening for the speaker and was avoided. These findings indicate how the situational context of communication determines whether or not a particular speech act may pose a threat to a hearer or speaker. Another point of discussion is that ease of communication – i.e. reduced or lack of communication anxiety – increases willingness to interact with students. A major finding that supports this claim is the casual talk that Anna seemed to engage in with her students in the lab. Most casual talk observed in Anna's interactions with students involved humor or exchange of banter. In addition to Anna, Mary also exhibited instances of such interpersonal talk during a negotiation of a class meeting during Thanksgiving break. These findings lend support to previous research in that situational context of a speech event, the power/distance relationships between the interlocutors, and intra-individual variables such as linguistic proficiency can determine varying levels of L2PC (Billmyer & Vargehese, 2000; Felix-Brasdefer, 2002).

Finally, RQ4 ‘What do ITAs’ self-reported perceptions or beliefs about their interactions with students in the US classroom reveal about the relationship between CA and WTC and L2PC?’ will be discussed in relation to the quantitative findings. As described in Chapter five, ITAs’ bring their own beliefs about teaching and communication into the US classroom. As findings indicated, most of these beliefs and perceptions are shaped by non-linguistic factors such as L1 cultural assumptions, social norms and practices in the L1 educational system, and pedagogical perspectives. For instance, Kyle’s efforts to establish solidarity in the class might be attributed to his background in journalism, media, and sociology. Therefore, Kyle strives to create an open environment for his students to discuss controversial topics in the class even at times when some students do not feel comfortable about doing that. Minimizing the power/distance differential in class might lead to an increase in his willingness to communicate with students and more ease of communication. More ease of communication may have facilitated more comfort and confidence in speaking and moderating class discussions especially when there are conflicts between students. As Williams (2011) noted, experience and confidence in teaching may help ITAs become more willing to negotiate with their students. During these conflicts, Kyle’s perceptions of appropriateness in communication seem to guide how he handles these conflicts. Specifically, he highlights being constructive in class discussions and advises students to use ‘better language’ meaning that ideas must be expressed in mitigated or soft ways. As for Anna who instantly perceived cross-cultural differences between the Chinese and American higher education systems as soon as she started teaching in the lab, it was a challenge for her to negotiate between ‘respect for teachers’ which was highly emphasized in the Asian educational culture and the ‘liberal’ or ‘open learning’ environment of the US university context. Specifically, Anna believes that respect is shown by listening to the lectures, taking notes, and not talking during class. However, seeing the open learning environment of the US college classroom where students freely share their opinions, ask questions and actively participate in discussions, Anna embraced this norm and she also engaged in casual talk with students, even though she reported that she initially had difficulty in understanding and accepting it. The informal learning environment of the lab might have contributed to increasing Anna's willingness to communicate with them for both instructional and personal purposes. As much as interacting with students and even sometimes joking with them, Anna also believed in being strict and serious in the lab environment and developing her teacher presence due to safety concerns. As shown by the direct imperatives she uses to warn and remind students about experimental procedures, Anna does not fear warning students. Therefore, it could be suggested that fear of warning, though it could be a face-threatening act in a different context, may not apply to certain contexts and may not always be perceived as negatively by the hearers. Additionally, warning appears to be an integral discourse category in the lab environment (Axelson & Madden, 1994). Unlike Anna, Marc does not believe in warning students to manage their behaviors in the classroom (e.g. making sure that they arrive to class on time). This is largely due to the fact that Marc fears offending students in the class by putting them on the spot. Therefore, he resorts to more indirect ways of interrupting students such as asking "Do you have any questions?" Additionally, moderating student behavior in a large class may not always be manageable, and this may be why Marc could be avoiding it. Also, the content-heavy and receptive nature of the finance class may limit opportunities for teacher-student interactions. For Mary, on the other hand, classroom management was a point of concern in her classes. She also experienced cross-cultural differences in how students behaved in class. For instance, when she directed questions towards students, getting responses such as "I don't know" or "I don't care" was perceived as inappropriate by her because in her home culture, and students always try to do their best to answer teachers' questions. In addition, her attempts to elicit answers from students might be due to her belief that learning requires active participation. Therefore, it could be suggested that pedagogical beliefs can determine interactions and teaching practice.

In conclusion, this merged/converged discussion will end with further points of discussion related to ITAs' L2PC and the relevant factors affecting it. As can be seen from the findings of both quantitative and qualitative data, L2PC is a multi-faceted construct and there are several variables surrounding and affecting it. As noted by Buehl and Fives (2009), it seems that these variables can be grouped into three main categories, specifically, prior educational experiences, L1 cultural background, and individual differences and interaction styles. Individual differences encapsulate psychological constructs such as communication anxiety and willingness to communicate, as well as linguistic proficiency and exposure to L2 culture. As addressed by RQ1, one of the unique contributions of the present study is the exploration of the underlying dimensions of ITAs' communication anxiety and willingness to communicate in the classroom. In addition, with RQ2, the study accounted for how these psychological dimensions of communication as well as intra-individual differences such as linguistic proficiency explained variance in ITA's L2PC. In order to build upon the quantitative findings, by addressing RQ3 the study provided an analysis of how naturally occurring interactions between ITAs and students helped explain the complex relationships between L2PC and aforementioned individual differences. Finally, by analyzing ITAs' point of view through their beliefs and perceptions of appropriateness in the classroom, relationships between L2PC and individual differences were further established. With this mixed-methods approach to the analysis of ITAs in North American higher education contexts, this study offers a number of implications for ITA research and training, which will be discussed in the remainder of this chapter. However, as in every study, this study is not one without limitations. Therefore, before the implications, a number of limitations are addressed in the following section.

Limitations of the Study

In this section a number of limitations with respect to the methodological aspects of this study will be addressed. Additionally, a number of unforeseen issues that influenced data collection procedures and the resulting revisions in these procedures will be described and discussed.

One limitation pertains to the variables that were uncontrolled in the study. Among these variables were gender, age, the country of origin of the ITAs, discipline of study, prior teaching experience, completion of TA training, and length of residence in countries other than the US. Even though some of these variables were descriptively analyzed in Chapter four, such as country of origin and discipline of study, and TA experience, they remained uncontrolled in the regression analysis.

The qualitative findings were limited to the particular demographics of the four ITAs who participated in the study, specifically, gender, age, nationality, and discipline of study. More participants from other fields of study and nationalities could have contributed to the interpretations of the findings. For instance, even though the four ITAs represented different disciplines, only one ITA (Anna) was from a chemistry lab and the interpretations from this particular instructional setting was only limited to one ITA. Similarly, only one ITA from sociology (Kyle) represented this particular disciplinary setting in which classroom interactions are mainly focused on discussions. Therefore, having more participants from these and other disciplines could strengthen the interpretations of the study. That being said, providing a comparative analysis of four different disciplinary settings in which ITAs interacted with students is one of the unique contributions of the present study. As findings of this study indicated, the style of classroom interactions in different disciplines appear to exhibit unique discourse-pragmatic features. Additionally, pragmatic notions such as face, (in)directness, (in)appropriateness and (im)politeness seem to be reconstructed in different situational contexts informed by the particular disciplinary norms of communication and as well as classroom contexts.

During the data collection process, a number of obstacles were encountered. The first limitation had to do with the distribution of the survey link. As stated in the data collection procedures section of Chapter three, in order to reach out to potential participants and maximize participation in the study, a number of gatekeepers such as department chairs, program coordinators, and ITA training program directors were contacted. Even though several individuals showed willingness to cooperate and share the survey link with the ITAs in their departments, some showed hesitation or unwillingness to do so. In addition to obtaining informed consent forms from the four ITAs who participated in the qualitative part of the study, the researcher also had to obtain informal approval of the program coordinators for ITAs' participation in the study. Except for Marc, three ITAs had to ask their program directors for their permission to be able to participate in the study. Therefore, the researcher had to contact the program coordinators and inform them about the study purpose and procedures in order to obtain their approval. No response was received from several other program coordinators contacted which caused limitations about the sample size.

Additionally, in the proposal stage of the study, the classroom sessions were originally going to be video-recorded. The rationale behind this decision was to have the opportunity to analyze any non-linguistic factors that might help interpret the linguistic observations. However, due to the concerns raised by some department coordinators, an amendment was submitted to the IRB and video-recording was changed to audio-recording. In so doing, the opportunity to analyze the potential non-verbal language or gestures that might have been helpful in the interpretations of the interactions between ITAs and students was lost. Another concern raised by a department chair was the necessity to obtain informed consent from the students during observations. Even though the ITAs informally notified their students of the research procedures, specifically that the researcher will attend and audio-record the class, per IRB advice, no official informed consent procedures were necessary because students were not the main participants of the study. Additionally, following informed consent procedures for the students could have influenced the participation dynamics in the classroom. These particular experiences indicated the mismatches between institutionally approved study procedures and the perceptions of gatekeepers whose approval is necessary for recruiting participants in a study. Therefore, in this study, participant recruitment was particularly difficult and the sample consisted only of those who were granted permission to take part in the study by their program administrators.

There were other issues regarding classroom observations. For instance, due to the time constraints of the research and the difficulty in determining a suitable class session to observe, classroom observations were limited to two sessions per ITA. Even though two class sessions provided enough data to gain a general understanding of the interactional patterns between the ITAs and students, the interactions observed may have been conditioned by the topics discussed in the class or the day and time of the class. For instance, both of Mary's math classes were observed on a Friday afternoon, a time when undergraduate students may be less willing to participate and look forward to the end of class. Another challenge was the observations conducted in Anna's chemistry labs. Due to the nature of the chemistry lab setting in which the lab TAs are very active and vigilant, audio-recording procedures proved to be difficult. For instance, the researcher recorded the first session sitting close to the exit door in order to protect himself from the chemicals. Also, he was not allowed to be close to the fume hoods due to safety concerns. However, recording from a distance did not result in good quality audio data. Therefore, Anna was asked to carry the digital recorder with her. She had to put the recorder in her lab coat pocket not only because students might have been apprehensive about being recorded if they saw the recorder but also to be able to help them during their experiments and carrying a voice recorder in her hand was not the ideal choice. Due to the constant touring in the lab to help the students as well as the noise caused by the experiments tools, it was difficult to decipher what was being said in some exchanges in the audio data. That being said, as can be seen from the analyses, several interactional exchanges were comprehensible enough to be analyzed and interpreted.

The procedures followed in the rating of the discourse completion tests also bore some limitations. First of all, all raters were native English speaking undergraduate students studying at the main research site university. As discussed by Taguchi (2011b), variation even among native speakers when it comes to judging the appropriateness of an utterance raises a concern in the scoring of the ITAs' responses to the situations in the test. More precisely, as ratings might show variation from one individual to another and therefore, the production competence scores elicited from ratings for ITAs might also show variation. That being said, the interrater reliability or the similarity in the raters' scores increases the reliability of this methodological procedure in operationalizing ITAs' elicited pragmatic production competence. Additionally, having only native English speakers as raters might raise concerns regarding the so-called 'native speaker bias' in SLA research. Specifically, using only native speaker judgments of appropriateness in interlanguage pragmatics is usually considered problematic (Kasper & Schmidt, 1996). However, recruiting undergraduate students for the rating of the DCT increased the validity of the rating procedures because the audience that judges ITAs' responses in the classroom setting are indeed undergraduate students. This particular methodological direction that was suggested at the proposal stage of the study actually strengthened the analysis of the DCT data.

Finally, the last limitation of the study is related to elicited data from the surveys and pragmatic tests. One issue was the length of the online survey which took approximately 30-45 minutes to complete. The pragmatic tests, especially the discourse completion test as it required written language production, may have required additional cognitive efforts and participants may have experienced cognitive fatigue and provided responses just to be able to finish the survey. As indicated by the response rate in Chapter four, a large number of respondents did not complete the survey. Additionally, there may have been a biased sampling due to the incentive offered for participation – i.e. gift card drawing. Specifically, the sample may have mainly included those participants who wished to win a gift card and others who had no desire to win one may have opted out. In addition, some items in the surveys and pragmatic tests may not have been applicable to some as they may have never been in those situations. That being said, it should be noted that the purpose of surveys and proficiency or competence measuring tests is to elicit data from situations where respondents might experience. Therefore, the responses that they give to survey items or pragmatic tests can mirror real-life performance. In fact, this was precisely why this study adopted a mixed-methods design.

As the merged analysis of the findings of both quantitative and qualitative data indicated, there were interesting connections between the two datasets which strengthen the interpretations of the findings in a triangulated fashion. More specifically, mixing methods afforded comparisons between the larger population of ITAs and the focal group of ITAs. For instance, lecture anxiety which emerged as a communication anxiety factor in the quantitative analysis was also confirmed in the qualitative analysis. Specifically, as reported by Anna, her lecture anxiety was particularly induced by the degree of formality of this particular instructional setting. In Marc's case it was largely dependent on the size of the class. That being said, classroom management anxiety factor which emerged in the quantitative analysis was not a valid factor in Kyle's case. This might be attributed to his advanced L2PC as result of the impact of the nature of his disciplinary background in journalism and sociology as well as his extensive overseas experiences. As these examples of data convergence or connections indicate, mixed-methods research affords more reliable data interpretations.

Implications for Future Research and ITA Training

In the last section of this dissertation, the concluding remarks will be made in the form of directions for future research based on the findings and interpretations of the present study. Additionally, informed by the major findings of this study, implications for ITA training will also be discussed. Examined from both quantitative and qualitative perspectives, the elicited and natural data interpreted in this study offered valuable insights about the factors contributing to ITAs' classroom L2PC. The study only included measurement and description of ITAs' L2PC, but also incorporated ITAs' own beliefs and perceptions into the analyses. In so doing, the quantitative findings were situated in particular qualitative case analyses, thereby strengthening the interpretations of findings drawn from multiple data sources. In other words, this mixed-method approach provided a comprehensive and integrated analysis of ITAs' individual differences and communication experiences in their L2 English with undergraduate students in the US context.

The scope of this study with respect to explaining the contributing factors to L2PC was limited to only six factors as described and discussed earlier. Even though the study enhances our understanding of the relationship between two specific individual differences (communication anxiety and willingness to communicate), linguistic competence, L2 residence and L2PC, there is still 73.6% of the variance that remains unexplained. Since pragmatic competence is an unwieldy construct, it is likely that there are potentially other variables affecting it, such as personality, L1 culture, prior teaching experiences, previous language learning experiences and other demographic variables such as age and gender. Therefore, future research is necessary to further explore the interface between L2PC and these variables.

Taking a comparative approach, future research could also explore the pragmatic competence of both ITAs and American TAs (USTAs) through contrastive analysis. The purpose of such a research effort should not be to implicate a baseline for ITAs to conform to. Rather, such research can enhance our understanding of the application of appropriateness, (in)directness, and (im)politeness notions in the interactions of L1 English speaker TAs and undergraduate students. Additionally, it would be interesting to see how undergraduate students rate the responses of US TAs to the DCT items and whether or not there are significant differences between ITAs and USTAs.

Due to the limitations in the scope of this study, undergraduate student perspectives were not the focus of analysis in the authentic data. A future research project that focuses on the interaction patterns of undergraduate students with ITAs and USTAs can inform us about the possible differences between intercultural as well as ‘intracultural’ communication. More specifically, observing the interactions of undergraduate students with USTAs (intracultural) versus their interactions with ITAs (intercultural) can enhance our understanding of how discourse pragmatic strategies are being used by two groups of teaching assistants. As indicated by the findings of the present and previous research, as much as ITAs have difficulty adjusting to the US classroom setting, we can learn more about how undergraduate students feel about their interactions with ITAs as well as USTAs. Additionally, such research can also show us whether the underlying dimensions of CA and WTC are the same or different for USTAs.

As discussed in the limitations sections earlier, the present study did not utilize video-recorded due to the ethical concerns raised by some departments during the data collection process. Inclusion of video-recorded data in a future study can provide an opportunity to analyze non-verbal language use in class interactions, gestures, and physical conditions of the communication environment. The integration of such non-linguistic factors into the analysis of pragmatic performance may provide better insights about language use, interaction, implicatures, and politeness strategies. Additionally, we may learn more about how feelings are conveyed through non-verbal language or whether non-verbal language can help explain communication anxiety or willingness to communicate as they relate to pragmatic behavior.

Finally, as the findings of this study showed, interaction patterns were quite different in different instructional settings. For instance, the interactions between a science lab ITA and a regular classroom ITA revealed different patterns of language, pragmatic functions and norms. In a social science class like sociology, classroom management appeared to be an important skill to develop due to the nature of the topics discussed and the discussion format. Among the particular discourse pragmatic functions were facilitating student turn-taking, disagreeing, giving suggestions and advice and sharing opinions. However, interactions in the lab environments tended to be more casual and mainly included question-answer exchanges. Due to the flexible learning environment where students work in groups, they were able to initiate small talk with each other and the ITA. Additionally, most interactional exchanges were limited in the lecture-based finance class. As suggested by Rounds (1987), each academic discipline has its own pedagogical and discipline-specific discourse and language use. Therefore, the findings of the present study call for future research to investigate disciplinary language use in the classroom as informed by the particular contextual and situational characteristics of each disciplinary instructional setting. More specifically, questions such as “What types of discourse pragmatic functions commonly occur in the interactions between ITAs and students in different academic disciplines and classroom contexts (e.g. science lab, discussion)?” “What type of discipline-specific training with regard to discourse-pragmatic features of language can be provided to pre-service ITAs in ITA training programs?” need to be answered. The investigation of such a research topic could offer a significant contribution to the training of ITAs offered by academic departments as well as the ITA training programs and courses usually offered by teaching and learning excellence units at universities. Additionally, discipline-specific practica can help ITAs improve their L2 pragmatic skills appropriate for the instructional setting in which they interact with students (Gorsuch, 2006).

Finally, the findings of this study offer a number of implications for ITA assessment and training programs. With respect to assessment, this study encourages us to question the use of the TOEFL iBT as a measure of linguistic proficiency to perform teaching duties in the US classroom. It is known that many North American institutions employ different screening assessments to determine whether ITAs can be assigned to teaching assistant positions. Among the instruments used to measure ITAs' oral proficiency are Test of Spoken English (TSE) or its institutional version, the SPEAK test, and Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI). Most of these assessment measures for oral proficiency only focus on accuracy and fluency of grammar and pronunciation. Recently, the speaking portion of the TOEFL iBT has begun to be used as an admissions requirement and TA language certification in most US universities, although this test was not specifically designed for ITA certification for teaching duties. For this reason, the usefulness of the TOEFL iBT as a test of communicative language ability to be used as a test to certify graduate students for teaching assignments was investigated (Farnsworth, 2013; Wylie & Tannenbaum, 2006; Xi, 2007). Farnsworth (2013) argued that, although the TOEFL Speaking portion was found to measure the same language abilities as institutional tests designed to determine ITA language proficiency, future research is needed to link TOEFL Speaking scores directly to real-life criterion measures of ITA language performance, such as undergraduate students' ratings of ITAs' comprehensibility. In addition, standardized and institutional oral proficiency tests designed to measure ITAs' communicative competence must reflect real-life ITA language use situations such as the classroom, the lab, the office hour, and other institutional settings. As the findings of this study showed, general linguistic proficiency as measured by the TOEFL iBT does not strongly correlate ITAs L2PC in particular instructional settings. In other words, advanced linguistic competence as demonstrated by a good command of grammatical and lexical features of language may not automatically guarantee effective language use in teaching situations. The case analyses in this study demonstrated that ITAs interact with their students differently in different disciplines and use various communication strategies and linguistic functions during their teaching. Additionally, ITAs in this study reported communication anxiety regarding classroom management and less willingness to engage in teacher-fronted talk including lectures. To this end, assessment measures can incorporate role-play situations in which ITAs perform speech acts in different classroom contexts. In this vein, the assessment tools used in the present study can provide guidance for the efforts to develop assessment tools for ITA certification for teaching with improved construct and content validity.

Informed by the observed differences in the interactions between ITAs and students in different disciplines and based on the notion of discipline-specific ITA training, the curricula of ITA programs can be revised and modified to incorporate field-specific discourse-pragmatic language features and functions. For instance, as demonstrated by the extensive question-answer exchanges in the chemistry lab, it seems that the discourse of chemistry labs largely consists of handling student questions, warning students about lab equipment, and explaining experiment procedures. Additionally, the lab setting appears to be more casual and open to more informal exchanges than other instructional settings. As findings showed, Anna initially was not prepared to teach in such an instructional setting. Therefore, she experienced initial anxiety in this environment as she was discovering the norms of communication in the US college classroom, even though she eventually adopted these norms and seemed to have successful interactions with her students. Therefore, a discipline-specific pragmatics curriculum for science labs like chemistry can incorporate basic communication functions such as handling student questions, monitoring student actions, and expressing and reminding safety regulations. Additionally, lecture anxiety emerged as one of the underlying dimensions of communication anxiety in the quantitative analysis and was also reported to be an anxiety factor for both Anna and Mary. Also, as exemplified in Marc’s classroom observation data, giving lectures in large classes can be particularly challenging for ITAs. It is interesting to note that lecture anxiety shows resemblance to a factor that emerged in the WTCS: reluctance in teacher-fronted talk. The interface between lecture anxiety and reluctance in teacher-fronted talk may indicate that ITAs might find it particularly face-threatening to speak to a group of people and their anxiety might increase due to the fear of making a mistake and being judged or mocked by the students. Therefore, in order to alleviate this rather overwhelming aspect of teaching, training curricula can include specific information and guided practice in giving lectures (particularly in large classes) and monitoring learning and maintaining student interest lectures. Additionally, ITAs can be provided with strategies to manage student behavior, linguistic resources regarding giving feedback, checking comprehension, and other non-linguistic strategies such as maintaining an appropriate length of pause during comprehension checks in order to elicit responses from students. In an instructional setting in which controversial topics are discussed (as in Kyle's sociology class), an ITA (or any TA, for that matter) must possess advanced pragmatic competence to facilitate discussion in a manner that is perceived appropriate and makes the learning environment safe for students to participate. Kyle's observed L2PC in the classroom may provide us with particular discourse pragmatic functions or speech acts that inexperienced or novice ITAs must know. Finally, based on these findings, ITA training programs may offer workshops that focus on these different aspects of communication in different pedagogical settings in the university environment.

In addition to the discipline-specific language features, ITA training programs should also focus on affective factors such as communication anxiety, cultural adjustment, and intercultural communication. As the findings of this study showed, classroom management anxiety negatively correlated with L2PC. Therefore, ITA training curricula can incorporate workshops on classroom communication, role-play activities focusing of performing different speech acts in the class, and observation tasks to be completed in experienced TA or professor classes. Such and similar activities can help ITAs become more acquainted with the US classroom and undergraduate students. As a follow-up, reflection activities can be incorporated into curricula so that ITAs can verbally document the main takeaway points from observing an actual class and raise his or her awareness about classroom communication.

As can be seen, the investigation of ITAs' language use in the classroom is important, necessary, and enlightening for several fields such as applied linguistics, second language acquisition, TESOL, teacher education, and higher education. ITA training programs can only be helpful so long as we understand the complex processes involved in second language use and the individual differences that affect it. In this vein, this study makes a significant contribution to the field of TESOL and second language acquisition in that it enhances our understanding of how ITAs as adult L2 users deal with multiple aspects of communication including but not limited to affective factors, classroom pragmatics, linguistic choices, cultural norms, delivery of disciplinary content, and interactions with students. With their growing importance in the US undergraduate education system, ITAs will continue to be an important L2 learner/user population and deserve continuing scholarly attention.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Introduction Page

International Teaching Assistants in the USA

1. Introduction

INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH
Information to Consider Before Taking Part in this Research Study
IRB Study **# Pro000017919**
We are asking you to take part in a research study that is called: International Teaching Assistants' (ITA) Pragmatic Competence. The person who is in charge of this research study is Erhan Aslan (easlan@mail.usf.edu). This study is approved by the USF IRB at (813-974-5638).

PURPOSE AND PROCEDURES OF THE STUDY
The purpose of this study is to contribute to the development ITA training programs in the areas of pragmatic competence and development, intercultural communication, and ITA professional development. You are being asked because you are either working or intend to work as a teaching assistant at a US higher education institution.The research will be done by collecting your responses online through an electronic survey. If you take part in this study, you will be asked to answer some questions about appropriate classroom communication, communication anxiety and willingness to communicate.

BENEFITS, RISKS, AND ALTERNATIVES/WITHDRAWAL
You should only take part in this study if you want to volunteer. You should not feel that there is any pressure to take part in the study. You are free to participate in this research or withdraw at any time. There will be no penalty or loss of benefits you are entitled to receive if you stop taking part in this study. Decision to participate or not to participate will not affect your student status (course grade) or job status.You have the alternative to choose not to participate in this research study. We are unsure if you will receive any benefits by taking part in this research study.This research is considered to be minimal risk.

COMPENSATION
If you would like to be entered into a random drawing for a **$25 Amazon gift card**, please provide your university email address when prompted to do so at the end of the survey.

PRIVACY & CONFIDENTIALITY
We must keep your study records as confidential as possible. It is possible, although unlikely, that unauthorized individuals could gain access to your responses because you are responding online. Your results will be password protected and may be stored for up to 5 years after the Final Report is filed with the IRB. Your confidentiality will be maintained to the degree permitted by the technology used. Specifically, no guarantees can be made regarding the interception of data sent via the Internet to or by any third parties. Certain people may need to see your study records. By law, anyone who looks at your records must keep them completely confidential. The only people who will be allowed to see these records are the research team, including the Principal Investigator and the Faculty Advisor, certain government and university people who need to know more about the study. For example, individuals who provide oversight on this study may need to look at your records. This is done to make sure that we are doing the study in the right way. They also need to make sure that we are protecting your rights and your safety. Finally, we may publish what we learn from this study.

CONTACT INFORMATION
If you have any questions please contact the USF IRB at 974-5638 or the Principal Investigator, Erhan

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Aslan at easlan@mail.usf.edu

If you agree to participate in this study, please go to next page. Please try to answer every question. Thank you for your time.

Appendix B: Classroom Communication Anxiety Scale (CCAS)

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2. Classroom Communication Anxiety

The following is a list of statements about classroom communication you may be engaged in as a teaching assistant. Please select the alternative that most accurately describes your answer for each statement below. If you completely disagree, you would select the alternative all the way on the left under "strongly disagree." If you completely agree, you would select the alternative all the way on the right under "strongly agree." There are no right or wrong answers to these questions. Below are all possible answer choices and an example:

Strongly disagree
Disagree
Slightly disagree
Slightly agree
Agree
Strongly agree

Example: I like chocolate.

Strongly agree

***1. Facing students who are disruptive to others in class makes me nervous.**

strongly disagree	disagree	slightly disagree	slightly agree	agree	strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○	○

***2. I usually find it difficult to ask non-participant students to be more active in class activities.**

strongly disagree	disagree	slightly disagree	slightly agree	agree	strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○	○

***3. I find it easy to engage students in a group discussion.**

strongly disagree	disagree	slightly disagree	slightly agree	agree	strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○	○

***4. When I don't understand student questions, I am afraid to ask for clarification.**

strongly disagree	disagree	slightly disagree	slightly agree	agree	strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○	○

***5. I feel comfortable asking students not to be late for class.**

strongly disagree	disagree	slightly disagree	slightly agree	agree	strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○	○

***6. Disagreeing with a student's response or comment is easy for me.**

strongly disagree	disagree	slightly disagree	slightly agree	agree	strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○	○

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***7. I feel calm and relaxed when I give lectures in the class.**

strongly disagree | disagree | slightly disagree | slightly agree | agree | strongly agree

***8. Responding to student opinions or questions in class is easy for me.**

strongly disagree | disagree | slightly disagree | slightly agree | agree | strongly agree

***9. Generally, I am comfortable encouraging quiet students to participate more in class activities.**

strongly disagree | disagree | slightly disagree | slightly agree | agree | strongly agree

***10. Leading a group discussion in class is challenging for me.**

strongly disagree | disagree | slightly disagree | slightly agree | agree | strongly agree

***11. I am usually comfortable redirecting a class discussion after an interruption or digression.**

strongly disagree | disagree | slightly disagree | slightly agree | agree | strongly agree

***12. Giving students a chance to ask me questions during class is easy for me.**

strongly disagree | disagree | slightly disagree | slightly agree | agree | strongly agree

***13. Introducing myself on the first day of class makes me nervous.**

strongly disagree | disagree | slightly disagree | slightly agree | agree | strongly agree

***14. I feel comfortable requesting students to repeat their questions when I don't understand them.**

strongly disagree | disagree | slightly disagree | slightly agree | agree | strongly agree

***15. The fact that English is not my first language makes me feel very self-conscious.**

strongly disagree | disagree | slightly disagree | slightly agree | agree | strongly agree

***16. Interrupting a student who speaks too long during class makes me nervous.**

strongly disagree | disagree | slightly disagree | slightly agree | agree | strongly agree

***17. When students seem distracted, I get nervous and confused about redirecting their attention to the discussion.**

strongly disagree	disagree	slightly disagree	slightly agree	agree	strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○	○

***18. I have no fear of warning a student who displays disruptive behavior in class.**

strongly disagree	disagree	slightly disagree	slightly agree	agree	strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○	○

***19. I am always afraid of expressing my disagreement with a student answer or opinion.**

strongly disagree	disagree	slightly disagree	slightly agree	agree	strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○	○

***20. I feel comfortable about the fact that English is not my first language.**

strongly disagree	disagree	slightly disagree	slightly agree	agree	strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○	○

***21. I feel at ease when I introduce myself to students on the first day of class.**

strongly disagree	disagree	slightly disagree	slightly agree	agree	strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○	○

***22. I find it challenging to respond to students' viewpoints or questions in the class.**

strongly disagree	disagree	slightly disagree	slightly agree	agree	strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○	○

***23. During class discussions, I feel comfortable interrupting students who go on too long.**

strongly disagree	disagree	slightly disagree	slightly agree	agree	strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○	○

***24. I get tense and nervous when I give lectures in class.**

strongly disagree	disagree	slightly disagree	slightly agree	agree	strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○	○

***25. Encouraging students to ask questions in class is challenging for me.**

strongly disagree	disagree	slightly disagree	slightly agree	agree	strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○	○

***26. Insisting that students arrive to class on time makes me uncomfortable.**

strongly disagree	disagree	slightly disagree	slightly agree	agree	strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○	○

27. Do you have any comments, questions or concerns about this section of the survey?

Appendix C: Discourse Completion Test (DCT)

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3. Discourse Completion Test

Read the following classroom situations. Imagine what you, as a teaching assistant, would say in each situation. Please type your response in as much detail as possible in the boxes under each situation, including pauses "…", hesitation "um", fillers "well" etc. if you use them. If you would not say anything, please type "I wouldn't say anything." You can also add additional comments in the box after your response. Below is an example:

Example: Your roommate is listening to loud music, and you are studying for an important exam. You want your roommate to turn the music down. You say:

"Could you turn down the music, please?"

***28. A student made a worthwhile remark about the topic of discussion in your class. You really liked what the student said, and want to acknowledge their contribution. You say:**

***29. A student made a comment about the topic of discussion, but you did not quite understand what the student meant. You want to ask the student to elaborate on the comment. You say:**

***30. During a discussion you are leading, you realized that certain students seem to be participating a lot more than others, and some others remain quite silent. You want to encourage those who are quiet to participate in the discussion. You say:**

***31. You are asking your students to bring a hard copy of the final paper to next class. A student suggests that it would be easier for you to grade if they submit it via email. However, you disagree with the student and demand hard-copy submission. You say:**

***32. A number of students request that you extend the deadline for the project you assigned at the end of the class. You believe that two weeks is long enough for the completion of the project, and you want to decline their request. You say:**

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*33. In a discussion activity you are leading, a student seems to be going on too long with what he's saying, and you want to give others the opportunity to speak and express their opinions. You need to interrupt this student. You say:

*34. A student asks a question that you find quite challenging and do not have an answer for. Still, you do not want to ignore the student's question. You say:

*35. A student asks your opinion about the evolution theory. Although you do not mind sharing your views with students, you feel a little hesitant about how you should express them. You say:

*36. A student points out a problem about one of the course requirements in class. You don't want to discuss it during class time, so you suggest that the student come to your office hours. You say:

*37. You need more space on the whiteboard in order to continue writing important concepts for students to see. You want to ask your students for permission to erase what you have already written. You say:

*38. In your class, you notice that most activities you planned require individual work. In order to stimulate interaction between the students, you give them the option to work in pairs. You say:

*39. You made a mistake during your lecture in class when writing on the board and noticed it several minutes later. You want to apologize for the mistake. You say:

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***40. You have just handed out a midterm exam. Warn the students about cheating on this or any exam and remind them of the serious consequences of cheating. You say:**

***41. Your students are taking their midterm exam next week. They ask for a study guide. You think reviewing lecture slides will greatly help them. You say:**

***42. While you are explaining the course requirements on the first day of class, your students ask if the quizzes will be open book or not. Except for the midterms or finals, you allow the use of notes and materials. You say:**

43. Do you have any comments, questions, or concerns about this section of the survey?

Appendix D: Willingness to Communicate Scale (WTCS)

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4. Willingness to Communicate

In this section, you are asked to indicate **how relaxed and comfortable you would be to initiate communication as a teaching assistant in the following classroom situations.** Please select the alternative that most accurately describes your answer for each situation below. Please mark only one alternative for each situation and do not leave out any of them.

If you are not relaxed and comfortable to initiate communication in the situation at all, you would mark the circle all the way on the left under "not at all." If you are quite relaxed and comfortable, you would mark the circle all the way on the
right under "tremendously." Below are all the possible answers you can choose and some examples:

not at all
not very much
slightly not
slightly
very much
tremendously

Example: How relaxed and comfortable would you be to ask your roommate to turn down the music?

Extremely

Example: How relaxed and comfortable would you be to decline a birthday party invitation?

Not very much

How relaxed and comfortable would you be to initiate communication in the following classroom situations?

***44. Introducing and talking about myself on the first day of teaching.**

not at all	not very much	slightly not	slightly	very much	extremely
○	○	○	○	○	○

***45. Giving a lecture.**

not at all	not very much	slightly not	slightly	very much	extremely
○	○	○	○	○	○

***46. Checking students' comprehension of information.**

not at all	not very much	slightly not	slightly	very much	extremely
○	○	○	○	○	○

***47. Encouraging students to ask questions.**

not at all	not very much	slightly not	slightly	very much	extremely
○	○	○	○	○	○

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*48. Asking students to hold their questions for office hours.

not at all	not very much	slightly not	slightly	very much	extremely
○	○	○	○	○	○

*49. Explaining a difficult concept for students to understand.

not at all	not very much	slightly not	slightly	very much	extremely
○	○	○	○	○	○

*50. Disagreeing with a student response or comment.

not at all	not very much	slightly not	slightly	very much	extremely
○	○	○	○	○	○

*51. Requiring students to submit their assignments by the deadline.

not at all	not very much	slightly not	slightly	very much	extremely
○	○	○	○	○	○

*52. Requesting students to work in pairs or groups.

not at all	not very much	slightly not	slightly	very much	extremely
○	○	○	○	○	○

*53. Walking around the classroom to interact with students during pair/group work.

not at all	not very much	slightly not	slightly	very much	extremely
○	○	○	○	○	○

*54. Asking permission to show sample student work on the doc cam.

not at all	not very much	slightly not	slightly	very much	extremely
○	○	○	○	○	○

*55. Suggesting that a student make an appointment with you to discuss a particular issue.

not at all	not very much	slightly not	slightly	very much	extremely
○	○	○	○	○	○

*56. Asking students to let you know when your pronunciation is not clear to them.

not at all	not very much	slightly not	slightly	very much	extremely
○	○	○	○	○	○

*57. Warning a student who displays disruptive behavior.

not at all	not very much	slightly not	slightly	very much	extremely
○	○	○	○	○	○

*58. Insisting that students arrive to class on time.

not at all	not very much	slightly not	slightly	very much	extremely
○	○	○	○	○	○

***59. Reminding students that they should complete their homework independently.**

not at all	not very much	slightly not	slightly	very much	extremely
○	○	○	○	○	○

***60. Responding to correct, incorrect, or irrelevant student responses.**

not at all	not very much	slightly not	slightly	very much	extremely
○	○	○	○	○	○

***61. Giving students oral instructions for completing a task.**

not at all	not very much	slightly not	slightly	very much	extremely
○	○	○	○	○	○

***62. Asking students to repeat when you don't understand their questions or comments.**

not at all	not very much	slightly not	slightly	very much	extremely
○	○	○	○	○	○

***63. Praising students for their intellectual contributions in class.**

not at all	not very much	slightly not	slightly	very much	extremely
○	○	○	○	○	○

***64. Redirecting discussion after an interruption or digression.**

not at all	not very much	slightly not	slightly	very much	extremely
○	○	○	○	○	○

***65. Interrupting a student who dominates the class discussion.**

not at all	not very much	slightly not	slightly	very much	extremely
○	○	○	○	○	○

66. Do you have any comments, questions, or concerns about this section of the survey?

Appendix E: Pragmatic Appropriateness Test (PAT)

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5. Pragmatic Appropriateness Test

Below are some classroom situations in which you may find yourselves as a teaching assistant (TA). At the end of each situation, the TA provides a response . On a scale of 1-6 (1 = not appropriate at all; 6 = completely appropriate), please rate the appropriateness of each response shown in **blue text** and quotation marks according to the given situation. Below is an example:

While eating at a restaurant, Jim wants the waitress to take a picture of his family at the table. He says:

"Can we have a picture, please?"

If you think Jim's utterance is completely appropriate, you would select the option on the right end of the scale (completely appropriate). If you think, Jim's utterance does not sound appropriate at all, you would select the alternative on the left end of the scale (not appropriate at all)

***67.**

Manal is going over the syllabus of the course "Intro to Economics" on the first day of class. She wants to clarify the attendance policy and needs to direct students' attention to the relevant section on the syllabus. Muna says:

"Would you look at the top of page 4, please? I want to explain the attendance policy."

How appropriate is this response?

not appropriate at all	inappropriate	somewhat inappropriate	somewhat appropriate	appropriate	completely appropriate
○	○	○	○	○	○

***68.**

At the end of a Mathematics class, James is giving his students a homework assignment that focuses on the use of binominal distribution to calculate different probability situations. One of the students asks whether they can resubmit the assignment in case they do badly on it. James says:

"I don't have time to grade extra homework. Try to get it right the first time."

How appropriate is this response?

not appropriate at all	inappropriate	somewhat inappropriate	somewhat appropriate	appropriate	completely appropriate
○	○	○	○	○	○

***69.**

In an Industrial Engineering class, Bin is giving a lecture on how cultures differ in the ways they organize and motivate factory workers. He realizes that his lecture is being interrupted by student questions. Although he wants to answer their questions, he also needs to cover the content in this class as he planned to. He says:

"How about holding our questions for later, possibly until the end of this presentation?"

How appropriate is this response?

not appropriate at all	inappropriate	somewhat inappropriate	somewhat appropriate	appropriate	completely appropriate
○	○	○	○	○	○

***70.**

Due to the similarity in homework papers, Meredith thinks that several students copied from each other in the last essay assignment in the Sociology class. She wants to remind the students that they should do their homework independently. She says:

"Working together on a homework assignment is cheating. You must do your homework on your own."

How appropriate is this response?

not appropriate at all	inappropriate	somewhat inappropriate	somewhat appropriate	appropriate	completely appropriate
○	○	○	○	○	○

***71.**

In a Psychology class, Carlos explains the psychoanalytic and humanistic theories that offer different perspectives on human personality. Some students seem to be favoring one theory over another. However, Carlos does not believe one method of study is more correct than others and wants to share his opinion with the class. He says:

"I understand that one theory might make more sense to you, but keep in mind that each theory has merit in accounting for certain phenomena."

How appropriate is this response?

not appropriate at all	inappropriate	somewhat inappropriate	somewhat appropriate	appropriate	completely appropriate
○	○	○	○	○	○

***72.**

On the first day of class Ali is giving advice to his students on how to be prepared for class discussions. He says:

"Do the class readings in advance and try not to go to bed late the night before class."

How appropriate is this response?

not appropriate at all	inappropriate	somewhat inappropriate	somewhat appropriate	appropriate	completely appropriate
○	○	○	○	○	○

***73.**

While Alice is lecturing about education and poverty, a student raises his hand to make a comment. After hearing student's comment, Alice wants to thank him for his participation. However, she doesn't remember his name. She says:

"I'm sorry. Could you please remind me your name?"

How appropriate is this response?

not appropriate at all	inappropriate	somewhat inappropriate	somewhat appropriate	appropriate	completely appropriate
○	○	○	○	○	○

***74.**

During the class discussion, a student makes a comment about pop art, which Jennifer (the TA) didn't quite hear. To ask the student to repeat what the student said, she says:

"What did you say?"

How appropriate is this response?

not appropriate at all	inappropriate	somewhat inappropriate	somewhat appropriate	appropriate	completely appropriate
○	○	○	○	○	○

***75.**

In a Calculus class, Andres is solving a problem with the students. According to his calculations, the correct theorem to use to solve the problem is U-substitution. However, one of the students suggests that the Chain Rule can be used. He says:

"Oh I see, but I'm afraid the Chain Rule will not work here. How about U-substitution?"

How appropriate is this response?

not appropriate at all	inappropriate	somewhat inappropriate	somewhat appropriate	appropriate	completely appropriate
○	○	○	○	○	○

***76.**

A student in Tom's class demands that she be given more points for a particular answer on a quiz. She is very persistent and does not seem to be taking no for an answer. In order to interrupt her and continue with the class, he says:

"Hang on just a sec. Now is not the time to discuss grades, OK?"

How appropriate is this response?

not appropriate at all	inappropriate	somewhat inappropriate	somewhat appropriate	appropriate	completely appropriate
○	○	○	○	○	○

***77.**

In a Biology class, a student named James brings up a very important point that Keiko (the TA), did not remember to mention previously. Since the contribution is made by the student, Keiko wants to give him credit for his intellectual leadership. She says:

"Very good! Did everybody hear what James said?"

How appropriate is this response?

not appropriate at all	inappropriate	somewhat inappropriate	somewhat appropriate	appropriate	completely appropriate
○	○	○	○	○	○

***78.**

In a Chemistry class some students are having difficulty finding the answer to a problem. Robert (the TA) wants to guide the students in finding the answer. He says:

"I want you all to use the chart in the appendix of the lab manual."

How appropriate is this response?

not appropriate at all	inappropriate	somewhat inappropriate	somewhat appropriate	appropriate	completely appropriate
○	○	○	○	○	○

***79.**

In order to get feedback from her professor on her teaching performance, Heba wants to video-record one of her class sessions. So, she needs her students' consent for the recording. She says:

"Would you guys be OK if I video-recorded our next class session?"

How appropriate is this response?

not appropriate at all	inappropriate	somewhat inappropriate	somewhat appropriate	appropriate	completely appropriate
○	○	○	○	○	○

***80.**

While Saul is lecturing, a student asks a question to which Saul does not have an immediate answer. Not knowing how to respond, he says:

"I don't know."

How appropriate is this response?

not appropriate at all	inappropriate	somewhat inappropriate	somewhat appropriate	appropriate	completely appropriate
○	○	○	○	○	○

***81.**

A couple students in Mary's Rhetoric class ask her if they could leave ten minutes before the class ends because the campus shuttle hours have recently changed. Understanding that students have to leave early to catch the shuttle, she says:

"Sure, you may leave class ten minutes early."

How appropriate is this response?

not appropriate at all	inappropriate	somewhat inappropriate	somewhat appropriate	appropriate	completely appropriate
○	○	○	○	○	○

82. Do you have any comments, questions, or concerns about this section of the survey?

Appendix F: Background Questionnaire (BQ)

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6. Background Questionnaire

***83. What US university do you currently attend? Please type in the box below.**

***84. What is your graduate degree of study?**

- ◯ M.A
- ◯ M.S
- ◯ Ph.D
- ◯ Ed.D
- ◯ Other

Other (please specify)

***85. What is your academic discipline of study?**

- ◯ Humanities
- ◯ Social Sciences
- ◯ Natural/Physical Sciences
- ◯ Engineering
- ◯ Fine Arts
- ◯ Other

Other (please specify)

***86. What is the title of your graduate degree program? Please type in the box below (e.g. Industrial Engineering, Psychology, Science Education, etc.)**

***87. How long have you worked as a teaching assistant at a US university?**

- ◯ 1 to less than 3 semesters
- ◯ 3 to less than 6 semesters
- ◯ 6 to less than 9 semesters
- ◯ More than 9 semesters
- ◯ I have never worked as a teaching assistant.

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***88. Which of the following graduate assistant appointments best describes you?**

- ◯ Research assistant
- ◯ Teaching assistant for a faculty member
- ◯ Teaching assistant in a (science) lab
- ◯ Teaching assistant as the sole instructor of a course
- ◯ Other

Other (please specify)

***89. On average, how many students do you usually have in the classes you teach?**

- ◯ Less than 25
- ◯ 25 to less than 50
- ◯ 50 to less than 75
- ◯ 75 to less than 100
- ◯ More than 100

***90. How long have you lived in the US?**

- ◯ Less than 6 months
- ◯ 6 months to less than 1 year
- ◯ 1 year to less than 3 years
- ◯ 3 years to less than 5 years
- ◯ 5 years or more

***91. How old are you?**

***92. What is your gender?**

- ◯ Female
- ◯ Male
- ◯ Other

Other (please specify)

***93. What country are you from?**

◯ Brazil	◯ Italy	◯ Spain
◯ China	◯ Japan	◯ Taiwan
◯ Columbia	◯ Korea	◯ Turkey
◯ France	◯ Mexico	◯ Venezuela
◯ Germany	◯ Russia	◯ Vietnam
◯ India	◯ Saudi Arabia	◯ Other

Other (if your country is not listed, please type it in the box below)

***94. What is your first (native) language?**

◯ Spanish	◯ Japanese	◯ French
◯ Arabic	◯ Korean	◯ German
◯ Chinese (Mandarin)	◯ Russian	◯ Portugese
◯ Chinese (Cantonese)	◯ Turkish	◯ Hindi
◯ Italian	◯ Vietnamese	◯ Other

Other (if your native language is not listed, please type it in the box below)

***95. What is your current TOEFL iBT score?**

	Reading	Listening	Speaking	Writing
Please select your score for each section from the drowdown menu				

***96. In general, how do you rate your ability to speak English?**

Novice	Intermediate	Advanced	Superior
◯	◯	◯	◯

97. Please indicate the languages you have studied other than English. If you have not studied languages other than English, please type N/A for each.

Foreign language #2

Foreign language #3

Foreign language #4

Foreign language #5

98. Please indicate below how long you have studied English and the other foreign languages that you studied.

	English	Foreign language #2	Foreign language #3	Foreign language #4	Foreign language #5
Choose for each.					

Appendix G: Rubric for the Discourse Completion Test

6 **Very good**	Almost perfectly appropriate and effective in the level of directness, politeness, and formality. The expressions contain conditional structures and sufficient supporting expressions to mitigate the potential face threat (e.g. enough explanation, positive comments and hedging that soften the expressions.
5 **Good**	Not perfect but adequately appropriate in the level of directness, politeness, and formality. Expressions are a little off from target-like, but pretty good.
4 **Fair**	Somewhat appropriate in the level of directness, politeness, and formality. Expressions are more direct or indirect than the situation requires with minimum framing expressions to mitigate the directness/indirectness.
3 **Poor**	Clearly inappropriate in the level of directness, politeness, and formality. Expressions sound almost rude or too demanding.
2 **Very Poor**	Not sure if the target pragmatic function or speech act is performed.
1	No response.

Appendix H: DCT Rater Recruiting Flyer

Do You Want to Earn Some Money for Christmas Shopping?

Here is an opportunity for you!

I am currently working on my dissertation study and I need your help with part of the data I have collected. I need some discourse completion test responses rated by undergraduate students based on a rubric. The work I need to get completed is a total of approximately 30 hours. Your involvement as an individual in this project requires at least **3 hours of your time** on USF campus during the week of **December 14-18, 2015**. The first hour is dedicated to the training for the rating, and the remaining two hours will be the rating itself. I am offering **$30 for a three-hour commitment ($10/hr).** If I need more people and you are interested in helping me more, you may earn even more with additional hours based on the availability of hours needed. The rating will take place in the Department of World Languages.

Detailed information about the study and instructions about your involvement will be provided at the training. Please email me at **easlan@mail.usf.edu** if you are interested in making some money before the holidays. Participation in this project is first come first serve. In your email, **please provide your name and last name, your email address, and how many hours you want to work.** Once I have enough participants, I will contact you to let you know of the date and time for the rating.

Task: Discourse Rating

Day: December 14-18 (A day will be determined within the week based on the availability of the participants selected)

Time: 12:00pm-5:00pm (on the day that will be determined)

Compensation: $10/hr (to be paid in cash immediately after your participation)

I look forward to hearing from you,

Erhan Aslan (easlan@mail.usf.edu)

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Appendix I: Sample Rating Sheet

DCT Item #32

Student #	Rater Score	A number of students request that you extend the deadline for the project you assigned at the end of the class. You believe that two weeks is long enough for the completion of the project, and you want to decline their request. You say:
1		How many of you think that two weeks is not enough for completing this project? I think you need to complete the project within two weeks, if you cannot let me know and we can figure something out.
2		I can understand your point here, but I believe two weeks is a descent amount of time for completing this project.
3		The deadline will NOT be extended. Try not to miss the deadline.
4		"I would probably if I could but its not possible. You have to get it done by that time." I usually don't impose student to do this and that I am quite flexible for those things but not for grading. learning is more important for me rather than deadlines. But I never overrule university's rules and regulations.
5		"I'm sorry, I can't change that. But I have added extra office hours, and I'm available per email, so please come with questions"
6		You see deadlines are made based on the time frame a project takes to complete. Two weeks is actually sufficient to complete this project. I'm afraid I might not be able to extend the deadline as all other coming projects may have an effect of this.
7		We talk about that when the due date is close
8		It's a fair amount of time you have, and I cannot extend the due date.
9		"Everybody must be under the same condition. I wish I could give you some more time, but I should be fair to all students."
10		I think there was plenty of time to complete the assignment, and I am not willing to grant extensions unless there is a valid reason, a matter outside your influence or university-related business that you had to attend to.
11		I am sorry:) The extension could only be given to students who has XXX conditions, as our syllabus said :(
12		"I understand all of us have a lot going on in our lives and sometimes it is hard to get things done in time. But, a part of our learning at school, or let's say in life, in fact, is about time management. So please do your best to hand in the project before the designated deadline. I think two weeks is a reasonable time, and I would expect to see your projects done by them."
13		I understand your situation but this deadline is hard.
14		Give me some arguments for the extension of the deadline...
15		I'm sorry, but I can't do that. Two weeks should be enough to complete the project. Besides, we have other things to do throughout the semester. If I extend the deadline for this project, it will mess up the whole schedule.
16		I really want to, it will also give me a break. But I also want to make sure you get my feedback on this one before you start to work on the next.

17		I think there's plenty of time for you to submit your projects on time. Why don't you start working on your project now?
18		Folks, if you can't get it done in two weeks, then you can't get it done any time sooner.
19		I understand your concern but I'm going to stick to the syllabus deadline. If you have extenuating circumstances please discuss it with the professor.
20		I know that you all are very busy, but I'm sorry I cannot extend the deadline. You don't need to write a whole dissertation. Two weeks should be enough. Make sure you start early enough and organize your time accordingly.
21		I see what you mean but I really would like you to complete the assignment by the deadline. I have allocated enough time for it, and I want to get it done and move on to the next part of the course. You can turn it in later but I will deduce some points.
22		I do believe that a two-week period would be more than enough for you to complete this project.
23		If you look at the syllabus, it says, unfortunately, the deadlines are not negotiable.
24		I can't give any extensions for this assignment
25		I think you can finish it in two weeks. Let us know if you have issues one 3 days before the deadline.
26		I am sorry, unfortunately I cannot extend he deadline.
27		You already have two weeks which should be sufficient time. At least give it a try. Let's see where we get in a week's time and then we'll discuss other options.
28		I understand that your schedules are tight with many courses. However, I think two weeks is the right timeline within which to complete this assignment, so I will keep the deadline.
29		I am not able to do that.
30		Naah, you can finish that in two weeks. Thanks for trying!
31		Based on my experience, two weeks is long enough.
32		I and the professor truly believe that 2 weeks is long enough, and students did it before you and will after you.
33		I can't move the deadline, but I'd be more than happy to help you in finishing your work if you need that
34		İ'm sorry. 2 weeks is more than enough for this task
35		I think two weeks are enough. I am afraid you will have to do it it two weeks.
36		I'm sorry, but I think that you have enough time to complete the project. I'm afraid I'll have to decline your request. If you appeal to the professor and he approves, I would permit it.
37		I surely understand your tension, but sorry to say that this is written in the syllabus which you agreed at the first day of our class, so we must obey that.
38		I`m sorry
39		It will not be possible because of my schedule.
40		"I understand that you all have a lot courseworks. The report does not have be perfect. Just submit your best effort."
41		I am so sorry but in my opinion two weeks are enough to complete this project. I know that all of you are really busy but I also know that you are a really good student and you will have the final project ready for that date :)
42		Sorry. This is a test that how long you need to accomplish the work.

43		"I can't extend the deadline for you guys because it won't be fair to the others."
44		I am sorry to tell you this, but that is not acceptable. Everyone agreed in the first place that this deadline is okay, so you should all try to work hard to get it done before the deadline.
45		Two weeks is enough time. If you're going to be absent and your absence is excused under university policy, please let me know. I'll need you to provide proper documentation if you need an exception, but, again, only if your absence is excused by university policy.
46		Let us not argue about the extension, I believe 2 weeks is enough because if we extend this assignment then you will get relatively less time for your final paper/ other assignment/ test.
47		I understand that you have other courses and commitments this semester, but I need to follow my course schedule to stay on track. If there is a particular part of the project that you are stuck on, I will be happy to discuss it in class, but unfortunately I cannot change the deadline.
48		I would actually probably just give them an additional grace period of 24 hours or so: if a number of students are having trouble finishing on time, maybe two weeks is not quite enough.
49		Usually I would give a one week length, then if students request, I extend to another week.
50		If we do that, then you will have less time for the next assignment. I don't think it's fair. But if you in particular are having troubles with the deadline, please visit me on my office hours and we can work it out.
51		I'm sorry , but two weeks is enough for this project.
52		I think the assignment is quiet easy and you can very well complete by this week, so 2 weeks is more than enough and I don't think it is wise to extend the deadline because if you finish it faster, you would get enough time to prepare for the fore-coming exam.
53		Check the syllabus.
54		"Sorry guys but I really think that two weeks is long enough for the completion of the project. If you need help with it just come by my office hours and I will be happy to assist you."
55		Dont worry. Two weeks is enough for the completion of the project.
56		I know it's a bit hard assignment, but I can't extend the deadline. Sorry about that.
57		This project is a replication and simplified version of a challenge (contest) hosted by (an institution in the field). The original challenge was to finish a report of 20 pages long in 1 month. Your assignment was to finish a report of 5 pages long in 2 weeks. I believe that should give you enough time, unless this request comes from the majority of the class. And sometimes it is good to learn the skills to be able to work under pressure, I think.
58		"It shouldn't take longer than two weeks. I strongly recommend you all start early. Then two weeks will be more than enough."

59		I believe that 2 weeks are enough to complete the assignment. I would like you all to try to finish it on time.
60		Unfortunately, I cannot extend the deadline, as that would interfere with the plan for the rest of the semester. If you manage/would have managed your time accordingly, you should have sufficient time to complete it by the posted deadline.
61		If I extend this deadline, then you'll only get a week for your next assignment. That's an awfully short time for an assignment. I suggest that you work in groups and finish the assignment on time. Feel free to email me if you are struggling with something specific
62		This will be not that hard, so I think 2 weeks is enough time for it. If you need any help about the assignment, you can discuss it with me
63		"I've told you since the beginning of the semester that some projects are time consuming. Starting the day before something is due just isn't enough time. You can turn in your work late, but there will be a penalty."
64		Hmm... I think this is enough time. Also the next assignment will also be due in time. So it is better for all of us to keep to the time schedule. I promise, it wont be difficult.
65		In my opinion, two weeks is enough time. If it really is not enough then it will be reflected in the quality of ALL of your papers and I really wouldn't want that. We will keep it as it is.
66		In my opinion, two weeks for sufficient for completing the project. I would request them to submit the project how much they complete and I would grade it accordingly.
67		Sorry guys, I really believe two weeks is enough. You're probably overthinking it. Come see me during my office hours, I will help you get started.
68		Unfortunately, that is not possible. If I want to properly review your work and give you meaningful feedback I need the papers by this time.
69		"Deadline is deadline. I wouldn't accept any late work."
70		"I understand some of you want to have extended deadline for the project. Unfortunately, I can't extend the deadline because the project has been announced two weeks ago. I believe that you have had enough time for doing the project! Keep the work, then you will be fine!"
71		I have listened to many people's request to give an extension; however I do not think that would be appropriate.
72		Sorry, I will be not fair for other students to extend the deadline.
73		I'm sorry, but two weeks is long enough for the project based on the project requirement and content. And you can come to me whenever you have questions during this project.
74		I will acknowledge that some students have requested extensions. If anyone has valid reasons to demand one than they should get in touch and let me know about it. Otherwise, the assignment is due on the proposed deadline for all students.
75		I believe two weeks is good enough.
76		I think I will leave it at two weeks.
77		I'm sorry about that. But that's the rule made by the professor.

78		Its not that hard, I think you all are more than capable of completing it, I know you can do it!
79		I believe that two weeks are more than enough to have your project ready, if any one of you have special circumstance , please stop by my office and we can talk about it. Otherwise, the deadline remians the same
80		You might want to take that up with Professor X
81		No, two weeks should be enough for this. I will not extend the deadline.
82		Oh c'mon, people! This assignment is not that tough! You can do it, and I'm always available if any of you need help. Available within reason, of course. Please don't try to get responses from me at night time or something.
83		I see. But I guess some of you already started to prepare the assignment. And if I give the extend extra time, it would not be fair for the students. So I think it is better to stick to the deadline for the fairness of this class.
84		I will not extend deadline and will ask them to follow the instructions and that instructions are equal for all.
85		I think you can complete it in 2 weeks.
86		I will talk to instructor of the course but I'm not sure he extend deadline for submission. So I recommend you to wrap all things up and submit you work on due date!
87		"I am sorry but I believe you have more than enough time to work on the project and extending the deadline will impact the overall progress of the course. You can let me know if you have unusually situations; otherwise I may not allow an extension."
88		I think you have the necessary time to turn in the assignment.
89		Two weeks is plenty of time.
90		I am sorry but I will not be able to extend the the deadline for the assignment more so because you were aware of the deadline of this assignment since the beginning of the semester (course calendar).
91		I will ask if they have a specific reason to demand extension of deadline.
92		I think two weeks is long enough to complete if you spend reasonable time working on this project every day.
93		I understand your schedule is tight. but I have done these many years and it is not fair for other students.
94		Sorry, you have enough time to do the project, if you have emergency issue, I can give extension.
95		I am sorry I can not adjust the due date.

96		Please stick to the deadline and manage your time to complete the project. In my experience, two weeks are typically sufficient for students to finish the assigned project. To be fair to other students in the class, late submission will result in partial credits, please also keep that in mind.
97		PLEASE THE TWO WEEKS ARE ENOUGH FOR EVERY ONE TRY TO FINISH WITHIN TWO WEEKS.
98		Dear Students, Extension is just the myth for finishing projects. If someone works on the assignment at least for five days it does finish before today. Giving an extension for this project is an extension for rest of the projects. I really don't want us to fall behind the whole week. You guys still have enough of time and If you work hard I believe it will be done within the deadline. And as always I would love to help on your difficulties along with the project.
99		Deadlines are not elastic. There are subtle penalties for late submission
100		"Unfortunately, that is the set time for this assignment as determined by the syllabus. I will speak with the other TAs, but I don't think the deadline is going to change."
101		It is not possible for me to make an exception for your case. I would've violated the course policy.
102		I might have extended the deadline, but two more assignments are lined up and we don't have enough time. So I won't be able extend the deadline. You people have to submit it on time.
103		Well, I think you've been given plenty time to work on the assignment, so I will not be making changes to the submission deadline.
104		The deadline was set up up front at the beginning of the semester. To be fair to the rest of the class I cannot extend the deadline at last minute.
105		I'm sorry but it will go a is already planned. If you feel that is not enough time, please ask to the professor, he is the only one that can approve extensions.
106		I understand you point of view but I feel two weeks was enough time for completion of the project
107		I understand your concern but given the schedule of the course we can't extend the deadline. We still have other projects to work on during the semester. I'm sorry, I hope you can understand.
108		If it is when I am assigning the project, then I would say "Two weeks is long enough, but you should start working in advance, don't leave it to the last minute". If I am requested an extension close to the submission date, I would say "I warned you to start ahead of time. You have had two weeks and that is long enough to complete this assignment"
109		But you had two weeks, unless everybody wants an extension, due date remains still.
110		The deadline is not negotiable. No assignment,
111		I'm sorry, but two weeks should be sufficient for you.

112		Two week is long enough guys, sorry.
113		I can not do it
114		Guys, I understand some of you might feel overwhelmed but I won't be able to extend the deadline as it will influence other assignment deadlines. However, I recommend you to come to my office hours or use the Writing Center to receive some more guidance on your assignment.
115		I understand your problem but I am sorry, I can't extend.
116		I understand your concerns, but I'm reluctant to extend this because we have other stuff to do for the rest of the semester.
117		It is the policy stated in the syllabus that an extension will be granted only in the event of appropriately documented excused absence. Please do complete the assignment on time.
118		No extensions, as per syllabus.
119		I really hope I could help you guys extend the deadline, but the lecturer insisted that two weeks must be enough for completing the project.
120		No, I think it is enough for you to finish the project within two weeks.
121		Dear Mr(Ms). XXX, we talked about this in our introduction that every deadline is a hard one. Any submission after the deadline will not be graded nor considered as an achievement in the class. Unless you have reasonable issues that may delay this submission, you may submit it late but I will degrade the score in the concern of fairness.
122		That project was completed every year with that timeframe, I think you can do it too.
123		"Two weeks is more than sufficient time to complete this project."
124		No extension will be given.
125		"Sorry, but I can't extend the deadline because if I extend the deadline, the next assignment may be interrupted by this project."
126		I understand your situation here but I have talked to the professor and he insisted that we have the deadline this week. I'm sorry. I understand that you guys are busy this week, but that's why I made the specific guideline to make everything easier right?
127		I'm sorry but I do think that 2 weeks is enough time. I don't invent the rules.
128		You know, deadline is strongest motivation for homework. So two weeks has same effect with two month. Why you wanna be guilty for longer time. You can make it!
129		Extension of two weeks might be too long, can we change it to one week?
130		I think the timeline is good enough if you study hard
131		No sorry
132		two weeks are quite reasonable time to finish the project. So, please make sure that you can submit it during this time interval. If you have any difficulties with it you can stop by my office and we can discuss it.

133		"I am sorry, but that will not be possible"
134		We take a lot of time at the beginning of the semester to fan out assignments and tests so that the students get the chance to apply themselves. While I do realize more time could be beneficial, I also think that extending this assignment will get in your way of putting in adequate time in the subsequent ones.
135		No late submissions will be accepted!
136		I'm sorry, but I stand by my initial deadline. Two weeks is enough and the number of people requesting an extension is too small to warrant one.
137		Let me speak with the professor about this, but I don't think you will get an extension.
138		Well, I always give the extension. But if I want to decline, I'd say: No, I don't think I can do it. What's your reason for not completing the assignment on time?
139		I must decline. I know that the time given is more than enough and although you might think it is not you will know it's enough when you start the project
140		I believe 2 weeks is long enough, so I`m going to decline your request.
141		Hmm, you will be able to finish them in two week, trust me.
142		sorry
143		No. two weeks are enough for you guys to finish it. Please schedule your time well.
144		we will stick to the deadline.
145		As per the topics and home works covered and the complexity of the project, I feel that two weeks is a decent time to finish the project.
146		I cannot extend the deadline. Two weeks is a reasonable amount to finish this project. If you need extra help with it, go to my office hours and I'll be happy to guide you.
147		I'm sorry, but I did not come up with the rules. You will have to ask the professor. (But I would probably grant them an extension. I don't like deadlines myself!)
148		You have enough time. If I extend the deadline all the other assignments will get delayed. And this is a way to learn not to start working on the project the night before the deadline.
149		It is not fair for the rest of the class to extend the deadline.
150		As I wrote in the syllabus, unless you have an official athletic event on which you informed me in advance or a note from a doctor, you must submit it by the deadline
151		I believe that two weeks are long enough
152		Sorry but I can't extend the deadline. Make sure you assign enough time daily to complete the project in time.
153		I will be available to review with anyone who wants to discuss how to go about submitting this assignment within two weeks. Honestly, this assignment does not even require that much.

154		No, I can't extend the deadline. Two weeks should give you enough time to finish this. If you can't, try harder.
155		I think two weeks is adequate for you to deal with the project. So please submit it on time.
156		"I understand that you all are busy and have other assignments in other classes but I believe two weeks are enough for you to for this project"
157		Well, I understand you but two weeks would be more than enough for you to complete the project.
158		I totally understand you are very busy, but there is no extension for it according to the syllabus. I am sorry.
159		I think two weeks is a fairly good time
160		Unfortunately I cant do that. It would be fair
161		Guys, I think 2 weeks is more than enough. I would have extended if it was difficult or in case of any technical difficulties.
162		I will not be extending the deadline, so make sure you have it turned in by that date or you might loose points. If you guys need help figuring out how to break down the homework in smaller task, we can work on a timeline together at the beginning of next class, but until then start thinking about the topic.
163		You could do it and you will do it. So, trust yourself!
164		I'm sorry everyone there is a syllabus for a reason. Let´s try and stick to it.
165		I get that it may be hard for you to meet the deadline, but we should move forward with our course and it would be hard without you completing the project in two weeks.
166		"I think two weeks are enough fi this type if assignment, time management is a good skill to practice and master"
167		"Deadline is deadline."
168		I am sorry but two weeks is fair and long enough. I would appreciate that you respect this deadline.
169		I'm sorry, but according to previous years, two weeks is fairly enough. If you have special reasons for the extension, you can ask for the professor's permission. Otherwise, please hand in on time.
170		I believe this is a fair deadline. Those who don't agree can find me after class
171		Not applicable to the kind of class I teach.
172		I'm going to keep the due date as is - but I'm making myself available to talk about any challenges people are having - please contact me by email if you'd like to discuss the project
173		I think two weeks might be good enough for you guys to do this project. Please email me if you have any issue on it.
174		I am sorry guys but I think 2 weeks will be sufficient for the project. If you feel that it is not then this dead line would help you to work under pressure too. I apologize but i cannot extend the deadline.

175		Sorry, there is no extension for the assignment.
176		I have been heard from some of you regarding the possibility of extending the deadline for the project. Yet it is not a good idea to do this because you had sufficient time to this and it would change our course schedule to a great extent. So I will keep the existing deadline.
177		It will be unfair to students who have completed their project in two weeks if I extend the timeline so I will not be able to extend it
178		Sorry. Maybe next time.
179		I believe you have had enough time to do the project.
180		I would have extended the deadline if I felt that two weeks would not be enough to complete the project. But I think if you need more time than that you are not approaching it correctly. I could assign some office hours this week so that you could come and ask any questions you might have. I am sure everybody can finish this on time if they understand the tricky parts. So, come talk to me.
181		I do not think it would be fair to students who have completed their project within two weeks. (Depending on the number of students who want extension, I would normally extend the deadline.)
182		Unfortunately,I cannot expand it because I think two weeks are enough.
183		Sorry two weeks is the deadline for this project.
184		Sorry but I can't extend the deadline
185		There won't be any extension. I'm sorry.
186		I understand your concern but we will keep the deadline. Two weeks is enough time to complete this task and afterwards you need to move on to your final projects.
187		I know it can be stressful at this time of the year, but welcome to the world of pressed deadlines!
188		Sure. You could get discount points if you want to do.
189		Its not fair somebody may finished it so far. Besides I thing the time was enough to finish the homework.
190		I think there was sufficient time to do this. I can schedule extra office hours to help you guys out if you are having trouble.
191		It's not supposed to be a big project. Just do whatever you can in the two weeks you have. If you spend your time efficiently and keep it to the point it shouldn't take you more than 3 days, you have 2 weeks because I realize you have assignments for other classes and other things to do.
192		"I'm sorry, but I firmly believe that two weeks was enough for the project. I won't be giving you an extension."
193		Well, lets see how everyone does , if we see that the performance overall isnt good, we will do something to make it up.
194		No. I believe two weeks is long enough for you. Please hand in the homework on time.

195		" I think the deadline is long enough. But if you really think that you cannot make it, please see me personally. I will arrange something for you."
196		I can understand your problem, but I am sorry I cannot extend the deadline as it would affect my planned schedule.
197		It is decided by the professor.
198		I am sorry, this is the policy of this class. Please submit it by the deadline.
199		It will not be very tough tor you if you, you will see when you will start.
200		No, sorry I am not going to extend itGood, thanks .. so has somebody else something to add to that or another opinion?
201		If you do a little bit every day, you will have plenty of time to complete the assignment before the deadline.
202		I'm sorry, I think two weeks us long enough for this project. If you have had any issues, you could have contacted the earlier. Now it is too late to extend the deadline.
203		No, two weeks is enough. You need to learn to manage your time.
204		Come on, you all can finish this in one week and enjoy the week after.
205		I see that many students are requesting me to extend the dealine for project submission, I feel that two weeks time is sufficient enough to complete the project. Hence, I think you should be able to manage it in two weeks.
206		I understand that all of you have a very large work load and hence i had given you two weeks of time.. which is actually mlre than enough for this assignment. But i know all you guys have both the hands full. So let me me we knw wer all of u have reached. I will help you guys to cross any major hurdles for the assignment. You can ask your classmates... quite a few have already completed it. Feel free to email me your dobuts. I wil definitely help you back.
207		No comment
208		Lets talk about how to complete the project in the two weeks. What is holding you back and what czm you do to complete it within the timeline
209		unfortunately, the deadline has been fixed.
210		I'm sorry, that's the rule.
211		oh, I don't think this project takes your time more than 2 weeks!
212		Dear Class, I'm afraid I cannot give extra time for you. However I will do my best to answer your questions and help you finish your project on time. I have posted a guidance on Canvas today it will help you a lot. Also please come to office hours. I also told your TA's to help you on your Friday help session time. (I take precautions for this kind of situations, First, I would not assign the project at the end of semester. I was once in their shoes and I believe they are right. At the end of semester their schedule are very tight and they freak out -they always tell me they freak out- therefore I stick to the syllabus 99% of the time)
213		Given the fact that two weeks is a long enough time for this project, beside the tight schedule for next homework, I am afraid, we need to try to finish our project to this deadline.

214		I am sorry the schedule of this course is kinda tight and I am sure you have plenty of time.
215		Sorry, because other students and previous students can finish it by time. so 2 weeks is the longest time I can give you in order to be fair
216		tell me what makes you feel you cannot make it on time. Lets discuss it and I give you some advice so then you can hand in the assignment on time.
217		"I respect your request, and at the same time I also perceive that the 2-week extended deadline was more than sufficient. For that reason, no more extension can be given. Thanks for your cooperation!"
218		I am sorry but I cannot extend it at all. I believe two weeks would be enough for you; however, if there is a family emergency or something like that, please email me about your situation.
219		Mmmm, well guys, I know you have other classes and projects to do as well, I totally understand that, but due to the long time I am giving you, It won't be so hard to put a little time aside and do this project, maybe at weekends. We have covered most part of it during our discussion, you only need to put those parts together. So I believe that is not much work.
220		Two weeks is a good time to complete your assignments. Any postponement would affect the deadlines afterwards, and thus, shorten the allotted times for the next assignments.
221		I understand that we are all very busy at this time of the semester, but if we don't respect this deadline, more assignments will accumulate for later.
222		I understand your concern, however the rules are the rules. We talked about it the first day of class and it is explained in the syllabus that deadline cannot be modified unless extreme matter such as weather incident, hospitalization...
223		Sorry I cannot, the deadline is clearly stated in the syllabus and I don't quite have the right to change that.
224		It is not possible to extend the deadline
225		The deadline is not negotiable I need to grade you all on time so we have to follow the dates stablished before
226		I really wouldn't like to pile up work towards the end of the semester - it would be even more difficult for you, because then you would have less time to prepare for the final test
227		The deadline has been in the course schedule since the beginning of the semester. Look, the project is designed to be completed in two weeks and you can make use of everything we covered in class. It's sufficient time.
228		"No, I insist that you complete the project by the given time"
229		Well, why don't you give it a try and we will see.
230		I really want to keep on with due dates for this project. If you cannot have it completely done, please bring me the results you found so far.
231		"Well, I feel that two weeks is long enough for the completion of the project, so I would like you to submit the project by evening."

232		"Two weeks is too long, how about two days?"
233		(I think I would first try to consider if the two weeks were during mid-terms, because if it were, I would consider extending the deadline by two or three days, and if it is not): "You had two weeks to be ready for this project, I am sorry but I cannot extend the deadline. If some of your projects are late, I will accept them but with a penalty."
234		I can't, it is unfair for the student who finished it on time
235		I attempt to understand why they need an extension and if the reason is good, I will give the extension. However, if I can't give an extension I would 'use' my professor as reason as to why it cannot be extended. As in, it is not my decision by the one of the instructor
236		You should make plan about your experiment before coming to the lab in order to save time.
237		Well, I understand that you have other stuff in your schedule. But, I have already given you 2 weeks and that is a fair enough for this assignment. Please turn it in by the due date.
238		I believe extending deadline will critically slow down our progression in the course , which is critical as we have to finish this on time. So sorry, I cannot afford it.
239		I know and a student I understand but according to the syllabus I cannot change any deadlines. You might want to talk to the professor about that.
240		"All the students are at par with the class syllabus and I really believe that 2 weeks should be more than enough for all the students to complete and submit the project"
241		First I request you all to start the project right today and try to complete it on time. if we delay this all the remaining will be delayed which will create a mess. So, i can help in this project if you have any doubt.
242		Am sorry but am afraid it wont be possible to extend the deadline.
243		For this it is quite enough the given time. What exactly taking your time more than needed. I would consider grading it linearly.
244		Deadline extensions are not allowed
245		unfortunately the class schedule does not allow me to give you an extension. please make sure you complete the work by the deadline.
246		I tell them that I hear them but my goal is for them to realize that your future bosses or managers may not heed to their requests and they may use this as a learning exercise towards time management...
247		I'm afraid that will not be possible. It would be unfair to the other students who already have the job done. It would had been a good idea to have told me that a week ago, when still you had time. Please, next time don't wait to the last minute.
248		You have had enough time, you can chose between two options. 1. Don't move the deadline and the project continues as until now 2. Postpone the deadline but increase the project

249		I'm sorry 2 weeks will be more than enough to finish this project. For you guys even 1 week would be fine :). You can do this.
250		"Two weeks is enough time for completing this project. I am afraid I cannot extend the deadline."
251		I believe the time is enough for this project. Please submit what you have and then we will see.
252		Since the expectation of the project is as as your assignment, I believe that two weeks is highly sufficient for completing your project. If you face any difficulties amidst your project, i will be more than happy to assist you in troubleshooting.
253		I don't think that the project requires more time to be completed, but if you feel like you are struggling with it, come to my office and I will assist you to get the project going.
254		I believe that this project isn't that hard for students of your calibre, two weeks is what I would expect you to finish it in. As a engineer its important for you to finish projects in deadlines
255		Two weeks is long enough to finish this homework. You can ask me questions if you fell it's hard for you.
256		I'm sorry guys that deadline was assigned to give enough time to complete the homework. I believe the 2 weeks is more than enough.
257		Let's meet for a special review session next week so everyone is on track to meet the deadline.
258		Depends on the number of students. If the number id high enough I will consider the possibility that they really need more time. If it is only a couple of students I will say that it would be unfair to the other students who spend the time to have it ready by the end of the deadline.
259		I think two weeks is enough time for the project to be done. If we postpone it now, you will not be able to prepare for the next exam, because part of the preparation is in the project.
260		"i wish i could.Bur if you need any help from i am here for you"
261		2 weeks is long enough. Let me know if any of you have questions.
262		For now lets stick to the deadline and when the time comes I will see what I can do.
263		Actually, you can finish it in one week, that is why I give you two weeks.
264		Sorry, I don't think an extension is required for this assignment. Please compile what you have by today and submit
265		At this point of time, I believe that two weeks is more than sufficient to complete the assignment, considering the effort required. Let me see your progress on the same.
266		The allowed time for this assignment was more than sufficient so make sure you have everything submitted by the deadline.
267		"Two weeks is good time to complete the project and I am afraid I cannot extend it any long."

268		I'm sorry everyone, but I need to maintain the two week deadline. Please start the assignment as soon as possible so that you can turn in a high quality project on-time.
269		You will be able to finish it, If we extend the deadline you will have more work by the end of the term which it is not good for you and me neither
270		"I'm sorry guys but two weeks is enough time. I know where you guys are coming from but I had to work with insane deadlines too!"
271		I am sorry, two weeks are enough for this project
272		I am not authorized to change this, please see Professor X
273		If you don't have enough reasons for the extending, I'm afraid I can't change the deadline. Because this project is not difficult and we have introduced in the class about how to solve it. So the deadline will not be extended.
274		Two weeks should be fair amount of time for the project completion. Unfortunately the requrest you have will be declined.
275		You should work hard. No problem, you will get partial credits of what have you done. However work hard for the final exam.
276		I will extend
277		The deadline for this project is in the syllabus and two weeks should be more than enough time to complete this project. If you are having any difficulties with the project I am available to assist you.
278		I think you need to turn in the project on time since I've already given you two weeks to complete it.
279		Well, right now it's not possible to extend the deadline. Good luck to your assignment!
280		N/A
281		I am sorry guys. I cannot extend it this time.
282		I wish I could be more help to you guys but I have some deadline to meet and we need to progress in the course.
283		I feel sorry that I would not be able to extend the deadline.
284		I think you should be able to complete it within two weeks.
285		No, I have given you enough time.
286		Lets do this by this time, you can make it short.
287		I believe in the beginning of the semester I told you 2 weeks is long enough to work on it. You will turn your project on time and we will see what the results are, then I will let you know about the plan B
288		I think 2 weeks is more than enough time to complete the project. If you still want an extension contact the professor in charge.
289		"We had an agreement at the beginning of the class that you would complete the project by the end of this week and nobody communicated their issues with team work as the project progressed. So, unfortunately, I will not be able to extend the deadline for the assignment. However, if you feel like you need clarifications, my door is always open."

Appendix J: Interview Questions

1) **General Questions**
   - **a)** How did you decide to come to the US to pursue graduate studies?
   - **b)** What did you know about the American higher education system and students before coming to the US?
   - **c)** Did you experience "culture shock" in the university setting? (cultural differences, interactions with staff, faculty, advisor, getting things done on campus, etc.)
   - **d)** What do you think about your English proficiency in the classroom when you're teaching? Do you experience any difficulties during your interactions with your professors, students, or administrative staff in the university?
   - **e)** Can you briefly describe your first day of teaching as a TA? How did you feel? Were you nervous/excited/anxious/calm?
   - **f)** How would you describe American college students (their behavior in the classroom, communication styles, etc.)

2) **Individual Differences (Communication Anxiety and Willingness to communicate)**
   - **a)** How do you feel when students ask you questions or ask for explanations in the classroom?
   - **b)** How do you feel when you don't understand a student comment or question during class?
   - **c)** How do you feel when the students don't participate in class discussions?
   - **d)** How do you monitor students' behavior in the classroom? (when you see a student texting, distracting others, arriving to class late, remaining quiet, etc.)
   - **e)** What do you do or say when students actively participate in the classroom discussions or activities?
   - **f)** What do you do or say in order to check if the students understood the lecture content?
   - **g)** How do you feel when students ask for extensions for projects/homework or request extra credit during the class?

h) Do you ever initiate small talk with your students at the beginning of class? (asking how they are doing, what they did over the weekend, making comments about weather or other events of the day, etc.)

i) What do you do when/if students are working in pairs or groups? (walking around the classroom, listening to the students' discussions, joining their discussions, asking them questions, etc.)

j) What are some of the challenges you experience communicating with US undergraduate students in the classroom?

k) How does it make you feel to teach large undergraduate classes?

3) Pragmatic Competence

a) What do you think is appropriate or inappropriate to say or do in the classroom? (asking for permission to go to the bathroom, leaving class early, yawning, eating, chewing gum, stretching legs, etc.)

b) What do you say or do when students display what you consider to be inappropriate behavior in the classroom?

c) How do you initiate discussions in the classroom? What strategies do you use? (e.g. controversial statements, questions, problems or cases, etc.)

d) What do you do if a student dominates a classroom discussion?

e) How do you deal with problem students in the classroom? (unprepared students, disagreeing students, struggling students, attention seeking students, rude students, discouraged students, etc.)

Appendix K: IRB Letter

USF UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA

RESEARCH INTEGRITY AND COMPLIANCE
Institutional Review Boards, FWA No. 00001669
12901 Bruce B. Downs Blvd., MDC035 • Tampa, FL 33612-4799
(813) 974-5638 • FAX (813) 974-7091

7/8/2014

Erhan Aslan, M.A.
USF Teaching and Learning
4202 East Fowler
Ave. Tampa, FL
33620

RE:	**Expedited Approval for Initial Review**
IRB#:	Pro00017919
Title:	The pragmatic competence of International teaching assistants

Study Approval Period: 7/8/2014 to 7/8/2015

Dear Mr. Aslan:

On 7/8/2014, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed and **APPROVED** the above application and all documents outlined below.

Approved Item(s):
Protocol
Document(s):
Study protocol

Consent/Assent Document(s)*:
Informed consent form.pdf

*Please use only the official IRB stamped informed consent/assent document(s) found under the "Attachments" tab. Please note, these consent/assent document(s) are only valid during the approval period indicated at the top of the form(s).

It was the determination of the IRB that your study qualified for expedited review which includes activities that (1) present no more than minimal risk to human subjects, and (2) involve only procedures listed in one or more of the categories outlined below. The IRB may review research through the expedited review procedure authorized by 45CFR46.110 and 21 CFR 56.110. The research proposed in this study is categorized under the following expedited review category:

(6) Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes.

(7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Your study qualifies for a waiver of the requirements for the documentation of informed consent as outlined in the federal regulations at 45CFR46.117(c) which states that an IRB may waive the requirement for the investigator to obtain a signed consent form for some or all subjects if it finds either: (1) That the only record linking the subject and the research would be the consent document and the principal risk would be potential harm resulting from a breach of confidentiality. Each subject will be asked whether the subject wants documentation linking the subject with the research, and the subject's wishes will govern; or (2) That the research presents no more than minimal risk of harm to subjects and involves no procedures for which written consent is normally required outside of the research context.

As the principal investigator of this study, it is your responsibility to conduct this study in accordance with IRB policies and procedures and as approved by the IRB. Any changes to the approved research must be submitted to the IRB for review and approval by an amendment.

We appreciate your dedication to the ethical conduct of human subject research at the University of South Florida and your continued commitment to human research protections. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please call 813-974-5638.

Sincerely,

Kristen Salomon, Ph.D., Vice Chairperson
USF Institutional Review Board