Martin Pütz
JoAnne Neff-van Aertselaer
(Editors)

Developing Contrastive Pragmatics

Interlanguage and Cross-Cultural Perspectives

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This collection of papers grew out of the 32nd International LAUD Symposium, held on March 27–30, 2006 at the University of Koblenz-Landau in Landau, Germany. A second accompanying volume edited by Istvan Kecskes and Laurence R. Horn (2007) appeared in the newly founded *Mouton Series in Pragmatics* (Mouton de Gruyter) and includes the keynote address by John Searle.

The conference was centrally concerned with intercultural pragmatics including linguistic, socio-cultural and cognitive perspectives. The goal of the symposium was to promote the understanding of interlanguage and intercultural competence by focussing on theoretical and applied pragmatics research that involves the use or the recognition of more than one language or language variety in a multilingual context and which extends to related disciplines such as communication science, psychology, sociology, anthropology, cognitive linguistics, second language acquisition, and bilingualism.

We would like to thank a number of people who contributed to this volume. First of all, many thanks are due to the participants in the symposium for the stimulating discussions in a very pleasant atmosphere, and to the contributors of the book, who have responded with alacrity and professionalism to all the requests that have been made of them. The contributions were selected for inclusion only after a lengthy process of refereeing and, in some cases, extensive revising. In this regard, we would also like to express a great debt of gratitude to the expertise of the many scholars who acted as our referees: Karin Aijmer, Laura Alba, Dorothy Chun, Jonathan Culpeper, Jean-Marc Dewaele, René Dirven, Angela Downing, Joaquin Garrido, Peter Grundy, Henriëtte Hendriks, Juliane House, Rosina Márquez-Reiter, Anne McCabe, Jacques Moeschler, Amanda Murphy, Jésús Romero, Francisco J. Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez, Maria Terkourafi, and Marjolijn Verspoor.

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The Editors
Martin Pütz (Universität Koblenz-Landau)
JoAnne Neff-van Aertselaer (Universidad Complutense, Madrid)

Introduction: Developing contrastive pragmatics

Martin Pütz and JoAnne Neff- Aertselaer

Pragmatics as a usage-based perspective on the language sciences such as linguistics, the philosophy of language and the sociology of language essentially focuses on the exploration of language use and the users of language in real-life situations and, more generally, on the principles which govern language in everyday interaction. Pragmatics therefore studies language as realised in interactive contexts and, consequently, as the creation of meaning in online discourse situations. At the beginning of this new century we are now witnessing a move away from overwhelmingly monolingual and monocultural research paradigms to a type of research which finds its objectives in the multilingual and multicultural interaction of speakers from different national, ethnic, and racial backgrounds. Thus in the era of globalization, communication is destined to become increasingly cross-cultural because it involves interactants who have different cultures, different conceptualisations, and different first languages, and who use a grammatically common language or lingua franca, but a pragmatically highly diversified instrument of communication representing, not only different cultures, but also different norms and values.

All 15 articles included in the present volume focus on pragmatic issues in the study of second language acquisition, i.e. the systematic research into the teaching and learning of second or foreign languages and its pedagogical implications. Furthermore, the main focus of attention will be on a contrastive perspective taking account of the learner's mother tongue (L1) and her target language or language variety (L2). The acquisition of pragmatic competence, i.e. to comprehend and produce a communicative act or speech act in a concrete speech situation in a second language, is considered a most difficult task for the L2 learner. Therefore, pragmatic issues such as the role of speech acts, conversational implicatures, facework and identity, discourse strategies in speaking and writing as well as politeness phenomena will be explored from a cross-cultural perspective focussing on contrastive patterns of pragmatic concepts and features. In recent years, there has been a growing interest in how people in different languages and cultures observe a certain pragmatic principle or how culture-specific pragmatic failures may

occur. In this vein, Contrastive Pragmatics investigates the pragmatic principles people abide by in one language or language community in contrast to how these principles may govern linguistic interaction in another language.

Reflecting the various approaches employed in studying contrastive pragmatics, this book is organized into three sections:

(1) Intercultural Pragmatics and Discourse Markers;
(2) Interlanguage Pragmatics: Strategies and Identity in the Foreign Language Classroom;
(3) Development of Pragmatic Competence in Second Language Acquisition: Focus on "Requests".

Most of the papers include empirical analyses of the performance of 'linguistic interaction' from a cross-cultural perspective involving at least two languages or language varieties.

Section 1: Intercultural Pragmatics and Discourse Markers

Intercultural Pragmatics explores the interaction between insights from pragmatics and from intercultural communication, all in relation to the roles and functions of language and communication in a world-wide communication network. The articles in this section focus on the importance of cultural norms and values inherent in the differential uses of pragmatic utterances (oral and written) as well as on discourse markers in accordance with cultural preferences. The authors make use of various theories and methods such as cognitive linguistics, sociolinguistics and discourse analysis. Most of the articles entail didactic and pedagogical implications geared towards an improvement of pragmatic and intercultural competence in the foreign language classroom.

In her programmatic article, **Anna Wierzbicka** confronts the reader with the question of whether the exclusive reliance on English as a source of conceptual tools is the best way in which intercultural pragmatics can serve the cause of world-wide understanding. Her paper argues that it is not, because English itself carries with it a great deal of cultural baggage, and so comparing communicative norms and cultural values through English leads inevitably to an Anglocentric bias. Wierzbicka offers an alternative to the use of English as a tertium comparationis by proposing her well-established NSM (Natural Semantic Metalanguage) model which as an auxiliary language (i.e. mini-language) matches the lexical and grammatical core of all languages. NSM English can be used to explain norms and values to ordinary interac-

tants and thus to advance the cause of intercultural communication and world-wide understanding.

From a cognitive linguistics perspective **Sabine De Knop** argues for an incorporation of real-life situations in the EFL classroom which are said to follow from a culture's experiences in past and present life. Cognitive pragmatics, therefore, is concerned with the study of the linguistic aspects of language use within the theoretical framework of cognitive science. By discussing examples taken from the nominal and verbal sphere of pragmatics as well as from case morphology, the author shows that the experience of socio-cultural reality is organized by speakers of different languages (here German and French) in different categories and conceptualizations, a fact which should be investigated and exploited for the purpose of FLT. Therefore, "to learn to think in a foreign language" can only be achieved with a cognitively and experientially rooted approach to language understanding and description.

Likewise, **Svetlana Kurteš** uses a cognitive linguistics approach to explain the interaction between grammar, pragmatics and culture specific processes of conceptualisation. More specifically, her paper addresses a segment of verbal reflexivity and middleness, as can be observed in a set of related verbs in Serbo-Croat, i.e. so-called '*se*-verbs' as discourse markers which constitute a multifunctional grammatical device. She then discusses the pragmatic principles underlying the rules of usage of this grammatical segment and proposes ways of introducing it into language teaching curricula and relevant pedagogical materials. She also argues for a recognition of Wierzbicka's 'cultural scripts' in foreign language teaching enabling the learner to interpret messages in terms of their underlying cultural norms and values. Thus, although her contribution does not directly focus on pragmatic features and markers in the foreign language classroom per se, her proposed framework nevertheless can yield contrastively valuable results which can be applied to language pedagogy.

JoAnne Neff-van Aertselaer and Emma Dafouz-Milne's study is to be seen as part of a larger project which aims to describe Spanish EFL students' pragmatic competency. It contrasts, quantitatively and qualitatively, texts written by editorialists in both English and Spanish with those used by novice writers, i.e. Spanish EFL and American university students. Specifically, the authors explore the role of interpersonal (e.g. devices to express certainty or doubt) and textual metadiscourse (logical markers, sequences, topicalizers, illocutionary markers, etc.) in persuasive texts. The results showed that rhetorical practices vary according to cultural preferences and

that, generally, metadiscourse markers can be regarded as indicators of cultural differences in argumentative texts. In the case of the EFL students, their limited competency in academic English may hinder them from choosing more appropriate textual and interpersonal strategies.

Augustin Simo Bobda's article shows that, despite a sustained effort to expose learners to a diversified spectrum of culture-specific features, current ELT materials still show a marked imbalance in favour of the Anglo-American and other Western cultures thus highlighting the dominance of English and neglecting issues of intercultural communication. In this respect, Africa is conspicuously marginalized. The author therefore pleads for the recognition of "cultural guidelines" to assist the English user in Africa, with special reference to Cameroon. Some pragmatic features of the local cultural background are to be taken into consideration, such as the African family (i.e. kinship terms), the importance of interactional language (e.g. greetings), and class-consciousness (e.g. address terms). These domains are discussed in the light of an analysis of culture-specific words and phrases by means of a cognitive approach (in terms of salience) supported by corpus analysis.

Section 2: Interlanguage Pragmatics: Strategies and Identity in the Foreign Language Classroom

Another focus of research in pragmatics is learner language or interlanguage, defined as the study of non-native speakers' use and acquisition of linguistic patterns in a second language. This section discusses research into interlanguage pragmatics, i.e. the use and development of pragmatic competence by non-native speakers. More specifically, it addresses the way L2 learners comprehend and produce a speech act in a target language and investigates how their pragmatic competence develops over time. Various articles included in this section focus on facework, indirect complaints and the speech act *humor*, as they constitute important pragmatic strategies in the foreign language classroom. Other articles deal with bilingual usage in classroom peer-group talk involving the use of code-switching and code choice as various pragmatic means of constructing linguistic and social identities.

Doris Dippold discusses the concepts of *face* and *facework* as important aspects of interlanguage pragmatics and specifically of Brown and Levinson's politeness theory. Based on data gathered through argumentative conversation tasks performed by learners of German and by native speakers of German and English in their respective languages, the article shows that

learners of German construct their conversational identities (i.e. the giving and taking of opinions) rather differently from native speakers of German. If the learners' development is measured based on target language norms, the researcher may run the risk of reducing learners to only one of their identities. As a result of her study, the author suggests that within the concept of 'communicative competence' researchers in contrastive pragmatics include/adopt the term 'interpersonal competence', defined as the 'interlocutors' ability to negotiate which strategies are appropriate, even though they may not match up to native speakers' competence.

The concept of 'identity' is taken up by **Constance Ellwood**, whose paper contributes to the under-researched area of 'indirect complaint' strategies. By making use of an ethnographic study among French and Japanese students, the paper discusses relationships between different uses of code-switching and student identities in an intercultural communication setting in an Australian university. A number of indirect complaints or acts were identified such as resistance and/or solidarity, rejection of an implied identity (imposed by the teacher), or expressing frustration with the students' own ignorance (acts of resistence). The author proposes that awareness of these uses can draw teachers' attention to students' major identity concerns in language classrooms: cultural identity, student identity, and an international identity.

Bilingual and bicultural identity also play a role in **Elin Fredsted**'s article which reports on bilingual language use among adolescents in the Danish-German border region involving Standard German, Standard Danish and South Jutish as a Danish-Jutish dialect. The data cover different situational contexts and speech activities (interviews, classroom dialogues, group tasks, conversations) where pragmatic devices such as code choice and code-alternation are used with social and interactive intentions, e.g. to negotiate language and culture, to position oneself in the class, or to construct 'otherness'. The author concludes that the Danish minority schools practise a less tolerant language policy than the German ones, in which code-switching is generally tolerated and a regional bi-culturality is practised.

Manuela Wagner and Eduardo Urios-Aparisi present results of a study carried out in concrete situations and role plays in the foreign language classroom. They focus on the speech act of 'humor' as a well-researched topic of pragmatic investigation hardly acknowledged in second language acquisition research. The questions addressed here are which types of humor were used by the instructor and the student, how the humor affected classroom interaction, and what kind of uptake those kinds of humor had on ei-

ther the student or the instructor. Two important functions of humor in the foreign language classroom are pointed out by the authors: (i) it can lower student anxiety (due to the discrepancy between their cognitive ability and their linguistic skills), and (ii) it represents content to be acquired in order to become skilled interlocutors in the target language. Data are drawn from Spanish and German classes of various degrees of proficiency at university level.

Section 3:
Development of Pragmatic Competence in Foreign Language Learning: Focus on "Requests"

The studies in this section aim to contribute to the growing literature on the development of pragmatic competence of L2 learners with particular attention to the illocutionary act of *requests* and their cultural significance. A single utterance such as a request can, and often does, serve a number of illocutionary acts and without requests it would be difficult for the learner to function effectively. As the various studies suggest, sources of intercultural misunderstanding are particularly revealing in regard to requests as intrinsic face-threatening acts. Some authors demonstrate that learners when producing requests rely heavily on L1 based pragmatic knowledge which then influences target language norms with negative transfer as the outcome. One of the primary goals in the language classroom is, therefore, to sharpen the learner's awareness of appropriate cognitive and social behaviour through explicit teaching strategies in order to further and strengthen metapragmatic competence.

Most of the researchers included in this section use discourse completion tasks (DCT) as their basic methodology, although others gather their data from informal interviews and questionnaire surveys. Some papers also examine students' knowledge and understanding of L2 pragmatic features in conjunction with positive/negative pragmatic transfer from their first language (L1).

Helen Woodfield presents findings from an empirical study of responses to written discourse completion tasks eliciting *requests* in English by Japanese and German ESL learners and British English native speaker graduate students. The study reveals that differences between the ESL learners and English native speakers were evident in the nature of request perspectives employed and the range of linguistic strategies for internally mitigating the head act. Overall the paper suggests that even at relatively advanced levels, ESL learners may operate with a limited range of linguistic strategies in

formulating appropriate speech acts and may benefit in instruction from awareness-raising tasks aimed at developing their pragmatic competence. Moreover, sociocultural transfer was evident as a significant influence in the planning processes of the Japanese learners in formulating appropriate politeness strategies.

In the same vein, **G. Bahar Otcu and Deniz Zeyrek**'s study examines how Turkish adult learners of English perform *requests* and compares them to native speakers' usage. Their investigation reveals a number of interesting findings: for example, as regards external modifiers, the overall picture is that the learners' and the native speakers' use do not show large variations. The most frequently used modal in the request head acts (RHA) was *can* for the learners whereas the native speakers used *could* most frequently, rendering *can* as a less frequently used modal for requests. The results of their study has important developmental implications: lower proficiency level learners simply rely on formulaic utterances which they have been introduced to before, whereas learners with an increased proficiency level are more liable to show pragmatic transfer, given the fact that now they have the linguistic resources for transfer.

The concept of 'transfer' is centrally taken up in the article by **Zohreh R. Eslami and Aazam Noora**. Using data from Persian learners of English the authors examine the transferability of *request* strategies to corresponding English requests contexts. A process-oriented approach was undertaken in order to explore the various conditions under which pragmatic transfer operates. The Persian request strategies were found to be differentially transferable and the learners' transferability perception was not significantly influenced by their L2 proficiency. As a result, the transferability of the L1 request strategies seemed to be influenced by the interaction between the politeness encoded in the strategies and the degree of imposition involved in the requestive goal.

Berna Hendriks also shows that *requests* can be regarded as potential areas of pragmatic failure in intercultural communication. The purpose of her study is to gain insights into the production of requests in relation to perceptions of situational factors by Dutch learners of English as compared to native speakers of English and native speakers of Dutch. Respondents were asked to formulate oral requests in response to situations that varied along three dimensions: power distance, social distance and context. Findings indicate that the English native speakers, the Dutch native speakers and the Dutch learners were very much alike in their choice of request strategies, but that they varied in the linguistic means that they used to modify their

requests. The learners generally included both fewer and less varied syntactic modifiers and fewer and less varied lexical/phrasal modifiers in their requests than the native speakers of English.

Anne Barron's paper is designed to address a research gap in the study of intra-lingual pragmatic variation. The study concentrates on the level of directness used in requesting in Ireland and England. Specifically, it takes the case of regional variation and investigates the realisation of *requests* focussing on the language pair of Irish English and English English. The study reveals similarities in the two cultures on the level of the strategy and also in the choice of modifiers. The overall analysis, however, shows that the head act is less direct in the Irish culture, with clear differences being found in the levels of upgrading and downgrading employed and in the particular distribution of the internal modifiers used.

One issue in interlanguage pragmatics which has received relatively little attention is the pragmatic development of university students who are studying at foreign universities. In this regard, **Gila Schauer** examines the productive pragmatic development (i.e. request strategies) of German learners of English at a British university over a period of one academic year, as well as German learners of English in Germany and British English native speakers studying at a British university. Specifically, she is interested in developments in the request strategy use as well as on gains in their request strategy repertoire. In addition, the effect of the sustained sojourn on learners' productive pragmatic competence is discussed by comparing the results of the three participant groups.

It is hoped that the articles included in this volume on contrastive pragmatics will encourage further research into areas of language teaching and learning that have not yet received full attention. One area which merits additional study is that of the type of sociocultural experiences language learners might find most conducive to the learning of highly entrenched patterns of behaviour in response to commonly occurring discourse situations, or, those which can most effectively prime language learners with new sets of semantic associations (Hoey 2005). In this regard, a growing body of research (Achard and Niemeier 2004; Pütz, Niemeier and Dirven 2001) has been devoted to the underlying conceptual differences between the L1 and the L2 and the need to include "conceptual fluency" (Danesi 1995) as an objective for second language teaching. Only in this way will learners be able to comprehend how contextualization cues, built up through past experiences, help guide speakers'/hearers' interpretation of what meaning was intended. The papers included in Section 1 of this volume call attention to

the idea of making schemas evident to learners in instructional materials and various suggest pedagogical practices which would offer students opportunities to develop awareness of appropriate language behaviour.

The other side of the coin –the study of language attrition of both the L1 and the L2 and, with the language, the cultural identity, a process leading to assimilation– has been examined from a macro-level approach but not so thoroughly on a micro-level. Relatively little research has considered the effect of educational background, motivation or gender on language maintenance or attrition of languages on various linguistic levels. More recent works have begun to focus on the behaviour of people who actually use various languages in daily life and how choice becomes a factor in activating these various "cultural personalities" in different contexts (Pavlenko 1999). The articles included in Section 2 contribute to the increasing number of micro-level studies by addressing the strategies employed to validate identity in the foreign language classroom, and in particular the issue of the cultural identity of learners and their possible resistance to adopting the norms of another cultural context.

The return of language relativity to the forefront of SLA research (Kramsch 2004) raises the question of whether, given the diversity within speech communities, one can actually state that "strict norms" really exist and if they do, what the severity of the social sanctions accompanying pragmatic failures might be (following studies concerned with which types of errors most seriously hamper communication). One area that has not yet received much attention is the interface between levels of linguistic competency in the L2 (for example, the six broad levels of competency established by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) and the utilization of different pragmatic phenomena under study. Closely linked to the level of competency is the notion of stages in the development of pragmatic competence, especially in adult learners. In this respect, the studies included in Section 3 of this volume provide important insights into this relatively underdeveloped area of research.

The editors and authors offer this book as an invitation to contribute to the promising avenues for future research into the many SLA issues raised within the volume.

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Section 1.
Intercultural Pragmatics and Discourse Markers

A conceptual basis for intercultural pragmatics and world-wide understanding

Anna Wierzbicka

1. Introduction: Ethnocentrism parading as science[1]

I think that one of the greatest obstacles to world-wide understanding is ethnocentrism and that a particularly dangerous form of ethnocentrism is ethnocentrism parading as "science". This applies, in particular, to the humanities and social sciences, including psychology and psychiatry. Above all, given the current prominence of English in science (as well as in most other areas of contemporary life), it is common for the cultural assumptions associated with the English language to be absolutized as the voice of reason itself. Anglocentric assumptions presented by Anglo scholars as "rational" and "human" frequently become part of scientific paradigms widely used as a basis for research, generating in consequence equally Anglocentric results.

Sometimes scientists recognize this Anglocentrism in contemporary science themselves. For example, the medical practitioner and medical scholar Christopher Dowrick (2004) argues that the current status of "depression" as a medical condition is based on shaky foundations and has one of its main sources in the fact that "English emotional words [such as *depressed* and *depression*, A.W.] are raised to positions of apparent pre-eminence and universality because English currently has such a predominant position as the international language of science" (2004: 126).

Remarkably, what applies to medical science, psychiatry, psychology and so on, applies also to linguistics, and even more remarkably, pragmatics is no exception in this regard. The key position of the exceedingly Anglocentric "Gricean maxims" (and their various successors) in this field is a sad illustration of how pervasive this phenomenon has been, and still is, with exceedingly Anglo concepts and norms such as 'reasonable', 'relevant' and 'evidence' ("be reasonable", "be concise", "be relevant", do not speak without adequate evidence) being elevated to the status of universal human values. I discussed the Anglocentrism of "Gricean maxims" and their "post-Gricean" and "neo-Gricean" offspring in detail in the introduction to the second edi-

tion of my book *Cross-Cultural Pragmatics* (2003). Here I will illustrate the same phenomenon with a different set of examples.

In a recent article in the British magazine *The Week* (24 September 2005), in a rubric entitled "What the scientists are saying…" one finds the following:

> Old people tend to speak their minds because the part of the brain that keeps rude thoughts in check weakens with age, reports *Daily Mail*. They know what they are about to say will cause offence or embarrassment, but just can't help themselves. "It seems that young adults have a greater ability to hold their tongue than older adults in contexts where it is inappropriate to discuss personal issues", said psychologist Dr Bill von Hippel. For the study, researchers looked at how volunteers of various ages raised sensitive subjects, such as haemorrhoids, or weight gain, in conversation. They found people aged over 65 were far more likely to blurt out personal questions than those aged 18 to 25. Dr von Hippel says that this is because the frontal lobes of the brain, which deal with inhibition, are the last to develop (which is why children are tactless), and, as we get older, the first to shrink. "It doesn't lead to a person becoming less intelligent but it gives them less control over thought suppression".

If Dr von Hippel and his team were to study human communication in Russia, they could easily come to the conclusion that in the brains of Russian people the frontal lobes never develop at all, at least much less than in those of most Brits, Americans and Australians. As Russian literature vividly illustrates, in Russia people of all ages are likely to "blurt out" what Anglos might see as "personal questions" and "personal remarks", and the mechanisms for "thought suppression" appear to be greatly underdeveloped: it would seem that people just can't "hold their tongues" in the ways Anglos would expect them to do.

If von Hippel and colleagues were to read Russian literature, they might be struck to see how people in it tell each other the "truth" about their appearance, especially if they haven't met for a long time. Thus, in Chekhov's "Three Sisters" Maša (a woman in her twenties) greets Veršinin, an old acquaintance whom she hasn't seen for many years, as follows (Karl Kramer's translation, Chekhov 1997):

Oh, how you've aged! (Through tears). How you've aged!

Similarly, in "The Cherry Orchard" (Michael Frayn's translation), the middle-aged Ljubov' Andreevna tells the student Trofimov after a few years' absence:

What's this, Petya? Why have you lost your looks?
Why have you aged so?

And then she continues:

You were still only a boy before, just a nice young student. You're surely not still a student?

Ljubov' Andreevna is fond of the student, but if she feels only concern for "not hurting his feelings" (an English expression, not a Russian one) it does not get in the way of "telling him the truth" or "telling him what she really thinks". Ljubov' Andreevna's gentle, kind-hearted daughter Varya (a young adult) makes similar remarks to Trofimov – without any malice but simply in recognition of the truth:

Oh, but Petya, you've grown so ugly, you've aged so!

If we don't want to assume, straight away, that in most Russian people the frontal lobes of the brain, which deal with inhibition, are severely underdeveloped, we might prefer to question von Hippel's assumptions: is it really the frontal lobes of the brain which are responsible for dealing with inhibition, or is it rather some cultural norms, associated with the English language and Anglo culture?

At this point, some readers are likely to raise an eyebrow. "The English language"? "Anglo culture"? Don't we all know that there are numerous "English languages" around the world, associated with different, and ever changing, cultural traditions and norms?

As I have argued at length in my book *English: Meaning and Culture* (2006), to reject the notions of English language and Anglo culture altogether means to throw out the baby with the bath water. There is of course a great deal of variation, and also change, in the use of English around the world, but there is also an important and relatively stable core, and this core is not culturally neutral. This core, which I call "Anglo English", corresponds in essence to what Braj Kachru (1992) called "the English of the inner circle" – a term widely adopted in current sociolinguistic literature. As I have tried to show in many publications (e.g. Wierzbicka 2002, 2003, 2006), it is linked with a particular cultural tradition, which has its roots in the British Enlightenment, in the discourse of the Royal Society and in the writings of John Locke and other influential philosophers and writers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The legacy of this tradition can be found, inter alia, in some core English concepts, associated with such cultural key words as *mind, reasonable*, *right* and *wrong*, *evidence*, *fairness*,

etc., which I have analysed in detail in my book *English: Meaning and Culture* (see also Wierzbicka, To appear).

Again, there is of course a great deal of individual variation between different speakers of English (Anglo English). But there is also a shared linguistic and cultural core: they may differ in their individual attitudes, values and assumptions, but they also have a great deal in common. In particular, they share a familiarity with cultural key words of Anglo English such as *reasonable, evidence*, *fairness*, and *privacy*, and with the cultural assumptions encoded in their meaning.

I want to argue then that Anglo English – the language on which most contemporary science and popular science relies – draws largely on a stock of ideas and assumptions which are culture-specific and which tend to be absolutized by Anglophone writers in psychology, sociology, philosophy, etc. as the voice of "Science" with a capital S.

To say this is not to side with those in whose view science is, and will always be, a search for power rather than a search for truth (cf. e.g. Latour 1987); or those who claim that truth can never be reached because language is always in the way, since it always "bears the imprint of its user; the strain of his own affectivity and psychic structures" (Chiari 1975: 171, quoted in Fernandez Armesto 1998: 194–5). I am strongly in sympathy with Fernandez Armesto:

> No development of our times is more terrifying to those who hope to sustain the truth or revive it than the breakdown of confidence in the power of language to express it. Any certainties left unscathed by other disciplines have been declared inexpressible by philosophers of language. (…) We are left with dumbstruck tongues and hands too numb to write, despairing of ever saying anything true because language is trapped in self-reference, unable to reach reality, never expressing truth and, at best, only able to 'represent' it.

If I say, nonetheless, "beware of English", it is not because I believe that truth cannot be reached through English. I believe that if we do beware of English – as a language that bears the imprint of its users – we can learn to discern within English a universal core which is free from such imprints and can therefore be used for talking about the world in culture-independent ways. I will show how this can be done in section 3; first, however, let me comment briefly on the concept of 'culture(s)'.

2. Linguistic evidence for shared cultural understandings

When one speaks of "Anglo culture" or "Russian culture" one is often accused of "essentialism". I have sought to refute this accusation for many years, most recently in a paper entitled "In defense of culture" (Wierzbicka 2005a). Here, I will confine myself to emphasizing again that the meanings of words provide the best evidence for the reality of cultures as ways of living, speaking, thinking and feeling which are widely shared in a particular society. This applies in particular to everyday words which exist not only in dictionaries and in some specialized registers and genres but above all in everyday discourse, and which are linked with salient speech practices, conversational routines and cultural norms. Of course societies are not homogeneous and in every society there is a great deal of variation (across gender, generations, occupational groups, etc.). But there is also a degree of stability and unity. The point is that both the variation and the "shared understandings" can be studied, objectively and accurately, through the meaning of words and expressions.

Let me illustrate this, first of all, with the vitally important English word *privacy* (which will be discussed more fully in section 6). In his memoir *Boyhood: Scenes from Provincial Life* the Nobel-prize winner J.M. Coetzee (1997) writes about the key role that the Anglo notion of "privacy" played in his bilingual and bicultural life as a boy growing up in South Africa. For young Coetzee, "privacy" epitomized Anglo culture, linked with the English language, and the absence of this notion, and this value, epitomized for him the culture linked with Afrikaans, which he rejected with dread.

> The childhood in Prince Albert that he hears his father joking about with his brothers strikes him as no different from an Afrikaans life in Worcester. It centres just as much on being beaten and on nakedness, on body functions performed in front of other boys, on an animal indifference to **privacy**.
> The thought of being turned into an Afrikaans boy, with the shaven head and no shoes, makes him quail. It is like being sent to prison, to a life without **privacy**. He cannot live without **privacy**. If he were Afrikaans he would have to live every minute of every day and night in the company of others. It is a prospect he cannot bear. (p.126)

Many native speakers of English in England, United States, Canada, Australia or New Zealand would no doubt say, like Coetzee, that they "cannot live without privacy". No doubt many would also say that the need for

privacy is a fundamental human need: they live with this word, they rely on it in their thinking, and they take it for granted, like the air that they breathe.

And yet English is the only language in the world which has a word for the concept of 'privacy' – a fact which native speakers of English often find hard to believe. "Surely at least European languages like French and German would have a word for it?" Well, they don't, and bilingual dictionaries recognize this. For example, the best that the Collins-Robert English-French dictionary can offer for *privacy* is *intimité*, *solitude*, and Langenscheidt's English-German German-English Dictionary, *Zurückgezogenheit* (glossed in turn as 'retirement, seclusion') and *Privatleben* 'private life'. None of these putative equivalents comes anywhere near *privacy* as it is used in modern English, and, for example, none of them could be used to translate Coetzee's phrase "an animal indifference to privacy…" or the sentence "he cannot live without privacy".

I have asked John Coetzee what words the translators of *Boyhood* have used, and he told me that the French translator uses *être seul* (*le besoin d'être seul*, etc), the Italian translator uses *vita privata* and *intimità*, the German translator uses *die Privatsphäre*, and the Dutch translator uses the English word *privacy*, unitalicized, and that his Dutch-English dictionary gives *afzondering*, "which is really isolation" (personal communication, 2 February 2006).

Paradoxically, a language which could cope better with sentiments like those expressed in the Coetzee passage is Japanese – not because it has any "native" words comparable to *privacy*, but because of its great appetite for loans from English. The word *puraibashi* (the Japanese rendering of *privacy*) does not have anything like the full range of its English source, but it certainly approximates many of its core uses better than words like *intimité, solitude*, *Zurückgezogenheit* or *Privatleben*. Truly, nothing illustrates Herder's dictum that "every nation speaks … according to the way it thinks and thinks accordingly to the way it speaks" (1877–1913, v.21: 88) better than the English word *privacy*.

As the quote from Coetzee illustrates, in modern Anglo societies people often think about their own lives, and lives of others, in terms of 'privacy': the current meaning of the word *privacy* reflects a culture-specific way of thinking which has for an extended period been sufficiently wide-spread to have become lexically encoded, and moreover, to have become a household word – a word that Anglo/English speakers live with and live by. In a later section, I try to pin down the meaning of this word, and with it, some culture-specific ways of thinking widely shared in modern Anglo societies.

First, however, let me discuss some words and expressions from the article *What the scientists are saying*.

Consider for example the verb *to blurt out*, used prominently in that article. There is no word like *blurt out* in Russian (or, for that matter, in my native Polish). In a very limited range of contexts, *blurt out* could be rendered in Russian with the transitive and perfective verb *vyboltat'*, but *vyboltat'* is by and large restricted to unthinkingly revealing a secret, and, for example, it could not be used to translate *blurt out* in any of the following sentences from COBUILD:

> Resist the temptation to **blurt out** your tales of woe to everyone you meet.
> You don't have to **blurt out** everything you're thinking--there is a place for tactful gentleness in all human relations. If you try, you can probably find something optimistic to focus on.
> In the presence of a star, some people ask for an autograph; some, more impressionable, scream or faint; and some, like commentator Nancy Slonim Aronie just **blurt out** the first thing that comes to mind.
> "I don't bloody well believe you then," I **blurt out**.

The fact that there is such a word in modern English reflects certain cultural assumptions – assumptions which von Hippel attributes to the human brain. Using a mini-language known as the "Natural Semantic Metalanguage" (to be discussed shortly), we can articulate these assumptions along the following lines:

- it is not always good to say to another person what one is thinking
- when one wants to say to another person what one is thinking
  it is good to think about it before one says it

The idea that it is not good to say the first thing that comes to one's mind without considering it first, appears to have been well established in Anglo culture from the eighteenth century, as the following quotation from the OED illustrates:

> Sometimes people will blurt out things inadvertently, which if judgement had been awake it would have suppressed. (Tucker 1768)

The word *suppressed* in this quotation echoes von Hippel's phrase "thought suppression". Of course different speakers of English may have different views as to whether it is good or bad to "suppress one's thoughts", but the view that it may often be advisable to do so has been sufficiently widely accepted among the speakers of English in the last two or three centuries to have become lexically encoded: the word *to blurt out*, which used to mean

(as the OED puts it) "to emit the breath eruptively from the mouth" and "to utter abruptly, and as if by a sudden impulse", with time came to include in its meaning a negative evaluation of an "impulsive" way of speaking. For example, the *Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary* (1991) defines this meaning as follows: "if you blurt something out, you say it without thinking first about the consequences, often with the result that you regret it, e.g. *he blurted it out before I had the time to stop him*".

To anyone familiar with Russian culture it can hardly be surprising that there is no word in Russian comparable to the English *blurt out*. In Russian culture, saying spontaneously what you think at a given moment, without thinking about the consequences, tends to be considered as a very good thing, not a bad thing (although of course it was not possible to follow this norm in Soviet times). Obviously, even in Russia not everyone would agree, but a sufficient proportion of Russian speakers must have seen such spontaneity as a virtue for the ideal of "iskrennost'" to emerge in Russian culture and to become lexically encoded. The word *iskrennij* (roughly, 'sincere and spontaneous' at the same time) is a cultural key word in Russian, used to praise an impulsive and spontaneous way of speaking.

In fact, Russian has many words and expressions for praising the ways of speaking anathematized by Anglo scientists like von Hippel and disapproved of, so to speak, by the English lexicon and English phraseology. This applies, in particular, to the area of potentially hurtful and offensive remarks, linked by von Hippel with underdeveloped or shrunk front lobes of the brain.

As the piece in *The Week* nicely illustrates, in Anglo culture there is a widely-shared norm prohibiting so-called "personal remarks", which can be expected to be offensive or embarrassing; and there is a concomitant assumption that people who make such remarks usually make them impulsively, "thoughtlessly", thus showing insufficient control over the expression of their thoughts. Von Hippel speaks here of "rude thoughts", but evidently what he means is "rude remarks": what is at issue is control over one's words, not over one's thoughts. Indeed, the expressions *personal remarks* and *rude remarks* are set phrases in English whereas the expression *rude thoughts* is not.

The Anglo cultural norm proscribing "personal remarks" as "rude" can be illustrated with a quote from *Alice in Wonderland*. When the Hatter, who "had been looking at Alice with great curiosity", remarks: "Your hair wants cutting", Alice responds "with some severity": "You should learn not to make personal remarks…; it's very rude".

Russian has no expressions corresponding to *personal remarks* or *rude remarks*, as it has no word corresponding to *blurt out*: as the examples from Chekhov illustrate, there is no widely shared norm in Russian culture against making what are known in English as “personal remarks”, just as there is no norm against saying what one thinks about the addressee or against speaking spontaneously, without any sustained effort at “thought suppression” or “thought control”. On the other hand, linguistic evidence suggests that considerable value is placed in Russian culture on speaking the truth and saying exactly what one thinks.

As I have discussed in my paper on Russian cultural scripts (Wierzbicka 2002), from an Anglo point of view, the insistence on saying truthfully what one thinks, characteristic of Russian discourse, may often seem extreme, even excessive. Aren’t all those Russians who cherish and practise this value aware that they may hurt other people’s feelings?

Russian expressions like *rezat' pravdu v glaza* (‘to cut the truth into somebody's eyes’) and sayings like *Pravda glaza kolet* (‘truth stings the eyes’) show that in fact Russians are well aware of the painful effect that truth-telling may have on the listener. Yet the same expressions and sayings also suggest that telling the truth may stand higher in the hierarchy of values than any consideration for the interlocutor's feelings. For example, the expression *rezat' pravdu v glaza* does not suggest at all that it is bad to throw the "cutting truth" into one's interlocutor's eyes (usually a truth expressing a negative moral evaluation of the interlocutor's actions or person).

Furthermore, linguistic evidence suggests that it is seen as good, rather than bad, to speak to another person *bez obinjakov*, that is, without any "soft padding" or "wrapping" around an unpleasant or painful message; it is good to speak *prjamo*, that is, "straight." One example from Chekhov's play *Ivanov* (1997) (my translation):

> Nikolaj Alekseevič, forgive me, I'll speak openly [*prjamo*, lit. ‘straight’], without beating about the bush [*bez obinjakov*]. In your voice, in your intonation, not to mention your words, there is so much soulless selfishness, so much cold heartlessness.... I can't tell you, I don't have a gift of words, but—I profoundly dislike you!

To which the addressee, evidently also concerned about the truth, replies:

> Maybe, maybe . . . You may be seeing more clearly because you're looking at it from the outside. Probably, I'm very, very guilty. . . . You, doctor, don't like me and you're not hiding it. This does you credit [lit. it gives honor to your heart].

As we saw earlier, it is not only a concern for moral truth that can make people speak "straight", "without wrapping", it can also be a simple desire to say to another person what one is currently thinking — for example, about the addressee's appearance.

This doesn't mean, needless to say, that Russian culture doesn't place any value on "not hurting people's feelings", but rather, that it places a greater value on saying, truthfully, what one thinks. Again, in saying this, I am not speculating about Russian "national character", or indulging in idle stereotyping (as the Swiss linguist Patrick Sériot (2005) recently accused me of doing), but describing the hierarchy of values reflected in the Russian language. The absence in Russian of expressions like *personal remarks* and words like *blurt out*, and the presence of positively charged words and expressions like *prjamo* ('straight'), *otkrovenno* ('openly') and *bez obinjakov* ('without soft wrapping') shows how this hierarchy of values differs from that reflected in English.

Von Hippel's idea that before their frontal lobes shrink normal human beings don't ask "personal questions" would also be amusing – if it were not such a good illustration of extreme ethnocentrism parading as "science". Memoirs of Anglo travellers are full of stories about "natives" asking their age, earnings, marital status, reasons for not being married or not having children and so on, often combined with the assumption that those who ask such questions must be savages.

In fact, the phrase *personal questions* – like the phrases *personal remarks* and *rude remarks* – is part and parcel of "Anglo" English; and it reflects a cultural norm which is part of a particular historical formation. I will return to the meaning of the expression *personal questions* and to the cultural norm associated with it in section 5.2.

As these preliminary examples illustrate, cultural norms relating to ways of speaking differ from one speech community to another, and while there can be a great deal of individual variation, there are also in each case some "shared understandings" (cf. Quinn and Strauss 1997) embedded in the lexicon itself. These shared understandings can of course change, but this too is reflected in language: new "shared understandings" lead to the emergence of new expressions (such as, for example, *personal questions* and *personal remarks* in modern English), and above all, new meanings (such as the pejorative meaning of the English word *to blurt out*).

As these examples also illustrate, English is not a culturally neutral language. Words and expressions like *blurt out*, *personal remarks* and *personal questions* are as culturally loaded as *reasonable, evidence, fairness,*

privacy, mind and so on (Goddard and Wierzbicka 2007). Like all other languages, English, too, is a cultural universe. And so are Singapore English, Sri Lankan English, Indian English, and Nigerian English. But “Anglo” English is not an exception: it, too, carries with it its own cultural baggage. Its cultural vocabulary is to a large extent “made in England”.

3. A conceptual lingua franca for intercultural pragmatics

Current research in intercultural pragmatics *“finds its research objectives in the multilingual and multicultural interaction of speakers from different national, ethnic, and racial backgrounds*” (see the “Call for Papers” for the Laud Symposium 2006). This is indeed where current research finds its objectives – but where does it find its conceptual tools? The fact is that most research in pragmatics (as in many other areas of humanities and social sciences) continues to find its conceptual tools in the conceptual vocabulary of English.

In the era of globalization, communication is becoming increasingly intercultural and it involves interactants “*who have different cultures, different conceptualisations, and different first languages, and who use a grammatically common language or lingua franca* [such as English]*, but a pragmatically highly diversified instrument of communication representing not only different cultures, but also different norms and values*” (see the “Call for Papers” for the LAUD Symposium 2006). But the question must be asked: in what **language** (and in what **conceptual vocabulary**) can those different norms and values be articulated? Is the exclusive reliance on English as a source of conceptual tools the best way in which intercultural pragmatics can serve the cause of world-wide understanding?

I want to argue that it is not, because English itself carries with it a great deal of cultural baggage, and so comparing communicative norms and cultural values **through English** leads inevitably to an Anglocentric bias. Many would say that such a bias, while real, is unavoidable. This paper argues otherwise and offers an alternative to the use of English as a tertium comparationis. This alternative can be called “NSM English”. “NSM” stands for “Natural Semantic Metalanguage” – a formal language based on empirically established semantic primes and intelligible through natural languages. Semantic primes are simple, indefinable meanings about sixty five of which can be found as the meanings of words or word-like elements in all languages. The English and, for comparison, Spanish exponents of these ele-

ments can be found in Table 1. Comparable tables can be drawn for other languages; and several have been drawn in the book *Meaning and*

Table 1. Universal Semantic Primes – English and Spanish exponents

Substantives:	I, YOU, SOMEONE/PERSON, SOMETHING/THING, PEOPLE, BODY	YO, TU, ALGUIEN/PERSONA, ALGO/COSA, GENTE, CUERPO
Relational substantives:	KIND, PART	TIPO, PARTE
Determiners:	THIS, THE SAME, OTHER/ELSE	ESTO, LO MISMO, OTRO
Quantifiers:	ONE, TWO, MUCH/MANY, SOME, ALL	UNO, DOS, MUCHO, ALGUNOS, TODO
Evaluators:	GOOD, BAD	BUENO, MALO
Descriptors:	BIG, SMALL	GRANDE, PEQUEÑO
Mental predicates:	THINK, KNOW, WANT, FEEL, SEE, HEAR	PENSAR, SABER, QUERER, SENTIR, VER, OÍR
Speech:	SAY, WORDS, TRUE	DECIR, PALABRAS, VERDAD
Actions, events, movement, contact:	DO, HAPPEN, MOVE, TOUCH	HACER, PASAR, MOVERSE, TOCAR
Location, existence, possession, specification:	BE (SOMEWHERE), THERE IS/EXIST, HAVE, BE (SOMEONE/SOMETHING)	ESTAR, HAY, TENER, SER
Life and death:	LIVE, DIE	VIVIR, MORIR
Time:	WHEN/TIME, NOW, BEFORE, AFTER, A LONG TIME, A SHORT TIME, FOR SOME TIME, MOMENT	CUÁNDO/TIEMPO, AHORA, ANTES, DESPUÉS, MUCHO TIEMPO, POCO TIEMPO, POR UN TIEMPO, MOMENTO
Space:	WHERE/PLACE, HERE, ABOVE, BELOW, FAR, NEAR, SIDE, INSIDE	DÓNDE/SITIO, AQUÍ, ARRIBA, DEBAJO, CERCA, LEJOS, LADO, DENTRO
Logical concepts:	NOT, MAYBE, CAN, BECAUSE, IF	NO, TAL VEZ, PODER, PORQUE, SI
Augmentor, intensifier:	VERY, MORE	MUY, MÁS
Similarity:	LIKE	COMO

Notes:

- primes exist as the meanings of lexical units (not at the level of lexemes)
- exponents of primes may be words, bound morphemes, or phrasemes
- they can be formally complex

- they can have different morphosyntactic properties, including word-class, in different languages
- they can have combinatorial variants (allolexes)
- each prime has well-specified syntactic (combinatorial) properties.

Universal Grammar (Goddard and Wierzbicka eds. 2002[2]). Together with their combinatory properties, the elements listed in the table can be seen as a universal mini-language – NSM. This mini-language has as many versions as there are languages; so there is NSM French, NSM Russian, NSM Malay, NSM Japanese; and so on. And there is NSM English.

Thus, NSM English is a mini-language derived from English but unlike "normal" (full-blown) English, matching the lexical and grammatical common core of all languages (as it has emerged from more than two decades of empirical cross-linguistic investigations). As the paper seeks to demonstrate, and as many other NSM publications have sought to demonstrate earlier (cf. in particular Goddard and Wierzbicka eds. 2004, 2007), NSM English can be used to describe and compare different communicative norms and cultural values without the inevitable bias inherent in the use of "normal" English. It can also be used to explain those norms and values to ordinary interactants and thus to advance in practice, as well as in theory, the cause of world-wide understanding.

All versions of NSM – English, Spanish, Malay, and so on – are culture-free, and so they can all be used for the elucidation of ideas across languages. Arguably, however, given the realities of the world today, it is NSM English rather than NSM Malay or NSM Spanish, which can be used as the most practical auxiliary lingua franca for cross-cultural comparisons and intercultural training. I stress: not a lingua franca for international communication, but a lingua franca for cross-cultural comparisons and intercultural training. I will elaborate this distinction in the next section.

4. English NSM as a culture-free "nuclear English"

It is a truism to say that, as the doyen of English studies in Britain Randolph Quirk (1981) put it quarter of a century ago, "the world needs a single medium for international communication", and that "the best current candidate" for this role is English. But what kind of English? Here, opinions differ, and the view appears to be gaining ground that it cannot be "ENL", that is, English spoken as a native language in countries like Britain and USA, and that

as Barbara Seidlhofer (2001:133) puts it, it is "inappropriate and counter-productive" to tie teaching English world-wide "to native speaker norms", given that English is now used most extensively as a global lingua franca, "largely among 'non-native' speakers".

But how exactly can English become an effective medium for international communication if it is not to be tied to any particular norms, including "native speaker norms"? Where would the (relative) stability (which is the prerequisite of intelligibility) come from if there were no shared code of communication?

Quirk's own proposed solution was the creation of "nuclear English" – an English trimmed to the bone and freed from its historical and cultural baggage, "easier and faster to learn than any variety of natural (full) English", and at the same time "communicatively adequate" (Quirk 1981: 155).

> Culture-free as calculus, with no literary, aesthetic or emotional aspirations, it is correspondingly more free than the 'national Englishes' of any suspicion that it smacks of linguistic imperialism or even (since native speakers of English would also have to be trained to use it) that it puts some countries at an advantage over others in international communication. Since it is not (but is merely related to) a natural language it would not be in competition for educational resources with foreign languages proper but rather with that other fundamental interdisciplinary subject, mathematics.

Is a "nuclear English" as described here by Quirk a real possibility or just a linguist's dream? In my view, a language meeting **all** the criteria of Quirk's "Nuclear English" is indeed a linguist's dream rather than a real possibility, and the fact that in the intervening twenty five years Quirk himself apparently did not seek to implement his programmatic idea suggests that he, too, may have reached this conclusion. At the same time, a language which meets **some**, though not all, of Quirk's criteria is in my view not only a real possibility but a reality: the English version of the Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) is nothing other than a "nuclear English" – a subset of "full English", easy to learn, and culture-free as calculus, with no literary, aesthetic or emotional aspirations, and for some purposes (though by no means all), communicatively adequate.

Gabriele Stein (1979: 68), to whom Quirk refers with approval, says about "Nuclear English" (as originally envisaged by Quirk) that "its vocabulary is conceived of as self-contained: with the items included it will in principle be possible to express whatever one wants to express". In a sense (to be clarified below), this condition is met by the Natural Semantic Metalan-

guage, in any of its versions: Spanish, Russian, Malay, and of course also English.

Does this mean that NSM English, that is, the English version of the Natural Semantic Metalanguage could serve as a medium for international communication? Here the answer is of course: no – certainly not in the sense in which Quirk hoped his Nuclear English could be. According to Quirk, "the emblematic consumers of Nuclear English should not be seen as Indonesian children in a village school room, but as a Italian and Japanese company directors engaged in negotiating an agreement" (p. 156). I don't imagine that Italian and Japanese company directors could negotiate an agreement in the English (or any other) version of the Natural Semantic Metalanguage, that is, in a mini-language with just sixty or so words.

The key question about any "nuclear English" – and any language of international communication – is the question about the vocabulary. Quirk avoids this question altogether: "Reluctantly ignoring issues in the lexicon, let me ponder a little on seeking appropriate nuclei in grammar" (p.156).

But if "issues in the lexicon" are ignored, the whole project of creating a nuclear English for international communication can be no more than a promisory note, utopian and lacking in substance. A "culture-free calculus" must be based on *universal* human concepts (otherwise, it will be culture-bound, not culture-free), and as decades of empirical investigations carried out with the NSM framework have shown, there are only sixty or so such concepts. This is not enough for negotiating international agreements between Italian and Japanese company directors.

Declaring his reluctant disinterest in the lexicon, Quirk refers the reader to Gabriele Stein's (1979) article "Nuclear English: reflections on the structure of its vocabulary". But sensible as Stein's reflections are, the soundness of the argument cannot make up for the absence of an empirical basis. For example, she proposes as "culture-free" lexical items for the hypothetical "nuclear English" words like *female, brother*, and *sister*, that is words which are in fact exceedingly culture-specific: most languages of the world don't have a word corresponding to *female* (covering women and girls as well as bitches, cows, mares, hens, etc.); and numerous languages don't have words covering both elder brothers and younger brothers, or elder sisters and younger sisters, the distinction between older and younger brothers and sisters being often culturally very important. As these examples illustrate, a "nuclear English" based on the speculations of native speakers rather than on extensive cross-linguistic investigations is bound to reflect ethnocentric preconceptions rather than being a desired "culture-free calculus".

A genuinely "culture-free" nuclear vocabulary cannot exceed the set of word meanings which constitute the intersection of the vocabularies of all languages. As NSM publications such as the Special Issue of *Intercultural Pragmatics* (Goddard and Wierzbicka eds. 2004) show, such a minimal (but truly universal) vocabulary is sufficient for the elucidation of culture-specific concepts encoded in "full" natural languages, including Anglo English. It is not sufficient, however, for tasks like negotiating international agreements, conducting business negotiations, safeguarding human rights or coordinating anti-terrorism or disaster-relief operations on a global scale.

Thus, agreeing with Quirk that the world needs a single medium for international communication and that the best current candidate for this role is English, I cannot agree that a nuclear, culture-free subset of English could fulfil such a role: only a much richer, larger subset of English could do that, and such a larger subset could not be "culture-free". In particular, culture-specific concepts like 'negotiations', 'compromise', 'deal', 'agreement', 'dialogue', 'efficiency', 'evidence', 'commitment', 'deadline', 'probability', 'performance', 'competition', 'opportunity', 'feasible', 'reasonable' and 'fair' are unlikely to disappear from English-based international communication, and it is ironic that they often crop up in the very passages in which their authors denounce the "unfair" position of (Anglo) English in the world today. Quirk's own use of the words *negotiate* and *agreement* in the sentence referring to the "emblematic consumers of Nuclear English" is very characteristic in this regard, as is also the use of words like *unreasonable* in Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas' (1999) bitter attack on "Englishisation" of the world ("it is unreasonable to expect that Danes, Catalans or other users of English as a second language use English supremely well. The dice are loaded against them (…) and native speakers often seem to be unaware of this." (1999: 33).

As this paper seeks to illustrate, a culture-free "nuclear English" (in the form of NSM) can play a useful role in the contemporary world as a universal cultural notation for elucidating meanings, ideas, assumptions, and so on. Ordinary international communication, however, for which speed is as important as accuracy, requires a language closer in scope to full natural languages, and such a language cannot be entirely culture-free.

Three quarters of a century ago in his paper on "The function of an international auxiliary language" Edward Sapir (1949 [1931]: 113) wrote:

> What is needed above all is a language that is as simple, as regular, as logical, as rich, and as creative as possible; a language which starts with a minimum of demands on the learning capacity of the normal individual

> and can do the maximum amount of work; which is to serve as a sort of logical touchstone to all national languages… . It must, ideally, be as superior to any accepted language as the mathematical method of expressing quantities and relations between quantities is to the more lumbering methods of expressing these quantities and relations in verbal form. This is undoubtedly an ideal which can never be reached, but ideals are not meant to be reached: they merely indicate the direction of movement.

Obviously, the Natural Semantic Metalanguage in its English (or any other) version does not look like what Sapir had in mind because with its sixty or so lexical items it is poor rather than rich. In many other respects, however, it fits Sapir's requirements for an ideal auxiliary language amazingly well. It is simple and can do maximum amount of work with a minimum of demands on people's learning capacities, and it can indeed be regarded as a logical (or cognitive) touchstone to all natural languages.

This brings us back to the question of language and truth. To quote Fernandez Armesto again, "To a philosopher seeking truth, the limitations of language seem like a tiresome obstacle. If natural language does not suffice to convey meaning precisely, it ought to be possible to construct an alternative language (…) free of ambiguities or cultural alterations – or a metalanguage in which the limitations of language can be contemplated without self-reference" (1998:197).

As colleagues and I have sought to demonstrate, the Natural Semantic Metalanguage can be seen as such an alternative language; and while it has, potentially, thousands of versions (as many as there are languages), one of these versions – the English one – has also the value of being a practical option in the world today. This privileged position of NSM English has of course nothing to do with any inherent superiority of English – a notion that we emphatically reject. The reason is simply that English has now become, to a large extent, a global language.

Thus, the warning formulated earlier – "Beware of English!" – can now be refined and supplemented with a more positive message: let's beware of Anglo English and let's not mistake it for the language of the human mind; at the same time, however, colleagues and I argue that we can trust NSM English – a faithful representation of the conceptual intersection of all natural languages, and at the same time, a practical global auxiliary lingua franca.

To reiterate the main point, NSM English can serve as such an auxiliary lingua franca only because it is divested of all cultural and historical "idio-

syncrasies" of "normal" English, which to many monolingual and monocultural speakers of English are simply invisible.

What is most important in the present context is that being (like any other version of NSM) culturally neutral, NSM English can serve as a cultural notation for cross-cultural comparisons and explanations. It cannot serve as a full-fledged language of intercultural communication but it can serve as a language of cross-cultural comparisons and intercultural training. In what follows, I will illustrate how NSM English can be used for such purposes with examples drawn from the same area on which von Hippel and his colleagues based their startling claims cited earlier. I will start with the Anglo conceptual category of "personal questions".

5. *Personal questions* and some related expressions

5.1. The key word *personal* and its collocations

The word *personal* is a cultural key word in contemporary English and it enters several common collocations, such as, for example, *personal opinion, personal belongings, personal choice, personal decision, personal appearance, personal hygiene, personal letter*. Aside from *personal opinion* and *personal choice*, which are the most common and the most culturally loaded of them all and deserve a separate study, those most important in the present context are *personal questions* and *personal remarks*, which I will discuss in this section. I will also touch here on the expressions *for personal reasons*, *personal issues, personal matters*, and *personal space*. In all these expressions the word *personal* functions, one might say, as a signal: "keep off", "don't intrude", "private territory". As we will see in section 6, they all express meanings related to the Anglo cultural value of 'privacy' and they are associated with a whole family of interrelated cultural scripts. I will start my discussion of this family of scripts with the script linked with the expression *personal questions*.

5.2. *Personal questions*

The concept of "personal questions", which is very important in contemporary Anglo culture, is linked with a cultural norm which as a first approximation can be formulated very simply: "don't ask personal questions". But

what exactly are those "personal questions"? Trying to answer this question, I will adduce here first of all some citations from the COBUILD corpus, to illustrate how the expression *personal questions* is used in contemporary English. As these examples illustrate, English speakers are very conscious of the cultural implications of the phrase *personal questions*: obviously, this phrase reflects, and appeals to, some shared cultural understandings.

> But it was not Oliphant's way to intrude with **personal questions**.
> The star then began a series of the most intrusive **personal questions**.
> …out of Ramon's character and past: Did he have a drug problem? Was he a chronic liar? What was his real criminal record? Had he left a trail of kited checks behind him back in the United States? When Ramon began to protest at his detailed, highly **personal questions**, Kevin patiently explained to him that in front of a jury and a good defense lawyer, Ramon's virtues were going to be a good deal less evident than his failings would be.
> Rick was full of questions about Dan and me. How long had we been together? Why had we never married? Was Rachel planned? Hang on, I thought. We are still at the stage in our relationship when we should be talking about what music we like. Now here I was, answering **personal questions** and being interrogated about bloody Dan, of all people.

As these examples also illustrate, there is really no finite list of questions that count in Anglo culture as "personal questions": what links all "personal questions" is, above all, the fact that they are questions about the addressee, and also that they refer to matters which can be regarded as "private", that is, matters which do not belong to public knowledge and which are not accessible through public sources of information.

But of course the words *public* and *private*, which I have just used in this preliminary explanation, are also part of the Anglo/English conceptual vocabulary and don't have semantic equivalents in most other languages of the world and so would not be intelligible to cultural outsiders. Using NSM English, we can explain the norm in question in the form of the following cultural script:

[A] The cultural script against asking *personal questions*
[many people think like this:]
some things are like this:
    not many people can know these things about other people
    if they don't know these other people well
it is not good if someone wants to know things like this about another person
    if they don't know this other person well
it is bad if someone says to another person about something like this:

"I want to know this about you
because of this, I want you to say it to me"
if they don't know this other person well

Arguably, the norm reflected in this script is related to (and implicitly contrasted with) the Anglo cultural norm which encourages free exchange of information (cf. Eades 1982, Goody 1978): in general, if one doesn't know something one needs to know, one can ask, and Anglo children are encouraged to do so. For example, one asks directions in the street, one can ask what time it is, one can ask when the last bus left, and so on; and to do so, one doesn't need to know the addressee at all. As the expression *personal questions* indicates, however, not **all** kinds of questions are culturally permissible: "personal questions" are not.

Formula [A], which articulates a "local" cultural norm in universal human concepts, is an example of what is known in NSM literature as "a cultural script". As this example illustrates, the content of a cultural script can be complex and culture-specific. In particular, the script presented here includes the assumption that there are some "kinds of things" that not many people can know about other people if they don't know these other people well. To many cultural outsiders, such an assumption will be no doubt unfamiliar, perhaps even strange. Nonetheless, the way it has been presented here, this assumption will be intelligible – and with it, the whole cultural script.

5.3. *For personal reasons*

The expression *for personal reasons* is usually used by someone who withdraws from some public or collective activity and doesn't want to be pressed for explanations. Typically, it collocates with verbs like *to retire, to withdraw, to resign* and *to leave*, as in the following examples from COBUILD:

> "It was a tough decision not to go on the tour, but I have discussed it with a few people and it's the right decision for me," Larson said. "I'll say it was **for personal reasons** and leave it at that."
>
> The orchestra was curtly informed by Shaw that, **for personal reasons**, Miss Norman was withdrawing. Everyone was flabbergasted: no further explanation has ever been provided, and it was extremely difficult to find another singer at short notice.
>
> Last night McGovern would only confirm the news, saying: 'I have resigned from the club **for personal reasons**. I have nothing more to add'.

> Father Joe quit his job at Coventry's St Mary's Church last year. But he has still not quit the priesthood. Church leaders at the Birmingham Archdiocese say Father Joe simply told them he was taking time off **for 'personal reasons'**. They have not heard from him since and say they had no idea he was living with a married woman.

Using NSM English, we can articulate the message sent by this expression like this:

for personal reasons
[I don't want to do this anymore]
I know that many people can want to know why I don't want to do this anymore
I don't want to say it
people know that some things are like this:
  not many people can know these things about a person
  if they don't know this person well
this is something like this
because of this, I don't have to say it

As the examples cited earlier illustrate, the expression *for personal reasons* can be used in reported speech as well as direct discourse, but it invariably refers to speech. For example, a sentence like "She resigned for personal reasons" clearly implies that this is what she said (and if used in an explanation offered by a third person it is often given in quotation marks). Thus, *for personal reasons* is an established speech routine, a ready-made tool for fending off unwanted questions (which could be seen as "personal questions").

5.4. *Personal issues* and *personal matters*

The expression *personal issues* also refers to things that a person normally doesn't want and is under no obligation to discuss with many other people. Some examples from COBUILD:

> He's now serving back but I'm still getting harassed letters phone calls and it's all basically to do with emotional blackmail on **personal issues** that he knows I've confided in him.
> Advertisement: WOMEN'S THERAPY GROUP: A place to work on **personal issues**, gain help in coping with transitions, change dysfunctional patterns, nurture self esteem, learn to love your inner child.

> Women who work in a man's world may welcome the camaraderie of all women being together, finding it a relief to talk about **personal issues** and themselves in the company solely of other women.
> Self-exploration, in some form, of **personal issues** related to illness and loss should be included in one's training experience, regardless of discipline.
> Generally, it is risky for clinicians to use self-disclosure as a vehicle for working through unresolved **personal issues**.
> This process (…) needs to be sensitively balanced with family needs for confidentiality regarding **personal issues.**

Without entering into a detailed analysis of the meaning of the expression *personal issues* and of the underlying cultural assumptions, I will note that the examples above refer to “confidentiality” and to the need to “address”, “work through”, or “resolve” any “personal issues” through “self-exploration” and through talking to carefully selected others. All such “issues” appear to involve things which are not of the kind that not many people who don’t know a person well can know about this person. Furthermore, the expression *personal issues* implies that when a person thinks about these things, this person can feel something bad because of this, and that because of this, this person may – for a long time – not want to think about these things. Thus, for others to ask someone about their “personal issues” may be even “worse” than to ask them “personal questions” of other kinds. The two cultural norms are clearly related to each other, and also to the norm which discourages inquiring about someone else’s “personal reasons”.

Another expression similar to *for personal reasons* and *personal issues* in its “hands-off!”-implications is *a personal matter* (or *personal matters*). Like *for personal reasons*, it can be used in direct discourse to fend off unwelcome questions, but like *personal issues*, it can also be used in other contexts. Some examples from COBUILD:

> From the couple’s cosy two-storey mews house in Islington, north London, new partner Lise said yesterday: Angus insists this is a **personal matter** and will not be making any statement.
> Yesterday a Buckingham Palace spokesman said: (…) I cannot comment on his rent. It is a **personal matter** and he will not speak on it.
> “Did Mr Stevens ever mention her to you?” “No, I don’t think so,” Remmers said. “However, there was no particular reason why he should. Our own relationship wasn't such that **personal matters** were discussed.”
> As in any group process, disclosure of **personal matters** will need time to reach a comfortable level.

> Peter Powell refused yesterday to reveal if he had been in touch with estranged wife Anthea since her split from Grant. Powell (…) said: "I never make any comment about **personal matters**, especially Anthea and myself."

In these examples, too, the implications are that people don't normally want to, and don't have to, talk about things described as "personal matters" to people who don't know them well.

In all these examples, the expressions *a personal matter* and *personal matters* are not purely descriptive but imply certain cultural scripts, including the following one:

[B] Cultural script concerning *personal matters*
[many people think like this:]
some things are like this:
    not many people can know these things about a person
    if they don't know this person well
if a person says to another person about something like this:
    "I want to know this about you
    because of this, I want you to say it"
this other person can say: "I don't want to say anything about it"

In fact, the phrase "I don't want to talk about it" is virtually a set phrase in English (there are numerous examples of it in the COBUILD corpus, including a book title and a song title) and it always implies a "personal" matter (more often than not, a "personal issue"). One example in COBUILD dots the "i": "I don't want to talk about it 'cos it's personal", but in most of the other ones it is simply implied.

5.5. *Personal remarks*

Turning now to the expression *personal remarks* (or *a personal remark*), it is used in English in three different senses. The first sense can be illustrated with the following example from COBUILD:

> Last night Government insiders distanced themselves from Mrs Jones's remarks. A source said: These were the **personal remarks** of a backbench MP and do not form part of policy.

Roughly speaking, the expression *personal remarks* indicates here that in making those remarks, the MP wanted to say what **she** thought, not what the Government thought. Often, *personal remarks* in this sense is used (perhaps

somewhat jocularly) in titles of books, essays, newspaper columns and the like, to indicate that the author is expressing a purely "personal" point of view – only their own, not anybody else's, and possibly idiosyncratic. Some random examples from Google:

On the homepage of the US Coast Guard one finds a personal narrative by one of the first US aviators – his personal recollections describing his time at the Naval Aviation Training Station at Pensacola, Florida – under the title "Pensacola: Personal Remarks by Eugene A. Coffin, Senior". On the pages of the journal *Current Dialogue*, published by the World Council of Churches, one finds an essay by Krzystof Skuza entitled: "Poland – the lost plurality: Some personal remarks on the religious plurality in Poland". In the on-line publication of the "Lutheran Church of Messiah" one can find a feature called "Paul's Personal Remarks Page". And so on.

While the first sense of *personal remarks* refers to the speaker and contrasts the speaker, implicitly, with other people, the second sense refers to somebody else (usually the addressee), and contrasts this other person, as an unsuitable topic for discussion, with things (issues etc.) which should be discussed instead. For example, in a book about the rules of parliamentary procedure, the American parliamentarian Doris Zimmerman (1997) gives the following "basic rule": "Personal remarks in debate are always out of order. The presiding officer must rule all personal remarks out of order." Similarly, the American legal manual (Williams 2004), in a chapter on "Ethics in the workplace", instructs all supervisors and managers: "Behave civilly and avoid personal remarks". The Municipal code of the City Council of Hamilton, Montana (2004) stipulates: "No personal remarks". The free on-line encyclopedia called *Wikipedia* in its instructions for contributors warns: "Avoid personal remarks". Examples could be multiplied. Used in this sense, the expression *personal remarks* refers to some negative comments about another person (usually, but not necessarily, the addressee) made in a public setting, where abstract matters rather than persons are expected to be discussed. To some extent, it is an English counterpart of the Latin expressions *ad personam* and *ad hominem*.

Whereas both the first and the second sense of *personal remarks* imply, in different ways, a public context, the third sense usually applies to a situation involving two private individuals. This third sense can be illustrated with the following passage from COBUILD:

> Binge-eating usually starts between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four. It may occur for one or more of the following reasons: i) Social pressures to be slim (including a phase of anorexia nervosa) ii) An upsetting incident or

> **personal remark** iii) A major stressful event or adverse circumstance. Many sufferers have anxieties about fatness sparked off during their adolescent years by a **personal remark** concerning their shape, size or weight. They may be overweight or simply think they are fat and develop a dislike for their body shape or size.

Here, the phrase a *personal remark* refers, roughly speaking, to a negative comment made by someone about another person's body. In the example from *Alice in Wonderland* quoted earlier, the Hatter says about Alice, in her presence, "Your hair wants cutting", and Alice points out to him, "with some severity", that "making personal remarks … is very rude". Had the Hatter said to Alice, "Your hair looks lovely", this would not have been a "personal remark" but a "compliment". Had he said to her "You seem dumb", this would have been a "rude" remark, but not a "personal remark": it appears that the category of "personal remarks" in that third sense of the term has to refer, specifically, to the addressee's body – usually, to their appearance, but possibly also to the body odour, bodily sounds, and the like.

Compliments can be inappropriate, and someone might conceivably call a crass compliment "a personal remark". Generally speaking, however, the fixed phrase *personal remarks* targets negative comments about the addressee's body. For example, St. Patrick's Senior National School in Skerries, Ireland, has an "Anti-bullying Code", which states, first: "Our School Community will not tolerate unkind, hurtful or insulting remarks", and then follows this general rule with one targeting, in particular, "personal remarks":

> When good-natured banter extends to **personal remarks** about appearance, clothing of personal hygiene or involves references of an uncomplimentary nature to members of one's family, it assumes the form of bullying.

Here, all kinds of critical comments are categorized as, potentially, a form of "bullying", but unfavorable comments about another person's body ("appearance, clothing, personal hygiene") are singled out for special attention as "personal remarks".

Thus, unfavorable comments about the addressee's body are singled out in contemporary Anglo culture as the target of a distinct cultural norm. Like the norm proscribing "personal questions", the norm proscribing "personal remarks" in the sense under discussion applies to people whom one doesn't know very well: one cannot make "personal remarks" about one's spouse, children or siblings. For example, if a husband said to his wife: "Your hair

wants cutting" or "You have put on weight", these could be hurtful remarks, but not "personal remarks".

So the "personal remarks" rule is a rule about how "not to talk to people whom one doesn't know very well", as well as a rule about how not to talk about the addressee. But while "personal questions" refer to something hidden, "personal remarks" can refer to something obvious, such as the addressee's current appearance. Furthermore, "personal remarks" (in the relevant sense) are always critical, whereas "personal questions" can be perfectly neutral.

Trying to account for all these aspects, we could propose the following Anglo cultural script:

[C] Cultural script against making *personal remarks*
[many people think like this:]
if someone doesn't know someone else very well
it is bad if they say something bad about this other person's body to this other person

It is precisely this cultural script which is violated, unwittingly, by Russian speakers in sentences such as those quoted earlier from Chekhov's plays: clearly there was no corresponding cultural script in Russian culture in Chekhov's time (and it appears that there is none today either; cf. Wierzbicka 2002).

The Anglo rule against making "personal remarks" about the addressee's appearance (etc.) can be seen as a special case of a more general Anglo rule about criticising the addressee, which I will discuss in a later section (section 7). Linguistic evidence suggests, however, that it is also seen as a rule in its own right.

5.6. *Personal space*

The Oxford English Dictionary defines *personal space* as "the physical space immediately surrounding someone, into which encroachment can feel uncomfortable or threatening". The use of the expression *personal space* in contemporary English can be illustrated with the following examples from COBUILD:

> **Personal space**, privacy and independence in old age are not luxuries. They are rights to be defended.

> The hard-pressed Japanese are used to living with very little **personal space** either in their tiny houses, at work or on their public transport systems whereas the Australian sheep farmer considers that a neighbour who lives ten miles away is almost encroaching on his territory.
> The eyes and thoughts of others seem to invade your **personal space**, making you ill at ease.
> Gropers are sick and there is no reason why women should have to put up with them. No one has the right to invade a woman's **personal space**. The message is this: If you haven't been invited to touch then you DON'T touch.

As these examples illustrate, the expression *personal space* can apply to a wide range of phenomena, including, above all, people's perceived need not to have to be in a close proximity to others, and also their right not to be touched by others (without an invitation), not to be "stared at" by others, and even "not to be invaded by other people's thoughts", whatever this might mean. The words with which *personal space* often co-occurs include *encroach, invade*, and *privacy*, as well as *right(s), require*, and *need*. Thus, unlike *personal questions*, *personal remarks* and the other phrases discussed in this section, *personal space* appears to be linked with a cultural theme relevant to a whole range of cultural scripts rather than with one particular script.

In some contexts, the expression *personal space* can be used as a synonym for the English cultural key word *privacy*, in particular, when it is combined with the word *invade* or *invasion*. For example, as the two quotes below illustrate, airport surveillance has been described both in terms of "invasion of personal space" (quote 1) and "invasion of privacy" (quote 2):

> 1. Bad week for: **Personal space**, after the Government announced plans to introduce airport-style security checks, including body scanner, X-ray machines and frisking at railway stations. (*The Week*, 5 November 2005, p. 6)
> 2. The 'radar skin scanner' has been developed at a federally-funded laboratory in Richland, Washington, on the US west coast. (…) Cost and the fear of a row over **invasion of privacy** so far held production back, but **privacy issue** is expected to fall in the face of demands for tighter security in the wake of the Oklahoma City bombing. The machines map the body beneath clothes using an ultra-wideband radar, bouncing signals off the skin to produce a picture. (COBUILD)

To conclude the section on the Anglo cultural scripts associated with the key word *personal*, let me reiterate the point that expressions such as those discussed in this section provide linguistic evidence for certain shared understandings and values (shared, that is, by those belonging to the 'Anglo com-

munity of discourse'); and that these shared understandings and values can be explained to cultural outsiders through NSM, in particular (for practical reasons) through NSM English.

6. *Privacy*

The assumption that there is for every person a "private sphere" that people who don't know this person well don't know about and should not "intrude upon" is closely linked to the key Anglo cultural idea of "privacy" – an idea which can also be clarified for Anglos themselves and explained to cultural outsiders by means of NSM English.

The close links between the cultural scripts linked with the word *personal* and those linked with the word *privacy* are clearly visible in the example from COBUILD adduced in the previous subsection: "**Personal space**, **privacy** and independence in old age are not luxuries. They are right to be defended", and even more so, in the following one: "The government has accepted the Calcutt committee's argument that press intrusion into **personal privacy** should be restricted in three particular cases and intends to introduce three new criminal offences to curb on unwarranted **invasion of privacy**".

The noun *privacy* is of course related semantically and culturally to the adjective *private*, which is often used in English as a "keep-off" word, just as the word *personal* is. In fact, the two frequently co-occur and in some contexts, can be almost interchangeable. For example, whether a particular letter is marked by the word *private* or by the word *personal*, it is implied that it should not be read by anyone other than the addressee. On the other hand, a sign: "Private" on a door (implying "keep out") does not have its counterpart in a sign: "Personal". Like the adjective *personal*, the adjective *private* deserves, too, a detailed study, semantic, cultural and historical, but here I can only discuss *privacy*. I will try to argue that the word *privacy* has two distinct (though related) meanings in present-day English. Before trying to show what these meanings are, I will take back a step in time.

In the sixteenth century *privacy* meant something similar to the German *Zurückgezogenheit*. The *Oxford English Dictionary* (2005) defines this meaning as "the state or condition of being withdrawn from the society of others, or from public interest; seclusion", and it illustrates it, inter alia, with a quote from Shakespeare: "Of this my privacy, I have strong reasons" (*Troilus and Cressida* III, iii, 190). A fuller context of this quote shows that

privacy really does mean here something like 'seclusion' or withdrawal from a wider society. In the play, Ulysses deplores the fact that Achilles, apparently weary of public adulation, has withdrawn from the public arena and spends his time, lazily, in his own tent, in the company of his closest friend Patroclus. Ulysses reproaches Achilles for this and it is in this context that Achilles says "of this privacy I have strong reasons". Since he spends all his days with Patroclus, this is not solitude but withdrawal from the company of many people.

The meaning of *privacy* in that early sense of the word ($privacy_0$) can be explicated along the following lines:

$privacy_0$ (as in Shakespeare's use)
for some time, this person is somewhere where there are not many other people
because this person thinks like this:
"at this time, I don't want to be with many other people"

With time, however, the meaning of *privacy* changed. Evidence suggests that between the 16th and the 20th century there were a number of stages, but in any case when Coetzee speaks about life in prison as "a life without privacy" *privacy* means for him something different from what it meant for Shakespeare: it is no longer a matter of not being "with many other people", but a matter of being able to be somewhere by oneself, and – crucially – being able to do some things "in private", that is, without other people being able to know what exactly one is doing. Some examples from COBUILD:

> If you think your bathroom is a last bastion of **privacy**, think again. The 1995 Bathroom Tissue Report found 39 percent of Americans peek into medicine chests and cabinets in homes they visit.
> Interior design considers **privacy** within the unit, too. Wherever you are sitting, you cannot see into the other rooms. When you walk out of the kitchen or other rooms, all you see is a blank wall. We have been very careful with **privacy** issues and with sounds even to the toilet flush.
> The conditions for the police staff are also abysmal: cramped offices, converted office space for meals, and no **privacy**.
> Children's and guest rooms on the upper level are pulled back for **privacy** and to give direct access to the ground at the rear of the house.

What is particularly striking about such modern usage of *privacy* is that it is no longer a descriptive term (describing a human practice) but an ideological one: *privacy* is now a value, something that people want and need. Using NSM English, we can portray this meaning as follows:

[D] The cultural script for *privacy*$_1$
[many people think like this:]
it is good if a person can think about some places like this:
  "when I'm doing something in this place
  other people can't know what I'm doing
  if I don't want them to know it"
it is bad if a person can't think like this about any places

I have designated this meaning of *privacy*, which is related to particular places, *privacy*$_1$, because there is also another meaning in present-day usage: a meaning related to "personal information" in general (regardless of place). This is a more recent usage, which appears to have become common in English only in the twentieth century. Some examples from COBUILD:

> People [are] entitled to **privacy** in life if within the law. Events in the United Kingdom last week that reached our local press publicised the recent practice of 'outing' public figures in relation to their supposed sexual orientation.
> President Robert Mugabe yesterday appealed to the press for **privacy** about his reported relationship with a woman nearly half his age.
> **Privacy** provisions in the Health Services Act mean details of history cannot be revealed without consent of the patient.
> He disagreed that **privacy** rules governing lawyer and client could prevent disclosure of legal fees being paid for by the proceeds of crime.

This more recent, "informational" sense of *privacy* (*privacy*$_2$) and the associated cultural script can be represented in NSM English as follows:

[E] The cultural script for *privacy*$_2$
[many people think like this:]
some things are like this:
  not many people can know these things about a person
  if they don't know this person well
it is bad if a person can't think like this about things like this:
  "if some people don't know me well
  they can't know these things about me
  if I don't want them to know these things"

Roughly speaking, *privacy*$_1$ refers to "private activities" carried out in a particular place at a particular time (e.g. to what one might be doing at a particular time in the bathroom), whereas *privacy*$_2$ refers to "private life" (without reference to any particular place). But there are two other differences between the two.

First, the idea of *privacy*$_1$ does not draw a line between, on the one hand, one's family and close friends, and on the other, the "public" (many people who don't know us well). For example, a desire for "privacy" in the bathroom implies that one wants to be able to do some things in this place without being observed by anyone, not even by one's family members. On the other hand, a desire for "privacy" about one's "private life" does imply a line between those who know us well and those who don't. Typically, *privacy* in this second sense tends to be used either about public figures who want some aspects of their life to be precluded from "public view" or about confidential information acquired by professionals such as doctors and lawyers, who don't know us well and who often know some things about us only because we have trusted their professional discretion.

Second, the distinction between a "private place" (where one cannot be observed by anyone) and "private life" (which strangers normally can't know much about) is linked with a difference between a "need" and a "right". According to the cultural semantics of the (present-day) English language, everybody **needs** a "private place" and everybody **has a right to** a "private life". This is why I have included a positive component "it is good if a person can think like this" in the explication of *privacy*$_1$ but not in that of *privacy*$_2$: it is good if a person has "privacy" (*privacy*$_1$) in some places and bad if they don't; but in the case of "informational privacy", it is simply bad if a person doesn't have it: it is not a "good" which they can cherish but a "right" which they can demand.

The difference in the "deontic status" of *privacy*$_1$ and *privacy*$_2$ is reflected in their collocational preferences: *privacy*$_1$ tends to collocate with the words *intrude* and *intrusion*, and *privacy*$_2$, with the words *invade* and *invasion*. While "intruding" is bad enough, "invading" is much worse. For example, one can ask "Am I intruding?", but hardly "*Am I invading?" An "intrusion" can be excused, but an "invasion" can't.

It is true that both *privacy*$_1$ and *privacy*$_2$ can be subject to laws (so-called "privacy laws"). But not all violations and limitations of *privacy*$_1$ can be subject to public scrutiny and regulated by law (e.g. the lack of *privacy*$_1$ in a cramped apartment cannot), whereas "informational privacy" (*privacy*$_2$) can be seen as something that could, and should, be protected by law.

It is easy to see how the ideal of "privacy" in that second sense (*privacy*$_2$) is related to the cultural norm proscribing "personal questions". As we have seen, the expression *personal questions* implies that while there are some kinds of things that even strangers or semi-strangers can know about other people, there are also things of another kind, which are not similarly accessi-

ble to the public eye; and it signals a proscriptive rule: don't ask people whom you don't know well about things of this other kind. The word *privacy* (in the sense of *privacy*$_2$) relies on the same implicit distinction between two kinds of things, but instead of identifying a rule it identifies a right.

Finally, it should be noted that the two meanings of *privacy* described here as *privacy*$_1$ and *privacy*$_2$ can't always be distinguished in context, and that sometimes the speakers don't seem to want to distinguish them. In particular, the phrase *invasion of privacy* often appears to gloss over the distinction. Consider for example the following passages from COBUILD:

> Mr Braddy rejected a suggestion from a conference delegate cameras be placed in prison cells to prevent suicides. He said camera surveillance would be an unacceptable **invasion of privacy**.
> The High Court effectively outlawed police use of bugging devices in other investigations, including serial rapes and murders, or acts of terrorism, to **protect privacy**. The court found that under the present wording of the **Invasion of Privacy Act**, while the law authorised **invasion of privacy** by allowing, in certain circumstances, the monitoring and recording of conversations, it did not allow a judge to authorise conduct which would otherwise amount to trespass.

The reference to camera surveillance in the first example and to the use of bugging devices in the second indicate that the "invasion of privacy" occurs in a particular place. But a reference to the monitoring and recording of conversations suggests also a violation of "informational privacy", comparable to what is described in another COBUILD example as "prying into unauthorized files". It is possible that a third meaning of *privacy* is in fact developing: one which may refer either to a particular *place* or to some *information* acquired in a particular place, and which at the same time implies a right rather than a need. The matter requires further investigation.

7. Cross-cultural semantics, trans-cultural life-writing and world-wide understanding

In their article on "Inhibitory control of thoughts better left unsaid" published in the journal *Psychological Science*, von Hippel and Gonsalkorale (2005: 487) write:

> With all the inappropriate and unfriendly things that people think and say about each other (Rosnow, 2001), how is it that interpersonal interaction is so often positive? What enables translation of socially insensitive or inap-

> propriate cognition into pleasant interaction? One answer to this question focuses on the role of cognitive inhibition in social interaction. Specifically, it may be the case that effortful inhibition of inappropriate but prepotent responses is a critical cognitive component of social skill.

The observation that "interpersonal interaction is so often positive" and "pleasant" echoes the observations of many immigrants to English-speaking countries. The only difference is that the psychologists quoted here present this "positiveness" and apparent "pleasantness" as a feature of "human behaviour" in general, whereas the immigrants crossing linguistic and cultural boundaries see it as something specifically Anglo.

For example, Eva Hoffman, who emigrated with her family from Poland to North America at the age of thirteen, writes of her cross-cultural discoveries as follows:

> I learn that certain kinds of truths are impolite. One shouldn't criticize the person one is with, at least not directly. You shouldn't say, 'You are wrong about that', though you may say 'On the other hand, there is that to consider'. You shouldn't say 'This doesn't look good on you', though you may say, 'I like you better in the other outfit'. I learn to tone down my sharpness, to do a more careful conversational minuet. (Hoffmann 1989: 146)

The idea that there are new '"rules" of speaking in the new country surfaces in one cross-cultural autobiography after another, often accompanied by the same sense of wonder. It is a discovery which makes sense of the immigrant's personal experience. It is a lived truth, derived directly from his or her own experiences in the new country.

To say to another person "this doesn't look good on you" could certainly qualify, for many Anglo Americans, as a rude "personal remark". But there is no lexical category of "personal remarks" in Polish, and there is no corresponding cultural rule. Does this mean that in Poland interpersonal interaction is less "positive" than in Anglophone countries? I don't think that such a vague assertion would make much sense.

For example, while Polish culture – as reflected in the Polish language – doesn't have rules proscribing "personal remarks" or "personal questions", it has a core value of *serdeczność* (roughly, 'heart-felt warmth', from *serce* 'heart'), which has no lexical or cultural counterpart in English. Similarly, while Russian culture – as reflected in the Russian language – doesn't have rules proscribing "personal remarks" or "personal questions" it has a core value of *obščenie* (roughly, "communing with others through talk"; cf. Pesmen 2000, Wierzbicka 2003), which has no lexical or cultural counterpart in

English either, and as mentioned earlier, it has a value of *iskrennost'* (roughly, 'spontaneous sincerity').

The distinguished Russian linguist Aleksej Shmelev, author of a book entitled *The Russian Linguistic Model of the World* (2002) and co-author of another entitled *Key Ideas of the Russian Linguistic Picture of the World* (Zalizniak, Levontina and Shmelev 2005) has written (personal letter, written in response to my paper "Russian cultural scripts"):

> I agree that in Anglo culture there are many prohibitions on saying unpleasant things to people (and probably even stronger "prescriptions" for saying pleasant things). For example, I know that some of my Russian friends and acquaintances who have emigrated to the United States were misinterpreting refusals (to employ, to publish a paper, to give a grant for a project) as almost acceptance, precisely because the Americans tried to "sweeten the pill" (saying something like "we will get back to you", "we will be in touch with you again" etc.).

The evidence cited by Shmelev could of course be dismissed as "anecdotal" – were it not highly consistent with many cross-linguistic testimonies based on personal experience, and also with linguistic evidence such as, for example, the semantics of Russian words and expressions like *iskrennij* (roughly, 'sincere and spontaneous, therefore good'), *prjamo* (roughly, 'straight, therefore good') and *bez obinjakov* (roughly, 'without soft wrapping, therefore good'). The fact that Russian doesn't have colloquial counterparts of English expressions like "nice to meet you", "nice talking to you", "lovely to see you", and so on, provides further evidence for the reality of the differences between Russian and Anglo/English ways of speaking discussed by Shmelev.

At the same time, those "Anglos" who have lived in Russia would be the last to say that there is less "positive interaction" among Russians than among speakers of English (cf. e.g. Hedrick Smith 1976; Hobson 2001; Merridale 2000). But the unspoken rules which govern "positive interaction" in Russia are evidently different, in many ways, from those prevailing in America or in Britain.

The Anglo style of "positive human interaction" can be illustrated with a vignette from a cross-cultural novel by the English writer of Ukrainian origin Marina Lewycka (2005: 1). In the vignette the narrator's father, who is eighty four, announces by telephone that he is getting married (to a woman who is thirty six):

> My father's voice, quavering with excitement, cracked down the line.
> 'Good news, Nadezhda, I'm getting married'.
> I remember the rush of blood to my head. Please let it be a joke! Oh, he's gone bonkers! Oh, you foolish old man! But I don't say any of those things.
> 'Oh, that's nice, Papa', I say.

As it soon transpires, the woman has come from the Ukraine on a tourist visa and needs to marry someone quickly to be able to stay in the UK. The narrator's father tried first to help her ("save her") by finding a suitable young husband for her and approached two friends with unmarried sons. "They have both refused: they are too narrow-minded. He told them so, in no uncertain terms" (p.4).

The father's communicative style illustrates for the bicultural narrator a Ukrainian way of speaking, whereas her own style, seen through her bicultural binoculars, illustrates the Anglo way of speaking. Once again, cross-cultural personal experience brings here a testimony of different cultural styles and different unspoken "rules" of speaking. And here is another vignette from Lewycka's cross-cultural novel (another telephone conversation between the narrator and her father):

> 'Tell me, Nadezhda, do you think it would be possible for a man of eighty-four to father a child?'
> See how he always gets straight to the point? No small talk. No 'How are you? How are Mike and Anna? No chit-chat about the weather. Nothing frivolous will hold him up when he is in the grip of a Big Idea.
> 'Well, I'm not sure…'
> 'And if it is, Nadezhda', he rattles on before I can marshal my defences, ….
> 'Well now, Papa' (pause for breath, keep the voice cheery and sensible) ….

It would not be possible to try to articulate, within the confines of this paper, all the cultural scripts brilliantly evoked in this exchange, so I will note only a few points: on the Ukrainian side, the command "tell me" (noted also in Eva Hoffman's cross-cultural memoir), the absence of "How are you?" and of "small talk" (a theme in the Polish poet Stanisław Barańczak's cross-cultural poem "Small talk"), and the "going straight to the point" (all characteristic also of Polish and Russian immigrant English); and on the English side, the ubiquitous English "well" (the prime tool of the "inhibition" of unpremeditated thoughts, the prime "anti-blurting" device); and the deliberately "cheery" and "sensible" voice (described elsewhere in the book as "English voice" [which] "distances me from all the pain and madness", p.34).

A “cheerful” voice helps no doubt to keep the interaction “positive” and “pleasant”, and if this is desirable in relation to one’s father, it is of course all the more so in relation to people whom one doesn’t know well. Thus, when the narrator finally meets her old father’s young wife and thinks “Tart. Bitch. Cheap slut. This is the woman who has taken the place of my mother”, at the same time: “I stretch my hand and bare my teeth in a smile. ‘Hallo Valentina. How nice to meet you at last’.” (p.77)

Needless to say, the ritual formula “nice to meet you” has no counterpart in Ukrainian. At the same time, it is important to note that for Lewycka, Ukrainian is anything but a language associated with a deficit of “positive interaction”. For example, of her mother, now dead, she says: “My mother spoke to me in Ukrainian, with its infinite gradations of tender diminutives. Mother tongue”. (p.15)

What I want to emphasize here is that cultural rules operating in different countries and in different communities of discourse are much more specific than anything that could be captured with vague labels like “positive interaction” and that to capture them adequately we need more fine-grained analytical tools. As colleagues and I have tried to show for many years, the methodology of cultural scripts, which is an off-shoot of NSM semantics, provides such tools. For example, the difference in cultural styles illustrated – somewhat satirically – in the first of Marina Lewycka’s vignettes can be portrayed in NSM English in the following cultural scripts:

[F.] An Anglo cultural script (roughly, *don’t criticise the addressee if you don’t have to*)

[many people think like this:]
it is bad if someone says to another person something bad about this person
if they don’t have to say it

[G.] An Anglo cultural script (roughly, *don’t ‘blurt out’ negative thoughts about the addressee*)

[many people think like this]
if someone thinks something bad about another person
    when they are with this person
it is bad if they say it to this person
    if they haven’t thought about it for some time before they say it

[H.] A Ukrainian cultural script (roughly, *tell the addressee what you think about them*)

[many people think like this:]
if someone thinks something bad about another person

when they are with this person
it can be good if this person says it to this other person

By using the universal set of conceptual primes as our basic tool, we can give an account of different cultural scripts linked with different languages that is consistent with the experience of people crossing linguistic and cultural boundaries. We can show how rules of interaction in different communities of discourse differ because the set of universal concepts gives us a common measure for comparing such rules across language boundaries.

Cultural scripts describe cultural norms and values from within rather than from the outside, that is, from the point of view of those people who are the bearers of the postulated norms and values. At the same time, these unique norms and values are presented in a way which makes it possible to compare them: not through identical labels chosen from one language and applied across the board, but through identical building blocks available in all languages and combined in accordance with the same universal rules. As a result, the proposed formulas are both unique and comparable: each is qualitatively different from all others, and yet each constitutes a configuration of the same elements – non-arbitrary, universal, and universally understandable.

To quote from the Introduction to the *Special Issue on Cultural Scripts* of the journal *Intercultural Pragmatics* (Goddard and Wierzbicka 2004: 160):

> The accessibility and transparency of cultural scripts written in semantic primes gives them a huge advantage over technical modes of description when it comes to real-world situations of trying to bridge some kind of cultural gap, with immigrants, language-learners, in international negotiations, or whatever. There is no need to begin with a ''tutorial'' about collectivism vs. individualism, positive politeness vs. negative politeness, high context cultures vs. low context cultures, or other arcane academic concepts. Because cultural scripts ''interface'' more or less directly with simple ordinary language—in any language—they can be practically useful for the purposes of cross-cultural education and intercultural communication (cf. Goddard 2004).

As the piece in *The Week* quoted at the outset illustrates, current psychological literature on human interaction is often depressingly blind to conceptual and cross-cultural issues inherent in such study. For a further example, when Dunbar (2004: 109), in an article entitled "Gossip in evolutionary perspective", asserts that "gossip (in the broadest sense) is the central plank on which human sociality is founded" and that "the cognitive demands of

gossip are the very reason why such large brains evolved in the human lineage" he is taking for granted the cultural category of "gossip" as suggested to him by the English language. Similarly, when Rosnow and Foster (2005: 2) call for "empirical gossip research" they simply take for granted the English word *gossip* and assume that this is a valid analytical tool for analyzing human interaction in all societies.

There is much stress in such publications on "empirical research" but none on conceptual analysis or cross-cultural experience, without which studies into "human cognition" and "human interaction" tend to remain locked in monolingual and monocultural anglocentrism. They may seem scientific and objective (as when von Hippel and Gonsalkorale 2005: 497 describe an experiment run to study under what conditions "participants (…) offered an unappetizing food product (…) emit a negative response"), but they are, I believe, conceptually flawed.

In her monograph on cross-cultural autobiography Mary Besemeres (2002: 278) points out that "life-writing by language migrants can challenge the monolingual, monocultural assumptions of contemporary literary theory and philosophy of language alike, which are not concerned, as immigrants must be, with the impact of specific natural languages on actual lives: the most significant way in which language is constitutive of the self". As I have argued elsewhere (Wierzbicka 2005a, 2005b), life-writing by "language migrants" can also challenge the monolingual and monocultural assumptions of contemporary psychological theory. Above all, however, it should challenge the monolingual and monocultural assumptions of Gricean, post-Gricean and neo-Gricean pragmatics.

As von Hippel and Dunlop's (2005) reference to Brown and Levinson's (1987) book *Politeness: Some universals in language usage* illustrates, Anglo psychologists can take comfort, in their culture-blind enterprises, in the putative "universals of politeness" allegedly established by linguists. It is time that linguists themselves should clearly and unequivocally disavow any such Anglocentric "universals".

Let me finish with a quote from Cliff Goddard's recent paper on "Cultural scripts" from the online *Handbook of Pragmatics* (2006):

> Because cultural scripts written in semantic primes can be readily transposed across languages, including into the language of the people concerned, native speaker consultants can become involved in a very direct way with working and re-working cultural scripts. Native speakers from different cultures are often surprisingly interested in engaging in this kind of collaborative work, especially those who have had direct personal ex-

> perience of intercultural "cross-talk" and confusion. Of course, consultants need guidance and support in such work, if only because it is no easy matter to learn to express one's ideas solely within a controlled vocabulary and grammar of cross-translatable words. Even so, the intuitive accessibility of cultural scripts means that native speakers can at least read (or hear) them, that they can understand them, and that they can respond to them without the intervention and mediation of the analyst. Cultural scripts are therefore potentially empowering for native speaker consultants.

Since cultural scripts are jargon-free and interface more or less directly with simple ordinary language, they can serve as practical explanations when it comes to trying to bridge some kind of cultural gap in real-life situations, and thus can contribute in a real and tangible way to the vital matters of world-wide understanding.

Notes:

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2. The readers familiar with the NSM theory will note that the table of universal primes given here include two new elements which were not included in the 2002 book *Meaning and Universal Grammar*. Thus, the current set includes 63 elements.
3. Sometimes, the expression *personal remarks* is also used in a way which "confuses" the senses distinguished here as 2 and 3. For example, the American publication called "A Maine Magazine of Art and Opinion" has recently published a piece entitled "Personal Remarks" which includes the following passage:

    As a rule, Mainers do not indulge in **personal remarks**. (…)
    Over the years, Mainers have noticed that those "from away" do not always refrain from making **personal remarks**, and when this happens, we have the same response that Alice had with the Hatter. We think the remarks are very rude indeed.
    As this year's political season winds down and next year's big political season begins to lurch forward, I have been thinking of **personal remarks**. The presidential race has barely begun, and already Senator Kerry has been told his problem is that he looks French. **A personal**

> **remark**, if ever there was one, and completely irrelevant to Senator Kerry's qualifications as a candidate.
> Unfortunately, the political system abounds with people who make **personal remarks**.

In this passage, the expression *personal remarks* refers to a comment about Senator's Kerry's body, which in context would be interpreted as negative ("his problem is"). To that extent, this comment was analogous to the Hatter's comment about Alice. At the same time, unlike the Hatter's words about Alice, the comment was not addressed to the person in question, and the rule it violated was the rule against critical and irrelevant "personal remarks" in the public domain.

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Sociocultural conceptualizations: Schemas and metaphorical transfer as metalinguistic learning strategies for French learners of German[1]

Sabine De Knop

1. Introduction

Whereas traditional foreign language teaching mainly concentrated on language as an object, that is, on the transmission of grammatical rules and lists of foreign vocabulary items, today's modern language teaching rather concentrates on the language as a communication tool and aims for genuine and fluent communication in semi-authentic situations. Real-life situations are rooted in and follow from cultural experiences in past and present life. This is the dimension in foreign language teaching that cognitive linguistics is relevant for. By its usage-based orientation and its being rooted in gestalt psychology and phenomenology, it offers a possibility of perceiving and describing the layer of sociocultural experience in a scientifically motivated way. "Cognitive Linguistics approaches language as an integrated part of human cognition which operates in interaction with and on the basis of the same principles as other cognitive faculties" (Dirven 2004: 1).

On this cognitive view, extralinguistic reality is not an unstructured mass, but it is experientially structured as the result of coherent conceptualizations in diverse categories, each firmly based in larger domains of experience. Reality, that is the experience of reality, is organized by speakers of different languages in different categories: "We communicate the world as our language structures the phenomena of the world and categorises them as entities, processes, actions, space, time, etc. Consequently our general cognitive ability, as far as categorisation functions are concerned, interacts with our linguistic ability." (Dirven 1989: 57) If we postulate an interactive relationship between language and the process of categorization, which is a result of our conceptualization, then we can conclude that differences between languages reflect differences in conceptualization:[2] „formal differences between languages are symptomatic of differences in conceptualization." (Taylor

1993: 213). Categorization is not only or solely universal, but also and to a very large extent culturally specific, which means that more often than not it differs from one language to the other. This is particularly clear when we compare historically closely related conceptualizations in the Romance languages with those in the Germanic languages: Germans use a *Schraubenzieher* ('screwdriver', literally a "screwpuller"), which stresses the aspect of "pulling the screws", whereas French people use a *tournevis* which "turns the screws".[3] Even if the experience of the same reality is present in German and in French, often there is a major difference in the way this reality is focussed: French people speak of *danger de mort* ('danger of (finding) death'), whereas Germans talk of *Lebensgefahr* ('life danger'; 'danger of losing one's life'). Sometimes one particular language has linguistic signs for conceptualizations which are not expressed in the other language because they simply do not exist: In German we find linguistic signs like *hitzefrei* ('having time off from school or work on account of excessively hot weather'), *Adventsplätzchen* ('special cookies baked during Advent'), *das Räuchermännchen* ('wooden figure from East Germany which burns incense') or *die Weihnachtspyramide* ('Christmas pyramid', i.e. a kind of merry-go-round with the holy family driven by candles); there are no counterparts in French for these German signs (as we see there are no linguistic signs for these objects in the English language either).[4] Even if you try to explain or describe what these realities/objects are to French speakers, you will have many difficulties.[5]

This difference in the conceptualization and in the expressions of conceptualizations has implications for foreign language acquisition: The learner of a foreign language will have greater learning problems with the linguistic signs which reflect foreign categories not present in his own language or which reflect a different focus in the experiencing of reality; s/he will have to learn to view events in a different way. In his study in the classroom Danesi (1993) showed that students have indeed the greatest problems with "the foreign way of thinking": "According to Danesi (1993: 490), students often develop a high level of speaking proficiency in a second language, but they continue to think 'in terms of their native conceptual system: that is, students typically use target language words and structures as 'carriers' of their own native language concepts.'" (Lantolf 1999: 43) That's why Lantolf concludes: "Although it may be possible for people to develop an intellectual understanding and tolerance of other cultures, a more interesting question, perhaps, is if, and to what extent, it is possible for people to become cognitively like members of other cultures; that is, can adults learn to construct

and see the world through culturally different eyes?" (Lantolf 1999: 29-30) This is exactly the question this paper deals with. I will first try to show the difference in conceptualization between French and German for two different domains, one in the verbal sphere and one in case morphology, and I will further look for solutions for an easier acquisition of the differences.

2. The expression of motion and location in German and French

In the following we will see that there are major differences between French and German in the way the concepts of motion and location are expressed. Already in 1985 Talmy compared the expression of motion in different languages; his analysis mainly focussed on the comparison between Spanish and English. He came to the conclusion that Romance languages constitute a different type of language from other Indo-European languages (1985: 75), because they express the path of motion in a different way: Does a language privilege plain verbs, as Romance languages do, or is the path of motion expressed by satellites accompanying the verb – i.e. particles, prepositions,… – as in other Indo-European languages? This leads Talmy to differentiate between verb-framed and satellite-framed languages. Starting from this difference I will look at and compare examples from French (a Romance language) and German (a Germanic language).

2.1. Manner and path of motion as conceptualized in verb-oriented vs. satellite-oriented languages

According to Slobin (2000) each language verbalizes experience favoring one particular perspective: "The world does not present 'events' to be encoded in language. Rather, in the process of speaking or writing, experiences are filtered through language into verbalized events." (2000: 107) Romance and Germanic languages are different in the way they express motion and the path of motion.

2.1.1. Manner of motion

Whereas French uses the verb *aller* ('to go') in a more schematic or abstract way for any kind of movement or change of location, German obligatorily uses several linguistic signs and must differentiate between the way the

movement is taking place: *gehen* (*only on foot*), *fahren* (*by car, train or boat*), *fliegen* (*by air*).[6] As Talmy (1985), Slobin (1996, 2000) and many other researchers have shown,[7] French and other Romance languages tend to use more general verbs of motion and do not tend to specify the manner of motion, whereas Germanic languages incorporate manner specifications much more into the verb. This explains the difference between the following German and French sentences:

(1a) *Er rannte aus der Küche* ('He ran out of the kitchen');
(1b) *Il sortit de la cuisine* ('He came out of the kitchen').

The German verb *rennen* ('to run') expresses the manner of motion, whereas *sortir* ('to come/go out') expresses the very general movement of "exiting".

If there is a necessity or a wish to specify the manner of motion in French, the speaker will often use a gerund or adverbial constructions. Pourcel (2005) illustrates with a long list of English verbs expressing the manner of motion that often their translation into French is only possible when using a complex construction with *marcher* 'to walk'; some of her examples are: *to stalk – marcher d'un air digne ou menaçant; to tramp – marcher d'un pas lourd; to plod – marcher d'un pas lent; to stomp – marcher d'un pas lourd, bruyant; to tiptoe – marcher sur la pointe des pieds.* (2005: 4)[8]. A literal translation of the German sentence (1a) *Er ra-nnte aus der Küche* would then be: (1c) *Il sortit de la cuisine en courant* (general verb + gerund construction) or (1d) *Il sortit de la cuisine précipitamment* (general verb + adverb).[9]

2.1.2. Path of motion

For the expression of the path of motion Romance and Germanic languages also use different syntactic possibilities[10]. French for instance uses plain verbs: *traverser* ('to cross/to go over'), *sortir* ('to go out'), *entrer* ('to come in'),... whereas German requires satellites. Typical German satellites are prefixes with the verbs (so-called "Partikeln" in "Partikelverben"): *Wir gehen hinaus* ('we go out'), *wir kommen herein* ('we come in'), *gehen wir rüber ?* (= *über die Straße*) ('Do we go across?' = Do we cross the road ?). Prepositions expressing motion with prepositional groups accompanying verbs also belong to the so-called satellites: *aus* ('out of'), *durch* ('through'), *zu* ('to'), ... The following examples with prepositions illustrate the difference in the expression of the path of motion in French and German:

(2a) *Er rannte aus der Küche durch das Wohnzimmer zur Straße;*
(V) (SAT) (SAT) (SAT)
(2b) *Il sortit de la cuisine, traversa la salle de séjour pour aller à la rue;*
(V) (V) (V)
'He ran out of the kitchen through the living-room into the street'.

(3a) *Sie kamen aus dem Theater und gingen nach Hause;*
(V) (SAT) (V) (SAT)
(3b) *Ils sortirent du théâtre et rentrèrent ;*
(V) (V)
'They came out of the theatre and went home'.

(4a) *Die Athleten schwimmen ans andere Ufer;*
(V) (SAT)
(4b) *Les athlètes traversent le fleuve (en nageant) ;*
(V)
'The athletes swim to the other side (of the river)'.

Whereas German uses prepositional satellites (*aus der Küche,* 'out of the kitchen'*; durch das Wohnzimmer,* 'through the living-room'*; zur Straße,* 'to the street'; *ans andere Ufer,* 'to the other side of the river') to express the path of motion, French uses a series of plain verbs (*sortir,* 'to come out'; *traverser,* 'to cross'; *aller,* 'to go') which are far more general than the German satellites.[11] As we can see with the translations, English as a Germanic language is quite similar to German in the way it expresses the path of motion. We are now in a state to understand why Talmy makes a difference between verb-framed and satellite-framed languages.

The description of this difference can help to explain why some syntactic constructions are not common usage in some languages although they are lexically possible and fully correct. Germans for instance will say:

(5a) *Lass uns rübergehen* ('Let us go over [to the other side of the street]')
(path of motion expressed by the satellite *rüber*), rather than
(5b) *Lass uns die Straße überqueren* ('Let us cross the road')
(path of motion expressed by a plain verb, which is unusual in German).[12]

French speakers on the other hand speak of :

(5c) *Traversons la rue* ('Let us cross the road')
(plain verb for the path of motion).

2.1.3. The acquisition of motion expressions

Until now a contrastive linguistics approach showing this major difference between the Romance and the Germanic languages has been lacking in foreign language teaching. Cadierno (2004) also points to this deficiency in her paper about the expression of motion events in a second language: “The question of how adult second language learners come to express spatial relations in a second language is a rather neglected area within second language acquisition research” (2004: 13). We must now ask the question of what happens when speakers of the V-language French learn the SAT-language German. Our study with French speaking students shows a transference of some of the French lexicalization patterns when learning German: First, often a generalization about the manner of motion takes place instead of a differentiation; German sentences produced by French speakers often have the verb *gehen* ‘to go’ for all kinds of motion. Second, there is a tendency for French speakers to use full verbs to express the path of motion in German as we saw in the example (5b) – which does not reflect the patterns commonly used in German. As French teachers of German know all too well, students have more difficulties with the so-called particle verbs in German, where the particle functions as a satellite.

Often foreign language teachers react to foreign sentences by learners with: “You don’t say it like that in German”, without any further explanation. For the French learner of German this not only means that s/he has to acquire many more specific verbs expressing the manner of motion, but also and especially that s/he has to learn to experience and see events in different ways: S/he will have to focus much more both on the manner as the core of the motion to be conceptualized obligatorily in each utterance and on the various possible satellites, which are not left as an optional choice but form part of the experiential habitus of focussing.

Motion	**French**	**German**
Manner	One single general verb: *aller*	Several differentiated verbs: *fahren, fliegen, gehen, schwimmen,…*
Path	Several plain verbs: *traverser, sortir, entrer,…*	Satellites: Particles: *hinein-, herüber-, heraus-,… ;* Prepositions: *aus…, durch…, zu…,…*

By using simple examples and schemas like those above, teachers can make learners aware of the differences in the expression of motion and of the path of motion.

2.2. Manner of location and change of location

A similar distinction can be made in the way speakers of German and French express location and the change of location.

2.2.1. Manner of location

Whereas French speakers like to use the very general verb *être* ('to be') to express a location of persons or things, Germans will almost always specify in which position they are located and use very different verbs which express the manner of location (a sitting, a lying or a standing position). "The use of one of the two verbs in competition [*stehen* or *liegen*] is almost obligatory in German when referring to the location of an object, i.e. you would hardly find the semantically neutral verb *sein* (= 'to be') in a locative sentence, where it is common in other languages, like English or Italian." (Serra-Borneto 1996: 377)

(6a) *Où est ma tasse ?* ('Where is my cup ?');
(6b) *Wo steht meine Tasse ?* ('Where does my cup "stand" ?');
(7a) *Le livre est sur la table* ('The book is on the table');
(7b) *Das Buch liegt auf dem Tisch* ('The book is "lying" on the table');
(8a) *L'enfant est sur la commode* ('The child is on the chest of drawers');
(8b) *Das Kind sitzt auf der Kommode* ('The child is sitting on the chest of drawers');
(9a) *Le cadre est au mur* ('The picture is on the wall');
(9b) *Das Bild hängt an der Wand* ('The picture is hanging on the wall').

Germans use the verbs *stehen, sitzen, liegen, hängen* to express a state or a location. Again, the difficulty for French speakers learning German will be this differentiation of the location of objects or persons.

2.2.2. Change of location

Similarly, for a change of location Germans will obligatorily use differentiated verbs expressing how things or persons are put or placed: in a sitting

(*setzen*), standing (*stellen*) or lying (*legen*) position, whereas French uses one single verb: *mettre* ('to put').

(10a) *Où as-tu mis le journal ?* ('Where have you put the newspaper ?');
(10b) *Wo hast du die Zeitung hingelegt ?* ('Where have you "laid" the newspaper ?');
(11a) *Je mets le vase sur la grande table* ('I put the vase on the large table');
(11b) *Ich stelle die Vase auf den großen Tisch* ('I put the vase "in a standing position" on the large table');
(12a) *Où as-tu mis ma tasse ?* ('Where have you put my cup ?');
(12b) *Wo hast du meine Tasse hingestellt ?* ('Where have you put „in a standing position" my cup ?').

For the expression of the change of location German also has a very general verb which corresponds to the French *mettre: tun.* And indeed we sometimes hear in Germany sentences like:

(10c) *Wo hast du die Zeitung hingetan ?* ('Where have you put the newspaper ?');
(11c) *Ich tue die Vase auf den großen Tisch* ('I put the vase on the large table');
(12c) *Wo hast du meine Tasse hingetan ?* ('Where have you put my cup?').

Sentence (10c) can be accepted because one does not know "in which position" the newspaper is. Sentences (11c) and (12c) are very colloquial and will probably be rejected by purists of the German language as being bad German sentences: a vase (11c) or a cup (12c) will usually be put in a standing position (a sitting position is never possible for a vase or a cup and a lying position is quite unusual[13]).

The expression of the manner of location and of the change of location in the Romance and Germanic languages can be represented in the following table:

Location	**French**	**German**
Manner	Very general verb: *être*	Several differentiated verbs: *sitzen, stehen, liegen, hängen*
Change	Very general verb: *mettre*	Several differentiated verbs: *setzen, stellen, legen, hängen*

2.2.3. The acquisition of location expressions

As with the concept of motion French speakers have some difficulties when they learn German expressions of location. They tend to generalize and to use one single verb in German for the expression of a fixed position; it is most of the time the verb *sein* (‘to be’). On the other hand we observed that the German verb *tun* is more often used by French speakers when they want to express a change of location.

A French speaker will have to think of the way things/persons are or in what position they are placed in German categories before s/he expresses a meaning of location or change of location. The foreign language teacher can introduce the differences with contrastive examples and then present the regularities in the form of schemas as described above. This kind of approach has been very much neglected up till now in foreign language teaching. With the use of the schemas it should be easier to achieve first an increase in awareness and then a real active use of the differences.

3. Morphosyntax: Spatial differentiation as static or dynamic location

3.1. Location and physical motion marked as dative or accusative

Teachers of German know all too well that spatial relations as conceptualized in German and syntactically realized in the system of verbs, prepositions and case marking in sentences constitute a major problem for French speakers, especially when prepositions can be used with two different cases dependent on the conceptualization which is being conveyed (called *two-way prepositions* by Smith (1987)); verbs expressing spatial conceptualizations are used with prepositional nominal groups which are either dative or accusative objects (with a different case-marking):

(13a) *Er geht auf die Straße* (he is not yet in the street) (accusative object)
‘He is walking into the street’
(13b) *Er geht auf der Straße* (he is already there) (dative object)
‘He is walking (up and down) in the street’.[14]

This static/dynamic differentiation relates to the difference Germans experience and see between verbs which express an already existing location (*stehen* (‘to stand’), *sitzen* (‘to sit’), *liegen* (‘to lie’)) – often realized by a dative

object in sentences – and verbs which express physical motion towards a landmark: something or someone *stellen* ('to put in a standing position'), *setzen* ('to set'), *legen* ('to lay') – which often implies the use of an accusative object. This differentiated use has been described in great detail by Leys (1989) and (1995). Traditional research tried to explain the difference with the concepts of 'motion/no motion', 'direction/no direction', 'location/no location'. This is unsatisfactory. Cognitive linguistics approaches like those by Di Meola (1998), Draye (1996), Meex (2002), Meex and Mortelmans (2002), Smith (1993) and (1995), Serra Borneto (1997) offer a more insightful way of explaining the difference:

> *Er lief in den Wald vs. im Wald*
> He ran in the-ACC forest vs. the-DAT forest
> 'He ran into the forest' vs. 'was running in the forest'.
> Here, the dative designates that the process in which – in cognitive grammar terminology – the *trajector er* is engaged, is taking place in the *search domain* of the preposition, i.e., on a point or in a set of points which fulfill the (spatial) specifications that the preposition *in* imposes on the *landmark Wald*. The accusative designates that the trajector *er* is engaged in a process which brings it into a position which permanently satisfies the specifications imposed by the preposition on the landmark *Wald.* (Draye 1996: 187)

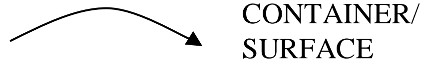
3.2. Case-marking for partial motion

In addition to the prototypical examples like (13a) and (13b) there is a list of more difficult cases:

(14) *in einen Apfel beißen* ('to bite into an apple'),
(15) *Kaffee in eine Tasse gießen* ('to pour coffee into a cup'),
(16) *etwas an die Tafel schreiben* ('to write something on the blackboard'),
(17) *an die Tür klopfen* ('to knock on the door').

In these examples German sees a dynamic location which requires an accusative: there is a dynamic movement from the teeth to the apple, from the coffee to the cup, from the hand to the blackboard and from the hand to the door. At the concept level the apple or the cup are experienced as containers, the blackboard or the door as surfaces. To facilitate the experiential learning and gradual acquisition of these verbs one can describe German spatial verbs in visualized schemas with their syntactic realizations (the arrow is

supposed to represent the concrete movement of the trajector or the trajectory towards the container or the surface).



CONTAINER/
SURFACE

In einen Apfel beißen	Zähne ('teeth')	Apfel ('apple') (*beißen)*
Kaffee in eine Tasse gießen	Kaffee ('coffee')	Tasse ('cup') (*gießen*)
An die Tafel schreiben	Hand ('hand')	Tafel ('blackboard') (*schreiben)*
An die Tür klopfen	Hand ('hand')	Tür ('door') (*klopfen*)

This means that the learner of German must analyze the examples in a conscious way. The movement is not necessarily explicitly expressed but can be reconstructed with our very general encyclopedic knowledge: one bites into an apple with one's teeth, one writes on the blackboard with the chalk in one's hand, one knocks on the door with one's hand. There is an underlying metonymic relationship between the action designated by the verb and some implicit objects (teeth or hand) which the learner must be made aware of and learn to visualize if s/he wants to find a justification for the use of the accusative.

3.3. Case-marking for abstract domains of thought perceived as motion

The crux is that this spatial distinction within spatial relations is also transposed to more abstract domains of thought as linguistically laid down in German. Some abstract German verbal expressions such as

(18) *auf ein Problem eingehen* ('to go into a problem'),
(19) *sich an die Hoffnung klammern* ('to cling to hope'),
(20) *in eine andere Sprache übersetzen* ('to translate into another language'),
(21) *ins Gesicht sagen* ('to say to someone's face'),
(22) *hinter etwas schauen* ('to look behind something' [in a figurative way]),
(23) *ich bin an den Vertrag gebunden* ('I am bound to the contract')

face the French speaker with a similar dilemma: Is this an instance of a static or a dynamic abstract location? None of the approaches mentioned above looks at these more abstract examples in which there is no real, concrete movement. An explanation attempt is made by Smith (1995) who shows that the difference between dative and accusative use can also be motivated by the presence or the absence of change (Smith 1995: 296):

> Dative designates that the trajector of the preposition is confined to a set of points satisfying the locative specification of the preposition (i.e. the search domain of the preposition). This situation can be interpreted as unchanging with respect to the preposition's search domain. Accusative designates that the trajector of the preposition is not always confined to the search domain of the preposition, but enters the search domain at some point along a path. This situation can be interpreted as involving change with respect to the locative configuration encoded by the preposition.

Smith illustrates the concept of *change* with the verb *übersetzen* which requires an accusative object*:*

> *Hans hat den Brief ins (in das) Deutsche übersetzt.*
> Hans has the letter in-the-ACC German translated
> 'Hans translated the letter into German.'
> Thus, to translate from one language to another (encoded in German, as well as in English, by a verb which literally means 'to set over') involves the (figurative) movement of the trajector of the preposition over a (linguistic) boundary of sorts, which results in a change in the trajector. (Smith 1995: 313)

In my opinion this concept of change is too general; there is no change in the sentences: (18) *Ich gehe auf ein Problem ein,* (19) *Ich klammere mich an die Hoffnung,* or (23) *Ich bin an den Vertrag gebunden.* Serra-Borneto (1997) looks at some more abstract examples of static verbs with the accusative:

> *Das Wasser reicht ihm bis über die Schenkel*
> The water reaches to-him till over the-ACC thighs
> 'The water is above his thighs;'
>
> *Er ist über seine besten Jahre hinweg.*
> He is over his-acc best years away
> 'He is over his best years (He has left behind the best years of his life)' Serra-Borneto 1997: 192).

He justifies the use of the accusative with the sense of *abstract motion*, although the situation is in itself static: But "you can imagine the eyes of the

speaker following a trajectory from the ground up to the thighs and beyond them". (Serra-Borneto 1997: 192) This abstract motion is typical for our examples above: the motion or the trajectory from the brain to the problem ((18) *auf ein Problem eingehen*), the motion of the hands to hope ((19) *sich an die Hoffnung klammern*), the motion of words from one language into the other ((20) *in eine andere Sprache übersetzen*), the motion of the words to the face ((21) *ins Gesicht sagen*), the motion of the eyes that look behind something or someone ((22) *hinter etwas schauen*), the motion of the hands to the contract ((23) *ich bin an den Vertrag gebunden*). The use of the accusative in the non-prototypical examples above highlights the entire path of motion. We need a further concept to explain the interpretation of the actions of our examples as being a motion and we can find it in conceptual metaphor theory as proposed by Lakoff/Johnson (1980): The abstract activity is perceived as motion, which means that there is a metaphorical transfer from the abstract activity to the motion. The conceptual metaphor 'ABSTRACT ACTIVITY IS MOTION' underlies our examples.[15] We can represent the abstract motion like this:

abstract motion

auf ein Problem eingehen	Gehirn ('brain')	*Problem* ('problem') (*eingehen*,'to go into')
sich an die Hoffnung klammern	Hände ('hands')	*Hoffnung* ('hope') (*klammern*,'to cling')
in eine andere Sprache übersetzen	Wörter in einer Sprache ('words in one language')	Wörter in *einer anderen Sprache* ('words in another language) (*übersetzen*,'to translate')
hinter etwas schauen	Augen ('eyes')	*hinter etwas* ('behind something or someone') (*schauen,*'to look')
ins Gesicht sagen	Wörter ('words')	*Gesicht* ('face') (*sagen*,'to say')
an den Vertrag gebunden	Hände ('hands')	*Vertrag* ('contract') (*gebunden sein*,'to be bound')

The elements of the second column ('head', 'hands', 'words', 'eyes') are again not explicit but can be reconstructed by metonymy starting from the verbs used and our knowledge about the action they designate: you cling to

something with your hands (19), you translate words (20), you look with your eyes (22),… The trajectory is between implicit elements which are metonymically bound to the verbs used.

3.4. Implications for the acquisition of German by foreigners

French speakers have major problems in the case-marking of such examples because the abstract activities are not necessarily perceived as a motion which motivates the use of the accusative. The difficulties can be reduced if the teacher chooses an approach in which s/he privileges an explanation that demonstrates the underlying conceptual metaphor. Juchem (2006) claims that you can even save time in teaching lessons if you raise metaphor awareness. The examples we discussed are illustrations of the underlying conceptual metaphor: ‘ABSTRACT ACTIVITY IS MOTION’. The foreign language teacher can ask questions like: Imagine the verb *klammern* (‘cling’) (example 19); what do you need to cling to something ? Show how you cling; what do you use when clinging ?... Learners will speak of their hands. This roundabout way is necessary to get to the underlying metaphor. The last step will be to show that exemplifications of this conceptual metaphor require the accusative case-marking in German.

4. Conclusion

The insights gained from the discussion of our examples bring important changes for foreign language teaching. It should have become clear that many differences between French and German can only be explained when considering the way both languages conceptualize. The concept of manner is not as relevant in French as it is in German. The cooking domain brings further evidence for the prevalence of the manner dimension for German speakers. They will always specify the cooking method by using different linguistic signs: by frying (*braten*), baking (*backen*), boiling (*kochen*). Again, French has several expressions for the different cooking methods but French speakers rather use the general verbs *cuire* (‘cook’) or even *faire* (‘to make’): *Je cuis la viande* (‘I cook the meat’) without specification of the way of cooking or *Je fais un gâteau* (‘I make a cake’). Foreign language teachers should point to the importance of the manner dimension in German

and to the obligatory use of a variety of verbs reflecting the diversity at the concept level.

The teaching of the German case-marking with abstract verbs can be facilitated if one chooses the indirect way of explaining the underlying conceptual metaphor: An abstract activity being interpreted as a motion offers a good explanation for the use of the accusative.

Until now, foreign language teaching has vaguely advised the foreign language learner "to learn to think in the foreign language". However, this can only happen with a cognitively and experientially rooted approach to language understanding and description. We now are in a position to begin to appreciate what this slogan involves.

Notes

1. I would like to thank Professor R. Dirven (University of Duisburg-Essen) for many insightful and constructive remarks and also Dr. Allan Turner (University of Greifswald, Department of English and American Studies,) for a correction look at my paper. This paper has been extended and deepened out in De Knop and Dirven (forthcoming).
2. Here a caveat has to be mentioned: In spite of the great similarity between the cognitive approach and the well-known theory of linguistic relativity (Sapir-Whorf-hypothesis) both approaches are fundamentally different: "Although cognitive linguistics fully recognizes the language-specific and culture-specific "construal" of the experiential world, nevertheless it does not derive from it any patterns of thought as 'given' through this linguistic categorization. Human cognition is extremely creative and flexible, so it can appropriate many other patterns of categorization through borrowing, second language acquisition and foreign language learning. Linguistic relativity in the cognitive sense rather expresses itself in each individual speech event (the psycholinguist Dan Slobin (1996) calls this "thinking for speaking") rather than in fixed, permanent modes of thinking, which would be in the sense of Whorf (1956) a "language for thought."" (De Knop and Dirven forthcoming)
3. At the lexical level there is also a difference between French and German in the way that French mostly juxtaposes words as they occur in a verb phrase (*tourne-vis* [German*: Schraubenzieher*]*, essuie-main* [German*: Handtuch*]), whereas German combines compounding (*Schrauben* ['screws'] + *zieh-* ['pull']) and derivation (*-er*; instrumental derivational morpheme).
4. See also Wierzbicka (this volume) in which she shows that "English is the only language in the world which has a word for the concept of 'privacy' (2007: 5).

5. Whereas German is highly flexible in the areas of compounding and derivation, French is far less so. This may explain why German coins all kinds of new compounds for its cultural innovations.
6. Of course in French we have similar linguistic signs like *marcher* ('to walk'), *rouler* ('to drive'), *voler* ('to fly'),... but they are not used like in German where the speaker has no choice when he wants to express a motion; s/he will have to analyze the manner of motion before talking and then use the corresponding verb.
7. For Turkish, see e.g. Özçaliskan (2003, 2004, 2005a and 2005b); for Dutch: Lemmens (2002 and 2004) and van Oosten (1986). Matsumo (1996) compares English and Japanese verbs of subjective motion.
8. For more details, see her full list p. 4. In her paper with Kopecka (Pourcel and Kopecka 2005) it becomes clear that there is much more variability in the expression of motion events in French than generally accepted from Talmy's typology. They suggest that the above pattern is not the only one available in French. As we are concerned with the acquisition of German patterns by French speakers, it cannot be our aim to go into the details of the different frames they are describing. Our question is much more how L2 learners can learn to express motion in a language (German) which is typologically different from their native language (French).
9. Studies on this topic have been done for translations between Spanish and English, e.g. by Slobin (2000).
10. See also the study by Slobin (1996) in which he compares Spanish and English; Özçaliskan's (2003) looks at examples of Turkish as compared with English and comes to the conclusion that Turkish "typically encodes direction of motion in the main verb of a clause (e.g., *He enters, exits, ascends, descends),* whereas English prefers to encode direction of motion by using particles or prepositions, making the main verb slot available for a manner verb (e.g., *He walks, runs, crawls in/out/across).*" (221) Bowerman (1996) compares English and Korean and notices that Korean presents a mixed picture.
11. In her investigation of French motion verbs Kopecka (2006) shows that French can also express the path of motion in a prefix revealing a satellite-framed pattern attributed to Germanic and Slavic languages, e.g. "L'oiseau s'est en-volé (P + M) du nid" (Pourcel/Kopecka 2005: 11). According to Kopecka it seems that the expression of path in a prefix is widely spread in French. We cannot go into the details of these examples in this paper. For more examples, see Kopecka (2006).
12. The particle *über-* in *überqueren* cannot be separated from the verb *–queren*, so it cannot be considered to be a satellite.
13. A lying position for a vase or a cup is possible when these objects are being transported (in a box for instance) but this is not the usual position.
14. English keeps something of this differentiation by the use of *into* (*he is walking into the street*) or *in* (*he is walking in the street*).

15. In her description of fictive motion verbs like in “the road runs along the coast” or “a trail goes through the desert”, Matlock (2004) also stresses the importance of conceptual metaphors for motion verb extensions “e.g., TIME IS SPACE, CHANGE IS MOTION” (Matlock 2004: 222).

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Wierzbicka, Anna
this volume A Conceptual Basis for Intercultural Pragmatics and World-Wide Understanding.

An investigation into the pragmatics of grammar: Cultural scripts in contrast

Svetlana Kurteš

> *[...] Reči [su] sasvim neprecizne i nemoćne, jer, u stvari, ne odražavaju ništa. Bar što se osećanja tiče, a i inače one su puka manipulacija. Razgovor je ukrasni papir u koji zamotavamo svoju ličnost da bi lepše izledali pred drugima [...].*[1]
>
> Vida Ognjenović, *Preljubnici*

1. Introduction

The paper will briefly report on the main results of a corpus-based and pedagogically oriented contrastive analytical project envisaged initially to complement and supplement the existing reference, descriptive and contrastive grammars of English and Serbo-Croat languages, and consequently other pedagogical materials. The analysis utilised the cognitive linguistic theoretical approach and focused, *inter alia*, on pragmatic principles governing the occurrence of the examined grammatical structures in interactive contexts. More recent stages of the project focus on pragma-linguistic structure of modern political discourse and public communication is general, pointing out its relevance in pedagogical contexts.

More precisely, the paper will present a segment of verbal reflexivity and middleness, exemplified in a set of related verbs in Serbo-Croat, the so-called '*se*-verbs', verbs followed by the morpheme *se*, a multifunctional grammatical device, and their English translation and pragmatic equivalents.

It will then be pointed out that the pragmatic principles underlying the rules of usage of this grammatical segment, often quite neglected in traditional reference grammars and relevant pedagogical materials, need to be established and analysed in a socio-cultural context in which the examined instances were found to be naturally occurring. Examples will be taken mainly from modern political discourses and public communication, and observed within some more recent theoretical frameworks such as contrastive and intercultural pragmatics and the theory of cultural scripts (e.g. Wierzbicka 2006), found to be able to provide an analytical apparatus capable of explaining the interaction between grammar, pragmatics and culture specific processes of conceptualisation. The concluding part of the paper

will point out that further research within the proposed framework can yield contrastively valuable results which can be further applied to a variety of study fields, primarily to language pedagogy.

2. Reflexivity and middleness in Serbo-Croat and English: An overview

One of the main objectives of the project was to look into the ways in which the conceptualisation of reflexivity and middleness, ontologically conceived, was grammatically encoded in the observed languages, English and Serbo-Croat.

In an attempt to define these concepts, an initial distinction can be made between dynamic and stative situations. They are observed as basic and, as ontological entities, expressed in most languages of the world (Zhang 1995: 24). Dynamic situation types involved the concept of 'change', defined as being "based on an understanding of our real world experience in terms of our existence in certain states and our motor movement from one state to the other" (Zhang 1995: 24). Most of our daily activities can thus be recognized as dynamic situations in this sense, as they all require various degrees of physical energy. Without this energy expenditure, though, "we think of ourselves as being in a state of rest, or as being in a certain emotional state, a state of certain quality, or as possessing things" (Zhang 1995: 24). In particular, the concepts of energy expenditure (following Comrie 1976) and change through time (following Langacker 1987) should be seen as basic features for characterizing the main aspectual situations, dynamic and stative (Zhang 1995: 27).

Focusing more closely on reflexivity and middleness in order to define the concepts in terms of their prototypical representation, an important semantic property of the middle was taken into consideration. Termed by Kemmer (1994: 181; 1993: 73) as the relative elaboration of events, this in essence "is the parameter along which the reflexive and the middle can be situated as semantic categories intermediate in transitivity between one-participant and two-participant events, and which in addition differentiates reflexive and middle from one another" (Kemmer 1994: 181). In particular, the two participant events represent prototypical transitivity (cf. Givón 1984) with two clearly distinguishable participants – the animate Agent and the inanimate Patient, the relation between them involving "some kind of transmission of force or energy from the animate participant to the second affected partici-

pant" (Kemmer 1994: 191). It is also important to notice that the participants are completely separate entities (Kemmer 1993: 73). At the other end of the continuum, however, there is the one-participant verbal event, or prototypical intransitivity. Reflexive and middle semantic domains occupy the central position, the former approaching the left side of the continuum, the latter coming closer to the right side. The following diagram is proposed (cf. Kemmer 1993: 73; 1994: 209):

Figure 1. Degree of distinguishability of participants

What does this de facto mean? Reflexivity and middleness are semantically very close and very often treated as alternatives in the traditional linguistic literature. Following Haiman's (1983) proposition of an iconic conceptual separation in the mind of a speaker between the two participants – the acting and acted-on, Kemmer argues that the crucial property of middle semantics is not the question of the subject-affectedness, as is often implied, but the low degree of participant distinguishability, approaching prototypical intransitivity, where this conceptual differentiation simply does not exist. The prototypical reflexive idea, however, still maintains the conceptual separation between Initiator and Endpoint, although they are co-referential, "filled by the same entity" (Kemmer 1994: 207). The middle domain, on the other hand, "refers to a single holistic entity without conceptually distinguished aspects" (Kemmer 1994: 207). This distinction can be graphically represented as follows (cf. Kemmer 1994: 207):

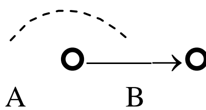

Figure 2. Prototypical reflexivity

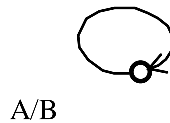

Figure 3. Prototypical middleness

The dotted line in Figure 2 refers to the single entity with two participant roles (A and B, i.e. Initiator and Endpoint), while in Figure 3 the lower de-

gree of conceptual differentiation between the initiating and endpoint entities is represented by the single circle.

Another major defining feature, derived from Manney (2000), maintains that middleness is notionally characterized either by a non-initiative emotional response or a spontaneous change of state, whereas prototypical reflexivity, subsuming co-reference between the two nominal arguments, "invokes a scene in which an individual acts on itself, intentionally or otherwise" (Manney 2000: 214). It is also possible to observe a steady decrease in agentivity and volition while the semantic roles occupying the subject position move in the following direction: Agent > Experiencer > Patient (cf. Figures 4 and 5).

ENERGY EXPENDITURE
DYNAMIC
VOLITIONAL
DISTINGUISHABILITY OF PARTICIPANTS
ACTING ON ITSELF

Figure 4. Defining features of prototypical reflexivity

CHANGE THROUGH TIME
STATIVE
SPONTANEOUS
LOW DEGREE OF DISTINGUISHA-BILITY OF PARTICIPANTS
NONINITIATIVE EMOTIONAL RESPONSE

Figure 5. Defining features of prototypical middleness

In view of the above, we are proposing the following pair of sentences in English and Serbo-Croat to express a prototypical reflexive segment of reality as defined above:

(1) *I cut myself.*

Posekao	*sam*	*se.*
cut-PART: ACT SING MASC	be-PRES:1SG	*se*-REFL

The prototypicality of this situation type can be confirmed in all the major characteristics, including the notion of energy expenditure confirmed as a

defining feature of the dynamic situation types. Moreover, it also confirms Kemmer's claim (1994: 207) that reflexivity maintains that conceptual separation of the Initiator and the Endpoint. Namely, (1) can be notionally elaborated further in order to pinpoint both Initiator and Endpoint, in spite of the fact that their coreferentiality is fully maintained. Thus, a slightly rephrased version of (1) can perhaps read:

(1a) '*I cut my finger.*'

Posekao	*sam*	*prst.*
cut-PART: ACT SING MASC	be-PRES:1SG	finger-ACC

Prototypical middleness, on the other hand, presented graphically in Fig. 5 and described as notionally clustering around two main ideas – a noninitiative emotional response and a spontaneous change of state – can be exemplified in the following pair of sentences:

(2) '*Grandpa tires easily.*'

Deda	*se*	*lako*	*zamara.*
grandpa-NOM	*se*-MIDDLE	easily	tire-PRES:3SG

The prototypicality of this situation type notionally captures both major semantic domains of middleness. Moreover, it particularly emphasizes the concept of 'change through time' (cf. Zhang 1995: 27; also Langacker 1987), with no detectable energy expenditure, internal or external, confirming the stative status of this situation type.

The above framework was used as an overall platform of reference, *tertium comparationis*, in a corpus based contrastive analysis that examined the ways of grammatical encoding of the idea of reflexivity and middleness in Serbo-Croat and English. The performed analysis was monodirectional and corpus-based, starting from Serbo-Croat (confining itself only to the so-called '*se*-verbs', verbs followed by the morpheme *se*, a multifunctional grammatical device) and observing their translation equivalents in English. Following the results of the analyses done so far (cf. Ivić 1962; Djordjević 1988; 1989; 2000; Kurteš 2003; 2005; in press), ten different classes of Serbo-Croat *se*-forms were identified according to their form and the function they perform (cf. Figures 6 and 7). The existing classification was tested against the proposed model of analysis and the results showed that there was a clearly discernible semantic core denoting prototypical reflexivity grammatically encoded by those *se*-instances known as 'pure reflexive verbs'

(prototypical reflexivity, se_1, cf. (1)), while the *se*-forms denoting reciprocity (prototypical reciprocity, (se_3, cf. (3)) were notionally clustering around it:

(3) *Volimo* *se.*
love-PRES:1PL *se*-RECIP

‘*We love each other.*’

Other *se*-instances reflecting semantic reflexivity, but standing further away from the prototypical semantic core involved absolute reflexivity (se_2, cf. (4)), reciprocity [± plural] (se_4), cf. (5), and intransitive reciprocity (se_5), cf. (6):

(4) *Ona* *se* *bije.*
she-NOM *se*-ABS REFL fight-PRES:3SG

‘She is pugnacious; she has a habit of fighting.’

(5) *Tuče* *se* *s* *bratom.*
fight-PRES:3SG *se*-RECIP with brother-INSTR

‘He is fighting with his brother.’

(6) *Ona* *se* *svadja*
she-NOM *se*-RECIP:INTR quarrel-PRES:3SG
sa sestrom).
with sister-INSTR

‘She is quarrelling (with her sister).’

Two basic notions of prototypical middleness, on the other hand, were found to be grammatically encoded by means of the instances exemplified by the *se*-forms known as ‘quasi-reflexive verbs’ (middleness as noninitiative emotional response, se_6, cf. (2); or spontaneous change of state, se_6, cf. (7)), where the morpheme *se* simply stands as a verbal affix, exuding no detectable meaning on its own:

(7) *Drvo* *se* *suši.*
tree-NOM *se*-MIDDLE wither-PRES:3SG

‘The tree is withering away.’

Other *se*-manifestations embraced by the middle semantics involved some notional passives (‘reflexive passive’, se_8, cf. (8)), as well as some impersonal (se_9, cf. (9)) and modal structures (se_{10}, cf. (10)):

(8) *Knjiga* *se* *čita* *lako.*
book-NOM *se*-PASS read-PRES:3SG easily

'The book reads easily.'

(9)	*Govori*	*se*	*o*	*tome.*
	speak-PRES:3SG	*se*-IMPERS	about	it-LOC

'People talk about that.'

(10)	*Spava*	*mi*	*se.*
	sleep-PRES:3SG	I-DAT	*se*-MODAL

'I feel sleepy. '

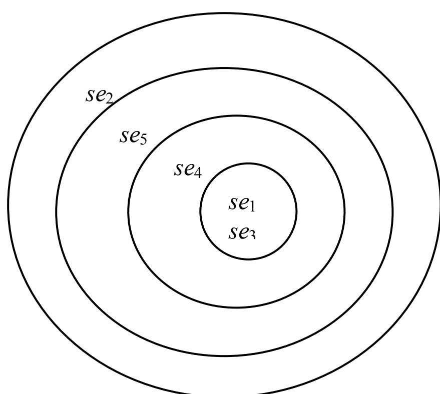

Figure 6. Relative proximity of *se*-instances to core flexibility

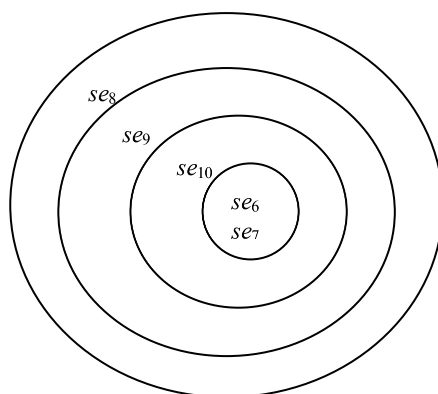

Figure 7. Relative proximity of *se*-instances to core middleness (Kurteš 2003: 629)

The project established that reflexivity in English, on the other hand, is canonically represented by pure reflexives, verbs followed by the reflexive pronoun, which are, however, to be found relatively rarely in Modern English. *Reflexiva tantum* are now to be found mostly in literary discourse. These are verbs such as *bethink*, *comport*, *perjure*, *pique*, *bemean*, *bestir*, *betake*, etc. It is important to notice, though, that they are all semantically intransitive.

The process of absorption of the reflexive pronoun can also be observed in a large number of verbs. Such are the verbs *behave*, *dress*, *hide*, *oversleep*, *overeat*, *rest*, *wash*, *bathe*, etc. The same applies to the omission of the reciprocal pronoun in case of inherently reciprocal verbs, such as *kiss*, *meet*, *hug*, *embrace*, *marry*, etc.

The usage of the reflexive pronoun can also give the sentence a metaphorical or figurative reading or simply make it stylistically marked, as in the following examples:

(11) *He felt disgusted.*

(11a) *He felt himself disgraced.*

(12) *He surrendered to the enemy.*

(12a) *He surrendered himself to despair.* (cf. Schibsbye 1967: 199)

When speaking about middleness in English, grammatical literature primarily focuses on the forms NP V NP alternating with NP V (PP) forms (Levin 1993: 25), which is the situation when the subject of the intransitive verb semantically has the same role as the object of the transitive verb, or, in other words, the surface subject of the intransitive verb has been derived from the underlying object (cf. Levin 1993: 25). Here are some examples (Levin 1993: 26):

(13) *The butcher cuts the meat.*

(13a) *The meat cuts easily.*

(14) *Janet broke the crystal.*

(14a) *Crystal breaks easily.*

It is also interesting to notice that middles are very frequently used in certain discourses, such as advertising or information technology, where the idea of an agent, although not explicitly specified, is necessary for the implication of the verb, "[…] it is impossible to disregard the role played by the agent, for it is he who makes it possible for the subject to realize its proper function. [...]" (Hatcher 1943: 12). The following are examples:

(15) *Couches convert easily into beds.*

(16) *Bed-lamps attach and adjust easily.*

(17) *The clock winds easily.*

(18) *This MS DOS programme has terminated.*

(19) *The icon will copy to your desktop.*

(20) *The segment will now repeat instantly and loop continuously.*

Reflexivity and middleness contrasted: results of the analysis
The results of the analysis have shown that in Serbo-Croat there is a clearly discernible semantic core denoting prototypical reflexivity grammatically encoded by the pure reflexive (and reciprocal) verbs (e.g. (1), (3), cf. Figure 6). Two basic notions of prototypical middleness, on the other hand, are grammatically encoded by means of the quasi-reflexive verbs (e.g. (2), (7), cf. Figure 7). Other instances, denoting, passive, impersonal and modal semantics (e.g. (8), (9), (10)), were found to be within the scope of middleness as defined above. Their English translation equivalents, however, have shown a number of grammatical manifestations capable of conveying the meaning of the observed notions. Clearly they include structures with the reflexive and reciprocal pronouns as that semantic core denoting prototypical reflexivity. Verbal intransitivity, however, has proved to be the grammatical category comfortably accommodating the majority of instances expressing prototypical middleness. More precisely, mutative and inchoative semantics seemed to be occupying the central position in this context, rendering into, and being rendered from, the majority of the Serbo-Croat *se*-instances denoting prototypical middleness. Other relevant categories include passive, some impersonal structures, and, finally, that NP V PP type of English 'middle' structures, that stand further away from prototypical Serbo-Croat middleness as defined here (cf. Kurteš 2005; in press).[2]

The relevance and applicability of the proposed analytical model is to be seen in a wider applied linguistic context. Let us here single out the applicability of the obtained results to language teaching methodology.

Language teaching methodology substantially relied on the results of contrastive analysis, as well as error analysis, particularly during the 1960s and, to a perhaps lesser degree, later on. The goals and aims of foreign language learning of that time established the grammar-translation teaching method as dominant, while, at the same time, contrastive linguistics focused almost exclusively on the various levels of language structure in its analysis, putting aside any extralinguistic and pragmatic factors that might have been worth looking at. However, with the introduction of the concept of communicative competence (Hymes 1974) and the redefinition of the goals of foreign language learning more in accordance with the needs of the modern world, teaching methods adopted a more communicative approach, emphasizing the cultural context that a human language finds itself embedded in. Pedagogical materials started to be supported by communicative grammars and course books designed for learners with specific first language backgrounds, focusing particularly on culturally specific issues and putting the relevant lan-

guage sequences in their natural pragmatic context. Again, the preparation of such materials would be much less successful without the readily available results of modern contrastive studies that took various extralinguistic factors as their platform of reference in the process of analysis (cf. Kurteš 2005; 2006; 2006a; in press).

3. Pragmatics of grammar and cultural scripts: Insights from modern public discourse

The second stage of the project, which is still in progress, focuses on pragmatic principles and pragma-semantic characteristics underlying the usage of this grammatical segment, in particular how it appears to be used in some areas of public communication. The main objective of this part of the project is not just to establish its proper contextual meaning and rules governing its natural occurrence, but also to point out its pedagogical relevance and propose ways of introducing it into language teaching curricula. In what follows we shall briefly report on the preliminary findings and offer a possible theoretical interpretation of them.

The quasi-reflexive verbs, mainly of the se_8 and se_9 type, seem to occur with increasing frequency in modern Serbian political discourse and public communication in general. Pragmatic and stylistic implications of that are still to be fully investigated, but what emerges as a dominant pragma-semantic effect is the opposite of what se_8 and se_9 structures ('reflexive' passives and impersonals) have been defined as canonically denoting–in spite of the fact that the Agent cannot be specified in these structures, which is why they are in traditional grammatical literature known as 'deagentivised', 'impersonalised' structures, pragmatically speaking the focus is brought straight onto the (normally political) opponent of the speaker (Agent in this case), that consequently becomes easily retrievable from the context or the hearer's background knowledge – which contradicts the canonical definition of the structure. It becomes immediately clear whom the speaker is referring to, but at the same time, by using what – on the face of it – appears to be an impersonal grammatical structure whose agent cannot be notionally retrieved, protects him/herself from the danger of being either publicly accused of defamation or, in more extreme case scenarios, taken legal action against for libel. In a society that embraces the suing culture as one of lifestyle choices of the affluent and powerful, this seems to be a very effective

protective strategy, and possibly a unique hedging device.[3] Here are some more recent examples:

(21) *Kada* *se* *moglo,* *tada* *se*
when *se*-IMPERS can-PART:PASS NEUT then *se*-IMPERS
nije *smelo,* *a* *sada,* *kada*
is not-AUX:3SG dare-PART:PASS NEUT and now when
se *sme -* *ne* *može* se.[4]
se-IMPERS dare- PRES:3SG not-NEG can-PRES:3SG *se*-IMPERS

'*When it could have been done, nobody dared, and now, when there are people who dare – it cannot be done*.'

(22) *Radi* *se* *na* *rasturanju*
work-PRES:3SG *se*-IMPERS on destroying-LOC
koalicije.
coalition-GEN

'*There are attempts to destroy the coalition*.'

(23) *Očekuje* *se* *smena* ministra.[5]
expect-PRES:3SG *se*-IMPERS deposition-ACC minister-GEN

'*The minister is expected to be deposed*.'

(24) *Sprema* *se* *moja* .
prepare-PRES:3SG *se*-IMPERS my-NOM
likvidacija.
liquidation-ACC

'*There are plans to kill me*.'

(25) *Ja* *se* *ovde* *bestijalno* *blatim*,
I *se*-PASS here bestially defame-PRES:1SG
stvari *se* *vade* *iz* *konteksta!*[6]
things *se*-PASS take-PRES:3SG from context-GEN

'*I am being bestially defamed here, things are taken out of context*!'

(26) *Igralo* *se* *najbolje* *što* *se*
play- PART:PASS NEUT *se*-IMPERS best as *se*-IMPERS
moglo.[7]
can-PART:PASS NEUT

'*They played the best they could.*'

The second phase of the project focuses on identifying pragmatic rules that underlie the use of this grammatical structure and interpret their contextual,

pragmatic and cultural meaning, as well as on identifying their pragmatic equivalents in other languages, primarily English, using the theoretical and methodological framework offered by contrastive analysis. The results, once obtained, will be observed from the pedagogical point of view and recommendations for their incorporation into foreign language curricula will be given.[8]

Preliminary results of the analysis suggest that the wider discoursal and pragmatic framework for the interpretation of the phenomenon observed can be offered by the theory of cultural scripts, originally introduced by Wierzbicka (e.g. 1994; 1996; also Goddard and Wierzbicka (eds.) 1994). The main construct of the theory essentially refers to "a technique for articulating cultural norms, values and practices using the [...] metalanguage of semantic primes as the medium of description" (Goddard and Wierzbicka, 2007). The concept of language scripts testifies to the fact that natural languages are never culturally and pragmatically neutral, on the contrary, both lexically and grammatically languages carry identifiable 'cultural baggage', ethnopragmatic norms and values (cf. Goddard and Wierzbicka, 2007).

These norms change constantly, but as Wierzbicka (2006: 9) has stated, "in every period there are certain shared understandings and shared cultural norms that find their expression in a community's ways of speaking. Words, with their meanings, provide evidence of the reality of such shared understandings". They, therefore, do not reflect, as Wierzbicka (2006:9) explains "any unchanging monolithic realities with sharp boundaries. They stand for certain constructs, but these constructs are not fictions, and they have an impact on people's lives".

There are at least four distinctive features of the theory that make it unique among other attempts to describe and analyze cultures. Briefly, the cultural norms and values in the theory of cultural scripts are described "from within rather than from outside" (Wierzbicka 2006: 24), that is "from the point of view of those people who are the bearers of the postulated norms and values (and in their own language)" (Wierzbicka 2006: 24). Secondly, although the norms are unique and identified for each language individually, they are based on a set of universal concepts found in languages across the board, which in turn ensures the common ground that enables them to be compared and contrasted. Its third and perhaps the most important distinctive feature is their practical application to a variety of fields of study, primarily language pedagogy, cross cultural education and intercultural communication (cf. Wierzbicka 2006: 24). Finally, the cultural scripts approach

relies on hard linguistic evidence and no generalizations can be made without being supported by the appropriate data (cf. Wierzbicka 2006: 25).

Taking account of some basic principles of the theory of cultural scripts as it has been presented so far, we propose the following interpretation of the examples (21)–(26). Namely, the observed pragma-semantic prototypes that appear to be emerging from the discoursal usage of the sentences is **self-protection**, obtained through the utilization of a hedging device that saves the speaker from being (dangerously) exposed, while at the same time enabling them to be direct and critical enough, as required and acceptable in the national culture. In other words, by using the impersonal and deagentivised structures the speaker seems to be bringing the spotlight onto the alleged culprit, so there is no real need to name him/her. Thus, the pragmatic effect is even stronger, while the speaker remains perfectly safe. Moreover, **self-promotion** appears to be another emerging effect. Not only does the speaker refer to the (political) opponent in defamatory terms–and does it safely–they also make it clear that any wrongdoing remains on the opposite side, too. Preliminary investigations thus show that examples (21)–(23) express self-protection as a dominant pragma-semantic effect, while (24)–(26) seem to have self-promotion as a dominant reading. This can be elaborated further in the following way (cf. Wierzbicka 2006: 30–31):

The Serbian cultural script for 'self-protection'
(underlying se$_9$ pragma-semantics)
[people think like this:]
when I want to say something
it will be good if I think like this:
    "I want to say openly what I think about X
    I want everybody to understand what I think about X
    I don't want to put myself into trouble"

The Serbian cultural script for 'self-promotion'
(underlying se$_8$ pragma-semantics)
[people think like this:]
when I want to say something
it will be good if I think like this:
    "I want to say openly what I think about X
    I want everybody to understand what I think about X
    I want everybody to understand that I blame Y for X
    I am right and Y is wrong"

Further and more systematic investigation into pragmatics of grammar using the cultural scripts approach can hopefully give more profound insights into

the ways meaning is conveyed generally, and how it is grammatically encoded more specifically. Contrastive analysis can benefit from this approach considerably, being empowered with the methodological approach that will no doubt yield valuable results which would otherwise probably remain unnoticed.

Cultural scripts and acquisitional pragmatics: Ways forward

The phenomenon observed above is relevant not only from the point of view of pragmatics of grammar, but also from acquisitional pragmatics.[9] Language learners, particularly those at more advanced stages of language proficiency, attempting to decode the message and get its proper contextual meaning need to develop the right level of sophistication not only in their linguistic and communicative competences, but also in the pragmatic and metaphoric[10] competences. Such competences should sensitize the learners to the discoursal and pragmatic layers of meaning of the message and enable them to decode its metaphorical levels–which can be very deeply culturally embedded too–rather than interpreting the message only on the basis of its literary uses (cf. Bailey 2003: 64). Modern foreign language curricula should no doubt be able to raise the learners' awareness of the metaphorical layering of an utterance, their "sensitivity in the use of metaphor in terms of social and political correctness."(Bailey 2003: 66).

What can be seen as a very useful technique, particularly from a methodological point of view, is the introduction of the basic concepts of the theory of cultural scripts into the foreign language classroom and inviting students, particularly those at more advanced levels of language proficiency, to interpret messages in terms of their underlying cultural norms and values. The students can then be encouraged to identify their discoursal, pragmatic and metaphorical[11] equivalents in the target language and its culture. Each student can compile their own mini data-bank of pragmatic and pragmasemantic descriptors that can be further contrastively analyzed and illustrated with more authentic examples.

Last but not less important, cultural scripts should find their place in language learning materials, both directly and indirectly, inviting the learners to reflect upon their own experiences, knowledge and understanding of both their own culture and the culture of the target language, thus helping them to develop metadiscoursal and metacognitive strategies that will in turn ensure more successful and more autonomous foreign language learning and learning in general.

4. Concluding remarks: Taking it further

There were two main objectives of the paper. Firstly, to present the results of the first phase of a contrastive analytical project envisaged to introduce certain innovative features in the field's theoretical and methodological apparatus as well as to complement and supplement the results of some earlier contrastive projects. The investigation itself had a very strong pedagogical bias and tried to recommend ways of direct implementation of some basic principles of contrastive analysis into foreign language teaching and learning. And secondly, to report on preliminary results of the second phase of the project and offer a possible theoretical framework for the interpretation of the results. To achieve that objective, basic principles of the theory of cultural scripts were deployed and a possible direction for future research was recommended.

Since the second phase of the project is still in progress, this paper tried to indicate possible directions in which it can develop and reflect upon the results obtained so far. The project is to keep its pedagogical bias, so further recommendations were also given concerning its possible foreign language classroom implementation. It is precisely here where the project can benefit from its interdisciplinary nature and utilize theoretical and methodological approaches taken from different subjects it had embraced.

Finally, the project also tried to highlight the necessity of a more systematic investigation into pragmatics of grammar and to inspire the confidence of applied linguists into its wide applicability to a variety of study fields, primarily language education, intercultural pragmatics and contrastive analysis.

Notes

1. "[…] Words [are] quite imprecise and powerless, because they, in fact, do not reflect anything. As far as emotions are concerned, and otherwise, they are mere manipulation. Conversation is decorative wrapping in which we embrace our personality in order to look nicer in front of others […]." Vida Ognjenović, *Preljubnici* [The adulterers]. Belgrade: Stubovi kulture, 2006, 29; Translation SK.
2. A more detailed overview of all the *se*-forms and their English translation equivalents identified in the project is presented in Kurteš 2003.
3. An interesting protective strategy – opposite in nature, on the face of it at least – could recently be observed. When a villager from a remote mountain-

ous settlement in central Serbia was interviewed amidst rumours that property prices in the region were sharply rising due to the fact that well known individuals from the public and political life began to buy there, he reluctantly answered:

Baš je dolazio... ne bi' imenovao... poslanik i raspitivao se o ceni.

Recently one of them came... I wouldn't tell his name... an MP and made enquiries about the price.

The villager, whose idiolect would not normally be expected to reflect the current public discourse trends, used the active sentence which – the way it was structured – begs the question 'who?' and he, anticipating it correctly, felt the need to preempt it by openly refusing to name the MP.

4. A senior official's reply why Serbia failed to deliver a war crime suspect to the war crimes tribunal in The Hague.
5. A web-based radio news title, slightly revised (www.b92.net).
6. Examples (22), (24)–(25) were stated at press conferences held by senior officials in Serbia about to be deposed.
7. Example (26) was recorded at a press conference held by the coach of a Serbian national sports team explaining why their performance at an international competition did not live up to the expectations.
8. Several presentations at the LAUD 2006 Symposium addressed this topic as well. Here we can single out Tatiana Larina (2006), who elaborated on directness vs. indirectness in Russian and English communicative cultures, focusing specifically on socio-cultural differences and highlighting their pedagogical relevance in particular. Eva Ogiermann (2006), on the other hand, looked more closely into contrastive analytical aspects of gender-based differences in Russian and English apologies. As well, a very insightful theoretical elaboration on conceptual basis for intercultural pragmatics was given by Professor Anna Wierzbicka (cf. this volume) in her plenary talk.
9. Very knowledgeable presentations at LAUD 2006 addressing the issue of pragmatic development in L2 were given, *inter alia*, by Julian House (2006) and Bahar Otçu and Deniz Zeyrek (2006), who analysed principles of interlanguage pragmatics in EFL generally and Turkish learners of English specifically.
10. For the notion of a metaphoric competence cf. Bailey 2003:64-69; also Low (1988).
11. For a more elaborate discussion on teaching metaphors cf. Bailey (2003) and Low (1988).

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Argumentation patterns in different languages: An analysis of metadiscourse markers in English and Spanish texts

JoAnne Neff-van Aertselaer and Emma Dafouz-Milne

1. Introduction

This study explores the role of interpersonal and textual metadiscourse in the construction of persuasive texts written by English- and Spanish-speaking writers. The study seeks to contrast, quantitatively and qualitatively, articles written by editorialists in both English and Spanish with those created by novice writers (Spanish EFL and American university writers) in an attempt to distinguish novice writer features, produced by the two latter groups, from the preferred and dispreferred rhetorical features as shown in the experts' texts. The pragmatic-rhetorical metadiscourse strategies used are those listed in Dafouz's (2000, 2003) taxonomy, which is loosely based on Crismore, Markannen and Steffensen's (1993) but with modifications in order to accommodate the particular characteristics of the languages contrasted. In the analysis presented here, the textual metadiscourse markers (used principally to organize the text for the readers) comprehend logical markers, sequencers and glosses, while the interpersonal metadiscourse markers (used primarily to engage the reader in the argumentation) comprehend hedges, certainty markers and attitude markers. This study is part of a larger project (see Neff et al. 2006) which aims to describe Spanish EFL students' pragmatic competency, for which it is first necessary to provide base-line information on native-speaker preferences, in this case, for those of English and those of Spanish.

2. Metadiscourse markers as indicators of cultural differences in argumentative texts

The issue of cultural differences, as reflected in academic writing, has long been controversial, ever since Kaplan (1966) put forth his much debated

proposition of "cultural thought patterns" in academic English as Second Language (ESL) writing. Although Kaplan has been criticized for his hypotheses, especially those related to "thought patterns" of groups of writers, a myriad of newer works continue to produce evidence which supports the supposition that language groups do differ in their interactional patterns in academic writing.

Both Régent (1985), for differences between French and Anglo academic writing, and Clyne (1987), for differences between German and Anglo academic texts, have convincingly demonstrated the existence of cultural discrepancies as reflected in organizational patterns. Both of these articles deal mainly with preferences in the layout of information for readers, although the Clyne study also discusses rhetorical aspects, such as how much digressive argumentation is permitted in one discourse community as compared to another (the Anglo-community).

In addition to academic texts, part of the analysis presented here–for the comparison of the English and Spanish expert writers–focused on opinion articles, a subclass of persuasive texts (van Dijk 1988) whose final aim is to convince their readership by means of logical (i.e. textual) as well as emotional (i.e. interpersonal) strategies. Opinion articles are eminently subjective, since they reflect the writer's personal stance, but at the same time they need to appear to be established on objective bases in order to be accepted by a wider community. Both types of metadiscourse, textual and interpersonal, contribute to the construction of a persuasive text through the use of balancing mechanisms. While logical markers, sequencers and code glosses bring cohesion and coherence to the text, hedges, certainty and attitude markers achieve persuasion through reader-writer identification and personal involvement.

As far as student writing is concerned, Connor and Lauer (1985) focused specifically on the persuasive strategies used by native British and American high-school writers. Although the study primarily examined the reliability of the variables used, these researchers showed that, regarding the variables of rationality (text type variables), credibility (evidence presented) and affective appeals (stance variables), the student texts differed greatly. These findings pointed to another factor to be included in the investigation which contrasts non-native student texts with those written by native speakers: novice native writers are not necessarily the best reference group to use when evaluating university ESL/EFL writing. As various studies have shown (Neff et al. 2004a; 2004b), novice writers, both native and non-native, share a series of rhetorical characteristics (i.e. lack of evidence presented, unbalanced writer

stance, intrusive writer presence in lexical phrases used as topic introducers, etc.), all of which contrast strongly with those used by professional or academic writers, both in English and in Spanish. Thus, there arises a need for other reference corpora, such as those presented here.

In this study, the concept of metadiscourse is used as a means to identify possible differences or similarities between the texts, languages and cultures compared. Metadiscourse is defined here "as the linguistic resources used to organize a discourse or the writer's stance towards either its content or the reader" (Hyland and Tse 2004: 157). This notion includes a heterogeneous array of cohesive and interpersonal features which help relate a text to its context by assisting readers in organizing and interpreting the text in a way preferred by the writer and with regard to the dominant rhetorical conventions of the discourse community (Hyland 1998). A variety of metadiscourse taxonomies have been proposed (Beauvais 1989; Crismore, Markkanen and Steffensen 1993; Hyland 1998, 2005; Vande Kopple 1985, 2002), which adopt different approaches and propose different metadiscourse categories. Generally speaking, most of these classifications adopt a functional perspective (with the exception of Beauvais' model) and distinguish between textual and interpersonal dimensions. While the textual dimension refers to the explicit resources used by the writer to organise the text and guide the reader through it, the interpersonal dimension is essentially interactive and evaluative and expresses the tenor of the discourse. Lately, Hyland (2005:45) has replaced the terms textual and interpersonal for Thompson's (2001) interactive and interactional since in former's view "all metadiscourse refers to interactions between the writer and the reader".

While we agree with the interactive function of both textual and interpersonal markers, the taxonomy followed here still follows the traditional terminology and adopts a functional perspective; however, it has included a second level of analysis to respond to the differences identified in the pairs of languages compared (English and Spanish). Previous contrastive research (Dafouz 2000, 2003; Valero-Garcés 1996) showed that existing taxonomies needed to be modified to accommodate the meanings expressed in other types of texts not analysed before, in this case, newspaper opinion articles. Our taxonomy differs mainly in the sublevels identified in the initial macro-categories devised by Crismore et al. (1993) and Hyland (1998), since it was found that at a functional level Spanish and English texts seemed to coincide in the number and frequency of metadiscourse categories used (see Dafouz 2000, 2003); however, on closer examination, the types of markers used

were seen to vary considerably. The next section will develop in detail the types of metadiscourse categories surveyed in this study.

3. Methods

As presented in Table 1, the corpora of expert writers compared in this study come from the *English-Spanish Contrastive Corpus* (ESCC) of argumentative texts (signed editorials) dealing with international affairs, economy and the European Union (Marín and Neff 2001), 113,475 words in English and 115,186 words in Spanish. The novice writer texts come from the Spanish subcorpus of the *International Corpus of Learner English* (SPICLE, 194,845 words) and their American university counterparts (149,790 words), a subcorpus of the *Louvain Corpus of Native English Essays* (LOCNESS). From the ESCC, the signed editorials in English were used as the reference group and the Spanish editorials corroborated possible transfer of discourse patterns into the Spanish EFL texts.

Table 1. Corpora used in the present study

CORPUS	NO. OF WORDS	LANGUAGE	WRITING EXPERTISE	TYPE OF TEXTS & POPULATION
SPICLE (part of ICLE)	194,845	EFL	Novice	Essays written by 3rd and 4th-year Spanish university students
LOCNESS	149,790	English as L1	Novice	Essays written by British and American students
ESCC	113,475	English as L1	Expert	Contrastive corpus of newspaper editorials
ESCC	115,186	Spanish as L1	Expert	Contrastive corpus of newspaper editorials

As mentioned above, the analysis for the different metadiscourse categories was based on Dafouz's (2000, 2003) taxonomy. The Oxford University Press Wordsmith Tools 3.1 was used to find the most frequent items. However, many tokens had to be analyzed manually to avoid ambiguities in the classification. For example, in the case of logical connectors, it was neces-

sary to eliminate from the concordance lines all the cases in which *and* or *but* were not used as inter-clausal connectors.

Within the textual metadiscourse categories (text organizers), this study focuses on only three textual metadiscourse markers (logical markers, sequencers and code glosses), since in a previous analysis (Dafouz 2003) with a smaller corpus, these three showed statistically significant differences in the professional writing of English and Spanish editorialists. Logical markers refer to cohesive elements (principally connectors) which help readers interpret pragmatic connections between ideas by signaling additive, contrastive and resultative relations in the writer's argumentation. These markers are subdivided into four types: Additives (*and, moreover, in addition, furthermore, also*); Adversatives (*but, however, nevertheless, yet*); Consecutives (*consequently, finally, thus, therefore*); and, Conclusive markers (*in conclusion, concluding, to conclude, to sum up/summing up*), as shown in Table 2. Sequencers mark particular positions in a series and serve to guide the reader along the lines of the argumentation. In this study the following items were analyzed: *first/second/third/in the first place/on the one hand/on the other hand/last/next/then.* The third type of textual markers examined were Code Glosses, which serve to explain, rephrase or exemplify textual material. These markers were divided in two types: Reformulators (*in other words, that is*) and Exemplifiers (*for example, for instance, such as*).

As in the analysis of the textual constituents, and for the same reasons, three major interpersonal markers were studied: hedges, certainty markers and attitude markers. Hedges express partial commitment to the truth-value of the text in the form of epistemic verbs (*may, might, seem, could*), probability adverbs (*maybe, perhaps*) and other epistemic expressions (*it is likely, it is possible).* Certainty markers, on the other hand, emphasize the force or the writer's full-commitment to the certainty of the message (*clearly, undoubtedly, obviously*), while attidunial markers express the writer's stance to the propositional content in the message and the readership, by using deontic verbs (*must, have to*), attitudinal adverbs (*surprisingly, unfortunately*) and other attitudinal expressions (*it is necessary, remarkable*). Table 2 summarizes the metadiscourse categories analyzed and offers some examples.

In the following sections the findings for the three corpora analyzed will be presented comparing, first, the variables of novice versus expert writing and, secondly, the cross-linguitic generic conventions, that is, Spanish texts as compared to English texts. For the study of the English data, the statistical differences were calculated by norming the results per 10,000 words and

comparing the results of the novice groups with the control group, the professional writers in English, by using a simple T-test. For the study of the Spanish and English texts, the results were also normed per 10,000 words and the differences were calculated by using a simple T-test.

Table 2. Metadiscourse categories analyzed

TEXTUAL MARKERS	**Examples**
Logical markers	*Furthermore, but, however, yet, finally, therefore, in conclusion, to sum up*, etc.
Sequencers	*First, second, on the one hand/other hand*, etc.
Glosses	*For example, for instance*, *in other words,* etc.
INTERPERSONAL MARKERS	**Examples**
Hedges	Epistemic verbs: *can*, *could*, *might*, *may*; Adj/Adv. expressions: *perhaps, it is likely*, etc.
Certainty markers	*It is clear/clearly, it is obvious/obviously, it is certain/certainly*, etc.
Attitude markers	Deontic modals: *have to, must, should*; Attitudinal adverbs: *Unfortunately*, *surprisingly*; Attitudinal expressions: *it is necessary*, *must,* etc.

4. Results: Novice versus expert writers

Table 3 shows the textual markers (logical, sequencers and glosses) as used by Locness (American university students), Spicle (Spanish EFL university writers' corpus, the *International Corpus of Learner English*) and professional writers (signed editorials), the reference group.

As can be seen in Table 3, significant differences exist between the English professionals' and the novice groups' use of metadiscourse markers of the three types studied: logical markers (P<.008 for both of the novice

groups), sequencers and glosses. There is more overuse of the sequencers by the Spanish EFL writers (P<.008) than by the novice English writers (P<.02), although both overused sequencers as compared to the professional writers. These results most probably point to novice writer characteristics as well as writing instruction. However, regarding the Spanish EFL writers, transfer from the preferences in Spanish writing conventions (see section 5 below) may also be worth considering. For glosses, both novice groups show significant differences in comparison to the expert writers, who use a much lower proportion. This result might reflect the need of novice writers to make themselves understood by rephrasing clauses, but also may respond to the fact that in editorials there is little space for rephrasing.

Table 3. Comparison of the textual markers used in English

Total TEXTUAL Markers in English	**Logical Raw fig.**	**Logical**	**Sequencers Raw fig.**	**Sequencers**	**Glosses Raw fig.**	**Glosses**
Locness (Amer. Univ.)	478	31.9 P<.008	189	12.6 P<.02	177	11.8 P<.002
Spicle (Span. EFL)	616	31.6 P<.008	365	18.7 P<.008	440	22.6 P<.009
Professionals English (reference group)	1407	123.8	22	1.9	44	3.9

Table 4. Comparison of the interpersonal markers used in English

Total INTERPERSONAL Markers in English	**Hedges Raw fig.**	**Hedges**	**Certainty Raw fig.**	**Certainty**	**Attitude Raw fig.**	**Attitude**
Locness (Amer. Univ.)	831	55.4 P<.05	91	6.1 P<.05	723	48.2 P<.02
Spicle (Span. EFL)	463	23.7 P<.01	114	5.9 P<.05	752	38.6 P<.02
Professionals English	543	47.6	81	7.1	321	28.2

The use of the interpersonal markers, displayed in Table 4, also reflects significant differences between the professional texts and those constructed by the two novice groups for the three categories: hedges, certainty makers and attitude markers. However, the two novice groups differ, in that the

American university writers overuse hedges, while the Spanish EFL writers under-use them in comparison to the professional writers.

The hedges most used by the professional writers were verbal (*could*, *may*, *might* and *seem*, in that order) and the adverbial *perhaps*. The American university texts show the same tendencies, but with more use of the modal verbs and also of rather informal *maybe*, perhaps a novice writer characteristic, given that the Spanish EFL writers also have a high proportion of both *maybe* and *perhaps*. An interesting detail of the interpersonal use of *seem* is that while the American university writers overuse it (126 tokens) in comparison with the expert writers (65 tokens), the Spanish EFL under-use it (28 tokens), probably as a result of insufficient language competence. This is one case where there seems to be little transfer from native-writer patterns since in the Spanish experts' texts the verb *parecer* [seem] is the second most used hedge, only after the multi-modal *poder* [can/may/might].

The Spanish EFL writers greatly overused the modal verb *could*, particularly in constructions in which they most probably should have used a clearer hedge, such as *may* or *might*. Consequently, their texts show an under-use of *might* but also of *seem*, a modal which is overused by the American novice writers. Another significant difference between the English professional texts and those of the Spanish EFL writers was the use the former made of more sophisticated modal phrases, such as *it is likely*, employed only once by the Spanish novice writers. Since such lexical phrases were also under-represented in the American university corpus, this may reflect a novice writer feature.

As for the certainty markers, the two novice groups showed significant differences with the professional writers, both because of overuse of these markers in comparison with the professionals, as might be expected in novice writing. There are also differences which lay at a more delicate level of analysis, in which it can be observed that the Spanish EFL writers overuse markers of certainty. Especially notable is the Spanish EFL writers' preference for lexical phrases, such as *it is obvious* or *it is true* and for which there is a clear preference in English for using the modal adverbs, *clearly*, *certainly*, etc.

In regard to the attitude markers, the professional writers utilize fewer, while both the novice groups use significantly more, thus pointing to a novice writer characteristic. Again, with regard to the Spanish EFL writers' texts, as compared to both those of their American counterparts and to those of the experts, a closer analysis shows an overwhelming presence of deontic modality (*has/have to*, *must*); there are 201 tokens of *must* in the Spanish

EFL texts, as compared to 31 tokens in the American university writers' texts and 83 in the experts' texts. The Spanish students' overuse of this deontic modal is perhaps due in large part to transfer from native language preferences: in Spanish, the modal *deber* encompasses both *should* and *must/have to*. However, the over-representation of this feature could also be compounded by lack of experience in writing. Regarding the confluence of the latter two variables, in the EFL texts there is a clear preference for the use of *have to/must* in lexical phrases which serve as topic introducers as in: *It must be taken into consideration/ be said/ be pointed out*, etc.

5. Results: Expert writers in English and in Spanish

Our analysis, generally speaking, reveals that the major differences between the Spanish and the English expert writers involve the use of textual metadiscourse, and in particular, the use of logical connectors (see Table 5). The Spanish professional writers used more additive connectors, a total of 2620 versus the 1407 tokens present in the texts of their English-speaking counterparts. A closer examination showed that the Spanish group concentrated most of these markers in the form of additive linkers (1868 tokens), leaving adversatives, consecutives and conclusives in a second place. The English group divided the use of logical markers into additives (824) and adversatives (549). These results substantiate early studies (Mauranen 1993; Dafouz 2003; Neff *et al.* 2004b) which proposed that differences in the use of additive and adversative markers may be due to the way cultures construct argumentative texts. Mauranen (1993: 236) argued that while Finnish writers present their claims in the form of a conclusion, Anglo-Americans present them in the form of a result. In other words, Finns build the argumentation using a progressive strategy that entails moving forward in the presentation of ideas and adding evidence to the original claim. Anglo-American writing, on the other hand, exhibits a retrogressive strategy, which requires reconstructing the argumentation and presenting different sides of the argumentation to reach a plausible result. Dafouz (2003) suggested that, in the case of the Spanish editorial writing, these authors may prefer to add justification to the original idea but continually develop the argumentation in the same direction (i.e. progressively) via additive markers. By contrast, the English-speaking discourse community makes a higher use of adversative markers in order to build arguments which contrast the pros and cons of an opinion.

As for Code Glosses, findings reveal that both groups of professionals used them very sparsely (coinciding in 44 tokens), a result which we believe responds to rhetorical conventions. Due to space constraints, editorials do not use these markers to organise their information nor to exemplify or clarify content. It seems thus that linguistic economy may well function as a crucial criterion in the writing of opinion articles.

Table 5. Textual markers preferred in English and Spanish argumentative texts

Total TEXTUAL Markers	Logical Raw fig.	Log. / 10,000 W	Sequencers Raw fig.	Seq. / 10,000W	Glosses Raw fig.	Glosses / 10,000 W
Professional texts, English	1407	123	22	1.9	44	3.9
Professional texts, Spanish	2620	262	67	4.5	44	2.9
Statistical differences		P<.005		P<.03		P<.05

Table 6. Interpersonal markers preferred in English and Spanish argumentative texts

Total INTERPERSONAL Markers	Hedges Raw fig.	Normed/ 10, 000 W	Certainty Raw fig.	Normed / 10, 000 W	Attitude Raw fig.	Normed / 10,000 W
Professionals English	543	47.8	81	7.1	321	24.2
Professionals Spanish	466	31.1	122	8.2	388	25.9
Statistical differences		*P<.1		P<.05		*P<.9

As can be seen in Table 6, the only significant difference in the use of interpersonal markers by professional English and Spanish writers was found in certainty markers (the asterisk indicate non-significant findings). Both sets of writers have hedges as the greatest number of interpersonal markers, followed by attitude markers and lastly, certainty expressions. In regard to the latter, however, the Spanish expert writers used significantly more certainty markers than did the English experts. At a more delicate level of analysis, it can be observed that English experts prefer the adverbial forms (*certainly*, 18 tokens; *surely*, 15 and *clearly*, 11). The Spanish experts prefer more

forceful evaluative adjectives and adverbials, such as *sin duda* [*no doubt*], 39 tokens; *es cierto* [*it is true*], 16 tokens; and, *ciertamente* [*certainly/truly*], 13 tokens. Although there is not a significant difference between the professional text as far as the number of tokens in attitude markers, again a closer examination does reveal some significant differences as to which particular markers are chosen. Spanish authors prefer the use of *deber* [*must/ should*], with 237 tokens, while Anglo-American authors prefer *should*, with 153 tokens as compared to 83 tokens of *must*. As *deber* translates for both *must* and *should*, it appears that the Spanish EFL writers' overuse of *must* is a reasonably good indication of transfer from the L1.

The analysis of some of the similarities among the two groups leads us to believe that genre-driven conventions might have priority over cultural or linguistic conventions, and thus the relative uniformity in the use of these interpersonal markers. As Le (2004:709) points out, hedges are ultimately necessary in editorials to mitigate the writers' monopolistic position and to invest them with a more representative and 'democratic' authority. In addition, attitudinal and certainty markers contribute to the construction of a textual *persona* with which the reader can identify and establish a textual dialogue. In other words, the reader-writer relationship becomes one of identification and not of submission (Enos 1990; Dafouz 2006). It seems that the types of metadiscourse markers used and also the frequency of appearance indicates that metadiscourse can be a useful strategy in the characterization of rhetorical conventions across genres.

Thus, if Spanish professional writers use approximately the same number of attitude markers as do their English-speaking counterparts (although the types differ, as pointed out above), then their overuse by EFL writers seems to be due to causes other than cross-linguistic differences/pre-ferences. The fact that these markers are also overused by the American university writers appears to point to novice writer insistence on making a point forcefully, which is reflected in the cumulative effect of the use of many different types of attitude markers.

6. Conclusions

The major conclusions of this study involve, on the one hand, novice writer characteristics compared with expert writers in English, and, on the other, the major differences between Spanish and English rhetorical preferences.

Regarding textual metadiscourse and novice writer characteristics as compared to those of expert writers in English, this study shows that both novice groups under-use logical markers (e.g. *and, moreover, but, however, nevertheless, yet*; etc.) but over-use sequencers (*first*, *second*, *next*, etc.), and the Spanish EFL writers much more so than American university students. This feature may reflect Spanish rhetorical conventions, which favour a progressive argumentation strategy, building up evidence of the same type, clause by clause, while English argumentation strategies prefer setting out the major premise at the beginning and then offering a balanced consideration of the pros and cons. Concerning the category of glosses, both novice groups over-used these, a finding which might reflect the need of inexperienced writers to make themselves understood by rephrasing clauses. In contrast, it seems that expert writers, both in English and in Spanish, do not allow themselves this possibility of clarification, perhaps because editorial space is limited. The analysis of interpersonal markers shows again that both groups of novice writers, in comparison with expert writers in English, display significant differences for the three interpersonal markers in question (hedges, certainty markers and attitude markers), but particularly so for attitude markers. Since both inexperienced groups choose the most assertive of these markers (*have to*, *must*, *it is necessary*), this may reflect a novice writer characteristic. At more a delicate level of analysis, the Spanish EFL writers also show a prominent use of strong certainty (*it is obvious/true)* and attitude markers (*have to/ must/ it is necessary*), many times as topic introducers (*I must admit that*...). The use of forceful attitude markers seems to be a feature of Spanish argumentative text and, therefore, this characteristic in the EFL writers' texts may be due to a combination of transfer and of novice writing.

With regard to the comparison of Spanish and English rhetorical preferences for particular types of textual metadiscourse**,** the use of the three categories analyzed above reveal significant differences, especially for logical markers. As far as additives and adversatives, findings show that some differences may be due to rhetorical preferences between languages. Spanish favours the use of coordination (mostly with *and/y])* while English prefers shorter sentences and less subordination. Another interpretation is that additives, as previously mentioned, help to construct a progressive argumentative style, with addition of arguments and examples, as the clauses progress. This style, supposedly, would require more textual markers. English, in contrast, seems to prefer a clear statement of the major thesis at the beginning of the argumentative essay and then a balanced argumentation follows, which

would favour adversative use. In the case of interpersonal metadiscourse, both Spanish and English seem to use similar numbers in two of the three categories, that is, hedging and attitude markers. The two groups showed a significant difference, however, in the use of certainty markers (P<.05). On closer examination, it can be observed that English experts prefer the adverbial forms (*certainly*, 18 tokens; *surely*, 15 and *clearly*, 11). Although the Spanish experts use these forms as well as adjectival constructions (*es cierto* [it is true/certain]), they seem to favour more forceful evaluative adjectives and adverbials, such as *sin duda* [no doubt], 39 tokens; *es cierto* [it is true], 16 tokens; and, *ciertamente* [certainly/truly], 13 tokens. For the attitude markers, although the numbers used by the two groups reveal no significant differences, the Spanish expert writers appear to favour assertive markers, such as *debe* [must]*; hay que* [have to]; *tiene que*, all meaning *must/have to*). Interestingly, the Spanish experts also use these devices as topic introducers, such as *debemos recordar el tema de la financiación de los partidos* [we should/must remember the topic of the funding of political parties]. Again, this result seems to point to different overall argumentation strategies, but not to divergent genre-driven strategies.

By and large, the findings drawn from this study hold important implications for cross-linguistic comparisons and genre characterization and also for the teaching of literacy in the EFL/ESL learning contexts. In our view, it is essential to include the notion of metadiscourse in the writing syllabus and to teach it explicitly, focusing on the textual and interpersonal functions of language. Various studies (Intaraprawat and Steffensen 1995; Thompson 2001; Thompson and Thetela 1995) have readily acknowledged the connection between metadiscourse markers and textual quality. Hyland (2005: 185–192), for instance, offers very practical examples of the inclusion of metadiscourse and metadiscourse categories in the classroom; examples that range from the analysis of texts and the identification of markers, to the manipulation of the metadiscourse categories within them, the understanding of audiences and, finally, the creation of texts. We believe that only through explicit exposure and teaching of metadiscourse categories can learners move from the writer-based discourse (Hinds 1987), traditionally produced by novice writers and EFL learners, to the reader-based discourse (Flower 1984) where socio-pragmatic decisions such as the possible reactions of the expected audience or the amount of background knowledge needed are taken into account.

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The management of global cultural diversity in ELT materials

Augustin Simo Bobda

1. Introduction

One common argument to temper the condemnation of international languages as imperialistic or killer languages is that, indigenised, they can be made to express the local cultures of the new environments in which they are used. These international languages, according to their defenders, can be moulded to become African or Asian languages, as suggested, in the case of French, by the titles of Mendo Ze's (1999) *Le Français, Langue Africaine* and of the first part of the collection, "Le Français, notre langue", which can be translated into English respectively as "French, an African language" and "French, our language". The question, however, remains how accurately these world languages can capture the subtleties of the new cultures and facilitate intercultural communication. This paper focuses on the specific case of English, and examines how well the didactic materials used to teach this language reflect the multiplicity of world cultures. More importantly, the paper examines whether, beyond the exposure of the learner to global themes and global contexts of language use, and mainstream meanings of words, the current textbooks provide, or can provide, sufficient tools for communication across cultures, without a supplementary set of cultural guidelines. The paper thus shares, to some extent, the concerns of Anna Wierzbicka (this volume) about the cultural significance of words.

2. Representation of cultural diversity in current ELT materials

The themes treated in current ELT materials are quite different from what they used to be. The formerly almost exclusively Anglo-Saxon topics have now given way to a much wider range for a much larger geographical scope. The diversity of themes often, but by no means always, corresponds to an equally wider range of cultural features to which English learners are exposed through reading activities, but also listening, speaking, writing and

others. It enables the English thus learnt to fulfil its role as an instrument for international and intercultural communication.

But much imbalance can still be observed in the representation of world-wide cultures by textbooks used internationally to teach the language, like John and Soars' *Headway*,[1] one of the collections used in language centres in Cameroon. In this collection, Anglo-American features dominate the scene, followed, in descending order, by other Western, Latin American, and Asian features, while Africa, especially Sub-Saharan Africa, is conspicuously marginalized. Table 1 shows the frequency of occurrence of exclusive cultural features deemed significant in *Headway Elementary* (HW EL), *Pre-Intermediate* (PI), *Intermediate* (IN) and *Upper-Intermediate* (UI). A cultural feature is considered exclusive if it associates mostly with a given cultural environment, and may engender a problem of understanding for a person outside it. For example, while air transport or using a computer, though originally associated with the West, may be considered culturally neutral, a local carnival in Britain and a traditional marriage ceremony in Japan will be considered culturally exclusive.

Table 1. Frequency of representation of exclusive cultural elements in some *Headway* materials

	Anglo-American	Other Western	Latin American	Asian	North African	Sub Sahara African
HW EL	11	7	6	3	2	1
HW PI	8	6	0	3	0	0
HW IN	10	6	0	3	0	0
HW UI	10	6	1	3	1	0
Total	39	25	7	12	3	1

A startling illustration of cultural bias is provided by a reading passage from HW IN (pp.40-41), probably the most intercultural, so to say, of the whole collection, an extract from *A World Guide to Good Manners,* subtitled *How **Not** to behave badly abroad,* by Norman Ramshaw (bibliographical details not given). After surveying the patterns of behaviour acceptable in Germany, in the European Community (today the European Union), among the British, the Americans, the Dutch, the Japanese, the author gives the final tips for the right behaviour in France, in Afghanistan, in Pakistan, in the Middle East, in Russia, in Thailand, and in America, as reproduced below:

'When in Rome, do as the Romans do.' Here are some final tips for travelers.

- In France you shouldn't sit down in a café until you've shaken hands with everyone you know.
- In Afghanistan you should spend at least five minutes saying hello.
- In Pakistan you mustn't wink. It is offensive.
- In the Middle East you must never use the left hand for greeting, eating, drinking, or smoking. Also, you should take care not to admire anything in your hosts' home. They will feel that they have to give it to you.
- In Russia you must match your hosts drink for drink or they will think you are unfriendly.
- In Thailand you should clasp your hands together and lower your head and your eyes when you greet someone.
- In America you should eat your hamburger with both hands and as quickly as possible. You shouldn't try to have a conversation until it is eaten.

As can be seen, while countries of all other continents are included, nothing is mentioned about Africa. Africa is not better represented in other textbooks like *True to Life* [2].

It is only in textbooks designed for specific countries, like Cripwell et al's and Montgomery et al's collection *Go For English*[3] and Nama et al's *Stay Tuned* [4] used in Cameroon, that Africa is given a fair treatment.

But the greatest problem with ELT materials is that, however localized they are, they may not be a good help to handle the many subtleties involved in intercultural communication, as their primary purpose is to teach the mainstream use of the language.

3. The limits of ELT materials in fostering intercultural communication

There is an abundant literature and accounts of personal experience recounting the fact that the language available in ELT textbooks, which does not generally take into account the specific cultural contexts in which the users may find themselves, is often not suitable for intercultural communication. In fact, it can breed social misunderstanding, disrupt interpersonal and social order, far more than intelligibility based on mainstream structural features of the language can. In an extract from *Intercultural Dialogue* by Susan Bassnett (2004) reported by the magazine *Thresholds* (No 2, 2005: 5–6), President Bush is reported to have apologized to the world for the treatment of

Iraqi prisoners-of-war by US servicemen by using the word of apology that the whole English-speaking world knows: the word *sorry.* According to the account of Susan Bassnett, the London Ambassador of the Arab League, presumably representative of listeners of his background, was angry that President Bush had not apologized as "he only said he was sorry". A more acceptable way to apologise would have been to actually ask for pardon. Bassnett (Thresholds: 6) remarks that in so many languages, the notion of apology involves a two-stage process, first asking and then being granted pardon, and the process is not complete until the request is granted. By saying that he was sorry rather than asking to be forgiven, Bush was focusing attention only on himself, thus creating an impression of arrogant self-sufficiency.

A second illustration is provided by the reaction that anger words can provoke in an Asian environment. Sally, a university teacher hired to teach in Beijing, learnt this the hard way, as recounted by Foster (1995:162). Although the terms of her contract clearly included her being given decent accommodation, she arrived in Beijing when her room was not fixed. She was temporarily accommodated in an unpleasant room behind the kitchen of the dormitory. After several polite complaints about her unpleasant lifestyle and several unfulfilled promises for her room to be fixed, Sally told her hosts "that she was angry, tired, very frustrated, and at the end of her rope" (p.162). Her hosts' response was that, "several days later, she was asked to leave Beijing and was presented with the necessary papers to return to the States" (p.162). My own personal experience at the University of Hong Kong is not as pathetic, but still adds to the evidence that words of anger are not interpreted in the same way in all cultural contexts. In my native Cameroon, I tell a student that he is a *liar* or that he is *dishonest* when he deserves to be told so. But I nearly provoked a violent confrontation with a student when I told him that he had told me a lie, and questioned his honesty, because I had seen him on the campus one day he claimed he was lying sick at home. According to Foster (1995:162), "it is considered immature to display emotion. One keeps one's thoughts and feelings to oneself. A display of anger is particularly destructive. One should not display anger in any form in Asia."

Even ordinary words for ordinary referents may be used and perceived differently across cultures, though the differences in perception may not have dramatic consequences as in the cases above. One example discussed by Liao (2000) is *birthday.* This word is certainly one of the most commonly used words in ELT materials, because it relates to a concept which is central

in the life of Anglo-Saxons and Western people in general. As Liao (2000) rightly notes, "in many Western countries, birthday and Christmas are two of the most important days of the year." That is why, in Liao's (2000) study on intercultural emailing, "Turkish kids told their new [Taiwanese] pals their birthday even in the first introductory letter," while this concern had little or no place in their Taiwanese correspondents' culture; even in one case where a Taiwanese child was expressly asked to say when his birthday was, he did not answer the question. "Chinese children do not generally have birthday parties", and "birthday is not thought of as important information among new acquaintances" (Liao 2000: 287). This kind of information is certainly of great relevance to ELT textbook writers, if they insist on discussing themes which are of immediate interest to the learners of a given cultural environment. From the point of view of selection of vocabulary to teach, this account clearly shows that, while *birthday* is one of the most active vocabulary items in the Western world, it is rather passive in the Chinese culture.

Non-verbal elements, generally not taken care of in ELT materials, are also a crucial aspect of intercultural communication. As explained by Usunier (1996: 374–377), non-verbal communication, which includes gestures and facial expressions and communication with the eyes, varies dramatically from one culture to another. Indeed, Usunier tells us, kissing (the cheek, the lips, the hand, the foot), taking a person by the arm, clasping the shoulders, pinching the cheek, shaking hands, tickling, stroking, giving a little pat, laughing and smiling, frowning and knitting one's brow, looking someone straight in the eyes, or looking away, or lowering the eyes, etc., express communication and are subject to a variety of constraints across cultures, and failure to observe the prescribed code in a given culture could have disastrous consequences. Usunier (1996: 375), citing Condon and Youssef (1975), reports that this is what happened to one professor of English origin teaching at the University of Cairo. He was sitting in his chair with his feet in front of him, the soles of his shoes facing his Egyptian students. Since a Muslim considers this one of the worst possible insults, a student demonstration ensued, taken up by newspapers which denounced British arrogance and demanded that the professor be sent back to his home country.

Up-to-date ELT materials expose learners to a wide range of varieties of English used world-wide, including foreign language varieties. But the (understandable) priority given to verbal language does not allow the necessary non-verbal aspects of communication to come out clearly. For example, many ELT textbooks contain dialogues involving Japanese speakers of the

language. But unless appropriate audio-visual tapes are used, they do not represent bowing, which is a crucial aspect of communication among the Japanese. While the French shake hands, excessively according to the Anglo-Saxons (Usunier 1996:175), bowing is the appropriate manner of greeting in Japan. In this respect, Usunier explains that there are hostesses in front of some departmental stores in Japan whose sole role is to bow to the customers who come into the store. He goes on to report that the depth of the bow reflects the status of the person greeting (the deeper the bow, the lower his / her status).

4. Some cultural guidelines for the use of English in Africa, with special reference to Cameroon

English can be effectively used and understood in Africa only with a good grasp of some general sociocultural features of the society as well as the understanding of the many other subtle ways in which a language item can be culturally significant.

4.1. Some sociocultural features of the African society

I will choose three features to illustrate the role of culture in English-medium communication in Africa: the meaning and importance of the notion of family, the importance of interactional language, and class-consciousness.

4.1.1. Meaning and importance of the notion of family

It is now clearly established in the literature (see, for example, Platt *et al.* 1984:106) that the notion of family in Africa extends far beyond the nuclear family in the Western sense which usually includes only father, mother and children, and perhaps other close relatives. It does not include only the extended family, but often covers people of the same ethnic group, and even of the same race, and beyond; family terms like *father, mother, brother, sister, son, daughter, uncle, auntie,* or variants like *Dad, Mom(my), Pǎ, Mǎ, ɔ̀ŋkɔ́ / ɔ̀ŋkú* (note the occurrence of tonal features in the latter words) may be used for anybody for whom one feels respect or affection. In intercultural communication, such usages have often brought misunderstanding. For example,

a young German lady is reported to have felt offended in Yaounde when a street vendor offering his goods called her *Mommy.*

The prefixation of some family terms to first names (FN) and surnames (SN) and the contexts in which it occurs in Cameroon is particularly interesting. For example, *Sister* + SN*,* but preferably FN (eg *Sister Mary*), is generally used for female close acquaintances of middle age. *Pǎ* or *Mǎ*+SN or FN (eg *Pǎ Moses*) may be used at the work place to refer to a boss or an older member of staff. Quite significantly, in a school or university environment, this form of address (with preference for SN) is commonly used for teaching staff above middle age. This is a significant innovation in Cameroon English, where *Pǎ Tarkang, Mǎ Ayuk* now frequently replace *Mr/Dr/Prof. Tarkang/Ayuk.* Note that *Ni* and *Bobe* [bɔbe]*,* forms of address used in some languages of the North West Province of Cameroon, may also be used in the same context, to address, or refer to, older colleagues of middle age (eg *Ni Galega, Bobe Ngong*).

4.1.2. Importance of interactional language

Brown and Yule (1983: 1 and *passim*) distinguish between transactional language and interactional language. Transactional language is meant to express "content", while interactional language expresses social relations and attitudes. Africans are fond of interactional language. This is seen in the variety and length of greetings and niceties that they have for each other, in the various languages they use. Speakers of the Ngyembɔɔn language in the West Province of Cameroon commonly greet each other in a long set of turns, as follows:

A*: O lan te ti?*
B*: Dan te ti*
O la ʒu nti?
A*: Dan te ti?*
A to B or B to A*: Fotio / Tiwa/ Mamo wu lan te ti?*
Reply*: Lan te ti.*

This can be translated into English as:

A: How did you spend the night? (=Did you have a good night sleep?)
B: I spent the night well.
Did you spend the night well yourself?
A: I spent the night well.
A to B or B to A: Did Fotio / Tiwa / your Mum spend the night well?

Reply: He/she spent the night well.

The English language as used in Cameroon is adapted to suit the social exigency for greetings and these niceties, when it does not altogether borrow from local languages, namely Pidgin English. For example, there is a greeting to somebody who is eating or about to eat, which is "*Good appetite!*" It is not only induced by the cognate "*Bon appétit*" from French, the other official language of Cameroon, but is also meant to fill a gap in the English language, which lacks this kind of greeting. Other European languages have a greeting for the important occasion of eating: they have *"Buen provecho"* in Spanish, "*Buon appetito*" in Italian, "*Guten Appetit*" in German, and so on.

Other greetings used by Cameroonian speakers of English include *"Ashia*!" or *"Assia"* used as an expression of commiseration to somebody in trouble (eg when they are bereaved), or of encouragement to somebody at work, or occasionally as a negative reaction to disapprove of something somebody has said; in fact, the use of *ashia/assia* here relates to the latter two cases, being an ironical expression of commiseration or encouragement (eg to somebody telling a lie).

4.1.3. Class-consciousness

Foster (1995:195–233) gives an interesting review of some Western and Eastern societies with regard to egalitarianism. He explains the strength of egalitarianism in the United States by the fact that "America was born in a revolution against class, status, and aristocracy," and there have never been kings and queens there. This is clearly reflected in business and intercultural communication. In contrast, class-consciousness in Europe is a vestige or reflection of "nearly a thousand years of feudalism," when kings and queens, dukes and princes, Church officials, peasants and burgers, and so on were assigned distinct places in societies. Eastern countries like Japan and China had the same historical experience, which continues today, yielding an even more class-conscious society today than in Europe.

The Cameroonian society, like most African societies, also emerging from long centuries of kingdoms and rigid class systems, and more recently from single party dictatorial regimes, is also extremely class-conscious. This sociological trait is reflected in interpersonal communication in several ways. First, it is reflected in the degree of formality observed in interpersonal relationships.

Indeed, Cameroonians are the very opposite of Americans. While Americans "rush into the use of first names, avoid using their titles or respecting the titles of others" (Forster 1995:203), Cameroonians are extremely formal. M-titles, academic, professional and traditional nobility titles are used extensively in everyday communication. It is very common to sign a letter to one's father, brother or girlfriend as *Dr Atanga, Professor Tangye, Chief Arrey.* People regularly introduce themselves on the phone to very close friends as *This is Dr Tantoh, I'm Professor Ngancha.*

The juxtaposition of titles, very common in the whole of West Africa, is a particularly interesting phenomenon, reported by authors like Akere (1982:16) who gives the example of *Alhaji Chief Doctor + Last Name*. It is caricatured in Chinua Achebe's (1966) *A Man of the People* where the main character is called *Chief the Honourable M.A. Nanga, M.P.* In Cameroon, all sorts of combinations are possible, as seen in the following examples:

- *Dr (Mrs) Njika*
- *Prof. (Mrs) Ayuk*
- *Chief Prof. Samson Abangma*
- *Rev. Dr Awasom*
- *His Excellency Professor Elvis Nole Nole*

In the Western world, the closest approximation to this pattern is the German style, illustrated by combinations like *Prof. Dr.Dr Dr. (h.c.) Hoffman.*

Formality also manifests itself in the use of professional positions to refer to the people who hold these positions. Even in very informal situations including family circles, it is common to hear people refer to each other as *Mr/the Director, Mr Sub-Prefect, Mr/Madam Rector, the Captain.* In the process, positions may be deliberately up-graded; a senior official in the Governor's office will be called *Mr Governor,* while a Vice-Rector or Vice-Dean (in a university) will be *Mr/the Rector* and *Mr/the Dean,* respectively, and *His/Your Excellency,* normally used only for personalities like heads of state and ambassadors, is used for ministers. Also worth mentioning is the fact that former titles tend to be kept in Cameroon for life; for instance once a minister, one remains *Mr Minister* for life; once a parliamentarian, one remains *Honourable X* or *Y* all one's life.

Titles are so important in Cameroon that some government officials do not hesitate to openly usurp them. One minister in the current government, who has never held any university position, has thus decided to call himself, and have himself called, *Professor X* [real name withheld for reasons of courtesy and this author's security]. Public figures like politicians and jour-

nalists whose names are not usually called with academic, professional and other titles are invariably called *Dr Mbarga, Professor Mendo Ze, Barrister Muna, Chief Inoni.* Indeed, Africa offers a markedly different style from the West, where prominent figures like (Professor) Henry Kissinger, (Professor) Bill and (Barrister) Hillary Clinton, and (Barrister) François Mitterand have prestigious titles that have hardly ever been used.

The salutation in business letters further shows this predilection for titles. In the Anglo-Saxon style of letter writing, a letter to an official whose name one knows is personalized and addressed as *Dear +title+ SN* (eg *Dear Mr Miller*). But in Cameroon, salutations must read *Mr Chairman, Mr Director, Mr Chief of Service*, etc.

4.2. Some other ways in which words may be culturally sensitive, as illustrated by English usage in Cameroon

The most visible manifestation of the impact of culture on English usage in Cameroon can be seen in the relationship between lexical items and referents; for example, in the fact that local terms are used to designate some new concepts alien to the English language like *achu, ndole* for local dishes; or new words like *co-wife* are formed from existing ones to designate other new concepts; or the meaning of an existing English term is extended to cover that of a local referent, which may be new to the native English culture; eg *funeral* which, in Cameroon, also refers to a celebration organized to commemorate the death of one or several relatives, who may have died a long time ago.

But there are many other ways in which a word may be culturally significant. These ways include the salience of the word from the cognitive perspective, prominence due to some particular socio-historical context, the social importance of the referent, the symbolic value of the referent, the low frequency of the word due to the existence of taboos. These forms of cultural significance, which can obviously overlap, are discussed below, sometimes with reference to the Cameroon English Corpus on the one hand, and, the BROWN and FLOB corpora on the other hand, where necessary and possible. (Raw frequency and collocation data other than those from the previous works of Wolf (2003) and Wolf and Simo Bobda (2001) were worked out in collaboration with Frank Polzenhagen of Humboldt University, Berlin.)

4.3. Salience from the cognitive perspective

A sociocultural reading of CamE lexis is seen much better through a cognitive approach supported by corpus analysis. Indeed, the mere inventory of peculiarities involving single items of the English lexicon of a given English-using community in isolation does not say all about the culture of the community, and how it is expressed by the language. The cognitive approach, supported by computer corpus analysis, is more rewarding in this regard. The cognitive approach to the study of the West African variety of English in general and of the Cameroonian variety in particular, can be seen in Wolf (2001, 2003), Wolf and Simo Bobda (2001) and Wolf and Polzenhagen (2007). This approach is based, on the one hand, on a comparison of the frequency of occurrence of some lexical items in CamE (using the Cameroon English Corpus [CEC]) and in one native variety (using the LOB, FLOB, BROWN and FLOWN corpora). On the other hand, it considers the textual and situational context in which these items appear (Wolf 2001:267).

As a vivid illustration, Wolf (2001:268-9) gives the data in Table 1 as the frequency of some common core terms in the CEC (a corpus of about 900,000 tokens) and in the BROWN Corpus (1,016,364 tokens) based on American English.

Clearly, some items are far more salient in CamE than in American English, and this is taken to reflect the Cameroonian society's "preoccupation with certain themes and problems" (Wolf 2003:5-6). These items include those relating to witchcraft, God and divinity, and the family. Indeed, these terms relate to common concerns of Cameroonians. For example, while social happenings and activities which *bewitched, bewitching, herbs, witches* and *witches* denote are not part of everyday life in the Western world, in Cameroon they are, as aptly documented by Wolf (2003:270ff), from Cameroonian newspapers, creative works, official and legal documents, and school textbooks. For instance, a newspaper will report that children are not sent to relatives in the village for fear of witchcraft. Another respectable newspaper will report on "neighbourhood witches and wizards." An official will call on "traditional medical practitioners […] to desist from witchcraft." A functionary will praise someone for destroying a magic potion that had killed several people. Journalists and creative writers will write about herbs that can be put to negative use by "tradi-practitioners", "herbalists" and "witchcraft practitioners". Article 251 of the 1967 Penal Code of Cameroon

Table 1: Frequency of certain common-core terms in the CEC and the BROWN Corpus

Item	CEC		BROWN	
	tokens	in percent	tokens	in percent
ancestral	**56**	**(0.0063)**	**5**	**(0.0005)**
witched	1	(0.0001)	2	(0.0002)
bewitching	0		1	(0.0001)
brothers	43	(0.0048)	41	(0.0040)
children	**709**	(0.078)	**355**	(0.035)
community/ communities	**408**	**(0.046)**	**277**	**(0.027)**
deity/ deities	**26**	**(0.0029)**	**3**	**(0.0003)**
divination(s)	5	(0.0006)	3	(0.0003)
diviner(s)	2	(0.0002)	0	
family/ families	**533**	**(0.06)**	**377**	**(0.037)**
fateful	**10**	**(0.0011)**	**3**	**(0.0003)**
fathers	**44**	**(0.0049)**	**19**	**(0.0019)**
ghost(s)[288]	**60**	**(0.0067)**	**16**	**(0.0016)**
god/ gods	**800**	**(0.089)**	**331**	**(0.0326)**
herbs	4	(0.0004)	6	(0.0006)
herbalist	2	(0.0002)	0	
indigenous	**122**	**(0.0014)**	**3**	**(0.0003)**
kinship	19	(0.0021)	3	(0.0003)
malediction	1	(0.0001)	1	(0.0001)
man-eater	2	(0.0002)	0	
mothers	**46**	**(0.0052)**	**25**	**(0.0025)**
spirit(s)[289]	**398**	**(0.045)**	**226**	**(0.022)**
tradition(s)	218	(0.025)	115	(0.011)
traditional	**327**	**(0.037)**	**78**	**(0.0077)**
seer(s)	**6**	**(0.0007)**	**1**	**(0.0001)**
sister(s)	**30**	**(0.0034)**	**13**	**(0.0013)**
sorcerer(s)	**6**	**(0.0007)**	**0**	
warlocks[290]	1	(0.0001)	0	
witch(es)	7	(0.0008)	11	(0.0011)
witchcraft/ witch-craft	**11**	**(0.0012)**	**0**	
witch-doctor(s)/ witch doctor(s)/ witchdoctor(s)	**12**	**(0.0013)**	**2**	**(0.0002)**
witching	1	(0.0001)	0	
witchweed	1	(0.0001)	0	
wizard(s)	2	(0.0002)	3	(0.0003)
zombie(s)	3	(0.0003)	2	(0.0002)

the 1967 Penal Code of Cameroon makes witchcraft a punishable offence:

> Whoever commits any act of witchcraft, magic or divination liable to disturb public order or tranquility or to harm another in his person, property or substance, whether by taking a reward or otherwise, shall be punished with imprisonment from two to ten years and with a fine of five thousand to one hundred thousand.

Wolf (2001:271) notes that the mention of *witch(es)* in the BROWN Corpus is in relation to historical events, novels and plays (eg the Salem witch trials or Shakespeare Macbeth), not to real life. Otherwise, magic and witchcraft are mentioned only metaphorically. It is this metaphorical use which is found in the BROWN Corpus in the only occurrence of the term in the news category of texts, when John Major refers to Margaret Thatcher as a witch (Wolf 2003:15).

The frequency of terms relating to God/gods and divinity, predictably, reflects the central role of God/the gods in the life of Cameroonians, their spirituality, while the salience of family and kinship terms suggests the importance given to the family, which is often extended to include other entities like tribal associations, the village, or the nation at large.

The concerns of the Cameroonian society are reflected, not only in the frequency of words in isolation, but in the other words with which they tend to occur, that is, in their common collocates. Wolf's (2003:10-12) comparative analysis of the collocates of *traditional* in the FLOB/FROWN Corpora (247 occurrences in all) and in the CEC (352 occurrences) provides an apt illustration. In the FLOB/FROWN Corpus, the words which collocate with *traditional* are, in decreasing order: *values* (11), *family* (6), *methods* (6), *teaching* (6), *Chinese* (4), *gender* (4), *techniques* (4), *wives* (4), *women* (4), *American* (3), *areas* (3), *arts* (3), *care* (3), *distinction* (3), *English* (3), *figure* (3), *materials* (3), *skin* (3), *southern* (3), *type* (3), *views* (3), *way* (3). In the CEC, they are: *rulers* (20), *modern* (14), *dances* (13), *ruler* (12), *African* (11), *dance* (11), *chiefs* (9), *groups* (9), *village* (9), *rites* (8), *society* (8), *doctors* (7), *law* (7), *courts* (6), *leaders* (6), *local* (6), *order* (6), *people* (6), *political* (6), *art* (5), *methods* (5), *structure* (5), *beliefs* (4), *culture* (4), *dishes* (4), *family* (4), *farming* (4), *healers* (4), *institutions* (4), *life* (4), *medicine* (4), *products* (4), *societies* (4), *structures* (4), *style* (4), *activities* (3), *administration* (3), *authority* (3), *chief* (3), *chiefdom* (3), *children* (3), *food* (3), *land* (3), *villages* (3). The higher frequency of the term *traditional* in CamE, the larger number of its collocates, and the salience of particular collocates (eg *rulers, dances, chiefs, rites, society, doctors*) signal, *inter*

alia, the constant acknowledgement of the traditional side of administration, cultural activities and practices, blending with the pervasive modern life.

In CamE, lexico-semantic peculiarities, the salience of some particular terms and the frequency of some collocates "may be tied to a larger conceptual network" (Wolf and Simo Bobda 2001:231) and reflect a cultural model. The concept of cultural model, it will be recalled, was developed by Quinn and Holland in the context of cognitive anthropology. It refers to "shared knowledge" (Quinn and Holland (1987:4), which consists of "presupposed, taken-for-granted models of the world that are widely shared [...] by the members of a society and that play an enormous role in their understanding of that world and their behaviour in it". The Cameroonian cultural model can be found in all types of texts used in Cameroon: textbooks, newspapers, creative works, private and official letters, legal documents, and so on. The cultural model is often presented in metaphors and/or metonymic form (Wolf 1994), and written conventionally in capital letters. The metaphors reflecting the Cameroonian cultural model include the following, compiled from Wolf (2001, 2003) and Wolf and Simo Bobda (2001) – note that cultural models are normally conventionally written in capitals:

- THE COSMOS CONSISTS OF MAN, HEAVENLY BODIES, AND DEITIES AND SPIRITS.
- LIFE COMES FROM THE GODS.
- HUMANITY IS IN COMMUNITY WITH THE GODS AND SPIRITS, NATURE, AND ITSELF.
- SPIRITS AND GODS ARE PART OF PRESENT REALITY.
- PERSONS OF RESPECT MEDIATE BETWEEN THE SPIRITS AND THE LIVING.
- ILLNESS, MISFORTUNE AND SIN ARE HUMANITY IN DISCORD WITH THE GODS AND SPIRITS, NATURE, AND ITSELF.
- DEATH OR ILLNESS OF A YOUNG PERSON OR HEALTHY ADULT IS CAUSED BY WITCHCRAFT.
- ANIMALS HAVE A SPECIAL RELATION TO THE SUPERNATURAL.

4.4. Prominence due to some particular socio-historical context

The above analysis concerns the permanent themes and preoccupations of the Cameroonian society, as part of their ancestral culture. Other themes and preoccupations arise at particular times and the English language quickly adapts to them. Life in Cameroon since the early 1990s and the resulting use of words provide ample illustrations. It has been marked by a democratic wind which has been more or less successfully shaking the former autocratic regime of the previous decades, considered by many people to be represented by President Paul Biya, in power since 1982, and winner of the last (2004) election for another seven-year term. There has also been an acute economic crisis, exacerbated by a salary reduction of more than 50% in 1993. The social landscape, not un-connected with the political and economic situation, has been marked by different ethnic and other clannish divisions. To match these and many more political and social changes, some words have gained salience, and others have experienced a semantic shift, and still others have come to be associated with distinctive collocates in the minds of the speakers. These words include *change, crisis, free and fair, radical, transparent,* analysed below.

Change: In the minds of many Cameroonians, the word *change* associates with political change, change from autocracy and its associated ills and problems like embezzlement, corruption, poverty, to democracy, expected to bring about a better life.

Crisis: In Cameroon the term *crisis* mostly associates with the economic crisis which has been hitting the country since the early 1990s. It has been marked, *inter alia*, by a drastic salary reduction and a 50% devaluation of the currency, the CFA franc. The salience of the word *crisis/crises* is reflected in the CEC where it occurs 184 times and collocates 74 times with *economic,* contrasting with 76 tokens in the FLOB Corpus where its highest lexical collocate is *debt* (17 collocations).

Electoral: While in the American presidential election, the adjective *electoral* associates with nouns like *college* because of the importance that the notion of *electoral college* has in the U.S., the term instead readily collocates in Cameroon with *code, commission* and *register*. Cameroonians have been concerned about an electoral code that would guarantee free and fair elections. The creation of an independent electoral commission has been a topical issue, and there have been problems with registration on the electoral register (apathy of the population disillusioned by alleged rigging in past

elections, refusal of administrative officials to register citizens with doubtful loyalty to the regime, and so on).

Free and fair: The expression has recently gained particular salience, and occurs mostly with the term *election(s)*.

Radical: In political speech, the word *radical* readily collocates with *opposition*. It is used to describe the attitude of some political parties which are radical in their opposition to government, and do not yield to pressure or bribery.

Transparent: It collocates mostly with *elections.*

More of such words can be found in the Appendix.

4.5. Particular function of the referent

While the denotative meaning of a word may be identical world-wide because of the identical form of the referents it is associated with, the particular function or use to which the referent is put in a given society may make it culturally significant. The words *flower* and *dog* aptly illustrate this phenomenon. Flowers have in common to all English users the fact that they are used as an ornament, generally in and/or around a building. In the Western civilisation, flowers are further given to loved ones to show one's affection; in Cameroon, they are far less often used for this purpose, even in the most Westernised circles. In many parts of Europe and America, visitors take flowers along to their guests' homes, or to sick people in hospital; this function of the flowers is not known in Cameroon. It follows from the sociocultural functions of the word *flower* that, while it readily associates with *house, garden, love, visit, sick, hospital* in the Western world, it does so only with *house, garden,* to some extent *love,* but not with *visit, sick, hospital in Cameroon.*

As for *dog,* it denotes in modern Western society a referent perceived as an animal used to keep away thieves and intruders. But it is also perceived there as a pet and a loved companion that receives near-human treatment. In Cameroon, it is almost exclusively associated with hunting and guarding. Predictably, the common collocates of *dog* in CamE will include *hunt, guard, fence, thieves* (note the particularly high potential occurrence of *thieves* in a country where burglary is a very common phenomenon).

4.5.1. Social importance of the referent

Some words refer to some concepts and phenomena which may be more important in some societies than in others. *Burial,* like other words associated with death, is an example. In Cameroon, *burial* does not just refer to the act of putting a corpse under the ground. It is a big and colourful event which always pulls crowds of relatives, friends and colleagues. Since people are normally buried only in their native village (married women are buried in the village of their husbands), the corpse is generally "*removed from the mortuary*" of the dead person's town of residence, "*laid in state*" at his house and crowds turn up at the "*wake-keeping.*" The following day, the corpse is transported in a convoy, sometimes hundreds of miles away, to the native village of the deceased to be laid to rest in a very solemn and colourful ceremony with a church service and plenty of singing, dancing, eating and wining, where various groups of mourners are identifiable from their uniforms. The CEC corpus reflects the salience of *burial* and other words of the same lexical family: *burial(s)* 28 tokens, *buried/burried* 25 tokens, *bury/burry* 9 tokens, *burying* 3 tokens in the CEC vs *burial* 18 tokens, *buried* 22 tokens, *buryin(g)* 5 tokens in the FLOB Corpus.

4.5.2. Predominance of one particular aspect of the meaning

How one particular aspect of the meaning of a word may predominate is illustrated by the term *meeting.* In the West, *meeting* readily associates with a gathering, generally to discuss professional matters. But in Cameroon, although *meeting* is also used for professional gatherings, it more readily associates with the many family and social gatherings that abound in the Cameroonian society. There are weekly, monthly or bi-monthly *meetings* for members at different levels of relationship within the family, as well as tribal, alumni, age groups and many other associations and each Cameroonian generally belongs to several of them. As a reflection of the social importance of the word *meeting,* the CEC has 333 tokens of *meeting* and 73 of *meetings* while the FLOB Corpus has 155 of *meeting* and 33 of *meetings.*

4.5.3. The symbolic value of the referent

Examples of words which have a special resonance in the ears of Cameroonians because of the symbolic value of their referents are *gizzard, kola, palmwine* and *goat.* In the Western culture, the gizzard is a part of a bird which is considered ordinary and even of low value. But in many Cameroo-

nian tribes, a high value is attached to it, and it is eaten only by the most senior person in a group. It is therefore evident that the reading behind the word *gizzard* is not the same in these tribes as in the Western culture. In Cameroon *kola* is, among other symbols, a symbol of friendship, union and togetherness; it is split and shared, for example, to seal the union between the family of the bride and that of the bride-groom; in slang usage, *kola* is also the term for *bribe.* Palmwine (or raphia wine in areas where raphia is grown) is also a symbol of union, used accordingly in the Cameroonian society. The goat is used for some traditional rituals; for example, as an offering to the ancestors (it is tethered in the ancestor's compound); *goat* is also used in Cameroon as a slang word for *bribe,* due to the fact that one common way of bribing an official is to offer him/her a goat.

4.5.4. The low frequency of the word due to the existence of taboos.

As is well-known, taboos are by no means universal. Even the four-letter word is not a taboo across all cultures. Conversely, some rather basic words by the standards of some cultures may be tabooed in others. For example, seemingly simple and inoffensive words like *boy-friend/girl-friend,* and to a large extent *husband* and *wife* are tabooed in some contexts in Cameroon. Having a boy-friend or a girl-friend is considered sinful in many Cameroonian cultures, and it is not socially acceptable, especially among teenagers, to openly declare that one has a boy-friend or a girl-friend, unless marriage is the immediate purpose of the friendship. In a recent ZdaF[5] oral examination at the Yaounde Goethe Institute, a 19-year-old female candidate, a university student, got offended when the German examiner, strictly following the prescribed syllabus for the examination, asked her whether she had a boy-friend. When the girl recounted the 'incident' to her parents, they also took the matter very seriously, and deplored what they perceived as the corruption of the youth by the 'irresponsible' German teacher. In the light of this analysis, we can understand why *boyfriend/ boy friend* occurs only 4 times in the CEC Corpus, while *boyried/boyfriend/boyfriends* occurs 12 times in the FLOB Corpus.

The word *husband* is also far less commonly used than in the Western culture. Substitutes for the word include the following:

- Terms like *Daddy;* eg (from wife to child or housemaid) *"Has Daddy eaten already?"*
- Some traditional title born by the husband; eg *Is Chief back from his journey?*

- Other non-Western titles; eg *Please tell Tanyi that I would like to see him* (*Tanyi* is the term locally given in some tribes to a man who has given birth to twins);
- Expressions like *X's father* (X being the name of one of the children); eg *Where is Pat's father?*
- Husband's academic or professional titles; examples:
  Please tell Prof that I'll call again tomorrow. [Prof = Professor]
  The Captain has told me not to disturb his sleep.
  The Minister will send his driver to see you.

Interestingly, *wife* may be replaced by parallel expressions like *Mommy, Mafo* (traditional nobility title), *Manyi* (feminine of *Tanyi*), *Y's mother,* but it is far less subject to taboo.

4.6. Conclusion

The early part of the foregoing discussion has assessed some ELT textbooks in terms of three related but different considerations: the themes, the cultural features and the extent to which they can provide the tools for intercultural communication. The themes and the cultural features are indeed international, but there is a marked imbalance in favour of Anglo-Saxon and Western topics and cultural features; outside the Western world, preference is given to Asia, while Sub-Saharan Africa has but a marginal place, except in textbooks designed for use specifically in Africa. Predictably, this imbalance impairs the ability of English to be used for communication across cultures.

In fact, even when ELT textbooks are not culturally biased, they have limitations in helping English in its role as an international language, namely a language used to communicate interculturally. Some cultural features are noticeable from the language elements used to express them. But even when other linguistic features are apparently culturally neutral, they may conceal cultural specificities which textbook writers and dictionary makers may not always be able to take into account, if their materials are meant for global use. As an illustration of this type of concern, we have already seen above, concerning *birthday,* that the notions of *passive* and *active* used in ELT vocabulary vary from one culture to another. We can also note in this connection that the classification of words "on the basis of their frequency and their importance", which the *Macmillan English Dictionary* (inside cover) and other dictionaries do, cannot apply universally. This Macmillan diction-

ary has its so-called 7,500 "red words" for which it "provides a lot of extra information […] and a wide range of example sentences" (ibid.). All "red word" further have a star rating, with three stars for the most common and basic English words, two and one star, respectively, for the "very common" and for the "fairly common words", respectively. As an illustration of the cultural bias discussed all along this paper, *Macmillan* (p.238) gives *cholesterol* as a "red word" (one star), while it does not even occur once in the CEC; this is just an example out of a multitude; in fact, for each culture, many entries would normally need to be re-classified and re-starred.

Furthermore, for the good of intercultural communication, some cultural specificities must be handled, *per se,* on the periphery of linguistics, using sociological, anthropological and other resources. In fact, to fully and effectively communicate in English in any given society, purely linguistic tools must be supplemented by a set of cultural guidelines on the model of Wenzhong and Grove's (1991) *Encountering the Chinese: A Guide for Americans,* reported by Foster (1995: 152). I have proposed a few ideas above for the English users in Cameroon. A more comprehensive picture of such guidelines would include non-verbal forms of communication, also essential in intercultural interaction, as demonstrated earlier in the paper.

Appendix

More examples of words associated with a particular socio-political era in Cameroon

Advanced: Traditionally, the notable salience of the term was in reference to the *General Certificate of Education, Advanced Level* (as opposed to *Ordinary Level*). But the adjective is also frequently used now in the context of the political slogan of *advanced democracy*, translated from French *democratie avancée*.

Anglophone: The term *Anglophone*, very commonly used in Cameroon along with its antonym *Francophone* does not so much refer to a person who speaks or can speak English. It mostly refers to a person who, from his ancestry, belongs to the Northwest and Southwest provinces, formerly Southern Cameroons or British Cameroons. In the same logic, the term *Francophone* refers to a Cameroonian who, from his ancestry, hails from the historically French part of Cameroon. The Anglophone vs Francophone divide is very sensitive in Cameroon, as most positions in the civil service and the high administration have to be shared between ethnic groups normally according to certain quotas, or along the Anglophone-Francophone divide.

It is also a sensitive term because of the political antagonism between Anglophones and Francophones, with the former complaining about marginalisation by the politically and numerically dominant Francophones; the complaint has manifested itself through street demonstrations, strikes and other types of campaigns, and has in recent years culminated in the demand for secession pressed forward by the SCNC (Southern Cameroon National Council). This feeling of frustration and marginalisation is called in Cameroon the Anglophone problem.

In Cameroon, there is a clear distinction between the above political sense of the terms *Francophone* and *Anglophone*. Politically *Anglophone* Cameroonians are not necessarily *linguistically Anglophones* and vice-versa; they do not need to know a word of English; it suffices for their parents to be from the Northwest and Southwest provinces even if they themselves, through schooling or other types of exposure to, say, French, have only this language as their language of interaction. Likewise, one does not need to know a word of French to be called a "Francophone" in Cameroon.

Anglophones and Francophones are derogatorily referred to as *anglos* and *frogs*, respectively.

Chairman: In the minds of most Cameroonians, *Chairman* readily associates with the chairman of the main Opposition party, the SDF (Social Democratic Front), a position currently held by John Fru Ndi. The terms for *leader* in the other parties are different and include *President, Secretary General, 1st Triumvir.*

Coalition: The most recent international widespread use of the term *Coalition* has been in the war in Iraq, referring to the group of countries fighting with the U.S.A. against Saddam Hussein's Iraq. In the same period in Cameroon, it was associated with the group of opposition parties that joined to field a single candidate, Cameroon Democratic Union's Adamou Ndam Mjoya, to challenge incumbent Paul Biya.

Francophone: see *Anglophone*

Ghost town: In mother tongue Englishes, a *ghost town* is a town deserted generally as a result of the end of an activity there like mining. But the expression has been very commonly used in Cameroon, to refer to a strike action which consisted in the early 90s in closing up all commercial and professional activities and leaving a town deserted.

Independent: The term *independent* mostly occurs in the context of an independent electoral commission mentioned above.

Majority: The new collocate acquired by the word *majority* in recent years is *presidential* (*presidential majority*) in reference to a group of parties getting together to campaign for the incumbent president.

Marginalise, -ation: Since the early 1990s, the words *marginalize* and its derivative *marginalisation* have acquired particular prominence in CamE, in connection with the "Anglophone problem" discussed above.
Motivate, -ion: One new meaning of *motivate* in the Cameroonian society is "give a tip or a bribe", and a *motivation* is the tip or bribe thus given. In a country where rampant corruption has been decried nationally and internationally, the prominence of these terms is quickly understood. *Motivate, -ion* are translations from French *motiver, -ation*, equally common in Cameroon French.

Opposition: Though a common word in English, *opposition* has acquired particular prominence since the 1990s, in connection with multiparty politics which reemerged at that period, having given way to government by a single party in the early years of independence. A person who has reactionary views is generally referred to by the French word *opposant*.

Settler: The term *settler*, which refers to an individual who has migrated and taken up a permanent home as a colonist in a new developing country, has historically been associated with countries like Sierra Leone and Liberia where important populations of free slaves were settled after repatriation to the African soil; or with New Zealand with immigrants from Britain. In Cameroon, it refers to people of other ethnic groups who have settled in a place. It most readily associates with the Bamileke tribe of the West Province as well as to the peoples of the North West Province, who are known to be particularly dynamic, and have settled in various parts of the country as traders and farmers. They are popularly called, derogatorily, *come no go*, a Pidgin English expression which means "those who come (settle) and do not go back".

Transparent: It collocates mostly with *elections.*

Notes

1. *Headway* is a collection used for adult learners. It includes books for the elementary (L. Soars and J. Soars 1993), pre-intermediate (J. Soars and L. Soars 1991), intermediate (L.Soars and J. Soars 1996) and upper-intermediate levels (J. Soars and L. Soars 1987).
2. *True to Life* published by Cambridge University Press, includes a book for Beginners, *Starter* (1998 by Stephen Slater and Simon Haines), one for the Elementary Level (1995) by Joanne Collie and Stephen Slater, one for the Pre-Intermediate Level (1995), one for the Intermediate (1996) and one for the Upper-Intermediate (1998) all by Ruth Gairns and Stuart Redman.
3. The books of the collection *Go for English* are published in London and Basingstoke by Macmillan / EDICEF between 1990 and 1995 and cover all classes of secondary education in Francophone schools (from *Sixieme* to

Terminale). The authors are Kenneth Cripwell, Jane Keane, Michael D. Nama, Berthe K. Tamla and James Taylor) – See Cripwell *et al.* 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993; Montgomery *et al.* 1993, 1994, 1995.

4. *Stay Tuned* is a collection authored by Michael D. Nama, Dorothy Forbin, Christine Bongwa, Dorothy Paizee, Berthe Tamla and John S. Njibamum, and published by Cambridge University Press (See Nama, Forbin and Bongwa 2002; Nama, Forbin, Bongwa and Paizee 2004a, b; 2005 a, b; Nama, Forbin, Bongwa, Tamla and Njibamum 2002).
5. *Zdaf* is the abbreviation for *Zertifikat Deutsch als Fremdsprache.* Concerning the candidate's parents' level of education, it is significant to note that the student's father was a medical doctor and a senior lecturer in the Faculty of Medicine, and the mother a top ranking official in the public administration.

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Section 2.
Interlanguage Pragmatics:
Strategies and Identity in the Language Classroom

Reframing one's experience: Face, identity and roles in L2 argumentative discourse

Doris Dippold

1. Introduction

Face as a metaphor was made popular, at least in Western scientific thought, by the sociologist Erving Goffman. In this paper, I explain the performance of L2 learners of German in argumentative discourse tasks through face as well as through another one of Goffman's concepts, *frames*.

I will start by discussing research traditions in Interlanguage Pragmatics, arguing that the field so far has focused on face maintenance, gain or loss from a *politeness* perspective and on *facework* directed to the addressee. This has led to the neglect of facework strategies that cannot be described with the term *politeness*, and that are directed by the speaker towards the face of the speaker. The paper will continue by discussing how Goffman's concepts of face and frames, interpreted from an individual perspective, can provide a sound theoretical basis for research in interlanguage pragmatics. Using data from argumentative discourse tasks performed by L2 learners of German, I will then suggest that learners act within different and overlapping frames of experience. Finally, I will discuss possibilties for pedagogy and implications for research in interlanguage pragmatics.

2. Traditions in interlanguage pragmatics

Interlanguage pragmatics is a field of research that is concerned with how non-native speakers comprehend and produce action in an L2 as well as with how that ability develops (Kasper 1998). It is only recently, however, that pragmatic development has really been a part of the research agenda, which has led Bardovi-Harlig (1999: 679) to comment that "not only was interlanguage pragmatics not fundamentally acquisitional, but it was, in fact, fundamentally not acquisitional."

Pragmatic competence is usually described in terms of the knowledge of forms and strategies to convey particular illocutions (pragmalinguistic com-

petence) and the appropriate use of these forms and strategies in a given context (sociopragmatic competence) (e.g. Leech 1983; Kasper and Roever 2005). The same distinction is also pursued in a number of models of communicative competence (Bachman 1990, Canale and Swain 1980, Celce-Murcia *et al* 1995), which means that the emphasis of the effect of the communication is on the receiver of a message, not on the speaker. In particular, the question of what forms are appropriate is defined from an external viewpoint.

It is this background that informs a majority of the studies on pragmatic use and development, which centre on notions of politeness, (social) appropriateness and native speaker norms of behaviour, describing pragmatic competence by how close L2 learners' pragmatic behaviour is to a standard set by native speakers. Many studies focus on single speech acts such as requests and apologies, with data collected through methods that allow for little or no interaction, e.g. DCTS.[1]

Although these studies have certainly made an important contribution to our understanding of how L2 learners acquire facework strategies, the speaker perspective has suffered from some neglect. Research has only rarely asked what learners are positively trying to achieve with diverging strategies, with studies working from the perspective of *subjectivity* being an exception.[2] However, there is more and more unease with discarding deviations from native speaker norms of behaviour as inappropriate or even failure. For example, House and Kasper (2000: 113) criticise their own work of the early 1980s:

> We compared the Interlanguage (IL) conversations of German non-native speakers of English to parallel conversations by native speakers (NS) of German, representing the learners' native language (L1), and to conversations by NS of British English, the learners' foreign language (L2). […] The observed IL-L2 differences were […] classified as 'over'- and 'under-use', and labeled 'pragmatic errors, 'deficiencies', and the like […].
> Looking back to our work after a passage of two decades of SLA research, we are amazed at the naivety of the projects' underlying assumptions. Clearly, the NNS did differ from the NS of both German and English in their politeness style and in their conversational organization and management. But were we justified to regard these differences as deficits?

What I argue in this paper is that by employing the concepts of face and frame introduced by Goffman, we can explain not only why L2 learners diverge from native speaker norms, but also the developmental paths speakers are taking. By focusing on individual learners and all their social identi-

ties, we are able to investigate in what way learners' individual decisions play in pragmatic behavior.

3. Goffman: Face and frames

Goffman's approach to face is vital for the argument made in this paper, as it renders support for a connection between face and identity. This is a connection not often made in interlanguage pragmatics research, which primarily approaches face from an exclusively social perspective, defining it as something that is attributed to them based on their behaviour.

The undoubtedly most influential theory in interlanguage pragmatics research is Brown & Levinson's work (1987) on politeness. Although assuming an individual basis of face by conceptualising face as wants – the want to be connected to others (positive face) and the want not to be imposed by others (negative face) – they nevertheless define facework from an addressee perspective, namely as the avoidance of face-threatening acts; this conception of the term *politeness* brings the suggested strategies close to lay conceptualisations of politeness and behavioural norms. From this perspective, face is linked to rules, norms and conventions. For example, Holtgraves (2005: 74) perceives face to be a "public identity" that "can only be given by others." For Lerner (1996: 303), face is something that emerges from interaction, something that can be subjected to judgment by others: "to maintain face is to fit in." Goffman (1967: 5) defines face as follows:

> The term face may be defined as the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact. Face is an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes – albeit an image that others may share, as when a person makes a good showing for his profession or religion by making a good showing for himself.

Although Goffman emphasizes the social interface of face ("positive social value"), he also claims that a speaker "claims for himself" a particular self-image. His approach therefore allows speakers an active role in proposing a certain self-image; whether this self-image is accepted by others is a different question. Furthermore, his definition of face also implies that the self-images speakers try to convey are related to social roles. This supports a reading of Goffman's face concept as both an individual construct and a social construct. Face is how speakers want to be seen (self-image) and how

they are seen by others, linked to the social roles foregrounded in an encounter (image). Identity, i.e. what kind of person one is, is therefore co-constructed by both speakers through interaction.

A further important concept Goffman introduces in his essay on facework is the concept of *line.* Lines are – again within a dual approach – defined as a social construct ("the line others assume has been taken") as well as something speakers actively bring forward:

> In each of these contacts, he tends to act out what is sometimes called a line – that is, a pattern of verbal and nonverbal acts by which he expresses his view of the situation and through this his evaluation of the participants, especially himself. […] The line taken by each participant is usually allowed to prevail, and each participant is allowed to carry off the role he appears to have chosen for himself." (Goffman 1967: 5, 11)

Lines have been defined in various ways in the research literature, although many theorists choose not mention the concept at all. For instance, for Watts (2003) lines are part of the politic (expected) behaviour associated with a certain discourse activity, while Bargiela-Chiappini (2003) sees in them merely speakers' perceptions of the situation and its actors.

The term, however, goes quite clearly beyond just standing for speakers' perceptions. Goffman makes it clear that lines are actual verbal acts by which a speaker represents his overall view of the situation and the interactants, to which is linked the array of goals that a speaker may pursue in a situation, including ideational goals (making one's ideas heard). Goffman (1967: 8) sees lines closely linked to both roles (as explained above) and face itself:

> When a person senses that he is in face, he typically responds with feelings of confidence and assurance. Firm in the line he is taking he feels he can hold his head high and openly present himself to others.

Speakers are "out of face" when they do not pursue the line which the situation requires them to take. In contrast, they are "in face" when they are confident that the lines they are taking are consistent with how they want to be seen, their self-image (Goffman 1967: 8).

Therefore, I see the term *line* as referring to the behaviour associated with particular social roles and encounters. Lines are the instruments, the means for achieving goals associated with these social roles. This has repercussions for a definition of *facework* as well.

Goffman (1967: 12) defines facework as verbal and non verbal behaviour which ensures that "whatever he is doing [is] consistent with face". Face-

work is proactive and protects or maintains the self-image of speakers as well as that of addressees:

> A person will have two points of view – a defensive orientation toward saving his own face and a protective orientation toward saving the others' face. Some practices will be primarily defensive and others primarily protective, although in general one may expect these two perspectives to be taken at the same time. In trying to save the face of others, the person must choose a tack that will not lead to loss of its own, in trying to save his own face, he must consider the loss of face that his action may entail for others (Goffman 1967: 14).

Consequently, I argue that a definition of facework needs to consider the fact that speakers express ideational meaning in addition to interpersonal meaning during any interactional situation. Face is not constructed by politeness alone, but also through speakers' expression of how they "view the world", i.e. the opinions they have. Goffman himself (1967: 24) clearly pursues a rather broad definition of facework, even including the possibility of "making points" through aggressive behaviour.

One recent approach to face acknowledges this link to social roles and identity, distinguishing two reflexes of face (Spencer-Oatey 2000: 14):

- *quality face:* "We have fundamental desire for people to evaluate us positively in terms of our personal qualities, e.g. our competence, abilities, appearance etc."
- *identity face:* "We have a fundamental desire for people to acknowledge and uphold our social identities or roles, e.g. as group leader, valued customer, close friend."

Spencer-Oatey, therefore, supports the idea that face relates to social identities and roles (identity face). The second reflex of face includes politeness as a personal quality, but does not include other qualities, such as – among many possible others – assertiveness.

One final term that needs to be introduced at this point are *frames,* a term that describes what governs and organises all social experience in which social interaction takes place (Goffman 1974: 10-11):

> I assume that definitions of a situation are built up in accordance with principles of organization which govern events – at least social ones – and our subjective involvement in them; frame is the word I use to refer to such of these basic elements as I am able to identify. That is my definition of frame. My phrase 'frame analysis' is a slogan to refer to the examination in these terms of the organisation of experience.

Hence, frames are the reference point for interaction in social encounters. They determine the roles which are prioritized in that particular social encounter, the lines pursued, and the facework used. They also determine to whom the discourse is mainly directed and at what it is oriented – be it a particular interlocutor, or certain societal expectations (Strauss 2004).

4. Research design

The major goal of this study was to ask how learners acquire the ability to do facework in argumentative conversation tasks, and what factors intervene in learners' efforts to maintain and protect face.

From a psycholinguistic perspective (Bialystok 1993), two processes intervene with L2 learners' endeavours. Firstly, learners have to form not only new symbolic representations or form-function matches (the process of analysis). In addition, they must achieve processing control over those forms, i.e. they have to select and retrieve them when required (the process of control).

More specifically, the research questions for this study were as follows:

1) What strategies do L2 learners of German at different proficiency levels use to do facework in spoken argumentative discourse, and how do these strategies develop and change across levels?

2) What can learners express about their decision-making processes in argumentative discourse, and how far are those processes governed by learners' commitment to maintenance and expression of face and identity?

Two means of data elicitation were used:

– Elicitation Tasks: Transcriptions of argumentative conversation tasks in which learners were asked to prioritize and discuss different solutions to problems affecting students (e.g. binge-drinking).
– Stimulated recall and self-observation (with learners only): transcriptions of interviews, conducted with some of the learner dyads after their conversations.

Six different tasks were designed for this study, the topics of which were related to student life (university admission criteria, binge-drinking, obesity, advice for first-year students of German, extra-curricular activities for stu-

dents of German, tuition fees). Students were asked to individually rank four different options pertaining to these problems (e.g. closing all campus bars as a solution to binge-drinking) and write down an option of their own choosing. They then discussed their rankings with a partner.[3]

The data were collected from learners of German[4] at a large UK university, most of whom studied German as part of their degree, and some of whom were enrolled in German classes as an optional unit. Data were collected from learners at three levels of proficiency: Lower intermediate level (first year university students), upper intermediate level (second year students) and advanced level (final year students). The native speaker subjects were recruited from the student population at the same university, representing either Socrates/Erasmus students or postgraduate students working towards a Masters' or PhD degree.

Given my earlier discontent with native speaker norms, the inclusion of native speaker data may seem inconsequential. My rationale for their inclusion is that native speaker data can help explain learners' behaviour under a psycholinguistic framework. Rather than imposing a native speaker norm of behaviour, through the study of the divergence from native speaker strategies, these data can throw light on language learners' strategies by asking what learners actively achieve.

5. Maintaining and constructing face in argumentative discourse

In the following section, I shall discuss some of the most interesting characteristics and developmental pathways observed. As the research is mainly qualitative, it must be noted that many of the claims made represent tendencies, i.e. particular observations that are fairly typical for a particular proficiency level, without there being a one-to-one relationship between certain behaviours and levels of proficiency.

5.1. The sequential organisation of speech turns

How speakers organise their turns is an important aspect related to the presentation of ideas and arguments. The basic notion in this respect is the term *adjacency pair,* defined as "pairs of utterances which are *ordered,* that is, there is a recognizable difference between first pair parts and second parts (or a particular range of seconds)" (Hutchby and Wooffit 2003: 39). A typi-

cal adjacency pair is, for example, invitation-response or, in the case of argumentative discourse, assessment/opinion – agreement/disagree-ment.

This definition of the term *adjacency pair* implies that a first pair part always makes a second pair part immediately relevant, and the absence of a second pair part is both noticeable and accountable (principle of *conditional relevance;* Schegloff 1968). This is particularly true when disagreement arises. According to Kotthoff (1991), it is proof of argumentative discourse ability when speakers are responsive to the arguments of the interlocutor. A missing reaction is equal to admitting that one has nothing to say.[5]

Learners' argumentative sequences at the lower intermediate level often span only two turns, as example (1) shows, and disagreement often does remain uncontested:

(1) LowInterm / Conv. 3 / Admission

1 *GOP: ich ich em (.) ich glaube em auch dass em die persönliche eindruck em*
I I em (.) I believe em too that em the personal impression em
2 *vom kandidaten ist eh ist wichtig em (.) weil em em (.) weil man em (.) weil*
of the candidate is eh is important em (.) because em em (.) because one em
3 *man em (.) was f- em em was für ein person em die bewerber em em die hat*
(.) what s- em em what sort of person em the applicant em em the has
4 *JOH: ja=*
yeah=
5 *GOP: =und sehen em em*
=and see em em
6 *JOH: ja ich verstehe was du meinst ja ja em (.) ja d- der persönliche eindruck*
yeah I understand what you mean yeah yeah em (.) yeah t- the personal
7 *ja ist ist wichtig ja em (.) ja od- obwohl eh (.) leute eh sind nervös in einem em*
impression yeah is is important yeah em (.) yeah a- although eh (.) people eh
8 *(.) wenn sie mit den lehrerinnen oder [lehrer treffen und eh sie kann nicht ein=*
are nervous in a em (.) when they with the [tutors meet and eh they can't=
9 *GOP: [ja (.) ja*
[yeah (.) yeah
10 *=ein gutes em (.) eindruck geben*
=give a good em (.) impression
11 *GOP: ((nickt)) ja eh em meine em dritte em kriteria em em war*
((nods)) yeah eh em my em third em criterion em em was

In this discussion about university admission criteria, Gopal suggests that it is important to gain a personal impression of the candidate in an interview (l. 1-3), to which John agrees with an agreement formula (l. 6) and then repeats the first part of Gopal's turn almost to the word (l. 6-8). This agreement

serves as a backdrop to the criticism which he then brings forward: the fact that candidates may be nervous in an interview and unable to make a good impression (l. 7-8, 10). This objection would now make some sort of reply or justification by Gopal relevant. However, Gopal simply nods and moves on to the next point (l. 11).

This pattern of not responding to criticism or disagreement is primarily observed at lower intermediate level. At the two higher levels, clear development takes place with regard to the extension of an argumentative sequence on a particular topic beyond the initial core adjacency pair. Topics are now usually negotiated over a large number of turns, which means that speakers build on agreement, and also deal with disagreement by defending their position. This has also been observed with respect to native speakers, whose argumentative sequences, consisting of numerous challenges and counter-challenges that can stretch over many turns, as in example (2):

(2) German / Conv. 1 / Obesity

1 *MAR: also an erster stelle ist kostenlose sportkurse an allen teilen der*
well at first place I have offering free sports classes at all
2 *universität anbieten (.) [das ist bei mir am wichtigsten*
parts of university (.) [this is the most important one for me
3 *BER: [ja das ((lange pause)) hm: das finde (.) ich zwar richtig*
[yeah that ((long pause)) hm: I find (.) that right
4 *aber die frage ist ob sie das wahrnehmen würden*
but the question is whether they would take this up
5 *MAR: wenn's kostenlos ist? was ist denn bei dir das wichtigste*
if it is for free? what is your most important one?
6 *BER: bei mir ist das wichtigste hm (.) em das generell natürlich (.) eine*
the most important one for me hm (.) em that generally of course
7 *aufklärung ((räuspert sich)) vorhanden sein sollte (.) ich meine die leute*
there should be education ((clears his throat)) (.) I mean the people
8 *würden ja die kostenlose kurse gar nicht wahrnehmen wenn sie nicht irgendwie*
would not accept the free sports courses if they would not somehow
9 *sagen mir mal em (.) wissen was weiss ich wo die fettsucht herkommt ich*
let's say em (.) know what do I know where obesity comes from
10 *meine oder wenn sie fettsüchtig sind ich meine da haben sie probleme sport zu*
I mean or when they are obese I mean they have problems to do sports
11 *machen und em da werden sie erst gar nicht anfangen*
and em they won't even start
[...]

26 *MAR: ja aber deshalb wissen die leute ja eigentlich schon bescheid wo w-*
yeah but therefore people already know where w- why
27 *warum man fett wird oder warum [und was alles passieren kann deswegen=*
one becomes fat or why [and what else can happen therefore=
28 *BER: [hm*
[hm
29 *MAR: =also im grunde wissen die leute das ja schon deshalb finde ich*
=well basically people already know that and therefore I do not
30 *aufklärung nicht das wichtigste sondern das wirklich aktiv [was dagegen*
find that education is the most important thing but that one really [does
31 *unternommen wird*
something about it

This section of a native speaker discussion on obesity and the solutions for obesity is only a small extract of a much longer stretch, and even this extract could not be represented fully because of space constraints. In the extract, Bertram and Martina represent two clearly opposite opinions. While Bertram emphasizes the value of education about healthy eating, Martina argues for free sports classes. Not only is there no sign of either of the two speakers giving in, but there is also close cohesion between speakers' turns. Each one takes up what the other speaker is saying, rejects it and/or uses it to construct his/her own turns (e.g. l. 3, l. 26).

Although learners generally move towards more extended argumentative sequences, they are rarely as long as the one in example (2). Moreover, only one argumentative sequence in the entire learner corpus could be shown to feature argument and counter-argument over a similarly high number of turns. The possible reasons for this will be discussed later.

5.2. Markers of epistemic modality

The analysis of markers of epistemic modality relates primarily to the interpersonal level, as it is with those markers that learners indicate their degree of commitment to what they are saying, and by this, interact with their interlocutor.

I will discuss only some selected markers of epistemic modality, represented in Table 1, which provides the frequency of the different markers used in 10,000 characters of transcript.[6]

Table 1 suggests that there are interesting differences in developmental paths of these markers. For example, the frequency of *downtoners* and

hedges increases steadily; in the cases of downtoners, their use by non-natives surpasses native speaker levels at the highest proficiency level. In contrast, the frequency of *uptoners* remains low at all levels, in particular when compared to native speakers, while *intensifiers* make a sudden leap at upper intermediate level. The frequency of *epistemic verbs* is, quite remarkably, at its highest at the lower intermediate level and moves more towards native speaker frequencies as proficiency progresses.

Table 1. Markers of epistemic modality per 10,000 characters

	uptoners	**intensifiers**	**downtoners**	**hedges**	**epistemic verbs**
Native speakers	20.14	12.76	12.65	35.13	21.66
Lower interm.	1.25	9.62	5.44	8.78	35.14
Upper interm.	3.28	24.17	19.99	10.71	24.76
Advanced	5.84	8.67	21.05	23.35	26.88

An examination of some data reveals more about the contexts in which those markers tend to be employed:

(3) Lower Intermediate/ Conv.4 / Binge-Drinking

1 *ANN: ich glaub- ich ich ich glaube dass em eh die wichtigste lösung hier ist eh*
I belie- I I I believe that em eh the most important solution here is eh
2 *eh alkoholische getränke in den campusbars NUR noch an studenten über eh*
alcoholic drinks in campus bars ONLY to sell alcoholic drinks to students who
3 *einundzwanzig jahre verkaufen ich glaube dass die eh jüngere studente sind*
to sell them to students who are more than twenty-one years old I believe that
4 *hm: sind nicht hm: (.) eh sie sind zu jung zu alk- zu dem sie trinken zu viel*
the eh younger student are hm: are not hm: (.) eh they are too young to alc-
5 *alkohol eh und eh und da ich glaube dass hm dass sie soll (.) älter (.) zu*
to they drink too much alcohol eh and eh and there I believe that em they shall
6 *alkohol [trinken*
(.) older (.) to alcohol [drink

Example (3) reveals that for Anne, epistemic verbs contribute more to the discussion than just epistemic meaning. While the first and second epistemic verb – 'ich glaube/'ich glaube' (l. 1) – actually introduce the opinion that Anna is giving on the issue of binge-drinking, the third and the forth instance of 'ich glaube' (l. 3, 5) are causal linking points rather than having an opinion-giving function. In l. 3, 'ich glaube' could easily be replaced by a causal conjunction like 'weil', while in l. 6, a causal adverb like 'deshalb' could replace 'ich glaube'.

This suggests that for Anne – and many other learners as well – epistemic verbs are discourse-structuring devices; they are features which provide learners with a springboard into their turns. Often we can actually observe learners (re)start a turn or a new unit within a turn with an epistemic verb after abandoning a turn due to linguistic difficulties. This may be partly due to the formulaic nature of epistemic verbs, which means that they are easily available to learners; furthermore, they are prototypical devices for the expression of opinion often taught and encountered in the language classroom.

Some downtoners and hedges also fulfil functions beyond mitigating a proposition and limiting the speakers' commitment, as an example from advanced level shows:

(4) Upper Intermediate. / Conv. 5/ Obesity

1 EST: ich hab ich weiß nicht ich komme jetzt wahrscheinlich vom thema ab
I have I don't know I am probably straying off topic
2 entschuldigung wenn ich das jetzt mach
sorry that I am doing this now

In example (4), the downtoner 'ich weiß nicht' (l. 1) can, of course, be considered a downtoner that indicates a decreased amount of commitment of the forthcoming turn being relevant. However, it must be noted that the phrase also starts a new unit within Esther's turn after she had abandoned an earlier attempt at starting the turn. It is in that function that multi-unit downtoners and hedges employing the lexeme 'weiß' (e.g. ich weiß nicht, ich weiß es nicht, was weiß ich) and hedges starting with 'und' or 'oder' (e.g. 'und so weiter') are often used by learners, but hardly at all by native speakers.

In contrast to this, upgraders and intensifiers are always single-unit items, as can be seen in extract (5):

(5) Advanced / Conv. 2 / Advice

1 *GOR:* also em (.) ich finde es eh auch wichtig eh so oft wie möglich
well em (.) I also eh find it important eh to speak as often as possible
2 mit deutschen muttersprachlern zu sprechen
with native speakers of german
3 *HAR:* hm
hm
4 *GOR:* weil em natürlich kann e:m diese person dich eh deine
because em of course can e:m this person correct you eh
5 fehler korrigieren
your errors

In this conversation, Gordon uses 'natürlich' (l. 4) to emphasize his suggestion that, by talking to native speakers of German, students of German can improve their language skills. In contrast to some downtoners and hedges, the uptoner here is not used as an aid to processing.

Uptoners and intensifiers are generally not productive in the same way as downtoners and hedges as far as their ability to gain for the speaker thinking and processing time and to help the speaker maintain fluency is concerned. This is due to the fact that uptoners and intensifiers are almost exclusively single-unit items, while downtoners and hedges frequently consist of multiple words and are syntactically freer. As a consequence, they remain limited to their epistemic meaning, which can explain their low frequency as compared to downtoners, epistemic verbs and hedges.[7] In native speaker discourse, the use of hedges and downtoners as aids to processing is less pronounced, and only a few multi-unit items are used.

5.3. Interview data

The interviews with learners were conducted with due caution regarding the validity of the data gathered through that methodology, e.g. the problem that learners may not be able to accurately report their behaviours or the possibility of their being a discrepancy between the processes reported and those which actually took place. Furthermore, it has been argued that subjects can only recall what has been heeded in the task or experiment (Ericsson and Simon 1993).

The analysis of the stimulated recall interview revealed that, while learners at lower levels mainly reported problems in retrieving and using the correct vocabulary – a result similar to the tendencies reported by Felix-Brasdefer (2006) – the reports by those at higher levels of proficiency relate primarily to their thoughts with regard to the content of their utterances and the manner of their conveyance. The following extract is an example from lower intermediate level:

(6) Lower Intermediate / Interview 2

Interviewer: What went through your mind while you were saying this?

[…]

Brooke: I couldn't find the right adjective in German so I spent the whole time saying 'nicht gut' because I couldn't think of anything else to say I think that's wrong something like that so I kept saying that's not good.

In this example, Brooke reports having problems retrieving the appropriate vocabulary, with the result of having to fall back on a tried and tested evaluative phrase that represents an island of reliability which they would very often make use of. Generally speaking, at this level, concerns for the content of messages and for interpersonal considerations were often overridden by problems in encoding the message.

The interviews also confirmed other observations made through the analysis of the conversations, for example, the pattern of learners not adding turns where they would be sequentially relevant: Some learners suggested that they considered it easier to introduce a new topic, using one of the suggestions made on the task instruction cards, than to elaborate on other topics.

Although grammar and lexis is still of great concern to learners, their comments at upper intermediate and, in particular, advanced level, relate more often to concerns with facework at both the ideational level and the interpersonal level, as in extract (7)[8]:

(7) Upper Intermediate. / Interview 1

Interviewer: What did you think at the time when you said this? How did you decide how to say it?

Catherine: Were you thinking about what you were going to say and respond?

Emily: I think yeah I was concentrating on what she was saying thinking ahead and also I was thinking do I interrupt her? How forceful can I be with my views?

This shift in the issues learners claim to have attended to indicates that the processing of grammar and vocabulary becomes more automated at more advanced levels of proficiency, which means that learners have more of their cognitive resources available for other aspects of language production. In addition, the answer patterns in the interviews also indicate that learners had more problems in accessing the cognitive processes relating to what to say and how to say it (pragmatically) than the processes in how to say it grammatically and lexically.

Gass and Mackey (2000: 21) suggest that "breakdowns in automatic processing, such as when the learner does not understand something due to lack of declarative knowledge, may lead to mental states in which some forms of procedural knowledge do become available to introspective report." Hence, it seems that vocabulary and grammar were cognitively problematic for learners and did therefore lead to reportable breakdowns in processing,

while pragmatic issues (the arguments made and the manner in which they are made) were unattended to and unreported.

Moreover, while learners did in general have the terminology to describe problems in grammar and vocabulary, their descriptions of pragmatic aspects remain vague and were usually carried out with colloquial language, as can be observed in the interview in (8):

(8) Advanced / Interview 1

Matthew: I think quite often we said 'perhaps that should be like the first point' because we didn't want to…

Darren: … rather than like steam in and say it.

This lack of terminology may not only have influenced learners' willingness to discuss those issues to a certain extent, but also even shaped their attention, which was then directed to other issues.

One further pattern that emerges strongly from the interviews is the fact that many learners describe their L2 performance in a rather self-depreciatory way. Again, this observation applies more to learners at lower levels than those at the most advanced level:

- "It would depend on how long they'd [native speakers] stop laughing… I think you possibly might pay a bit more attention, hope that they wouldn't think somebody is murdering our language" (John, lower intermediate level)
- "It sounded very bad" (Roberta, upper intermediate level)
- "I messed up here. I didn't have the vocab. Lost." (Clifford, upper intermediate level)

Often, learners even stopped the recording during the stimulated recall part of the interview to let me know that they were aware they might have made mistakes or not performed to the best of their ability.

I shall now take both the analysis from the conversation tasks and the interviews to suggest that all of learners' behaviours can be explained within Goffman's frameworks of face and frames.

6. Discussion and implications

In the beginning section of this article, I argued that interlanguage pragmatics often looks at its data through native speaker glasses and/or the frame of reference of politeness and appropriateness. But is there actually something

that learners accomplish by deviating – consciously or not – from those norms, by using distinct interlanguage strategies? What do they gain from it?

An attempt to answer the research questions – in particular the first one – in conventional terms could result in the following statement: "As proficiency progresses, learners are more likely to add turns where they are sequentially relevant. While this represents a movement towards more target-like behaviour, the frequency and usage of markers of epistemic modality does not necessarily develop in line with proficiency towards target-like use."

What would then follow are attempts to explain those patterns through external factors, such as lack of exposure to target language forms or the failure of explicit instruction to employ learners with forms to upgrade propositions. If internal factors were employed to explain learners' behaviours, those factors would most likely be the easy accessibility and therefore processibility of epistemic verbs, hedges and downtoners and their formulaic status.

Table 2. Frames

	Discussion frame	**Language task frame**
role	e.g. student	language learner
face: self-image/image	e.g. student who loves socialising, enjoys having fun with friends	e.g. good L2 speaker who is able to form syntactically / lexically accurate sentences
line	arguments, e.g. "campus bars should not be closed down"	accuracy & fluency
facework	markers of epistemic modality, preference organisation, structural organisation, etc.	epistemic verbs and evaluative phrases as an aid to processing, short argumentative sequences etc.; self-depreciation in interviews
interlocutor	actual discussion partner; societal expectations for behaviour / opinions	researcher seen in role as language tutor, expectations set by language programme
identity	The kind of person learners construct themselves to be and interlocutor(s) construct the speaker to be as a result of the encounter	The kind of person learners construct themselves to be and interlocutor(s) construct the speaker to be as a result of the encounter

And while all those explanations are very likely to be true to some extent,

there is a further internal factor that needs to be explored in more detail. Judging from both the conversational and the interview data, it is very clear that learners framed their tasks performance differently from what was expected. While as a researcher, I had designed the task with a view onto eliciting facework in argumentative discourse (see discussion frame), the task opened up an entirely new frame or reference for learners (language task frame), overlapping the discussion frame (Table 2).

Table 2 shows that the language task frame provides for very different values than the discussion frame. Within the language task frame, learners act mainly in their role as language learners and try to hold up a positive self-image which could be defined as good L2 speaker, mediated by accuracy and fluency (lines). In the interviews, one facework strategy is certainly the self-depreciation learners engage in, while in the actual discussion tasks, strategies such as the use of epistemic verbs or formulaic evaluative phrases ease processing, provide thinking pauses and avoid errors. The interlocutor is, within this frame, not mainly the actual discussion partner, but rather the researcher seen in his/her role as language tutor[9] (as well as the standard learners think they are expected to have at this stage). Divergence from native speaker norms is therefore an attempt by learners to make another identity, associated with different qualities, relevant. Cognitive and social processes interact at this point, as strategies that ease processing make it easier for learners to present themselves as good L2 speakers. Therefore, learner performances which diverge from native speaker performances, if interpreted within a framework of face, suddenly do not appear as failure, but as – unconscious or conscious – attempts at presenting themselves in the best possible light as language learners. Those observations confirm both Wildner-Bassett's (1989) and Roebuck's (2000) claims with regard to the split allegiances of language learners. They also confirm empirically Firth and Wagner's (1997) claim that strategies deviant from native speaker norms may be employed strategically to fulfil certain social or interactional needs. The goals learners pursue may be quite different from those a researcher might want them to pursue, and we can do little more than accept this.

For research methodology, this means that what Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (2005: 12) describe as "socioaffective consequences" also apply to role-plays and simulated tasks, which they claim usually, have no social connection and consequences beyond the task itself. This claim may be true far as the parameters provided through the task instructions are concerned; however, the research presented in this article clearly shows that learners felt that their face as language learner was at stake. The fact that the research

took place at the same educational institution where learners were enrolled for their degree certainly played a role, and turned the discussion tasks in a form of institutional talk not originally intended.

As far as language pedagogy is concerned, these observations mean that Grundy's (2006) suggestions for a lingua franca teaching paradigm (e.g. acquiring a language of self-representation, the privilege of identity) could be valid and applied beyond a lingua franca environment. Language pedagogy should, more than it does in many cases now, help learners of a foreign language acquire a voice appropriate to their social identities and roles.

Moreover, pedagogical models of communicative competence (Bachman 1990, Canale & Swain 1980, Celce-Murcia *et al.* 1990), which tend to see the learner in an idealized way, striving for social appropriateness and towards target level performance, would do well in integrating a perspective that sees language use as the active presentation of a self-image or identity and moves from a norm- and appropriateness based view to the flexible negotiation between participants in an encounter of what is appropriate or not.

7. Conclusion

Based on an analysis of L2 German learners' performance in argumentative conversation tasks and backed up by interview data based on those tasks, I have suggested that learners may not share the researchers' goals in a task, but instead operate within a different frame of experience. Nevertheless, learners' performance can still be explained and interpreted through the concept of face, if speakers are seen to be actively contributing to constructing and maintaining a certain self-image.

As researchers, we have to try to find a way into this second frame of experience in which language learners operate in order to truly understand the reasons behind their behaviours. Furthermore, interlanguage pragmatics has yet to integrate a perspective which sees face management not only as the enactment of politeness in a very limited set of speech acts. If one accepts a definition of pragmatics following Austin as "doing things with words", there is a lot more you can "do" with words than being polite.

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Appendix: Transcript Conventions for Conversation Tasks

(.)	pause
em, eh	hesitation markers
but-	false starts and abrupt cut-offs
?	rising intonation
!	very animated tone
CAPITALS	extremely stressed utterance
(word)	utterance not clearly intelligible; transcriptioners' best guess
:	elongation of an utterance
((comment))	some sound or feature of the talk that cannot be very easily transcribed, e.g. laughing, coughing
=	latched turns and turns by the same speaker that are overlapping lines
[	simultaneous/overlapping utterances
( )	utterance unintelligible

Notes

1. DCT = discourse completion tasks (DCT): after a short description of the situation, subjects are asked to provide in written form what they think they would have said in the situation.
2. Siegal (1996) defines *subjectivity* as "the construction of self and identity through a second language". Following the pragmatic development of Mary, a woman from New Zealand, during a trip to Japan, Siegal found that Mary resisted certain sociocultural conventions (use of honorific language, topic control) in order to present herself as a knowledgeable researcher who could communicate on equal grounds with a professor.
3. Argumentative discourse was chosen because speakers make particular social roles relevant through the representation of opinions. Moreover, engagement in argumentative discourse requires speakers to be polite and to limit imposition on one side, but to present themselves as committed and authoritative on the other side.
4. Most learners were native speakers of English.

5. Muntigl & Turnbull (1998) and Antaki (1994) argue similarly, suggesting that arguments/quarrels consist of at least three turns, with the third turn being an attempt by speaker A to justify or defend his position.
6. The markers used for this analysis are defined as follows:
   - Downtoner: Sentence modifiers used to moderate the impact an utterance is likely to have on the interlocutor (e.g. *vielleicht, hoffentlich).*
   - Uptoner: Sentence modifiers used to increase the impact an utterance is likely to have on the interlocutor (e.g. *natürlich).*
   - Hedge: Adverbials and longer formulae which render vagueness to their referent; scope smaller than for downtoners (e.g. *ich weiß nicht, ein bißchen).*
   - Intensifiers: Adverbials and longer formulae which render definiteness and force to their referent; scope smaller than for uptoners (e.g. *sehr, höchst)*
   - Epistemic verb**:** Verbs that describe the mental attitude of a speaker towards an issue, e.g. denken, glauben. For the purpose of this research, we are only counting epistemic verbs in the 1st person (e.g. *ich denke, ich glaube).*
7. The sudden frequency leap of intensifiers at upper intermediate level may be the learners' attempt to compensate for a perceived lack of authoritativeness.
8. Sometimes, they merely explained how they saw their own arguments relating to the interlocutors' arguments.
9. I personally taught all of the students at lower intermediate level and some of the students at upper intermediate level at the time of the recording; students at advanced level also knew me as a member of teaching staff.

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Indirect complaint in the language classroom: Cross-cultural contrasts between French and Japanese students of English

Constance Ellwood

This chapter examines how a group of French and Japanese students expressed dissatisfaction with aspects of their language class. I draw on data collected in a classroom ethnography which took place in an English language program with international exchange, or study abroad, students in an Australian university. I look at the indirect complaint expressed through code switches in naturally occurring classroom peer group talk and in interview data. Specifically, I consider two sets of classroom peer group data. The first consists of expressions of dissatisfaction contained in code-switched utterances. I discuss how this speech act, performed by the French students, expressed different types of indirect complaint. Secondly, I look at two extended segments of talk and contrast differing responses, by Japanese and French students, to a classroom task with which they were struggling. Supporting my discussion with students' interview comments, I contrast differing performances of indirect complaint. I am particularly concerned to look at the extent to which indirect complaint is expressed, at all, and in what ways. The discussion contributes to the under researched area of indirect complaint.

1. Methodology

The data analysed here is naturally occurring, gathered as part of an ethnographic enquiry into classroom identities of teachers and students in a second language context. The cohort consisted of fifteen students – from China, France, Germany, Italy and Japan – and their four Anglo-Australian teachers, in a full-time English language program which was part of a university to university exchange. Most of the students were in their early 20s and were enrolled in all or part of the language program. The student exchange program officially targeted students whose English level was IELTS 5-6;

however, monitoring of students' English entry levels was not strictly enforced. The students had between six and ten years previous English study. The teachers were all white Anglo Australians with between 16 and 36 years teaching experience.

The data is drawn from classroom observations, interviews with students and teachers, and classroom audio-recordings of both whole class and small group activities. In all, forty classroom hours were recorded at intervals over a 13 week semester, with up to three tape-recorders in simultaneous operation. Additionally three interviews of approximately 40 minutes each were carried out with participants. The data discussed here is drawn from audio recordings of students as they interacted during the small group activities in class and contextualised by referring to the researcher's classroom observations and interview data. The discussion demonstrates the importance of taking participants' own explanations into account and the value of ethnographic research for the elucidation of motivations (Rampton 1998; Sebba and Wootton 1998).

2. Indirect complaint in the literature

Research into complaint in general remains relatively limited when compared to other speech acts (Kraft and Geluykens 2002; Reiter 2005). Studies of indirect complaint, with which this chapter is concerned, are even more limited, even though they have "a fairly widespread ethnolinguistic reality" and are "ubiquitous in ordinary conversation" (Boxer and Pickering 1995: 45–46). Those studies which do exist have viewed it variously as griping, grumbling and troubles management (D'Amico Reisner 1985; Emerson and Messinger 1977; Jefferson 1984; Tannen 1990), or in terms of acts of affiliation and solidarity (Acuña Ferreira 2004; Boxer, 1993b). According to Edwards (2005), indirect complaints necessarily involve some kind of grievance. Additionally, as with direct complaint, questions of politeness and face threat (see for example Brown and Levinson 1978) are also clearly relevant.

This chapter seeks to extend these understandings by firstly, contributing to the discussion with an analysis of naturally occurring data, and secondly, by seeking to take account of the many variables which contribute to acts which may be viewed as indirect complaint. As Schilling-Estes points out, traditional approaches to the study of language use have tended, for analytical purposes, to view social categories such as age, sex or race as relatively

fixed; whereas in fact they are not "neatly isolable from other facets of identity" (Schilling-Estes 2004: 164). Indeed, as I will show, a range of variables is evident in my data. I thus seek here to give a more dynamic and multifaceted account which can reflect the complexity of naturally occurring data.

Boxer (1993b) suggests that a single label for indirect complaint may be difficult to find. Her definition of it as "the expression of dissatisfaction to an interlocutor about a speaker himself/herself or someone/something that is not present" (1993b: 106) can be applied here, provided we admit a broad understanding of *not present*. In much of the classroom data of this study, the teacher herself is the 'someone' about whom the dissatisfaction is expressed. Since the speech acts occur in the classroom, the teacher is usually present, but is either physically out-of-hearing, in terms of her physical distance, or she is effectively out-of-hearing because of a code switch. The distancing which operates in indirect complaint may take various forms, may need to be interpreted broadly, and may be a significant variable; that is, the amount of distance achieved between the complainable – the state of affairs described in the proposition – and the complainee – the one held responsible (Trosborg 1995: 312) may vary, as may the distance between the complainer and the complainable and/or complainee. Code-switching plays a vital role in the indirect complaint discussed here since clearly, the content of some of the students' complaints would have been threatening to the teacher's professional face (Brown and Levinson 1978) had they not been expressed through code switching. Nevertheless, in some cases, it is precisely the proximity of the teacher which is relevant; since to be able to express dissatisfaction with the teacher, in her presence but just out of her hearing, is a risky and dangerous business, but one which can provide the complainer with a certain amount of kudos.

Boxer (1993b: 45) has raised questions about distinctions between complaints, criticisms and phatic communication devices. Much of Boxer's data reveals the solidarity functions of the phatic aspects of indirect complaint. Her airport conversation data, in which fellow travellers engaged in indirect complaint/commiseration sequences to open conversations with each other, illustrates this function well (Boxer 1993b: 118–119). While solidarity functions are also evident in the data discussed here, phatic functions are not. I am concerned rather to draw out the significance of the criticisms/grievances end of the spectrum. To this extent, Murphy and Neu's (1996) distinction between complaint and criticism as two distinct speech act sets may be instructive. Their study discusses direct complaints made to teachers, and their data shows that criticism "functions to deny the responsibility of the

speaker for the problem" (Murphy and Neu 1996: 205). They thus distinguish *level of responsibility* as a parameter and see the Korean students in their study as abdicating responsibility by placing the blame for poor grades on the professor. My discussion takes up this parameter of level of responsibility in relation to variation in indirect complaint.

The terms, blame and responsibility, are somewhat problematic in their unequal connotations and draw attention to the need to be aware of contrastive cross-cultural perceptions of appropriate teacher and student behaviours. Indeed, keeping cross-cultural differences in mind opens up the possibility that the purposes of the complaint may differ. What may be seen as a blaming response may be rather an outcome of commonsense cultural expectations relating to teacher and student roles in general. For example, the Korean students in Murphy and Neu's study may be seeking recognition of a good student status, whereas the Americans in the same study may be seeking better grades.

Other aspects of indirect complaint which my data draws into focus are strategies for and levels of indirectness. Because complaining is often regarded as face threatening and therefore as something to avoid being seen as doing (Sacks 1992: 637–638), it is self-evident that complaints can be characterised as something worth disguising in some way. However it may be that the ways in which complaints are disguised or mitigated are significant. For example how does ironic delivery (Edwards 2005) function differently from code-switching? How might a first person utterance by the complainer about him or herself differ from a third person comment about the complainee? And how does a 'direct' indirect complaint function differently from an 'indirect' indirect complaint? Boxer's example of two female students discussing a task reveals that indirect complaints may appear on a cline of more to less indirect, in terms of levels of complaints/criticism. Boxer cites the students as saying:

A: I'm getting more and more lost.
B: So am I.
A: And yesterday he went over the home work, which is ... fine, but it didn't prepare us at all for this week.
B: No. He's just not a good teacher (1993b: 117).

Student A's "I'm getting more and more lost" can be located at the indirect end of the spectrum of indirect complaint and also implies that some responsibility is being taken by the student. No responsibility is taken by the student in B's "but it didn't prepare us at all for this week" which is more di-

rectly critical or "No. He's just not a good teacher" which can be seen as the most directly critical of these three utterances. While all three utterances can be accepted as indirect complaint, the final two more critical utterances about the teacher vary in indirectness level and differ from the first utterance in the attribution of blame and responsibility. It may therefore be useful to distinguish 'indirect' complaint from more 'direct' indirect complaint which can also be glossed as 'criticism'.

Part of the difficulty in discussing indirect complaint derives from the pluralism of uses of the word 'direct' in English. Dictionary definitions for the adjective include: "proceeding from one point to another in time or space without deviation or interruption", "stemming immediately from a source; having no compromising or impairing element", and "characterised by close logical, causal, or consequential relationship" (Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary 1975: 323). The first definition is the one upon which Boxer draws in her definition of indirect complaint; complaint is indirect insofar as it has deviated to another listener. The second definition comes into play in the form of expression of the complaint, and can be used to think about the way in which the complaint is compromised in its directness. This assumes directness as a virtue. Thus "I'm getting more and more lost" is read as an indirect complaint which has not yet achieved its full directness whereas "He's just not a good teacher" makes its claim directly. The third definition can be brought into play when discussing distances between the complaint utterance, the complainable, the complainee, and the complainer. The logical or consequential relationships between these players vary. Sometimes they overlap, in which case they could be viewed as direct; at other times they are distant, and therefore indirect. This kind of directness appears to relate to responsibility, when for example, the complainer aligns him- or herself with the complainable, as in "I'm getting more and more lost". Here there appears to be a direct link between the speaker (the complainer) and the complainable (her feeling of being lost) whereas in "He's just not a good teacher", the complainer and the complainable (the teacher) are more distant from each other and lack this direct link.

Indirect complaint is clearly a complex speech act. My attempts here to find a path through this complexity are tentative and I rely substantially on observation and interview data to explicate the indirect complaints in my relatively small corpus of natural data. All the examples of indirect complaint drawn from the classroom data involved code-switching. In other words, it seems that the strong institutional prescriptions against expressions

of direct complaint from students make code-switching a viable option for the expression of dissatisfaction.

3. Indirect complaint in the data

I begin by presenting extracts from the data in which two of the French females express their dissatisfaction. These extracts are taken from three different lessons, presided over by two of the teachers.

Excerpt 1: class with Teacher 1
Dominique (in a low voice to Sai'da): *j'ai trop envie de me casser, je te jure*
'I want to get the hell out of here, I swear'

Excerpt 2: class with Teacher 2
Dominique (whispering to Sai'da): *j'ai envie de Prozac (.) je te jure (???)*
'I need Prozac. I swear to you (???)'

Excerpt 3: class with Teacher 2
Sai'da (whispering to Dominique)*: j'en peux plus uh* 'I can't take any more'
(.) (.) (.)
Yoko: ha ha ha
Sai'da (whispering to Yoko): it's recorded!
Yoko: ha ha ha
(.) (.)
Sai'da (whispering to Dominique): *quelle heure il est?* 'What time is it ?'
Teacher: okay (.) who's happy with the way they wrote the notes (.) are you happy?
Sai'da (whispering): no

The comments – "*j'ai envie de Prozac*" 'I need Prozac'*; "j'ai trop envie de me casser"* 'I want to get the hell out of here'*; "j'en peux plus"* 'I can't take any more' – clearly express resistance to some aspect of the class although it is not clear without further information precisely what the students are resisting or complaining about. Similarly Sai'da's question "*quelle heure il est?"* 'What time is it?' indicates that she is looking forward to the end of, what is by implication, an unenjoyable lesson. The distinctions between Sai'da's question and the first three examples illustrate a difference in levels of indirectness; in Sai'da's question, the complaint is extremely indirect, it appears only distantly related to both the complainable and the complainer, and contextual details must be drawn upon to support the suggestion that this is indeed an example of indirect complaint.

On the other hand, *"j'ai envie de Prozac"* 'I need Prozac' and *"j'ai trop envie de me casser"* 'I want to get the hell out of here' and also *"j'en peux plus"* 'I can't take any more' are all highly critical and more directly expressive of complaint, or criticism, but their reference to the complainable is very indirect. Here also it may be useful to employ the term 'griping', insofar as griping involves troubles telling to friends and does not necessarily seek a response (Hatch 1992: 143), which indeed appeared to be the case with these utterances.

As griping or troubles telling, the exchanges between Dominique and Sai'da can also be seen as expressions of solidarity and affiliation, specifically in terms of Boxer's finding that it is more permissible to complain about other people to friends or intimates than to strangers who are "more constrained to behave within the constraints of politeness expectations" (1993b: 121). Dominique and Sai'da, along with a third student, Antonio, were well acquainted prior to the student exchange period; they not only came from the same university in France, had a history of friendship, but they also all identified with hybrid identities, having ethnic backgrounds which combined France with Portugal, Morocco or Brazil respectively. These factors increased their solidarity and their exchanges index this pre-established and ongoing affiliation.

Clearly, one of the functions here of the code switched indirect complaint is to maintain or display already-existing solidarity. Given the absence from my data of this kind of expression of solidarity, through code-switching, from any other students, it is interesting to note that it is performed by the students with the greatest levels of pre-established solidarity. In other words, it does not function, as in Boxer's airport data (1993b), to create solidarity between strangers but rather to reaffirm or consolidate pre-existing affiliations. One difference may be that airports are neutral ground and strangers meet on the basis of equal status. In the interview data, these three students at times positioned themselves strongly in opposition to France and French people in general, and even to the other two French students in the class. The hybrid backgrounds of the three students complexifies Boxer's statement that "Shared nationality in a foreign environment can be an important ingredient for a feeling of solidarity"(Boxer 1993b: 119). In this case, it is rather a shared hybridity which produces the affiliation and the term 'griping' could be used to describe a particular kind of indirect complaint between friends.

The complexity within what I am referring to as the French sub-group signals the multiplicity of identity which may be hidden in much survey-type

research which does not allow for such hybridity to be taken into account. Of these three students, Dominique had been born in France and brought up there, spoke French as her L1 and spoke Portuguese poorly. Sai'da had been schooled in French in Morocco, had gone to study in France after her baccalaureate, and spoke both French and Arabic fluently. Antonio had come to France at the age of 11 and spoke both Portuguese and French fluently. These students distinguished different aspects of their identity as being more or less French, more or less Brazilian, etc. While it is clearly possible to critique my argument with a claim that these students are not really "French", one of my aims is to demonstrate the diversity within any so-called homogeneous group. These students illustrate that diversity, and highlight problems of categorisation. While it is not feasible, within the scope of this chapter, to consider the ways in which these three cultures may have impacted on the Frenchness of these three students, there are differences within the cohort of the five French students. I discuss indirect complaints made by the remaining two French students later in the paper.

Aside from the expression of solidarity through griping, a second function of these indirect complaints was to express the students' assessments of the relevance of the classes to them. That they were critical of some of the teachers and other aspects of the classes was revealed in their interview comments. These responses were delivered in answer to the interview question: How was the class?

In her interviews, Dominique had expressed negative assessments of the teachers who figured in the excerpts given above, saying of the first teacher "I don't like the teacher but I like the person" and of the second "I don't like her. I like people with a bit of … (gesture of a rising fist)". By the end of the semester, both Sai'da and Dominique had begun to criticise the capacity of the first teacher to teach her subject. Sai'da stated "But frankly I don't think she's competent enough to do that" and Dominique questioned both the teaching methodology "I often say it gets um how can I translate it like pipi-kaka [wee-poo] the way she does it makes it really superficial uh like sometimes you just think ahhhrg!!", and teaching qualifications "yeah I'm not sure if she's really uh qualified for this". In the light of this interview data, it can be seen that the students' indirect complaints expressed in the classroom excerpts are far from simple troubles telling. They are, rather, serious grievances or criticisms which are disallowed expression in the institutional setting of the classroom since face threatening acts directed at teachers are highly dispreferred. Power imbalances which disallow certain utterances

become relevant here. Indeed when I asked Dominique in interview if she would consider talking to the teacher about her concerns, she replied

> No no no because (.) um (.) because it's a French thing (.) you just say 'oh I don't care' ha ha ha (…) No what do you want to say? (.) um (.) I don't know if you can do that in Australia but in France you cannot go and say 'Oh you know your class is boring and I think it's insulting and-' I think you **could** do that in Australia (.) I'm sure it's (.) yah (.) but um (.) that's not something we could- we could do in France you know or you- you will get in trouble.

In this sense, to categorise these utterances as griping reduces the possible impact of their critical nature, whereas the term indirect complaint retains the sense of justifiable grievance.

So far I have discussed these classroom excerpts in terms of the functions of affiliation and grievance expression. When other aspects of the speech context are taken into account, namely the body language and subtle gesture which accompanied these indirect complaints, it becomes clear that a third function was to perform a particular kind of rebellious identity in front of other students in the class. Thus, while the spoken texts were addressed only to particular other French speakers, in L1 and *sotto voce*, the student's body language was performed, extra-linguistically, to a different audience, namely the whole class. The context for Excerpt 1, for example, was that the students had been working silently in groups for an extended period, reading a text. Dominique had risen from her seat with a yawn, strolled from the room, and returned with a cup of water from the water cooler just outside the classroom. Her studied walk and gestures indexed a strong lack of interest in the task. Her comment was then made immediately after the point where the teacher had left the room to do some photocopying. This display, for the benefit of other students, can be also seen in Excerpt 3, where Yoko's laughter indexes a correct reading of Sai'da's body language which was expressive of boredom and dissatisfaction. Body language and gesture, along with the complainables (Trosborg 1995: 312) – *"j'ai envie de Prozac"; "j'ai trop envie de me casser"; "j'en peux plus"* – combine here to index indirect complaint.

Such displays provided performances of the students' resistance to aspects of the classroom, whether it be the teacher herself, her teaching approach, the subject matter, or the role of student. The displays index the students' developing claims to new identities which derive both from their age, on the cusp of adulthood, and from the student exchange situation where new relationships and new identities are possible. Additionally, they

indicate the importance of face and identity issues (Dippold 2006; Fredsted et al. 2006), particularly in the eyes of other students. In this case, kudos could be derived from this display. Katsuyuki, one of the Japanese males, commented about Dominique "I really envy her character (.) I want to be like her (.) she's so attractive isn't she? (...) She has many things that I don't have (.) like confidence (.) cheerfulness (.) that kind of things (.) I really want to be like her." On the other hand, for another of the French females, Chantal, the display could be irritating: "I don't know sometimes Dominique is very funny but (.) um (.) sometimes its pissing me off when she's always want to-to-to (.) not to boast (.) but to make everybody laughing".

Thus far, indirect complaint in this context can be seen to be used to express dissatisfaction with the teacher, to maintain solidarity and to perform a resistant identity in front of other students. In terms of the first and last function, indirect complaints provide an example of a "safe house" (Canagarajah 2004), an alternate classroom site which allows expression of the complexity of student identity (discussed further in Ellwood 2006b). It is worth noting that three out of four of the expressions of indirect complaint made by Dominique and Sai'da are formed as first person assessments, as I-statements, again indicating the significance of identity. These can be contrasted interestingly with another excerpt containing a number of apparently similar utterances, this time by Antonio, in another class, presided over by a third teacher.

Those present during this small group activity, included one Japanese student, Noboru, and three of the five French students, Antonio, Sai'da and Chantal.

Excerpt 4: class with Teacher 3

Teacher (addressing the whole class): so there's just a little bit of uh reading for each of you (.) in each group and then (.) there's some questions (.)(.) /to get the discussion going//

Antonio (in a low voice): /*ça m'emmerde*// 'This gives me the shits'

Teacher: I don't know if it's a topic you know much about

Antonio (in a low voice): *ça m'prend la tête* (.) *ça m'endort* (???) 'This drives me nuts. This sends me to sleep (???)'

Antonio's comments – "ça *m'emmerde"* 'This gives me the shits'*; ça m'prend la tête"* 'This drives me nuts'*; "ça m'endort*" 'This sends me to sleep' – appear at first sight to be delivered in the same spirit as those given by Dominique and Sai'da in Excerpts 1–3; that is, they appear to be criticisms and to index some kind of indirect complaint of the teacher or the task. However, aspects of the context, Antonio's subsequent comments, and

the interview data, permit both a clarification and complexification of these acts of indirect complaint. A few minutes later in the lesson, the following interaction occurs:

Excerpt 4 continued.
(Antonio is reading the text aloud to other members of the group)
Sai'da: I can't hear you
Antonio: *oui mais j'ai pas envie que tout le monde m'entende* 'Yes but I don't want everyone to hear me'
Sai'da: ha ha ha
(...)
Antonio: *je suis trop fainéant* I'm so so lazy I don't like reading at all, but I- I like talking (.) (.) (.) *moi il faut que-* I have to read it in my head for me to understand something. 'I'm so lazy. I'm so so lazy I don't like reading at all, but I like talking. For me I have to- I have to read it in my head for me to understand something'
Sai'da: you can do it?
Antonio: hmm?
Sai'da: you can do it in your head?
Antonio: *il faut que je dise dans ma tête pour (.) euh (.) je comprends quelque chose* 'I have to say it in my head for me to understand something'

Antonio's comments and the cause of this apparent resistance to the task were elucidated in an interview in which Antonio revealed that he was dyslexic and struggled with reading in any language. Indeed, during the task above he intimated this in a number of comments, referring to his reading strategies and difficulties with reading: "I don't like reading at all" and "*Il faut que je dise dans ma tête*" 'I have to say it in my head'.

Although Antonio's code-switching – "*ça m'emmerde*" 'This gives me the shits', "*ça m'prend la tête"* 'This drives me nuts', *"ça m'endort"* 'This sends me to sleep' – might initially be read as expressing the same kind of complaint as those of Dominique and Sai'da, it is of a different order**.** Here the complainable is not the teacher, but is rather a complex combination of his difficulties with reading and the reading task itself.

The use of the demonstrative pronoun, *ça* 'this', by Antonio contrasts with the personal pronoun, *je* 'I', used by Dominique and Sai'da. These pronouns index differences in the complainee and the complainable, and illustrate varying levels of indirectness. Antonio's complaints can be related directly to the reading task through the use of *ça* 'this' in, for example, "*ça m'emmerde*" 'this gives me the shits', which makes his indirect complaint very direct. The use of the ironic first person utterances by Dominique and

Sai'da makes their complaint more indirect, indexing institutional proscriptions on directly critical utterances about teachers. These uses of *ça* and *je* ('this' and 'I') illustrate a further way in which the directness and indirectness levels of indirect complaint may vary.

4. Pragmatic contrasts between the French and Japanese approaches to indirect complaint

These examples of indirect complaint all come from the three French students. To what extent are such indirect complaints expressed by the Japanese students and by the other two French students? In this section I discuss the relative absence of indirect complaint utterances by the Japanese students. I also draw on interview data from the other two French students and the six Japanese students to illustrate that the range of possibilities for indirect complaint intersects with factors which include but are not limited to cultural difference.

Indeed, there were no examples of indirect complaint by any of the Japanese students in the code-switching in my data. While a body of research supports the non-occurrence of this act, I see a number of factors impacting in complex ways on this apparent absence of indirect complaint by the Japanese students in my research. These include cultural impacts on attitudes to complaint as well as to teacher and student roles, discussed in more detail below.

Additionally several factors may have affected the amount and type of data which was collected. Firstly, it is possible that the presence of the tape recorder may have either promoted or inhibited expression in the small-group interactions. Related to this was an intense commitment on the part of five of the six Japanese students, expressed in interviews, to using English. In an attempt to maximise the opportunity to improve their English language skills, these five students sought to restrict their use of Japanese with Japanese-speaking peers in both classroom and non-classroom contexts. In contrast to this goal of developing L2 proficiency, the three French students who figure strongly in my data, as well as Chantal, all claimed that their major purpose in coming to Australia was to get away from France, and the student exchange provided an opportunity for this.

4.1. Attitudes to complaint

As Boxer (1993a) points out, there is a lack of research relating to complaining, particularly griping and troubles-telling, among speakers of Japanese. This lack of research may be a product of what has been understood as the Japanese negative orientation towards talk and a concomitant valuing of silence (Allami 2006: 62; Spees 1994; Yamada 1989). Pritchard (1995) discusses the impact on the Japanese students in her language learning classroom, of the concept of *amae,* which refers to a sense of helplessness combined with a desire to be loved, and which is associated with cooperation and the avoidance of confrontation (Doi 1973; Pritchard 1995; White 1987). White (1987: 109), writing about the educative strategies of mothers and teachers, says that one rarely hears "threats, warnings, pronouncements not to speak of character denunciations". On the other hand, it may be that the subtleties of Japanese complaint have not yet been fully catalogued. Indeed, Beebe found that the Japanese express disagreement directly with lower status people but indirectly with higher status people (Beebe and Takahashi 1989). Any cross-cultural comparison can be expected to encounter highly nuanced parameters; a recent cross-cultural study by Shaw et al. (2004) on telephone complaints found that for Japanese participants, an important politeness variable was sincerity. However further research is needed to clarify the role of such keywords in the manifestation of cultural values.

The interviews, however, provide another source of data in relation to indirect complaint and it is instructive to compare the complaints made by the French sub-group with those made by the other students in the interviews. As discussed above, indirect complaints about Teacher 1 were made by Dominique and Sai'da in interviews. However, such complaints were not made by Antonio, and, of the six Japanese students, only two comments index indirect complaint in relation to this teacher: Katsuyuki's: "I don't know what teacher want from me" and Rie's: "Just I have to do that (.) so I do". No further interview comments can be drawn upon since no other students were enrolled in the subject taught by Teacher 1. However, criticisms of Teacher 2 were made by a majority of the other students. For example, Chantal said, "Yeah uh tomorrow for example the class of tomorrow (.) it's a bit boring (...) because I feel like we are in high school and (.) uuuh (.) (mimicking teacher) 'and so what you remember from last time⇑ listening to radio⇑ watching TV⇑' ha ha ha I think everyone feels". The French male, Roland, commented that the subject was "boring", "not interesting" and "really slow compared to – with the other class". This was echoed by one of

the German students who said, of the same teacher*:* “I was more bored by [Teacher 2’s] classes (...) she always treated us like kids sometimes and it was a bit annoying”.

In respect of these two French students, Chantal and Roland, it is worth noting that Chantal viewed herself as shy and quiet. And this was confirmed through observation and interview comments from other students. She was thus less likely to perform resistant display or to express criticism as seen in Dominique. Roland, who like Chantal was enrolled in only a third of the whole program, was struggling with the mainstream classes which he was attending. His responses in interview tended to be almost exclusively concerned with these other classes, rather than with the language program. There are thus personality and contextual factors which impacted on the amount and type of complaint made by these two students.

The criticism of Teacher 2’s classes as being boring was also evident in the Japanese students’ interview data. Thus, one of the Japanese students, Rie said “maybe sometime I feel little bit boring- boring- I’m bored (.) so” and Noriko, speaking of the teacher, said “she is some kind of (.)(.) she talk so soft and maybe she don’t say joke or humour (.)(.) so her subject is not excited- in her subject (.) I wasn’t excited so much”. The utterances “I’m bored”, “Her subject is not excited” and “I wasn’t excited so much” work to remove responsibility from or avoid attributing responsibility to the teacher. However, apart from indicating these students’ struggles to express themselves in English, they effectively reference the same attitude as that expressed in “*j’ai envie de Prozac”* ‘I need Prozac’ and *“j’ai trop envie de me casser”* ‘I want to get the hell out of here’ and also *“j’en peux plus* ‘I can’t take any more’; that is, they are indirectly critical.

The Japanese students also took overt responsibility for their role in the classes. Speaking about the program more generally, Rie expressed frustration with her inability to find opportunities to take the floor in class discussions “It’s my- it’s my problem and I got some frustration about myself”. When I asked Katsuyuki “Is the problem the teacher, the course or the class?” in relation to a class he had described as “kind of meaningless”, Katsuyuki replied without hesitation “Me and the course, not the teacher”. Similarly, Noboru, talking about his difficulties with the classes, of Teacher 2, said “It doesn’t mean I don’t like the teacher but uh (.) need more improvement ha ha”. These complaints can be seen as allocating responsibility for outcomes to the students themselves. In other words, generally speaking, any problems or difficulties which the Japanese students had with the classes or the teachers were perceived as their own responsibility. Such perceptions

make the possibility of complaint less likely. Indeed when I asked "Is it okay to be critical of the teacher in Japanese culture?", Yoko answered "I pay respect during class (.) we didn't say any practical things not so (.) but outside class you might (.) yes with friends or (.)"

4.2. Attitudes to teacher and student roles

Related to this resistance to expression of complaint, many of the Japanese students' comments in interview tended to refer to their own skills, or lack of them, rather than to be comments on teachers, indicating a strong identification with the role of student and its associated responsibilities. Indeed, a high level of formality in teacher-student relationships has been found to exist in Japanese classrooms (Kato 2001; Pritchard 1995), perhaps limiting the possibility of thinking about teachers in the personal terms expressed by Dominique. Recent research reveals that Japanese classrooms tend to be strongly teacher-centred, that verbal participation by students of any sort is minimal (Nakane 2003) and that Japanese students' may tend to associate their teachers strongly with the pressure to study (Kato 2001). Explanations for students' verbal reticence include the fear of making mistakes, a conformity to certain patterns of turn taking, a valuing of silence, politeness strategies, and not wanting to stand out from the group (see for example LoCastro 1996; McVeigh 2002; Nakane 2003; Turner and Hiraga 2003; Yoshimoto 1998). Such cross-cultural differences in expectations of appropriate teacher and student roles may also underlie the contrasts in my study. Like the Korean students in the study by Murphy and Neu (1996), the Japanese students' focus may be strongly formed by the utilitarianism and pragmatism needed for survival in the Japanese education system (discussed by Yoneyama 1999: 146 cited in Nakane 2003).

Indeed, in interview, on the topic of whether any of the teachers on the program met their ideals, the students were generally hesitant to respond. I cite extracts from my interview with Tomoko to illustrate this.

> Tomoko: (...) in my high school, I have many ideal teachers
> Researcher: Right and what about these teachers here? /Which ones, are they close to your ideal or not so close?//
> Tomoko: /Aaaaahhhhhh⇓ Mmmmmm⇑ Mmmmmm⇓ // mmmmm⇓ not so (.) no: (.) no teacher so special ha ha no teacher are special for me (...)

> Researcher: These teachers, if they were going to be ideal, what would have to change?
> Tomoko: Aaaahhhh⇑ uuhhhhhhh⇓ Mmmmmmmmmmmm to give more interesting lectures ha ha the point I think
> (...)
> Researcher: And they have a good atmosphere?
> Tomoko: Mmmmmmmmm⇓ so-so (.) Not the good atmosphere and they're not interesting.

Only one of the students, Katsuyuki made directly critical comments about the teachers in the interviews. For example, of Teacher 3 he said "she doesn't remember our name, it's really rude I guess, even in European culture" and of Teacher 1 he said "she sometimes say things too directly (.) something that too directly [...] when she says some comment on the [students' work] she doesn't compliment at all (.) but complain (.) 100% complain (.) it's really different from Japanese style of teaching". The impact of Katsuyuki's previous quite extensive contact with western culture through personal relationships (discussed in Ellwood 2006a) may go some way towards explaining why he was the only one to make overtly critical comments.

Aside from Katsuyuki, it seems that Japanese students generally find it inappropriate to make comments which could be construed as critical about the teacher (although they do so in anonymous end-of-semester written evaluations) thus providing a cultural reason for the absence in my data of similar indirect complaints on the part of the Japanese students.

5. Approaching a definition of indirect complaint

In order to explicate any differences between the approaches of the Japanese and the French students in this context, further examples which provide contrastive accounts are needed. The excerpts below are taken from a pronunciation class in which the teacher had asked the students to listen to a model text and then record themselves reading the text[1]. They were then to listen to their own pronunciation on the recording and to self-correct with the aid of a partner who, following a random pairing activity, was often from the same language background. These excerpts provide interesting contrastive data since the random pairing activity resulted in one Japanese pair and one French pair, both male.

The preceding data, not cited here, reveals the students' failure to understand the task and their subsequent failed attempts to clarify their misunderstandings with the teacher, who, in her rounds of the classroom, had approached each pair to discuss their progress in the task. The excerpts given here occurred immediately after the departure of the teacher and thus immediately after her ineffective explanation. In both cases, the code switching enables the complaint to be expressed within the distant presence of the teacher. However they illustrate different approaches to the complainable.

Excerpt 5: French pair

(Following the departure of the teacher, the students rerecord themselves and listen to the tape recording)

Antonio: nice!
Roland: *ouais, mais je trouve toujours pas d'erreurs enfin (.) de truc à mettre* 'Yes, but I still can't find any errors or things to put'
Antonio: *ça va quoi on est étranger (alors).* 'It's all right, well, we're foreigners'
Roland: *ouais franchement-* 'Yeah, really-'
Antonio: *ça m'étend ou quoi ?* 'Does this test me or what?'
Roland: *c'est sûr qu'on a un accent et tout ça* 'And we certainly have an accent and all that'
Antonio: *ça va* 'That's right'
Roland: *ça va* 'That's right'
Antonio: *le plus important c'est que les gens nous comprennent quand on parle* 'The most important thing is that people understand us when we speak'
Roland: *oui c'est vrai ça (.) puis au pire tu parles avec les mains* ha ha ha 'Yes, that's true. Then at worst you speak with your hands. ha ha ha.'
Antonio: he he

In this interaction, Roland's comment "*ouais, mais je trouve toujours pas d'erreurs enfin (.) de truc à mettre"* 'Yes, but I still can't find any errors or things to put' reiterates his frustration with the task and, by implication, expresses a criticism of the teacher's inability or failure to clarify. Similarly, the "*ça va quoi"* in Antonio's "*ça va quoi on est étranger (alors)"* 'It's all right, well, we're foreigners' implies a direct challenge to the teacher's authority as does his "*ça m'étend ou quoi ?*" 'Does this test me or what?'. Even Roland's utterance that "*c'est sûr qu'on a un accent et tout ça*" 'And we certainly have an accent and all that' takes a resistive stance to the implied necessity of achieving accent-less English pronunciation as does Antonio's recognition that comprehension is more important than near-native pronunciation, when he says "*le plus important c'est que les gens nous comprennent quand on parle*" 'The most important thing is that people

understand us when we speak' and Roland's final humourous conclusion *"puis au pire tu parles avec les mains*" 'Yes, that's true. Then at worst you speak with your hands. ha ha ha'. Such resistance is contingent upon criticisms of the teacher or the goal of the task, namely improved English pronunciation; they can be viewed as indirect complaint insofar as they represent expressions of grievances directed at the teacher or at the social pressure for accent-less English.

To all extents and purposes the Japanese students' experience parallels that of French students in terms of their inability to understand the task, and their unsuccessful attempt to gain clarification from the teacher. However their subsequent code-switching contains neither criticisms of the teacher nor any expressions of resistance to the task or its goal.

Excerpt 6: Japanese pair

(Following the departure of the teacher, the students rewind the tape and listen to it again)

Katsuyuki: わかんない。(Wakannai) 'I don't get it'
Noboru: わかんないよな (Wakannai yona) 'I don't get it either'
Katsuyuki: 全然わかんない (Zenzen Wakannnai) 'I really don't get it'
Noboru: おれも (Oremo) 'Me too'
Katsuyuki: ぽぽぽって (???) (Po po po tte) 'It's like papapapapapa (???)'
(They rewind the tape and listen again)
Katsuyuki: わからず (Wakarazu) 'I don't get it!'
Noboru: ん〜 (Nnnn) 'Mm'
Katsuyuki: h h h h あはは わかんない (Aha ha ha Wakannai) 'I don't get it!'
(They rewind tape and listen again)
Katsuyuki: わかる？何がわるいのかわかんねえ。(Wakaru? Naniga waruinoka wakaranee) 'Do you get it? I don't get what's bad.'
(After this the students rewind the tape and listen again several times without further comment)

Although they were clearly baffled by the task, the Japanese students did not resort to critical assessments of the teacher or of the task. They simply reiterate their inability to understand through variations on the expression, わかんない。(Wakannai) 'I don't get it' with Katsuyuki as the main expresser of the complaint, and Noboru providing commiserative agreement.

In terms of previous studies of indirect complaint, both these excerpts can be viewed as commiseration sequences, an aspect of indirect complaint, in which there is either "straightforward agreement with a speaker, elaboration of the speakers' complaint or confirmation of the validity of the complaint" (Boxer 1993b: 117). In commiseration sequences participants work to build

rapport, normally around a head-act of indirect complaint. The fact that the participants in both examples given here are male and that they do engage in the to-and-fro of indirect complaint and commiseration supports Acuña Ferreira's (2004) finding that such commiseration is not a phenomenon restricted to women as earlier studies had claimed.

However, to return to the Japanese/French contrast, there are again clear differences in the manner of expression. The French students use a variety of ironic and humorous utterances to express criticism of the task, and by implication, of the teacher. They employ first, second and third person pronouns as well as the generic *on* 'one', effectively putting forward a series of arguments for their own view of the matter. The Japanese students use only first person utterances, which apart from being code switched, lack indirectness insofar as they are simple statements of evident fact. On the other hand, they are also extremely indirect; they are barely recognisable as criticisms of the teacher. Additionally the students maximise their own responsibility by restricting themselves to the pronoun *I*. In this sense the Japanese students' utterances can be read overall as less direct complaint whereas the French utterances can be seen as more direct criticisms, albeit modified by humour.

As with the earlier data, other Japanese students were also dissatisfied with the activity and expressed this in interview. Rie, for example, commenting specifically on this lesson, expressed a desire for individual attention to pronunciation difficulties.

> Rie: In the pronunciation class I want to prono- I want to check my pronunciation each by each (.) just practised in pairs (.) students with students (.) so I can't- I couldn't advise (.) like for example that- uh Sai'da (.) I think she has a French- French (.) um pronunciation, maybe different to I have Japanese pronuncia- Japanese particular pronunciation problems but I can't- I couldn't say what is wrong mm nn (.)(.) so I- I wanted [Teacher 3] to advise each by each (…) Each student, yah.

Again, the problem is expressed as her own: "I couldn't say what is wrong". The level of responsibility which Rie accepts here also locates her utterance as indirect complaint rather than more direct criticism.

6. Conclusions

A range of factors can be seen to be relevant to a consideration of the occurrence of indirect complaint in natural data. Social categories such as gender, and ethnic identity, individual characteristics of personality, and contextual

factors such as study pressures all contributed to the amount and type of indirect complaint data available from this study. A variety of different purposes may be suggested for any single instance of indirect complaint. These include affiliation, grievance expression, and performances of particular identities.

The fact that code-switching obviates the need for the complainee to be 'not present' introduces code-switching as a strategy in indirect complaint. I have viewed this strategy as one among many which enable varying levels of indirectness within indirect complaint. Ironic humour and variations in the grammatical form of the expression through pronoun use contribute to different levels of indirectness. These may be viewed along a continuum from self-evident matters of fact, such as わかんない。(Wakannai) 'I don't get it' and "I couldn't say what is wrong" which can be viewed as 'indirect' indirect complaint, to more direct, less concealed criticisms such as *"j'ai envie de Prozac* 'I need Prozac' and *"au pire tu parles avec les mains*" 'at worst you speak with your hands'. The level of responsibility taken by the complainer, in association with the severity of the complaint from the point of view of the complainer, seems to relate to this continuum.

7. Limitations of the study

This study suffers from a number of limitations. These include the small corpus of naturally occurring data retrievable from this context which had not set out to explore speech acts of this kind.

Other factors which impacted the amount and kind of data collected included varied enrolment patterns, the students' levels of English proficiency, and varying commitments to the use of English in class. The students' English proficiency may have impacted on the kind of data collected in interviews such that formulations of the criticisms expressed by Dominique and Sai'da – their use of "should" for example – may not have been available to the Japanese students. Moreover, in the classroom data, while it is possible that Antonio may not have known how to translate expressions such as *ça m'emmerde* into English, there is nevertheless a distinct difference between the kind of complaint made by Antonio in French and that made by Katsuyuki and Noboru in Japanese. Finally, as discussed previously, the Japanese commitment to using English in class – incidentally, not shared by Katsuyuki – may have precluded them from indulging in code-switching into Japanese.

Other factors which may have impacted on the students' uses of complaint include the students' affective isolation in the new country, and their ages. In terms of affect, like Boxer's compatriots meeting as strangers in airport lounges, these students may feel a need to express solidarity and affiliation in the face of the strangeness of being in another country. In terms of age, it can be assumed, that like class and gender, age is a crucial parameter in thinking through cross-cultural pragmatics; the late adolescence shared by the students may be highly significant for issues of identity formation. Finally, it is possible to suggest that there was an impact of the researcher as nonparticipant observer in the classroom, and of the tape-recorders, particularly in terms of the tendency of some students for display, and concomitant requirements for an audience.

Although my discussion exemplifies the limitations of naturally occurring data, it has nevertheless allowed some insight into indirect complaint in the classroom. It is unlikely, for example, that discourse completion tasks (DCTs) would have elicited the kind of data discussed here. Nevertheless the combination of a variety of types of data gathering tools as suggested by Burt (2006) may usefully contribute to a clearer contrastive analysis.

Finally, I would like to make a point about the relevance for SLA of this discussion. If we are to aim, in the language classroom, for a "genuine and fluent communication" (De Knop 2006) then effective relationships between teachers and students are vital. Generally speaking, the substantive concern in SLA studies is not with classroom discourse. However, the indirect complaint which occurred in this classroom indicates that, as in Murphy and Neu's (1996) study, there may be occasions when aspects of a language program are not meeting students' needs or expectations. My discussion may alert teachers to student dissatisfaction which is expressible only through indirect complaint. It is also worth considering that the silences of some students cannot necessarily be taken at face value, and that some students may be precluded, due to cultural or other factors, from expressing either direct or indirect complaint.

Appendix

Conventions used in the transcriptions:

ha/he	laughter
⇑	rising tone
⇓	falling tone

-	break off/unfinished word or phrase
/ text //	overlapping speech
text	emphasis
text:	elongation
(.)	micro-pause
(???)	unintelligible
(...)	text omitted

Notes

1. The text was as follows: I'm enrolled in the School of Chemistry at the University of Sydney. I'm a PhD candidate and I'm very interested in organic chemistry especially in natural products so my field of study and research is the chemical and biological aspects of natural products and I like this field very much (source unknown).

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“We make such a mishmash”: Bilingual language usage in classroom peer group talk

Elin Fredsted

1. Introduction

This paper presents an overview of a research project on bilingual language usage among adolescents in the Danish-German border region.[1] Audio-recorded and transcribed peer group data from 76 bi- and trilingual speakers in school settings present evidence to show how bilingual resources are used in a socially meaningful way to fulfil a variety of communicative purposes.

The data covers different situational contexts and speech activities where code choice and code alternations[2] are used with social and interactive intentions, in other words:

- To (re)contextualise with a variety of pragmatic intentions, for instance, setting off quotations and reported speech against its conversational context, shift of mode, role, or key, to mark emphasis, to frame the discourse, to mark topic shift, change of participant constellations, to accommodate or to mark disagreement, etc.
- To position oneself in the class and in the peer group and in relation to the language norms of the school.

In participating observations over six months we have recognised that the Danish minority schools practise a less tolerant language policy than the German one. In German minority schools code switching is generally tolerated and a regional inter-culturality practised. In Danish minority schools the pupils are expected to speak only Standard Danish during the lessons, and only the Danish culture and language are prestigious. But if this school norm of mono-culturality and double monolingualism blocks the possibility of both code choice and code switching, the speakers will find other ways to mark their inter-culturality linguistically or avoid a linguistic predicament. This way out can be by means of semantic and syntactic convergence which ‘disguises’ the bilingual mode. Interestingly we find more frequent and more

radical convergence among Danish minority pupils than among German pupils. It is quite possible to infer from the differences concerning language norms in practice to the divergence concerning bilingual language output.

This frequent use of convergence by the Danish minority pupils can partly be regarded as a reaction to cultural and linguistic norms and expectations, but it has also developed into a playful peer-group language which the speakers call "mishmash". One can interpret exaggerated examples of convergence and extreme mixing as deconstruction of monolingual language norms or even as subversive language behaviour.

The project works on a model to outline the reciprocity between (a) the structural linguistic analysis and (b) the pragmatic analysis and the contextual interpretation. This paper will focus on the social acceptance of code alternation. Section 2 briefly presents our data and main findings. In section 3, I present an overview of the structural analysis of the data. Section 4 presents a functional and pragmatic discussion of the data, and in section 5, I will discuss correlations between the structural and the socio-pragmatic aspects. Finally, section 6 summarises the arguments.

2. The data corpus and the main findings

The data were collected 2004 by Karoline Kühl and Astrid Westergaard in a project focusing on divergent bilingual language usage involving three typologically closely related languages (Standard German, Standard Danish and South Jutish) as spoken by bi- and trilingual adolescents within a school setting in the Danish-German border region (see Kühl (2007) and Westergaard (2007)). The corpus consists of participatory observations in four minority school classes over 6 months and various types of audio-recorded data from 76 observed speakers:

- Interviews with a bi- or trilingual researcher as interviewer.
- Group conversations on school related tasks. Here the pupils were asked to produce a radio play. Both the working process in the peer group and the radio plays were audio-recorded.
- Free conversation data produced within the peer groups without adults or researchers being present.

In total the research group collected almost 50 hours of audio data. This data is supplemented by written data in the two standard languages (essays)

and language tests, and – as already mentioned – by our own observations over 6 months.

The speakers are 12–14 years of age and pupils in minority schools in Denmark (German minority) and in Germany (Danish minority). The two minorities can be described as historical, regional communities that became minorities in their present host countries when the multilingual and multinational region, the Duchy of Schleswig, was divided into two parts by a national border line between Denmark and Germany in the year 1920. The question of nationality did not play an important role until the middle of the 19th century, so a one-to-one correspondence between nationality and preferred language never existed. From the end of the 16th century, Standard German gradually became the dominant high variety, especially in the southern and middle part of the duchy, whereas Standard Danish became the language of school and church in the northern part, but was abandoned in administrative and official contexts in the period 1864–1920.

The vernaculars Low German and South Jutish have been the dominating low varieties for centuries but are nowadays gradually being replaced by the standard varieties of German and Danish. South Jutish, however, is a nationally unmarked language which is still frequently spoken in the local communities of both national groups in the now Danish part of Schleswig (Nordschleswig). Consequently, the two national minorities (the German minority in Denmark and the Danish minority in Germany) are not language minorities in the literal or traditional sense of the word. The medium of instruction in the minority schools is, however, the high variety of the official minority language respectively: Standard German in the German minority schools in Denmark, Standard Danish in the Danish minority schools in Germany.[3]

Both school systems have a language policy stipulating that the pupils should be bilingual with a native-like competence in both standard languages. In addition, they should be able to keep these languages apart functionally.

The data can be considered as complementary as most of the speakers from the Danish minority have Standard German as their L1 and Standard Danish as their L2. On the Danish side of the border, with the German minority, most of the pupils have the Danish-Jutish dialect South Jutish as their L1, Standard German as L2 and Standard Danish as their L3. Thus, in most cases, the language of the family and the language of instruction at school are not identical.

In general the speakers are early sequential bilinguals who have acquired the official minority language in kindergarten from the age of 3. Eight of them are simultaneous bilinguals with two L1s and five of them have their roots on the other side of the border and consequently learn the majority language as L2.

3. Structural analysis – code switching and convergence

Based on the theoretical frameworks of primarily Myers-Scotton (2002) and Muysken (2000) the research team have made a structural analysis of the data using the following analytical categories:

A **Ad hoc loan translations and phonological integration (bold)**
- "non-established" loan translations of single words, lexicalised idioms and collocations
- ad hoc phonological integration into the Matrix Language (ML)

B **Code switching (bold)**
- mixed compounds
- insertion/Matrix Language + Embedded Language (EL) constituents (*classic code switching*)
- Embedded Language islands, i.e. constituents that show internal structural dependency relations and are well-formed in the Embedded Language (A-B-A structure)
- alternation as shift to other Matrix Language (intrasentential code switching) (A-B structure)
- shift to another Matrix Language (intersentential code switching)

C **Convergence (underlined)**
- phonological and prosodic convergence
- morphological convergence and convergent word formation processes
- morpho-syntactic convergence
- lexical-semantic convergence (transfer of semantic extension and/or intension)
- semantic-syntactic convergence
- syntactic convergent word order on the surface structure of the sentence

The term *code switching* will be used when referring to constituents showing surface level morphemes from more than one language. *Convergence* will be used as a cover term for processes where one language impinges on the other at the expense of differences: It will be used for constituents showing phonological, grammatical, lexical-semantic features or syntactic procedures from more than one language. Code switching and convergence may, of course, occur in combination. Unfortunately, it would go beyond the scope of this paper to give a detailed report on our results of the structural analysis of the data, so I will only present a few characteristic examples here.[4]

The research data shows the use of all the above mentioned code alternating features (A-C) but they are not equally distributed. Although the general social and institutional conditions are very much alike, the linguistic output differs considerably. Apart from that, there are some 'unusual' language contact phenomena to be mentioned.

Regarding category A, ad hoc 'non-established' loan translations of single lexical morphemes and of idioms, phrases and collocations from the Embedded Language to the Matrix Language are frequent. The following is just one example of a loan-translated phrase from South Jutish to German:

(1) Loan-translated phrase
'Das kannst du nicht bekannt sein'
from SJ: 'de ka do it væ bekeen',
Compare Standard Danish: 'det kan du ikke være bekendt',
Compare Standard German: 'Das ist aber nicht nett von dir'
'That was not very nice of you'.

More unusual is that phonological integration of lexical units – corresponding to the phonotactic rules of the borrowing Matrix Language – seem to be an alternative to both proper loan translations and to classic code switching in our data. Such cases of phonological integration of code-switched lexical units have not been well documented in many data corpora (cf. however Clyne 1967 and 2003):

(2) Phonological integration

A:	'og	så	pludselig	**stolpr-**ede [ʃd]lbʁəξə]	han	over
	conj.	adv.	adv.	verb+ past	pron./3.sing.nom.	prep.
	and	then	suddenly	stumbled	he	over

han-s	far'
pron/3. sing.+gen.	noun
his	father

'and then he suddenly stumbled over his father'

[…..]

B: **‘stolpr-**ede [sd]lbʁəξə]!’
verb + past
‘stumbled!’
Compare Standard Danish: A: “og så snublede han pludselig over sin far” B: “snublede”
Compare Standard German: A: “und dann stolperte er plötzlich über seinen Vater” B: “stolperte“.

Speaker A pronounces the code switched German verb ‘stolpern’ (stumble, Danish *snuble*) with the German fricative consonant [ʃ], which is, however, not part of the Danish consonant system. Speaker B ‘corrects’ him transforming the pronunciation of the fricative to [s] which is in correspondence with the Danish consonant system.

Regarding category B, classic code switching is mainly found as *insertion* of a single lexical stem of the Embedded Language (EL content morpheme and – not so frequently – early system morphemes) into a Matrix Language frame. In Nordschleswig (Denmark) the German minority students produce an insertion every 48 second on average. This number refers to both oral languages of the students (German and South Jutish), and there is no significant difference of distribution between the two Matrix Languages or the directions of the code switch.

The Danish minority speakers do not switch code quite that often. They produce a code switch every 120 second on average; most of the code switches are also inserted lexical stems like the following example:

(3) Insertion: German with Danish verbal stem (**pjæk-** / ‘skip the lesson’)
‘Wenn keiner da ist, wird sie ja nicht denken, dass alle **pjækk**en.’
Compare Standard German: schwänzen
‘when nobody is there she won‘t think that everybody skips the lesson’

The students of the Danish minority do not switch code frequently in class room communication or in talking to adults (e.g. in the interviews). Here they mainly use code switching for filling of lexical gaps. In peer-group communication on school related tasks, the students use code switching as a kind of ‘work in progress’-mode where they gradually substitute the code switched words (in German) with words of the target school language (Danish). In spontaneous communication among the peer group, however, they switch code more frequently.

In this research data, there are infrequent *embedded language islands* (Myers-Scotton 2002: 139) or *alternations* between structures from different languages (Muysken 2000: 96). This might be due to the fact that our speakers have got a rather high level of proficiency in both languages. Also other empirical studies (cf. Backus 1996: 190) have presented data showing that *embedded language islands* lose their frequency as speakers improve in their L2 and gradually feel at home in both languages.

Regarding category C, the research group have found a clear and frequent tendency towards convergence. In the data from speakers with German as school language the total number of convergences is 503**;** many of these are, however, part of a local contact variety of German ("Nordschleswigdeutsch"), a spontaneous convergence occurs every 342 second (equally distributed in both oral languages, Standard German and South Jutish). The speakers of the Danish minority are more frequent users of convergent constructions: In the data from schools with Danish as school language, there are 775 items of convergence, i.e. one convergence every 162 second on average.

More than half of all cases of convergence (ca. 56%) in both corpora involve a main verb – partly semantically, partly syntactically or both (cf. De Knop this volume). The number of examples of convergence is 1278 in total. The number of verb phrases (with main or modal verbs as head) involved in convergence is 714. Concerning syntactic convergence, the data show that the syntactic information of a main verb of the currently not spoken language (the EL) influences the predicate-argument structure of the currently used language (the ML) and activates syntactic procedures of the Embedded Language in the syntactic frame of the currently spoken Matrix Language.

(4) Convergence (underlined): South Jutish with German verb phrase and a code-switch to German (bold):

'Va laut han ejnle for **Unterricht'**
Compare Standard German: 'Was machte er eigentlich für einen Unter richt'
Compare SJ: 'Hva underviist han ejnle i'
'What subject did he teach'

The construction with "*lave/lau*" (do, make) in example (4) is partly semantic, partly syntactic convergent because it 'copies' a German verb construction (verb phrase with preposition). Generally speaking, the German verb

machen (do, make) is transferred to the South Jutish *lau* and/or the Danish verb *lave* with the following features:

a) The very broad semantic extension of the German verb *machen* is transferred to South Jutish (70 examples in our data) or Standard Danish (34 other examples). In the contact varieties of these languages it substitutes numerous other Danish verbs like "tage, skrive, holde, gøre etc." ("take, write, hold, do" etc.)
b) The syntax converges to a common SVO or SVPrepO word order which goes for both (or all three) languages.
c) The verb facilitates code switching (*insertion*) creating a slot in the sentence for an object of the verb, thus making integration of EL-Elements simpler from a morpho-syntactical point of view.

Dominating features of the language data are the following in general:

- Classic code switching and convergence often occur in combination (cf. Myers-Scotton 2002: 8 'composite code switching')
- In more than 50% of all cases of convergence a main verb is involved (Fredsted: forthcoming)
- There is a considerable individual and situational divergence concerning the use of code alternation strategies, and also a different distribution of bilingual features in the two neighbouring minorities (Carstensen and Kühl 2007)

4. Socio-pragmatic analysis

The two minorities have been living in bilingual surroundings for decades. Their language practices follow certain patterns, and conventions of language choice have been established over the years. What is typical for the members of the German minority is their clear distinction between formal and informal speech situations. Their motto is: "We speak South Jutish when we sit down, and German when we stand up." In the Danish minority Standard Danish together with the local contact variety of Danish ('Sydslesvigdansk') is the institutional language, the medium of instruction at school, the language of the church and in some other cultural institutions (Pedersen 2000). This means that not every item of language choice, code switching or language convergence *per se* has a pragmatic meaning or requires a func-

tional explanation, but must be seen as part of a community-wide, shared regional norm.

As Meeuwis and Blommaert (1998: 76) point out, code switching and – I would like to add – convergence might be layered in bilingual language societies and groups. Some issues of code alternation are part of an established fused lect ('one code in its own right'), in this case the regional contact varieties (Fredsted 2007). These features are indeed interesting from a structural and contact linguistic point of view as language contact phenomena, but they do not require any pragmatic explanation as they are part of a community-wide, default way of speaking. Apart from this, there exists a second 'layer' of code alternation phenomena with a discursive function as a conscious code alternation within a regional mixed variety.

> Yet inside this very large domain of language-contact phenomena, it is necessary to draw a very basic distinction: that between contact phenomena classified as such by the linguist, and contact phenomena seen and used as such by the bilingual participants themselves. The question 'Do bilingual participants see and use it?' takes us from structural systems continually referring to each other, to the speakers. It implies the shift from a structural towards an interpretative approach to bilingualism. (Auer 1995: 117).

A wide range of social, situational, contextual and linguistic variables make an interpretative approach to code alternating speech on speaker's level complicated. Not all instances of code alternation of speech carry interactional meaning. In many contexts the alternation of two or more languages is best explained through other means. The following are a few examples:

(1) The 76 individual speakers' *level of competence* in two or three languages are heterogeneous. So they may or may not use code switching as lexical gap filling. Lexical gap filling does not require any functional explanation.

> We probably need to make a distinction between CS which is used as a meaningful discourse strategy and CS which results from a lack of knowledge, because [.....] the mechanics of these two types of CS in terms of the model [Levelt's speaking model] are totally different (De Bot 1999: 3).

From a psycholinguistic point of view this distinction is important, but not from a pragmatic one, because also lexical gap filling has an important – but admittedly quite different - discursive function, i.e. to maintain the discourse. From a non-mentalist point of view, it is not always possible to distinguish between code switching for pragmatic pur-

poses and lexical gap filling. Code switching, ad hoc loan translations and phonological integrations as lexical gap fillers are, however, not *per se* indicators of a poor linguistic competence in the ML because even this kind of code alternation requires capabilities of linguistic awareness and knowledge – firstly regarding the similarities and differences of the language varieties involved, secondly concerning comprehensibility to the addressee.

(2) The social acceptance of code alternating speech varies according to changing situations, change of participant constellations, and the expected language norm. In our case study, there are different levels of acceptance in class room communication (with a norm of double monolingualism and relatively low acceptance of bilingual varieties) and peer group talk with a high acceptance of code alternation.

(3) In spite of the recent tendency to criticise the hypothesis of unproblematic links between language and identities, we still should bear these simple facts in mind that speakers use linguistic signs for self-characterisation and that code alternation is a resource through which bilingual speakers not only express their meanings but also index their identities (cf. Ellwood this volume):

> [A]part from the instrumental value of language, language can acquire symbolic value by being the means through which the values of the individual and particularly the group is expressed. In other words, language can become symbolic of the individual or group's identity. (Slabbert and Finlayson 1998: 293).

Following Pavlenko and Blackledge the research team view identity not as a stable, but as 'an interactional accomplishment, produced and negotiated in discourse' (2004: 13). Speakers construct identity in interaction within changing social contexts through communication. Such 'acts of identity' may be contradictory, have a different ranking according to context and situation, but they may be interpreted as an ongoing performance of identity. Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004: 21) distinguish three types of identities:

- The imposed identity (which is non-negotiable in particular time and place, e.g. the students' identity as pupils in a school of a national minority where the parents have placed them)
- The assumed identity (which is accepted but not negotiated, e.g. as bilingual and inter-cultural individuals)

- The negotiated identity (which may be contested and/or resisted by groups and individuals, e.g. a more or less subversive attitude towards the official school norm of 'double monolingualism', different notions of 'prestigious' language, etc.)

The variables of this case study can be described by means of the following figure. This figure gives a survey over the social and situational variables combined with the divergent linguistic outcomes reaching from obedience to school norm of double monolingualism to deconstruction of monolingual norms.

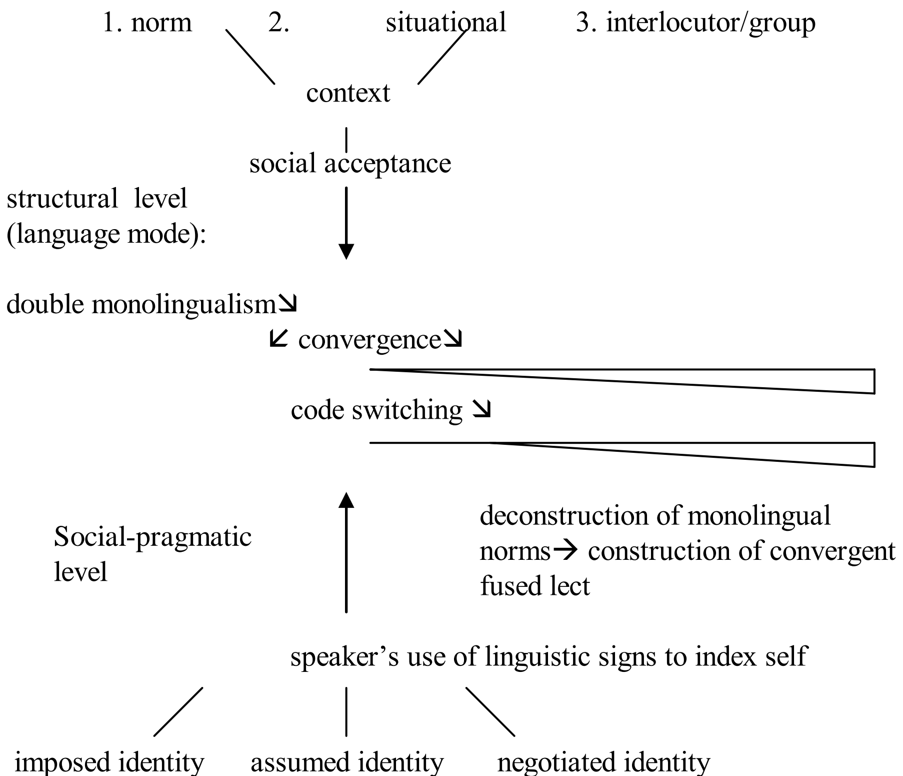

Figure 1.

Against the background of our data, we have categorised the pragmatic use of code alternation strategies knowing that this necessarily has to be an open-ended and purely descriptive list of categories. Logically, this list can only be open-ended since language users are creative and, indeed, bilingual

language users seem to be particularly creative using linguistic resources of different language varieties at the same time.

Code alternations may be connected with the following functions and purposes:

1) *Orientation to the speaker's language usage and individual level of competence*
   - Filling of lexical gaps
   - Metalinguistic strategies and speech elaboration (reiteration of content in another language, repetitions, self-repair, other-repair, negotiation of words and meanings)
   - Use of discourse markers, gambits and other hesitation phenomena (in order to gain processing time)

2) *Instrumental recontextualisation*
   - Quotation of speech, 'virtual' quotations, setting off quotations and narratives
   - Emphasis, foregrounding/backgrounding (creation of contrast)
   - Framing or re-framing a speech situation
   - Bipartite structures (topic-comment, premise-conclusion)
   - Indicating that something new is going to come (recontextualisation):
     a. Change of mode and illocution (e.g. side sequences, side comments)
     b. Change of key and register
     c. Topic shift
     d. Change of activity type

3) *Interactional recontextualisation*
   - Change of social role
   - Orientation to the addressee (accommodation)
   - Marking of disagreement or taking back control via non-accommodation or shift to one's 'stronger' language (Haußer 1995)

4) *Language games*
   Extended use of both convergence and code switching in a humorous and playful manner, also used subversively to deconstruct (expected) monolinguistic norms.

Due to the limited space of this paper, it will not be possible to give proof of all the above mentioned categories. Consequently, only a few examples from

category 1, 2, and 3 will be presented here. More examples will be discussed in section 5.

The metalinguistic awareness (Category 1) of our speakers is generally on a high level. The bilingual students pay much attention to language and meaning. A characteristic feature of our data is that 'self repair' and 'other repair' are very common in the peer group. Apparently 'other repair' is considered neither a dispreferred reaction nor connected with loss of face.

(5) Category 1: 'Other-repair', South Jutish with code switching to German (bold)
Student A: 'Sidste gang, da fik vi å å vii at vi sku hol **Aufsatz** næste gang.'
Last time they also told us that we had to do essay the next time
Student B: 'Det heje ik' **Aufsatz** Stine, det heje **Vortrag**.'
It is not called essay, it is called presenting a paper

Living in bilingual surroundings together with almost only bilingual persons seems to foster linguistic awareness and linguistic tolerance. Nobody in the peer group is supposed to be perfect in one standard norm. So everybody is accustomed to linguistic comments and help from other members of the peer group. This seems to point to the conclusion that categories from linguistic models designed for monolingual speech (e.g. 'other repair' as dispreferred response in Conversation Analysis) may not have the same relative rank or implications in a bilingual speech mode. Cross-checking meaning and mutual negotiation of lexical meaning belongs to one of the frequent topics of discourse:

(6) Category 1: Negotiation of lexical meaning, South Jutish with code switch to German
(German in bold)
Student: 'K, hva heje **verhungern** altså å sult, ja sult'
K, what is the right word for 'verhungern' to be hungry, yes hungry, you know
Teacher: 'sulte ihjel'
to starve
Student: 'ej ik' ihjel'
No, not starve to death
Teacher: 'jo, hvis det æ **verhungern** så døje do a det.'
yes, if you mean **verhungern** then you die.

Nevertheless, students who have the highly prestigious school language as L1 seem to have a high prestige in the peer group – at least in classroom communication and in connection with language tasks in the school language.

The most common distribution of language varieties in the audio-recorded radio plays is that the school language (the medium of instruction) is used for the narrative, the L1 for private talk in between, for internal discussions and stage directions. So it is framed very clearly to everybody in the group what is part of the narrative to be produced and what is not. Here switching between the two languages indicates a change of footing (Goffman 1981: 128). In example (7), three girls in a Danish school (H., M. and L.) work on their radio play:

(7) Category 2: Framing, narrative in Danish, comments and stage directions in German

H: (Danish) ‘det var en dejlig sommerdag og det var- (.) seks om aftenen- ’
It was on a lovely summer day and it was- (.) six o’clock in the evening-
(German) ‘nee das hört sich scheiße an’
no that’s bullshit

M: (Danish) ‘klokken var seks og Bert gik en tur ved stranden’
It was six o’clock and Bert was taking a walk on the beach

H: (German) ‘ja das finde ich hört sich gut an. oder er ---,
Yes that sounds good, I think. Or he--

L: (German) ‘ja aber da weiß man ja nicht wie das Wetter ist.’
Yes but then you don’t know what the weather’s like

H: (Danish) ‘det var en DEJLIG sommerdag klokken var-’
It was a LOVELY summer day it was-

M: (Danish) ‘klokken var seks om aftenen og det var stadig varmt’
It was six o’clock in the evening and it was still hot

H: (Danish) ‘det var en dejlig sommerdag’
It was a lovely summer’s day
(German) ‘und denn hört man auch schon ahh das ist schön warm und so-’
and then you already know that it was warm and so-

M: (German) ‘aber dann können wir die Zeit nicht mehr mit reinnehmen’
Yes but then we can’t include the time [reference]

H: (Danish) 'det var en dejlig sommerdag'
It was a lovely summer's day
(German) 'ach ja scheiße'
Well, shit
M: (Danish) 'klokken var seks.'
It was six o'clock
(German) 'das hört sich dumm an'
that sounds stupid

In bilingual speech a standard way of staging reported speech is to change to the other language in order to mark quotations against the conversational context. In the following example (8) we find a 'virtual' self-quote. The student will talk to the teacher in German which is the medium of instruction and the teacher's preferred language. So she prepares for what she is going to tell the teacher in order to explain why she has not done her homework. Another pragmatic feature is, of course, that she consciously accommodates to the preferred language of the German speaking teacher and the language norm of the school in order to avoid trouble.

(8) Category 2: Marking a 'virtual' quote, South Jutish with language shift to German (bold)
Student: 'Å så sie vi ti XX at vi ha vos **Materialien zu Hause**.'
And then we say to XX that we have our material at home.
'Du XX wir haben unsere Materialien zu Hause'.
'XX we have our material at home'.

The next example convincingly shows that the shift to another language in order to set off reported speech does not necessarily go in the direction of the original code (see also Alfonzetti 1998: 180 ff.).

(9) Category 2: Setting off a quotation (Interview data: Danish with shift to German, German in bold)
Student: 'ja det er- altså først kunne jeg li- kunne jeg li men nu hun er så- hun
yes it is- you know in the beginning I liked- I liked- but now she is so- she
synes det er sjo-'
finds it fun-
Interviewer: 'du ka osse forklare på tysk hvis du-'
You can explain it in German if you-
Student: 'ja **also hart zu einem** æhm æhm æhm altså der hvor vi

skulle vente der ved fysik da havde jeg bare sådan et i hånden og så sagde hun'
she treats us so hard ehm ehm ehm you know when we had to wait outside the the physics class room I had such a thing in my hand and then she said
(a) **'jaa du willst doch das jetzt nicht machen oder'**
you are not going to do this, are you
und ich so
and then I
(b) **Ich mach doch gar nichts**
I'm not doing anything
og det er dumt
and that is stupid

Line (b) is another example of self-quotation (as in example 8), although we do not know if the speaker really said this in German. But in line (a) the student quotes her Danish teacher, and we know from our observations that this teacher never talks in German to her pupils although the student here quotes her in German. Here the alternating code shifts are used functionally to mark reported speech as such, but are not reporting on the language of the original speech.

(10) Category 3: Marking of disagreement
Teacher in German: 'Nun benehmt euch ordentlich'
Now behave yourselves
Student in South Jutish with code switch to German (bold):
'Ja, æ **benimm** mæ oltins **ordentlich'**
Yes, I always behave myself

The student quotes his teacher's request in German, but at the same time he marks his disagreement with the content of the teacher's accusation of bad behaviour using a different language (South Jutish) in his comment. In this way the 'mixed' non-accommodated language variety is not only a neutral carrier of a message, but part of the message itself.

(11) Category 3: Marking a divergent opinion and different evaluation of a situation, taking control over the situation via non-accommodation
Student (in South Jutish) 'Nej, æ sætte mæ ik de op.'
No, I won't sit up there.
Teacher (in German) 'Nimm bitte Platz.'
Take your seat please

Student F. (in South Jutish)	'Ja, ka æ ik' ba si det he'? Why can't I just tell it from down here?
Teacher (in German)	'Bitte F.' Please F.
Student F. (in German)	'ja am Freitag war ich [...].' Last Friday I went...

The teacher asks F. to come up to the front of the class to tell about his weekend. F., however, wants to give his report from his own seat and starts to argue with the teacher in his L1 (South Jutish) which is not the L1 of the German teacher and does not conform with the linguistic norm of the school (German school) or of the subject (a lesson in German). F. has no competence problems in German, but he uses his 'stronger' language (which is the teacher's 'weaker' language) to gain control over the discussion with the teacher who consequently gives up her claim in the end. He 'thanks' her by accommodating to her preferred language after his victory.

5. A correlation between structural and socio-pragmatic aspects?

In this data, there is strong evidence for a correlation between different levels of acceptance of bilingual speech and the choice of divergent code alternation strategies. As already mentioned, both school systems have a language policy stipulating that the pupils should be bilingual with a native-like competence in both standard languages. In addition, they should be able to keep these languages functionally apart. In other words, there is an assumption in both school programmes that bilinguals can be considered double monolinguals. Consequently 'unsystematic mixing' (Iwersen 2003) is not accepted. What is meant by 'unsystematic mixing' is not quite clear, but from the context of the language recommendations of the schools one might conclude that it means intrasentential code switching and convergence in any case. Therefore, to produce extreme language 'mixing' is, in fact, an act of being subversive of school norms – a kind of 'illegal' talk (Jaspers 2005).

Nevertheless, there is a difference between the two school systems concerning the ways to handle these school norms in practice. In our six months of participating observations we recognised that the teachers of the Danish minority schools generally practice a more rigorous and less tolerant language policy than the German minority schools. In classroom communication there is generally a low acceptance of code alternating behaviour. In the

German minority schools, however, intersentential code switching is generally tolerated. Language shift is even used by a teacher, e.g. in the following example where a teacher kindly offers his help to a pupil in maths:

(12) Category 3: Change of social role (German and South Jutish)
Teacher: 'K., soll ich dir helfen?' (German – official school language)
K. (girl's name), can I help you?
Pupil: 'Ja.' (identical in German and South Jutish)
Yes
Teacher: 'Så sej da naue pich.' (The teacher shifts to SJ, which is the preferred L1 of the pupil)
Then say something, girl.

Here the teacher shows his solidarity with the pupil shifting to her preferred language, South Jutish, which is not an official medium of teaching at the school. South Jutish is, however, the preferred medium of informal conversation in the peer group.

In Danish minority schools, we find less code switching in classroom situations, and the teachers regard themselves as linguistic role models who hardly ever switch to German during lessons. The pupils are expected to speak only Danish with their teachers. This framework of normative aspects predicts that well-adjusted students will tend not to use code alternation. However, for bilinguals this is not the only possible or even preferred option. Searching for an appropriate way of expressing themselves, bi- or tri-lingual speakers will scan both or all three of their lexica for the appropriate word and consequently code switch if the concept sought does not exist in their lexicon in the language currently spoken or if it is momentarily not accessible. But if the school norm of double monolingualism blocks the possibility of code switching, because intrasentential code switching is not an accepted way of speaking, the speakers will try to find another way out of their momentary predicament. This 'way out' can be in the form of a loan translation, a phonological integrated lexeme or a convergence which 'disguises' the bilingual mode. In this perspective, one could regard convergence as a covert bilingual strategy which is used when overt bilingual strategies such as code switching are not welcome.

Certainly, we find there is more frequent and especially more radical convergence amongst the Danish minority pupils than amongst the German ones (more than twice as often). It is indeed very obvious to draw conclusions from the differences concerning language norms in practice to the divergence concerning bilingual language output. This frequent use of conver-

gence by the Danish minority pupils can partly be regarded as a reaction to the expected school norms and a way out of a momentary predicament. But it has also developed into a kind of peer group variety. One can interpret exaggerated examples of convergence and extreme mixing as deconstructive or even subversive language behaviour against the background of the less tolerant linguistic practice of the Danish minority schools – contesting the monolingual school norm (negotiable identity). This might be an explanation for examples of radical convergence and code switching, e.g. when the pupils are discussing teachers with whom they do not sympathise.

(13) Category 3: Marking of disagreement with convergence, code switch and shift ML (German ML, Danish EL in bold, name of teacher changed)

‘gleich	komm-t	**Lisepigebarn**.’
temp.adv.	verb+pres	compund of name and noun
soon	comes	(name of the teacher)-girl.

(Danish ML, convergence (underlined), German EL in bold)

‘så	er	det	slut	med	**lustig’**
adv.	aux./pres.	pron./subj.	adj.	prep	adj.

‘then the ball is over’

Compare Standard German: ‘gleich kommt L. Dann ist es Schluss mit lustig’

Compare Standard Danish: ‘snart kommer L. Så er festen forbi’.

‘Slut med **lustig’** is a word-to-word transfer of the German collocation ‘Schluss mit lustig’, including a code switch to German: **lustig**. The subversive intention of language choice and meaning goes hand in hand in example (13).

Examples like (13) and the following (14) give rise to the question why speakers with a relatively high proficiency in both languages use this extreme and obviously intended code alternation: to mark a double identity; perhaps to carry out linguistic sabotage and deconstruct monolingual school norms; perhaps to make fun. It will hardly be possible to give only one comprehensive explanation, but the fact is that this type of extremely ‘mixed’ language has turned into a kind of in-group language of the class and the network of pupils appearing even as the ‘working language’ of the peer group during the preparations of the radio play:

(14) Danish ML with convergence (underlined) and code switching to German (bold)

‘Imke komm-er ud af vand-et
name verb+pres. prep.s. noun+def.
Imke (girl’s name) comes out of the water
og lægg-er et **wunderbar-**t *striptease* hen’
coord.conj. verb+pres. indef.art./neut. adj.+ neuter noun verb particle
and performs a wonderful striptease
Compare Standard Danish: ‘Imke kommer op ad vandet og laver en dejlig striptease’
Compare Standard German: ‘Imke kommt aus dem Wasser und legt einen wunderbaren Striptease hin’.

The example above is typical for the peer group variety of the Danish minority pupils: On the surface, the Matrix Language is Danish because all system morphemes are Danish and are used in correspondence with the morphological requirements of the Danish language (e.g. NP-agreement in ‘et **wunderbar**t *striptease*). There is only one insertion as classic code switching in the last syntactic unit: **wunderbar** from German. ‘*Striptease’* does not count as code switch being an established loan borrowing in Danish and German. However, both verb phrase building procedures in this example are German: ‘kommer ud af vandet’ corresponds to German: ‘kommt aus dem Wasser heraus’ (compare Danish: ‘komme op ad vandet’), ‘Lægger et **wunderbar**t *striptease* hen’ is constructed in accordance with German colloquial ‘etwas hinlegen’ (‘perform’). Thus we find a typical structure of lexicon and inflectional morphology from one language, but verbal syntax from the other (for more examples of this kind see Fredsted forthcoming).

The Danish minority students certainly never speak like that to a teacher or to another grown-up, neither in classroom teaching discourse, nor in interviews with the researcher; but they use these extreme convergences frequently in free conversation when the peer group is left alone with the microphone. Thus what counts as ‘appropriate’ or ‘acceptable’ language depends on networks, addressees, situational context, attitudes and norms and other conditions that are pragmatically determined. These bilingual students are able to activate or deactivate their bilingual mode to a varying degree. Due to discursive dynamics more or less ‘mixed’ varieties may be implemented. They shift and adjust the ways of positioning themselves linguistically.

Many – again especially the Danish minority pupils are engaged in a kind of ‘language game’ where they try to test the limits of mixing or use radical mixing with a kind of comic effect. The joy of producing such language

games is a goal in itself and they occur spontaneously without any impulse or provocation from interlocutors or situation. These language games contribute to a humorous note in the conversation. They do not, however, differ in structure from what has been presented in section 3, and most of them are based on loan translations (of *false friends* and nearly homophone words), phonological integrations or code switching. Typically, these language games evoke amusement in the peer group. In example (15), three boys (A, S and H) work on their radio play:

(15) Category 4: Language game with near-homophones, Standard Danish and German (in bold)
A: (Danish) 'lu:rer. hvad kan vi mere sige om Hans Christian'
Peeping. What else can we say about Hans Christian
S: (Danish) 'Hans Christian er klog-'
Hans Christian is wise-
H: (Danish/German) 'klo-,
Danish: wis-(interrupted), German: colloquial for *loo*
S: (Danish) 'klo høhø toilette høhø og derfor –
Loo [laughs] toilet [laughs] and therefore –
na og derfor kan han godt få –
[German discourse marker] and therefore he can become –
derfor kan han godt skjule sig'
therefore he is good at hiding away

Example (15) shows a very characteristic feature of the data, i.e. the speakers using homophones or near-homophones as a starting point for a joking conversation. One might consider this as a result of their phonological awareness and the product as a kind of everyday 'poetry'.

The following conversation is based on code switching between Danish and German (bold). Three girls are discussing other girls with whom they do not sympathise, playing with the names of the girls.

(16) Category 4: Language game – Standard Danish and German (German in bold)
A: 'og så kommer **wie heißt die noch mal'**
and then comes what's-her-name
L: '**Ulrike Friederike'**
A: '**die in Christianslyst'**
The one in C.
W: 'Mia'
(Girl's name)

A: **‘nein ähm diese Frikadelle’**
No ehmm this meat ball
A: [laughs] ‘så kommer **bulette’**
[laughs] and then the meat ball comes
L: **‘oh manno’**
Oh my God
W: ‘ok’
ok
A ‘så kommer frikadellen’
Then the meat ball comes
[laughter]

The amusement arises because of the resemblance of the girl’s name ‘Friederike’ and the Danish word for ‘meat ball’ (‘frikadelle’), which is then translated to the Berlin variant ‘**bulette’** (meat ball) which again shows resemblance with another girl’s name (Bolette). Basically these language games are produced consciously and they give evidence of a high degree of language awareness in both (or all three) languages. In an interview one of the Danish minority pupils tells about this peer group variety:

(17) Category 1: Metalinguistic awareness
‘Vi laver sådan en **mischmasch’**
We make such a mishmash

In a conversational analysis, however, it is difficult to distinguish whether the use of German verb phrases in examples like the following is meant as a joke or not (German in bold, convergence underlined), because nobody reacts to it. In example (18) these code switchings and convergences seem to have developed into an unmarked pattern in the internal bilingual speech of this peer group.

(18) Category 2: Instrumental code alternation as unmarked working language. Standard Danish ML with convergence (underlined) and code switch to German EL (bold)

S:	‘sig-er	han	har	se-t	den	først’
	verb+pres	pron./subj	aux.	verb+pp	pron./obj.	adv.
	says	he	has	seen	it	first

R:	‘**genau**.	sig-er	han	har	se- t	fugl-en
	adv.[discourse marker]	verb+pres	pron./subj.	aux.	verb+pp	noun/obj.
	Exactly.	says	he	has	seen	the bird

først
adv.
first
[R. writes and speaks simultaneously]
si:g-er han har se-t fugl-en først.
verb+pres pron./subj. aux. verb+pp noun/obj. adv.
say:s he has seen the bird first
for-**klopp**-er **spanner-**en. de **klopp-**er sig,
prefix-verb-pres noun/def./ pron./3.pl.nom. verb+pres-refl.pron.
beats up the Peeping Tom. they beat each other up
de slutt-er fred.'
pron/3.pl.nom verb+pres noun
they make peace.

S: 'æhmm de stjæl-er tøj fra frue-n.'
pron./3.plu.nom verb+pres noun/obj. prep. noun+def.
emmm they steal clothing of the lady.

R: 'tag-er frue-n-s tøj.'
verb+pres noun+def.+gen. noun/obj.
take away the lady's clothing.

Example (18) is a typical sequence of talk with a translinguistic flow where code switching and convergence occur frequently and in combination. Typically, the main verb stems ('verkloppen' and 'sich kloppen'), the syntax of the verb phrases and the discourse markers ('genau') come from the Embedded Language (here: German). This example shows – again typically for our data – how the main verb of the Embedded Language influences the predicate-argument structure and the syntactical surface structure. Code alternation as an unmarked pattern (as in example 18) weakens the discursive 'value' of this feature: the more frequent the less salient. A relevant question to ask is where we should place stretches of talk like this on a continuum between an interactionally meaningful code alternation and a fused lect.

6. Concluding remarks

To conclude, it is clear that our speakers display a strategy which aims at using the same lexical knowledge in both languages. They aim to keep the languages structurally and lexically parallel as far as far as possible and even beyond. Over the years this strategy has moved these regional varieties community-wide away from the standard languages of the varieties of the

respective 'home-countries' and developed two regional language norms (colloquially called 'Nordschleswigdeutsch' and 'Sydslesvigdansk'), which can be considered established contact varieties.

But beyond this overall strategy of the regional variety norms, one can find a more specific variation which depends on different linguistic and social conditions and peer group identities. On the speaker's level we find the following characteristic:

Variation 1 is a code switch based strategy, where inter- and intrasentential code switching is used regularly – in addition to the regional contact induced norm. This variety occurs mainly in the German minority school, where there is a greater tolerance towards code switching. The speakers here are conscious about code switching and use it partly to fill in lexical gaps, partly with pragmatic and discourse related communicative intentions.

Variation 2 is characterised by convergence and partly inhibited code switching. We find this variety in the Danish minority schools, where code switching is not an accepted way of speaking in classroom discourse.

This leads to the third variation of language, intentional "mishmash", which is a playful and humorous display of bilingual and bicultural identity. This humorous display of bilingual and bicultural competence has developed into a peer group variety. When the language game is 'on' one cannot really tell if a convergence is produced intentionally or unintentionally as an emergency measure out of a momentary predicament – or if it is just for fun. Among these 'players' there is a high degree of bilingual and bicultural self-consciousness which is, however, not to be confused with the national patriotism of the minority school.

In both minority school systems the language of the 'home' country on the other side of the border has a high prestige. The minority identity and school regulations tell the students to keep their languages apart (double monolingualism) and their minority language 'pure'. But due to a gradual reduction of national and political tensions in the region over the last 50 years and political guarantee of minority rights, the young people of the two national minorities nowadays only to some – but varying – degree seem to accept a minority identity based on national ideology or an unquestioned identification with the 'home' country on the other side of the border. More or less consciously, more or less intentionally, they challenge the expected language norms developing an inter-cultural and bilingual group identity according to which they regard their own inter-culturality as – in a positive sense – something special which characterises their personal identities. Ref-

erence to one's own peer group seems more important than an imposed nationally defined identity.

Notes

1. The research project 'Divergierender Sprachgebrauch bei bilingualen Jugendlichen' is funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft – DFG.
2. Code alternation is used as a cover term for code switching and convergence.
3. For a more detailed overview see Søndergaard (1997: 1033ff. and 1769 ff.).
4. For a detailed structural analysis of the verb phrases of the data see Fredsted (forthcoming) 'Convergence in verb phrases', *Linguistics*.

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Pragmatics of humor in the foreign language classroom: Learning (with) humor

Manuela Wagner and Eduardo Urios-Aparisi

1. Introduction

Humor can be encountered in virtually all situations in our daily lives. In recent decades humor has become a well-researched topic of investigation in many disciplines (e.g., Ruch 1998, Ritchie 2003, Attardo 1994, Norrick 1993). In this paper, humor is understood in broad terms. According to Long and Graesser (1988: 37), humor is "anything done or said, purposely or inadvertently, that is found comical or amusing." In an even wider sense, humor can be understood as "playfulness" or the contrary to seriousness (cf. Achakis and Tsakona 2005). It is questionable, though, how to gauge whether something has been intentionally or unintentionally funny unless some kind of marker is present (e.g. laughter, gesture, tone of voice, cf. Holmes 2000). A qualitative analysis seems necessary to identify whether the instance is humorous or not, and, as Achakis and Tsakona (2005) point out, the presence of laughter is not always connected to the presence of humor or the absence of laughter does not always indicate the absence of humor.

Distinctions have been made between types of humor (see Urios-Aparisi and Wagner 2005), types of humorous interaction and social functions of humor (cf. Attardo 1994). The classroom is a multilayered context with overarching pedagogical objectives. Humor in this context is important for at least two reasons. When learning another language, students are potentially exposed to higher levels of anxiety due to the discrepancy between their cognitive ability and their linguistic skills (e.g., Krashen 1981, 1982, 1985; Horwitz 1986; MacIntyre 1995; MacIntyre and Gardner 1989, 1991, 1994; Young 1990, 1991, l992). Humor has the potential of creating a relaxed classroom atmosphere. Krashen (1982) concluded that a low affective filter corresponded to high motivation, self-confidence, and a lack of anxiety. He explained that the Affective Filter Hypothesis implied that our pedagogical goals should not only include supplying comprehensible input, but also cre-

ating a situation that encourages a low filter. In this respect, humor can help to lower that affective filter, reducing anxiety in the class, and encouraging students' desire to take part in what is being said in the class. In addition to this pedagogical role of creating a more relaxed classroom atmosphere, humor represents content to be acquired in world languages and cultures. According to current approaches in world language education (a term we favor instead of the more traditional "foreign language education"), the aim is for students to learn to communicate in authentic situations (cf. e.g., Richards and Rodgers 2001; Lee and VanPatten 2003). As Alexander (1997:7) has stated humor is an "instrument for cultural and social transmission" and it facilitates acquiring sociolinguistic characteristics of the target culture (Gumperz and Hymes 1972). Since humor plays such a crucial role in our lives, it makes sense that we should be equipped with tools to understand and produce humor in the target language and culture as well. In short, in the world language classroom humor represents a content area as well as a pedagogical tool.

The aim of the current article is to investigate the phenomenon of humor in the world language classroom. The focus is on the following research questions:

1) Which functions does the use of humor fulfill in the world language classroom?
2) How do students and instructors negotiate factors such as cultural characteristics in the world language classroom and what role does humor play in this context?
3) How can humor help increase cultural awareness in the world language classroom?

The framework for this investigation comes from studies carried out in humor research, pragmatics, sociolinguistics, and second language acquisition from the linguistic, as well as an educational perspective.

Upon studying students in foreign language and translation courses, Schmitz (2002) introduced a differentiation of humor on whether it is universal-, culture- or linguistic-based. Schmitz (2002:93) defines universal humor as derived "mainly from the context and the general functioning of the world" and linguistic humor as "linguistic joke or word-based joke based on specific features in the phonology, morphology or syntax of particular languages." His theory is that world language students first acquire universal humor, followed by culture-based humor, and finally linguistic humor. One would assume that especially culture-based humor is difficult to understand

because one has to carefully activate common background knowledge which is based on a culture that is presumably different from that of the language learner. As will be seen later, this indeed poses a challenge and requires the language instructor to be aware of and sensitive to the students' perspective.

The second body of research we draw from with regard to theory and methodology is the research of humor within the study of pragmatics. Humor in the world language classroom can be studied from various viewpoints. In order to gain insight into the functions of humor it is necessary to investigate humor in the context of classroom discourse. It becomes clear that humor in this context shares features with those of conversational humor as introduced by Kotthoff (1998). The most relevant characteristics of humor in the classroom context are the reference to common knowledge the participants must have and the mention of game-like modalities and playfulness (Kotthoff 1998). As far as the aspects of playfulness, creativity and fantasy are concerned, it seems plausible that instructors have different personalities that result in various different styles in the classroom. Norton (1983) addressed this by looking at different communicator styles (see also Attardo 1994 on humor and speaker's style). It would make sense to hypothesize a general tendency to have different humor styles as well. Those tendencies may be related to individual differences as well as cultural differences (cf. Ruch and Köhler 1998 for individual differences on humor appreciation). The point Kotthoff (1998) makes about gaining insight into the emotional, social and value system of participants in humorous situations through the use of humor is also an important point in classroom interaction. On the one hand, it could be a positive by-product that students get to know the instructor, the instructor the students, and the students each other. This could certainly cause a better atmosphere in the classroom with lower student anxiety and higher student participation because the students feel at ease. However, as we will see later, there are situations in which the relationship between students and instructor is strained because of different attitudes that were revealed due to the use of humor.

As indicated above, in the context of humor in the world language classroom, humor could be regarded as a teaching tool as well as content to be communicated. These aspects are interconnected to the extent of being present at the same time in one instance of humor. This interconnectedness is also represented in Attardo's (1994) differentiation between primary and secondary functions of humor. The primary functions are social. While the speaker is humoristic, other communicative goals are achieved. The social functions have been associated to four main groups of functions: social

management, decommitment, mediation, and defunctionalization (see Attardo 1994, based on Long and Graesser 1988). All these functions point towards two central mechanisms of humor: incongruity and background knowledge. The sharing of knowledge is an important factor at the moment of evaluating an utterance as humorous or serious. Knowing how to interpret an utterance correctly indicates in-group pertinence and the creation of a relationship of solidarity and also of jocularity and lack of seriousness. This is even more relevant in the world language classroom since different languages and cultures are involved. Meanwhile, the resolution of incongruous scripts at a cognitive level allows for multiple interpretations to be possible at the same time and for the speaker to reinterpret the utterance or action as humoristic, and therefore, less face threatening.

Social Management can be positive as it reinforces the social bonds and in-group relationship (Attardo 1994), but it also can function as social control, correcting members of the group. In the classroom setting, this function seems to be especially relevant since humor is a face-saving device which has important consequences on the development of the interaction. Hence, the use of humor can convey social norms which focus on "taboos, unacceptable behavior" (Attardo 1994:323). With humor, the speaker can ingratiate him- or herself to his/her audience and "build consensus" (Attardo 1994:324). The creation of in-group solidarity has been shown to be one of its most important roles in conversation. It helps create solidarity as there are potentially difficult or unpleasant situations, a function identified as "repair" (cf. Attardo 1994). As can be seen in our examples, instructors can use humor as a resource for preventing such potentially unpleasant situations. As Holmes (2000) shows, humor is extremely "context-bound" and, on many occasions, instances of humor usually appear obscure to outsiders. The next function of humor, "decommitment", has similar social roles as it is a face-saving tool, but it is based on a different mechanism. By using humor, the speaker can perform an act that could be socially unacceptable by creating a situation of intimacy, and giving the chance to the listener not to take it seriously ("probing") or after having done something, claim that it was not intended seriously ("salvaging" cf. Attardo 1994).

Similarly, as a mediation resource, humor solves potentially embarrassing situations or allows for the performance of actions which are socially unacceptable (such as criticizing someone) because they are performed under the umbrella of humoristic interaction. This function is connected to the "ludic nature" (Attardo 1994) of the humorous interaction and the possibility

of retracting and reinterpreting the meaning of the utterance if necessary (for instance, by stating "just kidding").

Finally, defunctionalization is a social function by which humor is used for "social play" (Long and Graesser 1988). This function connects with the importance of fantasy and creativity as suggested by Kotthoff (1998) mentioned above.

The secondary functions of humor are of an informative nature (Zhao 1988 in Attardo 1994). This secondary function appears in jokes, ritualized humorous conversations, which carry information about behaviors, taboos, etc. It can also add personal information about the nature or personality of the person who is telling the joke or acting in a humorous way (Attardo 1994).

As will be observed later, these functions play a role in the world language classroom but the importance of the function, that is, whether they serve as primary versus secondary functions, might be reversed in this context. After introducing the methods, we will analyze instances of humor in terms of this theoretical framework.

2. Methods

This paper presents results of a study carried out in the world language classroom at the college level. Eight Spanish and four German classes of beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels were video-taped (Table 1).

Table 1. Number and level of Spanish and German classes taped

Level	German	Spanish
1st semester		2
2nd semester	2	3
3rd semester		1
4th semester	1	2
5th semester		
6th semester	1	

Digital video files were transcribed according to the guidelines of CHILDES (MacWhinney 2000) and linked to the video files using TALKBANK technology (MacWhinney 2000). The focus of the analysis was on the use of humor in oral performance or in direct classroom interaction versus the use of humor in asynchronous interaction in written form. The level of analysis

was the utterance as well as the discourse level. As the focus of the current paper is on the functions of humor, instances of humor were coded using a scheme developed by the authors for the purpose of a separate but related study. Comparative detailed analysis of the interactions shed light on the patterns of conversation which are established and followed by the participants according to the participants' strategies (cf. Gumperz 1982). Consequently, the analysis applied in the current paper is qualitative in nature allowing for an investigation of the functions and the effects of humor on classroom interaction in world language classes.

3. Results and discussion

Analyses revealed differences between the classes in the quantity and quality of humor used. While some instructors used humor extensively and throughout the class, others used almost no humor or only in specific situations. Analyses of the various instances of humor showed that instructors' uses of humor had the following functions in the university-level world language classroom. The two main functions of humor could be summarized as: a) the use of humor for content presentation and, b) the use of humor for classroom management, with some overlap of the two functions. In the first function (content presentation), humor is used to: 1) present and clarify content, 2) present information that could cause conflict and 3) convey cultural and pragmatic information. In the second group, humor was used for classroom management to: 1) mitigate mistakes when pointing them out (behavioral and linguistic), 2) call on students, and 3) get students' attention. In the examples below, we will investigate how these functions relate to the functions discussed above.

In Example 1, humor was used *to present and clarify content and to convey cultural and pragmatic information*. The instructor smiles when talking about the different ways 'grades' are referred to in different parts of the Spanish speaking world. In the first part, the instructor uses his personal experience to explain linguistic variation in a humorous way employing the conversational strategy of typified direct speech ("typisierte direkte Redewiedergabe", Kotthoff 1998:21). The humor in the second short exchange lies in the fact that the Spanish word "grado" means only 'temperature grades' in standard Spanish, while at the US-Mexico border, it takes also the English meaning.

*MST,*FST, and *INS stand for "male student", "female student, and "instructor".

Example 1

Original

*MST: Calificación, that's your grade.
*INS: ¿Calificación? En México decimos calificación en lugar de nota.
*MST: That your grade.
*INS: Aha. Sí. Pero en la mayoría de los países es la nota. Pero en México decimos la calificación. Por ejemplo, la mayoría de mis amigos españoles dicen la nota y yo dije "oh, la calificación"
*MST: ahhh.
*INS: y en la frontera dicen los grados.
*INS: on the border los grados.
*MST: ah.
%act: INS laughs and shakes head.
%act: MST 3 smiles
*MST: That's nice.

Translation

*MST: Calificación, that's your grade.
*INS: ¿Calificación? In México we say "calificación" instead of nota.
*MST: That's your grade.
*INS: Aha. Yes. But in the majority of countries it's "la nota". But in México we say "la calificación". For example, most of my Spanish friends say "la nota" and I said "oh, la calificación"
*MST: ahhh.
*INS: on the border they say "los grados".
*INS: on the border "los grados".
*MST: ah.
%act: INS laughs and shakes head.
%act: MST 3 smiles
*MST: That's nice.

Example two is an illustration of how humor can be used to *present information that could cause conflict and convey cultural and pragmatic information.* As mentioned above, humor can be associated with taboo topics which can provoke laughter. The student produces the humorous utterance and the instructor veers the topic towards a cultural explanation about the different ways to name the "bum" in variants of Spanish. The instructor elaborates on the differences of dialectal vocabulary and at some point indicates which one is her favorite way of naming it.

Example 2
Original
*MST: No copies tu culo.
*INS: Copiar, no copies. Ok ¿Quién hizo esto?
[Students laugh]
*MST: J.
*INS: ¿Qué significa esto? [pointing at the board]
*MST: You know like… at the copy machine some people go crazy like that [gesture]
*INS: Culo es 'esto' [pointing at her own]
*INS: No copies tu culo, ok, bien. Está bien.
[Students laugh]
*INS: Está bien…
[Students laugh]
*INS: Esta palabra no es muy… apropiada…
*MST: It's in the radio
*INS: Se usa… sí, en España, se usa mucho culo como tushy.
*INS: En Latinoamérica es muy fuerte, muy grosero.
*INS: En España está bien.

Translation
*MST: Don't copy "your bum".
*INS: Copiar, no copies. Ok. Who did that?
[Students laugh]
*MST: J.
*INS: What does that mean? [pointing at the board]
*MST: You know like… at the copy machine some people go crazy like that [gesture]
*INS: "Culo" is 'that' [pointing at her own behind]
*INS: Don't copy "tu culo", ok, well. It's okay.
[Students laugh]
*INS: It's okay.
[Students laugh]
*INS: This word is not very… appropriate…
*MST: It's in the radio
*INS: you use… well, in Spain, you use a lot "culo" like "tushy".
*INS: In Latin America it is stronger, more impolite.
*INS: In Spain it is okay.

In example three the interaction is more complex. In this exchange between students in a fourth-semester Spanish class and the instructor, humor has several functions. It introduces a topic which could be considered offensive. In this sense humor is used to *present information that could cause*

conflict while at the same time *conveying cultural and pragmatic information*. The instructor seems to consider it important to clarify that in Spanish "entiendes" [you understand] could be used as a tool to ask if somebody is gay. He seems to think that this could amuse or interest his students. At the beginning he takes his time explaining details of possible encounters in which this expression could be used. The instructor employs humor in the way he acts out what it would look like if he met a man in the streets of Barcelona who asked him if he "understood". He uses exaggerated gestures and smiles. He even goes so far as to say that if somebody repeatedly asks "¿entiendes?" [do you understand?] it might be "an intention to seduce". On the one hand, the use of humor helps the instructor introduce the topic and explain a cultural phenomenon. On the other hand, there seems to be an additional function which could be described as "connecting to the students" which would fall under Mehrabian's description of positive teacher behavior in the concept of immediacy (e.g., Mehrabian 1981). This strategy seems to work with part of the class. However, the instructor is challenged by a female student who first asks whether this is connected to the grammar point they were discussing before the instructor introduced his humorous story. The instructor finds himself in the situation of having to negotiate his going off topic with a student who may be more interested in the grammatical point being discussed than in his story or who may be uncomfortable with the topic. At the end of this episode a female student asks "Are we filming this stuff?" This question implies that the student might not have found this type of humor, or probably the length at which it was discussed, appropriate. However, she herself uses an exaggerated tone which implies that she mitigates her own comment which could be seen as criticism. The student's use of humor can be interpreted as an example of *social control for correcting members of the group* (Attardo 1994). In this specific example the use of humor by the instructor and by the students did not disturb the classroom atmosphere. The instructor reacted to the challenge and managed to continue with his task without visible tension. In terms of uptake, the students seemed to understand the humor and laughed at different points throughout this humorous event.

Example 3

*INS: Con ese verbo si vais a España tened mucho cuidado porque generalmente el verbo "entender" es un verbo connotativo del lenguaje homosexual. O sea generalmente one way to say una manera de preguntar un homosexual al otro "entiendes?" (a lot of nonverbal communication to demonstrate).

%act: smiles.
*INS: Entiendes? Y claro si no conocéis, sí, claro, entiendo, entiendo.
%act: smiles.
[Students laugh]
*INS: es un verbo connotativo.
*FST: ¿aquí?
*INS: aquí no.
[Students laugh]
[Instructor laughs]
*INS: Es un verbo que tiene una connotación no. Por ejemplo si tú vas por la calle en Barcelona y coges y hablas y yo hablo con un chico y el chico empieza decir porque tú entiendes ¿verdad?. Y él repite “entiendes entiendes entiendes” you go wow ah aquí hay un intento de seducción.
*FST: Does that have to do with subjunctivo?
.....
*FST: Are we filming this stuff?
[Students laugh]

Translation
*INS: With this verb if you go to Spain be careful because generally the verb “entender” is a connotative verb in gay talk. I mean generally one way to say “una manera de preguntar” if somebody is homosexual is “entiendes?”
%act: smiles.
*INS: Entiendes? (Do you understand) Of course, if you don’t know you go “entiendo entiendo.”
%act: smiles.
[Students laugh]
Student asks a question.
*INS: it’s a connotative verb.
*FST: here?
*INS: not here.
[Students laugh]
[Instructor laughs]
*INS: It’s a verb with a connotation, right? For example, if you walk on the street in Barcelona and you go and you talk with a guy and the guy starts saying “porque tú entiendes ¿verdad?” (because you understand). And he repeats “entiendes entiendes entiendes” you go wow ah this is an attempt to seduce.
*FST: Does that have to do with subjunctive?
......
FST: Are we filming this stuff?
[Students laugh]

Example four is an illustration of a successful use of humor for the *presentation of information that could cause conflict*. The instructor wants to explain why she chose a certain student in her class for an award given by the department. She is hesitant to say the name straight away making sure to praise everyone by pointing out how difficult it was to make this decision. The use of humor in the form of hyperbole ("I could name at least nine students who could be nominated for the award") enables her to introduce the topic and the student who won the award. Once this is achieved she has to mediate again because now she is in danger of not giving the student enough credit. She successfully uses humor by comparing the award nominee to a German spy because her performance is so perfect. Her strategy of using hyperbole again clearly works. The students seem comfortable, laugh, and clap for the award winner. Hence, the instructor successfully uses humor twice to introduce content that could cause conflict or discomfort.

Example 4

Original

*INS: Mit awards. Ich muss dazu sagen, jede Klasse musste einen, ja, einen besten Studenten auswählen, ja… Für mich war es schwer, ich kann, und das ist keine Lüge, sofort neun Leute sagen, die sofort einen award kriegen sollten. Ja, neun Studenten, die wirklich exzellent, ja, exzellent sind. Wie native speaker eigentlich. Aber ich musste mich entscheiden, ja. Also habe ich überlegt: wer war immer da? Immer pünktlich? Kreativ, witzig? Ja, ich weiß, alle könnten jetzt so machen [macht Jubel nach], O.K.? Es war super schwierig. Einige waren schon letztes Jahr awardies, also musste ich [pfeift, rausdeutende Handbewegung], das ging auch nicht, ja, weil..., O.K, ja, also langer Rede, kurzer Sinn, ich habe mich schweren Herzens für Gretchen entschieden, das ist einen Applaus wert, aber ihr könntet alle, ja, echt, ...ich gebe euch Freitag auch etwas aus. Aber jetzt erste einmal zurück zu Gretchen. Das ist wirklich prima.

[Students clap]

*INS: Die Hausaufgaben immer ohne Fehler. Ich habe sie im Verdacht, daß sie Deutsche ist. Ja, Du bist ein deutscher Spion [lacht]. Ich bin mir sicher. Aber morgen ist eben Awardstunde, Kaffeestunde, und, ähm, versucht zu kommen.

Translation

*INS: With regard to awards. I have to say, each class had to choose a best student. Yes.. For me it was difficult, I can, and that‘s not a lie, immediately name nine students who should get an award immediately. Yes, nine students who really are excellent, yes, excellent. Like native speakers really. But I had to make a decision, yes. So I thought: who was al-

ways here? always on time? Creative, funny? Yes, I know, all could do was [imitates cheering], O.K.? It was very difficult. Some were already awardies last year, so I had to – that did not work, because..., O.K, right, to cut a long story short, I made the difficult decision to choose Gretchen, this calls for applause, but you could all, right really,....I‘ll pay a round for you all on Friday. But now first we come back to Gretchen. That‘s really great.

[Students applaud]

*INS: The homework always without any mistakes. I suspect she is German. Yes, you are a German spy [laughs]. I am sure. But tomorrow we have Awards, „Kaffeestunde“, and, ähm, try to come.

The interaction below illustrates several instances of student-initiated humor that were then used by the instructor to *convey cultural information*. The discussion starts with the instructor asking if the students have seen the movie “Blair Witch Project”. A female student volunteers that in her opinion the movie is bad. She challenges the instructor who reacts by contradicting the student but in a slightly humorous manner, not being too forceful about it. The student continues to call the movie “stupid” and repeats several times that she did not like the movie. At some point she makes fun of how the movie did not even manage to scare her. The instructor plays along by saying that he had intended to show the movie in class. At the same time he seizes the opportunity to introduce cultural facts, such as that the movie was well-received in Europe. When the student just repeats the word “stupid” after this comment the instructor mediates the situation with an explanation why this movie might not be funny for New Englanders while it could be considered funny for Europeans (see example 6). It is worth mentioning that the student even translates the name of the movie into Spanish which certainly shows that the goal of communicating in Spanish was met.

Example 5

Original

About movie “Blair Witch Project”

*INS: Exactamente. Eso es el título en Español.

*FST: xxx.

*INS: No está bien.

[Instructor laughs]

*FST: es malo.

*INS: Es mala?

*INS: Para mí es bastante...

*FST: estúpido.

*INS: no.

[Instructor laughs]
*FST: estúpida.
[Students laugh]
[Instructor laughs]
*FST: más estúpida película.
[Student laughs]
*INS: Pues.
[Instructor laughs]
*INS: Yo pensaba ponerla en la clase.
[Instructor laughs]
*INS: A mí me gustó. En Europa tenía bastante éxito.
*FST: Estúpido.

Translation
About movie "Blair Witch Project"
*INS: exactly. That's the title in Spanish.
*FST: xxx.
*INS: no it is good.
[Instructor laughs]
*FST: it is bad.
*INS: it is bad?
*INS: I think it is quite...
*FST: stupid.
*INS: no.
[Instructor laughs]
*FST: stupid *(correcting ending).*
[Students laugh]
[Instructor laughs]
*FST: most stupid movie.
[Student laughs]
*INS: well.
[Instructor laughs]
*INS: I was thinking of showing it in class.
[Instructor laughs]
*INS: I liked it. In Europe it was well-received.
*FST: stupid.

Example 6
Original
*INS: Claro para la gente en Nueva Inglaterra la película es pues estúpida.
[Students laugh]
About a jungle in the Amazon

*INS: Yo estuve y yo me sentía perdido totalmente. Y por la noche, dormir… ruidos, animales. Es un poco terror a lo desconocido, terror a lo que no conocemos.
[Students laugh]
*INS: Yo vi a una anaconda.
[Students laugh]
*INS: si eso es terrible.

Translation
*INS: Of course, for people in New England the movie is, well, stupid.
[Students laugh]
About a jungle in the Amazon
*INS: I was there and I felt completely lost. Sleeping at night? Animal noises.
[Students laugh]
*INS: I saw an anaconda.
[Students laugh]
*INS: yes that's terrible.

Examples seven and eight are short episodes in which humor again has the function of *conveying cultural information*. In example seven the instructor explains different clothing styles of men in Spain, for example, tighter pants, to the students by using a risqué statement in a humorous mode accompanied by a smile on her part. The students' reaction to this comment is ambiguous. This could be seen as an example in which it is not apparent whether the use of humor is constructive or not.

Example 7
Original
*INS: ayer, hablé con un amigo y me contó que cuando fue a España pensaba que todos los chicos y todos los hombres eran gays.

Translation
*INS: yesterday, I talked with a friend who told me that when he was in Spain he thought that all the guys were gay.

In example eight, the instructor alludes to a cultural stereotype by using humor in a second-semester German course. He states that it would be dangerous in Europe to jaywalk, especially because "it is illegal" and because Germans would not tolerate that. The students acknowledge the use of humor with smile but stay focused on the topic at hand.

Example 8

Original

*INS: Geh über die Zebrastreifen oder hier. Ne, das wäre gefährlich wenn Sie hier über die Strasse da rennen. Oh, mein Gott. (high pitch) Das ist auch illegal in Deutschland.

*INS: Jay walking is not such a good idea in Germany.

Translation

*INS: Cross at the pedestrian walk or here. No, that would be dangerous if you crossed the street here. Oh, my god. (high pitch). It is also illegal in Germany.

*INS: Jay walking is not such a good idea in Germany.

We now show some examples of how humor was used for classroom management. As mentioned above, in our sample humor had the following functions within classroom management: *1) mitigate mistakes when pointing them out, 2) call on students,* and *3) get students' attention.* In example nine, the teacher wants to remind the students to use the target language. She points out that a student speaks in English all the time but does not say a word in Spanish. This incident of teasing could be seen as classroom management since the instructor refers to the basic rules of the class. We categorize it as *mitigating mistakes when pointing them out* because the use of English is clearly seen as wrong behavior in the Spanish classroom.

Example 9

Original

*INS: Mientras hablas inglés muy bien, porque como en español ni una palabra. Pero en inglés hablas genial.

Translation

*INS: In the meantime you speak English very well. But in Spanish not a word. But in English you are excellent.

In example ten, the instructor reminds a student to pay attention. He is engaged in a conversation with a fellow student when the instructor points out that, since he is talking, he must have a question. She uses a light tone and the student immediately justifies why he was chatting. His fellow students show uptake by reacting with laughter to this humorous interaction. Interestingly, this example also contains a use of humor for classroom management (in this case reminding a student to use the target language) which is initiated by a student. The instructor laughs and reinforces the sentiment by repeating the need for using German. The student, who is reprimanded, reacts by using humor himself by translating his point into the target language. The in-

stances of humor in this example fulfill all three functions in our classroom management category, that is: 1) *mitigate mistakes when pointing them out* (chatting with the neighbor, the use of English), 2) *call on students*, and 3) *get students' attention*.

Example 10

Original

*INS: Genau. Ja, sehr gut, ja, absolut perfekt. Das ist... ... [name of male student] hat noch eine Frage.

[Max spricht mit Nachbarin]

[Student laughs]

*MST01: No, she asked me something.

[Students laugh]

*MST02: Auf Deutsch, bitte?

[Instructor laughs]

*INS: Ja, auf Deutsch?

[Student laughs]

*MST01: Ich sage auf Deutsch: sie fragen etwas über die Geschichte.

Translation

*INS: Exactly.Yes very good, yes, absolutely perfect. That is...[name of male student] has a question.

[MST01 is chatting with neighbor]

[Student laughs]

*MST01: No, she asked me something.

[Students laugh]

*MST02: In German, please?

[Instructor laughs]

*INS: Yes, in German?

[Student laughs]

*MST01: I say in German: she asked me something about the story.

We have shown that the two main functions of humor in world language classes at the university level could be summarized as a) the use of humor for content presentation and b) the use of humor for classroom management. Even though many of the examples above can be described in terms of the social functions introduced by Long and Graesser (1988) and Attardo (1994), it seems that within the world language classroom at the college level the role of humor to convey information might be more important. Social management and mediation certainly play important roles as we could see in the examples of the German instructor introducing the award-winning students or the Spanish instructor explaining why he insisted on a detailed description of the role of "entiendes" in certain contexts. However, they might

not be the primary reason for the use of humor. As research has shown, instructors' use of humor can foster group cohesiveness (Long and Graesser 1988) and immediacy with the students (cf. Gorham 1988, also "social management", cf. Attardo 1994). This is confirmed in our sample. Instructors use humor to connect to students and to create a more relaxed classroom atmosphere. In almost all instances instructors achieve this goal through the use of humor.

Some additional observations might be worth mentioning. Results reveal differences between the classes in the quantity and quality of humor used. Whereas some instructors used humor throughout the class, others employed almost no humor at all. This could partly be caused by the fact that each instructor was only recorded once and that we videotaped the classes at the end of the semester when students were being prepared for final exams. It might also be an indication for different humor styles comparable and most likely even related to differences in Communicator Styles (Norton 1983). A closer examination of the uses of humor shed light on some of the differences. Sometimes humor was used by the instructor or the students to achieve certain goals whereas other times humor was a by-product of an activity without an apparent function on its own. Preliminary analyses of our German versus our Spanish classes showed that interactions in Spanish classes contained more off-task and more off-topic humor than our German classes. However, these off-task episodes of humor introduced content regarding the target culture and hence ended up being relevant to the content of the class. This could again be an artifact of our small data sample. As in humorous conversations a closer look at our data brought to light the importance of common background knowledge with regard to the types of humor used (Kothoff 1998). In some instances, instructors had to negotiate the meaning of their comments with their students in order to get the point across. The data also shows that in most circumstances students show uptake and seem comfortable with the use of humor. In some classes, the use of humor developed into a routine joking relationship in the classroom which in itself created common background knowledge in the classroom which was used later on to create new instances of humor. Schmitz's (2002) recommendation to use culture-based before linguistic-based humor is followed intuitively by the instructors in our sample.

4. Conclusions

In conclusion, preliminary analyses of our data show that humor plays an important role in the world language classroom at the university level. In order to make recommendations to world language educators we will have to collect more data (different levels, different contexts, different languages) with quantitative and qualitative research designs. It is crucial to find out which types of humor are used in which context and how they influence the language learners' development. In addition, we need to investigate whether humor is considered a content area in world language education. In our small data sample we found that instructors at the university level seem to consider humor a pedagogical tool as well as a content area. Preliminary analyses of data in middle school world language classroom reveal substantially different functions and types of humor (Wagner and Urios-Aparisi 2006). Research on different levels of world language education will provide more information on this question. In return, classroom research offers affordances to the study of humor and pragmatics. In the world language classroom, we can gain insight into how students comprehend and produce humor in the target language. We can observe what role the target culture plays and what different interplays different cultures create. We can look at the development of humor in this situation and investigate whether some phenomena in humor are universal or not. These are just some of the affordances to the study of humor and pragmatics created through the collection of data in the world language classroom. More awareness of the importance of humor as content area and as pedagogical tool in the world language classroom and a unified effort to standardize research in this area could contribute to better student outcomes in world language education.

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Section 3.
Development of Pragmatic Competence: Focus on “Requests”

Interlanguage requests: A contrastive study

Helen Woodfield

1. Introduction

There is now a growing body of empirical evidence in interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) research that focuses on language learners' knowledge of target language pragmatic conventions and on how learners employ such pragmatic knowledge in the performance of speech acts in a second language. It has been observed (Kasper and Rose 1999; Safont Jorda 2005) that a significant number of such studies have focused on second language use rather than learning and acquisition due to the close alignment of ILP studies with cross-cultural pragmatics research rather than research in second language acquisition (Kasper and Schmidt 1996). ILP studies focusing on second language learning and acquisition may be of a cross-sectional nature or follow a longitudinal design (see Barron 2003: 30–34 for a summary). Alternatively they may combine the two (Kasper and Rose 2002: 75). As Cook points out, a cross-sectional study "looks at different learners at different moments in time and establishes development by comparing these successive states in different people" (Cook 1993: 34). While such designs do not allow for "direct observation of developmental patterns" (Kasper and Rose 2002: 76) they may shed light on pragmatic development based on findings on learner differences across the levels studied. Cross-sectional studies focusing on ILP development have focused on learners at different proficiency levels (Trosborg 1995; Hill 1997; Rose 2000) and have documented learners' speech act realizations as elicited through a variety of research instruments. Acquisitional studies focusing on developmental aspects of learners' pragmatic competence may also take a longitudinal form: Kasper and Rose (2002: 75) observe that such research "involves the observation of the same participant(s) over an extended period". Recent studies of this nature in pragmatic development include Ellis' (1992, 1997) documented observations of two beginning level young ESL learners in a formal context of learning, Schmidt's (1983) three-year study of Wes, an adult Japanese learner of English, and Achiba's (2002) study of the development of English requesting behaviour of her daughter Yao over a 17 month period in Australia. More

recently, study abroad contexts have been the focus of longitudinal studies by Schauer (2004, 2006) who documents the development of pragmatic competence in German learners of English, and by Barron (2003), who focuses on such development in Irish learners of German.

Studies on second language use in the ILP field incorporate those which have been defined as 'single moment studies' (Cook 1993; Rose 2000; Kasper and Rose 1999). Unlike cross-sectional approaches, such studies "do not compare groups of learners at different cross-sectional levels to establish a series of developmental language states, but either lump all the learners together in one group, or separate them by first language or criteria other than chronological development" (Cook 1993: 34). Rose (2000: 32) identifies three examples of studies in ILP which can be characterised as 'single moment': Blum-Kulka (1982), Faerch and Kasper (1989) and House and Kasper (1987). The latter two studies based on research in the Cross Cultural Speech Act Research Project (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989) incorporate data from learners of English and are thus particularly relevant to the present study.

The study presented here may be characterised as a single moment study, focusing on speech act use. Learners have been found to differ in several ways from native speakers in their production of speech acts (Cohen 1996; Bardovi-Harlig 1999, 2001): such differences relate to choice of speech acts, semantic formula, content and form. The present research account offers a comparison of the production of requests by graduate student learners of English with those requests by British English native speaker graduate students, analysed across three dimensions, (i) directness levels of speech act strategy, (ii) internal modification of the head act and (iii) request perspective. More specifically, the data in this study comprise the written performance of English requests from two groups of Japanese and German graduate student learners of English (ESL learners) on a written discourse completion task (WDCT): the responses are compared to those of British English graduate students (BE students) responding to the same tasks. Despite criticisms of the use of WDCTs in eliciting authentic speech act behaviour (Johnston, Kasper, and Ross 1998; Mey 2004; Woodfield 2005), such instruments: "when carefully designed…provide useful information about speakers' *pragmalinguistic knowledge* of the strategies and linguistic forms by which communicative acts can be implemented, and about their *sociopragmatic knowledge* of the context factors under which particular strategic and linguistic choices are appropriate" (Kasper and Rose 2002: 95–96, emphasis in original).

In addition to eliciting language learners' pragmatic knowledge of the forms and linguistic conventions for verbal action provided by performance data on discourse completion tasks, the present study also elicited oral data collected through learners' concurrent and retrospective verbal report. Due to limitations of space, this process data is not reported on extensively in this paper (but see Woodfield 2006 for examples). The aim of this study is thus to contrast the linguistic conventions of form employed by a small group of ESL graduate student learners with those of British English graduate students on a written discourse completion task eliciting requests in English. In the following section I review a sample of studies which have focused on interlanguage requests before moving to a description of the present study.

2. Interlanguage requests

A number of studies of interlanguage requests have employed WDCTs to elicit data on ESL and EFL learners' knowledge of pragmalinguistic conventions of form in speech act use. In a large-scale study, House and Kasper (1987) compared the request realizations of native British English speakers, native German and Danish speakers, and German and Danish learners of English. The analysis of directness levels of the German learners of English and the native British English speakers across the five request situations documented indicated a preference for query preparatory strategies in both groups, although the levels of directness of the learner group varied more situationally in comparison to the British English native speakers and were less frequent in occurrence. In explaining these findings, the authors suggest requests of the query preparatory type ('could you do x?') may be heavily routinised in British English (House and Kasper 1987: 1261) but less marked in the interlanguage of German learners of English. The analysis of internal modification of requests in this study pointed to a preference for interrogatives as a syntactic mitigation device across language groups and situations (House and Kasper 1987: 1267) although it must be observed that the range of syntactic downgraders documented in this latter study were limited (interrogative, interrogative + negation, conditional clause, impersonal construction, past tense with present time reference) compared to those documented in Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper (1989) and used as the basis for analysis in the present study. Observing the use of lexical/phrasal downgraders, House and Kasper (1987:1274) note that the politeness marker

'please' was overrepresented in the learner requests for both groups and that the native English group also mitigated frequently with this device.

Two methodologically-oriented studies also employing WDCTs have investigated the requesting behaviour of learners of English. In the first study, Sasaki (1998) compared the responses of Japanese university EFL learners on role plays and WDCTs eliciting requests in English.The analysis of levels of directness on the written request strategies demonstrated a learner preference for query preparatory moves on two of the four situations studied but also indicated a relatively high proportion (35.3%, 33.3%) of want statements in the remaining two situations (Sasaki 1998: 471). This finding is interesting in relation to that of Hill's (1997) cross-sectional study of sixty Japanese university level EFL students at three proficiency levels and employing discourse completion tasks. The learners' requests in this study were compared to a native speaker (British university undergraduates) control group. While Hill observed in the learners a development of conventional indirectness with increases of proficiency, with learners approximating to target norms at advanced levels, the analysis of sub-strategies indicated an overuse of want strategies ('I want to/I would like to') at beginner level, with such sub-strategies increasing at higher levels of proficiency and displaying a move away from target norms. The finding from both these studies regarding the frequency of learner use of 'want' statements in requests is reflected in Hassall's (2003) study. Here the focus was on Australian English learners of Bahasa Indonesian and the data was elicited through interactive role-play. Hassall observes a high frequency of want statements in the learner data suggesting that learners "resort to want statements when a complication develops during the request speech event, so that order must be restored by conveying the illocutionary force, or the nature of the request goal, very clearly" (2003: 1909). A second methodologically-oriented study investigating requests by (mixed L1) learners and native speakers of American English suggests that the preference for query preparatory moves may be resistant to intra-methodological variation, specifically in this study to the manipulation of the complexity of the discourse situation. Billmyer and Varghese (2000) examined the responses to two versions of a WDCT of thirty-nine native speakers of American English and those responses of forty-nine ESL learners at mid-intermediate level. The two versions of the elicitation instrument differed in the levels of enhancement of the situational prompts. The authors observe that the level of directness in the learner strategies were not sensitive to the differences in the two versions: the results indicated a preference for conventionally indirect requests in both versions of the task for this group

while the native speakers also expressed such a preference, using conventionally indirect request strategies in over 80% of the requests in both situations (Billmyer and Varghese 2000: 526–528).

Turning to further large-scale cross-sectional studies, requests in English were one of the three speech acts investigated in Trosborg's (1995) study. The context of Trosborg's study was the learning of English as a foreign language by Danish secondary school, high school and university students and the requests were elicited through role play. Data was also collected from native speakers of Danish and English. Trosborg found a preference for conventional indirectness across the three groups of learners and this pattern was reflected in the responses of native speakers of English (Trosborg 1995: 226). Trosborg (1995) also analysed the requests produced for both groups for internal modification. Native speakers of English were observed to internally modify requests more frequently than the learner group overall and this quantitative pattern was reflected in the analysis of both syntactic and lexical/phrasal downgraders (Trosborg 1995: 246). A qualitative analysis of the type of internal modification strategies employed also pointed to differences between the English native speaker and learner group. In the use of syntactic downgraders, a preference for past tense forms was in evidence by the native speakers of English while this modification device was less prominent in the learner data (Trosborg 1995: 247). Analysis of the lexical/phrasal downgraders in Trosborg's (1995) study pointed to further differences between learners and native English speakers with the latter group evidencing a wider range of devices of this type as compared to each group of learners.

Further evidence of the nature of internal modification devices by Japanese EFL learners is available through a closer examination of Sasaki's (1998) study. Sasaki (p. 471) observes that her participants "used fewer internal modifications than reported in other studies" and ascribes this finding to the participants' level of proficiency which may have restricted a greater variety of modification. Internal modifications used by the learners were limited in this study to the use of conditional syntactic downgraders ('could', 'would'); politeness markers ('please'); and understaters ('a little'). In the production questionnaires, internal modification by tense (use of past tense for present time, e.g. 'I wondered if you could VP') and aspect (e.g. 'I was wondering if you could VP') were altogether absent. Sasaki proposes a lack of linguistic development in the Japanese EFL learners in her study as an explanation of the restricted range of internal modfication strategies supplied in their English requesting behaviour (p. 471). Takahashi (2001: 173)

commenting on her study (Takahashi 1996) which examined the transferability of five Japanese indirect request strategies to corresponding English contexts, notes that Japanese EFL learners may be unaware of the use of syntactically complex biclausal English request forms (e.g. 'Would it be possible to VP') as mitigating devices, preferring instead monoclausal devices (e.g. 'Would/Could you VP') where biclausal forms are more appropriate.

Further evidence from empirical studies on the restricted range of linguistic devices which learners of English employ in internal modification of request production is available from a study by Otcu and Zeyrek (2006). In this study, a cross-sectional design was followed. Two groups of Turkish undergraduate students at low intermediate and upper intermediate levels took part in interactive role plays in three situations while 13 native speakers of English provided a control group: data from the latter group were collected through a discourse completion task. Two points of interest may be noted here. First, similar to the trends outlined in Trosborg (1995), the findings of the study point to differences between the learner and native speaker groups in the overall frequency of internal modifiers employed, with the native speaker group modifying more frequently (Otcu and Zeyrek 2006: 9). Second, there were qualitative differences between learner and native speaker groups in the nature of the internal modifiers used. The authors observe that "neither of the learner groups [could] make use of the full range of syntactic downgraders observed in the native speakers' data" (Otcu and Zeyrek 2006: 10), a finding which mirrors the observations on the rather restricted use of syntactic downgraders by the Japanese learners in Sasaki's (1998) study. For both the learner groups and the native speaker group in Otcu and Zeyrek's research, internal modifiers of the lexical/phrasal variety were the most frequent forms used. Both learner groups exhibited a preference for the politeness marker 'please', a finding which corresponds to the observations on German learners of English in House and Kasper's (1987) study and Danish learners of English in Faerch and Kasper's (1989) research. Faerch and Kasper report an overuse of the politeness marker 'please' in the Danish learners' requests in English and explain this preference by "its double function as illocutionary force indicator and transparent mitigator… language learners tend to adhere to the conversational principle of clarity, choosing explicit, transparent unambiguous means of expression rather than implicit opaque and ambiguous realizations" (Faerch and Kasper 1989: 233).

These studies of the requesting behaviour of learners from a variety of L1 backgrounds as compared to target language native speakers indicate several trends in request production. First, a preference for conventional indirectness by native speaker groups and by learners at broadly intermediate and advanced levels is apparent in several studies. Second, there is evidence of quantitative and qualitative differences in internal mitigation between learners and native speakers with learners tending to modify internally less frequently and with a restricted range of syntactic devices. It is interesting in this regard to relate these trends to the five stages of L2 request development outlined in Kasper and Rose (2002) based on findings from longitudinal studies by Achiba (2002) and Ellis (1992). Kasper and Rose (2002: 140) identify five stages of request development in the young learners of English investigated in these two studies. Of these, the third stage ('Unpacking') identifies a shift to conventional indirectness, with the "addition of new forms to pragmalinguistic repertoire, increased use of mitigation [and] more complex syntax" characterising the fourth stage ('pragmatic expansion') (Kasper and Rose 2002: 140).

A more recent longitudinal study by Schauer (2004, 2006) sheds further light on these trends. Schauer (2006) investigated the development of requests by German learners of English in a study abroad context. Data from a multimedia elicitation task were collected at three month intervals during the sojourn. Amongst the findings observed, Schauer (2006: 16–17) notes that conventionally indirect strategies were more salient during the last months of the participants' stay and that this occurrence may have been related to the learners' noticing the less frequent use of direct strategies by English native speakers during this period. Turning to the development of internal modification of English requests by the German learners (Schauer 2004), results indicate that certain syntactic downgraders (Appreciative Embedding '*It would be really nice* if you could fill it in'; Tentative Embedding '*I wondered* if I can pop into your office sometime'; and Conditional Clauses '*I would like to ask if you could complete this*)[1] first occurred in the learner data only at the third session of data collection (Schauer, 2004: 265–266). However, certain lexical downgraders such as the politeness marker ('please') and Downtoner ('perhaps') displayed high frequencies in the learner data during the first stage of data collection suggesting that these had already been acquired by this group of learners. Both these findings on the development of internal modification patterns (Schauer 2004) and of conventional indirectness (Schauer 2006) may be suggestive respectively of the

‘pragmatic expansion’ and ‘unpacking’ stages observed by Kasper and Rose (2002: 140).

2.1. Method

2.1.1. Participants

The twelve ESL learners taking part in this study were graduate students studying in British universities. Six of these participants were native speakers of Japanese and six were native speakers of German. Two of the German participants were engaged in an advanced level language development progamme. Three of the Japanese learners were following a Masters programme in teaching English as a Foreign Language. The remaining participants were following courses in English for Academic purposes. All the learner participants were graduate students engaged in a range of fields of study. The learners had spent an average of 6.3 months in the target language community and had an average age of 25.3 years, ranging from 21 to 38 years. The British English graduate students (BE students) were all mid-career professionals studying on Masters programmes for professional development at a British university in diverse fields of study. The average age of this group was 36.5 years. All participants in the study were female.

2.1.2. Instrument

Written discourse completion tasks
The study employed an eighteen-item written discourse completion task (appendix 1) which required participants to provide a written request as an appropriate response to the given discourse situation.These situations were drawn mainly from previous studies in interlanguage and cross-cultural pragmatics and were considered to be potentially meaningful for the participants in the study. The employment of WDCTs in pragmatics research has not been without criticism however. Woodfield (2005) reports on negative comments from research participants regarding both the authenticity of the research task and the reliability of written responses. Other criticisms from the research literature stem from the scope of such elicitation instruments in measuring pragmatic competence and to questions of construct validity. For example, Golato (2003: 91–2) suggests that “DCTs are inappropriate for studying actual language use [and are] in a crucial sense metapragmatic, in

that they explicitly require participants not to conversationally interact but to articulate what they believe would be situationally appropriate responses within possible, yet imaginary, interactional settings". However Kasper and Rose (2002: 96) maintain that "when carefully designed, DCTs provide useful information about speakers' pragmalinguistic knowledge of the strategies and linguistic forms by which communicative acts can be implemented and about their sociopragmatic knowledge of the context factors under which particular strategic and linguistic choices operate". It is this latter position which is adopted in the present study.

Verbal report

In addition to the written responses elicited, a form of verbal report (Faerch and Kasper 1987; Cohen and Olshtain 1994; Kasper 2000) was employed and data was collected in this form both concurrently and retrospectively to the written task. Retrospective interviews immediately following a written or oral task enable participants to provide the researcher with the reasoning behind their linguistic choices (Robinson 1992; Cohen and Olshtain 1993; Felix-Brasdefer 2006). As indicated earlier, the findings from the verbal report procedures are reported in detail elsewhere (Woodfield 2006) and are beyond the scope of the present paper.

Procedure

Previous studies in ILP which have combined a WDCT instrument with verbal report (for example, Robinson 1992) have required participants to respond individually to the task. Robinson (1992: 64) reports difficulties with the verbalisation procedure in her study with individual participants failing to verbalize and providing incomplete reports of their thoughts.The learner participants in the present study thus worked in L1 pairs following Haastrup (1987). Haastrup observes that the use of pairs on a lexical inferencing task helped to stimulate informants to "verbalise all their conscious thought processes because they need to explain and justify their hypotheses about word meaning to their fellow informant" (Haastrup 1987: 202). It is important to note that the written responses to the WDCT in the present study thus represent the final jointly- negotiated linguistic choices by each pair of learners. Pairs of participants were initially presented with a short training task to familiarise them with procedures (Kormos 1998; Cohen 2000) and to test audio recording equipment. Written instructions directed all participants to respond to the tasks in their role of student. In three of the tasks (tasks D1–D3) the participants assumed the role of hearer, formulating

an appropriate response for the (hypothetical) speaker described in the task. At the end of each of three tasks, the learners were interviewed on their responses to the tasks.

2.1.3 Analysis

Written responses to the WDCT were coded according to the framework set out in the Cross Cultural Speech Act Research Project (henceforth CCSARP) coding manual (Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper 1989) and analysed for level of directness, internal modification and perspective.

Level of directness

The CCSARP coding scheme identifies nine levels of directness in request strategies: these are documented below in increasing levels of indirectness, with examples from the CCSARP coding manual [emphasis in the original] (Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper 1989: 278–281).

Direct requests
Mood derivable ('Clean up the kitchen').
Explicit performative ('I am *asking* you to move your car').
Hedged performative ('I *must/have to* ask you to clean the kitchen right now').
Locution derivable ('You'll have to/should/must/ought to move your car').
Want statements ('I*'d like* to borrow your notes for a little while).

Conventionally indirect requests
Suggestory formula ('*How about* cleaning up the kitchen').
Query preparatory ('*Can/Could* I borrow your notes?').

Non-conventionally indirect requests
Strong hint ('Will you be going home now?') Intent: getting a lift home.
Mild hint (You've been busy here, haven't you?) Intent: getting hearer to clean the kitchen.

Internal modification

In formulating their requests, speakers may use a range of linguistic devices to mitigate or aggravate the force of a request. Such moves may take place either internally by modifying the head act ('Could you *possibly* VP?') or externally to the head act through the use of modifying supportive moves (*'Sorry to bother you* but could you VP'). Modification of the head act relates to the speaker's attention to the face needs of the hearer (Brown and Levinson 1978, 1987), to the management of rapport (Spencer-Oatey 2000) and to the contextual features of the discourse situation. Speakers may

downgrade the force of a request by mitigating to different degrees, depending on their perceptions of a range of social factors.

The analysis in the present study focuses on those internal modification strategies which were employed to mitigate the force of the request (downgraders). The coding scheme employed in this study, taken from Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper (1989: 281–283) is given below.

Syntactic downgraders
Negation of preparatory condition ('I don't suppose you'd like to').
Subjunctive ('Might be better if you *were to leave* now').
Conditional ('I would suggest you leave now').
Aspect (I*'m wondering* if I could get a lift home with you').
Tense (I *wanted* to ask you to present your paper a week earlier').
Conditional clause ('I was wondering if you could present your paper a week earlier than planned').

Lexical and Phrasal downgraders
Politeness marker ('please').
Understater ('Could you tidy up *a bit'*).
Hedge ('It would fit much better *somehow* if you did your paper next week').
Subjectivizer (*'I'm afraid* you're going to have to move your car').
Downtoner ('Could you *possibly/perhaps* lend me your notes').
Cajoler (*'You know,* I'd really like you to present your paper next week').
Appealer ('Clean up the kitchen, *will you?/Okay?*).

Request perspectives
The request strategies in the present study were also analysed for perspective following Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper (1989). Analysis of request perspective in the Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper (1989) coding framework identify:

Hearer dominance ('Could *you* tidy up the kitchen soon').
Speaker dominance ('Do you think *I* could borrow your notes from yesterday?').
Speaker and Hearer dominance (joint perspective) ('Could *we* begin now'?).
Impersonal perspective ('Can one ask for a little quiet?').

Results and discussion

A total of 162 Head Acts were identified in the corpus as a whole. A Head Act is defined as that part of the speech act which conveys the main illocutionary force of the utterance. This total figure comprised 57 and 56 head acts in the corpus of the Japanese and German learners respectively, and 49 head acts in the BE data. As in previous studies (Sasaki 1998: 464) some requests contained more than one Head Act and these were double-coded

accordingly. Secondly, where the participant indicated that a request was not appropriate in the discourse slot, a 'no request' was entered in the summary analysis. The distribution of request strategies according to learner and BE groups and across Direct, Conventionally Indirect (CI) and Non-Conventionally Indirect (NCI) levels is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Directness levels of request strategies (raw scores in brackets)

	Direct	CI	NCI	Total
Japanese ESL	26.31 (15)	70.17 (40)	3.50 (2)	99.98 (57)
German ESL	8.92 (5)	82.14 (46)	8.92 (5)	99.98 (56)
BE	4.08 (2)	81.63 (40)	14.28 (7)	99.99 (49)
Total	13.58 (22)	77.77 (126)	8.64 (14)	99.99 (162)

In line with several studies in ILP (Blum-Kulka and House 1987, Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper 1989, Billmyer and Varghese 2000, Trosborg 1995) conventionally indirect (henceforth CI) strategies were preferred by both ESL and BE groups. Similar patterns have been identified in comparisons of learners of other languages with native speakers of those languages. For example Hassall (2003: 1913) identified a preference for CI strategies in requests by both Australian learners of Bahasa Indonesian and native speakers of that language in his study. Support for the prevalence of CI strategies in British English requesting behaviour is also evident from cross-cultural studies. For example, Fukushima (2000: 188) observes the prevalence of CI strategies in the British subjects in her study as compared to the Japanese participants who displayed more differentiation according to situation. Similar preferences for CI strategies have been observed for American English speakers in a cross-cultural study by Rose (1994). In explaining this overall preference for CI strategies in the present study, it has been observed that such strategies achieve a balance between pragmatic clarity and the need to avoid coerciveness: as Blum-Kulka (1987: 131) points out "politeness is defined as the interactional balance achieved between [these] two needs". In this regard, Trosborg (1995: 235) observes that by implementing such a strategy, the requester "exhibits a protective orientation towards his/her own face in that he/she does not take compliance for granted". Furthermore, as observed by House and Kasper (1987) and noted above, query preparatory requests of the type 'could you VP' are heavily routinised in British English.

In the following examples from the data in the present study, the learner pair is identified first (e.g. BE1, BE2), followed by the discourse situation (e.g. C1, C2).

Examples of CI strategies from BE students included the following:

(1) (BE1, C1 Extension). 'I've got a problem. I'm not going to be able to give the seminar paper on Tuesday. *Could we make it the following week?*.

(2) (BE3, C1). 'I could do my seminar next…but I want to do a good job, so *would it be possible to postpone it until*…?

Examples of CI strategies from the learners included the following:

(3) (G1, C1) 'I'm really working hard but I won't be able to finish the paper in time. *Could you please allow for an extension?*

(4) (J1, C1) '*Could you give an extension for giving you a seminar paper* because I had tried to finish but I couldn't'.

The CI strategies of the learners as exemplified in (3) and (4) thus exhibited qualitative differences from those of the BE students. One such difference was evident in lexical errors as exemplified in both (3) and (4) above. In (3), learner difficulty is evident in the use of the preposition ('allow *for*' an extension) and in (4) with the inclusion of an object pronoun where none was needed ('giving *you* a seminar paper'). Non-target use in the form of lexical and syntactic errors has been observed by Eisenstein and Bodman (1986, 1993) in their study of advanced learners' expressions of gratitude and by Blum-Kulka and Levenston (1987) in their detailed discussion of lexical simplification, morphological constraints and syntactic development in the realization of speech acts. This aspect of the learners' requests in the present study will be discussed more fully in relation to perspective and in the final part of the analysis.

A second observation regarding the distribution of directness levels across participant groups is the relatively high (26.31%) proportion of direct requests in the Japanese learner data in relation to the German learner group (8.92%), and the BE group (4.08%). In explaining this phenomenon, it is interesting to recall the findings from Hill's (1997) study. The analysis of learner sub-strategies in Hill's study indicated that the frequency of direct strategies decreased with a concomitant increase in proficiency. Thus in the present study, it is possible that the findings regarding the Japanese learner group were indicative of a developmental stage, with these learners not yet approximating native speaker norms.

A further explanation for the contrast in directness levels between the two learner groups may be found in those studies which have compared Japanese

interlanguage requests with English native speaker verbal behaviour. Tanaka (1988: 93) points to the possibility of "false stereotyping" as one explanation for inappropriate levels of directness in requests in such learners. Such stereotyping, according to Tanaka, may lead some Japanese learners of English to the belief that direct requests are appropriate in any situation. Aside from such beliefs, the problems faced by Japanese learners may also stem from the nature of learning in classroom contexts in Japan, either through the lack of adequate practice of appropriate forms and structures or lack of exposure to appropriate linguistic devices for polite expressions (Locastro 1997). In her research, Locastro found that in the English language teaching materials for Japanese secondary school learners she surveyed, "the text books themselves not only provide little appropriate exposure to politeness for the adolescent learners, but also, due to the focus on the development of linguistic competence, forms or patterns are presented without any attention to their communicative function" (Locastro 1997: 254).

A further explanation for the relatively high levels of directness strategies in the Japanese learner data may stem from method effects. Rose (1994) compared the requests of American English speakers and Japanese speakers on two written data collection instruments, namely a WDCT and a multiple choice questionnaire (MCQ). Based on research on interactional style among Japanese speakers which suggests a hearer-oriented, intuitive approach to communication (Clancy 1990; Lebra 1976), Rose (1994) hypothesised that the Japanese group would choose hints more frequently than the Americans. Contrastively, the findings indicated that the Japanese participants used direct strategies more frequently than the latter group in all eight situations for the WDCT. According to Rose the high levels of direct strategies in the Japanese speaker data may be a function of the elicitation method: as Rose observes, "it is possible that not having a hearer present to intuit speaker intent, Japanese subjects may have written responses which are not characteristic of face to face interaction" (1994: 7).

A closer examination of the sub-strategies for the learner pairs indicates that direct strategies in the Japanese learner group were particularly frequent for learner pair J2 (Table 2 below). An analysis of the sub-strategies for the learner groups indicated 15 tokens of direct strategies for the Japanese learners overall with 12 (80%) of these occurring in the data for J2. While method effects may provide an explanation for the high levels of directness in the requests of this pair, it is not clear why this pattern was not also repeated in the requests of the remaining Japanese pairs. In explaining this intra-group difference, appeals might be made to intra-group differences in

exposure to input for learning in formal and informal contexts. J2 were at the beginning of an EAP course when the data were collected, J2A having spent one month and J2B one and a half months in a target language community. Thus it is possible that neither of these students had experienced the opportunities for noticing of input (Schmidt 1993) which have been hypothesized as significant processes in language learning and development of pragmatic knowledge. Table 2 presents an analysis of learner sub-strategies in the present study.

Table 2. Proportion of request types used by learners by sub-strategy.

	Japanese ESL (J1) *N = 19*	(J2) *N=12*	(J3) *N=16*	German ESL (G1) *N=19*	(G2) *N=18*	(G3) *N=19*
Mood	1 (5.2%)	6 (50.0%)	-	-	1(5.5%)	2 (10.5%)
Perf.	-	-	1(6.2%)	1(5.2%)	-	-
Hedged P	-	-	-	-	-	-
Obligation	-	1(8.3%)	-	-	-	1 (5.2%)
Want	1 (5.2%)	5 (41.6%)	-	-	-	-
Suggestory	1 (5.2%)	-	-	-	-	-
Query Prep	16 (84.2%)	-	13 (81.2%)	17 (89.4%)	15 (83.3%)	14 (73.6%)
Strong hint	-	-	1 (6.2%)	1 (5.2%)	2 (11.1%)	2 (10.5%)
Mild hint	-	-	1 (6.2%)	-	-	-

Internal modification

The analysis of internal modification in the present study follows Faerch and Kasper (1989) and Hassall (2001) in restricting the analysis to modification of query preparatory strategies. Faerch and Kasper (1989: 222) indicate that, in order to ensure validity, "it is methodologically requisite to operate from a given strategy type as an independent variable". The criterion for the selection of strategy type for the purposes of analysis in this study is identified as frequency of occurrence following Faerch and Kasper (1989: 222) and Hassall (2001: 263). Applying this criterion to the present study, over 30% of participants employed the query preparatory strategy in all eighteen discourse situations, thus the analysis comprises internal modification across query preparatory strategies in all situations studied. Table 3 indicates the

proportion of query preparatory moves as a proportion of request strategies for all groups.

An analysis of internal modification (Table 4) indicates quantitative differences and similarities between the BE group and the learner groups. First, the BE group modified their requests more frequently than the learner groups overall. The BE group internally modified their request strategies in 69.23% of cases as compared to the German learners (56.52%) and Japanese learners (43.58%). Secondly, all groups modified the requests at least once in over 43% of cases. In this regard, similarities are evident between the BE group and the Japanese learner group in the frequency of internal modification by one modifier (43.58% in both groups) as compared to the German learner group (52.17%). Thirdly, differences between the BE group and both the learner groups were more pronounced however when a comparison of frequency of internal modification by more than one modifier was made. In this instance the BE group modified noticeably more frequently (25.64%) as compared to the German ESL learners (2.17%) and the Japanese ESL learners (0%). In this latter group, there were no cases of internal modification of request strategies by more than one internal modifier in the data.

Table 3. Query preparatory moves as a proportion of request strategies.

	German ESL	Japanese ESL	BE
Total head acts	56	57	49
Query preparatory moves	46 (82.1%)	39 (68.4%)	39 (79.5%)

Table 4. Proportion of requests which are internally modified.

	German ESL	Japanese ESL	BE
Head acts with 1	N	N	N
Internal modifier	24 (52.17%)	17 (43.58%)	17 (43.58%)
Head acts with > 1			
Internal odifierm	1 (2.17%)	0 (0%)	10 (25.64%)
Total internally			
Modified head acts	25 (56.52%)	17 (43.58%)	27 (69.23%)

Evidence from Hassall (2001), Trosborg (1995) and Kasper (1981) all point to differences between learners and native speakers in the frequency of internal modification strategies employed, with such modification being underrepresented overall in the learner groups for these studies. Some studies provide evidence where the converse is the case, at least for some types of

modification employed. For example, House and Kasper (1987: 1267) note that while the above pattern of less frequent modification was observed in the use of syntactic downgraders by the German learners of English as compared to British English participants in the five situations documented with the learners using this device less frequently in three of the five situations studied, this learner group used politeness markers with comparable or greater frequency than the British English group in all five situations (House and Kasper 1987: 1270–1272).

In the present study, learners evidently experienced difficulty with modifying their requests with more than one internal modifier. Interestingly, Hassall (2001) reports that the Australian learners of Indonesian in his study never used more than a single internal modifier in their requests (Hassall 2001: 266). In explaining this lack of double marking by learners in internal mitigation patterns, appeals may be made to the grammatical competence required to mitigate requests effectively. In order to mitigate an expression, a degree of linguistic competence is needed in the form of syntactic knowledge (for example, knowledge of modals, tense and aspect), and lexical knowledge (Bardovi-Harlig 1999: 690). In explaining learner difficulties in this regard, it is possible that the learners in the present study had not yet developed the linguistic competence required to use a range of lexical/phrasal and syntactic downgraders as mitigating devices and to combine these appropriately in the formulation of their request strategies. Hassall (2001: 271) observes that it may be "inherently difficult" for second language learners to add internal modifiers and points to the extra processing effort required in producing pragmalinguistically complex structures. Interestingly, it might be observed with regard to the learners in the present study, that these participants were required to provide *written* requests which increased the available processing time. Further, the learners in the present study were able to avail themselves of the potential mutual support available by constructing the responses in pairs. Despite these two potential sources of support, learner difficulties were nevertheless evident in internally modifying their requests more than once.

Two examples from the BE data in the present study demonstrate instances where more than one internal mitigation device was employed. Knowledge of both syntactic and lexical/phrasal downgraders is evident in both the examples (5) and (6) below. In (5) syntactic knowledge takes the form of an understanding of tense and aspectual forms as mitigating devices while in (6) the use of negation also draws on syntactic knowledge of linguistic structures. In both examples knowledge of syntactic devices com-

bines with use of lexical/phrasal modifiers, in (5) with the use of an appealer ('Would that be OK?'), and in (6) with a politeness marker ('please'). Similarly in (6) the mid-sentential tag question 'are you?' functions in an interpersonal way. As Trosborg notes, such interpersonal markers may be important in "establishing and maintaining harmony between the two interlocutors" (Trosborg 1995: 263) and thus have an important social role in pragmatic competence.

(5) BE2/C1
X, you know the seminar paper I'm supposed to be giving on the 29th –
I'm having a bit of trouble getting it finished 'cos I've just started a new teaching job and I can't find the time to get the reading done at the moment. *I was wondering* if there's any chance of changing the date? *Would that be OK?*

(6) BE1/A1
Excuse me, don't you live in x street?. I *don't suppose* you're going home are you or could drop me off *please*, as my car has broken down?.

A closer look at the range of lexical/phrasal and syntactic downgraders employed within the corpus (table 5) indicates qualitative and quantitative differences in the internal modification devices employed by learner and BE groups. First, several internal modifiers were altogether absent in the learner data. In relation to (5) and (6) above, the analysis shows that the syntactic downgraders 'tense'and 'aspect' together with the lexical/phrasal downgraders, 'appealer' and 'subjectiviser' were not evident in the request strategies of the learners.

The findings regarding the absence of tense and aspect as internal modification devices are also reflected in Sasaki's (1998) study in the production questionnaires of the Japanese learner participants, while Trosborg (1995: 247) observing the use of these syntactic devices in the advanced learners in her study, indicates that such use did not reach native speaker levels in the frequency employed. The use of aspectual forms (the ing-form in Trosborg's terms) was not evident in the requests of the secondary school learners of this study but was in evidence in the two more advanced groups.

There are several possible explanations for the absence of certain internal modifiers (namely, tense, aspect, subjectiviser, appealer) in the learner data in the present study. First, appeals may be made to ease of processing: as Faerch and Kasper (1989: 237) point out, "lexical means are both more

transparent and easier to process than complex syntactic structures. The mitigating function of syntactic downgraders is not inherent in the grammatical meaning of syntactic structures: it is a pragmatic "acquired" meaning that derives from the interaction of the structure with its context". A second reason for the findings above may be related to interlanguage development. Thus the absence of tense and aspect forms in the learner data may indicate that the form-function networks in these learners' pragmalinguistic repertoires had not developed to the extent that past tense forms could be used as a mitigating device for present time reference (cf. Bardovi-Harlig 1999: 696). The pragmatic function of such syntactic devices may take time to acquire and learners may remain uncertain as to the effects on pragmatic clarity, resorting instead to lexical markings as islands of reliability in their pragmatic knowledge. Thirdly, the absence of interpersonal markers ('appealers') in the learner data may relate to the restricted nature of classroom input for learning in pragmatic development as observed in recent studies (Locastro 1997; Crandall and Basturkmen 2004).

Table 5. Proportion of requests containing each type of internal modifier.

Type of internal modifier	G Total requests (46)	J Total requests (39)	BE Total requests (39)
Lexical/Phrasal			
Politeness marker	21 (45.6%)	11 (28.2%)	19 (48.7%)
Understater	1 (2.1%)	1 (2.5%)	1 (2.5%)
Downtoner	2 (4.3%)	4 (10.2%)	2 (5.1%)
Subjectiviser	-	-	3 (7.69%)
Appealer	-	-	4 (10.25%)
Syntactic			
Conditional clause	1 (2.17%)	1 (2.56%)	3 (7.69%)
Negation	1 (2.17%)	-	2 (5.12%)
Aspect	-	-	2 (5.12%)
Tense	-	-	5 (12.8%)

The second difference in internal modification between the BE group and the learner groups was that the former group made use of the full range of lexical and syntactic devices available while the range of devices used by the learners was much more restricted. Few syntactic devices were in evidence across the learner data and these were confined to conditional clause (two tokens) and negation (one token). These patterns are reflected to some degree

in other ILP studies. In their study of Turkish learners of English, Otcu and Zeyreck (2006: 10) report that neither of the lower intermediate and upper intermediate participants were able to make use of the full range of syntactic downgraders observed in the native speaker data although syntactic devices for internally mitigating their requests were more in evidence in the advanced group (Otcu and Zeyreck 2006: 9). Turning to specific syntactic structures, the findings regarding negation in the present study are reflected in cross-sectional and longitudinal studies. Hill (1997) found that even the advanced learners in his study did not employ negation while Schauer (2004: 269) reports that negation was not in evidence in the requests of German learners of English on any of the three occasions of elicitation during their academic sojourn in Britain.

The third finding regarding internal modification in this study was the prevalence of the politeness marker across all groups. In the BE group, the politeness marker was the most frequent (48.7%) device used, followed by tense (12.8%) and appealer (10.25%). In the learner group, there was also a marked preference for the politeness marker overall (45.6% and 28.2% in the German and Japanese learner data respectively). Regarding the prevalence of the politeness marker across groups in the present study, this pattern has also been observed in the learner data for the CCSARP study (Faerch and Kasper 1989: 232) although evidence from Trosborg's study suggests different patterns (1995: 257). Faerch and Kasper, noting the prevalence of the politeness marker in the interlanguage (Danish – English) data, observe the learners' preference for "transparent, unambiguous means of expression" (1989: 233) provided by such a device. Two examples from the learner data in the present study illustrate the preferred use of politeness markers for internal modification and single marking for mitigation (examples 7 and 8 below).

(7) G1/A2
Sorry, is it possible you forgot to return my draft essay? I will miss the deadline for the final draft already, so could you *please* return it to me?

(8) J1/A2
Excuse me I think you have my draft now. Would you return it to me *please*?

To summarise the findings on internal modification, the learners in this study employed a narrower range of linguistic devices as compared to the BE students and modified less frequently overall. The range of syntactic devices

were restricted in the learner data to conditional clause and negation while the BE students made use of a full range of syntactic structures. The politeness marker was the preferred form of lexical/phrasal marking for all groups while the BE students evidenced double marking for mitigation more frequently than either of the learner groups.

2.2. Perspective

The final part of the analysis in the present study turns to the issue of request perspective. In determining request perspective, speakers may be influenced by social constraints. In this regard, Blum-Kulka (1991: 266) observes that "choice of request perspective is another source of variation for manipulating the request's degree of coercive force. Choice of perspective is one of the ways in which the native speaker signals his or her estimate of the degree of coerciveness required situationally". Further, avoiding naming the hearer as the performer of the requested act may minimize the imposition (Blum-Kulka and Levenston 1987: 158). It seems that few studies in the interlanguage and cross-cultural pragmatics literature to date have presented analyses of perspective in the requesting behaviour of learners and native speakers of the target language, with the exception of a few. Blum-Kulka and Levenston (1987) present a quantitative and qualitative analysis of request perspective in their study of learner and native speakers of Hebrew and English in relation to lexical and grammatical pragmatic indicators, while Ellis (1992, 1997) identifies the development of request perspective in a longitudinal classroom study of two young beginner learners of English. The present study offers a quantitative and qualitative analysis and follows the CCSARP analytical framework (Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper 1989: 278) for request perspective identifying four options (Hearer, Speaker, Joint, Impersonal) noted in 2.1.3.

Table 6. Request perspective

	German learners *N=51 tokens*	%	Japanese learners *N=51 tokens*	%	BE students *N=46 tokens*	%
Hearer	42	82.35	35	68.62	19	41.30
Speaker	6	11.76	16	31.37	19	41.30
Joint	-	-	-	-	1	2.17
Impersonal	3	5.88	-	-	7	15.21

Table 6 presents the distribution of request perspective in the data for the present study for the two learner groups and the BE group. From a quantitative perspective, the first finding in the present study is the prevalence of the hearer perspective in the data for the two learner groups. Ellis (1997: 187) also observes a preponderance of hearer perspective in the data for the young learners in his study, noting that this pattern reflected the high number of mood derivable utterances in the data. In this latter study, requests with speaker perspective were more evident later on as the participants acquired other strategies for requesting. In the present study, differences between the two learner groups were evident in the proportion of speaker-oriented request perspective (31.37% and 11.76% for the Japanese and German learner respectively). This result may have been influenced by the greater number of 'want' statements in the direct strategies in the Japanese learner data as compared to the German learner data, as observed in Table 2.

Secondly, from the quantitative analysis, the present study found that no requests in the learner data encoded a joint perspective while this perspective was evident (2.17%) in the BE data. In relation to this finding, similar patterns are in evidence in both ILP and cross-cultural studies. Blum-Kulka and Levenston (1987: 159) document the limited frequency of joint perspective in the requests of native speakers and learners of Hebrew in their study. In terms of their situational distribution these authors note the occurrence of joint perspective in two of the five situations documented (i) a student asking a room mate to clean the kitchen and (ii) a lecturer asking a student to give his class presentation a week earlier than scheduled. Similarly, Rose (1992:5 5) reports the single occurrence of joint perspective in the American English requests in his study in a similar social situation to (ii) above. Interestingly, in the present study the one instance of joint perspective is evident in the BE data (example 9) where a student asks for more time to prepare a seminar paper.

(9) BE1/C1
'I've got a problem. I'm not going to be able to give the seminar paper on Tuesday. *Could we make it* the following week?'.

In explaining the occurrence of joint perspective in the studies by Blum-Kulka and Levenston (1987), Rose (1992) and the present study, appeals may be made to social factors: a joint perspective may reflect intentional encoding by the speaker of a sense of equality and solidarity with the hearer, and may serve to encourage compliance. The BE students in the present study were mid-career professionals and it is possible that this factor served

to minimise their perceptions of social distance and status differences with their tutors. Some evidence to support this stance can be found in the concurrent verbal report of BE3: "And I think that when you get to our level as Masters students there's a lot less of a hierarchical 'You're my student' thing", a comment indicating this student's perception of a sense of equality with her tutors.

A brief qualitative analysis of the learners' request strategies in relation to perspective indicates the existence of some interlanguage phenomena which may serve to characterise the utterances as falling short of target norms. Blum-Kulka and Levenston (1987: 160) observe that certain verbs in possibility questions may be morphologically marked for perspective, such as 'lend' (hearer's perspective) and 'borrow' (speaker's perspective) while pairs of converse terms may lexically express speaker's perspective ('receive') or hearer's perspective ('give'). In the present study, there was evidence of occurrences where learners ignored such lexical constraints, as in (10) below.

(10) J2/E1
'I want you to show your notebook'

In (10), the verb 'show' lexically expresses hearer perspective. It is possibly the combination of speaker perspective with the lexically marked 'show' (hearer perspective) which contributes to the sense of inappropriacy of the utterance, augmented by the absence of any modification and the use of a 'want' statement. The overall effect is one of abruptness, noted in the Japanese learner data in Tanaka's (1988) study.

2.3. Lexical and grammatical differences in requesting behaviour

Analysis of the learner utterances uncovered further lexical and grammatical differences in the learner data as compared to the BE students. Previous studies in ILP have documented learner difficulties in using lexis and syntax appropriately in speech act production. In their study of expressions of Gratitude in American English, Eisenstein and Bodman (1993: 69) observe that "nonnatives lacked the words and the syntax to work their way through culturally familiar and unfamiliar situations". The learners in this study experienced difficulties with intensifiers, word order, idioms, prepositions and choice of words. Lexical difficulties were also observed in Cohen and Olshtain's (1993) study of speech act production in role plays. Here for

example one learner reports being uncertain as to how to use the word 'lift' in a polite request and decides instead on the formulation 'I want to drive with you' (Cohen and Olshtain 1993: 40). Turning to the present study, the first observation relates to the absence of a quantifier on some occasions where such use would be appropriate. In (11) below, the request by J1 to a fellow student in a lunch queue to lend her some money may appear rather scary to the addressee, given the absence of a quantifier. This contrasts with the utterance by BE1 in (12) which both qualifies the amount and offers further promise of compensation in the external modification move.

(11) J1/F2
'I left my purse at home. Can I borrow your money please'

(12) BE1/F2
'Oh no I can't believe it, I've left my money at home. Can you lend me enough for lunch and I'll pay you back later'.

The second observation relates to lexical differences in the requests of the learners and BE students. Blum-Kulka and Levenston (1987: 167) observe that the English native speakers in their study were "far more inventive in their choice of vocabulary, often using a subtle lexical shift to signal either mitigation or aggravation of a request". In the present study such lexical shifts were evident on at least two occasions in the BE data and on both these occasions these served to downplay the force of the request (examples 13 and 14 below).

(13) BE3/D2
'I'm sorry to bother you, but I've just fallen over. Could you *run me up* to the hospital please'.

(14) BE3/E1
'Did I miss much at yesterday's lecture? Do you mind if I *have a look at* your notes please?

In (13), the BE students' use of the idiomatic 'could you run me up' contrasts with the prevalence of the more explicit 'take' and 'bring' on four of the six requests of the learner participants. With regard to (14), this example compares favourably to Blum-Kulka and Levenston's (1987: 167) observation that in their study "it was only the native speakers who wanted, apparently just to *look at* [a friend's lecture notes]". In the present study, the learners contrastively preferred 'lend' and 'borrow' on four of the five occasions where a request was made on this task (cf. [10] above).

3. Conclusion

The present study focused on the interlanguage requests of a small group of German and Japanese ESL graduate students and contrasted their written responses to WDCTs with the request realizations of six BE graduate students. There are a number of limitations to the study and the findings need necessarily be taken as indicative, rather than conclusive. First, the findings may not be transferable to wider populations due to the relatively restricted number of participants. Second, the description of the discourse situations was limited in terms of the amount of social and contextual detail provided: enhancement of discourse situation prompts in pragmatics studies (Billmyer and Varghese 2000) has shown to be influential on the length and elaboration of requests in native speakers and learners of English and so task design influences may not be ruled out.

However, despite these limitations the study indicates a number of trends. First, similar to the BE group, the learners indicated an overall preference for conventional indirect strategies. Second, the Japanese learners exhibited a higher proportion of direct strategies than both the German and BE group. The third finding relates to quantitative and qualitative differences in internal modification patterns. The learners internally modified their requests less frequently overall as compared to the BE group: this quantitative difference was more pronounced in the analysis of double marking for internal mitigation. In this latter analysis, the BE group internally mitigated their requests noticeably more frequently than both learner groups and in the case of the Japanese learners' requests, there was no evidence in the data for double marking. Qualitative differences between the BE and learner groups were evident in the nature of the linguistic devices employed. The learner group operated with a more restricted range of devices and certain syntactic devices (aspect, tense) were altogether absent in the learner data. All groups exhibited a preference overall for the politeness marker when internally mitigating their requests. The fourth finding relates to request perspective. Here, both learner groups evidenced a preference for hearer perspective over other perspectives. This preference was less in evidence in the BE group where both hearer and speaker perspective were documented in the data in equal proportions (41.30%). The one instance of joint perspective occurred in the BE group: the cause of this phenomenon being attributed tentatively to social and interpersonal factors. Further, a qualitative analysis of request perspective indicated that learners may ignore lexical constraints when formulating their requests and that this may serve to contribute to the overall sense of

inappropriacy. Finally, as in other studies on learner speech act production (Eisenstein and Bodman 1993; Cohen and Olstain 1993), learners experienced difficulties on occasions in harnessing the appropriate lexis and syntax in the process of mobilising their pragmatic knowledge.

While this study has focused overall on the contrast between interlanguage requests and those requests of British English graduate students, a number of differences and similarities between the two groups of learners might be highlighted. First, while both learner groups favoured CI strategies, the Japanese learner group showed a stronger tendency to use direct requests as compared to the German learners of English. In explaining this finding, appeals have been made to the cross-cultural validity of the data elicitation method (Rose 1994), to the limited nature of input for learning in Japanese secondary schools (Locastro 1997) and to the nature of learner beliefs about culturally appropriate styles of speaking (Tanaka 1988). Secondly, it was evident in this study that both learner groups evidenced difficulties in producing head acts with more than one internal modifier: this finding suggests that a level of grammatical competence is needed in interlanguage request development in order to combine forms effectively in mitigating requests internally. Finally, both learner groups evidenced a limited range of syntactic modifiers in their requests while some forms (tense, aspect) were altogether absent in the corpus.

The findings of this small-scale study suggest that even at relatively advanced levels of proficiency, ESL learners may experience difficulties in speech act use. There would seem to be minimally two implications for the development of pragmatic competence in ESL pedagogy. The first relates to the design of textbook materials which perhaps need to reflect more closely the range of linguistic devices available in speech act use. Crandall and Basturkmen (2004: 38) point out that EAP textbooks tend towards presenting learners with "lists of useful expressions … typically the lists present explicit realizations of speech acts rather than subtle and indirect ones". Similarly Boxer and Pickering (1995) observe that native speaker intuition cannot be relied on in describing speech act behaviour and that social strategies in such behaviour may be overlooked entirely in materials for learning. Thus insights from empirical research may contribute to an understanding of both the range and the combination of linguistic devices available in the communication of pragmatic intent: as Kasper (1997: 9) observes "it is vital that teaching materials on L2 pragmatics are research-based ". The second implication for ESL pedagogy relates to classroom activities for promoting the development of pragmatic competence in formal contexts of learning.

Awareness-raising tasks may combine a dual-focus approach to developing learners' pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence by helping learners to "make connections between linguistic forms, pragmatic functions, their occurrence in different social contexts and their cultural meanings (Kasper 1997: 9). Recent research by Martinez-Flor and Uso-Juan (2006) proposing a six-stage approach to integrating pragmatics in language teaching and incorporating such awareness-raising tasks is clearly a step in the direction of developing such tasks for classroom pedagogy. Finally it is hoped that the empirical evidence of speech act behaviour by learners and native speakers of English contained in the present study will contribute in some way to the development of such pedagogical tasks in the future.

Appendix

Discourse Completion Tasks

Instructions**:** In the situations below you should respond in your role as yourself, a student. In situations D1 – D3, you should think about what the person would say to you in that situation.

A1 LIFT (1)
Your car has broken down and you would like someone to drive you home from the supermarket. There are no buses that go to your home. You see some other people who live in your street (who you do not know) standing near the exit. Ask them to drive you home.

A2 DRAFT
You handed in a draft essay to a new, young lecturer who promised to return it 10 days ago. Your essay will now be late and you will miss the deadline for handing in. Ask for the return of the draft.

A3 JOB
You are coming to the end of your studies and have seen an advertisement for a job that you are interested in. You would like some more information about the job. You phone the company secretary and ask her to send you the information.

B1 RESTAURANT
You are in a small, local restaurant with a friend and the waiter has just brought you your meal. You realise that your knife and fork are missing from the table. Ask the waiter to bring them.

B2 LIBRARY
You have decided to study in the public library for a change one Saturday morning. Some children behind you are making a noise. You can't see their parents. Ask them to be quiet.

B3 ROOM
You have decided to allow another student to stay in your room for a small fee while you go home for the holiday. You do not know this student and have not met her before, but you have contacted her through a friend. As you show her the room, ask her to clean and tidy it before you return.

Note: In situations C1 – C3 the lecturer has been teaching you in a small group for a year. She is in her early forties, and you have established a good working relationship.

C1 EXTENSION
You have been asked by your lecturer to give a seminar paper but you need more time. You go to see her to ask her for extra time to prepare your paper. Ask her for an extension.

C2 BOOK
You realise you need an important book for your essay. The book is not available in the library. You know your lecturer has a copy of the book you need. Ask to borrow the book.

C3 LIFT (2)
You have missed the last bus home and you know that your lecturer is going your way. Ask her if she can take you home.

Note: In D1 – D3, you are asked to write what the person would say to you in the following situations. In each case, you have known the speaker for some time.

D1 HOUSE HELP
Your friend's mother would like some help with some light house- work over the vacation. She is prepared to pay you for this. She asks you for help.

D2 HOSPITAL
You are at home, looking after a friend's child. An elderly neighbour has had a bad fall. She comes to your door and says she is badly hurt and wants you to take her to the local hospital. She asks you for help.

D3 POLICE
The local policewoman (who you have met and spoken to before) wants you to move your car to make space for a large van that is arriving soon to help the neighbours move house. She asks you to move your car.

E1 NOTES
You missed a lecture yesterday and need to borrow a friend's notes. Ask her for the notes.

E2 KITCHEN
You share a kitchen with another student who has left it dirty and untidy from the night before. Ask her to clean it.

E3 PARTY
Your room -mate is a good cook. You want her to prepare the food for your joint party. Ask her to prepare the food.

F1 BUS
You get into the bus going home from college and only one seat is free. The seat is by the window and you would have to climb over the student to reach it. You have never met this student before. Ask her to move over so that you can take her seat.

F2 MONEY
You are standing in the lunch queue by the cashier point at college and realise you have left your purse at home. Ask the student in front of you to lend you money for your lunch. You do not know this student.

F3 MUSIC
The student in a nearby room in your student accommodation is playing loud music. You are trying to sleep. You go to her room and ask her to turn the music down. You do not know this student.

Note

1. Examples from Schauer (2004: 263)

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Development of requests: A study on Turkish learners of English

Bahar Otcu and Deniz Zeyrek[1]

1. Introduction

In today's globalized world, where the borders between countries are shrinking day by day, the importance of knowing a second or third language has become indispensable. Because of certain outcomes of globalization such as immigration and trade patterns, overseas educational opportunities, and the Internet, English as a foreign language has become the most popular language among the non-English speaking populations. The case of Turkey, where English has been taught as a foreign language since the 1920s, would illustrate the popularity of this language. Turkish students start to learn English from their 4th year in the elementary level at public school system and continue until they graduate from university. There are also private or high-demand public education institutions, from elementary schools to colleges, in which English is the medium of instruction. Most parents want to send their children to these schools for better job opportunities and social mobility. On the other hand, it is not unusual to encounter graduates of these schools who report being unable to fully communicate in English despite all those years of work. A majority of the complaints have to do with the fact that these students can read, write and understand English well, but when they need to use it in natural settings (e.g. giving directions to English-speakers visiting Turkey, ordering food in a restaurant in an English-speaking country) they have difficulties. They may prefer to be silent, to create certain formulae peculiar to interlanguage, or to try to find their own ways by transferring structures from Turkish (Doğançay-Aktuna and Kamışlı 1997). Most of these students refer to this situation as *knowing textbook English only, and being totally blind of the rest of the picture*. A number of studies have referred to such cases as *committing pragmatic failures* even when the users have an excellent grammatical and lexical command of the target language (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain 1984; Eisenstein and Bodman 1993). On the basis of pragmatic studies to date and the experiences lived by learners, it may be predicted that Turkish learners of

English hardly ever become successful in showing pragmatic competence unless they are exposed to English in natural settings for a certain amount of time. Particularly requests, being one of the most demanding speech acts, may be quite problematic for learners to produce.

It is conceivable that there are linguistic and cultural reasons besides the natural psychological pressure (e.g. the face-threatening act, FTA) on the speaker in requesting, as implied in the CSARP coding manual (Blum-Kulka *et al.* 1989: 274). This being the case, Turkish learners of English as a foreign language may be expected to display different types of politeness strategies in producing requests. From the native English speakers' perspective, the learner may be considered as committing a pragmatic failure; but from the perspective of acquisition, such failures might be showing the interlanguage characteristics of Turkish learners. It would not be surprising to see that these characteristics would shift across the proficiency levels. With these issues at hand, it is inevitable that research is required specifically on the complex speech act of request in terms of the learners' choice of politeness strategies and the development of this choice across proficiency levels.

The literature on the empirical studies regarding the requesting behaviour of English learners of diverse native languages is quite rich. Interest in interlanguage studies with an acquisitional perspective is growing, particularly after Bardovi-Harlig (1999), who strongly emphasized the need for acquisitional pragmatic studies. This growing literature includes at least the following recent studies on requests: Trosborg (1995), Hill (1997), Rose (2000), Kasper and Rose (2002), Barron (2003), Achiba (2003), Matsumura (2003), Schauer (2004, this volume) among others.

The present work is an attempt to contribute to the growing literature with data from Turkish learners of English. To our knowledge, there are no existing studies focusing on the acquisition of requests by Turkish learners. Therefore, this research will fill a gap but it cannot hope to cover all the issues involved in the development of the request speech act in Turkish learners' interlanguage. It aims at being exploratory, and this is the overall purpose of the research. At a specific level, it examines what lower proficiency learners say in the given request situations and whether higher proficiency learners exhibit any developmental trends in the the way they modify their requests. It compares the learners' requesting strategies to each other and to those of English native speakers to reveal any developmental trends in the learners' requesting abilities. It also refers to the characteristic aspects of requests in Turkish to determine any effects of transfer. The following request categories are investigated in the study: alerters, external

modification, internal modification, request head act realizations, modal verbs and main verbs in request head acts. Although the study is carried out with Turkish learners, we believe that the findings will inform us about different learner populations as well. Ours was a challenging task, since such additional components to the request head act as alerters, external modifiers and so on "require further attention and usually are dealt with separately in the literature" (House & Kasper 1981 as cited in Martı 2006).

The rest of the paper is structured as follows: In section 1, the method of the study is explained. In section 2, the results concerning the two learner groups are provided and compared to those of English and Turkish native speakers. In section 3, the results of the study are summarized and some conclusions including developmental implications are drawn.

2. Method of the study

2.1. Methods of data collection

Four sets of data were collected for this research: request realizations of (i) low proficiency learners (ii) high proficiency learners, (iii) English native speakers and (iv) Turkish native speakers. In all these data sets, the focus was on three request situations: a note, a menu, and a ride situation. The notes and the menu situations have been taken from Eslamirasekh (1993), the ride situation is from Cohen and Olshtain (1993). Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, which is based on the recognition of positive and negative politeness, was our starting point in the selection of these particular situations. All three of them took the social distance between the interlocutors into consideration. By social distance, we mean the deference phenomena as discussed by Brown and Levinson (1987). They indicate that address terms and language structures can be used to show different kinds of politeness. For instance, when the speaker wants to emphasize his/her close relationship with the hearer, s/he uses positively polite formulae like first names (FNs) as address terms rather than last names (LNs) or titles such as "Sir". Negative politeness, on the other hand, is constructed as a means of avoiding FTAs, and can be achieved by using, for instance, LNs and titles. In this context, Brown and Levinson (1987: 177, 178) connect power differences with giving deference, which is categorised as a negative politeness strategy, and is achieved in two different ways: the speaker may either raise the hearer or lower him/herself. With their extended definition, honorifics, for instance,

stand as the representatives of deference phenomena in language structure. They are “direct grammatical encodings of relative social status between participants, or between participants and persons or things referred to in the communicative event” (Brown and Levinson 1987: 179). According to this notion, the speaker can determine the relation between him/herself and the addressee by looking at particular aspects of the speech event such as speaker, addressee, setting and so on.

By choosing the above mentioned three situations for the roleplays, we aimed at contextualizing these relations for our participants. In the first situation, the student was to ask for class notes from a friend, thus from somebody with equal social status, and s/he was expected to use positive politeness strategies. In the second one, s/he was to ask for the menu from a waiter, thus from a stranger presumably with lower social status. Here, the student was to use either positive or negative politeness strategies, according to the addressee and the setting. Finally in the third situation, the student was to ask for a ride from her/his professor, who is someone of a higher social status. This would require the students’ requesting by using negative politeness strategies.

2.1.1. Learner data

The data from learners were collected in a cross-sectional design by means of interactive role-play from a lower-intermediate and an upper-intermediate group undertaking an undergraduate degree program at Middle East Technical University at Ankara. Cross-sectional designs are useful in investigating pragmatic development, because they “involve significantly larger number of participants, making more robust generalizations possible” (Kasper and Rose 2002: 141). The lower-intermediate group in the study consisted of 19 students, who were between 17 to 19 years of age. They had just started the university and were placed in a beginner’s English class by an in-house proficiency exam. The upper-intermediate group had 31 students, who ranged between 18 to 20 year-olds in age. They had passed an in-house English proficiency exam and were studying at the Foreign Language Education Department. A native speaker of American English working as an English teacher at Middle East Technical University was recruited to interact with the lower-intermediate level students. Another native speaker of American English who had past teaching experience was recruited to interact with the upper-intermediate students, but she was not teaching at the time of the research. They were both told the purpose of the experiment and agreed to

carry out a conversation with each student. Their dialogues were videotaped. The data from the learner groups were collected on site at different times, by the first author of the study.

During the role-plays, it was necessary for the learners not to observe each other's performance in order not to be affected by each other's request sequences. Therefore, they were allowed into the classroom one by one, according to their last name. The seats inside the classroom were rearranged in order to have free space in the middle of the classroom so that the role-playing and video-recording could be carried out smoothly. Each student was provided with written cues about the three above-mentioned situations. They were given sufficient time to read and understand the cues and were told to initiate the dialogue. It took the students approximately 45 seconds to read the cues and start the role-play. Before each new dialogue, the native speaker interlocutor reminded the student what the next situation would be. The videotaped interactions were transcribed according to the CHAT manual (MacWhinney 2000) by the authors. Since the aim of the research is to capture the developmental trends in the way learners express the request speech act, interactional aspects such as hesitations, turn taking, overlaps, etc., that were coded following this manual were disregarded in the analyses.

The role-play was preferred as the method of data collection to elicit a rich sample of what the learners say in the given request situations. In a role-play with a native English teacher, it was predicted that the conversation would continue even if the learner's request sequences were infelicitous, allowing the researcher to collect rich data. This is indeed what happened: the learners' requests did not have a negative effect on the interlocutor and adequately many instances of the request speech act were documented. The situations used for the role-play and written prompts in the DCTs (which we discuss below) required imagined roles. In this sense, the request speech acts produced by the learners in the role-plays were comparable to those obtained from the native speakers through the DCTs.

2.1.2. English and Turkish native speaker data

The English native speaker data were collected by means of a DCT from 13 native speakers of English at Teachers College, Columbia University. The participants were all master's or doctorate students at Teachers College from various academic backgrounds with an age range from 25 to 46. The Turkish native speaker data were obtained by means of a Turkish version of the same DCT administered to 50 undergraduate students aged from 18 to

25. The Turkish participants were enrolled in the Foreign Language Education Department of Middle East Technical University at Ankara.

The DCT has a number of well-known disadvantages, a major one being its failure to measure pragmatic action. However, this study employs the answers to DCTs to document native speakers' intuitions about requests and uses them as yardsticks against which the learners' request sequences can be compared and assessed. The DCT appeared a satisfactory method of data collection for this purpose. It was also preferred for its obvious advantage of collecting systematic data in a relatively short time. [2]

2.2. Data coding and analysis

All the data were coded by means of the CCSARP coding manual by the authors jointly (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989). Despite some shortcomings of this manual (cf. Barron 2003: 141, and the references therein) it was employed in the study as it has become an established scheme of analysis. The coded data from the learners and English native speakers were quantified. The coded data obtained from Turkish native speakers were not quantified because it was aimed to be used qualitatively to determine any effects of transfer in the learner data. Two statistical methods were employed in quantifying the learner and English native speaker data: frequency analysis and chi square. The total number of request sequences was 57 for the low-intermediate group, 93 for the upper-intermediate group, and 36 for the native speaker group. Although there were 13 native English speakers participating in the study, only 12 of the request sequences per situation were usable in the study for the purposes of comparison, which resulted in 36 total number of request sequences for this group. The chi square was conducted using the computer software in Preacher (2001). For the frequency analysis, all the instances of strategies in the participants' request sequences were counted and the results were converted to percentages (See the Appendix). Examples of request sequences are supplied in the text, and developmental patterns are shown in graphs within the discussion. In the following section, the results are provided. Only significant chi square results are reported.

3. Results of the study

3.1. Alerters

The alerter strategy was coded as zero, first name, greeting, attention getter, waving, title, role, apology, and a combination of these. It seemed necessary to distinguish between role and title. For instance, while 'Professor' was coded as title, 'teacher' and 'my friend' were coded as role. The results of the frequency analysis are summarized in the form of a graph in Figure 1.

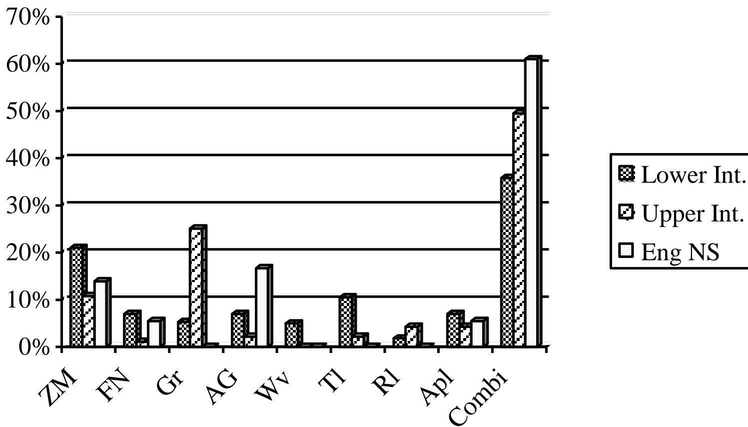

Figure 1. Distribution of alerter substrategies in three request situations[3]

According to the results, the most commonly used alerter type is a combination of different types of the alerter strategy. Chi square results also confirmed the overall results, i.e. there was a significant difference between using the combined type and the single type across groups, $\chi^2(2) = 15.11$, $p < 0.01$. The graph further suggests that there is a developmental pattern in the learners' use of the combination type. Some examples of the combined alerter type from the learner data are:

Lower-intermediate

(1) a. *hi Antonia..* [Notes]
b. *excuse me* [Menu]
c. *hi teacher..* [Ride]

Upper-intermediate

(2) a. *hello my friend* [Notes]
b. *hi* <Wv> [Menu]
c. *good evening teacher..* [Ride]

Turkish native speaker data also show that the combined alerter type is quite common in Turkish. Moreover, the Turkish data include a number of alerter types not found in the English native speaker data.

Martı (2006: 1842) discusses the agglutinative feature of Turkish, pointing out that the language "offers a wide range of morphological features that contribute to the directness level of request strategies". In the same vein, our study suggests that certain suffixes determine the degree of social distance and intimacy. For example, we found a frequent use of the diminutive and the possessive marker in the notes situation, as examples (3a) and (3b) show. The use of the honorific address term *Hocam* 'my teacher' with the possessive suffix attached to it is yet another example. (See example [4]). [4]

(3) a. Ayşe-ciğ-im
Ayşe DIM my
'Ayşe, my dear' [Notes]

b. can-ım
Dear-my
'my dear' [Notes]

(4) merhaba hoca-m
hello teacher-my
'Hello my teacher' [Ride]

The examples therefore suggest that the learners' tendency of using combined alerters might also be associated with the learners' attempt of finding an alerter type equivalent to the combined alerter types found in Turkish.

The data revealed three notable variations between the learner data and the English native speaker data concerning alerters. The first variation was that the upper intermediate learners differed from native English speakers in the choice of alerter type in the menu situation. While the learners mostly greeted the waiter (e.g., *hi, hello*), the native speakers tried to get the waiter's attention by the phrase *excuse me* or *sorry*. This trend cannot be associated with native language influence because the greeting subtype did not occur at all in the menu situation in the Turkish data. Secondly, the learners' choice of apology and role substrategies did not match the choice of native

English speakers. Both groups of learners used these substrategies in all three situations but the native speakers resorted to apology only in the ride situation and did not use the role substrategy at all. The use of the role subtype might be native language influence since there was a large number of this subtype in the Turkish data, particularly in the menu and the ride situation. *Garson bey* "Mr. Waiter" and *hocam* 'my teacher' are frequently used role strategies. Examples of the apology and role in the learners' data are given below:

Lower-intermediate
(5) a. *sorry* [Notes, Menu]
b. *teacher* [Ride]

Upper-intermediate
(6) a. *Friend* [Notes]
b. *Waiter* [Menu]

The third noteworthy finding is regarding the use of waving as an alerter strategy. While neither the upper intermediate nor the native English group used this strategy, the lower intermediate student group have resorted to it only in the menu situation. It may be that the lower-intermediate group are not aware of certain terms with which they need to address someone that they do not know, hence they prefer gestures such as waving. We should note that if the native speaker data had been collected via role-plays, this result might have been different.

3.2. External modifiers

The coding scheme revealed that the learners used grounders, preparators, getting a precommitment and imposition minimizers. Since the grounder, preparator, and getting a precommitment substrategies were almost always used in combinations, they were collapsed into a single group, namely the GPP. Figure 2 summarizes and represents the results of the frequency analysis in a graph.

The overall result is that, although the lower-intermediate students' use of external modifiers was slightly higher than the upper group's use, both learner groups have used them at frequencies quite close to native English speakers' frequency of use. The graph shows that the lower group did not use any imposition minimizers. This result may be a consequence of the

excessive reliance of this group on the use of GPPs. We now return to the analysis of the subtypes of external modifiers.

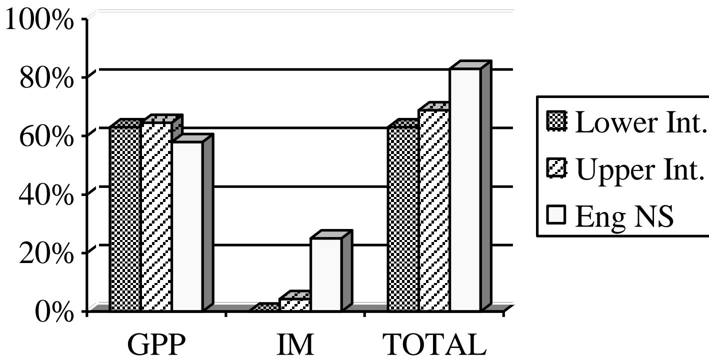

Figure 2. Distribution of external modifiers in three situations[5]

3.2.1. GPPs

According to Figure 2, the learner groups and the English native speakers show no or little variation in their choice of GPPs in the request situations studied. Taking Hassall (2001) as our reference point, we suggest that this might be a result of the prompts presented to the learners and the native speakers, particularly in the notes and the ride situations[6]. For example, the participants ensured that they explained the reason why they were asking for the notes of a friend, they made sure that they listed the reasons why they needed a ride from a professor. The examples below illustrate how grounder, preparator, and getting a precommitment are combined by the learners.

Lower-Intermediate:

(1) a. *I was sick yesterday so I couldn't borrow…I don't have the notes.* [Notes]
b. *I missed the bus…I live in the same neighborhood* [Ride]

Upper-Intermediate

(2) a. *I just want you to do me a favor. … I was absent yesterday…. I was kind of sick and I missed the class.* [Notes]
b. *I want to ask a question to you... I missed the ring [school service] and I couldn't go to home now.* [Ride]

3.2.2. Imposition minimizers

The pattern of imposition minimizers is different from the pattern of GPPs. Figure 2 shows that the lower-intermediate group did not use any imposition minimizers while the upper-intermediate group and the native speakers used them in the notes and the ride situation. The use of imposition minimizers by the upper-intermediate group and the native speakers shows considerable variation. This overall result is confirmed statistically. We found a highly significant difference between the use or not of imposition minimizers by the upper-intermediate group learners and native speakers: $\chi^2(1)=12.27$, $p<0.01$.

The results concerning external modifiers show that overall, imposition minimizers were used much less frequently than GPP's by the learners and the English native speakers alike. The frequencies at which imposition minimizers were used by the learners suggest that their use is developing but at a rather slow pace. Examples from the upper-intermediate group's use of imposition minimizers are given below.

(3) *Please give your note if you have* [Notes]
(4) *Can you leave me near somewhere my house?* [Ride]

These examples indicate that the upper-intermediate students are clearly aware of a need to minimize the imposition of their request on the hearer but they exhibit lexical and grammatical difficulties.

3.3. Internal modifiers

The results of the frequency analysis of internal modifiers are represented graphically in Figure 3. The figure shows that overall, there is a developmental pattern in the learners' use of internal modification. This overall pattern was also confirmed by chi-square results. There was a highly significant difference between internal modifier use and no internal modifier use across groups, χ^2 (2)=44.04, $p<0.01$. The discussion of the data which follows is presented under three subheadings, namely lexical/phrasal downgraders, cajolers and subjectivizers, and syntactic downgraders.

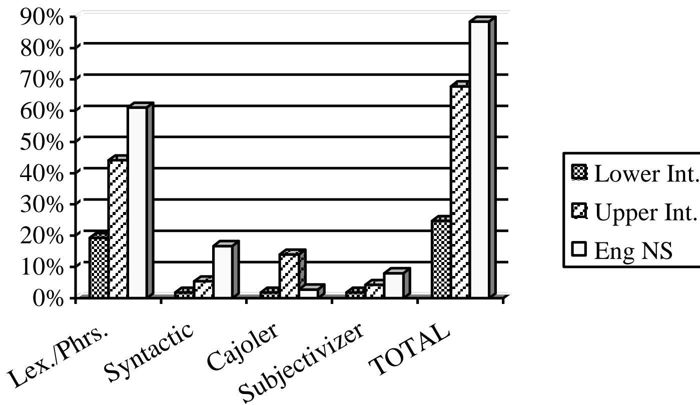

Figure 3. Distribution of internal modifiers in three situations[7]

3.3.1. Lexical/phrasal downgraders

According to the figure, lexical/phrasal downgraders were the most frequent internal modification type used by the learners, and the learners' use of this particular type of downgraders showed a clear developmental pattern. The overall picture was confirmed by chi-square results. There was a highly significant difference between lexical/phrasal downgrader use and no use across groups, $\chi^2(2)=17.54$, $p<0.01$. The most typical lexical/phrasal downgrader used by both learner groups was the politeness marker *please.* There were other, though less frequent downgraders such as hedges and consultative devices in the learners' data. Some examples are given below.

Lower-intermediate

(1) a. Can I take your notes, *please*? [Notes]
b. Would you *mind* to get some foods? [Menu]
c. Would you *mind* dropping me home [Ride]

Upper-intermediate

(2) a. Would you *mind* giving me your notes? [Notes]
b. Can I take *some* soup and a cola? [Menu]
c. Can you take me to my dormitory *please*? [Ride]

Martı (2006) found in her comparative analysis of the requests of Turkish-German bilinguals and Turkish monolinguals that the informants used other strategies than the ones reported in a majority of DCT studies. Her findings of such other strategies included opting out, providing alternative

solutions, and negotiation attempts. We also encountered such situations as can be observed in the menu example above (2b). Some of the learners preferred to order their meal rather than asking for a menu. We do not know if this is a negative transfer, but we still counted these data as they were composed of requests.

The lower-intermediate level learners resorted to lexical/phrasal downgraders most commonly in the menu situation and did not show much variation in their use in the notes and the ride situation. The upper-intermediate level learners used lexical/phrasal downgraders in the menu and the ride situations quite frequently, showing slightly less preference for them in the notes situation. The upper-intermediate students' choice matched the English native speakers' choice; i.e., they preferred lexical/syntactic downgraders in the menu and ride situations more frequently than in the notes situation. These results show that the students are learning to express negative politeness strategies by calculating their relationship to the addressee and choosing appropriate modifiers to achieve deference.

In this study, the use of *please* was not analyzed in detail. Further research is necessary to investigate whether it serves the function of "requestive marker" in Turkish learners' requests, as suggested by House (1989). It might also be necessary to examine whether the use of *please* is differentiated by the learners in situations where formal politeness is needed and in situations where there is a low degree of difficulty in requesting, as proposed by Barron (this volume) for different varieties of English. It is also worth investigating whether the use of *please* is a native language influence. For the purposes of the present work, it is important to point out that while the learners employed *please* frequently, Turkish native speakers used *lütfen* sparingly. Bayraktaroğlu and Sifianou (2001) and Zeyrek (2001) propose that Turkish culture shows characteristics of collectivist and high-power distance cultures. These cultural characteristics are associated with the concepts of benevolance, supportiveness, kindness and nurture. It is reasonable to assume that internal and external modifiers associated with these concepts would figure in the speakers' requests. This is precisely what our Turkish data has shown. Turkish speakers' requests are characterized by a typical imposition minimizer, namely *sakıncası yoksa* 'if it isn't inconvenient for you, if it isn't a burden on you' employed commonly in the notes and the ride situations. Politeness marker *lütfen* 'please' is rare, being used in the menu situation more frequently than in the other situations. Infrequent use of *lütfen* by Turkish speakers may be because it is felt to encode a type of behaviour not conventionally associated with the collectivist nature of the Turkish culture. It might even be thought to encode social distance and imposition. The frequent use of *please* by the learners cannot be associated with native

language influence, therefore. For comparison, it might be interesting to note that according to Economidou-Kogetsidis (2006), *please* is underused by Greek learners of English. The author attributes this tendency to the learners' native language where *parakalo* 'please' is not a conventionalized politeness marker. She argues that due to Greek culture having positive-politeness orientation, the learners might find polite formulaic utterances such as *please* rather unnecessary. Our findings regarding Turkish learners' use of *please* are not in line with this work as it has not found an underuse of *please*.

3.3.2. Syntactic downgraders

Figure 3 shows that the levels of syntactic downgraders employed by the learners are different from those of native English speakers. Neither the learners nor the English native speakers used any syntactic downgraders in the menu situation. In the other situations, the higher-intermediate group used them slightly more frequently than the lower-intermediate group. The English native speakers used them more frequently than both of the learner groups, as expected. The percentages indicate that neither learner group can make use of the range of syntactic downgraders observed in the native speakers' data. The only syntactic downgraders in the learners' data are conditional clauses. The learners lack the use of tense and aspect, which are frequent in the English native speaker data. This finding is compatible with Woodfield's (this volume) study on the interlanguage of advanced Japanese and German ESL learners. Nevertheless, the slightly higher percentage of syntactic downgraders in the upper-intermediate data suggests a developmental pattern: learners are developing a sense of judgment about their relationship with the addressee, i.e., social distance and the need to minimize the FTA. The following examples are from the learners' data:

Lower-intermediate

(3) *If it's ok with you, can I come with you?* [Ride]

Upper-intermediate

(4) a. *If you taken notes, if you don't mind, could I take it?* [Notes]
b. *If you don't mind, could you give me a ride to home?* [Ride]

3.3.3. Cajolers and subjectivizers

Although this substrategy was not common in any of the three groups studied, Figure 3 suggests a regressive pattern in the use of cajolers due to the

upper-intermediate level learners' excessive use. On the other hand, according to Figure 3, the use of subjectivizers seem to exhibit a developmental pattern. Notably, these internal modification devices were absent in the learners' and the English native speakers' requests in the menu situation. The learners' choice of cajolers and subjectivizers in the notes and the ride situations are given below.

Lower-intermediate

(5) a. I was ill yesterday and I couldn't come to class *you know*.
[Cajoler use in Notes]
b. *I know that* you are in the same neighborhood.
[Subjectivizer use in Ride]

Upper intermediate

(6) a. *You know* that I didn't come to lesson yesterday.
[Cajoler use in Notes]
b. *I think* we will have a quiz next week.
[Subjectivizer use in Notes]

Cajolers are expressions that are mostly used in informal speech to increase the harmony between the speakers. As the CCSARP manual (1989) indicates, they do not go into the syntactic structure of requests because of their informal and conventionalized nature. Crucially, these are among the structures that are not taught in EFL classes and textbooks, as the focus in these resources is heavily on grammatical structures. Hence, when the learners encounter situations in which they need to use daily casual speech or their own creativity in L2, they may be unsuccessful (Otcu 2000). The low percentage of cajoler use particularly by the lower proficiency learners may suggest that the low-intermediate learners lack the linguistic resources that would allow them to be creative, casual and harmonious with the hearer when requesting in English.

More frequent use of cajolers (in the notes situation) by the upper-intermediate students indicates that they can use positive politeness strategies with close acquaintances. It is noteworthy that the upper intermediate students used cajolers more frequently than the native English speakers. This suggests Turkish influence. We found that Turkish native speakers often employed cajolers in their requests. Most typical example in our data is *biliyorsun* "you know, as you know." The cajolers in the higher proficiency learners' interlanguage in the examples above (6a) are probably the equivalents of this form. According to Takahashi and Beebe (1987), pragmatic

transfer correlates positively with language proficiency. Hill (1997, cf. Rose 2000) supports this hypothesis partly. The levels of cajolers in the Turkish learners' data seem to be in line with the positive correlation hypothesis of Takahashi and Beebe. In other words, increased proficiency levels make learners more prone to pragmalinguistic transfer than the lower proficiency levels. This is particularly the case, we suggest, in foreign language learning situations like the Turkish EFL learners' case.

Figure 3 shows that the upper-level learners also outweigh their lower-group counterparts in the use of subjectivizers. Subjectivizers are quite rare in the Turkish data, a common example being: *sanırım* "I believe so." Given the infrequency of subjectivizers in our Turkish data, it is difficult to interpret their steady increase by referring to native language interference. It seems that in the case of subjectivizers, the learners exhibit a developmental pattern. Moreover, the approximity of upper-intermediate students' use of subjectivizers to that of native speakers may show that compared to the lower proficiency group, this group of students are establishing their identities as successful conversers in L2. By using more phrases indicating "what *they* think" or "believe," they seem to attempt at asserting their personal ideas and beliefs within the requesting speech act.

3.4. Request head acts

According to the CSSARP, there are nine distinct levels of directness in requesting behaviour (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989). It is possible to collapse these into three macro levels (following Blum-Kulka et al. 1989, cf. Woodfield this volume) These are: (i) Direct strategies including mood derivables, performatives, hedged performatives, locution derivables, and want statements; (ii) Conventionally indirect strategies which include suggestory formulae and query preparatory, (iii) Hints. We shall analyze our results according to these macro levels. The results of the frequency analysis of the request head acts (RHAs) used by the three groups in the present study are graphically shown in Figure 4.

According to the figure, the most common strategy is a conventionally indirect strategy, namely the query preparatory. Total use of all the strategies show that both student groups' use of RHAs has developed and are compatible with the use of native speakers. The fact that the students' total use of RHAs was even higher than the native speakers' use was due to their resorting to two direct strategies which were not employed by the native

speakers at all, namely, mood derivables and want statements. These will be discussed in the following.

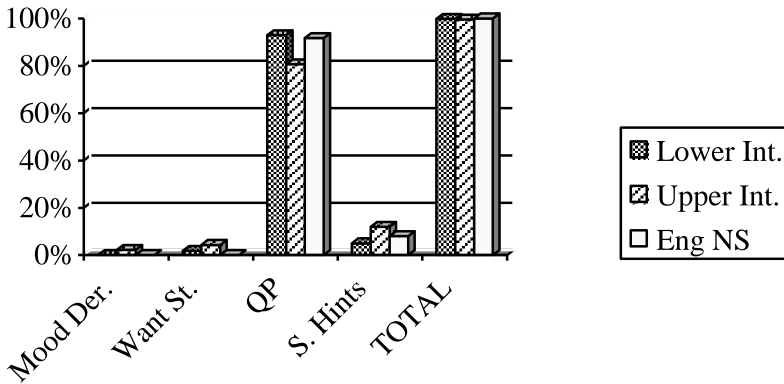

Figure 4. Distribution of request head acts used by three groups in three situations[8]

3.4.1. Direct strategies: Mood derivables and want statements

According to Figure 4, mood derivables were used only by the upper-intermediate group learners (and only in the menu situation). The lower-intermediate group and the English native speakers did not use mood derivables as the RHA. Want statements were used by both of the learner groups but not by the English native speakers. Characteristic examples for want statements and mood derivables from the learners' data are given below.

Lower-intermediate

(1) a. *I want to have the notes.* [Notes]
b. *I want to take a menu, hamburger menu.* [Menu]

Upper-intermediate

c. *Please give me a menu.* [Menu]

Given that the above direct RHA strategies have only been used in the notes and menu situations, the reason for the learners to resort to them may be explained by the need to achieve efficiency in a perceived positively polite environment. A competing factor might be the native language of the learners. Eslami and Noora (this volume) suggest that in Persian, direct requests may be conventionalized by modifying the head act by a number of internal

and external modifiers with mitigating functions[9]. This idea seems to be supported by the Turkish data as well, where a direct request is expressible in a conventionalized way. Our Turkish data showed that direct strategies are employed in Turkish, mostly in the form of locution derivables and want statements. Commonly occuring in the data were statements with main verbs marked with the optative marker or the polite plural marker. Two examples are provided below. [10]

(2) Notlar-ın -ı ver-sene.
notes-2PSING-ACC give-OPT
'Will you give me your notes?'

(3) beni de araba-nız -a al-ır mı-sınız?
me too cat- 2PPLU-DAT take-AOR Qp-2PPLU
'Will you take me in your car?'

Although a deeper analysis of direct requests in Turkish is necessary[11], the existence of these and similar examples in our data set implies that the use of direct strategies by the learners might be due to native language influence.

3.4.2. Conventionally indirect strategy: Query preparatory strategy

Figure 4 shows that the query preparatory was the most commonly used RHA type in all the three groups' request sequences. The lower-intermediate group used it most frequently, and a slightly lower percentage of use was recorded in the upper-intermediate and the English native speaker data. Characteristic examples from the learners' data are given below.

Lower-intermediate
(4) a. *May I borrow your notes that you took yesterday?* [Notes]
b. *Can you lend your notes?* [Notes]
c. *Could I take a menu?* [Menu]
d. *Can I come with you?* [Ride]

Upper-intermediate
(5) a. *Could you give me your lecture notes?* [Notes]
b. *Can I take the menu?* [Menu]
c. *Would you mind giving me a ride?* [Ride]
d. *Is it possible for you to give me a ride to my home?* [Ride]

Although there was not a statistically significant difference between the use of the QP strategy and the other strategies, the learners' frequent use of

the QP strategy shows that they already have control over this strategy and can employ it across different request situations. This result may be due to the early introduction and use of the QP as the essential requesting strategy in English classes.

3.4.3. Hints

Only strong hints were employed by the learners in our study. They were used rarely by the lower-intermediate group and at a higher level by the upper-intermediate group. Examples of the learners' strong hint use are presented below.

Lower-intermediate

(6) a. *I don't have the notes* [Notes]
b. *What's the menu today?* [Menu]
c. *What do you have for me?* [Menu]

Upper-intermediate

(7) a. *Did you attend to class? Were you in class?* [Notes]
b. *I want to know if you have the notes of the lesson* [Notes]
c. *Do you have anything special today?* [Menu]
d. *What would you advise?* [Menu]
e. *Where are you going?* [Ride]
f. *You can ride me where you.* [Ride]
(As an answer to professor's question: How can I help you?)

The percentages display a noticeable overuse of strong hints by the higher proficiency learners. This is hardly negative transfer from the students' native language because our Turkish data suggest that hints (both mild and strong) are not used by Turkish speakers so often. Martı (2006) found that Turkish speakers adopt quite direct strategies in their requests. The overuse of strong hints may be specific to the higher proficiency learners in the study.

3.5. The use of modals in the RHAs

Figure 5 is a graphical representation of the use of modals in the RHAs. It shows that the modals *can, could, would*, and *might* were employed by the learners and the native English speakers in the studied request situations. It

also shows that no modal use was an option for the speakers and the learners.

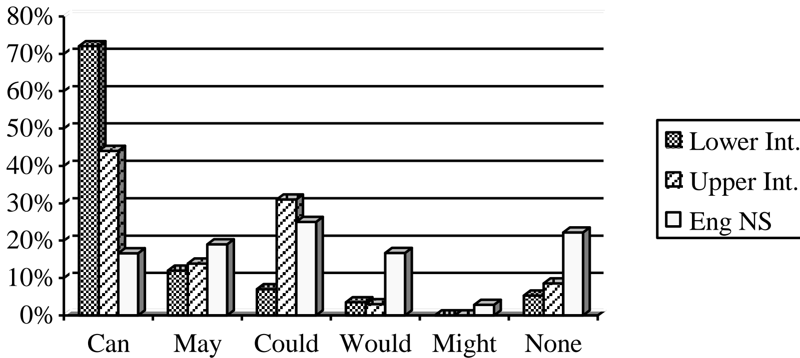

Figure 5. Distribution of the use of modals by three groups in three situations

As the graph illustrates, *can* was the modal most frequently used by the learners. For native speakers on the other hand, the most preferable modal was *could*. This overall picture was confirmed by statistical results. There was a highly significant difference between the use of *can* and the other modals across groups, χ^2 (2)=27.80, $p<0.001$. The native speakers did not use any modal in their RHAs in some of their request sequences. Instead, they used expressions like *is it possible…,* consultative devices*, e.g., do you mind if I …*, syntactic downgrading*, i.e. I was wondering if…,* and strong hints*,* e.g., *do you happen to have the notes, do you have a men*u.

Overall, these results suggest that the learners exhibit a developmental pattern in the use of modals in the RHAs. This is particularly evident in the decreasing level of *can* in the upper intermediate learners' data. It appears that lower proficiency learners resort to this modal, which they probably hear most frequently from their English teachers or see in their textbooks. As the students' proficiency level increases, they start to become aware of other modals and use them differentially, which in turn means that they decrease their use of *can*. This finding is in line with the fact that "the development of L2 requests can also be characterized generally as a move from reliance on routine formulas in the earliest stages of development to a gradual introduction of analyzed, productive language use" (Kasper and Rose 2002: 135).

3.6. Main verbs in request head acts

The use of main verbs in the RHAs varies in the data. Figure 6 displays the results about the notes situation graphically and shows that the verbs *borrow, take, give, have, get, make copies* were used.

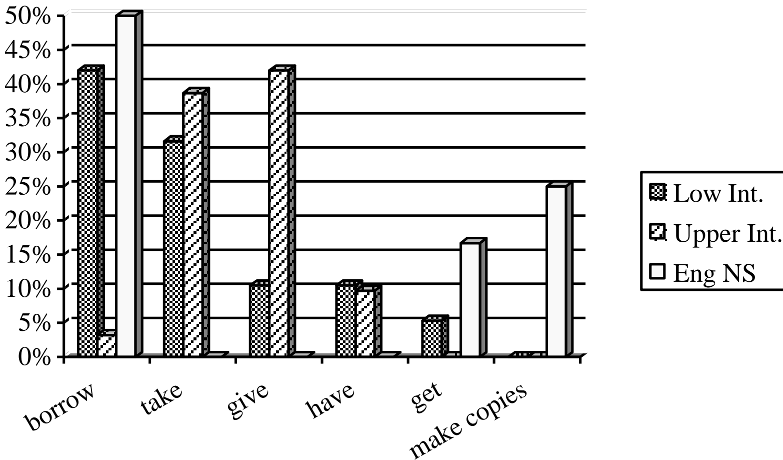

Figure 6. Distribution of the use of main verbs in the notes situation

As the figure shows, in the notes situation, the native speakers mostly used the main verb *borrow*. The lower-intermediate group learners came close to the native speakers' usage, using *borrow* at a comparable frequency. The upper-intermediate level learners mostly used a verb which was not used at all by the native speakers, namely the verb *give*. It was followed by the common use of another verb which was not observed in the native speakers' data either, viz. *take*. The upper-intermediate students' usage of main verbs deviates from that of the native speakers and one is tempted to associate their verb choice with negative transfer. The verbs *al-* 'take, get*'* *ver-* *'*give*'*, appear quite prominently in the Turkish data. The use of these verbs by the learners as main verbs may point to a transfer from Turkish, therefore. If this proposal is valid, it is curious why lower proficiency learners appear to approach the native English use in their choice of the main verb in the RHA. One possible answer is their familiarity with the notes situation. It is probable that the lower intermediate learners have been introduced to the verb *borrow* in a request situation.

Figure 7 is a graphical representation of the use of main verbs in the menu situation, showing that the verbs *take, have, get, see* and *look at* were used in the data.

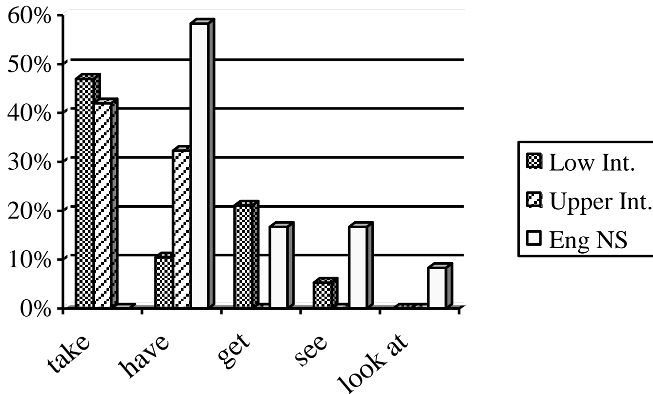

Figure 7. Distribution of the use of main verbs in the menu situation

The figure shows that in the menu situation, both the lower-intermediate and the upper-intermediate level students used *take* frequently in their RHAs, whereas the native speakers used *have* commonly. The upper-intermediate group was closer to the native speakers in the usage of *have*, while the lower-intermediate group used it less frequently. These percentages suggest a developmental pattern in the use of *have* but an excessive use of *take* is also observable. The preference of *take* might be a result of a transfer from Turkish again. The frequent use of the following request in the Turkish data, which is reminiscent of the interlanguage utterances, testifies to the influence of Turkish: *Pardon, menüyü alabilir miyiz?* 'Sorry, can we take the menu?'

The case of the ride situation is a little bit more complicated compared to the previous two. In the ride situation, the lower-intermediate group mostly used the phrase *come with you* in their RHAs. The upper-intermediate group, however, did not use this phrase at all. They used the phrase *take me* along with a variety of adverbs. The native speakers, on the other hand, did not use any of these phrases at all. The most frequent verb phrase they used was *get/catch a ride* with different adverbs. These results indicate that the learners are far from using the phrases common in the native speakers' request sequences. In addition to this, in this situation, both groups of learners made use of ill-formed verb phrases. For example, in the ride situation, the lower-intermediate group used *…bring me to the house…* and *…come with*

you to my house... Likewise, the upper-intermediate group employed such phrases as *…ride me where you [go]...* and *…leave me near somewhere my house....*These utterances display the lexical and syntactic difficulties of students. It may be predicted that, at advanced proficiency levels, the learners might start to internalize the English verbs employed by native speakers.

3.7. Limitations

This study has a number of limitations. One of the major limitations is the use of different data collection methods for comparison. As we have discussed in the relevant sections above, some of the mismatches between the learner data and the English native speaker data may be artifacts of our methods of data collection. Secondly, this study did not triangulate the data, for example by verbal reports and hence cannot safely generalize the results. Thirdly, the study did not do situation assessment analyses to reveal native speakers' intuitions about inherent characteristics of the request situations focused on in the research (cf. House 1989). Despite these limitations, the study yielded a number of trends which we recapitulate in section 3 below. As it has been indicated in the introduction, this study aimed at being exploratory. Therefore the results are indicative rather than conclusive.

4. Summary and developmental implications

a) Alerters: The study found that the learners were able to use alerters in their request sequences. A combination of various alerter types was the most frequent alerter strategy used by the learners. The Turkish data revealed that a combination of alerters was also the commonest alerter type in Turkish. Whether or not this characteristic of Turkish influenced the learners' interlanguage is not an issue that can be settled in the present study and must be left for further research.

b) External Modifiers: The overall picture is that, the learners' and the native speakers' use do not show large variations. Particularly the GPPs were employed at comparable levels by all the groups across three situations. We suggested that the tendency to use GPPs at comparable levels may be an artefact of the prompts given to the participants, as argued by Hassall (2001). The use of imposition minimizers exhibited a slow deve-

lopmental pattern. The lower-intermediate group did not use any imposition minimizers in any of the situations but the upper-intermediate group used them in their request sequences. Although their frequency of use was still far from the native speakers' use, the increased frequency appeared to be a sign of a development. Despite exhibiting an observable pragmatic development in the use of external modifiers, higher proficiency learners displayed lexical and grammatical difficulties in expressing pragmatic functions; thus, they were tagging behind the pragmalinguistic abilities of English native speakers.

c) Internal modifiers: The overall use of internal modifiers by the learners exhibited a developmental pattern, as evidenced by the pattern of three substrategies of internal modifiers, namely, lexical/phrasal downgraders, syntactic downgraders and subjectivizers. Among these subtypes, the use of syntactic downgraders suggested a gradual but clear developing pattern. However, the only structure the learners could use was conditional clauses. Tense and aspect, two typical downgraders in English were lacking in their request head acts. The pattern in the use of lexical/phrasal downgraders was more readily observable. The development of the politeness marker *please* was also evident in the data but the specific function it fulfilled was not clear from the research. The use of cajolers displayed a different pattern. The upper-intermediate group made excessive use of cajolers while the lower-intermediate group used them quite infrequently. It was proposed that the upper-intermediate group's overuse of cajolers is in line with Takahashi and Beebe (1987) which hypothesizes that more advanced learners are more likely to transfer pragmatic functions from their native language because they have more linguistic resources.

d) RHAs: The most frequent RHA for all groups was the conventionally indirect query preparatory substrategy. This finding suggested that Turkish learners are familiar with this strategy and can use them quite successfully in their requests. Direct strategies, namely mood derivables and want statements were employed by both learner groups in the notes and the menu situations but not by English native speakers. The upper-intermediate group's level was slightly higher than that of the lower-intermediate group. It was suggested that this finding may be due to the learners' need to achieve efficiency in a perceived positively polite environment. An equally possible explanation was native speaker influence. It was proposed that in Turkish, direct acts may be conventionalized and

thus may be preferred by native speakers. It may be that higher proficiency learners can more readily transfer direct RHA strategies from their native language due to their expanding linguistic resources, as argued by Takahashi and Beebe (1987). In addition to conventionally direct strategies, strong hints were employed by the higher proficiency learners in the study at a slightly higher level than the English native speakers.

e) Modals: The most frequently used modal in the RHAs was *can* for the learners. The native speakers used *could* most frequently, rendering *can* less frequently. These results pointed to a developmental pattern in the use of *can* because the higher proficiency learners used it less frequently than the lower proficiency learners, suggesting that they have started to use other modals. Following Kasper & Rose (2002), we suggested that lower proficiency learners rely on routine formulas with *can* and gradually analyze it as their proficiency level increases.

f) The main verb in the RHAs: The overall picture about the use of main verbs is an ambiguous one. In the notes situation, *borrow* was the winner for the lower-intermediate group (similarly to native English speakers) while *give* was the winner for the upper-intermediate learners. In the menu situation, both learner groups opted for *take,* while the native speakers employed *have.* It was suggested that the use of *take* may be due to Turkish influence. In the ride situation, the lower-intermediate group's most frequent phrase was *come with you,* the upper-inter-mediate group's most frequent phrase was *take me to….*The native speakers used *get/catch a ride* in this situation. In addition, in most RHAs, lexical and grammatical difficulties were obvious. We predicted that most of such difficulties are inherent characteristics of the interlanguage and would disappear at more advanced levels and with adequate exposure to native English.

All in all, the results of the study show that proficiency level is important in the development of requesting strategies in an EFL context. The findings show that, in general, lower proficiency level learners simply rely on formulaic utterances they have been introduced to since they lack pragmatic and linguistic resources which would allow them to use the foreign language creatively in interactive situations. As their proficiency level increases, they tend to be more creative and expressive but as we have seen, there is often a lack of trade-off between increased expressive power and pragmatic ability. It appears that learners with an increased proficiency level are more liable to

pragmatic transfer since they now have the linguistic resources for transfer. Moreover, at both lower and higher levels of proficiency, pragmalinguistic abilities appear to be lagging behind native English speakers' abilities. This is most evident in the Turkish learners' use of internal modification and the main verb/verb phrase in the RHA.

APPENDIX A

Role-play samples

Upper-intermediate

@Begin
@Situation: asking for notes
*STU: hello kellie-.
*NS: <hi↑ morning>!
*STU: <how are you doing>?
*NS: good↑ how'r you doing?
*STU: um, I was sick yesterday and um I um missed the class.
*STU: um did you hear ?
*NS: ## oh, I knew you were absent.
*STU: um, can you take th [///] can you give the class notes to me?
*NS: sure↑ I have to go get them, let me give them to you.
*STU: thanks!
*NS: ok↑
@End

@Begin
@Situation: asking for the menu
*STU: excuse me!
*NS: yes!
*STU: um ## may I have menu?
*NS: sure↑ here you go.
*STU: thank you ## I would like to eat a fruit salad and:: I would like to drink an orange juice.
*NS: fruit salad and orange juice, is that it?
*STU: yes.
*NS: wonderful, thanks, I'll be right back with your food.

*STU: thank you!
@End

@Begin
@Situation: asking for a ride
*STU: sorry, miss, um I have missed my bus, is it possible for you to give me a lift to my home?
*NS: sure you're still living in um kızılay?
*STU: yes.
*NS: sure↑ one minute and then I'll just get my stuff then we'll go.
*STU: thanks.
*NS: ok↑ see you in a minute.
@End

Lower-intermediate

@Begin
@Situation: Asking for notes
*STU: antonia↑ uh, can I take your uh # yesterday # uh, class notes?
*NS: why?
*STU: um, because # I wasn't # um, I missed the # lessons.
*NS: ah that's right↓ I remember you weren't there # yeah, sure, no problem you can borrow my notes.
*STU: ok.
@End

@Begin
@Situation: Asking for the menu at the restaurant
*STU: <waiter> ! [=! waves at her]
*NS: m yes!
*STU: may I take a menu ?
*NS: yes, just a minute please.
*STU: right.
*NS: good.
@End

@Begin
@Situation: Asking for a ride
*STU: miss sorry # where are you going now to your home?
*NS: um in about ten minutes I'll go home yes.
*STU: ok um I missed the [///] I missed my bus # for home um # can you take me to my home?
*NS: yeah, we live close by, no problem.
*STU: ok thanks.
*NS: wonderful.
@End

Transcription Conventions (MacWhinney 2000)

Hesitation. um
short pause
longer pause
↓ lower pitch
↑ higher pitch
< > text followed by explanation of action
< overlap starts
> overlap ends
[/] retracing without correction
[//] retracing with correction (of a word, grammatical rule, etc.)
[///] reformulation (of an utterance)
: lengthening
= where one turn ends, the next onestarts immediately

APPENDIX B

Distribution of the request categories used by participants

ALERTERS	L-I (N=57)	%	U-I (N=93)	%	NS (N=36)	%
Single		64.2		50.5		39
Combined		35.8		49.5		61
Total		100		100		100

INTERNAL MODIFIERS			
LEXICAL/PHRASAL DOWNGRADERS			
Used	19.3	44.1	61
Not used	80.7	55.9	39
Total	100	100	100
SYNTACTIC DOWN-GRADERS			
Used	1.8	5.4	16.7
Not used	98.2	94.6	83.3
Total	100	100	100
CAJOLERS			
Used	1.8	14	2.8
Not used	98.2	86	97.2
Total	100	100	100
SUBJECTIVIZERS			
Used	1.8	4.3	8
Not used	98.2	95.8	92
Total	100	100	100

EXTERNALMODFIERS			
GPPs used	63	64.5	58
GPPs not used	37	35.5	42
Total	100	100	100
IMs used	0	4.3	25
IMs not used	100	95.7	75
Total	100	100	100

RHA's			
QP's	92.9	80.7	90
STRONG HINTS	5.3	12.5	6.3
WANT STATE-MENTS	1.8	4.5	0
MOOD DERIVAB-LES	0	2.4	0
no RHA's	0	0	3.4
Total	100	100	100

MODALS IN RHA's			
Can	72	43.9	16.2
May	12	13.8	18.7
Could	7.2	30.9	24.6
Would	3.5	2.9	16.3
Might	0	0	2.4
no modals	5.3	8.5	21.8
Total	100	100	100

MAIN VERBS IN RHA's (NOTES)			
Borrow	42	3.2	50
Take	31.6	38.7	0
Give	10.5	42	0
other verbs	15.9	16.1	50
Total	100	100	100

MAIN VERBS IN RHA's (MENU)			
Have	10.5	32.3	58.3
Take	47	42	0
other verbs	32	16	41.7
no verbs	10.5	9.7	0
Total	100	100	100

MAIN VERBS IN RHA's (RIDE)			
come with you	42	0	0
take me	21	48.4	0
give me a lift	0	38.7	0
get/catch a ride	0	0	58.3
other verbs	37	12,9	41.7
Total	100	100	100

Notes

1. This study would not have been possible without the presence of the following contributors: the students, their teachers, native speaker interlocutors, native speaker participants, Enis Dogan and Nart Bedin Atalay who have helped with the statistical calculations. We would like to thank them all. We are also grateful to the audience at the 31st International LAUD Symposium, Intercultural Pragmatics: Linguistic, Social and Cognitive Approaches at Landau for their insightful contributions to our presentation. All remaining errors are ours.
2. The reader is referred to Golato (2003) and Burt (2006) for an extensive review on the advantages and disadvantages of the DCT.
3. ZM: zero marking, FN: first name, Gr: Greetings, AG: attention getter, Wv: waving, Rl: role, Apl: apology, Combi: combination of all, AVRG: average
4. DIM: diminutive.
5. GPP: grounder, preparator and getting a precommitment, IM: imposition minimizer.
6. Hassall's (2001) data reveal that the learners favour the same type of supportive move as natives, namely the Grounder. Grounders create the verbose effect often mentioned in the literature. According to Hassall, this effect is partly an artifact of the elicitation method both in his study and earlier ones.
7. Lex./Phrs.: Lexical/Phrasal downgraders; Syntactic: Syntactic downgraders; Cajoler: cajoler; Subjectivizer: subjectivizer.
8. QP: Query preparatory; S. Hints: Strong hints; Want St.: Want statement; Mood der.: Mood derivable
9. Indeed, Martı (2006: 1842) independently categorizes the Turkish suffix "-sene," which we encountered in the learners' requests, under mood derivable as its illocutionary force is clear. However, contrary to the mood derivables in CCSARP manual, this mood derivable is also mitigated due to this suffix.
10. 2PSING: second person singular, 2PPLU: second person plural, ACC: accusative marker, AOR: aorist marker, Qp: question particle, OPT: optative marker.
11. See Martı (2006) for the only one available.

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Perceived pragmatic transferability of L1 request strategies by Persian learners of English

Zohreh R. Eslami and Aazam Noora

1. Introduction

The current study examines transferability at the pragmatic level. The study examines the transferability of six Persian request strategies to corresponding English request contexts. Based on Takahashi (1996), pragmatic transferability was operationally defined as transferability rate which was established through the summation of the perceived L1 contextual appropriateness of a Persian request and the perceived similarity in contextual appropriateness between a Persian request and its English equivalent. The results show that pragmatic transferability judgment is influenced by the degree of imposition involved in the requestive goal and by the learners' L2 proficiency. Even though proficiency was found to be an influential factor on transferability perception, there was no positive or negative trend for correlation between transferability judgment and proficiency. The politeness and conventionality encoded in each strategy and the degree of mitigation required based on the level of imposition were other important factors influencing the transferability of each L1 request strategy.

Pragmatic transfer in interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) has received considerable attention and has been investigated by a number of applied linguists and ESL/EFL educators. Olshtain (1983) refers to pragmatic transfer as a learner's strategy of incorporating native-language-based elements in target language production. Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz (1990: 56) define pragmatic transfer as "transfer of the L1 sociocultural competence in performing L2 speech acts or any other aspects of L2 conversation where the speaker is trying to achieve a particular function of language."

Many researchers have shown that second language learners tend to transfer the sociolinguistic norms of their native language when interacting with native speakers of the target language. Thus, studies on second language learners' realization of target language speech acts have supported the idea that pragmatic transfer is an important source of cross-cultural communication breakdown (e.g., Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz 1990; Olshtain

and Cohen 1983; Richards and Sukwiwat 1983; Schmidt and Richards 1980; Takahashi and Beebe 1987).

Studies show that L1 transfer into the L2 may operate at different linguistic levels. Ebsworth, Bodman, and Carpenter (1996) for example, found many instances of NL influence in NNSs' greetings in English. Geis and Harlow's (1996) study shows that NSs of French and English tend to "frame requests somewhat differently and that English-speaking learners of French tend to fall somewhat in between, favoring pragmatic strategies in their NL." Some studies have suggested a tendency for learners to produce a mix of L1 transfer and overgeneralization in the use of an L2 form (Blum-Kulka 1987; Thomas 1983).

Transfer effects have been noted at the sociocultural and pragmalinguistic levels. Sociocultural transfer appears to govern learners' perceptions of contextual factors such as interlocutors' relative social status (Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz 1990; Takahashi and Beebe 1987) and assessment of appropriateness in carrying out a particular speech act (Blum-Kulka 1982; Olshtain and Cohen 1989). On the other hand, pragmalinguistic transfer appears in learners' use of conventions of means and form, affecting the illocutionary force and politeness value of interlanguage utterances (House and Kasper 1987; Eisenstein and Bodman 1986).

A good example of pragmalinguistic transfer is provided by Takahashi and DuFon's (1989) study which examined nine Japanese ESL learners' use of indirectness in two request situations. They found that learners at beginning proficiency level were either too direct or too indirect in their choice of indirectness in one of the situations. The reason for being too direct was that they transferred L1 request strategies which were direct, but polite since they contained honorific verbs. However, since the English equivalents to those L1 request strategies do not contain honorific verbs and thus are impolite, the use of L1 request forms resulted in deviation from L2 English. So this case shows not only pragmalinguistic transfer, but also pragmatic failure caused by negative transfer.

As far as sociopragmatic transfer is concerned, Kasper (1992) includes context-external factors and context-internal factors. The former refers to participants' role relationships regardless of a given linguistic action and the latter is intrinsic to a particular speech event. Therefore, sociopragmatic transfer, then is operative when the social perceptions underlying language users' interpretation and performance of linguistic action in L2 are influenced by their assessment of subjectively equivalent L1 contexts (Kasper 1992: 209).

For instance, Robinson (1992) attempted to discover the cognitive processes involved in the production of refusals by L2 female Japanese learners of ESL. He found that one subject had difficulty expressing refusals in English since she was taught not to say 'no' in Japanese culture. As a result, when she tried to make refusals, she was confused and hesitant to say no. Robinson (1992: 57) suggested that "The memory of this lesson and the social responsibility it conveyed, increased this subject's difficulty in making a refusal in a less familiar, American cultural context. Sociopragmatic transfer, then, prompted at least part of this subjects' confusion over what to say".

Different manifestations of pragmatic transfer also have been identified in the literature: interference or negative transfer and facilitative or positive transfer (Ellis 1994; Nemser 1971; Selinker 1972). The distinction between positive and negative pragmatic transfer dates back to the language transfer literature (Odlin 1989). Negative transfer results in errors and creates a divergence between the behavior of native and non-native speakers of a language. Positive transfer, on the other hand, provides facilitating effects on acquisition due to the influence of cross-linguistic similarities. Thus it results in a convergence of behaviors of native and non-native speakers of a language. Adopting the distinction in the language transfer literature, Kasper (1992) defines two kinds of pragmatic transfer: positive and negative pragmatic transfer. Positive pragmatic transfer occurs when a language learner succeeds in achieving his/her intended message as a result of transferring a language-specific convention of usage shared by L1 and L2 (Kasper 1992). Negative pragmatic transfer, on the other hand, is the inappropriate transfer of native sociolinguistic norms and conventions of speech into the target language.

Occurrences of pragmatic transfer may be influenced by various factors including learners' perception of language distance between their native and target language (e.g., Takahashi 1996), learning context (e.g., Taka-hashi and Beebe 1987), instructional effect (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig 2001; Kasper 1982), second language proficiency (e.g., Olshtain and Cohen 1989; Takahashi and Beebe 1987), and length of time in the target community (e.g., Félix-Bradsefer 2004; Olshtain and Blum-Kulka 1985).

Even though there are a relatively fair number of publications investigating pragmatic transfer, the conditions of transfer and especially its interaction with other factors are less clearly documented (Kasper and Rose 2002). Furthermore, what has interested interlanguage pragmatic researchers is detecting pragmatic transfer as a possible source of miscommunication

without considering the conditions or processes underlying pragmatic transfer (Beebe et al. 1990). As Kasper (1992) has pointed out, surface-level investigation makes it difficult to distinguish positive transfer from learners' activating universal pragmatic knowledge, or from generalizing prior interlanguage pragmatic knowledge. Therefore, focusing on product alone would not provide explanation as to how learners perceive the role of L1 in realizing speech acts. A process-oriented approach to pragmatic transfer would reveal conditions under which pragmatic transfer operates.

Some pragmatic transfer studies have attempted to grasp the nature of L1 transferability constraints on the basis of learners' perception of language specificity or universality. Indicative of Kellerman's psychotypology (1983), studies by Olshtain (1983) and Robinson (1992) suggest that learners may be more prone to transfer their pragmatic first language knowledge when they hold a universalist view as opposed to a relativist perspective on pragmatic norms. More specifically, these studies demonstrated that learners may not transfer L1 pragmatic features to the L2 if they perceive them as language – specific. For example, in Olshtain (1983), Russian learners of Hebrew were found to have a universal perception of occasions for apology. They in fact apologized far more often than native speakers (NSs) of Hebrew and, hence, their production showed negative transfer. It should be noted, however, that the preceding ILP studies were not initially intended to examine pragmatic transferability. In order to interpret and discuss their findings on transfer; researchers simply paid attention to transferability. Takahashi (1993, 1996) are the only studies designed specifically for the purpose of investigating pragmatic transferability (Kasper and Rose 2002).

Takahashi (1996) is a more in depth study of Takahashi (1993). It explicitly discusses the transferability of request strategies from Japanese to English and has a rigorous design that is well grounded in theories of pragmatic transfer. Results of her study revealed that, regardless of L2 proficiency, learners were sensitive enough to the varying degrees of imposition in their transferability judgments. In addition, she suggests that learners use simultaneously more than one knowledge source – L1 transfer, interlanguage (over)generalization, and transfer of training.

The present study, like that of Takahashi (1996), is intended to explicitly address the issue of pragmatic transferability by examining the transferability of Persian request strategies when Persian learners of English realize English request in corresponding L2 contexts. Based on Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper (1989), request strategy is defined as the socioculturally determined usage of syntactic forms to attain certain communicative pur-

poses. The effect of two intervening variables of language proficiency and degree of imposition on transferability judgments of Persian English language learners are also examined in the study.

One of the variables influencing the choice of politeness strategies is the degree of imposition involved in face-threatening acts (Brown and Levinson 1987). Numerous studies (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig and Griffin 2005; Niki and Tajika 1994; Takahashi 1996), have found that the degree of imposition determined the learners' choice of IL speech act forms. Takhashi (1993, 1996) reported that the degree of imposition significantly affected Japanese EFL learners appropriateness judgments of English request strategies. The influence of imposition on transferability is therefore an issue for investigation in this study.

Inclusion of the proficiency variable is motivated by a controversy among researchers as to its effect on L1 transfer. It is thus expected that the findings obtained for the relationship between pragmatic transferability and learners L2 proficiency may contribute to our understanding of developmental aspects of L2 pragmatic competence. In the following section the literature on transfer and second language proficiency is discussed.

2. Pragmatic transfer and second language (L2) proficiency

Research findings on the relationship of pragmatic transfer and L2 proficiency have not lead to conclusive results. Takahashi and Beebe (1987) proposed the positive correlation hypothesis, predicting that second language proficiency is positively correlated with pragmatic transfer. Lower-proficiency learners, according to this hypothesis, are less likely to display pragmatics transfer in their L2 production than higher–proficiency learners because they do not have the necessary linguistic resources to do so. Higher proficiency learners, on the other hand, do have sufficient linguistic means, so their L2 production will be likely to reveal more pragmatic transfer. Although Takahashi and Beebe's own study on refusals performed by Japanese EFL and ESL learners did not clearly demonstrate the predicted proficiency effect. Some studies (e.g, Blum-Kulka 1982; Cohen 1997; Cohen and Olshtain 1981; Hill 1997; Keshavarz, Eslami, and Ghahreman 2006; Olshtain and Cohen 1989) have supported Takahashi and Beebe's notion that learners' limited target language knowledge prevents them from transferring native language pragmatic knowledge. For example, Cohen's (1997) account of his experience in a four-month intensive Japanese as a Foreign

Language course indicates that despite his intended desire to violate target language norms and intentionally produce utterances in the L2 that observed pragmatic norms from his L1, he was unable to do so because he lacked sufficient Japanese resources. His experience lends support to the positive correlation hypothesis. Hill's (1997) study also appears to support this hypothesis. An examination of sub-strategies for the realization of requestive speech acts and mitigators revealed pragmalinguistic features that deviated from the target language norms and revealed the influence of the first language.

However, evidence contrary to Takahashi and Beebe's positive correlation hypothesis exists in the literature both on language transfer in general and on pragmatic transfer in particular (e.g., Maeshiba et al. 1996; Takahashi and Dufon 1989). Maeshiba et al. (1996) study involved intermediate and advanced Japanese-speaking ESL learners in Hawaii. Their findings confirmed that the advanced learners showed more positive transfer and less negative transfer which does not support the positive correlation hypothesis. As Kasper and Rose (2002: 155), submit, we should continue working with Takahashi and Beebe's hypothesis by looking for explanations for the conflicting findings offered by these studies. One possible explanation they provide for the different outcomes of Hill (1997) and Maeshiba *et al.* (1996) is that apology strategies in Japanese and English vary less in terms of syntactic complexity of speech act strategies than request strategies do. In addition, Eisenstein and Bodman (1986) suspected that other types of knowledge can outweigh linguistic proficiency such as learners' familiarity with the target situational context. They found that familiarity with a particular situation was a significant factor in L2 learners' performance of target-like expressions of gratitude.

Since the study of Takahashi and Beebe (1987) was conducted, not only have there been few interlanguage pragmatic studies with explicit focus on second language proficiency interacting with transfer, but also the range of languages studied has been narrow (mostly Japanese learners of English). In order to identify which aspects of second language pragmatic development are due to cross-linguistic influence and which are due to the general process of second language development, the comparison of data elicited from speakers of various native language groups at different proficiency levels who are acquiring the same target language is needed. Additionally, ESL (English as a Second Language) and EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners potentially possess different learner characteristics, each one having its own variations, and thus, should be studied separately. Therefore, the

present study specifically investigates the effect of language proficiency on the Iranian EFL learners' pragmatic development as evident in their perception of pragmatic transferability.

3. Pragmatic transferability

Takahashi's (1993, 1996) definition of pragmatic transferability is used in this study. Based on Kellerman's (1983, 1986) account of transferability, Takahashi (1993, 1996) provides a detailed account of pragmatic transferability. Her delineations are well situated on the transferability studies in L2 acquisition. She defines pragmatic transferability as 'the probability with which a given L1 indirect request strategy will be tranferred relative to other L1 indirect request strategies" (1986: 195). In her definition she emphasizes the probabilistic nature of pragmatic transferability (i.e., item a) is more likely to be tranferable than item b) which will only allow us to predict tendencies in language use and not necessarily actual language behavior.

Takahashi outlined two criteria for pragmatic transferability, that is, learners' assessment of the contextual appropriateness of a given strategy in their L1 and their assessment of the equivalence of strategies in the first language and the target language in terms of contextual appropriateness. The L1 contextual appropriateness criteria is derived from transfer studies which propose that frequency in L1 is a likely requirement for transfer. Therefore if the L1 strategy is perceived to be frequently used and assumed to be appropriate enough, this strategy would more likely be tranferred to the L2 context. On the contrary, if the L1 strategy is perceived not to be frequently used and therefore assumed not to be appropriate, the L1 strategy is far less likely to be transferred to the L2 context.

Her second transferability criteria, that is, equivalence of strategies in L1 and L2, is perceived equivalence of the first and second language pair of a request strategy in terms of contextual appropriateness.

Based on the above two criteria she proposed a pragmatic transferability scale, which posits that strategies rated high for contextual appropriateness and viewed as contextual equivalents are more transferable, while those that are rated low for appropriateness and considered contextually different are less transferable.

4. Method

4.1. Participants

The participants of this study included 65 Iranian undergraduate university students studying at two universities in Esfahan. Their age ranged from 19-21 with a mean age of 19.6 years. The students had been formally studying English as a foreign language for 8-10 years. The students who had any amount of residency in an English speaking country were not included in this study. For the purpose of investigating the proficiency effect on transferability, the participants were further divided into a low EFL and a high EFL proficiency group. The subjects' proficiency in English was measured by a comprehensive English Language Test for learners of English (CELT, Form B; see Harris and Palmer, 1986). Ninety three students took the test. The mean (61.86) as well as the standard deviation (SD=18.01) of their scores on the CELT were computed and used in conjunctions with the assumptions of the normal distribution to assign the subjects appropriately to high (H) and low (L) level groups. The participants who scored beyond + 0.5 SD above the mean were considered as high level EFL students and those who scored less than -0.5 SD below the mean were considered as low level subjects in the main data analyses of this study. Only the learners who could be placed in H or L level of language proficiency (65) were considered for the transferability judgment task.

4.2. Instruments

Three preliminary studies were carried out in order to construct the transferability judgment questionnaire which was the main instrument of this study. Participants for the preliminary studies were similar to the main study participants in terms of age, academic background, and English language proficiency.

Even though the aim of this research was to replicate Takahasi's study with another group of learners in Iranian EFL context, the cross-cultural comparability of the situations used in Takahashi's study had to be examined to make sure, among other things, that the degree of imposition in each situation perceived by Iranian participants is comparable to the participants in Takahashi's study. Therefore, 8 situations were selected from Takahashi's (1993) study and the participants were asked to indicate how

much of an imposition they thought each of the requests would be if asked of their professor. This was done by asking the participants to rate each situation in terms of difficulty in making the request on a 5 point Lickert scale (1=least difficult to 5=most difficult). Four requests with mean ratings above 3.5 (high imposition) and below 2.5 (low imposition) were selected for this study. The results corresponded to Takahashi's results. The least difficult situation was situation number 2 with the mean rating of 2.02. The most difficult situation was situation number 4 with a mean rating of 4.34 (See appendix B for description of situations).

1. Marking problem: A college student asks his professor to correct a few grading mistakes on the exam-low imposition.
2. Thesis: A college student asks his professor to return a term paper that the student wants to expand into a thesis – low imposition.
3. Appointment: A college student asks his professor to reschedule an appointment – high imposition.
4. Paper due: A college student asks his professor to extend the due date of a term paper – high imposition.

The second preliminary study was designed to identify L1 Persian request strategies that are actually used by Iranian college students in these situations. Request strategies (Appendix A) were adapted from Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper (1989) and Takahashi (1996). The most commonly used strategies were as follows:

– *(Please) Mood derivables.*[1] (the speaker states a direct, imperative request to the hearer)
  Lotfan VP
  Please VP

– *(Mitigated) Mood derivables* (the speaker embeds a direct, imperative request to the hearer in another clause)
  Age zahmatetoon nist VP
  If problem for you (PL) not ….
  Mitigated VP

– *Permission question* (the speaker asks if the hearer grants permission for the speaker to have his/her request fulfilled):
  Momkeneh khahesh konam ke ...
  Possible (to) ask do+I that …
  Would/could I ask you to VP?

- *Mitigated preparatory statement* (the speaker states a preparatory condition by embedding it within another clause):
  Mikhastam bebinam age baratoon emkan dare ...
  I wanted to see+I if for you (PL) possible is …
  I was wondering if you could VP.

- *Mitigated want statement* (the speaker states his or her want or wish that the hearer will perform the action in hypothetical situations):
  Kheily mamnoon misham age lotf konid o ...
  Very grateful would be+I if a favor do+you(PL) and …
  I'd be very grateful if you could VP.

- *Nonconventional strategy* (hint)(stating reason for request)
  Example from the Appointment situation :
  Man farda nemitoonam dar zamane mogharar khedmattoon berasam.
  I tomorrow not+can+I in time scheduled service-to-you do+I.
  'I can't come to your office tomorrow at the scheduled time.'
  (intention: please change the appointment time)

The second criterion of pragmatic transferability mentioned above was perceived equivalence of L1-L2 request strategies. Therefore, the third preliminary study served to establish English equivalents of the Persian request strategies elicited in the second preliminary study. Based on the definition of request strategy as the pragmalinguistic convention by which the request is realized, the criterion of equivalence was the request conventions. Equivalence of the Persian and English request strategies in terms of the request convention was established by three Persian – English bilingual judges. Hereafter, each Persian strategy will simply be referred to as follows based on its English conventional equivalent (CE):

- The "please VP" strategy (mood derivable)
- The "mitigated VP" strategy (mitigated mood derivable)
- The "could I ask you" strategy (permission question)
- The "I was wondering" strategy (polite preparatory statement)
- The "I'd be grateful" strategy (mitigated want statement)
- The "NC" strategy (nonconventional).

Since L1-L2 equivalents of pragmalinguistic conventions do not necessarily correspond to functional equivalence and they may not necessarily convey the same communicative functions the next task was intended to estabilish

Table 1. Persian Strategies and Their Conventional and Functional Equivalents

Strategy	L2 conventional Equivalents	L2 Functional Equivalents
Lotfan VP. Age zahmatetoon nist VP	Please VP (mood derivable) Mitigated VP (mood derivable)	Could you VP? (less polite preparatory question) Would you please VP? (polite preparatory question)
Momkeneh khahesh konam ke VP?	Would/could I ask you to VP? (Permission question)	Would it be possible to VP? (mitigated preparatory question)
Mikhastam bebinam age baratoon emkan dare VP Kheily mamnoon misham age lotf konid o VP	I wanted to see if you can VP (mitigated preparatory statement) I would be very grateful if you VP (Mitigated want statement)	I was wondering if you could VP (mitigated preparatory statement) I would be very grateful if you could VP (Mitigated want statement)
Nonconventional	I think you have made a mistake on scoring my exam.	I was wondering if these answers might not be correct.
	My thesis proposal deadline is coming.	Is it possible for me to come by some time this week to get my paper back to use for my thesis?
	I don't think I can finish my paper by tomorrow.	I have really tried so hard to complete the paper for your class by tomorrow but because of having two other exams I don't think I can finish it by then.

L1-L2 functional equivalence (FE). Therefore, three Persian–English bilingual judges, who had high proficiency in both Persian and English, were asked to establish L1-L2 equivalence in terms of communicative functions. The obtained L1-L2 functional equivalent pairs are presented in Table 1, along with the corresponding CEs.

4.3. Transferability judgment questionnaire

This questionnaire, the main instrument for this study, was constructed based on the data obtained from previous phases of the study. The transferability judgment questionnaire consisted of two sections. In Section I, participants' perception of the contextual appropriateness of the six Persian request strategies was assessed on a 7-point rating scale (1=definitely inappropriate, 7=definitely appropriate). Participants were reminded to put themselves in an Iranian context in which they requested something from their Iranian professor.

The second criterion for transferability judgment, L1-L2 equivalence perception, was dealt with in section II of the instrument. This section included the six pairs of Persian and English request expressions established as the CEs and the six L1-L2 expressions established as the functional equivalence. The same 7-point rating scale as above was used for this section as well. The participants were asked to take target language contexts in mind when judging the equivalence.

Procedure

The data for this phase of the study was collected during one of the general English classes. Written instructions were given for each part of the instrument at the beginning of that section. However, to ensure comprehensibility, oral instructions were given as well. The students were asked to first complete section I and then section II. No time limit was set. The tasks were completed in about 45 minutes.

Based on the two criteria for the notion of pragmatic transferability set by Takahashi (1996), the transferability of a given Persian request strategy was operationally defined as transferability rate, calculated as: perception rate of the contextual appropriateness of the L1 request strategy + perception rate of the equivalence in contextual appropriateness between the L1 strategy and its L2 equivalent x 0.61.

Following Takahashi's procedure for establishing L1-L2 conventional equivalence and the probabilistic nature of transferability, the probability of the judges' selecting the English conventional equivalent was calculated for each Persian strategy. The value of 0.61 resulted from averaging the selection probabilities across the six request strategies by the three judges. Therefore the value of 0.61 is an equivalence weight value for possible variations in students' equivalence representations, computed by using the data obtained from the three Iranian-English bilingual judges who established the conventional equivalence pairs in the third preliminary study. The variation ratio in our study was slightly higher than Takahashi's study (0.54). This might be due to the lower number of bilingual judges used in our study (3 vs. 4) or to the higher number of strategies (5 vs. 6) used by Iranian students in this study.

5. Results and discussion

The study involved two within factors (strategy type and imposition), and one between factor (proficiency level), as the independent variables. The dependent variable was the transferability rate. Thus, a three-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) with repeated measures on Imposition (two levels), and strategy (six levels) was used as the main statistical procedure for this study.

5.1. Strategy type and differential transferability

Requestive strategy as a variable was found to be significant as the main effect F (5, 315) =31.73, $p<.0001$. The interaction effects were found to be contributing to this large main effect. For imposition x strategy it was F (5,315) = 5.75, $P<.01$; and for strategy x proficiency it was F (5,315) = 4.323, $P<.01$.

The strategy "mitigated VP" was the most transferable followed by: "I'd be grateful", "I was wondering", "could I ask you", "please VP" and "non-conventional" (see Table 2 and Figure 1). This ranking was almost exactly the same when strategy interacted with proficiency and Imposition (see Table 2 and Figure 2).

Table 2. Means and Standard Deviations of the Transferability Rates for Strategy x Proficiency

	High EFL			Low EFL		
Strategy	Rank	Mean	SD	Rank	Mean	SD
Mitigated VP	1	12.483	1.461	1	10.883	2.597
I'd be grateful	2	10.633	1.627	2	9.833	2.058
I was wondering	3	10.216	2.192	4	9.416	1.959
Could I ask you	4	9.2	1.651	3	9.583	1.935
Please VP	5	6.833	2.116	6	8.666	1.473
Nonconventional	6	6.683	1.853	5	8.733	1.592

The strategy "mitigated VP" consistently surpassed the other five request strategies in transferability. The means comparison for the effect of Imposition × Strategy showed that the difference in transferability of "mitigated VP" and "I would be grateful" strategy was statistically significant at $P<.01$ ($F(1,64)= 22.09$ for the low-imposition condition and $F(1,64)=27.44$ for the high imposition condition).

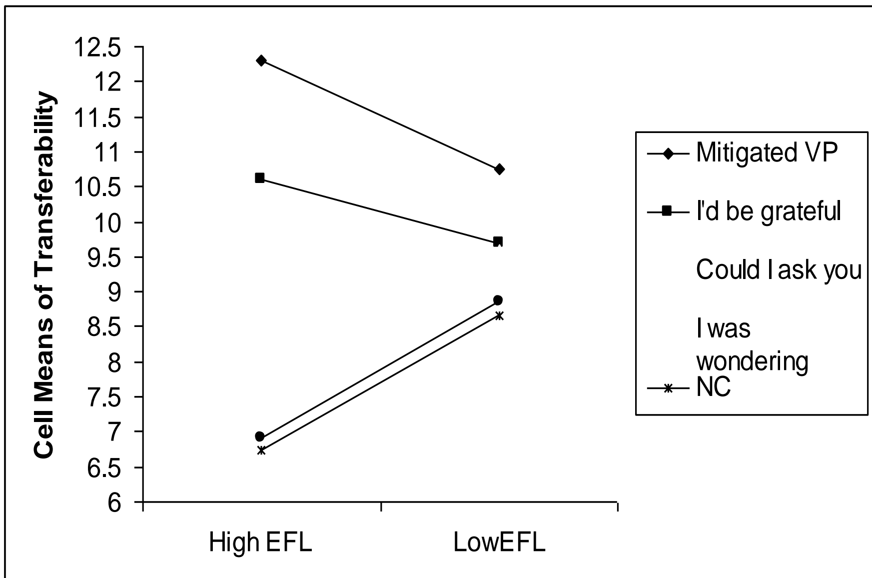

Figure 1a. Effect of **strategy** × Proficiency for (a) transferability perception.

However, the strategies “Please VP” /”NC” were found to be far less transferable than other strategies in their interactions with proficiency and imposition. It seems clear that the Iranian EFL learners did not perceive the Persian request strategies as equally transferable to the corresponding L2 request context. Different variables of imposition and proficiency interacted with L1 strategy appropriateness and L1-L2 equivalence perception to result in different transferability perceptions.

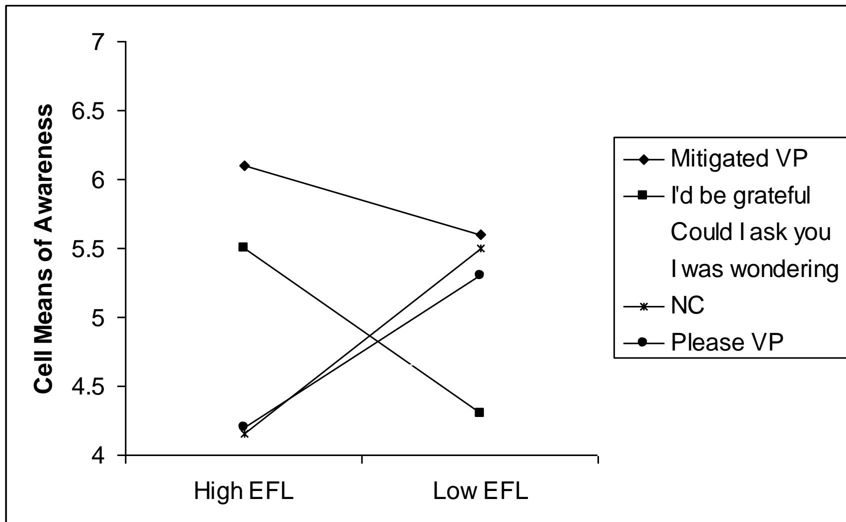

Figure 1b. Effect of **strategy** × Proficiency for L1 appropriateness perception

To further explain the nature of the observed transferability patterns, additional analysis was carried out on the underlying L1 appropriateness and L1-L2 equivalence ratings for the effects of strategy x proficiency and Imposition x Strategy. The purpose of this analysis was to explore the relative effect of perceptions L1 appropriateness vs. L1-L2 equivalence on transferability judgments of the learners. This analysis revealed that the higher transferability of the mitigated VP, mitigated want statement (*I'd be grateful*) and permission question (*Could I ask you*), was due to their relatively high rates of both L1 appropriateness and L1-L2 equivalence perception (see Table 3 and Figure 1.).

The Persian mitigated VP, mitigated want statements and permission questions are realized with socioculturally conventionalized respectful forms and honorific terms that encode an appropriate degree of politeness for the four situations in this study. Thus, the encoded high degrees of politeness

and conventionality leads to the degree of perceived L1 appropriateness of the strategies compared to the other request forms in Persian.

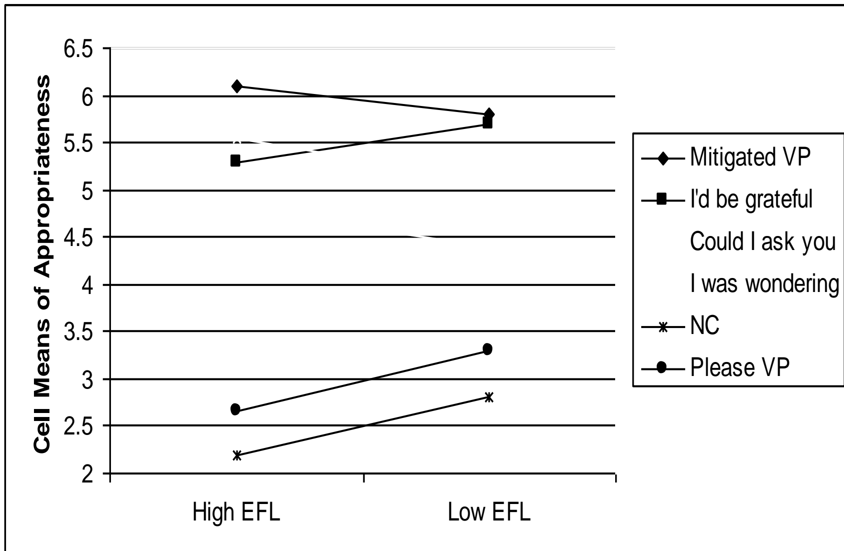

Figure 1c. Effect of **strategy** × Proficiency for. L1-L2 equivalence perception

Table 3. Means and standard deviations of transferability rates for imposition x strategy

	Low Imposition			High Imposition		
Strategies	N	M	SD	N	M	SD
Mitigated VP	65	11.891	0.029	65	10.199	0.028
I'd be grateful	65	10.3	0.3	65	10.071	0.270
I was wondering	65	9.171	0.029	65	10.056	0.257
Could I ask you	65	8.914	0.685	65	9.885	0.456
Please VP	65	9.828	0.426	65	6.814	0.413
Nonconventional	65	8.025	0.427	65	7.442	1.383

The high L1-L2 equivalence perception rates for "Mitigated VP" by both groups of learners could be due to the surface-level structural correspondence in the form of the "Mitigated VP" strategy in L1 and L2 and also the L1 perceptual saliency of the strategy to the subjects. The structural form (imperative) corresponds to the most frequent requestive head act used in Persian (Eslamirasekh 1993).

The supplementary analysis suggests that the relatively low transferability of the strategies "Please VP/NC" may be due to the fact that these two strategies do not encode an appropriate degree of politeness in Persian if they stand alone (see figure 2). The subjects in this study were asked to assess the appropriateness of a one–utterance response, not an extended conversational interaction. Hence, the EFL learners would more likely opt for politeness by assuming that a single direct request without any supportive moves (Eslamirasekh 1993) or a single implicit expression is just too inappropriate and opaque to get the message across. These mood derivable (imperative) requests are usually issued with several internal and external modifiers and honorific lexical terms in Persian which can not easily be translated into their corresponding English equivalents (Eslami 2005b).

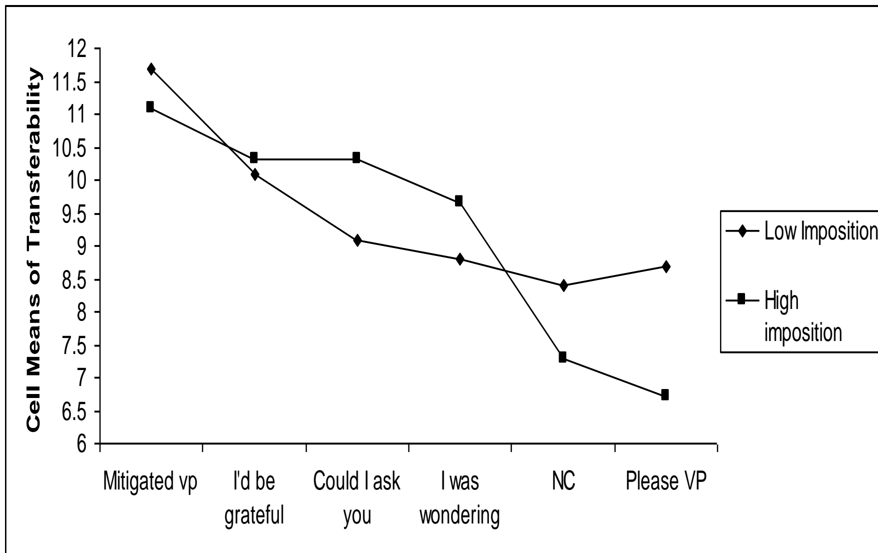

Figure 2a. Effect of Imposition × Strategy for (a) transferability perception

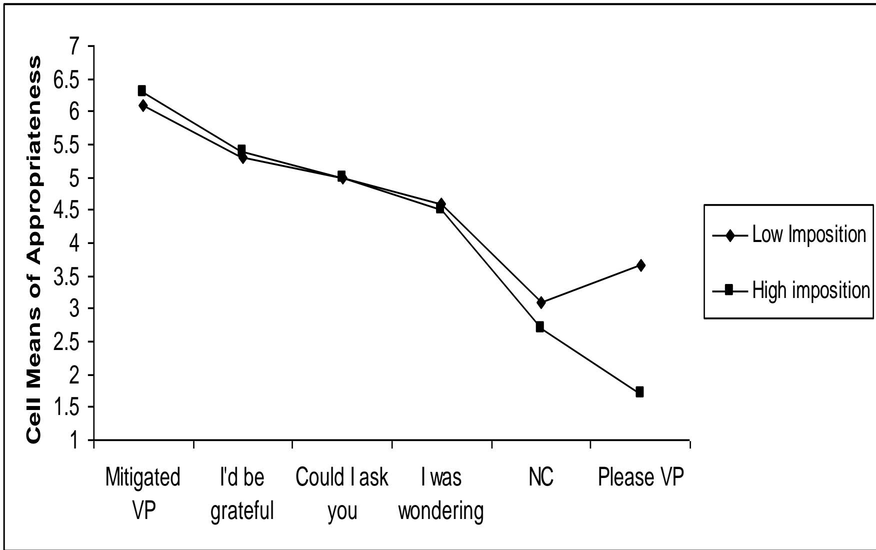

Figure 2b. Effect of Imposition × Strategy for (b) L1 appropriateness perception

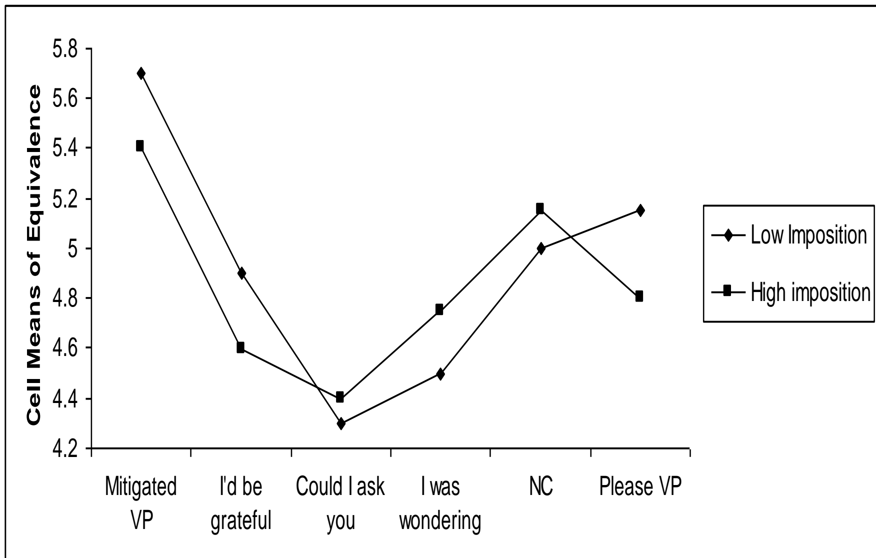

Figure 2c. Effect of Imposition × Strategy for (c) L1-L2 equivalence

5.2 Proficiency effect

The effect of proficiency x strategy was significant, F (5,365) = 4.323, *P*<.01. Significant proficiency effects were found for the transferability of the strategies “mitigated VP”, “I was wondering”, “Please VP”, and “Non-conventional” (see Table 2). The low proficiency learners perceived “Please VP”, and “nonconventional” as more transferable than high proficiency learners. In contrast, the high proficiency learners perceived “Mitigated VP”, and “I was wondering” as more transferable. The significant main effect for proficiency was, *F* (1, 64) =4.755, *P<.01*.

Table 4. Means and standard deviations of the L1 appropriateness rates and the equivalence rates for Strategy × proficiency

	L1 Appropriateness					
	High EFL proficiency			Low EFL proficiency		
Strategy	Rank	M	SD	Rank	M	SD
Mitigated VP	1	6.383	0.973	1	5.983	0.954
I was wondering	2	5.733	0.657	2	5.35	1.210
I’d be grateful	3	5.4	0.840	3	5.633	0.830
Could I ask you	4	4.816	0.615	4	4.75	1.551
Please VP	5	2.65	1.066	5	3.416	1.074
NC	6	2.3	0.995	6	2.883	1.280
	Equivalence					
	High EFL proficiency			Low EFL proficiency		
Strategy	Rank	M	SD	Rank	M	SD
Mitigated VP	1	6.116	0.840	1	5.816	0.754
I was wondering	2	4.466	1.445	2	4.116	1.459
I’d be grateful	3	5	1.414	3	4.366	1.749
Could I ask you	4	4.433	1.819	4	4.833	1.822
Please VP	5	4.266	1.599	5	5.433	1.516
NC	6	4.65	1.535	6	5.666	1.253

Note: The values on the 7 point scale ranging from 1-7were used. High EFL : N=3, low EFL: N=35

To further explain the nature of the observed transferability patterns, an additional analysis was carried out on the underlying L1 appropriateness and L1-L2 equivalence ratings for the effects of strategy × proficiency. The analysis shows that the higher transferability perception by the low EFL learners of "Please VP" and "NC" might be due to the combined effect of the L1 appropriateness perception and L1-L2 equivalence (Table 4 and Figure 1). It could be argued that the structural simplicity of "Please VP" and the "NC" strategy, and the one to one semantic correspondence between L1-L2 has led to higher transferability of these strategies for low EFL learners.

In contrast to "please VP" and "NC" strategies, the "mitigated VP" and "I was wondering" strategies were structurally more complex (bi-clausal) and the L1-L2 equivalence is not as straightforward. This could have led to the lower transferability of these strategies for low EFL learners.

Overall, proficiency influenced the learners' transferability judgments. However, neither the positive nor the negative correlation hypothesis could be supported. Positive correlation between transfer and proficiency predicts that L1 transferability should be more prominent for the high EFL learners. Negative correlation hypothesis, on the other hand, predicts that the low EFL students should rate L1 strategies as more transferable than the high EFL group. Our results show that proficiency has an effect on transferability in that different strategies are differently transferable based on proficiency level of the learners. However, no definite tendency in either direction was observed.

5.3. Conventional vs. functional equivalence

One of the objectives of the study was to examine the learners' performance on the L1-L2 conventional equivalents (CEs) vs. L1-L2 functional equivalents (FEs) in relation to their language proficiency level. A two-way analysis of variance with repeated measure on strategy was performed. Proficiency was considered as the independent variable and equivalence rate as the dependent variable.

The findings show a significant difference between CEs and the corresponding FEs for each strategy in all situations. Additionally, the learners rated CEs higher than the corresponding FEs across strategies and situations. The difference was particularly prominent for the strategy "Please VP", "Mitigated VP", "I was wondering" and "Could I ask you". Proficiency was not a significant factor in this analysis. The findings support the

claims made by other researchers that even highly proficient learners often rely on their L1 strategies or conventions of form (Blum-Kulka 1982; Kasper and Blum-Kulka 1993) when performing in L2. Regardless of proficiency the learners relied on L1 request conventions when making requests in the L2.

The results show that the real English functional equivalents of the Persian request strategies were not easy for learners to identify. For instance, the functionally equivalent English request form for the Persian strategy "Please VP" (mood derivable) in the corresponding L2 situations was "*Could you VP*?" (Preparatory question). The learners, however, could not establish such a functional equivalence between these L1 and L2 forms. Instead, the English request with the same conventionalized form was perceived to convey the same function as in the L1. This indicates that the functional equivalence of L1 and L2 conventions is often unclear to L2 learners. Similar to Takahashi's (1996) findings, a possible causal factor that may have induced the learners to choose CEs rather than FEs is that politeness in Persian is mainly lexically, and morphologically encoded (Eslami 2005b). As Beeman (1986: 37) suggests, Persian is in some ways like Japanese, in that it is a language with a very simple grammatical structure, and a rich set of idiomatic expressions that help individuals to convey accounts of their feelings.

The English language users mitigate speech acts by making them syntactically more complex (Blum-Kulka and Levenston 1987). The Iranian EFL learners seem to lack the sophisticated pragmalinguistic L2 knowledge to equate honorific terms in their L1 with syntactic complexity of English request forms (e.g., embedding the request in within another clause). Moreover, since the most conventional form of request strategy in Persian is the "mood derivable" strategy with added internal and external modifiers and the use of honorific morphology (Eslamirasekh 1993), Persian learners of English have a difficult time in moving to conventionally indirect strategies (Preparatory questions) to convey the same illocutionary force. Consequently, when Iranian learners of English attempt to convey their requestive intentions in English, they may appear impolite due to their use of simple direct strategies in English. When the L1 and L2 use different forms to express a comparable degree of politeness, that is, through morphological honorific terms in Persian (Beeman 1986; Eslami 2005b) and mainly syntactic encoding in English, the pragmatic failure (Thomas 1983) and possible miscommunications may become even more serious.

In general, both low-and high-proficiency learners relied on their L1 request conventions in L2 request realization. Learners' transferability judgments were strongly influenced by complex pragmalinguistic form-function relationships. Both groups of learners falsely projected L1 pragmalinguistic form-function mappings onto L2 contexts regardless of their level of language proficiency.

5.4. Imposition and Transferability

Table 3 shows that the effect of Imposition on the learners' estimation of transferability of the request strategies. The significant two-way interaction effect of Imposition × Strategy, F (5, 365) = 9.546, $p < .01$, indicates that the learners' transferability perception of the Persian request strategies was jointly influenced by strategy and imposition. Comparing the means for each strategy in the low and high imposition situations revealed the "Mitigated VP", "Please VP", and "NC" strategies were perceived as more transferable in the low imposition context than in the high-imposition context: The "Could I ask you" and "I was wondering" strategies, however, were found to be more transferable in high imposition situations than in low imposition situations. Therefore imposition in interaction with strategy had a significant effect on learners' transferability judgments.

The supplementary analysis (Figure 2 and Table 5) reveals that the high transferability of, "mitigated VP", "I'd be grateful", "I was wondering", and "Could I ask you" was related to L1 appropriateness of these strategies. Except for the "mitigated VP" the L1-L2 equivalence for these strategies was relatively low. Therefore the L1 appropriateness was the influential factor in transferability of these strategies. The transferability of the "NC" strategy seemed to be more influenced by learners' L1-L2 equivalence perceptions.

The Persian strategies "Please VP" and "NC" were perceived to be more appropriate in the low-imposition situations, whereas the strategies "Could I ask you VP" and "I was wondering" were rated as more appropriate in the high-imposition situations. As claimed by Brown and Levinson (1987) in their politeness theory, high-imposition situations normally require the requestors to use more polite and mitigated request forms as a face-supportive activity. Therefore, the learners have possibly judged the more syntactically complex strategies as more appropriate for the high-imposition context where skillful politeness or mitigation is more crucial. However, the

less polite request strateiges, “Please VP” and “NC” could have been judged more appropriate for the low-impoistion situations. Therefore, the observed patterns reveal the projection of L1 contextual preference for the use of these strategies on the L2 contexts.

Table 5. Means and standard deviations of the L1 appropriateness rates and the equivalence rates for Imposition × Strategy

	L1 Appropriateness				Equivalence			
	Low Imposition		High Imposition		Low Imposition		High Imposition	
Strategy	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Mitiga-ted VP	6.085	0.111	6.128	0.242	5.628	0.141	5.550	0.036
I’d be grateful	5.385	0.1	5.457	0.141	4.899	0.154	4.642	0.1
Could I ask you	5.142	0	5.842	6.241	4.028	0.028	4.742	0.447
I was wonde-ring	4.413	0.470	4.928	0.3	4.528	0.327	4.742	0.447
NC	3.685	0.256	1.885	0.231	5.199	0.111	4.928	0.126
Please VP	3.1	0.5	2.813	0.811	4.928	0.070	5.113	0.726

Except for the “Please VP” and “NC” strategies, all the other strategies were very close in ratings of L1 appropriateness and L1-L2 equivalence regardless of imposition. This could be attributed to the fact that learners were asked to assess the one utterance responses. In an extended conversational interaction, Persian speakers use more supportive moves, internal modifiers, alerters, and honorifics to mitigate their requests in a high-imposition situation and to be more polite. As a result, Persian utterances are usually longer than the English utterances due to more and longer modifications in requests (Eslamirasekh 1993; Eslami *et al.* 2004, 2005b).

That is, in practice the same strategies which were perceived to be equally appropriate in high- or low-imposition situations would be used with more modifications in high imposition situations. The higher transferability of the “NC” strategy in the low-imposition situations might be attributable to its low L1-appropriateness and L1-L2 equivalence perception rate in the high imposition situations. High imposition situations require great degree of

politeness; thus, the subjects could not project the impolite implicit L1 strategy onto English, which is considered to value being explicit as a means of conveying being polite.

6. Concluding remarks

Scholars in ILP research have argued that we often cannot precisely tell whether a particular IL performance is a result of language transfer, IL overgeneralization, or transfer of training (Blum-Kulka 1982; Keshavarz, Eslami, and Ghahreman 2006, among others). Even though this might be the case in the current study as well, the specific instrument used in this study actually forced learners to project L1 contextual functions onto corresponding L2 forms; thus, it is claimed that the results obtained most likely reflect the transferability of L1 request strategies. Additionally, since the EFL curriculum in Iran is mostly exam driven and it is structurally based, the likelihood of learners getting any specific explicit instruction on pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic realizations of requestive speech acts is slim. From examining a collection of textbooks used in Iran, Mansoori (1999) claimed that speech acts are not explicitly dealt with in textbooks and that the most frequently used English requestive form in textbooks is the 'Preparatory questions' strategy. However this strategy was hardly used in the transferability judgments of our learners. The design adopted in this study did not make it possible for the learners to directly carry over a certain rudimentary L1-L2 correspondence in unmarked situations as taught in the classroom to the current L1-L2 equivalence judgments in the more marked situations. However, the effect of general instructionally induced L1-L2 correspondence on transferability judgment task can not be excluded.

We believe that the primary guiding force in transferability of L1 strategies to L2 contexts is the learners' L1 pragmatic knowledge and their reliance on that knowledge when performing in L2. The most prominent factor for the high transferability of the "Mitigated VP", and "I'd appreciate it if VP", is their high L1 appropriateness rating. The direct requestive strategy is highly conventionalized and thus frequently used in Persian. Therefore the performance of English requests is facilitated by the already-established conventions in the learners L1.

It was shown that the strategies used and the degree of transferability is related not only to proficiency level and the level of imposition in the requestive goals, but also other factors, such as L1 conventions and norms related

to its cultural value, and the ease of use of the formula in L1 or L2. In Persian, using a direct form as a head act is conventionalized because the head act is supported by a number of internal and external mitigating modifiers. The use of honorific forms of language is internalized into the lexical and grammatical system of the language, and therefore the use of explicit head act to make a request is compensated by a host of other resources. Persian speakers performing in English might transfer the most perceptually salient form, which is the direct requesting form, from their L1 to their L2 causing pragmatic failure and miscommunications.

Hence, a "pluricausal" view rather than a "monocasual" view may explain the observed IL phenomena. That is, learners may draw on various knowledge sources – for example L1 transfer, IL (over) generalization, and transfer of training – simultaneously in their IL pragmatic performance (Blum-Kulka 1982). In order to further explore the process of pragmatic transfer and to get further understanding, process-oriented studies of pragmatic transferability (Takahashi 1996: 190) which explore the conditions under which transfer occurs, are needed. These studies should expand the research into other speech acts and should include both perception and production of speech acts. To enhance our understanding of conditions under which pragmatic transfer occurs and to study pragmatic development, future studies should focus on identifying other factors that may influence the occurrences of pragmatic transfer among learners at various developmental stages. As suggested by Kasper and Rose (2002: 302), more research is needed to investigate the interaction of individual differences such as age, gender, affiliation with the target community, acculturation, motivation, social identity and transfer. Social-psychological approaches to identity may prove fruitful in analyzing L2 pragmatic and sociolinguistic use and learning. It is important to investigate how transfer is shaped by learners' social category membership as constructed by members of the target community and by learners' own agency (Locastro 2001, Siegal 1996). Furthermore, the present study revealed the transferability judgment patters in an EFL context where learners have a limited exposure to the target language. In ESL contexts where there is more possibility and potential of interaction with native speakers this pattern might change.

Another important issue in relation to the relation of proficiency level and transfer is the use of conventional vs. functional equivalents. It was found that CEs were rated higher in terms of equivalence than FEs, with no differences across the two proficiency groups. That is, Persian EFL learners could not identify the English requests that were the real functional equivalents of

the Persian request strategies no matter what their level of proficiency. This leads us to believe that both groups equally relied on their L1 request conventions or strategies in second language request realization.

The findings of this study strongly suggest the need to help learners to develop awareness and sensitivity for their own second language use (e.g., Eslami *et al.* 2004, 2005a; Kasper 1997; Rose 1997). Therefore, the responsibility of language educators is to remind learners that in order to communicate effectively and successfully in a second language, as they would in their native language, acquiring grammatical knowledge alone is not sufficient; rather learners may also have to acquire and practice different sets of sociolinguistic rules by studying and paying attention to what is considered to be generally appropriate in the target culture.

Appendix A

Request strategies adapted from Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper (1989) and Takahashi (1996):

1. *Mood derivables*: The speaker states a direct imperative request to the hearer. [e.g., (please) VP]
2. *Mitigated Mood derivables:* The speaker embeds the direct imperative request in another clause to mitigate its force. [e.g., If it is not that much a problem for you please VP]
3. *Performatives*: The speaker explicitly states the request illocutionary force by using a performative verb. [e.g., I ask you to VP]
4. *Obligation (expectation) statements*: The speaker states that the hearer is under some obligation to perform the desired action. [e.g., you should VP]
5. *Want statements*: The speaker states his or her want or wish that hearer will perform the desired action. [e.g., I would like you to VP]
6. *Preparatory questions (without mitigated forms)*: The speaker asks a question concerning the hearer's will, willingness, ability, or possibility to perform the desired action (preparatory condition)[e.g., (will you VP?) (Would you VP?)]
7. *Suggestion questions*: The speaker asks a question concerning a reason why the hearer will or will not perform the desired action. [e.g., How about VP?/why don't you VP?]
8. *Permission questions:* The speaker asks if the hearer grants permission for the speaker to have his or her request fulfilled. [e.g., May/can I VP?]
9. *Mitigated-preparatory questions*: The speaker asks a question concerning preparatory conditions or a permission question by embedding it within

another clause. [e.g., Do you think that you can VP?/would it be possible to VP ?]

10. *Mitigated–preparatory statements*: The speaker states a preparatory condition by embedding it within another clause. [e.g., I was wondering if you could VP.]
11. *Mitigated- want statements:* The speaker states his or her want or wish that the hearer will perform the action in hypothetical situations. [e.g., I would appreciate if you would VP]
12. *Nonconventional (hints)*

    a. Illocutionary opacity

    (1) Questioning hearer's commitment to comply. [e. g, Are you going to give me a hand ? will you help me?]

    (2) Questioning hearer's availability. [excuse me, but are you going my way? → give me a ride]

    (3) Stating potential grounders (reason / explanation). [The kitchen seems to be in a bit of a mess → Clean the kitchen.]

    (4) Stating or questioning zero illocutionary components. (Attention!) b. Propositional opacity

    (1) Reference to the requested action (but there is no reference to the effect that the hearer is responsible for its performance . I haven't got time to clean up the kitchen → Clean the kitchen)

    (2) Reference to hearer's involvement. [e. g, You've left the kitchen in a mess → Clean the kitchen]

    (3) Reference to related components. [e. g , The kitchen is in a terrible mess → Clean the kitchen]

    (4) No reference to prepositional components. [Will you help me?]

Appendix B

Situational Descriptions of the four Request Situations

1. "Marking Problem" Situation
   Today professor C returned the graded linguistics exam to you. After the class, you and your classmates were talking about the grades obtained. You found out that professor C incorrectly marked your exam for questions 1, 3, and 6. Since you studied hard for this exam you can not accept these inaccuracies. So, you have decided to ask professor C to correct your grade on the linguistics exam or to re-check your exam.

2. "Thesis" Situation
   You submitted your paper to professor F about one month ago. You have been thinking of writing your thesis based on this paper. Professor F knows your intention, and in fact he promised you that he would return the paper as soon as

possible with his comments on it. However, professor F has so far failed to give it back to you. You need to start writing your thesis in a few days. So, you have decided to ask professor F to return your paper.

3. "Appointment" Situation
   You have an appointment with professor H, whose seminar you are now taking at 10 am tomorrow. You are supposed to talk with him about a topic for the term paper for his seminar. However, due to a serious problem you cannot attend the office around the same time tomorrow. You understand that professor H is a very busy person, and in fact you had a hard time getting an appointment with him. But you have decided to ask him to change the appointment.

4. "Paper Due" Situation
   You are now writing a term paper for your literature course. You have been doing your utmost to write this paper by staying up late every night. But you can not proceed with this paper as you had expected because you also must prepare for the final exams in your other courses. The paper is due tomorrow, but it seems that you need a few more days to complete this paper. You understand that professors have to submit grade reports as soon as possible and that it takes a while to evaluate a paper. But you have decided to ask professor B to extend the due date for the paper anyway.

Note

1. Based on Persian data, and the most frequently used requestive strategies, we categorized two different '*Mood derivable'* strategies. The first one was 'Please VP' strategy referred to as '*Mitigated mood derivable'* in Blum-Kulka *et al.* taxonomy. The next one we called '*Mitigated mood derivable*' because it involves the use of direct requestive strategy embedded in another clause for mitigation.

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Dutch English requests: A study of request performance by Dutch learners of English

Berna Hendriks

1. Introduction

In the June 2005 Eurobarometer survey *Europeans and their Languages*, for which citizens of 29 EU member states were interviewed about their language skills, the Netherlands ranked third on the list of EU countries where English is the most widely known foreign language (after Sweden and Malta). When asked to assess their skills in English, the majority of Dutch respondents assessed their level of English as *good* or *very good* (87%). However, a recent study showed that the Dutch consistently overrate their (foreign) language skills (Onna and Jansen 2006) and largely anecdotal evidence from *How to* ... guides, such as the passage below, seems to indicate that the Dutch may not always be successful communicators in English.

> *More on Dutch English*
> *Many people are quite impressed with the Dutch ability to speak English, but native speakers of English should realise that Dutch English is seldom 100% perfect. ... Linguistic misunderstandings may easily strengthen the native English speaker's impression that the Dutch are blunt or arrogant ...*
> *An example: in Amsterdam tram conductors often have to urge the public, entering at the back of the tram, to move forward to allow more passengers to board. As a courtesy to tourists they repeat themselves in 'English'. Now in Dutch one may omit the word 'please' without sounding too rude. But a harsh 'Move to the front, everybody!' through the microphone may come as a bit of a shock to the non-Dutch. (Vossestein 2001: 68–69)*

This passage serves as an illustrative example of Thomas's claim that "... pragmatic failure reflects badly on [the non-native speaker] as a person" (1983: 97). The passage also serves to illustrate that even fairly advanced learners may not be fully pragmatically competent speakers of a foreign language.

The realization that pragmatic failure may be an important impediment to successful cross-cultural communication has resulted in an increasing

number of studies in the field of what has become known as interlanguage pragmatics (ILP). One specific area of investigation has been the ability of learners to understand and use indirect and polite language in performing speech acts, such as requests, apologies or refusals (e.g., Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper 1989a; Gass and Neu 1996; Trosborg 1995). ILP speech act studies have demonstrated that, although learners are reasonably successful in formulating speech acts, the speech act production of even highly proficient learners is still different from that of native speakers in a number of respects. Learners at all levels of proficiency have been found to differ from native speakers with regard to type (content) of speech act strategies, length of utterance and directness level of speech act strategies (Barron 2003; Blum-Kulka and Olshtain 1986; Faerch and Kasper 1989; House and Kasper 1987; Trosborg 1995; Woodfield 2006).

Requests, in particular, have received considerable attention in speech act studies. Studies analysing request production generally segment request utterances into the head act (or core) of the request, which contains the request strategy, and request modification. Request modification may take place internally, when the head act of the request is modified, and externally, when supportive moves for the request are provided. Internal modification can be realized with syntactic means ('*Could* you help me' vs. '*Can* you help me') or with lexical/phrasal means ('Can you *perhaps* help me?').

Request production studies have reported different findings with respect to learners' ability to produce target language speech act strategies and their ability to vary the directness level of speech act strategies. Some have found that learners tend to be less direct than native speakers (Blum-Kulka 1983; Le Pair 2005), whereas other studies have reported a tendency in learners to use more direct strategies than native speakers (House and Kasper 1987; Trosborg 1995). In general, only advanced learners have been found to approach target language 'norms' in using request strategies.

The majority of studies have looked at learners' ability to use request strategies, but only few studies have provided detailed accounts of learners' ability to use request modification to mitigate or aggravate the illocutionary force of their requests. Studies that did analyse request modification have found that learners use both less request modification but also different types of request modifiers than native speakers. Even advanced learners are reported to be less successful in approaching target language norms in using request modification (e.g. Barron 2003; Faerch and Kasper 1989; House and Kasper 1987; Trosborg 1995; Van der Wijst 1996; Woodfield this volume).

Some studies have suggested that learners may not always recognize preferred ways of expressing politeness in the target language. For example, Van der Wijst (1996) found that French speakers typically used positive politeness strategies, such as conferring deference on the hearer, whereas the Dutch native speakers in his study used more negative politeness strategies, which minimize the imposition of the request. Van der Wijst found that Dutch learners of French used relatively few positive politeness strategies in their requests, which were often regarded as relatively blunt by French native speakers. Other studies have suggested that syntactic and lexical/phrasal modifiers often lack propositional content and are implicit rather than explicit markers of pragmatic force, which is why learners take time to learn how to use them (Faerch and Kasper 1989; Trosborg 1995).

Another explanation for learners' undermodification of requests might be that learners experience problems in assessing how sociopragmatic factors determine the required level of politeness in the target culture. If learners misinterpret sociopragmatic factors, such as the power distance between speaker and hearer, they may be inclined to use less (or more) politeness than is required. Studies in the area of cross-cultural pragmatics have revealed that the way sociopragmatic factors are assessed may vary considerably cross-culturally (e.g. Blum-Kulka and House 1989). Also, studies investigating apologies, complaints or refusals have demonstrated that learners often perceive sociopragmatic factors as different from native speakers (Bergman and Kasper 1993; House 1988; Olshtain 1983; Olshtain and Weinbach 1993; Robinson 1992). However, few request studies have looked at learners' request production in combination with their assessment of sociopragmatic factors (e.g. Barron 2003). Therefore, there seems to be a clear need to investigate how learners' request production relates to their assessment of sociopragmatic factors. The purpose of the present study was to do so by taking a detailed look at how Dutch learners of English use request strategies and request modification in English in different situations and to compare their use of these strategies with their assessment of situational variation. The central questions the study tried to answer were:

1. What are similarities and differences between native speakers of Dutch (ND) and native speakers of English (NE) in the use of request strategies and request modification and in the assessment of sociopragmatic factors?
2. What are differences and similarities between native speakers of English (NE), intermediate learners (NNE1) and advanced learners (NNE2) in the

use of request strategies and request modification and the assessment of sociopragmatic factors?

2. Method

(a) Design

A within-subjects experimental design was used with two data collection methods: an oral production questionnaire (DCT) and a written judgement questionnaire. Although the use of the DCT has not been without controversy, DCT data have been shown to have obvious advantages over authentic data in research studies where situational control is important (e.g. Houck and Gass 1996; Beebe and Cummings 1996). Since the purpose of the present study was to compare request production in relation to situational assessment, situational control, such as provided by a production questionnaire, was a prerequisite.

Learners at two levels of proficiency were included in the study to find out if linguistic proficiency played a facilitating role in preventing pragmatic failure.

(b) Respondents

The non-native English group consisted of 46 university students (advanced learners) and 55 secondary school pupils (intermediate learners). The intermediate group had all taken 4 or 5 years of English classes at school. It was decided to choose secondary school pupils for the intermediate group, as it is difficult to find intermediate learners of English among university students in the Netherlands. University students take at least six years of English at secondary school before entering university and often take some of their university courses in English as well.

As the non-native English group included respondents in two different age groups, the respondents in the two native speaker groups were selected from the same age groups. The native English group consisted of 35 secondary school pupils and 24 university students. The native Dutch group included 49 secondary school pupils and 63 university students.

(c) Production task

The oral discourse completion task (DCT) was based on the format used in the CCSARP project (Blum Kulka, House and Kasper 1989b). Following Rintell and Mitchell (1989), the DCT in the present study did not include a hearer response in the situations.

All DCT situations (unlike in the CCSARP project) were scripted from the speaker's perspective, such as in the following example:

> *You are a student-trainee who has worked in the PR department for the past six months. As part of your traineeship you have had to write a report on your work experience. This report is to be handed in to your university tutor tomorrow. The head of the PR department, Peter Hopkins, who was your supervisor at work, will have to read and approve the report before you can hand it in. If he read the report tonight, you would be able to hand it in tomorrow morning. Peter Hopkins, your supervisor, has just walked into your office.*
> *What do you say to your supervisor?*

As one of the aims of the present study was to investigate the influence of situational variation, the request situations in the DCT were systematically varied along three parameters: power distance (P), social distance (SD) and context (C).

Power distance is defined as the relative authority between speaker and hearer in a situation. Three different types of role constellations were distinguished in the situations. In the first type the hearer was in a position of relative authority over the speaker, such as for example in an assistant - manager, but also child - parent relationship (P1: low speaker authority). The second type (P2: status equal) included situations where speaker and hearer were more or less status equals, such as, for example, in a request between two colleagues (of similar rank) or two neighbours. Finally, in the third type of situation (P3: high speaker authority) the speaker was in a position of relative authority with respect to the hearer, as in requests from supervisor to trainee, but also in requests from parent to child.

Social Distance is defined as the degree of familiarity between speaker and hearer in a situation. Two types of social distance were distinguished in the situations. In low social distance situations (SD1: acquainted) speaker and hearer knew each other well, such as for example parent-child, but also colleague-colleague relationships. In high social distance situations (S2: stranger), speaker and hearer had never met before, or had only just met prior to the request.

Context is defined as the setting in which the request was made. Half of the situations described non-institutional contexts (C1) involving requests about everyday life matters, such as doing the dishes. The other half described institutional contexts (C2) in which the requests were job-related. Systematic variations of these three variables resulted in twelve different situations.

(d) Judgement task

The judgement task was constructed with the same twelve situations that were used in the DCT. Respondents were asked to give their opinion about situational factors on one 7-point and six 5-point Likert scales. They were asked to give their opinion about the degree of authority and social distance between speaker and hearer and the degree of formality of the setting. In addition, respondents were asked to give their opinion about the rights and obligations of speaker and hearer in the situation, the difficulty of the request and the likelihood of the hearer complying with the request.

(e) Procedure

All respondents completed both the production task and the judgement task in one session. To control for proficiency, the learners also took an oral proficiency test, which was a tape-mediated, semi-direct test, constructed by Cito (Dutch National Institute for Educational Measurements). The maximum score for oral proficiency was 38. The mean score for the intermediate group was 15.4; the mean score for the advanced group was 20.3. T-test results indicated that the difference between the two groups was significant ($t(99)= 4.86$; $p< .001$, $\eta^2 = .19$).

3. Results

3.1. Request strategies

Following other studies into the use of request strategies, requests were analyzed for the occurrence of request strategy in the head act of the request, internal modification inside the head act and external modification in the remainder of the utterance. The coding scheme in the present study was a modified version of the CCSARP scheme developed by Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper (1989a). For details see Hendriks (2002). In example (1), the request sequence starts with two external modifiers, a precommitment getter 'could I ask you a favour', which serves to secure commitment from the hearer before the request itself is made, and a justification for the request: 'I have to hand in this report tomorrow'.

(1) *Could I ask you a favour? I have to hand in this report tomorrow.*
*__**Could** you **perhaps** read it tonight__?*

The head act (underlined) contains the actual request strategy, 'could you

perhaps read it tonight', which is a conventionally indirect strategy, in which the speaker queries the hearer's ability to comply with the request. The request strategy itself includes a lexical modifier: 'perhaps' (= downtoner) and a syntactic modifier: 'could' (= past tense modal).

Table 1. Distribution of request strategies in % for all groups of respondents

	native English		non-native English		native Dutch		Total	
	NE1*	NE2	NNE1	NNE2	ND1	ND2		
N**	35	24	55	46	49	63	272	
n***	405	269	622	525	550	689	3060	
Strategy	%	%	%	%	%	%	n	%
direct								
1 imperative	1.0	1.9	1.6	0.6	0.7	0.1	27	0.9
2 performative	0.7	2.6	1.6	-	0.7	0.3	26	0.8
3 obligation statement	0.2	0.4	1.6	-	0.9	0.3	19	0.6
4 want statement	3.5	4.1	5.9	5.3	3.3	2.6	125	4.1
5 suggestion	0.2	1.1	2.4	2.9	2.5	2.3	64	2.1
conventionally indirect								
6.1 non-obviousness	6.7	3.0	11.1	5.3	0.4	0.7	139	4.5
6.2 willingness	25.2	30.1	21.5	22.1	43.1	40.6	949	31.0
6.3 ability	62.5	56.1	53.9	62.9	47.8	51.7	1689	55.2
7 hint	-	0.7	0.3	1.0	0.5	1.5	22	0.7

* NE1=native English pupils; NE2=native English students; NNE1=non-native English pupils; NNE2=non-native English students; ND1=native Dutch pupils; ND2=native Dutch students
** N=number of respondents in each group
*** n=number of requests in each group

The frequency distribution of request strategies in Table 1 shows that for all three groups of respondents the majority of requests in this study were formulated with conventionally indirect strategies. Hints, the most indirect request strategies, were used in less than one per cent of all requests. Only about ten per cent of the requests were formulated with direct request strategies, the majority of which were want statements, in which speakers state their wishes or desires. Few of the native Dutch or native English requests were formulated with want statements, but the learners used them slightly more often. This suggests that although the learners know that want statements can be used to formulate English requests, they use them slightly too often.

Three categories of conventionally indirect strategies were distinguished

in this study. Strategies referring to the non-obviousness precondition (strategy 6.1) were not used frequently in any of the groups (4.5%). They were rare in the native Dutch requests, but used more frequently in the native English group. The non-native English respondents used them more than the two other groups. The learners seem to realise these strategies are more common in English than in Dutch, but seem to overshoot the mark. This applies in particular to the intermediate learners, who used more strategies referring to the non-obviousness condition than any of the other groups (11.1%). Strategies referring to the willingness condition (strategy 6.2) accounted for about a third of all strategies used (31.0%). These are strategies in which a speaker queries the hearer's willingness to comply with the request.

Questioning a hearer's willingness is a quite common strategy for formulating a request in Dutch, but not in English. In the Dutch data willingness strategies accounted for about 40 per cent of all strategies used. Willingness strategies usually occurred in a syntactically modified form, such as in example (2):

(2) homework
Zou je me straks met m'n huiswerk
'Would you me later with my homework'

willen helpen?
'want to help?'
'Would you be willing to help me with my homework later on?' (ND2)

In the native English data, willingness strategies occurred considerably less often and were typically formulated with 'mind', such as in example (3):

(3) *Would you mind helping me with my school project?* (NE2)

Both groups of learners seem to be aware of the difference in conventionality of the strategy between Dutch and English, since they used willingness strategies in almost the same frequency as the native English respondents.

The third category, strategies referring to the ability precondition (strategy 6.3), accounted for roughly half of all request strategies used (55.2%). It was the most frequently used strategy in all three groups, although the strategy seems slightly more conventionalised in English than in Dutch. Ability strategies were usually formulated with English 'can' (example 1) or Dutch *kunnen* 'can'. For the learners the use of ability strategies did not present any problems, since it was clearly the most preferred strategy for both groups of learners. All groups of respondents used both modified and un-

modified 'can' or 'kunnen' in their requests, as in examples (4a-c):

(4) a. *Dad, can you help me with my homework? (NE1)*
b. *Pap, zou je me met m'n huiswerk kunnen helpen?*
Dad, would you me with my homework can help?
'Dad, could you help me with my homework?' (ND1)
c. *I was wondering if you could help me. (NE2)*

Situational variation

As all groups of respondents displayed an overwhelming preference for conventionally indirect strategies, there was little variation in the use of request strategies across the different situation types and little variation between groups of respondents. In general, all respondents used more highly indirect strategies in those requests that were addressed at a hearer in a position of authority, such as a request from trainee to supervisor, than in status equal or high speaker authority situations (χ^2 (6, n = 3038) = 189.15, p < .001; Cramer's V= .18). Both the Dutch native speakers and the English native speakers varied their strategies in the same way, as did the learners of English. (Relatively) more direct strategies were used in situations in which the hearer was in a position of authority, such as in a request from a manager asking an assistant to work overtime. Although this trend was the same for all respondents, it was particularly salient in the learner group where some requests sounded more like orders. Example (5) is a request from a manager to an assistant to work late to change some material for a presentation:

(5) *I want you to change these overhead sheets tonight.* (NNE2)

Generally, the learners used relatively more direct strategies in the institutional contexts than did the native speakers of Dutch and English. This suggests that the non-native English respondents may have misjudged the politeness level required for English work-related requests slightly.

Contrary to expectations, all respondents used (relatively) fewer indirect strategies in requests directed at strangers than in requests to addressees they knew (χ^2(3, n = 3038) = 142.31, p <.001, Cramer's V= .22).

To conclude, results indicate that respondents in all groups preferred conventionally indirect (ability) strategies in the majority of requests. There was little situational variation or cross-cultural variation in the use of request strategies and no substantial differences were found between the native speakers of English and the two groups of learners. In all, the learners were quite successful in formulating requests at the level of request strategies.

3.2. Request modification

In addition to varying the directness level of request strategies, speakers can modify the impositive force of their requests by means of internal or external modifiers. To examine differences in request modification, mean numbers of internal and external modifiers were calculated for all requests. Subsequently, repeated measures analyses were performed with *language* (native English, non-native English and native Dutch) and *level* (secondary school versus university) as between-subject factors and power, social distance and context as within-subject factors. As the analyses revealed a large number of significant effects, only those effects that accounted for at least ten per cent of explained variance (i.e. ($\eta^2 > .10$) will be discussed here. The analysis showed that the more advanced learners did not modify their requests differently than the intermediate learners ($p > .05$). However, differences between native speakers of English, native speakers of Dutch and Dutch learners of English were highly significant, which means that, in purely quantitative terms, respondents differed in the extent to which they used request modification (Wilks' $\lambda = .63$, $F(4, 536) = 34.67$; $p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .21$).

If we look at the three categories of modifiers, it turns out that no significant differences were found for the use of external modifiers. On average, all respondents included two external modifiers per request, the majority of which were reasons and explanations. As becomes clear from Figure 1, most variation between the three groups was due to differences in the use of syntactic modification. The native English respondents used (significantly) more syntactic modifiers than both the non-native English respondents and the native Dutch respondents ($p < .001$). In addition, both the native English group and the native Dutch group used (significantly) more lexical modifiers than the non-native English group ($p < .001$).

In terms of total modification, the native English respondents modified their requests more than the other two groups, mainly because they used more syntactic modifiers. Although the non-native English respondents used more syntactic than lexical/phrasal modifiers, as did the native English respondents, they still generally included fewer of both. This suggests

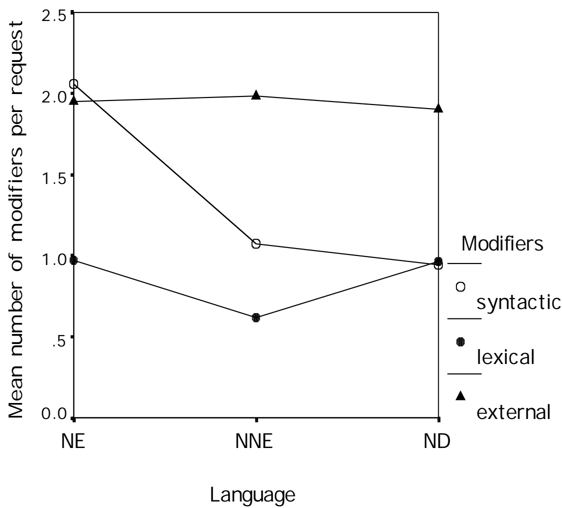

Figure 1. Syntactic, lexical and external modification for NE, NNE and ND respondents

that the learners may have ‘undermodified' their requests slightly compared to ‘native English’ standards. It seems as if the learners are aware of differences between English and Dutch – they use more syntactic modifiers than lexical modifiers – but still underuse English types of modifiers.

3.2.1. Syntactic modification

The most frequently used syntactic modifier for all three groups of respondents was the past tense modal, which accounted for almost 75 per cent of all syntactic modifiers (Table 2).

Past tense modals function as mitigating devices in that they add an element of conditionality to a request, which gives the hearer an extra option (over non-conditional requests with present tense modals) to refrain from complying with the request, as in examples (6a–b):

(6) a. *Can you give me a hand with my project?*
  b. *Could you give me a hand with my homework?*

Both the native speakers of Dutch and the non-native speakers of English made frequent use of past tense modals, almost to the exclusion of other types of syntactic modification (ND: 84.5% vs. NNE; 77.2%). The native speakers of English, however, used considerably fewer (NE: 58.6%), al-

though it was clearly the most preferred syntactic modifier in this group, too. The non-native speakers seem to have overused this type of syntactic modifier and seem to have relied on past tense modals almost exclusively, possibly as a result of transfer from Dutch.

Table 2. Distribution of syntactic modifiers; all groups

Syntactic modifiers	NE		NNE		ND		total	
		%		%		%		%
interrogative	1	0.1	2	0.2	3	0.3	6	0.2
tag question	40	4.6	6	0.6			46	1.6
negation	59	6.8	5	0.5	7	0.7	70	2.4
aspect	53	6.1	37	3.8			90	3.1
tense	77	8.9	52	5.3	37	3.6	166	5.8
past tense modal	507	58.6	758	77.2	873	84.5	2138	74.2
interrogative clause	77	8.9	64	6.5	67	6.5	209	7.2
conditional clause	51	5.9	58	5.9	47	4.5	157	5.4
total	865	100.0	982	100.0	1033	100.0	2881	100.0

The native speakers of English used more ‘typically English’ modifiers, such as tag questions and negation. Tag questions mainly occurred in the native English data, where they were often used in combination with negation, or lexical modifier *I don’t suppose* (examples (6a–b):

(7) supermarket situation
 a. *You wouldn't do me a favour and help me carry these bags, would you?* (NE)
 neighbour situation
 b. *I don't suppose you could pick them up, could you, from football practice?* (NE)

Requests such as those in examples (7a–b) are highly polite (and idiomatic) requests, because they convey a pessimistic attitude on the part of the speaker about possible compliance with the request, which reduces the imposition on the addressee of the request. These requests are also, however, structurally difficult due to co-occurrence restrictions on tags and negation, which might explain why the non-native speakers of English did not use them more often.

Two other syntactic devices that tended to co-occur, especially in the native English data, were (past) tense and (durative) aspect. Both devices have a mitigating effect, although they work along different lines to achieve this effect. The use of the past tense in a request distances the request away from reality (8a), whereas continuous aspect (*I'm wondering*) creates a mitigating effect by making a request more tentative (8b).

(8) report situation
   a. *I wondered if you could read it through for me, so I can hand it in tomorrow*. (NE)
   b. *I was wondering if you could have a look at this*. (NE)

Both modifiers were used in the native English requests, but not in the native Dutch requests. The learners used them sparingly, possibly again as a result of transfer from Dutch

In conclusion it seems that the native English respondents not only used more syntactic modifiers, but also a wider range of modifiers than the learners of English. Although the favourite syntactic modifier in all three groups was the past tense modal, the learners used it almost to the exclusion of other types of syntactic modification. The learners seem to have underused typically English syntactic modifiers such as tag question, negation or aspect.

3.2.2. Lexical modification

As was clear in Figure 1, both the native English requests and the native Dutch request included significantly more lexical modifiers than the non-native English requests. The native English and the native Dutch requests also included a wider range of lexical modifiers than the non-native English requests (Table 3).

Perhaps the most salient cross-cultural difference between Dutch and English concerned the use of politeness markers to modify requests. Judging from the low frequency (ND 9.4%) of Dutch politeness marker *alsjeblieft* 'please', the author of the guidebook quoted in the introduction was justified in observing that "...in Dutch one may omit the word 'please' without sounding too rude." (Vossestein 2001: 69). In the native English requests politeness marker *please* was used considerably more (NE: 42.8%.) than its Dutch counterpart. The learners seem to be aware of the cross-cultural variation in use of politeness markers, but again seem to overshoot the mark.

In the non-native English data *please* was clearly the most favourite lexical modifier (75.8%).

Table 3. Distribution of lexical modifiers; all groups

Lexical modifiers	NE	%	NNE	%	ND	%	total	%
Politeness marker	293	42.8	567	75.8	122	9.4	982	36.0
Downtoner	42	6.1	52	7.0	464	35.9	558	20.5
Understater	186	27.2	44	5.9	636	49.2	866	31.8
Subjectivizer	122	17.8	77	10.3	57	4.4	256	9.4
Consultative device	42	6.1	8	1.1	14	1.1	64	2.3
Total	685	100.0	748	100.0	1293	100.0	2726	100.0

Another clear cross-cultural difference between Dutch and English was the use of downtoners and understaters to modify requestive force. In Dutch both downtoners (ND 35.9%) and understaters (ND 49.2%) are highly conventionalised ways of modifying requests. In the native Dutch data downtoners, such as Dutch *misschien* 'maybe' and understaters, such as '*even* 'just', frequently co-occurred as in example (9):

(9) report situation
Zou jij misschien vanavond tijd hebben om het verslag
Would you maybe tonight time have to the report

even door te lezen?
just through to read

'Would you maybe have time tonight to just read through the report?' (ND1)

Downtoners were rarely used in the native English group (NE: 6.1%) or in the non-native English group (NNE: 7.0%), which suggests that the learners were aware of cross-cultural differences between Dutch and English. If we look at the use of understaters in these two groups, the picture is slightly more complicated. In the native English requests, understaters did occur, although not very frequently (NE 27.2), but the learners seem to have avoided them altogether (NNE 5.9%).

A final cross-cultural difference between Dutch and English was the use of subjectivizers, which are phrases in which a speaker expresses a personal opinion, attitude or a degree of pessimism with respect to the request, such as in *I'm afraid*. Subjectivizers were hardly used by the Dutch native speakers (ND: 4.4), whereas the native speakers of English used considerably more (NE: 17.8%). The learners used more subjectivizers than the Dutch native speakers but still fewer than the native speakers of English (NNE: 10.3%). This suggests the learners were aware of the difference between Dutch and English but still underused subjectivizers compared to the native speakers of English.

3.2.3. Situational variation in request modification

The next question was whether situational factors had an effect on the way speakers modified their requests. A repeated measures analysis showed that interactions between type of modifier and the design factors power, context and social distance were all significant, but that only the interaction between type of modifier and power accounted for over 10% of explained variance (Wilks' $\lambda = .63$, $F(4, 266) = 39.96$; $p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .37$). Post hoc analyses revealed that in overall terms respondents used slightly more modifiers in status equal situations, such as in requests between colleagues than in status unequal situations (P1 vs. P2: $F(1, 269) = 33.88$; $p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .11$; P1 vs. P3: $F(1, 269) = 2.64$; $p = .11$; $\eta^2 = .01$; P2 vs. P3: $F(1, 269) = 24.47$; $p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .08$). More importantly, the repeated measures analyses also showed that none of the effects for language were very substantial (all $\eta^2 < .10$). In other words, no substantial differences were found between the native English group, the native Dutch group and the non-native English group in the way they modified their requests in the different situations.

In conclusion, it turned out that the native English respondents used more syntactic modifiers than the native Dutch and the non-native English respondents. The non-native English respondents seem to have undermodified their requests slightly, since they used both fewer lexical and syntactic modifiers than the native English respondents. If the total number of modifiers included in a request can be regarded as a rough measure of overall politeness, then the non-native English requests seem to have been 'lacking in politeness' compared to the native English requests. A second conclusion is that, of the three design factors, power distance between speaker and hearer turned out to be the most influential factor in determining how respondents modified their request. Requests in status equal situations were modified

more elaborately than requests in either low or high speaker authority situations.

3.3. Sociopragmatic assessment

The analysis of the judgement task did not reveal any major cross-cultural differences between Dutch and English in the way the sociopragmatic factors (power, social distance and formality of context) were judged. Although differences were found across situation types, these differences were largely the same for all groups of respondents

Power. Differences between assessments of power for the three situation types turned out to be significant (Wilks' $\lambda = .15$, $F(2, 249) = 702.72$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .85$). All respondents attributed the highest degree of authority to the speaker in the high speaker authority situations (P3) and regarded speaker and hearer as equally powerful in the status equal situations (P2). In the low speaker authority situations the speaker was regarded as having less authority than the hearer. The native English respondents, however, regarded the speaker in these low speaker authority situations as slightly more powerful compared to the non-native English group and the native Dutch group. This suggests that the non-native English respondents may have misjudged these situations slightly, possibly as a result of transfer from Dutch.

Social Distance. The social distance between speaker and hearer in the acquainted situations was rated as significantly lower than in the stranger situations (Wilks' $\lambda = .18$, $F(1, 259) = 1181.52$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .82$). No major differences between the assessments of respondents were found.

Context. All groups of respondents felt that the institutional contexts were significantly more formal than the non-institutional contexts (Wilks' $\lambda = .20$, $F(1, 257) = 1025.99$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .80$). No major differences between the three groups of respondents were found.

4. Conclusion and Discussion

The present study shows that Dutch and English requests are quite similar at the level of request strategy and that the influence of sociopragmatic factors on the level of politeness required in requests is essentially quite similar. In both English and Dutch, ability strategies are highly conventionalized, and modal verbs *can* and *kunnen* 'can' are the preferred linguistic form in the

realization of ability strategies. In Dutch, unlike in English, requests are also quite commonly realised with willingness strategies, in which the speaker queries the willingness of the hearer to comply with the request. In Blum-Kulka's (1989) terms, Dutch and English seem to share *function-form mapping*, but not *distributional equivalence*.

Dutch and English seem to differ with regard to the preferred linguistic means for modifying requestive force. The native English requests included both more and more varied syntactic modifiers than the Dutch requests and frequently also included politeness marker *please*. Dutch politeness marker *alsjeblieft*, however, was used considerably less often. Instead, Dutch requests were more typically modified with downtoners and understaters.

For both intermediate and advanced Dutch learners of English, communicating pragmatic intent indirectly and varying the directness level of requests relative to situational variation does not seem to be problematic. However, the learners do seem to have problems using typically English request modification. They undermodified their requests both in terms of syntactic and lexical modification and, in addition, used a relatively narrow range of modifiers compared to the native speakers of English. The learners overused what might be called a standard pattern of modification consisting of past tense modal *could* and politeness marker *please*.

Two types of modifiers that were rare in the learner data, but more frequent in the native English data were modifiers that Brown and Levinson (1987) categorize as a 'be pessimistic' strategy. One of the options that a speaker has to protect a hearer's face is to "Assume H[earer] is not likely to do A[ct]" (1987: 131), in other words to be pessimistic. Typical examples of pessimism markers in English are the use of negation (plus tag), as in *You couldn't help me, could you*?, or the use of a pessimistic subjectivizer (plus tag), such as *I don't suppose you could help me, could you?*. In Dutch there appears to be a clear preference for politeness strategies that 'minimize the imposition' in Brown and Levinson's (1987) terms, in the form of understaters, in combination with downtoners. The fact that Dutch and English, to some extent at least, seem to differ in the way negative face wants are typically protected may explain why learners fail to notice, and use, typically English modifiers.

Still, although Dutch learners of English do not seem reach the 'native' English norm with regard to request modification, the question is whether these differences actually result in pragmatic failure in interaction. As Kasper and Schmidt (1996: 56) observed: "... some differences between NS norms and L2 performance may result in negative stereotyping by NS mes-

sage recipients, whereas others may be heard as somewhat different but perfectly appropriate alternatives". Future studies should therefore first of all be aimed at investigating whether undermodification of requests by learners of English has a negative effect on how these speakers are judged.

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Contrasting requests in Inner Circle Englishes: A study in variational pragmatics

Anne Barron

1. Introduction

Current descriptions and contrasts of the Englishes focus predominantly on the phonological, syntactic and lexical levels of language. In contrast, research on the conventions of polite language use in and across the Englishes is limited, as indeed reflected in recently published overviews of some of the varieties of English, none of which address pragmatic variation (e.g., Bauer 2002; Davies 2005; Hughes, Trudgill, and Watt 2005; Kortmann and Schneider 2005). Indeed, this general lack of attention to intra-lingual pragmatic research applies, with few exceptions, not only to the Englishes, but to the study of intra-lingual regional and social varieties in general.

This research desideratum in the study of pragmatic intra-lingual variation is, on the one hand, the result of limited attention paid to the effect of macro-social factors, such as region, ethnic background, age, social status and gender, on intra-lingual pragmatic conventions in the study of cross-cultural pragmatics (cf., e.g., Barron 2003: 266; Barron and Schneider 2005; Kasper 1989, 1995: 72–73; Schneider 2001). On the other hand, the pragmatic level has only also been considered to a very limited extent in dialectology (i.e. in traditional dialect geography and contemporary urban dialectology) despite the concern of this discipline with synchronic variation. The general lack of attention to intra-lingual research on language in (inter)action in both of these fields means that intra-lingual pragmatic variation still largely awaits systematic investigation (cf. Barron 2005a; Barron and Schneider 2005: 12; Schneider 2001; Schneider and Barron 2005, forthcoming).

Schneider and Barron (2005, forthcoming), among others (cf. below), have highlighted the need for research into the effect of macro-social factors on language in (inter)action. Indeed, they have proposed the establishment of *variational pragmatics* (VP), a sub-field of pragmatics, as a means of promoting such a systematic investigation of the effect of geographical and social factors on language in (inter)action (cf. also Barron 2005a; Barron

and Schneider 2005; Schneider and Barron forthcoming). VP is concerned with the investigation of possible correlations between macro-social factors and the use of language in action.

The present study, situated in the field of variational pragmatics, takes regional variation as its focus. Specifically, the paper investigates the realisation of requests by native speakers of two Inner Circle varieties of English, namely Irish English and English English.[1] The investigation focuses on the level of directness used in these varieties via an analysis of the head act strategies and of the amount and types of internal and external modification employed. Differences on the formal level are also addressed. The data for the study were elicited from 27 Irish and 27 English students using a production questionnaire (three situations). Findings are discussed as to their consequences for the study of intra-lingual pragmatic variation within the framework of variational pragmatics and also as to their implications – and the implications of the existence of intra-lingual regional variation in general – for the Inner and Expanding Circle classrooms. The investigation then, although it must be seen as a pilot study in variational pragmatics given the relatively small sample and number of situations analysed, nonetheless adds to the literature on variational pragmatics and also provides direction for future research in the area and also for the further development of the teaching of pragmatics in the classroom context.

The paper begins with an introduction to variational pragmatics and an overview of the levels of pragmatic variation found between regional varieties to date. Following this, the methodology underlying the present study is introduced, and the findings are presented and discussed against the background of previous research in variational pragmatics. Implications for the Inner and Expanding Circle classrooms are also discussed in some detail.

2. Variational pragmatics

2.1. Where is intra-lingual variation in pragmatics and pragmatics in intra-lingual variation?

Cross-cultural pragmatics is "… a field of inquiry which compares the ways in which two or more languages are used in communication" (House-Edmondson 1986: 282). Research in this area has shown rather conclusively that the pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic conventions of language use may differ across languages (cf., e.g., Blum-Kulka, House, and

Kasper 1989a; Ochs 1996: 425–431). However, problematically, languages in cross-cultural pragmatics are often dealt with as homogeneous wholes.

Early cross-cultural research in the form of the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realisation Project (CCSARP) did recognise that regional variation might influence language use conventions. This was apparent in the different intra-lingual varieties of English for which data were collected, i.e. Australian English (Blum-Kulka 1989; Blum-Kulka and House 1989; Olshtain 1989; Weizman 1989), American English (Wolfson, Marmor, and Jones 1989) and British English (House-Edmondson 1986; House and Kasper 1987).[2] However, regrettably, these different varieties of English were never compared in the CCSARP, at least not in a public forum. In other words, although there was a clear recognition in this project of the possible influence of regional variation across pluricentric languages, this aspect of variation was not investigated further within the framework of the project. Indeed, with the exception of a small – but, rather encouragingly, growing – number of recent studies into macro-social pragmatic variation, particularly in the area of the pragmatics of the regional varieties of Spanish (cf. Garcia forthcoming for an overview) (cf. 2.2), the investigation of macro-social variation has largely continued to take a back seat in pragmatic research. Differences based on region, age, social status, gender and ethnic identity have, for the most part, been either abstracted away or, at the very least, not systematically discussed, meaning that the study of intra-lingual variation on the pragmatic level has been generally limited to the situational level, i.e. to the study of "micro sociolinguistic factors", in Kasper's (1995: 72) terms.[3]

This research dearth into macro-social pragmatic variation has not gone unnoticed in pragmatics. Kasper (1995: 73), for instance, laments on the lack of investigation into the effect of region, age, social status, gender and ethnic identity on language use conventions, writing:

> Der seiner makrosoziolinguistischen Merkmale entledigte Zielsprachenaktant ist damit ein beobachtungs- und beschreibungsinadäquates Konstrukt. Auch aus verschiedenen theoretischen Perspektiven der Soziolinguistik heraus ist der homogenisierte Zielsprachenaktant nicht zu begründen. Soziolinguistische Normmodelle haben seit jeher den Einfluss kontextexterner und kontextinterner Faktoren auf situiertes Verstehen und Sprechen hervorgehoben …
>
> 'The target language participant who is abstracted away from his macro-sociolinguistic characteristics is an inadequate construct from an observational and descriptive point of view. Neither can the homogenised target language participant be justified from the point of view of various theoreti-

> cal sociolinguistic perspectives. Sociolinguistic norm models have always emphasised the influence of context-external and context-internal factors on situated understanding and speaking …' (my translation).

Other researchers who have also highlighted the dearth of research on pragmatic variation according to region include Grzega (2000, 2005: 44, 46) who has noted the dearth for pluricentric varieties of German and English in particular, Márquez Reiter (2002, 2003) who has focused on the desideratum for research into the pragmatics of various regionally-defined varieties of Spanish, and more recently Clyne (2006), who, like Grzega, has focused above all on variation within the pluricentric varieties of English and German. Indeed, Clyne (2006: 97) succinctly comments "Very few studies so far have focused on pragmatic variation between different national varieties of a pluricentric language."

On the other hand, research in dialectology and variational sociolinguistics (urban dialectology) has long established that macro-social factors correlate with linguistic choices. Variational sociolinguistics has focused predominantly on the phonological level of language. However, a number of studies in this tradition have also revealed a correlation between higher-order social factors and other traditionally recognised system-based variables (cf. Apte 2001: 43–46).[4] Indeed, the traditional form-based focus of dialect studies is clearly reflected in recent overviews of variation in regional dialectology, such as those by Bauer (2002) and Kortmann and Schneider (2005). Both of these works discuss variation only on the levels of phonology, morphology and syntax; pragmatic variation is not even mentioned.[5] Similarly, Rickford (1996), a reader-friendly overview of some of the applications of sociolinguistic research on regional and social factors, concentrates on the phonological, syntactic and lexical levels of language variation. Macro-social variation in language use conventions is not discussed (cf. also Davies 2005; Hughes, Trudgill, and Watt 2005, both overviews of the varieties of English which also omit the pragmatic level of description).

Individual writers in dialectology have lamented this general lack of data on macro-social pragmatic variation. As early as 1978, Schlieben-Lange and Weydt made a plea for an extension of the scope of dialect studies to include a pragmatic perspective. Also, more recently, Wolfram and Schilling-Estes (2006: 100–101), in the context of their account of dialects in American English, have remarked that: "The acknowledgment of language-use differences as a legitimate domain of dialect studies is relatively recent compared to the traditional focus on language form (i.e. lexical items, pronunciations, grammatical structures) …". In other words, Wolfram and Schilling-Estes

recognise the fact that intra-lingual varieties may differ from each other, not only on the well-established phonological, grammatical and semantic levels, but also on the pragmatic level. Rather unusual for overviews of variation in dialectology, they devote a complete sub-section to differences in language-use conventions (2006: 93–101). Here, they give an overview of some studies which have revealed the macro-social factors, ethnic identity and gender, to correlate with intra-lingual pragmatic variation.[6]

2.2. Variational pragmatics: At the interface of pragmatics and modern dialectology

Schneider and Barron (2005) have suggested *variational pragmatics* (VP) as a term for research dedicated to investigating the effect of macro-social pragmatic variation on language in (inter)action (cf. also Barron 2005a; Schneider and Barron forthcoming). From a pragmatic perspective, VP aims at complementing the study of pragmatics with a focus on macro-social factors. From a dialectologist position, it aims at complementing the study of variation with a pragmatic component.

Variational pragmatics can be conceptualised as an area of research dedicated to systematically investigating the effect of macro-social factors on the use of language in (inter)action. Macro-social factors refer here to factors, such as region, gender, ethnic identity, socio-economic status and age. Similar to variational sociolinguistics, variational pragmatics is a top-down approach, with these macro-social factors viewed as stable social categories which nonetheless interact. Needless to say, such a conceptualization of social structures as stable is commonly criticised by constructivists who argue that social structures do not have a reality outside of local actions and practices. Rather, they believe that social class, gender, etc. are things that individuals do rather than things that they are or have (cf. Coupland 2001: 2; Holmes and Meyerhoff 1999: 180). They argue, therefore, that, depending on the interaction, an individual may be more or less female, more or less middle-class, etc. in a particular context. However, our view here, and indeed, the view taken in variational sociolinguistics, is that social identities are never written on a *tabula rasa* in a socio-historical vacuum. In other words, individuals cannot but be influenced by the social environment in which they are brought up. Variational pragmatics, like variational sociolinguistics, investigates exactly such influences.

In an earlier paper, I reviewed some of the studies which have recently begun to concentrate on regional intra-lingual varieties. Based on this analysis, I was able to conclude that macro-social regional variation does indeed exist on a pragmatic level (cf. Barron 2005a). In addition, in this same paper, focusing on research on Inner Circle varieties of English and also on other pluricentric languages, I address the question as to the levels at which speech-act-based macro-social pragmatic variation occurs in particular in the area of regional variation. The results of this analysis showed that at this early stage of research, it can be suggested that intra-lingual pragmatic variation does not generally affect the inventory of strategies or the modification devices available for use. Instead, intra-lingual pragmatic variation is concentrated on the following levels:

a) *Differences found in the distribution of the strategies chosen in terms of relative frequency (differences on a subordinate level for offers and requests)*
The choices made from the inventory of strategies and the distribution of these strategies in terms of relative frequency may differ by variety. However, these differences appear to be at a more sub-ordinate level, at least for offers and requests, than is the case for inter-lingual variation (cf., e.g., Cenoz and Valencia 1996; Eslamirasekh 1993; House and Kasper 1987 on inter-lingual differences on the level of the strategy). Indeed, representative of variational pragmatic research to date is an intra-lingual study on offers in Irish English and English English (cf. Barron 2005b). In this study, an identical conventionally indirect super-strategy was found to be used by speakers of both varieties. Also, on a more sub-ordinate level, the most frequently employed strategies were shared by both groups, namely the execution strategy state ability and the preference strategy question wish, and both strategies were similarly distributed across situations. However, differences were noted on a deeper level of analysis. Irish English speakers were found, for instance, to use a strategy of predication (*Will I take you to the hospital?*; *Will you have a cup of tea ...?*) extensively. This convention was only used to a limited extent in the counterpart English English data. Indeed, the convention of means employed in *Will I take you to the hospital?*, a question future act of speaker strategy, was not found in the English English data analysed at all. Similarly, Placencia (2005), in an intra-lingual study on product requests employed in corner store interactions in Quito (Ecuadorian Spanish) and Madrid (Peninsular Spain) finds no differences on the level of

the super-strategy. However, on a more subordinate level, Quito informants are found to clearly prefer imperatives while Madrid speakers opted for a wider variety of strategies, preferring quasi-imperatives (i.e., elliptical forms) (cf. also Márquez Reiter 2003; Márquez Reiter and Placencia 2004; Warga forthcoming for studies yielding similar findings).

b) *Differences found in the distribution of the modification chosen in terms of relative frequency*
The English and Irish offers mentioned above used external mitigation in the form of grounders and explicit conditionals (*if you want/ like*) (Barron 2005b). However, the Irish informants employed significantly more external modification than speakers of English English. Similarly, Schneider (2005) shows that speakers of Irish English, English English and American English made similar choices of external modifiers in minimising thanks. Schneider's Irish informants, however, engaged in a considerably higher level of external modification than speakers of either of these other varieties. Likewise, the Irish informants investigated were found to employ internal modification in their thanks minimisers to a greater extent in this study than either the English or American informants in the situations investigated. A study by Breuer and Geluykens 2007 should also be mentioned in this context. Breuer and Geluykens investigated requests realised by American English and British English native speakers using a production questionnaire. She found British speakers to employ both internal and external modification more frequently than American English speakers (cf. also Márquez Reiter 2002, 2003; Muhr 1994; Placencia 2005; Warga forthcoming for similar findings on different regional varieties).

c) *Differences in the range of modifiers employed in a particular situation*
The range of modifiers used may also vary. Placencia (2005), for instance, finds a larger level of variation in the internal modifiers used in requests for products in Quiteño Spanish relative to Madrileño Spanish. In addition, speakers of Quiteño Spanish were shown to use multiple downgraders in a single request.

d) *Differences in the particular linguistic forms used to realise an individual strategy or type of modification*
On the level of form, differences may be found on the level of the existence of a particular form, on the level of the relative preferences of use of a particular form, and finally, on the level of the relative range of

forms employed to realise a particular strategy or type of modification. Márquez Reiter (2003), for example, shows a higher degree of explicitness to characterise Uruguayan relative to Peninsular grounders. Also, differences are found in Barron (2005b) between the Irish English and English English offers, with the conventionalised explicit conditional form *if you like* used frequently by the Irish informants, but not at all by English informants. Finally, Terkourafi (1999) finds non-literal diminuation not to constitute a conventionalised means of expressing politeness in a range of speech acts in Cypriot Greek, the non-standard variety spoken in urban areas in Cyprus, relative to Standard Modern Greek, the standard variety spoken in urban areas of mainland Greece (cf. also studies by Márquez Reiter and Placencia 2004; Schneider 2005; Warga forthcoming).

As highlighted in Barron (2005a), however, it is important to caution that these generalizations represent a very early stage of research. Further speech-act-based data are required to investigate these and other parameters. In addition, as well as

a) *speech act realisations*,

other levels of analysis include:

b) *linguistic forms*
i.e. the analysis of linguistic forms, such as discourse markers, hedges, upgraders. The analysis of the distribution and use of the forms *I say* and *I mean* vs. *I'd say* and *you know* is one example (cf. Kallen 2005b). Cf. also Farr and O'Keeffe (2002), Kallen (2006) and Tottie (2002: 187–188).

c) *sequential patterns*
i.e. the analysis of, e.g., the sequences in which speech acts are embedded (cf., e.g., Placencia 2005; Schlieben-Lange and Weydt 1978: 262–263; Tottie 2002: 181–182).

d) *topic management*
i.e. the analysis of topics addressed in small talk, taboo topics, etc. (cf., e.g., Tottie 2002: 185–187; Wolfram and Schillig-Estes 2006: 98–99).

e) *discourse organisation*
i.e. the analysis of turn-taking phenomena, e.g. pauses, overlaps, interruptions, back-channelling (cf., e.g., McCarthy 2002; Tottie 1991, 2002: 185–187).

To this list, could also be added:

f) *genre conventions*
i.e. the analysis of macro-structure, such as the moves conventionally employed in book blurbs (cf. Kathpalia 1997). Cf. also Yajun and Chenggang (2006).

In the present paper, we concentrate, however, on the level of the speech act, and in particular on requests. It is requests to which we now turn.

3. Method

3.1. Data collection

Requests in Irish English and English English were elicited using a production questionnaire, specifically a discourse completion task (DCT).[7] A DCT is, in essence, a series of short written role-plays based on everyday situations which are designed to elicit a specific speech act by requiring informants to complete a turn of dialogue for each item. A short description of the scene before the interaction is usually included. Here, the general circumstances are set and the relevant situational parameters concerning social dominance, social distance and degree of imposition described (cf. Appendix for an example).

The DCT is, as Bardovi-Harlig (1999: 238) aptly summarises, "… at once the most celebrated and most maligned of all the methods used in cross-cultural and interlanguage pragmatics research". However, as she goes on to emphasise, no instrument can be said to be good or bad, but rather suitable or unsuitable to the question at hand. The DCT offered many advantages for the particular analysis at hand, that of requesting across cultures. Firstly, previous research has shown that the data elicited reflect the content of oral data despite its written form.[8] Ease of elicitation of comparable speech act realizations from large samples of informants quickly and efficiently and across cultures was also an important advantage, as was the ease of variability of contextual variables, such as social distance and social dominance, important constraints in determining the degree of directness chosen in a particular utterance. In addition, the DCT enables the elicitation of stereotypical interactions in the mind of the respondents and, as such, portrays the socially accepted use of language in a particular culture.

On the negative side, informants in a DCT task are forced to play the part of a person other than him/herself – suggesting possibly unreliable responses (cf. Rose 1992: 57; Wolfson, Marmor, and Jones 1989: 181). Also, the belief that contextual variables, such as social distance and social dominance, can be maintained stable in an interaction is an assumption inherent in the production questionnaire which is reductive as these factors are in fact continuously evolving. Furthermore, the situational descriptions provided are of necessity simplified, with the minimum of information given. As a result, respondents are forced to elaborate on the context themselves, which naturally reduces the degree of control as different people may imagine different details (cf. Bardovi-Harlig 1999: 242; Kasper 1998: 94).[9] There is also some evidence that the DCT elicits more direct strategies than would be found in naturally-occurring data.[10] In sum, then, although the DCT offered many advantages for the present study, it remains exploratory in nature, and should be supplemented in future investigations with triangulated data – ideally with naturally-occurring data.

The present study focuses on three request situations. Table 1 provides brief details of these (cf. Appendix for the actual DCT items employed in the study). All three of these situations were originally included on the CCSARP questionnaire. House (1989: 106) differentiates between standard and non-standard request situations – both opposing poles on a continuum. A relatively high obligation to comply with a request, a relatively low degree of difficulty in performing the request and a high right to pose the particular request are features associated with standard situations. The opposite features describe non-standard situations although these descriptions are relative rather than absolute – representing a continuum. The lift situation in the present study is a non-standard situation (cf. House 1989: 109). The police situation, on the other hand, represents a standard situation. The notes situation is half way on the standard/ non-standard continuum – as House (1989: 107) remarks, this situation is "too low in obligation to be standard

Table 1. Requests – situational descriptions

Request Situation	**Synopsis of Situation**
Notes	Student requests notes from friend
Lift	Man requests colleague/neighbour for drive home
Police	Policeman requests woman to move car

and both too high in rights and low in difficulty to be included as nonstandard".

Finally, it should be noted that the request data were collected on a questionnaire which included a total of nine situations designed to elicit a range of requests (7) and responses to thanks (2) (cf. Schneider 2005). The inclusion of two speech acts served to increase the naturalness of informants' behaviour in that it prevented skimming of situational descriptions (e.g., *Ah, they're all requests anyhow*). The focus on the three request situations police, notes and lift was based on the continuum of standardness which they represent.

3.2. Participants

Production data were elicited from 27 females in a school in the South-East of Ireland and from 27 females in a school in Southern England.[11] This concentration on two areas only is necessarily reductive. Clearly, this project is only a step towards an analysis of Irish English and English English.[12] Further research is needed before generalisations can be made.

The average age of the Irish group was 16.2 years, that of the English informants 16.3 years. The group sizes were established on the basis of a recommendation by Kasper and Dahl (1991: 226) who found that responses of homogeneous groups elicited using a production questionnaire, the primary instrument employed in the present study, tend to concentrate around a few subcategories, thus rendering larger samples unnecessary. The concentration on females only was considered important given gender differences established in language use (cf., e.g., Fukushima 1990: 541 on gender differences in the choice of offer strategy in English).

In total, 81 English English requests and 80 Irish English requests were analysed. The difference in one is due to one item left uncompleted in the Irish data for the police situation. This was coded as a missing value.

3.3. Coding scheme

The coding scheme which first guided this study was that developed for the CCSARP by Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper (1989b), itself based on an earlier coding system by Edmondson (1981). It allows a request to be analysed according to the degree of directness and the type of modification em-

ployed.[13] This analysis was then complemented by an analysis of form, where relevant. Additional categories of analysis were added where necessary, cf., e.g., 4.3.

As in the CCSARP, the head act, i.e., the minimal unit which can realise a particular speech act (cf. Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper 1989b: 275), is first isolated in the present study, and the strategy employed in the head act then established. Following this, modification, whether internal or external, is identified. An example of the coding serves to illustrate the scheme:

(1) Lift, IrE: ... *I was just wondering if I could get a lift home with you as I've missed my bus and the next one is not due for an hour*

Head act strategy: *I was just wondering if I could get a lift home with you* = query preparatory.

Internal modification:
- Syntactic downgrading: *I was just wondering, if I could …* = tense (*was*) & aspect (*wondering*) & conditional clause (*if*) & conditional (*could*)
- Lexical and phrasal downgrading: *just* = downtoner, I was wondering = subjectiviser

External modification:
- *I've missed my bus and the next one is not due for an hour* = 2 (post-) grounders

The CCSARP recognises nine distinct levels of directness in requesting (cf. Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper 1989a: 17–19, 1989b: 278–281). Those relevant to the present study are detailed in the following.

4. Findings

4.1. Request head act

By far the most frequently employed of the nine request strategies identified in the CCSARP in both the English and Irish requests in the present data is the query preparatory strategy, a strategy in which the preparatory conditions of a request are thematised in a conventionalised manner. An example of a realisation of this strategy from the present data is the following request (cf. also example (1) above):

(2) Police, EngE: … *can you move your car to the next street.*

Here the preparatory condition for requests "H is able to perform x. S believes H is able to do x" (Searle 1969: 66) is queried in so conventional a manner that the speaker usually does not consider his/her ability to carry out the request, but rather simply decides to comply or not to comply.

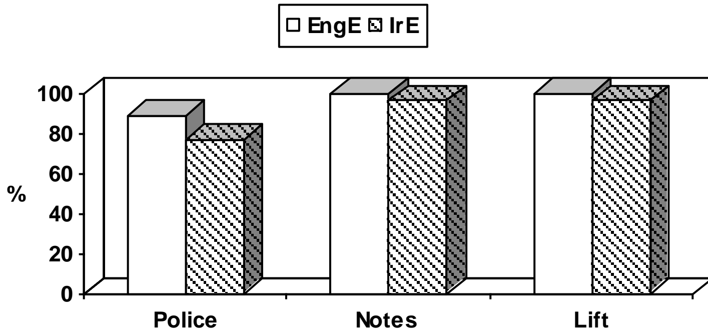

Figure 1. Distribution of query preparatory strategies in the request head act

The English English and Irish English data show no variation in the choice of head act strategy. Both speech communities clearly prefer a query preparatory request strategy in all three situations (Police: IrE: 76.9% [n=20] EngE 88.9% [n=24]; Notes: IrE: 96.3% [n=26], EngE: 100% [n=27]; Lift: IrE: 96.3% [n=26], EngE: 100% [n=27]). As in House (1989: 102), a somewhat lower use of query preparatories was recorded in both cultures in the standard police situation relative to the more non-standard situations (cf. Figure 1).

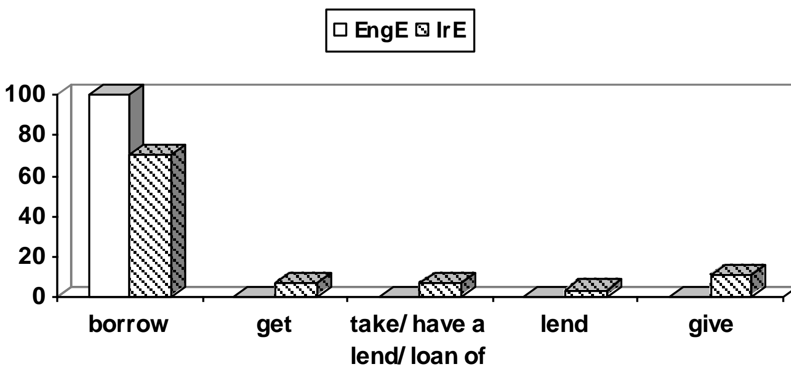

Figure 2. Lexical means used to refer to the requested act in the notes situation

Despite such broad similarities, there were, however, some interesting lexical differences found in the notes situation, differences which had repercussions for the relative politeness level of these utterances. In the EngE data, the action requested was always communicated via the verb *borrow*. Some examples serve to illustrate this unambiguous trend (cf. also Figure 2).

(3) Notes, EngE: *Hi! I missed yesterday's lesson**, could I please borrow** your notes?*

(4) Notes, EngE: ***Can I borrow** your notes for yesterday's class?*

(5) Notes, EngE: *You know I missed that class yesterday? **Would it be OK to borrow** your notes to copy them up?*

In the Irish data, by contrast, speakers chose between a variety of options, namely between *get*, *lend*, *give* and *to take/ have a lend/ loan of something* to refer to the requested act, as seen in Figure 2 and in examples (6) to (9). Similar to the EngE data, the preferred option is to use *borrow*. However, only 70.4% (n= 19) of the Irish speakers do so compared to 100% (n=27) in the EngE data. This difference was statistically significant (p=0.004).

(6) Notes, IrE: *Ciara, Is it alright **if I get** your notes from yesterday so I can see what I missed in class*.

(7) Notes, IrE: *Ciara, I missed yesterdays class and I was wondering **could I have a lend of** your notes*

(8) Notes, IrE: *Ciara **would you mind lending me** your notes from class yesterday. I was absent*

(9) Notes, IrE: *Hello Ciara, I was wondering **if you could give me** the notes for yesterday's class please. I had to visit the dentist and I would like to catch up with the class.*

The preference for the verb *borrow* meant that the request perspective in the EngE data could only be either speaker-oriented, as in examples (3) and (4), or impersonal, as in example (5). Indeed, overall, the English informants preferred a speaker-orientation (cf. Figure 3). Specifically, 92.6% (n=25) of all EngE requests in the notes situation were speaker-oriented. The remaining 7.4% (n=2) were impersonal. In Irish English, on the other hand, use of the verbs *give* and *lend* meant that a hearer-perspective was possible, as seen in examples (8) and (9). However, Figure 3 shows that the Irish, similar to the English informants, also prefer a speaker-perspective (81.5% [n=22]). Nonetheless, 14.8% (n=4) of them formed their requests in

a hearer-oriented manner, and thus, brought the hearer's future action to the fore. In so doing, these four Irish informants were more direct than informants who employed a speaker-oriented request since speaker-oriented requests, given that they frequently appear as a request for permission, imply that the hearer or requestee has control over the speaker (the requester). They, therefore, avoid the appearance of trying to control or impose on the hearer and are, therefore, perceived as being relatively more polite (cf. Blum-Kulka and Olshtain 1984). This difference in speaker/ hearer/ impersonal perspective in the Irish and English request data was, however, unlike the difference in lexical means, not statistically significant. Hence, we cannot conclude from this analysis that the Irish were more direct than the English informants.

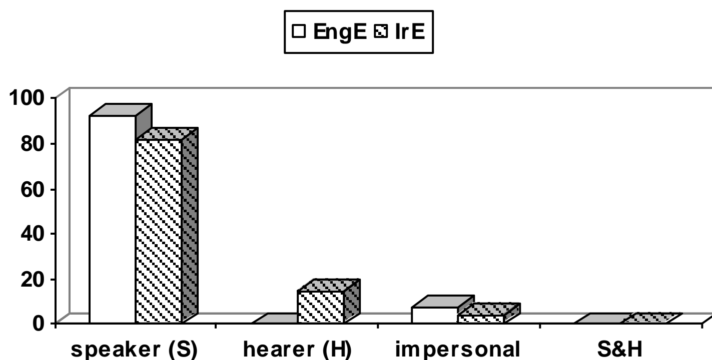

Figure 3. Request perspective in the notes situation

The following analysis concentrates exclusively on the query preparatory strategies identified here since any mitigation employed is often related to the underlying strategy. This approach to data analysis serves to increase the validity of the investigation (cf. Faerch and Kasper 1989: 222). An example may serve to illustrate this point: the politeness marker *please*, for instance, always acts as a downgrader when used with an imperative. However, when used with a query preparatory strategy, it may function either as an IFID or as a downgrader, depending on the nature of the situation (cf. House 1989).

4.2. Internal modification

The analysis of internal modification investigates how the head act may be modified to aggravate or mitigate the requestive force. In the following we

look at the use of syntactic downgraders (SDn) and lexical and phrasal downgraders in the Irish English and English English requests at hand.

4.2.1. Syntactic mitigation

The use of syntactic downgraders in a requestive head act reduces the impact of the request on the addressee. In increasing the level of indirectness, they provide the hearer with some freedom and in so doing, lessen any negative face-threat to the hearer in complying with the wishes of the speaker. The syntactic downgraders employed in the data are shown in Table 2. As mentioned above, the mitigators identified here were first established within the framework of the CCSARP (cf. Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper 1989a, b). Importantly, the use of these forms must be optional for them to be coded as downgraders. The conditional form *could* in

(10) Police, EngE: *could you move your car please*?

can be replaced by an indicative form, i.e. *can*, in the present example. Hence *could* is mitigating (cf. Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper 1989b: 283). Brown and Levinson (1987: 173) categorise such forms as a negative politeness strategy. They explain that by choosing *could* rather than *can* in the present example, the speaker is being pessimistic since it is assumed that the hypothetical world associated with such a request (e.g. *if I were to ask you*) is far away. In other words, the use of the conditional in such cases communicates a sense of remoteness of possibility. Of the variety of syntactic downgraders found in the data, the use of conditionals represents a rather simple form of downgrading with limited mitigating power. Combinations of syntactic downgraders, such as *I was wondering, if I could*, a combination of tense, aspect, conditional clause and conditional, are more highly mitigating since they include a range of negative politeness strategies (cf. also Barron 2003: 206–212). The use of *was* in such an utterance, for instance, represents the negative politeness strategy point-of-view distancing. That is, by using *was* the speaker distances him/ herself from the present moment and, thus, from the request (Brown and Levinson 1987: 205) (cf. Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper 1989b and Brown and Levinson 1978, 1987 for further details).

Syntactic mitigation is used in all three situations in both speech communities. In the standard police situation, cultural differences are found neither in the frequency of syntactic downgrading employed (cf. Figure 4) nor in the

number of syntactic downgraders employed when syntactic downgrading was used (cf. Figure 5).

Table 2. Overview of syntactic downgraders employed with query preparatory head act strategies

	Description	**Example** (from the present data)
Conditional	Use of the conditional serves to distance the speaker from the reality of the situation and, thus, to decrease the face-threat to the speaker of a request should it be refused. It is coded only when optional and is, thus, downgrading.	*Could you?*
Conditional clause	The speaker, with the aid of a conditional clause, is able to distance the request in question from reality, and so decrease the positive face-threat to the speaker, should the request be refused. In addition, it decreases the imposition on the hearer and, thus, the associated negative face threat.	*...if you ...*
Aspect	Inclusion of types of aspect, such as the durative aspect marker. Usage is only regarded as mitigating, if it can be substituted by a simpler form.	*I was wondering if I ...*
Tense	Past tense forms are coded as downgrading only if they can be substituted with present tense forms without a change in semantic meaning.	*I was wondering, would I*
Combinations of the above		*I was wondering, if I could*: tense, aspect, conditional clause, conditional

In both of the more non-standard situations, by contrast, the Irish informants are found to be more indirect, using more syntactic downgrading than their English English counterparts. In the notes situation, for instance, syntactic mitigators are used to a larger extent by the Irish informants

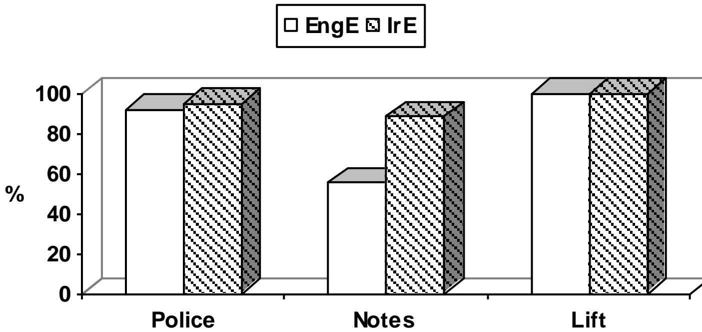

Figure 4. Syntactic mitigation employed in query preparatory head act strategies

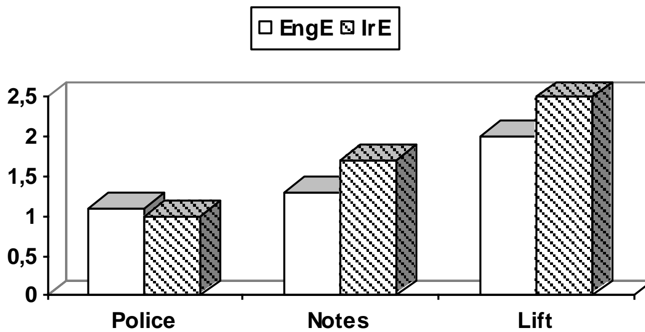

Figure 5. Average number of syntactic downgraders employed per informant where syntactic downgrading is used in query preparatory head act strategies

(88.5% [n=23]) than by the English informants (55.6% [n=15]), a statistically significant difference (p=0.007) (cf. Figure 4). The higher number of syntactic downgraders employed in this same situation in the Irish data is also notable, despite not being statistically significant (cf. Figure 5). In the more highly non-standard lift situation, the higher level of indirectness in the Irish data is not apparent at first sight since levels of syntactic mitigation are equal at 100% (IrE: n=26, EngE: n=27) (cf. Figure 4). However, the difference between the number of mitigators used per informant in this same situation is statistically significant when the average of two mitigators in the English data is compared to the average of 2.5 employed in the Irish data (p=0.035) (cf. Figure 5). In other words, syntactic downgrading is employed

in all of the Irish English and English English lift requests. However, the Irish requests include more such downgraders.

Table 3. Use of conditionals and combinations of syntactic downgraders with aspect-tense in query preparatory head act strategies as a percentage of the syntactic downgraders used[14]

	Syntactic downgraders	**Conditionals**	**Aspect-tense combinations**
Police			
EngE	n=22	95.5% (n=21)	4.5% (n=1)
IrE	n=19	100% (n=19)	0 (n=0)
Notes			
EngE	n=15	73.3% (n=11)	0 (n=0)
IrE	n=23	52.2% (n=12)	30.4% (n=7)
Lift			
EngE	n=27	48.1% (n=13)	40.7% (n=11)
IrE	n=26	19.2% (n=5)	69.2% (n=18)

The analysis of the different types of syntactic downgraders employed is also insightful, pointing also to a higher level of indirectness in the Irish more non-standard requests. Here, we contrast the use of a conditional, the simplest form of syntactic downgrading in the data, with combinations of aspect and tense. Such combinations include aspect, tense, conditional and conditional clause, as in ... *I was just wondering if I could borrow your notes*, and aspect, tense and conditional combinations, as in *I was wondering could I borrow your notes*.

As above, there are no differences to be found in the police situation, both cultures preferring a simple conditional (cf. Table 3). However, similar to the preceding analysis, the Irish are again found to invest more in indirectness in the non-standard situations relative to their English counterparts. In the notes situation, downgrading in the form of conditionals was used most extensively in both data sets, and findings for the use of conditionals were not significant in this situation. However, clear cross-varietal differences were found in the use of the complex combination of aspect and tense with other syntactic downgraders (p=0.007). This type of syntactic downgrading was namely not recorded at all in the English data for this situation. By contrast, combinations of aspect-tense were found in 30.4% (n=7) of the Irish notes requests, making the head act of the Irish informants' requests

more indirect than those of the English informants (cf. Table 3). The following examples are taken from the Irish English data set:

(11) IrE, Notes: *Ciara, **I was wondering could I** borrow your notes from yesterday's class because I missed it as I was sick*

(12) IrE, Notes: *Ciara I was missing from class yesterday and **I was just wondering if I could** borrow your notes.*

This same trend towards a more indirect Irish request is also seen in the lift situation where the Irish informants use significantly less single conditionals (19.2%) compared to the English informants (48.1%) (p=0.026), and significantly more syntactically complex and highly downgrading aspect and tense combinations (IrE: 69.2%; EngE 40.7%) (p=0.038) (cf. Table 3).

4.2.2. Lexical and phrasal downgrading

Like syntactic downgraders, lexical and phrasal downgraders serve to mitigate the illocutionary force of requests. The lexical and phrasal down graders used in both cultures in the situations analysed are listed in Table 4. The mitigators identified here were first established within the framework of the CCSARP (cf. Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper 1989a, b).

Table 4. Overview of lexical and phrasal downgraders employed with query preparatory head act strategies[15]

	Description	**Example(s) (from the present data)**
Subjectivisers	Elements which express a speaker's subjective opinion with regard to the situation referred to in the proposition	*I wonder..., I don't suppose, ...*
Consultative devices	Elements chosen to involve the hearer directly in an effort to gain compliance	*Do you mind, if ...?*
Downtoners	Sentential or propositional modifiers employed to moderate the force of a request on the addressee	*possibly, maybe*
Politeness marker *please*	Downgrading function only in standard situations (cf. below)	*please*

Here it is important to note that *please* only functions as a downgrader of illocutionary force in standard situations (cf. House 1989: 106–118). In non-standard situations, it upgrades illocutionary force.[16] In the present data, *please* is thus coded as a lexical and phrasal downgrader in the police situa-

tion only.[17] Since the notes situation is between the standard and non-standard poles, it is difficult to interpret the status of *please* in this situation in either data set. As a result, House (1989) excludes this situation from her analysis. This is also the approach taken here. In other words, the notes situation is not analysed for lexical and phrasal downgrading. The analysis of the range of lexical and phrasal downgraders occurring concentrates, therefore, on the police situation (where *please* is coded as a downgrader) and on the lift situation (where *please* is not analysed as a lexical downgrader).

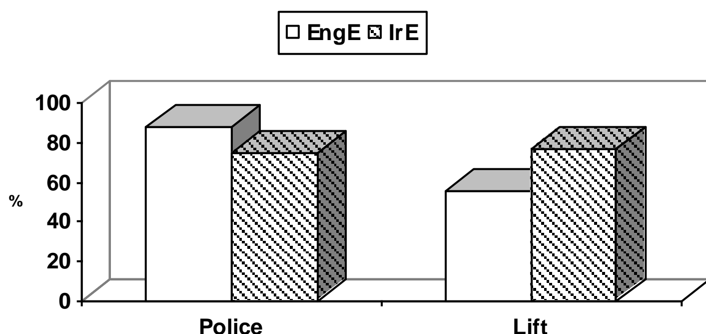

Figure 6. Lexical and phrasal downgraders distributed over query preparatory head act strategies

In the police situation, lexical and phrasal downgraders were employed by 75% (n=15) of the informants using a query preparatory strategy in the Irish data and by 87.5% (n=21) of those in the English data (cf. Figure 6). However, this difference was not statistically significant. A single lexical and phrasal downgrader was usual in both cultures, only 15% (n=3) of the Irish informants using a lexical and phrasal downgrader with a query preparation strategy and 9.5% (n=2) of the English informants using two such downgraders. Both speech communities showed a preference for an extensive use of *please* in this standard situation. Indeed, every time a lexical and phrasal downgrader was used in the Irish data, *please* was used (on occasion in combination). In the English data, *please* occurred in 76.2% (n=16) of requests. However, here too, these differences were not statistically significant (cf. Figure 7).

In the non-standard lift situation, 55.6% (n=15) of the English informants used a lexical and phrasal downgrader compared to 76.9% (n=20) of the Irish informants (cf. Figure 6). However, this difference was not statistically significant. In addition, similar to the police situation, a single lexical and

phrasal downgrader was usual, although proportionally more combinations of lexical and phrasal downgraders were employed than in the police situation, two downgraders being used by 35% (n=7) of the Irish informants

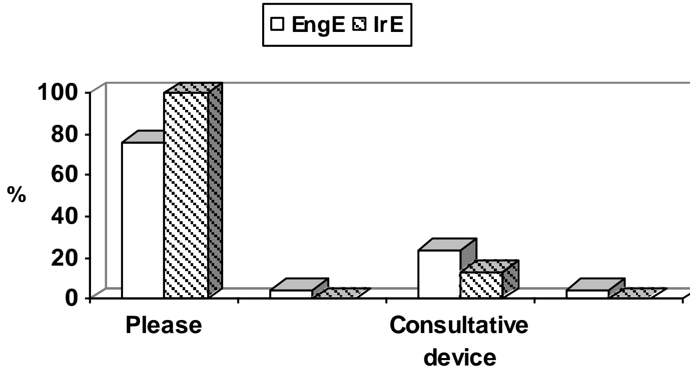

Figure 7. Police situation: Types of lexical and phrasal downgraders used in query preparatory head act strategies as a percentage of the lexical and phrasal downgraders used[18]

and 26.7% (n=4) of the English informants. An example of a request in which a combination of lexical and phrasal downgraders appeared is seen in the following. Here, we have a combination of a downgrader (*possibly*) and a subjectiviser *I wonder*, combined with aspect, tense, a conditional form and conditional clause:

(13) IrE, Notes: *Hello, how do yee do today.* ***I was wondering*** *if it was o.k. with you could I* ***possibly*** *get a lift home.*[19]

Consultative devices were only used to a very narrow extent in both data sets here (EngE: 6.7% [n=1], IrE: 15% [n=3]). A request with a consultative device is seen in example (14). Here, the consultative device, *do you mind,* is combined with a conditional:

(14) IrE, Notes: ***Would you mind*** *if I got a lift home in the car with you, I've just missed my bus.*

Subjectivisers, on the other hand, such as that seen in example (13), were employed to a large extent in both the English and the Irish data in the lift situation, as seen in Figure 8 (EngE: 80% [n=12], IrE: 95% [n=19]). Interestingly, on a formal level, the structure of requests involving the subject-

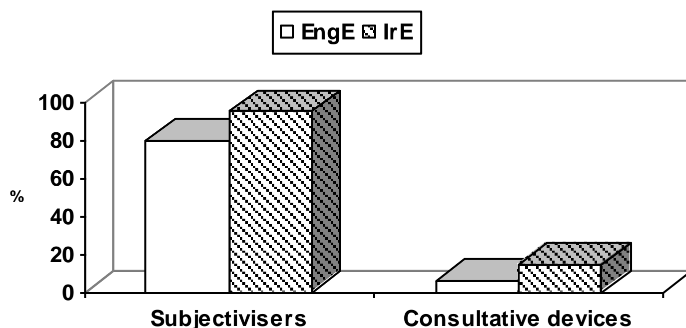

Figure 8. Lift situation: Subjectivisers and consultative devices distributed over query preparatory head act strategies as a percentage of the lexical and phrasal downgraders used

tiviser *wonder* differed in English English and Irish English. In the most non-standard situation, lift, use of *if* was the most popular option in both cultures. However, notably, 26.3% (n=5) of the total 19 Irish informants who used a subjectiviser omitted *if* or *whether* completely to form utterances, such as

(15) Lift, IrE: *I'm sorry to trouble you, but I've just missed my bus and* ***I was wondering could you*** *drop me off on your way home.*

or

(16) Lift, IrE: *Hi, how are ye!* ***I was just wondering would there*** *by any chance that I might be able to get a lift home off ye as the next bus isn't for an hour.*

The absence of *if* or *whether* is a frequent feature in the Irish data, not only in the lift situation discussed here, but also in the notes situation in which the subjectiviser *wonder* is recorded without either *if* or *whether* in 42.9% (n=3) of cases in which this subjectiviser occurs. Although not statistically significant, it is notable that either *if* or *whether* is always present in the English English requests of this form, not only in the lift situation, but also in the one English English request in the standard police situation which includes this subjectiviser. An interesting question which might be posed in this regard is whether we might be dealing here with two different argument structures for *wonder* in Irish English. In other words, the question might be posed as to what extent this difference is encoded in the grammar (i.e. two argument structures), and to what extent is it simply confined to request uses and,

hence, pragmatically licensed.[20] Overall then, the analysis of lexical and phrasal downgraders did not reveal any statistically significant differences in the requests of the Irish and English informants in either the police or the lift situation. Non-statistically significant differences on the level of form did, however, point to possible differences which might form the basis of future analysis.

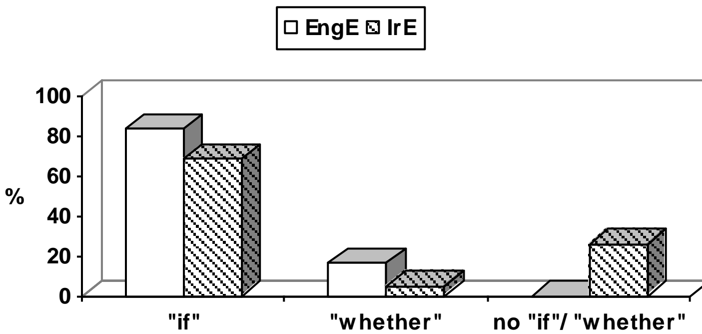

Figure 9. Lift situation: Use of *if/whether* with the subjectiviser *wonder* in query preparatory head act strategies as a percentage of the subjectivisers used

4.3. External mitigation

External mitigators were used by both the Irish and English informants. Table 5 shows those mitigators found in the data. The category *apology for imposition* is not included in the CCSARP. The grounder is the most common external mitigator employed in all three situations, as will be seen below. One may differentiate between pre-grounders and post-grounders. Pre-grounders are situated before the head act, post-grounders follow the head act.

Cross-varietal differences, similar to those recorded in the analysis of syntactic mitigation for the more non-standard situations are also found in the standard police situation. In other words, the Irish informants are found to be more indirect, investing more effort in external downgrading than their English counterparts (p=0.000). Specifically, 70% (n=14) of the Irish informants used external mitigation in the standard police situation compared to only 33.3% (n=8) of the English informants (cf. Table 6). The actual number of mitigators used was similar as seen in Figure 10.

Table 5. Overview of external mitigators employed

	Description	Example
Preparator	The speaker prepares the hearer for the request which is to follow by enquiring about the hearer's availability to carry out the request or the hearer's permission to make the request. The exact nature of the request remains, however, unknown.	*Hi, I live in the same street as you and ...*
Grounder	The speaker provides reasons, explanations, or justifications for the preceding or ensuing request.	***I've just missed my bus**, would you possibly be able to give me a lift?*
Disarmer	An attempt by the speaker to address, and, thus, weaken/ invalidate, any possible arguments the hearer might introduce in order to refuse the request.	*I know this is very rude to ask, but..., I know this is a bit forward, but ...*
Imposition minimiser	The speaker attempts to reduce the imposition which the request places on the hearer.	*... if it was o.k. with you could I ...*
Apology for imposition	The speaker apologises for any imposition the request may cause.	*I'm sorry to bother you but ...*

Table 6. Use of external mitigation (disarmers, grounders [pre-grounders]) in query preparatory head act strategies [21]

	Police		Notes		Lift	
	EngE	**IrE**	**EngE**	**IrE**	**EngE**	**IrE**
Query preparatories	88.9% (n=24)	76.9% (n=20)	100% (n=27)	96.3% (n=26)	100% (n=27)	96.3% (n=26)
External mitigation	33.3% (n=8)	70% (n=14)	70.4% (n=19)	88.5% (n=23)	100% (n=27)	100% (n=26)
Disarmers	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	22.2% (n=6)	0% (n=0)
Grounders	100% (n=8)	85.7% (n=12)	100% (n=19)	100% (n=23)	88.9% (n=24)	80.8% (n=21)
Pre-grounders	0% (n=0)	16.7% (n=2)	73.7% (n=14)	34.8% (n=8)	87.5% (n=21)	57.1% (n=12)

The grounder is the most common type of external downgrader employed in the police situation (IrE: 85.7% [n=12], EngE: 100% [n=8]).Post-grounders are preferred over pre-grounders in this standard situation in both cultures – a fact which points to the lower mitigating power of post-grounders relative to pre-grounders. Specifically, pre-grounders were only used in 16.7% (n=2) of the requests with grounders in the Irish data. Post-grounders were used in 83.3% (n=10) of cases in which grounders were employed. Pre-grounders were not used at all in the English data in this situation.

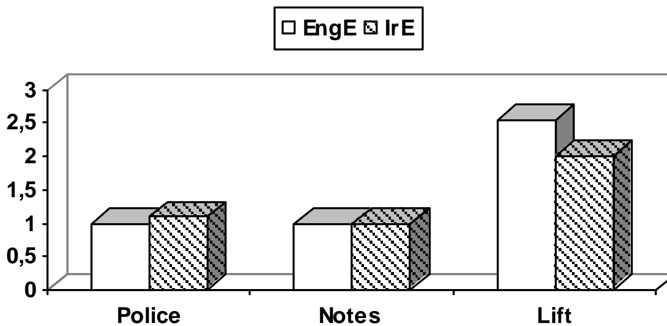

Figure 10. Average number of external mitigators used with query preparatory requests

In the more non-standard notes and lift situations, on the other hand, the levels of mitigation employed are rather different to those in the standard situation described here, and indeed also rather different to those higher levels of syntactic mitigation recorded in the Irish English data above. Specifically, it is the English rather than the Irish informants who invest more effort in externally mitigating their requests in these two non-standard notes and lift situations. Consequently, they are more – not less – indirect in their requesting behaviour than the Irish informants on this level. It was found, namely, that in the lift situation the English informants used an average of 2.5 external mitigators, while the Irish only used two mitigators on average – a statistically significant difference (p=0.014) (cf. Figure 10). In addition, the analysis of the types of external mitigators used (cf. Table 6) shows the same pattern of a more highly direct Irish English request in the more non-standard situations. Grounders are used by both the Irish and English informants to a large extent in both non-standard situations (Notes: IrE: 100% [n=23], EngE: 100% [n=19]; Lift: IrE: 80.8% [n=21], EngE: 88.9%

[n=24]). There are no differences to be found in either situation in these levels of use by the two speech communities. Interestingly, however, pre-grounders are preferred over post-grounders in the English data in both situations to a statistically significant extent (lift: p=0.026, notes: p=0.030). Pre-grounders, by acting to explain the reason for a particular request before realising the head act itself, are more strongly mitigating. Consequently, the Irish requests are more strongly direct in this aspect than the English requests.

The same higher degree of indirectness recorded in the use of pre-grounders rather than post-grounders in the English English data is seen in the use of disarmers in the most non-standard lift situation (cf. Table 6). Disarmers are highly mitigating, as seen by their absence in both cultures in the police situation, and also in their absence in the notes situation, a situation less non-standard than the lift situation. Notably, the disarmer is used by 22.2% of the English informants (n=6) in the lift situation, but not at all by the Irish informants (statistically significant difference, p=0.011). This finding underlines the higher level of investment in external mitigation in the English English data. Against this background, it is all the more interesting that the head acts employed in this situation were more direct in the English data on the level of internal modification (cf. 4.2.1).

5. Discussion: Implications for variational pragmatics

The present analysis shows Irish English and English English requests to be remarkably similar on the level of the strategy chosen. In both the standard and non-standard situations analysed, the query preparatory strategy was the preferred strategy, although situational differences were found, with levels of conventional indirectness higher in the more non-standard notes and lift situations and lower in the most standard police situation – in line with previous research (cf. Blum-Kulka and House 1989; House 1989). Despite such broad similarities on the level of the strategy, differences were found to exist between English English and Irish English on the level of internal and external modification. These are summarised in the following and also in Tables 7, 8 and 9 below.

The standard police situation revealed a similar choice of strategies and of internal modification. The Irish informants, however, invested more in external mitigation, making their standard requests more highly indirect (cf. Table 7). In the non-standard situations analysed, on the other hand, the Irish

English head act requests are characterised by a higher level of internal mitigation than the English English head acts. The higher level of mitigation is seen in a significantly higher use of syntactic downgrading in the notes situation and in a significantly larger number of syntactic mitigators employed in the most non-standard lift situation. In addition, the use of relatively more complex syntactic downgraders is recorded in both situations (cf. Table 8). However, the same English English informants who were comparatively more direct in the use of internal mitigation in their head act requests were found to use a higher degree of external mitigation in these same non-standard situations relative to the Irish informants. This was seen in the larger number of external mitigators used in the most non-standard lift situation and in the more extensive use of more highly mitigating pre-grounders in both of the more non-standard situations. In addition, disarmers, mitigators with a high mitigating force which serves to weaken or invalidate any possible arguments which the hearer might introduce in order to refuse the request, were used in the lift situation in the English data only.

Table 7. Overview of the features of standard query preparatory requests in English English and Irish English

	EngE	**IrE**
Number of external mitigators		Higher

Table 8. Overview of the features of non-standard query preparatory requests in English English and Irish English

	EngE	**IrE**
Use of syntactic downgrading/ Number of syntactic downgraders employed		Higher
Conditionals (simple SDn)	Higher (lift)	
Aspect & tense (complex SDn)		Higher
Number of external mitigators	Higher (lift)	
Disarmers	Higher (lift)	
Pre-grounders (more highly mitigating)	Higher	
Post-grounders (less highly mitigating)		Higher

In summary then, the Irish English requests were more indirect than the English English requests in the standard situation and also in the requestive head act in the non-standard situations. However, given the higher degree of external modification found to characterise the English English requests, it

cannot simply be claimed that Irish English is more indirect than English English.

Table 9. Level of investment in politeness in English English and Irish English non-standard query preparatory requests

	EngE	IrE
Internal mitigation		Higher
External mitigation	Higher	

The current study on language use in Irish English and English English adds to the existing research in variational pragmatics. On a general level, the similar choice and distribution of request strategies in Irish English and English English standard and non-standard requests confirms previous research in variational pragmatics which suggests that, in contrast to inter-lingual variation, intra-lingual variation in the choice and distribution of strategy does not usually appear to occur on such a general level of description in realisations of requests (cf. 2.2).

In addition, in line with previous research in variational pragmatics, the choice of modifiers was broadly similar in both cultures. Grounders were, for instance, clearly the preferred external modifiers in both cultures. The differences found in the levels of internal and external modification employed by both cultures in the standard and non-standard situations were also in line with Barron's (2005a) finding that macro-social variation may be recorded in the levels of use of internal and external modification in intra-lingual analyses. However, a surprising finding in the light of previous research in VP was that the more highly mitigating internal modification used in the Irish English data was not accompanied by a more highly mitigating use of external mitigation, but rather by the use of less highly mitigating external mitigation relative to the English English data. This is an aspect which deserves further research.

The formal level of analysis was only skimmed in the present study. On this level, and also in line with previous findings in VP, minor differences were found. Specifically, lexical differences were found to exist in the realisation of the query preparatory head act strategy, with a larger variety of realizations characterising the Irish English data. It was shown that such differences could potentially affect the speaker/ hearer-perspective of the head act strategy. However, such differences, while they occurred, and while they had the potential to cause meaningful differences on the pragmatic level, were not statistically significant. In addition, it was found that in Irish

English, yes-no questions embedded in an indirect question may be realised using two patterns. They may, as in Standard English, be introduced by *whether* or *if* with the verb-subject question order undone, as, for instance, where the direct yes-no question *could you help me?* is transformed into *I was wondering, if you could help me?* Alternatively, however, *whether* or *if* may simply be omitted and the verb-subject question order left untouched. That is, the same utterance would read *I was wondering could you help me?* in Irish English. This aspect of subordination has also been discussed by Asián and McCullough (1998: 49). In the present data, the structure *I was wondering could you ...* was not the usual case in Irish English. However, it was a frequent structure in the Irish English data and was not recorded in the English English data. An interesting point in this regard, and one suggested by Juliane House (personal communication), is that the omission of *if* or *whether* may cause a pause to be inserted before the request proper, i.e. before *could you help me*? in *I was wondering could you help me*? If so, this feature may also function to increase the indirectness of the request. On the other hand, the absence of a pause may well indicate the presence of a new IrE argument structure for *wonder* (cf. the brief discussion above on the question as to whether we have one or two argument structures here). Unfortunately, the present data do not give any information about such issues. However, these no doubt represent intriguing questions for further research.

Finally, the question might be posed as to how the differences established in the present data between requests in Irish English and English English may be explained. One possible explanation might be said to relate to different sociopragmatic assessments of the situational constellations of the three situations investigated, in line, for instance with research by Blum-Kulka and House (1989) who found assessments of a variety of situational factors to differ across culture (cf. also Barron 2005b). This is indeed a possibility and one which necessitates further research using, for instance, assessment questionnaires designed to yield such data. In the present study, it is notable, for instance, that, as mentioned above, disarmers are employed in the lift situation in the English data alone. In other words, utterances such as *I know this is very rude to ask, but ...*, are found in the English data in this situation but not in the Irish data. The situation would, therefore, appear to be highly face-threatening for the English. However, on the other hand, it is all the more noteworthy that the head acts employed even in this situation were more direct in the EngE data on the level of internal modification than those in the IrE data. In other words, the general trend towards a lower level of

internal modification in the English data relative to the Irish data appears rather stable irrespective of possible situational differences.

A further possible, and indeed, more likely explanation for the present results are possible differences in cultural values. This issue is discussed in detail in a further paper (Barron forthcoming) where extensive reference is made to previous findings on language use in Irish English and also to the findings of the Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness (GLOBE) research project, an empirically-based, interdisciplinary project designed to examine culture and leadership in 61 nations, including Ireland and England, on the basis of nine dimensions of culture (cf. House et al. 2002; Javidan & House 2002; Martin, Donnelly-Cox, and Keating 1999). In brief, it is suggested in this paper that the strong tendency towards conventional indirectness in both the EngE and IreE request data points to a high level of autonomy in the Irish and English cultures, a characteristic which necessitates attention to the negative face of the hearer. On the other hand, however, the higher level of internal mitigation in the Irish non-standard situations and the higher levels of external mitigation in the standard situations appear to be in line with a slightly lower level of autonomy and a higher level of institutional (societal) collectivism and also family collectivism found in the GLOBE project to characterise Irish culture relative to English culture, particularly since communication patterns characteristic of collectivist cultures have been found to be generally more indirect due to a greater desire to save face relative to individualist cultures which are more concerned with self expression (cf. Gelfand et al. 2004: 452).[22] On a similar note, collectivist cultures have been found to be generally high context cultures (cf. Hofstede 1994; Triandis 1994). This would imply that Ireland is a high context culture (cf. also Scharf and Mac Mathúna 1998: 161), and as such that implicit knowledge plays an important role in communication in Hall's (1976) terms. In addition, these findings seem to tally with the lower level of assertiveness, i.e. "the degree to which individuals in organizations or societies are assertive, confrontational, and aggressive in social relationships" (cf. House et al. 2002: 5–6), which the GLOBE project also found to characterise Ireland relative to England (cf. also Kallen's 2005a concept of "silence"). In other words, Irish people are not particularly dominant in interpersonal relationships, tending not to deal with issues head-on. As in the case of collectivism, a low degree of assertiveness is also reminiscent of a high context culture (cf. Den Hartog 2004: 403–404; Keating and Martin 2007). Overall then, the findings of the present study would seem to be explained by slightly lower levels of autonomy, a higher level of collectivism

and a lower degree of assertiveness characteristic of the Irish people relative to speakers of English English. Indeed, this finding that Irish English is characterised by a higher level of indirectness also supports previous studies of language use in Ireland (cf., e.g., Farr and O'Keeffe 2002; Kallen 2005b, cf. Barron forthcoming for more details).

On the other hand, however, the analysis of the non-standard situations clearly reveals that it cannot be simply stated generally that Irish English is more indirect than English English since the analysis of the non-standard situations revealed that English informants prefer to invest in external rather than in internal modification while the Irish informants show a preference for internal modification. Rather, an assessment of the relative directness/indirectness of the externally and internally modified requests elicited would be necessary before such statements could be made. The analysis, thus, underlines the necessity of investigating language use at the level of the speech act rather than at the level of the linguistic form, and also cautions against generalised comparative statements of language use across cultures.

6. Variational pragmatics in Inner and Expanding Circle classrooms

Even at this early point in VP research, it is clear that the findings of this study, of those studies of intra-lingual regional pragmatic variation discussed above, and also previous research on the relationship of language use conventions and other macro-social variables, indicate that pragmatic variation within language is not limited to situational and contextual variables. In addition, based on present and – let us be optimistic – future variational pragmatic research, increasingly more will be known about the systematic nature of intra-lingual variation. The question posed here is whether such findings on the pragmatic level should be addressed in classrooms in the Inner and the Expanding Circle (cf. also Barron 2006). Let us turn first to the Inner Circle.

Wolfram and Schilling-Estes (2006: 100) note that misunderstandings may arise due to pragmatic differences between groups who are close on a linguistic level. They write: "[c]ertainly, there are many shared language-use conventions across varieties of American English, but there are also important differences among groups that can lead to significant misunderstandings across regional and social dialects" (2006: 100). Indeed, it would seem that differences due to differing conventions of language use are all the more difficult to understand as being language-related when groups are linguisti-

cally-close. Consequently, it would appear that an increased awareness of differences in the conventions of language use has the potential to decrease potential misunderstandings between cultures sharing a single language and indeed between socially-based sub-groups within such cultures. This is not to suggest that Inner Circle speakers should strive for an in-depth competence in all possible varieties of English. Indeed, as Bardovi-Harlig et al. (1991: 5), writing on second language pragmatics accurately note: "It is impossible to prepare students for every context, or even all of the most common situations they will face in natural language settings". That is, it is not possible to teach all the pragmatic conventions of one variety. Hence, it is all the more true that teaching students the pragmatic conventions of several varieties represents an unrealistic goal – for teachers, learners, and for researchers alike. It is, thus, an awareness of pragmatic issues which is to be striven for. In other words, it is recommended that a variational perspective be taken in the Inner Circle classroom context to promote an awareness of variation in the conventions of language use.

Turning to English in the Expanding Circle, one might question whether a variational perspective is not perhaps superfluous given firstly the overriding focus on British English and American English in the foreign language classroom and secondly given that most learners actually communicate with other non-native speakers in their use of English (cf. House 2002, 2003). These are indeed factors which have to be recognised and considered. However, despite these realities, it is suggested that a variational perspective can only benefit the foreign language classroom (cf. also Barron 2005a). Specifically, it is suggested that a variational perspective be taken in the classroom context to promote an awareness of the fact that variation exists in pragmatic conventions. One particular L2 model of language use may well be chosen for the classroom. However, learners can be made aware that the chosen variety is only one possibility and that macro-social factors will influence language use conventions. In this way, learners can be equipped with a sensitivity towards variation. They can be taught to assume an emic perspective and learn not to judge others' language use using their own conventions. Indeed, given the well established fact that pragmatic failure is a prominent feature of intercultural communication, developing an awareness of different conventions of language use and a strategic competence to solve communication difficulties seems to be the only solution worthy of suggestion. Equipping learners with a recognition that variation exists within one language furnishes them with an appreciation of, an expectation of and an acceptance for differences in language use norms within cultures.

The students in classrooms in both the Inner and Expanding Circles can be made aware that the regional variety of English which they have acquired or learnt is only one possibility and that language use conventions will vary across the Englishes. In this way, they can be equipped with a sensitivity towards variation. One possible method of developing such a sensitivity is to transform learners into researchers and to ask them to research the pragmatic conventions which apply in different intra-lingual speech communities. This may be done by setting learners to collect intra-lingual data themselves. Inner Circle students might, for instance, be asked to collect data, whether naturally-occurring or elicited, in their own culture and in a neighbouring intra-lingual variety. Learners in the Expanding Circle, on the other hand, might be asked to collect data in two intra-lingual L2 varieties or alternatively in two intra-lingual varieties of their own language. It is suggested that the parameters of intra-lingual variation highlighted above may be used as a general guideline for such – and other – classroom tasks. Data gathered could be analysed for the type and frequencies of the strategies used or indeed the external or internal modification employed. Where the collection of L2 field notes or elicited data are not a practical possibility, recourse can be to film, television, radio, books or plays which represent spoken data in written form or indeed to written genres which may be more easily accessible.[23] Kachru and Nelson (1996: 97), for instance, give some examples of "hands-on experience" exercises focusing on written genres which transform learners into researchers, requiring them to examine variation in discourse patterns across region. They suggest tasks, such as the identification and discussion of conversational discourse markers in fiction or the comparison of obituary notices in American, British, and Outer Circle newspapers, and indeed, exercises of a similar nature could be given to learners based on a range of parallel texts. In addition, a further option in the present internet-era is the use of on-line speech corpora. Indeed, the International Corpus of English (ICE), an electronic corpus consisting of several comparably-structured components of intra-lingual regional varieties of English, is an excellent resource.[24] Similarly, the Limerick Corpus of Irish English (L-CIE), a corpus which follows the design of the Cambridge and Nottingham Corpus of Discourse in English (CANCODE) (cf. Carter 1998), is also under construction. When it is finished, cross-varietal analyses using both the LCIE and the CANCODE will also be possible (cf., e.g., O'Keeffe and Adolphs forthcoming for an example).

To conclude, therefore, let us not blinker students into viewing language use as homogeneous but rather furnish them with an appreciation of, an

expectation of and an acceptance for differences in language use norms within cultures. In so doing we can extend their perspective to appreciate the many levels of pragmatic variation in both linguistically-close and linguistically-distant cultures.

Appendix

1. IN THE STREET
Margaret is driving into town when she notices a house on fire in front of her. She pulls into the side and parks and is walking towards the house when a policeman comes up to her.

Policeman: _
_ _
We're expecting an ambulance to arrive any minute.
Margaret: Sure, I'll move it straight away.

2. AT THE UNIVERSITY
Ann missed a class the day before and would like to borrow Jane's notes.

Ann: _
_
_ _
_
_ _
_
Jane: Sure, but let me have them back before the class next week.

3. AT A UNION MEETING
The meeting is over. Jack's bus has just left and the next one is not due for an hour. Jack knows that the couple next to him (who he knows by sight only) live in the same street as he does and that they have come by car.

Jack: _
_ _
_ _
_ _ _
Woman: I'm sorry, but we're not going home straight away.

Notes

1. This categorisation of World Englishes into an Inner, Outer and Expanding Circle is taken from Kachru's (1985: 12) model. It reflects differences in the type of spread, the pattern of acquisition and also the function allocated to English in different cultures. Varieties in the Inner Circle are first language varieties, those in the Outer Circle second language varieties and those in the Expanding Circle foreign language varieties. This model, although very influential, is, however, not without criticism (cf. Bauer 2002: 22–25; Jenkins 2003: 17–18).
2. Not all pluricentric languages were differentiated regionally. Only German German data, for instance, were gathered. Muhr (1994), however, later collected counterpart Austrian German data.
3. Situational variability is a dimension of variability that has been firmly instituted in variational sociolinguistics since Labov (1972). The investigation of situational pragmatic variation has adopted concepts from researchers, such as Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987). It has focused on the effect of social distance, social dominance and degree of imposition on language use conventions (cf., e.g., Blum-Kulka and House 1989; Kasper 1989).
4. Milroy and Milroy (1993) and Trudgill and Chambers (1991) focus, for instance, on the syntax of varieties of English.
5. Bauer (2002) also mentions variation in spelling and pronunciation.
6. Reference is also made very briefly to the level of language use in both Jenkins (2003) and Melchers and Shaw (2003). However, the pragmatic level is not included in their overviews of the various varieties of English.
7. The DCT was the first type of production questionnaire employed. In the meantime, however, several variations on it have been developed (cf. Kasper 2000 for an overview).
8. That this is the case was shown by Beebe and Cummings (1996) in a study which tested the validity of the production questionnaire. These researchers compared refusals gathered using telephone conversations and using a production questionnaire (a dialogue construction questionnaire), and confirmed that the productions elicited using the questionnaire accurately reflected the content expressed in real-life situations. This finding has also been reported by Margalef-Boada (1993: 155) who compared open role-play data with production questionnaire data. Similarly, Bodman and Eisenstein (1988) and Eisenstein and Bodman (1993) found that natural observation, written questionnaires, oral questionnaires and open role-plays revealed similar semantic strategies.
9. Indeed, even when a rather extensive situational description is given, the situation described does not necessarily reflect the complexity and ambiguity of natural data (cf. Billmyer and Varghese 2000: 545).

10. Hartford and Bardovi-Harlig (1992), in their research into differences between rejections elicited using production questionnaires and naturally-occurring data gathered within the institutional context of academic advisory sessions, found evidence, for example, that respondents tend to employ more direct strategies in questionnaires. They explain this with reference to the lack of interaction in the DCT (cf. also Rintell and Mitchell 1989: 271 on this point).
11. I would like to thank Jolie Taublieb and Anne Tully for help in the data collection process.
12. Irish English is used here to refer to Southern Irish English. The origins of the English spoken in the North of Ireland, including parts of the Republic of Ireland, such as Donegal, are rather different. While also influenced by the English of England (although not very importantly), the Northern variety also bears traces of Ulster-Scots and Mid-Ulster English (cf. Adams 1977: 56–57; Trudgill and Hannah 2002: 99).
13. The CCSARP coding scheme is not without criticism. Van Mulken (1996) has, for instance, criticised the differentiation made between mitigation and indirectness and Hassall (1997: 190–191) takes issue with the criteria of selection for internal modifiers. Nonetheless, it is this coding scheme which has proven most popular in analysing requests to date, having been employed in a number of studies. As such, it facilitates the comparison of findings with previous research outcomes.
14. It should be noted that Table 3 focuses on those syntactic downgraders used most frequently in the data given. It does not, however, include, all instances of syntactic downgraders employed. Hence, the figures do not necessarily add up to 100%.
15. Other lexical and phrasal downgraders include understaters, hedges and cajolers, appealers. However, these were not used in the present data.
16. That *please* functions as a downgrader only in standard situations is explained in terms of the dual function of *please*, i.e. *please* can act as an illocutionary force indicating device and as a transparent mitigator (cf. Sadock 1974). According to findings by House (1989), the illocutionary indicating function of *please* is in harmony with the formal, clearly defined context characteristic of standard situations. It does not, thus, "drown" the downtoning qualities of the adverb whether it is used with a query preparatory strategy or with an imperative. Consequently, the adverb *please* acts as a lexical and phrasal downgrader when it is used in standard situations. On the other hand, when *please* is employed in non-standard request situations, such as in the lift situation in the present data, its illocutionary force indicating powers come to the fore, causing an increase in the directness of query preparatory head act strategies which tend to occur in such situations (cf. House 1989: 109). This happens because the query preparatory strategy is itself pragmatically somewhat ambiguous. The effect is to curtail any scope for negotiation

previously afforded. The utterance moves nearer the status of an imperative. House (1989: 113) argues, based on her findings, that the utterance, thus, becomes "… inappropriate" because direct request strategies do not usually occur in non-standard situations. In the present data, direct strategies were not a feature of the most non-standard situation, the lift situation, in either dataset (cf. Figure 1). Similarly, in the Irish data, there were no occurrences of *please* in this same situation. However, *please* does occur in the EngE data in 18.5%, i.e. in 5 of 27, of the lift requests. As noted in endnote 17, such occurrences are analysed as upgraders in Barron (forthcoming).

17. Barron (forthcoming) analyses occurrences of *please* in the non-standard lift situation as upgraders. The English English data are found to be more highly direct on this parameter, the Irish not using *please* at all in this situation. The differences found are statistically significant.
18. *Ye* or *yee* is the form often taken by the second personal plural personal pronoun in spoken Irish English. It corresponds to *you* in Standard English.
19. More than one lexical and phrasal downgrader was used in some replies. The figures in Figure 7 and 8 are, therefore, not calculated as a percentage of the total lexical and phrasal downgraders employed but rather reflect how often an informant who employed a lexical and phrasal downgrader employed a subjectiviser, for instance.
20. I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer for this insight.
21. Here the external mitigators are given as a percentage of the overall number of query preparatory strategies employed in the particular situation. Similarly, the use of disarmers and the use of grounders are given as a percentage of the external mitigation employed and the pre-grounders as a percentage of the grounders employed. The use of preparators, imposition minimisers and apologies for imposition are not discussed in the present context due to space limitations. They did not, however, show any noteworthy cross-cultural differences.
22. Institutional collectivism was defined in the GLOBE project as "the degree to which organizational and societal institutional practices encourage and reward collective distribution of resources and collective action" (House et al. 2002: 5), and family collectivism as "the degree to which individuals express pride, loyalty and cohesiveness in their organizations or families" (House et al. 2002: 5; cf. Ashkanasy, Trevor-Roberts, and Earnshaw 2002: 34, 37).
23. The validity of employing the language of films in teaching pragmatics has been investigated by Rose (2001) in a study contrasting compliments and compliment responses in film and naturally-occurring speech. In this study, validity was found to be higher on a pragmalinguistic than a sociopragmatic level. However, it remains a recommendable resource for purposes of awareness-raising.

24. The International Corpus of English (ICE) has been compiling a corpus of fifteen varieties of English since 1990. Each corpus, similar in structure, consists of one million words of spoken and written English produced in 1989 and after. The East African, Great Britain, Indian, New Zealand, Singapore, Philippine and Hong Kong corpora have already been completed (cf. The International Corpus of English [ICE]).

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Getting better in getting what you want: Language learners' pragmatic development in requests during study abroad sojourns

Gila A. Schauer

1. Introduction

Spending one semester or more at a higher educational institution in a foreign country is becoming increasingly popular for university students who wish to experience another culture, expand their skills in their academic discipline and improve their linguistic competence. Since the European Union established its Erasmus/Socrates academic exchange programme in 1987, more than one million students from 30 different countries have completed parts of their degree programmes at accredited higher educational institution in a foreign country (European Union Education Archive). In 2004/5 alone, 144,037 students from a wide range of different disciplines were given the opportunity to live and study abroad by the European Union.

From a linguistic perspective, the impact of a sustained sojourn on language learners' communicative competence in their second language (L2) is of considerable interest, since study abroad (SA) students typically have to use their L2 on a day-to-day basis in a wide variety of contexts and with a wide variety of interlocutors. Following the publication of Freed's (1995) seminal collection of papers about the effect of the study abroad context on language learners' competence in their L2, interest in this area has increased and a number of studies have been published (e.g. Collentine 2004; Segalowitz and Freed 2004; Taillefer 2005; Pellegrino Aveni 2006). Perhaps due to the rather limited number of longitudinal developmental studies in interlanguage pragmatics (Kasper and Rose 2002), relatively few investigations have explored the effects of study abroad on learners' pragmatic competence.

The present paper attempts to shed some light on the impact of the study abroad context on language learners' pragmatic development by focusing on request strategies. Requests were selected as the focus of the investigation, since being able to appropriately ask for their interlocutor's help or coopera-

tion is an essential skill for language learners who have to negotiate their everyday lives in their L2. In addition, requests are "face-threatening, and therefore call for considerable linguistic expertise on the part of the learner [and] differ cross-linguistically" (Ellis 1994: 168).

In the following, I will begin with an overview of cognitive models of pragmatic development. This will then be followed by a review of longitudinal studies examining learners' pragmatic development during study abroad and a review of cross-sectional developmental studies investigating request strategies. The analysis and discussion will then focus on a) factors that may influence SA learners' request strategy use over time and b) differences and similarities between SA learners', at home (AH) learners' and native speakers' (NS) request strategy use in different contextual conditions.

2. Background

2.1. Cognitive psychological models in interlanguage pragmatic development

Two cognitive psychological models have had considerable impact on developmental research in interlanguage pragmatics in the past. The first model is Schmidt's (1990, 1993) noticing hypothesis. He argues that pragmatic strategies, such as how to end telephone conversations in a second language for example, first have to be noticed by the learner before they can be processed, understood, and finally appropriately implemented. Schmidt also emphasizes the importance of motivation, acculturation and other affective factors on learners' pragmatic development. He further suggests that learners, who are interested in getting to know speakers of the target language and in establishing relationships with them, may focus more on pragmatic norms conveyed through the L2 input than those who are not motivated by affective factors.

The second cognitive psychological model that is frequently referred to in interlanguage pragmatics was developed by Bialystok (1991, 1993). Her model for linguistic processing divides the elements that are necessary for the analysis of linguistic systems into three levels of representation: conceptual, formal, and symbolic. Conceptual representation is the first access stage to a new language. Although learners can convey their intentions at this level, they focus on "the intended meaning and not on the forms being selected to express that intention" (Bialystok 1993: 51). Thus, learners do

not have the ability to recognize that a specific form is functioning as a request. They are only able to make this connection in the next stage, formal representation. Symbolic representation then entails the learner's ability to identify the formal-functional mapping of linguistic features in a request as well as the illocutionary function of these features.

2.2. Developmental studies in the study abroad context

2.2.1. Length of time spent in the SA context

Previous research on interlanguage pragmatic development in the study abroad context[1] suggests that one of the factors that determines improvements in language learners' pragmatic competence is the amount of time spent in the L2 context (Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford 1993; Bouton 1994; Felix-Brasdefer 2004; Barron 2003, 2006; Schauer 2006a). Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford found in their study on academic advising sessions, which compared the strategies used by learners of English and native speakers to negotiate the courses they have to take for their degree, that the learners' pragmatic competence improved within a period of less than four months in the target environment. Whereas learners had used fewer suggestions than the native speakers at the beginning of their stay, which put them into a reactive position, they considerably increased their use of suggestions in later sessions. The researchers attribute this improvement to the high amount of explicit input provided by the advisor in the session, which showed the learners that a more active role was expected, and also to subsequent discussions with fellow students, which provided the learners with further insights.

However, Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford also noted that although the learners increased their use of suggestions, they still displayed some non-native like use of aggravators and mitigators at the end of the observation period. Due to the rather private nature of academic advising sessions, learners generally cannot observe interactions between advisors and NS students in this context. Thus, following Schmidt's noticing hypothesis it is rather difficult for them to obtain relevant input in these conditions.

Using a longer observation period than Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford, Barron (2003, 2006) and Schauer (2006a) both examined the pragmatic development of study abroad learners who spent one academic year in the L2 contexts of Germany or Great Britain. They found that their learners' pragmatic competence improved during their sojourns in the target environment.

Barron's data revealed that her learners increased their repertoire of pragmatic routines and decreased their use of non-reciprocal switching between the German *Sie/du* address pronouns. Schauer's results, elicited with Bardovi-Harlig and Dornyei's (1998) video-and-questionnaire instrument, showed that SA learners' significantly increased their ability to detect pragmatic and grammatical errors during their stay in the L2 context. After nine months in Great Britain, her SA learners had achieved the same error recognition scores for pragmatic infelicities as the native speakers, thus indicating that they had acquired native-like competence for a variety of situations in an educational context that were tested by the instrument.

That nine months may be a critical period for learners' pragmatic development in the study abroad context was also noted by Félix-Brasdefer (2004), who examined politeness strategies used by learners of Spanish who spent 1 to 30 months in the target environment. His study revealed that "with at least 9 months in the L2 community, the acquisition of pragmatics among Spanish learners may approximate the behaviour of NSs with respect to interaction skills and degree of politeness" (p. 632). A positive correlation of length of time spent in the L2 context and increases in learners' pragmatic competence was also found by Bouton (1994). His study showed that SA learners' ability to grasp conversational implicature had already improved after 17 months, but increased even more after four and a half years in the target context. Thus, the findings of the studies above indicate that although some development is likely to occur even within the first few months of a SA learners' stay in the target environment, more considerable progress may occur after about 9 months or more in the study abroad context.

2.2.2. The effect of individual differences

The literature indicates that in addition to the length of time spent in the study abroad context, individual learner differences, such as amount of exposure to the L2 (Matsumura 2003; Kinginger and Farrell 2004, Kinginger and Belz 2005; Schauer 2006b), or preoccupation with grammatical correctness (Sawyer 1992; Félix-Brasdefer 2006) may also play a decisive role in the development of learners' pragmatic competence. With regard to the latter, Sawyer's investigation of SA learners' use of the Japanese sentence final particle *ne* showed that only four of the eleven learners investigated by him made considerable progress in the use of *ne* during their stay in Japan. He suggests that the students who did not learn to use *ne* in a wide variety of contexts probably focused too much on other grammatical issues and did not

understand the pragmatic significance of *ne* in Japanese. The notion that learners might be too focused on grammatical structures to allocate processing resources to pragmatic concerns is supported by Félix-Brasdefer's study that employed retrospective verbal reports. His results showed that even learners who had spent more than 18 months in the SA context, performed constant grammatical checks, which may have "diverted the learners' attention from the message" (p. 21).

Not focusing on conflicting grammatical concerns, but instead concentrating on other variables that may influence learners' pragmatic development, Matsumura (2003) investigated how SA learners in Canada judged the appropriateness of a range of advice situations. His learners also completed self-report questionnaires about their degree of exposure to the L2 in their daily life and provided their individual TOEFL scores. Data for the study were elicited at three months intervals, with the first data collection taking place while the students were still in their home country, Japan. The statistical analysis of the data showed that the amount of exposure to the target language was the single factor in this study that determined the pragmatic development of the learners, i.e. those learners who were more exposed to English displayed a higher amount of competence. The results further revealed that even the amount of exposure in the learners' home country influenced their pragmatic development abroad, as those learners who had received a higher amount of exposure in Japan became more pragmatically competent early on in their time in Canada. Concerning the learners' different proficiency levels in the L2, the study showed that proficiency on its own did not have a significant effect on the learners' pragmatic development. Instead, the data revealed that proficiency had an indirect effect on pragmatic development linked with the degree of exposure.

Matsumura's finding that exposure to the L2 is an important factor in learners' pragmatic development is supported by Kinginger and Farrell (2004), Kinginger and Belz (2005) and Schauer's (2006b, 2007) studies. The former researchers examined the development of American SA learners' address form competence in France. The results of their case studies show that learners who sought out opportunities to be exposed to the L2, e.g. by joining sports clubs or by generally making friends with French age peers, made more progress in their ability to use t/v pronouns than those learners who spent most of their time in the SA context with fellow American students. Focusing on requests, Schauer's research indicated that students' willingness to communicate with native speakers seemed to have a considerable effect on learners' acquisition of internal and external modifiers.

The studies reviewed so far all examined the effect of the study abroad context on learners' pragmatic development in their L2. The results suggest that language learners generally tend to improve their pragmatic competence during their sojourn at a higher educational institution in the target environment. However, the findings also indicate that not all learners may make the same pragmatic progress and that other factors concerning the specific circumstances and background of the individual learner may also have a considerable impact on learners' pragmatic development.

2.3. Cross-sectional developmental studies investigating request strategies

All developmental studies discussed above have focused on language learners' pragmatic development in the SA context. To provide some further background on research concerning request strategies, I will review three cross-sectional developmental studies focusing on this issue that are of particular relevance for the present investigation. The cross-sectional investigations by Trosborg (1995), Hill (1997) and Warga (2004) compared English or French language learners' ability to produce requests in the typical foreign language contexts of Denmark, Japan and Austria. The three studies contrasted the request strategy use of three learner groups with different levels of proficiency in their L2.

In all three studies conventionally indirect requests were the most frequently employed strategy type by the learner and native speaker participants. However, while Trosborg (1995) and Warga (2004) found several instances of non-linear development with regard to learners' strategy use, e.g. Warga's group II employed fewer direct Performatives than group III and thereby demonstrated behaviour closer to the native speaker norm than the more advanced group, Hill's (1997) results indicate a more linear progression towards the native speaker norms. His findings show that his learners developed towards the native speaker norms with increasing proficiency level. While the lower level learners overemployed direct strategies and underused indirect strategies, higher proficiency learners employed considerably fewer direct strategies and used more indirect strategies. A possible reason why Trosborg's and Warga's data did not suggest the same distinct development as Hill's may be that Hill based the allocation of learners to the different proficiency groups on a test, whereas Trosborg and Warga focused on year groups. As school classes tend to contain students with different levels of aptitude and interest in the foreign language, the presence or ab-

sence of particularly proficient students may perhaps have affected their results to a certain extent.

Cross-sectional studies are very useful, since they enable researchers to collect and compare data from a large number of participants. However, they do not allow researchers to follow the development of a specific group of learners over a longer period of time. As the overview of the literature has shown, only a rather limited number of longitudinal studies on learners' pragmatic development have been conducted in the SA context so far and even fewer of these studies have focused on requests. Since requests are 'key speech acts' (Cohen 2003: 94), that language learners cannot avoid making in the SA context this investigation hopes to shed some light on how SA learners' use of request strategies in different contexts develops over time and intends to explore if/how SA learners' request strategy use differs from that of British English native speakers and at home learners.

3. Method

3.1. Participants

Twelve German learners of English in England, henceforth study abroad (SA) learners, provided the developmental data for the investigation into learners' request strategy choices in the L2 university context. All members of this group were enrolled at an English university for the period of one academic year. Four of them were studying for English degrees at their home institution, while the remaining eight read various subjects mainly in the Sciences or the Business School. Seven of the learners were male and five female. Their average age was 23 years. They had received formal English education in German schools for an average of eight years and came from a variety of German states. Six of the participants in this group had studied English for their 'Leistungskurs' (equivalent to British A-levels or US-American advanced placement courses) at grammar school. None of the participants in this group had lived in an English speaking environment prior to taking part in the research. Table 1 provides an overview of the individual SA learners and their English language learning background.

Regrettably, three of the 12 German learners in the study abroad context (Karl, Lisa, and Michael) were not available for the final data collection session. Due to the small participant number, their data were included in the

analysis of the first occurrence of individual request strategies, where the impact of their request strategy use can be easily followed.

Table 1. Overview of SA learners

	Age	**English 1st foreign language**	**formal English education (years)**	**English honours degree course**
Andreas[2]	24	yes	11	yes
Bernd	21	yes	8	yes
Christoph	23	yes	9	no
Daniel	24	yes	9	no
Eva	22	yes	9	yes
Franziska	27	yes	9	no
Greta	22	no	5	no
Hendrik	23	yes	9	no
Iris	20	no	7	yes
Karl	23	no	7	no
Lisa	22	yes	8	no
Michael	25	yes	9	no

However, for the analysis of participants' use of strategies in relation to contextual conditions (4.3 and 4.4), the data of Karl, Lisa and Michael were excluded. This is because the analysis focuses on a whole group development over three sessions and does not reflect the different contributions of individual participants.

In addition to the German learners of English in England, two control groups provided data for the present investigation. The first control group consisted of 14 German learners of English in Germany, henceforth at home (AH) learners. The learners in this group were all in their final year of a three-year course in English-German translation studies at a higher educational institution in Germany. Members of this group attended 19 English classes per week that were taught by American, British, and Australian English native speakers, as well as by German instructors. The vast majority of students at this institution are female and although I specifically approached the three male students who were also in their final year, they declined to take part in the research. Consequently, all 14 learners in this group were female. The average age of the group members was 24 years and was therefore similar to that of the Germans in England. None of the learners in this

group had taken part in an exchange programme or lived in an English speaking country before participating in the study.

The second control group comprised 15 British English native speakers, henceforth NSs. The participants in this group were undergraduate or postgraduate students at the same university the Germans in England were enrolled at. Similar to the SA learners, the students in this group were studying a variety of subjects, mainly in the Arts and Sciences. Six of the participants were male and nine female. Their average age was the same as that of the Germans in England, namely 23 years.

3.2. Instrument

Data for the investigation into the participants' request strategy choices were collected with the Multimedia Elicitation Task (MET). The MET is a 16-scenario multimedia production instrument focusing on requests. It is computer-based, elicits oral data and was designed to address one of the major weaknesses of role plays – the issue of standardization. Since role plays involve the presence and participation of two interlocutors, most commonly a learner and a second person taking on different roles, it is an important challenge for researchers to ensure that their data have indeed been collected under comparable circumstances without the interference of factors such as changes in the actor's mood or tone of voice. The MET attempts to control for these factors by regulating the timing and the nature of the audiovisual input through a computerized presentation format. Thus, it is designed to ensure equal conditions for every participant, while also providing rich audiovisual contextual information, which is also often rather limited in role-plays (Kasper 2000).

The MET contains 16 request scenarios (plus one introductory sample scenario) and investigates the effect of two variables on learners' request strategy choices, namely the interlocutor's status and the degree of imposition inherent in the request. I decided to focus on request utterances for the present investigation since they are frequently performed, can differ cross-linguistically, can be executed with a variety of different strategies and involve the selection of appropriate/polite forms and are thus of considerable significance for the language learner. The participants were asked to make four high imposition and four low imposition requests to higher status interlocutors (professors), as well as four high and four low imposition requests to equal status interlocutors (friends). Four of the scenarios have been taken

from existing questionnaires and modified for the present study: Scenario 1 and Scenario 7 from Kitao (1990), Scenario 11 from Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei (1998) and Scenario 12 from Kasanga (1998). The remaining twelve scenarios were developed by myself and follow Bonikowska's (1988) and Bardovi-Harlig's (1999) call for considering the context of the participants. Thus, all of the scenarios depict situations students are likely to encounter during their time at a British university.

The eight requests that are directed at a higher status interlocutor and the eight requests towards an equal status interactant are based on the same request situations, but were modified to obtain contextually appropriate scenarios that are not too similar to each other. Thus, the high-imposition request 'asking someone to postpone a meeting' is ranked as being high-imposition in the equal status scenario on the basis that the friend had to cancel another meeting to see the participant. The same level of imposition is achieved in the higher-status scenario by stating that the interlocutor is a visiting professor who is extremely busy. The scenarios were arranged in four blocks of four, each containing two high and two low imposition requests to equal and higher status interlocutors. The sequence of the four scenarios varies in each block and was determined randomly. Table 2 shows the distribution of the 16 scenarios with regard to the two variables.

Table 2. Categorization of the 16 MET request scenarios according to the two variables 'status' and 'imposition'

	low imposition	**high imposition**
higher status	scenario 1 'open window' scenario 2 'give directions' scenario 5 'move away from door' scenario 16 'speak louder'	scenario 4 'borrow sth.' scenario 8 'arrange meeting' scenario 11 'fill out questionnaire' scenario 13 'postpone sth'
equal status	scenario 7 'speak louder' scenario 9 'open window' scenario 12 'give directions' scenario 14 'move away from door'	scenario 3 'fill out questionnaire' scenario 6 ' postpone sth' scenario 10 'borrow sth.' scenario 15 'arrange meeting'

Each MET scenario comprises two slides: the content slide (see Figure 1.2) and the introductory slide (see Figure 1.1) which immediately precedes the

content slide. The introductory slide briefly tells the participants what to expect in the following scenario (e.g. “Asking two Professors to step aside”). After 10 seconds, the introductory slide switches to the actual scenario slide that provides the participants with audiovisual information in the form of a photographic image depicting the situation as well as an audio description of the scenario.

Visual input	**Audio input**
5) Asking two Professors to step aside	

Figure 1a. Introductory Slide for Scenario 5

Visual input

Audio input

Scenario 5)
You have to hand in an essay to the secretary. The secretary's office is closing soon and you are already running late. When you get to her office, two professors are standing in front of it. You ask them to let you through.
You say:

Figure 1b. Content scenario Slide for Scenario 5

The introductory slides were included in the MET because like Harada (1996) I felt that it was important to allow the participants “to think about what they were going to say before the performance, since it would be common in a real life situation” (p. 50), especially since requests are deliberate acts and not reactive utterances towards an interlocutor’s preceding turn that have to be produced without previous planning. To provide the learners in England and native speakers with an accessible context in the MET scenarios that was familiar to them, all pictures were taken with the help of staff

and students of the British university they were enrolled at. In order to ensure that the audio input would be easily understood by the participants, the recordings were done by an experienced English native speaker who had worked on a similar linguistic project before.

3.3. Coding categories

The request strategy categories of my classification scheme are based on Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper (1989) and Trosborg (1995) and Van Mulken (1996) and have been slightly modified to better clarify the data in the present study. Based on the directness of the locutionary act, a request

Table 3. Overview of directness strategies

Direct requests	Imperatives	Tell me the way to X!
	Performatives	
	unhedged	I'm asking you to tell me the way to X.
	hedged	I want to ask you the way to X.
	Want Statements	I wish you'd tell me the way to X.
	Locution derivable	Where is X?
Conventionally Indirect requests	Availability	Have you got time to tell me the way to X?
	Prediction	Is there any chance to tell me the way to X?
	Permission	Could I ask you about the way to X?
	Willingness	Would you mind telling me the way to X?
	Ability	Could you tell me the way to X?
Non-Conventionally Indirect requests	Hints	I have to meet someone in X.

utterance can be assigned to one of three major categories (from most to least direct requests): *direct requests*, *conventionally indirect requests* and *non-conventionally indirect requests*. Table 3 provides a brief overview

over the different request strategies according to the three major directness levels.

Due to space limitations, the present study focuses exclusively on request strategies. See Schauer (2006b, 2007) for analyses of internal and external request modifiers.

3.4. Procedure

The data from the SA learners were collected at three distinct points of the participants' stay in the target environment: shortly after their arrival in England (in October or early November 2002), in the middle of their stay (in February 2003) and shortly before their return to Germany (in May 2003). Thus, the intervals between the sessions were roughly 3 months. The English native speaker data were gathered in spring and early summer 2003. Each MET session lasted about 30 minutes depending on the individual participants' talkativeness. All the data were collected in one-to-one sessions conducted by the researcher using the same instrument and the same scenarios.

4. Discussion and results

In the following I will first provide a general overview of the initial occurrence of the various request strategies in the data of the learners in the L2 context (see Figure 2 and Table 3), and will specifically focus on factors that may influence the first occurrence of the individual request strategies. This will be followed by an overview of the total number of request strategies that were employed by the three participating groups. Subsequent to that, I will discuss the participants' use of the individual request strategies in the four contextual conditions tested by the MET.

4.1. Factors influencing the first occurrence of request strategies

In the present paper the term "first occurrence" is used to refer to the first use of a particular strategy by the individual student. Thus, in Figure 2 below, students who first used a particular strategy in either session 1, 2 or 3 are marked by the respective columns. The analysis here is based on 12 participants.

The first occurrence of request strategies in the SA learners' utterances suggests that the use of the three major categories (direct, conventionally indirect, non-conventionally indirect) seems to be influenced both by a temporal aspect, i.e. the length of the participants' exposure to the target language in the target environment as well as individual learner differences. The latter appears to be evidenced by the finding that during their nine month stay in England only one direct strategy, Locution derivables, and one conventionally indirect strategy, Prediction, were employed by more than 90 per cent of the SA learners. Only one, the conventionally indirect Ability strategy, was used by all SA learners during their stay in England.

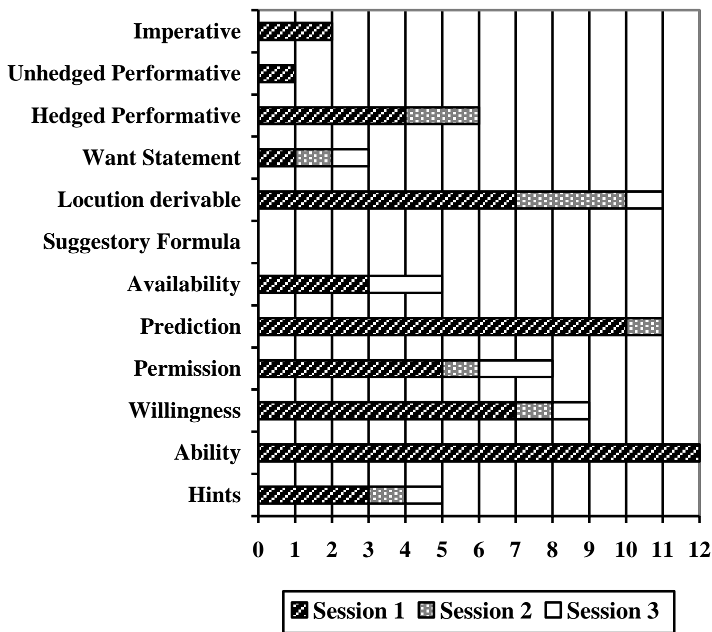

Figure 2. First Occurrence of request strategies

The temporal effect on learners' use of request strategies seems to be shown by increases in the initial employment of direct and conventionally indirect strategies at different periods, schematically illustrated in Figure 2 and Table 4. While the direct strategies saw a more marked gain in first learner use in the second than in the third session, the inverse is the case for the conventionally indirect strategies. Although two SA learners first used either Prediction or Permission in the second session, six SA participants employed conventionally indirect requests they had not used before in the

final session. The data therefore seem to suggest that the time between the first and second session was more salient for direct strategies, while the months preceding the final data collection session were more salient for conventionally indirect strategies. Due to the relatively limited number of students, these findings do however have to be considered tentative.

Table 4. First occurrence of request strategies

	A[3]	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	K	L	M
Imperative		1							1			
Unhedged Performative								1				
Hedged Performative	1	1			1		2	1		2		
Want		1					3			2		
Locution derivable	1	1	2	1	3	1	2		1	1	1	2
Suggestory Formula												
Availability				1			3	1	3	1		
Prediction	1	1	1	1	2	1		1	1	1	1	1
Permission	3	3	1	1			1	1			1	2
Willingness	1	2	1		3	1	1	1	1	1		
Ability	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Hint	1	2	1	3					1			

Since the number of longitudinal developmental studies is very small and not all focus on the investigation of requests, there is hardly any comparable data available with regard to the first occurrence of direct and conventionally indirect strategies that might be correlated with the length of stay in the L2 context. Ellis (1992) and Achiba (2003), however, found in their developmental studies focusing on child learners in the target language context, that the three children they examined first acquired more direct strategies in their L2 and later made more gains in the conventionally indirect strategies. It has to be pointed out, though, that their research involved young learners who were only beginning to acquire the second language.

One explanation for the findings of the present study might be that exposure to the target language may have resulted in the participants first becoming more aware of the use of direct strategies between the first and second session, which lead to a tentative subsequent employment of these strategies. In contrast, exposure to the L2 between the second and third session may have made them more conscious of different conventionally indirect strategies. A possible reason for why the direct strategies tended to first occur in the initial months of the learners' stay in the target environment may be that

German speakers tend to prefer a more direct conversational style than English native speakers (Byrnes 1986; House and Kasper 1981, 1987). Thus, based on the norms of their L1, the SA learners may have initially noticed more direct strategies (see also Eslami and Noora, 2006, on transferability of request strategies). Then, after having spent a few months in the target environment, the learners may have noticed that English native speakers tend to use fewer direct strategies and may therefore have added more conventionally indirect strategies to their pragmatic request strategy repertoire.

Non-conventionally indirect Hints saw a steady, but small increase in initial use by the SA learners, which like the fact that not all SA learners used all strategies indicates that individual learner variation also plays an important part in the use of request strategies in the L2.

4.2. Request strategy use by the three participant groups

The previous section has concentrated on the initial occurrence of request strategies in the SA learners' data. In this section, I will investigate whether the request strategy preferences found in the SA learners' data are also evident in the AH learners and NS's results. Figure 3 schematically presents the total participant numbers that used the individual request strategies in per cent.

The results show that the conventionally indirect strategy Ability, which was employed by all SA learners in the first data collection session, is also the only request strategy that was used by every AH learner and native speaker. This finding is in agreement with House and Kasper (1987) Otçu and Zeyrek (this volume) and Woodfield (this volume), who noted that this strategy seems to be a very routinized request form, and Warga (2002, 2004) who referred to it as the standard request form.

The data also reveal that conventionally indirect strategies were used by a higher number of SA learners and native speakers than direct strategies. Locution derivables was the only direct strategy employed by more than 50 per cent of the SA learners and native speakers, whereas four conventionally indirect strategies (Prediction, Permission, Willingness and Ability) were used by more than 50 per cent of the SA learners and native speakers.

Overall, the results show that the SA learners used a much wider range of request strategies that is comparable to the range of strategies used by the native speakers. In contrast, the majority of learners in the AH group employed a considerably more limited range. Only two strategies, Willing-

ness and Ability, were employed by more than 50 per cent of them. This is a worrying result, as the AH learners in the present study were training to be translators and had studied English intensively for more than two years prior to taking part in the research. At the same time, however, it is a positive result for the SA learners, since it indicates that the study abroad sojourn benefits learners' pragmatic development in that it enables them to acquire a broad repertoire of request strategies.

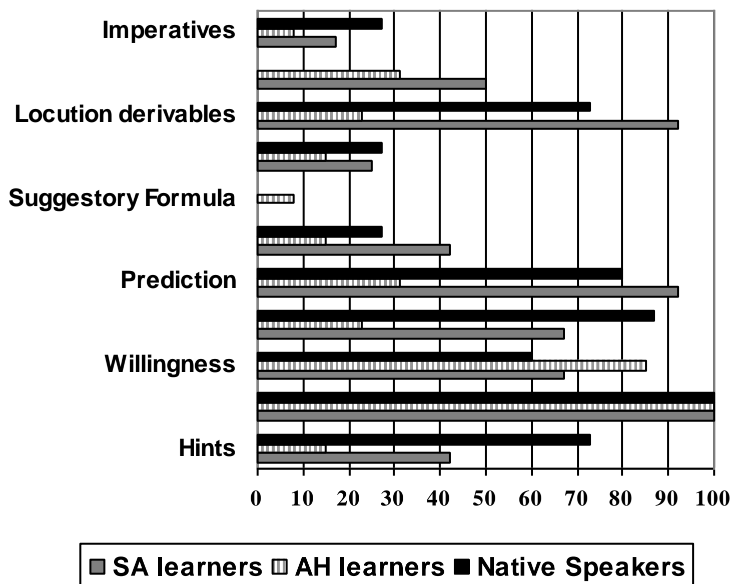

Figure 3. Comparison of groups' request strategy use

Yet having a wide range of request strategies at one's disposal does not automatically translate into being able to use the strategies effectively and appropriately. Whether the SA students' broader repertoire of request strategies helped them getting better in getting what they wanted in the contextual conditions tested with the MET will be explored in the next section. The SA learners' data analyzed in the next sections only includes the data of the nine learners who took part in all three sessions.

4.3. Participants' employment of direct request strategies according to contextual conditions

Learners and native speakers' use of request strategies in low imposition scenarios, presented in Table 5a, seem to be rather restricted. Again, Locution derivables, e.g. *Excuse me, Professor Jones, where is the Trent Building?* (SA learner, Session 2), were the most frequently used by all groups in low imposition scenarios. Notably, this strategy is also the only one that is employed by all participant groups in interactions with both equal status and higher status interlocutors. In contrast, Imperatives, e.g. *Speak up, please!* (SA learner, Session 1), were exclusively used in scenarios with equal status interlocutors. With regard to SA learners' pragmatic development, the SA learner that took part in all three sessions and used a Want statement in the first session, subsequently employed conventionally indirect strategies that were used by the NS participants. This thus seems to suggest a positive development of his pragmatic competence in the L2.

Table 5a. Direct request strategies in low imposition scenarios (in per cent[4])

	Low imposition equal status					**Low imposition higher status**				
	S1	*S2*	*S3*	*AH*	*NS*	*S1*	*S2*	*S3*	*AH*	*NS*
Imperative	8	3		4	7					
unhedged Performative										
hedged Performative										2
Want Statement						3				
Locution Derivable	11	14	14	6	17	3	11	6	4	8

With the exception of Locution derivables in equal status interactions, the percentage figures for direct request strategies in low imposition scenarios are rather small, which indicates that all three participant groups shared a preference for more indirect strategies. This, as well as the learners' use of Imperatives with equal status interactions and their employment of Locution derivables suggests that both learner groups were aware of the request strategy norms in their L2.

In contrast to the learners and native speakers' request strategy choices in low imposition scenarios, Imperatives and Locution derivables were either not used at all or only used by a very small number of participants in high imposition interactions, as shown in Table 5b. This suggests that learners and native speakers have a shared perception of appropriateness regarding these two strategies in high imposition interactions. Want Statements were again employed by a limited number of learners and native speakers in high imposition interactions. While they had only been used in low imposition interactions with higher status interlocutors, learners and native speakers employed them with both, equal status and higher status interlocutors, in high imposition scenarios. However, due to the rather low figures for that particular request strategy, findings have to be considered as tentative.

Table 5b. Direct request strategies in high imposition scenarios (in per cent)

	High imposition equal status					**High imposition higher status**				
	S1	*S2*	*S3*	*AH*	*NS*	*S1*	*S2*	*S3*	*AH*	*NS*
Imperative										
unhedged Performative	3					3				
hedged Performative	6	8	3	2		14	14	22	15	
Want Statement				2	3			3		5
Locution Derivable			3			3				2

From a developmental and cross-cultural perspective, the SA and AH learners' use of unhedged and hedged Performatives is particularly interesting. Neither strategy was employed by native speakers in high imposition scenarios, but hedged Performatives, e.g. *I wanted to ask you if you could just complete it now* (SA learner, Session 2), were the most frequently used direct strategy by AH learners and SA learners in all three sessions. This appears to be a rather unexpected result, since the high imposition context should warrant a rather less direct approach (and indeed the vast majority of request utterances made by both SA and AH group members in the high imposition scenarios are indirect in nature). One possible explanation for this finding seems to lie in the learners' native language. Kasper's (1981) and Warga's (2004) studies revealed that, in contrast to French and English, hedged Performatives are frequently used in German and considered to be

polite. This supports Fraser's (1978) and Larina's (2006) notion that the use of strategies that are considered to be appropriate in the same situation may differ in two languages, even if as Blum-Kulka (1982) points out both languages possess a similar range of possible request forms.

It has to be noted, however, that Hill (1997), in his cross-sectional developmental study with learners of English in Japan, also found an increase in hedged Performatives in correlation with an increasing proficiency level in the second language. Consequently, the use of hedged Performatives might also be characteristic of the learners' interlanguage. While the second explanation for the learners' overuse cannot be disregarded, I think that negative transfer from the Germans' L1 is the more likely reason, especially since literal translations of the requests made by the Germans would be considered very polite in their native language. The consistent use of hedged Performatives in the SA learners' data can perhaps be explained by the circumstances in which high imposition requests directed at a higher status interlocutor are normally made. Since these requests tend to be made in private one-to-one conversations with the higher status interlocutor, and not for example in front of a seminar group, it is very difficult for learners to observe native speaker students in this context and to obtain appropriate input.

On the positive side, however, unhedged Performatives were only used by one SA learner in interactions with equal status and higher status interlocutors in Session 1. The fact that this learner subsequently refrained from using unhedged Performatives in the following sessions, resorting to conventionally indirect requests or the less direct hedged Performatives instead, indicates that he realized that his choices in the first session had been too direct.

4.4. Participants' employment of indirect request strategies according to contextual conditions

Apart from Locution derivables and hedged Performatives, the use of direct request strategies by the three participant groups was rather restricted and not very varied. In contrast, SA learners and native speakers employed a much broader range of indirect strategies in all four contextual conditions, as shown in Tables 6a and 6b. Ability, e.g. *Can you tell me the way to the Trent Building, please?* (SA learner, Session 1), was the most frequently used strategy by both learner groups and the native speakers. However, while 39-61 per cent of the SA learners and 52-62 per cent of the native

speakers also employed other strategies, only 25-56 per cent of the AH learners used strategies other than Ability. This finding indicates that the AH learners have a more limited request strategy repertoire than the SA learners or the NSs. This is further supported by the fact that in three of the four contextual conditions, only two strategies, Ability and Willingness, were employed by more than 10 per cent of the AH learners. In addition, one of the AH learners also employed an inappropriate Suggestory Formula in a high imposition interaction with an equal status interlocutor.

Table 6a. Indirect request strategies in low imposition scenarios (in per cent)

	Low imposition equal status					**Low imposition higher status**				
	S1	*S2*	*S3*	*AH*	*NS*	*S1*	*S2*	*S3*	*AH*	*NS*
Suggest. F.										
Availability										
Prediction						6		6		5
Permission	6	8	3		10	6	8	14	2	13
Willing-ness	6	6	8	12	5	14	11	22	25	8
Ability	61	64	64	75	40	61	64	50	62	48
Hints	9	6	12	2	21	9	6	3	4	15

Table 6b. Indirect request strategies in high imposition scenarios (in per cent)

	High imposition equal status					**High imposition higher status**				
	S1	*S2*	*S3*	*AH*	*NS*	*S1*	*S2*	*S3*	*AH*	*NS*
Suggest. F.				2						
Availability	6		6	8	7					3
Prediction	14	8	14	10	10	28	17	25	8	23
Permission	3	3	3	2	15	3	3		4	12
Willing-ness	31	31	25	17	17	14	11	14	27	17
Ability	39	50	47	58	47	36	56	36	44	38
Hints									2	

Compared to the AH learners, the SA learners tended to vary their use of request strategies in the four contextual conditions more. Although the range of request strategies used by the SA learners was slightly more limited than that of the NS participants, with fewer SA learners employing Permission in high imposition interactions, overall the data indicate a development towards the native speakers' request strategies preferences. For example, the number

of SA learners employing Hints in low imposition, equal status scenarios increased from session one to three. SA learners also became less reliant on the Prediction strategy in high imposition interactions during their stay in the L2 context.

4.5. Limitations

There are certain limitations of this study related to the number of participants and the resulting amount of request utterances that were investigated. Several of the findings have to be considered tentative due to the limited number of requests that were made by the participants in some categories. Although the very nature of requests, and the various strategies that can be used to perform them in different contextual conditions will probably always lead to a rather uneven distribution of the data in request studies, a somewhat higher number of participants might have made trends in strategy use more obvious. Regrettably it seems that attracting a higher number of participants for a study that involves a long-term commitment will probably always be difficult. It also needs to be noted that due to the low participant number, no statistical analysis of the data was conducted.

5. Summary and conclusion

The results of the present study into the pragmatic development of language learners in a study abroad context have shown that the target language environment seems to have influenced L2 learners' pragmatic competence positively. The investigation of the initial occurrence of request strategies in the SA learners' data revealed that the first months of the learners' sojourn in England facilitated more the initial use of direct than indirect request strategies, while the subsequent months promoted more the initial use of indirect rather than direct strategies. Possible explanations for this pattern may be that adult learners' interlanguage pragmatic development in the L2 context follows somewhat similar stages as that of child learners, or else that the more direct nature of the SA learners' first language initially influenced their pragmatic choices. A second factor which also seems to have affected SA learners' pragmatic development is individual learner differences, since not all learners employed all of the strategies or first used them during the same period.

The in-depth investigation of the learners' and native speakers' employment of request strategies according to the contextual variables of status and imposition suggested that the amount of time spent in the L2 environment had an impact on the SA learners' strategy use. This was shown by the fact that the SA learners developed towards native speaker norms in several instances (unhedged Performatives, Hints).

The request strategy choices of the learners also revealed that, in the vast majority of the cases, the SA learners, to a higher extent than the AH learners, were able to choose request strategies that were appropriate in the various contexts. At the end of their sojourn, the SA learner group also had a broader repertoire of request strategies at their disposal, which allowed them to vary their requests more and will probably have resulted in them getting better in getting what they wanted. However, request strategy choices in some contextual conditions (e.g. unhedged Performatives) also indicate the importance of individual differences on language learners' development. A third factor which may also influence learners' pragmatic development in the study abroad context is the transfer of pragmatic norms and strategies from the learners' L1. The use of hedged Performatives in high imposition interactions by both learner groups suggests that some strategies seem to be so ingrained in the learners that even an extended stay in the study abroad context did not lead to a decrease in the employment of this particular strategy.

Thus, these findings suggest that a longitudinal sojourn in the L2 university context has an overall positive impact on learners' pragmatic competence in their L2. However, the apparent influence of individual learners' differences suggest that further research is needed to examine the significance of factors such as learners' motivation, their educational background and personal aims on their pragmatic development in such contexts. One factor in particular seems to lend itself to further investigation, namely the amount of contact[5] learners have with native speakers and the resulting opportunities to observe native speakers' reactions towards learners' output. Future research into the impact of learners' exposure to the target language and of their contact with different members of the target speech community (e.g. higher/equal status interlocutors) could prove valuable.

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Notes

1. The use of the term "study abroad" is not unambigous in the literature, as Coleman (2006) points out. For the purposes of the present paper, study abroad is defined as being enrolled at a higher educational institution in an L2 context, either as part of students' degree course at a university in their home country, such as Erasmus/Socrates, or to obtain a degree, such as a Master, in the L2 country.
2. All names of the participants are pseudonyms.
3. The initials used in this Table refer to the pseudonyms of the SA students presented in Table 1.
4. The percentage figures refer to how often individual strategies were used per scenario of a contextual condition. Therefore they were computed by dividing the number of instances that an Imperative was employed in a contextual condition, e.g. low imposition + equal status, by the four scenarios that constitute the condition x the participant number of this group, i.e. for the SA learners' employment of Imperatives in session 1: 3 / 4x9 = 8%.
5. Very few studies have examined the effect on contact with native speakers on learners' development in the L2 so far. One notable exception is Zahran's (2005) in depth analysis on the effect of contact on learners' linguistic development in which she also provides a good general overview of research done in this area.

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