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Maria Dolores García-Pastor (ed.)

**TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN
LANGUAGE**

Proposals for the language classroom



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Director de la col·lecció: Josep Ballester

Consell Assessor: Jesús Figuerola, Manuel García, Pascuala Morote, Mateo del Pozo i Paulina Ribera

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Maria Dolores García-Pastor (ed.)

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C. Sèquia de Montcada, 13

46470 Catarroja (València)

Tel. 609 426 131. Fax: 961 270 038

e-mail: periferic@periferic.es

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EFL TEACHING WITH A VIEW TO THE CLASSROOM

María Dolores García-Pastor

Faculty of Education, Universitat de València

1. Introduction

This volume presents a collection of papers that put forward proposals on the teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL). The onus here is on innovation in the language classroom along the lines of current trends in language teaching and learning, which promote the integration of technology in teaching and learning processes, attention to cultural diversity and intercultural exchanges, consideration of learners' personalities, attitudes, beliefs, and values (Council of Europe, 2001, 2011; Fitzpatrick, 2004; Alcón-Soler and Safont, 2007; etc.). However, the most important focus of this volume is the attempt to foster learners' pragmatic development in a second or foreign language (L2/FL) (Rose and Kasper, 2001; Kasper and Rose, 2002; Bardovi-Harlig and Mahan-Taylor, 2003; Martínez-Flor et al., 2003; Alcón-Soler and Martínez-Flor, 2005, 2008; Bardovi-Harlig et al., 2006; etc.).

While this is not a book on pragmatics in language learning *strictu sensu*, i.e. a collection of articles consisting of second or foreign language pragmatics studies, also referred

to as interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) investigations,¹ the contributions that are included here do address pragmatic aspects of the English language in instructional and non-instructional settings of a different nature (virtual, face-to-face, media-based). The aim is to make claims and establish proposals on how to teach English to speakers of other languages. Therefore, this volume contains: a) classroom studies in which a specific instructional treatment is offered, and/or implemented and assessed (Mugford, Pennock-Speck and Clavel-Arroitia, Brígido-Corachán); b) investigations of learner language in educational settings that aim to provide useful information for cross-cultural communication in general, and instruction in EFL in particular, advancing practical suggestions in this respect (Bayyurt and Marti, Bordería-García), and c) papers in which a didactic approach is suggested in light of an analysis of English as a first language (L1) or bilingual Spanish-English speakers' discourse (O'Keefe and Clancy, Gregori-Signes and Alcantud-Díaz). From the perspective of L2 pragmatics research, it can be argued that all the papers in this collection except for O'Keefe and Clancy's, and Gregori-Signes and Alcantud-Díaz's are comparative studies, that is, investigations that "are close to research on cross-cultural pragmatics" (Alcón-Soler and Martínez-Flor, 2008: 3), since non-native speaker productions and perceptions are contrasted to a greater or lesser extent with native speakers' vis-à-vis communicative action.

2. L2 Pragmatics: L1 and L2 im/politeness

Common to the articles presented here is the premise that the pragmatic aspects of a second or foreign language

1. Only Bayyurt and Marti's study and Bordería-García's in this volume qualify as classical ILP research.

can be taught or, at least, learners can be made aware of them, in line with evidence culled from the ILP literature (cf. Bardovi-Harlig, 2001). The papers in this collection align with this premise in spite of how difficult an enterprise this may be, especially in the context of the classroom (Kasper, 1997; Cook, 2001), and despite the fact that L2 learners do not automatically put their knowledge to use in production (Kasper, 1997; Rose and Kasper, 2001b). Pragmatics in language learning has typically been conceived as *pragmalinguistics* and *sociopragmatics*. Pragmalinguistics has been identified with a set of linguistic resources for conveying illocutionary and interpersonal meanings (Leech, 1983; Thomas, 1983). In turn, *sociopragmatics* has been equated with the socio-cultural factors underlying the use of these resources across contexts (ibid.). Pragmalinguistics thus encompasses strategies like directness and indirectness, routines, and linguistic forms on the whole that intensify or soften communicative acts (Kasper, 1997; Rose and Kasper, 2001b). Sociopragmatics refers to speakers' and hearers' assessments of social variables such as social distance, power, rights and obligations, and the degree of imposition of a determinate communicative act in their communicative practices across speech communities (ibid.).

All the chapters here deal with the pragmalinguistic component, thereby converging with studies on L2 pragmatics teaching and learning (Alcón-Soler and Martínez-Flor, 2008). However, pragmalinguistics is explored in relation to the sociopragmatic component, since contextual factors such as the relationship between speaker and hearer, the discourse genre (O'Keefe and Clancy, Pennock-Speck and Clavel-Arroitia; Brígido-Corachán), and the communicative situation in general (O'Keefe and Clancy, Gregori-Signes and Alcantud-Díaz) are considered in connection with the linguistic elements interlocutors deploy in their communicative exchanges. As a result, all the studies in this collec-

tion unavoidably deal with im/politeness phenomena, since EFL, L1 English, and bilingual Spanish-English, speakers' linguistic behaviours and attitudes are seen as triggered to a certain extent by knowledge of appropriate (politeness) versus inappropriate (impoliteness) behaviour in a specific communicative situation (cf. Escandell-Vidal, 1996, Meier, 1997; Jary, 1998, Mills, 2003; Watts, 2003; Locher, 2004; García-Pastor, 2006, etc.).

Such knowledge is stored and organised in an individual's cognition in frames (Bateson, 1972), structures of expectations (Tannen, 1993), or the like, and is part of an individual's pragmatic competence in a specific language (cf. Bachman, 1990). Therefore, underlying the contributions to this volume is the understanding of im/politeness either in a first language, which I refer to as L1 im/politeness, or a second or foreign language, namely, L2 im/politeness, as an important element of a speaker's pragmatic competence in L1 and L2 respectively (Kasper, 1990; Beebe, 1995; Locastro, 1997; Beebe and Waring, 2005). Additionally, a second order approach to L1 and L2 im/politeness has been adopted in the chapters of this book (cf. Eelen, 2001; Watts, 2003).

In view of the above, L1 and L2 im/politeness involves a speaker's or writer's consideration of socio-cultural norms of his/her own speech community when communicating in his/her first language (i.e. English in the chapters of this book), and the target community when communicating in the target language (English as foreign language here). Such norms govern notions of personhood, relationships, and discursive practices in a given society and culture, and result from a process of reification and typification of social reality in and through the communicative practices of community members (cf. Berger and Luckman, 1966). In the case of L2 im/politeness, besides invoking L2 socio-cultural norms, language learners are expected to transfer those of

L1 to L2 usage (cf. Evans Davis, 2004), because some pragmatic knowledge is universal, for instance, the fact that interlocutors take turns during talk, the idea that communicative acts can be conveyed in a more direct or indirect manner, etc. (Kasper, 1997; Rose and Kasper, 2001a, Kasper and Rose, 2002a). Furthermore, certain communicative situations in L1 and L2 may be identical with regards to rules of social conduct. Consequently, it can be argued that L2 im/politeness is to some extent contingent upon L1 im/politeness within an individual's pragmatic competence.

At a cognitive level, this dependency relation is even more clear, if we consider that in learning the L2/FL, learners construct new concepts and reorganize their encyclopaedic knowledge as well as other cognitive structures, e.g. their interlanguage systems (Selinker, 1972), so that L2 im/politeness necessarily entails a process of reframing L1 frames (Pizziconi, 2006; Brown, 2010). Such process consists of "re-analyzing and enriching existing frames" (Brown, 2010: 250) by means of constructing new metarepresentations (i.e. representations of representations) and reshaping pre-existing ones, in the form of *reflective beliefs*, i.e. representations of the world inserted in a validating context, towards which one has a credal attitude (Sperber, 1997), especially when acquiring culture-specific norms of the target community (cf. Sperber, 1994). Culture-specific norms amount to culture-specific content that may be embedded within culture-bound speech events. Some examples of the above may be the acquisition of *dugri ritual* norms in the Sabra culture for learners of Hebrew (Katriel, 1986), the learning of norms underlying *palanca* narratives for learners of *non-peninsular* Spanish in Colombia (Fitch, 1998), etc. Therefore, L2 im/politeness is closely linked to L1 im/politeness, and is based on knowledge of socio-cultural norms.

This knowledge is expected to be observed in and through interactants' interchanges, in particular, the relatio-

nal work they realize (Watts, 2003; Locher, 2004; Locher and Watts, 2005), their attention or damage to face as an aspect of it (Brown and Levinson, 1987; Lachenicht, 1980; Culpeper, 1996; Culpeper et al., 2003; Bousfield, 2008), their concern for, or neglect of, the discourse genre in which the exchange is inserted, i.e. its operating patterns and expectations (cf. Lakoff, 1989; Penman, 1990; García-Pastor, 2006, 2008; Limberg, 2008; etc.), interactional principles on the whole (cf. Lakoff, 1973; Leech, 1983), participants' rights and obligations (Fraser and Nolen, 1981), an evaluation of social variables such as power, social distance, etc., and the degree of imposition of a given communicative act.

In the chapters of this volume, im/politeness thus surfaces in and through L1 English, and bilingual Spanish-English, speakers' and EFL learners' use of certain linguistic forms, e.g. deictics based on personal pronoun usage (O'Keeffe and Clancy), pragmatic markers (O'Keeffe and Clancy, Mugford, Brígido-Corachán), hedges also conceived as semantic formulas or components of communicative acts as defined in the L2 acquisition literature, e.g. modal expressions (O'Keeffe and Clancy, Mugford, Brígido-Corachán, Bayyurt and Marti); and strategies such as vague language (O'Keeffe and Clancy), directness and indirectness (Bordería-García), target formulas² and appraisal routines (Gregori-Signes and Alcantud-Diaz), politeness strategies à la Brown and Levinson (1987) (Pennock-Speck and Clavel-Arroitia), and broader interactional strategies like supportiveness, solidarity, self-disclosure, and face enhancement (Mugford) in the context of communicative phenomena like peer-tutoring and peer assessment practices (Pennock-Speck and Clavel-Arroitia, Brígido-Corachán), code-switching (Gre-

2. For a detailed review of formulas in second language studies and pragmatics, see Bardovi-Harlig et al. (2006).

gori-Signes and Alcantud-Díaz), and specific communicative acts like criticism (Pennock-Speck and Clavel-Arroitiá), suggestions and advice (Bayyurt and Martí, Bordería-García), and others, e.g. requests, offers, etc. (Brígido-Corachán).

3. The organisation of the volume

The papers in this collection have been organised considering their theoretical and methodological approaches along with thematic lines. It is precisely the variety of theoretical and methodological strands they present that give this volume an interdisciplinary character. The volume opens with two chapters, namely, O’Keeffe and Clancy’s, and Gregori-Signes and Alcantud-Díaz’s, which adopt a corpus-based approach to the study of L1 English, and bilingual Spanish-English speech respectively for teaching purposes. A corpus perspective on language use as regards language learning and instruction involves considering large or small corpora as powerful tools for the teaching of authentic language to non-native speakers (Ghadessi et al., 2001; O’Keeffe et al., 2007; Belles-Fortuño et al., 2010; Campoy et al., 2010; O’Keeffe et al., 2011; etc.).

O’Keeffe and Clancy thus argue that a corpus can provide language teachers and learners with the wide range of authentic linguistic choices made by native speakers and writers, and accurate frequency-based contextual information involved in making these choices. The authors especially advocate using a corpus to enhance learners’ awareness of L2 pragmatics in view of the restricted or inconsistent pragmatic content found in the ELT material, and the significant differences between native and non-native speaker discourse observed in corpus-based studies. In this regard, they provide empirical evidence on the use of pragmatic devices like hedges consisting of modals, prag-

matic markers, vague language, and deictics constituted by pronouns in spoken and written genres. Their aim is to offer practical strategies for searching through an electronic spoken corpus for pragmatic elements. To this end, they present an account of basic corpus analysis techniques, i.e. frequency lists, keyword lists, and concordances. Frequency lists prove a useful teaching tool for the illustration of the relationship between the frequency of occurrence of linguistic items and the language variety, genre or context in which they appear. Keyword lists can be helpful for exploring the different conventions of particular discourse domains. Lastly, concordances afford detailed contextual information about frequency lists, and allow for establishing whether or not an item has, in fact, a pragmatic function. Therefore, all these techniques can shed light on certain pragmatic devices and their importance in the pragmatic system of a language; they may allow student hypotheses about a variety, genre or context to be proven or disproven; and they can serve as a starting point for the design of awareness-raising activities. O’Keeffe and Clancy end their chapter offering three corpus-based activities that illustrate the use of an electronic corpus for raising learners’ L2 pragmatic awareness in the classroom. They conclude calling for research that integrates pragmatics and language corpora in relation to language teaching.

In the following chapter, Gregori-Signes and Alcantud-Díaz examine the phenomenon of code-switching between L1 Spanish and L2 English with a focus on the use of formulas and formulaic appraisal or evaluative devices within a corpus consisting of 20 episodes of the series *Handy Manny/Manny Manitas*. More specifically, the chapter aims to explore when and how L2 English is introduced and its functions in order to critically assess the potential of the series as language teaching material for Spanish children under the age of nine, to whom the series is addressed. The

authors show that L2 English is introduced on average every 42.65 words per episode, frequently in the form of a direct switch from L1 Spanish into L2 English without translation, but adequately contextualised, so that a particular expression is clarified for the targeted audience. L2 English in code-switching mainly comprises pragmalinguistic elements that Gregori-Signes and Alcantud-Diaz classify into: *permanent lexical items*, which are a hallmark of the series (e.g. L2 terms in the songs of the series), and *context lexical items*, which are more episode-related, and amount to *non-formulaic* units, and *formulaic* expressions with abundant instances of *evaluative* language. It is the latter that make up the bulk of L2 English expressions in *Handy Manny*. The chapter closes with a positive evaluation of the series as a learning tool bar a few specific drawbacks, namely, careless pronunciation, minor pragmatic errors, and insufficient exposure to L2 expressions. Nevertheless, exposure to formulaic language use at an early age contributes to language learning in general, and pragmatic development in particular, especially if such formulaic language has a relevant social function like that of regulating the relationships between the fictional characters in the series. In this regard, L2 English formulae and formulaic appraisal categories could be said to facilitate the acquisition of L2 im/politeness.

The volume continues with two classroom studies, Gerrard Mugford's, and Pennock-Speck and Clavel-Arroitia's, which emphasize the interpersonal dimension of communication, with the former arguing for an *interpersonal pragmatic competence*, and the latter embracing Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness approach. Mugford's chapter is a longitudinal interventionist study (Kasper, 2001) that accounts for EFL users' development of what he calls 'interpersonal pragmatic competence' in advice giving. Advice giving is seen to cover suggestions, requests, etc., hence is

broadly understood in the paper. Interpersonal pragmatic competence refers to the free choices language users make to establish, develop, and maintain local relationships with others, in such a way that they act as *somes*, i.e. fully-fledged participative interactants who express their own personalities, identities and attitudes, as opposed to *anys*, competent but indistinct participants (Aston, 1988, 1989, 1993). Following a pre-test post-test design, Mugford elicits responses on advice giving in EFL from 45 Mexican learners through a Dialogue Construction (DC) questionnaire (Bergman and Kasper, 1993). Learners' initial responses evince a lack of interpersonal pragmatic competence in the foreign language that is reflected in the general formulaic use of 'should' to give advice. Taking such responses as a point of departure, the author instantiates an explicit instructional approach (Kasper and Rose, 2002a; Rose, 2005) which focuses on awareness-raising of all-encompassing interpersonal resources such as supportiveness and solidarity, and more specific interpersonal resources like self-disclosure and face enhancement along with certain pragmatic markers (hedges, cajolers and downtoners). By the end of the study, learners show more interpersonal and individual ways of conveying advice in the target language. This is discerned in their expression of supportiveness and solidarity primarily through a proposed joint activity with the addressee and identification with his/her feelings respectively; self-disclosure practices based on offering their own experiences to get reciprocal experiences from the hearer; and face enhancement strategies consisting of emphatic approval of the latter often combined with self-effacement and the use of specific pragmatic markers.

Pennock-Speck and Clavel-Arroitia employ Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory to look at the shape of criticism in EFL students' written peer reviews. Their chapter mainly aims to identify those areas in which learners

might need training in issuing criticism on the work of other students, whilst considering face needs. Learners were organised into 13 groups, and each group's critique was produced as part of an assignment within a sociolinguistics module at a Spanish university in the context of the competence-based higher education program fostered by the Bologna system in Europe. Students' reviews were based on previous in-class group presentations and contained a total of 137 critiques. The authors analyse these critiques in terms of positive and negative evaluations, and Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness strategies. Results reveal a predominance of positive over negative evaluations, with the latter typically emerging in an unmitigated form. This lack of mitigation is probably due to students' attention to showing their prowess at writing critiques in EFL over face concerns. Moreover, Spanish students may be less concerned with the negative effects of their negative evaluations, because they are less oriented toward negative politeness values, and are also centred on enacting sincerity, which seems to be characteristic of a Hispanic cultural ethos (cf. Fitch, 1998; García-Pastor, 1999, 2007). In spite of warning against correlations between positive evaluations and positive politeness strategies, and negative evaluations and negative politeness strategies, Pennock-Speck and Clavel-Arroitia find positive politeness strategies embodied in positive evaluative statements, and negative politeness strategies constituting mitigated expressions of negative evaluation. Unmitigated negative evaluations were observed to consist mostly of bald-on-record strategies. The authors conclude that students' written discourses in EFL, albeit adequate overall, need some fine tuning to bring them more in line with politeness strategies employed by English native-speakers. They offer specific guidelines on how to address this issue in the classroom, underscoring the importance of heightening awareness of politeness issues in criti-

ques, and by affording students the opportunity to actually be im/polite in the foreign language.

The next chapter in the volume, namely, Brígido-Corachán's, constitutes a bridge between Pennock-Speck and Clavel-Arroitia's study and the two final papers in this book, i.e. those by Bayyurt and Martí, and Bordería-García. Brígido-Corachán shares with Pennock-Speck and Clavel-Arroitia a focus on critical writing in an instructional context, and similarly to Bayyurt and Martí, and Bordería-García, considers suggestions and advice giving in her analysis. By contrast with all these studies, the author does not adopt any specific theoretical perspective; rather, she draws on general pragmatic notions like illocutionary acts and pragmatic markers to examine learners' peer-tutoring and peer-assessment practices in EFL within an online forum created in a literature course at a Spanish university in 2008-2009. In particular, she explores learners' deployment of pragmatic markers with a focus on expressions of modality to assess their progress on the acquisition of subject content, and the development of their pragmatic abilities in the target language – especially of a discursive kind. The online discussions under study are principally follow-ups of in-class face-to-face debates and interactions dealing with students' literature-related interests and discoveries. In her analysis, Brígido-Corachán conceives pragmatic markers broadly, and assorts these elements into: argumentative assertive and strong commitment markers; hesitation markers; and markers that evidence lack of confidence or willingness. The author shows an abundance of online threads consisting of original and creative interpretations of course contents, which contain mostly assertive and strong commitment markers. These threads and markers yielded an assertive pattern of interaction that became common by the end of the academic year, and unveiled joint argumentative scaffolding among forum participants. Learners' acquisition of subject

content and improvement of L2 discursive skills were clearly observed in these threads. Offers of peer-assistance were the next frequent thread type, and also showed a prominence of argumentative assertive and strong commitment markers. Finally, threads based on direct requests for help were not as abundant, and incorporated mainly hesitation markers that illustrated a tentative construction of knowledge. The chapter concludes with a call for a redefinition of assessment in tertiary education, which contemplates virtual forums as a suitable tool to monitor and evaluate students' work in the target language.

The two contributions that close the present volume, i.e. Bayyurt and Martí's, and Bordería-García's, investigate suggestions and advice giving from a classic interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) approach in educational settings. As opposed to other illocutionary acts, suggestions and advice do not have a long history in ILP research. These two final chapters thus look at these communicative actions, holding, however, divergent conceptualizations of them, and constituting also different studies in nature. Bayyurt and Martí use the cover term of 'suggestion-giving' for both suggestions and advice, including suggestions functioning as recommendations or requests. Therefore, similarly to Mugford, these authors adhere to an all-inclusive view of suggestions or advice. Bordería-García discards suggestions which might be classified as other illocutionary acts to concentrate only on 'pure' instances, which she denominates 'advice'. Additionally, Bayyurt and Martí's is a cross-sectional study of EFL suggestions in L1 Turkish speakers, whereas Bordería-García's is an empirically informed proposal for dealing with advice giving in the foreign language classroom.

Bayyurt and Martí analyse the EFL suggestions formulated by 101 freshman and senior undergraduate students of a state university in Turkey within 10 different relational scenarios outlined in a written Discourse Completion Test

(DCT). Suggestions in L1 English are potential threats to an addressee's negative face (Brown and Levinson, 1987), and interactants need to use linguistic devices to soften such possible face damage, taking the relationship with the interlocutor into account. By looking at learners' interlanguage suggestions, the authors aim to determine whether these qualify as adequate linguistic behaviour in the target language; hence provide information that may be useful for EFL instruction concerning L2 pragmatics, and cross-cultural research. Bayyurt and Marti thus scrutinize the semantic formulas learners avail themselves of to modify suggestions by paying heed to syntactic choices (imperative, interrogative, and declarative modes), and syntactic structures (modal expressions and their functions) across the relational scenarios. Among their principal findings is a general preference for the declarative mode and an overall inclination towards the use of 'can' and 'should', avoiding the latter with older and more powerful hearers. Freshman students displayed a tendency towards 'should', hence obligation versus ability in their suggestions, whilst seniors manifested a more balanced use of modals combining both obligation and ability. These differences indicate seniors' greater sensitivity to face threat, and freshmen's more bookish repertoire of formulas. The authors therefore recommend the inclusion of more appropriate options to formulate suggestions in ELT materials, and put forward guidelines for their instruction from a communicative task-based approach.

In the last chapter of this volume, Bordería-García convincingly argues for advice as a kind of illocutionary act that embraces significant cultural differences across languages such as Spanish and English. The author resorts to empirical evidence to depict advice as simultaneously threatening both positive and negative face in L1 English (*ibid.*). In any case, the production and interpretation of advice as face threat hinges upon a myriad of contextual factors she spe-

cifies in the chapter. Consequently, advice in L1 English is a complex and imposing communicative act that native speakers often avoid or soften. Spanish learners usually experience some difficulties in instantiating advice in EFL. These difficulties typically consist of excessive directness probably stemming from transfer of L1 pragmatic norms. Bordería-García thus advocates the need of integrating pragmatics in the foreign language curriculum, and offers a detailed proposal on how to teach the pragmatics of advice giving in L1 English to Spanish speakers. Raising learners' awareness of pragmatic concepts, namely, face, the socio-cultural factors that can affect face in different contexts, and the strategies that interactants can deploy to attend to face, is the basis of her proposal. EFL learners need to be taught that advice in English can be a highly context-dependent face-threatening activity requiring the use of certain pragmatic strategies, i.e. advice-giving strategies. Through a classification of these strategies into direct, conventionally indirect, and non-conventionally indirect strategies, the author presents, evaluates, and contrasts the different advice-giving strategies in L1 English and their Spanish counterparts to help EFL teachers and learners identify potential areas of negative transfer and pragmatic failure. With this information, she suggests a combined explicit and implicit approach to the instruction of advice in EFL (Kasper and Rose, 2002a; Rose, 2005) she develops at the end of the chapter.

As an end note, the papers in this collection constitute a modest effort to innovate in the EFL classroom mainly by attempting to increase attention to pragmatic issues, among which im/politeness phenomena are crucial. In so doing, the contributions to this volume intend to underline the relevance of a learner-centred pedagogy that takes into consideration learners' changing needs in an increasingly globalized world, and the consequent flexibility this brings about

in teacher and student roles, teaching methodologies and learning materials in the classroom setting. Thus, the chapters in this book cover the use of new technologies in teaching and learning processes (O’Keeffe and Clancy; Brígido-Corachán), learners’ cultural backgrounds with a view to cross-cultural communication and international mobility (Bayyurt and Martí’s; Bordería-García), and learners’ personalities, attitudes, beliefs, and values, stressing learners’ freedom of choice in their acquisition of a second or foreign language (Gregori-Signes and Alcantud-Díaz; Mugford; Pennock-Speck and Clavel-Arroitia). All these issues are contemplated from many different angles that account for the divergent theoretical viewpoints and methodological perspectives adopted by their authors. Such diversity mirrors the hybrid and interdisciplinary character of this volume, which is necessary if we are to make further progress. The idea of this book emerged in an informal discussion over the dinner table, prompted by an interest in improving as language teachers among some of its contributors. This interest and other related topics were also shared with others through e-mail and at some conferences. The result is the compilation of their work in this direction here.

Finally, I would not like to finish this introductory chapter without thanking wholeheartedly the authors of the individual papers in this collection, who also participated actively in the reviewing process. Special thanks go to Carmen Gregori-Signes for her unconditional support and enthusiasm, and Barry Pennock-Speck and Judith Likin-Gasparro for their help and efficiency. I would also like to express my thanks to the general editor of the series *Estratègies*, Josep Ballester, and the editorial board, Jesús Figuerola, Manuel García, Pascuala Morote, and Paulina Ribera for making this project possible. Last but not least, any shortcomings that might remain are my responsibility.



USING A CORPUS TO ENHANCE PRAGMATIC AWARENESS

Brian Clancy and Anne O’Keeffe

Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick

1. Introduction

Over the past two decades, corpus linguistics has had an increasing influence on the field of language teaching pedagogy. This chapter will demonstrate, in particular, the benefits that the fortuitous blend of corpus linguistics and pragmatics offers language teachers and learners. One of the primary benefits is that the language represented in corpora is authentic and naturally-occurring. Corpus linguistics is “the study of language based on examples of real life language use” (McEnery and Wilson, 2001: 1). It involves the assembly of a number of spoken and/or written texts that are collected according to a principled set of design criteria. These texts are then stored electronically as a whole, or a ‘corpus’, and analysed by specifically designed computer software. The electronic nature of a corpus affords the researcher access to the results of quantitative analysis, represented as, amongst other things, frequency-based information. These results allow researcher intuition about language to be measured against a naturally-occurring language sample, something that was not possible prior to the advent of corpora. The development of modern spoken corpora and the speaker information they contain, such as number of

participants, speaker relationship, conversation topic and channel of communication, has also facilitated detailed qualitative analysis. This allows for the “explanation, exemplification and interpretation of the patterns found in quantitative analyses” (Biber et al., 1998: 5). In relation to language teaching and learning, corpus-based studies have highlighted a frequent mismatch between authentic language use and the language that is presented in language textbooks (see, e.g., Holmes, 1988; McCarthy and Carter, 1995; Römer, 2004). Corpora provide teachers and learners with quantifiable evidence to test their language intuitions and hypotheses against or a resource that can impart an answer to a question about language. O’Keeffe, McCarthy and Carter (2007) point out that corpora have also highlighted features about language that had previously eluded intuition.

According to Crystal (1985: 240), “pragmatics is the study of language from the point of view of users, especially of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction and the effects their language has on other participants in the act of communication”. Pragmatics might, therefore, be interpreted as the study of how speakers and writers successfully accomplish their goals, i.e. to get things done, while at the same time attend to the relationship they have with others (Leech, 1983; Crystal, 1985; Kasper, 1997). The notion of context is crucial to this. Context is complex and multi-faceted in nature, and is comprised of a number of cultural, social and discursal factors such as interpersonal shared knowledge. The importance of the interpersonal to the study of pragmatics and, indeed, to language use in general, cannot be overstated. It is the interpersonal that has traditionally separated the study of pragmatics from that of syntax or semantics. Yule (1996: 4) maintains that pragmatics explores “the relationship between linguistic forms and the user(s) of these forms.” Contextual factors such as interpersonal shared

knowledge impact on the particular pragmatic choice made by speakers and writers. Corpus linguistics has allowed for the comparison of this pragmatic choice at a number of levels. These include language variety (e.g. between Irish English and British English), medium (e.g. spoken language versus written language) and, recent studies in corpus linguistics have highlighted the fact that specific, local-level discourse domains (e.g. radio phone-in or family discourse) use language in pragmatically specialised ways (O’Keeffe et al., 2011). This enables the researcher/teacher to examine in detail the contextual factors associated with a particular language choice at a particular level. In relation to language learning, the ability of learners to make the linguistic choice appropriate to the context within which they find themselves is referred to as their ‘pragmatic competence’. Therefore, it might be argued that a corpus provides language teachers and learners with a wide range of authentic linguistic choices as made by spoken and written language participants, and the contextual information surrounding these choices, thus allowing the examination of what might be called ‘real’ pragmatic competence.

Edwards and Csizér (2004: 17) describe pragmatic competence as an “organic part of the learners’ communicative competence”, commensurate to, not contained within, grammatical competence. Traditionally, pragmatic competence has been subdivided into two components – *pragmalinguistics* and *sociopragmatics* (Leech, 1983). Pragmalinguistics refers to “the resources for conveying communicative acts and relational or interpersonal meaning” (Kasper, 1997: 2). These resources include a range of speech acts and politeness strategies and the devices available for intensifying or softening these acts. Sociopragmatics refers to the knowledge of how to make an appropriate pragmatic choice based on a particular goal in a particular setting. It is necessary to consider addressing these components in the language

classroom for a number of reasons. Pragmatic misunderstandings can lead to a negative evaluation of a non-native speaker by a native speaker, due to the fact that grammatical errors are expected of non-native speakers and acknowledged as part of the language learning process, whereas pragmatic errors are “often interpreted on a social or personal level” (Bardovi-Harlig and Mahan-Taylor, 2003: 38). It also appears that pragmatic competence does not develop in tandem with a learner’s grammatical competence (Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei, 1998). In addition, exposure to a second language alone without instruction is insufficient for the acquisition of pragmatic competence (Schmidt, 1993; Kasper and Rose, 2002a, 2002b; Rose, 2005). Finally, it has been shown that the pragmatic content in much of the commonly used ELT material is restricted or inconsistent.

2. Corpus linguistics, pragmatics and language learning and teaching

Corpus linguistic research of relevance to the teaching and learning of pragmatic competence is characterised by the fact that authentic language use yields a variety of patterns that are not readily evident in ELT materials or traditional grammars. One particularly fertile area for corpus-based studies is the comparison of the distribution, meaning and context of use of modal particles in corpus data and in ELT textbooks. Möllering and Nunan (1995: 41) characterise modals as important “indicators of pragmatic competence”. Modals often function pragmatically as politeness markers in the form of hedges (Brown and Levinson, 1987), allowing speakers and writers to downtone the force of an utterance or an argument respectively. Corpus-based studies have illustrated that the presentation of many modal parti-

cles in textbooks differs markedly from their use in the authentic, everyday speech of native speakers. Broadly speaking, modal devices have two different types of meaning: 'deontic' or modal meaning associated with permission, obligation or volition, and 'epistemic' indicating likelihood, e.g. possibility or prediction. Holmes (1988) uses four different corpora, the Brown corpus of written American English, the parallel Lancaster-Oslo-Bergen corpus of British English, semi-formal and informal sections from the London Lund Corpus of spoken English, and a 50,000 word 'base corpus' of spoken and written English across a variety of contexts, to determine the frequency of lexical epistemic devices in spoken and written English. She then compared these results to occurrences of epistemic devices in four textbooks. She claims that textbooks devote an "unjustifiably large amount of attention" to modal auxiliary verbs while neglecting other devices that express doubt or uncertainty such as lexical verbs (e.g. 'appear', 'hope', 'think') or adverbials (e.g. 'at first sight', 'maybe', 'obviously') (Holmes, 1988: 40). She provides a wealth of frequency counts to support this finding and argues that these counts could provide textbook writers with "a more principled basis on which to select the forms to be included in their ESL materials" (ibid.).

Sixteen years later, this situation appeared not to have been addressed. Römer (2004) compares the distribution of modals in the 10-million-word spoken component of the British National Corpus (BNC) with six ELT textbooks and a reference grammar. She found that in textbooks 78.3% occurrences of 'could' are used to express ability, in comparison to the BNC where the corresponding figure is 34%. Also, 'may' is used to express permission in 41.5% of the occurrences in textbooks, but only in 13% of the occurrences in spoken English; 'may' is predominantly employed to express uncertainty in real language use (83%). Römer, like

Holmes, suggests that these findings are used to improve teaching materials. She suggests a changing of the order in which modals are introduced from 'can' → 'must' → 'may' → 'could' → 'would' → 'should' → 'will' → 'shall' → 'ought to' → 'might' to 'will' → 'would' → 'can' → 'could' → 'should' → 'might' → 'must' → 'may' → 'shall' → 'ought to', to reflect their frequency of occurrence in the BNC, thereby equating frequency of occurrence with degree of importance in communication. She also suggests that more focus be placed on the relationship between past tense modals and politeness, which, is "an important concept which is still very much neglected in the EFL context" (Römer, 2004: 197). Although not a study in the ELT context, Farr and O'Keeffe's (2002) study on the variational distribution of the hedging devices 'I would say' and 'I'd say', highlights the importance of investigating past tense modals, politeness and context of use. They examined the frequency of occurrence of these hedges across three one-million-word corpus samples: the Limerick Corpus of Irish English (LCIE), the Cambridge and Nottingham Corpus of Discourse in English (CANCODE), and the Cambridge International Corpus (CIC), representing Irish, British and American English respectively. They found that these devices are used most frequently in Irish, the Irish being twice as 'hedgy' as their American counterparts. For language teachers and learners, this may point toward the need for ELT to take account of language variation when designing teaching materials (see also Conrad, 2004).

Corpus linguistics has played a prominent role in exploring the relationship between other pragmatic devices utilised in spoken language and their contexts of use. Corpus analysis has shown that discourse markers (DMs) are among the most frequent forms employed in spoken discourse (see, e.g., Biber et al., 1999; Carter and McCarthy, 2006). One of the primary functions of discourse markers is as pragmatic

devices (see, e.g., Blakemore, 1987; Schiffrin, 1987; Fraser, 1996; Aijmer, 2002) in that they “indicate an interactive relationship between speaker, hearer and message” (Fung and Carter, 2007: 411). DMs are pedagogically relevant for learners at an advanced level because, through their usage, they can progress towards a C2 level in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (Mukherjee and Rohrbach, 2006). Müller (2005) explored the pragmatic functions of the discourse markers ‘well’, ‘like’, ‘you know’ and ‘so’ in the Giessen Long Beach Chaplin Corpus, which consists of recordings of English and German-speaking university students. She assigned ‘you know’ five different functions (labelled ‘imagine the scene’, ‘see the implication’, ‘reference to shared knowledge’, ‘appeal for understanding’ and ‘acknowledge that the speaker is right’), and found that there are two of these functions (‘see the implication’ and ‘appeal for understanding’) for which there is no significant difference between German students speaking English and native speakers of English. There was, however, a considerable difference in the use of the other three pragmatic functions of ‘you know’.

Fung and Carter (2007) explored the use of DMs in two pedagogical corpora – a 14,157-word corpus from group discussions of intermediate-advanced learners of English in a secondary school in Hong Kong, and the pedagogic sub-corpus from CANCODE (460,055 words, native speakers of English). They found that DMs, while present in the student corpus, are generally less frequent than in British English. However, their frequency counts demonstrated that those DMs that function interpersonally, for example, ‘you know’, ‘well’, ‘sort of’, ‘yeah’, have only limited occurrences in the student data. The exception to this was ‘I think’, which was used markedly more frequently in the student corpus. Previous research into this marker has suggested that it is used primarily as a marker of politeness and uncertainty, rather

than as a verb of cognition (Brown and Levinson, 1987; Holmes, 1990). Fung and Carter, however, indicate that 'I think' is used in their student corpus to mark speaker thoughts to an extent which indicates pragmatic fossilisation (see also Romero Trillo, 2002). They also found evidence of pragmatic fossilisation in the students' frequent use of 'but' and 'because'. In terms of pedagogical implications, Fung and Carter suggest that the students' range of DMs, and the frequency with which they use them, reflects the unnatural and restricted input they receive in the ELT context. They cite the example of 'well', whose adverb, adjective and noun meanings receive attention in ELT, but whose pragmatic meanings are largely ignored (although Mukherjee and Rohrbach (2006) suggest that 'well' is not as underrepresented as other DMs in modern materials). They advocate awareness-raising approaches such as the Illustration-Interaction-Induction model (McCarthy and Carter, 1995) in order that students become competent and intelligible interactionally.

Vague language, which is almost always highly significant pragmatically (Carter, 1997), is another prevalent feature of everyday spoken language. Drave (2002) studied the use of vague language in intercultural conversations between native speakers of English (NSE) and native speakers of Cantonese (NSC) in Hong Kong. Using two corpora, a 98,310-word corpus of NSE and an 84,208-word NSC corpus, he generated frequency counts and found that NSE are 'vaguer' than NSC. However, the range of vague expressions used by the two groups was similar. Functionally, he maintains that in intercultural conversation, vague language is used for promoting politeness and intersubjectivity, and for managing asymmetries of knowledge. Through an analysis of the vague language marker 'stuff', he discovered that NSE use 'stuff' for a range of pragmatic functions which suggest that speakers share knowledge and assumptions. The NSC, however, do not use 'stuff' in this way. He explains that

“perhaps prevailing pedagogical methods do not allow for sufficient exposure to native language models which contain vague language, such as informal conversation” (Drave, 2002: 38).

Corpus linguistics has shown spoken grammar to be rich, flexible, emergent and intensely interpersonal. O’Keeffe et al. (2007) analyse occurrences of *which*- and *if*-clauses and *wh*-cleft clauses in spoken language across a range of corpora. They note that all three patterns have important interpersonal functions – *which*-clauses serve to evaluate and encode attitude and stance, *if*-clauses are used in hierarchical speech situations to help create a non-threatening context, and *wh*-clefts can also be used to encode attitude and stance. They maintain that these three language patterns depart from canonical grammatical ‘rules’ which lends support to the theory of emergent grammar (Hopper, 1998), “where structure is not seen as a pre-ordained system through which discourse realises its communicative intent, but rather, the opposite: grammar is always ‘deferred’, temporally negotiable, and is always emergent from the exigencies of discourse, moment by moment” (O’Keeffe et al., 2007: 136). This has one very important implication for what corpora can tell us about the teaching of pragmatics. O’Keeffe et al.’s analysis of *if*-clauses in particular highlights the relationship between grammatical form and context. This grammatical form appears to be sensitive to context and has emerged as a result of participant ‘needs’ in a specific context – in this case, feedback sessions between English language teacher trainers and trainees (see also Farr and McCarthy, 2002). Therefore, it is logical to expect that different contexts have, due to their differing demands, a range of distinct grammatical forms which do not always behave as previously prescribed in grammar references. O’Keeffe et al. (2007: 138) maintain that “learners wishing to focus on their special needs should be given the opportunity to work with the

typical grammatical patterns which characterise the special contexts in which they work or study” and corpora afford these learners the opportunity to do so should they desire.

Pragmatic competence does not apply exclusively to the spoken environment. Epistemic modality is also an essential discourse tool for presenting an argument in academic writing. According to Hyland (1994: 241), “in persuasive writing, hedges are an important means of both supporting the writer’s position and building writer-reader relationships”. He maintains that the problems faced by L2 university students in employing modality in their writing results in an important area of pragmatic failure. Hyland compiled a corpus of 22 ELT textbooks, representative of those used around the world for the teaching of academic writing skills that covered a broad time scale, a range of writing materials and levels of proficiency. He found that, generally, the importance of hedging and hedging devices is under-represented in textbooks making the information contained therein both inadequate and misleading. For example, none of the textbooks give much attention to the use of epistemic adjectives (e.g. ‘apparent’, ‘evident’ or ‘possible’), adverbs (e.g. ‘essentially’, ‘probably’ or ‘undoubtedly’) and nouns (e.g. ‘assumption’, ‘claim’ or ‘evidence’), despite their widespread use in academic writing. Holmes (1988) suggests that these grammatical classes comprise 27% of devices used to express epistemic modality in written discourse. In common with Holmes (1988), he calls for materials developers to employ the authentic and empirical data provided by corpora in order to raise learner awareness of socio-pragmatic variation in specialist registers.

Pronoun usage is an area that is generally under-represented in pragmatic research (Levinson, 2004). Our use of pronouns is connected to our deictic system, which facilitates contextual orientation. For example, in “I’ll meet you here at five or clock”, the meanings of ‘I’, ‘you’, ‘here’ and

'five o'clock' are all determined by reference to the context – 'I' and 'you' are the speakers, 'here' is where the conversation took place and 'five o'clock' is determined by the moment of utterance. Hyland (2002a) examined the presence of author pronouns in two corpora – an 'expert' corpus of 240 published journal articles, 30 from each of eight disciplines, and a 'novice' corpus of 40 project reports across six fields written by final-year undergraduates in Hong Kong (see also Hyland, 2002b). He found that there were 12 author pronouns per text in the novice corpus compared to 22 in the expert corpus. He also noted that in the expert corpus there is considerable disciplinary variation with 75% of author pronouns occurring in the social sciences and humanities, while the sciences and engineering accounted for only 25%. However, this variation was largely absent in the novice corpus. He maintains that academic writing is commonly portrayed as impersonal and faceless in textbooks and style guides. To portray academic writing as such is to ignore the degree of subject-specific variability present therein. Hyland claims that "by avoiding the use of author pronouns, and failing to stand behind their interpretations, these emerging writers run the risk of not establishing an effective authorial identity, and of failing to create a successful academic argument" (2002a: 354). He also advocates an awareness-raising approach where students' critically evaluate the use of 'I' in their own writing.

3. Searching a corpus for pragmatic features

This section presents an overview of the basic corpus analysis techniques that are possible using various corpus software programmes such as *WordSmith Tools™*, Version 5.0 (Scott, 2009).

Frequency

Frequency lists are often identified as a good starting point for the analysis of a corpus. For the language teacher and learner, raw frequency lists, which simply rank the order an item appears in a corpus based on the number of times it occurs, can prove useful for the illustration of the relationship between the frequency of occurrence of linguistic items, and the variety, genre or context in which they appear. This enables the identification of pragmatic items that may be characteristic of a particular variety, genre or context. When applied to the study of pragmatics and the development of students' pragmatic competence, corpus frequency lists can be quite beneficial, especially when presented in direct contrast with one another. Table 1 features the first 25 words from three different corpora:

Table 1. Comparison of word frequencies for the 25 most frequent words across three corpora.

Rank	LCIE	BNC	LIBEL
1	the	the	the
2	I	I	and
3	and	you	of
4	you	and	you
5	to	it	to
6	it	that	that
7	a	a	a
8	that	's	in
9	of	to	it
10	yeah	of	is

Rank	LCIE	BNC	LIBEL
11	in	n't	I
12	was	in	's
13	is	we	so
14	like	is	what
15	know	do	we
16	he	they	this
17	on	er	they
18	they	was	on
19	have	yeah	there
20	there	have	have
21	no	what	for
22	but	he	okay
23	for	to	amm
24	be	but	ahh
25	what	for	are

The Limerick Corpus of Irish English (LCIE): a one-million-word corpus of spoken English collected in Southern Ireland;

The British National Corpus (BNC): a ten-million-word corpus of spoken British English;

The Limerick and Belfast Corpus of Academic Spoken English (LIBEL CASE, hereafter LIBEL): a one-million-word corpus of academic English collected on the island of Ireland.

Table 1 demonstrates that a considerable amount of pragmatic information can be gleaned by working with the most frequent 25 words in each corpus. In relation to pragmatics and variety, when spoken Irish English (LCIE) is compared to spoken British English (BNC), it can be seen that, for

example, 'like' and 'know', positions 14 and 15 respectively on the LCIE, do not appear in the top 25 words in the BNC. 'Like' and 'know' have been shown to function frequently as pragmatic markers of uncertainty in Irish English (see, e.g., Clancy, 2011a, 2011b; Schweinberger, forthcoming). Indeed, corpus-based research into Irish English has shown that Irish English speakers may feel the need to mark uncertainty where other English speaking cultures may not (see also Farr and O'Keefe, 2002; Vaughan and Clancy, 2011). Table 1 also demonstrates that the response token 'yeah' is present on both the LCIE (position 10) and BNC (position 19) frequency lists. This points toward the importance of 'yeah' as a response token in informal, spoken English, both in Ireland and Britain. McCarthy (2002: 70) maintains that cross-corpora, inter-varietal studies offer "a powerful tool for an overall understanding of the common ground that typically exists alongside differences between one variety and another". He also claims that these studies could contribute in some way toward an 'average' list for English as an international language, something which has important implications for English language pedagogy.

In relation to pragmatics and context, personal pronouns feature prominently in corpus frequency lists, especially spoken ones. Personal pronouns are strongly associated with deictic reference; in particular, they facilitate the identification of conversational participants. In both the LCIE and BNC lists, 'I' and 'you' appear in the top four positions. This is indicative of the high level of interactivity between participants in casual conversation. However, in marked comparison to the LCIE and BNC lists, in the LIBEL corpus frequency list, 'you' (position 4) is more frequent than 'I' (position 11). This is, perhaps, illustrative of the different interactive nature of the context – the information presented in the academic sphere could be interpreted as largely mono-directional from teacher to student where 'you' may

refer to 'you the audience'. Additionally, the BNC frequency list features two plural personal pronouns 'we' (position 13) and 'they' (position 16), neither of which are present in the 25 most frequent items in the LCIE. 'We' and 'they', however, do feature in the LIBEL (positions 15 and 17 respectively). It seems that 'we' is used in academic spoken discourse to invoke a professional academic community that both lecturer and student are part of. For the language teacher and learner, distinguishing between what 'we' refers to in different contexts is essential to successful communicative competence within these domains (see, e.g., McCarthy and Handford, 2004; Harwood, 2005; Vaughan, 2007). The LIBEL list is also characterised by the high frequency of spoken DMs such as 'so' and 'okay'. These DMs are necessary in the academic spoken context, as they are used by speakers to 'manage' the discourse allowing them to mark phases such as openings and closings, new topics or rhetorical shifts for the students (Carter and McCarthy, 2006: 214-216).

Frequency information can also be used to analyse how words systematically 'cluster'. Rather than asking the computer to generate single word frequencies, it can instead be asked to generate frequencies for recurrent strings of words, often referred to in corpus literature as 'lexical bundles' or 'chunks' (Greaves and Warren, 2010). Corpus software can provide this information in the form of 2-, 3-, 4-, 5- or 6-word bundles. In addition to providing a wealth of information about the vocabulary of a language, lexical bundles can also provide illuminating insights into the importance of the pragmatic system of a given language. Table 2 features the most frequent 2-, 3- and 4-word chunks in LCIE:

Table 2. Ten most frequent 2-word, 3-word and 4-word units in LCIE results per million words.

Rank	2-word units	3-word units	4-word units
1	you know	I don't know	you know what I
2	in the	do you know	know what I mean
3	of the	a lot of	do you know what
4	do you	you know what	I don't know what
5	I don't	do you want	do you want to
6	I think	I don't think	are you going to
7	It was	you know the	you know the way
8	I was	you have to	I don't know I
9	going to	going to be	thank you very much
10	on the	yeah yeah yeah	the end of the

Table 1 has demonstrated the presence of 'know' and 'like' in the top 25 words of the LCIE frequency list, and noted that these are not present on the BNC or LIBEL lists. Table 2 reinforces the importance of these items to the pragmatic system of Irish English in that it contains expres-

sions such as ‘you know’, ‘I think’, ‘I don’t think’, etc., which are commonly associated with relational language or language used to establish or sustain relationships. The presence of these items in the frequency lists perhaps indicates the importance of this relational work in Irish culture and society and, therefore, has implications for teachers and students working with this language variety.

In terms of language learning, when looking at word unit frequency lists, it is also useful to distinguish between units which seem complete (I don’t know) and those that seem incomplete (know what I mean). O’Keeffe et al. (2011) point out that there is a temptation to dismiss the latter, but that these are in fact operating as frames for different structures:

You know what I mean?

If you know what I mean?

Do you know what I mean?

Does he know what I mean?

Does she know what I mean?

Do you know what I mean **by X**?

Does he know what I mean **by X**?

Does she know what I mean **by X**? ... etc. (O’Keeffe et al., 2011: 10-11)

It is worthwhile to input items such as ‘you know’ as part of larger chunks that are frequently used in casual conversation at a formal level in the classroom (Mukherjee, 2009). These chunks can thus become ‘automatised’ and easily accessible in different spoken contexts.

Keyness

Keyword lists also provide language teachers and learners with a tool for the development of pragmatic compe-

tence. Key words occur with unusual frequency or 'keyness' in a target corpus relative to a norm. Using corpus software it is possible to identify keywords whose frequency is unusually high (positive keywords) or low (negative keywords) in comparison to a reference corpus. A reference corpus is, usually, a larger corpus such as the BNC, which acts as a 'baseline' for comparison. In order to achieve this measure of keyness, the wordlist from the target corpus is compared to a wordlist in the reference corpus, and the statistical significance of difference is calculated using chi-square or log-likelihood tests. This distinguishes between frequencies that are a matter of chance, and those that "are likely to be motivated by some characteristic of the communicative event" (Anderson and Corbett, 2009: 37). Scott and Tribble (2006) maintain that it is impractical for teachers to employ detailed statistical analysis of corpora in the classroom to demonstrate differences between, for example, speech and writing. Instead, they recommend the use of keyword analysis which gives teachers and learners 'an accessible means' for exploring difference.

Due to the statistical nature of the list, keywords are, according to Baker (2006), indicative of saliency as opposed to only providing frequency. Scott and Tribble (2006: 56) maintain that keywords "reflect what the text is really about, avoiding trivia and insignificant detail. What the text 'boils down to' is its keyness, once we have steamed off all the verbiage, the adornment, the blah, blah, blah". Therefore, the keywords in a corpus are often attributed to its 'aboutness' (see Scott, 2010; Cheng, 2009; Scott and Tribble, 2006). In relation to keyword analysis, Scott (2010: 165) cautions that researchers "don't compare apples with phone boxes!", meaning that the selection of the reference corpus to be used is of importance. For example, if the researcher wishes to generate a keyword list for a selection of newspaper articles and uses a spoken corpus, then the cha-

racteristics of spoken versus written language may affect the keyword list.

Keyword analysis can be used by the language teacher and learner to explore different conventions of different contexts. Spoken keyword lists generally contain three types of words: proper nouns, 'aboutness' words and high frequency grammatical words. 'Aboutness' words are often the focus of corpus studies, however, for the study of pragmatics, both the proper nouns and the high frequency grammatical words also offer a rich vein of material that can be exploited in the language classroom. Table 4 contains the top ten keywords, minus proper nouns and 'aboutness' words, of C-MELT, a corpus of meetings of English language teachers,³ generated with LCIE as the reference corpus.

Table 4. Top 10 keywords, minus content items, of C-MELT with LCIE as reference corpus.

Rank	Keywords
1	we
2	think
3	they
4	okay
5	so
6	kind
7	mean
8	maybe
9	if
10	could

This keyword list offers a wealth of information into the pragmatic system of a specific discourse domain. The list contains a number of epistemic markers that may indicate uncertainty such as ‘think’, ‘maybe’ and ‘could’. It also contains ‘kind’, which is connected to the vague language item ‘kind of’. Finally, ‘we’ is shown to be the most significant grammatical item in the corpus. The work of Vaughan (2007, 2010) and McCarthy, and Handford (2004) illustrate the particular pragmatic practices employed in professional context-types such as business meetings. For example, ‘we’ has been shown to be a device that can be employed as an unthreatening means of proffering identity in meetings, whereas the epistemic markers serve to soften the presentation of suggestions or directives.

This is not to say that the aboutness words should be discarded in teaching pragmatics. Table 5 features the keyword list for lexical verbs in a corpus of first year undergraduate philosophy essays with the written component of ICE-Ireland as the reference corpus.⁴

Table 5. Lexical verb keyword list for first year undergraduate philosophy essays with ICE-Ireland (written) as reference corpus.

Rank	Lexical verb
1	die
2	believed
3	believe
4	prove
5	commit
6	believing
7	believes
8	claims

Rank	Lexical verb
9	says
10	defend
11	speaks
12	brought
13	convince
14	committed
15	accused
16	shows
17	states
18	makes
19	argue
20	knew

If verbs such as ‘die’, ‘commit’, ‘defend’ and ‘accused’ are omitted, a number of reporting verbs associated with citation in academic writing such as ‘believe’, ‘claim’, ‘show’, ‘state’ or ‘argue’ emerge as key. Hyland (1999) illustrates that philosophy has the highest citation rate in comparison to seven other academic disciplines. Based on corpus analysis, he also identifies the seven most frequent reporting verbs used by expert philosophical writers – ‘say’, ‘suggest’, ‘argue’, ‘claim’, ‘point out’, ‘propose’ and ‘think’. Table 5 demonstrates that although these students are at an early stage of their academic careers, they have already identified and utilised some of the key reporting verbs, ‘say’, ‘claim’ and ‘argue’, in their discipline. This has obvious teaching applications. For example, the keyword list in Table 5, coupled with Hyland’s (1999) findings, offer a starting point for awareness-raising activities in English for Academic Purpo-

ses (EAP), where the difference in reporting verb use between novice and expert writers is highlighted and discussed. This has important pragmatic outcomes for EAP students. Pragmatics, as discussed, is the study of how speakers and writers accomplish their communicative goals while maintaining interpersonal relationships. Hyland (1999: 359) maintains that “research in any field has significance only in relation to existing literature, and citation helps demonstrate accommodation to this community knowledge”. However, expectations of how this accommodation to community knowledge is presented are different across different disciplines. Therefore, part of writers successfully accomplishing their goals and maintaining interpersonal relationships with their reader is to choose the reporting verbs that show appropriate accommodation to community expectations.

Concordance

Concordances are perhaps the most familiar manifestation of a corpus in the language classroom. Frequency lists often identify items that merit further investigation. Concordances provide the language teacher and learner with detailed contextual information about these specified items. Concordance lines are often presented with the search, or ‘node’, word in the centre surrounded by a number of words on either side. Figure 1 shows a randomised selection of 15 concordance lines generated from LIBEL with ‘okay’ as the node word:

Figure 1. Random sample of 15 concordance lines for *okay* in LIBEL.

N Concordance

1 . To vote out of office okay . Okay yeah? . **Okay** so right to vote and freedom of speech .
 2 in at the end you know is absolutely fine . **Okay?** It's it's again kind of something that
 3 going to come up with that standard of writing **okay?** In the terms of the language that
 4 present it in a bad way and you lose marks . **Okay** . Now that point that is unfortunate but
 5 either the essay questions or in the exam . **Okay?** Is the book related to the course? If it
 6 sentence . Now everybody has a voice . **Okay?** If you understand what you say . I
 7 get the gist and find out what was going on . **Okay?** So ye learned success . What was
 8 two thousand c cs and Bob's your uncle . **Okay?** If you've any questions about that just
 9 articles that were recommended by Stevens **okay?** That case . We'll have a look at that
 10 people who are up to that great challenge . **Okay** . Graphic design then is all we need
 11 Are there any problems with reading it? No? **Okay** . If you just go back to the applied
 12 in . Like I said less employment available . **Okay** so the the rockites ahh under the guise
 13 is we want a function that will do this for us **okay?** So I want a function that will look here
 14 in bold but that's kind of it's in ordinary font **okay?** So what that means is that means
 15 anywhere you want . So you might say **okay** I might maybe prefer down at the bottom

Concordances are often read vertically or from the centre moving to the left or the right and, therefore, it may be necessary to introduce students to how to read concordances. Sinclair (2003) recommends a seven-step process for reading concordances: Initiate → Interpret → Consolidate → Report → Recycle → Result → Repeat (this process is explored in detail with examples in Tribble (2010)). Many corpus software programmes allow the re-sorting of the concordance to the left or right of the node word in order to examine patterns that occur before or after the node. Corpus software also facilitates a quick switch from an individual concordance line to the original text in which it appears. Concordances are important for the study of pragmatics because they allow the researcher to determine whether or not an item has, in fact, a pragmatic function. For example, the LCIE frequency list in Table 1 highlights the potential that 'like' is pragmatically significant; however, concordances allow instances of the lexical verb 'like' to be separated from occurrences of 'like' as a pragmatic marker.

Concordance lines, however, need to be treated with some caution. Johns (1997: 114) warns that the selection and editing of concordance lines is “time-consuming and requires fine linguistic and pedagogic judgement”. Spoken language features such as ellipsis, repetitions and false starts often mean that, visually at least, spoken discourse can appear ‘disorganised’. In addition, because concordances only present approximately eight or nine words to the left or right of the node word, students are frequently dealing with truncated sentences. Johns notes that short, complete sentences are easier for the student to deal with than longer, incomplete ones. Some corpus transcription conventions are also quite dense and, therefore, difficult to read for the uninitiated. Accordingly, the language teacher needs to carefully select examples and may have to ‘clean them up’ by eliminating confusing aspects of spoken language and/or its transcription. Mukherjee (2009) recommends using concordance lines based on language generated by the learners, since this is more psychologically rewarding for, cognitively accessible to, and typical of, learners at a certain level.

In the language classroom, concordances might function to allow student hypotheses about a variety, genre or context to be proven or disproven. Figure 2 shows 20 sample concordance lines generated from LCIE with the item ‘now’ as node word:

Figure 2. Sample of 20 concordance lines for *now* in LCIE.

N	Concordance
1	they're in that . So you can rename them now yourself I'm not going to do it at all for
2	you go . Its up there . Yeah . There you are now the only thing is its pulling all you can
3	when it flashes on charge you put it like that now . Yeah . There tis now . No you see I
4	to kind of you know you can see it there now . Yes . The guy who sings has dyed red
5	song was nice . The German song was . Now how do you listen to those kind of
6	. Now . There's the fire . There's the fire . Now is that a good shot or is that not a
7	the religious artefacts to this fella fellow . Now . There's the fire . There's the fire . Now
8	onto your system? Do shure stick them on . Now am where is my pictures do you know?
9	Syl Adley's place look . Syl . He has his Now do you want those things will I put them
10	good I'm going to print that off . That's it now Dermot Lynch said he'd send me all
11	two three laughing It's sent . Is it? It's gone now . background talking He'll go that Derek
12	and she goes I was telling you about it now in Paris and I said what's this and she
13	like yeah sure there's Ah Eva's off to Canada now in+ she's off in two weeks . +she's going
14	\$1> How are you Gerry? Not too bad Eileen now . Ah yeah with the exams . ah you'd get
15	I don't know about being mechanically minded now . If you'd do well Derek listen have a go
16	. That's her that's the mother . The other one now is just Yeah . The other thing is on
17	you want they're not holding at all Tommy now ? Which no . The bananas . Are they
18	at all Terry I only bought them yesterday now and the fruit there+ Yeah . +and they go
19	laughing I know well that's another story now . you know what I mean shure give John
20	take care of yourself alright . Alright bye now . See ya

From the concordances, students, supported by the teacher, should be able to draw conclusions on the use of 'now' in spoken Irish English:

'now' can be used in the initial (line 5), medial (line 1) and final (line 3) positions in an utterance and also occurs as a stand-alone item (line 7);

'now' has a variety of functions – it is used as a temporal adverb (line 14), and as a discourse marker which indicates a change in topic (line 6);

'now' can be used with a variety of time references – present time reference (line 14), past (line 18) and future (line 13);

'now' time references can occur either to the right (line 13) or to the left (line 18);

'now' may be used in phrases connected to greeting (line 14) and leave-taking (line 20).

This engagement with concordances should be followed up by the teacher with the opportunity to use and practice the item selected for analysis (Mukherjee, 2009).

4. Using a corpus in the language classroom to enhance pragmatic awareness

The first challenge that is faced by a language teacher who wishes to use a corpus is the question of which corpus. Here we will suggest some basic templates from which materials can be created using easily accessible corpora, some of which are freely available and others which are commercially available at a reasonable price. Another issue is how to present the material. Should the students be given hands-on work with corpora using PCs? Should the teacher mediate and carefully select the material on hand-outs?³ The consensus seems to be that students need training before they can cope with working with 'live' concordance searches. This training would help them to become accustomed to how to read concordance lines vertically and from the node word out so as to see the patterns that words make. The best way to build up students' awareness of how to use corpora then is to carefully select sentences from a corpus to illustrate a teaching point and to guide the learners through the initial tasks. In the initial tasks, it is wise to use complete sentences where possible.

We are also mindful that corpus data does not have to be presented to learners in the form of concordances. A cor-

3. For a detailed discussion of these dilemmas, see Gilquin and Granger (2010), and Sripicharn (2010).

pus is a collection of naturally-occurring texts in spoken or written form, and these texts can simply be drawn on for classroom use to raise pragmatic awareness. What follows therefore is a selection of ideas for corpus-based materials.

Sample 1: Exploring the modal verb ‘may’ in the context of presenting scientific facts

Corpus: Michigan Corpus of Spoken Academic English (MICASE)

Details: 152 transcripts of interactions in academic settings at Michigan University (1,848,364 words)

Availability: Freely available online

(<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/c/corpus/corpus?page=home;c=micase;cc=micase>)

Rationale: The focus of this task is the use of the modal verb ‘may’ to present factual information in a hedged manner, in a science lecture. ‘May’ expresses epistemic modality, and it is often the case in the presentation of facts in English that their certainty is hedged by modal verbs.

Below are extracts from a Physical Sciences and Engineering lecture on ‘the Dynamic Earth’, recorded at Michigan University, USA. Notice how the lecturer uses the modal ‘may’ very often when presenting scientific information. Look closely at the examples and try to identify the function of ‘may’ in these examples (the longer extracts are presented below the table):

Modal	Function	Example (see below for fuller context)
May (extract 1)		we <u>may</u> be able to observe at hundred kilometers away, units one two three four five and then six
May (extract 2)		And in fact you <u>may</u> find that on top of that, there are other sediments deposited
May (extract 3)		Uh you <u>may</u> find, that, uh immediately below an unconformity like so, uh there are series of intrusions we call dikes.
May (extract 4)		well we think that one <u>may</u> have happened sixty-six million years ago, when the dinosaurs go extinct.

Extracts:

1. ...we're going to start talking about stratigraphic correlations, we may be able to observe at hundred kilometers away, units one two three four five and then six. That's how we infer, that a unit five ever existed.

2. okay so sedimentary layers would look like this. This would be say unit one two, three and four. And in fact you may find that on top of that, there are other sediments deposited.

3. Say this is a line, along which there's been some erosion, uh take place. Uh you may find, that, uh immediately below an unconformity like so, uh there are series of intrusions we call dikes. And let's have them represent several different uh, uh generations, okay so let's call this one dike A, and this one is going to be dike B, uh and to make it interesting let's put in, (a) third one. okay so this is cross sectional view, uh we're looking at a road cut, and we see sedimentary layers, that are horizontal like so <PAUSE:04> okay and these sedimentary units have been cut, uh by these intrusions that I'm calling, uh dikes. okay so sedimentary layers would look like this.

4. I would like you to remember those three terms, Paleozoic Mesozoic and Cenozoic the reason being that uh later on in our discussions we will need to know what they are I'll simply tell you life-forms of the Mesozoic and you should know what Mesozoic means. If you, if you want to you can remember, uh exactly when each one of these ends but it's not absolutely necessary, uh the Paleozoic begins five hundred and thirty million years ago ends two hundred and forty-five million years ago, ... well we think that one may have happened sixty-six million years ago, when the dinosaurs go extinct. In other words reptiles, uh many reptiles go extinct at this particular time, and mammals become the dominant life-form, uh subsequently.

Sample 2: Looking at numbers and vague language

Corpus 1: Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA)

Details: 425 million words, spoken, fiction, magazine, newspaper and academic genres

Availability: Freely available online
(<http://corpus.byu.edu/coca/>)

Corpus 2: British National Corpus (BNC), Spoken Component

Details: 10 million words of spoken language

Availability: Commercially available at a reasonable price

Rationale: Here we focus on the use of vague language when talking about numbers not to make them sound too direct (see O’Keeffe et al., 2011). This is prevalent in spoken language but not as much so in written language. If you choose two corpora, one spoken and one written, then use a number as your search word. You should be able to select good examples to compare the use of vague language in speaking with the more on-recordness of written language. You may need to write out the number in alphabetical form for your search, depending on how each corpus transcribed numbers.

1) Below is an extract from an American magazine, *American Scholar*, taken from the COCA corpus. Read through it and notice how numbers are presented.

According to the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, black men represented 7.9 percent of the 18- to 24-year-olds in the U.S. population in 2000, but they constituted just 2.8 percent of undergraduate enrolments in 50 of the best public universities in the nation in 2004. In each of the 30 flagship universities, fewer than 500 black male undergraduates were enrolled that year. # Even after being enrolled, less than half of all black male students who start college at a four-year institution graduate in six

years or less, a rate more than 20 percentage points lower than the white graduation rate. That is not good news: it is the lowest college completion rate among all racial groups for both sexes. Perhaps most striking about these discouraging figures is that many black male students at some of the best institutions would likely not be enrolled at all if they were not athletes. The same Joint Center study reveals that more than one out of every five black men at 21 flagship public institutions was a student athlete in 2004. At 42 of these universities...

Source: CHACE, W. M. (2011): "Affirmative Inaction", *American Scholar*, 80(1): 20-31.

2) Below is an extract of a recording from the British National Corpus. Speakers A and B are talking about their school days. Notice here how numbers and times are talked about with more vague language.

a) What words are used by the speakers to make the numbers more vague?

b) Why do you think speakers do this?

c) Look back at the first example, why is the use of vague language not so common when talking about numbers in writing?

A: ... And after that you'd go to your own classes and you had a, a set < pause > er what did they call it?

B: Set er programme where you had er maybe an hour's arithmetic.

A: Addition, subtraction, multiplication, and so on, do so many sums a day, each lesson.

B: And after that you'd maybe have er well be playtime then.

A: And about ten minutes playtime running round the yard, come back and maybe have a history lesson.

B: Er maybe half and hour history and half an hour geography and er science er < pause > but it were all very elementary stuff.

A: Er < laugh > wasn't nothing technical, you know.

Source: BNC spoken Oral History:
talking about their school days.

Sample 3: Exploring politeness in business correspondence

Corpus: Corpus of Business Correspondence

Details: Corpus of business letters (c.5,900 words), business memos (c.10,000 words), business reports (c.15,000 words)

Availability: Freely available online
(http://langbank.engl.polyu.edu.hk/corpus/business_correspondence.html)

Rationale: The focus of this task is the formal use of language in business letters to attend to negative politeness. It focuses on apologies, requests and offers, and the polite use of 'near' in the phrase 'in the near future'. This task could easily be limited to one speech act.

Look closely at the extracts from the business letters below and provide answers to the following questions:

- a) Find a polite more polite way of saying 'soon'.
- b) Find a very polite way of saying 'I'm sorry' that is used in formal letters but not usually in speaking.
- c) Find a polite way of saying 'Get in touch if you need any help'.
- c) Find a very polite way of requesting that someone sign a contract.

Extract 1

Dear Fiona,

Firstly, please accept my sincere apologies for not responding sooner with regard to consignment stock; I am now able to detail below our proposal, which I trust you will find acceptable...

Extract 2

I would be grateful if you would indicate your acceptance by signing below and returning the original to us. In the meantime, I assure you of our closest attention at all times and remain, yours sincerely

Extract 3

I am currently looking into the cost issues relating to the Select feed Plus service and will contact you in the near future. Yours sincerely

Extract 4

I have sent a copy of your letter to City and District Health Authority and United Healthcare NHST with a request that they reply directly to your request for information. I hope you find the information contained in this letter helpful. If I can be of any other assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact me.

5. Conclusion

In this chapter, we have attempted to make the case for two areas that are often under-represented in relation to language teaching: the raising of pragmatic awareness and the potential of language corpora. While pragmatics has gained attention in recent years, particularly within the study of En-

glish language and philology programmes, it is generally absent from contemporary grammars or vocabularies of English, even though pragmatic meaning in relation to grammar and vocabulary is crucial. Equally, much insight has been gained over the years from the empirical study of language through the use of corpora, but many of these insights remain frozen on the pages of academic journals. There may be many reasons for this, not least of all, lack of training in the use of corpora and their software. For pragmatics and corpus linguistics to become more integral to language teaching, more publications such as the present volume will play an important role.

To this end, we hope to have shown that there is a wealth of research findings from pragmatics research using corpus linguistics that is relevant to the language classroom and course materials. We hope to have given an insight into corpus software (namely, the generation and use of word frequency lists, concordances and keyword lists), along with the types of information about language use that can be gleaned from these analyses. We also hope to have enthused our readers to try out corpora, even if it is just for exploring some authentic language use. Using corpora is not without its challenges. They are often messy; the language often needs more context than invented examples, etc. However, any user of a corpus will become enthralled at the evidence-base for language use that it offers.



HANDY MANNY: THE PRAGMATIC FUNCTION OF CODE-SWITCHING IN THE INTERACTION OF CARTOON CHARACTERS

Carmen Gregori Signes and María Alcantud Díaz
IULMA, Universitat de València

1. Introduction

The so called globalization, along with the modernization of our society, “have stimulated the expansion in numbers of people speaking national languages located within relatively limited boundaries alongside international languages such as English”, as Milroy and Muysken (1995: 1) explain. New multilingual communities have been emerging, mostly from the Second World War, and linguistic minorities have become bilingual. A bilingual person is a unique speaker-hearer using one language, two languages, or both simultaneously, depending on the interlocutor, situation, topic, etc. One of the main issues in bilingualism research is code-switching, which “must be taken seriously first and foremost as a conversational activity” (Wei, 2005: 276). The wide use of code-switching in different contexts and with different languages in contact makes this linguistic device one of the most studied behavioural characteristics of bilinguals’ speech. Code-switching thus seems to have an important communicative function. The characters in the series analysed here, *Manny Manitas/Handy Manny*, use code-switching between English (the second or foreign language in our case, L2 henceforth) and Spanish (the first lan-

guage, L1 hereafter) as one of their main resources for alternating between the two languages as well as translations and explanations of some terms in L2. The creators of the series claim that the series may help children learn English, while enjoying the adventures of Manny Manitas and his tools.

This article presents the results obtained from the analysis of 20 episodes of the series to critically assess its potential impact on teaching and learning English as a foreign language (EFL) in a context where Spanish is the L1. *Handy Manny* is broadcast predominantly in L1 (English in the U.S., and Spanish in Spain) with occasional inclusion of some expressions in L2. The terms from L2 are either single words or more complex lexical units. The purpose of this article is to explore when and how L2 is introduced, its function, and the impact that its use may have in the process of EFL learning for Spanish children under the age of nine, to whom the series is addressed. *Handy Manny* is marketed to parents and children as a programme that may help children learn and improve their English. However, to the best of our knowledge, no systematic account of what and how it may do so has been provided. The methodological approach adopted in this paper sets this study apart from others that focus on code-switching in the real world by entering the realm of fictional discourse.

2. Code switching

Code-switching may be understood as the alternative use by bilinguals of two languages in the same conversation. This alternation will occur not only between the turns of different speakers in the conversation, but between utterances within a single turn, and even within a single utterance. There are, no doubt, several theories on the use of code-swit-

ching, and on the high potential regarding its creativity in language use. Gysels (1992), for example, argues that code switching may be used to achieve two objectives: (i) to fill a linguistic/conceptual gap and (ii) for other multiple communication factors. In addition, Cook (2008) establishes the following uses of code-switching: (i) to report what someone has said in the other language, as in “Sara dijo que I was cute”; or (ii) to talk about certain topics: “La consulta era eight dollars”, so that it is used to express terms which do not exist in L1 or are better expressed in L2 (e.g. burger) (cf. Poplack, 1980, 1988, Cortés Moreno, 2001); and (iii) to differentiate between roles: e.g. in a shop, the shop keeper speaks in Spanish with his wife, but in English with his customers. Crystal (1987) and Huang (2008) add that, on occasion, if speakers cannot use one language to express what they intend to, due to a lack of skill, they may switch to another language to fill that gap or difficulty; in such a way that communication does not get disturbed. In addition, a switch can often occur when a particular social group develops solidarity and seeks to exclude outsiders (Crystal, 1987).

While Poplack and Meechan (1995: 201) base their definition on the syntactic element of code-switching and consider it “the juxtaposition of sentences or sentence fragments, each of which is internally consistent with the morphological and syntactic rules of its lexifier language”, Gumperz (1982: 97) defines code-switching as “a discourse phenomenon in which speakers rely on juxtaposition of grammatically distinct subsystems to generate conversational inferences”. Along the same lines, Köppe and Meisel (1995: 277) stress the pragmatic dimension of code-switching by stating that:

code-switching is used to describe a certain skill of the bilingual speaker that requires pragmatic and grammatical

competence in both languages. With respect to pragmatic competence, code-switching refers to the ability to select the language according to external factors like the particular interlocutor, the situational context, the topic of conversation, etc. Concerning grammatical competence, adequate code-switching requires that switches within one sentence observe specific grammatical contents.

It is the pragmatic dimension of code-switching that mainly concerns the present research dictated by the nature of the data analysed, which shows a prevalence of contextualized pragmatic expressions in L2. Thus, we coincide with Duran (1994: 72), who states that “if code-switching is something which happens naturally in the scheme of bilinguality, it must serve important functions for the language learner/user”. This use of code-switching as a learning tool that may help improve pragmatic competence is the hallmark of the present study, in which code-switching frequently takes the form of translation or repetition to clarify certain expressions with the intention of teaching English to children of other languages.

Regarding types and functions of code-switching, there are several classifications. Depending on where it takes place within the utterance, code-switching can be intersentential or intrasentential (Ennaji, 2005: 141). In the former, it takes place across sentences or phrase boundaries (e.g. *Él quiere agua, not Coke*), in the latter, it occurs inside a sentence (e.g. *¡Qué guapo, cute,y encantador es!*). In our data, code-switching occurs in five different situations which will be fully accounted for in the methodology section: a) when an expression in L1 Spanish is translated into L2 English within the same turn; b) when an expression in L2 is translated into, or explained in, L1 within the same turn; c) when a L2 expression is part of a single utterance; d) when an expression in L2 is translated into, or explained in, L1 in two

different turns; and e) when an expression in L2 is defined and explained.

The analysis focuses on what Gumperz (1982: 76-84) describes as “conversational code-switching”, which can appear in the following forms and contexts: (i) in quotations (either direct quotations or indirect speech), e.g. “She doesn’t speak English, so habla español con su madre”; (ii) in addressee specifications, as in “Hola Manny, hello tools”; (iii) in reiterations, when a message or a word in L1 is repeated in L2 or vice versa, e.g. “Necesitamos un micrófono, a microphone”; (iv) with interjections and sentence fillers such as “Excellent! Lo habéis hecho muy bien”. To this list, we have added (v) *metadiscursive code-switching* where the speaker uses a word in L2 and then explains its meaning in L1 (e.g. **No, Rusty, glue en ingles significa cola**). Metadiscursive code-switching is often designed for language learners and it may often be used as a conscious strategy, e.g. in the classroom.

3. Pragmatic expressions: Formulaic and appraisal language use

In *Handy Manny*, among the different types of L2 target utterances introduced using code-switching, formulaic and appraisal expressions are among the most common. Despite the fact that formulaic expressions have not yet been fully accounted for in the literature, it is now widely accepted that the role of formulas in the process of language learning and teaching is a fast-growing research issue in its own right (Bardovi-Harlig, 2006; Wray, 2006; Ide, 2007). Within second language acquisition, to which our series claims to be contributing to, formulaic language “has been most recently blossoming as a major focus of attention” (Wray, 2006:

592), as the recent proliferation of publications on the topic seem to indicate (cf. Schmitt and Carter, 2004; Spöttl and McCarthy, 2004; Wray, 2004, 2008; Corrigan et al., 2009; García-Pastor, 2009a, 2009b). This is partly due to the fact that the advances in corpus linguistics studies have demonstrated that “the patterning of words and phrases [...] shows far less variability that could be predicted on the basis of grammar and lexicon alone” (Perkins, 1999: 55-56, cited in Wray, 2002). It is now widely accepted that our capacity for novelty is far less than we thought (cf. Coulmas, 1981). As Coulmas argued “conversation” is a structured activity, and as such “a large part of it consists of enacting routines. We greet and say goodbye to one another, we introduce ourselves, we thank, we apologise, we make requests, we exchange good wishes, we give advice, we seek information, etc., all of these are conducted within a large range of conventionalized, pre-patterned expressions” (Ide, 2007: 1). Additionally, different languages may have different patterns and routines with regard to conversational practices such as requests or opening and closing conversations, to mention but some (Bou-Franch and Lorenzo-Dus, 2008; García-Pastor, 2009b; Bou-Franch, 2011).

Wildner-Bassett (1984) establishes that “routine formulae constitute a substantial part of adult native speaker’s pragmatic competence, and learners need to acquire a sizable repertoire of routines in order to cope efficiently with recurrent and expanding social situations and discourse requirements”. Along the same lines, Tomasello (2003, cited in Corrigan et al., 2009: 309) claims that “the schemacity and abstraction of adult grammar arises through a developmental process of building an inventory of constructions. This process is centrally influenced by patterns of meaning and frequency on what children hear and produce”. If that were the case, being exposed to formulas and formulaic appraisal expressions may help children in the process of lear-

ning a language to “avoid the difficulties associated with stringing words and morphemes together by rule and the risk of instilling our message with inappropriate pragmatic overtones” (Wray, 2004: 249), thus helping them increase accuracy and fluency, and develop their pragmatic awareness (cf. Nattinger and Decarrico, 1992; Bou-Franch and Gregori-Signes, 1999). Several authors also state the relationship between formulas and greater pragmatic competence (Kasper and Schmidt, 1996: 163), and argue in favour of explicit teaching (cf. García-Pastor, 2009a) as a more effective way of “facilitating the acquisition of pragmatic routines” (Tateyama, 2001: 220).

Formulas or formulaic sequences “exist in so many different forms that it is difficult to develop a comprehensive definition of the phenomenon” (Schmitt and Carter, 2004: 4). This coincides with Wray (2008: 35), who admits that these discrepancies have caused “a considerable scope for discussion about what should and should not be counted”. Formulaic expressions may be composed of single or multi-word units. The criteria used for classifying formulaic sequences by different authors are “institutionalization, fixedness, [...] non-compositionality and frequency of occurrence” (Schmitt and Carter, 2004: 2). Schmitt and Carter pay attention to multi-word sequences, while Wray (2002) also includes single words and morphemes as examples of formulaic language. Wray (2006: 593) argues that “for most researchers, the term ‘formulaic language’ refers to two or more words which may or may not be adjacent and which have a particular mutual affinity that gives them a joint grammatical, semantic, pragmatic, or textual effect”. She acknowledges the discrepancies between child language acquisition, sociolinguistics, literary style, phraseology, grammar, discourse and psycholinguistics, each with a different conception of the purpose of formulaic language; and proposes a holistic definition:

Formulaic language is a generic strategic solution to a recurrent challenge for us as humans: how to promote our own interests. The rationale for this proposal resides in the way that humans use language to manipulate others. Manipulation entails persuading another person to think, feel, or act in some way that you desire. Selecting linguistic material that enables you as a speaker to fluently express your message and enables your hearer(s) to easily decode it supports this self-promotional goal. (ibid.)

Formulaic expressions in *Handy Manny* may help children improve their conversational skills and pragmatic competence in English, as “automatic retrieval of words and fixed expressions undoubtedly contributes significantly to smooth performance and normal paced delivery [...] [since] [t]he extremely high frequency of occurrence of such chunks in native-speaker and expert-user conversation reveals their regular, fixed forms and the pragmatically specialised functions they have acquired over many millions of utterances” (McCarthy, 2010: 4).

Many of the formulaic expressions in our corpus may be classified as appraisal or evaluating devices, which should be viewed as belonging to the field of interpersonal semantics (Egins and Slade, 1997). Appraisal refers to the attitudinal colouring of talk among dimensions like certainty, emotional response, social evaluation, and intensity. As reported by these authors, appreciation, affect, judgement, and amplification are four main categories that should be included in appraisal analysis. Egins and Slade (1997: 125) define each as follows: appreciation indicates “the speaker’s reactions and evaluation of reality”, while affect is “the expression of emotional states both positive and negative”. Judgement includes “the speaker’s judgements about the ethics, morality or social values of other people”. Finally, amplification is “the way speakers maximize or minimize

the intensity and degree of the reality they are negotiating". Formulas and formulaic appraisal expressions in our corpus perform the pragmatic function of helping to regulate the relationship between the fictional characters. Appraisal expressions mainly convey positive emotional states and judgements of the situations they get involved in, thus creating solidarity, friendship and group membership, as illustrated in the following section.

4. Analysis

Quantitative and qualitative methods have been combined to provide an account of the use of code-switching in *Handy Manny*. Quantitative measures address the presence of L2 (English) in the analysed episodes broadcast mainly in L1 (Spanish), while the qualitative analysis comprises an assessment of the pragmatic function of the different types of units that code-switching is made of in the corpus which, broadly speaking, fall into two different categories: *permanent* and *context units*. *Permanent lexical items* are present in most of the episodes and are the hallmark of the series (e.g. its song, the song characters sing every time they go to work and the names of the characters). *Context lexical items* are more episode-related and can be classified as: a) *non-formulaic* units (i.e. vocabulary or expressions that are related to the topic of the episode); b) *formulaic* and *evaluative* expressions, which work on the pragmatic level and help express the attitude of the characters towards the situation, and towards the other characters. Our aim has been to clarify the function of these items that emerge from code-switching to evaluate their contribution as potential language teaching material.

Quantitative analysis

First, we counted the number of target words in L2 per episode to assess how much vocabulary was introduced. Secondly, we analysed each instance of L2 according to the order of appearance of L1 and L2 in code-switching, since L2 expressions are often translated in the next turn. The possible variations are:

- a) Type 1= L1+L2 (e.g. silencio/quiet, Ep. *Unas vacaciones bien merecidas*);
- b) Type 2= L2+L1 (What's this?/¿Qué es esto?, Ep. *Objeto Perdido*)
- c) Type 3= L2 without any translation (e.g. Oh my!, Ep. *The Lost Object*).
- d) Type 4= Translation (L1+L2) in two different turns by two different speakers (e.g. Manny: yes, grandpa, acabamos de arreglar tu 'boat'. Grandpa: mi 'barco', excellent. Ep. *Unas vacaciones bien merecidas*)
- e) Type 5= metadiscursive code-switching (L2+L1). The term is explained by using a definition formula, which is not used as such in the other types (e.g. Herramienta: ¿Una lavadora y una washing machine? Sí que tenemos trabajo; Manny: No, una washing machine es una lavadora, vamos herramientas).

Qualitative analysis

The qualitative analysis includes a classification of the L2 terms into permanent or context dependent lexical items. The nature of both is different, as explained below.

- a) Type 6 = *permanent* units (e.g. the song of the series, the song they sing every time they go to work, the na-

mes of the characters) recur in all or almost all episodes. These terms help identify the series for the audience;

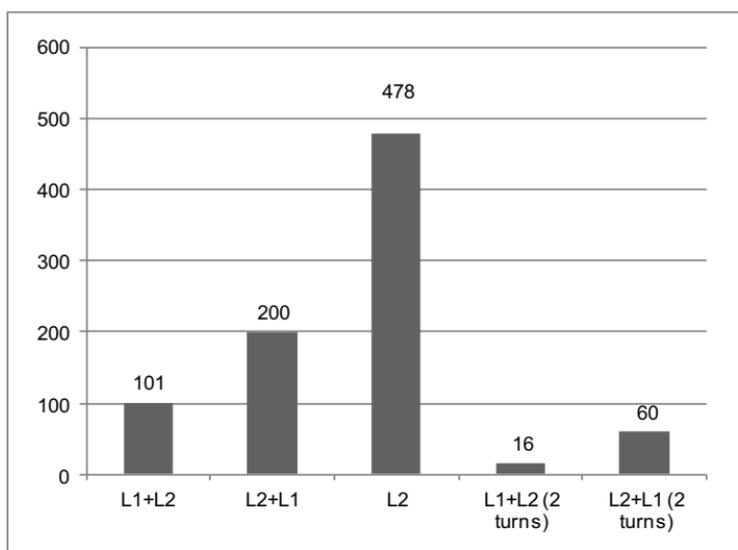
- b) Type 7 & Type 8= *context* units. These are contextually dependent on the topic of each episode and/or the progress of the conversation. They have been classified according to the nature of the expression itself, and its pragmatic function within the interaction. Two main categories emerge: *non-formulaic* and *formulaic expressions*, which are combined with the categories established in section 4.1, as exemplified below. They can be single- or multi-word strings.

5. Results and discussion

Quantitative analysis: Presence of L2 in the corpus

A total of 853 terms in L2 were found in the corpus, i.e. an average of 42.65 L2 words are introduced per chapter. In this estimation, we have not included the proper names of the characters. However, we have paid attention to some other characters' names like Grandpa or Cute, since they also have lexical meaning, thus counting as target L2 expressions for children to learn. We have also included terms of address (Mr., Miss, etc.) for the same reasons. Graph 1 illustrates the percentages of L2 terms according to the categories described above.

Graph 1. Percentages of L2 terms according to the categories described in the method.



Type 3, where code-switching into L2 appears without translation has the highest percentage. Although it seems that there is a high quantity of L2 terms introduced in the series; in fact, this is not truly so in qualitative terms, as most of them are repetitions of the same word. For instance, the greeting ‘hello’ appears 89 times in type 3; or the affirmation particle ‘yes’, which appears 44 times in this same category. Besides, there are expressions which are repeated several times in most of the chapters: various greetings (e.g. good morning, thank you, bye), some orders encouraging the tools (e.g. come on, let’s go) or evaluating expressions of a process or action by another character (e.g. excellent, wonderful). Type 3 is also used to carry out pragmatic functions like accepting or agreeing (e.g. “That’s great Grandpa” in *Como una herramienta en una cacharrería*), greeting (e.g. “Hello Grandpa, how are you?” in *Grandpa’s tomatoes*), gi-

ving orders (e.g. “Herramientas: si, let’s go” in *Feria de ciencias*) and apologizing (e.g. “I’m sorry” in *Philip tiene hipo*); as well as reinforcing vocabulary (e.g. “No creo que quisieran secar la ‘coin’, la meterían sin querer” in *Objeto perdido*); and evaluating (e.g. “excellent” in *Música*).

Type 2 (L2 + translation into L1 within the same turn) is the second in highest percentage. Its function overlaps with the functions of type 3 above. Some examples are: giving orders and thanking (e.g. “Light on, enciende la luz, light off, apaga la luz”, “Julietta’s Grandpa: Thanks a lot Manny y gracias también a vosotras, herramientas” in *El monstruo de Julieta*). There are also examples of type 5, metadiscursive code-switching, where the speakers – mainly Manny – translate and explain the meaning of the term in L2 (e.g. “No, una washing machine es una lavadora, vamos herramientas” in *La pequeña Squeeze*). In other occasions, L2 introduces semantic fields (e.g. “Bueno, aunque no quede yellow pintura tenéis muchos otros colores, tenéis red, blue, green, montones de colores” in *Grandpa’s tomatoes*).

Qualitative analysis

Permanent lexical terms

Two songs in the series appear in all the chapters. The first song is played as Handy Manny and his tools are leaving to go to work. The second one occurs when they start working on the task. These songs intersperse L1 words and expressions with L2 ones (e.g. “A trabajar, go quickly go”, in the first song, and “now we work together, nos gusta trabajar” in the second).

Some names of the tools are also in English: Dusty, Pat, Philips, Rusty, Squeeze, Stretch, Turner. They serve the purpose of introducing three types of lexical items in L2. Two of them are proper nouns (Pat, Philips), while the others ma-

ke reference to their characteristics: Pliers (Squeeze) are operated by squeezing the handles, while you have to Stretch a measuring tape if you want to measure. Yet, Dusty and Rusty are of a different nature. Dusty (a saw) makes reference to the wood dust, which results from using the saw. Finally, Turner (a screwdriver) is given this name due to the action that is carried out in using it, since a turner is an item that turns. Turner would thus be an example of onomatopoeia.

The choice of address terms in the series also alternates between the use of L1 and L2. Thus, Grandpa (*abuelo*) is one of the permanent L2 terms and has never appeared in L1 in the data. Some characters such as Sr. Lopart are always in L1, while others are always in L2, e.g. Mr. Lawrence. The objective in introducing both terms of address in L1 and L2 (e.g. Sr/ Mr.) is to force learners to make an implicit connection between the two, while in examples such as Grandpa, L2 vocabulary is expected to be learned by association with the characteristics of the character himself (old, white hair, Manny's only relative). However, there are no clear reasons or patterns emerging from the alternation between the two. Some other permanent terms belong to formulaic conversational routines such as "Hello, Manny Manitas", every time he answers the phone, or the alternation between L1/L2 when Grandpa greets them all: "Hola Manny, hello tools". The affirmation 'yes' – which may be considered as being halfway between formulaic and non-formulaic – is also a permanent L2 term that alternates with other formulaic expressions such as 'of course':

- (2) Mrs. Rose: Yes, Rusty. ¿Qué opinas Manny, puedes hacerlo?
Manny: Of course, Miss Rose. El cartel va a quedar genial. ¿Verdad, herramientas?

La mentirijilla de Rusty

Context lexical items

Formulaic and fixed expressions and/or formulaic appraisal expressions – which help establish the relationship between the characters, the situation, and, indirectly, the audience – are prominent in the series. Greetings such as ‘hello/hi’ (89 examples), ‘goodbye’ (13 examples), ‘good morning’ or ‘cheers’, are among the most common. Other formulaic expressions include: directives (be quiet, be careful let’s go), questions (what happened? what’s wrong?), apologies (I’m sorry), expressions for agreeing and disagreeing (that’s right, you’re right), and evaluating or appraisal expressions of appreciation (that’s perfect, terrific, that’s good, wonderful!, fantastic!) and judgement (well done). As for non-formulaic items, nouns are the most common with around 40 nouns in the episodes, followed by adjectives and verbs. Most of them are examples of common everyday words (e.g. nouns such as ‘boat’, ‘coffee mugs’, ‘potato’, ‘salesman’, ‘girl’, ‘washing machine’, ‘hat’, or verbs such as ‘understand’, ‘listen’, ‘know’, ‘are gone’).

Discussion and implications for language learning

This study analysed code-switching focusing on the presence of L2 terms in 20 episodes of the series *Handy Manny*, with the aim of evaluating whether this series may be a suitable tool for learning English/Spanish. Results indicate that, in fact, there’s a presence of L2 terms introduced through code-switching in each episode. These include a wide variety of basic formulaic and non-formulaic expressions in English. These expressions are introduced using code-switching with a direct switch into L2 English, often followed by a translation for each of them. Previous studies (Wray, 2006; Spöttl and McCarthy, 2004; Schmidt and Carter, 2004; McCarthy, 2010) have demonstrated the impor-

tance of formulaic language in applied linguistics and pragmatics (cf. Tateyama, 2001); and how learning formulae may help improve pragmatic competence among learners (Tateyama, 2001; García-Pastor 2009a, 2009b). As can be observed from the examples above, pragmatic functions are expressed predominantly by formulaic language which is introduced in chunks, and may therefore be learned as such. The variety of formulas is considerable (53 different formulaic expressions over 20 episodes), and they fulfil a number of pragmatic functions such as greeting, thanking, apologizing, requesting, identifying and evaluating through appreciation, judgement, and amplification. Other formulas are also interjections and discourse markers, and storytelling opening formulae (e.g. Once upon a time). All of these formulae are uttered within a comprehensible situational context, which certainly may help clarify their function for potential language learners, so that they may understand how they are used.

Qualitatively, there is a prevalence of positive over negative pragmatic expressions. Evaluative positive expressions contribute to help maintain and strengthen comradeship and friendship between Manny and his tools. Most of these expressions are introduced by the main character Manny. Consequently, his role is ratified through discursive means: Manny is the teacher (explains L2 words which the tools may not be familiar with), the boss, and a good friend who has a very positive attitude towards his friends, and who fosters comradeship and team-work. Manny's discourse is also polite, always using greetings when appropriate (how are you? See you, Have a good day), and thanking other characters for their help (thanks, you're welcome, I'm very grateful) as well as apologising if necessary (I'm sorry). All these pragmatic functions are explicitly introduced in the conversations between the characters in the series through code-switching in the different patterns specified above.

We firmly believe that pragmatic functions can help promote the learning of specific routines that learners should start mastering from an early stage in the process of language learning. The simplicity of the expressions introduced in *Handy Manny* is in accordance with the age group which the series is mainly addressed to (i.e. children under 9 years old), thus favouring the development of pragmatic competence. The series, however, does have a few drawbacks: mainly careless pronunciation of L2 terms (the voices of the Spanish version are by native Spanish speakers, and their pronunciation reflects many mistakes that are the product of L1 transfer), and some minor pragmatic errors, which are caused by the process of dubbing the series into Spanish. In such context, the series should provide for the most correct pronunciation, so that children can learn from it.

Another drawback is the fact that exposure to these expressions is most probably insufficient. A longitudinal interpretation of the results proves that along 20 episodes chosen at random, the input may be insufficient. Most of the expressions appeared only once or twice in the episodes analysed, while other items such as 'yes' (44 times), 'hello' (89 times), and 'thank you' (27 times) appear more often. Insufficient exposure is a handicap for learning a language, unless the child watches the episode several times (an action pretty common among children). However, one may doubt whether children are aware of the implications of code-switching or not, since many authors claim that "learning requires awareness at the time of learning target features" (Schmidt 1993, in Takahashi, 2001: 198; Tateyama, 2001).

As for the non-formulaic expressions in our corpus, the verbs are common verbs (e.g. sing, listen, know, wait) and they are introduced in the right context. There is also an example of a modal auxiliary (must), which is also contextualized, and helps introduce the idea of obligation. The adjectives and nouns also belong to basic semantic fields that

would correspond with what children start learning at school at an early age (e.g. colours). Other adjectives may be classified as belonging to the evaluative category of appreciation (Eggins and Slade, 1997: 125) such as 'good', 'handsome', 'beautiful', 'new', 'little', 'incredible', 'smart', 'pretty'. Others, which may at first sight look less common, are justified due to the topic of the episode and the situational context (e.g. windy, sharp). The nouns introduced (around 98) are also contextualised and correspond with items that can be retrievable from the context: the physical context (i.e. the objects can be visualized) or the topic under discussion.

6. Conclusion

The starting point for this study was to investigate the possibilities that the cartoon series *Handy Manny* may offer for children who are learning English. The analysis of L2 (English), which was introduced through code-switching, led us to establish different categories according to the order in which L1 and L2 were combined. Results indicate that there is a prevalence of formulaic expressions with a pragmatic function in the conversation. This is a positive feature of the series, since exposure to formulaic sequences at an early age can help improve children's pragmatic competence in situations where the use of such formula is adequate or even required. We believe that introducing vocabulary in L2, and pragmatic expressions with a clear social function at an early age is certainly a good idea.

Notwithstanding the utility of L2 terms in a series for children, there are several drawbacks: a) learners do not have enough exposure and input; b) the input is unsystematically organized, and there seems to be no rationale behind most of the choices of L2 expressions when looking in depth

to what the learner is being “taught”; c) the careless pronunciation of the L2, which often reproduces the Spanish phonological system rather than the English one. This study, however, has not tested the impact that the series may have had on a regular spectator. Further research is thus needed to see whether there is any impact on the children or not, and whether using code-switching is fully comprehended by the child.



INTERPERSONAL PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE: DEVELOPING COMMUNICATIVE CHOICES IN EFL INTERACTION

Gerrard Mugford

Universidad de Guadalajara

1. Introduction

In attempting to develop learners' pragmatic competence in English as a Foreign Language (EFL), teachers are often encouraged to develop their students' pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge (Leech, 1983; Thomas, 1983). Pragmalinguistic resources offer foreign language (FL) users a range of ways to express the intention and the illocutionary force of a given utterance (e.g. in terms of directness and indirectness), whereas sociopragmatic resources allow learners to respond appropriately to the social context (e.g. by taking into consideration factors like social distance and power relations). Whilst such resources provide the means to participate in the target language, FL users still need to decide how they want to engage interpersonally with native and non-native speakers: the appropriate use of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic resources may result in efficient and effective communication, but FL users may not come across in the way that they want to.

In this paper, I revisit Aston's (1988a) work on interactional speech to examine how FL learners can be given opportunities to develop interpersonal pragmatic competence,

so that they can acquire communicative options regarding how they wish to participate in the target language. Interpersonal pragmatic competence allows language users to establish, develop and maintain individual local relationships with other language users, and therefore goes beyond building up pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge which provide resources for interacting and responding at a societal level. Focusing on advice giving in the target language, I examine how FL users can be encouraged to underline the interpersonal dimension to speech acts, rather than purely concentrating on conveying the transactional component, i.e. the message. First of all, I review definitions and understandings of pragmatic competence in terms of individual choices and re-examine Halliday's (1976; 1997[1973]) concept of *interpersonal language* in order to identify the interactional and personal dimensions to interpersonal pragmatic competence. To further understand interpersonal pragmatic choices, I build upon Aston's (1988a) distinction between *anys* and *somes* and examine how FL users may interact either as competent but indistinct *anys* or as fully-fledged participative *somes* who express their own personalities, identities and attitudes in the target language. To enquire about how FL users engage interpersonally with the target language, I asked 46 advanced-level Mexican EFL learners to respond to a Dialogue Construction (DC) questionnaire (Bergman and Kasper, 1993: 87), which called upon them to give advice in different social contexts. Since respondents employed a restricted range of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic resources (i.e. interactional strategies) and displayed limited interpersonal abilities in the different contexts, I explored how they use additional intercommunicative speech strategies such as supportiveness, solidarity, self-disclosure, and face enhancement (Aston, 1988a), and downtoners, hedges and cajolers within these (Márquez Reiter, 2000) to develop interpersonal prag-

matic competence in the target language. Learners were not taught the aforementioned strategies, but they were simply made aware of them.

2. Pragmatics and choice

Crystal emphasises the element of choice in pragmatics – a field which “studies the factors that govern our choice of language in social interaction and the effect of our choice on others” (1987: 120). Pragmatics as choice can be understood in terms of the selection of speech acts, pragmatic resources such as cajolers, downtoners and hedges (Leech, 1983; Thomas, 1983), sociopragmatic resources (*ibid.*), i.e. interactional options such as linguistic politeness and, interpersonal speech strategies like supportiveness (Astton, 1988a). Whilst choices often cannot be neatly categorised, these pragmatic features taken as a whole provide a wide range of resources for FL users to express themselves in individual ways.

Any examination of pragmatics in terms of communicative choices needs to start with speech acts, since they reflect the view “that ‘words’ are in themselves actions” (Stilwell Peccei, 1999: 43). Speech acts (or illocutions) like apologising, giving advice and agreeing appear in most EFL textbooks and are often labelled as communicative functions. However, they are often presented as if there are fixed ways of conveying actions. FL learners may therefore be unaware of the multiple ways of expressing a given action; for instance, in articulating disagreement, FL learners, depending on their level, should be able to select from an extensive range of possibilities besides an outright ‘I don’t agree’. Options would include an indirect ‘I don’t think so’, a friendly ‘I’m not sure I agree with you’ and an apologetic ‘I’m afraid I can’t go along with you on that’. Whilst com-

municative functions play an important role in highlighting the 'actional' component of speech, in the main, FL learners' attention is focused on the transactional component versus the interpersonal dimension.

Pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics also offer a way of examining pragmatic choices, since they provide FL users with linguistic and social resources when interacting in the target language. Pragmalinguistics identifies "the particular resources which a given language provides for conveying particular illocutions" (Leech, 1983: 11). Pragmalinguistic knowledge includes the use of directness/indirectness, routines and linguistic forms which can intensify or soften communicative acts, e.g. "I was wondering if you would terribly mind feeding the cat" (Kasper, 1997: 2). Interactants often try to modify speech acts by employing certain pragmalinguistic resources which reflect concern for other interactants. To lessen the impact of a message on the hearer, downtoners such as 'possibly' and 'perhaps' can make speech acts like requests sound more tentative (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989; Márquez Reiter, 2000). Hedges (e.g. 'kind of', 'sort of') allow a speaker to sound less specific. Cajolers such as 'I mean' and 'you know' aim to restore harmony (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989) and "can be used to invite the addressee to join in the conversation, to participate in the speech act...." (Márquez Reiter, 2000: 94). Whilst such resources allow FL users to participate in more a context-sensitive manner, this does not mean that they are necessarily involved as individuals or *somes*.

By comparison, sociopragmatic knowledge reflects an understanding of the social conditions which affect language use. Speaker utterances are influenced by social considerations rather than just by linguistic ones. Arguing that speakers will differ in their assessments of the social dimension to communication, Rose and Kasper see sociopragmatics as referring "to the social perceptions underlying

participants' interpretation and performance of communicative action" (2001b: 2). When it comes to interpersonal language use, FL users need to be aware of the social context and such factors as how imposing the speech act is, social distance between interactants, and the cost and benefit to both the speaker and the hearer along with their relative rights and obligations (Thomas, 1983).

Downplaying the interpersonal dimension of communication, pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics emphasise the linguistic (pragmalinguistics) and the social (sociopragmatics). Language users are individuals:

it is not good enough to situate them [individuals] in some vague and ill-defined 'society' as though society were homogenous, monolithic and transparent in its workings, and as if individual language users were pre-programmed automata. (Cameron, 1990: 65)

Following Cameron, pragmatics needs to consider language users as individuals, making their own personalised choices. This becomes especially important in the case of FL learners who are not, or do not, necessarily want to become members of the target language society.

Going beyond pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics, Aston (1988a) identifies interactional speech strategies with regards to how interactants position themselves with other interactants. Employing the terms supportiveness and solidarity, he argues that interactants can show concern and interest with others (i.e. supportiveness) or closely identify with the feelings of the other (i.e. solidarity). This contrast can be seen in the following answer given by Pedro, one of the participants in the study, when asked to give advice to a younger brother concerning his low grades at school (Situation 5, see Appendix).

(1) Supportiveness: Hey kid, we need to get your grades up or you'll be in serious trouble.

Solidarity: Hey dude, look, I know that school isn't always fun, trust me, I've been there before, but just try to think of the rewards you'll get if you up your grades!!!! I'll help you if you need help ok?

Pedro shows supportiveness to his younger brother's predicament by offering an all-inclusive 'we' and saying that "we need to get your grades' up", i.e. finding an answer in order to avoid "serious trouble". In the case of solidarity, however, Pedro says that he has been in the same position and knows just how his younger brother feels: "I know that school isn't always fun, trust me, I've been there before". This empathetic advice shows a greater sense of interpersonal identification than the supportive expression of concern. Therefore, supportiveness and solidarity offer FL learners communicative options regarding how they can express themselves in the target language and identify with the addressee.

3. Interpersonal pragmatics

Whilst pragmatics involves linguistic and social choices, interpersonal pragmatics (Leech, 1983; Thomas, 1983, 1995) emphasises the interactional dimension and how an interactant wishes to participate in an interaction as an individual. Halliday argues that there can be a transition from "the pragmatic function into the interpersonal function in the linguistic system" (1978: 56) and describes the interactional and personal aspects of communication as interpersonal language which

may be understood by the expression of our own personalities and personal feelings on the one hand, and forms of interaction and social interplay with other participants in the communication situation on the other hand. (Halliday, 1997[1973]: 36)

Halliday's focus on the personal and interactional aspects suggests that FL learners should not solely concentrate on the ideational or message component in any given communicative act. The message component is conveyed through transactional language which aims to transmit information. By contrast, they should consider the personal and interactional dimensions to communication as they come across and engage with others.

On a unique and personal level, FL users need resources to individualise the interaction. Interactants need to decide how they want to present themselves (Goffman, 1959) in singular ways to other target-language users or as Wardhaugh argues:

You must "present yourself" in a conversation, and part of that presentation is the way you choose to display yourself to others and how you view your relationship with the rest of the world. In fact, every encounter with another person requires you to come to a decision about how you want to appear in that encounter, that is, how you wish to present yourself to the other or others. (Wardhaugh, 1985: 26-27)

On an interactional level, FL users need to decide whether they wish to interact as *some*, i.e. interactants who wish to underscore the uniqueness of a social relation, or as an *any* who participates impersonally and noncommittally in a given situation (Aston, 1988a, 1989, 1993). The image (Goffman, 1959) that they project will depend on what they

wish to achieve socially. In this study, I offered learners two interpersonal resources with which they could interact in more personalised ways when giving advice: self-disclosure, which entails giving information about oneself, and face enhancement, which involves focusing on the addressee.

If interactants can be encouraged to reveal something about themselves (i.e. self-disclosure) when offering advice, they may come across as more of an individual rather than just an *any* handing out advice. Aston (1988b: 89-90) argues that self-disclosure includes troubles-telling, “success stories”, and story-telling. Self-disclosure thus allows the FL user to manage personal language use (Halliday, 1976; 1997[1973]). Furthermore, self-disclosure reflects a willingness to entrust the addressee with personal information whilst an interactant makes an investment (Norton 1995, 2000), because s/he hopes that by revealing something about him/herself, the addressee will do likewise. Self-disclosure therefore prepares the language user for interactional language use in Halliday’s terms, hence helps him/her to fulfil the interpersonal function of language established by Halliday, both in terms of personal and interactional language use. Edmondson and House see self-disclosure as a way of increasing social bonding in the target language and outline two disclosure strategies:

- i) speaker volunteering a disclosure in the hope of being reciprocated with a matching disclosure from the hearer;
- ii) to voice a request for a disclosure as in the use of tag questions, e.g. ‘You are doing this course as well are you’. (Edmondson and House, 1981: 173-174)

Aston (1988a, 1989) sees self-disclosure as providing one means for a language user to become a *some* – as L2 users share particular attitudes and not just any attitudes. An example can be seen in the following extract taken from da-

ta collected at a United Kingdom university: Tania, a Mexican student, gives advice to Saeko, a Japanese student. Saeko is talking about the upcoming visit of her boyfriend and their proposed trip to Italy:

- (2) Saeko: ...I am very looking forward to going to Italy
Tania: I think Italy is a very nice a very pretty country
Saeko: I think so
Tania: yeah you need to go to *Florenzia* to....

By saying that Italy is a very pretty country and that Saeko should go to Florence, Tania is revealing not only her attitudes but also that she has presumably been to Italy and, through her own personal experiences, is able to recommend places to visit.

Face enhancement not only aims to make the other interactant feel good about him/herself, but, as Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1997) argues, counterbalances the negative aspects of Brown and Levinson's face-threatening acts (FTAs). She maintains that rather than seeing interactants as continually "under threat of all kinds of FTAs", they also engage in "flattering behavior towards the other person, that is an *anti-threat*" (1997: 13; her emphasis). Face enhancement has also been described as intimacy enhancement (Aston, 1989) and face-boosting acts (Bayraktarolu, 1991, 2001). In the following extract, Blanca and Armando, Portuguese and Mexican students respectively, studying at the same United Kingdom university, are giving Mariana, another Mexican student, advice as to whether she should keep her cat:

- (3) Blanca: but it's fashionable to be a single woman and have a cat
Marian: yeah that's true
Blanca: it's quite a fashionable thing

- Armando: no you know you know [general laughter]
Mariana: yeah we have like three kittens each [laughter]
Blanca: it's a fashionable thing to be a single woman
and live in a nice flat and have a cat

Blanca is trying to boost Mariana's face (Goffman, 1967; Brown and Levinson, 1987) by conjuring up the image of Mariana as the sophisticated single woman living alone in comfortable surroundings and accompanied by her pet. Face enhancement not only enables interactants to converse with others as concerned and interested participants, but also reveals a personal contribution, as interactants demonstrate their attitudes, feelings and beliefs. It can be seen as a way of approving of an interactant's face and improving his/her image.

4. Methodology

The study

The underlying research question guiding this study is:

RQ: How can FL users be encouraged to engage in more interactional and personal language use when giving advice?

To examine how FL learners can be encouraged to use interpersonal pragmatic resources when giving advice in different contexts in order to come across as a *some*, I divided the study into three phases. In the first stage, FL students emphasised the transactional element of giving advice rather than considering to whom and how they came across. In the second stage, I asked respondents to focus on interactional speech strategies (supportiveness and solidarity) and inter-

active markers (downtoners and cajolers) so as to take into consideration a more interpersonal element of communication. In the third stage, I asked subjects to individualise the advice giving by using self-disclosure and face enhancement strategies.

FL learners had already been made aware of the strategies of supportiveness and solidarity, self-disclosure and face enhancement. This research focuses on how they can be encouraged to employ such strategies when giving advice without imposing on them specific linguistic elements or grammatical structures as regards the instantiation of all these strategies.

Participants

To answer the research question, I needed to find two fairly large-sized comparable groups of students who had had the same exposure to English language use. An “opportunity sample” (Brown and Dowling, 1998: 29) emerged at a public university in Guadalajara, Mexico, with first year and third year students pursuing a B.A. in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL). The participants were all Mexicans aged between 18 and 25 years old with a high intermediate and near-native language level. All the names used in this study have been changed in order to preserve their identity. There were 25 first year participants and 20 third year participants.

Data and instruments

The data in this study comprise 138 written responses as students in both groups responded to five situations through a Dialogue Construction (DC) questionnaire (Bergman and

Kasper, 1993: 87) (see Appendix). In the first stage of the research, I examined whether the respondents were sensitive to the context and gave advice in socially sensitive ways. I was especially interested in whether they took into consideration interpersonal closeness or distance and if they appeared to be imposing when offering advice. No instructions or guidance were given as to how they were to answer and the length of their responses.

In the second stage, two weeks later, I added an interactional element to reflect Aston's (1988a) interactional speech strategies. Rather than just focusing on giving advice, learners had to decide how they wished to interact with others. I applied the same questionnaire but asked the respondents to focus on the interactional relationship they might want to construct with the addressee. I broadly described possible relationships in terms of supportiveness (showing concern and interest) and solidarity (sharing the same experiences). The participants therefore were asked to respond in ways which were both supportive and showed solidarity in the five situations focusing on the addressee and their relationship with him/her.

In the third stage of the study, two weeks later than the second stage, the respondents were asked to see interpersonal language in terms of revealing something of themselves and making the other person feel good – providing two possible answers to the five situations. Using the same questionnaire, they were asked to employ personal and interpersonal resources in terms of self-disclosure and face enhancement. I asked them to adopt a more personal focus to the advice giving and think about how they wanted to come across as individuals. As part of understanding how the respondents participated as *somes*, I examined how they employed downtoners, hedges and cajolers as ways of softening the illocutionary force of the advice and concentrating more on sustaining social relationships as opposed

to the transactional aspect of the communicative act in hand.

Analysis

A qualitative approach was adopted to examine the specific strategies that FL learners employed in their individual responses to the DC questionnaire. In light of the research question guiding this study, a longitudinal overview of the development of their range of pragmatic resources when engaging in interpersonal language use is important. Quantitative data have been employed to summarise the different strategies used by participants.

Examining pragmatic development on an individual level means that not all FL learners will be seen to reach the same level of competence. However, if an FL user – independent of his/her language ability – can increase the extent of his/her participation, the end result should lead to an increase in interpersonal pragmatic competence. In presenting the research findings no attempt has been made to correct the participants' grammatical errors.

5. Research findings

First stage

Research findings from the first stage revealed that students overwhelmingly employed pragmalinguistic resources such as the 'impositive' modal 'should' when giving advice, and scant attention was given to the nature of the relationships. The respondents focused on telling the hearer what to do from a potential position of power and knowledge. Vanessa uses 'should' in four instances:

- (4) You should stop buying cigarettes. (Situation 1)
You should start to study English at least 20 minutes every day, I know you had stopped studying a lot of times. (Situation 2)
You should start to do exercise or you should go with a doctor he/she can give advices. (Situation 3)
You should go to ask information about the degree in universities. (Situation 4)

‘Should’ was used in 41 of 125 answers with the first year students, and 41 occasions in 100 answers with the third year students. ‘Can’ also featured strongly in giving advice: it was used 25 times by the first year students and on 12 occasions by the third year students. The use of ‘can’ seems to reflect first language interference, i.e. the direct translation into English of the Spanish verb *poder* (can, to be able to), as seen through these responses from Ana:

- (5) You can do some exercise, Distracted with some sport or any activity that you like. (Situation 1)
You can organize better your schedule and like this way you will have more time. (Situation 2)
You can eat healthy. Maybe fruits and vegetables would be a good option for you and do exercise. (Situation 3)
You can start with taking some English classes and then look for a good school for English teachers. (Situation 4)

Second stage

In the second stage, respondents were asked to show concern and interest (supportiveness) or identify with the feelings of the other (solidarity). Therefore, the process of giving advice goes beyond linguistic structures and entails taking the addressee into consideration. In conveying

supportiveness, respondents expressed interest and concern largely in terms of action and reaction to the addressee's words, rather than through lecturing or sermonising. Calls for action and reaction in heeding advice often resulted in proposed joint activity as reflected in the following suggestions. For instance, Vanessa offers to work with the addressee on ways to stop smoking: "We can look for help, if you want". Cristina supports the addressee's efforts: "I smoke too, why don't we get together?". The same spirit of fellowship is expressed by Berta: "That's a good idea. I want to loose weight also. Why don't we go on a diet together". The use of 'we' demonstrates an active level of commitment which appears to go beyond the perfunctory and mechanical expression of concern and consideration.

Sometimes the respondents offered to seek advice from a third party. Pedro implies in Situation 2 that he does not know where there are good English schools, but he offers to find out: "Well, let me talk to some of my friends about that, in the mean time don't give up keep on studying". When it comes to finding ways to lose weight, Alejandra says that she will ask her mother what diet she is following: "My mom is trying to lose weight too, and she's doing a really good diet. I can ask her what is she doing if you want". Therefore, the respondents' answers indicated they were not just going through the motions of offering advice, but were willing to invest time and effort in seeking advice from others to provide the best piece of advice possible to the addressee. Finally, the respondents often identified with the plight of the addressee, offering outright support and identification with him/her. Eva (in 6) and Celia (in 7) offer open-ended help (Situation 6):

- (6) I can help you out with your homework, I'll be there whenever you need me ok. (Eva)

- (7) I understand it's frustrating but anything you need you may ask me and I'll be glad to help. (Celia)

In conveying solidarity, participants identified with the addressee by expressing the same feelings. Alejandra knows how difficult it is to give up smoking: "I know what you are going to do, it's difficult but you can make it"; and Saúl identifies with the problem of giving up favourite foods: "We need to stop eating those things we love, uh?". The respondents also made reference to having gone through the same experiences. For example, Pedro identifies with the problems of learning English as a Foreign Language: "I know how you feel, I've been there before and I know it's a little hard but don't feel discouraged, we'll work on it"; and Rogelio knows how difficult it is to give up smoking, and offers to give up too: "I know it's difficult to quit but you know we can plan something together".

Whilst participants had not been asked to focus on face enhancement yet, numerous examples revealed that they were trying to make the addressee feel good and engaged in "flattering behavior towards the other person" (Kerbrat-Orecchioni, 1997: 13):

- (8) What a wonderful idea that you decided to lose weight, try to do your best to get it. (Gabino)
(9) I'm sure you'll do it great. (Lucio)

Besides examining how respondents expressed supportiveness and solidarity, I also analysed whether there had been a reduction in the number of impositive modals. Such a decrease would suggest that the respondents were no longer imposing their views on the addressees. With the first semester students, the number of impositive 'should' modals dropped from 41 out of 130 answers in the first stage to 37 out of 183 in the second stage – a significant decrease. With

the third year students, there was a dramatic decrease from 41 out of 150 answers in the first stage to 13 out of 185 answers in the second stage.¹

Third stage

In the third stage, respondents were asked to offer personal information about themselves (i.e. self-disclosure) and boost the face of the addressee (face enhancement) in order to give a more individual dimension to the advice giving. Self-disclosure practices largely fell into the category of offering one's own experiences, so that these revelations would be matched by a similar disclosure from the addressee. When talking about losing weight, Flavio said: "The worst part is when you get tempted by all the food that they told you not to eat". In so doing, he is presumably hoping that his revelation will be matched by the addressee and this would be the first step towards establishing a closer degree of interpersonal understanding between both. Meanwhile, Lidia reveals that she used to smoke and found it difficult to give up: "You know, I tried twice but what better worked for me was changing my life style and relaxing myself with music to avoid the stress of the nicotine. Maybe you could try it". Through the use of the tentative "Maybe you could try it", she is inviting the addressee to decide whether the same practices might work for him/her. A less frequent practice undertaken by the respondents was directly asking the addressee for a disclosure, e.g. "Good for you but tell me why did you decide to stop smoking, did you have problems" (Gabino).

1. There were more answers in the second stage because participants were invited to express both supportiveness and solidarity.

With regards to face enhancement strategies, respondents adopted two approaches. First, they expressed emphatic approval of the addressee's face. For instance, Sofia tells the addressee that there is no need to lose weight: "You look really good the way you are. But if you want to lose weight just try to have a balanced diet or do some exercise". Miriam follows a similar line: "You really don't need to lose weight, you look great! maybe if you exercise for 30 minutes everyday will keep you in good shape". By having her face previously boosted, the addressee would presumably subsequently be more willing to accept advice. Secondly, respondents tried to further boost the addressee's face by emphasizing a quality or virtue of the addressee along with praising it. Susana gave the following advice with regards to being a teacher (Situation 4): "I think that's a great option and besides your English is really good, I think you are gonna like it". Victoria strongly rated her addressee's chances of success in giving up smoking by praising his or her will-power: "Oh, it's really good that you want to try...You'll see you'll stop cause you're really strong minded...you can do it!".

In a less favoured option, the respondents hurt their own face. Flavio talks about his own problems in learning English and engages in 'troubles telling' (Jefferson, 1984a, 1984b): "I remember quite well when I started studying English. of course you may feel kind of dumb at the beginning". By recounting the problems that he first experienced, Flavio tried to make the addressee feel good and reassure him/her that he had undergone exactly the same experience. A troubles telling strategy is also used by Victoria as she says that she had problems with grammar: "You know when I was learning I had problems with third person and simple present and things like that...". Such a revelation aims to make the hearer feel better and give the idea that other people had the same problem and were able to overcome it.

Respondents often employed a combination of strategies as seen with Eva's advice on learning English in (10). Eva builds up the addressee's face by saying that the addressee is "smart". She self-discloses with "I also had the same problem" and then shows concern by asking the addressee to disclose how she feels:

- (10) You can do it! You are very smart. How long have you been studying? Is it too difficult? Do you understand everything? I know you can learn, I also had the same problem. Everything was really difficult at the beginning, I couldn't understand anything...

Besides examining how respondents expressed self-disclosure and face-enhancement, I once again analysed whether there had been a reduction in the number of impositive modals. In first semester students, the number of 'should' modals had dropped to 22 from 41 recorded in the first stage – a substantial decrease. With the third year students, there was an even more noteworthy decrease from 41 in the first stage to only 5 instances in the third stage.

To further reinforce the interpersonal aspect of advice giving, I asked respondents to consider using cajolers, downtoners and hedges as ways of maintaining harmony, coming across in less imposing and less precise ways. No examples of downtoners were offered, whilst hedges were few and largely expressed through 'kind of' and 'I guess':

- (11) I remember quite well when I started studying English. of course you may feel kind of dumb at the beginning. (Flavio)
- (12) I guess you weren't prepare to the exam ... (Alejandra)

The cajoler 'you know' was extensively used, which mirrors the talk of young adult native speakers: "you know 2

years ago I tried to stop smoking and I did....” (Eva); “you know, there was a time I wasn’t so good...” (Sonia). Finally, there were only two instances of ‘I mean’ in the data.

Longitudinal overview

The ‘product’ of interpersonal competence can be analysed by examining supportiveness and solidarity, and self-disclosure and face enhancement. However, progress of FL users needs to be examined on an individual basis to ascertain whether they are able to come across in more interpersonal ways as a *some*. Such development can be seen with Saúl, who goes from using the impositive ‘should’ to offering gentle encouragement (Situation 1):

(13) Stage 1:

You should try to smoke less cigarettes every week until you feel ready to stop.

Stage 2:

Supportiveness: Try a different habit.

Solidarity: It’s really hard, isn’t it?

Stage 3:

It was really difficult for me to stop that habit (self-disclosure), but if I could do it, you should be able as well (face enhancement).

By having raised their awareness of supportiveness, solidarity, self-disclosure and face enhancement, respondents managed to develop longer answers which indicate a greater degree of involvement and commitment in the advice giving. Susana went from using an impositive ‘should’ to relating the personal experience of a friend, even though, in reality, the actual advice she gives has not changed:

(14) Stage 1:

Well, maybe you should try one of those patches that help you quit smoking, don't you think?

Stage 2:

Supportiveness: I think that's great! Why don't you try a patch?

Solidarity: I know it's hard but don't you give up and you'll make it.

Stage 3:

Oh, I know a friend who tried stop smoking too, and you know what work for him? Well, he tried on of those patches and it took time but it worked in time, is a matter of time and effort.

Discussion

The respondents' initial approach to giving advice was characterised by the overuse of 'should'. This modal is often promoted in the language classroom and by ELT textbooks. Under the heading "advising, giving advice, function", Thornbury, in his book for EFL teachers, states that "common ways of expressing the *function* of giving advice involve the use of the *modal verbs* 'should' and 'ought to', as in 'You should take it easy'. 'You ought to phone your mum'" (2006: 7, his emphasis). Thornbury's definition may be misinterpreted by EFL teachers who only offer modal verbs as a way of giving advice. Data analysis revealed that no respondent used the modal 'ought to', which indicates that, even when it comes to using modals, participants enjoyed a limited access.

FL users need to offer advice considering the context, purpose and addressee of the exchange. As a first step, interactants should notice the pragmalinguistic resources available to them in the target language, rather than immediately

using off-the-peg ready-made elements such as 'should' and 'ought to'. Then they need to take into account the social context. Advice giving needs to consider (Jones, 1981: 59):

- a) how difficult or unpleasant the course of action you suggest is.
- b) who you are and who you are talking to – the roles you are playing and your relationship.

He asserts that a gamut of advice strategies ranges from the tentative 'I was wondering if you'd ever thought of' to the direct 'You'd better'. In contrast, Dörnyei and Thurrell (1992) argue that advice can be studied in terms of directness and indirectness, and suggest that FL learners should examine and be able to interpret phrases like 'Why don't we/you ...', 'It would be best if...', and 'Would/Might it be an idea'. The problem with using ready-made structures can be seen in situations 1 (talking to a friend), 2 (talking to a cousin) and 5 (talking to a younger brother), in which the use of 'should' could be seen as projecting superiority and distance rather than friendly advice. Advice conveyed as imposition may lead to strained interpersonal relations, and impede the advice-giver reaching his/her communicative goal.

For the FL user, engaging in supportiveness and solidarity can be loosely labelled as expressing sympathy and empathy. By focusing on interactional intentions and goals rather than on grammatical structures and functions, learners can be given greater opportunity to practise developing interpersonal communication in the target language. Furthermore, respondents often saw supportiveness and solidarity in terms of action and joint activity, e.g. "We can look for help if you want" and "That's a good idea. I want to lose weight also". Therefore, by asking them to engage in supportiveness and solidarity, they were no longer practising language structures but rehearsing communicative 'action'

in the foreign language. They were identifying with the addressee, making an investment, and becoming involved, e.g. by losing weight together or seeking further advice from friends.

Whilst supportiveness and solidarity involve, among other things, identifying with the addressee, self-disclosure develops joint understandings, and entails the use of past experiences to find solutions to problems. By offering his/her own personal experience, the advice-giver is looking for reciprocity from the addressee. Self-disclosure helps deflate the all-knowing and superior stance potentially transmitted through the use of 'should' and 'ought to'. At the same time, face enhancement underscores the importance of the feelings of the addressee. By denying or downplaying the addressee's problem or difficulty and boosting his/her face, the respondents were in a much stronger position to not only give advice but perhaps, to have that advice accepted. For instance, in "You look really good the way you are. But if you want to lose weight just try to have a balanced diet or do some exercise", Sofia uses face enhancement to deny that the addressee really needs to go on a diet, which may make him/her more willing to listen to her suggestions. Therefore, this seems potentially to be a more successful approach to giving advice than the impositive 'should' or 'ought to'.

The limited use of downtoners, hedges and cajolers suggests that FL users do not employ them as an interpersonal communicative resource. In a comparative study between Uruguayan Spanish and English language speakers in Britain, Márquez Reiter (2000) noted a low occurrence in the use of these elements by Spanish speakers. She suggested that Uruguayans may have been more focused on positive politeness (Brown and Levinson, 1987) (i.e. solidarity) and directness as opposed to protecting the face of the addressee, which is one of the objectives of these linguistic devi-

ces. Márquez Reiter's conclusion may also explain their low incidence among the respondents in this study.

The longitudinal analysis offers insights into student development in terms of interpersonal pragmatic competence. In contrast to the formulaic and predictable use of 'should' or 'ought to', the use of interpersonal resources such as supportiveness and solidarity is a much more tentative and exploratory process. Teacher intervention, as attempted in this study, cannot be expected to produce immediate results. However, the respondents' answers indicated that they were indeed experimenting in how to come across in more interpersonal and individual ways, especially since the actual advice often did not vary between the different stages:

(15) Stage 1:

Well, the first thing you need to do is reduce the number of cigarettes you have everyday, if it is possible then you should try to quit. (Lucio)

Stage 2:

Supportiveness: I know it's difficult, just try. (Lucio)

Solidarity: That's the best idea you've had. (Lucio)

Stage 3:

I really know how difficult it is because when I used to smoke it was hard to quit tha bad habit. (Lucio)

Lucio focuses on the need to quit smoking and his message does not vary in the three stages. What does vary is the impositive nature of his advice, which becomes much more considerate and thoughtful in the third stage.

6. Conclusions

In this paper, I have argued that FL users need to be given the opportunity to interact as a *some* rather than an *any*.

To further this argument, I have revisited Aston's (1988a, 1989) concepts of supportiveness and solidarity, and have applied them to advice giving by FL learners. Results indicate that, along with self-disclosure and face enhancement, learners can express themselves in more personalised ways. To come across as a *some*, they should be encouraged to examine both what they can do with language within a target language situation, and how they come across. Widowson (1978: 3) contrasts these learning objectives of producing "meaningful communicative behaviour", with purely demonstrating "instances of correct English usage". In other words, supportiveness, solidarity, self-disclosure and face enhancement represent what FL users can do with language versus using 'should' or 'ought to', whereby they demonstrate the correct manipulation of grammar structures and function. Therefore, pragmatic resources must not be seen as ends in themselves, but as means of helping interactants achieve individual and interpersonal communicative objectives.

In this study, the participants were not specifically taught ways to express supportiveness and solidarity, self-disclosure or face enhancement; rather, they were made aware of these strategies which can be accessed from the foreign language users' own first language or from the target language (see Curc6, 2007). A focus on interpersonal strategies helps students to see what they can do with language rather than be limited by a narrow range of language structures. Such focus promotes the idea that language use is intimately related to 'doing'. Finally, the use of interpersonal pragmatic strategies can compensate for grammar difficulties, since target language speakers are willing to forgive grammatical errors but not pragmatic ones (Thomas, 1983).

Appendix

Situation 1:

You have a friend who wants to stop smoking. What would you say to help her?

Situation 2:

A cousin has been trying to study English for years but has had little success. What would you advise him to do?

Situation 3:

A stranger starts a conversation and says he wants to lose weight. What would you advise?

Situation 4:

An acquaintance wants to be an English teacher what advice would you give her?

Situation 5:

You have been asked to talk to a younger brother about his low grades at school. What would you tell him?



MITIGATING THE FORCE OF CRITICISM IN STUDENT PEER REVIEWS¹

Barry Pennock-Speck and Begoña Clavel-Arroitia
IULMA, Universitat de València

1. Introduction

The preparation for the new degree structures in Spanish universities has proved to be more of a challenge than was originally foreseen. One of the reasons is that students are expected to learn or acquire not only specific content such as, e.g. knowledge of English grammar, phonology, lexicology and pragmatics, but also both general and discipline-specific competences. One of the competences students are supposed to acquire in the new degree programme in English Studies at the Universitat de València, Spain, is the ability to think critically and to express their thoughts in English. In this chapter, we will describe how this competence was exercised in the subject *Sociolinguistics in English* during the academic year 2008-2009. In this module, students were required to critically assess class presentations carried

1. This research has been made possible thanks to the project “Efectos pragmático-cognitivos de los elementos paralingüísticos y extralingüísticos sobre la audiencia en los anuncios de televisión en lengua inglesa” (UV-AE-10-24541), financed by the *Universitat de València* through the *Projectes d’Investigació Precompetitius* scheme.

out by their classmates as part of the continuous assessment within the context of our university's *Innovation in Education Project* that was, at the time, in its sixth year. This peer criticism took the form of a written assessment that was sent to each of the student groups, while preserving the anonymity of the authors of the critiques.

The idea for this study arose due to a complaint from a student about the criticism she and her group had been subjected to. We therefore decided to scrutinize the reviews to find out what politeness strategies students employed to mitigate the possible face-threatening acts (Brown and Levinson, 1987) that might have been instantiated through their critiques. Our analysis of student assessments aims to pinpoint those areas in which students might need training to criticize the work of others, while taking into account their face needs. At the same time, we will examine the usefulness of Brown and Levinson's (1987) approach to explore this particular written genre. We will also discuss the feasibility of helping students to acquire pragmatic skills, especially those related to politeness work, in the context of a degree in which students need to acquire academic writing skills that enable them to express complex concepts, whilst considering the interpersonal dimension of written discourse.

2. Context of the study

This study would not have come about if it had not been for the sweeping changes taking place in Spanish and European Higher Education. Therefore, it is essential to supply the context for our research. European universities are required to adapt their degree programmes to the Bologna system during the academic year 2010-2011. This enormous change, which involves making degree structures more homogeneous throughout Europe, will have lasting effects on

what students are required to achieve in order to obtain a degree. Instead of degree programmes based on discipline-specific content, students will be required to acquire discipline-specific and transferrable skills referred to as 'specific' and 'general' competences. In English Studies at the Universitat de València, content can be said to be subsumed under forty different general and specific competences (Pennock-Speck, 2009, in press). For example, Competence 18 states that students should "be aware of the theoretical and practical aspects of the following disciplines in English: phonology, lexicology, morphology, syntax and textual and discursive analysis", while other competences subsume content such as the knowledge of dialect studies, learning and acquisition of languages, and familiarity with literatures in English. The philosophy behind competences is that it is no longer enough to learn certain concepts by heart; it is essential that students also learn how to put the knowledge and skills they have acquired to use inside and outside the classroom. This, the theory goes, will stand them in good stead when employing their knowledge and skills in their professional careers once their degree is finished. What is more, the kind of instruction they receive is designed to enable them to go on learning throughout their working lives.

The move to competence-based systems has been met with mixed responses by lecturers at our university and elsewhere. Some opponents in the UK consider these systems to be too prescriptive, and to focus on parts of an individual's education unlike the whole (T. Hyland, 1994; Betts and Smith, 1998; Smith, 2005). For some, the onus on competences is thought to be to the detriment of traditional academic learning; but for others, within and beyond Europe, there is no better way of proving that a student has grasped the complex ideas inherent in any degree programme than by requiring him/her to put them into practice. Voorhees (2001: 5) considers that new pathways in education have

now been opened by the introduction of competences that challenge traditional tertiary education, and that:

these pathways lead most directly to learning opportunities that are intensely focused and are populated by learners and employers who are chiefly interested in the shortest route to results.

Thanks to competence-based learning, access to learning opportunities is greater now than at any previous time (Rosenberg, 2000; Voorhees, 2001). Voorhees points out that another advantage of competence learning is that it can be described and measured in ways that are understood by all parties, and relates to what students need. According to the Working Group on Competency-Based Initiatives in Postsecondary Education of the NPEC drawn up by Jones, Voorhees and Paulson (2002: vii), an important reason to implement competences² is:

to help faculty and students across campus, as well as other stakeholders such as employers and policymakers, to have a common understanding about the specific skills and knowledge that undergraduates should master as a result of their learning experiences.

Thus far, we have deliberately avoided the word 'teaching' when looking at competences in a university context, because we see our main role as finding ways to provide students with the opportunities to acquire competences rather than us teaching them in an overt fashion. Thus, although traditional lectures are not eschewed, we have attempted to gi-

2. This is not the place to delve into the semantic differences between the terms 'competence' and 'competency'. The latter is used by Jones, Voorhees and Paulson (2002). We employ the former throughout this chapter but will treat both as synonymous.

ve our students a central role in their learning process. It is precisely this new focus on competences that created the context in which we were able to conduct this research.

3. Student critiques in a sociolinguistics module

In the first year module *Sociolinguistics in English*, our students are introduced to basic sociolinguistic issues such as language varieties, gender, register and genre, linguistic politeness, and other topics. The introduction to theoretical issues is carried out through input classes in which sociolinguistic concepts are studied along with the reading and discussion of seminal texts in each of the areas mentioned above. Students participate in discussions and answer questions about the material covered in the input sessions. As class size is normally large – up to 80 some semesters – this work is carried out in small groups of a maximum of five members. For the class which is the object of this study, each group of students was asked to post their answers on a blog that they had previously been asked to create.

Towards the end of the input classes, roughly half way through the 15-week term, students were asked to begin the preparation of a presentation on sociolinguistic issues in TV ads, and pay special attention to areas such as the depiction of gender, national and regional stereotypes, and linguistic politeness strategies. This type of assignment is designed to give them the opportunity to practice several competences that include the development of interpersonal skills and the capacity for teamwork (Competence 11), the design and management of projects (Competence 13), and the use of ICT tools, programmes and software (Competence 10).³ The

3. For a full list of the competences in our English degree programme, see Pennock-Speck (in press).

main reason for asking the students to analyze a corpus of TV ads is that television advertising is a prime locus for the transmission of societal norms (Killbourne, 1999), and, at times, transgressions of such norms. Another reason is that the discourse of advertising is one of the key discourses in society, and the most influential kind of advertising is through TV (Fairclough, 2001). A third, more practical, reason is that in a Spanish context it is rather difficult to gather a corpus of naturally occurring language, in this case English, for the students to scrutinize (cf. Stockwell, 2002). Providing students with a sizeable corpus of TV ads in English to analyze from a sociolinguistic point of view is also relatively easy.

Each group of students was furnished with the same corpus of TV ads. They were given the freedom to choose a sub-corpus of around 15 ads using the criteria on corpus selection delivered in the input classes, and they were asked to focus on the sociolinguistic issues mentioned above. The presentations were made up of the analyses of the ads performed by the students, and had to be carried out by each group in front of the whole class. The students also had to write critiques of the other groups' presentations. Initially, the critique activity was designed to give them a way of focusing on the presentations of other students, and to exercise Competence 25, which refers to becoming conversant with the techniques and methods involved in linguistic analysis, and the ability to apply them in oral and written discourse in English. The critiques had to focus, among other areas, on the quality of the analyses, how the presentations were delivered, and if they were effective in getting the students' ideas across. It is this set of peer reviews which makes up our corpus of analysis. We asked the students for their permission to use their writing for this research.

4. Linguistic politeness

We have chosen Brown and Levinson's (1987, henceforth B&L) approach to linguistic politeness, as it is the most important framework on linguistic politeness whether it involves members of the same or different cultures. However, our application of this approach has not been uncritical, and the work of other authors has been incorporated when necessary. From a practical point of view, using B&L provides readers with a familiar framework. We will, however, outline some of their major tenets, starting with the notion that underpins their view of politeness, i.e. *face*. B&L (1987: 61) define this central concept as "the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself, consisting in two related aspects":

- a) negative face: the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction – i.e. to freedom of action and freedom from imposition;
- b) positive face: the positive consistent self-image or 'personality' (crucially including the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of) claimed by interactants.

In everyday interaction one's face is often threatened, e.g. when a stranger asks one for money, a student questions a teacher's instructions, or even when one is given a compliment. These situations constitute face-threatening acts (FTAs), and mitigating them is a major component of "doing" politeness. FTAs may threaten a hearer's positive face by indicating him/her that the speaker (S) does not "care about the addressee's feelings, wants, etc." (1987: 66); or his/her negative face by indicating that S might not be doing enough to avoid impeding the hearer's freedom of action. When assessing the seriousness of an FTA, we also have to consider "sociological variables" (1987: 74): social distan-

ce (D), power (P), and the absolute ranking (R) of the imposition an FTA may involve in the particular culture.

Speakers are sensitive to face and, therefore, politeness issues in their interactions, hence they will generally make an effort to lessen the impact of possible FTAs. These can be mitigated in several ways. One is through positive politeness strategies which constitute “redress directed to the addressee’s perennial desire that his wants or actions should be thought of as desirable” (1987: 106), for instance, claiming solidarity, common points of view, and in-group membership. Negative politeness mitigation, on the other hand, is:

essentially avoidance-based, and realizations of negative-politeness strategies consist in assurances that the speaker recognizes and respects the addressee’s negative-face wants and will not (or will only minimally) interfere with the addressee’s freedom of action. (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 70)

Finally, with off-record strategies S “wants to do an FTA” but also “wants to avoid the responsibility for doing it” (1987: 211). This is accomplished by using an indirect expression that leaves it up to the addressee how to interpret it.

B&L mainly focus on politeness in conversation but a lot of work has been done on politeness in written discourse (Hagge and Kostelnick, 1989; Bremner, 2006). Given the very different nature of these modes of communication, the instantiation of politeness in writing will be different. Even within written discourse, there are differences depending on genre. Research into scientific academic texts (Myers, 1989), book reviews (Gea-Valor, 2001), business language (Harris, 2003), etc., shows that in all of them, there is an interpersonal aspect that writers take into account. With regard to instructor-to-student criticism in a monolingual context, Hyland and Hyland (2001: 194) observed that instructors

were aware of the “affective, addressee-oriented meanings their comments conveyed”, and thus avoided bald-on-record criticism. 20% of the criticism was accompanied by praise “slightly softening the negativity of the overall evaluation”, while 15% was linked to suggestions thus “adding a more effective pedagogic and interactional dimension” (2001: 195).

5. Politeness in an intercultural context: the case of written student peer criticism

B&L (1987: 61) state that “the content of face will differ in different cultures”, although the underlying principles of politeness are universal. In other words, speakers in any culture will take the hearers’ positive and negative face into account, but the way they do it will most likely be different. In this sense, an important claim is that one culture may be biased towards either negative or positive politeness. With regard to the cultures of Britain and Spain, Hickey (1991) and Haverkate (2002) put forward that the former is oriented towards negative politeness values, while Spanish culture is biased towards positive politeness. According to García Vizcaíno and Martínez-Cabeza (2005), this may be because British culture gives more importance to values such as independence and individualism, whereas Spanish culture values closeness and solidarity more in social interaction. Given these differences between cultures, the potential that exists for failure in negotiating face threat in contexts in which interlocutors are from more than one culture is logically greater than those in which interlocutors come from just one culture. What is more, it not only depends on culture and genre, but also on the specific speech act involved (e.g. Blum-Kulka 1987, 1989; Olshtain and Wein-

bach, 1993; Bal, 1994; Sabaté i Dalmau and Culler i Gotor, 2007; Sun Park and Guan, 2009).

Within the literature on peer criticism in student discourse, emphasis is placed on the willingness, or otherwise, of students to accept criticism from their equals. In this vein, Cheng (2006: 302) reporting on research into an L2 graduate students' production warns against the approach "which often involves describing the values, attitudes, and learning practices of individuals in terms of fixed, homogeneous, reified national cultures", found in the work of Connor (1996), among others. Cheng (2006: 303) states that "it may be more productive to attend to how learners' trajectories become transformed in the concrete acts of analyzing writing samples by others and producing writing of their own". Following Holliday (1999), she suggests that we must take into account "the co-construction of the various small cultures defined as the sum total of all the processes, happenings, or activities in which a given set of people habitually engage" (ibid.). This community of practice approach seems to attach more importance to the individual and the social contexts s/he may find him/herself in, than his/her linguistic and cultural background. This view is supported by Lee (2008), who states that it is dangerous to generalize about groups of students, especially those in entirely different contexts (i.e. geographical location, age, educational background, etc.). Mendonca and Johnson (1994), and Berg (1999) found peer review, in their research into ESL writing, to be pedagogically positive. Two other studies report misgivings about peer reviewing from ESL students due to the awkwardness they feel when being reviewed by other peers (Spear, 1987), and lack of confidence in the critical comments made by the latter (Paulus, 1999). Other researchers found students preferred teacher reviews in ESL classes (Mangelsdorf, 1992; Nelson and Murphy, 1992; Stanley, 1992; Zhang, 1995; Yang, Badger and Yu, 2006).

6. Method

The students in our sociolinguistics class were asked to write a critique of the presentations carried out by every other group, and to send them to their instructor. Thus a corpus of around 18,000 words was gathered. It was made up of the critiques of the members of 12 groups out of a total of 13 – one group did not hand in their critique. The critiques were then sent to each group. In some groups, only one member wrote the criticism for the whole group, while in others, each member wrote a critique. The total number of critiques amounted to 137, which is an average of around 11 critiques per group.

Our analysis took the form of a close reading of each critique to discover the politeness strategies employed. We identified any positive or negative comment on a group's performance as a previous step, before considering politeness strategies within these. After a preliminary analysis, we realized that a positive or negative evaluation could involve one clause or a series of clauses, and we decided that the boundaries depended on a change of topic. Therefore, in the example "slide show was short and to the point – everyone spoke well",⁴ we have identified two aspects of group B's presentation, which are positive evaluations. The first centres on the group's presentation, and the second on its delivery. By contrast, sometimes two or more sentences contained only one clear case of positive evaluation as in:

- (1) A thing we really liked about their voiceover point was talking about aggressiveness or politeness. Using this would make it easier for us to go from the voiceover point to the hard & soft sell point.

4. None of the student mistakes have been corrected.

7. Results and discussion

After the analysis described in the last section, the following results emerged:

Table 1. Positive and negative evaluations in the corpus.

Positive evaluation	Unmitigated negative evaluation	Mitigated negative evaluation	Positive plus negative evaluation	Negative plus positive evaluation
369	102	28	59	51

One of our findings is the absence of off-record politeness strategies. A predominance of positive evaluative statements can be observed. These are followed by unmitigated negative evaluations, which contrast with the relatively small number of mitigated negative evaluations. Finally, there are 110 instances of mixtures of positive and negative evaluations.

Expressions of positive or negative evaluation do not necessarily constitute positive or negative politeness strategies, so before deciding which of them did, we had to analyze each phrase, sentence or paragraph in turn. We assumed expressions of positive evaluation would be possible candidates for positive politeness strategy status, and negative evaluations would be potential candidates for negative politeness strategy status. It is our view that for an expression of positive evaluation to be deemed a positive politeness strategy, it must constitute a proposition that can be identified as a gambit to offset or redress possible criticism, which in B&L (1987: 67) is seen as an FTA in which “S has a negative evaluation of some aspect of H’s positive face”. In group A’s opinion about group F’s performance, there are

instances of positive evaluation with no attempt at any kind of criticism:

- (2) + interesting that they mentioned why they have choosed
Fragrances – + interesting point „colours“– + most of them
spoke very free – + presented the ad again which was good
to remember it better.

Although theoretically a critique is, by its very nature, potentially face-threatening to the person being subjected to it, nothing here indicates that Group F's face is actually being threatened. Therefore, the expressions of positive evaluation in example 2 cannot be instances of redress defined by B&L (1987: 61) as "attempts to counteract the potential face damage of the FTA". Unless, that is, the term "potential" allows for any phrase to be interpreted as threatening. Our stance is that as discourse analysts, we have an obligation not to sit on the fence, but to decide whether a particular word or sentence is, in fact, face-threatening. Therefore, for the reasons stated above, we have not categorized the statements seen in example 2 above as embodying redressive politeness strategies. Although these remarks are indeed cases of positive evaluation, we cannot, with any certainty, state that they embody positive politeness strategies.

One of the problems we, as discourse analysts, are faced with is not being able to determine what our students' intentions are when expressing their critiques. B&L (1987: 65) state that criticism is one of the acts that "intrinsicly threaten face". It threatens the hearer's positive face because "the speaker *does not care about* the addressee's feelings, wants, etc." (1987: 66, our emphasis). Note, however, that there is no mention of intention. On the other hand, B&L (1987: 65) describe criticism that threatens a hearer's negative face as "indicating (potentially) that S does not *intend* to avoid impeding H's freedom of action" (our emphasis). Of course,

the different choice of words “not care” and “not intend” to describe the positive and negative FTAs enacted by criticism may just be a case of elegant variation, but it does not make things any clearer with regard to how we are supposed to gauge intentionality in human communication. Graham (2007), following Watts’ (2003) distinction of polite/politic and impolite behaviours, offers what seems like a clear example of intentional impoliteness in computer-mediated communication. Contrarily, we have not been able to find any examples of “intentionally” impolite or overtly polite verbal behaviour in the literature on peer or academic criticism. Nevertheless, as Culpeper (2005: 39) admits referring to impoliteness, “recognizing intentions is highly problematic”. This is especially true if, as some authors state (Fraser, 1990), being polite is unmarked behaviour.

The difficulty of gauging the level of intentionality of any particular statement thus constitutes a drawback in most genres, and it falls on the discourse analyst to decide whether it exists or not. This is definitely the case with peer criticism and, to our mind, also with conversation. For example, the exclamation in one of B&L’s (1987: 103) first examples of positive politeness: “What a beautiful vase this is! Where did it come from?” could be caused by genuine admiration, and have nothing to do with intentional face attention. As Fraser and Nolen (1981: 96) establish in their oft-cited aphorism “no sentence is inherently polite or impolite”. Only if we were privy to the intentions of the speaker, could we be sure if the utterance was *meant* to be polite. Advertising is one of the few genres where the intention of S, i.e. the creator of the advert, is logically to win over the hearer/viewer (see del Saz-Rubio and Pennock-Speck, 2009). This may have to do with the fact that the strategic goal of the creator of an advert is to promote or sell a product (Pennock-Speck and del Saz-Rubio, 2006). The strategic goal of someone involved in conversation might be to

ingratiate themselves with their hearers, hurt their feelings by using sarcasm, gather information from them, etc. This would depend on a very wide range of contextual factors. In the case of our students, their strategic goal was – at least this was *our* intention – to show that they had listened carefully to the presentations and to show their prowess at writing critiques. Avoiding threatening the face of those who did the presentation was probably a secondary concern.

Another difficulty we were faced with in our analysis is the fact that there are no paralinguistic cues like “hesitations, umms and ahhs” (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 57); prosodic cues such as intonation and stress; or kinesic cues. Of course, B&L directed their attention almost exclusively towards conversation, where these cues are most certainly present. It is this oral bias of the B&L approach that constitutes its main drawback when analyzing written texts, rather than the supposed Anglo- or Eurocentricity of their proposal, and the reliance on speech act theory. These alleged defects are made much of by some researchers, but this is due to a somewhat biased reading of B&L in order to promote other approaches to politeness (Escandell-Vidal, 1998; Arundale, 2006). The evident and logical preoccupation with oral discourse in B&L means that the examples of the instantiation of their strategies are of little help to anyone wanting to analyze written discourse.

Bearing in mind these difficulties, most of the expressions of positive evaluation do not constitute positive politeness strategies or at least any we can identify. However, 157 positive politeness strategies were embodied in expressions of positive evaluation with a total of 117 instances of Strategy 15: “Give gifts to H (goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation)” (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 129). This strategy involves S satisfying H’s face by fulfilling some of H’s wants. These include non-tangible gifts such as “the wants to be liked, admired, cared about, understood, listened to, and so

on" (1987: 129). We have categorized expressions that include the explicit presence of S through the first person singular and plural pronouns as instances of this strategy:

- (3) Overall, this presentation was very interesting and this is *our favourite presentation*
- (4) *We liked* their format of the presentation.

The next most common positive politeness strategy is Strategy 2 "Exaggerate" (1987: 104). The lack of any intonation and stress makes recognizing this strategy quite difficult as these prosodic cues are two of the identifying characteristics of this strategy in conversation. We therefore had to rely on the presence of lexical items to detect its presence. In all we found 34 examples. Other positive politeness strategies hardly appeared in the corpus. Examples 5 and 6 are instantiations of Strategy 2:

- (5) No group has mentioned it before even though this seems very important and *really* interesting.
- (6) He was calm and had a *great corporal expression*, sometimes talking to the public in a *very desirable way* for a presentation.

In the case of negative evaluations, to achieve politeness strategy status, our main criterion was that they should soften the imposition created by the critique itself. The 28 instances of mitigated negative evaluation found indicate the writer's attempt in this direction. Once more, the problem is to identify those cases in which the writer is actually attempting to mitigate face threat. In this category, we only included those cases in which there was some indication that s/he was trying to save the reader's face. The instances found were of Strategy 4, i.e. "minimize imposition" (1987: 176) (examples 7 and 8 below). This strategy shows that the wri-

ter is making a conscious and deliberate effort to mitigate the force of his/her criticism:

- (7) The videos that were supposed to be used during the presentation didn't work out, but those were *only some technical problems*, none of the group's fault.
- (8) *The only thing that was lacking*, for me, were videos or some visual ads that *could attract more* the audience attention.

Finally, we found 102 instances of bald-on-record (henceforth BoR) type of criticism; 51 took the form of lists in which each phrase was preceded with a hyphen (example 9), while others were couched in connected prose (example 10). In example 9 positive evaluations are interspersed with BoR statements. Example (10) is a more elaborate BoR instance:

- (9) X spoke well - second girl spoke very quietly and mostly read from her paper – *too many words on slides* – interesting video – *3rd girl also only read from her paper.*
- (10) I felt surprised to see that they haven't been working on given ads, but on others they have found in the Internet. *I didn't like so much the topic, which was centred in banned ads because these are not examples of honest advertising but of illicit one.*

BoR statements expressed through connected prose seem more face-threatening than the ones in lists, as lists appear to require less thought on the part of the writer. This ties in with B&L's (1987: 71) idea that the payoff of BoR expressions is that "S can claim that other things are more important than face, or that the act is not an FTA at all". So, paradoxically, it would seem that the balder the expression, the more matter-of-fact, the less threatening it is. However,

given the naked criticism in many of the BoR expressions in our corpus, we would argue that they do not constitute politeness strategies in the same way as many positive evaluations do not constitute positive politeness strategies. Another important point is that the extensive use of BoR expressions in the data contrasts with Hyland and Hyland's (2001: 194) corpus of teacher criticisms where "baldly negative comments" are "rare".

A large number of expressions (a total of 110) were made up of positive plus negative evaluation, and negative plus positive evaluation. The first type (examples 11, 12 and 13 below), could be construed as cases of negative politeness strategies, because they can be interpreted as attempts to redress criticism using a preceding positive evaluation. For B&L (1987: 161) they embody negative politeness strategy 2, "Question, hedge", through which criticism is softened. Johnson and Roen (1992: 46) call them "good news/bad news pairings strategies", while Hyland and Hyland (2001: 195) describe them as "criticisms...accompanied by praise". We found both positive evaluations followed by negative evaluations (examples 11 and 12) and negative evaluations followed by positive evaluations (examples 13, 14 and 15). The latter type does not seem to have been contemplated by any of the above authors. There were 59 good news/bad news pairings, and 51 bad news/good news pairings, making this mixed strategy the second most common:

- (11) First of all, I think we would all agree that the I group's presentation was very well prepared but it took definitely too long time.
- (12) We find that the information of this presentation is good, with matters that we hadn't talked about in our presentation. But *some of them have talked very quickly, and we cannot understand them.*

- (13) *The next guy gave too much info on each slide although it was very informative.*

The positive and negative remarks are normally linked with an adversative “but” and “although”. These cases contrast with those where there is simply a juxtaposition of positive and negative statements. Here it might be considered that the writer is merely stating positive and negative aspects of the presentation, and has no intention of being polite or otherwise:

- (14) *The last girl was obviously spanish and she made a great effort with her english which really payed off. She made interesting comments about sexism in ads and I very much liked the eternal woman reference. Once again *she had problems differentiating between woman and women. Her part was too long though and could have been summarised more.**

In some instances (example 15), the misuse of “and” might impede a mitigating reading of the statement, but our understanding is that this is merely a mistake common in student discourse:

- (15) *Personally, we think that this presentation has been so long. And we agree with some of facts that they have talked about, like women.*

In our corpus, the positive politeness strategies make up 53% of the total, while negative politeness strategies make up the remaining 47% (we have not counted BoR statements). This leads us to the discussion of whether our students’ discourse could be described as lacking in politeness strategies, and, if this is so, whether this has something to do with the fact that they are writing in a foreign language,

which, of course, is part of a foreign culture. The main finding in this sense is the large number of unmitigated or BoR statements compared to criticism exercised by native-speaking teachers of English. We might ask whether the difference is due to the maturity of the native speakers of English or the fact that these teachers are obviously more proficient at writing in their own language. We have found no studies on the influence of age or level of instruction on the use of politeness strategies. However, there is a quite a large body of research on politeness in intercultural contexts as seen above. The point now is whether it is possible to bring the students' discourse more into line with native discourse, which in this case, would require a greater use of mitigating devices in negative evaluations. This would mean taking into account that:

...a great number of cultural assumptions, which would normally be presupposed, and not made explicit by native speakers, may need to be drawn explicitly to the attention of speakers from other cultures. (Brown and Yule, 1983: 40)

If it is necessary to draw learners' attention to these assumptions, it is essential that teachers are aware of them. In consequence, Cohen and Ishihara (2009: 1) state that teachers need to improve "their ability to recognize, interpret, and explain to learners the often subtle sociocultural meanings associated with oral, written, and nonverbal communication". This implies incorporating a pragmatic component into foreign language teaching, as contemplated in the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001). Rose and Kasper (2001a) mention several important aspects of pragmatic competence that need to be taken into consideration such as speech acts and conversational structure based on empirical studies of native speaker discourse (Holmes and Brown, 1987; Myers-Scotton and Bernstein, 1988; Bardovi-Harlig et al.,

1991), and native speaker and interlanguage data (Edmondson and House, 1981; Rose, 1994a). However, one of the greatest reservations about teaching an aspect of pragmatics such as politeness is that it is difficult to get across. As a result, linguistic skills constitute the bulk of much traditional language teaching. Thomas (1983, cited in Bou-Franch and Garcés-Conejos, 2003: 6) provides two good reasons that may account for this situation: (i) that pragmatic description is not as precise as grammar in accounting for linguistic competence; and (ii) that pragmatics is “a delicate area and it is not immediately obvious how it can be ‘taught’”. Another related problem is time. Language teachers have so much to teach in class that some have doubts about the viability of introducing a pragmatic component.

With regards to linguistic politeness in an intercultural context as in our case, the first task is to decide on how to go about teaching it. In this respect, Eelen (2001: 31) distinguishes *politeness1* and *politeness2*, the former being the common-sense notion and the latter theoretical concepts of politeness. We believe it would be relatively easy to highlight “folk” conceptions of politeness, and even contrast two cultures through classroom activities. This could be complemented by focusing on specific problems such as the lack of mitigation in negative evaluations, as established above. On the other hand, we are persuaded that teaching *politeness2* would be rather more difficult to put into practice with EFL learners in general, as they might not find it relevant. Students in an English degree programme like ours might be less reticent, since they expect to receive input on theoretical matters. Another problem with *politeness2* would be which approach to use. Although B&L’s is the most influential, it has met with quite a lot of criticism.

We do not believe that awareness of politeness issues in the context of a foreign culture can be raised solely through theory; students need the opportunity to acquire it through

practice. In other words, we need to allow students to become aware of politeness issues – in this case in writing – by actually getting them to write potentially face-threatening critiques as in our sociolinguistics module. This is quite different from Cohen and Ishihara's (2009) approach, which is basically made up of awareness-raising perception-based exercises (see also Bou-Franch and Garcés-Conejos, 2003), and the analysis of language and contextual factors. Unlike face-to-face communication, in which most of us are aware that what we say might be face-threatening, writing is more often than not asynchronous communication, and the recipient is out of sight, and possibly out of mind. To be really aware of the FTAs they may perpetrate when critiquing another student's work, students must at least be given the opportunity to be impolite to others and for others to be impolite to them. We suggest that instruction in politeness awareness should be provided in more advanced courses, as it is quite possible that lack of proficiency in a language can cause unintended impoliteness. It also seems logical that individuals with basic knowledge of a foreign language do not have the linguistic tools to negotiate potentially face-threatening communication. In this sense, one of the problems with the sociolinguistics group object of our study is that there was a mixture of first year students, whose English is still only at A2 level, and more advanced students.

The methodology we propose to help students become aware of the importance of politeness in academic writing has three stages: first, making the students aware of politeness issues within a specific genre, in this case critical writing; secondly, giving the students the opportunity to critique other students; and thirdly, supplying them with teacher feedback on potential problems. Our research into student writing within a sociolinguistics course is very different from general English courses and academic writing courses in general. However, as outlined in the CEFR (Council of Euro-

pe, 2001), there is no reason why a pragmatic component, which includes politeness issues, should not be part of any advanced course.

8. Conclusions

In spite of our reservation with regard to the application of B&L's approach to peer criticism, our results show that students are aware that there are ways to mitigate face-threatening acts even though they have not been given any explicit input on the means to do this. We consider that, in general, the students' output in this research would be considered adequate from a politeness perspective in an English-speaking country. Many of our students seem to know how to minimize imposition in quite sophisticated ways. However, our results also show that some may not realize the need for redress in their critical remarks, and sometimes use rather abrupt BoR statements. It might be the case that both non-redressive positive expressions and BoR statements are simply the enactment of sincerity on the part of the writer. Our results seem to point in the direction that our Spanish students are less concerned with the effects of their negative evaluations, because they are less oriented toward negative politeness values (Hickey, 1991; Haverkate, 2002). There may be an ethical as well as cultural aspect here as politeness can be, and often is, the expression of insincerity. However, it is precisely the existence of contexts in which restraint has to be exercised, which makes us think that our students would benefit from some fine tuning in the use of politeness strategies, especially where a BoR expression might be seen as an instance of *ad personam* criticism.



A PRAGMATIC STUDY OF PEER-TUTORING AND PEER-ASSESSMENT PRACTICES IN ONLINE LITERARY FORUMS

Anna M. Brígido-Corachán
IULMA, Universitat de València

1. Introduction

In the last decade, the field of assessment in tertiary education has changed dramatically under the new guidelines proposed by the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), to the point that assessment today is seen as a continuous process rather than a specific event or product that takes place at the end of the semester. As a continuous process, learning has to be monitored closely on a weekly basis, which means that testing practices must focus on student progress rather than on end-results (achievement), and that new instruments have to be provided, so that both instructors and students can participate actively in this evaluation (McLuckie and Topping, 2000; Langendyk, 2006; Maíz Arévalo, 2007; Lund, 2008).

The introduction of computer-mediated communication (CMC) in the university classroom has brought into being additional pedagogical changes. Here, learning becomes collaborative and multidirectional rather than individual and teacher-oriented. In a linguistic analysis of standard classroom teacher-fronted interaction, Trosborg (1995) found that 80% of the talking was done by the teacher, and that stu-

dents were thus allotted, on average, half a minute per lesson each. Such is the reality of English Studies at the Universitat de València, where groups often average 100 students. In order to monitor learning progress in such groups, I have implemented online forums to enhance student participation, and to reinforce face-to-face communication and student collaboration (see Brígido, 2008, 2009a, 2009b).

This preliminary study analyses pragmatic markers in student exchanges taking place in an online forum that was a key component of the subject *Pre-19th Century British Theatre* – an upper level full year literature course at the Universitat de València. In these linguistic exchanges English was used as the L2 to communicate scholarly ideas in the form of spontaneous peer-tutoring remarks, requests and offers in an informal exercise of peer-assessment. A selected sample of the pragmatic markers used by these students were considered focusing on modality markers, as they reveal students' peer-assisted argumentative progress, and their level of cognitive engagement with the subject matter and with each other. The general aim of this study is to understand the mechanisms by which students become aware of their collaborative learning progress and take responsibility in its development, so that learning and its assessment are collectively managed (cf. Calbó Angrill).

To this end, I have examined the way students collaboratively build an argumentative scaffolding in the foreign language, helping each other gain critical autonomy in a self-conscious and empowering manner, while developing their pragmatic competence therein. More specifically, I have looked at pragmatic markers that contribute to 1) determine a student's level of individual assertiveness, commitment and self-esteem in relation to the subject's content (cognitive engagement); 2) determine the degree of student collaboration in the scaffolding discussions (peer-assisted construction of knowledge); and 3) determine the students'

level of assertiveness, commitment and self-reflection when judging their classmates' work (peer-assessment). Tracking and decoding these pragmatic elements in an online forum may help the instructor evaluate cross-disciplinary skills that are often difficult to assess such as motivation, team-work, and creative critical thinking skills.

2. A pragmatic lens on continuous assessment in an online forum

Virtual forums foster active student involvement in the construction of shared knowledge, and strengthen peer-assisted learning (PAL) processes (Warschauer, 1995; Richards, 2000; McLuckie and Topping, 2004; Moore and Marra, 2005; Brígido, 2008, 2009a). Moreover, they accommodate different thinking and communicative styles in a more spontaneous and creative manner, helping students to improve their argumentative skills, as they transfer the complexity of text-based lexical and syntactical expression onto a conversational and non-hierarchical linguistic terrain. Electronic communication's complex rhetorical resources make it stand out as an efficient communicative bridge between oral and written modes of discourse (Warschauer, 1995). Electronic talk often imitates the flexible patterns of oral communication and it may be an interesting channel for exploring L2 pragmatics in student interactions.

Additionally, the asynchronous, multi-vocal, and free-form nature of threaded online discussions contributes highly to the reconfiguration of power-relations in interactions which, in traditional lecture-based classrooms are very often unidirectional with the instructor leading the "distribution" of knowledge, and with students actively seeking his/her approval rather than constructing critical opinions,

or daring to question his/her validity claims. Communicating outside these rigid protocols, students build on what they have learnt in class and through their readings, and generate fresh output on the material, while linguistically empowering their critical voices with the assistance of their peers. Through the use of asynchronous online communication, students can enhance their creative critical thinking skills and reach a higher level of cognitive engagement with the subject matter, which they are able to internalize and verbalize at their own pace.

The development of both critical thinking and argumentative processes lies at the heart of tertiary education (Veerman, 2003). However, university students in English Studies at the Universitat de València often decline to participate in debates in the classroom for a variety of reasons. Some of them, as Veerman suggests (2003: 18), “tend to believe in one overall correct solution or show difficulties with generating, identifying and comparing counter-arguments and with using strong and impersonalized justifications”. On other occasions, students may be reserved and inhibited for social, psychological, or linguistic reasons, not wishing to disappoint the instructor with a “poorly phrased”, publicly delivered comment. Online forums with minimal direct teacher intervention, where students build ideas collaboratively in a stress-free environment can be key complementary vehicles in helping students understand that “shared knowledge” constitutes a form of truth, yet one that is not univocal and that is above all disputable. Moreover, lacking communicative competence in a language should never limit our “right to speak” (Harris, 1995: 127).

Although online forums managed by non-native speakers may not always shed positive linguistic results, since students often have to navigate incoherent linguistic structures (Thomas, 2002), the forum “significantly improves the students’ autonomous and collective performance in the class-

room – encouraging them to not merely transmit but to dialogically construct knowledge” (Brígido, 2009a: 143). Through collaborative CMC-based platforms such as forums, e-mails, wikis, blogs, and chats, students can assist one another in their learning process, as they provide positive confirmation, linguistic and critical content feedback, and emotional support (Beauvois, 1992; Oscoz, 2005; Brígido, 2008).

According to McLuckie and Topping (2004: 575), there are five areas that may help us judge whether collaborative skills have been transferred from one student to another in Online Peer-Assisted Learning (OPAL) settings. These include: *social/affective* (initiating, participating, sharing and acknowledging); *organizational* (planning, drawing on experience); *interactive process management* (role clarification, requesting, giving feedback); *cognitive interaction* (generating ideas and guiding), and *reflective/evaluative* (meta-cognitive activities such as assessing, reflecting and summarizing). In this study I focus on collaborative learning (OPAL skill number three: interactive process management) and creative critical thinking skills (OPAL skills number four and five: cognitive interaction and reflection/evaluation).

Pragmatic theory has been applied to various educational paradigms and assessment methodologies (Hunston and Thompson, 2000; Martin and White, 2005). I suggest that through a pragmatic analysis of a student’s linguistic behaviour in the forum, instructors may be able to recognise (and therefore assess) certain patterns in a student’s cognitive progress, and in his/her acquisition of the abovementioned OPAL skills. The forum thus becomes a complementary vehicle through which to implement continuous assessment on cross-disciplinary skills such as collaborative learning and creative critical thinking skills.

3. Methods

Data and Participants

The data of this study are contributions to an online forum made by 44 participants from October 2008 to April 2009 in the subject *Pre-19th Century English Theatre*. A total of 97 senior students were officially registered in this subject, but only 59 attended classes regularly and took the final exam. Of these 59, only 44 (28 female and 16 male) contributed to the forum at least three times, and these are the subjects of this study:

Table 2. Number and gender of participants.

Total # Students	Total # Participants	Male	Female
100% (n=59)	74% (n=44)	27.1% (n=16)	47.4% (n=28)

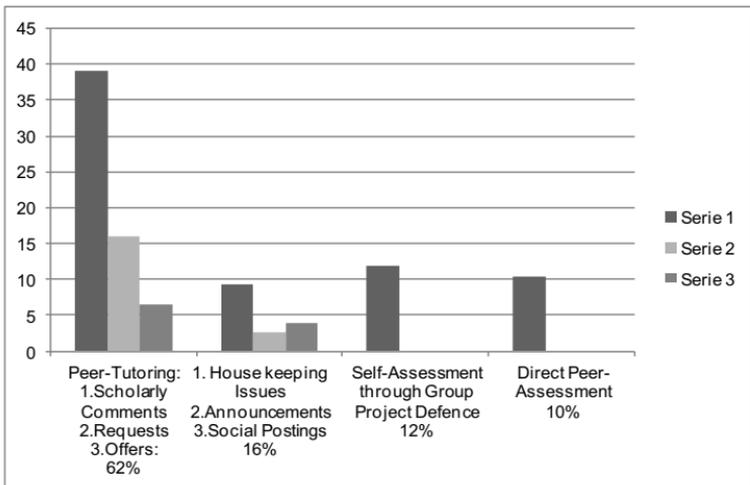
They are all non-native English speakers, and their knowledge of the L2 was, on average, upper intermediate-advanced. The average number of postings per student was 7, with some students contributing up to 3 postings weekly, and some writing only bimonthly. 28 students initiated a discussion (that is, opened a thread) at least once during the period of this study.

In addition to in-class participation and participation in the forum, students had a static assessment component: two examinations, a series of individual and group stylistic commentaries, and a performance and recording of a scene from one of the plays read in class. All of their linguistic and theatrical choices had to be justified during the public defence

of the screened scene at our end-of-the-year “Festival of Student Performances”. All students also had to evaluate their classmates’ recordings by means of a detailed, numerical and anonymous online questionnaire (using the online survey website: SurveyMonkey), and through positive verbal peer-assessment in the online forum by voting for the best performances in a series of categories inspired by the “Oscars”.

This online forum was available as part of the university’s e-learning platform *Aula Virtual*. Discussions were asynchronous, threaded and free-form, that is, any student could open a new thread or write on any topic during the course. Students had no specific tasks, although a list of questions to consider on each play was regularly provided by the instructor, and many of these served as a jump-start for discussion. Moreover, the instructor often recommended that several unresolved in-class face-to-face discussions be continued in the online space. After seven months, there were 76 successful threads or discussions, and 312 student postings distributed in the different types of threads (Figure 1):

Figure 1. Types of threads.



(9,4%) focused on house-keeping issues; 2 threads contained announcements for plays performed in Valencia (2,7%), and 1 thread was devoted to greetings and social remarks (3,9%).

Since the main goal of this study has been identifying patterns of assertiveness and cognitive engagement as evidence of critical thinking, cognitive reflection, and collaborative interaction, the analysis has focused on threads that belong specifically to the peer-tutoring category (PAL), and threads that were used for the meta-cognitive peer-assessment exercise which took place at the end of the year (sections 1 and 4 in Figure 1).

Analysis

As already mentioned, the argumentative (peer-tutoring) and meta-cognitive (peer-assessment) threads were analysed to:

1. Determine a student's level of individual assertiveness, commitment and self-esteem in relation to the subject's content through his/her use of modality markers in the argumentative threads;¹

1. Assertiveness is a "style of conversation occurring in complex interpersonal contexts" (Gervasio and Crawford, 1989: 1), in which speakers may elect to adopt a specific social role (e.g. being academically assertive in a learning environment in order to get a better grade). That is, two factors should be taken into account: 1) that a student may have learned to sound authoritative via specific pragmatic markers used in a conventional fashion without evidence of creative critical thinking in the proposition (e.g. the statement uttered may be contradictory or *assertively* plagiarized); and 2) that assertiveness is often grounded on personality traits, gender, and other cultural or linguist factors. For this reason, these pragmatic markers were always contrasted with the critical content in which they were embedded, so that the level of cognitive progress of the learner could be more effectively evaluated.

2. Determine the degree of student collaboration in the scaffolding discussions that took place in the argumentative threads (peer-assisted construction of knowledge or interactive process management, i.e. McLuckie and Topping's OPAL skill #3);
3. Determine the students' level of commitment and self-reflection when judging their classmates' work, in the meta-cognitive peer-assessment threads.

In order to analyze the pragmatic markers in these threads, I created a taxonomy of selected markers that was intended as a check-up device of a learner's argumentative progress, and of his/her individual efforts in the negotiation of meaning through collaborative reasoning. The selected markers are based on Trosborg's (1995) description of internal modifiers in requests, complaints and apologies, and Gutiérrez-Colón's (2004). They are divided into three categories revealing the degree of commitment to an utterance: assertive, hesitant, and lacking confidence or unwilling. I have also looked at markers and expressions that evince direct interaction with, or an acknowledgment of, peers in the forum.

Table 1. Taxonomy of pragmatic elements used in this study.

ASSERTIVENESS, STRONG COMMITMENT			
Markers conveying argumentative assertiveness, commitment to the task, high level of cognitive engagement with the subject matter and a stronger critical voice.			
Self-naming or uses of the personal pronoun in a sentence that constitutes a verbal representational statement (rather than a request, apology, complaint, etc.).	Expressions such as 'It's obvious that', 'I'm sure that,' 'yes'	Intensifying adverbials 'really', 'very much,' 'so')	Exclamation marks or other emotionally-charged CMC symbols like smileys and/or other emoticons.
HESITATION			
Markers that evince caution, and hesitation but still show willingness to engage critical ideas that are often relativised as personal opinion.			
Subjectivisers Modifiers that indicate that a statement is the learner's personal opinion, and not an authoritative remark ('I think', 'in my opinion' 'as far as I know').	Downtoners Adverbial modifiers that express certain hesitation 'perhaps', 'just', 'simply')	Understaters Phrases that, under-represent the remark such as 'a little bit', 'not very much' etc.	Shields Modal verbs expressing possibility, semi-auxiliaries such as 'to appear' and 'to seem' and adverbs and adjectives conveying probability such as 'probably/probable,' 'likely' etc.

LACKING CONFIDENCE or UNWILLING		
Markers that indicate indecision, lack of involvement with the subject matter, and/or low self-esteem. ²		
<p>Uncommitting subjectivisers Show a speaker's lack of belief in his/her own statement, e.g. 'I'm not sure,' 'I'm afraid that'.</p>	<p>Negative downgraders Adverbials that express lack of engagement with the subject matter or with the task at hand. e.g. 'whatever', 'I don't really care that much about it'</p>	<p>Appealers Phrases that are aimed at generating a response in the listener e.g. 'what do you think?' 'Do you agree?'</p>

4. Results and discussion

As for peer-tutoring (PAL) threads and postings, the following were the most revealing results on students' pragmatic markers: in requests for help, participants exhibited hesitation and a tentative construction of knowledge. This lack of confidence is usually assuaged through peer-assistance when one of the students, spontaneously acting as "tutor", confirms validity claims in a more authoritative manner. The most common modality markers were appealers (e.g. Any suggestions?, does it make sense?); downgraders and uncommitting subjectivisers (e.g. I'm not really sure, in my opinion) linking the expressed idea to an authority that can back it up; and shields (e.g. probably, it seems that). The following is an example of a standard request for help in peer-tutoring threads. Illustrative markers are underlined.

2. These markers appear in comments that frequently appeal to peer-confirmation and/or seek emotional support although, in this study, I consider appealers mostly as direct evidence of collaborative learning and interaction.

(1) **Thread Title:** *'Alas' in Middle English poetry* (started by Student A)

Student A: Sent on 04/11/08, 22:53

I've seen this interjection in many poems from this period, and have never found an approximate translation, just the explanation of what it means. It appears, for example, in verse 131 and 184 of *Everyman*.

I found the explanation in the Merriam-Webster Dictionary online.

<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/alas>

Any suggestions?

Student B: Sent on 05/11/08, 13:22

I am not really sure but I have understood it as an exclamation that means "Oh! poor me!", or "What a pity!" or "I am such an ill-fated"

Does it make sense?

Student C: Sent on 13/01/09, 23:42

Yes, it means something like "Poor me!" or what in Spanish we would say "¡Ay de mí!".

In this example, student C evinces a higher level of assertiveness and authority, and no further responses are necessary in the thread. We can also observe two appealers, which indicate both hesitation and interactive process managing, demonstrating joint effort and a collaborative negotiation of meaning. Collectively, Students A, B, and C contribute to solving a linguistic query in a peer-assisted manner. Student C's assertiveness in this case is the result of a more advanced knowledge of the subject matter. The initial request and its follow-up responses are direct and succinct, with no greetings or leave-takings used by any of the students. These, however, can be taken as evidence of collaborative interaction, and help the instructor assess interactive process management (OPAL skill #3).

In threads containing offers of peer-assistance, students generally express a higher level of self-confidence, frequently making use of assertive, even directive verbs (I believe, if you go), and commitment upgraders and intensifiers (obviously, quite, really) with minimal presence of appeasers, downtoners, understaters or shields. This information is generally followed by expressions of gratitude.

(2) **Thread Title:** *YouTube adaptation of Everyman*

Student A: Sent on 21/01/09, 14:07

Hi!

I found several adaptations of the plays we have studied so far in this module. All of them are obviously performed in English and I believe they're quite accurate and interesting. The best one (because it's really short and funny) is the one I'm posting in here. It's a LEGO adaptation of 'Everyman'. Also, if you go to the link on the right Hope this helps!

A. EVERYMAN - versión Lego

<http://es.youtube.com/watch?v=vM5Zwd427iU>

Student B: Sent on 25/01/09, 19:48

Thank you so much A.! I have better understood the play with such a funny video, and I encourage everybody to do the same! Honestly, it had never come to my mind but I have searched on Youtube for more adaptations and it is a good way to interpret the plays that we have to study. Well done!

Good luck on the exam!

Student C: Sent on 26/01/09, 13:08

Hi A. Thanks for your recommendation on youtube video adaptation for Everyman (sic). As B. has said before I found that play a little complex but I have better understood the play with the video.

Thanks and good luck on the exam!

Student D: Sent on 26/01/09, 18:02

It helped a lot, because I read the play when we studied it, and now I've been able to remember most of what I read so, great! Besides, the Lego performance of Everyman was so funny, we should do something like that for our performance in class!

Thanks!

In this example, the assertiveness, commitment and level of competence of Student A is self-evident. He uses a shield (seems), but also a wide variety of intensifiers, assertive and directive verbs. He concludes his offer with a humble wish, so his efforts are put to good use (Hope this helps!). His assertiveness is therefore empathetic, and his peers express sincere gratitude for it. Assertiveness is seen in psycholinguistic literature in the Anglo-Saxon context as competent and effective. However, an assertive speaker can also be seen as insensitive and rude in certain settings; therefore, an assertive attitude that also shows empathy towards the listener is always seen in a more favourable light (Gervasio and Crawford, 1989). Student A's enthusiasm spreads, and Student B not only expresses gratitude and contributes positive confirmation (Well done!), but confesses that the first posting prompted her to search on the Internet for more resources. She also uses intensifiers and directive verbs encouraging others to follow the link. Students C and D also thank Student A, confirm that his assistance was helpful (great!), and contribute to building shared knowledge on this particular play.

In postings containing creative/critical contributions and argumentative remarks, results were more complex and varied from student to student. When consistent, the modality markers used were crucial towards determining students' level of commitment and cognitive development, and facilitated continuous assessment. The following figures are based on the modality markers present in 21 of the 30 threads

containing such argumentative contributions and critical remarks, as indicated in Figure 1 (78 postings in total). The remaining 9 critical threads received no follow-up postings, so that they have been discarded from analysis.

Table 3. Results for Argumentative and Peer-Assessment Threads.

	Peer-Tutoring: Argumentative Threads (n=78 postings)	Peer-Assessment Threads (n=190 postings)
Commitment Upgraders	45	201
Subjectivisers	24	112
Downtoners	16	14
Understaters	7	5
Intensifiers	0	83
Appealers	27	61

As for assertive expressions or commitment upgraders, 41 instances of self-naming and stative/assertive verbs emerged in these threads, e.g. 'We can say that', 'I believe,' 'I would like to emphasize'. Other commitment upgraders were also observed in 5 instances aiming to strengthen already assertive declarations (e.g. of course, it is very obvious, cle-

arly). Out of these 41 expressions of critical self-confidence, 9 were backed up by authorities. These were critical notes of their reading copy, a website, or class notes from the lectures. It is worthwhile emphasizing that 82% of students using these expressions attained a B+ or an A as their final grade. These expressions were more common in the later months of the course, which indicates that the assertive pattern spread throughout the forum, as students gained more confidence with subject contents, and felt more comfortable interacting at this level of critical thinking with their peers. Moreover, there seems to be a clear connection between a student's level of assertiveness and commitment in the forum, and his/her success in other evaluation practices. Identifying such students early on is crucial for instructors, as they can offer valuable peer-assistance in the forum as 'dynamisers' of discussion and linguistic models.

As regards subjectivisers, downtoners, understaters and other modifiers showing personal opinion, hesitation or need for positive confirmation in threads with scholarly/argumentative remarks, the results are as follows: subjectivisers were found in 24 instances, slightly downgrading the authority of the statement (e.g. as far as I know, personally). There were 16 downtoners, expressing tentativeness and lack of confidence in what was being said, although they could also be a form of politeness or shyness (e.g. perhaps, I'm not sure if). There were also 7 instances of hedges avoiding specification (e.g. kind of, in a way). Finally, appealers seeking positive confirmation for a critical thought, and/or seeking debate (interactive process management) appeared in 27 postings. The presence of an appeal at the end of a posting led to the construction of an argumentative scaffolding where students contributed ideas, negotiated meaning, and built shared knowledge. Interpretation became multilayered and complex as a result of the appeal for alternative or supportive ideas, as it often fostered a variety of critical perspectives

(e.g. "Have you found more examples of this derogatory treatment of women?", "what do you think of this statement?"). Other expressions also showed evidence of a collaborative construction of knowledge and argumentative thinking. These expressions addressed previous comments, and with them students thus built shared knowledge in collaboration (e.g. "as my classmate has pointed out", "I strongly agree").

When tracking the modifiers used by a single student in the critical discussion threads, learners appeared to be at different stages of cognitive development. Some were consistently more assertive; others required the support and assistance of their peers. Some students' commitment varied depending on the topic being discussed, but they often presented themselves in a more assertive manner in the later months of the course. Thus, pragmatic markers may contain crucial information for the instructor when measuring student critical thinking needs and cognitive progress, and they can therefore help instructors monitor and guide learners in a more effective manner. Results on all these markers also shed light on the nature of collaborative argumentative discussion and its key role in the construction of shared knowledge, as successful threads contained postings that most often appealed or referred to other classmates, and content therein was observed to be drawn from each others' comments (see Appendix for an example).

Concerning the use of internal modifiers in meta-cognitive peer-assessment threads (190 postings, 17 threads of which were actually in Spanish) results vary (see Table 3). These peer-assessment threads were, in fact, a mere playful exercise and had no impact on the students' grade.³ Postings

3. Their final grade, however, had a complementary peer-assessment component that students fulfilled using an anonymous online survey and numerical grades (1 to 4) for each group, where they reacted to scholarly categories set by the instructor.

in these public peer-assessment threads did count as forum participation. Student use of pragmatic markers included 183 instances of self-naming, the most common of which were 'My vote' and 'I give my vote to'. Other commitment upgraders were observed in 18 instances, (e.g. it's obvious that, unquestionably). This high figure suggests that students felt a great level of commitment and enthusiasm towards judging and praising each other's work. Subjectivisers appeared in 112 instances (e.g. in my opinion, I personally believe); downtoners were seen in 14 instances (e.g. perhaps, maybe); understaters were observed in 5 instances (e.g. a little bit, a little less), and intensifiers occurred in 83 occasions (with 'really', 'especially', 'very much' and 'more' being the most frequent). 41 examples of these intensifiers were exclamation marks and they were mostly used by female participants 95% (n=39). Appealers and direct addresses amounted to 61 instances mentioning other peers who also were worthy of praise, but for whom the student could not vote, given the limitations of the voting system. Congratulatory notes appeared in 17 occasions (e.g. congratulations, congrats, olé). Students became much more assertive and committed when positively judging the work of others in these peer-assessment threads:

(3) **Thread Title:** *Best Performance* (selected comments, out of 37)

Student A: Sent on 03/05/09 23:31

My vote goes to "A Modern Falstaff complains in the tavern".

It was very original and at the same time very respectful with the classic text, and on the other hand, they gave the excerpt a very up-to-date and everyday life touch, just as "Henry IV" should have had in the Elizabethan period

Student B: Sent on 04/05/09 11:27

the tragical life and death of Dr. Faustus in my opinion deserves to win the category of best performance, even though I haven't voted for it in any specific category, overall this performance is stunning in all of them: editing including some very good shots like the clock, or the part where she confronts herself in the mirror, how they represented the 24 years period among other things, the music they used matched perfectly the tone of the play, the interpretation of L. was brehtaking, and everything in this play was just amazing.

Congratulations!

The amount of postings per thread (ranging from 25 to 39 in the critical argumentative threads) also testifies to this commitment and willingness to contribute a thought (or rather, a vote) to the collaborative negotiation of a peer-grade. The main reason behind this difference between peer-tutoring and peer-assessment threads is that, in the forum, students were asked to vote positively for their favourite performance, actor, staging, etc., providing a justification for their vote. This positive emphasis explains the high number of intensifiers, self-naming (declarative statements when voting), commitment upgraders, and subjectivisers, as students struggled to justify their voting for one group, and not for others, by making it a subjective personal choice, rather than a validity claim that could undermine their peers' efforts.

The practice of assessing the work of others always entails a reflection on what has been learned and shared by other peers in relation to one's own learning. Thus, positive peer-assessment discussion threads was a good tool to measure meta-cognitive efforts, and to observe the level of accountability in one's own learning process. The following example shows how a student reflectively compares his/her peers' efforts to his own:

(4) **Thread Title:** *Best Adapted Screenplay* (Selected out of 17 postings)

Student A: Sent on 04/05/09 10:33

My vote goes to "A modern Falstaff complains at the tavern" because they try to adapt a Shakespearean play into 21st C. language, style and showing that this play (written in the 16th C.) can take place every day in every single "bar" in Spain.

Also because I know how difficult is to create a dialogue or a situation out of the original script and being faithful to the original.

5. Conclusion

In this article, I have looked at the nature of pragmatic markers in scaffolding asynchronous online discussions in a literary context. My main goal has been to identify the kind of markers deployed by university students in an argumentative (peer-tutoring) and meta-cognitive (peer-assessment) virtual environment. More specifically, this paper has aimed to show whether pragmatic markers help to assess a student's cognitive progress, as well as his/her Online Peer-Assisted Learning (OPAL) skills (McLuckie and Topping, 2004). In the analysis of student interactions here, assessment has been considered a continuous process that takes into account notions of student accountability, dynamic and non-hierarchical constructions of knowledge, and collective management of learning progress. In this study, I focused on a) the way students collaboratively build an argumentative scaffolding that enables them to express, organize, question and assess validity claims in a foreign language, helping each other gain critical autonomy in a self-conscious and empowering manner, and b) the way in which content-based courses taught in a foreign language can also provide

an arena for linguistic practice that may help L2 learners develop their pragmatic competence in the target language. The levels of assertiveness and commitment to the subject matter as reflected in students' pragmatic markers varied from student to student. It is difficult to establish the cause. Therefore, this study could be developed by additional oral interviews with students whose level of commitment seems to be low or contradictory, early on in the semester.

All in all, forums are spaces where the acquisition of content, linguistic practice, motivation and collaboration take place on a continuous basis. Given their public nature, peer-tutoring and peer-assessment carried out through forums has a more effective "washback effect" (Alderson and Wall, 1993) than traditional testing and paired peer-review activities, as all students can potentially benefit from exposure to, and participation in, critical discussion and other types of interactions at all times. Most importantly, forums can also help the instructor identify linguistic problems, so s/he can assist students in their communicative efforts in a more effective manner. In addition, these virtual spaces present a non-hierarchical space where social distance is shortened, but a kind of psycho-cognitive distance may appear as more advanced and mature students may shine over hesitant and insecure ones. In such cases, instructors must intervene to ensure the platform is kept free from power-laden, conflictive situations, and these more advanced students should be encouraged to take a more pro-active tutoring attitude. In this study, though, advanced students have in all cases adopted their tutoring role to be generous, humble, and empathetic. Although peer-feedback is not always immediate (McLuckie and Topping, 2004) or guaranteed, forums enable students with different communicative styles and linguistic abilities to communicate critical ideas with one another successfully. Given the collaborative nature of scaffolding asynchronous discussion threads, knowledge is

negotiated, and is always envisioned as plural and multi-voiced rather than as one isolated truth claim. Therefore, I would argue that a redefinition of assessment in tertiary education is necessary, and new methods of monitoring student work in large groups should be implemented, so that a greater understanding of students' cognitive/linguistic strengths and weaknesses is achieved. Participation in online forums can contribute greatly to the development of creative critical thinking and verbal skills, providing additional opportunities to formulate contextualised and thought-provoking information in an autonomous, but also collaborative manner.

Appendix

Ten commandments of forum use

1. **Contribute Original Material.** Do not plagiarize or copy others' comments without proper acknowledgment (citing)
2. **Do Not Repeat Ideas.** Please read comments made about the same play in other threads before posting
3. **Be Concise.** Go to the point but give examples when necessary
4. **Do Not Mix Ideas:** Keep different points separate under properly labeled postings, so other students can anticipate the main focus of your posting
5. **Name Your Thread** in a precise manner, so we keep the discussion clear and organized. Be specific
6. **Keep Social Postings** (news on performances, personal comments, advice, etc.) in the Social Thread: "Boar's Head Tavern: Greetings and Introductions, Informal Postings, Castings, etc."

7. Be Collaborative. Read your classmates' comments and contribute to ongoing discussions. This is a space for conversation, not monologues
8. Be respectful. Do not include any offensive, disrespectful remarks
9. Do Not Merely Repeat Your Instructor's Class Notes. You can include ideas discussed in class, but add something of your own to the conversation
10. Learn from your Peers and Have Fun!

Example of critical output, consensus-grounded, dialogical, peer-assistance

Title of Thread: *Prospero as God*

Student A: Sent on 02/10/08 20:33

Hello!!!

In my opinion, Prospero clearly is the only god in the island. The fate of every character on the play depends on his wishes, everybody is manipulated by his "arts" and all happens according to his master plan of revenge. Even his own daughter is involved in this manipulation, he does not hesitate to use her to achieve his goals.

I think his behaviour is similar to that of the Christian god, who although being kind-hearted, sent the Egyptians the 10 plagues as a revenge. But we could also relate it to the Puritanism (even though Shakespeare did not agree with this doctrine) because the characters cannot change their fate, it is planned and unchangeable.

Student B: Sent on 02/10/08 21:36

Hi all!

I also agree with what A. posted. I'm not any pre-19th c. Brit theater expert, but I think she is quite true (it's a very interesting point of view).

Perhaps, as Anna explained in our previous lecture, Prospero has always been compared to Shakespeare and, in a way, he belonged to the King's men company which the king, James I, kind of financed together with some other managers (as far as I know).

This way, I would suggest that if such comparison has been made, it is a very important device though.

In fact, Prospero sort of aims to become the 'God Almighty of the island', and so did Shakespeare, as the writer was fondly keen on doing all his plays totally accessible, productive and commercial, which is -alongside all the comments presently mentioned- what our character pretends or just does.

Best wishes

Student C: Sent on 03/10/08 10:43

Totally agree, but I would add the fact that we have to bear in mind the colonialistic point of view in the drama.

Men from Europe were shown quite as Gods in the colonies, so here we could find some trace of a colonialism.

An obvious colonialism if we consider the ages when "The Tempest" was released.

Rock.

Student D: Sent on 06/10/08 12:43

Prospero, can be seen as a "God" in the main plot. But in the Subplot, we can guess that this figure is represented by Stephano.

Caliban (who is drunk) believes that he is the right "God", and follows him because he thinks that he can kill Prospero and bring peace and order to the island.

Student E: Sent on 13/10/08 16:51

Hi everybody

Following this thread I would like to make a parallelism about the role of Prospero and the role of Caliban.

If it is quite clear for all of us to link the character of Prospero with God, but do you think we can associate Caliban with the figure of Satan?.

It is true that Caliban is shown as selfish, rude and capable to do whatever in order to take his own profit.

Sometimes he shows no morality in his acts but I see him more as a victim since his origins, education and other things he has accostumed to live that has determined his personality and acts.

I don't see him as powerful as Satan and we can't forget his description as a beast, which would explain better his no-human attitudes (more similar to the animals attitudes).

Student F: Sent on 13/10/08 21:45

Hi,

Well I don't think that Caliban is like Satan at all. Shakespeare shows this character's defects in order to justify in some way the fact that Prospero has submitted him to be his slave.

That's why it is very important the colonialist point of view.

It was justified that the colonists occupied the land of natives and used them as if they were inferior, and not only that they had to be grateful that the Europeans brought them "civilisation" as if without that they were nothing.

Caliban, under my point of view just tries to survive the best he can to all that situation. Prospero is his lord, his God, but not because he recognizes him as so but because he is afraid of his magic powers and the way Prospero tortures him when he disobeys.

Therefore, I think that Caliban is just a survivor, but not worst as those in the play who want to get the power and control over the rest.

Student G: Sent on 13/10/08 23:03

I agree with F.

From a colonial point of view, we have to take into account that native people were taken as slaves and forced to change in their lives.

They were tortured and mistreated and they had to learn and adopt the new culture, which was set up as the “correct one”.

Just as Caliban does, they adapted their language and way of life in order not to be mistreated by their masters.

They, natives and Caliban, just try to survive in their new life.

Student A: Sent on 09/11/08 16:24 (wrapping up the discussion)

Hiiiiiiii!!!

I think your idea of Caliban as Satan is quite interesting. In my opinion there is parallelism between both figures.

First of all, Caliban is the son of a witch. She embodies all the negative and dark traits in the play. She is described as an evil character, imprisoning Ariel in a tree and using the dark arts for her purposes. Then Caliban is the seed of evil in the island.

Moreover, if we see Prospero as God, there is a clear parallelism with the situation of God sending Lucifer into exile.

Lucifer was one of the most appreciated angels in heaven, as Caliban also was to Prospero, because he was very useful for him and he even treated him as his own son.

But when Lucifer felt that he really wanted to be as powerful as God, he became the fallen angel and joined the other side. Caliban rebels against Prospero as he mistreats him, even though he is the only one that knows everything about the island and the one that should own it.

Therefore he is a sort of fallen angel to Prospero. Of course, Caliban is a result of Prospero’s attitude, but there is resemblance to Satan’s character.



THE USE OF SUGGESTION FORMULAS BY NON-NATIVE SPEAKERS OF ENGLISH IN AN EFL CONTEXT¹

Yasemin Bayyurt and Leyla Marti
Boğaziçi Üniversitesi

1. Introduction

In our daily lives we often encounter situations in which people give and receive advice or suggestions about their problems, duties, activities, and future plans. The giving of advice and suggestions in an interaction differs with respect to several factors such as the degree of imposition the advice or suggestions bring on the recipients, the familiarity of the interactants, etc. According to Brown and Levinson (1987: 77), the degree of imposition is “a culturally and situationally defined ranking of impositions by the degree to which they are considered to interfere with an agent’s wants of self-determination or of approval (negative and positive face wants)”. In an interaction, the relationship among the participants (friend, boss, teacher, etc.), their status, and the context of the interaction influence the way they choose to

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give suggestions or advice. Hence, decision-making depends on “assessing social relationships along the dimensions of social distance or solidarity, and relative power or status” (Holmes, 1992: 297). In other words, the relationship among the participants of an interaction may enable them to assess the degree of involvement or the rank of impositions. These judgements lead to decisions on how to formulate and react to suggestions or advice (Bayyurt, 1996).

In an advice-giving situation, the hearer is expected to act according to the advice offered, and the speaker implies that it will benefit the hearer to do so. In a suggestion-giving situation, the speaker suggests something that may benefit both the hearer and the speaker (Martínez-Flor, 2003a). However, it is not always easy to draw the boundaries between speech acts (Thomas, 1995). Culture-specific and/or context-specific aspects of interaction should be taken into consideration when differentiating them. In this paper, we consider that it is difficult to draw the boundaries between advice-giving situations and suggestion-giving situations. Borderia-García (this volume) points out that ‘advice’ and ‘suggestions’ are used interchangeably in the literature with no explanation as to why authors choose one word or the other. According to her, ‘advice’ is a more specific speech act referring to advice-giving situations only, while ‘suggestions’ is a fuzzier category that includes other speech acts like invitations, requests, and recommendations. In this chapter, we do not differentiate between advice giving and suggestion giving for practical purposes. In general, the situations that are used in our study fall in the category of suggestion-giving, including those in which a suggestion functions like a recommendation or a request.

The speech act of suggesting has not been so frequently investigated in the literature of interlanguage pragmatics (henceforth ILP) as that of requesting, complaining, apologising, and complimenting. More specifically, its investiga-

tion does not have a long history in ILP within foreign language teaching contexts. By contrast, the speech act of requesting, for example, has been extensively investigated in these contexts since the 1980s (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989; Alcón and Codina, 2002; Marti, 2006; Otcu and Zeyrek, 2008). There has also been some work on refusals, complaints, and suggestions used by non-native speakers of a language in such contexts (e.g. Cook, 1999; Alcón and Codina, 2002; Cook and Liddicoat, 2002; Kondo, 2003; Mach and Ridder, 2003; Martínez-Flor and Fukuya, 2005; Martínez-Flor and Usó-Juan, 2006; Usó-Juan and Martínez-Flor, 2008). The present study addresses the deficit of research on suggestions in the ILP field by looking at the suggestions produced by English as a foreign language (EFL) learners in an instructional setting. More specifically, we centre on the linguistic formulas used to make suggestions by freshman and senior undergraduate students at a state university in Turkey. We believe that this study may be a valuable contribution to ILP research, because, to the best of our knowledge, there are not many investigations on the interlanguage of Turkish learners formulating suggestions in EFL in the production of, and reaction to, these communicative acts.

2. Suggestions

In his seminal work on speech acts, Searle (1969) identified five different types of illocutionary acts: assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declaratives. According to his classification, suggestions are included in the category of directive speech acts intended to get the addressee to do something that will benefit the speaker and/or the hearer. In the literature, directives have been described as potentially face-threatening acts (FTAs) (cf. Brown and Levinson, 1987). Two types of *face* are involved in an inter-

action: *positive face* and *negative face* (ibid.). Thomas (1995: 173) clarifies these terms as follows:

An individual's positive face is reflected in his or her desire to be liked, approved of, respected and appreciated by others. An individual's negative face is reflected in the desire not to be impeded or put upon, to have the freedom to act as one chooses.

The positive and negative faces of each participant together with their relationship influence the interaction. Failure to understand one another's face wants may lead to FTAs. Thus, suggestions can be face-threatening depending on the relationship between the speaker and the hearer (Brown and Levinson, 1987). In other words, the acceptability of a suggestion varies depending on its source, for example, an authority, a friend, or a younger member of one's family (Decapua and Huber, 1995). Therefore, suggestions are included among the types of acts that may threaten an addressee's desire for autonomy or negative face, and the degree of the threat varies depending on the relationship of the participants (Brown and Levinson, 1987; Thomas, 1995; Bayyurt, 1996).

Although Brown and Levinson (1987) categorise suggestions among intrinsically face-threatening acts in terms of their structure, depending on factors like the relationship between speaker and hearer, the communicative exchange among the parties, and the context of communication, Anglo-American native speakers of English commonly consider suggestions less face-threatening than requests and commands (Fitch, 1994). The illocutionary force of a suggestion is not as strong as the force of a request or a command, since the suggestion itself may be an idea, plan, or activity, possibly a preferred course of action in unusual circumstances (Jiang, 2006). Suggestions require the hearer to con-

sider what has been offered by the speaker as an option (Searle, 1979). The hearer has the freedom to accept the suggestion and act accordingly, or not.

Martínez-Flor (2003a) sees a difference between the directive speech act of advising and that of suggesting. The former is a proposed action in the interest of the hearer, while the latter is a proposed action in the interest of the speaker and/or the hearer. When making a suggestion, the speaker implies that, if followed, the suggestion will benefit one or the other, or both. This aspect of making a suggestion decreases the degree of face threat in the proposed action. In addition, the way a suggestion is formulated by the speaker influences how it is perceived by the hearer. Factors such as the relationship between the speaker and the hearer, and their age difference influence this perception. Thomas (1995), however, states that there can be overlaps between certain types of speech acts, so that it is difficult to differentiate between suggesting and advising. Advising as a speech act is similar to suggesting because their linguistic formulas are similar. As regards their pragmatic qualities, there are no clear-cut boundaries between them either. This is why we do not treat them separately here.

Suggestions and L2 pragmatics

The various forms of suggesting, such as advising, proposing, and recommending, under certain circumstances, may be quite distinct from one another and may differ in terms of their illocutionary and perlocutionary force. Additionally, the force associated with the various forms may vary from one culture to another. For example, suggestion-giving in the shape of advice in English is potentially face-threatening and interlocutors need to use mitigation devices such as hedges to minimize the imposition on the hearer, and thus

decrease the face-threatening nature of the advice (Leech, 1983; DeCapua and Huber, 1995; Hinkel, 1997; Bayraktaroğlu, 2001; Liu and Zhao, 2007). In this way, Hinkel (1997: 5) defines suggestion-giving in English as “a complex speech act that should be performed with caution when the speaker is reasonably certain that the hearer is likely to do what is being advised”. In contrast, suggestion-giving in Turkish and Greek is usually more direct and less face-threatening for the interlocutors (Sifianou, 1992; Bayraktaroğlu, 2001). Speakers are less inclined to soften the message to minimize the degree of imposition on recipients of their advice.

Besides the cultural and linguist context of the interaction, factors like social distance, power relationships, and idiosyncratic cultural and linguistic differences between the participants may also influence the way in which they make suggestions. Because suggestions in English are potentially face-threatening, especially as regards personal matters, L1 English speakers may avoid giving one another suggestions on such matters. By contrast, in some other cultures such as Chinese, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, and Arabic, suggestions on personal issues are often interpreted as expressions of friendliness and concern (Hinkel, 1994a). In these cultures, people may give suggestions to one another on physical appearance, well-being, and work without being overly concerned about the recipient’s need to save face. These cultural differences in the perception and use of suggestions might very well transfer to L2 (Liu and Zhao, 2007). However, this issue has not been studied in depth (e.g. Rintell, 1979; Banerjee and Carell, 1988; Bell, 1998; Matsumura, 2001; Jiang, 2006).

Studies of native and non-native English-speaking graduate students in academic supervision sessions show that native English-speaking supervisees receive their supervisor’s assent to suggestions more often than non-native supervisees, whose suggestions are commonly rejected. A cultural

difference between supervisor and supervisee might lead to misunderstandings and limit the supervisee's level of success (Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford, 1990, 1993; Bardovi-Harlig, 1996). Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1990) found that when non-native English speaking students produced pragmatically inappropriate acts in academic supervising sessions, they were less successful in getting their supervisor's approval of courses they wanted to take. Learners of a language should thus learn how to produce speech acts, in this case suggestions, appropriately in various communicative contexts.

The semantic formulas of suggestions

There are differences between native speakers' use of suggestion formulas and non-native speakers' use of these formulas in English. These differences may be attributed both to the cross-linguistic influence of L1 on L2 and to the non-native speakers' level of proficiency in English. Suggestion formulas in English commonly include modal verbs, conditionals, performatives, and imperatives (Liu and Zhao, 2007). In the field of English language teaching, foreign/second language textbooks generally teach suggestions in the form of 'let's' and 'Wh- questions' (Jiang, 2006). Fernández Guerra and Martínez-Flor (2006) propose a typology of conventional formulas used by native speakers of English when they give suggestions based on directness and indirectness. To minimise potential face-threatening implications of these communicative acts, native speakers of English use indirect forms rather than direct ones. In a study examining the suggestions made by technical writing tutors, Mackiewicz (2005: 371) found that the tutors often disguised suggestions as hints to help their students revise a manuscript, thus minimising the effect of negative criticism. For example, instead of writing "You could work on the conciseness of each

statement here”, one of the tutors wrote, “Some sentences in here seem a bit less concise than some of the others”.

Although research on suggestions in the L2 pragmatics literature is limited, some studies reveal that learners of L2 English produce sociolinguistically less appropriate suggestions (Rintell, 1979; Banarjee and Carrell, 1988; Bell, 1998; Matsumura, 2001; Jiang, 2006). Matsumura (2001) found that although the Japanese style of communication is often indirect and polite, when Japanese learners produce suggestions in English they are often more direct, in some cases impolite and even rude. This tendency could be related to the learners’ level of proficiency, and to the way in which suggestion formulas in English were presented in the teaching materials (Jiang, 2006). Martínez-Flor (2003a) observed that learners of L2 English at higher levels of proficiency used more indirect modification devices when making suggestions than learners at lower levels. The lower level learners opted for more direct strategies, which can be interpreted as face-threatening by native speakers of English in different contexts. Finally, Bell (1998) analysed the production of requests, suggestions, and disagreements by “high-beginning level” (*sic*) Korean ESL learners. As compared to the formation of requests and suggestions, students showed a higher degree of politeness in their disagreements, which nevertheless were direct and unmodified.

In another study, Hinkel (1997: 19) discovered that Chinese speakers “transferred interactional and politeness strategies from their L1”, and used more indirect strategies, whereas native speakers of English used more direct strategies, but hedged their strategies when making suggestions. In a recent study, Li (2010) compared Cantonese students’ use of syntactic forms and pragmatic strategies when making suggestions in L2 English to their use of forms and strategies when making suggestions in Cantonese, and to Australian students’ use of forms and strategies when making sugges-

tions in L1 English. The findings of the study revealed that Cantonese students used fewer syntactic types and fewer simple sentences when formulating suggestions in English than did Australians. However, the pragmatic strategies that the Cantonese adopted in their suggestions resembled Australian students' pragmatic strategies in terms of perspective, directness, and politeness. Finally, Matsumura (2001) compared two groups of Japanese learners of English in two different learning environments: Canada (ESL) and Japan (EFL) focusing on how much the perception of social status in suggestions varied over time. Matsumura found that the ESL setting had a positive influence on students' pragmatic development as the ESL students' use of appropriate suggestion formulas improved more rapidly and noticeably than that of the EFL students.

To the best of our knowledge there are not many studies investigating ILP in a Turkish EFL setting. Therefore, we have been interested in finding out how university students at an English medium university in Turkey formulate their suggestions with their friends, family, and instructors. We are aware that our data are limited to EFL students' production on a DCT. Although this seems to be a major limitation when compared to the comparative studies cited above, we believe this study can be a valuable contribution to ILP, because it is one of the few studies on the interlanguage suggestions of Turkish students considering factors such as age, students' level of proficiency in English, and the relationship between speaker and hearer.

3. Methods

This study investigates the ways in which Turkish university students make suggestions in English as a foreign language according to the following research questions:

1. How do freshman and senior students formulate suggestions – i.e. through the use of an imperative, a declarative, or an interrogative?
2. Which syntactic structures do the students use to formulate suggestions? Do they use modals? If so, which modals do they use?
3. What are the functions of frequently used modals in their suggestions?

Participants and data

The participants in the study are 57 first year students (49 female, 8 male) and 44 fourth year students (38 female, 6 male) at a state university in Istanbul. The data have been collected through a Discourse Completion Test (DCT) comprising 10 situations in which the informants were asked to make suggestions. In the situations, students offered advice on certain issues they encounter in a university setting. Although the DCT asks participants to respond to hypothetical situations and not to real-life situations requiring genuine communication, we believe it is the most practical and suitable method for collecting large amounts of data (Wolfson et al., 1989; Rose, 1994b; Yuan, 2001), as it occurs in this study. The situations provided in the DCT are described in Table 1 (see the Appendix for a full depiction). A brief questionnaire to collect demographic information was also used.

Table 1. Summary of situations in DCT.

S1 Invitation	student -> student suggestions about how to get to a party on the Asian side of Istanbul
S2 Car	student -> sister suggestions about what kind of a car to buy
S3 Low grade in English	student -> aunt suggestions for the improvement of your cousin's low grades in English
S4 Visit	student -> instructor suggestions about activities that can be done in your hometown
S5 Job interview	student -> friend suggestion about what to do in a job interview
S6 Present	student -> mother suggestions about what to buy for your brother's birthday
S7 Excuse	student -> friend suggestions for an excuse to refuse an invitation to a party given by a tutor.
S8 Decoration	student -> friend suggestions about how to decorate a new office
S9 Saving water	student -> friend suggestions about the best way(s) to save water in daily household tasks
S10 Leisure activities	student -> friend suggestions about the best way(s) to spend a summer holiday

We have attempted to use situations that are as realistic as possible. For example, traffic is a big problem in Istanbul, and it is not unusual to ask a friend about the best way to cross the Bosphorus; therefore, we included a situation in which the informant is asked to suggest a way to get to a party on the Asian side of Istanbul (S1). Another situation that addresses a contemporary issue is S9. There was a serious water shortage at the time we administered the DCT. Public service announcements addressed water conservation strategies and weather forecasts reported how much water remained in the reservoirs. Making suggestions about how to save water was not unusual at the time. Situations as these cannot replicate authentic communicative situations; however, this version of the DCT enabled us to control to some extent contextual variables like the social distance of the speaker and the hearer.

Analysis

We have analysed the syntactic formulas (i.e. imperatives, indicative declaratives, and indicative interrogatives, specifically those that include modals and their functions) of the suggestions produced by the participants of this study. We have adopted Li's (2010) classification of syntactic choices when making suggestions. In order to categorize the syntactic choices of the participants, we divided the analysis into two sections. In the first section, we looked at how the students formulated their suggestions, i.e. through the use of an imperative, a declarative or an interrogative statement. In the second section, we further divided the analysis into two stages. We first identified which syntactic structures they used in their suggestions, modal structures specifically, and the functions of the most frequent modals. We did not include in our analysis those formulas that did not involve modals.

We investigated only linguistic formulas in the head acts of suggestions, since they are the core of a suggestion. In this study, we operationalized the definition of a head act as “the minimal unit” or the “nucleus” that realises the speech act (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989: 275). Some of the informants used more than one sentence or used more than one element to produce a suggestion. Therefore, in cases where it was difficult to identify the head act, we took the most explicit realization of the speech act to be the head act (ibid.). In cases where all the head acts were equally explicit we coded the first one as the head act. The following is an example in which the informant produced two sentences that function as head acts. In such cases, we coded the first one as the head act:

(1) Senior S3 – 12

He can read books or watch English channels but if he lacks some basic knowledge, he should take private lessons and study more.

Head act: He can read books or watch English channels

Syntactic type: Indicative declarative

Suggestion strategy: Ability statement

In sum, the head acts in the data were analysed in terms of syntactic categories, as indicated in Table 2 below.

4. Results

Syntactic choice

We adopted Li's (2010) categories to analyse the syntactic formulas that students produced when making suggestions: imperative, indicative declarative, and indicative interrogative (see Table 2).

Table 2. Syntactic categories of formulas for making suggestions.

Syntactic categories
<p>1. Imperative: <u>Example:</u> Dress in black and put a natural but still noticeable make up.</p>
<p>2. Indicative (declarative): <u>Examples:</u> You have to look professional. The best way to go to Üsküdar is using the boat. You better take shorter showers and make sure that you don't leave the tap running as you brush. You should go to the south of Turkey if you want to have a good vacation. I recommend you to be careful about features of the car. He'd better see more movies in English. You must look professional so you should put on a suit. I advise you to go there by boat. I want you to see my home and my family. You can visit Antalya.</p>
<p>3. Indicative (interrogative): <u>Examples:</u> Why don't you go to Olympos? What about going there by boat?</p>

Examples for the three syntactic types are presented in Table 2. Students used a wide range of structures for declaratives, whereas the same could not be said for imperatives and interrogatives. This range is reflected in the percentages provided in Tables 3 and 4. In situations where the informant addressed an older or powerful person (aunt, instructor and mother) s/he preferred primarily declaratives. More

than 85% of all responses in S3, S4, and S6 are in the declarative form. However, social status or power does not seem to be the only factor influencing preferred formulas. In five situations the students were asked to make suggestions to a friend. Of these, two elicited a high number of imperatives (40.3%) compared to the other three, namely, S5, in which the informant was asked to suggest what to do in a job interview, and S9, about the best way(s) to save water in daily household tasks. It is difficult to determine a parameter responsible for the difference. However, we believe that the topic itself may have had an influence on the selection of the formulas.

Regardless of situation, declaratives were the most commonly used formula. In S9, 40.3% of the responses of freshmen, and in S5, 38.6% of the responses of seniors were in the form of imperatives. Yet the highest percentage of imperatives (40.3%) did not exceed the lowest percentage of declaratives (59.6% in S9).

Table 3. Syntactic categories in percentages according to situation.

Situation	1		2		3		4		5	
	fre	sen								
Imperative	10.5	6.8	21.0	43.1	5.2	6.8	0	4.5	28.0	38.6
Indicative (declarative)	84.2	86.3	71.9	56.8	94.7	86.3	96.4	93.1	71.9	61.3
Indicative (interrogative)	1.7	6.8	1.7	0	0	6.8	1.7	2.2	0	0
No answer	3.5	0	5.2	0	0	0	1.7	0	0	0
TOTAL	99.9	99.9	99.8	99.9	99.9	99.9	99.8	99.8	99.9	99.9
Situation	6		7		8		9		10	
	fre	sen								
Imperative	3.5	4.5	14.0	29.5	14.0	22.7	40.3	31.8	10.5	15.9
Indicative (declarative)	96.4	90.9	85.9	68.1	85.9	70.4	59.6	68.1	84.2	77.2
Indicative (interrogative)	0	4.5	0	2.2	0	6.8	0	0	1.7	6.8
No answer	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3.5	0
TOTAL	99.9	99.9	99.9	99.8	99.9	99.9	99.9	99.9	99.9	99.9

Number of students: Fres 172hmen 57, Seniors 44.

Senior students used more varied forms of suggestions than did freshman students (Table 4). The distribution of syntactic categories for the senior-year students illustrates this point as follows: 20.4% imperatives, 75.9% declaratives, and 3.6% interrogatives. For freshman students: 14.7% imperatives, 83.1% declaratives, and 0.7% interrogatives. Whereas the freshman students use predominantly declarative suggestions, senior students use also imperatives and interrogatives. It seems that greater exposure to English, resulting in a higher level of proficiency, influences the variety of suggestion formulas chosen by L2 users.

Table 4. Syntactic categories in general.

Number and %	Freshman		Senior	
	N°	%	N°	%
Imperative	84	14.7	90	20.4
Indicative declarative	474	83.1	334	75.9
Indicative interrogative	4	0.7	16	3.6
No answer	8	1.4	0	0
TOTAL RESPONSES	570	99.9	440	99.9

Modals

Modal expressions comprise the major syntactic structure used for suggestions in our data; 62.45% of the freshmen, and 58.18% of the seniors used modals in their suggestions. Modals have been analysed in various studies, some of which also examine how speech acts and modals are introduced in textbooks (Li, 1999; Vellenga, 2004; Jiang, 2006). Jiang (2006) analysed three old- and three new-generation ESL textbooks, and found that only two recent textbooks include a variety of modals when dealing with how to make suggestions (and only one deals with modals in detail). For example, the modal 'should' is introduced in all the textbooks examined, whereas 'can' or 'could' appear in only one recent book. 'Might', 'must', 'have to', 'had better', 'need to', and 'ought to' are introduced exclusively as a way of suggesting, but only in some recent textbooks. Similarly, Li (1999) analysed six popular English textbooks used in primary schools in Hong Kong, and showed that in these books suggestions were formulated through the use of three syntactic forms: 'Let's', 'Why don't', and 'Why not'. Table 5 shows the distribution of modals provided by freshmen and seniors in the 10 situations in our study.

Table 5. Distribution of modals used by freshmen and seniors in their suggestions.

Situation	1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8		9		10	
	fre	sen																		
Could	3	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
Can	13	16	5	1	6	5	7	8	0	10	15	16	13	7	13	8	4	6	15	10
Should	14	12	30	21	37	19	25	14	31	12	9	6	25	13	25	12	24	19	20	12
Must	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
Have to	0	0	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Had better	1	1	1	0	1	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	3	0	0
May/might	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ought	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Need	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	31	30	38	23	49	32	32	26	35	24	25	24	41	24	39	23	30	28	36	22
%	54.3	68.1	66.6	52.2	85.9	72.7	56.1	59.0	61.4	54.5	43.8	54.5	71.9	54.5	68.4	52.2	52.6	63.6	63.1	50.0

As seen in Table 5, the modals 'can' and 'should' are the most common. 'Could', 'must', 'have to', 'had better', 'may/might', 'ought to' and 'need to' are rarely used. The use of 'should' and 'can' differs according to the nature of the situation. For example, in S1 students used 'can' and 'should' equally; however, in S2 they used 'should' more than 'can'. As mentioned before, situational factors have an influence in the choice of suggestion formulas. Certain modals are preferred in certain situations. Even though 'should' is frequently used in the data, it was avoided in situations where an older or powerful person was addressed (S3, S4, and S6). Only in S3, where the informant was expected to make suggestions to his/her aunt for the benefit of a cousin, 'should' was used frequently. It is notable that freshmen used 'should' more often than seniors in all of these three situations. This indicates that senior students might be more sensitive to face threat.

L2 learners' level of proficiency influences their usage of certain suggestion formulas (Jiang, 2006; Li, 2010). In the early stages of their L2 learning, they stick to the formulas taught in English textbooks. We wanted to see if there was any difference between the suggestion formulas used by freshmen and those used by seniors. We hypothesised that, since freshman students are less exposed than senior students to diverse forms of suggestions, they would use a limited range of formulas, perhaps more bookish than the suggestions produced by the latter. Therefore, we further categorised modals according to *obligation statements* and *ability statements* (Li, 2010). Obligation statements are instantiated through 'must', 'should', 'have to', 'had better'; ability statements through 'can' and 'could' (see Table 6).

Table 6. Distribution of ability statement vs. obligation statements in the data.

Number and %	Freshmen		Senior	
	N°	%	N°	%
Ability Statement	95	16.6	94	21.3
Obligation Statement	255	44.7	156	35.4
TOTAL RESPONSES	570	100	440	100

As illustrated in Table 6, freshman students preferred obligation statements, predominantly the modal 'should', whereas seniors used more ability statements, showing a more balanced use of modals. This confirms the hypothesis that seniors use a wider range of structures when making suggestions, probably because they can draw from a wider repertoire of formulas.

The results above highlight some important characteristics of the use of suggestion formulas by non-native speakers of English with L1 Turkish in a university context. We can use these to suggest teachers how to teach suggestions in EFL classrooms. However, before teaching any speech act, we believe teachers should seek answers to the following questions: 1) which speech act to teach?, 2) what do students already know about the speech act?, 3) what do you expect the students to be able to do as a result of the lesson?, and 4) what resources and methods can you use to teach the speech act most effectively?.

Since we selected the speech act of suggestions to teach in the classroom, some answers to questions 2-4 may be the following: as regards question 2, students already know how to suggest in L1, and if their L1 is typologically similar to English in terms of using modals to formulate suggestions, then, it will be easier for them to master their use in suggestion formulas in English. However, if the students' L1 is typologically different from English, then the teachers will need to examine the differences between L1 and L2 very carefully, and highlight this in the tasks and activities they choose by paying attention to students' age, and level of proficiency. Concerning question 3, teachers should at least aim to increase students' understanding of the use of modals in English, and make sure that their students are able to use suggestion formulas appropriately in the target language. Finally, the answer to question 4 depends on the language teaching philosophy of the teacher. However, we suggest a communicative approach in determining the resources and methods to use in teaching suggestions. In this case, the use of authentic samples should be encouraged. A task-based approach could be taken in designing language teaching activities.

As indicated, the analysis of the data showed that the level of proficiency of the students was a very important factor in their choice of modals in formulating suggestions. This points out that, in teaching suggestions, teachers should choose materials that include a variety of suggestion formulas. In this way, they can afford their students more exposure to a variety of modals in suggestion formulas occurring in authentic English texts. Teachers should not confine their teaching to the textbooks. They should include a variety of resources like videos, audios, flashcards, etc. to increase their students' exposure to target language features.

5. Conclusion

The present study has aimed to examine the suggestion formulas used by non-native speakers of English, namely, freshman and senior students in an EFL context. Our findings show that the preference for declarative structures versus imperative and interrogative ones. Modals were the most frequently used structure, especially 'should', and freshman's use of obligation statements in terms of function. The analysis of the data also evinced that senior students used a wider variety of structures and relied less on the modal 'should'; i.e. they used 'can/could' (ability statement) in addition to 'should' (obligation statement) more than the freshman group. The results of the study point to the influence of factors such as proficiency level and exposure to language teaching materials in learners' choice of suggestion formulas. Although other factors such as visits of students to English-speaking countries, use of the internet, satellite TV, etc., can be influential in the development of learners' pragmatic competence, textbooks are by far the most common materials in Turkish educational centres. Therefore, these findings support Jiang's (2006) claim that textbooks present a limited range of suggestion formulas to language learners. Consequently, we recommend that textbooks and teachers offer English language learners more appropriate options for making suggestions.

Finally, we collected only interlanguage data from a limited number of university students. Cross-cultural investigations comparing EFL learners' performance with that of native English speakers would enable us to contrast our students' use of certain L2 structures with native speakers'. Our study, one of the first studies of suggestions produced by Turkish EFL learners to our knowledge, must therefore be viewed in the context of its limitations.

Appendix

1. Invitation

Your friend has been invited to a party, but s/he could not decide how to get there. The party is in the evening in Üsküdar (on the Asian side of Istanbul). (S/he might go there by car, by bus, by boat). You can give her/him suggestions about how to get there.

2. Car

Your sister wants to buy a car. She asks for your advice. She has only enough money to buy a second-hand car. Give her suggestions about what kind of car to buy, what to pay attention to while buying the car, and so on.

3. Low grade in English

Your cousin is a student in high school. He got low grades in English. Your aunt asks you for advice. (For example, you can suggest that he should read books, take private lessons etc.)

4. Visit

Your instructor is going to a conference which will take place in your city/hometown. After the conference s/he has an afternoon free before s/he leaves the place. What would you suggest s/he should do before her/his return? What would you recommend her/him to see, eat, or drink?

5. Job interview

Your friend is going to a job interview. Give her or him suggestions about how to dress, what to say, etc.

6. Present

Your mother asks you what she can buy for your brother. Give her suggestions about what your brother would like to get as a present.

7. Excuse

Your friend cannot say “no” to her tutor’s invitation to a goodbye party that will take place the night before one of

her very important exams. Give her/him some suggestions about how to excuse her/himself from going to the party.

8. Decoration

Your friend is planning to decorate her/his new office and asks your advice. Make some suggestions to your friend about how to decorate her/his new office.

9. Saving water

Your friend lives in Istanbul and the municipality has announced that the city will be short of water if people do not take some precautions. Give your friend some suggestions about the best way(s) to save water in her/his daily household tasks.

10. Leisure activities

Give your friend some suggestions about the best way(s) to spend her/his summer holiday.

SUGGESTIONS AND ADVICE IN ENGLISH: CONSIDERATIONS FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Ana M. Bordería-García
Augustana College

1. Introduction

Different cultures have different ways and preferred styles in which they carry out the same pragmatic functions or *speech acts*, such as making a request, greeting someone, or giving advice. This type of linguistic behaviour is deeply rooted in cultural and societal values that are internalized both consciously and unconsciously. These cultural differences in the way individuals interpret and carry out everyday language functions can make second language acquisition and intercultural communication a challenge. Making suggestions and giving advice are pragmatic functions in which important cultural differences exist across some languages, at least in the case of giving advice in Spanish-speaking (i.e. peninsular Spanish) and English-speaking cultures. However, the number of studies dealing with the acquisition of this speech act is still limited (Mwinyelle, 2005; Fernández Guerra and Martínez-Flor, 2006).

This chapter summarizes the existing literature on advice giving and suggestions in English, examining the different factors a speaker has to consider when evaluating the probable effect of a piece of advice and, therefore, what will be the appropriate way to express it. Based on data collec-

ted in a previous study (Bordería-García, 2006), the different advice-giving strategies in English are presented, evaluated, and compared to their Spanish equivalents. The chapter concludes with practical ideas for teaching Spanish learners of English how to give advice appropriately, although the proposed ideas could be implemented easily with learners of English from other cultures with slight modifications.

The speech act reviewed here is usually classified as ‘suggestions’ or ‘advice’. The terms are often used interchangeably, commonly without explanation and a definition of what is meant by the term(s) chosen. In line with previous research, suggestions or advice have been considered the same speech act and are described as such in the present study. While some researchers have preferred the term ‘suggestions’ (Banerjee and Carrell, 1988; Fernández Guerra and Martínez-Flor, 2006), ‘advice’ has been used more commonly (Jefferson and Lee, 1992; Heritage and Sefi, 1992; DeCapua and Dunham, 1993; Hinkel, 1994b, 1997; Hutchby, 1995; Hernández Flores, 1999; Alcón and Safont, 2001; Mwinyelle, 2005; Waring, 2007). In this paper, I use this term, which I prefer to ‘suggestions’, because ‘suggestions’ may be used to refer to other speech acts such as invitations (Let’s go for coffee) and requests (Why don’t you start the oven?).

2. Politeness issues in suggestions and advice

Advice giving can be a complex speech act and speakers have to consider politeness issues to save and maintain *face* when giving or receiving advice. The concept of *face*, introduced by Goffman (1999), refers to the vulnerable image of the participants in a conversation. This image can be at risk when an interlocutor gives advice because of the directive nature of this speech act; therefore, speakers often avoid it or employ different politeness strategies to minimi-

ze its potential threat to the hearer's face. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), there are two types of face, i.e. *negative face* and *positive face*, and politeness, namely, positive and negative politeness, based on the face that one is trying to protect or satisfy at a given time. Positive face is the positive consistent self-image that people have of themselves or 'personality', and it entails a need for validation or approval. Negative face can be defined as the desire for autonomy and self-determination, or freedom from imposition. The concept of negative face implies that people do not want to be told what to do, or have their actions impeded by others. Brown and Levinson claim that certain speech acts are intrinsically face-threatening, e.g. advice giving or suggesting. This speech act is intrinsically face-threatening to the hearer's negative face, since it calls for him/her to do or not to do a particular action. A piece of advice could also imply a threat to the hearer's positive face, because in advice-giving there appears to be an assumed deficit of knowledge on the part of the recipient (Heritage and Sefi, 1992), hence advice and suggestions may be heard as criticism or disapproval (Goldsmith and Fitch, 1997), at least in English-speaking cultures.

Brown and Levinson (1987) identify three factors that affect how speakers evaluate these face threats and the politeness strategies to be used: social distance or degree of familiarity among the interlocutors, power, and the ranking of imposition. The absolute ranking of imposition is a more obscure concept than those of distance or power; it depends on the rights and obligations of the interlocutors to carry out a determinate speech act. In a given culture and context, imposition has to be calculated based on the degree in which the given speech act may "interfere with an agent's wants of self-determination or of approval" (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 77). Goldsmith and Fitch (1997) corroborate the effect of power and distance on perceptions of face in

advice-giving situations in North-American culture. However, the effect of imposition on speech act performance, in general, and on advice giving, in particular, has been less frequently investigated (Goldsmith and MacGeorge, 2000). A possible explanation is that the concept of imposition is more difficult to grasp because it “means something different in the context of different speech acts” (Kasper and Schmidt, 1996: 155). Thus, imposition needs to be ‘redefined’ for each specific speech act, and a clear definition of what it entails with regards to advice should be proposed supported by empirical research.

Other factors that influence how advice is formulated and perceived could be related to imposition. For example, the urgency of the situation influences how often and how advice is given, and the degree of embarrassment that the advice can cause has an influence in this as well (Banerjee and Carrell, 1988). Similarly, suggestions of a personal nature can be more threatening, e.g. suggestions on losing weight (Koike, 1998). The perceived experience of the advice-giver also plays an important role in how advice is perceived (Goldsmith and Fitch, 1997; Waring, 2005). The interactional moment in which the advice occurs (Jefferson and Lee, 1992; Peräkylä, 1993; Goldsmith, 2000), and the original intentions of the person initiating it (Jefferson and Lee, 1992) will also have an effect on how it is evaluated by the hearer. Although being told about a problem may be seen as an invitation to give advice, it may not be the intention of the trouble-teller, and it may then be resisted or seen as presumptuous (*ibid.*). Unsolicited advice given by someone without perceived experience, or delivered in an inappropriate moment or manner will more likely be considered imposing or intrusive, hence face-threatening. All these factors are related to imposition in advice giving, and could determine its perception as face threat or not by the hearer.

Advice and advice-giving strategies can present different face concerns in different cultures. Although English speakers seem more oriented towards negative face and avoid giving advice, advice may be seen as an expression of affection, solidarity, or friendliness in Turkish (Bayraktaro lu, 2001), Japanese and Chinese (Hinkel, 1997), and Arabic (El-Sayed, 1990). Advice in Spanish may be less face-threatening than in English, because the Spanish appear to have a different approach to the concept of face, placing less value on negative face, and more on positive face (Haverkate, 1994; Ballesteros-Martín, 2001). Finally, many pragmatic aspects, and thus many politeness issues, are “inseparable not only from socio-cultural practices and values, but also from personal views, preferences, and style” (Kasper and Rose, 2002a: 275). Not everyone will judge or weigh the social and contextual variables mentioned above in the same way, nor will they necessarily judge the different forms of mitigation exactly in the same manner. In pragmatic studies, however, we often speak of generalities to describe what appears to be the norm for a group, but we also acknowledge that a range of pragmatic behaviours may be observed among native speakers of the same language. Keeping in mind that there are individual differences in socio-pragmatic conduct within the same culture, and that languages are not monolithic entities, the next sections present a summary of studies on advice giving in English.

3. Advice-giving in English

Advice-giving in native speakers of English

Hinkle (1997: 5) explains that, because English-speaking societies place special emphasis on individuals’ rights and autonomy, hence negative politeness, “the giving of advice

generally has a negative socio-cultural, pragmatic, and interactional value and can be perceived as intrusive and overbearing". North-American society "seems to regard even suggestions as an imposition to the hearer" (Banerjee and Carrell, 1988: 318). In a study of advice in the United States, Goldsmith and Fitch (1997) identified the existence of three dilemmas in seeking, giving, and receiving advice. These dilemmas include that a) in trying to be helpful and caring, one can be seen as intruding; b) at times, the advice-giver has to choose between being supportive and being honest; and c) in receiving advice, one may debate between showing gratitude or respect, and possibly losing autonomy. Therefore, advice is often avoided or accompanied by different forms of politeness or redressive work.

Due to its complexity, the interest in advice-giving discourse in English has expanded in the last 20 years and many interdisciplinary studies have emerged that analyze advice in different contexts such as health related environments (e.g. Jefferson and Lee, 1992; Peyrot, 1987; Heritage and Sefi, 1992; Peräkylä, 1993; Kinnell, 2002), radio talk shows (e.g. Hudson, 1990; DeCapua and Dunham, 1993; Hutchby, 1995), and academic advising sessions (Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford, 1990, 1993; He, 1993; Waring, 2005, 2007). These studies show how expert advice-givers use politeness strategies to minimize the potential threat of advice in English-speaking cultures (United States and the United Kingdom). In English, advice-givers often prefer indirectness and make advice sound generalized, rather than specific to the hearer. In stressful situations, experts often use the hedge 'maybe', present advice as their opinion, use 'oblique proposals' presenting the advice as applied to someone other than the hearer (Peyrot, 1987), or use conditional forms that situate the conversation in a hypothetical world (Peräkylä, 1993). Even in radio call-in shows, where advice is sought, it is still offered mostly in indirect ways. Radio

hosts or experts offer advice as recommendable in general (Hutchby, 1995), or in ways in which the agent is de-focused. For example, the speaker may use the prototypical non-subject imperative, the agent imperative with 'you' ('you' with the meaning of 'one'), pseudo-cleft constructions (as in 'what I would do'), the 'I would' projection, 'other-as-agent constructions', and conditionals (Hudson, 1990). Finally, He (1993) reported several forms of *low modality* used in academic advising. Low modality includes the use of 'can' and 'may', conditional forms, and formula like 'I would', 'I think,' or 'probably'. When *high modality* (e.g. 'must', 'need', 'should', or 'have to') was used to give advice, it was usually preceded by low modality. These studies suggest that giving advice in English is commonly done with care and through politeness strategies that make advice more indirect and less threatening to the receiver.

Advice-giving and English language learners

The complexity of advice giving in English appears makes it a difficult speech act to master for learners of English as a second or foreign language (henceforth ESL and EFL respectively). Learners differ from native speakers in the amount of advice or suggestions they give, in the frequency in which they use advice-giving strategies, and in the degrees of directness with which they formulate advice. In comparing Chinese and Malay learners of English to native speakers of English from the United States, Banerjee and Carrell (1988) found that the groups differed in the number and type of politeness strategies they used. North-Americans were also more indirect than the learners, and offered suggestions slightly more frequently. Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1993) observed that their native speakers, North-American graduate students, made more self-initiated suggestions than

international graduate students during their advising sessions. At first, the international students rarely performed self-initiated suggestions, used fewer mitigators and some aggravators, and rejected the advisor's suggestions ten times more than the Americans. Learners showed improvement after two months, with a near-native success rate, which indicates that the ESL context helped them acquire the pragmatics of academic advising.

Hinkel (1997) studied the acquisition of advice by Chinese learners of English using two types of questionnaires: a Multiple-Choice Questionnaire (MCQ) and a Discourse Completion Test (DCT). In the DCT, the learners preferred hedged advice over direct advice, and indirect comments were common. Still, native speakers of English used more direct strategies than the Chinese learners, who preferred indirect comments and avoided advice more frequently. In the MCQ, only a few L1 English speakers chose direct and hedged advice with indirect comments or opting out of giving advice. In contrast, the Chinese chose more direct and hedged advice. The opposite patterns observed call for further research, but they suggest that Chinese learners show important differences from native speakers. Matsumura (2001) conducted a similar study with Japanese learners of English comparing the EFL and ESL contexts. Surprisingly, both learner groups showed the same preferences as a group of native speakers of English when communicating with a higher-status person. In communication with equal or lower status interlocutors, the ESL group had learned to use the same strategies as the native speakers early in the exchange program, but no change was observed in the EFL group that early. The ESL context thus appeared more conducive to native-like pragmatic behaviour.

Few studies have looked at how Spaniards perceive and produce advice in their native language (Bordería-García, 2006) and in English (Martínez-Flor, 2003b, 2003c, Fer-

nández Guerra and Martínez-Flor, 2006). These studies suggest that advice could be a difficult speech act to acquire for them. Martínez-Flor (2003b) studied learners' pragmatic ability with advice and based on Hinkel (1997), she divided advice strategies found in a DCT into: direct, conventionally indirect, and indirect. She also included a fourth category for strategies that had not been anticipated, which incorporated expressions like: 'I recommend that you', 'you need to', 'you must', 'you have to', 'you could', and 'you'd better'. Learners most frequently used direct strategies. Martínez-Flor (2003c) also investigated the production and awareness of these speech acts by university teachers of EFL to study the characteristics of the input that students received. The teachers, who were more aware of grammatical errors than pragmatic violations, tended to use direct strategies to give advice and rarely used indirect strategies. Although there are limitations in these studies, the results strongly suggest that Spanish EFL teachers and learners prefer direct ways of giving advice, probably reflecting the patterns of their L1, thus differentiating themselves from speakers of L1 English.

In Fernández Guerra and Martínez-Flor's (2006) study, Spanish learners of English frequently used direct strategies with few indirect comments, even after instruction. The group that received instruction on this speech act showed a wider variety of direct strategies, and a lower number of suggestions in the form of obligation (as in 'you must...' or 'you have to...') than did the control group, which received no instruction. The experimental group also showed more frequent use of appropriate downgraders and grounders that made the suggestion less authoritative, a wider range of mitigating devices, and more accurate grammar than the control group. Overall, learners' pragmatic competence seemed to develop "progressively, from short or prefabricated phrases, to more complex sentences and different routine for-

mulae” (Fernández Guerra and Martínez-Flor, 2006: 105). There was no comparison with data from native speakers in this study, but it appears that, regardless of the impact of instruction, learners were still more direct than native speakers would be.

Because advicegiving in English-speaking cultures is a complex speech act that is dispreferred and imposing, learners of EFL/ESL experience difficulties with it, and formulate it differently from the native-speaker norm. In particular, Spaniards may be deemed too direct when speaking English if they transfer the pragmatics of their L1 when giving advice. The work of Martínez-Flor (2003b, 2003c) suggests that Spaniards do, in fact, use more direct strategies and fewer hints than native speakers of English in advice giving. In consequence, learners of English could benefit from learning about this speech act in the classroom.

4. Pedagogical implications and recommendations

Even advanced learners show limitations in their pragmatic ability, which suggests that the teaching of pragmatics needs to be part of the foreign language curriculum. Raising awareness of pragmatics is important, and should be implemented in the L2 classroom. The following sections provide ideas of what could be taught and how with regard to the pragmatics of advice giving in English to speakers of other languages, especially, Spanish.

What to teach in the EFL classroom

Learners could benefit from knowledge of some pragmatic concepts and reflection upon them such as the construct of face, and some of the strategies that can be used to

attend to it. They should reflect about what socio-cultural factors may affect face in different contexts. They could also learn and reflect upon how certain strategies show different levels of directness, and how different languages favour these distinct directness levels as well. Advice seems to be a speech act in which such training could be particularly beneficial, at least when English and Spanish (i.e. peninsular Spanish) are involved. Learners need to learn that in English, advice can be highly face-threatening, requiring appropriate politeness work like indirectness. If these learners are from Spain or any other culture that considers advice giving and directness less face-threatening, they need to be aware that translating the strategies that they would use in their L1 into English could lead to pragmatic failure and portray them as rude.

Reinforcing learners' awareness of the factors that affect strategy choice in different situations is also important (Cohen and Olshtain, 1991). In evaluating the amount of face threat of a given piece of advice, speakers must consider the factors suggested above. These factors include the nature of the topic and content of the advice, the urgency of the situation, the nature of the relationship with the hearer, speaker's own experience in the subject, and the intentions of the hearer. The content of the advice may be too personal or even embarrassing for the hearer, thus requiring more politeness work if the speaker decides to give it. Also, the greater the distance, the more likely that the advice will be perceived as intrusive, therefore calling for more politeness strategies. Another issue is who initiates the advice-giving sequence and how it is initiated. If advice is unsolicited, it is more likely to be offensive. Advice can follow the narration of a problem, but the intention of the narrator may not be to receive advice. Advice given in this case may still be considered intrusive. All of these factors play a relevant role in choosing whether to give advice or not and how to do it.

Learners would also benefit from learning the strategies that one can use to give advice in English and the different degrees of directness that they involve could be useful for English learners. The following is a list of those advice-giving strategies, organized by level of directness, and reported in the literature. Some comparisons between these strategies and their Spanish counterparts are provided based on the results of Bordería-García's (2006) study.

Direct strategies

The strategies available in this category also exist in Spanish, but a few differences have been observed in terms of their frequency. Spaniards favour direct strategies, while North-Americans prefer indirect ways of giving advice (Bordería-García, 2006). When advice is given in a direct way in English, it is frequently accompanied by some form of politeness work that makes the contribution less face-threatening. The following is a list of the direct strategies identified in the literature:

Table 1. Direct advice-giving strategies.

1.	Imperative
2.	Explicit performative verbs and structures
3.	Present tense as imperative
4.	'You should ...'
5.	'You ought to ...'
6.	'You need to ...'
7.	'You must ...'
8.	'You have to...'
9.	'You'd better...'

The use of the imperative is, by far, the most common direct strategy, although it is more commonly used by Spaniards than by native speakers of English (Bordería-García, 2006). There are three performative verbs that can be used to give advice: suggest, advise, and recommend. Fernández Guerra and Martínez-Flor (2006) classify the performative structure 'I recommend (that) you...' as a conventionalized form, and not as direct suggestions, where they include 'I suggest that you...' and 'My advice is that you...'. In my opinion, there is little or no difference between 'I suggest (that) you...' and 'I recommend (that) you' or 'I advise you...'. From my experience with native speakers of English in the United States, the verb 'suggest' does not appear to be more direct than the verb 'recommend', and, if anything, it may have a softer pragmatic force than 'recommend' or 'advise'.

Among the high modality strategies (4 to 9), 'should' is the most common in English. The form 'you should' appears to be more frequent than its potential Spanish counterparts *debes* or *deberías* (Bordería-García, 2006). The other modals listed are not frequently used for giving advice in English. In fact, Strategies 7 to 9 – 'must', 'have to' and 'ought to' – were not used at all by the native speakers (*ibid.*), probably because they sound too direct or imposing. Fernández Guerra and Martínez-Flor (2006) classified the use of 'should/ought to' and 'need' as conventionalized forms as well unlike direct strategies. Although I would not disagree that these are conventional ways of giving advice, the usage of 'should' and 'ought to' without hedging make the advice direct (Hinkel, 1997). I have included 'need' under direct strategies too because of the high modality that it entails. Other modal verbs conveying lower modality are included under the next category.

Conventionally indirect strategies

This group includes a wide variety of strategies, most of which have close Spanish counterparts (see Table 2). Many of these strategies are considered indirect because they help to defocus the agent or to make the situation sound hypothetical. The use of low modality and questions also make advice less direct. As these forms are conventional, they are easy to interpret as advice even if they are not considered direct.

Table 2. Conventionally indirect advice-giving strategies.

1.	Expressions of opinion
2.	Hedge 'maybe'
3.	Hedge 'probably'
4.	Participant shift
5.	Impersonal sentences
6.	The prototypical non-subject imperative
7.	The agent imperative with 'you' subject present (with 'you' used as 'one')
8.	Inclusive we
9.	'You can/could...'
10.	'You may/might...'
11.	Questions to the hearer
12.	If-clauses

Strategies 1-3 are hedges often used to soften the force of a more direct strategy in the head act, as in 'I think you should', 'maybe you should', or 'probably you should'. These strategies differ from those used in peninsular Spanish. In

Bordería-García's (2006) study, the Spanish group did not use the hedge *quizás* or the modal *poder* in their role-plays, while 'maybe' and 'may' were used by a few native speakers of English. In the metapragmatic judgement test, these native speakers also gave higher appropriateness ratings to 'maybe' in contexts where imposition was low in comparison to the ratings of Spaniards on *quizás*. Therefore, although these hedges are lexical equivalents, their pragmatic use is different.

Strategies 4-8 serve to defocus the agent, and they are thus less direct. The participant-shift strategy includes the use of the formulas 'If I were you', 'what I would do', and the 'I would...' projection (Hudson, 1990; Bordería-García, 2006). The first one (If I were you) has to be accompanied by any of the other two formulas that include the conditional tense, as it occurs with its Spanish counterparts (*Yo de ti...* and *yo que tú*). Impersonal sentences like 'it's important...' or 'it's necessary...' make advice sound generalized. The prototypical non-subject imperative and the agent imperative with 'you' in the meaning of 'one' are used to defocus the agent and to make advice sound recommendable in general (Hudson, 1990). Lastly, by including oneself in the advice, e.g. through an inclusive-we structure, the advice-giver can make the suggestion less threatening and more like an offer to help. Instead of saying, for example, "talk to the teacher", a speaker can say "Let's talk to the teacher".

Questions to the hearer as in 'why don't you...?' or 'have (haven't) you considered...?' have been reported and discussed extensively by Koike (1994, 1996, 1998) as conventionally indirect strategies that can be used to make suggestions. These questions can be affirmative or negative in English but, according to Koike (1994), in Spanish they are all negative as in *¿No has probado a hacer X?* (Haven't you tried to do X?). This type of negative interrogative suggestions is claimed to show awareness of the listener's des-

ires or wants, so it can be a strategy for positive politeness. Moreover, negative politeness strategies like hedges or showing pessimism (Brown and Levinson, 1987) could also be used. In English negative interrogatives have a stronger force and they are avoided (Koike, 1994). Koike (1996) found that American learners of Spanish did not understand all negated interrogative suggestions, often considering them simple information questions and identifying them with criticism or a rebuke on a few occasions. Spanish learners of English may want to avoid them, possibly with the exception of the highly conventionalized form 'why don't you...?'.

Finally, conditional sentences that include an 'if-clause', in which the action recommended to the hearer is presented, are another way in which advice can be given indirectly. In this kind sentences, as in "if you ask the professor for help, he will help you", the main clause presents a potentially desirable consequence. Because such consequence works as a reason, it can be considered a negative politeness strategy that mitigates the threat to the hearers' right to do as they please. The main clause could also express a negative consequence of an undesirable action, as in "If you copy your paper from the Internet, the teacher will find out" or "If you don't finish your paper, you'll fail the class". This type of conditional sentence is also an indirect way to give advice, in which the degree of directness resembles that of a hint.

Non-conventionally indirect strategies or hints

Non-conventionally indirect strategies or hints are the most indirect way to give advice and may be the most appropriate in English. North-Americans consider non-conventionally indirect strategies or hints more appropriate than Spaniards (Bordería-García, 2006). It is difficult to categorize these strategies, because they are non-conventional. Mwinylle (2005: 88) classified hints into: *strong hints* and *mild hints*, where a strong hint "contains partial reference to

an object or element needed for implementation of the act”, and a mild hint “makes no reference to the advice proper but can be interpreted as advice by context”. An example of a strong hint is “You are seriously damaging your lungs and thus reducing your life span each time you smoke”, whereas one of a mild hint is “Be like the Pope” assuming the Pope does not smoke (ibid.). Mwinyelle’s strong hint is a clear case of a reason; while his mild hint could be deemed a hint to a solution (Bordería-García’s, 2006). Oblique proposals, where advice is proposed as applying to someone else other than the hearer (Peyrot, 1987), can be considered hints to a solution as well. The type of if-clauses described above, in which the negative consequences of an action are pointed out, could also be considered hints, because they pinpoint the reason that a particular course of action is not advisable.

Finally, some types of hints may offend the person receiving the advice because they imply criticism or mockery. For example, when telling someone described as overweight that she should order a lighter meal, in Bordería-García’s (2006) study one Spaniard said *¡Mira a ver si revientas!* (Eat all that) and *Vas a explotar* (you’re gonna explode!) and *Es que no es lo más adecuado, vamos, vas a acabar rodando* (Well, it’s not the best choice, you know, we’re gonna have to roll you out of here). This kind of linguistic behaviour was not found in the English data, and even if they are possible hints to advice, they were not classified as indirect advice because of their offensiveness to the hearer. They were regarded as rebukes or reproaches, instead, and in English should be avoided.

How to teach pragmatics and advice giving

In teaching pragmatics, explicit approaches appear to be more effective than implicit ones (Kasper and Rose, 2002a).

The teaching of pragmatics needs to be explicit because learners may not notice the subtleties and differences between their native and the target language when focusing on meaning. The *Noticing Hypothesis* claims that conscious noticing is necessary for converting input into *intake*, the language material that aids L2 acquisition (Schmidt, 1995). We cannot expect learners to learn this kind of pragmatic nuances just by being exposed to the target language, although some pragmatic aspects may be learned that way. Fernández Guerra and Martínez-Flor (2006: 105) found that “learners receiving explicit instruction on how to make suggestions generated more pragmatically appropriate, more varied, more structurally complex, and more correct strategies when suggesting”. With the information offered in this paper, instructors should be able to write lesson plans that could help learners to perform advice more appropriately, or at least to do so more consciously.

Although pragmatics should be taught explicitly, this does not mean that its teaching needs to be done in a deductive or theoretical manner. While deductive approaches could also be useful, foreign language teachers can prepare lesson plans that lead students to analyze examples of advice, and discover on their own some of its pragmatic aspects. Using questions for guided observation and analysis, followed by classroom discussion, could prove useful. For example, learners can watch videos in the target language that exemplify this speech act and its pragmatic aspects. Then, they can analyze the interactions in the video with guided questions and possibly a copy of the script. Video excerpts have the advantage that they can be stopped and replayed whenever desired. In ESL contexts, these observations and reflections could be done with naturally conversations. In this context, the use of journal entries in which the learners write their observations and impressions about

different pragmatic aspects suggested by the teacher could be helpful.

Learners can also benefit from making explicit comparisons and reflecting about how they would handle similar situations in their L1, before or after seeing the example. It could be useful to make the pragmatic norms of their L1 explicit, and to understand their personal preferences and styles. Learners may not want to accommodate to some pragmatic norms of the target community, since pragmatic behaviour is also part of someone's personality. However, they need to understand what speakers of the L2 are going to interpret and feel if they do not accommodate. By ignoring these pragmatic differences, learners can be unintentionally rude or misunderstood. If learners come to understand such differences, they can make more conscious choices, and understand native speakers' reactions better. Finally, practicing the speech act in situations close to real life would be necessary, even when done hypothetically (Cohen and Olshtain, 1991). Learners could benefit from role-playing activities that involve pragmatic aspects if the activities include some feedback or reflection about the appropriateness of their contributions. The role-plays should have specific information about the context, especially the relationship between interactants. They could be recorded for future analysis, whether learners analyze their own speech or the speech of their classmates. These activities should be accompanied by feedback from the teacher and/or the classmates, about the student's performance and appropriateness in the target language.

Teachers certainly face a challenging task when handling pragmatics, since textbooks often provide little help in this area, and they have not been provided with training therein either. However, there are resources that can be very useful on the Internet. One of the most useful ones is the website developed by the Center for Advanced Research of Language-

ge Acquisition (CARLA) at <http://www.carla.umn.edu/speechacts/index.html>, where teachers can find teaching tips, sample teaching materials, and a list of references for different speech acts. The centre supplies information for teachers and learners of several languages, especially EFL/ESL. Introducing the teaching of pragmatics into the curriculum is becoming more possible every day with the help of resources like CARLA and other websites that provide visual and written materials. It is a challenge worth taking.

5. Conclusion

Pragmatic aspects can be difficult to master in a foreign language, but they are crucial for successful communication. Pragmatic knowledge does not seem to be acquired naturally in the foreign language classroom and explicit teaching maybe necessary for its development. Although interest in pragmatics and its instruction has recently grown (Fernandez Guerra and Martinez-Flor, 2006), more research is still necessary on the acquisition of speech acts and the instructional methods that would be most effective for their teaching. This chapter has reviewed the major studies on one of a neglected speech act type, i.e. advice giving, and has identified potential areas of difficulty for English language learners, especially Spanish learners of English as a foreign language. The literature suggests that in Anglo-American societies, giving advice can be more threatening than in Spanish culture, and that higher levels of indirectness and mitigation might be necessary to carry it out. A comparison of the strategies available in English and Spanish has been offered to help teachers and learners of EFL identify potential areas of negative transfer and pragmatic failure. With this information, teachers could design teaching materials and activities that focus on raising awareness of the prag-

matic differences in advice giving between Spanish and English, and that could help learners develop the pragmatic knowledge for appropriately give advice in English.



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Contributors

María Alcantud-Díaz (PhD) is an Assistant Lecturer in the Department of English Studies at the *Universitat de València*. Her research interests include foreign language teaching by means of ITCs such as digital storytelling and digital portfolio, corpus linguistics, systemic functional linguistics, and critical discourse analysis related to children's literature. Her publications include articles in various refereed journals and books in these fields. (E-mail: maria.alcantud@uv.es)

Yasemin Bayyurt (PhD) is an Associate Lecturer in the Department of Foreign Language Education at Bozaziçi Üniversitesi, Istanbul, Turkey. Her research interests include politeness, interlanguage pragmatics, cross-cultural communication, computer-mediated communication (CMC) and Foreign Language Teaching. Her publications include articles in various refereed journals and books in the field. She has recently co-edited a book on teaching Turkish as a Foreign Language. (E-mail: bayyurty@boun.edu.tr)

Ana M. Bordería García (PhD) is an Assistant Professor in the Spanish Department at Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois (USA). She teaches methodology and second language acquisition for prospective foreign language tea-

chers, and supervises their work during their practical experiences. Her research interests include interlanguage pragmatics, cross-cultural communication, and politeness. (E-mail: anaborderia-garcia@augustana.edu)

Anna M. Brígido-Corachán (PhD) is an Associate Lecturer at the *Universitat de València* and is a member of the *Instituto Universitario de Lenguas Modernas de la Comunidad Valenciana* (IULMA). She has published on contemporary literature and culture, media language, e-learning in English language and literature, and teaching and innovation in higher education in various refereed journals such as *American Anthropologist*. (E-mail: anna.m.brigido@uv.es)

Brian Clancy (PhD) lectures in the areas of academic writing and research skills at Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick, Ireland. He has published articles and book chapters on various aspects of discourse analysis such as politeness strategies in family discourse and the exchange structure in casual conversation. His research interests include discourse in intimate settings, small corpora and spoken language varieties. He is also involved in research projects on academic discourse, both spoken and written, and has published in this area. He is co-author, with Anne O'Keeffe and Svenja Adolphs, of *Introducing Pragmatics in Use* (Routledge, 2011). (E-mail: Brian.Clancy@mic.ul.ie)

Begoña Clavel Arroitia (PhD) is an Associate Lecturer at the *Universitat de València* and is a member of the *Instituto Universitario de Lenguas Modernas de la Comunidad Valenciana* (IULMA). She teaches English Language and Second Language Acquisition in the English Studies degree. Her research interests include second language acquisition, teaching English as a foreign language, the implementation

of ICT's in the classroom, and multimodal analysis of television commercials. (E-mail: Begona.Clavel@uv.es)

María Dolores García-Pastor (PhD) is a tenured lecturer at the Faculty of Education of the *Universitat de València*. Her main research interests are within politeness theory, political communication, pragmatics, second or foreign language learning and instruction, and innovation in language teaching. She has published articles, book chapters and some books in all these fields. She has recently conducted a funded research project on first and second language writing and is currently editing a book on the subject. (E-mail: maria.d.garcia@uv.es)

Carmen Gregori-Signes (PhD) is a tenured lecturer at the *Universitat de València* and is a member of the *Instituto Universitario de Lenguas Modernas de la Comunidad Valenciana* (IULMA). Her research interests are within the areas of media studies, in particular TV discourse, multimodal discourse analysis and pragmatics. One recent area of research examines the possible applications of the use of digital storytelling, and how this genre may be used in the field of teaching English as a Foreign Language. Her publications include contributions in all these fields. (E-mail: carmen.gregori@uv.es)

Leyla Marti (PhD) is currently an Assistant Professor in the Department of Foreign Language Education at Boaziçi Üniversitesi, Istanbul, Turkey. Her main research interests include cross-cultural communication, politeness, indirectness and bilingualism. She has published in the *Journal of Pragmatics* on indirectness and politeness, and co-authored an article on impoliteness in *Intercultural Pragmatics*. (E-mail: marti@boun.edu.tr)

Gerrard Mugford (PhD) is *Profesor Docente Titular* in Sociolinguistics, Pragmatics and Discourse Analysis at the Universidad de Guadalajara, Mexico. His current research interests include linguistic politeness, critical pedagogy, and interpersonal language use. (E-mail: gerrymugford@yahoo.com)

Anne O’Keeffe (PhD) is senior lecturer at Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick, Ireland. She has many years of experience as a teacher of English and teacher trainer. She is author of seven books on a range of topics including pragmatics, grammar, vocabulary teaching, teacher development, corpus linguistics and media discourse. She is currently leading an in-depth study of learner grammar using the Cambridge Learner Corpus, as part of the Cambridge English Profile project. (E-mail: Anne.okeeffe@mic.ul.ie)

Barry Pennock-Speck (PhD) is a tenured lecturer at the *Universitat de València* and is a member of the *Instituto Universitario de Lenguas Modernas de la Comunidad Valenciana* (IULMA). He teaches Phonology, Sociolinguistics and Translation. His research interests include pragmatics and the multimodal analysis of television commercials. He is also currently conducting research into the implementation of ICTs in English studies at a tertiary level. (E-mail: barry.pennock@uv.es)