universität wien

# DISSERTATION

Titel der Dissertation

## Politeness Strategies in Different Varieties of English: De- and Encoding of Modality in Speech Acts from a Translational, Editorial and Transcultural Perspective Considering Methods of Automatic Text Processing

verfasst von

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*Dedicated to…*

*my late Grandfather G. R. Reginald, who planted the seeds of my motivation to learn until his last day,*

*my late professor, Prof. Dr. Reiner Arntz*

*and my late coach at work, Rainer Aberer,*

*who believed in me, encouraged my work, and helped me grow my tree of knowledge and skills until their last day,*

*and my little son Amrit Gabriel Aberer,*

*who makes the tree blossom from his first day, every day.*

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## Table of Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| FTA: | Face Threatening Act |
| CCSARP: | Cross Cultural Speech Act Realization Project |
| FG: | Focus Group |
| TW: | Twitter Group |
| DCT: | Discourse Completion Test |
| DBMS: | Data Base Management System |
| DB: | Data Base |
| OLAP: | On-Line Analytical Processing |

## Conventions Used in this Thesis

In this thesis, designations that refer to abstract and fuzzy concepts play a relevant role. The thesis contains chapters and/or sections in which these terms are discussed, before a working definition is determined. Subsequent chapters and/or sections are based on the respective working definitions of the terms. In order to increase terminological clarity, the following typographical conventions will be applied henceforth:

- If a designation is written in regular font style, and denotes a key aspect of the thesis, it is used as a generic, preliminary term without reference to a specific definition. In order not to impair reading fluency, the term will be only highlighted with an asterisk (*) at first mention.

- Abbreviations are always written in capital letters. If an abbreviated term is introduced, all constituents of this term are written in capital letters and the corresponding meaning of the abbreviation is explicitly presented.

- The thesis is written in US American English. If citations contain British English spelling or grammar, these will not be marked with "[sic]".

- German quotes containing the old spelling rules applied before the orthography reform in 1996 are not marked with "[sic]".

# Foreword

My motivation to investigate a small part of the complex and vague concept of politeness from a translational and transcultural perspective is based on three key elements: My personal lingua-cultural biography, the results of my *Diplomarbeit*, and my work at an international, multicultural company.

Having a Tamil-German lingua-cultural biography, I am often confronted with situations in which I need to decide very consciously how to say something appropriately and politely. When speaking Tamil or German, the cognitive "stretch" seems to happen rather unconsciously or "intuitively", but when speaking or writing English texts to relatives in India and Sri-Lanka, I often feel that I need to "adjust" my English, which I have primarily learned in Germany and practiced in the USA, assuming that my addressees have certain lingua-cultural expectations. This experience led to my interest in the features of Indian Englishes and my decision to write my *Diplomarbeit* about the phonological, lexicosemantic, morphosyntactic and pragmatic characteristics of Indian Englishes and their influences on international technical and business communication. Basing my study on interviews with Indian and German employees of the companies IBM, Bosch/Blaupunkt and Cognizant, distributing surveys among participants of the Hannover Fair in 2007 and analyzing websites of Indian companies, I figured that some characteristics described in literature could be detected empirically. On the pragmatic level, however, there seemed to be the most severe, yet opaque sources of communication failure. The preliminary results of the study increased my interest in investigating the pragmatic characteristics of Englishes. This interest increased even further when I started to work in an international company. At my place of employment I am regularly confronted with real-case scenarios in which I have to decide frequently how to compose e-mails to customers, cooperation partners and colleagues in the most polite way, regardless of whether I am writing an English text from scratch or translating a text based on a briefing or a German source text. Due to my years of translation studies at the university, I am aware of the possibility that my message may get across differently depending on the “target culture” of my addressee, but often it is not clear which target culture(s) a person belongs to and how this person might express or perceive politeness in language.

These experiences at the theoretical and practical level encouraged me to write this thesis, and I hope to be able to shed at least a few rays of light onto the maze of factors that influence the conceptualization, expression, and perception of politeness from a translational and transcultural perspective.

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Status Quo, Problem, and Hypotheses

‘Good morning!’ said Bilbo, and he meant it. The sun was shining, and the grass was very green. But Gandalf looked at him from under long bushy eyebrows that stuck out further than the brim of his shady hat.

‘What do you mean?’ he said. ‘Do you wish me a good morning, or mean that it is a good morning whether I want it or not; or that you feel good this morning; or that it is a morning to be good on?’

‘All of them at once,’ said Bilbo. ‘And a very fine morning for a pipe of tobacco out of doors, into the bargain.’

[…]

‘Good morning!’ he [Bilbo] said at last. ‘We don't want any adventures here, thank you! You might try over The Hill or across The Water.’ By this he meant that the conversation was at an end.

‘What a lot of things you do use Good morning for!’ said Gandalf. ‘Now you mean that you want to get rid of me, and that it won't be good till I move off.’” (Tolkien, 2012, pp. 13-14)

Today, English* enables human beings with a variety of lingua-cultural biographies*, educational, and professional backgrounds to share information, feelings, and attitudes, to collaborate, provide, and receive services, or in short: “to do things with words”,[1] across the globe in different contexts and with different purposes. English texts[2] are produced by and for an increasingly lingua-culturally heterogeneous group of users. In many texts, e.g. e-mails, business letters, chat contributions, etc., professionals[3] aim at establishing, maintaining, or improving relationships to commissioners, customers, business partners, co-employees and employers. Regardless of whether

---

[1] See title of Austin’s book “How to do things with words” (1975).

[2] In this thesis, “text” is used in the general sense of “a technical term, to refer to the verbal record of a communicative act” (Brown & Yule, 1983, p. xviii). The reason for choosing this definition is explained in subchapter 1.3 “Limitations of the study”.

[3] Here, “professional” refers to any person, who needs to fulfill the task described above in their professional context. This could be a customer-support staff member who composes an e-mail to a customer, a translator who needs to write or translate a business letter, or a proofreader who needs to review a written or translated business letter.

communication* takes place inter- or intralingually, one aspect represents a tremendous challenge: the pragmatic[4] realization and perception of speech acts*.

Speech acts can be realized in numerous ways and be perceived in at least as many ways. Correspondingly, requests* as one category of speech acts can be expressed in different ways. For instance, there are manifold options for a requester[5] to ask a requestee to send an e-mail to someone. Some examples could be:

(1) "Please send an e-mail to Mr. X."
(2) "Would you please send an e-mail to Mr. X?"
(3) "Could you send an e-mail to Mr. X, please?"
(4) "Can you send an e-mail to Mr. X, please?"

While these examples share the same semantic core meaning, their pragmatic realization is different.

Suppose the requester would like the requestee to fulfill the request on the one hand (perlocutionary goal), and establish, maintain or improve the relationship to the requestee on the other hand (social goal), how would he or she realize the illocutionary act? If the requester applies politeness* to achieve the perlocutionary and the social goal, what makes him or her prefer a specific option when uttering the request? Which of the different options, if any, could be perceived as sufficiently polite by the requestee?

If the English request is to be translated from or into a German request, which of these options correspond to the German[6] "Bitte senden Sie eine E-Mail an

---

[4] In line with Baker, "pragmatics" is considered "the study of language in use. It is the study of meaning, not as generated by the linguistic system but as conveyed and manipulated by participants in a communicative situation" (1992, p. 217).

[5] In line with Trosborg's terminology, "requester" refers to the sender and "requestee" to the recipient of a request (Trosborg, 1994, p. 187).

[6] Although the spread of German is not as strong as the spread of English, it is of a language that is also used in different sociocultural contexts. Therefore, it is not possible to conceptualize "German" as a monolithic entity. However, since the focus of this thesis is language use in English, the variations in the use of German shall be remarked here, but will not be elaborated upon in this thesis.

Herrn X."? One might expect the German wording to correspond to the English request (1) because of the syntactic similarity between the utterances. But this expectation could be deceptive, as it is not clear whether both expressions would have the same perlocutionary effect.

The questions above are far from being trivial: There is no universal definition of "politeness". The concept of, the perception and the application of "politeness" are highly lingua-culturally shaped. The notion of "politeness" is subjective, abstract, and fuzzy. Even if communication partners shared a concept of "politeness", it does not mean that they automatically employ the same communicative strategies to express politeness in a request or that they perceive the intended politeness in a request in a similar way. Furthermore, the application of a communicative strategy* and the perception of a speech act depend on multiple and complex parameters – to name a few: the relationship between the communication partners, their role, their emotional and psychological prerequisites, the communicative situation, time pressure, the type of communication, their social status, and their lingua-cultural biographies.

But although there is no universal definition of "politeness", no general criteria for applying politeness strategies, and although the lingua-cultural biographies of users of English are heterogeneous, communication across cultures* *does* take place; human beings *do* seem to be able to communicate *about* politeness and to build relationships across cultures and to maintain them *due to* politeness. If this were not so, there would not be any international scientific discourse on politeness, and there would not be any international organizations, business relationships or collaboration across the globe, which are based on successful communication. Why is this possible? This question leads to the first hypothesis of this thesis:

**Polite communication and communication about politeness in English between users with different lingua-cultural biographies are possible because human beings have the potential to switch their perspective and**

**re-consider their communicative choices – regardless of whether they are communicating intra- or interlingually, i.e., because they are able to *translate*. In other words, translation* is the prerequisite for politeness research and polite communication.**

This thesis synthesizes aspects of Constructive Realism (Wallner, 1997; Wallner & Jandl, 2006), Cooke's evolutionary theory of translation (2004), and functional perspectives on translation (including Skopos Theory) to explain that politeness *is* translatable due to its universal aspects, and that politeness *needs* to be translated due to the lingua-cultural diversification of the concept, perception and linguistic manifestations of politeness.

As proposed above, this thesis assumes that in expressing a speech act, both a perlocutionary and a social goal are aimed at, and that politeness strategies are employed in order to reach both goals. Which politeness strategy is preferred by the requester and how the requestee perceives a request, depends on different parameters, among them the lingua-cultural biographies of the communication partners. They influence the realization and perception of politeness. Preferences of strategies in illocutionary acts, perception and interpretations of illocutionary acts could be based on frequently used and approved communicative conventions at different stations of humans' lingua-cultural biography. This assumption leads to the second hypothesis of the thesis:

**Human beings with similar lingua-cultural biographies are more likely to share patterns of perceiving and realizing politeness in English than are individuals with diverging lingua-cultural biographies.**

The differences between the perception and realization of politeness might lead to communicative challenges between communication partners with different lingua-cultural biographies. Subtle, inexplicable misunderstandings could take place which – in the most severe case – could lead to the disruption of a relationship – regardless of whether English is used as a direct means of communication or if translations from and into English are necessary for communication (Ife, 2005, p. 287).

This represents a challenge not only for professionals without a background in translation studies or intercultural communication, but also for professional translators, editors and experts in intercultural communication. The first group of professionals might not be aware of the lingua-cultural diversification of politeness concepts, manifestations and interpretations, and thus needs to be sensitized towards these differences. The second group might face difficulties of identifying and assessing source and target cultures when being confronted with English texts due to the increasing lingua-cultural heterogeneity of users of English and the dynamics of communication through mass media and cyberspace.

An example taken from a non-scientific context, the "Patenttranslator's Blog", illustrates this development:

> "Different languages and cultures have different levels of politeness. […] I don't like it when people who are half my age and who I don't know from Adam call me by my first name. It must be the European in me. I don't mind that much when a paralegal or lawyer calls me by my first name, but that's because I can charge them twice as much as a translation agency. You pay me fifty percent more for my translation, you can call me anything you want. That must be the American in me. […] When I asked a customer service representative who works for T-Mobile here and who must be very young too why was he calling me "Steve", he said that he wanted me to consider him his friend. I am not your friend, buddy, I thought. But I did not say anything. I have my polite moments too. It would be useless anyway. The instruction to call customers by their first name must have come from the management. The lady with Southern (North Carolina?) accent who works for my local phone company still calls me "Mr. Vitek". She sounds older too. I will probably switch my cell phone service to that company." (Vitek, 2011)

This example does not only demonstrate that the realization and perception of politeness varies from individual to individual, but that even one and the same person can embody different cultures and react differently depending on the situation. It does not only reflect the heterogeneity of the users of English, but also the trends in today's society, i.e. migration, mass media, cyberspace, travelling and other processes which result in cultural encounters not only between different individuals but also within one individual. As Kramsch summarizes the challenge in one line:

> “[c]ulture, in an individual, as in society at large, is plural, changing and often conflictual” (2002, p. 252).

Another example, taken from a scientific source, illustrates how misunderstanding can occur – not because of a way of realizing politeness that is different, but because of expressing politeness in a situation when a recipient with a different lingua-cultural biography does not expect it at all and could thus be irritated, or even feel offended:

When Indians whose first language is Urdu say “very nice” to express politely that they have heard the communication partner, and that he or she can continue speaking, this can be misunderstood by British who could feel offended since they might interpret the tone of this expression as condescending, as it is often used to praise children in their cultural context (Kaiser-Cooke, 2007, p. 75).

A third example is a copy of an invitation to a cocktail reception for international scientists and researchers:[7]

| | |
|---|---|
| The City of Vienna invites you to the second Reception for International Scientists and Researchers at Vienna City Hall – an evening to honour you and the many other International Scientists and Researchers living and working in this city.<br><br>Programme<br>[…] | The Mayor and Governor of Vienna<br>requests the pleasure of your company<br>at a<br>Cocktail Reception<br>for<br>International Scientists and Researchers<br>on Thursday, January 9th, 2014, at 7.30 p.m.<br>at the City Hall of Vienna, Festsaal |

[7] At this instance, I would like to thank Professor Cooke for sharing this invitation with me.

| | |
|---|---|
| PLEASE NOTE: THIS INVITATION IS VALID FOR ONE PERSON ONLY. PLEASE CONFIRM YOUR ATTENDANCE BY JANUARY 3RD 2014 WITH MS. […].<br>PRIOR CONFIRMATION AND THE PRESENTATION OF THIS INVITATION UPON ARRIVAL ARE REQUIRED FOR THE ADMITTANCE TO THE RECEPTION. | |

The last sentence on the left page reads, "Prior confirmation and the presentation of this invitation upon arrival are required for the admittance to the reception." In these lines, the "Germanness", "Austrianness", or at least the "Otherness" can be "smelled". While the rest of the invitation is written in active voice, this last sentence is written in passive voice, and is shaped by different discourse conventions and communicative style. It is possible that the editor or translator of this text has either a lingua-cultural biography with a germanophone focus or adheres to a German source text, without adapting it to the needs of the target culture – perhaps since he or she does not know *which* target culture should be addressed. The invitation is sent to "international scientists", and can thus be potentially addressed to recipients with any lingua-cultural biography.

The probability that there are differences of conceptualizing, perceiving and expressing politeness is already very high within a common cultural context. It is even higher when communication takes place across different cultural contexts, regardless of whether it is inter- or intralingual communication, since the communication partners behave according to different cultural concepts (Thomas, et al., 2003, p. 266) and interpret the behavior of the other communication partner as based on patterns of perception and judgment of their own culture (Witte, 2006, p. 346).

In order to assess the second hypothesis, the thesis conducts an empirical analysis. The study focuses on the aspect of politeness in written communication, examining correlation patterns between lingua-cultural biographies and preferred patterns of expressing and perceiving politeness through different ways of de- and encoding[8] modality in requests. For this examination, it uses a multiple choice survey incorporating optional discourse completion in fictitious customer-support communication contexts. In addition, it analyzes messages sent to and from customer support accounts on the social networking platform Twitter.

In line with Terkourafi's frame-based view on politeness (2005), the study observes the frequencies of modal expressions in requests and assumes that frequently occurring expressions are considered polite in a lingua-cultural group. In order to assess the de- and encoding of modality in requests from a pragmatic and semantic perspective, the modal expressions are described on the level of modal meaning according to Collin's typology (2009), and on the level of pragmatic meaning according to the Blum-Kulka et al.'s Cross Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (1984; 1989).

Regardless of whether intra- or interlingual communication takes place and regardless of the educational and professional experiences of those who are involved in the communication process – there is one common denominator: In most of these cases, the professionals need to make fast decisions. There might not be enough time left to switch the perspective and accommodate the communicative choices. What do professionals do in such cases? It is possible that they make a decision based on their own subjective opinion, past experiences or the opinion or experience of their co-workers. This might be particularly difficult in new or unfamiliar communicative situations when no past

[8] In this thesis, "encoding" is used as a generic term referring to the process of transforming ideas or thoughts into verbal and nonverbal signs, which are sent as messages to a communication partner. "Decoding" is used as a generic term and relates to the attribution of meaning to these verbal and nonverbal messages received by the communication partner (Steinberg, 2007, p. 47).

experience is available. In such a case, as is often common in practice, some may simply start to write, assuming that the intelligibility of the message is most important and expressing him- or herself in such a way as if the communication partner had the same lingua-cultural biography. Some may also feel helpless, ask for templates,[9] if available, or ask co-employees or so-called "native speakers"[10] for a review.

One might wonder if a certain type of additional training or computational tool could help these professionals to substantiate their decisions. But apart from the problem that in many cases the time and financial resources for additional training are missing, even if some training were offered, it is not clear or evident what kind of data its content could rely on and how it could help in specific decision-making scenarios. Therefore, as a proposal for further research in the future, the thesis suggests a conceptual design for an interactive computational aid considering methods of automated text processing, data mining, and fuzzy logic as part of biocybernetics.

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[9] In some companies, it is common to use templates for e-mails to ensure linguistic correctness and to adhere to a certain corporate culture and language. This trend to standardization is often also applied for internal and external marketing purposes, in spite of the increasing heterogeneity of the readership.

[10] Not only in the translation sector, but also in other industry sectors, it is commonly assumed that a "native speaker" is particularly skilled, would automatically fulfill his or her tasks successfully and ensure linguistic quality (of translated or newly written texts). In translation practice, this stipulation, often referred to as "mother tongue principle," seems indisputably valid in institutions such as translation companies or translation schools. Translating into a non-native language rather represents an exception (Thelen, 2005, p. 242). But there is no definition of the term "native speaker" and one should be careful when expecting a "native speaker" automatically to have certain skills (Pokorn, 2004, p. 113). Particularly with regard to English, the "mother tongue principle" needs to be rethought, since English has been spreading during the last five hundred years. In spite of this development, the translation industry does not take into consideration implications caused by this spread and "treats English as just another language" (Campbell, 2005, p. 27).

## 1.2 Relevance of Study

Now in the twenty-first century, writing a thesis on politeness might seem to be an idle undertaking and one might question its relevance from a translational, transcultural and editorial perspective. Multiple scholars have already approached "politeness" from different perspectives and tried to define, describe, subcategorize and explain the phenomenon (Lakoff, 1973; Fraser & Nolan, 1981; Leech, 1983; Arndt & Janney, 1985; Brown & Levinson, 1987; Eelen, 2001; Watts, 2003; Spencer-Oatey, 2004; Ting-Toomey, 2005).

In addition, with the "pragmatic turn" in linguistics and the "cultural turn" in translation studies, with Brown and Levinson's politeness theory, and with Blum-Kulka et al.'s Cross Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (henceforth: CCSARP),[11] the number of empirical studies attempting to grasp politeness strategies in different languages and cultures has been constantly growing. Particularly the realization of requests as a type of speech act has been analyzed frequently and the results of these studies corroborate the second hypothesis of this thesis that there could be more commonalities in the conceptualization, manifestation and perception of politeness the more similar the lingua-cultural biographies are. In the following section, some examples of these studies will be reviewed. After the review, arguments *for* nevertheless revisiting the topic of politeness in general and requests in particular from a transcultural, translational and editorial perspective will be provided.

### 1.2.1 Previous investigations on politeness in English requests across different cultures

Different subfields of pragmatics have approached the concept of politeness. For example, scholars in the field of cross-cultural pragmatics, with its pragmatic and sociolinguistic roots, anticipate different linguistic manifestations of

[11] More information on the "pragmatic turn", "cultural turn", Brown and Levinson's politeness theory (1987), and the CCSARP (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984; Blum-Kulka, et al., 1989) can be found in the Theoretic Framework of this thesis.

politeness in different societies. They presume that these differences reflect the respective cultural values, priorities of values, and are “profound and systematic” (Wierzbicka, 2003, p. 69).

Also interlanguage pragmatics is a subfield that has approached the topic of politeness. It focuses on speech act production patterns of learners and proposes “that even fairly advanced learners fail to convey or comprehend the intended illocutionary force or politeness value” (Trosborg, 1994, p. 55).

The assessment of request realization patterns in particular has been of special interest to interlanguage, cross-cultural and intercultural pragmatics scholars. Studies embedded in an interlanguage pragmatics framework use observations to derive implications on teaching and learning English in classroom contexts. Cross-cultural and intercultural pragmatics aim at describing commonalities and differences of politeness strategies in different cultural contexts. While studies from an interlanguage pragmatic perspective use Inner Circle[12] Englishes as a reference of “pragmatic competence”[13] and depict deviations from this reference, studies from a cross-cultural pragmatic perspective compare realization patterns in different lingua-cultural groups without using a main reference.

One of the first and largest projects that examined request realization patterns in different cultural groups was the CCSARP. The request realization patterns

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[12] The term “Inner Circle Englishes” is derived from Kachru’s model of concentric circles, which focuses on English as a global language. It represents “three distinct types of speech fellowship of English, phases of the spread of the language, and particular characteristics of the uses of the language and of its acquisition and linguistic innovations” (Kachru, 1986, p. 122). According to Kachru, the innermost circle of English covers those countries where the first Englishes had started to emerge, such as the USA, UK, New Zealand, Australia and Canada. The Outer Circle covers those countries in which English has an official status in a multilingual, formerly colonialized country and is acquired as a second language (ESL) – like Nigeria, Malaysia, India or the Philippines. The Expanding Circle covers countries, in which English is learned as a foreign language (EFL), particularly in classroom contexts (Kachru & Bolton, 2006, p. 242).

[13] The concept of “pragmatic competence” represents a main focus of most interlanguage pragmatics studies. This term “refers to the ability to use the language forms or speech acts appropriately in respect of social variables such as social status and familiarity” **Invalid source specified.**.

were elicited from discourse completion tests (henceforth: DCTs) and surveys for different languages and varieties of languages: Australian, American and British English, Canadian French, Danish, German, Hebrew and Russian (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984, pp. 197-198). The methodology and coding system proposed and applied for the CCSARP form the basis of many other analyses of request realization patterns.

Tanaka and Kawade's study compares politeness strategies of native speakers of English and Japanese learners of English as a second language, using a multiple-choice survey. Their study demonstrates for both participant groups that the more distant the psychological relationship between requester and requestee, the more indirect the politeness strategy (according to the CCSARP scaling). However, in some situations where the relationship between the communication partners is close, the Japanese learners' politeness strategies are even more direct than native speakers' strategies (Tanaka & Kawade, 1982).

Based on Tanaka and Kawade's study, Suh conducted a study to examine politeness strategies in requests using a multiple-choice questionnaire. Suh compares the strategies preferred by native speakers of English and Korean learners of English as a second language. This study reveals that in intimate relationships, the politeness strategies used by the Korean learners differed from those used by the native speakers (Suh, 1999).

A difference between the preference of impersonal and personal devices can be detected in the comparison of request production by Venezuelan learners of English and American native speakers of English in García's study based on role-play situations. While the Venezuelan learners show higher preference towards impersonal devices in requesting a service, the American native speakers prefer personal devices (García, 1989).

In their DCT-based study, Iwai and Rinnert compare request realization patterns of US native speakers of English with nonnative speakers of English in Japan, Hong Kong and Singapore. The study reveals that only the Japanese participants show the preference of direct strategies or conventionally indirect expressions of desire and use the marker “please” more often than the other participants (Iwai & Rinnert, 2001).

Based on a spoken role-play task, Taguchi’s study examines request realization patterns of Japanese learners of English. However, instead of comparing the results of request production with the request production of native speakers, Taguchi uses a six-point appropriateness scale according to which native speakers of English rate the appropriateness of the produced requests. The results of this study show that with higher proficiency of English (based on TOEFL scores) more requests are produced according to the preference patterns of the native speakers (Taguchi, 2006).

A similar approach has been also used by Hendriks who investigates syntactic and lexical modification of requests in e-mails by Dutch learners and asks native speakers of English to evaluate the requests. The results of this study reveal that “the underuse of elaborate request modification in particular, such as the combination of subjectivizer/tense/aspect, may affect perceptions of recipients in that a sender of an e-mail may be regarded as less agreeable by native speakers of English” (Hendriks, 2010, p. 238).

Not only the type of psychological relationship between the communication partners, but also differences in social status play a role in request realization strategies. Umar’s study, that compares request strategy preferences of advanced Arab learners of English and British native speakers based on a DCT distributed among Arab and British university students, reveals that a commonality is the preferred use of conventionally indirect strategies,[14] if the requestees are of equal or higher social status. But if the requestees are of lower social status, they are more frequently addressed with direct strategies by Arab learners (Umar, 2004).

[14] An elaborate description of “conventionally indirect strategies” as part of Brown and Levinson’s politeness theory will be provided in the Theoretic Framework.

Similarly, the study by Chen and Chen, which examines the request strategies of Taiwanese learners of English and American native speakers, shows that both groups prefer conventional indirectness if requester and requestee are of equal social status. However, if the requester is of higher social status, the Taiwanese learners are more inclined to employ directness (Chen & Chen, 2007).

Biesenbach-Lucas examines patterns in e-mail requests from students to university faculty members. Her study reflects that native and non-native speakers of English use more direct strategies when posing a low-imposition request, but not when posing a high-imposition request.[15] A quantitative analysis of the used request strategies does not reveal any differences, but the qualitative analysis shows that the realization of the strategies is different (Biesenbach-Lucas, 2007).

In Jalilifar's study, which examines request strategies used by Iranian learners and Australian native speakers of English based on a DCT, reveals an overuse of conventional indirectness by high-proficiency learners and an overuse of directness by low-proficiency learners (Jalilifar, 2009).

Chiravate compares request realization patterns of native speakers of US American English with those of two groups of Thai learners of English as a foreign language. One group shows high and the other low proficiency in English. In this study, the participants are asked to judge how they perceive politeness forms in requests in different situations. For each situation, six politeness forms are offered and the participant is asked to choose the one he or she prefers most. The study shows that more similarities of request realization are shared among the native speakers of US American English and high-proficiency learner group than among the native speakers of US American English and low-proficiency learner group. In addition, Chiravate observes that high-proficiency learners of English show differences in the

[15] More information about "low-imposition" and "high-imposition" requests, as defined by Brown and Levinson, can be found in the Theoretic Framework.

preference of politeness forms, especially in situations in which the relationship between sender and addressee is psychologically close. In situations in which the relationship between sender and addressee is distant, the politeness forms preferred by high proficiency learners and native speakers show more resemblance. Furthermore, the native speakers prefer interrogative forms with the modal verb “can”, e.g. “Can you…?”, while both groups of Thai learners prefer the imperative. The imperative is used more commonly in the Thai language in close relationships (Chiravate, 2011).

The tendency of Expanding Circle speakers’ preference of direct strategies and of Inner Circle speakers’ preference of conventionally indirect strategies can also be observed in telephone service encounters, according to the study results of Economidou-Kogetsidis, which investigates request realization by Greek learners of English and British native speakers (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2005). In a later study, she investigates downgraders and supportive move mitigation by Greek learners of English and native speakers of British English. She also examines the manner how Greek learners combine internal and external modification. For this study, DCTs are used. Although this result shows generally similar results, as does her previous study, some further patterns are revealed: The learners use more external modification in the form of supportive moves and less frequently use “please”, which is attributed to a possible sociocultural transfer (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2009).

From the perspective of intercultural pragmatics, Sharifian and Jamarani compare speech act realization of Persian and non-Persian speakers of Australian English. By analyzing naturally occurring data, they investigate in how far the Persian cultural pragmatic schema *sharmandegi* (literally meaning: “being ashamed”) is applied as a politeness strategy in the realization of Australian English speech acts, including requests for goods and services, by Persian speakers (Sharifian & Jamarani, 2011).

### 1.2.2 Revisiting politeness as a translation-relevant aspect

Although the conceptualization and manifestations of politeness have been intensively studied – particularly after the pragmatic/cultural turn – and a number of analyses of the realization of requests have been undertaken, it is necessary to revisit the topic of politeness and the question to which extent it plays a (new) role in translational, transcultural and editorial activities.

One reason for this is the observation that – particularly with regard to politeness in requests – most existing studies focus on the realization of requests rather than the *perception* of requests (Hendriks, 2010, p. 222).

Furthermore, most studies in politeness research are conducted from the perspectives of interlanguage, cross-cultural or intercultural pragmatics. Since pragmatics is a relevant aspect of translation and transcultural communication, it is interesting to discover the interface between translation, pragmatics and politeness. As translation studies does not need to focus on justifying its position as an own discipline anymore, and as it is accepted that it is not only a subpart of applied linguistics or foreign language studies, it is now ready – more than ever before - to build synergies between its own insights and insights into other disciplines such as linguistics, cultural or communication studies (Bassnett, 2002, p. 3). Scholars are still hesitant about this new possibility of interdisciplinary work. As Salevsky, for example, rightly puts forward:

> "In spite of the great advances that have been made in knowledge about translation, some fundamental gaps still remain: texts, cross-cultural communication and mental processes are treated as utterly disparate phenomena. Yet all three arise in experience, and in the translator all three meet and apparently intermingle." (2011, p. 5)

Therefore, approaching "politeness" from an interdisciplinary perspective could pave the way for new findings and it is even more so justified that the "old" topic of politeness is re-visited from a translational and transcultural perspective.

At this instance, the following observation also needs to be mentioned: translation studies started already in the 1960s to adopt approaches and methods from the perspective of linguistics, cultural and communication studies, while in the opposite direction, the consideration of the contribution of translation studies to linguistics, cultural or communication studies has just begun (Salevsky & Müller, 2011, p. 191). This observation also applies to politeness research as part of linguistics (particularly pragmatics), cultural and communication studies.

The (new) role of English is another reason for revisiting the topic of politeness strategies in different varieties of English. English is used in different varieties and as a lingua franca by individuals with different lingua-cultural biographies in and across the Inner, Outer and Expanding Circle. If English is not used as a direct medium of communication, translators and interpreters act as mediators and transfer content from English into other languages or from other languages into English. In the Outer circle, English has "adapted" to the respective cultures and has new features on all linguistic levels.[16] In the expanded circle people consider varieties of the Inner Circle as the standard, and try to reach it. Nevertheless, their use of English is not only influenced by their first language(s) and cultural biography, but also by other aspects such as new features of English as a lingua franca or the use of English as a corporate language. Due to these multiple and complex roles of English and its pluricentricity, some scholars even speak of "Englishes" (Coulmas, 2005, p. 221).

Regardless of whether an individual is in the role of an editor[17] and uses English to communicate with his or her employers, employees, colleagues,

[16] Steiner even contends that the "differences of dialect have polarized to the degree that we are almost dealing with distinct tongues.", and that in "all these cases comprehension demands translation along lines closer and closer to those of inter-lingual transfer" (1998, pp. 32-33).

[17] In this thesis, the term "editor" is not used in the narrow context of the publishing industry, but as a broad term to describe any professional who frequently edits a "sub-English" text that is considered "the defective but by no means standardised or impoverished English that is often used for international communication". As more and more sub-English texts

customers and external partners through e-mails, business letters, or indirectly through written marketing material, or if English is a source or target language for a translator in an international company – whenever users of English with different lingua-cultural and linguistic biographies wish to communicate successfully, communicative skills are required not only on the lexicosemantic and morphosyntactic level, but also on the pragmatic level. But due to the increasing lingua-cultural heterogeneity of users of English, the level of pragmatics, which the topic of "politeness" is a main aspect of, becomes increasingly opaque, difficult to assess and mediate. Therefore, whenever English is involved in communication, those who are in charge of professionally coping with these tasks face a tremendous challenge from a translational, transcultural and editorial perspective. Because of these developments, functional approaches to translation have to be revisited, as they propose that translators should know the "cultures" in which texts are created and received (Vermeer, 1996a, p. 106), and it has become difficult to identify the source and target culture(s) of English texts. Translators have to interpret the patterns in the source text and translate them in such a way that they have the same effect in the target culture(s).

Another relevant aspect of this study is that the object of study in politeness research is still not defined, despite the large number of works on politeness that have been published already. This being the case, the questions of what happens when "politeness" is "translated" and of how one can ensure that "politeness" is translated still remain open. Do translators need to make translation shifts in order to fulfill the function of a text, and to compensate for the "degree of politeness"? If yes, which kind of shifts could they perform? Is it necessary to apply a "cultural filter*" to fulfill the requirements of a target culture, when translating a text? If yes, which "cultural filter" could be applied? Or does the increasing dominance of English also cause a process of

are produced, translating increasingly involves editing of sub-English texts in daily practice (Wagner, 2005, p. 215).

neutralization or homogenization, which House refers to as “cultural universalism” or “cultural neutralism”? Text production today is in an area of conflict between “global information and marketing strategies on the one hand and local, particular textualisation conventions on the other hand” (House, 2004, p. 503).

Moreover, the dynamics of world’s society is constantly increasing due to modern communication technology, cyberspace, mass media, travel and migration. More than ever before, cultures cannot anymore be viewed as separate or isolated entities, but rather as hybrid cultures – this notion of “culture” was already mentioned in the 1990s (Welsch, 1994, p. 99). Welsch criticizes the general understanding of “culture” as “national culture”, because political, cultural and geographical borders are not congruent (Welsch, 2011, p. 306). Although it is generally recognized that mutual understanding is necessary for effective collaboration (Borofsky, 1994, p. 331), although an increasing number of companies pay attention to intercultural trainings, and although the research field “intercultural communication” that emerged in the US, and has now expanded to Europe, is flourishing (Witte, 2006, p. 346); the dynamics of the transcultural society and the specificity of communicative tasks represent a major challenge.

In addition, the professional role(s) of individuals has adapted to the trends of the globalized world. Not only individuals with a language-, culture-, or translation-related training or education write, edit or translate texts in English.[18] Since in many contexts English is the official language of communication or corporate language, it is used by individuals with different professional and educational backgrounds. For example, they might be experts in a technical field and be customer support representatives without

[18] At this instance, it needs to be also mentioned that the professional profiles of those who have had a professional translation training is also constantly changing – they work in different fields such as marketing, customer support centers, etc. Studies show that individuals educated to be translators possess competencies such as research, text and cultural competences, which are useful for tasks outside of translation (Höller, 2008).

any experience or training in transcultural communication, but need to exchange English e-mails with customers from all over the world. Another example could be a professional translator who has to translate German business letters into English and who knows that the letters are to be sent to an Indian recipient. This translator might be experienced and might have undergone a dedicated translators' training. Nevertheless, he or she cannot rely on any specific support when having to decide whether his or her English translation of the German business letter will be perceived as "polite" by the recipient. In all these examples, the proficiency of the professionals on levels such as phonology, lexicosemantics and morphosyntactics may be measurable, according to certain standards such as the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment.[19] (Council of Europe, 2001). But pragmatic competence is difficult to assess and, in addition, all professionals have their own lingua-cultural biography that might influence their decisions and perceptions as well.

The need to become sensitized towards differences or commonalities of patterns of perceiving and expressing "politeness" in spite of the necessity to make fast decisions represents the main relevance of this study. The study presented in the thesis does not aim at providing a "recipe" for communication, but to make something that is usually implicit explicit, in order to substantiate the translators' awareness *that* there are lingua-culturally shaped differences in perceiving and expressing politeness, which facilitate the decision-making process.

[19] Even on these levels, one needs to take into consideration aspects such as language variation, which standard can be used as a benchmark and how much deviation from the standard is acceptable. Numerous works in the framework of second language acquisition, teaching and sociolinguistics cope with these questions. However, as this thesis focuses on the pragmatic level of language, this discussion shall not be elaborated upon at this point.

## 1.3 Limitations of the Study

"1. All concepts are embedded in practice; and so their definition and thrust can only be determined in the context of that practice.

2. All views are singular and positioned; and anthropological accounts and generalizations about a cultural tradition will represent the anthropologist's own construction, based on her judgments and analyses.

3. All meaning remains contestable, within as well as between social circles and cultural traditions" (Barth, 1994, p. 356)

This thesis distinguishes two types of limitations. The first type comprises those limitations that are mentioned in this subchapter but are not discussed in the Theoretic Framework, as the discussion would go beyond the scope of this thesis. The second type of limitations is associated with the challenges that need to be tackled to approach the hypotheses of the thesis. These challenges (and with them the limitations) will be described and discussed in detail in the Theoretic Framework.

Any approach towards the hypotheses of this thesis will contain some lingua-cultural bias. Even if scientific inputs from different lingua-cultural contexts are considered in one thesis, the human being selecting the inputs, interpreting and evaluating them will do this in a specific language with a specific lingua-cultural biography. In addition, most of the literature used as reference has been published in the USA or Europe, which might also contribute to the interpretational bias of this thesis. In fact, scientific objectivity is "inter-subjective consensus. The more one's peers agree with one's findings, the more it is accepted as truth. Scientific knowledge is a process of communication and social construction." (Cooke, 2011, pp. 116-117).

Throughout the entire thesis, it is important to distinguish between pragmatic concepts, patterns of de- and encoding them and the relationship between the two. It is stated that the content constituting pragmatic concepts can merely be assumed; it cannot be observed directly. Only patterns of linguistic de- and encoding can be observed and quantified. Any attempt of reasoning and linking these two parts will contain an interpretational bias:

> "You cannot access the internal thoughts and feelings of other human beings; you can only infer what they are experiencing by what you see and hear. […] This characteristic of communication has always frustrated human beings because, in a very real sense, all people are isolated from one another by the enclosure of their skin." (Samovar, et al., 2010, p. 17)

In addition, it does not only play a relevant role that those who conduct a study cannot access the internal thoughts or feelings of the study participants. In fact, it is even possible that even the participants are not aware of their own mental processes that influence the decision-making processes:

> "There is another factor which is very important for translation: the subconscious mind. […] The Mind[20] integrates the past and the future with the present. At any given moment of functioning, the experience of the past has a powerful influence on the conscious present of the experiencing subject. Even the unremembered past experience is active below the level of consciousness; its silent vote is often decisive. […] Therefore a subconscious judgement is a fundamental bias for our instinctive reactions and our individual way of looking at people, things and situations." (Salevsky, 2011, p. 14)

The output of the empirical research will strongly depend on whether it analyzes spoken or written language. Depending on whether a message is codified in written or spoken language, the sender and the addressee are confronted with different sets of verbal and non-verbal devices. In spoken language, the sender can employ non-verbal cues, observe the addressee and his or her reactions, but also has to monitor the conversation under time pressure. However, immediate repair, repetition or paraphrasing is possible in spoken communication. In written language, the sender has more time to reflect, but his or her utterances are more binding. Techniques such as immediate repetition, paraphrasing, discussing, modification and observation of non-verbal cues are not possible in written communication (Vermeer, 2007, pp. 26-27). Today's communication technologies provide possibilities of hybrid communication types, merging spoken and written communication. It is

[20] Salevsky defines "The Mind" as follows: "The *Mind* (reasoning activity) coordinates and regulates all experience. Its physical basis is the brain and neural system, the central system of regulation and coordination in the *body*. It has its conscious and subconscious areas. The experience of the individual's life as well as physiological bases exercise a powerful influence. The sensitive bases forms a capacity of intellectual intuition. The Mind is thus the organ of control, of knowledge and of values (2011, p. 14)."

possible to interact by writing and still be able to see non-verbal cues and receive immediate responses. For instance, in video chats, communication partners can write to each other and still see each other. Also the use of emoticons in text messages can be seen as an attempt to compensate for the lack of non-verbal cues. Thus, texts written in chat rooms, forums, through e-mails and social media platforms possess many characteristics of spoken language, so that in this thesis – in accordance with Brown and Yule – "text" will be very generally used "as a technical term, to refer to the verbal record of a communicative act" (Brown & Yule, 1983, p. xviii).

In addition, it is necessary to acknowledge that – regardless of the results of the study of this thesis – it remains open in how far real-life organizational conditions additionally influence the process of translation in the widest sense (Göpferich, 2008, p. 1).

Finally, one needs to keep in mind that languages and cultures represent only one dimension of politeness research. Psychological, emotional, social, historical or situational parameters can also play a relevant role in the expression and perception of politeness.

# 2 Theoretic Framework

"οἶδα οὐκ εἰδώς" (*I know that I don't know.)*

(Socrates, 496 – 399 B.C., in: Plato, Apology, 21d[21])

"I do not know that I know".

(Pöppel & Bao, 2011, p. 219)

In his postscript, Anthony Pym recommends not to stick to one paradigm in translation theory, but to identify a problem first, before finding the actual paradigms, and – if necessary – to move between them (Pym, 2010, p. 181).

Examining politeness strategies in different varieties of English from a translational, transcultural and editorial perspective, focusing on patterns of de- and encoding modality in requests is inevitably linked with complex conceptual and methodological problems. Due to this complexity, it is not only recommendable, but even necessary to synthesize aspects from different paradigms in order to theoretically and empirically assess the topic of this thesis.

In the first part of the Theoretic Framework of this thesis, an overview over the conceptual and methodological problems will be provided. In the subsequent subchapters, each problem will be discussed in detail.

## 2.1 Conceptual and Methodological Challenges: An Overview

This thesis hypothesizes that the ability of humans to translate is the prerequisite for metacommunication about politeness as well as polite communication across different cultures. Furthermore, it claims the positive correlation between the similarity of lingua-cultural biographies of individuals

[21] See, for example, Cooper & Hutchinson (1997, pp. 17-36).

and the frequency of similar patterns of perceiving and expressing politeness in verbal communication.

At first sight, these two hypotheses may seem to contradict each other, since the second hypothesis implies that the concept of, the perception and the manifestations of politeness are culture-specific, while the first hypothesis claims that politeness, its concept and manifestations are nevertheless translatable. This seemingly contradictory notion of politeness is the first problem that will be discussed in the Subchapters 2.2 and 2.3 of the Theoretic Framework: In how far is politeness translatable and yet culture-specific? In order to approach this question, the concepts of translatability, translation, transculturality, culture and communication will be discussed as a first step. As a second step, it will be explained in how far politeness is lingua-culturally embedded and in how far resulting differences in perceiving and expressing politeness can lead to communication problems.

In order to assess empirically the second hypothesis of the thesis, it is necessary to find a working definition of politeness. This represents another major challenge of this thesis. Depending on the research perspectives of different scholars, their opinions vary as to what constitutes politeness and how politeness is perceived and expressed. In addition, other factors that influence the extent to which a certain type of verbal behavior is interpreted as polite and that influence the way humans express politeness are manifold and increase the complexity of the phenomenon. Whether a type of behavior is considered “polite” or not is also highly dependent on the roles of the communication partners, their relationship to each other, the context or situation of communication, emotions and feelings, cognitive prerequisites, the medium of communication (e.g. letter, e-mail, chat, messages in a forum, messages in social networking platforms), experience in communication, etc., to name only a few parameters. In order to find a working definition of politeness for this thesis, Subchapter 2.5 of the Theoretic Framework, will review different perspectives on politeness and elicit a working definition.

As the study aims at finding commonalities and differences of politeness strategies in different varieties of English and used by human beings with different lingua-cultural biographies, it is necessary to find a scheme for categorizing varieties of English and lingua-cultural biographies. Subchapter 2.6 will discuss the challenge of identifying and distinguishing varieties of English and lingua-cultural biographies because of the spread of English and the transculturality of today's society. In addition, a scheme for the empirical study will be proposed.

The fourth challenge consists in finding a coding scheme for describing and evaluating the patterns of realizing and perceiving politeness. In order to build a scheme, Subchapter 2.6 discusses the advantages and disadvantages of Speech Act Theory as a foundation for the study. In addition, the concepts of "request" and "modality" will be discussed, and a coding scheme will be worked out for the study.

## 2.2 The Translatability of Politeness

### 2.2.1 The dichotomy between universality and relativity

In how far can politeness be considered translatable? As a first step towards approaching this question, this section will review approaches to the concept of "translatability". The discussion about the concept of "translatability" in translation studies is not new. In the 1940s up to the 1950s, the issue of "translatability" dominated translation theory. Scholars from different disciplines, such as philosophy, literary criticism, and linguistics, discussed the question whether the differences between languages and cultures can be reconciled with translation (Venuti, 2012, p. 109).

In most of the discussions during that time, translation is seen as what Jakobson refers to as "translation proper", i.e. translation between different languages (neglecting the fact that there is no universal set of criteria for distinguishing languages from each other). On the one hand, the discussion has been dealing with the possibility of “translation” in general; on the other hand, particular “translation” problems in specific cases of “translations” triggered discussions.

In the discussion about “translatability”, two extreme positions can be observed: the universalist and relativist view.

#### 2.2.1.1 Universalist views

From a universalist perspective, everything can be translated, including politeness. This view is shaped by Noam Chomsky,[22] who claims that language consists of a surface and deep structure, and that the deep structure elements can be expressed in any language and culture (Venuti, 2000, p. 67; Pym & Turk, 1998, p. 273). Other scholars, particularly representatives of the linguistically oriented translation studies such as Kade or Jakobson, share this opinion and underline their position by arguing that whenever humans become aware of new things in the world, they are able to denote them. Therefore, languages have the potential to denote anything (Kade, 1964, p. 95). Kade argues, furthermore, that the process of cognition (“Erkenntnisprozess”) is equal for all human beings – regardless of which language they speak (Kade, 1981, p. 208). Therefore, he believes that any content can be expressed in any language and thus translatability is generally given. Nevertheless, he asserts that socio-economical, cultural, and historical factors can lead to translation issues and temporary untranslatability. Such gaps in the conceptual system are not caused by structural differences between languages, but by different ways of codifying results of a process of cognition (Kade, 1964, p. 94). Kade believes that individual associations are less relevant in the communication across nations, and that they can go lost in translation, but would not hinder communication (Kade, 1981, p. 207).

Jakobson argues in a similar way as Kade does, but his understanding of “translation” is broader. In his opinion, “translation” includes intralingual,

[22] See, for instance, Chomsky (1972).

interlingual and intersemiotic “translation” (Jakobson, 1959, p. 232). For him, symbols that are to replace other symbols are never identical – this applies to synonyms within one language, but also to lexical and grammatical categories across different languages. Jakobson believes that the difference between languages rather lies in what they have to express than in what they are able to express (Jakobson, 1981 (1959), p. 195).

Based on Chomsky’s and Jakobson’s perspectives, Nida claims in his theory of dynamic equivalence that through transformation, language structure can gain a dynamic dimension. He claims that languages consist of kernel sentences and that they can be categorized into seven groups. According to this view, the logic organization of the kernel sentences represents the surface structure of any language. Therefore, he concludes, all meanings can be expressed by all languages (Nida, 1964, pp. 66-69).

#### 2.2.1.2 Relativistic views

From a relativistic perspective as occupied by Sapir and Whorf[23] who claim that language determines culture, nothing is translatable, including politeness, as thinking and speaking are strongly bound to each other (Pym & Turk, 1998, p. 273). Supporters of this view are, for instance, Humboldt, Weisgerber or Schleiermacher. According to Humboldt, who particularly refers to poetic texts, thoughts are bound to location and language reflects a speaker’s worldview. He does not believe that it is possible to translate fully something since no word in one language is wholly identical with a word in a different language (Humboldt, 1949, pp. 60-61). Humboldt’s observation does not only apply across different languages but also within one language: Rarely is it possible

[23] According to the principle of linguistic relativity by Sapir and Whorf, language determines thought. Whorf examined different language and thought structures and their correlation with geographical and social environmental influences, based on the works of his teacher Sapir. Whorf explains that humans who use languages with highly different grammatical structures are influenced by these grammars in their perception, observation and evaluation of observations. This causes different views on the world (Whorf 1963: 20). According to the principle of linguistic relativity, a similar linguistic background is necessary for human beings to create the same worldview under equal physical conditions. In other words, language influences thought – regardless of its cultural integration.

to find two identical synonyms: there are often conceptual overlapping, exclusions, inclusions and connotative differences. Based on Humboldt's opinion, Weisgerber also argues that different languages represent different worldviews and thus for him each language is a relatively closed and isolated system.

Similar to Humboldt, Schleiermacher is of the opinion that the "spirit of the source language" is difficult to translate (Schleiermacher, 1977 (1838), p. 72). But Schleiermacher acknowledges the translatability of texts in spite of the individuality of languages. He proposes that it is possible to mediate between thinking, speaking, meaning, and expression (Pym & Turk, 1998, p. 274).

#### 2.2.1.3 Intermediate views

Between these two extremes of universality and relativity, scholars also occupy intermediate positions. For example, some scholars distinguish between different types of translatability: Catford, for instance, asserts that translatability can be considered "a cline rather than a clear-cut dichotomy" (Catford, 1965, p. 93), and distinguishes between linguistic and cultural untranslatability. Linguistic untranslatability refers to the impossibility of substituting a lexical or syntactical item of the source language in the target language. Cultural untranslatability occurs when, in the target language culture, a functionally relevant situational feature is missing for the source text (Catford, 1965, pp. 94-99).

Koller differentiates translatability on the denotative and connotative level. He claims that translation is generally possible on the denotative level, but problematic on the connotative level (Koller, 1998, p. 120).

#### 2.2.1.4 Conclusions

The different perspectives on translatability imply two main presuppositions. Firstly, they assume that cultures and languages constitute homogeneous entities that can be distinguished clearly from each other.

As stated above, communication, media, cyberspace, travelling options, migration and technology all enhance the dynamic intermixing of cultures and languages, and thus the lingua-cultural heterogeneity of societies. This *trans*cultural communication is closely linked to globalization, since through globalization, cultural and communicative patterns are “spread” globally (Hepp, 2006, p. 10).

Therefore, the views on translatability presented above, which are based on perspectives on cultures as isolated spheres, or rather homogeneous entities, cannot sufficiently represent a foundation for this thesis. They neglect the differentiation and complexity within cultures in societies and in individuals, but also the interconnection and “hybridization” processes across cultures (Welsch, 1999, pp. 195-198).

Considering the problem of finding criteria for distinguishing languages and cultures, which constantly intermix and change, in how far can the view on translatability be adapted to this new transculturality of societies? In order to approach this question, Section 2.2.2 explains how the seemingly dichotomous relationship between the universal and relativist aspects of translatability can be linked and how this link relativizes the necessity for clear-cut boundaries between cultures and languages. This new transculturally-oriented perspective on translatability also challenges the perspective on “translation”, as the transculturality of today’s societies increases the difficulty of identifying and differentiating cultures and languages that are involved in translation.

Secondly, the views on translatability presented above suggest that the concept of translatability is constituted by the capacity “for some kind of meaning to be transferred from one language to another without undergoing radical change" (Pym & Turk, 1998, p. 273).

The etymological background of the word "translation", which comes from the Latin verb "transferre" and means "to carry over" (Eco, 2001, p. 9), might indeed imply that something is carried over from somewhere to somewhere else and that this something remains constant. But in other languages, the process of "carrying over" is not necessarily the focus in corresponding translations of "translation". Maria Tymoczko, for instance, presents examples of words and metaphors for "translation" in other languages and cultures whose etymological roots do not necessarily imply aspects such as "carrying across". The Arab word "*tarjama*" derives from a root connected with "speaks" and can mean "biography" or "definition". The Nigerian language Igbo uses the words "*tapia*" and "*kowa*" for "translation". The root "*ta*" means "to narrate", and the root "*pia*" means "destruction". The root "*ko*" also means "to narrate", and "*wa*" means "to break in pieces". The Chinese word, "*fan yi*" means "to turn over". In India, the Bengali word *rupantar* means "change of form", and the Hindi *anuvad* means "speaking after", "following". The Malay word *tersalin* and the Tagalog word *pagsasalin* relate to "birth" and describe the process of translation as filling liquids or granular solids from one container to a different one (Tymoczko, 2014, pp. 114-116). The notion of "carrying across" is also not focused upon in common translations of "translation" in Finnish, Tibetan, Japanese, Finnish, Turkish and Tamil, but rather the aspect of "difference" or "mediation" (Chesterman, 2010, p. 104).

Considering this, it is necessary to ask, if there is something *at all* that remains after translation and if yes, what is *it*? In addition, the question of what constitutes "translation" emerges as well. Sections 2.2.3 to 2.2.8 will discuss these questions.

### 2.2.2 The link between universality and relativity

> "Culture has always dictated where to draw the line separating one thing from another. These lines are arbitrary, but once learned and internalised they are treated as real." (Hall, 1963, p. 230)

> "Culture-specific or language-specific perception does not confine us to a cultural straitjacket: Relativism is not absolute." (Cooke, 2011, p. 131)

> "[W]e confront the world neither directly nor precisely." (Kandel, 2006, p. 302)

The concept of "transculturality" does not focus on the differences *between* cultures, as does the concept of "interculturality", but focuses on the permeating processes across cultures (Welsch, 1999, pp. 195-197).

It epitomizes the complexity of today's communication – a complexity that is caused by the manifold possibilities of receiving information through different types of media, by migration and enculturation in many countries (Hepp, 2008).

This transcultural perspective of the world demands a perspective on translatability and translation that covers "global and local, universalistic and particularistic aspects" (Welsch, 1999, p. 205). How can this gap between universality and particularity be bridged?

#### 2.2.2.1 *Wirklichkeit*, *Realität*, and *Homo sapiens*

One aspect that represents a link between universalistic and particularistic features of today's transcultural societies is the concept of *Wirklichkeit*.[24] According to the axioms of Constructive Realism, humans and their environments are part of an objectively existing world: *Wirklichkeit*. In this world, which is independent from humans' perception, universality and particularity co-exist. The scientific constructions of *Wirklichkeit* are referred to as "*Realitäten*" (Wallner & Jandl, 2006, p. 54). While there is only one *Wirklichkeit*, which

[24] For terminological clarity, the German terms "Realität" (singular form), "Realitäten" (plural form), and "Wirklichkeit" will henceforth be used as technical terms throughout the thesis.

connects all humans, there can be at least as many *Realitäten* as there are human beings, since *Realitäten* depend on individual perception and interpretation.

Although Wallner and Jandl particularly focus on scientific constructions, they put forward that *Realitäten* could also be socioculturally constructed (Wallner, 2006, p. 68).

Furthermore, the species *Homo sapiens*, which is part of *Wirklichkeit*, also represents a link between universality and particularity. In spite of being individuals, all humans share a commonality: the main structures of their biology and cognition, their being *Homo sapiens*,[25] and a product of evolution. Cooke's evolutionary translation theory, which is based on Darwin's theory of evolution, provides a framework for considering human beings, including translationally acting people, as embedded in the context of the development of all living creatures and as biological creatures (Kaiser-Cooke, 2003, pp. 13-14). It shows that

> "[t]ranslation as a human activity is an expression of positive cognitive abilities, of mental faculties which have been selected for because they confer on humans an adaptability which enhances their survival chances." (Kaiser-Cooke, 2004, p. 21)

From this evolutionary perspective, the environment in which human beings live determines many aspects of their life: their perception of the world and what is relevant for their survival. Furthermore, other conspecifics who live in and are part of the same environment determine what is considered true or

[25] This view is also supported by Salevsky, who promotes a holistic approach to translation that considers the translator a human being with all associated facets: "Each translator is a biological-psychical organism, an individual, with his/her own development curve, and own phases of growth. Any explanation which overlooks the personality of the translator (as an organism in a given situation of life and energy) ignores the whole and the creativity in an activity or in an action and therefore cannot be considered satisfactory. The difficult question is the body and mind relation. A disembodied mind or a disminded body are both impossible concepts, as either only has meaning and function in relation to the other [sic]. The one acts inside the other and through the other. Thus the whole is an active mediating factor in whatever action takes place among its elements. Mind and body as elements of the human personality influence each other because of their copresence in the personality" (Salevsky, 2011, p. 14).

false, what they believe, and how to behave. The values and norms constituted within this community influence their perception and actions. Individuals and the communities in which they live interpret their relationships/references to the world differently – they have different cultures. They perceive their own interpretation of the world as reality (Kaiser-Cooke, 2007, pp. 28-29).

##### 2.2.2.2 *Homo sapiens'* ability to translate between different *Realitäten*

Different characteristics and abilities of human beings that can be considered a product of evolution and part of *Wirklichkeit* enable them to translate between different *Realitäten*:

###### 2.2.2.2.1 First- and second-order theory

Humans are able to relate adequately to *Wirklichkeit* in order to survive. Kaiser-Cooke proposes that all human beings are born with relevant knowledge about the world. This is necessary for their survival. This initial knowledge is referred to as "first order theory" and has to be adequate enough, to approve of itself in practice, i.e. in the *Wirklichkeit* – if not, it is possible that the human being does not survive (Kaiser-Cooke, 2003, p. 21). It represents an immaterial, abstract relation to the world. Practice is a material concrete relation of living creatures to the world and prerequisite for life. Learning happens through the unity of theory and practice. It is necessary to tackle real living conditions (Kaiser-Cooke, 2003, p. 16). Based on the first order theory, organisms (including humans) are programmed to expect rule-based events because regularity happens in the world and is necessary for the continuity of life. The expectation of regularity is necessary for survival (Kaiser-Cooke, 2003, p. 22). Humans expect that events *do* re-occur, not that each event itself re-occurs. Each event is part of a continuum, and at the same time a specific case of a general phenomenon. That is, each event has something in common with all the others, but is also unique (Kaiser-Cooke, 2003, p. 23).

> "It is the expectation of regularity that makes it possible for the organism to react adequately to each specific individual event. It does not have to develop

> completely new strategies or deal with each individual occurrence *ad hoc.*" (Kaiser-Cooke, 2004, p. 143)

Using this approach, humans do not have to find new methods of tackling each event, but can modify their strategies. The generality of their expectations and the flexibility of their cognitive structures make these adaptations possible (Kaiser-Cooke, 2003, pp. 23-24).

Furthermore, human beings' cognitive relation to the world, which is the basis of their biological relation, represents a universally shared feature of all human beings. Since humans live all over the world, the entire world could be the possible environment for humans. Thus, humans embody a general theory about potential environments. This common cognitive equipment and the common biology mean that all humans have the potential to experience the world in the same way (Kaiser-Cooke, 2003, p. 25). Human beings are able to perceive consciously their relation to the world. They have a self-awareness, since they are able to de-familiarize themselves from their own world. In this way, they can interpret their relation to the world.

Cooke distinguishes between first-order and second-order theory. First-order theory is not mediated and can be considered as "universal-human" and "immediate" (Kaiser-Cooke, 2004, p. 167). Second-order theory is mediated and can be considered "culture" (Kaiser-Cooke, 2003, pp. 36-37). Culture as the theory about the environment of human beings is universal (Kaiser-Cooke, 2003, p. 38). Different collectives interpret their relation to their environment differently. Therefore, there are different cultures. The common denominator is the human consciousness and the biological relation to the world. But culture as second-order theory superseded first-order theory and is treated as if it were first-order theory. Humans' perception depends on their culture (Kaiser-Cooke, 2003, pp. 38-40).

###### 2.2.2.2.2 Humans' ability to use language

All human beings share the ability to use language to articulate their interpretation of the world. Through language, they can "theorize" about the world, i.e., talk about their assumptions on the world, experiences and actions in the past, in the present, in the future, and in virtual worlds (Kaiser-Cooke, 2003, pp. 36-37). There are different manifestations of language. These manifestations are culture-specific. But the ability itself to communicate one's interpretation of the world and to mediate culture through language is universal (Kaiser-Cooke, 2003, p. 41). Every language has the theoretical potential to express anything. But a language is a superordinate interpretation of reality. In practice, a language manifests itself in different ways, in different discourses (Kaiser-Cooke, 2003, pp. 64-65). If a culture does not have a designation for something, it means that it did not consider it relevant. Therefore, humans see their *Realität* through culture *and* language. Languages construct the human reality (Kaiser-Cooke, 2003, pp. 41-63). Language does not only have a denotative function, but also serves as a means to convey one's emotional state and to establish social bonds, which are both survival advantages from an evolutionary perspective (Cooke, 2011, pp. 122-123).

##### **2.2.2.2.3** Strangification/de-familiarization as a human ability for communicating across *Realitäten*:

Constructive Realism proposes a set of strategies, which are called "strangification", and have one common denominator:

> "Transferring one (logical) system of propositions from their original context into another context and judging this system out of this context." (Wallner & Jandl, 2006, p. 57)

This strategy is not only applicable for transferring systems of scientific systems, but also for transferring systems of cultural systems, since Wallner and Jandl put forward that *Realitäten* can also be socioculturally constructed (Wallner, 2006, p. 68). Kaiser-Cooke refers to the process of "strangification" as "de-familiarisation" and defines it as

> "the process by which the section of reality under investigation is disengaged from one's "native" concept system and set *in relation* to another." (2004, p. 114)

Since each individual has an own concept of *Realität*, all humans must be able to de-familiarize, since – in order to survive – they need to communicate with other human beings. For successful communication, they need to be able to de-familiarize:

> "We are all born with the capacity to distinguish between ourselves and others in order to be able to see others as other than us, which is an essential condition for any inter-action, and thus for understanding. Changing our perspective is a biological necessity: We can all adapt to new environments, cultures and languages (unless we decide we don't want to)." (Cooke, 2011, p. 130)

It is possible that human beings are not aware of this process, but they need to be able to shift their perspective from their own *Realität* to the *Realität* of the communication partner in order to understand him or her and to make oneself be understood. The process of de-familiarization becomes more complex when humans of different cultures communicate – but the process *per se* takes place in any type of communication.

##### 2.2.2.2.4 Empathy as a universal human ability to understand and explain *Realitäten*:

Because all human beings can de-familiarize in communication processes, it can be assumed that they can also be empathetic. Empathy enables human beings to anticipate the communication partners' intention and to understand the motives and feelings of others (Bonacchi, 2011, p. 128). It is the extent to which humans can infer other humans' thoughts or feelings (Neuliep, 2015, p. 343). Furthermore,

> "Empathy, i.e. seeing things through somebody else's eyes, also requires that we see them as *different*, as *somebody else*. Empathy is not the same as identification." (Cooke, 2011, p. 129)

This perspective on empathy is shared by Broome who argues that due to the idiosyncratic nature of our individual thoughts and perceptions, a person can never actually *become* another person. But nevertheless,

> "it is possible to erect a structure within the framework of which the other's interpretation of the world or us takes shape or assumes meaning." (Broome, 1991, p. 241)

In neuroscience, so-called mirror neurons have been found in human beings. They enable human beings to understand and learn unfamiliar, new things. They are widely spread in the brain and “fire both when an individual performs a simple goal-directed motor sequence and when the individual sees another person perform the same act”. Furthermore, humans and primates are able to understand other humans’ intentions and feelings due to the mirror neurons. This ability promotes interpersonal relationships. Thus, it is assumable that mirror neurons contribute to humans’ ability to be empathetic (Tymoczko, 2012, pp. 96-97).

2.2.2.2.5 Consciousness as a “biological mediator” between *Wirklichkeit* and *Realität*:

As a product of human brains and nervous system, and thus, as part of *Wirklichkeit*, consciousness represents an interface between human beings’ biological presence and their respective environment(s). Through interaction with the environment, consciousness enhances the survival chances of human beings. It helps the human identify relevant information of Wirklichkeit and thus, plays a relevant role in constructing *Realität* (Kaiser-Cooke, 2004, pp. 125-126).

Through consciousness, humans are able to reflect what they are doing. It is the interface between biology and culture (Kaiser-Cooke, 2004, p. 164).

Because of consciousness, humans’ awareness of *Wirklichkeit* estranged them from their first-order theory.

> “This increasingly sophisticated consciousness gave the species homo sapiens a dis-embodied theory, a second-order theory, a conscious interpretation of its relation to its Umwelt. These second-order theories become attuned to the specific umwelts of various human collectives. All humans have the biological-cognitive potential to understand and to grasp any and any number of second-order theories of reality. This second-order theory is embodied in culture-as-practice.” (Kaiser-Cooke, 2004, p. 182)

2.2.2.2.6 Natural pedagogy and neuroplasticity for cultural learning:

In addition, unlike other organisms, humans are able to transmit sociocultural knowledge by communication and the use of language. This ability is universal and termed “natural pedagogy” by Csibra and Gergely (2006, p. 237). It is assumed that humans are able to acquire two different types of cultural products. Some cultural products can be directly associated with relevant aspects regarding their cause and function by the observational learner. These cultural forms are denoted as "cognitively transparent". Other cultural products cannot be directly associated with a cause or function and are called "cognitively opaque" (Csibra & Gergely, 2006, p. 229). The ability to imitate cognitively opaque behavioral patterns enables the "fidelity of cultural transmission", i.e. cultural products that are cognitively opaque do not seem to undergo a lot of modification when transmitted within a sociocultural group or even across generations of one sociocultural group (Csibra & Gergely, 2006, pp. 234-235). According to Csibra and Gergely, the concept of "pedagogy," which incorporates the notion of the communicative instruction of cultural products, is a main characteristic of efficient cultural transmission in human groups:

> "In cultural learning, one obvious way to overcome the limitations imposed by the cognitive opacity of relevance is to acquire the relevant knowledge content directly from another conspecific who already possesses it. As new behaviors, especially cultural activities, are often not transparent as to either their knowledge base or their function, an active communicative role of the more knowledgeable conspecific may greatly assist the efficiency and viability of cultural knowledge acquisition. [...] Through pedagogy, then, fast, efficient and ‘relevance-proof’ transfer of cultural knowledge – even when its content is cognitively ‘opaque’, arbitrary or conventional – becomes achiev-able.” (Csibra & Gergely, 2006, p. 237)

Thus, through natural pedagogy it is possible that translators *can* acquire cultural knowledge through metacommunication with other human beings.

In addition, human beings are able to learn throughout their entire life. The long-term memory can involve physical modifications of the brain. It can lead to the establishment of new axon terminals of the brain cells, new neurons and new neural networks (Kandel, 2006, pp. 254-275, cited in Tymoczko 2012, p.

92). Hence, long-term memory and learning physically change humans' bodies (Tymoczko, 2012, p. 92). This change and the brain's ability to "reallocate parts of the brain to new uses when the old ones cease to be needed, as well as the physical alteration of neurons and neural networks or the growth of new neurons" is referred to as "neuroplasticity[26]". Neuroplasticity enables human beings to be cognitively flexible (Tymoczko, 2012, p. 95).

#### 2.2.2.3 Conclusions

At the beginning of this section, the question has been posed in how far a transcultural concept of translatability can reflect and cover universalistic and particularistic aspects of today's societies. In order to approach this question, possible links between universality and particularity were shown:

a) *Wirklichkeit* as a common world for universality and particularity
b) *Homo sapiens* as a link between universality and particularity

All human beings have in common cognitive and biological survival techniques, such as their ability to relate to *Wirklichkeit*, to articulate their interpretation of *Wirklichkeit*, i.e. their *Realität*, through language, to be empathetic and able to shift their perspective. Furthermore, all humans share common neurological prerequisites that have an interdependent relationship to culture and enable human beings to acquire and adapt cultural knowledge.

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[26] "The human brain differs from the brains of other mammals most fundamentally in the greater extent to which development of its structure and function are influenced by sensory input. This sensitivity to the environment rests on three features shared throughout the mammalian line and one unique to human beings. First, cognitive functions such as perception, memory and thinking arise from the integrated activity of dynamic neural systems distributed over multiple brain areas rather than being properties of a specific anatomical location or of groups of nerve cells each "dedicated" to different specific cognitive operations. Second, neurocognitive capacity increases across the phylogenetic hierarchy primarily through increases in the overall number of brain cells and their interactions. Third, cell viability and growth depend upon cells being activated by input from the environment. Fourth, human beings alone shape the environments that in turn shape their brains. Neuroplasticity is the quality of neural structures to change, primarily through change in the interconnections of the nerve cells that constitute the structures. Neuroplasticity is evident on different time scales." (Wexler, 2011, p. 2)

These common characteristics enable human beings to translate[27] and translation is necessary for conveying different *Realitäten*. Humans can de-familiarize consciously from their own culturally constructed *Realität* and take on the perspective of the communication partner with his or her own culturally constructed *Realität*. Because de-familiarization is possible, translation is possible.

In addition, since all humans are equipped with mirror neurons, they can feel empathy towards a different person. Empathy as a shift of perspective is a prerequisite for de-familiarization. Also, the neuroplasticity of human brains enables humans to de-familiarize since it facilitates the shift of

> "cultural frameworks within which neurological patterning was established. New neurons can grow, new networks can be developed, and areas of the brain can be reallocated for new purposes. […] Physical changes in neurons and shifts in neural networks are part of memory, associations, concept formation, and category perceptions, all of which factor into translation – particularly translation of culture and cultural differences." (Tymoczko, 2012, p. 97)

While *Wirklichkeit* exists independently from human perception, *Realitäten* are interpretations of *Wirklichkeit* and can be translated. If we suppose that politeness is culturally constructed and part of *Realität*, we can conclude that politeness is translatable in spite of its culture-specificity. Due to the translatability of politeness, it is possible to communicate politely across different cultures and to metacommunicate about the concept of politeness in international scientific discourse. Translators need to be aware of the recursive relationship between culture and perception and that they themselves, as well as the target reader, are influenced by this relationship, too.

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[27]See also Schmid: "Translation is possible because translators are able to make a deliberate effort to distance themselves from the culture-specific conceptualizations they apply to make sense of the world. This distancing effort enables translators to compare how two different concept systems construct a certain aspect of the world to analyse differences and similarities in these conceptualizations" (2008, p. 53).

### 2.2.3 From translatability to translation: Revisiting the concept

The proposition that politeness is part of culturally conditioned *Realität* and, thus, can be translated, leads to the question what it means when an element of *Realität* can be translated. In order to answer this question, the concept of "translation" needs to be re-considered – particularly against the background of transcultural societies.

How translation is defined, highly depends on the research perspective of the respective scholar. The term "translation" can refer to the process of translation, the product or the field of study. The self- and meta-reflection of the concept of "translation" represents a major part of today's translation studies; it seems that there is a trend towards widening the scope of translation studies by extending the definition of "translation". As Delabastita puts it:

> "the more Translation Studies is coming into its own, the more its central object – translation – gets eroded and dispersed. The harder we look at translation, the softer our analytical focus appears to be getting and the more the specificity of our object seems to be dissolving. Translation Studies had to be invented, apparently, to show how blurred and how elusive a concept translation really is." (Delabastita, 2003, p. 9)

This situation might be seen as a sign for the dynamics and continuous development of the discipline (Brems, et al., 2012, p. 1). It is also possible that this situation is a necessary consequence because of the twofold view on "translation" as a theoretical concept and as an applicable activity necessary for daily business. As Brems, Meylaerts, and Van Doorslaer observe:

> "This link between theory and practice is an important and striking characteristic of Translation Studies. It is no coincidence that the combination of the keywords 'theory' and 'practice' yields 517 instances in the *Translation Studies Bibliography*." (2012, p. 3)

Up to the 1970s, translation studies were considered part of applied linguistics. At that time, "translation" was considered a process of "recoding" and "substituting" the source text with equivalents of the target language. This view was criticized at later stages, since it implies that "translation" is a merely linguistic procedure and does not take into consideration the necessity to keep in mind the cultural background of human beings (Snell-Hornby 1988: 39).

When the first institutions for translators' training were established (during the 1930s up to the 1950s), the focus was more application-oriented, and scientific discourse about translation-relevant problems was treated by other disciplines, such as linguistics or literature studies (Kadrić, 2008, pp. 23-24).

After having focused on textual and linguistic aspects of translation for a long time, translation theory saw a shift from a predominantly linguistic and formal perspective of translation towards a socio-cultural and functional approach after the 1970s, particular in Germany. During the 70s, the perspective on "language" in linguistics changed. Extralinguistic factors, such as the function of the text, the communicative situation or the sociocultural context, were taken into consideration. This shift in linguistics is often referred to as "pragmatic turn" (Risku, 2004, p. 38).

This shift in linguistics led to what is often referred to as "cultural turn" in the translation studies of the 80s. Texts – oral or written – were now considered items embedded in a sociocultural context (Snell-Hornby, 1986, p. 13).

The cultural turn represents the basis for the development of a functional translation theory (Snell-Hornby, 2006, p. 47). Snell-Hornby (1986) was one of the first to summarize all the functional approaches and show that they represent a major change in translation theory (Risku, 2004, p. 39).

### 2.2.4 Perspectives on translation before the pragmatic/cultural turn: A brief review

In his work "On linguistic aspects of translation", Jakobson introduces three types of translation: intralingual translation (or "rewording", i.e. "an interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs of the same language"), interlingual translation (or "translation proper", i.e. "an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language"), and intersemiotic (or "transmutation", i.e. "an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of non-verbal sign systems") (Jakobson, 1959, p. 139; Jakobson, et al., 1987, p. 429).

Regardless of whether "translation" refers to the product, process or field of translation, what Jakobson refers to as "translation proper", has traditionally been often associated with the concept of "translation" in scientific and non-scientific contexts,[28] assuming that there were a definition of culture and language, that there were a universal criterion for clearly distinguishing different cultures and languages from each other, and that cultures and languages were homogeneous entities, related to "national cultures" and "standard languages".

Based on these assumptions, different scholars expressed different opinions on the requirements that a translated text ought to fulfill, on how "equivalence"[29] can be defined in the context of "translation", and on which methods are recommendable for translation training. Oettinger, for instance, defines interlingual translation as the process of replacing elements of the source language text with elements of the target language text (Oettinger, 1960, p. 110).

Oettinger is aware of the impossibility to accept only one equivalent. His perspective reflects the optimism among developers and designers of

[28] See also Bassnett, who critically puts forward: "What is generally understood as translation involves the rendering of a source language (SL) text[2] into the target language (TL) so as to ensure that (1) the surface meaning of the two will be approximately similar and (2) the structures of the SL will be preserved as closely as possible but not so closely that the TL structures will be seriously distorted. […] It is hardly surprising that such a restricted concept of translation goes hand in hand with the low status accorded to the translator and to distinctions usually being made between the writer and the translator to the detriment of the latter. […] Translation has been perceived as a secondary activity, as a 'mechanical' rather than a 'creative' process, within the competence of anyone with a basic grounding in a language other than their own; in short, as a low status occupation" (Bassnett, 2002, pp. 11-12).

[29] One of the most crucial and controversial topics in translation studies is the concept of "equivalence". While some scholars prioritize the concept of "equivalence" and even include it into their definition of translation, other scholars reject this notion and claim that it is not significant or beneficial for translation studies (Kenny, 2009, p. 96). Nord and Sparrow, for instance, even put forward that equivalence is a concept hindering the further development of translation studies (Nord & Sparrow, 2006, p. 25). Other scholars take on an intermediate position, e.g. by using the concept of equivalence for convenience purposes or as category for the description of translations (Kenny, 2009, p. 96).

automated translation systems in the 1950s and 1960s. His view on translation neglects aspects such as connotation, communicative aspects and pragmatic factors. It also neglects the difficulties on the denotative level (Koller, 2011, p. 87).

Jakobson points out the notion of “equivalence in difference”, which is the “cardinal problem of language and the pivotal concern of linguistics” (Jakobson, 1959, p. 232). Asserting that, in spite of structural differences between languages, concepts specific to one language can be transferred by explication into another language, Jakobson claims that the process of interlingual translation includes “two equivalent messages in two different codes” (Jakobson, 1959, p. 233). Depending on the structural similarity or difference between two languages, it is possible that the translator may not find a translation equivalent. In such cases, it may be necessary to get the message across using loanwords, loan translations, paraphrasing etc. (Jakobson, 1959, p. 234).

The aspect of “text” is the center of Catford’s definition. He defines translation as the substitution of a text in the source language with a text in the target language. The criterion of substitution is equivalence (Catford, 1965, p. 20).

Catford focuses on the source text, approaches translation from a systemic linguistic perspective, and introduces the concept of “translation shifts”, defined as “departures from formal correspondence in the process of going from the SL to the TL” (Catford, 1965, p. 73), which occur when transferring syntactic and semantic structures from the source to the target language. In addition, Catford distinguishes between “context” and “co-text”. While the former refers to extralingual factors, the latter refers to the linguistic factors inherent to a given text (Catford, 1965, p. 31).

Jean-Paul Vinay and Jean Darbelnet approach the topic of equivalence from a contrastive perspective. They claim that the method of replicating “the same situation […] by two texts using completely different stylistic and structural methods” (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995, p. 38) helps produce equivalent texts.

Moreover, they propose that this procedure supports the maintenance of the stylistic effect of the source language text in the target language text. They point out the “syntagmatic nature” of equivalent structures, which influences the entire message (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995, p. 38). Vinay and Darbelnet assume that if two identical communicative situations are given, these will provoke the emergence of new, two sets of signs that would be the “ideal” equivalents (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995, p. 5).

The prescriptive and normative character of earlier definitions of translation (as compared to a descriptive character) is also illustrated by Nida and Taber’s statements. They claim that a good translation is one that cannot be recognized as a translation and that translators have to strive for equivalence (Nida & Taber, 2003, p. 12). Nida and Taber define “equivalence” as “a very close similarity in meaning, as opposed to similarity in form” (Nida & Taber, 2003, pp. 200-201). They distinguish between “closest equivalent” and “natural equivalent”: while the former refers to transferring the meaning of the source text, the latter refers to the expressions chosen by the translator for conveying the meaning of the source text in the target language. These expressions should sound “natural” in the target text (Nida & Taber, 1969, p. 12). In addition, Nida distinguishes between “formal correspondence” and “dynamic equivalence” (Nida, 1964, p. 159). While formal correspondence concentrates on the form and content of a message, dynamic equivalence can be defined “in terms of the degree to which the receptors of the message in the receptor language respond to it in substantially the same manner as the receptors in the source language” (Nida & Taber, 2003, p. 24).

Nida and Taber, who believe that translation “consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source-language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style,” insist on the translator’s striving “for equivalence rather than identity” and his or her emphasis on “the reproduction of the message rather than the conservation of the form of the utterance” (Nida & Taber, 2003, p. 12).

Nida and Taber put forward that due to cultural and historical circumstances, identical response cannot be achieved, but that the response should be the closest possible to each other. Furthermore, they also point out that the response is not only constituted by semantic understanding but also pragmatic features (Nida & Taber, 2003, p. 24). With this view, Nida and Taber were among the first scholars to move away from the source text and shift the focus to the target text. Another important aspect that Nida puts forward is that of “linguistic and cultural distance”. He assumes that the more differences can be detected between source and target language and cultural structures, the greater is the possibility of confrontation with translation problems. However, he also warns that sometimes one can be deceived by supposedly similar structures (Nida, 1964, p. 160).

Younger definitions of “translation” take into account the communicative aspect of translation, while still focusing on the aspect of language and relying on the concept of “equivalence”.

Wilss, for instance, defines translation as a process of text processing and reverbalization, which leads from a text in a source language to an equivalent text in a target language. The prerequisite of translation is the understanding of the content and the style of the source text. He claims that translation consists of two phases, a phase of understanding and a phase of reconstructing (Wilss, 1977, p. 72).

Similarly, Jäger views communication as a relevant aspect of translation. According to him, translation ensures communication. He speaks of a “communicative value”, of a text that remains constant after translation. He refers to this “communicative value” as “communicative equivalence”. Acknowledging that the nature of translation is extralinguistic, he claims that translation – and communication in general – is a linguistic process. He also divides the process of translation into a phase of understanding (analysis of content and style of the source text) and a phase of reconstruction in the target language (Jäger, 1975, p. 36).

Before the cultural turn took place in translation theory, Koller introduced a rather language-based definition of translation and proposed that translation was a process of linguistic transcoding or substitution (Koller, 1972, pp. 69-70).

Koller claims that "equivalence" primarily describes the relationship between source and target text, which is determined by the framework of the texts (Koller, 1992, p. 215). He also distinguishes between different subtypes of equivalence: denotative (relating to the extralinguistic text content), connotative (referring to the lexical level), text-normative (referring to different text types), pragmatic (referring to communicative aspects and the message recipient), and formal equivalence (referring to stylistic and aesthetic aspects of a text) (Koller, 1992, p. 216).

Having reviewed some of the predominant views on translation before the cultural turn, one can observe that the aspect of "equivalence" is considered a relevant factor in translation. The term "equivalence", which is often used in mathematics and implies "sameness" between the two sides of an equation, is confusing in the context of translation since – as has been argued above – each individual has an own interpretation of *Wirklichkeit*. The idiosyncratic nature of this interpretation, the *Realität*, does not allow human beings to determine whether two units of language (regardless of whether of the same or of two different languages) can be considered the "same" or as referring to "the same". Functionalist approaches to translation argue that the "function" of a text remains the "same". What does this mean?

### 2.2.5 After the pragmatic/cultural turn: Translation as a function-oriented action

The publication of Göhring's definition of culture[30] paved the way for a shift of focus in translation research. Göhring's definition does not restrict "culture" to

[30] Göhring's definition of culture is based on Goodenough's definition. According to Goodenough, "a society's culture consists of whatever it is one has to know or believe in

what is often “high culture”, i.e. products of arts or music. His definition sees culture from an anthropological perspective and is more comprehensive, taking into consideration the knowledge, perception, behavior, events, expectations and norms of a “society” (Snell-Hornby, 1995, pp. 39-40). He defines culture as

> “everything one needs to know, master and feel in order to judge where people’s behavior conforms to or deviates from what is expected from them in their social roles, and in order to make one’s own behavior conform to the expectations of the society concerned – unless one is prepared to take the consequences of deviant behavior.” (Snell-Hornby, 1995, pp. 40, translated by Snell-Hornby)

This definition forms the foundation for many instances of culturally oriented translation research (Floros, 2003, p. 26), in particular the functional perspectives on translation during the 1980s.

During that period of time, Vermeer published his Skopos Theory, which supports Göhring’s concept (Vermeer, 1996b, p. 3), since it allows to look at culture as a structured entity (para-, dia-, idioculture), i.e. the culture of a whole society, of part of a society, and of an individual; it considers language as part

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order to operate in a manner acceptable to its members, and do so in any role that they accept for any one of themselves. Culture, being what people have to learn as distinct from their biological heritage must consist of the end product of learning: knowledge, in a most general, if relative, sense of the term. By definition, we should note that culture is not a material phenomenon; it does not consist of things, people, behavior, or emotions. It is rather an organization of these things. It is the forms of things that people have in mind, their models of perceiving and dealing with their circumstances. To one who knows their culture, these things and events are also signs signifying the cultural forms or models of which they are material representation” (Goodenough, 1964, p. 36). In his German original, Göhring writes: “In Anlehnung an Goodenough (1964:30) läßt sich Kultur für die Zwecke des Übersetzers und Dolmetschers definieren als all das, was dieser in Hinblick auf seine Ausgangsgesellschaft und auf seine Zielgesellschaften wissen und empfinden muß,

(1) damit er beurteilen kann, wo sich Personen in ihren verschiedenen Rollen so verhalten, wie man es von ihnen erwartet, und wo sie von den gesellschaftlichen Erwartungen abweichen;

(2) damit er sich in den gesellschaftlichen Rollen, die ihm – z. B. von seinem Alter und Geschlecht her – offenstehen, erwartungskonform verhalten kann, sofern er dies will und sich nicht etwa dazu entscheidet, aus der Rolle auszubrechen und die daraus erwachsenden Konsequenzen in Kauf zu nehmen;

(3) damit er die natürliche und die vom Menschen geprägte oder geschaffene Welt (zu letzterer gehören natürlich auch Texte) jeweils wie ein Einheimischer wahrnehmen kann“ (Göhring, 1995, pp. 112-113).

of culture, and allows for the description of behavioral patterns and results of actions, and the explanation of them (Floros, 2003, p. 26).

Based on Göhring, Vermeer defines culture as the set of all behavioral norms and conventions in a society and the results of the types of behavior conditioned by these norms and conventions (Vermeer, 1990, p. 36).

Vermeer's Skopos Theory claims, the function of the target text and the skopos of the translational action represent the dominating criteria for translational activities. Thus, they form the basis of functional translation theory, which considered language as embedded in culture (Risku, 2004, p. 38).

The main idea of the Skopos Theory is that every translation is determined by and has a certain purpose, a skopos. Translators are expected to distance themselves from the original text and to translate it in such a way that the intention remains and/or the effect that the commissioner has intended remains (Vermeer, 1990, pp. 67-68).

The skopos determines the translation strategy that the translator uses for his or her translational action, the translation as a product, and the relationship between source and target text (Vermeer, 1990, p. 152).

In addition, translators should skopos-adequately take into consideration the idio-, dia- and paracultural differences of human behavior. In other words, they should know the cultures in which the texts were produced and received (Vermeer, 1996a, p. 27).

Based on Action Theory,[31] Skopos Theory considers translation an action, i.e. a prospective, teleological type of behavior (Vermeer, 1990, pp. 72-85). In a more recent work, he asserts that translation is "*transcultural* acting", i.e. a

[31] According to Action Theory, action is intentional behavior. Each action happens during a certain situation and changes itself the situation. Texts are produced for a certain purpose and for a certain readership. Thus, they can be considered actions. Through this action, humans of different cultures can communicate and interact with each other. Thus, translation can be considered a special case of interactional acting (Stolze, 2008, pp. 170-172).

“skopos-oriented transcultural text production under given and clearly specifiable (and specified) circumstances.” (Vermeer, 2007, pp. 28-29). He claims that translation is a “culture transcending process” (Vermeer, 2007, p. 22). As any type of communication, translation requires “culture-sensitive reflexive co-orientation and behavioural maxims” (Vermeer, 2007, pp. 23-24). In Vermeer’s opinion, a translator’s task consists in conveying

> “an intended meta-meaning in such a way that the ultimate aim (“skopos”) of the communicative act is achieved. But this meta-meaning is not […] “in” the source text. It is created, thanks to the translator’s intervention, by the recipient, on the basis of culture-specific conventions, and, hopefully, fulfils the commissioner’s intention in having communication established with someone else in a given situation. It is “verbalized” in the form of a target text in the recipient’s own situational context. The translator’s task is to transform the form and function (“skopos”) of the message on its object level into a target text in such a way as to make it correspond as nearly as possible to the intended skopos. […]” (Vermeer, 2007, p. 14)

Translators re-create the skopos or the intention of the source text with means that are adequate in the target language and culture (Reiß & Vermeer, 1984, pp. 97-99) It is also possible that source and target text are in the same language, since translation is not primarily about linguistic differences, but the different perceptions coined by different cultures. Translational activities do not only involve the confrontation with language, but also with culture. Language and culture cannot be considered separate concepts, since language is the conventional means of communication and thought of a culture, and is shaped by culture (Reiß & Vermeer 1984. 26).

In some cases, a text can have multiple skopoi. This can represent a challenge to the translator, as he or she needs to identify and define the main skopos (Holz-Mäntärri, 1984, pp. 111-112).

Holz-Mänttärri has widened the scope of functional translation theories by arguing that translational action can be seen from the perspective of work sharing and cooperation. This affirmed the action- and system-theoretical basis of the functional theories (Risku, 2004, p. 38).

In Holz-Mänttärri's translation model, wishes, responsibilities and requirements of all involved participants are considered. Those who are involved are the person who needs a translated text (translation initiator), the person who commissions or orders the translation (client), the source text producer, the translator, the person who works with the target text (target text applicator), and the target text recipient. These roles can also overlap (Holz-Mäntärri, 1984, p. 27).

Also Holz-Mänttärri supports Göhring's definition of "culture", since it allows for the perspective on translation as culture-specific communicative acting in an intercultural framework (Holz-Mäntärri, 1984, p. 34).

As a conclusion, it can be summarized that representatives of the functional perspectives do not consider translation as a process of pure re-coding of linguistic structures, but as a cultural process oriented towards the function of texts. The focus of this approach is the function/purpose of the translation in the target culture, which is determined by the requirements and expectations of the target recipients (Snell-Hornby, 2006, p. 51).

If language is considered part of culture, each language transfer is also a cultural transfer. The translator is not only a language but also a cultural mediator. The translator plays an active role in the translation process (Snell-Hornby, 1986, p. 11).

Although the term "equivalence" still plays a role in many functionalist definitions, the implication of "sameness" does not refer to text-immanent characteristics, but to the function of the text.

House, for example, *does* use the term "equivalence" in her theory, but clearly occupies a functional approach. While Vermeer focuses on the target text and culture, House puts forward the double-bound nature of translation.

For her, translation is

> "a cross-linguistic sociocultural practice, in which a text in one language is replaced by a functionally equivalent text in another. The fundamental characteristic of a translation is therefore that it is a text that is doubly bound:

on the one hand to a text in the source language, the 'source text' or the original and, on the other hand, to the communicative-linguistic conditions holding in the culture to which the addressee belong." (House, 1998, p. 63)

By taking into consideration the situational context in which the source and target texts are embedded, translators can establish and evaluate functional equivalence. Thus, functional equivalence is not a static notion (House, 1998, p. 64). In addition, House distinguishes between overt and covert translation: the former refers to a translation that focuses on the source text and does not attempt to adapt the function in the target culture. The latter refers to a translation that is perceived as an original in the target culture and language. Specifically referring to "politeness" as a factor that is reflected by the text, and that shapes the text, House explains that different "politeness norms" in different cultures can represent a challenge in covert translation, since the translator's aim is to reproduce a functionally equivalent text, i.e. a target text in the target culture that has the same function as the source text in the source culture. In this context, House speaks of "politeness equivalence" (House, 1998, pp. 63-65).

Aiming at functional equivalence in covert translation, the translator applies a "cultural filter" through which the target text is adapted according to the politeness norms in the target culture:

> "The cultural filter is often so expertly integrated into the fabric of the text that the seams do not show." (House, 1998, p. 66)

Empirical research should be the foundation for the cultural filter (House, 1998, p. 66). In order to employ a cultural filter, one needs to assess multiple factors such as social roles, relationships or involvement of the communication partners (House, 2004, pp. 498-499).

According to House, "equivalence" refers to meaning preservation on three levels: semantic, pragmatic and textual, while the focus is put on pragmatic equivalence. House considers "equivalence" an important translation quality criterion (House, 1997, p. 31).

While the semantic level is confronted with propositional content, the pragmatic level deals with illocutionary force. One may assume that grammatical features allow for a prediction of illocutionary force, but the communicative context determines which grammatical features can be attributed to which illocutionary force (House, 1997, p. 31).

Similarly, Baker distinguishes different levels of translation equivalence: the morpheme or word level, the grammatical level, the textual level and the pragmatic level. On the textual level the translator's decisions are influenced by the target group, the text type and translation purpose. On the pragmatic level, the translator needs to interpret implied meanings and intentions and transfer them adequately to the target culture (Baker, 1992, pp. 11-12).

With regard to the pragmatic level, Kallia explicates that

> "[t]wo utterances are pragmatically equivalent if they can be used in the same context and have the same transactional and interactional effect, i.e. if they realize the same speech act and support the relationship between the participants to the same degree. Pragmatic equivalence is an issue that can be the source of problems in intercultural communication." (Kallia, 2009, p. 60)

Taking into account this wider understanding of equivalence, which implications do the functional perspectives have on the understanding of translating politeness?

Above, it has been claimed that politeness as part of culturally constructed *Realität* is translatable. The review of definitions of translation before the cultural turn revealed that the concept of "equivalence" played an important role in many approaches to translation. But the idea or notion of "sameness" or "being identical" is not compatible with the understanding of translatability from the perspective of Constructive Realism due to the idiosyncrasy of *Realität*", which is based on individual experiences and perceptions.

The functional perspectives on translation dethrone the source text and focus on the function of the translated text in the target culture. For Vermeer (1984), for example, the source text merely offers information to the source culture, and the translation of the source text provides information, i.e. the target text, for the target culture. Holz-Mänttärri (1984) even contends that translation does not require a source text; in fact, she uses the term “translational action” instead of “translation” in order emphasize this aspect (Göpferich, 2007, p. 32). Due to this dethroning of the source text, functional perspectives don’t focus on comparing two texts with each other, but ask which effect a certain text is expected to have in a certain target culture.

This approach is compatible with the assumption that politeness is part of culturally constructed *Realität*. If a linguistic manifestation of politeness or the concept of politeness is to be translated overtly, it is necessary that the translator will anticipate the perception and interpretation of the translation in the target culture. He or she may need to explicate aspects of the manifestation or concept for the target reader. Overt translation of politeness happens (or should ideally happen), for instance, in scientific discourses about the concept politeness or in intercultural trainings.

In covert translation, the process of anticipation is still necessary. But the translator cannot explicate aspects of the manifestation or concept of politeness for the target reader. Instead, he or she needs to find a skopos-adequate solution for the translation. Implied politeness reflected by grammatical aspects, such as for instance modality, with a certain illocutionary force in a sociocultural context and a specific communicative situation, needs to be skopos-adequately transferred to the sociocultural context of the target culture.

### 2.2.6 Conclusions: Towards a working definition of “translation”

#### 2.2.6.1 Translation as a communication strategy in the transcultural world

“When my eyes behold you,
we are the three of us: first me, then you, and finally you in me.”
(Kupsch-Losereit, 2007, p. 205, my translation)

“Wenn meine Augen dich erblicken, sind wir drei:

zuerst ich, dann du und zuletzt du in mir.“

(Kupsch-Losereit, 2007, p. 205, German original)

In the functional theories of translation, translation is often considered a special type of communication (Stolze, 2008, p. 169). But if translation is considered a type of communication, if we argue that translation can take place intra-, inter- and transculturally as well as intra- and interlingually, and if we claim that the borders between cultures and languages become increasingly unclear, then one might rightly wonder where the difference is between translation and other types of communication. Steiner claims that

> “[an]y model of communication is at the same time a model of translation, of a vertical or horizontal transfer of significance. No two historical epochs, no two social classes, no two localities use words and syntax to signify exactly the same things, to send identical signals of valuation and inference. Neither do two human beings.” (1998, p. 47)

Steiner argues that any type of discourse has a dual structure. He states that in most conventional acts of communication there is a discrepancy between what is said explicitly and what is “aside”.[32] Therefore, he concludes, whenever one receives a message, one performs translation and that translation

> “is a special case of the arc of communication which every successful speech-act closes within a given language. On the inter-lingual level, translation will pose concentrated, visibly intractable problems; but these same problems abound, at a more covert or conventionally neglected level, intra-lingually.” (Steiner, 1998, pp. 48-49)

He explains that in translation and in communication, there is

> “‘in the middle’ an operation of interpretative decipherment, an encoding-decoding function or synapse. Where two or more languages are in articulate interconnection, the barriers in the middle will obviously be more salient, and the enterprise of intelligibility more conscious. […] In short: *inside or between languages, human communication equals translation*.” (Steiner, 1998, p. 49)

[32] Steiner does not elaborate on the “aside”, but it could be interpreted as a similar notion to the Gricean notion of “implicature” (more information on “implicature” is provided in the Theoretic Framework, section 2.4.2).

Since Steiner refers to a sender-receiver concept of communication at this instance, and the author of this thesis considers communication a more complex phenomenon, the thesis hesitates to equate communication with translation.

Instead, it is argued that translation can be considered a communication *strategy*. The question is not, “What differentiates translation from other types of communication” or “In how far is translation a special kind of communication?”, but the question is, “In how far does translation enable human beings to communicate successfully and thus represents a survival strategy in the transcultural world?”

#### 2.2.6.1.1 On the meaning of “communication”

Translation does not happen on the level of langue, i.e. the language system, but on the level of parole, i.e. the expressions in text contexts. In other words, translation needs to be considered in the context of communication (Koller, 2011, p. 88). But what is communication?

One of the oldest approaches to communication is Shannon and Weaver’s “sender-and-receiver” model. It considers communication as a linear process. According to this model, a message is produced by an information source and sent to a transmitter who encodes the message into a code. This signal is then sent to a receiver who decodes the code into a message, which then arrives at its destination. Communication can be hampered by external noise. Shannon and Weaver’s approach comes from an electrotechnical perspective (Heringer, 2004, p. 14).

This view proposes that “communication” is a simple, one-way process, independent of socio-cultural, psychobiological or historical context. It also neglects the dynamics of communication. But in spite of this simplification, the terminology used in this model can be helpful for describing empirical analyses of linguistic data. Therefore, this thesis uses the terms “sender”, “receiver”, “decode” and “encode”, although it does not agree with the simplified conceptualization of communication by Shannon and Weaver.

Instead, communication is considered a dynamic form of interaction in this thesis, in line with Gudykunst and Kim. In their definition, “communication” consists of “encoding” thoughts or information into symbols and of “decoding” these symbols. These two processes are considered interactive. They are influenced by cultural, sociocultural, psychocultural and situational factors (2003, p. 45).

Furthermore, communication can have different functions. Bühler’s organon model proposes that communication is based on three pillars: the sender, the receiver and the objects or states of affairs. He distinguishes three main functions: representation (if the object is the focus), expression (if the sender is the focus), and appeal (if the receiver is the focus) (Heringer, 2004, p. 15).

Whether a receiver perceives the intention of the sender highly depends on his or her interpretation. This is reflected by Schulz von Thun’s model of “four-ears”. According to his concept, each sender has four voices and each receiver has four ears. Whatever a sender says, it carries factual information, a self-revelation, a relationship indicator, and an appeal (Schulz von Thun, 1999, p. 45).

This perspective is corroborated by Watzlawick’s second axiom (of five) that claims that each kind of communication has “a content and a relationship aspect, such that the latter classifies the former, and is therefore a metacommunication” (Watzlawick, et al., 1967, p. 54). While the “content aspect” can be understood as the denotative level of communication, the “relationship aspect” refers to the way human beings relate to the world and interpret it. Since their communication partners are part of the world, the emotional level of the relationship between the communication partners is also reflected and affected[33] by the communication process.

This pragmatic dimension of communication is of central relevance for translators since it comprises the situation of language use and considers language from the perspective of the language user. Knowledge about syntactic rules and semantic content are not sufficient for successful communication (Kadrić, et al., 2010, p. 49). Thus, translators need the pragmatic view on language, i.e. knowledge about the appropriate verbal behavior in specific situations.

Although this thesis focuses on politeness in written communication, it agrees with Watzlawick's fourth axiom, which states that human communication consists of "digital and analogic modalities", while "digital" refers to verbal and "analogic" to nonverbal aspects of communication (Watzlawick, et al., 1996, p. 68). In his last axiom, he states that communication between humans is symmetric or complementary depending on the power differences between the communication partners (Watzlawick, et al., 1996, p. 70).

In his third axiom, he claims that relationships depend on the way communication partners anticipate results of communicative events based on their own interpretation of the communication partner's expectations (Watzlawick, et al., 1996, p. 61). This interpretation of behavior as the reason for another type of behavior, which Watzlawick refers to as "punctuation", is arbitrary (Kadrić, et al., 2010, p. 12) and organizes the communicative process. As stated above, the way humans perceive is shaped by their culture(s) and experiences. Thus, it is possible that the interpretational processes involved in "punctuation" are more complex and prone to misunderstandings, the more the lingua-cultural biographies of the communication partners vary.

[33] Similarly, from the perspective of discourse analysis, Brown and Yule differentiate between two functions of language – the "transactional" and the "interactional" function. The former refers to the expression of "content" and the latter refers to the expression of "social relations and personal attitudes" (Brown & Yule, 1983, p. 1).

Above, it has been claimed that there is an independent world, i.e. *Wirklichkeit*. Humans and their behavior are part of the *Wirklichkeit*. Whether behavior is interpreted as communication, highly depends on the sociocultural interpretation of *Wirklichkeit* constructed by collectives and individuals, i.e. their *Realität*. Therefore, any type of behavior could be potentially interpreted as communication. This opinion is reflected also in Watzlawick's first (and well-known) axiom that claims that it is not possible *not* to communicate (Watzlawick, et al., 1996, p. 53).

Thus, in this thesis, communication is considered a phenomenon that happens whenever an encounter between human beings takes place. The communication can be of verbal or nonverbal nature (Kaiser-Cooke, 2007, p. 85). Very generally, it is considered a process during which signals are exchanged between the communication partners (Kadrić, et al., 2010, p. 11).

Another relevant aspect of communication – particularly with regard to today's transcultural world - is the merging process of different interpretations of the world. This process is reflected by Rogers and Kincaid's perspective on communication as a process of "mutual understanding". In their opinion, communication takes place in a certain context – human beings relate their thoughts to their environment, thoughts of others or of themselves. Communication occurs because human beings want to share information and reach mutual understanding. Patterns of communication of two individuals are never identical (1981, p. 56).

Rogers and Kincaid introduce the model of convergence that claims that during the communication process the communication partners establish a relationship of exchange. Their schemes of interpretation and interpretation of *Wirklichkeit* converge during the communication process. When both communication partners aim at establishing mutual understanding, the convergence of interpretations represents the focus during the communication process. In other words, the "common denominator" between the communication partners' interpretations play a relevant role. Diverging interpretations are not focused upon during the communication process (1981, p. 55).

This view on communication is supported by Broome's idea of "relational empathy". As argued above, all human beings are able to be empathetic. Broome introduces the model of "relational empathy" and explains that since our interpretations and worldviews are subjective and depend on our individual sociocultural experiences, it is never possible to completely know what another person is feeling or thinking. Therefore, he claims that human beings create a "third culture" when developing a relationship. In this third culture, meanings are shared and mutual understanding is established. The prerequisite for the third culture to develop is the willingness and openness of the communication partners towards new meanings and interpretations. The new meanings established in the third culture are referred to as "interdependent" meaning since they are based on the meanings and interpretations of both communication partners (Broome, 1993, p. 104).

This opinion is also supported by Arndt and Janney who put forward that communication partners who "cannot rely on shared cultural knowledge in attempting to regulate their relationships" often attempt to (partially and temporarily) replace the cultural framework with an alternative assumed framework that emerges from a common context or situation (Arndt & Janney, 2005, p. 38).

Thus, the conclusion can be drawn that humans do not only shift their perspective in order to understand their communication partner and to be understood by the communication partner. But in shifting their perspective during the interaction their perspective is changed as well during the exchange with the communication partner in the "third culture".

What is the relationship between culture, communication, and language? One way of practicing culture is behavior; language and verbal behavior, or "communication", are also considered a type of behavior (Vermeer, 2007, p. 22). Communication does not occur in vacuo, but is situation-sensitive and directed towards a recipient. Communication involves mutual presuppositions and anticipations with regard to the knowledge, behavior and reactions of the communication partner, which is called “culture-sensitive-reflexive co-orientation” by Vermeer (2007, pp. 23-24). Moreover, “communication is a dynamic process in which people attempt to share their internal states with other people through the use of symbols” (Samovar, et al., 2010, p. 16).

Written and oral verbal communication requires knowledge along three dimensions: syntax, semantics and pragmatics. Linguistic, paralinguistic and nonverbal behavior are influenced by the sociocultural environment. This influence on human beings’ actions and interactions is called “enculturation”. Language, being one of the most important media of communication, reflects culture (Kadrić, et al., 2010, p. 60).

Vermeer emphasizes the complexity of communication and the parameters influencing communication. In a minimal communicative interaction, a producer, recipient, a text or topic, a skopos and a situation are involved. Temporal and spatial influences have an impact on the interaction as well (Vermeer, 2007, p. 35). The producer and receiver are influenced by their biological, acquired, idio-, dia-, and paracultural traits and roles. Furthermore, the producer views the receiver differently than the receiver views him- or herself, and the other way around. All these factors have a historical depth in the continuum of possible worlds (Vermeer, 2007, pp. 36-37).

Communication can be promoted or hampered by presuppositions and anticipations. The more similar the para-, dia- and idiocultural background of two communication partners, the more similar their presuppositions, formulation and understanding of messages. Transcultural communication is more characterized by para-, dia- and idiocultural differences between the communication partners, and thus, by “acting strategies”, than intracultural communication (Vermeer, 2007, p. 45).

#### 2.2.6.1.2 On the meaning of “strategy”

Above, it has been claimed that translation is a communication “strategy”. What is meant here by “strategy”? In the context of translation studies, the term “strategy” is often associated with conscious planning. For example, Krings defines “translation strategy” as the “translator’s potentially conscious plans for solving concrete translation problems in the framework of a concrete translation task” (Krings, 1986, p. 18). Similarly, Loescher defines it as “a potentially conscious procedure for solving a problem faced in translating a text, or any segment of it” (Lörscher, 1991, p. 8). According to Jaaskelainen, a strategy is “a series of competencies, a set of steps or processes that favor the acquisition, storage, and/or utilization of information”, which is “heuristic and flexible in nature, and their adoption implies a decision influenced by amendments in the translator’s objectives” (1999, p. 71).

But in this thesis, the distinction between conscious and unconscious decisions is not made, since there is neither a clear-cut definition of “consciousness” (Velmans, 2009, p. 1) nor is it clear in how far decisions that have once been made consciously become automatized after frequent repetition. Furthermore, it has been shown that in cultural learning, implicit and explicit knowledge play an important role, and this knowledge influences human perception.

Therefore, in line with Moser-Mercer, “strategy” is considered the process of employing implicit and explicit knowledge in a “conscious or unconscious problem situation” (Moser-Mercer, 1997, p. 258). In this thesis, this definition of “strategy” is not only applied to the understanding of “translation” as “communication *strategy*”, but also to the understanding of “politeness *strategies*” throughout this thesis. The term “politeness strategy” is not restricted to the realization of politeness in speech acts, but also covers the perception and interpretation of politeness.

#### 2.2.6.2 Translation as a universal quartet of understanding, explaining, shifting perspective and negotiating

After having discussed the concepts of "communication" and "strategy", this subsection will now explain in how far translation can be considered a communicative strategy for surviving in the transcultural world.

From an evolutionary perspective, human beings need to relate to the world in order to survive. Since other human beings are also part of their world, they also need to relate to other human beings.

Due to the transculturality of today's world, human beings are not only linked to conspecifics who have made similar experiences in life and who have the same lingua-cultural biography. They also communicate with humans who have made altogether different experiences and have different lingua-cultural biographies. Furthermore, communication also takes place through mass media and cyberspace, i.e. communication can be virtual as well, and virtuality[34] is part of today's *Wirklichkeit*.

In many contexts, communication is also the prerequisite for cooperation, collaboration and services. When communicating, it is important that the communication partners understand each other, explain what should be understood, shift their perspective, and negotiate meaning.

Prunč, for instance, puts forward that an important aspect of translational work is to *understand* the source text as part of a source-cultural perception and to

[34] Adams proposes three complementary definitions of "virtual". The term "indicates an immaterial context of interaction, a kind of intangible architecture that supports and organizes interactions. In some cases a human user interacts with the context itself, while in other cases the interaction occurs between people who share the immaterial context." In addition, "the virtual evokes an organized field of relations that people navigate using one or two senses while suspending or separating the other senses, bracketing them in a different stream of awareness. This implies a splitting of consciousness or a sensory fragmentation such that one's focus is on mediated rather than unmediated sensations and their corresponding sensory modes." Finally, "the virtual can be understood as a system that permits spatially dispersed participants to interact in a way that would otherwise require proximity and face-to-face interaction" (Adams, 2014, p. 239).

convert the source texts to a target text that is *understandable* for target-cultural recipients (Prunč, 2007, pp. 144-145, my emphasis).

Understanding is based on a common denominator. The elements of a text, which seem strange at first sight, slowly become familiar. Understanding happens step by step. The receiver accepts the strangeness of the text and then tries to deal with it against his or her pre-knowledge or pre-opinion. Gradually, the strange elements are acknowledged (Stolze, 1999, p. 117).

Understanding means perceiving, grasping or treating a given item (e.g. speech act, an action, a tool, a piece of art, etc.) and incorporating it into a familiar, habitualized pattern (Kogge, 2005, p. 86).

From a neurological and cognitive perspective, understanding is based on a performance of networked integration during which verbal and nonverbal knowledge is integrated into human consciousness. This process is subjective and individual, since the neural connections organize themselves, learn and have learned from experience (Kupsch-Losereit, 1997, pp. 250, my translation). Furthermore, understanding is not confined to primarily mental processes, but it also refers to the “practical ability to participate in common actions” (Loenhoff, 2011, p. 59).

Experiences of different individuals are never identical, and each human processes new information within their own horizon. Understanding assumes the reciprocal relationship of the perspective of the communication partners, but this is not (always) the case. But full reciprocity is also not necessary as long as meaning can be negotiated during the process of communication (Kotthoff, 2002, p. 8). [35]

When translating, humans compare different experiences and references to reality, identify the common denominator and transfer what is meant into the horizon of experience of the target text recipient (Kaiser-Cooke, 2007, p. 64).

[35] Therefore, it can be concluded that in order to translate politeness, it is not necessary to have a universal definition of politeness or a *tertium comparationis*.

Concepts shaped by a certain culture are transported into a different scheme of perception (Kaiser-Cooke, 2004, pp. 166-169). In other words, humans shift their perspective. All human beings are potentially able to shift their perspective and thus able to translate (Kaiser-Cooke, 2007, p. 66).

Similarly, Vermeer puts forward that humans translate whenever they communicate. They translate idiocultural structures into the framework of the world of the communication partner (Vermeer, 1986, p. 45).

Besides understanding and shifting the perspective, explaining also plays an important role in translation. At this instance, “explain” means to relate to a certain part of reality and make this relation explicit. It means to bring one’s own reference to reality close to someone else’s. Humans only “explain” something when they know that there is the need for explanation. In order to be able to explain something, a person has to understand what he or she means[36] and understand what the other means, i.e. in how far the other relates to reality. To explain something, humans must compare their perspective on things with the perspective of their communication partner. Humans try to see the things through the eyes of their communication partners. Only this way can they estimate what the communication partner knows and is thus capable to understand (Kaiser-Cooke, 2007, pp. 63-65).

Due to the idiosyncrasy of *Realitäten*, translation must be based on negotiation:

> “The communicative negotiation takes place in the act or process of translating. […] The translation process thus consists of relating to reality via two different second-order theories, relating these to each other via reality, negotiating reference between them and, on this basis, deciding amongst various options for labeling or naming this reference. It will have become clear that it is in fact not possible to say “the same thing” in two different languages. This does not matter in the least and is not relevant for deciding whether translation is possible or not. The important thing is that it is possible to relate to *more or less* (i.e. to a degree that is adequate for the translation purpose) “the same thing” temporarily.” (Kaiser-Cooke, 2004, p. 195)

[36] “To mean,” means to relate to reality from a specific perspective (Kaiser-Cooke, 2007, p. 86).

The mechanisms behind translation do not only apply in interlingual communication, and not only when two communication partners interact and a translator acts as a mediator. They also apply when the communication partners communicate directly, or when communication takes place intralingually. The processes of understanding, explaining and changing perspective, and negotiating; in other words, the process of translation is thus contained in any kind of communication. Translation is present in all types of communication, whenever humans interact.

As everything in the world, translation – as part of the world - is also a continuum.[37] Towards the one end of the continuum, translation happens, although the people involved are not aware of this or are not able to explicate the process. Their knowledge remains implicit or unconscious and their actions are of intuitive nature. Intuition essentially develops from our experience. We learn from experience that there are certain regularities in the world. This learning often happens unconsciously. Often we cannot explain why we draw certain conclusions or make certain decisions. Intuition is a feeling that we can sense physically but which we cannot rationalize. It *can* lead to successful translation, but it is not a reliable and reproducible resource[38] (Kaiser-Cooke, 2007, p. 72).

Towards the other end of the continuum, translation happens professionally, and the translator knows why he or she makes certain decisions. At this other end, where professional translators can be located, the translators are aware of their actions and can explicate what they are doing (Kaiser-Cooke, 2007, p. 72). This type of systematic translation is considered professional and it is

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[37] See Kaiser-Cooke's argumentation from the perspective of evolutionary epistemology: "The real world is a continuum; there is a continuous, uninterrupted link between all levels of this reality" (Kaiser-Cooke, 2004, p. 119) and the eighth premise of her evolutionary theory of translation that claims that translation is real (Kaiser-Cooke, 2003, p. 16).

[38] In this context, Kaiser-Cooke also puts forward that one task of science is to bring implicit knowledge and intuitive decisions onto the rational level by observing regular patterns of how translation problems are detected and solved. These findings are then the basis of theories. Of course, this kind of "scientifically substantiated" intuition is also based on experience. But it is more reliable than everyday intuition, since one can trace back its emergence and results (Kaiser-Cooke, 2007, p. 73).

based on explicit knowledge. Professional translators enable communication to take place between members of different cultural communities. They bridge the gap between situations where differences in verbal and non-verbal behavior, expectations, knowledge and perspectives are such that there is not enough common ground for the sender and receiver to communicate effectively by themselves (Nord, 2014, p. 19).

Theoretically, all humans have the potential to translate, but there is a difference between "everyday translation" and "professional translation". While all human beings are able to "change perspective, detach meaning from form, and re-structure the order that we are used to seeing" (Cooke, 2011, p. 136), professional translators can perform "systematically, consciously and professionally, what all people can do intuitively" (Cooke, 2011, p. 137).

## 2.3 The Culture-Specificity of Politeness

### 2.3.1 Politeness as a culturally-embedded survival skill

Above, it has been argued that the translatability of politeness enables human beings to communicate politely and metacommunicate about politeness *in spite of* the culture-specificity of politeness. What does it mean for politeness to be culture-specific?

Relationships to other human beings are vital for humans' survival.[39] In order to build relationships with other human beings, they have to communicate. Humans are not born with the knowledge to behave and communicate according to the social norms of their lingua-cultural environment, but they need to learn it. How does this learning proceed?

[39] In fact, from a biological perspective, loneliness, rejection, and isolation can even cause pain. The neurocognitive processes associated with this pain are comparable to those of physical pain (Cooke, 2011, p. 126).

In general, human beings are not isolated entities. As soon as they are born, they are part of a “social network”.[40] Their first social network might consist of their family or the primary caregivers, who themselves are part of one or more larger social networks. Within these initial networks, humans acquire implicit (procedural) and explicit knowledge (Spitzer, 2003, pp. 21-78) about communicative conventions and strategies. Humans start this learning in the family or among their primary caregivers, and then expand it in the neighborhood, at school, at work, in relationships, friendships, and so on, in their social environments (Hofstede, 1997, p. 3).

The ability to perceive is a necessary requirement for learning, i.e. humans must be able to observe communicative behavior in their environment and filter what they consider relevant for their survival. During this process of perceiving communicative behavior, they undergo a subjective process based on individual experiences and interpretations (Risku, 2004, p. 82). Rather than as an inventory of objectively existing attributes, “perception” can be described as a process during which the attributes are interpreted and constructed. This process depends on the experiences and prerequisites of the perceiver (Risku, 1997, p. 263). Perception is not merely a reception and processing of sensory data, but is shaped by culture and experience (Tymoczko, 2012, p. 87).

Moreover, “perceiving” is rather an active than a passive process. Humans actively filter what seems relevant to them in this process (Spitzer, 2003, p. 143). New sensory input is connected with previously acquired knowledge. The latter has emerged through experience, which has been saved in interneural synapses. The human brain deducts rules from experiences and tries to explain events in the environment (Spitzer, 2003, p. 76). This is a dynamic process. Interneural synapses change continuously with new input.

[40] In this thesis, a “social network” is considered the sum of direct and indirect relationships of a subject to other individuals. Each social network is embedded in a context of macro-level social frameworks (Milroy & Gordon, 2003, p. 117).

The repetition of experiences strengthens them. The lack of experiences weakens them (Spitzer, 2003, p. 75).

Being an open and dynamic system, the way the human brain and memory index, order and classify, constantly change in order to receive new information. This system is cognitive and learns from past experiences in order to choose a strategy of acting in a new situation (Kupsch-Losereit, 1996, p. 219). The brain consists of billions of neurons. They are interconnected, send and receive electrical signals. If a signal exceeds a certain threshold, it sends through synapses impulses to connected neurons. When perceiving something and the perception has something in common with a past experience, the impulse’s path is similar and recognized. Units of knowledge are saved in a systematic order in the long-term memory (Kupsch-Losereit, 1996, pp. 220-221).

Long before human beings’ personal memories start to be activated, their perception is overridden by cultural categories and imperatives (Tymoczko, 2012, pp. 87-88). Nevertheless, the memory plays an important role in perception. What humans perceive is selected and transferred through the hippocampus from the short-term memory to the long-term memory. There are two types of long-term memory: implicit and explicit memory.[41] Implicit and explicit knowledge is saved and retrieved from the implicit and explicit memory (Tymoczko, 2012, p. 89).

Since during early childhood, humans are particularly apt to learning and assimilation processes, it is possible that a majority of communicative patterns are acquired during that phase (Hofstede, 1997, p. 2). But this does not mean

[41] Due to the difficulty of verbalizing processes in the long-term memory, particularly in the implicit long-term memory, most research projects analyzing the translation process focus on processes in the short-term memory. The contents and processes in the short-term memory can be verbalized. Nevertheless, it is necessary to remark that not all cognitive processes happen consciously. Furthermore, if cognitive processes have become routines and thus happen in an automatized way, they cannot be verbalized either. In addition, it is possible that retrospective description of processes can be erroneous, since the short-term memory has only a limited capacity (Göpferich, 2008, pp. 18-19).

that humans need to adhere to these patterns and cannot actively deviate from them. As humans grow older, they become part of an increasing number of social networks and they apply and adapt their implicit and explicit knowledge in each new communicative encounter.

Since the own culture(s) is/are perceived as “normal” (Spitzer, 2003, p. 213) and since perception is not only biologically conditioned but also socially and culturally influenced, it can be assumed that humans of different cultures perceive the world differently (Maletzke, 1996, p. 48). If it is assumed that culture influences the way communication takes place and that politeness is a key aspect of communication, it is possible that manifestations of politeness in foreign culture(s) are perceived as “abnormal”. Based on the politeness patterns learned within the own lingua-cultural environments, humans develop expectations and anticipations as to how speech acts can be realized and perceived. It is possible that some politeness strategies and perceptions of politeness are conventionally used or “automatized”, as procedural learning not only leads to a predisposition of behavior, but also to automatized perception (Roth & Menzel, 1996, p. 239),

The way humans perceive culture is determined by their neurological wiring. In other words, the relationship between culture and perception is recursive. In most cases human beings are not aware in how far their perceptions are constructed and influence their interpretation of what they perceive, as well as their “emotional, ethical, and value assessments of the sensory world” (Tymoczko, 2012, p. 88). Thus, often people who undergo processes of enculturation and socialization are not aware of them (Witte, 2000, pp. 162-163), so they might not even assume or sense differences regarding the perception and realization of politeness. Therefore, when communication partners behave according to different cultural concepts, it is possible that problems, difficulties or misunderstandings occur during the communication process (Thomas, et al., 2003, p. 266).

If it is assumed that communication partners interpret behavior of members of another culture based on patterns of perception and judgement of their own culture (Witte, 2006, p. 346), then it is possible that behavior (verbal and nonverbal) that is considered polite of members of one culture is not considered polite of members of another. It is probable that most human beings' concepts of politeness are mainly shaped by common communicative patterns in the lingua-cultural environments they have been confronted with throughout their lives.[42] It is possible that the concepts of politeness and the ways speech acts are expressed and perceived according to these concepts diverge, the more differences can be found in the lingua-cultural biographies of the communication partners. If politeness is considered an aspect of communication that contributes to the maintenance or even improvement of interpersonal relationships, then it can be assumed correspondingly that humans "learn" what is accepted as polite behavior, implicitly and explicitly, in the social networks that they are members of, i.e. through a "process of socialization" (Márquez-Reiter, 2000, p. 29). This learning is a vital survival skill. Which role does "culture" play in this process of socialization and what constitutes culture?

### 2.3.2 A working definition of culture

Since the learning process described above is highly dependent on the feedback of humans' communication partners, it can be concluded that humans' knowledge about politeness is constructed during the process of interaction. Through interaction with conspecifics and reciprocal adaptation of their knowledge, humans learn to anticipate the behavior of other humans. If goals and situations re-occur, social norms, expectations and roles emerge.

[42] The author of this thesis is aware of the influence of other factors onto how someone expresses or perceives politeness, such as age, gender, psychological factors, the relationship between the communication partners, or context of communication. It is not clear, if culture influences all these aspects or if certain aspects are universal and rather influence culture. Maybe culture and these other factors influence each other. This discussion shall not be elaborated upon in this thesis. In line with Schmid, the author of this thesis doubts that culture determines individual behavior. (Schmid, 2008, p. 45)

The flexible result of reciprocal knowledge adaptation and the formation of compatible knowledge structures can be denoted as "culture" (Risku, 2004, p. 84).

Thus, culture can be considered a cooperative phenomenon. The compatibility of actions and representations,[43] which have been created during interaction, results in humans' ability to cooperate and present the limit or border of their culture – not the nationality or language (Risku, 2004, p. 84).

Similar to Risku, Casmir puts forward the cooperative aspect of culture:

> "Culture is created by and exists within people […] Culture results, after all, from the combined efforts of human beings, over time, to assure as much as possible that our survival needs are met. Thus it can be argued that rather than being totally dominated by a culture, its members frequently negotiate and re-negotiate together the meanings of the culture's concepts and value-systems, including ethics" (Casmir, 2009, p. 99).

In fact, there can be many different aspects that are shared by the members of a culture: e.g. shared experience, a certain common goal, interaction in a nation, a geographic region, etc. (Schmid, 2008, p. 44). Since every person can be a member of multiple social networks with their respective discourses and concept systems, each individual can be part of a number of different cultures (Schmid, 2008, p. 47; Risku, 2004, p. 84).

Closely connected to the notion of cooperation is the notion of collectivity. Already in 1952, the anthropologists Kroeber and Kluckhohn published a collection of more than 150 definitions of "culture" from different perspectives, such as anthropology, philosophy, sociology, history, literature studies and ecology (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952). Regardless of how elaborate, short,

[43] Based on Sperber (1996), House argues that the concept of "culture in terms of different types of 'representations'" can help bridge the cleavage between generalization versus diversification and individualization (House, 2009, pp. 9-10). Each individual has "mental representations" of ideas, behaviors, attitudes, concepts etc. Some of these representations can be expressed by language, shared and multiplied in public. The more frequently a set of representations is shared and multiplied in a group, the more likely it is that this set of representations becomes part of the group's culture. This process is continuous, rather than step-by-step, so that it is difficult to determine when exactly individuals' and subgroups' representations become culture. (House, 2009, p. 10)

specific or general a definition is and regardless of the perspective from which the definition is made (anthropological, psychological, social, etc.): Many definitions have in common that they speak of a collective or group of people. In other words, culture is a collective phenomenon, which does not only affect an individual but becomes evident in and is shared by members of a social network.

This aspect of collectivity is corroborated by Hofstede's definition of culture as the "collective programming of the mind which differentiates the members of a group or category of people from another"[44] (Hofstede, 1997, pp. 2-3). Also D'Andrade, who views "culture" from the perspective of cognitive science and anthropology, speaks of a "program" here: according to him, "culture" is the mental programming of the cultural cognition which is shared by a network of human beings and which differentiates one network of human beings from another. This mental programming influences human beings' behavior. Human beings' mental programs are conditioned by the social and geographical context in which they have lived and collected experiences (D'Andrade, 1981, p. 192).

Hofstede's and D'Andrade's concepts of "mental programming" have in common that the influence is described as a "one-way process" and the program is considered a rather static than dynamic one. But in fact, it can be assumed that culture is a rather a recursive and dynamic phenomenon: while culturally conditioned mental programming influences human behavior, the behavioral patterns observable in everyday practice in a network of individuals corroborate the resource of cultural knowledge or "cultural brain" (Bolten, 1997, p. 474). In addition,

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[44] German original: Kultur ist "die kollektive Programmierung des Geistes, die die Mitglieder einer Gruppe oder Kategorie von Menschen von einer anderen unterscheidet" (Hofstede, 1997, p. 4).

English original: *"Culture is the collective programming of the mind distinguishing the members of one group or category of people from others"* (Hofstede, 2012).

> “[c]ultures, like all human attempts at organizing our experiences while striving to meet simple or complex survival needs, are always in a state of adaptation, flux or change as a direct response to the need for making adaptation fit changing environments” (Casmir, 2009, p. 99).

Furthermore, as explained above, recent studies about neuroplasticity suggest that humans’ brain can change during the entire life: In analogy with computer programs, Hofstede also speaks of the “software” of the mind (1994). If we adhere to this analogy and consider the brain itself the “hardware”, we can conclude that the “software” needs to be updated, whenever the “hardware” changes. In line with Prunč, it can thus be concluded that culture is a dynamic system of socially recognized values and norms of behavior (1997, p. 123).

Culture has a sense-attributing function: it “refers to the shared set of taken-for-granted assumptions that structure how members of a community make sense of the world” (Conway, 2012, p. 265). Instead of generating identical attitudes or determining behavior, “it makes their actions and interactions compatible in the sense that the members of a culture are able to locate them within a coherent framework and interpret them against this conceptual background” (Schmid, 2008, p. 44). Cultural concepts identify relevant aspects of the world for the members of a certain group, and provide an interpretative framework that helps human beings evaluate behavior and ascribe meaning to it. Based on this interpretation, expectations regarding the probability of the occurrence of behavioral patterns in different contexts can be concluded. Furthermore, human beings’ communication is facilitated due to a common conceptual ground (Schmid, 2008, p. 45).

Another characteristic of culture is its fuzziness. It can be described as a “fuzzy set of attitudes, beliefs, behavioural norms, and basic assumptions and values shared by a group of people, and that influence each member’s behaviour and his or her interpretations of the “meaning” of other people’s behaviour” (Spencer-Oatey, 2000, p. 4).

In addition, culture is learned individually, but also passed on to the next generation. It is “a learned system of meanings that fosters a particular sense of shared identity and community among its group members. It is a complex frame of reference […]. It is through communication that culture is learned, modified, and passed down from one generation to the next” (Ting-Toomey, 2005, pp. 71-72).[45]

Culture does not only refer to cultural products such as arts, music or literature. It refers to all norms and conventions, which characterize the behavior of a society or a group.[46] It can be defined as the entirety of experiences, thought structures and everyday practices of a society[47] (Kadrić, et al., 2010, pp. 27, my translation). Based on the assumption that there is an objectively existing world, regardless of whether humans perceive it or wish to communicate about it, and that humans are part of this world, the conclusion can be drawn that humans relate to this world. The way that they relate to the world in which they live is determined by the society. Representing the entirety of experiences, thought structures and everyday practices of a society, culture can be considered the result of the environment in which we live, our needs regarding this environment, which need to be fulfilled, and the way in which we treat these needs and communicate about them. A society’s experiences are its selective perception of aspects of the world, which seem relevant for it. This selection leads to certain structures of thought and the everyday practices that

[45] See also Schmid who contends that culture is about what a community considers to be worth passing on to the next generation and applied in actions. (Schmid, 2000, p. 55)

[46] This view is also occupied by House who asserts that culture is not material, but refers to the behavior of the members of a collective. “The important and recurrent aspects of culture are thus the cognitive one guiding and monitoring human actions and the social one emphasizing what is shared by members of a society.” (House, 2009, p. 9)

[47] German original: „Kultur bezieht sich nicht nur auf Literatur, Theater, Musik etc., sondern stellt die Gesamtheit der Normen und Konventionen dar, die das Verhalten einer Gesellschaft oder einer Gruppe kennzeichnen. Wir können somit sagen: Kultur ist das Ensemble gesellschaftlicher Erfahrungen, Denkstrukturen und Handlungspraktiken.“ (Kadrić, et al., 2010, p. 27).

result from these thought structures and experiences. Our actions are influenced by the way we experience and think about reality (Kadrić, et al., 2010, pp. 28, my summary and translation).

Culture can be considered the result of humans' need to relate adequately to the world, while the society and its collective need to determine what "adequacy" means. Because different societies have different needs regarding their environment and their part of the world, there are different cultures. Thus, each culture represents a different relation to the world. Each individual undergoes a process of enculturation during his life and acquires certain parts of different subcultures (Kadrić, et al., 2010, pp. 29-30, my summary and translation).

## 2.4 Conclusions: Politeness Between Translatability and Culture-Specificity

From a transcultural perspective on translation, the translatability and culture-specificity of politeness do not exclude each other. Instead, politeness can be understood as a concept that embodies universal *and* culture-specific aspects of human communication.

All human beings employ politeness in order to build and maintain relationships to other human beings. These relationships are necessary for the survival of *Homo sapiens.*

In addition, all humans have in common that their concept of politeness is part of their culturally constructed *Realität*. It can be translated, since human beings are able to shift their perspective, understand, explain, and negotiate meaning, including pragmatic meaning. They are equipped with the neurological and cognitive characteristics, which enable them to communicate and interact with other human beings, although each human being has his or her own *Realität*. This ability is a product of evolution and necessary for human beings as a survival skill.

*Realitäten* are shaped by culture. Therefore, it can be assumed that the conceptualization and perception of politeness can also be considered culture-specific. But this culture-specificity does not effectuate untranslatability, because of the cognitive abilities of all human beings listed above.

Politeness manifests itself in nonverbal and verbal behavior. This behavior can be considered part of *Wirklichkeit*, since it exists independent from whether, and if yes, in how far, it is perceived and interpreted by human beings as "polite". Human beings cannot interpret the behavior of other human beings without their own socially, culturally and/or scientifically constructed framework. Therefore, any approach to observe the realization of politeness and the reaction to the realization of politeness (which can be considered part of the perception of politeness) cannot be considered as "objective" or free from bias. Different models attempt to define the meaning of politeness and to explain its ways of manifestation. In the following chapter, these models will be presented and discussed in order to find a working definition of politeness for this thesis.

## 2.5 Politeness: meanings and manifestations

"At first blush, it might seem obvious that politeness is simply a well understood concept that pervades human interaction, and that the task of those interested has been relatively straightforward. Not so. While the existence of politeness or the lack thereof is not in question, a common understanding of the concept and how to account for it is certainly problematic. In reviewing the relevant literature in preparing this critique, I was struck by the lack of consistency among researchers on what politeness is, never mind how it might be accounted for. Remarkably, many of the writers do not even explicitly define what they take politeness to be, and their understanding of the concept must be inferred from statements referencing the term." (Fraser B. 1990, p. 219)

"Optimists take the position that we can expect to arrive at a serious theory of politeness, where concepts of face and principles for interpretation are carefully articulated and well understood. Pessimists, on the other hand, take the position that while we all know polite behavior when we see it, we will never be able to speak definitively about it. Stay tuned." (Fraser B. 1990, p. 235)

With these words, Fraser concludes his paper "Perspectives on politeness". Although more than two decades have passed since the publication of this paper, and new studies have been conducted on the topic of politeness, the overall situation in politeness research remains the same: one of the main problems in politeness research is the definition of the "subject of study" itself (Arndt & Janney, 2005, p. 22). Moreover, the literature review reveals that either no explicit definition of politeness is offered or politeness is considered

> "a consequence of rational social goals such as maximizing the benefit to self and other, minimizing the face-threatening nature of a social act, displaying adequate proficiency in the accepted standards of social etiquette, making sure that the social interaction runs smoothly etc. Linguistic politeness is then taken to be the various forms of language structure and usage which allow the members of a socio-cultural group to achieve these goals." (Watts, et al., 2005, pp. 3-4)

The lexemes "polite" and "politeness" are part of the English scientific and everyday language use.[48] Their meaning needs to be re-produced and re-negotiated whenever people interact in English (Watts, 2003, p. 13).

The fact that there is no universal definition of politeness is not surprising. As argued above, politeness is culturally embedded. Whether human beings perceive a certain type of verbal behavior as polite or not, how human beings express politeness and how they conceptualize politeness depends on their lingua-cultural biography. But politeness as a method to establish and maintain relationships can be considered universal among human beings.

Therefore, it is necessary to find a working definition that allows for the consideration of universal and culture-specific aspects of politeness. In order to approach a working definition, the following sections will review different perspectives on politeness.

Politeness can be defined on an intensional and an extensional level. The intensional definition refers to the meaning of the term "politeness" and summarizes its properties, and its necessary and sufficient conditions. The extensional definition comprises all items that fulfill the criteria of the intensional definition. With regard to "politeness", these "items" are types of

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[48] In this context, it needs to be mentioned that also the differentiation of the term "polite" from other terms such as "impolite" (Eelen, 2001), "rude", "(dis)courteous" (Watts, 2003, p. 13), or "courteous", "civil" or "mannerly" (Lakoff & Ide, 2005, p. 4) is unclear.

behavior (or non-behavior) under different conditions. The more conditions determine the intensional definition of politeness, the smaller is the range of the extensional definition. Both types of definition, intensional and extensional, constitute the concept of politeness.

### 2.5.1 Politeness as a social, cultural *and* scientific construct

The term "politeness" is not confined to scientific contexts, but is also part of general language usage. In non-scientific contexts, politeness is often associated with positively or negatively connoted virtues such as 'socially "correct" or appropriate behavior', considerateness, cultivation, or insincerity (Watts, 2003, p. 1). Members of a cultural group seem to be able to assess intuitively polite and tactful behavior and have clear metalinguistic ideas of politeness. These common sense notions of politeness are subject to historical developments, depend on social norms, and vary between different sociocultural groups (Pizziconi, 2009, p. 706). Most of the early research on politeness is based on such non-scientific concepts of politeness. Fraser sums up these perspectives as the "social-norm view" which represents

> "the historical understanding of politeness generally embraced by the public within the English-speaking world" and assumes "that each society has a particular set of social norms consisting of more or less explicit rules that prescribe a certain behavior, a state of affairs, or a way of thinking in a context." (Fraser, 1990, pp. 220-221).

Patterns of behavior that adhere to the norm are considered polite; behavioral patterns contradicting the norm are considered impolite. According to Fraser, this view focuses on speech style, which is not supported by many scholars (Fraser, 1990, pp. 220-221).

In scientific discourse, particularly the discourse published prior to the introduction of what is commonly referred to as the "postmodern"[49] perspective on politeness, scholars dissociate themselves and their research from the

[49] A more detailed description of this perspective can be found in Chapter 2.5.6.

social-norm view and consider it “pre-pragmatic”, as the linguistic codification of politeness is deterministically linked to the “essential character of an individual, a nation, a people, or its language” (Pizziconi, 2009, p. 706).

Bousfield emphasizes the impossibility of sharply separating this view from politeness research, as

> “we must recognise that most, if not all of the approaches to politeness rely in at least some way upon social norms. After all, the very concept of politeness is a socially oriented one.” (Bousfield, 2008, p. 45)

Also Locher puts forward the close connection between all politeness theories and social norms (Locher, 2004, p. 60). Indirectly, fundamental concepts closely related to East Asian politeness research, such as the concept of “discernment (*wakimae*)”,[50] also rely on social norms (Watts, et al., 2005, p. 4). Looking at the other side of the coin, i.e. impoliteness research, social norms seem to be an influential factor as well. Culpeper, who states that social norms[51] “relate to authoritative standards of behaviour, and entail positive or negative evaluations of behaviour as being consistent or otherwise with those standards”, puts forward that impolite behavior involves transgressing or violating social norms (Culpeper, 2011, pp. 36-37).

Main representatives of the postmodern perspective on politeness, e.g. Watts, even go a step further and argue that a theory of non-scientific perspectives on politeness (which he refers to as “first order politeness”) consisting of descriptive notions should be the goal of politeness research rather than the

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[50] Hill et al. define “discernment” as following: “[O]nce certain factors of addressee and situation are noted, the selection of an appropriate linguistic form and/or appropriate behaviour is essentially automatic” (Hill, et al., 1986, p. 348).

[51] Note that Culpeper distinguishes “social norms” from “experiential norms”, the latter relating to “the regularity or typicality of behaviour, and may acquire positive value through their aura of certainty”. Culpeper remarks that these two types of norms cannot be sharply separated, since any neutral social habit could potentially become positively valued through “certainty and regularity” (Culpeper, 2011, p. 36).

attempt to approach a theory of “second order politeness”[52] (Watts, 2003, pp. 130-135).

Watts and Eelen criticize the missing distinction between “non-scientific” perspectives on politeness and politeness as a “scientific” concept (Eelen, 2001; Watts, 2003). Watts contends that scientific concepts of “politeness” that are used among linguists and other researchers deviate from the non-scientific understanding of “politeness” (Watts, 2003, p. 2). Eelen (2001), who shares Watts’ opinion, proposes the term “(im)politeness 1” (corresponds to “first-order politeness”) and the term “(im)politeness 2” (corresponds to “second-order politeness”) (Watts, et al., 2005, p. 5).

Eelen who also criticizes that most politeness theories do neither clearly distinguish between politeness 1 and 2, nor describe the “relationship between both notions”, puts forward that politeness 1 is evaluative per se, since it depends on social values. In addition, politeness 1 is argumentative in the sense that it can lead to social effects. Politeness 1 is also normative, i.e. based on social-norms. Finally, he asserts that the aspects of modality and reflexivity are associated with politeness, since each person can choose which politeness strategy they wish to apply (Eelen, 2001, p. 31).

In this thesis, both perspectives on politeness, i.e. sociocultural *and* scientific views on politeness will be taken into consideration. In line with Cooke, it is argued that

> “scientific objectivity is in fact inter-subjective consensus. The more one’s peers agree with one’s findings, the more it is accepted as truth. Scientific knowledge is a process of communication and social construction.” (Cooke, 2011, pp. 116-117)

Above, the distinction between *Wirklichkeit* and *Realität* was proposed. *Realität* is different for every person and shaped by social, cultural and linguistic prerequisites. When scientists encounter each other in international scientific discourse, they all – as human beings – are also influenced by their

[52] Second order politeness refers to scientific concepts of politeness (Watts, et al., 2005, p. 5).

respective social, cultural and linguistic environments and biographies. Therefore, their scientific consensus (or non-consensus) on politeness cannot be clearly detached from their cultural, social and linguistic bias. Thus, it can be concluded that politeness is a social *and* scientific construct.

### 2.5.2 Politeness and the Gricean maxims

With reference to Immanuel Kant, Grice tries to point out the foundation of rational communication and claims that usually any type of conversation is an attempt of “cooperative efforts” with a purpose, or a set of purposes, and a direction. The purpose can be recognized by the communication partner and the direction is mutually accepted. The direction can be determined from the beginning of a communicative act or it can evolve during the communication process. It can be also unspecific and open, as for instance in “small talk” (Grice, 1975, p. 45). In any case, communication partners seem to follow a general principle, which Grice calls the “Cooperative Principle”:

> “Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged.” (Grice, 1975, p. 45)

Based on the assumption of this principle, Grice concludes four maxims: “Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner” (Grice, 1975, pp. 45-46), which can be understood as guidelines, and are presented in the following chart. The term "participant" chosen in this table refers to communication partners (e.g. speaker and hearer, writer and reader).

Table 1: Gricean maxims (adapted from Grice, 1975)

| Maxim | Meaning of maxim |
|---|---|
| Quantity | Participants in communicative processes make their “contribution as informative as is required (for the current purpose of the exchange)” and NOT “more informative than is required”. (Grice, 1975, p. 45) |
| Quality | Participants are expected to try to make their contribution “one that is true” and not to say what they “believe to be false” or that for which they “lack adequate evidence”. (Grice, 1975, p. 46) |
| Relation | Participants are inclined to “be relevant”. (Grice, 1975, p. 46) |
| Manner | Participants are expected to “be perspicuous”, i.e. to avoid “obscurity of expression”, “ambiguity”, to be “brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity)” and “orderly”. (Grice, 1975, p. 46) |

#### 2.5.2.1 Leech's Politeness Principle

Leech – having adopted the Gricean Cooperative Principle – introduces the term "Politeness Principle" which

> "regulates the social equilibrium and the friendly relations which enable us to assume that our interlocutors are being cooperative in the first place which, again, is clear evidence of an evaluative, normative stance despite claims to the contrary." (Leech, 1983, p. 3)

Thus, he claims that interlocutors do not only adhere to the Cooperative Principle, but also follow the so-called "Politeness Principle", which recommends to "minimize (other things being equal) the expression of impolite beliefs" and "maximize (other things being equal) the expression of polite beliefs" (Leech, 1983, p. 81). Communicative behavior, according to the Politeness Principle, helps explain why participants tend to violate the Cooperative Principle. This complementary Politeness Principle promotes social balance and the maintenance of a friendly relationship between the interlocutors (Leech, 1983, p. 82). Leech distinguishes between a sender's illocutionary and social goals. Correspondingly, he differentiates interpersonal rhetoric and textual rhetoric principles. Both groups of principles consist of maxims, "which socially constrain communicative behavior in specific ways". Politeness belongs to the group of interpersonal rhetoric principles (Alfattah, 2010, p. 86).

Furthermore, Leech proposes five scales that have a significant impact on the tact level "appropriate to a given speech situation": "cost-benefit scale", "optionality scale", "indirectness scale" (Leech, 1983, p. 123), "authority scale", and "social distance scale" (Leech, 1983, p. 126).

According to Leech, politeness has two facets. On the one hand, it can be "relative", referring to "politeness vis-à-vis a specific situation" and on the other hand, it can be "absolute", referring "to the degree of politeness inherently associated with specific speaker actions" (Alfattah, 2010, p. 86).

Based on the assumption of the politeness principle, Leech concludes six maxims, i.e. the maxims of tact, generosity, approbation, modesty, agreement and sympathy, and relates them to different speech act categories (Leech, 1983, p. 132).

Leech considers some speech act types as intrinsically polite and others as intrinsically impolite. He claims that indirect illocutions are inclined to be more polite, since they offer the addressee more options, and therefore have a "diminished" and "tentative" force (Leech, 1983, pp. 107-109). In addition, he considers questions in the conjunctive mode to be more indirect and thus more polite than questions in the indicative mode.

#### 2.5.2.2 Lakoff's Rules of Politeness

Another well-known representative of the conversational-maxim based approach to politeness is Robin Lakoff. According to her, members of a society use politeness to strategically avoid and reduce communicational conflicts (1975a, p. 64). Furthermore, she defines politeness as "a means of minimising confrontation in discourse – both the possibility of confrontation occurring at all, and the possibility that a confrontation will be perceived as threatening" (Lakoff, 1989, p. 102). She proposes a universal dichotomy of pragmatic competence, i.e. that of clarity and that of politeness. Based on this, she suggests two rules: a) be clear, and b) be polite. The latter consists of three submaxims:

- "Don't impose".
- "Give options".
- "Make your receiver feel good" (Lakoff, 1989, p. 102).

To explain differences of politeness phenomena in different cultures, Lakoff introduces the terms "distance politeness", "deference politeness" and "camaraderie". The use of non-imposition and impersonal expressions in European cultures are considered characteristics of "distance politeness". "Deference politeness", found especially in Asian cultures, "denies the existence of interaction by removing the speaker from the action". "Camaraderie" refers to the high prioritization of "openness and niceness" in modern American culture (Lakoff, 1990, pp. 35-39).

Lakoff, who argues based on the Gricean Cooperative Principle, states that the Gricean concept of “implicature”[53] is linked with the concept of “politeness”:

> “When the speaker is afraid that what he has to communicate will involve nonfree goods of some kind, he is apt to resort to circumlocution – that is, the use of implicature.” (Lakoff, 1975b, p. 44)

Lakoff argues that it is very improbable that two individuals use implicatures according to identical rules with regard to communicational context and linguistic encoding (Lakoff, 1975b, p. 43). She claims that interdisciplinary work between linguists and sociologists is necessary in order to find explanations to language use patterns that are decisively influenced by the complex phenomenon “politeness”. She assumes that politeness is a main reason for language users to choose a specific way of saying something (in spite of there being many ways) in certain contexts (Lakoff, 1975b, p. 52). She argues

> “that the rules of pragmatic competence, along with the rules of politeness and the rules of conversation, are applicable to different degrees in different contexts, and thus they all interact with one another in many and varied ways” (Lakoff, 1975b, p. 52).

Lakoff tries to formalize the relationship between politeness and syntactic structures in English. She points out that, imperatives are the most direct speech-act type, as it does not leave the addressee the choice to refuse (Lakoff, 1975b, p. 46), while declaratives and questions are less imposing. She argues:

> “While giving information may put you in an intellectually superior position, which makes the question a relatively light constraint on the addressee, doing something at the behest of someone else indicates that you are somehow inferior to him, and thus an imperative is the least polite and the most avoided of all the three speech-act types, and hence cannot be used as an indirect means of conveying the others.” (Lakoff, 1975b, p. 46)

[53] Grice has introduced the term “implicature”, which refers to the process and product of making an utterance the semantic content of which is distinct from the speaker’s intention (Wayne, 2010), or in other words: if in a communicative situation the above-quoted maxims and Cooperative Principle are not adhered to, an implicature can be expected (Grice, 1975, p. 43). Since the production of an implicature requires a higher degree of effort and does not adhere to the maxims of the Cooperative Principle, it can be assumed that they do not mainly epitomize transactional function.

### 2.5.2.3 Criticism of Leech and Lakoff's approach

Lakoff and Leech's theories are criticized by Arndt and Janney, who claim that

> "[t]here is nothing wrong with saying that politeness is related to cooperation and claiming both are essential to effective communication. But it is odd (and symptomatic of the present state of linguistic research in this area) that linguists have to translate such simple ideas into the terminology of speech act theory (or some other theory) and elevate politeness and cooperation to the level of 'necessary principles' in order to point this out." (Arndt & Janney, 1987, p. 374)

Frederking also generally criticizes the conversational-maxim view on politeness. Questioning their applicability and being skeptical towards their claim of universality, he points out the vagueness of the Gricean maxims and concludes that they therefore may be more useful for purely theoretic concepts rather than for applications such as the implementation of computational systems:

> "The notion of conversational implicature, and the Cooperative Principle, have been useful and important to some researchers in thinking about how language works in real use. But however useful they are for guiding a researcher's thinking, they are not useful as an actual part of an implementation." (Frederking, 1996, p. 1)

Frederking even goes one step further by warning that the Gricean maxims could imply a misleading taxonomy:

> "Because the maxims have the form of a taxonomy, they lead researchers to think that the maxims taxonomize the space of conversational implicatures in some useful fashion. But using the maxims even in this way is counter-productive, because they are much too vague, and often overlap when applied to actual examples of conversational implicature. They tend to lead to confusion more than enlightenment." (Frederking, 1996, p. 2)

In addition, Watts criticizes the speech act-based approach in general, and particularly the a priori categorization of speech acts into inherently polite and impolite ones without giving the researcher a

> "clear idea of how an individual participating in an interaction can possibly know the degree and type of politeness required for the performance of a speech act" (2003, p. 69).

Although Leech's approach is quite adaptable to different cultures, as it allows different maxim prioritizations, it has been criticized for two main reasons.

Firstly, it has been suggested that Leech does not actually define his concept of politeness explicitly (Alfattah, 2010, p. 86). Furthermore, his maxim partitioning seems arbitrary and not of equal intensional breadth. Some of his maxims seem rather general, others more particular, so that the number of maxims could theoretically be extended (Thomas, 1995, p. 160).

### 2.5.3 Politeness as a means for saving and negotiating face

#### 2.5.3.1 Brown and Levinson

The face-saving view on politeness by Brown and Levinson is also based on the Gricean Maxims, but while Leech and Lakoff consider politeness to be a means for cooperation and smooth communication, Brown and Levinson consider politeness a means for saving face.

Their politeness theory represents the foundation of most empirical studies on politeness. Basically, they view politeness as a reason for deviation from the Gricean Cooperative Principle, claiming that

> "there is a working assumption by conversationalists of the rational and efficient nature of talk. It is against that assumption that polite ways of talking show up as deviations, requiring rational explanation on the part of the recipient, who finds in considerations of politeness reasons for the speaker's apparent irrationality or inefficiency." (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 4)

Based on the Gricean Cooperative Principle, they argue that all communication partners are "rational agents – i.e. choose means that will satisfy their ends" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 59), while "rationality" is defined

> "as the application of a specific mode of reasoning [...] which guarantees inferences from ends or goals to means that will satisfy those ends." (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 64)

The concept of face is central to their theory. Based on Goffman's concept of "face"[54] (Goffman, 1955), Brown and Levinson consider politeness to be a face-saving device. They define "face" as the "public self-image that every

[54] Goffman defines "face" as "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact" (Goffman, 1955, p. 214).

member wants to claim for himself". They claim "that face consists in a set of wants satisfiable only by the actions (including expressions of wants) of others" and that therefore all communication partners strive for mutual face maintenance. They suggest that individuals invest, lose, and maintain face during a communicative situation. Based on the expectation that individuals cooperate in face maintenance, Brown and Levinson conclude that face maintenance is a continuous, mutual and interactive process between sender and addressee (Brown & Levinson, 1987, pp. 60-61).

Brown and Levinson state that every person has positive and negative face, and that some illocutionary acts intrinsically threaten or damage another person's face; these acts are called "face threatening acts" (henceforth: FTA).

Correspondingly, they distinguish between positive and negative politeness.

Positive face is defined as "the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 62).

> "Positive politeness is oriented toward the positive face of H [hearer or, more generally, addressee], the positive self-image that he claims for himself. Positive politeness is approach-based; it 'anoints' the face of the addressee by indicating that in some respects, S [speaker or, more generally, sender] wants H's wants (e.g. by treating him as a member of an ingroup, a friend, a person whose wants and personality traits are known and liked). The potential face threat of an act is minimized in this case by the assurance that in general S wants at least some of H's wants; for example, that S considers H to be in important respects 'the same' as he, with in-group rights and duties and expectations of reciprocity, or by the implication that S likes H so that the FTA doesn't mean a negative evaluation in general of H's face." (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 70)

Negative face is defined as "the want of every 'competent adult member' that his actions be unimpeded by others" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 62).

> "Negative politeness, on the other hand, is oriented mainly toward partially satisfying (redressing) H's negative face, his basic want to maintain claims of territory and self-determination. Negative politeness, thus, 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. Hence negative politeness is characterized by self-effacement, formality and restraint, with attention to very restricted aspects of H's self-image, centring on his want to be unimpeded. […] There is a natural tension in negative politeness, however, between (a) the desire

> to go on record as a prerequisite to being seen to pay face, and (b) the desire to go off record to avoid imposing.” (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 70)

A sender or speaker normally intends to reduce the threat by an FTA, unless it is more important to them to be efficient (according to the Gricean Maxims) than to preserve the addressee’s face (Brown & Levinson, 1987, pp. 59-60).

Generally, Brown and Levinson propose five strategies of face management (see illustration below) and assert that the particular strategy chosen by a sender depends on the perceived amount of threat to a sender’s or addressee’s face by an FTA, with strategy one corresponding to the lowest threat level and strategy five corresponding to the highest perceived threat level (Brown & Levinson, 1987, pp. 59-60). Assuming that the aforementioned politeness principles are known to all rational agents, Brown and Levinson conclude that they “will not choose a strategy less risky than necessary, as this may be seen as an indication that the FTA is more threatening than it actually is” (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 60).

Brown and Levinson recognize that the concept of face, the borders of individual territories and the perception of personality vary from culture to culture. Nevertheless, they assume “that the mutual knowledge of members’ public self-image or face, and the social necessity to orient oneself to it in interaction, are universal” (Brown & Levinson, 1987, pp. 61-62) and that some speech acts are intrinsically face threatening, “namely those acts that by their nature run contrary to the face wants of the addressee and/or of the speaker”, while “act” is understood to be “what is intended to be done by a verbal or non-verbal communication” (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 65).

Although Brown and Levinson are aware of the necessity to adapt the concept of “face” to different cultural contexts, they claim that the core notions of face are universal (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 13).

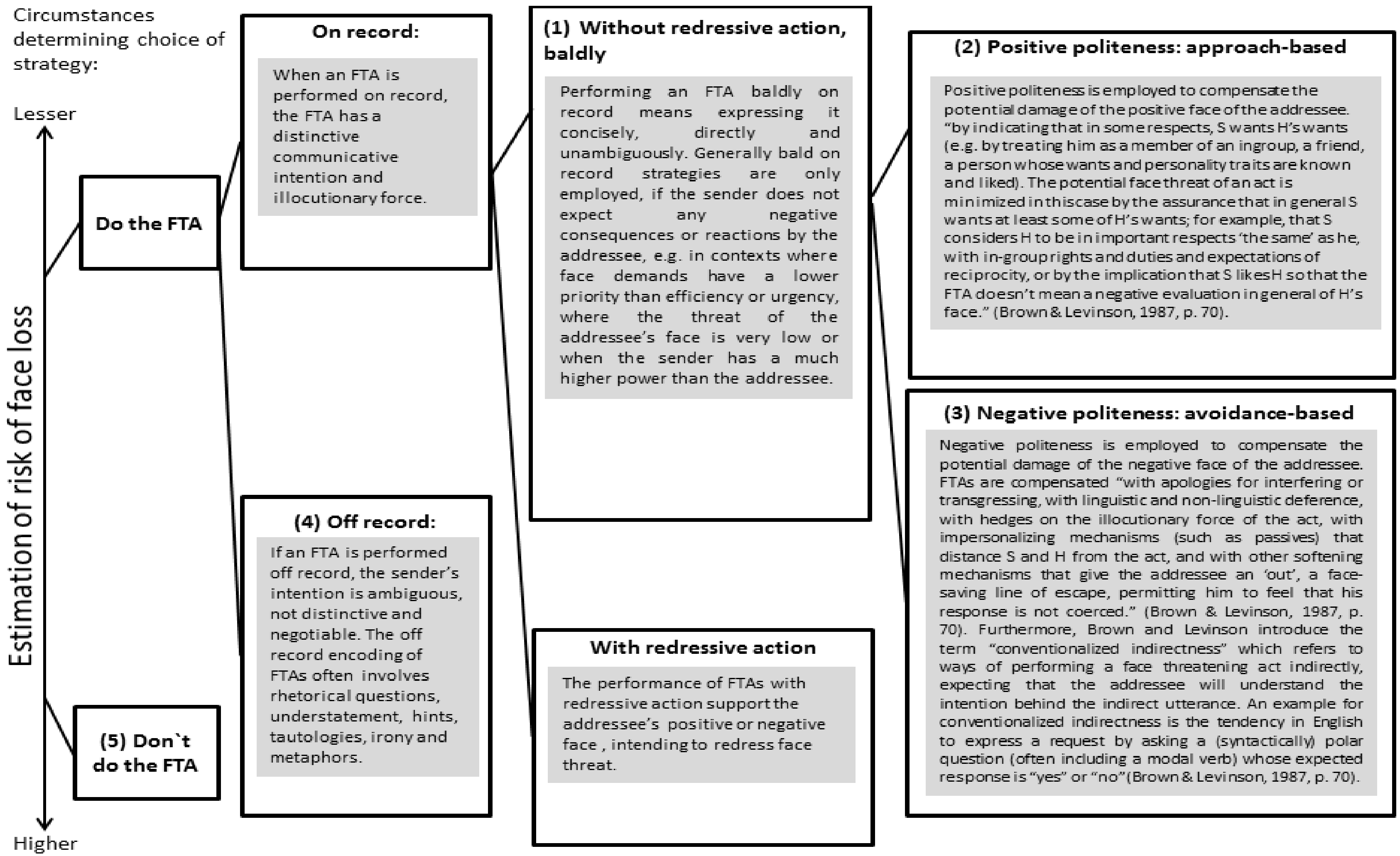


Figure 1: Politeness strategies adapted from Brown & Levinson, 1987

Brown and Levinson attempt to assign certain functions to certain linguistic devices in the framework of their face-saving view. With regard to negative politeness strategies, which are required to mitigate face when uttering a request, they propose the following chart (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 131):

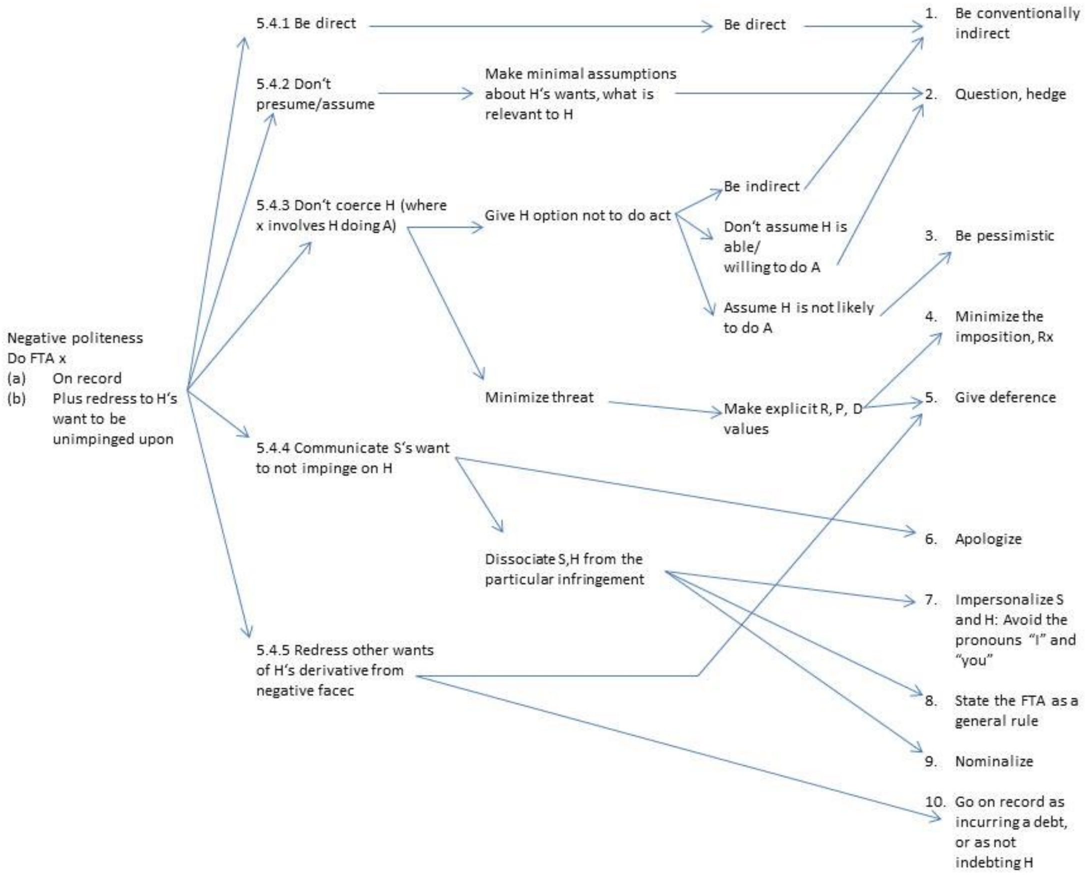


Figure 2: Negative politeness strategies according to Brown and Levinson

One main negative politeness strategy that Brown and Levinson point out is to "be conventionally indirect":

> "In this strategy a speaker is faced with opposing tensions: the desire to give H an 'out' by being indirect, and the desire to go on record. In this case it is solved by the compromise of conventional indirectness, the use of phrases and sentences that have contextually unambiguous meanings […] which are different from their literal meanings. In this way the utterance goes on record, and the speaker indicates his desire to have gone off record (to have conveyed the same thing indirectly). Conventional indirectness *encodes* the clash of wants, and so partially achieves them both. Note that there are degrees of conventionalization, and so degrees of compromise in one

direction (off-recordness) or the other (on-recordness)" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 132).

According to Brown and Levinson, indirect speech acts constitute a relevant form of conventional indirectness and have been studied by numerous scholars (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 132). An example for conventional indirectness in indirect speech acts is an utterance of the following structure:

*"Can you please do xyz?"*

Syntactically this utterance can be identified as a question. Solely looking at the modal verb, the utterance could refer to the ability of the addressee to do xyz. But the inserted politeness marker "please" disambiguates the illocutionary force of the utterance, so that it can be only understood as an indirect request (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 133).

Brown and Levinson's theory has been adopted by many scholars as a framework for empirical research. Some scholars have only adopted parts of Brown and Levinson's framework and modified other parts for their own research purposes. Kil-Ho Kang, for instance, is of the opinion that a general and universal conceptualization of "politeness" and "face" are not sufficient to analyze politeness strategies in one specific society, but that it is necessary to employ a unique and culture-specific politeness framework for each specific culture (2004, p. 133).

Other scholars, e.g. Locher, criticize Brown and Levinson's assumption that an utterance can be considered more polite, the more indirect it is, which is revealed by their strategy ranking (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 20). She argues that the consideration of an indirect utterance as polite or impolite depends on social norms and context. In other words, she points out that it is impossible simply to draw a direct positive correlation between the degree of indirectness and politeness (Locher, 2004, p. 68). In fact, indirectness can "turn out to be impolite if the speaker misjudged the appropriate form called for by the speech situation" (Locher, 2004, p. 69). Another aspect that Locher criticizes is the oversimplification of Brown and Levinson's computational model to determine weightiness,[55] since far more than the parameters P, D and R influence the choice of politeness strategies (Locher, 2004, p. 69), such as "the level of formality of the speech event, the presence of an audience, the degree of liking between the participants, and so on" (Holmes, 2009, p. 715).

Furthermore, Brown and Levinson's theory is criticized "for mixing up different types of data, and providing very little indication of its source or context" (Holmes, 2009, p. 715).

In addition, the incomparability of the proposed politeness strategies is criticized. For example, there are very general and code-independent strategies such as "Be pessimistic." and on the other hand there are very clear code-bound strategies such as "Nominalize." While negative politeness strategies are analyzed more strongly on a code-bound basis, positive politeness strategies "seem much more open-ended and difficult to restrict" (Holmes, 2009, p. 715).

Eelen criticizes the strategic nature of Brown and Levinson's face-saving view, as it suggests that "speakers are only polite in order to realize their personal goals" (Eelen, 2001, p. 128). It "assumes an ideal and very individualistic intentional agent (labeled a Model Person) as its starting point, and has been criticized by many researchers as culturally very restricted and even Anglo-centric in basic conception" (Holmes, 2009, p. 715).

Correspondingly, East Asian scholars (e.g. Ide 1989) question the validity of universal claims, as more convention- or norm-based notions in East Asian cultures tend to influence politeness phenomena. Xie is even generally convinced that "universality does not and cannot exist in nature, and that,

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55 Brown and Levinson introduce the term "weightiness" (W) of a face-threatening act "x", attempting to quantify and compute weightiness. They suggest the following formula: $W_x = D(S,H) + P(H,S) + R_x$ (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 76). $W_x$ represents "the numerical value that measures the weightiness of the FTA x, D (S, H) is the value that measures the social distance between S [speaker] and H, P (H, S) is a measure of the power that H [hearer] has over S, and $R_x$ is a value that measures the degree to which the FTA x is rated an imposition in that culture." (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 76)

given the uncertain nature of human life, prediction making should not be the major goal of politeness studies" (Xie, 2007, p. 249).

Ogiermann criticizes the synonymous use of the terms "culture", "society" and "group" in Brown and Levinson's work:

> "For them, culture is a factor responsible for varying assessments of social variables and differences in selection of politeness strategies resulting from these assessments. The strategies available to perform an FTA are regarded as universal – and so are the strategic choices made by Brown and Levinson's rational 'model person'." (Ogiermann, 2009, p. 24)

Another critical aspect put forward by Ogiermann is the reliance of Brown and Levinson's theory on the "equation of politeness with implicatures", suggesting

> "that speech acts that adhere to the CP cannot be polite. […] This shows another problematic aspect of Brown and Levinson's theory, namely that all speech acts are seen as potentially face-threatening while inherently polite or face-enhancing speech acts receive very little attention." (Ogiermann, 2009, p. 14)

In fact, one of the main criticisms put forward with regards to existing politeness theories is the foundation of most studies on speech acts (Eelen, 2001, p. 31), as it neglects that "utterances that are intended to be polite do not necessarily have to be perceived as such by the hearer" (Ogiermann, 2009, p. 16). Brown and Levinson do not explain in their theory how the addressees interpret the utterances (Eelen, 2001, p. 96), so that this speech-act-based politeness research is rather speaker- than addressee-oriented (Holmes, 2009, p. 715).

#### 2.5.3.2 Ting Toomey and Spencer-Oatey

As does Brown and Levinson's face-saving view, Ting-Toomey and Spencer-Oatey's theories are also based on the concept of face, however, they lay more emphasis on face negotiation, imply a stronger dynamic notion of face work and leave space for variability in different cultures.

Ting-Toomey's face-negotiation theory assumes that face maintenance and negotiation exist in all cultures and communicative situations, particularly in communicative situations that threaten or hurt the emotions and identity of the communication partners. She argues that along the cultural dimensions of individualism versus collectivism and power distance, preferences of facework can vary. Not only the cultural dimensions influence the preferred facework, but also individual aspects, the relationship and roles of the communication partners, the topic and situation of communication affect facework behavior. For Ting-Toomey,

> "intercultural facework competence refers to the optimal integration of knowledge, mindfulness, and communication skills in managing vulnerable identity-based conflict situations appropriately, effectively, and adaptively." (Ting-Toomey, 2005, p. 73)

Helen Spencer-Oatey introduces the concept of "rapport management", which refers to "the management of social relations". Spencer-Oatey prefers the expression "rapport management" to "face management" since, in her opinion, "rapport" does not imply a strong focus on the individual's concern for self, and is thus more compatible with collectivistic cultures (Spencer-Oatey, 2004, p. 12).

She believes "face to be a universal phenomenon: everyone has the same fundamental face concerns" (Spencer-Oatey, 2004, p. 12) and proposes that

> "rapport management (the management of harmony-disharmony among people) involves two main components: the management of face and the management of sociality rights." (Spencer-Oatey, 2004, p. 13)

She defines face as "the positive social *value* a person effectively claims for himself [*sic*] by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact" (Spencer-Oatey, 2004, p. 14).

Managing sociality rights includes managing social expectancies, which are defined as

> "fundamental personal/social entitlements that individuals effectively claim for themselves in their interactions with others". In other words, face is associated with personal/social value, and is concerned with people's sense of worth, dignity, honour, reputation, competence and so on. Sociality rights, on the other hand, are concerned with personal/social expectancies, and reflect people's concerns over fairness, consideration, social inclusion/exclusion and so on." (Spencer-Oatey, 2004, pp. 13-14)

Spencer-Oatey distinguishes two aspects of face: “quality face” and “identity face”. Quality face refers to humans’ basic desire to be evaluated positively with regard to their “personal qualities” (e.g. skills, appearance, competence) by other humans. It is “concerned with the value that we effectively claim for ourselves in terms of such personal qualities as these, and so is closely associated with our sense of personal self-esteem.” Identity face refers to humans’ basic desire for their social identities or roles to be acknowledged by others (e.g. best friend, valued customer, team’s coach). It is “concerned with the value that we effectively claim for ourselves in terms of social or group roles, and is closely associated with our sense of public worth” (Spencer-Oatey, 2004, pp. 14-15)

In addition, she distinguishes two types of sociality rights: “equity rights” and “association rights”:

> “*Equity rights*: we have a fundamental belief that we are entitled to personal consideration from others, so that we are treated fairly: that we are not unduly imposed upon, that we are not unfairly ordered about, and that we are not taken advantage of or exploited. […]
>
> *Association rights*: we have a fundamental belief that we are entitled to an association with others that is in keeping with the type of relationship that we have with them. These association rights relate partly to *interactional association-dissociation* (the type and extent of our involvement with others) […] They also relate to *affective association-dissociation* (the extent to which we share concerns, feelings and interests). Naturally, what counts as ‘an appropriate amount’ depends on the nature of the relationship, as well as sociocultural norms and personal preferences.” (Spencer-Oatey, 2004, pp. 14-15)

Furthermore, Spencer-Oatey distinguishes between face- and rights-threatening behaviors:

> “When people threaten our rights, they infringe our sense of personal/social entitlements […]. The result is that we feel offended, uncomfortable, annoyed or angry; however, we do not necessarily feel a loss of face. Sometimes, though, people’s treatment of us may not simply irritate or annoy us; it may go a step further and make us feel as though we have lost credibility or have been personally devalued in some way. When this happens we talk of ‘loosing face’. This can happen when people criticize us or oppose us, or make us ‘look small’ in some way.” (Spencer-Oatey, 2004, p. 16)

From a rapport-management perspective, rapport-sensitive speech acts such as orders, requests, apologies or compliments can affect the following components of rapport management: depending on individual and contextual factors, these speech acts can threaten and/or enhance face or infringe and/or support sociality rights (Spencer-Oatey, 2004, p. 15).

### 2.5.4 Politeness as a negotiation-based notion

According to Fraser's conversational-contract view which includes norm-based and interaction-based notions of "politeness", participants who communicate with each other "bring an understanding of some initial set of rights and obligations", as soon as they enter a conversation. This understanding determines the mutual expectations of the communication partners for the beginning of the conversation. Depending on contextual changes, it is possible for both participants to renegotiate this "conversational contract". (Fraser, 1990, p. 232)

Furthermore, Fraser puts forward that politeness is not necessarily associated with the feelings of the addressee, but primarily serves the fulfillment of tasks while adhering to the conversational contract. In other words, for Fraser the illocutionary goals plays a more relevant and dominant role than the social goals of communicative acts (Fraser, 1990, p. 233).

On the one hand, there are conventional terms of the contract which are hardly negotiable, such as the expectation to take turns, the capacity to understand the language of communication, the prerequisite of expressing oneself in such a way, that one can be understood (e.g. speech volume), and the expectation that the spoken content is meant seriously. Furthermore, there are also-nonnegotiable terms based on institutional rules (e.g. whispering at church service, special addressing patterns for prominent people) (Fraser, 1990, p. 232).

On the other hand, there are negotiable terms that "may be determined by previous encounters or the particulars of the situation". Such terms depend on the communicative situation, the role, status and power of the participants and their relationship to each other (Fraser, 1990, pp. 232-233). This process is summarized by Fraser as follows:

> "In short, we enter into a conversation and continue within a conversation with the (usually tacit) understanding of our current conversational contract (CC) at every turn. Within this framework, being polite constitutes operating within the then-current terms and conditions of the CC." (Fraser, 1990, p. 233)

According to Fraser, politeness "is taken to be a hallmark of abiding by the CP – being cooperative involves abiding by the CC. Fraser and Nolen see politeness as "a property associated with a voluntary action" (1981, p. 96).

This view on politeness is "the most generalized view of politeness – it equates politeness with appropriate language use." Its particularity consists in its dynamic and interactive approach. Contrary to the social-norm view, which considers the norms a given constant in a society, the conversational-contract view "situates politeness in the moment-by-moment progression of talk" and thus, can be considered a "discursive approach to politeness" (Geyer, 2008, p. 13).

### 2.5.5 Politeness as an interpersonal phenomenon

Arndt and Janney propose an interpersonal approach to politeness and claim that politeness is an "interpersonal activity that can be observed, described, and explained in functional interactional terms" (Arndt & Janney, 2005, p. 22).

Though having adopted Brown and Levinson's face-saving view on politeness, which is based on Goffman's concept of "face",[56] they emphasize that politeness is a dynamic rather than a static and logical concept (2005, p. 22).

From a psychological view, the physiological conditions and restrictions of displaying affection may be equal to all human beings, but the way these are

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[56] Arndt and Janney rely on Goffman's definition of "face" as "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact" (Goffman, 1955, p. 214).

applied and perceived varies from culture to culture (Arndt & Janney, 2005, p. 26).

Arndt and Janney distinguish emotional from emotive communication. While in emotional communication, activities are described as more “instinctive” and as “the spontaneous, unplanned, physical externalization of internal affective states”; in emotive communication, they are described as “learned” and as “the conscious use of affective displays for communicative purposes”. In emotional communication, the focus is put on “the individual” and the “people’s need to adapt physiologically to powerful internal psychic stimuli”; in emotive communication, the focus is put on “projected ‘others’” and the “others’ projected feelings, perceptions, and interpretation in the situation”. In emotional communication, the frame is “psychobiological,” reflecting “people’s need to adapt physiologically to powerful internal psychic stimuli”. In emotive communication, the frame is “sociopsychological”, reflecting “people’s need to adapt behaviourally to others in order to avoid interpersonal conflicts”. The function of emotional communication is “carthatic” and it “releases emotional tension and helps maintain psychic balance”, while the function of emotive communication is “strategic” and “signals affective information in order to influence others’ behaviour” (Arndt & Janney, 2005, p. 28).

Different cultures may generally share face-saving techniques, like the reduction of self-assertiveness or the increase of acceptance; however, the actual manifestation of these techniques may differ from culture to culture (Arndt & Janney, 2005, p. 29). Emotive styles and strategies of interaction vary from culture to culture and constitute communication in all cultures. Members of a cultural group acquire the ability to adapt to and roughly share inference, perception, thought and behavior patterns of their fellow members (Arndt & Janney, 2005, p. 30).

When members of different cultures communicate with each other, it is thereupon possible that misunderstandings or disruptions can occur. If communication takes place primarily to convey information, it is possible to repair instances of communication failure, as it may be caused by the lack of linguistic competence or interference. But breakdowns in emotive communication can cause irreversible misunderstandings (Arndt & Janney, 2005, p. 31).

Furthermore, Arndt and Janney distinguish between cultural assumptions and situational assumptions. While the former are more synchronically and diachronically stable, the latter have to be renegotiated in each different context to enable the communication partners to interact more smoothly (Arndt & Janney, 2005, p. 37). The latter concept shows some similarities to Fraser and Nolen's conversational contract.

Although a missing common ground may hamper communication, Arndt and Janney also point out positive frames of communication. Communication partners who "cannot rely on shared cultural knowledge in attempting to regulate their relationships" often attempt to (partially and temporarily) replace the cultural framework with an alternative assumed framework that emerges from a common context or situation (Arndt & Janney, 2005, p. 38).

Similar to Brown and Levinson, Arndt and Janney also consider face threats to be a major cause for interpersonal conflicts (Arndt & Janney, 2005, pp. 28-29). The co-existence of interpersonal and personal face needs can lead to psychological conflicts – between and within individuals. To solve, overcome, assuage, or buffer these conflicts, cultures worldwide have developed different face-saving techniques (Arndt & Janney, 2005, p. 29).

Another representative of the socio-psychological view on politeness is Yabuuchi who proposes a trichotomous politeness system consisting of fellowship, autonomy and hierarchy politeness:

> "Fellowship politeness is the expression of sincere politeness based on the recognition of various qualities held in common. Autonomy politeness is the deference to the *alter*'s self-confidence that s/he has the competence to do everything that is necessary at least to maintain his/her present status. Hierarchy politeness refers to the deference paid to the competence that is greater than that of *ego*, plus the insincere surplus of fellowship politeness and the insincere surplus of downward autonomy politeness." (Yabuuchi, 2006, p. 344)

While in individualistic cultures, upward deference seems to be minimized, in collectivistic cultures it seems to be maximized. The latter is referred to as "insincere politeness" the signs of which "are at times hardly observable and people are not always conscious of their insincerity" (Yabuuchi, 2006, p. 344).

Yabuuchi's estimation is supported by observation of communicative behavior in Indian English: "In Indian languages, a common politeness strategy called *bountiful behaviour* is used by a speaker to humble her/himself and to exalt the addressee" (Valentine, 1996, p. 291).

### 2.5.6 Politeness as a dynamic social phenomenon

Recent approaches to politeness are based on social rather than pragmatic theory; and assume that politeness is a dynamic phenomenon emerging in interactions. This perspective is also often called the "post-modern" view on politeness. The representatives of this approach consider the Gricean-based view on politeness not suitable for linguistic politeness research. Research is more based on principles of discourse analysis than speech act analysis (Watts, 2003, p. 116). Moreover, interaction is considered rather a process than a product, i.e. an entity that is restricted to text (Mills, 2003, p. 38).

The roots of this perspective on politeness lie in Bourdieu's theory of practice. Bourdieu, who distances himself from structuralist views on language and speech act theory, criticizing their neglect of external, contextual factors (Bourdieu, 1995, p. 32), proposes the concept of *habitus*, the key concept of this theory. This concept describes the interdependence between social power, individual action and symbolic order. Thus, the postmodern view on politeness is more sensitive to the heterogeneity within cultures (Mills 2003).

In line with Bourdieu's concept of "habitus," Eelen claims that politeness depends on cultural expectations, which are based on cultural norms. Therefore, the realization of speech acts that reflect cultural norms does not only differ from culture to culture or language to language, but also varies depending on regional and social variety. Eelen claims that his framework also considers the addressee and the evaluative, normative character of politeness. Furthermore, his view does not neglect the concept of “impoliteness” and enables a dynamic, bipolar perspective on the relationship between social and individual norms. He proposes that sociocultural norms are the engine for politeness systems:

> “communicative success depends on the right amount and kind of politeness applied at the right time to the right speech act, as determined by social norms that stipulate what is appropriate for a specific interactional situation." (Eelen, 2001, p. 128)

Furthermore, Eelen claims that the judgement of whether a certain type of behavior is considered appropriate or not depends on social norms (not the addressee’s individual norms) shared by all in specific cultures and situations, while “culture” is characterized by “its vagueness and its transformation from an observational into an explanatory notion" (Eelen, 2001, p. 169).

According to Watts, who is also a representative of the post-modern approach, politeness is often evaluated subjectively and based on specific situations. Furthermore, behavioral patterns that are considered “polite” are not necessarily always considered “positive”. Following Bourdieu and his own theory of emergent networks, Watts proposes a “social model” of politeness, the goal of which is to recognize “*when* a linguistic utterance *might* be open to interpretation as (im)polite”, and hence to “provide the means of assessing how lay participants […] assess social behaviour that they have classified as (im)polite utterances as positive or negative” (Watts, 2003, p. 143).

Although this fairly young post-modern view on politeness has not received as much criticism as the face-saving view, it does not provide a suitable framework for cross-sectional studies with large samples that attempt to find communicative patterns in different cultures. With regards to this issue, Pizziconi points out that the

> “[t]heoretical constructs proposed, however, have proven unsatisfactory as heuristic instruments for the analysis of empirical data. Much of the current scholarly debate is focused on taking stock of recent critiques of past dominating paradigms and epistemological premises, and on formulating new philosophical and methodological practices based on a radical

> reconceptualization of the notion of politeness, when the construct is removed from a historically determined, socioculturally specific, and interactionally negotiated conceptualization of the term." (2009, p. 706)

### 2.5.7 Politeness between intention and convention

Not only across different cultures, but also within one culture it is difficult to find a universal benchmark to state whether the codification of the illocutionary acts relies on conventionalized habits, on strategic choices, on linguistic rules or on all of these three factors. Eelen criticizes especially the conversational-maxim and face-saving approaches to politeness that they consider politeness an intentional, strategic phenomenon that can be clearly identified, and for neglecting the normative nature of politeness (2001, p. 31).

According to Ide (1989) the use of honorifics in the Japanese language is not motivated by face concerns but by "discernment" (*wakimae*). Ide explains the conventional notion of "discernment" and criticizes the neglect of this notion in Brown and Levinson's face-saving view on politeness:

> "To behave according to *wakimae* is to show verbally and non-verbally one's sense of place or role in a given situation according to social convention […] To observe *wakimae* by means of language use is an integral part of linguistic politeness. […] The choice of linguistic forms or expressions in which the distinction between the ranks or the roles of the speaker, the referent and the addressee are systematically encoded will be called the discernment aspect of linguistic politeness, which I claim to be one of the neglected aspects in Brown and Levinson's framework. In contrast to the discernment aspect, 'the aspect of politeness, which allows the speaker a considerably active choice, according to the speaker's intention from a relatively wider range of possiblities' is called the 'volitional' aspect." (Ide, 1989, pp. 230-231).

Hill et al. (1986) and Ide (1989) put forward the dichotomy between "volitional politeness" and "discernment/*wakimae*". While in modern Western cultures politeness is considered an individual strategic behavior, in Eastern cultures politeness is not optional but obligatory. In many cases, e.g. the use of honorifics, politeness is even part of the grammatical system. The linguistic form that needs to be used in a specific context is determined by social status and relationship. It is often impossible to make utterances without revealing the differences in status of the speaker, referent and addressee. This type of politeness is called “discernment” or “*wakimae*” and these terms refer to the ability of the speakers to recognize his or her position or role in a given situation and to behave according to social conventions. Correspondingly, Lakoff and Ide distinguish between “civil” and “polite” behavior.

> “To be civil is to do the bare minimum to avoid conflict and bad feelings, but often in a way that indicates that one would just as soon not be doing so. […] *Politeness* […] goes beyond the bare minimum required to keep a society cohesive, and is seen as an adornment to a person’s behavior.” (Lakoff & Ide, 2005, p. 5)

Ide suggests that the concept of “civility” could correspond to the concept of “*wakimae*”, but Lakoff is skeptical towards this comparison. She believes that these two concepts might be partially comparable, but that

> “*wakimae* […] defines participants’ behavior as expressing shared acculturation and thus increasing social cohesion – positive aims – while civility stresses the negative aim of not creating disruption, often between individuals who see themselves as having little in common and with no likelihood of creating a shared future relationship – not likely therefore to participate in the kinds of behaviors we label “polite”. *Wakimae*, like politeness, is seen within its cultural context as positive, civility as negative, not quite ‘nice’.” (Lakoff, 2005, p. 26)

Furthermore, no sharp distinction can be made between “real” and conventional politeness according to Lakoff. Instead, these two notions form a continuum along which hesitancy, camaraderie, etc., can be located (Lakoff, 1975b, p. 52).

A similar distinction is made by Watts (however, not necessarily as a differentiation criterion between Western and Eastern cultures). He distinguishes between “politic” and “polite” behavior. While the former refers to “linguistic structures in excess of what the speaker needs to utter which nevertheless go unnoticed”, the latter refers to linguistic “behaviour which is perceived to be beyond what is expectable, i.e. salient behaviour” (Watts, 2003, p. 19). The necessity to distinguish politeness as marked surplus behavior and as unmarked behavior by Watts is criticized by Yabuuchi. She argues

> "that the surplus, when in the context of power relationships, may expand to form a third important area of polite behavior to sustain the want of recognition/admiration. This type of polite behavior is generally called ingratiation or flattery […]". (Yabuuchi, 2006, p. 330)

Yabuuchi criticizes the assumption made by Watts "that surplus instantly becomes impolite when it passes over the border of appropriateness". She states that this does not always apply to ingratiation or flattery. (Yabuuchi, 2006, p. 330)

Ehlich makes a similar distinction to Watts' politic-polite differentiation and points out the distinction between conventional and intentional notions of politeness by saying that

> "two things are understood as 'polite' in the actions of the interactants: (1) the specific status of socially developed regularities of action; (2) going beyond that which is socially required within the framework of these regularities." (Ehlich, 2005, p. 74)

These two notions are referred to differently by various scholars. For example, Arndt and Janney also distinguish between two types of politeness: "social politeness" and "tact", and they claim that both "are culturally acquired, and are interrelated in speech; but they are quite different" (2005, p. 22).

While "social politeness" seems to imply a certain degree of conventionality, "tact" is employed for face-maintenance purposes. Correspondingly, they define "social politeness" as "rooted in people's need for smoothly organized interaction with other members of their group" (Arndt & Janney, 2005, pp. 23-24). One of the prerequisites to communicate sustainably and coordinate social actions is to behave predictably within certain tolerances. These tolerances are set in a social group by the members of the group and

> "provide a framework of standardized strategies for getting gracefully into, and back out of, recurring social situations." (Arndt & Janney, 2005, pp. 23-24)

"Tact", on the other hand, represents in any culture

> "an important means of maintaining the sense of cooperation and supportiveness necessary for successful interaction." (Arndt & Janney, 2005, pp. 36-37)

Tact helps preserve the communication partners' faces and regulate interpersonal relationships. Tactful behavior reaches beyond social politeness and involves interpersonal supportive behavior such as empathy towards others, minimization or avoidance of threatening, offending or humiliating behavior (Arndt & Janney, 2005, pp. 23-24).

"Tact" can be employed intra- and interculturally. Intracultural tactful behavior requires subtle adaptions of verbal and nonverbal behavioral patterns, such as the nonverbal and linguistic modulation of verbal messages, for example changes of intonation, mimics, gestures and indirectness (Arndt & Janney, 2005, pp. 23-24). The complexity of knowledge needed for intracultural tactful behavior should not be underestimated (Arndt & Janney, 2005, pp. 36-37), but tactful behavior across cultures is even more complex:

> "being interculturally tactful […] is a complicated skill that involves much more than simply translating politeness formulas from one language into another." (Arndt & Janney, 2005, p. 21)

According to Fraser, politeness

> "is a state that one expects to exist in every conversation; participants note not that someone is being polite – this is the norm – but rather that the speaker is violating the CC. […]. It simply involves getting on with the task at hand in light of the terms and conditions of the CC. The intention to be polite is not signaled, it is not implicated by some deviation(s) from the most 'efficient' bald-on record way of using the language." (1981, p. 96)

Locher criticizes Fraser's assumption

> "that politeness is the norm and is accordingly unnoticed […] because being friendly or offering more than is absolutely necessary in interaction does not have to be an expectation the interactants have; but it is still noted positively as standing above the norm." (Locher, 2004, p. 72)

Furthermore, Locher believes "that there is behavior that is neither polite nor impolite, but merely adequate and appropriate for the task at hand" (Locher, 2004, p. 72). Therefore, she doubts that equating politeness with the norm and dividing behavior into the categories "politeness" and "impoliteness" can lead to a solution (Locher, 2004, p. 72). She contrasts Fraser's perspective with (Kasper, 1990) and (Watts, 1989) view, who distinguish between "politic" and “polite” behavior. While the former represents the unmarked behavior, the latter designates a “surplus” (Locher, 2004, p. 75).

### 2.5.8 Conclusions: Towards a working definition of “politeness”

From a transcultural and translational perspective, it was concluded above that politeness can be considered a translatable and yet a culture-specific phenomenon. This attribute of politeness is reflected by the definitions and models of politeness proposed by different scholars. Although scholars point out different nuances, subcategories and relationships with linguistic devices, the definitions share some commonalities: they assume that “politeness” exists, is a matter of non-verbal and verbal behavior (Lakoff & Ide, 2005, p. 3), and that human beings in different cultures, in one way or another, are inclined to employ nonverbal and verbal methods that maintain or promote interpersonal relationships[57] on the one hand, and to fulfill certain (communicative) goals on the other hand. Furthermore, all approaches – even if the majority of them may contain a certain amount of “Western” or “Anglocentric” bias – implicitly or explicitly take into consideration the interplay between culture, language and communication, and try to place the concept of “politeness” into this frame. While some perspectives focus on universal aspects of politeness (e.g. Leech, 1983; Lakoff, 1975; Brown & Levinson, 1987), others focus on the culture-specific aspects (Ting Toomey, 2005; Spencer-Oatey, 2004; Arndt & Janney, 2005).

As this thesis argues that politeness is translatable and yet culture-specific, it synthesizes aspects of different politeness models, in order to achieve a working definition that covers both attributes of politeness:

Regardless of how politeness manifests itself, it seems that certain patterns of linguistic behavior are employed conventionally or intentionally across

[57] See also Watts: “Cooperative social interaction and displaying consideration for others seem to be universal characteristics of every socio-cultural group” (2003, p. 14).

different cultures in order to establish, maintain, or promote interpersonal relationships (Arndt & Janney, 2005; Leech, 1983; Lakoff, 1975a). The concept of “face” seems to play an important role in the conceptualization, manifestation, and perception of politeness (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Ting-Toomey, 2005; Spencer-Oatey, 2004; Watts, 2003; Villki, 2006). The concept of “face” can be understood as a negotiable and dynamic aspect the dimensions of which can vary from culture to culture (Spencer-Oatey, 2004). It is assumed that “[f]acework consists partly of utterances that are open to interpretation as polite” and there are

> “individualistic and collectivistic value tendencies. Different cultures cannot be simply defined as either individualistic or collectivistic, but if individualism versus collectivism is interpreted as a value dimension, it can serve as a frame in explaining why individuals differ in their face expectations and face concerns in different cultures.” (Villki, 2006, p. 330)

In line with Ting-Toomey, it is additionally claimed that

> “[w]hile face and facework are universal phenomena, how we ‘frame’ or interpret the situated meaning of face and how we enact facework differ from one cultural community to the next.” (Ting-Toomey, 2005, p. 73)

The thesis agrees with Ting-Toomey who claims that “*[f]acework* refers to the specific verbal and nonverbal behaviors that we engage in to maintain or restore face loss and to uphold and honor face gain” (Ting-Toomey, 2005, p. 73).

Because the perception and interpretation of behavior as “polite” depends on the respective individual’s *Realität,* this thesis does not agree with the proposal of Leech, Lakoff, Brown and Levinson that certain linguistic devices are intrinsically more or less polite or direct than others. As Fraser puts forward:

> “Sentences are not *ipso facto* polite, nor are languages more or less polite. It is only speakers who are polite, and then only if their utterances reflect an adherence to the obligations they carry in that particular conversation” (Fraser, 1990, p. 233).

A main problem of politeness research seems to consist in the cleavage between postmodern views based on social theory (Eelen, 2001; Watts, 2003) and views based on ordinary language philosophy, pragmatic theory, speech act theory and the concept of face (Grice, 1975; Leech, 1983; Lakoff, 1975a; Austin, 1975; Searle, 1975; Brown & Levinson, 1987).

From the conversational-maxim and face-saving perspective, politeness is employed for face maintenance and is made up of a set of strategic choices influenced by culture. Postmodern theories, on the other hand, put forward the dynamics, individuality and unpredictability of politeness as well as the heterogeneity of the concept of culture.

Although one can observe the trend of researchers moving towards the postmodern, qualitative approaches, researchers interested in communication patterns in different cultures and quantitative empirical analysis adhere to the concepts and methods based on pragmatic theory and theory of face. Especially Brown and Levinson's politeness theory, in combination with classifications based on the CCSARP, serve as the foundation of most of these studies. Therefore, this thesis uses the terminology proposed by Brown and Levinson and the CCSARP to describe the empirical study.

While Brown and Levinson's approach is widely criticized, there is less criticism of postmodern approaches. This may be caused by the lack of research framework that postmodern approaches offer for cross-cultural comparison (Villki, 2006, p. 325).

Postmodern approaches to politeness emphasize "the lack of homogeneity within cultures, focus on individual cases and avoid generalisations", while research based on pragmatic theory "aims at establishing general patterns" (Ogiermann, 2009, p. 17).

In order to bridge the cleavage between postmodern views based on social theory and "traditional" views based on ordinary language philosophy, pragmatic theory, speech act theory and the concept of face, this thesis applies Terkourafi's frame-based approach for the empirical study (Terkourafi, 2005, p. 237). According to this perspective, the realization and perception patterns of politeness are considered heuristically approachable through the observation of frequently occurring linguistic behavior in a similar contextual, communicative, social and lingua-cultural frame.

The frame-based approach observes frequently occurring correlations between contextual frames and codes. Regular patterns are considered “polite”. Similarly, in this thesis, the regularity of code-frame patterns will be investigated; however, the frame will be adapted to the concept of transcultural communication.

Both, the traditional and post-modern approaches to politeness share two main premises: they are based on theoretical assumptions, i.e. the Gricean Cooperative Principle and speech act theory on the one hand, and the theoretical distinction between first and second order politeness on the other. Furthermore, they analyze politeness “on the pragmatic level as a particularized implicature” (Terkourafi, 2005, p. 246). Terkourafi points out that there is an assumption of cultural homogeneity in the traditional approach, which is challenged by the post-modern approaches (Terkourafi, 2005, p. 238). Terkourafi proposes the frame-based view as a third, complementary view. Instead of being theory-driven, the frame-based view is based on data. On the one hand, it relies on a large corpus of, in her cultural context, Cypriot Greek. On the other hand, “it acknowledges norms *to the extent* that these can be empirically observed” (Terkourafi, 2005, p. 247). To discover norms the frequent correlation of linguistic devices and contexts are observed.

According to the frame-based view on politeness, the determination of whether linguistic behavior is polite or not depends on the regularity of its use in a certain context. In other words, “politeness resides not in linguistic expressions themselves, but in the regularity of this co-occurrence”. Put in a nutshell, according to the frame-based view, linguistic expressions “are polite *because* they are regular” (Terkourafi, 2005, p. 248).

Furthermore, this thesis does not sharply distinguish between intentional and conventional notions of politeness, but considers them as end points of a continuum. Following Csibra and Gergely (2006), it is believed that unmarked, “conventional” polite behavior is cognitively opaque. Intentional/strategic behavior is considered more “cognitively transparent”. It is assumed that all politeness manifestations were initially cognitively transparent, i.e. unconventional. But after an unconventional linguistic item has proven to be a useful tool to employ for illocutionary and interpersonal relationship-maintenance purposes at a certain frequency, having “survived” through several generations, it can become a conventional linguistic item.

## 2.6 Challenges of Assessing Politeness Strategies in Different Varieties of English

### 2.6.1 Problems of assessing lingua-cultural biographies and varieties of English

If different manifestations of politeness are to be described in a quantitative analysis, how can they be described, categorized or explicated without neglecting the transculturality of today’s societies?

One prerequisite for this could be an attempt to classify or group cultures according to certain criteria. From the perspective of intercultural communication, Hofstede, Hall or Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner developed concepts of cultural dimensions of different national cultures along which cultural values can be analyzed. Hofstede, for instance, proposes the following dimensions: power distance,[58] individualism versus collectivism,[59] masculinity versus femininity,[60] uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede, 1997, pp. 16-17),

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[58] Power distance is defined as “the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organisations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally” (Hofstede, 1994, p. 28).

[59] “[I]individualism pertains to societies in which the ties between individuals are loose […] Collectivism as its opposite pertains to societies in which people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout people's lifetime continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty" (Hofstede, 1994, p. 51).

[60] "[M]asculinity pertains to societies in which social gender roles are clearly distinct […]; femininity pertains to societies in which social gender roles overlap" (Hofstede, 1994, pp. 82-83).

pragmatic versus normative, and indulgence versus restraint (Hofstede, 2012).

Another cultural dimension, that represents particularly the research focus for the anthropologist Edward Hall, is the high-context versus low-context dimension.[61] He also distinguishes between poly- and monochronous societies (Hall, 1976, pp. 86-91). Furthermore, cultures can be relationship- or rule-based.[62]

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner distinguish the following dimensions: universalism versus pluralism, individualism and communitarianism, specific versus diffuse, affectivity versus neutrality, inner directed versus outer directed, achieved status versus ascribed status, sequential time versus synchronic time, and relationship to nature (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998, pp. 8-10).

It is possible that correlations can be discovered between the frequency of politeness strategies and cultural values along the cultural dimensions. But such correlations could be also deceptive. Kotthoff, for instance, criticizes the methodological approach chosen by Hofstede for eliciting the cultural dimensions. Since his study is based on interviews to assess the behavior of the participants, Kotthoff puts forward that it is also possible that the interviewed individuals will not be aware of certain dimensions of their behavior. For example, if humans were asked if they would criticize their boss in German speaking countries (which was also asked in Hofstede's study), many would probably say yes. But it is risky to conclude that they would really

[61] In high-context cultures communication occurs particularly indirectly and implicatures are very frequent, since it is expected that meaning is derived from the contextual environment. In low-context cultures, this expectation is less strong and communication is more direct and explicit (Hall, 1976, pp. 86-91).

[62] In relationship-based cultures, high-context communication is common. In such cultures, authority figures closely supervise and influence behavior and are expected to be respected. Authority figures which form an integral part of society on different levels "set" the rules implicitly by their relationships to non-authority figures. In rule-based cultures, low-context communication is common. Here the respect is directed towards rules rather than authorities themselves. Rules are explicit and do not rely as much on relationships (Hooker, 2003, p. 130).

behave this way. Furthermore, this does not show how they would do it in a specific context (Kotthoff, 2002, pp. 12-13).

Furthermore, since this thesis is written from a *trans*cultural perspective, and thus does not consider "national culture" an adequate unit of analysis, it requires a different type of categorization scheme in order to describe and evaluate the politeness strategies in different varieties of English.

As we speak of *lingua-cultural* biographies, one might also attempt to define groups in which a certain language is spoken predominantly and describe the politeness patterns that are used by users of English in this group. But what constitutes a language, and how can languages be differentiated from each other? Language, being one of the most important media of communication, reflects culture (Kadrić, et al., 2010, p. 60). However, languages should not be mistaken as monolithic entities without internal heterogeneity (Schmid, 2008). As Steiner puts forward, "The language of a community, however uniform its social contour, is an inexhaustibly multiple aggregate of speech-atoms, of finally irreducible personal meanings" (Steiner, 1998, pp. 47-48).

Therefore, even if people of the same country and with the same mother tongue communicate with each other, communication problems can occur. They may use the same "words", but they mean something different (Kaiser-Cooke, 2007, p. 75). Thus, as has been rightly put by Schmid,

> "[t]he only way to account for the social and cultural reality of language communities is to define languages as entities formed through sociopolitical conventions. […] A single language is first and foremost a matter of consensus." (Schmid, 2008, p. 34)

One example that illustrates the difficulty of distinguishing languages and varieties from each other is the case of languages in India. The number of languages spoken in India fluctuates from year to year, because the distinction between languages, and between languages and their varieties is not clear.[63] Another example is given by Schmid, who points out that the differences

[63] Other, secondary reasons for this fluctuation can be the lack of a clear terminology for designating the languages or the death of certain languages (Ethnologue, 2015).

between southern and northern varieties of German are comparable to the differences between standard Dutch and German (Schmid, 2008, p. 33). Languages also change throughout history. Steiner, for instance, points out that we automatically translate when “we read or hear any language-statement from the past, be it Leviticus or last year’s best-seller”. He claims that readers, actors and editors are translators of language out of time (Steiner, 1998, pp. 28-29).

Another way of describing, evaluating and explaining politeness strategies in different varieties of English is to focus on the varieties themselves and establish criteria according to which varieties can be distinguished.

English, is used by a highly heterogeneous group of people. In some regions, particularly in former colonial countries, English has also been integrated into the local cultures. Through this process, the language has gained specific characteristics on all linguistic levels (lexicosemantics, morphosyntax, pragmatics) that reflect the local cultures.

One of the main challenges of attempting to describe politeness strategies in different varieties of English are the clear and transparent definition and categorization of the different roles of English, the parameters according to which varieties of English are identified and distinguished. Sociolinguists have been particularly occupied with the geographic and socio-cultural stratification of English. With the following words, Coulmas hits the nail on the head with regard to today’s multiple and complex roles of English:

> “Having been indigenized to more places and cultures and adapted to a wider range of contexts than any other language, English encompasses local, social and functional variation on a greater scale than has been observed at any time in the linguistic history of the world. Unlike other language names, English has a plural.”[64] (Coulmas, 2005, p. 221)

This plural indicates that by now “English” is far from being a monolithic entity. The English language, which had its origins in Anglo-Saxon England in the

[64] Plural expressions are, for instance, “World English(es)” or “Englishes” (van Gelderen, 2006, p. 249).

early fifth century (Denison & Hogg, 2008, p. 3) has been continuously spreading globally due to political, economic and technological developments. English started to move globally when pioneers travelled to North America, South America, Asia and the Antipodes. Due to colonialism, the spread of English continued in the nineteenth century. Its official relevance even increased in the twentieth century, when formerly colonialized countries ascribed an official or semi-official status to English after independence. Beside colonial developments, the economic relevance and power of the United States after World War II was another main force for the spread of English.

Today, the relevant status of English cannot be denied, as it is used as a dominant or official language in more than 75 territories. Speakers of English can be found in all continents and major oceans (Crystal, 2003b, p. 106). More than 350 million individuals speak English as a "mother tongue" (Jenkins, 2003, p. 14), more than 350 million individuals speak English as second language, and more than a billion individuals speak English as a foreign language (Wajnryb, 2008, p. 198).

As a "mother tongue", English is used in Great Britain, Ireland, the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. In many former British colonies with different indigenous language (e.g. India), English is used as one official language for intra- and international communication. For educational purposes, English is taught and learnt in many countries in which English does not have an official status. Often English is an obligatory part of the curriculum. In former communist countries, some Islamic countries, and countries that were colonialized by other countries than Great Britain, English may be less distributed; however, in these countries the proficiency in English also plays an important role for international communication (Vikor, 2004, p. 333).

There have been some very influential attempts to classify Englishes. One well-known classification among linguists, translators, teachers, and people who do not have a language-related professional background, is the distinction between English as a native language (ENL), English as second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL). According to this classification, “ENL is spoken in countries where English is the primary language of the great majority of the population”, such as the USA, UK, Australia, Canada and New Zealand (Kirkpatrick, 2007, p. 27). As a second language, English is spoken in former British colonies. In these countries, English has an official status next to other officially acknowledged vernaculars. English as a foreign language is used “in countries where English is not actually used or spoken very much in the normal course of daily life” (Kirkpatrick, 2007, p. 27). EFL usually does not have an official status; and is particularly used within classroom contexts.

This classification, as Kirkpatrick puts forward, has some disadvantages: The denotation “native” implies that ENL speakers all speak the same standard variety and that ENL is inherently superior to other non-native varieties because of which ENL varieties can serve as “models” for non-native speakers of English. But in reality, ENL varieties are heterogeneous themselves, and it is questionable whether it is appropriate to use ENL in ESL contexts with local varieties and expert users of these varieties.

Kirkpatrick’s estimation is also reflected by mainstream second language acquisition and interlanguage pragmatics approaches to business communication, which suggest the distinction between native and non-native use of language and the “failure” of pragmatic competence of non-native speakers (instead of “difference”) (Hendriks, 2010, p. 222).

An influential classification from a sociocultural perspective is proposed by Kachru. Kachru’s classification has a similar structure with regard to the geographical stratification of different varieties of English. But the main difference in the ENL, ESL and EFL distinction is that ENL is not considered a standard model for ESL and EFL, and that Kachru’s classification indicates a plural notion of English.

Kachru’s model of concentric circles focuses on English as a global language. It represents “three distinct types of speech fellowship of English, phases of the spread of the language, and particular characteristics of the uses of the language and of its acquisition and linguistic innovations" (Kachru, 1986, p. 122). According to Kachru, the innermost circle of English covers those countries where the first Englishes have started to emerge, such as the USA, UK, New Zealand, Australia and Canada. The Outer Circle covers those countries in which English has an official status in a multilingual, formerly colonialized country and is acquired as a second language (ESL) – like Nigeria, Malaysia, India or the Philippines. The Expanding Circle covers countries, in which English is learned as a foreign language (EFL), particularly in classroom contexts (Kachru & Bolton, 2006, p. 242).

This model is criticized by scholars, such as Ferguson, as "it takes the nation as the unit of categorization", simplifies sociocultural heterogeneity within national units and neglects changes over time (Ferguson, 2006, p. 151).

Normally, people are inclined to speak more than one variety of language, depending on the communicative context. Furthermore, each variety consists of sub-varieties, depending on how speech communities are defined. Varieties of a language differ from each other by characteristics on all linguistic levels, i.e. pronunciation, vocabulary, syntax, grammar, meaning and language use (Kirkpatrick, 2007, p. 26).

Besides "varieties" of English, there is also a relevant "language use mode" of English today: English as a lingua franca (Kecskés, 2007, p. 213).

Due to globalization, English is the main medium of communication in numerous international fields, e.g. science, economy, politics, media, popular culture, tourism and technology (Vikor, 2004, p. 333). As a lingua franca English is used by more non-native speakers than native speakers, and sometimes communication even happens without involving any native speakers. People with different socio-cultural and language backgrounds use a lingua franca. There is no global standard English language. A decreased formality and increased democracy is observable with regard to the usage of English as a lingua franca (Kecskés, 2007, pp. 191-192).

This aspect of English and the observation that Expanding Circle countries are increasingly using, in a similar way as do Outer Circle countries, are neglected by the three circles model (Kirkpatrick, 2007, p. 30).

While a "variety" of English fulfills the function of not only being a means of communication (Kirkpatrick, 2007, pp. 10-12), but also one of reflecting identity and culture, a lingua franca primarily represents a means of communication, having "lost track of its original cultural identity […] and has become a reduced standardized form of language for supra-cultural communication" (Snell-Hornby, 2000, p. 36).

In accordance with Holmes in this thesis, "English as a lingua franca" is generally referred to as English "used for communication between people whose first languages differ" (Holmes, 2008, p. 82). This can be the case in an intranational context (e.g. between two Indians who do not speak the same first language) or an international context (e.g. between a German, a US and a French employee of a company).

Jenkins introduces the term "world Englishes" to refer to Englishes of all circles of Kachru's model. All these Englishes are considered "bona fide varieties of English regardless of whether or not they are considered to be 'standard', 'educated', and the like, or who their speakers are" (Jenkins, 2009, p. 200). Similar to Holmes, Jenkins defines ELF as "English being used as a lingua franca, the common language of choice, among speakers who come from different lingua-cultural backgrounds" (Jenkins, 2009, p. 200). She points out that while using ELF, speakers of *all* varieties of English need to adjust their local variety of English to the needs and requirements of the addresses in the ELF communication context:

> "ELF is thus a question, not of orientation to the norms of a particular group of English speakers, but of mutual negotiation involving efforts and adjustments from all parties. At its simplest, ELF involves both common ground and local variation. On the one hand, there is shared linguistic common ground among ELF speakers just as there is shared common ground among the many varieties of the English that are collectively referred to as 'English as a native language' (ENL). ELF's common ground inevitably contains linguistic forms that it shares with ENL, but it is also contains forms

> that differ from ENL and that have arisen through contact between ELF speakers, and through the influence of ELF speakers' first languages on their English. On the other hand, ELF, like ENL, involves a good deal of local variation as well as substantial potential for accommodation – the scope for its users to adjust their speech in order to make it more intelligible and appropriate for their specific interlocutor(s)." (Jenkins, 2009, p. 201)

Communication partners who use English as a lingua franca focus on conveying their message. Thus, intelligibility based on linguistic code and system is a relevant fact. To reach their goal efficiently, they repeat, paraphrase, elaborate upon, reduce figurative or metaphorical language and do not rely on socio-cultural background knowledge (Kecskés, 2007, p. 204).

According to Jenkins (Jenkins, 2007, p. 2) and Seidlhofer (Seidlhofer, 2004, p. 13), ELF exists in its "own right" and is not comparable to ENL. ELF can be used intra- and internationally (Meierkord, 2007, p. 199). Correspondingly, ELF research does not define deviations of English use from "standard" Inner Circle use as "error" or "deficiency" per se. Instead, it distinguishes between "deficiency" (i.e. deviations that can be observed in interlanguage) and "difference". The "differences" can be considered a special ELF characteristic, especially if they occur systematically, frequently and contribute to "communicative effectiveness" (Jenkins, 2009, p. 202).

The sharp distinction between "deficiency" and "difference" in ELF usage is not trivial, as many ELF users are in the process of learning English and it is difficult to determine at which point they can be considered "proficient". The non-pragmatic components of this "proficiency" may be measurable with certain reference tests, however, on the pragmatic level, reference tests may not be the most convenient assessment tool.

ELF research is rather descriptive than prescriptive, it does not aim at, for instance, "teaching" certain ELF characteristics:

> "[E]ven if and when ELF features have been definitively identified and perhaps eventually codified, ELF researchers do not claim that these features should necessarily be taught to English learners. In other words, they do not believe either that pedagogic decisions about language teaching should follow on automatically from language descriptions or that the linguists compiling the corpora should make those decisions. In this, ELF corpus

researchers take a rather different approach from compilers of most corpora of British and American English (often, oddly, referred to as 'real' English), who tend to transfer their findings immediately to English language teaching publications for circulation all round the Expanding Circle, without seeing any need for the mediation of pedagogic and sociolinguistic considerations." (Jenkins, 2009, p. 202)

Determining the role of English for individuals is at least as much of a challenge as attempting to categorize varieties of English. One main problem is the opacity of terms such as "first", "second", and "foreign" language (Crystal, 2008, p. 424). Also universal definitions for the terms "native speaker", "non-native speaker", "native variety", "non-native variety", and "mother tongue" are missing.

The content of the different definitions of "mother tongue" is influenced by the research background of the respective linguists: Linguists with a research priority in language acquisition define the terms slightly differently than those with sociolinguistic interests. Many definitions – regardless of their research background – have in common that the term "first language" is often used as a synonym for "mother tongue". Those individuals who speak a language as a "mother tongue" or "first language" are often referred to as "native speakers".

Tulasiewicz and Adams define "mother tongue" as the first language acquired by a child or the language preferred in a multilingual setting (2005, p. 3). Similarly, Müller uses "Erstsprache" ("first language") as a synonym of "Muttersprache" ("mother tongue") and defines "Muttersprache" ("mother tongue") as the language that a child acquires first, and whose acquisition process is closely linked to cognitive developments. Furthermore, Müller emphasizes that "mother tongue" is acquired naturally and by interactional learning in dialogues, not by instruction (Müller, 2000, pp. 11-12). Katarina Brizić considers "mother tongue" as a monolingual construct. She points out that a language is neither automatically linked to a speech community, nor is the membership of a community a guarantee for language competence (Brizić, 2007, p. 345). According to Dietrich, the term "mother tongue" of an individual refers to the language that a person shares with members of a culturally homogeneous community to which he or she feels a specific emotional affection. The quality and intensity of this affection depends on the individual and national circumstances of the individual. In language contact situations, the individual may be more aware of his mother tongue than in homogeneous environments where primarily the mother tongue of the individual is spoken (Dietrich, 2004, p. 308). Native speakers are often expected to have acquired or effortlessly learned their mother tongue during their childhood “through a combination of exposure, the child’s innate talent for language learning, and the need to communicate”. Furthermore, native “speakers are seen as people who use the language, or a variety of it, correctly, and have insight into what is or is not acceptable” (Cook, 2003, pp. 28-29). The complexity of the “mother tongue” concept increases even more, when a language is widely distributed, such as English: As Cook points out, many users of English for whom English is not the first language feel more or less culturally attached to a speech community, the main language of which is not English, and who may even consider English to be a threat for their indigenous languages. However, this cultural distance does not necessarily correlate with the linguistic competence of these users (2003, pp. 28-29). Some scholars claim that the “mother tongue” especially influences the development of nonverbal and verbal cognitive structures and thus, the planning of utterances and texts (Dietrich, 2004, p. 310). While the term “mother tongue” is strongly associated with personal identity, emotional affection and linguistic competence, the term “first language” seems to rely particularly on the very first language that has been acquired by a person. This could be synonymous to “mother tongue”, but does not have to be identical.

The terms “second” and “foreign language” are equally difficult to grasp. In many sources, the terms “second language”, “L2”, and “foreign language” are used as synonyms (Ellis, 1997, p. 3). If a language is defined as “official” in a country and primarily used for communication in public and administrative contexts, it can be considered a “second language” (Crystal, 2003a, p. 4). When a language is learned in a classroom context, it is often referred to as a “foreign language” (Edmondson, 1999, p. 4). Thus, with regard to the terms “second language” and “foreign language”, the distinction between “language *acquisition*” and “language *learning*” seems to be crucial for some scholars. According to Yule, a person acquires a language in natural communicative contexts. When a person learns a language, he or she learns it more consciously by gathering linguistic lexical and morphosyntactic knowledge (Yule, 2006, p. 163). Similarly, Bhatia distinguishes between children’s “innate capacity to acquire languages in an environment which is termed a ‘natural’ environment, while, by contrast, adults and school-age children learn language in formal settings such as schools and colleges through a formal instructional method” (Bhatia, 2009, p. 51). Also the age of learning, the amount of exposure to languages, and if they are learned or acquired sequentially or simultaneously, influences the linguistic background profile of individuals. There is no universal definition of terms like “sequential” or “simultaneous bilingualism” (Bhatia, 2009, p. 52). While children seem to undergo “a subconscious process resulting in tacit knowledge of the language (i.e. ‘language acquisition’)”, adults rather undergo “a more conscious process (i.e. ‘language learning’)” (Bhatia, 2009, p. 50).

According to Dietrich, the term “second language” refers to the language that has been acquired by an individual after having finished learning his first language. The acquisition of the first language and the acquisition of the second language have in common that the knowledge about language usage is acquired in everyday situations, not necessarily instructionally. Therefore, the oral usage represents a priority. Second language competence primarily refers to oral usage, secondarily to written usage. The cognitive procedures to acquire a first language versus a second language are different, since in the case of the second language the learner already has communicative competence in his first language (Dietrich, 2004, p. 312).

**Conclusions and implications for the empirical investigation**: A transparent lingua-cultural frame for this study is far from simple to achieve.

This is already reflected by the figures collected by different individual authors and linguistic surveys that represent the numbers of speakers of English. There are no universal, reliable and up-to-date figures clearly representing the global distribution of English. The challenge about grasping the distribution with up-to-date figures lies in the fast spread and distribution of English but also in the comparability with regard to linguistic competence. Another aspect is the categorization of English-based pidgins and creoles and if they are classified as English varieties (Crystal, 2008, p. 424). Furthermore, as definitions of terms like “mother tongue”, “foreign language” or “native speaker” are not universal, it is difficult to describe quantitatively and qualitatively the groups of users of English.

In order to provide as much transparency and objectivity as possible, as regards to the identification of lingua-cultural biographies and varieties provided for this study, some generally used terms and distinctions which are closely connected with emotional and judgmental connotations will be avoided:

a) The avoidance of the term “dialect”: Denison and Hogg point out the increasing opacity of the term “dialect” with regard to English (2008, p. 2). Technically, the term “dialect” neutrally refers to “any variety of a language that is shared by a group of speakers”. However, the popular perspective on the term “dialect” is different. Often it implies the connotation of inferiority or being a “substandard” (Wolfram & Schilling-Estes, 2006, p. 2). To avoid confusion and to guarantee a completely neutral, descriptive approach, the term “dialect” will be avoided in this thesis; instead, the term “variety” will be used. But this avoidance does not necessarily simplify or facilitate the question how a variety can be identified and defined. Hudson distinguishes between the concept of “language” and “languages”. He considers “language” to be the conglomerate of all languages and to be manifested in different “varieties of language”. The different varieties can be differentiated by their "linguistic items", so a variety of language can be defined "as *a set of linguistic items with similar social distribution*" (Hudson, 1999, p. 22).

b) The avoidance of the distinction between "native" and "non-native" or "nativized" varieties: In line with Kirkpatrick, the distinction between "native" and "non-native" or "nativized" varieties of English is questioned in this thesis and thus, avoided in the study. Kirkpatrick argues that even when English was introduced in England, the use of English was socio-linguistically influenced by local languages and cultures. This also applies to newer varieties such as American or Australian varieties of English. The criteria of having a long history in a certain country does not necessarily justify that a variety is considered "native", since "long" is a very relative attribute (Kirkpatrick, 2007, p. 6). Therefore, "the difference between varieties of English can be explained by the fact that they are all nativised", i.e. "influenced by the local cultures and languages of the people who have developed the particular variety" (Kirkpatrick, 2007, p. 7).

c) The avoidance of the distinction between "native speaker" and "non-native speaker": Although this distinction is very common in literature, for the evaluation of this study, the distinction will be avoided, in accordance with Kirkpatrick. He points out the problem that most people assume, that the linguistic competence of a native speaker is better than that of a non-native speaker, and that a person shows better skills in the language learned at first than in the language(s) afterwards. He states that this belief and the popular concept of a "mother tongue" rather suits monolingual societies; however, today there are more multilingual societies (Kirkpatrick, 2007, pp. 8-9).

d) The avoidance of the terms "mother tongue" and "foreign language": In order to avoid possible connotations and guarantee transparency, in this thesis the term "mother tongue" will not be used at all as a basis for the evaluation of the study. The term "first language" will be used without any prescriptive connotation. It will be defined as the language a person acquires first in his or her life. Only if a person cannot remember which language he or she has acquired first in his or her life (e.g. if the person has been raised in a special bilingual context with parents or other close family members speaking different languages), then the person is defined to have two first languages.

e) The author of this thesis questions the possibility of a sharp distinction between second language and foreign language, because in some countries (e.g. India) English has the status of a second language, however, is also often taught in the classroom context. In countries of the "Expanding Circle", exchange programs enable learners sometimes to go abroad and broaden their linguistic skills by not only learning it in an instructional environment. In such programs, students that are often integrated in a host family may acquire language skills in a similar manner as a student in an Outer Circle country. Furthermore, due to the continued increase in international migration, sharp distinctions are difficult to draw as well: Would an Indian student, who has immigrated to the UK for his studies, be considered a person who uses English as a second language or a foreign language?

In order to guarantee transparency in this thesis, the term "foreign language" will be avoided. Instead, only the terms "second language" and "third language" will be used. The "second language" is defined as the language that has been learned after the "first language". The "third language" is defined as the language that has been learned after the "second language".

f) All concentric circles of Kachru's model could be potential users of "English as a lingua franca". In the context of this thesis, all participants of the study are considered users of "English as a lingua franca", regardless of their lingua-cultural biography. In order to find out whether similarities in geographical, linguistic and sociocultural backgrounds correlate with the language use in ELF communication, the participants are asked to answer a set of questions whose answers will be clustered into groups.

g) As in this thesis pragmatic patterns are examined, deviations or extraordinary patterns will not be considered a “deficiency”, nor will Inner Circle patterns be considered “norm-providing”.

### 2.6.2 The challenges of building a coding scheme

In order to describe the manifestation and perception of politeness in a quantitative analysis, while focusing on the de- and encoding of modality in requests, it is necessary to find a coding scheme for categorizing the results of the study. This scheme should cover the pragmatic and semantic aspects of modality.

#### 2.6.2.1 Speech act theory for describing politeness strategies

Especially since Leech’s introduction of the Politeness Principle and the introduction of the face-saving view, much politeness research has been performed based on speech acts. In his pioneering work “How to do things with words”, Austin claims that by *saying* something, people do not merely *state*, but also *do* something (Austin, 1978, p. 12). According to Austin, an utterance consists of the locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary act, where each utterance has an illocutionary force. The locutionary act refers to the semantic content of the utterance. The illocutionary act refers to the act performed *in* saying something and perlocutionary act refers to the way the addressee is affected *by* the utterance (Austin, 1978, p. 94). Each utterance has an illocutionary force and linguistic items that determine the illocutionary force are referred to as “illocutionary force indicating devices” (IFID) (Austin, 1978, p. 100). Austin does not elaborate upon the meaning of illocutionary force. He proposes the following classification of illocutionary verbs:

Table 2: Classification of illocutionary verbs (adapted from Austin, 1978)

| Name of the group of illocutionary verbs | Examples of verbs | Definition |
|---|---|---|
| Verdicitives | convict, interpret, estimate, reckon | "typified by the giving of a verdict, as the name implies, by a jury, arbitrator, or umpire. But they need not be final (…). It is essentially giving a finding as to something – fact, or value – which is for different reasons hard to be certain about." (Austin, 1975, p. 151) |
| Exercitives | order, command, request, advise | "exercising of powers, rights, or influence" (Austin, 1975, p. 151) |
| Commissives | promise, plan, agree, consent | "typified by promising or otherwise undertaking; they *commit* you to doing something, but include also declarations or announcements of intention, which are not promises, and also rather vague things which we may call espousals" (Austin, 1975, pp. 151-152) |
| Behabitives | apologize, bless, resent, thank | "very miscellaneous group, and have to do with attitudes and *social behaviour*" (Austin, 1975, p. 152) |
| Expositives | affirm, describe, accept, argue | "make plain how our utterances fit into the course of an argument or conversation, how we are using words, or, in general, are expository" (Austin, 1975, p. 152) |

According to Searle, who basically adapts Austin's theory, locutionary acts consist of two aspects: "utterance act" and "propositional act". The performance of "utterance acts" refers to the process of uttering morphosyntactic structures (i.e. words, sentences). The performance of "propositional acts" refers to the process of reference and predication (Searle, 1969, pp. 23-24). Searle's modified view on locutionary acts allows for a more precise analysis of speech acts whose surface structure is different, but whose propositional content is identical. Furthermore, Searle argues that "speaking a language is performing acts according to rules" (Searle, 1969, pp. 36-37).

Searle distinguishes between "constitutive" and "regulative" rules. If language is compared with a game, "constitutive" rules are inherent to a given system. They allow or permit certain acts, and form an indispensable basis of the game. "Regulative" rules are those that should be followed in order to play successfully. For an utterance to be categorized as an illocutionary act and to be felicitous, it has to meet four rules proposed by Searle: the propositional content rule, the preparatory rule, the sincerity rule, and the essential rule.

In order to classify speech acts, Searle employs three main dimensions: the "illocutionary point", the "direction-of-fit" and the "psychological state". The illocutionary point represents the main pragmatic function of a speech act. The notion of direction-of-fit represents the relationship between the propositional content of a speech act and the world. The third dimension, the psychological state, expresses the speaker's attitude towards the propositional content (Searle & Vanderveken, 1985, p. 92).

Searle differentiates five illocutionary points, each of which corresponds to a group of speech acts. Furthermore, he distinguishes between the illocutionary force and the propositional content of a speech act.

Table 3: Speech act classification by Searle (1985)

| Category | Illocutionary point | Direction of fit | Psychological state |
|---|---|---|---|
| Assertives | “say how things are” | “word-to-world” | “belief” (Searle & Vanderveken, 1985, p. 52) |
| Directives | “try to get other people to do things” | “world-to-word” | “desire” (Searle & Vanderveken, 1985, p. 52) |
| Commissives | “commit oneself to doing things” | “world-to-word” | “intention” (Searle & Vanderveken, 1985, p. 52) |
| Declarations | “bring about changes in the world through one’s utterances” | word-to-world AND world-to-word | none (Searle & Vanderveken, 1985, p. 52) |
| Expressives | “express one’s feelings and attitudes” | none | identical with illocutionary point (Searle & Vanderveken, 1985, p. 52) |

At first sight, Speech Act theory seems to provide a reliable foundation for politeness studies. As it considers utterances not only as propositions, it leaves space to take into account further communicative dimensions and analyze the multifaceted character of utterances.

However, conducting empirical research based on speech acts and Speech Act theory holds some perils: First, it is difficult to determine when an utterance starts to be a speech act and how long an utterance can be in order to be considered a speech act. Many existing studies imply a certain “sameness” between utterances and sentences, although speech and/or face threatening acts can be longer than one sentence and can even consist of different turns of talk (Holmes, 2009, p. 715). In other words, the length of the unit “speech act” is not defined, so that, for instance, an entire e-mail consisting of multiple sentences could technically be considered a request as much as a single sentence. This does not facilitate the comparability of different studies.

Second, an utterance may contain multiple speech acts, and it challenges the researcher to determine which act can be considered the head act (which may be subject to a certain degree of arbitrariness). Another challenge is to determine the illocutionary and perlocutionary act of indirect utterances and to measure the illocutionary force of a speech act.

Third, it is difficult to measure illocutionary force. It refers to an aspect of utterances that reaches beyond the classical understanding of meaning “equivalent to sense and reference” (Austin, 1978, p. 100).

The definition of and differentiation between different types of speech acts represent a challenge as well. Although Austin’s typology is helpful for grouping speech act types, when a study, for instance, aims at analyzing patterns of request realization, it is difficult to differentiate members of the group “exercitives”. The difference between suggestions, requests, commands and orders is difficult to grasp, especially since it largely depends on the role of and relationship between the communication partners. Thus, if an employer asks an employee to do something, this can be interpreted as an order, even if the employer chooses to express it in the form of a question such as “Could you please send an e-mail to Mr. X?” For such a case, Searle’s proposal to perform a classification based on four rules is quite helpful. The preparatory rule for requests, i.e. that it is not obvious to both communication partners that the addressee will fulfill the request, can usually not be applied for orders. As to the speech act of “request”, the propositional content rule corresponds to “Future act *A*[65] of *H*[66]”, the preparatory rule corresponds to

[65] A: Act
[66] H: Hearer

> “*H* is able to do *A*. *S*[67] believes *H* is able to do *A*. It is not obvious to both *S* and *H* that *H* will do *A* in the normal course of events of his own accord.”, the sincerity rule corresponds to “*S* wants *H* to do *A*.” and the “essential rule” corresponds to “Counts as an attempt to get *H* to do *A*.” (Searle, 1969, p. 66)

Contrary to requests,

> “*order* and *command* have the additional preparatory rule that *S* must be in a position of authority over *H*. *Command* probably does not have the ‘pragmatic’ condition requiring non-obviousness. Furthermore, in both, the authority relationship infects the essential condition because the utterance counts as an attempt to get *H* to do *A in virtue of the authority of S over H*.” (Searle, 1969, p. 66)

Within Searle’s framework, by performing a request and an order, a speaker performs different types of illocutionary acts reflecting the status of the speaker and the relationship between the communication partners, but the illocutionary point of both acts is identical, since both want the addressee (not) to do something.

Finally, Speech Act theory is generally criticized for its sender-oriented approach, which neglects the addressee as well as the interactional processes between the sender and the addressee (Becker, et al., 2009, p. 90).

In sum, the conclusion can be drawn that the problems associated with Speech Act theory are of essential nature and have a relevant impact on politeness research. Especially the parallelism between speech acts and face threatening acts underlines these problems.

#### 2.6.2.2 Requests as one speech act category

Requests belong to the group of directive speech-acts. According to Searle’s preparatory rule, when a request is uttered, it is not obvious to both the sender and the recipient that the request will be fulfilled. The propositional content of requests relates to an act A, performed by the recipient in the future. The preparatory rule corresponds to the sender’s belief that the recipient is able to perform the acts. Uttering a request, a sender wants the recipient to perform

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[67] S: Speaker

an act (sincerity rule), and the request can be considered “an attempt to get” the recipient to do an act A (essential rule) (Searle, 1969, p. 66).

Rue and Zhang claim that the sender benefits from the act A (2008, p. 1). But in workplace situations, this characteristic does not always apply. The sender, as a representative of an organization, might only indirectly benefit from the act A, since his or her personal desires might play a minor role (Vine, 2004, p. 30). This is particularly the case when a representative of an organization communicates with a person outside the organization, as for instance in customer support contexts, which represent the focus of the study presented in this thesis.

With regards to customer service contexts, for instance, a request posed by a customer may not be face-threatening at all, as “customer service” is “designed to take care of customer needs before, during, and after the sale” (Wisner & Stanley, 2008, p. 98). However, a request posed by a staff member of a customer service team may be all the more likely to threaten face.

While members of a customer support staff are obliged to fulfill requests, the customers are not. While a member of a customer support staff may be interested – as a representative of an organization – to keep a good relationship with the customer, the customer may feel indifferent about this relationship, but rather focus on receiving help.

According to Brown and Levinson, a request implies an imposition on the addressee. Therefore, a request is considered to intrinsically harbor the potential to be negatively face threatening, and thus requires negative politeness strategies (1987, pp. 65-67). These strategies decrease the illocutionary force of the request, and thus its degree of imposition (Rue & Zhang, 2008, p. 1). But this claim can be only partially applied to the asymmetric relationship between customer-support staff members and customers. While a member of the staff may feel that he or she could impose on the customer, the customer might assume that it is his or her “right” to send a request to the customer service. Thus, it is possible that he or she does not employ negative politeness strategies to decrease the illocutionary force of the request.

#### 2.6.2.3 The pragmatic dimension for request analysis: CCSARP

The CCSARP framework provides a coding scheme for request analysis, aiming at reaching consistent terminology. According to the CCSARP framework, three segments constitute a request:

- Alerter or address term – linguistic devices to get the attention of the addressee
- Head act – the request core containing the actual speech act
- Supportive move

The CCSARP distinguishes three different head act performance strategy groups: direct, conventionally indirect, and nonconventionally indirect. Direct strategies include linguistic devices such as performatives and imperatives. Conventionally indirect strategies are “procedures that realize the act by reference to contextual preconditions necessary for its performance, as conventionalized in a given language” (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984, p. 201). Nonconventional indirect strategies are represented by an “open-ended group of indirect strategies (hints) that realize the request by either partial reference to object or element needed for the implementation of the act […], or by reliance on contextual clues […]” (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984, p. 201). These are nine strategies, which are subdivided into strategy types (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984, p. 202):

Table 4: Request strategies according to the CCSARP coding scheme

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Mood derivable | “The grammatical mood of the verb in the utterance marks its illocutionary force as a request.” | direct |
| Explicit performative | “The illocutionary force of the utterance is explicitly named by the speakers.” | |
| Hedged performative | “Utterances embedding the naming of the illocutionary force.” | |
| Locution derivable | “The illocutionary point is directly derivable from the semantic meaning of the locution.” | |
| Scope stating | “The utterance expresses the speaker’s intentions, desire or feeling *vis à vis* the fact that the hearer do X.” | |
| Suggestory formula | “The sentence contains a suggestion to X.” | |
| Reference to preparatory conditions | “Utterance contains reference to preparatory conditions (e.g. ability or willingness, the possibility of the act being performed) as conventionalized in any specific language.” | |
| Strong hints | “Utterance contains partial reference to object or to elements needed for the implementation of the act (directly pragmatically implying the act).” | |
| Mild hints | “Utterances that make no reference to the request proper (or any of its elements) but are interpretable through the context as requests (indirectly pragmatically implying the act).” | indirect |

Another dimension of distinguishing head acts is the perspective. Blum-Kulka and Olshtain propose four perspectives: hearer-oriented, speaker-oriented, speaker and hearer oriented and impersonal perspective (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984, p. 203).

A third dimension is request mitigation by downgrading and/or upgrading a speech act. On a syntactic level, this can happen with an interrogative, a negation, the use of past tense, or by embedding if-clauses.

Furthermore, downgrading can happen through the following devices (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984, p. 204):

Table 5: Request mitigation techniques

| Device | Definition |
|---|---|
| Consultative device | "Elements by means of which the speaker seeks to involve the hearer and bids for his/her cooperation, in addition to other strategy types. Frequently these devices are ritualized formulae." (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984, p. 204) |
| Understaters | "Elements by means of which the speaker minimizes parts of the proposition, such as the required action or object." (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984, p. 204) |
| Hedges | "Elements by means of which the speaker avoids specification in making a commitment to the illocutionary point of the utterance, in naming the required action, in describing the manner in which it is to be performed, or in referring to any other contextual aspect involved in its performance." (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984, p. 204) |
| Downtoner | "Elements by means of which the speaker modulates the impact his/her utterance is likely to have on the hearer, achieving the modulation via devices signaling the possibility of non-compliance." (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984, p. 204) |

Upgraders, on the other hand, increase the force of a request head act. Intensifiers and expletives are upgraders (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984, p. 204).

#### 2.6.2.4 The semantic dimension for request analysis: Modality, mood and modal expressions

Halliday puts forward that one of the main functions of language is its interpersonal function. The concept of “interpersonal function” refers to the choices human beings make on the grammatical level for relationship management purposes (Halliday, 2003, p. 16). Since interpersonal relationships to other human beings are vital for our survival, the acquisition of knowledge about the conventions and patterns of choices in grammar can be considered a survival skill.

According to Brown and Levinson’s politeness theory, there are different ways of minimizing the imposition of a face-threatening act, one of which is modality. Modality is an abstract concept and very culture-specific. It is expressed differently in different languages. It is a grammatical, semantic and pragmatic category. In English, modality can be expressed with modal verbs, specific syntactic structures, and modal particles. Often the same type of modality on the semantic level (e.g. epistemic and deontic) can be used for different types of meanings. For instance, the modal verb “can” can refer to the ability of a person to do something, “Peter can swim”, the possibility of something to occur, “Things like this can happen”, or to express a request “Can you help me, please?” On the other hand, a certain type of speech act can be expressed with different types of modality. Instead of saying “Can you help me, please?” one could also say “Could you help me, please?”, “You will help me, won’t you?”, “Help me.” Or “I need help.”

In line with Villki, whose study focuses on the interrelationship between epistemic meaning and facework meaning, in this study it is believed that general modal meaning incorporates semantic and pragmatic functions, while the boundaries between these functions is fuzzy (Villki, 2006, p. 331).

In most cases, humans use aspects of realis and irrealis structures of language without questioning why they are used. They are often used conventionally. It is believed that pragmaticalization plays an important role in this conventional usage:

> "The effect of pragmaticalisation is to bleach the propositional content of linguistic expressions to such an extent that they no longer function as expressions contributing to the truth value of a proposition but begin to function as markers indicating procedural meaning in verbal interaction. As such they often stand outside the sentential structure of the proposition to which they are attached." (Watts, 2003, pp. 176-177)

Modality and its manifestations represent an important aspect of grammar that relates to the interpersonal function of language, since through modality "a region of uncertainty where I can express, or ask you to express, an assessment of the validity of what is being said" (Halliday & Matthiesen, 2013, p. 116).

Due to the process of pragmaticalization, the propositional content of linguistic expressions becomes opaque, so that "they no longer function as expressions contributing to the truth value of a proposition but begin to function as markers indicating procedural meaning in verbal interaction." Together with grammaticalization, pragmaticalization is directed towards human beings' communicative goals as individuals in social interaction. Through pragmatic inferencing, linguistic forms are conventionalized and lose their denotational flexibility (Watts, 2003, pp. 176-177).

Correspondingly, modality has become an interface between grammar and pragmatics: One of the main cognitive features of human beings is their ability to think and talk about matters beyond here and now, i.e. beyond factuality, which can thus not be considered clearly true or false. Modality reflects this ability on the one hand, and on the other hand, it is used to influence intentionally or conventionally the illocutionary force of speech acts such as requests (Carretero, 1992, p. 17). On a semantic level, this ability is reflected by modality (besides tense and aspect) and on a pragmatic level it is reflected by speech acts, which – according to Austin (1975) – also cannot be assigned a truth-value. Thus, modality in speech acts can be considered an interface between semantics and pragmatics.

How can modality and its de- and encoding patterns be described, categorized and related to the speech act of request?

Kiefer distinguishes three approaches to modality. Firstly, modality as a concept relating to necessity and possibility "is used to relativize the validity of propositions to a set of possible worlds". This approach includes propositional and non-propositional aspects of sentences. Secondly, modality refers to "[a]ny modification of a proposition". This approach covers a greater range of notions than the first approach, as it also includes volition, emotion and evaluation. The third approach considers modality to be "what the speaker is doing with a proposition", i.e. it includes the first and second approaches as well as illocution in face threatening speech acts that impose obligation or grant permission (Kiefer, 2009, p. 179).

Revising different approaches to modality, one can observe, "that there is broad agreement about some central members of the class, but disagreement about some of the candidates for inclusion" (Salkie, 2009, p. 80). Instead of suggesting a clear, all-encompassing universal definition, Salkie proposes a core-periphery approach to a definition of "modality". He states that, "we need a clearly defined core, but fuzzy boundaries […] we should specify the criteria which demarcate the core, and allow for peripheral members of the category which do not meet all the criteria" (Salkie, 2009, p. 80). What could be the core concept of "modality"?

In a very broad sense, modality "is concerned with the status of the proposition that describes the event" (Palmer, 2001, p. 1) and epitomizes the sender's attitude towards the semantic content of an utterance and towards its relationship to reality. Relating to "human mental activity" (Larreya, 2009, p. 11), modality is an interdisciplinary topic covering aspects of grammar, semantics, cognitive linguistics, psycholinguistics, philosophy of language and pragmatics. Due to its reference to mental spaces, modality cannot be assessed directly, but through communicative patterns reflected by linguistic forms. The “core” of modality relates to the mutually related concepts “*possibility* and *necessity*” (Larreya, 2009, p. 9).

From a modal logic perspective, von Wright distinguishes four subcategories of modality (von Wright, 1951, p. 1):

Table 6: Modality categories by Wright (1951)

| Subcategory | Focus | Notions |
|---|---|---|
| Alethic | Truth | e.g. the “necessarily true”, the “possibly true”, the “contingently true” |
| Epistemic | Knowledge | e.g. the “verified”, “falsified” |
| Deontic | Obligation | e.g. the “obligatory”, the “permitted”, the “forbidden” |
| Existential | Existence | e.g. “universality, existence, and emptiness (of properties or classes)”. |

Based on von Wrights taxonomy of modality, Palmer distinguishes between epistemic, deontic and dynamic modality (Palmer, 2003, p. 7). He claims that

> “[e]pistemic modality is concerned solely with the speaker’s attitude to status of the proposition. […] Deontic and Dynamic modality relate directly to the potentiality of the event signaled by the proposition, but of two different types, both of which may both be seen as “directive” – getting things done. Deontic modality is directive in that the event is controlled by circumstances external to the subject of the sentence (more strictly the person or persons identified by the subject). […] With Dynamic modality the control is internal to the subject.” (Palmer, 2003, p. 7)

Palmer distinguishes propositional and event modality, the former including epistemic modality and the latter dynamic and deontic modality (Palmer, 2003, p. 7).

Table 7: Modality categories by Palmer (2003)

| Level 1 of subcategory | Level 2 of subcategory | Notion/definition | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Propositional modality | Epistemic | “concerned with the speaker’s attitude to the truth-value or factual status of the proposition” (Palmer, 2001, p. 8) | “speakers express their judgments about the factual status of the proposition” (Palmer, 2001, p. 8) |
| | Evidential | | “they indicate the evidence they have for its factual status” (Palmer, 2001, p. 8) |
| Event modality | Deontic | “refer to events that are not actualized, events that have not taken place but are merely potential” (Palmer, 2001, p. 8) | “the conditioning factors are external to the relevant individual” […] “relates to obligation or permission, emanating from an external source” (Palmer, 2001, pp. 9-10) |
| | Dynamic | | Internal conditioning factors; “relates to ability or willingness, which comes from the individual concerned” (Palmer, 2001, pp. 9-10) |

A similar approach to modality is proposed by Bybee et al.: they distinguish between speaker-oriented, epistemic and agent-oriented modality:

Table 8: Modality categories by Bybee et al. (1985)

| Subcategory | Notion/definition |
|---|---|
| Epistemic | "signal the degree of commitment the speaker has to the truth of the proposition. These are usually said to range from certainty to probability to possibility" (Bybee, 1985, p. 166) |
| Agent-oriented | "the existence of internal and external conditions on an agent with respect to the completion of the action expressed in the main predicate"<br>The notions of obligation, necessity, ability and desire are important aspects of this subcategory (Bybee, et al., 1994, pp. 177-178). |
| Speaker-oriented | Includes "directives as well as utterances in which the speaker grants the addressee permission […]. Speaker-oriented modalities do not report the existence of conditions on the agent, but rather allow the speaker to impose such conditions on the addressee" (Bybee, et al., 1994, p. 179). |
| Subordinating moods | This is rather a group of grammatical forms than a mental category such as for instance complement, concessive and purpose clauses (Bybee, et al., 1994, p. 180). |

Biber et al. distinguish between intrinsic and extrinsic modality (1999):

Table 9: Modality categories by Biber et al. (1999)

| Subcategory | Definition |
|---|---|
| Intrinsic/deontic | Relates to the "actions and events that humans (or other agents) directly control" and expresses notions of "permission, obligation, or volition (or intention)" (Biber, et al., 1999, p. 485). |
| Extrinsic/epistemic | Concentrates on "the logical status of events or states, usually relating to assessments of likelihood"; expresses notions of "possibility, necessity, or prediction" (Biber, et al., 1999, p. 485). |

Van der Auwera and Plungian differentiate between participant-internal modality which "refers to kinds of possibility or necessity internal to a participant engaged in the state of affairs" and participant-external modality which “refers to circumstances that are external to the participant, if any engaged in the state of affairs and that make this state of affairs either possible or necessary” (Auwera & Plungian, 1998, p. 80).

Coates differentiates two different types of modality: epistemic and non-epistemic:

Table 10: Modality categories by Coates (1983)

| Subcategory | Definition |
|---|---|
| Epistemic | “It is concerned with the speakers’ assumptions or assessment of possibilities” and “indicates the speaker’s confidence (or lack of confidence) in the truth of the proposition expressed” (Coates, 1983, p. 18). |
| Non-epistemic or root | Not defined clearly, but considered “more difficult to characterise” (Coates, 1983, p. 20) |

Larreya, quite similarly, distinguishes “root modality” and “epistemic modality”, the former corresponding to “domain of affect and/or action” and the latter corresponding to “domain of knowledge”. The former manifests itself in root speech act, i.e. speech acts that are used to get the addressee do something, and the latter manifests itself in epistemic speech acts, i.e. speech acts that are used to elicit information by the addressee. Furthermore, he distinguishes subtypes of root and epistemic modality. Root modality has the two subcategories, physical and deontic modality. Epistemic modality has the two subcategories, problematic and implicative modality (Larreya, 2009, p. 11). Larreya proposes a modal square, the four corners of which are constituted by the concepts of “necessity”, “non-necessity”, “impossibility”, and possibility”. A modal square can account for the semantic equivalence between the expression, “You can’t NOT go!” and “You’ve got to go!”, but cannot explain the pragmatic difference between the two (Larreya, 2009, pp. 9-10).

The possibilities of encoding modality are language-specific. Theoretically, the English language provides an infinite number of ways to express modal meanings, such as adverbs, semimodal verbs, modal auxiliaries, conditionals, nouns, adjectives, and certain syntactic structures. This thesis focuses on the “modal system” specific to the English language and a predominant means of expressing modality in English (Palmer, 2003, p. 3).

The modal system consists of eight modal verbs. The declarative is considered an unmarked, non-modal form. It “states what the speaker believes, or claims to believe, is a fact” (Palmer, 2003, p. 3). The verbs of the English modal system can be analyzed along three subcategories of modality: epistemic, deontic and dynamic modality (Palmer, 2003, p. 7).

Coates identifies two groups of attributes that are characteristic of modal auxiliaries in English: The first group consists in patterns that distinguish ALL auxiliaries from main verbs: They take postverbal negation without support by the auxiliary DO. Questions with auxiliaries are formed by direct subject-auxiliary inversion without the auxiliary DO. They can be elliptically used as a “code”, e.g. in tag questions, and as “emphasis” without auxiliary DO support.

The second group consists in patterns that only modal auxiliaries share: Modal auxiliaries are not inflected, have no distinct third person form, only take infinitives without “to” as their complement, and do not co-occur.

According to Collins, “[m]odality embraces a range of semantic notions, including possibility, necessity, ability, obligation, permission, and hypotheticality.” All these notions have in common “that they all involve some kind of non-factuality: a situation is represented not as straightforward fact, as not being known” (Collins, 2009, p. 11).

Modality can be expressed by grammatical mood, such as the imperative or subjunctive mood. In addition, modality is frequently expressed by modal auxiliaries and so-called “quasi-modals”, “a set of periphrastic expressions” (Collins, 2009, p. 11). Collins distinguishes three groups of modal expressions and links them with their epistemic, deontic and dynamic notions:

Table 11: Modality-modal expression relationship (Collins, 2009)

| | Necessity and obligation | Possibility, permission and ability | Prediction and volition/willingness |
|---|---|---|---|
| Epistemic | e.g. must, should, ought to, have (got) to, need to | e.g. may, can, might, could | e.g. will, would, shall, be going to, want to |
| Dynamic | e.g. must, have (got) to, need to | e.g. may, can, might, could | e.g. will, would, shall, be going to, want to |
| Deontic | e.g. must, should, ought to, have (got) to, need to | e.g. may, can, might, could | e.g. will, would, shall, be going to, want to |

**Conclusion:** As the study represented in this thesis aims at analyzing patterns of de- and encoding modality in requests, Collin's model is chosen for the evaluation of the linguistic data, as it best represents the relationship between categories of modality and their possible linguistic manifestations. As asserted above, modality represents an interface between semantics and pragmatics. The categorization as provided by Collin's model will represent the semantic dimension of the coding scheme of the study.

Since the imperative mood is frequently used in speech acts such as requests, it will be also taken into consideration in this thesis. While modal auxiliaries and quasi-modals will be described and categorized according to the table above, the imperative mood will be treated as an autonomous, special case of expressing modality.

#### 2.6.2.5 The coding scheme for this study

In order to make statements about the correlation patterns between lingua-cultural groups and the de- and encoding patterns of modality, it is necessary to set up a framework to explain the relationship between linguistic forms, categories of semantic meaning, and pragmatic function. While semantics focuses on predictable aspects of meaning based on “langue” (i.e. lexical meaning and syntax), pragmatics views linguistic patterns expressing modality in relation to context, which is influenced by many parameters (Kiefer, 2009, p. 179). If the pragmatic function of speech acts remains constant, how can modality be assessed and described systematically?

One possibility is to relate to a typology of modality and relate codes to subcategories of modality.

When comparing these typologies, it is noticeable that all of them distinguish epistemic and non-epistemic meaning. The notions of relativized factuality, necessity, and possibility are also common to all taxonomies. These notions may underline the preparatory rule, i.e. the assumption of the sender and recipient, that it is not obvious that the recipient fulfills the request, can be strengthened if the sender employs epistemic modality. Furthermore, the propositional content of the request can be relativized as well, by the use of epistemic modality. Deontic and dynamic modality can influence the sincerity rule. How exactly the notions and subcategories of non-epistemic meaning are defined, varies from scholar to scholar. In this thesis, it is claimed that due to the process of distancing oneself from the propositional content of the request, and relativizing the sincerity rule, modality can be applied as a negative politeness strategy to minimize the imposition on the recipient.

Based on Collin’s analysis of modal and quasi-modal verbs in English (Collins, 2009), in this thesis, requests will be categorized according to their epistemic, deontic or dynamic meanings and to their coding. Furthermore, they will be categorized according to their general linguistic realization. As an orientation framework for the realization patterns, Blum-Kulka et al.’s CCSARP framework will be applied. Blum-Kulka and Olshtain propose that request realization can vary, depending on towards whom the request is directed. A request can be hearer-, speaker-, speaker- and hearer-oriented, or impersonal. Furthermore, components of requests are defined. They consist of an attention getter or alerter, a head act, and a supportive move. While Blum-Kulka et al. distinguish direct, conventionally indirect, and non-conventionally indirect strategies (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984), in this study this distinction will be omitted, as the perception of "directness" is considered culture-specific and relative, depending on the role and relationship of the interlocutors.

Instead, this study describes requests on three dimensions: the modal meaning contained in the request, the request strategy and perspective, and the modal expression:

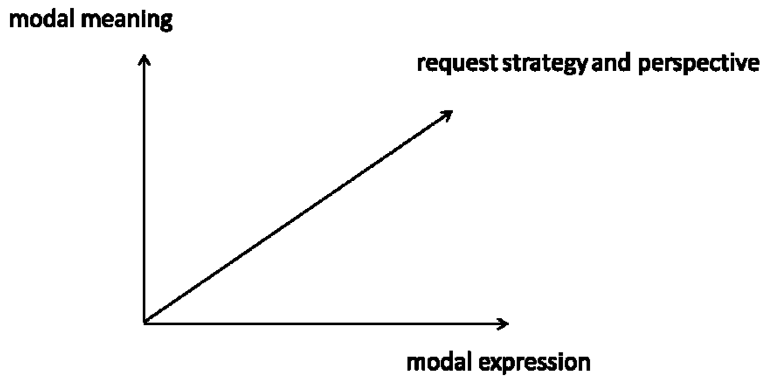


Figure 3: Coding scheme with adapted dimensions for this thesis

For example, the request "*Could you send me a screenshot, please?*" would be coded as shown in the table below:

Table 12: Example of coding of the request above

| | |
|---|---|
| Request | Could you send me a screenshot, please? |
| Modality type in head act | Dynamic ability |
| Modal expression used to modality codification | Could |

| | |
|---|---|
| Request strategy | Query preparatory |
| Request perspective | Hearer |
| Syntactic downgrader in head act | Interrogative |
| Lexical/phrasal downgrader in head act | |
| Upgrader | |
| Focus group | Germany |

# 3 Empirical Research

## 3.1 Scope of the Study and Subhypotheses

For professional, systematical and conscious translation, it is necessary that translators are aware of and sensitized towards differences between culturally constructed concepts, linguistic manifestations, and perceptions of politeness. The transcultural complexity of today's collectives and their dynamics may not enable humans to make general statements about *how* politeness is conceptualized, realized and perceived, but it is important *that* translators know that there *are* differences, in order to ask the right questions during the process of communication.

How *do* translators know which questions to ask? In order to ask questions, it is necessary to have a certain basis of knowledge. But what kind of knowledge can help translators make their decisions?

Since natural pedagogy is a universal human phenomenon, it can be assumed in general that translators *are* able to acquire knowledge about different *Realitäten* and the interpretations of "politeness" in them. But in which way can this knowledge be mediated? Since, in line with Kadrić et al. (2010), culture can be considered the entirety of experiences, thought structures and everyday practices, these practices are not only acquired through mental or cognitive processes that underlie semantic understanding, but also "through participation and rehearsal" (Loenhoff, 2011, p. 59). In other words, the knowledge about how cultures or how different scientific schools define "politeness", i.e. explicit knowledge about politeness concepts, cannot be sufficient.[68] It may assist decision-making processes to a certain degree, but

[68] Loenhoff criticizes the fact that in contemporary discussions about communication across cultures it is often claimed that explicable knowledge about societies, their histories and belief systems can facilitate communication processes. He even claims that it is implicit knowledge "that has crucial pragmatic relevance in the process of intercultural communication." (Loenhoff, 2011, p. 57)

not to the full extent. It is also necessary to acquire implicit knowledge about the manifestation and perception of politeness in different cultures.

While explicit knowledge is constituted linguistically and can be communicated (Loenhoff, 2011, p. 57), implicit knowledge is learned through socio-cultural practice:

> "Implicit knowledge is not an individual knowledge, but a collectively shared social background knowledge. We acquire it through participation in a social praxis in our primary process of socialization through imitation, accession, rehearsal, and training." (Loenhoff, 2011, p. 59)

Furthermore, implicit knowledge is, contrary to explicit knowledge, the prerequisite for propositional knowledge. For instance, a child cannot learn its first language by attending grammar lessons. To understand grammar lessons of the first language, the child needs to be able to use the language in practice (Loenhoff, 2014, p. 28).

The acquisition of implicit knowledge is inherently an embodied process – it is necessary to physically act or participate in a cultural system in order to gain implicit knowledge. Therefore, it can be considered "a 'transdiscursive' proficiency and a physically incorporated competence" (Loenhoff, 2011, p. 59).

How can translators acquire implicit knowledge? Considering the large number of potential cultures that translators might be confronted with, particularly when English is involved in the communication process, it can be challenging for translators to acquire this knowledge by socio-cultural practice. House, as stated above, suggests the application of a cultural filter in covert translation that is based on empirical work (1998, p. 66). What might constitute a possible cultural filter for realizing and perceiving politeness in different cultures, how could these manifestations and perception be detected in the use of English, and how could empirical work support the building of a cultural filter?

As a first step towards approaching these questions, the empirical study for this work aims at examining the second hypothesis of this thesis, which claims that individuals with similar lingua-cultural biographies are inclined to show similar patterns of realizing and perceiving politeness.

In order to assess this general hypothesis, the following subhypotheses shall be examined:

a) Individuals with similar lingua-cultural biographies are more likely to use the same notion of modal meaning in a request than are individuals with different lingua-cultural backgrounds.
b) Individuals with similar lingua-cultural biographies are more likely to perceive the same notion of modal meaning in a request as politeness than are individuals with different lingua-cultural backgrounds.
c) From a semantic perspective, modality implies notions in the range between epistemic, dynamic and deontic necessity, obligation, possibility, permission, ability, prediction and willingness (Collins, 2009). From a pragmatic perspective, requests are often classified according to the CCSARP coding scheme. In this thesis, it is claimed, that the more similar the lingua-cultural biographies of individuals, the more co-occurrences can be detected with regard to the relation among the semantic notion of modality used in a speech act, the strategy types of head act realization (Blum-Kulka, et al., 1989), and the request perspective according to the CCSARP (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984, p. 203). The analogous hypothesis is claimed for the perception of modality in requests.
d) Individuals with strong UK-based lingua-cultural biographies show similar patterns to those with a strong Outer Circle-based lingua-cultural background due to linguistic residuals of former colonial influences.
e) Individuals with strong USA-based lingua-cultural biographies show similar patterns to those with a strong Expanding Circle-based lingua-cultural background due to mass media influence, and since a majority of the study participants from the Expanding Circle work for a company with “US American English” as corporate language.

f) Based on the results of previous studies of request realization patterns, it is assumed that the Inner Circle focus groups show a stronger preference of what is called “conventionally indirect strategies” in the CCSARP than do the other focus groups.

## 3.2 Data Collection

### 3.2.1 General information

This study analyzes the patterns of de- and encoding modality in requests in the communicative settings between customer-support service members and customers. It consists of two parts: The first part is based on an analysis of a survey. The second part is based on the analysis of customer support accounts on the social networking platform “Twitter”. The study does not compare the results of its two parts, since both represent different communication media (tweets versus the core of fictional e-mails).

The results of the study are described and evaluated based on the coding scheme described in more detail under 2.6. The scheme considers three dimensions of requests: modal meaning, request strategy and perspective, and modal expression.

To analyze both, the survey results and the tweets, the modal meaning, request strategy and perspective needed to be identified manually. Although the tweets can only consist of 140 characters at most, the request head act needed to be identified. This was mostly not necessary for the survey results.

### 3.2.2 The survey

#### 3.2.2.1 Distribution

For the empirical research of this study, an electronic survey was created using the survey creation tool “SurveyMonkey”. The survey was distributed to 601 respondents as a link, and to 283 respondents as an e-mail attachment or print out. Of these respondents, 201 work for the same company, i.e. OMICRON electronics (Klaus, Austria). At OMICRON, English is the official company language. Of the participants, 343 are members of the international linguistics community www.linguistlist.org, 183 have attended the CEBIT 2011 as exhibitors, and 157 are university students and employees. All participants have in common that they always or often use English in their daily professional lives.

#### 3.2.2.2 Survey[69] design

To enhance transparency and comparability of data, the survey consisted of two parts: In the first part, multiple-choice questions regarding the lingua-cultural, educational and professional background were asked, in order to find groups of participants with similar lingua-cultural biographies. In a comment field, participants were also given the option to include additional information. The first-part questions can be divided into the following subgroups:

a) "Geographic milestones": These questions were asked to set a preliminary starting point for the preselection. These starting points only serve as initial references and do not imply that respondents with same the place of birth, residence and similar lengths of stay in "Inner Circle" countries are automatically counted as members of one sub-speech community. The respondents were asked for their place of birth, to choose their current principal country of residence and employment (i.e. the country where they have spent more than 50% during the past 12 months) and if they had ever spent more than 3 months in succession in the following countries: UK, USA/CANADA, Australia, New Zealand, or Republic of Ireland. For each country, the respondents had the option to enter the duration of their stay.

[69] A scan of the survey and the crosstables resulting from the questions regarding the participants' lingua-cultural biographies can be found in the Appendix under A.3.

b) "Educational milestones" in combination with "geographic milestones": Here the respondents were asked to specify at what age, for how long and in which countries they attended school, college and/or university. If they spent an educational period in more than one country, they were given the option to specify this in more detail, either in a comment field or by using a multiple-choice template. These questions may contain a certain bias, as the terms "primary", "secondary", "tertiary" and "higher" education can be interpreted differently in different countries. However, data transparency could nevertheless be maintained, since the examples "elementary school", "middle school", "high school", and "university" were given and the respondents were asked to enter the exact lengths of educational periods in the respective countries.

c) "Linguistic milestones" in combination with age: Here the respondents were asked to specify at what age they have learned or acquired which language, and how long each language has been used actively: As mentioned before, the use of the terms "first language", "second language" and "third language" (instead of "mother tongue" and "foreign language") was intentionally chosen to avoid emotional connotation or the opaque distinction between language learning and acquisition. In addition, the respondents were asked in which domain they use the language(s), i.e. whether they use their first, second or third language with family members, friends, neighbors, classmates, fellow students, teachers, professors, co-employees, employers, customers, cooperation partners and/or others. Multiple choices were permitted here as well.

d) In addition, knowing that all respondents use English in their educational or working context: The respondents were asked to specify the subdomains in which they used English in these two contexts since June 2010, i.e. technical development, research, studying, teaching, technical testing, human resources, public relations, customer support, marketing, sales, language services, business controlling, business management, administration, consulting or others.

The second part of the survey consisted of multiple-choice questions with incorporated option for discourse completion.

In order to analyze the distribution of modal expressions to encode modality in requests, six situations were presented. In the first three situations, the respondent was asked to imagine he or she were a member of a customer service staff and had to make a request to a customer. The respondent was given ten options of requesting for each situation and the possibility to enter their own phrasing. These three situations were used to elicit patterns of politeness realization.

In the second set of three situations, the respondent was asked to imagine he or she were a customer and received a request by a company’s customer service staff. The respondent was again given ten options and asked to check the answer that he or she would perceive as most polite or to write his or her own phrasing. These three situations were used to elicit patterns of politeness perception.

For all six simulated situations, the ten given options expressed the same propositional content; however, they contained different nuances of modality: epistemic possibility, epistemic necessity, deontic permission, deontic obligation, dynamic ability and dynamic willingness.

#### 3.2.2.3 Survey participants: focus groups (FG)

Due to the transcultural approach of this investigation, the lingua-cultural biographies were not predefined for this study. Instead, a large variety of people was asked to participate in the survey, and the participants were grouped based on shared characteristics. In a first step, participants were grouped according to shared place of birth[70], countries of education and main countries of residence. Because the sample size determines the statistical significance of the relations between variables, and smaller samples increase the probability of coincident relations (StatSoft, 2011), this investigation focuses only on those five groups with the highest number of representatives. These groups are referred to as “Focus Groups” (FG)[71] and are classified according to Kachru’s model of the three concentric circles. Keeping in mind that this model is a simplification of reality, these circles shall nevertheless serve as anchor points for orientation and focus:

a) Two Inner Circle countries, namely USA and UK,

b) One Outer Circle country, namely India,

c) Two Expanding Circle countries, namely Germany and Austria

#### 3.2.2.4 Limitations of the survey

To assess politeness strategies in an authentic setting, the examination of naturally occurring data with specific contextual information, which is mostly used by discourse analysts, seems most convenient. However, from a frame-based view, which relies on regularities, the convenience of naturally occurring data is relative – especially for investigations that are bound to a specific time frame. For the detection of natural patterns in written communication between customers and customer support representatives, it would be, for instance, necessary to collect e-mails. However, to detect any regular pattern, the number of e-mails would need to be very large. In addition, ethical and confidential issues associated with analyzing e-mails further complicate this approach.

The discourse completion test has been employed in numerous studies since the CCSARP. It represents a survey in which brief situations are described

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[70] An overview of places of birth for all participants (including the ones who could not be ascribed to a Focus Group) can be found in the Appendix (A.3.2).

[71] The number of participants for each Focus Group can be found in the Appendix (A.3.3).

which are supposed to trigger speech acts by the survey respondents. The respondent reads a text and writes down what he or she would say in such a situation. With DCTs, large corpora can be collected within a short span of time.

In order to avoid the risk of discouraging survey participants with a “pure” DCT, which requires more time for being filled out, and thus to minimize the risk of receiving an insufficient number of answers, a combined approach consisting of multiple-choice questions with the incorporated option of discourse completion was chosen. Because of the changes that had to be made due to practical convenience, and in order to receive as many responses as possible, the following limitation is given for this survey: Since the discourse completion test has been modified to allow multiple-choice answers or free-text entries, it is probable that most respondents will choose one of the given answers instead of formulating their own request. This reduces the freedom of expression of the respondent and therefore may be less reflective of a real case scenario.[72]

Answers that were entered manually by survey participants were difficult to code, according to the coding scheme of the study, since the naturalistic data did not always fit the categorization in the coding scheme. In addition, sometimes more than one request strategy could be ascribed to a manually entered answer.

### 3.2.3 Customer support accounts on Twitter

#### 3.2.3.1 General information

The social networking and microblogging platform “Twitter” allows its users to exchange message posts containing a maximum of 140 characters. These

[72] This assumption is confirmed by the results of the study: In the second part of the survey 67.8 % of all answers were multiple choice selections and 32.2 % were manually entered completions.

posts are also referred to as “tweets”. An increasing number of companies create customer support accounts and communicate with their customers through Twitter. The advantage of Twitter is its relatively simple network structure and the possibility to use “public” accounts for research purposes, as they are visible to all (including non-registered visitors) (Bruns & Liang, 2012). The customer support accounts analyzed in this study are “public” accounts.

The tweets exchanged between customer-service staff members and customers provide an enormous resource for corpus collection. For this study, two major groups of corpora were created: The first group was created to find request realization patterns in tweets sent by customer-service staff members; the second group was created to find request realization patterns in tweets sent by customers.

The corpus collection was performed by using the Twitter API YourTwapperkeeper and through manual analysis.

YourTwapperkeeper is an open-source tool based on PHP and MySQL. With this tool, researchers can track and archive tweets containing specific keywords. The tool allows for an export of the captured data, such as the:

- **“archivesource:** API source of the tweet (twitter–search or twitter–stream)
- **text:** contents of the tweet itself, in 140 characters or less
- **to_user_id:** numerical ID of the tweet recipient (for @replies) *(not always set, even for tweets containing @replies)*
- **from_user:** screen name of the tweet sender
- **id:** numerical ID of the tweet itself
- **from_user_id:** numerical ID of the tweet sender
- **iso_language_code:** code (e.g. en, de, fr, ...) of the sender’s default language *(not necessarily matching the language of the tweet itself)*
- **source:** name or URL of the tool used for tweeting (*e.g.*, Tweetdeck, ...)
- **profile_image_url:** URL of the tweet sender’s profile picture
- **geo_type:** form in which the sender’s geographical coordinates are provided
- **geo_coordinates_0:** first element of the geographical coordinates
- **geo_coordinates_1:** second element of the geographical coordinates
- **created_at:** tweet timestamp in human–readable format *(set by the tweeting client — inconsistent formatting)*
- **time:** tweet timestamp as a numerical Unix timestamp” (Bruns & Liang, 2012).

When using YourTwapperkeeper to collect and archive tweets, one can search by placing the hashtag or the "@" symbol in front of the name of the respective company's customer support account. Using this search method, tweets sent *to* the respective customer support account can be retrieved. Since in most cases tweets sent from customers to the customer support staff contain a request, this search method worked reliably.

This is not the case with tweets sent *from* customer support accounts, since most of them do not necessarily contain a request. Though it was possible to retrieve tweets sent *from* the respective customer support account by searching for "from: nameofcustomerserviceaccount", it was necessary to manually select the tweets that do contain a request, since there are no hashtags that are intrinsically linked to requests in customer service contexts (there are neither any fixed linguistic items that exclusively indicate a request, nor is the semantic field of all customer service contexts small enough to automatically collect reliable sender-based corpus). The tweets sent by customer service accounts were manually gathered by copying and pasting them from the respective Twitter lists.[73] While the UK, US and Indian accounts provided a sufficient amount of data, eliciting English tweets for German and Austrian accounts was more difficult, as these accounts mostly use German when communicating with their customers.

The lingua-cultural biography of tweet senders and receivers cannot be assessed directly. Each customer support account lists a country in its Twitter profile and is responsible for customers in this country. Furthermore, each tweet can be assigned to information on language and geographic location[74]

[73] In order to analyze the collected data the "clean-up" methodology proposed by Jon Hickman (teacher and researcher at Birmingham City University, Centre for Media & Cultural Research) was chosen: http://theplan.co.uk/cleaning-up-twitter-data-in-excel-for-analysis.

[74] Note: The assignment of a tweet to a certain geographic location was only rarely possible, as "Twitter does not allow applications to retrieve tweets from a specific geographic location on the basis of the stated location or geo–IP of a user (*e.g.*, tweets from Australian or Taiwanese users); the only mechanism it provides for retrieving geographically relevant tweets is to specify latitudes, longitudes and radius parameters in search requests. However, evidence from our research to date suggests that only a very small percentage

under “**iso_language_code**”, “**geo_coordinates_0”, and** “**geo_coordinates_1**”. Based on these aspects of information, tweets are assigned to the group “USA”, “UK”, “India”, “Germany” or “Austria”. For terminological clarity, these groups will be referred to as “Twitter Groups” (TW).

The following customer support accounts were examined:

Table 13: Twitter Groups of customer support accounts

| **Twitter Group** | **Customer support account** |
|---|---|
| India | Airtel Presence |
| India | Nokia India |
| India | Vodafone India |
| Germany | Airberlin |
| Germany | Deutsche Bahn |
| Germany | DHL Paket |
| Germany | Deutsche Post DHL |
| Germany | Lufthansa |
| Austria | Austrian Airlines |
| UK | T-Mobile UK |
| UK | UK Tesco |
| UK | Vodafone UK |

of tweets are encoded with geographic metadata; this means that only a small (and likely highly unrepresentative) sample of tweets from the target geographic region will be retrieved using this method. This means that — in the absence of reliable means for limiting data retrieval to specific geographic areas — tweet datasets cannot be easily confined to certain geographic areas. Even more elaborate methods for retrieving tweets through a combination of various approaches may be able to be developed — but such more complex approaches in turn suffer from scalability issues in storing and computing the data.” (Bruns & Liang, 2012)

| | |
|---|---|
| USA | T-Mobile USA |
| USA | Paypal USA |
| USA | Ford USA |

The tweets sent *to* customer service accounts were collected and archived via the Application Programming Interface (API) “YourTwapperkeeper”. Here the difficulty was to find reliable criteria that would increase the probability that a sender of a tweet to a US- or UK-based support account actually stems from the US or UK, since many international accounts, such as Windows or Adobe, are based in the US, but receive tweets from all continents. A time zone-based filtering seemed not very reliable, as the respective countries share time zones with other countries, or there are time zone overlaps. Therefore, only those US/UK-based support accounts were examined, which specifically had a Twitter account for the US/UK and other alternative, official twitter accounts for other countries or continents.

After creating the YourTwapperkeeper archives, strings that occurred frequently in the survey results were searched for in the “tweet-text” field. The output was exported and rows not containing requests were deleted manually with the help of Excel filters. Finally, both groups of corpora were prepared, creating frequency charts and cross tables in the statistical software SPSS.

#### 3.2.3.2 Limitation of analyzing Twitter accounts

Although Twitter accounts provide authentic material for analysis, the lingua-cultural biographies of the request producers can only be assumed, and their profiles cannot be differentiated as well as by the survey. Another problem is the difficulty to assess the topics and contexts of the messages. In addition, the Twitter accounts only allow the analysis of request realization, but not perception patterns.

Furthermore, request and modality coding were challenging for the tweets, since the naturalistic data did not always fit the coding scheme proposed above. Furthermore, the modal meaning of modal expressions was difficult to assess in some cases, due to polysemy.

Biesenbach-Lucas experienced a similar challenge for her study and states:

> "For a number of e-mail requests, no clear coding categories exist within the CCSARP framework. A likely reason is that naturalistic data, especially data in a new language medium, give rise to request realizations that do not surface in DCT elicitation; yet, most research on request speech acts has almost exclusively relied on DCT data. Consequently, an e-mail request might fit into more than one category, or new categories might need to be established." (Biesenbach-Lucas, 2006, p. 89)

Although the tweets could mostly be coded due to their shortness, some tweets could be ascribed to more than one request strategy.

# 4 Analysis, Evaluation and Discussion

## 4.1 Survey

### 4.1.1 Situation 1: Speech act production & request for information

#### 4.1.1.1 Modal meanings depending on focus groups

In the first fictional situation, the respondent was asked to imagine the following situation:

> "You are a member of a customer service staff. A customer is reporting a technical problem x in an e-mail. To solve problem x, you need additional information. How would the core of your response most probably look like?"

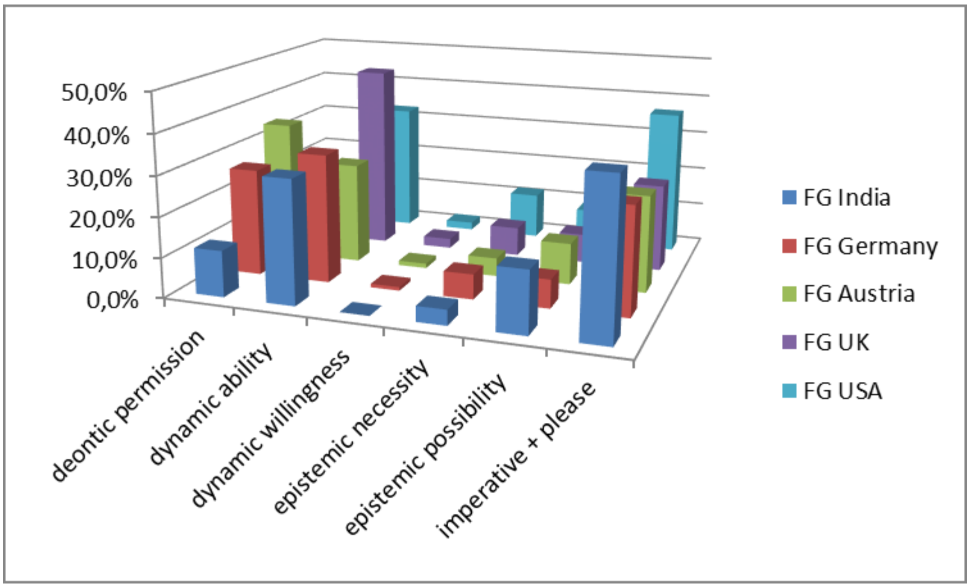


Figure 4: Relative frequencies of modality types in focus groups

Looking at the modal meaning, the data reveals the following commonalities: Dynamic willingness[75], epistemic necessity and possibility do not seem to be very popular. The most striking differences can be observed in the use of dynamic ability, deontic permission and the imperative with "please". The focus

[75] An overview of modality types and their respective codification with examples is given in the Appendix (A.1). This overview is based on the coding scheme proposed in section 2.6.2.5.

group UK shows a strong inclination towards dynamic ability. While the focus groups Germany, Austria and UK show equal or lower frequencies in the use of the imperative with “please” (as compared to the use of dynamic ability), the focus groups USA and India use the imperative with “please” more frequently than dynamic ability. The focus group Austria shows the highest frequency in the use of deontic permission.

#### 4.1.1.2 Modal expressions, request strategies and perspectives based on modal meaning

Taking a closer look at those levels of modal meaning, which were chosen by a minimum of 15 participants of at least one FG[76], the following is observable with regard to the distribution of modal expressions on each level and the co-occurrence of modal meaning with request strategies and perspectives:

At the level of deontic permission, two main trends can be observed. Deontic permission is expressed by the auxiliaries “may” or “can”. In both cases, these are used in hedged performatives with speaker-oriented perspective and interrogatives. While the FGs Germany and Austria show a preference towards “may”, FG UK shows a preference towards “can” (see Table 14).

Table 14: The level of deontic permission

| Modal expression | Request strategy[77] | Request perspective | Syntactic downgrader | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| May | Hedged performative | Speaker-oriented | Interrogative | 8 | 20 | 32 | 1 | 2 |
| Can | Hedged performative | Speaker-oriented | Interrogative | 6 | 14 | 9 | 17 | 8 |
| Number of participants | | | | 14 | 34 | 41 | 18 | 10 |

[76] An overview of frequencies for all modality types (including the ones chosen by less than 15 participants) can be found in the Appendix (A.4).

[77] An overview of request strategies, perspectives and downgraders is given in the Appendix (A.2). The overview is based on the coding scheme proposed in section 2.6.2.5.

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Reference relative frequencies[78] | 11.5% | 26.8% | 34.5% | 14.6% | 8.7% |

Dynamic ability appears in query preparatories and appears in hearer-oriented interrogatives. It is expressed by the auxiliaries “can” or “could”. Here a strong preference towards “can” is shown by the FG UK; all other FGs prefer “could”. While the FGs India and Germany use “could” more than twice as often as “can”, FG USA uses it more than three times as often, and FG Austria four times as often (see Table 15).

Table 15: The level of dynamic ability

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | Syntactic Downgrader | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Can | Query preparatory | Hearer-oriented | Interrogative | 12 | 12 | 6 | 39 | 9 |
| Could | Query preparatory | Hearer-oriented | Interrogative | 25 | 28 | 24 | 18 | 30 |
| Number of participants | | | | 37 | 40 | 30 | 57 | 39 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | | 30.8% | 32.1% | 25.3% | 46.3% | 32.7% |

The expression of epistemic possibility by “would” is the most frequent choice across all FGs. “Would” is used in impersonal sentences in hedged performatives (see Table 16).

Table 16: The level of epistemic possibility

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Might | Hedged performative | Impersonal | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 |

[78] This value refers to the relative frequency of the usage of a certain linguistic device within the respective FG.

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Would | Hedged performative | Impersonal | 16 | 8 | 12 | 7 | 9 |
| Number of participants | | | 18 | 9 | 12 | 9 | 10 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | 15.4% | 7.1% | 10.3% | 7.3% | 8.7% |

The imperative in combination with "please" is used most frequently by FG India and USA (see Table 17).

Table 17: The level of "imperative & please"

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Imperative | Mood derivable | Speaker-oriented | 46 | 34 | 29 | 27 | 43 |
| Number of participants | | | 46 | 34 | 29 | 27 | 43 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | 38.5% | 26.8% | 24.1% | 22.0% | 36.5% |

### 4.1.2 Situation 2: Speech act production & request for alternative action

#### 4.1.2.1 Modal meanings depending on focus groups

In this situation, the respondent was asked to imagine the following:

> "You are a member of a customer service staff. A customer has ordered a product and tried to pay by direct debiting. But since his/her account is overdrawn, you need to ask him/her to pay by wire transfer. How would the core of your e-mail most probably look like?"

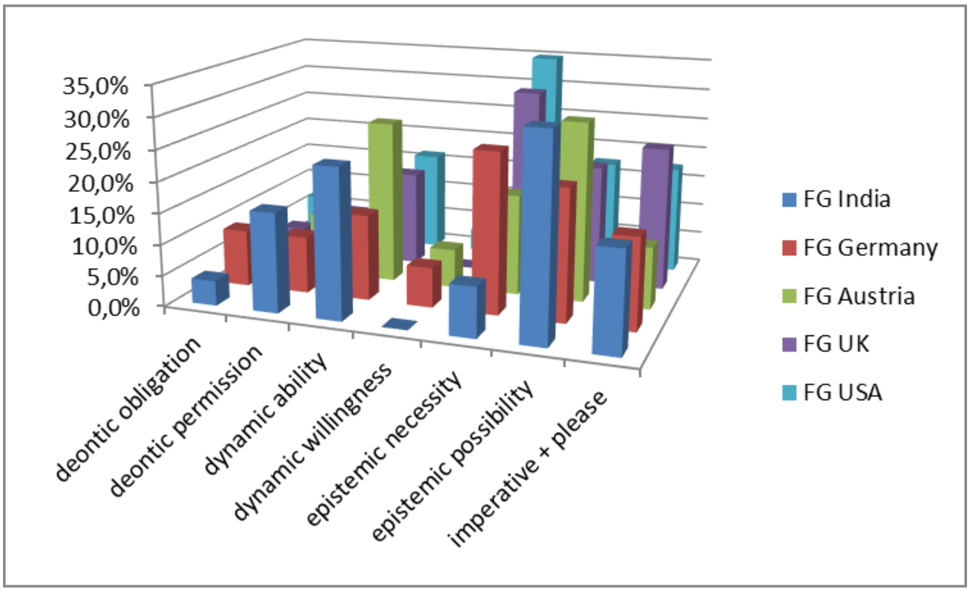


Figure 5: Relative frequencies of modality types in focus groups

The variety of modal meaning is greater in this situation than in situation one. Furthermore, two parallel tendencies can be observed. One parallelism can be observed between the FGs UK and USA. Both groups strongly prefer epistemic necessity and show a similar distribution as regards to dynamic ability, epistemic possibility and imperative with please. Similarly, parallel trends can be observed in the FGs India and Austria. In both FGs, dynamic ability and epistemic possibility are preferred. Epistemic necessity is also the preference of the FG Germany.

#### 4.1.2.2 Modal expressions, request strategies and perspective based on modal meaning

Taking a closer look at those levels that are at least chosen by 15 members of at least one FG, the data reveals that at the level of deontic permission, only in FG India "may" and "can" show similar frequencies. In all other FGs, "can" is preferred. "May" and "can", both appear in hedged performatives with speaker-orientation (see Table 18).

Table 18: The level of deontic permission

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| May | Hedged performative | Speaker-oriented | 9 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| Can | Hedged performative | Speaker-oriented | 10 | 11 | 10 | 7 | 4 |
| Number of participants | | | 19 | 12 | 12 | 9 | 4 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | 16.0% | 9.2% | 10.0% | 7.7% | 3.5% |

FGs India and USA show a strong preference for “could” at the level of dynamic ability. FG UK strongly prefers “can”. FGs Germany and Austria almost equally prefer “can” and “could” (see Table 19).

Table 19: The level of dynamic ability

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Can | Query preparatory | Hearer-oriented | 8 | 9 | 15 | 18 | 3 |
| Could | Query preparatory | Hearer-oriented | 21 | 8 | 16 | 1 | 16 |
| Number of participants | | | 29 | 17 | 31 | 19 | 19 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | 24.0% | 13.8% | 26.3% | 15.4% | 16.3% |

The use of “need to” seems to represent an interface between epistemic necessity and deontic necessity due to its combination with the impersonal request perspective. This strategy was mostly used by FGs UK and USA; while FGs India and Austria show lower frequencies (see Table 20).

Table 20: The level of epistemic necessity

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Need to | Obligation statement | Impersonal | 10 | 32 | 19 | 38 | 42 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number of participants | 10 | 32 | 19 | 38 | 42 |
| Reference relative frequencies | 8.0% | 25.7% | 16.3% | 30.8% | 34.9% |

Epistemic possibility is mostly expressed by “might” and “would”. But “might” is strongly preferred by FGs India and UK. The other FGs prefer “would” (see Table 21).

Table 21: The level of epistemic possibility

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Might | Hedged performative | Impersonal | 32 | 6 | 3 | 19 | 2 |
| Would | Hedged performative | Impersonal | 6 | 21 | 31 | 5 | 19 |
| Number of participants | | | 38 | 27 | 34 | 24 | 21 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | 32.0% | 21.1% | 28.8% | 19.2% | 17.4% |

The imperative with “please” is used most frequently by FG UK, and used least frequently by FG Austria (see Table 22).

Table 22: The level of “imperative & please”

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Imperative | Mood derivable | Speaker-oriented | 19 | 18 | 12 | 28 | 21 |
| Number of participants | | | 19 | 18 | 12 | 28 | 21 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | 16.0% | 14.7% | 10.0% | 23.1% | 17.4% |

### 4.1.3 Situation 3: Speech act production & request for action

#### 4.1.3.1 Modal meanings depending on focus groups

In this situation, the respondent was asked to imagine the following:

> "You are a member of a customer service staff. Your customer has a specific problem. To explain a solution to him/her, you need to ask him to perform certain steps. How would you do this?"

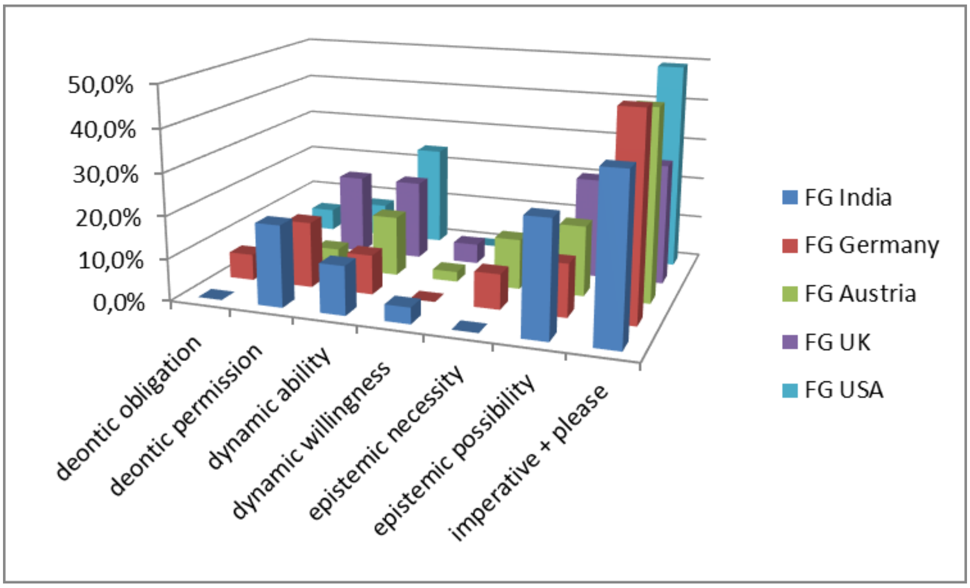


Figure 6: Relative frequencies of modality types in focus groups

In this situation, a strong parallelism can be observed between the FGs. All FGs show a strong preference towards the imperative with "please". The most frequently used patterns can be found on the levels of deontic permission, dynamic ability, epistemic possibility, and imperative with "please". Except for the level of the imperative with "please", in all other cases the interrogative is used as syntactic downgrader. In the following subsections, the realization patterns within the levels of deontic permission, dynamic ability, epistemic possibility and imperative with "please" will be described.

#### 4.1.3.2 Modal expressions, request strategies and perspective based on modal meaning

At the level of deontic permission, the FGs Germany and UK show a stronger preference for “can”, while FG India prefers “may”. The FG USA uses both expressions with equal frequency.

Table 23: The level of deontic permission

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | Syntactic Downgrader | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| May | Hedged performative | Speaker-oriented | Interrogative | 19 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 5 |
| Can | Hedged performative | Speaker-oriented | Interrogative | 4 | 15 | 1 | 19 | 5 |
| Number of participants | | | | 23 | 20 | 6 | 23 | 10 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | | 19.2% | 15.6% | 4.8% | 19.0% | 8.0% |

At the level of dynamic ability, FGs India and Austria show a preference for “could“, while the other FGs – except for FG USA - prefer “can“.

Table 24: The level of dynamic ability

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | Syntactic Downgrader | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Can | Query preparatory | Hearer-oriented | Interrogative | 4 | 9 | 5 | 19 | 15 |
| Could | Query preparatory | Hearer-oriented | Interrogative | 10 | 3 | 12 | 4 | 14 |
| Number of participants | | | | 14 | 12 | 17 | 23 | 29 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | | 11.5% | 9.4% | 14.3% | 19.0% | 24.0% |

At the level of epistemic possibility, FGs India, UK and Austria show a preference for “might“, while the other FGs prefer “would“.

Table 25: The level of epistemic possibility

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Might | Hedged performative | Impersonal | 29 | 5 | 16 | 25 | 0 |
| Would | Hedged performative | Impersonal | 3 | 9 | 4 | 4 | 5 |
| Number of participants | | | 32 | 16 | 20 | 29 | 5 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | 26.9% | 12.5% | 16.7% | 23.8% | 4.0% |

The FGs USA, Austria and Germany show the strongest preference towards the imperative with "please".

Table 26: The level of "imperative & please"

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Imperative | Mood derivable | Speaker-oriented | 46 | 60 | 54 | 35 | 59 |
| Number of participants | | | 46 | 60 | 54 | 35 | 59 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | 38.5% | 47.9% | 45.2% | 28.6% | 49.3% |

### 4.1.4 Situation 4: Speech act perception & request for action

#### 4.1.4.1 Modal meanings depending on focus groups

In this situation, the respondent was asked to imagine the following:

> "You are a customer. You are asked to pay a long overdue bill. How would you most likely prefer to be addressed?"

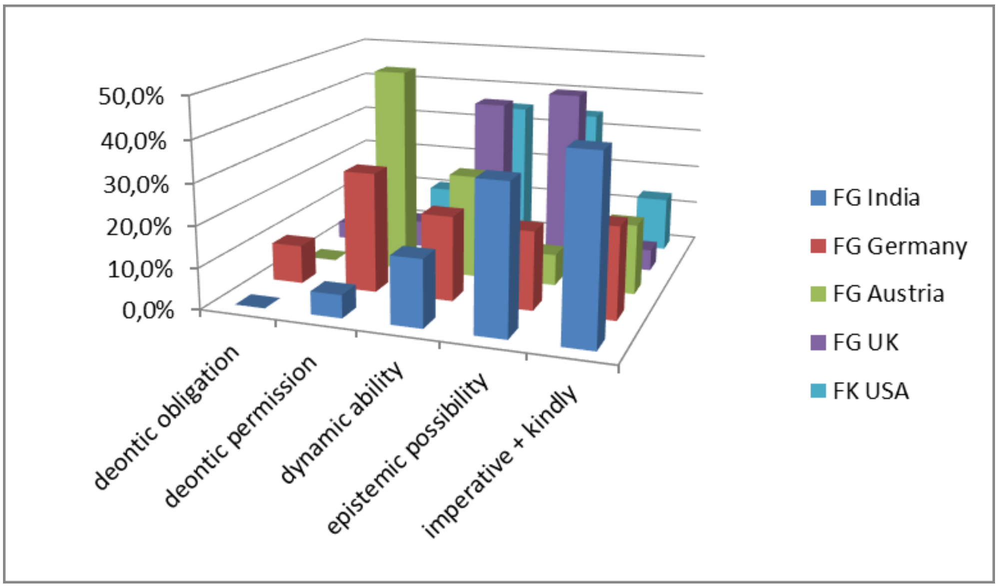


Figure 7: Relative frequencies of modality types in focus groups

Here, the FGs' preferences diverge strongly. While FG India shows higher preferences towards the imperative with kindly and epistemic possibility, FG Austria shows a strong tendency towards deontic permission. FG Germany shows almost equal frequencies for deontic permission, dynamic ability, epistemic possibility and imperative with "kindly". FGs UK and USA both show a preference for dynamic ability and epistemic possibility. The distributions and frequencies of the modal expressions for each level with at least 15 members in one FG are shown below.

#### 4.1.4.2 Modal expressions, request strategies and perspective based on modal meaning

FG Austria shows a high preference towards "may" to express deontic permission in speaker-oriented hedged performatives. FG Germany, on the other hand, prefers "can". FG UK shows a lower frequency of "can" at the level of deontic permission than at the level of dynamic ability.

Table 27: The level of deontic permission

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| May | Hedged performative | Speaker-oriented | 6 | 4 | 52 | 3 | 3 |
| Can | Hedged performative | Speaker-oriented | 1 | 33 | 7 | 5 | 10 |
| Number of participants | | | 7 | 37 | 59 | 8 | 13 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | 5.6% | 29.1% | 50.0% | 6.7% | 10.9% |

Table 28: The level of dynamic ability

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Can | Query preparatory | Hearer-oriented | 2 | 0 | 6 | 42 | 3 |
| Could | Query preparatory | Hearer-oriented | 17 | 26 | 24 | 7 | 39 |
| Number of participants | | | 19 | 26 | 30 | 49 | 42 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | 16.2% | 20.5% | 25.4% | 39.7% | 35.2% |

FGs Austria, Germany, India and USA show a strong preference towards "could" to express dynamic ability. Epistemic possibility is expressed by "might" more frequently by FGs India and UK, while "would" is preferred by the FGs Germany and USA.

Table 29: The level of epistemic possibility

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Might | Hedged performative | Impersonal | 38 | 0 | 0 | 49 | 6 |
| Would | Hedged performative | Impersonal | 4 | 24 | 9 | 4 | 35 |
| Number of participants | | | 42 | 24 | 9 | 53 | 41 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | 35.4% | 19.0% | 7.6% | 43.3% | 34.5% |

Table 30: The level of "imperative & kindly"

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Imperative | Mood derivable | Speaker-oriented | 52 | 28 | 20 | 6 | 16 |
| Number of participants | | | 52 | 28 | 20 | 6 | 16 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | 43.5% | 22.1% | 17.0% | 5.2% | 13.4% |

### 4.1.5 Situation 5: Speech act perception & request for information

#### 4.1.5.1 Modal meanings depending on focus groups

The respondent was asked to imagine the following situation:

> "You are a customer. You have had a problem with a software and have posted it to a company's support team. Now you are asked to send a screenshot. How would you most likely prefer to be addressed?"

In this situation, a very convergent behavior of the FGs can be observed. All FGs show a very strong preference for dynamic ability. The frequencies for the imperative with "please" are lowest in this situation compared to all other situations.

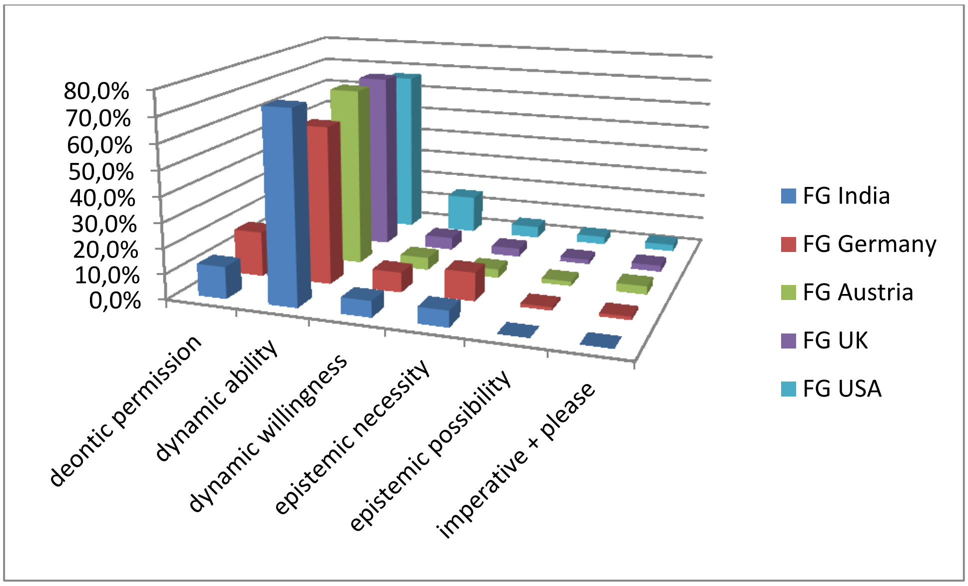


Figure 8: Relative frequencies of modality types in focus groups

#### 4.1.5.2 Modal expressions, request strategies and perspective based on modal meaning

If deontic permission is used, then only “may” is chosen as modal auxiliary. On the level of dynamic ability, all FGs prefer “could”, except for FG UK, which again strongly prefers “can”. Detailed information on the distribution and frequencies of modal expressions can be found below.

Table 31: The level of deontic permission

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| May | Hedged performative | Speaker-oriented | 15 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 13 |
| Number of participants | | | 15 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 13 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | 12.5% | 17.8% | 19.4% | 19.4% | 10.6% |

Table 32: The level of dynamic ability

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Can | Query preparatory | Hearer-oriented | 18 | 6 | 14 | 79 | 4 |
| Could | Query preparatory | Hearer-oriented | 72 | 72 | 70 | 8 | 75 |
| Number of participants | | | 90 | 78 | 84 | 87 | 79 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | 75.0% | 62.2% | 71.0% | 71.0% | 66.7% |

Dynamic willingness is preferably expressed by "would" in hearer-oriented query preparatories

Table 33: The level of dynamic willingness

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Would | Query preparatory | Hearer-oriented | 8 | 10 | 6 | 6 | 18 |
| Number of participants | | | 8 | 10 | 6 | 6 | 18 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | 6.3% | 7.8% | 4.8% | 4.8% | 15.2% |

### 4.1.6 Situation 6: Speech act perception & request for (alternative, repeated) action

#### 4.1.6.1 Modal meanings depending on focus groups

Here, the respondent was asked to imagine the following:

> "You are a customer and have ordered a product. But unfortunately, you have entered an incorrect credit card number during the payment process. Now you are being asked to repeat the order. How would you most likely prefer to be addressed?"

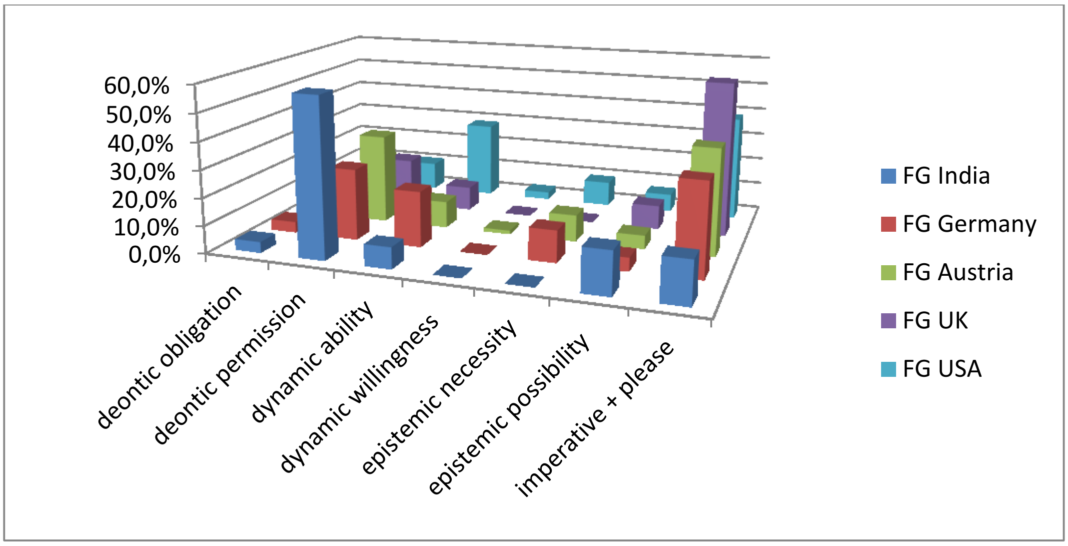


Figure 9: Relative frequencies of modality types in focus groups

In this situation, all FGs seem to prefer deontic permission or imperative with please. Dynamic ability is also chosen at a higher frequency by FGs USA and Germany. FG India shows the highest frequencies of deontic permission. Detailed information on the distribution and frequencies for each level can be found below.

#### 4.1.6.2 Modal expressions, request strategies and perspective based on modal meaning

FG India, UK and Austria show a preference towards "may"; FG Germany shows the reversed pattern and prefers "can".

Table 34: The level of deontic permission

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| May | Hedged performative | Speaker-oriented | 57 | 4 | 32 | 20 | 4 |
| Can | Hedged performative | Speaker-oriented | 12 | 29 | 7 | 1 | 8 |
| Number of participants | | | 69 | 33 | 39 | 21 | 12 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | 57.7% | 26.0% | 32.5% | 17.4% | 10.3% |

Also in this situation, the preference of FG UK for “can” to express dynamic ability can be observed, but contrary to other situations, the FG UK does not show the overall highest frequency of preferring dynamic ability in general. Here the frequencies of FGs Germany and USA are higher, though they prefer “could” to express this modal meaning.

Table 35: The level of dynamic ability

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Can | Query preparatory | Hearer-oriented | 4 | 5 | 1 | 11 | 5 |
| Could | Query preparatory | Hearer-oriented | 5 | 20 | 10 | 0 | 29 |
| Number of participants | | | 9 | 25 | 11 | 11 | 34 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | 7.7% | 20.2% | 9.6% | 8.7% | 28.2% |

All FGs prefer “need” to express epistemic necessity, but FG Germany embeds “need” more frequently in want statements, and FG Austria in explicit performatives. However, due to the low overall frequencies at this level, these tendencies are not highly reliable.

Table 36: The level of epistemic necessity

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Need | Want statement | Speaker-oriented | 0 | 12 | 5 | 0 | 4 |
| Need | Explicit performative | Speaker-oriented | 0 | 3 | 6 | 0 | 7 |
| Number of participants | | | 0 | 15 | 11 | 0 | 11 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | 0.0% | 11.5% | 9.6% | 0.0% | 9.0% |

Mostly preferred by FG India and FG UK, epistemic possibility is especially preferred in the form of “might” in hedged performatives.

Table 37: The level of epistemic possibility

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Might | Hedged performative | Impersonal | 17 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 4 |
| Would | Hedged performative | Impersonal | 1 | 6 | 6 | 1 | 4 |
| Number of participants | | | 18 | 6 | 6 | 11 | 8 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | 15.4% | 4.8% | 4.8% | 8.7% | 6.4% |

Table 38: The level of "imperative & please"

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Imperative | Mood derivable | Speaker-oriented | 18 | 42 | 46 | 70 | 46 |
| Number of participants | | | 18 | 42 | 46 | 70 | 46 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | 15.4% | 33.7% | 38.6% | 56.5% | 38.5% |

### 4.1.7 Observations within focus groups

Within the FGs, it is possible to detect some clusters based on different lingua-cultural parameters and to find certain tendencies towards politeness strategies and modality coding methods. The type of heterogeneity varies depending on the FG, and it is possible that a member can belong to multiple clusters within one FG. Therefore, a direct comparison between the clusters across FGs is avoided and in the following subsections, the most striking examples within each focus group shall be listed.

#### 4.1.7.1 Focus group: India (120 members)

Within the FG India, two larger clusters based on the following parameters could be detected according to the:

1. First language
2. Domains in which English is used

Of all members of the FG India, 86 members stated that Hindi was their first language (learned or acquired between 0 and 3 years). The other FG members' first languages were Tamil (20), Bengali (2), Punjabi (3) and Malayalam (9). While participants with Tamil, Bengali, Punjabi and Malayalam do not seem to show significant patterns of sharing same politeness strategies, the members with Hindi as a first language reveal a shared tendency towards the use of deontic permission. Each member with Hindi as a first language chose deontic permission in at least two situations.

Another observation that can be made is the domain of using English. Of all members of this FG, 52 stated that they use English to communicate with their family. Of these, 46 prefer the imperative in at least three situations.

#### 4.1.7.2 Focus group: Germany (126 members)

Within the FG Germany, two clusters could be detected:

1. Age of learning English
2. Country of secondary and higher education

Of all members, 109 stated that they learned English between the ages 10 to 13. Of these, 95 preferred dynamic ability in at least three situations.

Of all members, 24 stated that they had spent part of their education in an Inner Circle country. These members showed a preference for dynamic ability in at least four situations.

#### 4.1.7.3 Focus group: Austria (119 members)

In this FG, no significant clusters could be detected based on the lingua-cultural background of the members. But based on professional experience and the workplace, two clusters could be found:

1. Experience in customer support, marketing, sales or language services

2. Work at a specific company

Of 119 members, 85 stated that they have had experience in the fields of customer support, marketing, sales or language services. These participants opted in at least three situations for dynamic ability.

Within this cluster of 85 participants, 56 work for the company OMICRON electronics. They showed a preference towards the encoding of dynamic ability by the modal expression "could" in at least two situations.

#### 4.1.7.4 Focus group: United Kingdom (123 members)

This FG is the lingua-culturally most diverse with respect to the use of language within the domains of family and friends. Based on these domains two main clusters could be found:

1. Use of languages other than English within the domains of family and friends
2. Use of English within the domains of family and friends

Of 123 members, 52 use one of the following languages within the domains of family and friends: Urdu, Russian, Romanian, Hindi, Tamil, Chinese and Polish. They opted for the imperative in at least two situations.

Those members (61), who use English only within the domains of family and friends, opted for dynamic ability in at least three situations.

#### 4.1.7.5 Focus group: United States (119)

This focus group shows the least diversity as regards to lingua-cultural heterogeneity, so that on this level no significant clusters can be found. On the level of professional experience, however, two observations can be made:

1. Professional experience in sales
2. Professional experience in customer support

Of 119 members, 66 state that they have professional experience in the areas of sales or customer support. Those members who have professional experience in the area of sales (27) show a higher frequency of the use of dynamic ability (at least two situations), while professionals in the area of customer support (24) show a higher frequency of the use of the imperative (at least two situations). The remaining 15 members have professional experience in sales AND customer support. They do not show any particular regularity.

### 4.1.8 Summary and preliminary conclusions

The subhypotheses stated in subchapter 3.1 could only partially be corroborated. The following modality types were chosen by at least one FG in one situation with a higher frequency than 30% (see bold font type).

Table 39: Highest frequencies of modality types across all focus groups

| modality type | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA | Situation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| deontic permission | 11.5% | 26.8% | **34.5%** | 14.6% | 8.7% | 1 |
| dynamic ability | **30.8%** | **32.1%** | 25.3% | **46.3%** | **32.7%** | 1 |
| imperative + please | **38.5%** | 26.8% | 24.1% | 22.0% | **36.5%** | 1 |
| epistemic necessity | 8.0% | 25.7% | 16.3% | **30.8%** | **34.9%** | 2 |
| epistemic possibility | **32.0%** | 21.1% | 28.8% | 19.2% | 17.4% | 2 |
| imperative + please | **38.5%** | **47.9%** | **45.2%** | 28.6% | **49.3%** | 3 |
| deontic permission | 5.6% | 29.1% | **50.0%** | 6.7% | 10.9% | 4 |
| dynamic ability | 16.2% | 20.5% | 25.4% | **39.7%** | **35.2%** | 4 |
| epistemic possibility | **35.4%** | 19.0% | 7.6% | **43.3%** | **34.5%** | 4 |
| imperative + kindly | **43.5%** | 22.1% | 17.0% | 5.2% | 13.4% | 4 |
| dynamic ability | **75.0%** | **62.2%** | **71.0%** | **71.0%** | **66.7%** | 5 |
| deontic permission | **57.7%** | 26.0% | **32.5%** | 17.4% | 10.3% | 6 |
| imperative + please | 15.4% | **33.7%** | **38.6%** | **56.5%** | **38.5%** | 6 |

This overview reflects a tendency towards dynamic ability and imperative across all FGs. Furthermore, it reveals some preferences that are unique to certain FGs. FG Austria shows a higher preference of deontic permission than other FGs do in two situations (1 and 4). This is often combined with an interrogative and speaker-oriented perspective.

The hypothesis that Inner Circle FGs show a stronger preference of conventionally indirect strategies (which in most cases include dynamic ability combined with the interrogative) can be only partially confirmed. Only for two situations (1 and 4), this can be corroborated. What can be observed for three situations is, however, that if Inner Circle FGs use dynamic ability, the percentage of the FG UK is always higher than the percentage of the FG USA. This observation may underline Marquèz-Reiter's observation that native speakers of British English seem to prefer negative politeness strategies, which may be explained by the British having a low-context culture where detachment and non-imposition are valued and denoted by conventionally indirect strategies (Márquez-Reiter, 1997).

Table 40: Frequencies of dynamic ability across all focus groups and situations

| modality type | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA | Situation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| dynamic ability | 30.80% | 32.10% | 25.30% | **46.30%** | **32.70%** | 1 |
| dynamic ability | 24.00% | 13.80% | 26.30% | 15.40% | 16.30% | 2 |
| dynamic ability | 11.50% | 9.40% | 14.30% | 19.00% | 24.00% | 3 |
| dynamic ability | 16.20% | 20.50% | 25.40% | **39.70%** | **35.20%** | 4 |
| dynamic ability | **75.00%** | **62.20%** | **71.00%** | **71.00%** | **66.70%** | 5 |
| dynamic ability | 7.70% | 20.20% | 9.60% | 8.70% | 28.20% | 6 |

The FG UK also shows the highest frequencies for dynamic ability in comparison with the usage of other modality types, such as epistemic necessity, epistemic possibility and imperative with please. This observation may also corroborate the hypothesis that FGs show special modality preference tendencies.

Table 41: Most frequently used modality types in FG UK

| Modality type | FG UK | Situation |
|---|---|---|
| dynamic ability | 46.3% | 1 |
| epistemic necessity | 30.8% | 2 |
| dynamic ability | 39.7% | 4 |
| epistemic possibility | 43.3% | 4 |
| dynamic ability | 71.0% | 5 |
| imperative + please | 56.5% | 6 |

All FGs show some common tendencies in all situations. One tendency is the relatively low frequency (below 10%) of preferring deontic obligation and dynamic willingness. Only in Situation 5, the FG USA shows a higher frequency than 10%. The interpretation of low frequencies is problematic. On the one hand, the low frequencies are not statistically significant ($p > 0.5$). On the other hand, it is striking that some modality types are not chosen frequently by any FG. Therefore, these tendencies will be shown in spite of the high $p$ value:

Table 42: Least frequently preferred modality types across all FGs

| modality type | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA | Situation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| deontic obligation | 4.0% | 9.2% | 2.5% | 3.8% | 7.0% | 2 |
| deontic obligation | 3.9% | 3.9% | 3.6% | 8.7% | 5.1% | 6 |
| deontic obligation | 0.0% | 6.3% | 4.8% | 0.0% | 5.3% | 3 |
| deontic obligation | 0.0% | 9.4% | 0.0% | 4.3% | 6.5% | 4 |
| dynamic willingness | 0.0% | 0.9% | 1.1% | 2.4% | 1.9% | 1 |
| dynamic willingness | 0.0% | 6.4% | 6.3% | 0.0% | 3.5% | 2 |
| dynamic willingness | 3.8% | 0.0% | 2.4% | 4.8% | 0.0% | 3 |
| dynamic willingness | 6.3% | 7.8% | 4.8% | 4.8% | 15.2% | 5 |
| dynamic willingness | 0.0% | 0.0% | 1.2% | 0.0% | 2.6% | 6 |

By taking into consideration Brown and Levinson's concept of negative politeness, it is possible that notions of volition and obligation impose too much on the negative face of the communication partners, regardless of which FG a participant belongs to.

In Situation 5, where the respondent was asked to imagine he or she were a customer and asked to send a screenshot, the most commonalities between all FGs can be observed. They show low frequencies for the imperative with "please" and for epistemic possibility. On the other hand, all FGs show relatively high frequencies for dynamic ability (above 30%).

Table 43: Frequencies of modality types in Situation 5

| modality type | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA | Situation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| imperative + please | 0.0% | 1.1% | 3.1% | 2.3% | 2.6% | 5 |
| epistemic possibility | 0.0% | 1.1% | 1.6% | 1.6% | 3.0% | 5 |
| dynamic ability | 75.0% | 62.2% | 71.0% | 71.0% | 66.7% | 5 |

In the reversed situation (1), where the respondent is asked to imagine he or she were a customer-support staff member and needed to ask for information, the frequencies for dynamic ability were also high, but the frequencies for the imperative were much higher than in Situation 5.

Although in both situations a person asks another for further information, the respondents show a strong preference of being addressed by dynamic ability in combination with an interrogative. This observation confirms the hypothesis that patterns differ depending on the (fictitious) role of the respondent.

However, dynamic ability in Situation 5 was not codified equally by all participants. The FG UK strongly prefers "can", while all other FGs prefer "could". The preference of "can" by FG UK to express dynamic ability could be also observed in all other situations, so that the hypothesis that members of the same FG are more likely to share codification patterns of modality is again partially corroborated.

The FG India shows a strong preference towards deontic permission (Situation 6), dynamic ability (Situations 5 and 1), epistemic possibility (Situations 2 and 4), imperative with “kindly” and “please” (Situations 1, 3 and 4). The frequent preference of the imperative could be explained by Valentine’s observation:

> “In Indian languages […] it is acceptable to use imperatives and desideratives as requests […], especially if the forcé is toned down by deference markers, even English set expressions of please and thank you […]. In Indian languages, the imperative is considered a very polite form because the verb usually carries an honorific ending. […] When Indian English speakers make their requests, it is formed with hedges, polite language, emphasis on lexical items, and other politeness markers.” (Valentine, 1996, p. 295)

Table 44: Mostly preferred modality types in FG India

| modality type | FG India | Situation |
|---|---|---|
| deontic permission | 57.7% | 6 |
| dynamic ability | 75.0% | 5 |
| dynamic ability | 30.8% | 1 |
| epistemic possibility | 32.0% | 2 |
| epistemic possibility | 35.4% | 4 |
| imperative + kindly | 43.5% | 4 |
| imperative + please | 38.5% | 1 |
| imperative + please | 38.5% | 3 |

For the following modality types and situations the FG India shows higher frequencies than the other FGs. In the cases of epistemic possibilities, this modality is used in combination with hedged performatives, which underlines Valentine’s statement.

Table 45: Modality types preferred by FG India

| modality type | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA | Situation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| epistemic possibility | 15.4% | 7.1% | 10.3% | 7.3% | 8.7% | 1 |
| deontic permission | 16.0% | 9.2% | 10.0% | 7.7% | 3.5% | 2 |
| epistemic possibility | 15.4% | 4.8% | 4.8% | 8.7% | 6.4% | 6 |

The FGs Austria and Germany show a preference for epistemic necessity in three situations, which partially corroborates the hypothesis of common patterns in the same FG. They show a frequency higher than 10% and higher than the frequency of the other FGs:

Table 46: Modality types preferred by FG Austria and FG Germany

| modality type | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA | Situation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| epistemic necessity | 6.3% | 11.1% | 3.2% | 3.2% | 4.5% | 5 |
| epistemic necessity | 0.0% | 11.5% | 9.6% | 0.0% | 9.0% | 6 |
| epistemic necessity | 0.0% | 8.3% | 11.9% | 4.8% | 9.3% | 3 |

In the following situations, two FGs show similar frequencies (difference tolerance max. 0.3 %). The highest commonalities can be found between the FGs Austria and UK and India and UK:

Table 47: Common preferences in FG Austria and FG UK

| modality type | FG Austria | FG UK | Situation |
|---|---|---|---|
| epistemic possibility | 1.6% | 1.6% | 5 |
| epistemic necessity | 3.2% | 3.2% | 5 |
| deontic permission | 19.4% | 19.4% | 5 |
| dynamic willingness | 4.8% | 4.8% | 5 |
| dynamic ability | **71.0%** | **71.0%** | 5 |

Table 48: Common preferences in FG India and FG UK

| modality type | FG India | FG UK | Situation |
|---|---|---|---|
| dynamic willingness | 0.0% | 0.0% | 2 |
| dynamic willingness | 0.0% | 0.0% | 6 |
| deontic obligation | 0.0% | 0.0% | 3 |
| deontic permission | 19.2% | 19.0% | 3 |
| epistemic necessity | 0.0% | 0.0% | 6 |

This observation might serve as a hint showing similar tendencies between FG India and UK in Situation 3. However, due to the small dataset and the lack of statistical significance, this finding cannot be considered an actual confirmation of the hypothesis that Outer Circle FGs share patterns with UK-based FGs due to former colonial influence. Interestingly, also FG Austria and UK partially share common patterns, all in Situation 5. For two modality types, i.e. deontic permission and dynamic ability, higher statistical significance can be observed. It is possible that this reveals a similar degree of negative face wants in both focus groups.

These FGs all show the same modality type preference in one to three situations. The comparison of these tables shows that the hypothesis that Expanding Circle FGs share patterns with FG USA cannot be confirmed, since a similarity is only shown in one instance (situation 6); in all other instances the statistical significance is not given ($p > 0.5$).

Table 49: Common preferences in FG Germany and FG Austria

| modality type | FG Germany | FG Austria | Situation |
|---|---|---|---|
| dynamic willingness | 6.4% | 6.3% | 2 |
| epistemic possibility | 4.8% | 4.8% | 6 |
| deontic obligation | 3.9% | 3.6% | 6 |

Table 50: Common preferences in FG Germany and FG UK

| modality type | FG Germany | FG UK | Situation |
|---|---|---|---|
| epistemic possibility | 7.1% | 7.3% | 1 |
| dynamic willingness | 0.0% | 0.0% | 6 |

Table 51: Common preferences in FG Germany and FG India

| modality type | FG India | FG Germany | Situation |
|---|---|---|---|
| deontic obligation | 3.9% | 3.9% | 6 |
| dynamic willingness | 0.0% | 0.0% | 6 |

Table 52: Common preference in FG India and FG Austria

| modality type | FG India | FG Austria | Situation |
|---|---|---|---|
| deontic obligation | 3.9% | 3.6% | 6 |

1

Table 53: Common preference in FG Austria and FG USA

| modality type | FG Austria | FG USA | situation |
|---|---|---|---|
| imperative + please | **38.6%** | **38.5%** | 6 |

Table 54: Common preference in FG Germany and FG USA

| modality type | FG Germany | FG USA | situation |
|---|---|---|---|
| dynamic willingness | **0.0%** | **0.0%** | 3 |

## 4.2 Twitter Accounts

### 4.2.1 Tweets sent *from* customer support accounts

Although the results of the multiple choice questionnaire with incorporated DCT that simulate e-mail communication cannot directly be compared to the result of the tweet analyses, it is striking, nevertheless, that the social networking platform Twitter reveals a much lower diversity of statistically significant frequencies of modality types and request realization strategies, but a higher variability of internal modifiers. Figure 10 shows the types of modality that could be detected in tweets sent *from* the customer support accounts. The indicated percentages refer to the relative frequencies of the modality types in all requests posed by the customer support representatives of a country:

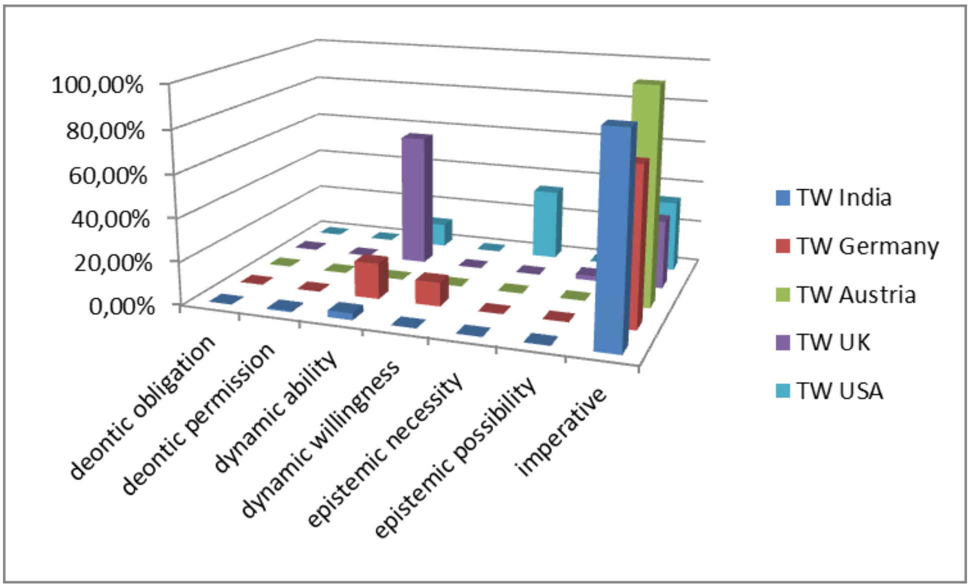


Figure 10: Tweets sent *from* Twitter customer support accounts

A special usage observed only in tweets *from* Indian customer support accounts is the use of the auxiliary “do” in combination with the imperative and “please” as well as the frequent use of “kindly” instead of “please”. This usage could not be detected in the survey; however, many of the tweets sent from, for instance, Vodafone India and Nokia India are addressed to customers in India, while in the questionnaire emphasis, was put onto international addressees.

Table 55 shows the correlations of modal expressions, request strategies and request perspectives for those modality types featuring statistical significance (i.e. $p < 0.5$). The second row of the table, for instance, reads as follows: Of all

TW India members who chose the modal meaning "dynamic ability + can", 99.2 % combined it with the request strategy "query preparatory", the request perspective "hearer-oriented", and with the internal modifier "please".

Table 55: Modal expressions, request strategies and perspective, based on modality type

| Modality and modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | Internal modifier | TW India | TW Germany | TW Austria | TW UK | TW USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Dynamic ability + can | Query preparatory | Hearer-oriented | Please | 99.2% | 97.6% | 96.4% | 92.7% | 96.8% |
| Dynamic ability + could | Query preparatory | Hearer-oriented | Please | 0.3% | 1.7% | 1.7% | 2.5% | 1.6% |
| Dynamic ability + could | Query preparatory | Hearer-oriented | Downtoner: Perhaps | 0.5% | 0.7% | 1.9% | 4.8% | 1.6% |
| Dynamic willingness + would | Query preparatory | Hearer-oriented | Downtoner: Perhaps/ maybe | 0% | 0% | 0% | 35.2% | 0% |
| Dynamic willingness + would | Query preparatory | Hearer-oriented | Please | 100% | 100% | 100% | 64.8% | 100% |
| Epistemic necessity + need | Want statement | Speaker-oriented | - | 94.3% | 90.2% | 16.7% | 23.4% | 26.7% |
| Epistemic necessity + need | Want statement | Speaker-oriented | Subjectivizer: I'm afraid/ I think | 5.7% | 9.8% | 83.3% | 76.6% | 73.3% |
| Imperative | Mood derivable | Hearer-oriented | Please[79] | 33.5% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Imperative | Mood derivable | Hearer-oriented | Do-emphasis | 21.2% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Imperative | Mood derivable | Hearer-oriented | kindly | 45.3% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |

[79] It is very common in tweets to abbreviate "please" by "pls" or "plz". These abbreviations are also included in the frequencies.

### 4.2.2 Tweets sent *to* customer support accounts

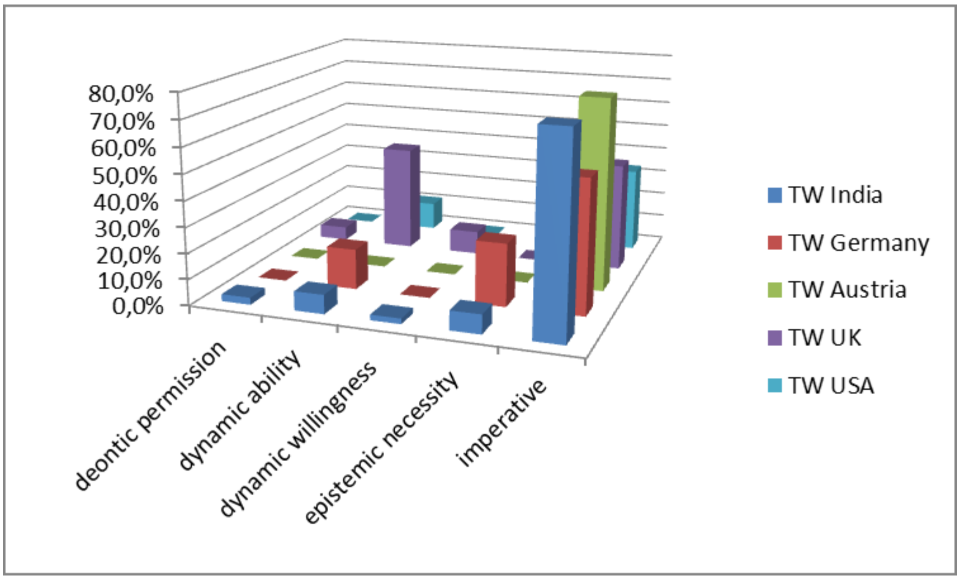


Figure 11: Tweets sent *to* Twitter customer support accounts

Tweets sent to customer support accounts even show lower variability, especially with regard to the internal modifier. The tendencies of modality type preference are very similar to the ones in tweets sent from customer support accounts. Again, the most preferred types are the imperative and dynamic ability.

Table 56: Modal expressions, request strategies and perspective, based on modality type

| Modality and modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | Internal modifier | TW India | TW Germany | TW Austria | TW UK | TW USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Dynamic ability + can | Query preparatory | Hearer-oriented | Please | 36.8% | 4.8% | 8.8% | 90.7% | 94.8% |
| Dynamic ability + could | Query preparatory | Hearer-oriented | Please | 63.2% | 95.2% | 91.2% | 9.3% | 5.2% |
| Dynamic willingness + would | Query preparatory | Hearer-oriented | Please | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |

| Modality and modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | Internal modifier | TW India | TW Germany | TW Austria | TW UK | TW USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Epistemic necessity + need | Want statement | Speaker-oriented | - | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Imperative | Mood derivable | Hearer-oriented | Please[80] | 49.8% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Imperative | Mood derivable | Hearer-oriented | Do-emphasis | 9.5% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Imperative | Mood derivable | Hearer-oriented | kindly | 40.7% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |

### 4.2.3 Summary and preliminary conclusions

The data taken from Twitter only partially corroborates the hypothesis that members of the same FG share modality and request realization patterns. This data set – similarly to the data retrieved by the surveys – shows especially the preference of dynamic ability by FG UK. Furthermore, the data reveals the special use of the DO auxiliary in the FG India.

It is possible that, in the case of being restricted to only 140 characters, the imperative with "please" seems to be the most efficient option to utter a request.

[80] It is very common in tweets to abbreviate "please" by "pls" or "plz". These abbreviations are also included in the frequencies.

# 5 Prospective for Further Research on Politeness Strategy Patterns

## 5.1 Objectives and Scope

As the empirical study could only represent a “snapshot”, did not exclusively reflect real-case scenarios and was based on a relatively small dataset, in this subchapter a methodology for long-term research shall be proposed. Parts of this methodology are performed manually; parts are based on computational approaches. Thus far, few computational approaches to politeness research have been contributed. For example, in the field of language and cultural training, scholars have proposed systems based on Brown and Levinson’s politeness theory:

One attempt to use a computational tool to teach polite forms is the project POLLy (Politeness for Language Learning) based on Brown and Levinson’s view of face-saving in politeness. The tool generates spoken language, using a planner based on artificial intelligence. This planner models Brown and Levinson’s politeness theory and aims at offering a convenient learning atmosphere. (Gupta, et al., 2007, p. 203).

Miller et al. propose computational models that attempt at capturing politeness and etiquette in social interactions for enabling improved simulations and games for language and cultural training. Their model is based on Brown and Levinson’s politeness theory and “links observable and inferred aspects of social context (power and familiarity relationships, imposition, knowledge about character), which have culture-specific values, to produce expectations about politeness behaviors (also culturally defined) (Miller, et al., 2007, p. 1).

From the perspective of natural language processing, Kumar proposes the politeness recognition tool (PoRT) for Hindi, focusing on online texts and based on a hybrid approach, combining semi-supervised machine learning and complementing rules for learning (Kumar, 2011, p. 367).

An approach that focuses on politeness in requests is the framework proposed by Danescu-Niculescu-Mizil et al. (2013). It aims at identifying linguistic aspects of politeness and their relationship to social factors. For this, they annotate a corpus of requests for politeness. Based on this annotation, they evaluate different aspects of politeness theory to find interdependencies between politeness markers and contexts. Based on these findings they build a classifier, using domain-independent lexicosyntactic features, which operationalize key components of politeness theory (including modality).

While the approaches listed above attempt to model politeness based on politeness theory, this thesis aims at introducing a proposal for a methodology, including a computational tool that enables researchers to create their own application-specific theory based on long-term observation.

Based on Terkourafi's frame-based approach, this methodology assumes that the more frequently a certain communicative behavior is observed in a given communicative contexts with certain fixed parameters, the more one can assume that this communicative behavior is considered "normal" by a certain group of people. If this behavior additionally promotes the relationship between the communication partners, it can be considered "polite".

The methodology and the conceptual design for the tool, which will be henceforth referred to as PoliTran, focus on aspects of politeness in the realization and perception of requests in English and the codification of modality in request head acts in e-mail communication between customer service representatives and customers.

The presented framework integrates features of translation and business intelligence applications, and takes into consideration aspects of fuzzy logic as part of biocybernetics.

The thesis suggests designing PoliTran in a modular, object-oriented way, so new functions can be easily added at later stages. An object-oriented approach is also proposed in order to enable other researchers to understand the program more easily and to make the interface to other software modules, such as the e-mail editing system, transparent.

## 5.2 Overview

### 5.2.1 Groups of people working with PoliTran

PoliTran shall represent a link between members of a university or research institution, a business organization, and its customers. While the members of the university or research staff administer and maintain PoliTran, the business-organization staff members interactively work with PoliTran, while communicating via e-mail with their customers. Customers indirectly influence PoliTran with their input.

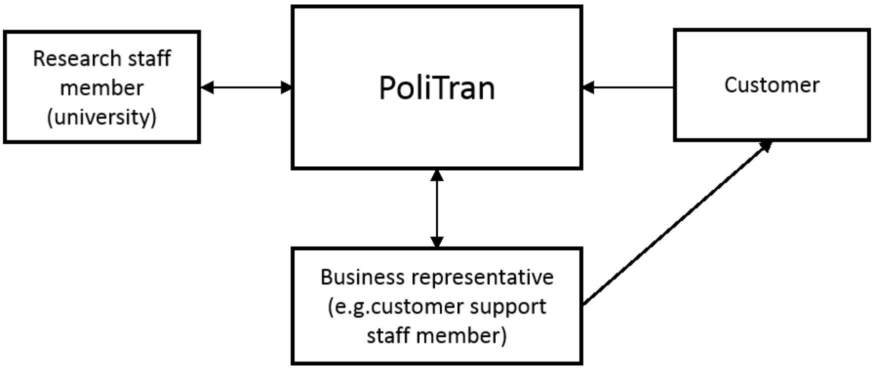


Figure 12: Participants having access to PoliTran

Thus, PoliTran is accessible to multiple users - in the ideal case, it promotes the collaboration of universities or other academic institutions that are interested in politeness research and organizations or businesses that frequently perform international customer support in English to provide first-hand information that can be valuable in maintaining and improving customer relationships.

### 5.2.2 Workflow summary

PoliTran observes, tracks, and memorizes the request realization patterns of customer-support staff members and the reaction of the customers towards these patterns. If a specific request realization pattern is frequently preferred by a specific customer focus group, this pattern is recommended to the customer-support staff member when he or she composes a new request to the same customer focus groups. Customer focus groups are determined with the help of online surveys as have been used for the study presented in this thesis.

### 5.2.3 Practical limitations of this methodology

It might be possible that only few companies would employ this methodology in a real setting in day-to-day operations, due to issues of confidentiality. In order to commit to such a project, a company or business organization would need to be interested in the results of the research as well.

Furthermore, the preparatory work for the methodology and the manual administration needed might have to be performed by more than one research institute due to the amount of time and capacity such work would require. A solution for this problem could perhaps be a collaboration of different university institutes.

## 5.3 Framework and Design

### 5.3.1 Integrating aspects of CAT tools and Translation Memory

In today's translation practice, "Computer Aided Translation" (CAT) tools are often used to assist human translators. There are already varieties of CAT tools available, such as, for instance, tools to capture data, analyze corpora, manage terminology, localize webpages and translation memories (Bowker, 2002, p. 7). Contrary to automatic machine translation, CAT tools allow the translator to take over the control of the translation process. Due to globalization and technology, the need for fast translations, especially technical and scientific translations as well as localizations, is increasing, so the CAT tools are expected to increase the translators' work efficiency and quality. One widely used CAT tool is translation memory. Assuming that certain expressions are re-used frequently, translation memories incorporate a database where translations are stored. Translations are split into segments. When a new translation is produced, the translation memory automatically retrieves a potentially matching segment from the database and offers it to the translator. The matching can be exact, full or fuzzy. The translator can re-use it, but does not have to. The database of a translation memory stores translation units, which consist of text segment pairs of the source and target text. Segmentation of text is an integral part of translation memories. The segmentation can take place on a lexical level or on a syntactic level. Depending on the needs of the user, translation memories also allow customized segmentation in interactive mode. Another important part of translation memory is the process of alignment, which is responsible for building translation units. Algorithms used for alignment are often based on "anchor points", and the user can verify the alignment in interactive mode to stock the memory. Translation memories are often based on a client-server architecture, which allows many translators to work at one project in spite of being located at different places (O'Hagan, 2009, pp. 48-51).

Based on the principle of Translation Memory systems, PoliTran shall store and retrieve segments used in requests, categorize the request realization with regard to the modality used in the head act and with regard to source and target user profiles based on relational databases, perform text analysis by using segmentation and pattern matching, shall be customizable and able to adapt or learn by manual inputs in the interactive mode.

### 5.3.2 Integrating aspects of business intelligence systems and biocybernetics

#### 5.3.2.1 Data mining

For business intelligence purposes, different approaches and applications have been proposed based on data mining. The goal of business intelligence is to

> "provide decision-makers with the tactical and strategic information they need for understanding, managing, and coordinating the operations and processes in organizations." (Tseng & Chou, 2006)

"Data mining" designates the process of knowledge extraction from large sets of data usually structured in relational databases, transactional databases or data warehouses (Han & Kamber, 2011, p. 5).

PoliTran shall be based on the principles of a data mining system:[81] Data mining helps discover regular patterns, which are the basis of the frame-based approach to politeness. It includes data preprocessing (i.e. cleaning, integration, selection and transformation). It is necessary that the process of actual pattern extraction can be linked with the users and the knowledge base, so "interesting patterns are presented to the user and may be stored as new knowledge in the knowledge base" (Han & Kamber, 2011, p. 7).

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[81] Although methods of document warehousing and text mining would represent a possibility to automatically monitor e-mails and retrieve patterns occurring in these e-mails (Tseng & Chou, 2006), in this thesis a fully automated approach is not chosen due to two reasons:

a) Confidentiality issues: it would be difficult to justify that external research staff members have access to the full texts of in-house company e-mails.

b) Most of the automatic document-warehousing systems are based on keyword frequencies and in many cases text mining tools are programmed to remove stop words. As the identification of requests and modality patterns requires careful consideration, PoliTran is designed to be a tool that interacts with the customer-support staff members and requires manual administration by the research staff members.

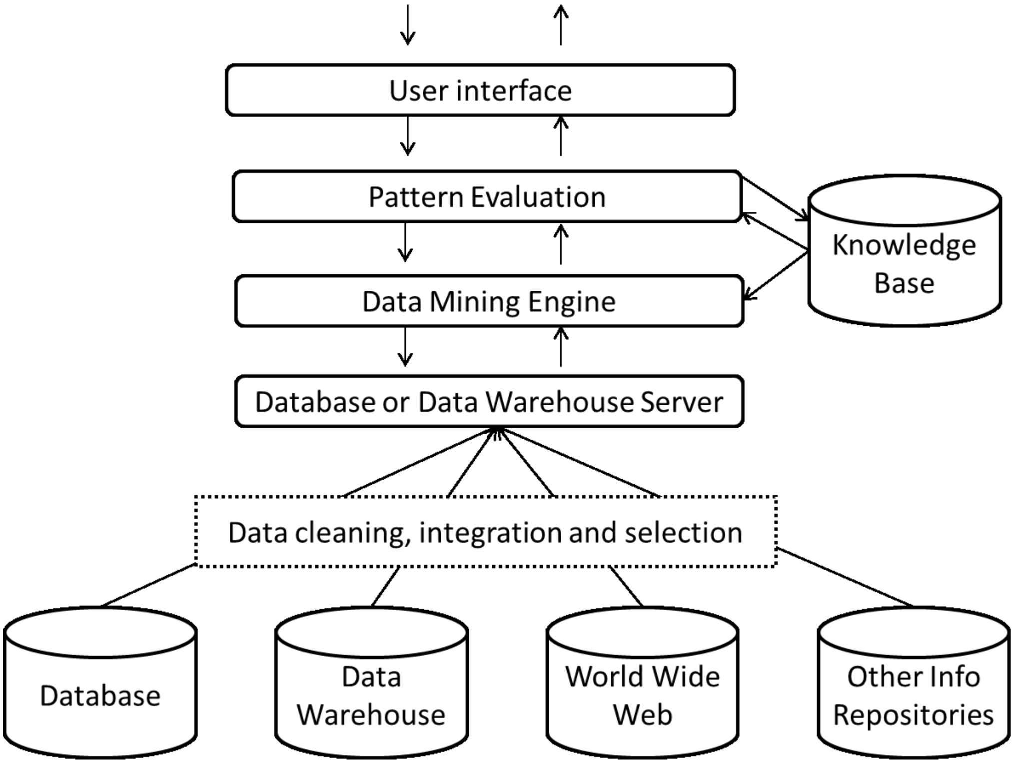



Figure 13: Architecture of a typical data mining system (Han & Kamber, 2011, p. 8)

Typical data mining systems rely on one or a group of databases. Depending on the request of the user, the database or data warehouse server retrieves relevant data from the database set. The knowledge base guides the "search or evaluate[s] the interestingness of resulting patterns" (Han & Kamber, 2011, p. 8). The data mining engine includes modules to extract patterns based on different methods, including "characterization, association and correlation analysis, classification, prediction, cluster analysis, outlier analysis, and evolution analysis" (Han & Kamber, 2011, p. 8). The pattern evaluation module determines the "interestingness" of patterns based on defined thresholds. The user interface enables users to interact with the data mining system (Han & Kamber, 2011, pp. 8-9). In many data mining systems, relational databases are used, which are a set of tables whose columns represent attributes and whose rows represent tupels which "represents an object identified by a unique *key* [emphasis in original] and described by a set of attribute values." Users can access relational data by "**database queries** [emphasis in original] written in a relational query language, such as SQL, or with the assistance of graphical user interfaces." (Han & Kamber, 2011, p. 10)

#### 5.3.2.2 Data-warehouse server

Because PoliTran shall be part of further research, it is important that the databases it draws from be separated from operational databases. Therefore, a data-warehouse solution is proposed for PoliTran, since its maintenance can take place indepently from the databases of an organization used for daily business operations (Han & Kamber, 2011, p. 106).

Data warehouses are often based on a three-tier architecture. The bottom tier consists of a data warehouse server, frequently constituted by a relational datebase system. Before data is fed into the bottom tier from operational databases or other sources, it is extracted, cleaned and transformed by back-end tools and utilities. The middle tier consists of an OLAP server implemented using either an extended relational database management system (henceforth: DBMS) that reflects multidimensional data operations to standard relational operations or using special servers for the direct implementation of multidimensional data and operations. The top tier represents the front end of the system, i.e., the interface between the system and the user, containing analysis tools, datamining tools, and query or reporting tools. (Han & Kamber, 2011, pp. 131-132).

Figure 15: Data warehouse structure, adapted from (Han & Kamber, p.131)

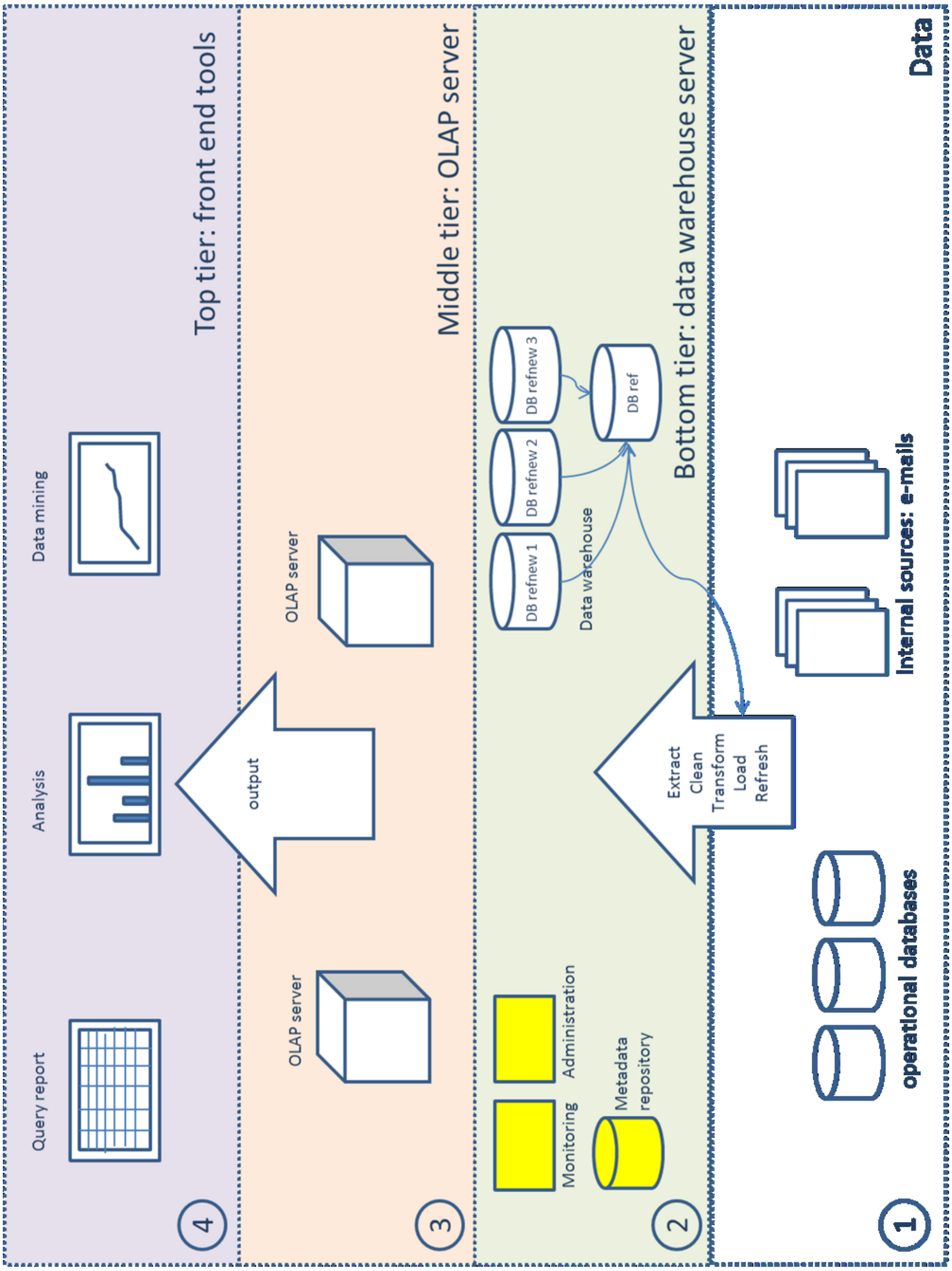



Figure 14: Data warehouse structure, adapted from (Han & Kamber, p.131)

5.3.2.2.1 Processes on level 1(Data Tier)

5.3.2.2.1.1 Creating a reference database

The main challenges of using data warehousing and OLAP for analysis, interpretation and decision making are the pre-processing of data, i.e. data cleaning, transformation and integration, exploratory data analysis and solutions to help the user, if he or she cannot predict beforehand which information should be mined (Sreenivasarao & Pallamreddy, 2011, p. 162). To tackle this task, a university/research staff member creates a reference database (henceforth: DB ref). This database consists of an annotated monolingual lexicon with imperatives, modal auxiliaries, quasimodal auxiliaries, and modal adverbs, the frame for a relational database to track modality indicating devices on the lexical and syntactical level, and possible topics that a request could focus upon (henceforth referred to as "semantic focus"). A message can contain 10 semantic foci at maximum. The semantic foci need to be determined beforehand, depending on the main topics that frequently occur in e-mail communication performed by the business organization, e.g. payments, refunds, technical issues, etc. To prepare a useful initial dataset for DB ref., it might be helpful to use automatic content analysis tools (e.g. the text mining tool in R or wordscore in STATA).

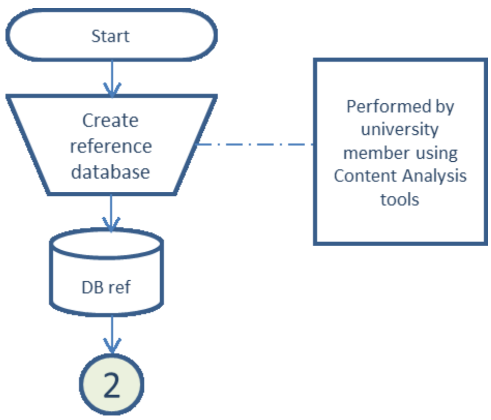



Figure 16: Process of creating a lexicon

#### 5.3.2.2.1.2 Request core processing module

Furthermore, inputs by the business representatives and the customer are processed in an interactive mode. The processing results are compared to DB ref and adjustments are performed. PoliTran is connected to the e-mail editing system the business representative uses. In the e-mail editing system, the business representative can indirectly influence and draw from the relational database with which PoliTran has been initially fed. For this, an interactive mode is available. When the business representative has finished writing an e-mail with a request to a customer, he or she can ask the system to segment the message into sentences. A pseudocode for this function could look as follows:

**Assumptions:**

- A database is in this case a XML file
- [] refers to an array and [] [] to 2D array
- [:] refers to ALL entries in this column or row

```
Segmentation(String emailText)
{
String [] splitEmailText =  emailText.split at every “.“,“!”, “?”, “:”
printScreen splitEmailText ;
printScreen  “Select core of interest, at most 3 ? ”;
Integer coreOfInterestIndex [] = input(Integer [] userinput); \\ user types one to three different numbers indicating which sentence he or she selects
String [] coreOfInterest=splitEmailText[coreOfInterestIndex []]; \\ the index numbers are used to select the required sentences
}
```

After segmentation, the system asks the business representative to click on the segment with the core of the request. Taking into consideration that the core – which will be treated as the “Head Act” of the speech act – can be surrounded by supportive moves, it is possible to click on multiple segments, three at maximum.

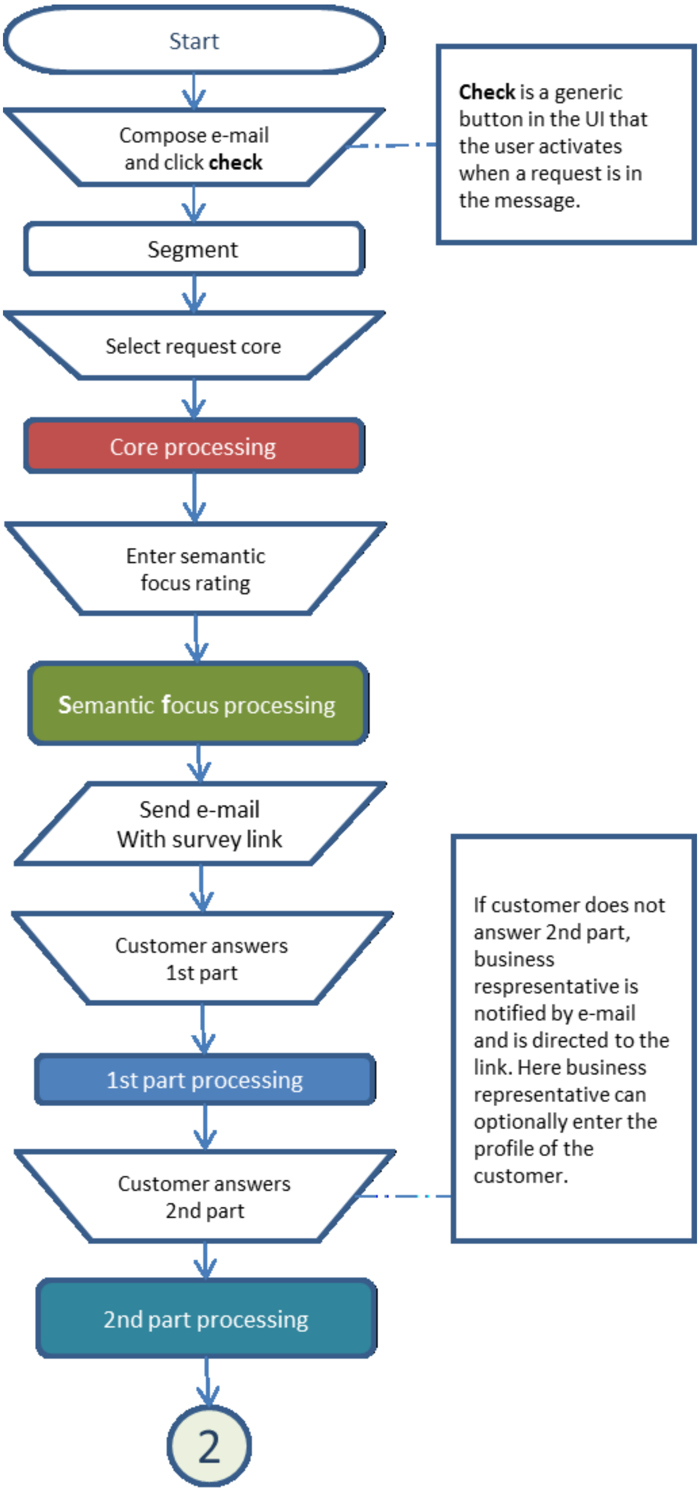



Figure 17: Process overview below the bottom tier

In the “core processing” module, automatic string matching is used to check if a string used by a business representative can be found in DB ref. If not, the entire segment selected by the business representative is saved in a new database, called DB F1. If a string can be recognized, this segment is saved in another database called DB 1. PoliTran needs to be able to detect strings in texts, as do spell checkers, for instance, in text editors or word processors or virus checkers. Spell checkers identify words and alert the user if they detect a "misspelled" string. Often they also propose alternative spellings. Spell checking can, for instance, be based on the comparison of the strings in the text with strings in the system and user lexicon (McConnell, 2008, pp. 211-212). There are different approaches towards and implementations of spell checkers. Depending on the structural complexity of user requirements, some rely on finite automata, two-level morphology or approximate string matching based on, for instance, Levenshtein distance, Hamming distance or n-grams (Fliedner, 2010, pp. 556-557). As PoliTran is supposed to detect specific pre-defined strings, it is possible to use regular expressions to describe the strings and to perform backtracking for matching (Klint, 1985, p. 17).

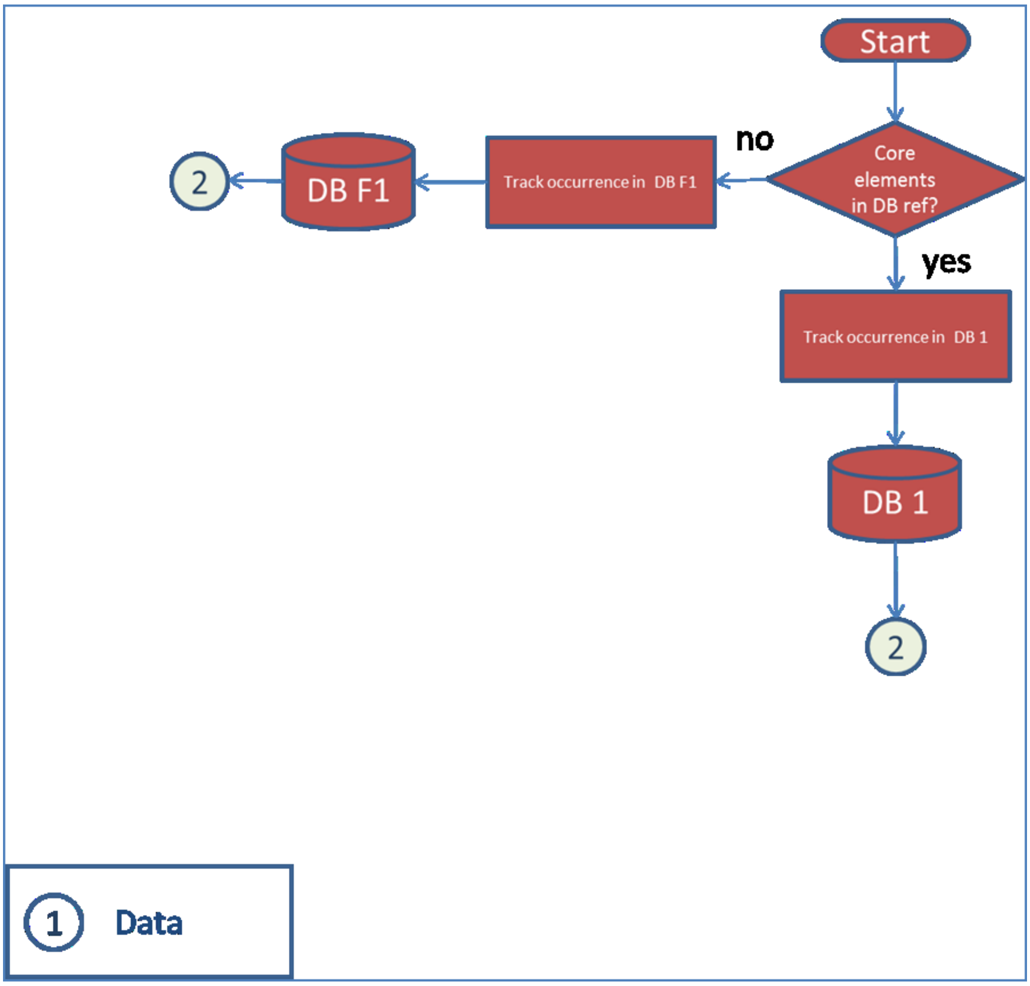



Figure 18: Request core processing module

The corresponding pseudocode for this module could look as follows:

**Assumptions:**

- A database is in this case a XML file
- [] refers to an array and [] [] to 2D array
- [:] refers to ALL entries in this column or row

Coreprocessing (String [] coreOfInterest)
{
Define String [] [] *temporaryDB1*;
Define String [] [] *temporaryDBF1*;
Integer *numberOfStrings*=length(coreOfInterest); \\ Important for nested loop
Load DBref.xml and save in 2D String d*Bref* [] [] ;
Integer [] *dimension*=Size.d*Bref*; \\ second entry of array gives the length of the list
**Repeat** n = 1 to *numberOfStrings* \\ for each core of request

```
 String [] splitString =  coreOfInterest[n] at every " "; \\ split one core of request into separate words
 Integer numberOfWords=length(splitString); \\ Important for loop
   Repeat n = 1 to dimension [2]  \\ Go through whole list of DBref
     Repeat x = 1 to numberOfWords \\ Go through all words of each core of request
       IF (splitString[x]== dBref [n] [1]) && (splitString[x+1]== dBref [n] [2]) \\ Boolean to ensure order of words
       THEN temporaryDB1    [n] [1]  = splitString [x ]
            temporaryDB1    [n] [2]  = splitString [x+1 ]
       ELSE   temporaryDBF1  [n] [1] = splitString[x]
             temporaryDBF1 [n] [2] = splitString[x+1]
       ENDIF
    END
  END
END
save temporaryDB1 [] [] in .xml file;
save temporaryDBF1 [] [] in. xml file;
}
```

### 5.3.2.2.1.3 Semantic focus processing

After selecting the core of the request, the business representative chooses the semantic foci (10 at maximum) that were defined initially by the university staff member in a dialogue box, and is asked to rank them according to priority. If the business representative does not find his or her semantic focus in the optional choices, he or she can enter a new semantic focus.

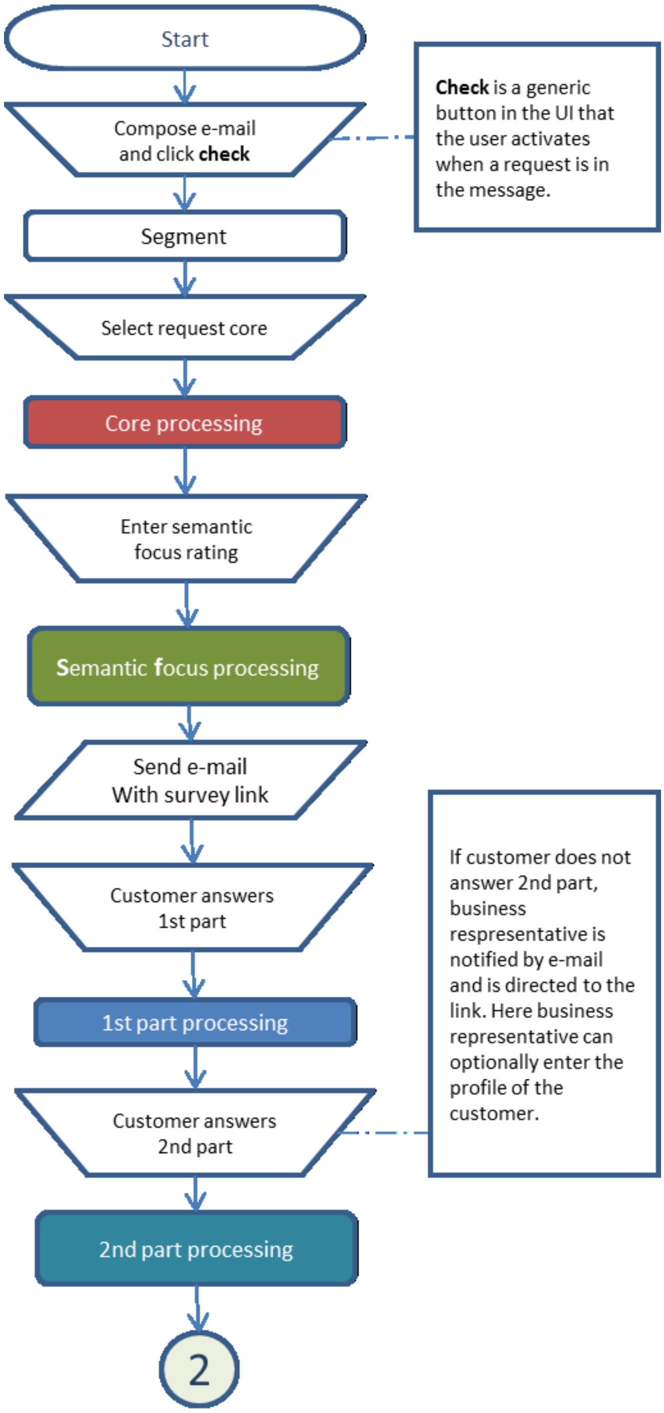



Figure 19: Process overview below the bottom tier

In the “Semantic Focus processing” module, it is checked if the business representative has entered a new semantic focus or a new semantic focus priority. If this is the case, this entry is saved in a new database called DB F2.

If no new entry has been made, the recognized entry is saved in a database called DB 2.

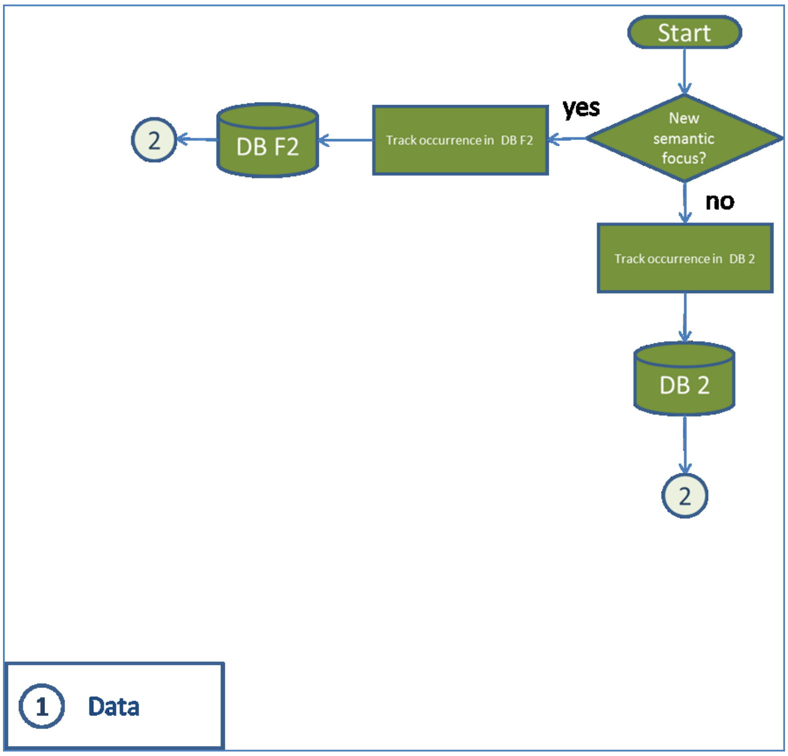



Figure 20: Semantic focus processing module

The corresponding source code could look as follows:

**Assumptions:**

- A database is in this case a XML file
- [] refers to an array and [] [] to 2D array
- [:] refers to ALL entries in this column or row

SemanticFocus
{
Define String [] [] *temporaryDB2*;
Define String [] [] *temporaryDBF2*;
Define Boolean *input;*
Define Integer *number;*
Load DBref.xml and save in 2D String d*Bref* [] [] ;
printScreen d*Bref [:] [3], [:] [4], [:] [5]* *\\ User will see all semantic focus entries with corresponding row/col index*
printScreen "How many semantic foci do you want to select ? (MAX. 10)"
Wait for user to enter *number*
**Repeat** x = 1 to *number* \\ Ask user *number* times to enter semantic foci
printScreen "Is semantic focus x in this list? "

```
 Wait for user input on Dialogbox Yes/No
   IF (input==Yes)
   THEN semanticFocusIndex=userinput(Integer [] [] s ) \\ user types the coordinates row/col corresponding to
the semantic focus
         temporaryDB2 [] = dBref [s[1]] [s[2]]
   ENDIF

   IF (input=No)
   THEN temporaryDBF2 [] = userinput(String S)
   ENDIF
END
save temporaryDB2 [] in .xml file
save temporaryDB22 [] in .xml file
}
```

#### 5.3.2.2.1.4 Survey result processing

Now the business representative can send his or her e-mail to the customer with an attached survey that can be accessed through a link. This survey consists of two parts. In the first part, the customer is asked to rate on a scale from “+3” (very polite) to “-3” (very impolite) how polite he or she perceived the message of the business representative to be. If the customer performs the rating, he or she is informed about the current research project and is asked, if he or she can participate in the second part of the survey. To increase the probability of the customer participating, this second part could be linked with a lottery participation. In this second part of the survey, the customer is asked questions with regard to his or her lingua-cultural background. If the customer participates in the second part of the survey, the business representative receives a notification mail about this. If the customer does not participate in the second part, but does participate in the first part, the business representative is notified about this as well. In this notification e-mail, a link takes the business representative to an area where he or she can enter information that he or she may know about the lingua-cultural biography of the customer.

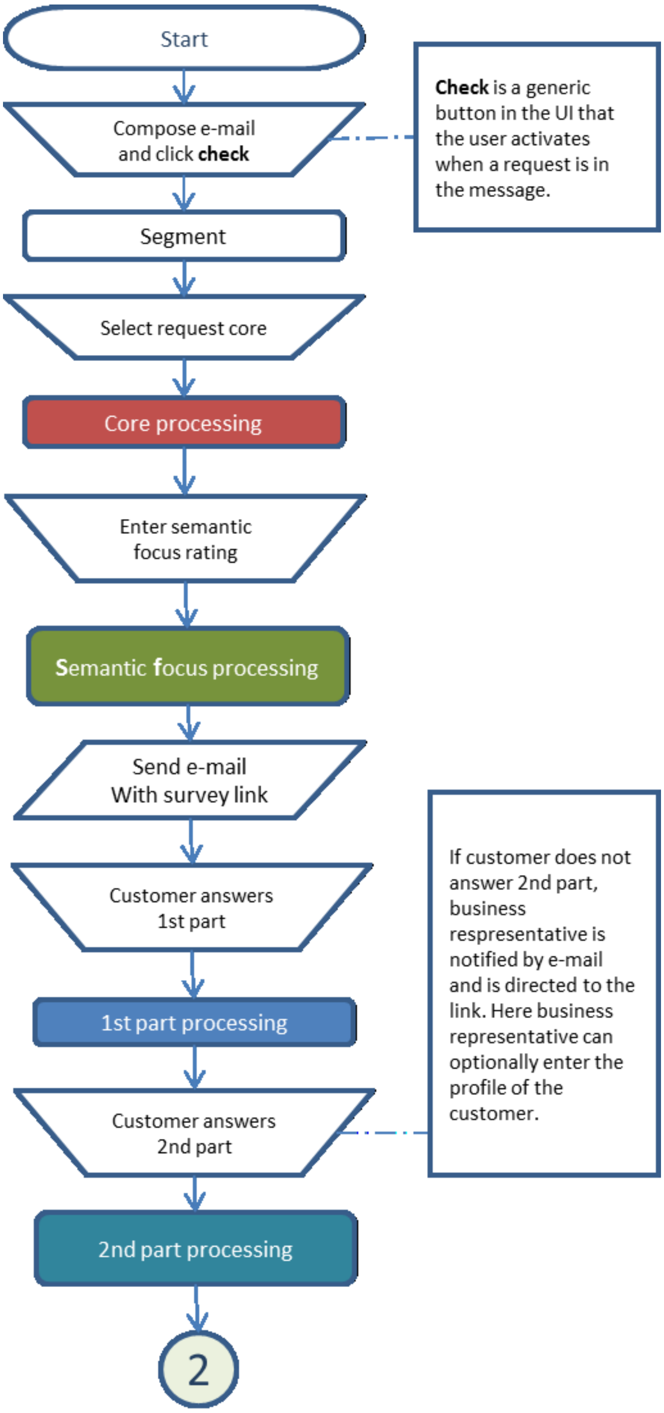



Figure 21: Process overview below the bottom tier

Those survey inputs with positive feedback, e.g. +3 and +2, undergo further analysis. For these inputs, the survey entry is saved in a separate database (DB 3).

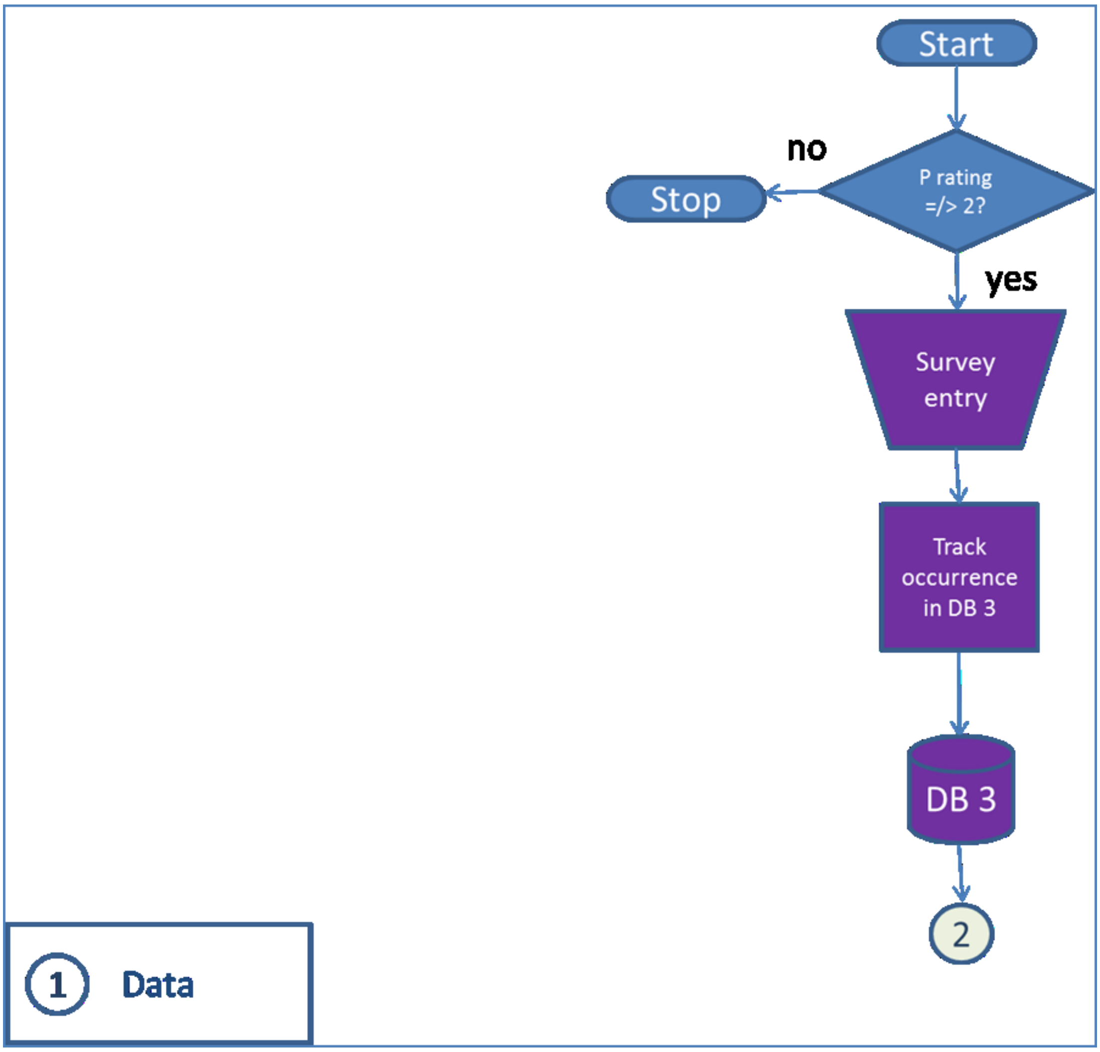



Figure 22: Customer feedback processing module

5.3.2.2.2 Processes on level 2 (Bottom Tier)

In the bottom tier, the different databases created in the previous steps are merged with each other and serve as a new reference database again for the subsequent training session.

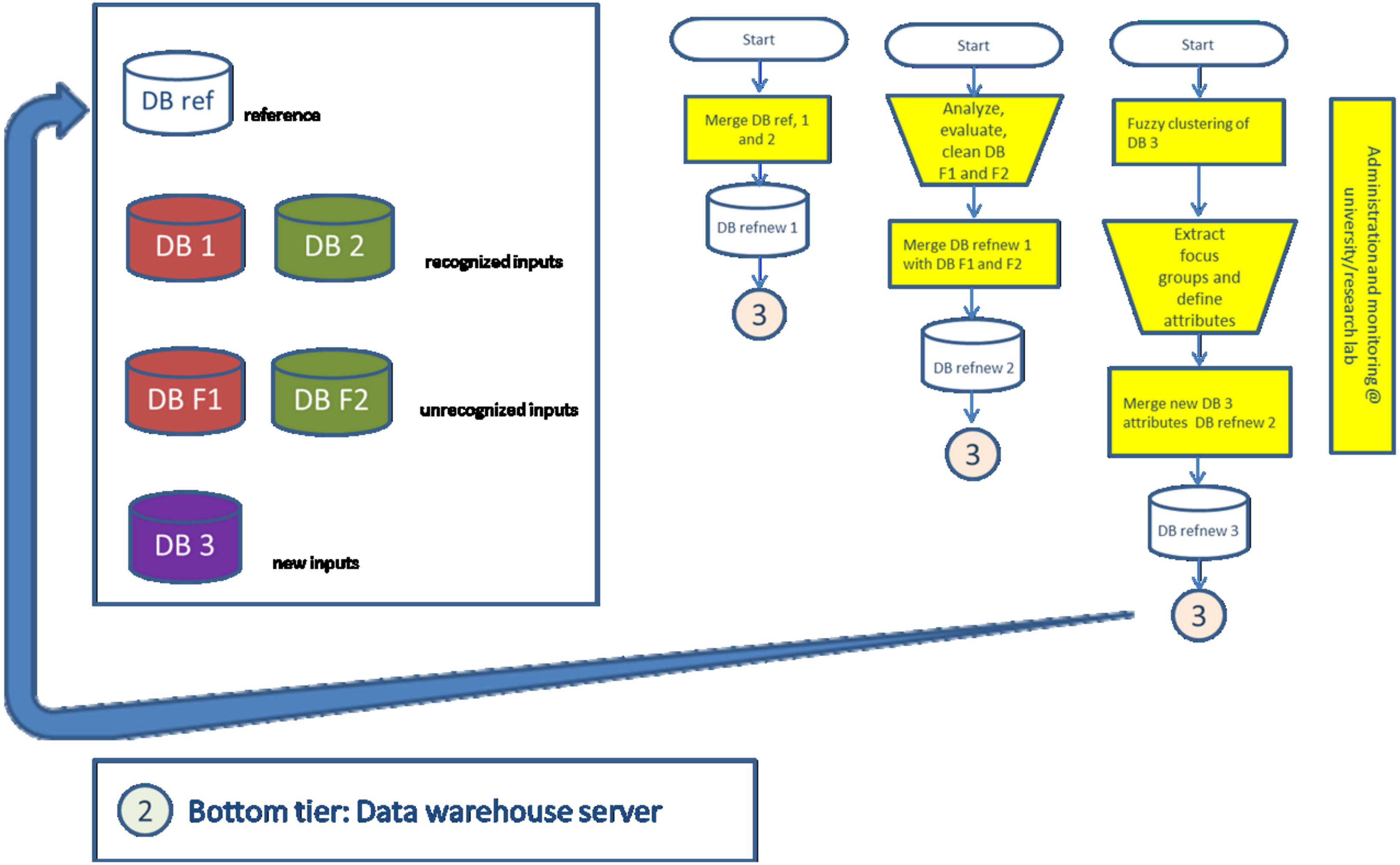



Figure 23: Bottom-tier process overview

The merging process shall be described with simplified example charts: Table 57 shows a simplified reference database of four sample cases. This reference database is initially created by a research staff member.

5.3.2.2.2.1 Procedure for items that can be recognized from DB reference

Table 57: DB reference

| ID | modal verb in head act | request perspective | semantic focus 1 | semantic focus 2 | semantic focus 3 | (Focus group) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | can | I | payment | n/a | n/a | (USA) |
| 2 | can | you | technical issue | information | n/a | (Spain) |
| 3 | may | I | technical issue | information | call back | (USA) |
| 4 | could | you | information | call back | n/a | (India) |

When the customer-support staff member selects a segment in the interactive mode of PoliTran and thus defines it to be the head act, the core processing module of the PoliTran compares the segment with strings in this reference database. For string detection, not only the string content plays a role, but also the sequence and position of strings.

Suppose the customer-support staff members selected segments containing items that are recognized (here “can you” and “could you”), this information is saved in Database 1 (see Table 58).

Table 58: DB 1

| ID | modal verb in head act | request perspective | semantic focus 1 | semantic focus 2 | semantic focus 3 | Focus group |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | can | you | | | | |
| 6 | could | you | | | | |

When the customer-support staff member selects a semantic focus that is already contained in the reference database, it is saved in Database 2.

Table 59: DB 2

| ID | modal verb in head act | request perspective | semantic focus 1 | semantic focus 2 | semantic focus 3 | Focus group |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | | | payment | n/a | n/a | |
| 6 | | | technical issue | information | n/a | |

In the bottom tier, the reference database, database 1 and database 2, which both contain items that are also contained in the reference database, are automatically merged with each other (see Table 60). The new merged reference is called “DB reference 1”.

Table 60: DB ref, DB 1 and DB 2 → DB reference 1

| ID | modal verb in head act | request perspective | semantic focus 1 | semantic focus 2 | semantic focus 3 | Focus group |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | can | I | payment | n/a | n/a | |
| 2 | can | you | technical issue | information | n/a | |
| 3 | may | I | technical issue | information | call back | |
| 4 | could | you | information | call back | n/a | |
| 5 | can | you | payment | n/a | n/a | |
| 6 | could | you | technical issue | information | n/a | |

5.3.2.2.2.2 Procedure for items that cannot be recognized from DB reference

If the customer support staff member's selected segments do not contain strings that are contained in the reference database (in this case "Would you mind…" and "Could I…?", the entire segment is saved in database F1.

Table 61: DB F1

| ID | modal verb in head act | request perspective | semantic focus 1 | semantic focus 2 | semantic focus 3 | Focus group |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | Would you mind...? | | | | | |
| 8 | Could I ...? | | | | | |

The same applies to a newly entered semantic focus by a customer support staff member. This information is saved in database F2.

Table 62: DB F2

| ID | modal verb in head act | request perspective | semantic focus 1 | semantic focus 2 | semantic focus 3 | Focus group |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | | | refund | n/a | n/a | |
| 8 | | | technical issue | information | n/a | |

In the bottom tier, these two databases, DB F1 and DB F2, are first manually checked by a university or research staff member. Especially in DB F1, it is necessary that the entire segment is subsegmented into modal expressions and other request strategy elements, and that other parts of the segment are filtered out. After manual evaluation and adjustment, DB reference 1, DB F1 and DB F2 can be merged:

Table 63: DB reference 1, DB F1 and DB F2 → DB reference 2

| ID | modal verb in head act | request perspective | semantic focus 1 | semantic focus 2 | semantic focus 3 | Focus group |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | can | I | payment | n/a | n/a | USA |
| 2 | can | you | technical issue | information | n/a | Spain |
| 3 | may | I | technical issue | information | call back | USA |
| 4 | could | you | information | call back | n/a | India |
| 5 | can | you | payment | n/a | n/a | |
| 6 | could | you | technical issue | information | n/a | |
| 7 | would | you | refund | n/a | n/a | |
| 8 | could | I | technical issue | information | n/a | |

5.3.2.2.2.3 Procedure for determining focus groups

For the customer FGs it is necessary that they are first determined before merging can take place. Instead of predefining discrete groups based on nationality, geographic or political boundaries (e.g. Germans, Italians, Indians etc.), the input of the second part of the survey undergoes fuzzy clustering. Clustering or cluster analysis is a common method in data mining, which “analyzes data objects without consulting a known class label”. Without known class labels in the training data, labels are newly generated and constitute the third dimension of the relational database which was originally fed into PoliTran. In cluster analysis, the “objects are clustered or grouped based on the principle of *maximizing the intraclass similarity and minimizing the interclass similarity*” (Han & Kamber, 2011, p. 26). While clustering based on discrete logic distinguishes full or no membership of an object, fuzzy clustering enables membership to a group by percentage.

From a transcultural perspective, it is difficult to speak of cultures in forms of homogeneous entities. This makes it difficult to determine “the culture” and “the linguistic background” of the customers in discrete sets. In other words, a customer, for instance, cannot simply be categorized as being GERMAN OR NOT GERMAN. Even if the customer is of German nationality, it is possible that he or she has immigrated to Germany from a different country, and has been raised by parents with a different culture. It is also possible that this customer does not live in Germany anymore, but in the USA. How can this complexity of determining focus groups be computationally approached? Already in 1990, Holz-Mänttäri applied the perspective of cybernetics to translational action. She argued:

> "The time has come to part with the deeply rooted western habit of thinking in terms of cause and effect, which in the debate on translation theory has given rise to the formula: X in the source text, hence Y in the target text. From a cybernetic point of view, however, the function of a text can also be seen as a process with determinable variables which in itself controls processes. A cybernetic system fluctuates. The controlling element is not an end-point to be reached, but the relationship between the limits of fluctuation, between the extremes beyond which the system does not yet exist or no longer exists. […] A translatological concept of function and skopos as conceived, for example, in the theory of translational action […], is biocybernetically grounded, process-related and oriented towards the key question: "What use shall be made of the text to be produced?" Methodologically speaking, the translator as the responsible text specialist fills the parameter with the case-specific relevant data and makes his decisions on the bases of the product specification established in this way." (Salevsky, 2011, p. 28; Holz-Mänttari, 1990, pp. 71-72)

Salevsky picks up the idea of considering translation from a (bio)cybernetic perspective in the book "Translation as systemic interaction" (Salevsky, 2011). To grasp the high complexity and dynamics of translational processes, she suggests the application of fuzzy logic. In line with Holz-Mänttäri and Salevsky, this thesis suggests employing fuzzy set theory as a basis for the description of approximate customer groups based on cultural and linguistic biographies.

Lotfi Zadeh developed modern fuzzy set theory to model problems that involve data gaps or imprecise data. In the framework of fuzzy set theory, diffuse categories are available. Thus, propositions can be assigned to a continuum of truth-values rather than just true or false (Rojas, 1996, pp. 287-289).

Fuzzy systems are often used "in situations involving highly complex systems whose behaviors are not well understood" (Ross, 2010, p. 8). In fuzzy systems, membership of an element to a set is not determined on a binary basis (i.e. member or no member), but by percentage.

Suppose a set of customers shall be categorized into cultural FGs and suppose they have answered the second part of their survey as following:

Table 64: Example for fuzzy clustering

| ID | Country of birth | Country of residence | First language acquired | Language spoken in family domain | Language of instruction in primary school | Language of instruction in secondary school | Primary language used at work |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Germany | Germany | German | German | German | German | German |
| 2 | Germany | Germany | Russian | Russian | Russian | German | English |
| 3 | Germany | USA | German | English | German | English | English |

Based on discrete logic, it would be necessary to state whether customers 1, 2 and 3 belong to cultural group “German” or not. Based on fuzzy logic it is possible to determine membership by percentage depending on the rule and definitions the research and business institutions make.

For instance, a customer who chooses “German” or “Germany” in all columns could be considered a 100% member of the cultural group “German” (e.g. customer with the ID 1). Taking this as a “reference,” it is possible to determine the membership percentage of customers who do not choose “German” or “Germany” in all columns based on customizable rules. A quantitative rule could be, for instance, to assign membership percentage based on a defined minimum number of columns (e.g. 4) that need to be filled with “German” or “Germany”, so the customer can be considered “50% German”. If a column is more relevant for determining the cultural group, this column could be weighted with a defined factor.

In order to define FGs based on clustering, it is necessary that a certain amount of survey input is available to start the clustering. Therefore, the third merging step in the bottom tier may not be possible right after the first training session. Once FGs are defined after clustering, DB reference 2 is merged with DB 3 to DB reference 3:

Table 65: DB 3

| ID | modal verb in head act | request perspective | semantic focus 1 | semantic focus 2 | semantic focus 3 | Focus group |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | | | | | | Germany |
| 6 | | | | | | Russia |
| 7 | | | | | | Portugal |
| 8 | | | | | | France |

Table 66: DB reference 2 and DB 3 → DB reference 3

| ID | modal verb in head act | request perspective | semantic focus 1 | semantic focus 2 | semantic focus 3 | Focus group |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | can | I | payment | n/a | n/a | USA |
| 2 | can | you | technical issue | information | n/a | Spain |
| 3 | may | I | technical issue | information | call back | USA |
| 4 | could | you | information | call back | n/a | India |
| 5 | can | you | payment | n/a | n/a | Germany |
| 6 | could | you | technical issue | information | n/a | Russia |
| 7 | would | you | refund | n/a | n/a | Portugal |
| 8 | could | I | technical issue | information | n/a | France |

DB reference 3 serves then as DB reference again for the next training session.

5.3.2.2.3 Processes on level 3 and 4 (Middle and Top Tier)

5.3.2.2.3.1 Overview

The processes described above are iterated. The survey feedback with the politeness evaluation results +3 and +2 is counted and relative frequencies are calculated. As soon as at least three lingua-cultural clusters manifest themselves on the third dimension, they are determined as FGs and their frequencies are placed into the relational database. The frequencies undergo tests to determine statistical significance (e.g. chi-square tests). For this, a p-value is defined that represents "the probability that the observed relationship […] in a sample occurred by pure chance" (StatSoft, 2011). As soon as at least three significant trends can be observed, the testing and application phase begins.

In the testing and application phase, PoliTran shall be able to propose alternative expressions to the business representative, based on frequency observation and tracking.

At the interface between middle and top tier, frequent pattern mining, based on a knowledge base containing for instance classification rules, can be prepared with training objects. If a set of items, subsequences or substructures occurs frequently in a data set, it is denoted as "frequent pattern" (Han & Kamber, 2011, p. 227). The definition of the relative or absolute number of recurrences is determined by a threshold. The process of finding frequent patterns fulfilling a minimum threshold requirement is part of associate rule mining. From this knowledge, "association rules in the form A->B are generated. These rules also satisfy a minimum confidence threshold (a prespecified probability of satisfying B under the condition that A is satisfied). Associations can be further analyzed to uncover correlation rules, which convey statistical correlations between itemsets A and B." (Han & Kamber, 2011, p. 272)

The classification of data relies on two steps. First, set of data classes or concepts is predefined. These definitions are modeled in a classifier in a learning phase. In this phase, a classification algorithm builds a classifier based on training data analysis. The training data consists of database tuples with their associated class labels:

> "A tuple, X, is represented by an n-dimensional attribute vector, X= ($x_1$, $x_2$, $x_3$…, $x_n$), depicting n measurements made on the tuple from n database attributes, respectively, $A_1$, $A_2$, $A_3$, …, $A_n$. Each attribute represents a "feature" of X. Hence, the pattern recognition literature uses the term feature vector rather than attribute vector. Each tuple, X, is assumed to belong to a predefined class as determined by another database attribute called the class label attribute. The class label attribute is discrete-valued and unordered. It is categorical in that each value serves as a category or class. The individual tuples making up the training set are referred to as training tuples and are selected from the database under analysis. […] Because the class label of each training tuple is provided, this step is also known as supervised learning (i.e., the learning of the classifier is "supervised" in that it is told to which class each training tuple belongs)" (Han & Kamber, 2011, pp. 286-287).

How the two-step classification process may look like, is shown in the following, simplified illustration:

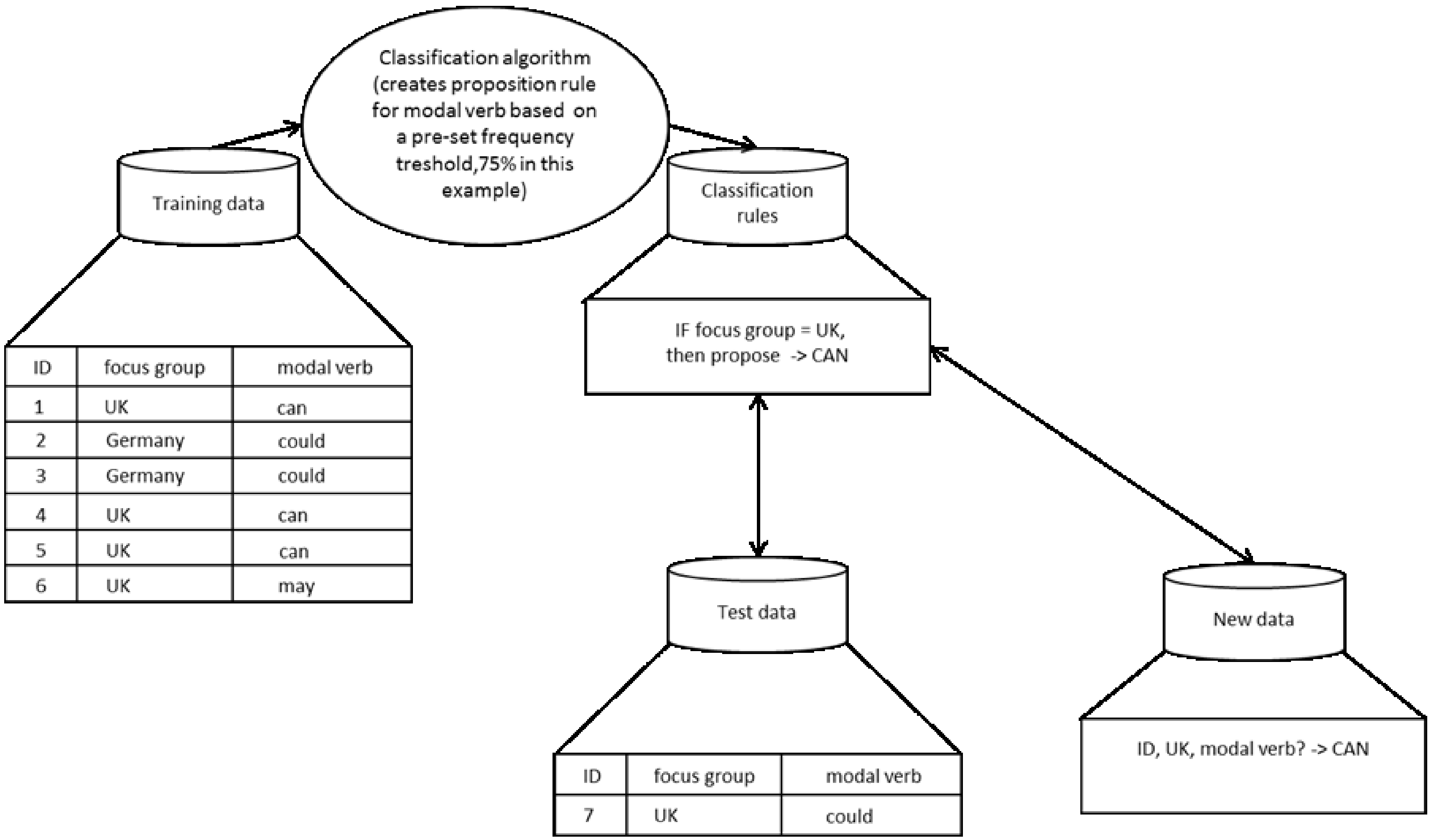



Figure 24: Principle adapted from Han and Kamber, p. 287

When the business representative opens the e-mail editing system and plans to write a request with regard to the semantic focus X, he or she can interact with PoliTran through the e-mail editing system. For this, he or she could for instance activate PoliTran under “Tools”, so that a dialog with check boxes appears. Here the business representative can check the semantic focus of his or her message and the ASSUMED FG of the recipient.

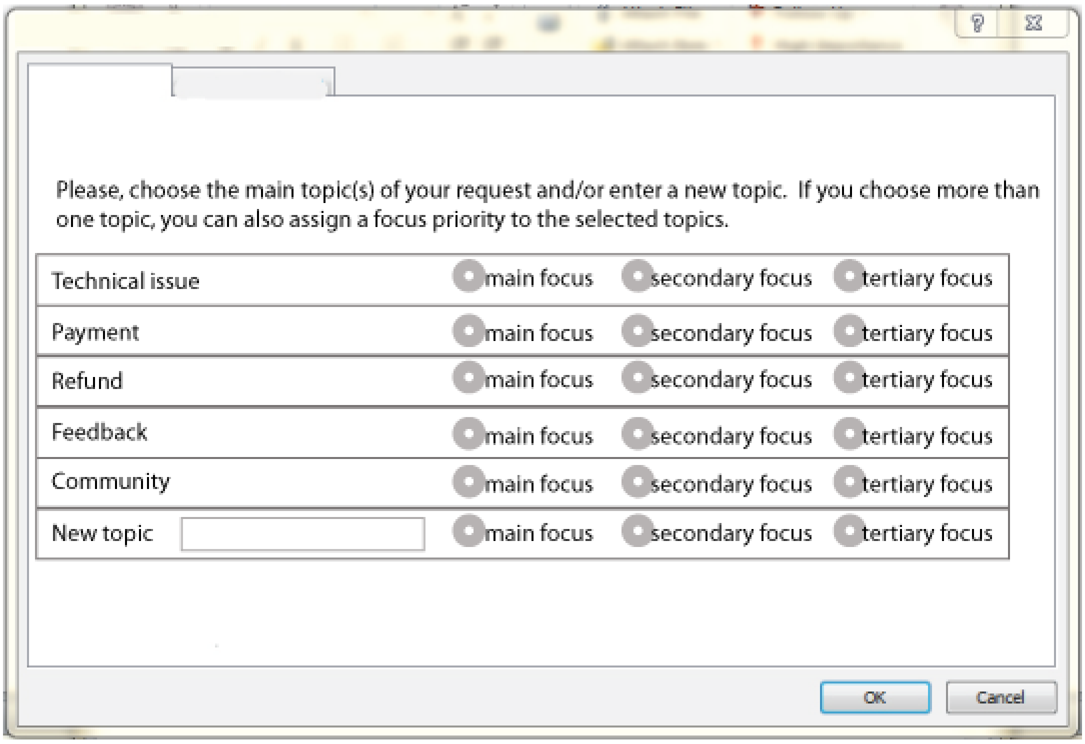



Figure 25: Mock-up of user interface of semantic focus processing module

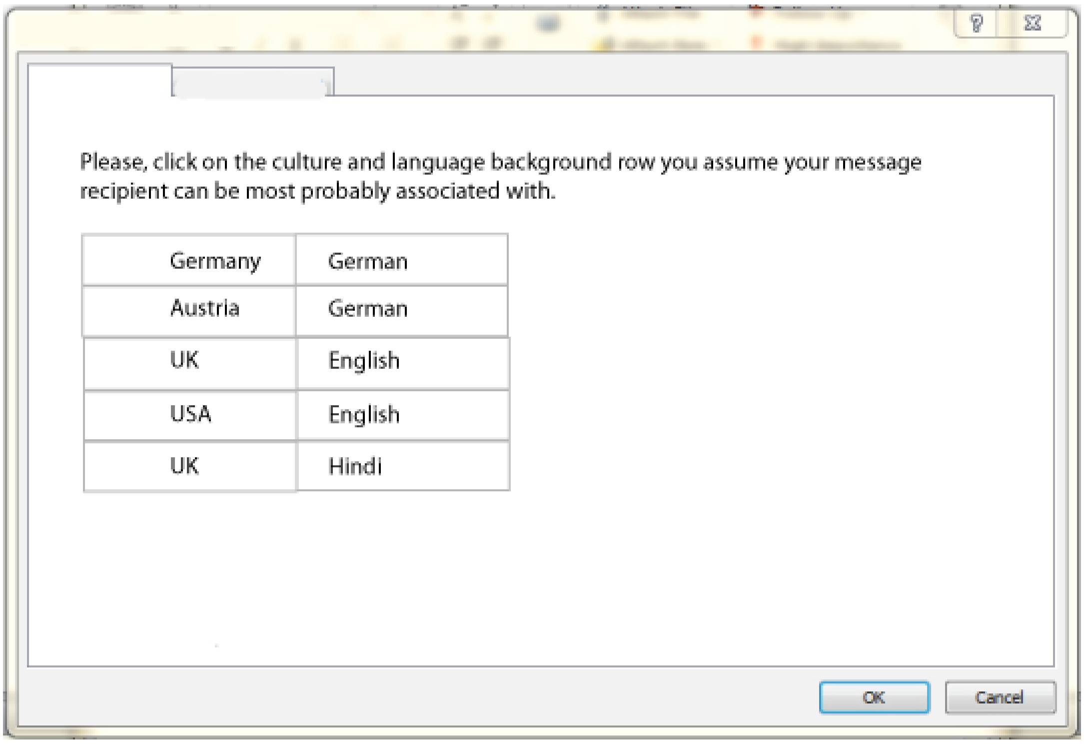



Figure 26: Mock-up of user interface of focus group assumption module

Then the business representative can start writing his or her message. Afterwards, the business representative commands the system to “segment”, which then asks to click on the core segment(s) of the request.

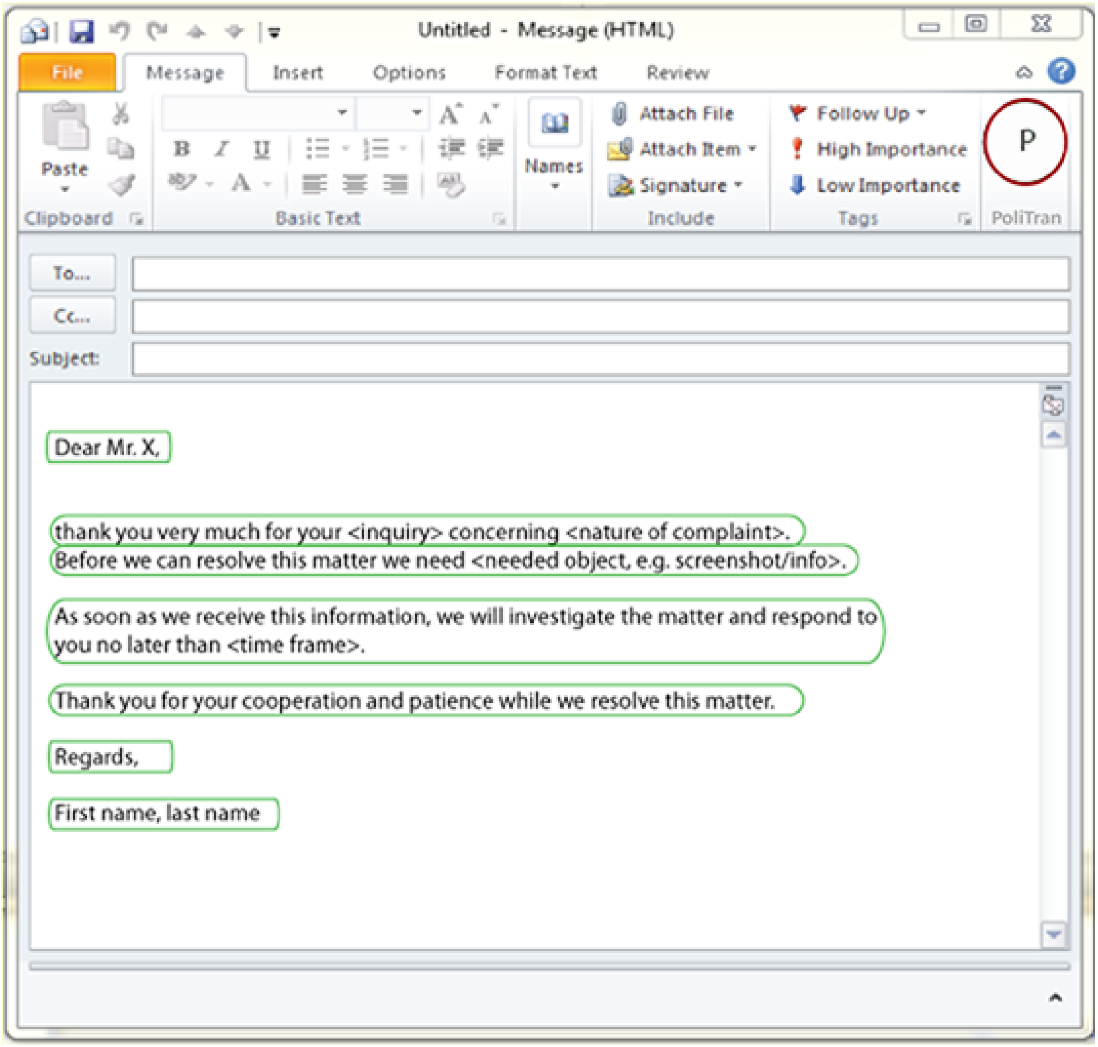



Figure 27: Mock-up of segmentation feature, e.g., based on punctuation (circle with “P” represents a symbolic button for activating PoliTran)

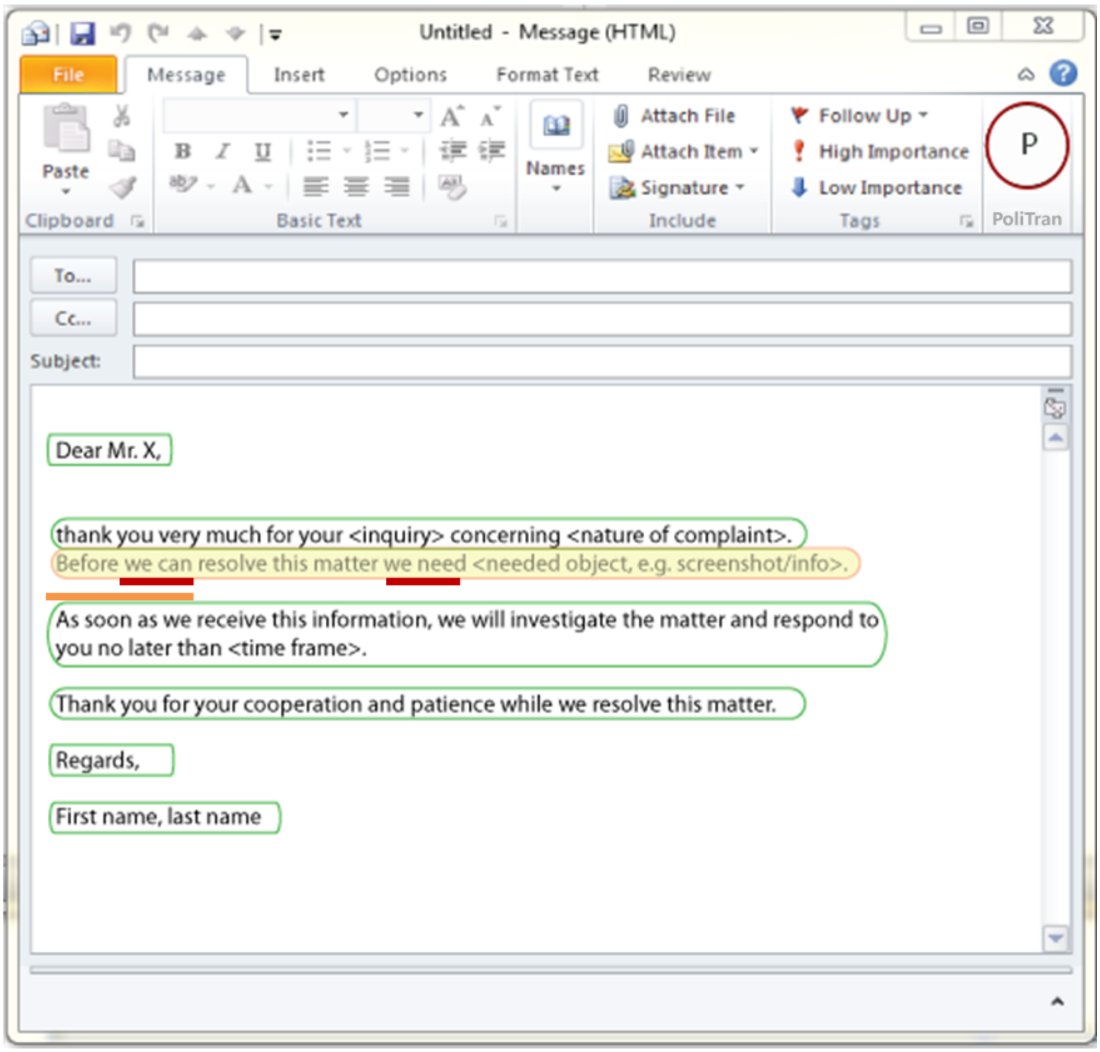



Figure 28: Mock-up of user interface to select head act (circle with "P" represents a symbolic button for activating PoliTran)

The modality indicating device(s) used in this segment is/are compared to the segments mostly preferred by members of the assumed FG, and an alternative proposal is made, if necessary. The business representative can decide whether he or she wants to accept the proposal.

The rest of the process is equal to the process in the training phase. That is, the e-mail will be sent with a link to the survey and the customer's politeness feedback and profile will be tracked, if the politeness feedback equals +3 or +2.

The frequency of the proposals made by the system AND accepted by the business representative AND rated as “+3” and “+2” by the customer is tracked. The testing phase should have a similar length to the training phase, so that the device frequencies of both phases can be compared. This comparison is performed by university staff members. If more than 70% of the system’s proposals lead to positive politeness feedback AND if the distribution patterns of the modality indicating devices depending on semantic foci and sociocultural groups in the training and testing phase show 70% similarity, the knowledge of the system is sufficient for application. If not, the university staff member and the business organization need to consider re-training and testing.

5.3.2.2.3.2 The data cube in the middle tier

In the middle tier, a multidimensional database structure is modeled relying on the two-dimensional databases of the bottom tier. In a multidimensional database, an attribute or a set of attributes is represented by a dimension. The values of aggregate measures (in the case of PoliTran: absolute or relative frequencies) are stored in each cell. Each dimension is associated with a dimension table, which specifies the dimension and which can be either generated automatically or manually based on data distribution and expertise.

> “A multidimensional data model is typically organized around a central theme […] This theme is represented by a fact table. Facts are numerical measures. […] The fact table contains the names of the facts, or measures, as well as keys to each of the related dimension tables. […] Although we usually think of cubes as 3-D geometric structures, in data warehousing the data cube is n-dimensional.” (Han & Kamber, 2011, p. 111)

The advantage of a data warehouse system lies in the multidimensional view of data it provides for the user. Furthermore, with data warehouse systems data can be pre-computed and accessed fast. Therefore, these systems are suitable for on-line analytical processing (OLAP):

> “OLAP operations use background knowledge regarding the domain of the data being studied in order to allow the presentation of data at *different levels of abstraction*. Such operations accommodate different user viewpoints.” (Han & Kamber, 2011, p. 13)

The different levels of abstractions are, for instance, visualized in the "roll-up operation", which "performs aggregation on a data cube, either by climbing up a concept hierarchy for a dimension or by dimension reduction" (Han & Kamber, 2011, p. 125). The reverse operation is reached by the "drill-down operation" which "navigates from less detailed data to more detailed data" (Han & Kamber, 2011, p. 125).

To select and analyze only one dimension of the cube the "slice operation" can be used (Han & Kamber, 2011, p. 125). Also, the rotation of data axes is possible by the "pivot operation" (Han & Kamber, 2011, p. 125).

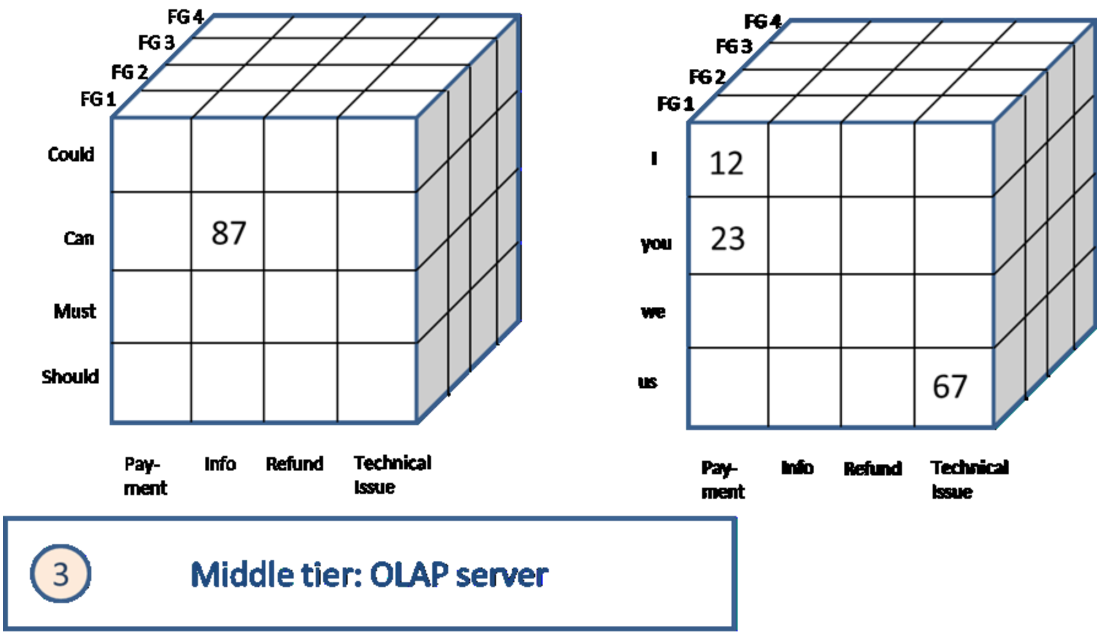



Figure 29: Possible simplified structure of PoliTran data cubes

These functions are especially useful for the analysis of the codification of modality in requests, in combination with request strategies, perspectives, internal and external modifications. For such, more complex and extended functionalities of PoliTran, it might be helpful to define micro and macrolinguistic levels of analysis.

Data warehousing and OLAP systems are often used for business and science purposes, as they facilitate the analysis and interpretation of large, complex data sets and thus, contribute to decision support (Sreenivasarao & Pallamreddy, 2011, p. 162).

Data cubes do not necessarily have the form of an actual cube, but can have more than three dimensions. To represent such multidimensional models so-called “cuboids” are often used: “Given a set of dimensions, we can generate a cuboid for each of the possible subsets of the given dimensions. The result would form a lattice of cuboids, each showing the data at a different level of summarization […].” (Han & Kamber, 2011, pp. 112-113)

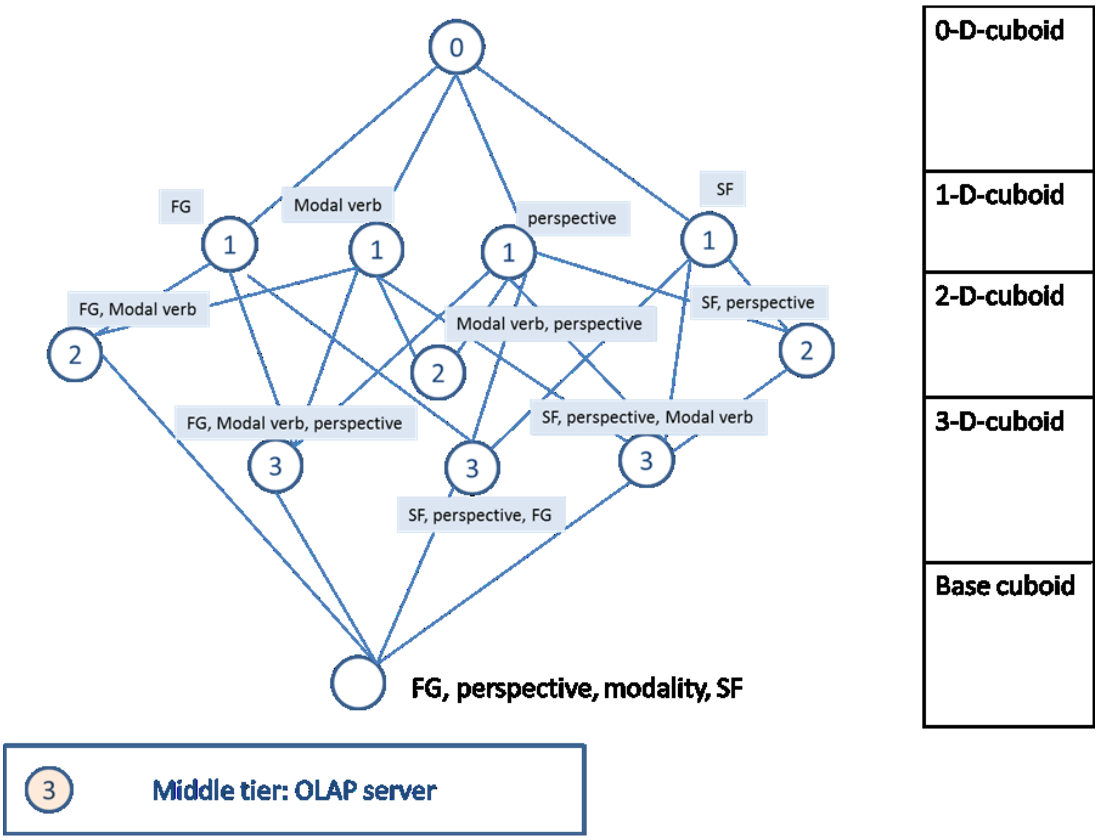
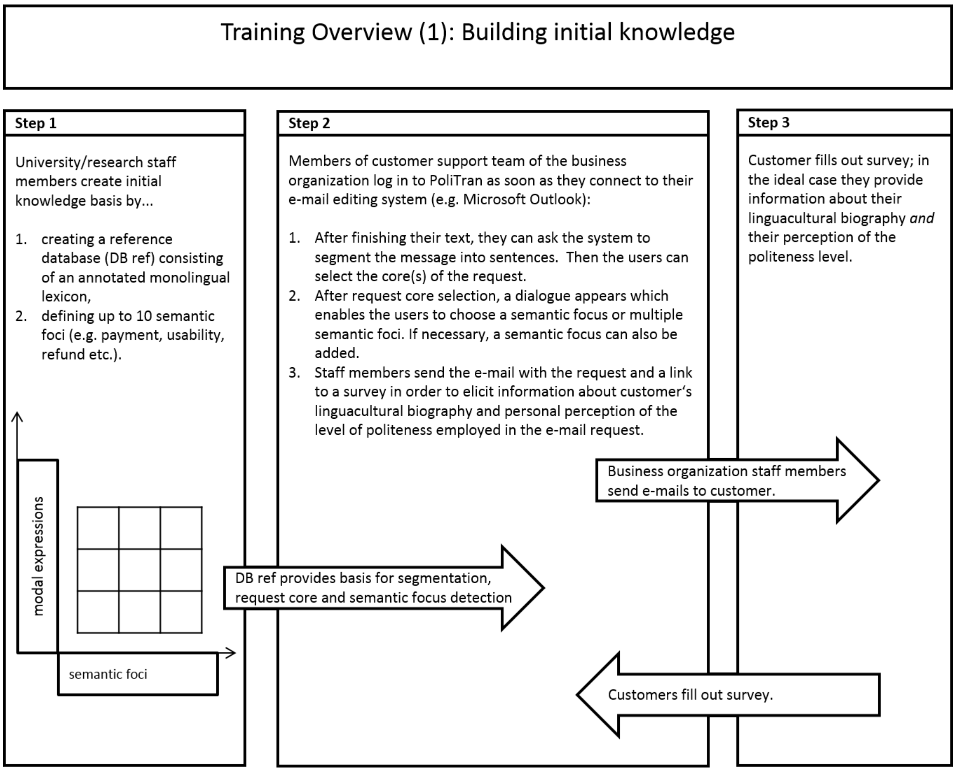
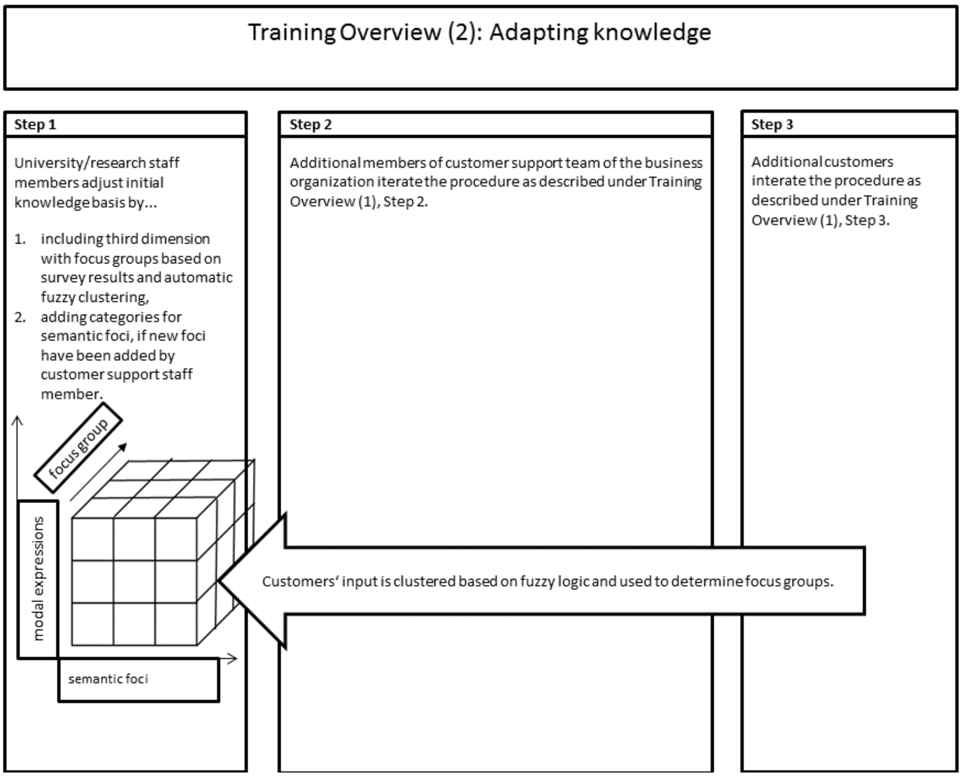



Figure 30: Possible simplified structure of PoliTran cuboid

### 5.3.3 Graphical summary of the full PoliTran concept



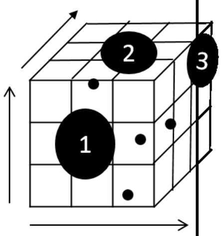



## Training Overview (3): Corroborating and prioritizing knowledge

**Step 1**

University/research staff member additionally adjusts the knowledge basis:

1. Extension of modal expression categories
2. Expansion of semantic foci, i.e. Insertion of additional columns.
3. Adaptation of focus groups
4. Matching of 1-3 into the cube, only if customers feedback is 1 or 2 on politeness scale.




**Step 2**

Knowledge-based frequency observation with manual input:

Additional members of customer support team of the business organization iterate the procedure as described under Training Overview (1), Step 2.

Based on those feedback inputs reflecting that customers perceived the communication as highly polite or polite, the information on customer profiles, the semantic foci in the requests and recurrent patterns in the „non-head act", frequencies of modality coding patterns and the interdependencies between the parameters can be detected.

**Step 3**

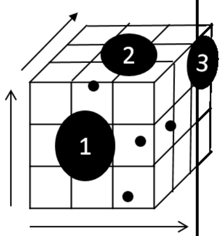
Additional customers interate the procedure as described under Training Overview (1), Step 3.

## Testing and application (1): Automatic Classification and Proposal

**Step 1**

University/research staff member additionally adjusts the knowledge basis:

1. Extension of modal expression categories
2. Expansion of semantic foci, i.e. Insertion of additional columns.
3. Adaptation of focus groups
4. Matching of 1-3 into the cube, only if customers feedback is 1 or 2 on politeness scale.

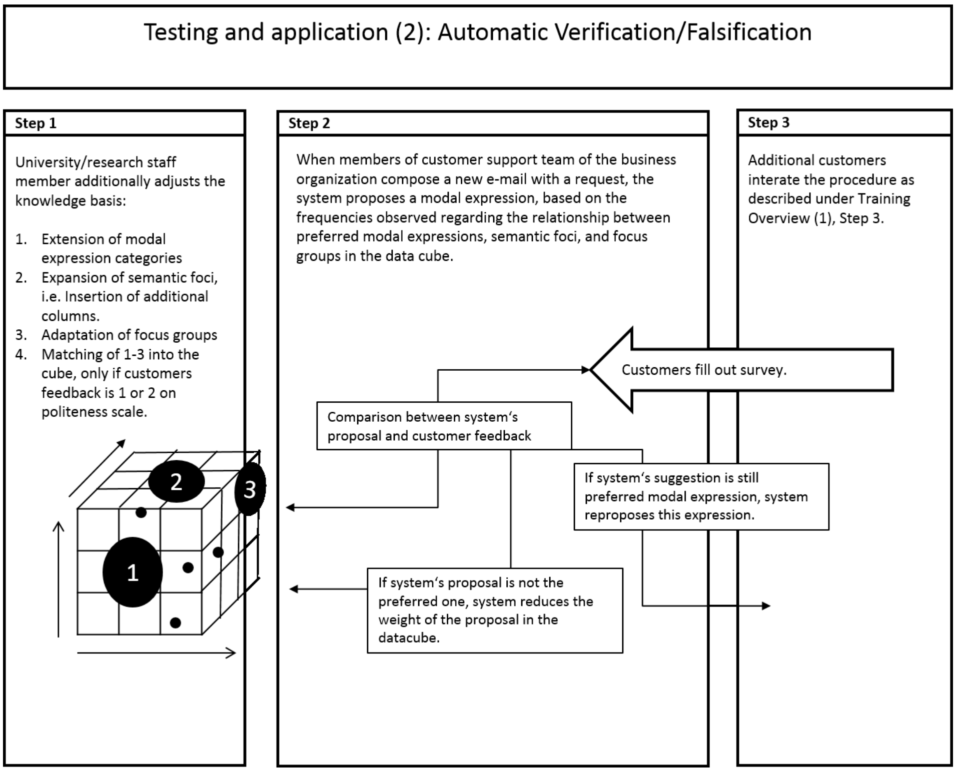



**Step 2**

When members of customer support team of the business organization compose a new e-mail with a request, the system proposes a modal expression, based on the frequencies observed regarding the relationship between preferred modal expressions, semantic foci, and focus groups in the data cube.

**Step 3**

Additional customers interate the procedure as described under Training Overview (1), Step 3.


Testing and application (2): Automatic Verification/Falsification
Step 1
University/research staff member additionally adjusts the knowledge basis:
1. Extension of modal expression categories
2. Expansion of semantic foci, i.e. Insertion of additional columns.
3. Adaptation of focus groups
4. Matching of 1-3 into the cube, only if customers feedback is 1 or 2 on politeness scale.
2
3
1
Step 2
When members of customer support team of the business organization compose a new e-mail with a request, the system proposes a modal expression, based on the frequencies observed regarding the relationship between preferred modal expressions, semantic foci, and focus groups in the data cube.
Customers fill out survey.
Comparison between system's proposal and customer feedback
If system's suggestion is still preferred modal expression, system reproposes this expression.
If system's proposal is not the preferred one, system reduces the weight of the proposal in the datacube.
Step 3
Additional customers interate the procedure as described under Training Overview (1), Step 3.

# 6 Conclusions and Implications on Translation and Transcultural Communication

This thesis hypothesized that politeness is a) translatable and b) yet culture-specific. The first hypothesis was approached through theoretical discussion based on Cooke's translation theory, Constructive Realism, and functional perspectives on translation. It was argued that the concept of politeness can be considered part of human beings' *Realitäten*, and that due to the biological and cognitive abilities of all human beings, they are able to translate in general and translate politeness in particular. Translation, in this discussion, is considered a transcultural communication strategy enabling human beings of different cultures to communicate with each other intra- and interlingually, consisting of the processes of understanding, explaining, defamiliarizing and negotiating.

The second hypothesis of this thesis claimed that individuals with a similar lingua-cultural biography are more inclined to share patterns of realizing and perceiving politeness than are individuals with diverging lingua-cultural biographies. It was approached through an empirical research, based on the analysis of survey and DCT results and of twitter messages exchanged in customer service contexts. To assess this hypothesis the de- and encoding of modality in requests was analyzed. The results of the empirical study have demonstrated that communicative patterns are partially distinct, and partially homogenous.

For example, in both analyses, the common preference of the imperative and the expression of dynamic ability through “can” or “could”, across all focus groups, could be detected. Also, the request strategies and perspectives were mostly shared by all focus groups. From a transcultural perspective, this could be understood as one indicator for the process of homogenization as already anticipated by House (2004, p. 503). This process could be interpreted as a result of today's globalization and transcultural activities, including the influence of mass media and cyberspace (Welsch, 1999; Hepp, 2008).

It is also possible that this process has practical reasons, such as working efficiency, time pressure or the limitation of the number of characters used in a text (particularly in tweets).

Furthermore, it could be interpreted as a process of building a "third culture" as proposed by Broome (1993, p. 104). Through empathy, activation of mirror neurons and humans' general ability to translate, it is possible that the understanding and expression of politeness is negotiated in an unspoken process.

In the Theoretic Framework, it was explained that politeness can be considered a survival skill, since human beings depend on social interactions and the maintenance of relationships for their survival. Furthermore, it was described that humans learn implicitly and explicitly the conventional patterns of a lingua-cultural group, according to which politeness is realized and perceived; and that human beings – because also of the neuroplasticity of their brain – are able to learn new patterns or adapt patterns throughout their entire life. Based on this argumentation, it is possible that the trend towards homogenization reflects this human ability, and that "lingua-cultural biographies" are not only shaped by real face-to-face encounters, but by virtual encounters through e-mail or social networking platforms as well.

If this process continues, it might be possible that the concept of a cultural filter employed in covert translation, as proposed by House (1998, p. 66), needs to be re-visited. Maybe it would be helpful to distinguish between two types of cultural filters – particularly in the context of Englishes. On the one hand, there could be a cultural filter applied in translation processes that involve English as a lingua franca, reflecting the homogenous features of politeness perception and realization. On the other hand, there could be a cultural filter applied in translation processes, in which English plays a role as a first, second or foreign language and needs to reflect the cultures connected to it.

For example, if a text in a language other than English (e.g. Austrian German) is to be translated into English for an international readership, and if the text contains requests and reactions to requests in customer service contexts, the translator might apply the cultural filter for English as a lingua franca when translating the text into English.

But if the same text were to be translated for readers with a strong India-focused lingua-cultural background, the translator might use the cultural filter for English as a second language. The study showed, for instance, that the focus group India uses the adverb “kindly” frequently with the imperative or the “DO” auxiliary in requests (e.g. “Please *do* call us”), so the translator could apply these preferences into the translation.

The cultural filter could be also applied for the understanding of a Non-English source text by a translator and to the translation of the pragmatic meaning into an English target text. The study showed, for instance, that focus group Austria prefers deontic permission when asking a customer support staff member for information or actions. If a person needs to translate the oral English briefing of his or her colleague into a written English e-mail to a customer, he or she might need to employ the cultural filter for English as a foreign language to grasp the pragmatic meaning, anticipate the perlocutionary effect in the target text, and perform a translation shift, if necessary.

But in order to make such generalized statements, the data set that this study is based upon is too small, too specific, as it could not be carried out as a long-term study. In order to make such statements that could substantiate a cultural filter for translation processes, it is necessary to examine whether in certain situations distinctive patterns of realizing and perceiving politeness repeatedly occur over a longer span of time. For this, a research methodology considering automatic text processing would be necessary. A proposal for such a methodology was made in the framework of the PoliTran concept. If this long-term research based on large quantitative analysis corroborates distinctive patterns of realizing and perceiving politeness in different lingua-cultural groups, the detected patterns could serve as a profile of a cultural filter for professional translators and be integrated into existing CAT tools or Translation Memory systems. Furthermore, the results could be used for teaching or professional training purposes, and for the assessment of translation quality.

Whatever solution is used to substantiate the knowledge about patterns of realizing and perceiving politeness, it is necessary that the system is dynamic – not only because of the fast-paced transcultural processes and globalization, but because of the constantly changing technological prerequisites as well. For instance, as this thesis was started, the use of mobile devices with touchscreen technology was just introduced in many businesses. Today already, the devices are often used for writing e-mails and other text messages. In order to increase the writing speed, many touchscreen-based devices propose words or expressions while writing e-mails. So the choice of how requests or other speech acts are worded could be highly dependent on the suggestions made by these devices. This could lead to even more homogenization processes in communicative patterns of Englishes.

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# Appendix

## A.1 Inventory of modality types and modal expressions

| modality type | possible modal expressions | examples |
|---|---|---|
| dynamic willingness | will, would, shall, be going to, want to | Will you send xyz to ... |
| | | Would you send xyz to... |
| epistemic possibility | to be possible, may, can, might, could | Is it possible for you to send the xyz to... |
| | | Would it be possible for you to send the xyz to... |
| deontic permission | may, can, to be allowed | Can I ask you to send the xyz to... |
| | | Could I ask you to send the xyz to... |
| epistemic necessity | need | I need a xyz... |
| | | I would need a xyz... |
| dynamic ability | can, could, to be able to | Can you send me a xyz... |
| | | Could you send me a xyz... |
| deontic obligation | must, should, ought to, need to, to have (got) to | You have to send me a xyz... |
| | | You would have to send me a xyz... |
| imperative | | Please, send me a xyz... |
| | | Kindly, send me a xyz ... |

## A.2 Inventory of request strategies, perspectives, and downgraders

| Request strategy | Request perspective | Syntactic downgrader | Examples |
|---|---|---|---|
| Hedged performative | Speaker-oriented | Interrogative | May I ask you to send a xyz to ... |
| Hedged performative | Speaker-oriented | | I would like to ask you to send a xyz to ... |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Hedged performative | Impersonal | | You are asked to send a xyz to... |
| Query preparatory | Hearer-oriented | Interrogative | Could you send a xyz to.../Would you mind sending a xyz to... |
| Query preparatory | Hearer-oriented | | You could send a xyz to... |
| Mood derivable | Speaker-oriented | | Send a xyz to... |
| Obligation statement | Impersonal | | It is necessary that you send a xyz to... |
| Want statement | Speaker-oriented | | I would appreciate it, if you could send a xyz to... |
| Explicit performative | Speaker-oriented | | I ask you to send a xyz to... |

## A.3 Survey analysis

### A.3.1 Survey scan

Please, choose your place of birth.

Please, choose the countries of your personal periods of education and specify the length of each period.

| | Choose country 1 | Choose country 2, if necessary | Choose number of years |
|---|---|---|---|
| Primary education (e.g. elementary school) | | | |
| Secondary education (e.g. middle school) | | | |
| Tertiary education (e.g. high school) | | | |
| Higher education (e.g. university) | | | |

Please, choose your current principle country of residence and employment (i.e. the country where you have spent more than 50% during the past 12 months).

Comments

Please, choose the type(s) of tasks you have been mainly occupied with since June 2010.

- Technical Development
- Customer Support
- Business Controlling
- Technical Testing
- Marketing
- Business Management
- Human Resources
- Sales
- Administration
- Public Relations
- Language Services
- Consulting

Other tasks

Do you use standardized e-mail templates in your daily business?

- Yes
- No
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- I don't write any e-mails.

Please, specify, which languages you have acquired at what age. In addition, specify for which purpose(s) you use(d) each language.

| | Choose a language | Choose an age range | Choose a primary purpose | Choose a secondary purpose | Choose a tertiary purpose |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| First language | | | | | |
| Second language | | | | | |
| Third language | | | | | |

If English is not among your 1st, 2nd or 3rd language: At which age did you learn English and for which purposes do you use it?

| | Choose an age range | Choose a primary purpose | Choose a secondary purpose | Choose a tertiary purpose |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| English | | | | |

Please, specifiy, if you have ever spent more than 3 months in succession in the following countries:

| | Choose a length of time |
|---|---|
| UK | |
| USA | |
| Australia | |
| New Zealand | |
| Northern Ireland | |

**IMAGINE the following situation and make a spontaneous choice - there are no right or wrong answers:**
**You are member of a customer service staff. A customer is reporting a technical problem x in an e-mail. To solve problem x, you need additional information. How would the core of your response most probably look like?**

- "Please, inform us about the following details:..."
- "Could you inform us about the following details, please?..."
- "Can you possibly inform us about the following details?..."
- "Inform us about the following details:..."
- "Would you be so kind to inform us about the following details, please?..."
- "We would be very grateful for the following information:..."
- "To solve problem x I would need additional information:..."
- "We would need additional information to solve problem x:..."
- "The following information would be very helpful..."
- "To solve problem x I need additional information:..."
- I would answer differently. I would say...

**IMAGINE the following situation and make a spontaneous choice - there are no right or wrong answers:**
**You are member of a customer service staff. A customer has ordered a product and tried to pay by direct debiting. But since his/her account is overdrawn, you need to ask him/her to pay by wire transfer. How would the core of your e-mail most probably look like?**

- "Can you remit the outstanding amount by wire transfer, please?"
- "We kindly ask you to remit the outstanding amount by wire transfer."
- "May I ask you to remit the outstanding amount by wire transfer."
- "Could you perhaps remit the outstanding amount by wire transfer?"
- "Sorry for the inconvenience, but would it be possible for you to remit the outstanding amount by wire transfer?"
- "I would highly appreciate your wire transferring the remaining amount within X days."
- "Kindly remit the outstanding amount by wire transfer."
- "Remit the outstanding amount by wire transfer."
- "The outstanding amount needs to be remitted by wire transfer."
- "I hereby ask you to remit the outstanding amount by wire transfer."
- I would say it differently. I would say:

IMAGINE the following situation and make a spontaneous choice - there are no right or wrong answers:
You are member of a customer service staff. Your customer has a specific problem. To explain a solution to him/her, you need to ask him to perform certain steps. How would you do this?

- "In order to reach XYZ, do step 1, then step 2 and finally step 3."
- "Do step 1, then step 2 and step 3."
- "Could you, please, do step 1, then step 2 and step 3?"
- "Kindly follow step 1 to 3."
- "Would it be possible for you to do step 1, then step 2 and finally step 3?"
- "To solve this problem, it is necessary to perform step 1, 2 and then 3."
- "I would appreciate your performing steps 1 to 3."
- "The steps 1 to 3 need to be done to solve the problem."
- "Without performing steps 1 to 3 the problem cannot be solved."
- "I apologize for the inconvenience, but the steps 1 to 3 need to be done to solve the problem."
- I would say it differently. I would say:

IMAGINE the following situation and make a spontaneous choice - there are no right or wrong answers:
You are a customer. You are asked to pay a long overdue bill. How would you most likely prefer to be addressed?

- "Could you remit the outstanding amount within the next X days, please?"
- "I was wondering, how you have been and if you haven't been satisfied with product xyz, since we did not receive any payment from your side."
- "Can you perhaps remit the outstanding amount within the next X days?"
- "We kindly ask you to remit the outstanding amount within the next X days."
- "I would appreciate your transferring the remaining amount within X days."
- "Kindly remit the outstanding amount within the next X days."
- "Remit the outstanding amount within the next X days."
- "I'm afraid to ask you to remit the outstanding amount within the next X days."
- "We are afraid to ask you to remit the outstanding amount within the next X days."
- "May I ask you to remit the outstanding amount within the next X days."
- I would say it differently. I would say:

**IMAGINE the following situation and make a spontaneous choice - there are no right or wrong answers:**
**You are a customer. You have a had a problem with a software and have posted it to a company's support team. Now you are asked to send a screenshot. How would you most likely prefer to be addressed?**

- "Send us a screenshot showing x."
- "We would be very grateful, if you could send us a screenshot showing x."
- "Please, send us a screenshot showing x."
- "To solve problem x we would need a screenshot showing x."
- "Could you send us a screenshot showing x?"
- "Could you, please, send us a screenshot showing x?"
- "Can you perhaps send us a screenshot showing x?"
- "A screenshot showing x would be really helpful to find a solution."
- "I need a screenshot showing x in order to find a solution."
- "We need a screenshot showing x in order to find a solution."
- I would say it differently. I would say:

**IMAGINE the following situation and make a spontaneous choice - there are no right or wrong answers:**
**You are a customer and have ordered a product. But unfortunately you have entered an incorrect credit card number during the payment process. Now you are being asked to repeat the order. How would you most likely prefer to be addressed?**

- "We kindly ask you to repeat the order."
- "Please, repeat the order."
- "Repeat the order."
- "Could you possibly repeat the order?"
- "Can you repeat the order, please?"
- "The order needs to be repeated."
- "We are afraid, you will have to repeat the order."
- "May I kindly ask you to repeat the order?"
- "You will have to repeat the order."
- "You ought to repeat the order."
- I would say it differently. I would say:

## A.3.2 Overview over places of birth for all participants

| Place of birth | Number of participants |
|---|---|
| Afghanistan | 1 |
| Argentina | 1 |
| Australia | 2 |
| Austria | 121 |
| Bahrein | 1 |
| Bangladesh | 2 |
| Belarus | 3 |
| Belgium | 1 |
| Bosnia & Herzegowina | 2 |
| Brazil | 5 |
| Bulgaria | 2 |
| Cameroon | 2 |
| Canada | 11 |
| China | 8 |
| Croatia | 2 |
| Cuba | 1 |
| Czech Republic | 1 |
| Denmark | 15 |
| Egypt | 3 |
| Finland | 2 |
| France | 8 |
| Germany | 135 |
| Ghana | 2 |
| Greece | 5 |
| HongKong | 5 |
| India | 137 |
| Iran | 3 |
| Ireland | 9 |
| Israel | 1 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Italy | 4 |
| Jamaica | 1 |
| Korea, South | 1 |
| Kuwait | 1 |
| Lithuania | 1 |
| Luxembourg | 2 |
| Mexico | 3 |
| Morocco | 2 |
| Netherlands | 9 |
| New Zealand | 4 |
| Norway | 2 |
| Panama | 1 |
| Peru | 1 |
| Poland | 3 |
| Romania | 7 |
| Russia | 11 |
| Saint Vincent and the Grenadines | 1 |
| Sierra Leone | 1 |
| Slovakia | 1 |
| South Africa | 6 |
| Spain | 17 |
| Sri Lanka | 2 |
| Sweden | 22 |
| Switzerland | 6 |
| Taiwan | 4 |
| Tanzania | 2 |
| Thailand | 7 |
| Tunisia | 1 |
| Turkey | 5 |
| Uganda | 1 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Ukraine | 1 |
| United Kingdom | 140 |
| United States | 121 |
| Uzbekistan | 1 |
| Venezuela | 1 |

### A.3.3 Overview over number of participants for main focus groups

A focus group consists of more than 100 representatives; its members share the place of birth AND the country of residence in which they have spent more than 50% during the 12 months prior to filling out the survey. Furthermore, members of a focus group share the main countries of education, i.e., they have spent more than 50% of their educational time in the same country (= "Country 1") as their fellow focus group members. For example, all members of the focus group "Austria" were born in Austria, have spent more than 50% of their educational time in Austria, and have been resident in Austria for more than 50% during the 12 months prior to filling out the survey.

| Place of birth | Country 1 of primary education (e.g. Elementary school) | Country 1 of secondary education (e.g. Middle school) | Country 1 of tertiary education (e.g. High school) | Country 1 of higher education (e.g. University) | Country of residence | Assignment to Focus Group | Number of participants |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Austria | Austria | Austria | Austria | Austria | Austria | Austria | 119 |
| Germany | Germany | Germany | Germany | Germany | Germany | Germany | 126 |
| India | India | India | India | India | India | India | 120 |
| UK | UK | UK | UK | UK | UK | UK | 123 |
| USA | USA | USA | USA | USA | USA | USA | 119 |

### A.3.4 Overview over “Country 1” of education and respective length of time

| | | 2 years | 3 years | 4 years | 5 years | 6 years | 7 years | 8 years | 9 years | 10 years |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Country 1 of primary education | Austria | 0 | 1 | 114 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Germany | 0 | 0 | 126 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | India | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 18[82] | 102 |
| | UK | 6 | 6 | 43 | 31 | 17 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | USA | 0 | 10 | 20 | 21 | 53 | 11 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| Country 1 of secondary education | | 2 years | 3 years | 4 years | 5 years | 6 years | 7 years | 8 years | 9 years | 10 years |
| | Austria | 0 | 1 | 72 | 46 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Germany | 0 | 3 | 9 | 102 | 3 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | India | 0 | 2 | 47 | 66 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | UK | 3 | 39 | 22 | 31 | 0 | 28 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | USA | 45 | 63 | 11 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Country 1 of tertiary education | | 2 years | 3 years | 4 years | 5 years | 6 years | 7 years | 8 years | 9 years | 10 years |
| | Austria | 0 | 18 | 18 | 72 | 6 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| | Germany | 36 | 88 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | India | 12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | UK | 24 | 59 | 4 | 36 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | USA | 1 | 9 | 108 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Country 1 of higher education | | 2 years | 3 years | 4 years | 5 years | 6 years | 7 years | 8 years | 9 years | 10 years |
| | Austria | 7 | 26 | 13 | 41 | 7 | 6 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| | Germany | 0 | 57 | 23 | 39 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | India | 8 | 43 | 35 | 19 | 1 | 11 | 1 | 0 | 0 |

[82] The figures for FG India are higher, since in India “primary education” refers to the education provided to children aged 5-14 years.

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | UK | 8 | 1 | 6 | 4 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| | USA | 1 | 4 | 19 | 24 | 30 | 28 | 7 | 4 | 3 |

### A.3.5 Overview over number of FG members who spent educational phases in countries other than "Country 1"

Primary education

| | Number of participants of FG Austria | Number of participants of FG Germany | Number of participants of FG India | Number of participants of FG UK | Number of participants of FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Argentina | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Australia | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Canada | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| France | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Iraq | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Malaysia | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Oman | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |

| | 1 year | 2 years |
|---|---|---|
| Argentina | 1 | 0 |
| Australia | 1 | 0 |
| Canada | 0 | 2 |
| France | 1 | 0 |
| Iraq | 1 | 0 |
| Malaysia | 1 | 0 |
| Oman | 1 | 0 |

## Secondary education

| | Number of participants of FG Austria | Number of participants of FG Germany | Number of participants of FG India | Number of participants of FG UK | Number of participants of FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| France | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Netherlands | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| South Africa | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| UK | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| USA | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |

| | < 0.5 year | 1 year | 8 years |
|---|---|---|---|
| France | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Netherlands | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| South Africa | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| UK | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| United Kingdom | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| United States | 0 | 1 | 0 |

## Tertiary education

| | Number of participants of FG Austria | Number of participants of FG Germany | Number of participants of FG India | Number of participants of FG UK | Number of participants of FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Canada | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Denmark | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Finland | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Germany | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Liechtenstein | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Malaysia | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Netherlands | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| New Zealand | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Switzerland | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| United Kingdom | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| United States | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| | 1 year | 2 years |
|---|---|---|
| Canada | 1 | 0 |
| Denmark | 1 | 0 |
| Finland | 1 | 0 |
| Germany | 3 | 0 |
| Liechtenstein | 3 | 0 |
| Malaysia | 1 | 0 |
| Netherlands | 0 | 1 |
| New Zealand | 0 | 1 |
| Switzerland | 2 | 0 |
| United Kingdom | 2 | 0 |
| United States | 1 | 0 |

## Higher education

| | Number of participants of FG Austria | Number of participants of FG Germany | Number of participants of FG India | Number of participants of FG UK | Number of participants of FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Australia | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Belgium | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Brazil | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Canada | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| China | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Czech Republic | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Denmark | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Finland | 4 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| France | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Germany | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Hong Kong | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Japan | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Korea, South | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Netherlands | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Norway | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Poland | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Republic of Ireland | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Saudi Arabia | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Singapore | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| South Africa | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Spain | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Sweden | 0 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Switzerland | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| United Arab Emirates | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| United Kingdom | 0 | 7 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| United States | 4 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 |

| | 0.5 year | 1 year | 2 years | 3 years | 4 years | 5 years |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Australia | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Belgium | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Brazil | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Canada | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| China | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Czech Republic | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Denmark | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Finland | 0 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| France | 2 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Germany | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Hong Kong | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Japan | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Korea, South | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Netherlands | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Norway | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Poland | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Republic of Ireland | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Saudi Arabia | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Singapore | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| South Africa | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Spain | 2 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Sweden | 0 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Switzerland | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| United Arab Emirates | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| United Kingdom | 1 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| United States | 0 | 4 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

### A.3.6 Overview over language profile of FG members

Distribution of first languages of FG members acquired between the ages of 0-3

| | FG Austria | FG Germany | FG India | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bengali | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| English | 0 | 0 | 0 | 123 | 119 |
| German | 119 | 119 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Hindi | 0 | 0 | 86 | 0 | 0 |
| Malayalam | 0 | 0 | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| Polish | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Punjabi | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Russian | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Tamil | 0 | 1 | 20 | 0 | 0 |
| Turkish | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Length of time during which first languages have been used actively

| | 2 years | 3 years | 6 years | 9 years | > 10 years | > 20 years | > 30 years | > 40 years | > 50 years |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bengali | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| English | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 25 | 89 | 39 | 43 | 44 |
| German | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 125 | 79 | 24 | 6 |
| Hindi | 7 | 10 | 0 | 6 | 11 | 21 | 6 | 22 | 3 |
| Malayalam | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Polish | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Punjabi | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Russian | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Tamil | 0 | 6 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 6 | 1 | 4 | 0 |
| Turkish | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 |

Distribution of second languages of FG members acquired between the ages of 0-3

| | FG Austria | FG Germany | FG India | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bengali | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Chinese | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| Croatian | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Dutch | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| English | 0 | 0 | 120 | 0 | 0 |
| French | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| German | 0 | 7 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Hindi | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Polish | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| Romanian | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 0 |
| Russian | 1 | 0 | 0 | 12 | 0 |
| Slovenian | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Tamil | 0 | 0 | 0 | 12 | 0 |
| Turkish | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Urdu | 0 | 0 | 0 | 12 | 0 |

| | 3 years | 6 years | 10 years | > 10 years | > 20 years | > 30 years | > 40 years | > 50 years |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bengali | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Chinese | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Croatian | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Dutch | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| English | 13 | 20 | 1 | 44 | 6 | 24 | 11 | 1 |
| French | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| German | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| Hindi | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Polish | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Romanian | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Russian | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Slovenian | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Tamil | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Turkish | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Urdu | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 |

Distribution of languages of FG members learnt between the ages of 10-13

| | FG Austria | FG Germany | FG India | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Arabic | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Bengali | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Dutch | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| English | 118 | 109 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| French | 1 | 12 | 0 | 15 | 0 |
| German | 0 | 0 | 1 | 9 | 0 |
| Portuguese | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Russian | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Spanish | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| | < 1 year | 1 year | 2 years | 3 years | 4 years | 5 years | 6 years | 7 years | 8 years | 10 years | > 10 years | > 20 years | > 30 years | > 40 years | > 50 years |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Arabic | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Bengali | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Dutch | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| English | 0 | 1 | 20 | 0 | 1 | 23 | 0 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 144 | 21 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| French | 4 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 7 | 6 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 0 |
| German | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Portuguese | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Russian | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Spanish | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |

Distribution of languages of FG members learnt between the ages of 13-16

| | FG Austria | FG Germany | FG India | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| English | 0 | 11 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| French | 7 | 9 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| German | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 3 |
| Hindi | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Italian | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Spanish | 1 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 7 |
| Swedish | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Tamil | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |

| | < 1 year | 1 year | 2 years | 3 months | 3 years | 5 years | 6 years | 9 years | 10 years | > 10 years | > 20 years | > 30 years | > 40 years |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| English | 7 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| French | 6 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| German | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Hindi | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Italian | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Spanish | 1 | 0 | 6 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Swedish | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Tamil | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Distribution of languages of FG members learnt after the age of 18

| | FG Austria | FG Germany | FG India | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Chinese | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Czech | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Danish | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Dutch | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| English | 0 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Finnish | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| French | 13 | 36 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| German | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Hindi | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Indonesian | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Italian | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Japanese | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Polish | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Russian | 0 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Spanish | 5 | 14 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Swedish | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| | < 1 year | 1 year | 2 years | 3 years | 4 years | 5 years | 6 years | 7 years | 8 years | 9 years | 10 years | > 10 years | > 20 years |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Chinese | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Czech | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Danish | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Dutch | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| English | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 2 |
| Finnish | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| French | 8 | 7 | 2 | 7 | 5 | 7 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 7 | 1 |
| German | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| | < 1 year | 1 year | 2 years | 3 years | 4 years | 5 years | 6 years | 7 years | 8 years | 9 years | 10 years | > 10 years | > 20 years |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Hindi | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Indonesian | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Italian | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Japanese | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Polish | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Russian | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Spanish | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Swedish | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |

### A.3.7 Distribution of languages according to domains

Family

| | | Austria | Germany | India | UK | USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Language 1 | Bengali | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| | Chinese | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 |
| | Croatian | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | English | 0 | 0 | 0 | 62 | 123 |
| | French | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | German | 109 | 102 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Hindi | 0 | 0 | 86 | 1 | 0 |
| | Malayalam | 0 | 0 | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| | Polish | 0 | 7 | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| | Punjabi | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| | Romanian | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 0 |
| | Russian | 2 | 4 | 0 | 14 | 0 |
| | Slovenian | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Tamil | 0 | 4 | 20 | 14 | 0 |
| | Turkish | 4 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Urdu | 0 | 0 | 0 | 14 | 0 |

| | | **Austria** | **Germany** | **India** | **UK** | **USA** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Language 2 | Bengali | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | Dutch | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| | English | 0 | 0 | 52 | 33 | 0 |
| | French | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | German | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 |

## Friends

| | | Austria | Germany | India | UK | USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Language 1 | Bengali | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| | Chinese | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| | English | 0 | 0 | 0 | 114 | 123 |
| | German | 119 | 126 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Hindi | 0 | 0 | 86 | 0 | 0 |
| | Malayalam | 0 | 0 | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| | Polish | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| | Punjabi | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| | Russian | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| | Tamil | 0 | 0 | 20 | 2 | 0 |
| | Urdu | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Language 2 | Chinese | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| | Dutch | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | English | 20 | 24 | 65 | 5 | 0 |
| | French | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Hindi | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| | Polish | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| | Romanian | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 0 |
| | Russian | 0 | 1 | 0 | 17 | 0 |
| | Tamil | 0 | 0 | 0 | 16 | 0 |
| | Turkish | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Urdu | 0 | 0 | 0 | 14 | 0 |

| | | Austria | Germany | India | UK | USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Language 3 | English | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | French | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| | Spanish | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Tamil | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| | Turkish | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

## Neighbors

| | | Austria | Germany | India | UK | USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Language 1 | Bengali | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| | English | 0 | 0 | 0 | 123 | 119 |
| | German | 119 | 126 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Hindi | 0 | 0 | 86 | 0 | 0 |
| | Malayalam | 0 | 0 | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| | Punjabi | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| | Tamil | 0 | 0 | 20 | 0 | 0 |
| Language 2 | English | 0 | 0 | 52 | 0 | 0 |
| | Hindi | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| | Romanian | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| | Russian | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| | Tamil | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| | Turkish | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Language 3 | English | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| | German | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| | Tamil | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |

## Fellow students

| | | Austria | Germany | India | UK | USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Language 1 | Bengali | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| | English | 0 | 0 | 0 | 110 | 86 |
| | German | 111 | 67 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Hindi | 0 | 0 | 86 | 0 | 0 |
| | Malayalam | 0 | 0 | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| | Punjabi | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| | Tamil | 0 | 0 | 20 | 0 | 0 |
| Language 2 | English | 21 | 21 | 120 | 0 | 0 |
| | French | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | German | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| | Russian | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| | Spanish | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Language 3 | English | 0 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | French | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | German | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| | Hindi | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| | Spanish | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Urdu | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |

## Fellow students

| | | Austria | Germany | India | UK | USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Language 1 | Bengali | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| | English | 0 | 0 | 0 | 92 | 87 |
| | German | 75 | 54 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Hindi | 0 | 0 | 86 | 0 | 0 |
| | Malayalam | 0 | 0 | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| | Punjabi | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| | Tamil | 0 | 0 | 20 | 0 | 0 |
| L | Dutch | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| | | Austria | Germany | India | UK | USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | English | 11 | 23 | 51 | 0 | 0 |
| | French | 1 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | German | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| | Russian | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| | Spanish | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Language 3 | English | 0 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | German | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| | Hindi | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |

## Co-employees

| | | Austria | Germany | India | UK | USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Language 1 | English | 0 | 0 | 96 | 91 | 83 |
| | German | 92 | 87 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Hindi | 0 | 0 | 18 | 0 | 0 |
| | Malayalam | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| | Punjabi | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| | Tamil | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Language 2 | English | 13 | 35 | 24 | 0 | 0 |
| | German | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| | Hindi | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| | Russian | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Language 3 | German | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| | Tamil | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |

Employers

| | | Austria | Germany | India | UK | USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Language 1 | English | 0 | 0 | 99 | 117 | 119 |
| | German | 119 | 126 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Hindi | 0 | 0 | 16 | 0 | 0 |
| | Malayalam | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| | Punjabi | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| | Tamil | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Language 2 | English | 13 | 27 | 21 | 0 | 0 |
| | German | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Language 3 | Hindi | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| | Russian | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |

Customers/cooperation partners

| | | Austria | Germany | India | UK | USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Language 1 | English | 7 | 0 | 120 | 120 | 119 |
| Language 2 | German | 67 | 126 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | English | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Language 3 | French | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

### A.3.8 Overall frequencies of participants' tasks/professional experiences

| | FG Austria | FG Germany | FG India | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Technical Development | 8 | 4 | 13 | 8 | 9 |
| Research | 1 | 17 | 3 | 15 | 38 |
| Studying | 9 | 11 | 1 | 16 | 26 |
| Teaching | 1 | 18 | 6 | 9 | 31 |
| Technical Testing | 4 | 10 | 7 | 8 | 2 |
| Human Resources | 3 | 5 | 4 | 15 | |
| Public Relations | | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 |

| | FG Austria | FG Germany | FG India | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Customer Support | 27 | 13 | 18 | 11 | 39 |
| Marketing | 16 | 2 | 7 | 6 | 2 |
| Sales | 31 | 14 | 18 | 19 | 42 |
| Language Services | 11 | 3 | 3 | 12 | 4 |
| Business Controlling | 9 | 11 | 3 | 3 | 2 |
| Business Management | 2 | 1 | 7 | 8 | 3 |
| Administration | 3 | 17 | 19 | 4 | 6 |
| Consulting | 1 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 2 |
| Quality Management | | | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| Health care | | | 3 | 2 | |
| Journalism | | | | 5 | |

### A.3.9 Overall frequencies of preferred modality types per situation and focus group

| modality type | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA | Situation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| dynamic willingness | 0.0% | 0.9% | 1.1% | 2.4% | 1.9% | 1 |
| epistemic possibility | 15.4% | 7.1% | 10.3% | 7.3% | 8.7% | 1 |
| deontic permission | 11.5% | 26.8% | 34.5% | 14.6% | 8.7% | 1 |
| epistemic necessity | 3.8% | 6.2% | 4.6% | 7.3% | 11.5% | 1 |
| dynamic ability | 30.8% | 32.1% | 25.3% | 46.3% | 32.7% | 1 |
| imperative + please | 38.5% | 26.8% | 24.1% | 22.0% | 36.5% | 1 |
| dynamic willingness | 0.0% | 6.4% | 6.3% | 0.0% | 3.5% | 2 |
| deontic permission | 16.0% | 9.2% | 10.0% | 7.7% | 3.5% | 2 |
| deontic obligation | 4.0% | 9.2% | 2.5% | 3.8% | 7.0% | 2 |
| dynamic ability | 24.0% | 13.8% | 26.3% | 15.4% | 16.3% | 2 |
| epistemic possibility | 32.0% | 21.1% | 28.8% | 19.2% | 17.4% | 2 |
| imperative + please | 16.0% | 14.7% | 10.0% | 23.1% | 17.4% | 2 |
| epistemic necessity | 8.0% | 25.7% | 16.3% | 30.8% | 34.9% | 2 |

| modality type | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA | Situation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| dynamic willingness | 3.8% | 0.0% | 2.4% | 4.8% | 0.0% | 3 |
| epistemic possibility | 26.9% | 12.5% | 16.7% | 23.8% | 4.0% | 3 |
| deontic obligation | 0.0% | 6.3% | 4.8% | 0.0% | 5.3% | 3 |
| deontic permission | 19.2% | 15.6% | 4.8% | 19.0% | 8.0% | 3 |
| epistemic necessity | 0.0% | 8.3% | 11.9% | 4.8% | 9.3% | 3 |
| dynamic ability | 11.5% | 9.4% | 14.3% | 19.0% | 24.0% | 3 |
| imperative + please | 38.5% | 47.9% | 45.2% | 28.6% | 49.3% | 3 |
| deontic obligation | 0.0% | 9.4% | 0.0% | 4.3% | 6.5% | 4 |
| deontic permission | 5.6% | 29.1% | 50.0% | 6.7% | 10.9% | 4 |
| imperative + kindly | 43.5% | 22.1% | 17.0% | 5.2% | 13.4% | 4 |
| epistemic possibility | 35.4% | 19.0% | 7.6% | 43.3% | 34.5% | 4 |
| dynamic ability | 16.2% | 20.5% | 25.4% | 39.7% | 35.2% | 4 |
| imperative + please | 0.0% | 1.1% | 3.1% | 2.3% | 2.6% | 5 |
| epistemic possibility | 0.0% | 1.1% | 1.6% | 1.6% | 3.0% | 5 |
| epistemic necessity | 6.3% | 11.1% | 3.2% | 3.2% | 4.5% | 5 |
| deontic permission | 12.5% | 17.8% | 19.4% | 19.4% | 10.6% | 5 |
| dynamic willingness | 6.3% | 7.8% | 4.8% | 4.8% | 15.2% | 5 |
| dynamic ability | 75.0% | 62.2% | 71.0% | 71.0% | 66.7% | 5 |
| dynamic willingness | 0.0% | 0.0% | 1.2% | 0.0% | 2.6% | 6 |
| deontic obligation | 3.9% | 3.9% | 3.6% | 8.7% | 5.1% | 6 |
| epistemic possibility | 15.4% | 4.8% | 4.8% | 8.7% | 6.4% | 6 |
| epistemic necessity | 0.0% | 11.5% | 9.6% | 0.0% | 9.0% | 6 |
| deontic permission | 57.7% | 26.0% | 32.5% | 17.4% | 10.3% | 6 |
| dynamic ability | 7.7% | 20.2% | 9.6% | 8.7% | 28.2% | 6 |
| imperative + please | 15.4% | 33.7% | 38.6% | 56.5% | 38.5% | 6 |

## A.4 Frequencies for modal expressions, request strategies, request perspective and focus groups for each modality level

### Situation 1

Deontic permission

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| May | Hedged performative | Speaker-oriented | 8 | 20 | 32 | 1 | 2 |
| Can | Hedged performative | Speaker-oriented | 6 | 14 | 9 | 17 | 8 |
| Number of participants | | | 14 | 34 | 41 | 18 | 10 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | 11.5% | 26.8% | 34.5% | 14.6% | 8.7% |

Dynamic ability

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Can | Query preparatory | Hearer-oriented | 12 | 12 | 6 | 39 | 9 |
| Could | Query preparatory | Hearer-oriented | 25 | 28 | 24 | 18 | 30 |
| Number of participants | | | 37 | 40 | 30 | 57 | 39 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | 30.8% | 32.1% | 25.3% | 46.3% | 32.7% |

Dynamic willingness

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Would | Query preparatory | Hearer-oriented | 0 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 2 |
| Number of participants | | | 0 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 2 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | 0.0% | 0.9% | 1.1% | 2.4% | 1.9% |

Epistemic necessity

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Need | Want statement | Speaker-oriented | 4 | 2 | 4 | 8 | 6 |
| Need | Explicit performative | Speaker-oriented | 1 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 8 |
| Number of participants | | | 5 | 8 | 5 | 9 | 14 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | 3.8% | 6.2% | 4.6% | 7.3% | 11.5% |

Epistemic possibility

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Might | Hedged performative | Impersonal | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 |
| Would | Hedged performative | Impersonal | 16 | 8 | 12 | 7 | 9 |
| Number of participants | | | 18 | 9 | 12 | 9 | 10 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | 15.4% | 7.1% | 10.3% | 7.3% | 8.7% |

Imperative + please

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Imperative | Mood derivable | Speaker-oriented | 46 | 34 | 29 | 27 | 43 |
| Number of participants | | | 46 | 34 | 29 | 27 | 43 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | 38.5% | 26.8% | 24.1% | 22.0% | 36.5% |

## Situation 2

### Deontic obligation

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Must | Obligation statements | Hearer-oriented | 1 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Need to | Obligation statements | Hearer-oriented | 3 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 3 |
| Have to | Obligation statements | Hearer-oriented | 1 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 1 |
| Number of participants | | | 5 | 12 | 3 | 5 | 8 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | 4.0% | 9.2% | 2.5% | 3.8% | 7.0% |

### Deontic permission

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| May | Hedged performative | Speaker-oriented | 9 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| Can | Hedged performative | Speaker-oriented | 10 | 11 | 10 | 7 | 4 |
| Number of participants | | | 19 | 12 | 12 | 9 | 4 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | 16.0% | 9.2% | 10.0% | 7.7% | 3.5% |

### Dynamic ability

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Can | Query preparatory | Hearer-oriented | 8 | 9 | 15 | 18 | 3 |
| Could | Query preparatory | Hearer-oriented | 21 | 8 | 16 | 1 | 16 |
| Number of participants | | | 29 | 17 | 31 | 19 | 19 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | 24.0% | 13.8% | 26.3% | 15.4% | 16.3% |

### Dynamic willingness

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Would | Query preparatory | Hearer-oriented | 0 | 8 | 7 | 0 | 4 |
| Number of participants | | | 0 | 8 | 7 | 0 | 4 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | 0.0% | 6.4% | 6.3% | 0.0% | 3.5% |

### Epistemic necessity

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Need | Obligation statement | Impersonal | 10 | 32 | 19 | 38 | 42 |
| Number of participants | | | 10 | 32 | 19 | 38 | 42 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | 8.0% | 25.7% | 16.3% | 30.8% | 34.9% |

### Epistemic possibility

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Might | Hedged performative | Impersonal | 32 | 6 | 3 | 19 | 2 |
| Would | Hedged performative | Impersonal | 6 | 21 | 31 | 5 | 19 |
| Number of participants | | | 38 | 27 | 34 | 24 | 21 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | 32.0% | 21.1% | 28.8% | 19.2% | 17.4% |

### Imperative + please

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Imperative | Mood derivable | Speaker-oriented | 19 | 18 | 12 | 28 | 21 |
| Number of participants | | | 19 | 18 | 12 | 28 | 21 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | 16.0% | 14.7% | 10.0% | 23.1% | 17.4% |

## Situation 3

### Deontic obligation

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Must | Obligation statements | Hearer-oriented | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Need to | Obligation statements | Hearer-oriented | 0 | 6 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Have to | Obligation statements | Hearer-oriented | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Should | Obligation statements | Hearer-oriented | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 5 |
| Ought to | Obligation statements | Hearer-oriented | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Number of participants | | | 0 | 8 | 6 | 0 | 6 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | 0.0% | 6.3% | 4.8% | 0.0% | 5.3% |

### Deontic permission

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| May | Hedged performative | Speaker-oriented | 19 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 5 |
| Can | Hedged performative | Speaker-oriented | 4 | 15 | 1 | 19 | 5 |
| Number of participants | | | 23 | 20 | 6 | 23 | 10 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | 19.2% | 15.6% | 4.8% | 19.0% | 8.0% |

### Dynamic ability

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Can | Query preparatory | Hearer-oriented | 4 | 9 | 5 | 19 | 15 |
| Could | Query preparatory | Hearer-oriented | 10 | 3 | 12 | 4 | 14 |
| Number of participants | | | 14 | 12 | 17 | 23 | 29 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | 11.5% | 9.4% | 14.3% | 19.0% | 24.0% |

## Dynamic willingness

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Would | Query preparatory | Hearer-oriented | 5 | 0 | 3 | 6 | 0 |
| Number of participants | | | 5 | 0 | 3 | 6 | 0 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | 3.8% | 0.0% | 2.4% | 4.8% | 0.0% |

## Epistemic necessity

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Need | Want statement | Speaker-oriented | 0 | 9 | 4 | 0 | 8 |
| Need | Explicit performative | Speaker-oriented | 0 | 2 | 10 | 6 | 3 |
| Number of participants | | | 0 | 11 | 14 | 6 | 11 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | 0.0% | 8.3% | 11.9% | 4.8% | 9.3% |

## Epistemic possibility

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Might | Hedged performative | Impersonal | 29 | 5 | 16 | 25 | 0 |
| Would | Hedged performative | Impersonal | 3 | 9 | 4 | 4 | 5 |
| Number of participants | | | 32 | 16 | 20 | 29 | 5 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | 26.9% | 12.5% | 16.7% | 23.8% | 4.0% |

Imperative + please

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Imperative | Mood derivable | Speaker-oriented | 46 | 60 | 54 | 35 | 59 |
| Number of participants | | | 46 | 60 | 54 | 35 | 59 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | 38.5% | 47.9% | 45.2% | 28.6% | 49.3% |

## Situation 4

Deontic obligation

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Must | Obligation statements | Hearer-oriented | 0 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Need to | Obligation statements | Hearer-oriented | 0 | 9 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Have to | Obligation statements | Hearer-oriented | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Should | Obligation statements | Hearer-oriented | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 6 |
| Number of participants | | | 0 | 12 | 0 | 5 | 8 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | 0.0% | 9.4% | 0.0% | 4.3% | 6.5% |

Deontic permission

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| May | Hedged performative | Speaker-oriented | 6 | 4 | 52 | 3 | 3 |
| Can | Hedged performative | Speaker-oriented | 1 | 33 | 7 | 5 | 10 |
| Number of participants | | | 7 | 37 | 59 | 8 | 13 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | 5.6% | 29.1% | 50.0% | 6.7% | 10.9% |

Dynamic ability

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Can | Query preparatory | Hearer-oriented | 2 | 0 | 6 | 42 | 3 |
| Could | Query preparatory | Hearer-oriented | 17 | 26 | 24 | 7 | 39 |
| Number of participants | | | 19 | 26 | 30 | 49 | 42 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | 16.2% | 20.5% | 25.4% | 39.7% | 35.2% |

Epistemic possibility

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Might | Hedged performative | Impersonal | 38 | 0 | 0 | 49 | 6 |
| Would | Hedged performative | Impersonal | 4 | 24 | 9 | 4 | 35 |
| Number of participants | | | 42 | 24 | 9 | 53 | 41 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | 35.4% | 19.0% | 7.6% | 43.3% | 34.5% |

Imperative + kindly

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Imperative | Mood derivable | Speaker-oriented | 52 | 28 | 20 | 6 | 16 |
| Number of participants | | | 52 | 28 | 20 | 6 | 16 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | 43.5% | 22.1% | 17.0% | 5.2% | 13.4% |

## Situation 5

### Deontic permission

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| May | Hedged performative | Speaker-oriented | 15 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 13 |
| Number of participants | | | 15 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 13 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | 12.500% | 17.778% | 19.355% | 19.355% | 10.606% |

### Dynamic ability

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Can | Query preparatory | Hearer-oriented | 18 | 6 | 14 | 79 | 4 |
| Could | Query preparatory | Hearer-oriented | 72 | 72 | 70 | 8 | 75 |
| Number of participants | | | 90 | 78 | 84 | 87 | 79 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | 75.000% | 62.222% | 70.968% | 70.968% | 66.667% |

### Dynamic willingness

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Would | Query preparatory | Hearer-oriented | 8 | 10 | 6 | 6 | 18 |
| Number of participants | | | 8 | 10 | 6 | 6 | 18 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | 6.250% | 7.778% | 4.839% | 4.839% | 15.152% |

## Epistemic necessity

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Need | Want statement | Speaker-oriented | 1 | 12 | 0 | 2 | 5 |
| Need | Explicit performative | Speaker-oriented | 7 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 0 |
| Number of participants | | | 8 | 14 | 4 | 4 | 5 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | 6.250% | 11.111% | 3.226% | 3.226% | 4.545% |

## Epistemic possibility

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Might | Hedged performative | Impersonal | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| Would | Hedged performative | Impersonal | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Number of participants | | | 0 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | 0.000% | 1.111% | 1.613% | 1.613% | 3.030% |

## Imperative + please

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Imperative | Mood derivable | Speaker-oriented | 0 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| Number of participants | | | 0 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | 0.030% | 1.118% | 3.111% | 2.334% | 2.551% |

## Situation 6

### Deontic obligation

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Must | Obligation statements | Hearer-oriented | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Need to | Obligation statements | Hearer-oriented | 0 | 3 | 0 | 6 | 2 |
| Have to | Obligation statements | Hearer-oriented | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Should | Obligation statements | Hearer-oriented | 5 | 0 | 4 | 3 | 4 |
| Number of participants | | | 5 | 5 | 4 | 11 | 6 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | 3.85% | 3.85% | 3.61% | 8.70% | 5.13% |

### Deontic permission

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| May | Hedged performative | Speaker-oriented | 57 | 4 | 32 | 20 | 4 |
| Can | Hedged performative | Speaker-oriented | 12 | 29 | 7 | 1 | 8 |
| Number of participants | | | 69 | 33 | 39 | 21 | 12 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | 57.69% | 25.96% | 32.53% | 17.39% | 10.26% |

## Dynamic ability

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Can | Query preparatory | Hearer-oriented | 4 | 5 | 1 | 11 | 5 |
| Could | Query preparatory | Hearer-oriented | 5 | 20 | 10 | 0 | 29 |
| Number of participants | | | 9 | 25 | 11 | 11 | 34 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | 7.69% | 20.19% | 9.64% | 8.70% | 28.21% |

## Dynamic willingness

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Would | Query preparatory | Hearer-oriented | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| Number of participants | | | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | 0.00% | 0.00% | 1.20% | 0.00% | 2.56% |

## Epistemic necessity

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Need | Want statement | Speaker-oriented | 0 | 12 | 5 | 0 | 4 |
| Need | Explicit performative | Speaker-oriented | 0 | 3 | 6 | 0 | 7 |
| Number of participants | | | 0 | 15 | 11 | 0 | 11 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | 0.00% | 11.54% | 9.64% | 0.00% | 8.97% |

Epistemic possibility

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Might | Hedged performative | Impersonal | 17 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 4 |
| Would | Hedged performative | Impersonal | 1 | 6 | 6 | 1 | 4 |
| Number of participants | | | 18 | 6 | 6 | 11 | 8 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | 15.38% | 4.81% | 4.82% | 8.70% | 6.41% |

Imperative + please

| Modal expression | Request strategy | Request perspective | FG India | FG Germany | FG Austria | FG UK | FG USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Imperative | Mood derivable | Speaker-oriented | 18 | 42 | 46 | 70 | 46 |
| Number of participants | | | 18 | 42 | 46 | 70 | 46 |
| Reference relative frequencies | | | 15.38% | 33.65% | 38.55% | 56.52% | 38.46% |

## A.5 Twitter analysis

### Tweets sent to customer support accounts

Examples of YourTwapperkeeper retrieval:

| TEXT | TO_USER_ID | FROM_USER | ID | FROM_USER_ID | ISO_LANGUAGE_CODE | GEO_TYPE | GEO_COORDINATES_0 | GEO_COORDINATES_1 | CREATED_AT | TIME |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| @airberlin When u find Reference: TXLAB27871/ 26SEP11/1619 GMT, 2 lost between Dusseldorf & Berlin today, please send to #RitzCarlton Berlin! | 26223583 | SteveCokkinias | 1,18E+28 | 274053741 | en | | 0 | 0 | Mon Sep 26 17:53:42 +0000 2011 | 1317059622 |
| @airtel_presence: Mr Anoop, with regards to our conversation, no one yet has come to check the connection. Please update. | 89513747 | abhishekmohta | 1,22E+28 | 35850503 | en | | 0 | 0 | Fri, 07 Oct 2011 13:33:06 +0000 | 1317994386 |
| .@_austrian: Flooded areas in and around #Bangkok: Please plan ahead if you going to #Suvarnabhumi Airport. http://t.co/C43GkIL1 #oervinfo | | oerv_info | 1,27E+28 | 390127912 | en | | 0 | 0 | Thu, 20 Oct 2011 09:54:46 +0000 | 1319104486 |
| @DB_Bahn I need help with my bahn card | 278581822 | syc12002 | 1,29E+28 | 429931598 | en | | 0 | 0 | Mon, 24 Oct 2011 17:37:17 +0000 | 1319477837 |
| @DeutschePostDHL I need to contact the customer service department. have some issues with Dhahran-KSA branch. | 40428749 | MuslehJameel | 1,29E+27 | 16822308 | en | | 0 | 0 | Tue, 25 Oct 2011 22:35:31 +0000 | 1319582131 |
| @Lufthansa_DE Would be nice to hear back from you regarding this: http://t.co/leqtHLQo Thank you for your prompt response. | 14589577 | LiveandLetsFly | 1,23E+28 | 377963790 | en | | 0 | 0 | Mon, 10 Oct 2011 20:08:04 +0000 | 1318277284 |
| @NokiaIndia Kindly help me to get my money money back without without further wasting my time...... nokia E6-00 is not a business phone. | 39898915 | Arinjay5 | 1,22E+28 | 129119121 | en | | 0 | 0 | Thu, 06 Oct 2011 07:32:12 +0000 | 1317886332 |
| @NokiaIndia Wen is the N9 releasing in INDIA?? Plz do say!!! | 134059205 | VK_MUFC | 1,21E+28 | 148649410 | en | | 0 | 0 | Mon Oct 03 16:20:17 +0000 2011 | 1317658817 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| @VodafoneUK hello, would u b able to help me? the mobile web on my fone isn't working it just keeps saying "service unavailable" | @VodafoneIN 68 rupees deducted frm account, i have my weekly netpack, m nt texting, dont have caller tune.My balance is -19. Kindly explain. | @UKTesco Hi tesco, can you PLEASE get some more staff at the elephant & castle shopping centre, the queues are constantly insane! | Hi '@airberlin'!A:L could you please tweet me your contact information (e-mail address)? | @TMobileUK Please can you give me some sort of answer, When will the Atrix get 2.3 update? ive heard we are not getting it now? | @NokiaIndia *will u plz tell me about #Nokia dual sim mobile only, cuz I'v 2 buy |
| 4766254 | 51224366 | 258481540 | 351460319 | 351243446 | 39898915 |
| ktc307 | adityakakodkar | mark01983 | theannamontana | adi1530 | jeebendra |
| 1,22E+28 | 1,23E+28 | 1,22E+28 | 1,26E+28 | 1,23E+28 | 1,20E+28 |
| 225121465 | 19255855 | 128434694 | 96718510 | 364946603 | 24383985 |
| en | en | en | en | en | en |
| | | Point | | | |
| 0 | 0 | 51,4945 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 | -0,0997 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Thu, 06 Oct 2011 21:00:45 +0000 | Sat, 08 Oct 2011 03:08:28 +0000 | Fri, 07 Oct 2011 17:28:20 +0000 | Mon, 17 Oct 2011 22:15:37 +0000 | Mon, 10 Oct 2011 14:03:43 +0000 | Sat, 01 Oct 2011 00:13:33 +0000 |
| 1317934845 | 1318043308 | 1318008500 | 1318889737 | 1318255423 | 1317428013 |

## Frequencies of modality types

| Country | TW India | TW Germany | TW Austria | TW UK | TW USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| deontic permission | 2.7% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 5.4% | 0.0% |
| dynamic ability | 7.5% | 15.8% | 0.0% | 41.8% | 11.1% |
| dynamic willingness | 2.1% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 9.3% | 0.0% |
| epistemic necessity | 7.5% | 24.4% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 33.3% |
| imperative | 75.9% | 51.8% | 75.0% | 42.4% | 33.3% |

## Tweets sent from customer support accounts

Examples of YourTwapperkeeper retrieval:

| TEXT | TO_USER_ID | FROM_USER | ID | FROM_ USER_ID | ISO_ LANGUAGE_ CODE | GEO_TYPE | GEO_ COORDINATES_0 | GEO_ COORDINATES_1 | CREATED_AT | TIME |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| @matteoc: Hello Matteo! We have received your mail from october 13th and would like to ask you for your patience. Many thanks! | 924046 | airberlin | 1,29E+28 | 418662 | en | | 0 | 0 | Tue, 25 Oct 2011 11:04:24 +0000 | 1,32E+09 |
| @ajuonline Please click on the airtel relationship center and your area to get to the nearest one to you. | 2061745 | Airtel_ Presence | 1,22E+28 | 89513747 | en | | 0 | 0 | Fri, 07 Oct 2011 09:52:37 +0000 | 1,32E+09 |
| @melissaingeneva We are very sorry. We would like to follow up on your request. Please send us an email to customer.relations@austrian.com. | 3,83E+08 | _austrian | 1,27E+28 | 1,02E+08 | en | | 0 | 0 | Fri, 21 Oct 2011 07:53:53 +0000 | 1,32E+09 |
| @hoplarchus ThatÂ´s not good. IÂ´d like to check whatÂ´s the problem with your booking. Can you give me the connection (place and date)? /ki | 4,11E+08 | DB_Bahn | 1,22E+28 | 2,79E+08 | en | | 0 | 0 | Thu, 06 Oct 2011 13:12:50 +0000 | 1,32E+09 |
| Severe impact on air traffic due to a short-term runway closure at FRA Airport today. Pls check your flight status http://t.co/dKU78xwt | | Lufthansa_DE | 1,22E+28 | 14589577 | en | | 0 | 0 | Thu, 06 Oct 2011 11:27:44 +0000 | 1,32E+09 |
| @arjunp3000 Sorry to hear about your experience. Please write to us on nokiaindiadigitalmarketing@ovi.com and do (cont) http://t.co/G1r3nuGT | 81889853 | NokiaIndia | 1,21E+28 | 39898915 | en | | 0 | 0 | Tue, 04 Oct 2011 06:24:15 +0000 | 1,32E+09 |
| @brasseye Hi Tim, can you get in touch with @TMobileUK Help for this one? They'll be able to look into it! | 2840095 | tmobileuk | 1,22E+28 | 3,51E+08 | en | | 0 | 0 | Fri, 07 Oct 2011 15:54:37 +0000 | 1,32E+09 |
| @fargher Sorry to hear this Jack, can you let me know what your nearest store is and Iâ€™ll see what I can do? | 4975077 | UKTesco | 1,22E+28 | 2,58E+08 | en | | 0 | 0 | Fri, 07 Oct 2011 18:40:31 +0000 | 1,32E+09 |
| @MananSehgal Kindly DM us your number so that we may assist you better. | 4,2E+08 | VodafoneIN | 1,22E+27 | 51224366 | en | | 0 | 0 | Fri, 07 Oct 2011 12:38:23 +0000 | 1,32E+09 |
| @TheSugi Oh no! Check http://t.co/ylSVIDr9 for local faults. If nothing listed, post on http://t.co/pTFsMN47 & the Team will investigate ^JH | 6755699 | VodafoneUK | 1,22E+28 | 4766254 | en | | 0 | 0 | Fri, 07 Oct 2011 15:52:09 +0000 | 1,32E+09 |

Frequencies of modality types

| | TW India | TW Germany | TW Austria | TW UK | TW USA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| deontic obligation | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.30% | 0.00% |
| deontic permission | 0.72% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% |
| dynamic ability | 3.14% | 16.67% | 0.00% | 61.97% | 11.11% |
| dynamic willingness | 0.00% | 11.11% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% |
| epistemic necessity | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 33.33% |
| epistemic possibility | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 2.28% | 0.00% |
| imperative | 93.24% | 72.22% | 100.00% | 32.01% | 33.33% |

## Statement of originality

I declare that the work enclosed reports on original research. All the sources that I used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references. I further declare that I have not submitted the work or parts of the work for assessment or examination in any country of the world. The enclosed work is identical in form and content with the work assessed by the assessors.

Dornbirn, 2014-10-15

Ort, Datum Unterschrift

## Eigenständigkeitserklärung

Ich versichere hiermit, dass ich die vorliegende Arbeit selbstständig verfasst, keine anderen als die angegebenen Quellen und Hilfsmittel benutzt und auch sonst keiner unerlaubten Hilfe bedient habe. Des Weiteren bestätige ich, dieses Doktoratsthema weder im In- noch im Ausland in irgendeiner Form als Prüfungsarbeit vorgelegt zu haben. Zudem versichere ich, dass diese Arbeit mit der vom Begutachter beurteilten Arbeit übereinstimmt.

Dornbirn, 2014-10-15

| | |
|---|---|
| Place, Date | Signature |

## Abstract

For professionals involved in transcultural communication and translation, the expression and understanding of speech acts becomes increasingly difficult due to the increasing heterogeneity of users of English. This also applies to politeness as one pragmatic aspect. On the one hand, the concept, realization and perception of politeness are highly subjective, on the other hand, polite communication in English across different cultures and metacommunication about politeness are possible. This thesis argues that this is possible because of the translatability of politeness, based on Cooke's evolutionary theory of translation, aspects of Constructive Realism, and perspectives of functional translation theories (including Skopos Theory). Furthermore, the thesis claims that politeness is nevertheless lingua-culturally embedded and shaped, and

that human beings with similar lingua-cultural biographies are inclined to share patterns of perceiving and realizing politeness. To assess this hypothesis an empirical study is performed. The study focusses on the de- and encoding of modality in requests in the communication between customer-support staff members and customers. The first part of the study consists of a survey incorporating optional discourse completion and simulating fictitious situations, and the second part of the study analyzes messages exchanged between customers and customer support accounts on the social networking platform Twitter. The results of the study show that the second hypothesis can only partially be corroborated. The patterns of de- and encoding modality are in some cases shared within a lingua-cultural group and distinctive for this group, but in many cases certain patterns of de- and encoding modality are shared across different lingua-cultural group. This could be interpreted as an indicator for homogenization processes due to mass media, cyberspace, and communication technology, or already existing subtle translation processes leading to a newly negotiated communication culture. In order to learn more about the patterns based on a large dataset and in the framework of a long-term project, the thesis suggests a method for further research considering methods of automated text processing.

## Zusammenfassung

Für Professionelle im Bereich der transkulturellen Kommunikation und Translation wird das Ausdrücken und Verstehen von Sprechakten durch die wachsende lingua-kulturelle Heterogenität von Benutzern der englischen Sprache erschwert. Dies trifft auch auf den Aspekt der Höflichkeit als Teil der Pragmatik zu. Einerseits sind der Begriff, der Ausdruck und die Wahrnehmung der Höflichkeit subjektiv, andererseits sind höfliche Kommunikation im Englischen über kulturelle Grenzen hinweg und Metakommunikation über

Höflichkeit möglich. Diese Arbeit argumentiert auf Basis der evolutionären Translationstheorie von Cooke, von Aspekten des Konstruktiven Realismus, und von Perspektiven der funktionellen Translationstheorien (inklusive Skopostheorie), dass diese Möglichkeit aufgrund der Übersetzbarkeit von Höflichkeit gegeben ist. Zudem stellt die Arbeit die These auf, dass Höflichkeit dennoch lingua-kulturell eingebettet und geprägt ist und dass Menschen mit ähnlichen lingua-kulturellen Biographien ähnliche Ausdrucks- und Wahrnehmungsmuster von Höflichkeit teilen. Um diese Hypothese zu prüfen, wird eine empirische Studie durchgeführt. Sie konzentriert sich auf das De- und Enkodieren von Modalität in Bitten in der Kommunikation zwischen Kundenservice-Mitarbeitern und Kunden. Der erste Teil der Studie besteht aus einem Fragebogen mit integriertem optionalem Discourse Completion Test. Der zweite Teil der Studie analysiert Nachrichten, die zwischen Kunden und Kundenservice-Mitarbeitern auf dem sozialen Netzwerk Twitter ausgetauscht werden. Die Ergebnisse der Studie können die zweite Hypothese zum Teil untermauern. In manchen Fällen können De- und Enkodierungsmuster von Modalität erkannt werden, die innerhalb einer linguakulturellen Gruppe mit hoher Frequenz vorkommen und für diese Gruppe spezifisch sind. Aber in vielen Fällen werden auch Muster von verschiedenen lingua-kulturellen Gruppen gemeinsam benutzt. Diese Tendenz könnte als ein Indikator für Homogenisierungsprozesse aufgrund von Massenmedien, Cyberspace und Kommunikationstechnologien interpretiert werden. Es ist auch möglich, dass das Ergebnis bereits bestehende subtile Translationsvorgänge widerspiegelt, die zu einer neu verhandelten Kommunikationskultur führen können. Um weitere Erkenntnisse über die Muster auf Basis von größeren Datensätzen und in einem Langzeit-Projekt zu erzielen, schlägt die Arbeit unter Berücksichtigung von Methoden der automatisierten Textverarbeitung eine Methode zur weiteren Forschung vor.

## Curriculum Vitae

### Professional Experience

| | |
|---|---|
| Since April 2012 | Marketing Communications Specialist, OMICRON electronics, Klaus (Austria) |
| 2007-2012 | Content Manager for educational software, OMICRON electronics, Klaus (Austria) |
| 2006-2007 | Applied Mathematics Tutor, University of Hildesheim, Institute of Technology and Physics (Germany) |
| 2006-2007 | Translator, University of Hildesheim, Institute of Cultural Studies, Aesthetics & Applied Arts (Germany) |
| 2005 | Translator (Internship), Abbott Laboratories, Louvain-la-Neuve (Belgium) |

### Education

| | |
|---|---|
| Since 2010 | PhD student, Center for Translation Studies, University of Vienna (Austria) & Individual further education in Mathematics (Akademiestudium), Distance University Hagen (Germany) |
| 2003-2007 | International technical communication, University of Hildesheim (Germany) |
| 2002-2003 | Bio-Engineering, Technical University of Brunswick (Germany) |
| 2000-2002 | Abitur (General Qualification for University Entrance), Adalbert-Stifter-Gymnasium, Castrop-Rauxel (Germany) |

## Awards and scholarships

2008 Award for one of two best final theses by the Federal Association of Interpreters and Translators

2000 Honors award for Biology at the Winton Woods Highschool, Cincinnati

2000 Excellence award for mathematical competition at the University of Cincinnati

1999 EF Achievement scholarship to spend a high school year in the USA

## Publications and poster presentation

2008 “Spacing effect and mnemonic strategies: A theory based approach to e-learning”, paper and poster presentation for IADIS International Conference, e-Learning, Amsterdam

2011 “Modality as politeness indicator in different varieties of English: A cross-sectional analysis of speech act perception and production patterns and a conceptual proposal for a computational tool to optimize intercultural pragmatic awareness”, poster presentation for the First Global Conference - Creating Cultural Synergies - Setting Intercultural Competence to Work in a Changing World, Salzburg

2008 “Don’t we all wish to have a Babel fish sometimes?”, article for PAC World Magazine (Protection, Automation & Control World)