

MASTERARBEIT | MASTER'S THESIS

Titel | Title

How to be polite in ELF contexts: An analysis and adaptation of Austrian
coursebook activities

verfasst von | submitted by

Simona Gruber BEd

angestrebter akademischer Grad | in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Education (MEd)

Wien | Vienna, 2024

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt |
Degree programme code as it appears on
the student record sheet:

UA 199 507 529 02

Studienrichtung lt. Studienblatt | Degree
programme as it appears on the student
record sheet:

Masterstudium Lehramt Sek (AB) Unterrichtsfach
Englisch Unterrichtsfach Spanisch

Betreut von | Supervisor:

Univ.-Prof. ao. Univ.-Prof. i.R. Mag. Dr. Barbara
Seidlhofer

Declaration of authenticity

I hereby declare that the present paper was conceived and composed all by myself.

Verbatim quotations as well as any ideas or passages borrowed and paraphrased from the works of other authors are truthfully acknowledged and identified in the paper. References to primary and secondary sources are all fully and clearly stated in the bibliographical section.

Vienna, 2024

Simona Gruber

Acknowledgements

First, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my thesis supervisor Univ.-Prof. Mag. Dr. Barbara Seidlhofer. Thank you for being so incredibly patient and insightful throughout the whole composition process of my thesis. Your words of encouragement were always highly appreciated, and you always offered invaluable advice stemming from your incredible competence. No matter how long it took me to continue with this project, you were always understanding. I am incredibly grateful for all the guidance and support I could have asked for and for thereby making the composition of this thesis an enjoyable process.

I am especially thankful for my family, who have unconditionally supported me and my decisions all my life in every way possible. Without your help and encouragement, it would not have been possible for me to follow my dream to become a teacher. Thank you for everything that you did, which is way too much to mention it all here in one short paragraph.

I would also like to thank my friends, who sat down in the library with me, even on hot summer days. Thank you for sharing your words of wisdom and encouragement, coffee, snacks, and some tears with me and for motivating me to finish this thesis once and for all.

And lastly, the biggest thanks go out to my partner Timo for being my solid foundation throughout all the drama and craziness of the past twelve years. Your support means the world to me, and I cannot even begin to imagine any words that would be adequate to express how thankful and blessed I am to have you in my life.

Table of contents

List of abbreviations.....	I
List of figures.....	II
1 Introduction.....	1
2 Politeness.....	4
2.1 The beginnings of politeness research: pragmatic approaches.....	5
2.1.1 Core theories.....	5
2.1.2 Criticism.....	11
2.2 Discursive politeness approaches.....	13
2.3 Cross-cultural and interlanguage pragmatics.....	15
2.4 Interpersonal positioning.....	19
3 Teaching Politeness.....	22
3.1 Communicative competence.....	22
3.2 From competence towards capability.....	29
3.3 A possible alternative: the ELF-informed classroom.....	36
3.3.1 What is English as a Lingua Franca (ELF)?.....	37
3.3.2 Is there any ELF in ELT coursebooks?.....	43
3.4 “ELF politeness”.....	47
4 Analysis and adaptation of Austrian schoolbook politeness tasks.....	53
4.1 Methodology and research questions.....	53
4.2 Politeness through mitigation.....	55
4.3 Expressing disagreement.....	61
4.4 Turn-taking and interrupting.....	64
4.5 Polite small talk.....	67
5 Conclusion.....	73
6 Bibliography.....	76
7 Appendix.....	84
7.1 Coursebook examples.....	84
7.2 Abstract in English.....	92
7.3 Abstract in German.....	93

List of abbreviations

AHS	Allgemein-bildende Höhere Schule
BELF	Business English as a lingua franca
CEFR	Common European framework of reference for languages
CLT	Communicative language teaching
CCP	Cross-cultural pragmatics
CP	Cooperative Principle
EFL	English as a foreign language
EIL	English as an international language
ELF	English as a lingua franca
ELFA	English as a lingua franca in academic settings
ELT	English language teaching
ENL	English as a native language
FTA	Face-threatening act
HAK	Handelsakademie
HLW	Höhere Lehranstalt für wirtschaftliche Berufe
HTL	Höhere Technische Lehranstalt
HUM	Humanberufliche Schule
ILP	Interlanguage pragmatics
L1	First language
L2	Second language
NNS(s)	Non-native speaker(s)
NS(s)	Native speaker(s)
PP	Politeness Principle
SLA	Second language acquisition
VOICE	Vienna Oxford international corpus of English

List of figures

Figure 1: Possible strategies for performing FTAs.....	10
Figure 2: Schematic representation of different communicative competence frameworks...	27
Figure 3. Overview of communicative language competences.....	32
Figure 4. Framework for textbook analysis from an ELF-perspective.....	45

1 Introduction

In recent years, the English language has gained importance for communication on a global level. The need for interaction between people who reside in completely different parts of the world has grown considerably with the emergence of an expanding global economy and has been advanced by the rise of the internet and other technical developments. Because of this need for a “convenient language” for interaction and communication, “it so happened that English was in the right place at the right time” (House 2022: 122). English was already being used in various parts of the world (for example in British commonwealth territories) and the language possesses linguistic traits of both Germanic and Romance languages, which were already considered highly important international languages before (ibid.).

Nowadays, politicians, business partners, international friends or acquaintances, and many more groups of individuals find that English is suitable in catering to their interactive and societal needs. Its use has increased continuously and a growing number of non-native speakers (NNSs henceforth) use English frequently as part of this development. Consequently, the language is undergoing constant change, as speakers with diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds shape and modify its linguistic forms and structures. In other words, English has become a highly important contact language for speakers with different first languages and in this way, it acts as a *Lingua Franca* (*English as a Lingua Franca* - ELF). Hence, ELF’s rise as a worldwide phenomenon represents a linguistic change unparalleled in history, which “calls for a reconsideration of established concepts and assumptions, especially those that relate to variety, community, and competence” (Seidlhofer 2011: 91). Bearing this in mind, it appears it would be valuable for learners of English to be aware of what ELF-communication entails as well as to consider becoming proficient ELF-users a worthwhile learning target, because, realistically, they are probably going to interact more with NNSs than native speakers (NSs) in their future life.

In the last three decades, the scientific field of ELF has turned into a thriving body of research. Jenkins, Cogo and Dewey (2011: 283) even call the amount of attention ELF is currently receiving an “avalanche of research-based and conceptual publications” as there are now a myriad of articles, journal issues and books (e.g. Jenkins 2007; Seidlhofer 2011; Cogo & Dewey 2012; Mauranen 2012) and even an entire journal (Mouton de Gruyter’s *Journal of English as a Lingua Franca*) dedicated to the topic. ELF has been investigated in reference to interlanguage (which will be discussed later in the theory section of this thesis) (Jenkins 2000; Knapp & Meierkord 2002), pragmatics (Firth 1996; Cogo 2009; Cogo & House 2018), creativity (Pitzl 2018), negotiation of meaning strategies (Cogo 2009; Mauranen 2012), certain discourse markers (Baumgarten & House 2010) or with regards

to the influence of multilingual resources (Cogo 2012), to name just a small selection of scientific work conducted in the field. However, it is surprising that, considering this multitude of publications, ELF research findings have not been as much of an influence on the development of EFL teaching materials as one would expect (Cogo 2015; Vettorel 2018).

Moreover, one aspect that has been researched relatively little as well is the expression of politeness in ELF-contexts. In general, politeness as a linguistic and sociocultural phenomenon has been investigated for about 5 decades, with highly influential and often-quoted frameworks being developed (see Lakoff 1973; Leech 1983; Brown & Levinson 1987; Eelen 2001; Watts 2003). However, scientific interest has been rather sparse when it comes to investigating intercultural politeness and especially when examining politeness in lingua franca contexts (House 2008; Bjørge 2012; Walkinshaw & Kirkpatrick 2020).

This thesis therefore presents an attempt to link all the aforementioned topics and to investigate whether the teaching materials currently used in Austrian English language classrooms represent the reality of the increasingly international and intercultural use of the English language by NNSs too. This seems particularly important, because most teachers rely heavily on the material they are provided with by publishing houses. More concisely, the goal of this project is to investigate in how far politeness tasks in Austrian coursebooks are suited to equip language learners with the skills necessary to master ELF communication politely. For this reason, the present thesis aims address a series of research questions that will be thoroughly examined and critically analysed within the confines of this research paper:

1. Which aspects of politeness do Austrian schoolbooks ‘teach’ to EFL learners?
2. To what extent do the politeness tasks in Austrian school textbooks adhere to a NS-oriented ideology or are “ELF politeness” phenomena considered?
3. How are cultures and target interlocutors depicted in the materials? (Is there a focus on diverse global cultures and ELF communication?)
4. How could those tasks be adapted to better fit an ELF-informed classroom context?

In order to answer these research questions, this thesis is divided into the following sections: chapters 2 and 3 form the theory part of this project by addressing research about politeness theories and models, approaches and current issues in foreign language teaching, ELF and its relevance in today’s world, critical teaching material analysis, and lastly, an investigation into ‘„ELF politeness“’. Chapter 4 contains the practical analysis part

of this paper, in which five politeness examples from different English language teaching materials currently used in the Austrian educational system are discussed. The purpose of this investigation is to gain insight into what features “ELF politeness” possesses and whether the selected teaching materials reflect them to some extent. The analysis will be based on research into politeness as a linguistic and socio-economic phenomenon, on ELF and its characteristics, and on current teaching approaches. Moreover, suggestions for task appropriations will be proposed in order make the activities more suitable for an ELF-informed classroom. Thus, the main goal of this thesis is to provide educators with ideas about how they could extend schoolbook activities and incorporate ELF into their teaching practices.

2 Politeness

Politeness is an integral part of everyday communication and most of us are already as small children instructed by our parents to be polite and respectful towards others. As a result, most people have a certain (culturally shaped) opinion of what they perceive as polite or impolite. Typically, when we use the term *politeness*, we refer to etiquette, such as tactful language use and thoughtful social behaviour. It is probably described the easiest by giving examples, such as saying *please* and *thank you*, or holding a door open for somebody. In a rather broad sense, Kasper (2001: 187) considers *politeness* the opposite of *rudeness* and, according to her, it can be considered a synonym of respectful, tactful and considerate behaviour towards other people.

When it comes to establishing formal criteria for *politeness* though, for a layperson with a general understanding of the concept, it can be difficult to pinpoint what we actually refer to when we talk about *(im)politeness*. Moreover, these interpretations may vary from individual to individual too. Hence, the attempts to formulate criteria to define politeness have yielded multiple different results and, more often than not, those criteria differed from what a layperson would understand politeness to be. Therefore, it seems appropriate to make a distinction between the everyday usage of the term *politeness* and the specialised linguistic concept that has interested many researchers for decades now. In an attempt to do so, Eelen (2001) distinguishes between *politeness*₁, which refers to the lay conception of the term, and uses *politeness*₂ to describe the linguistic reflection and expression of politeness as a sociolinguistic phenomenon.

More generally, most researchers who proposed some sort of theoretical framework to conceptualise politeness, intend to formulate a set of guidelines and rules in order to describe language that is conventionally perceived as 'polite', whereas everyday interpretations of politeness might rely more on the historical and cultural norms of a given society. In order to interpret and analyse how politeness is being 'taught' in upper secondary textbooks, it is important to consider both *politeness*₁ and *politeness*₂, which is also what Watts (2003: 9) stresses when he argues for the inclusion of *politeness*₁ in the debate because, according to him, it is "the only valid means of developing a social theory of politeness" in general.

This chapter 2 will provide an overview of relevant theories of and approaches to politeness research, which has been subject of scholarly discussion for at least five decades. First, traditional politeness approaches will be discussed, which are then followed by the more recent conversational takes on politeness. Then, the concepts of cross-, inter- and transcultural pragmatics are examined due to them being crucial for forming an

understanding of politeness as a linguistic phenomenon. Lastly, a relatively new take on discourse analysis, the concept of interpersonal positioning, will be discussed to add a new perspective to politeness research. The aim of this chapter is to unearth how we understand politeness, both as a linguistic and as a social phenomenon, and to identify which notions of the concept are relevant to language learners in order to establish a thorough understanding of what politeness encompasses for the analysis of the textbook activities that follows.

2.1 The beginnings of politeness research: pragmatic approaches

In the early days of politeness research, the distinction between politeness₁ and politeness₂ had not yet been considered. The agenda of traditional politeness approaches seemed to be to unmask the rules that govern the use of polite language and different models, strategies and guidelines have been proposed. Section 2.1 will discuss the beginnings of the research on politeness as a linguistic construct and provide an overview of the most influential approaches in the field in order to identify relevant conceptions and terminology.

2.1.1 Core theories

When discussing politeness as a sociolinguistic concept, it is first and foremost important to consider the underlying theoretical concepts on which all the later assumptions are based. Therefore, it seems to be common-sense to start with one of the most influential works with regards to pragmatics: Grice's (1975) *cooperative principle* (henceforth CP).

Grice's basic assumption is that speakers will try to cooperate when they interact with each other in order for it to be a meaningful encounter. He therefore proposed a theoretical model that is supposed to identify the underlying rules that govern the construction of interpersonal discourse. He defines it as follows: "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. One might label this the COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLE" (Grice 1975: 45 [original emphasis]).

In order to establish a framework that describes the underlying rules and mechanisms of cooperative communication, Grice defines four *maxims*, which speakers should and, according to him, do typically adhere to. Grice calls them the maxims of *quantity*, *quality*, *relation* and *manner* (Grice 1975: 45–46). These maxims refer to the way in which speakers

can cooperate in order to make a communicational attempt successful. The *maxim of quantity* refers to the amount of information that is provided by a speaker and should be adequate and informative. The *maxim of quality* means that interactants should speak the truth, whereas the *maxim of relation* refers to speakers trying to contribute to the conversation by giving relevant information. The *maxim of manner* refers to the way that interactants communicate with each other, rather than to the actual information that they are providing. This maxim encompasses a set of different rules such as avoiding ambiguity or obscurity and making the contribution brief. When these 'rules of conversation' are followed, the conversation is informative and clear and this is, according to Grice, the default mode when people enter in a conversation, as they naturally try to cooperate (Eelen 2001: 2). However, it is also possible to not adhere to these guidelines and thereby transgressing from the CP, which can be done on purpose or unintentionally. Grice calls this the 'flouting of the maxims' e.g through the use of irony, metaphors or ambiguity, which then triggers certain interpretative behaviours on the part of the addressee (Grice 1975: 52–55).

Lakoff (1973), who Eelen (2001: 2) calls "the mother of modern politeness theory", criticised that she believes that in informal conversation the rules of the CP as proposed by Grice are almost never completely followed and she therefore added the politeness-factor to Grice's CP.

[I]f one seeks to communicate a message directly, if one's principal aim in speaking is communication, one will attempt to be clear, so that there is no mistaking one's intention. If the speaker's principal aim is to navigate somehow or other among the respective statuses of the participants in the discourse indicating where each stands in the speaker's estimate, his aim will be less the achievement of clarity than an expression of politeness, as its opposite. (Lakoff 1973: 296)

Lakoff thereby shifts the focus from Grice's semantic perspective on conversations to a more pragmatic one (Eelen 2001: 2). In her view, pragmatic discourse has underlying rules and guidelines the same way that a short sentence structure has them and those rules can be violated too. Those she calls the "rules of pragmatic competence", which consist of two main components: clarity and politeness. Depending on the aim that the speaker wants to achieve (whether it be reinforcing personal relationships or simply conveying information), one of the two notions might supersede the other (Lakoff 1973: 296).

According to her, politeness is often preferred over clarity, especially when there is a conflict between the two notions. She says that speakers tend to opt for formulating their utterance politely and thereby rather risk compensating the clarity of what is being said and she also refers to the influence that different hierarchical structures might have on the amount of politeness markers used. Lakoff then defines her "rules of politeness", which she claims

are universal to all cultures, although different levels of importance might be given to them in different cultural settings (Lakoff 1973: 303). The rules are as follows (see Lakoff 1973: 298):

1. *"Don't impose"*. This means that one should not intrude into other people's business and should use strategies to distance oneself from the addressee through the use of e.g. passives or impersonal expressions.
2. *"Give options"*, so that the addressee can choose what to do and is not limited or constrained.
3. *"Make A feel good and be friendly"*, thereby producing a sense of camaraderie and equality between the speakers.

Overall, Lakoff's view on communication and politeness shifts the focus from the mainly information-exchange viewpoint of Grice's CP towards the social circumstances of discourse (for a comprehensive summary of Lakoff's theory see Eelen 2001: 2–3).

Another one of the most important works that has influenced politeness research ever since is Leech's (1983) *Politeness Principle* (PP henceforth). He, too, bases his assumptions on Grice's CP, although he stresses that the PP compliments the CP and can therefore be seen as a separate principle, although it is linked to the CP. In his view, the PP is necessary to explain situations where the main focus of an utterance is not the conveying of information but some sort of social goal.

The CP enables one participant in a conversation to communicate on the assumption that the other participant is being cooperative. In this the CP has the function of regulating what we say so that it contributes to some assumed illocutionary or discursal goal(s). It could be argued, however, that the PP has a higher regulative role than this: to maintain the social equilibrium and the friendly relations which enable us to assume that our interlocutors are being cooperative in the first place. To put matters at their most basic: unless you are polite to your neighbour, the channel of communication between you will break down, and you will no longer be able to borrow his mower. (Leech 1983: 82)

Leech distinguishes between different forms of politeness, i.e. relative and absolute politeness. Relative politeness is typically used when the social norm or the cultural setting calls for a certain type of politeness and absolute politeness is viewed as a set of rules that defines utterances as inherently polite or impolite (Leech 1983: 83–84).

He then stresses the possibility of different interpretations in different discourse settings by adding a set of politeness maxims to the PP, but with a focus on the goal of politeness as "establishing and maintaining comity" between speakers (Leech 1983: 104). In short, his politeness theory differs from Lakoff's, because it focuses more on the avoidance and

minimising of “impolite beliefs” in order to reduce unfavourable behaviours, thereby concentrating on conflict-avoidance, which can be achieved through the use of the PP (Leech 1983: 81).

Another highly influential politeness model was introduced by Fraser and Nolen (1981), who view politeness as a “conversational contract”. They claim that each participant enters a conversation with a certain given “set of rights and obligations that will determine, at least for the preliminary stages [of the conversation], the limits of interaction” (Fraser & Nolen 1981: 94). Those terms are not fixed; they can be readjusted over time and the parties involved can shape them to a certain extent, depending on their roles in the communicational setting and the hierarchical structures in place. General conversational rules, such as waiting for one’s turn or speaking intelligibly, are rarely violated, because the conversation could not be successful without them. More specific rules are much rather subject to negotiation since they are more variable and context-dependent. These specific terms regulate, among other things, which speech acts are considered appropriate in a certain situation, as e.g. a patient would typically not order their doctor around.

In that sense, politeness is seen as adhering to the conversational contract and its rules, which is the rational choice that participants typically choose by default. They can obviously also choose to violate the contract, which would then result in impoliteness. According to Fraser and Nolen (1981: 96), speakers choose to be polite voluntarily and whether an utterance is intended or interpreted as polite is highly circumstantial and depends significantly on how it is perceived by the addressee.

All of the theories mentioned above have been very significant in politeness research and have contributed to shaping and defining the field. However, the undoubtedly most influential politeness theory was proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987) in form of a monographic work: *Politeness: some universals in language use*, which was first published in 1978 and then again as a revised version with a critical introductory chapter in 1987. Their work basically “set the research agenda for the following quarter of a century” (Pizziconi 2009: 707) and it has been acknowledged, praised, critiqued and amplified by many in the research field (see e.g. Fraser 1990, Eelen 2001).

Brown and Levinson’s politeness model is based on Searle’s *Speech Act Theory* (1969), which views language and communication as the performance of certain speech acts, although Searle does not specifically focus on politeness in his work. Nonetheless, he views politeness as a feature of indirect speech acts and makes a brief comment about it: “The chief motivation - though not the only motivation - for using these indirect forms is politeness” (1969 [1975]: 177).

Moreover, Brown and Levinson (1987: 58) refer to the phenomena of *rationality* and *face*, which they claim to be universal factors. Generally speaking, they view politeness as a 'face-saving action' and are thereby drawing their fundamental assumptions from Goffman's (1967) concept of *face*, which he defines as "an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes" (Goffman 1967: 5). This notion of face as being someone's self-esteem is elaborated on further by Brown and Levinson (1987: 61) when they refer to it as "notions of being embarrassed or humiliated, or 'losing face'".

Thus face is something that is emotionally invested, and that can be lost, maintained, or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction. In general, people cooperate (and assume each other's cooperation) in maintaining face in interaction, such cooperation being based on the mutual vulnerability of face. (Brown & Levinson 1987: 61–62)

According to them, people try to maintain and defend their own face in every interaction, which can result in the threatening of their interlocutor's face. It is crucial to mention that Brown and Levinson consider *face* to have two components: *positive* and *negative* face. A person's negative face is thereby defined as "the want of every 'competent adult member' that his actions be unimpeded by others" (Brown & Levinson 1987: 62). This means that in every conversation, people want to maintain their freedom of choices and do not want to be forced to do anything. The positive face is seen as the need of wanting to be considered "desirable to at least some others" (Brown & Levinson 1987: 62). Depending on how much of an imposition e.g. a request for help poses on the listener, speakers typically apply different strategies in order to satisfy their ends: from stressing of "in-group membership and social similarity" to using formal expressions or being indirect and only implying a request (Brown & Levinson 1987: 57). Maintaining each other's face is seen as a mutual interest between two people having a conversation, therefore politeness strategies have to be chosen wisely and evaluated carefully in order to reach a satisfactory outcome for all interactants.

Brown and Levinson (1987: 59) then introduce the term "face-threatening acts" (FTAs), which refers to speech acts that impede either the positive or the negative face of one of the interactants and the participant thereby risks 'losing their face'. According to them, some speech acts, e.g. requests or warnings, are inherently face-threatening and should be avoided or at least modified in order to minimise the threat to the participants' positive or negative face. Hence, the use of politeness, in their view, is a useful strategy to mitigate and counter-balance those FTA's (Brown & Levinson 1987: 68). According to them, there is a fixed set of rules that apply if one tries to be polite. This means that, if a speaker finds themselves obligated to perform an FTA, they have a variety of choices to manage the situation. The figure below illustrates this.

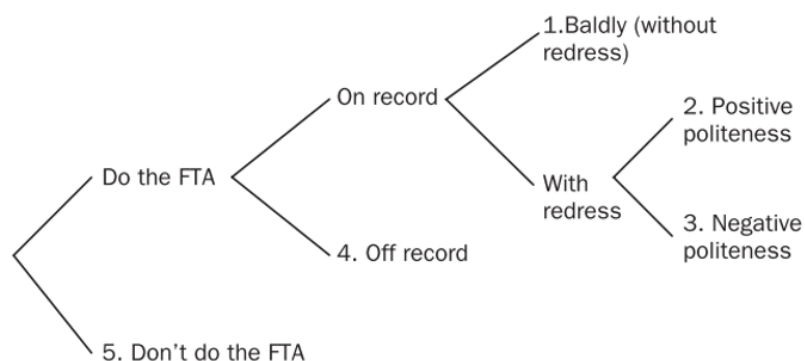


Figure 1: Possible strategies for performing FTAs (based on the illustration in Brown and Levinson 1987: 69)

According to Brown and Levinson, a speaker can choose to perform an FTA either *on record* or *off record*. Performing it on record would mean that the communicative intention of the FTA is clear and unambiguous to all parties, whereas in an off record FTA this clear intention is missing or obscured by the speaker and they can therefore not be held accountable for the intention that they might hold beneath. Those off record FTAs are often associated with the use of sarcasm or metaphors.

If a speaker chooses to do the FTA on record, they have the option to do so with or without redress. If they choose to act baldly, they would typically perform the FTA in the most direct way possible, which would typically impede the addressee's face wants. On the other hand, if redressive action is added to the FTA, it can be interpreted as the speaker's intention to reduce the potential face damage of the FTA to the interlocutor. This redressive action then can come in the form of positive or negative politeness, depending on the face (positive or negative) that the speaker intends to preserve.

For Brown and Levinson, the politest option is performing an FTA off record, sometimes in the form of what they call *conventionalized indirectness*, which means that the indirect formulation has become well established, and everybody knows what the intention behind it is. The example that they provide for this is "Can you pass the salt?", which is immediately recognised as a request, because it has become conventionalised (Brown & Levinson 1987: 70). However, speakers do not always choose the politest option; they regularly choose to perform FTAs on record for different reasons such as being straightforward. Which strategy they choose then depends on certain social variables, such as the social distance between the speakers, the power relations in place and the cultural setting in which they encounter each other (Brown & Levinson 1987: 83). All of these factors and variables then explain the degree to which speakers decide to be polite towards their interlocutor.

2.1.2 Criticism

Although heavily influential still, all of the above-mentioned politeness models, especially the one proposed by Brown and Levinson, have been subject to extensive scrutiny and criticism. One notion that has been heavily critiqued is the fact that “[t]he politeness models by Leech, Brown and Levinson, and Fraser aspire to universal validity“ (Kasper 2001: 189). This universality and applicability in all settings has also been questioned by Meier (1995: 388), who is adamant that such a thing does not exist:

Politeness can be said to be universal only in the sense that every society has some sort of norms for appropriate behavior although these norms will vary, thereby accounting for societies in which the individual’s position within a group or those where the individual takes precedence. (Meier 1995: 388)

Moreover their model has come “under fire” for being too “Western-oriented”, because it primarily focuses on the Anglo-Saxon world and assumes that this perception of politeness is also applicable to any other language context (Fraser 1990: 74).

One example of a society where this does not apply has been investigated by Gu (1990), who tries to relate Leech’s PP and Brown and Levinson’s model to Chinese language settings. In contrast to the universal validity view that they portray, Gu stresses, like Meier, that politeness can also be intrinsically linked to societal norms and rules, which is especially true for the Chinese context, where the society is generally more focused on collectivism rather than individualism. According to him, other (western) researchers tend to investigate something “for the sake of it”, but Chinese researchers often act in a politically or morally motivated way in their pursuit of knowledge (Gu 1990: 239–240). In contrast to Brown and Levinson’s claim that FTAs, and the politeness strategies employed to mitigate them, are universal, Gu argues that many speech acts that are considered face threatening in the English-speaking context, are not perceived as impolite in China at all (Gu 1990: 241). In general, Gu claims that politeness in the Chinese context can often be considered morally and socially prescriptive and is more oriented towards societal norms rather than the psychological needs of the individual.

Another politeness researcher, Matsumoto (1988), also claims that Brown and Levinson’s concepts of face are, at least how they outlined them, not applicable for the Japanese context as they focus too much on an individual’s wants in comparison to the societal desires that are heightened in the Japanese culture. Because of this focus on the society and the norms and values in place, Matsumoto stresses that a loss of face is rather associated with the evaluation from others than with the violation of personal rights or space.

Critique on the actual strategies used for performing FTAs has been raised by Fraser (1990: 71–72), who notes that “[t]he Brown and Levinson hierarchy of strategies from bald on-record to off-record (indirect) appears to be a continuum, although we are not told the relative placements of the two intermediary strategies: on-record with positive politeness and on-record with negative politeness”. This means that it might be difficult to predict which strategy a speaker would choose when performing on-record FTAs, because the degree of the face-threat is typically interpreted differently by different speakers.

Blum-Kulka (1987) also notes that conventional indirection, which are indirect speech acts that are very apparent to the participants, can be perceived differently because of conventionalisation and non-conventional indirection. The latter is, according to her, rarely associated with politeness, because it is more difficult to decipher the underlying indirect message. This would mean that this distinction between conventional and non-conventional indirection should be made for off record strategies in the Brown and Levinson model for performing FTAs.

Furthermore, Brown and Levinson (1987: 24) claim that “some acts are intrinsically threatening to face and thus require ‘softening’”. This ignores the possibility that what is considered (im)polite in one setting might be interpreted differently in another. Kasper notes:

The conversational maxim approach and the face-saving view of politeness converge in categorizing certain types of linguistic action as inherently impolite, or face-threatening. They agree furthermore in perceiving politeness as a continuous rather than an on-off phenomenon. Hence, speakers who intend to perform an FTA have to determine just how much politeness is appropriate to counterbalance the disruptive effect of an 'impolite' action. (Kasper 2001: 188)

Eelen (2001: 49) summarises the above mentioned critique by saying that the main issue with Leech’s, Fraser and Nolen’s, and Brown and Levinson’s theories is that the “so-called conversational maxim view of politeness is concerned uniquely with scientific analyses of politeness as a general linguistic and pragmatic principle of communication, aimed at the maintenance of smooth social relations and the avoidance of conflict, but not as a locally determined system of social values”. Thereby, the notion of interpretation and social variability gets lost.

The main issue with the pragmatic approaches to define linguistic politeness is thus that they focus on one particular cultural context, evaluate and describe it, and then try to devise a theory that explains why people from that society behave the way they do. Thereby, they ignore the fact that in other parts of the world, where societies are structured differently, interpretations of polite behaviour might differ significantly. This ethnocentric view of language seems to “take it for granted that what seems to hold for the speakers of English

must hold for 'people generally'" (Wierzbicka 1991: 26). It seems that crosslinguistic differences are ignored in the traditional politeness models.

In conclusion, these traditional politeness theories "have provided the terminology for talking and even thinking about politeness phenomena [...] and their shortcomings have been dealt with by proposing additional rules/maxims/principles" (Terkourafi 2005: 240). Moreover, the increasing significance of communication across linguacultural boundaries because of globalisation in the recent decades has not been considered sufficiently by these traditional models either. Nowadays, an expanding number of speakers primarily use the English language to facilitate interaction with speakers of other languages, which influences the use and perception of politeness considerably. Due to the time of their publication and their focus on English NSs, these traditional models are not apt to describe or predict politeness as a linguistic phenomenon for neither speakers of other languages than English nor for learners of English as a second or foreign language.

2.2 Discursive politeness approaches

The traditional politeness approaches discussed in section 2.1 focus on the description of politeness as a linguistic phenomenon with the aim to unearth the underlying structures of polite utterances. This section 2.2 will outline a move towards a post-modern approach to politeness research, which Garcés-Conejos Blitvich (2013: 1–2) calls the "discursive turn", because the focus shifted towards viewing politeness "as something socio-cultural and socio-historical: an unfinished product of discourse".

It appears that this shift towards a more discursively oriented conceptualisation of politeness originates in the dissatisfaction of many researchers with Brown and Levinson's model of politeness (Terkourafi 2005: 246). Many wanted to move away from the prescriptive politeness concept proposed by traditional politeness models towards viewing politeness as fundamentally influenced and shaped by social interaction, thereby focusing on its participants and their personal perceptions and interpretations (see Eelen 2001; Mills 2003; Watts 2003; Locher & Watts 2008).

One very influential notion new to politeness research was established by Eelen (2001), who proposed a distinction between *politeness*₁, referring to the lay term 'politeness' as an everyday concept and *politeness*₂, which is the theory based, scientific phenomenon that has been investigated for decades. Watts (2003) calls the same concepts *first-order politeness* and *second-order politeness*. His critique of previous theories is that most researchers used to focus primarily on second-order politeness and that they forget about

the everyday use of the concept, thereby ignoring a crucial notion in the discussion.

A theory of politeness₂ should concern itself with the discursive struggle over politeness₁, i.e. over the ways in which (im)polite behaviour is evaluated and commented on by lay members and not with ways in which social scientists lift the term '(im)politeness' out of the realm of everyday discourse and elevate it to the status of a theoretical concept in what is frequently called Politeness Theory. (Watts 2003: 9)

In his work, Watts (2003) tries to conceptualise *linguistic politeness*, i.e. politeness₂, by considering the lay term (politeness₁) as a foundation for the general concept of politeness. This approach to redefining the politeness construct has been heavily influenced by social theory and the importance of cultural variables in interaction. Therefore, the personal interpretations of the addressee are viewed as having paramount importance to the negotiation of politeness between conversational participants (Terkourafi 2005: 238). Although this idea had already been touched upon by e.g. Lakoff (1973: 297), who criticizes Grice's maxims for not considering the different interpretations of politeness on the addressee's part, this notion was not further elaborated back then.

In discursive approaches politeness is thus viewed as behaviour that exceeds the expectations of the participants and it can be interpreted positively or negatively (Pizziconi 2009: 709). Moreover, Locher and Watts (2008: 77) define politeness as *relational work*, because they believe that politeness is primarily used to form and shape interpersonal relationships. They, too, consider the personal interpretations of the participants the most important factor and they claim that those interpretations rely heavily on what is considered appropriate behaviour in a certain setting. Furthermore, these rules and expectations about appropriate behaviour are not static. Instead, they constantly evolve in interaction and can be renegotiated by the participants (Locher & Watts 2008: 78). Generally speaking, the discursive turn has created a shift in politeness research from the utterance level and its interpretation to the communication level (Mills 2003: 3).

Although there is an abundance of publications that concern themselves with the theoretical assumptions about politeness₁, there are surprisingly few studies that actually investigated how lay politeness is constructed, applied and evaluated in everyday situations. Sifianou (2015) tried to apply the post-modern politeness approach when analysing Greek public Twitter messages in order to discover how 'lay people' view politeness. For this, she specifically looked into Tweets that discussed the topic "politeness is/is not" as the main focal point. In the analysis part, Sifianou then mentions what Twitter users posted about politeness in form of a list of different factors that have been discussed by the users such as hypocrisy or sincerity. Her study was concluded with a very generalised assumption that "most posters appear to view politeness as something abstract rather than behaviour per se" (Sifianou 2015: 28).

The problem with this analysis is that, although it tried to focus on the conception of politeness₁, it is very difficult to actually investigate the perceptions and interpretations of the addressees by just analysing internet discourse. It is almost impossible to draw conclusions about this when only focusing on written discourse. Terkourafi (2005: 244) also mentions that the issue which “post-modern theorists see with quantitative analyses is that, to discover empirical regularities, one necessarily substitutes the participants’ interpretation of what is going on by the interpretation of the analyst.” As of now, no method has been established to adequately analyse the participants’ personal view of the interactional situation, which also applies to e.g. interviewing the participant about their perceptions, because self-reporting is always prone to distortion (Terkourafi 2005: 244). In order to then study polite language from the discursive perspective, it would mean to investigate language within its social setting and ask participants how they interpreted what has been said in order to gain insight into the level of perceived politeness.

The issue seems to be obvious: in the discursive politeness approaches there is an absence of a politeness model that allows researchers to quantify their finding against some theoretical background, which could then compromise the data’s comparability and relevance. As a result, it is very difficult to analyse instances of politeness from a post-modern viewpoint without applying additional methodological and theoretical approaches.

But even granting that analysis of politeness phenomena is only possible at the descriptive level, one cannot help but to be slightly disappointed at post-modern theories not having anything new to offer at this level. (Terkourafi 2005: 245)

Haugh (2007: 297) goes as far as to question whether it is feasible for politeness researchers to further investigate the phenomenon from a discursive perspective, because there is no politeness model that is suitable for longer stretches of discourse. He even questions whether there is actually a need for politeness research at all or if it would not be better to analyse it in the broader research fields of interpersonal communication.

2.3 Cross-cultural and interlanguage pragmatics

A shift of focus towards NNSs (and also learners) of English is undertaken by examining cross-cultural pragmatics (CCP) and interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) and how they view the politeness phenomenon. Generally speaking, CCP is primarily concerned with native speakers of a language and their production of different speech acts (see e.g. Blum-Kulka & Olshtain 1984; Wierzbicka 1991). Cross-cultural linguists e.g. investigate how NS of English differ in their speech act production in comparison to NSs of other languages, thus

comparing and contrasting the underlying rules that govern different language systems. The view that speech acts are universal across cultures is rejected by CCP researchers.

One of the most influential cross-cultural linguists, Wierzbicka, defines the need for taking cultural values and norms into account as follows:

In different societies and different communities, people speak differently; these differences in ways of speaking are profound and systematic, they reflect different cultural values, or at least different hierarchies of values; different ways of speaking, different communicative styles, can be explained and made sense of in terms of independently established different cultural values and cultural priorities. (Wierzbicka 1991: 69)

For politeness research this means that the phenomenon should be studied within its cultural and societal setting. Mills and Kádár (2011: 30) agree with Wierzbicka and argue that it is crucial to investigate politeness from this perspective:

[...] if even within one language group there are regional differences in what are considered to be politeness norms, how can it be possible to make statements about cultural linguistics norms as a whole? Instead, we need to make statements about cultural linguistic 'norms' which are considered by various groups to be dominant and of value.

According to this, politeness rules differ greatly across cultures and languages and cross-cultural linguists typically view politeness as something that has to be evaluated by the interactants. Those interpretations then can vary greatly and the cultural guidelines therefore have to be contested regularly. Mills and Kádár (2011: 21) also stress that "[t]here may be trends within particular groups, but even within them there will be conflict over what constitutes politeness and impoliteness". Moreover, they note that subgroups might have different perceptions of politeness. As a result, it is necessary to consider that politeness norms are often influenced by certain stereotypical notions and traditions of primarily the dominant groups in a given society (Mills & Kádár 2011: 22–24). Brown and Levinson also raised this issue of different cultural groups interpreting politeness differently, or i.e. having different politeness habits, and they argue that:

dominated groups [...] have positive politeness cultures; dominating groups have negative politeness cultures. That is, the world of the upper and middle groups is constructed in a stern and cold architecture of social distance, asymmetry and resentment of impositions, while the world of the lower groups is built on social closeness, symmetrical solidarity and reciprocity. (Brown & Levinson 1987: 245)

Generally speaking, they associate conventional indirectness with speakers of higher social status whereas people belonging to 'lower' classes tend to utilise more positive politeness and markers that signal camaraderie. Mills and Kadar (2011) mainly criticise the generalised and stereotypical norms that are being reinforced when talking about the

politeness of a culture. They stress that it is important to refrain from generalising statements based on a dominant group's or 'higher' social classes' language. It is possible to analyse the language produced by those groups, however their language use does not represent every speaker and therefore it should not be assumed that those are universal norms and values.

Many of the studies that have been conducted from a CCP viewpoint do not explicitly focus on politeness as a linguistic phenomenon but more on the realisation of different speech acts, which often entails the necessity to discuss politeness theories and models (see e.g. Blum-Kulka 1987; Yu 2011). The speech acts most prominently investigated by CCP are requests, which can be linked to politeness theory as a relevant construct. Brown and Levinson (1987) e.g. claim that requests are generally considered FTAs and would therefore be of interest to politeness researchers. One very influential study on the realisation of certain speech acts was conducted by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984), which is well known as CCSARP (Cross-cultural Study of Speech Act Realisation Patterns). In the empirical investigation, the two speech acts of requests and apologies were analysed and compared in eight different languages (or language varieties, as British/American/Australian English were considered separate language categories in the study) with the aim of discovering similarities and differences between NSs and NNSs of said language varieties. To this end, Blum-Kulka and Olshtain developed a new framework and methodology for a cross-cultural analysis of requests and apologies, which will not be outlined here as this paper will not solely focus on requests and apologies but on politeness phenomena in general.

In general, cross-cultural investigations of politeness are interested in speakers of the same language, typically NSs, and those analyses raise many important questions. For this thesis in particular, another strand of research seems to be even more crucial to examine though: Interlanguage pragmatics (ILP). In contrast to all of the previously discussed theoretical frameworks for politeness research that have been focused on speakers of the same languages, ILP is devoted to investigating language that is spoken by NNSs.

Interlanguage pragmatics is heavily influenced by three different theoretical constructs: Gricean pragmatics, politeness theory as proposed by Brown and Levinson and the interlanguage hypothesis. These concepts have contributed significantly to ILP research practices. *Interlanguage* is a term that was coined by Selinker (1972b), which describes the (current state) of the language that a learner develops in the process of acquiring a new language. The interlanguage is seen as evolving and being in an 'unfinished' state while the ultimate goal is viewed to be the approximation of the interlanguage towards a native-speaker-like proficiency level (Kecskes 2014: 18). Bardovi-Harlig (2010: 220) defines

interlanguage pragmatics in the following way:

In interlanguage pragmatics the focal participants are nonnative speakers, users of a second language, a subset of whom are actively learning a language and who are referred to as 'learners' in the more acquisitionally oriented ILP studies.

This particular focus on language learners suggests that the focus of ILP is on the acquisition of pragmatic rules in the target language. ILP studies are primarily interested in learners' advances in language proficiency regarding their comprehension and production of different speech acts (see Bergman & Kasper 1993; Olshtain & Weinbach 1993; Weizman 1993; Hassal 2001; Schauer 2004; Marti 2006; Woodfield 2008; Economidou-Kogetsidis 2008, 2009; Ogiermann 2009; Economidou-Kogetsidis & Woodfield 2012).

As many of the ILP studies focus on speech acts such as requests and/or apologies it is unsurprising that many refer back to traditional and post-modern politeness theories when examining learners' language production. It is assumed by ILP that, due to a possibly 'lower' language proficiency, the interactants in a conversation have to compromise and evaluate their wording more carefully in order to achieve successful communication. Moreover, the participants can rely less on shared cultural knowledge or conventions and therefore might lack this common understanding that other pragmatic approaches depend on. Thus, this common ground has to be co-constructed in the process of interaction (Kecskes 2014: 2).

There is more reliance on language created ad hoc by individuals in the course of interaction than on prefabricated language and preexisting frames. In the case of communicators who use a common language and whose L1s differ (intercultural communication), the lack of full control over language skills (L2) and full knowledge of conventions, beliefs and norms in the target language (L2) used as the medium of communication may lead *to a more conscious approach to what is said, and how it is said*. (Kecskes 2014: 2, [original emphasis])

This could signal that the NNS interactants in intercultural communication might choose to formulate their utterances in a relatively unambiguous and rather straightforward manner than e.g. making use of traditionally 'polite' language that might lead to confusion or misunderstandings due to a lack of language proficiency or shared cultural norms (Yu 2011: 385).

Generally speaking, most ILP studies have concentrated on the examination of learners' ability to produce and apply politeness strategies in the same way that NS's would do (Félix-Brasdefer 2004: 589). This focus on NS norms suggests that this 'unfinished' state of language learners' interlanguage could be interpreted as incomplete or limited in its application. The ultimate goal, as already mentioned before, is seen in acquiring NS-like competence in the target language.

Nonetheless, it can be said that CCP and ILP has made an important contribution to the shift away from the native-speaker-centered (or Anglo-Saxon-centered for the most part) research that had disregarded speakers of languages other than English and language learners for a long time. The focus of those research fields then shifted more towards the acknowledgement and consideration of cultural differences and language diversity.

2.4 Interpersonal positioning

Another very interesting concept relevant to (politeness) discourse analysis was proposed by Klötzl & Swoboda (2020) with their concept of *interpersonal positioning*. Their theory is based on Bakhtin's concepts of *polyphony* and *voice*, which view any conversation as interpersonally motivated. This means that, in every interaction, the speakers continuously construct and shape interpersonal relationships and thereby try to realise some perlocutionary effect on the addressee. Bakhtin (1997: 364) calls this process the use of one's *voice*, which he defines as "a realised ideational/social position in the world". Hence, through the use of their voice, a person is able to position themselves in a conversation, which is, according to Bakhtin, a process that happens in every form of communication, whether it be reading, listening, or speaking. Moreover, personal cultural assumptions and interpretations are added during this process, without which the communication would be considered meaningless (Klötzl & Swoboda 2020: 51).

Therefore, this positioning process is referred to as *polyphony*, which is understood as the "dialogic process of negotiating – actualizing and realizing – voices/positions through language" and in doing so, human communication is interpreted as "a chorus of independent voices" (Klötzl & Swoboda 2020: 52–53). These voices then operate on two different levels. The first level is the dialogue between the self and the other, referring to the relationship that is being negotiated and constructed in dialogue. The other level is the relationship between the self and the world(view) and attitudes/beliefs of said person. Both levels are constantly evaluated and reshaped in interpersonal communication. The process of communication is viewed as "unfinalized" because of the constant repositioning and renegotiation that is taking place. An utterance is hence considered a process of creating something new out of some pre-existing knowledge or thought. In this sense, Klötzl and Swoboda view communication as "polyphony or the interpersonal dialogic process whereby people negotiate their voices/positions" (2020: 57).

Furthermore, positioning has been investigated for decades in the realm of social sciences and is viewed as a process in which participants construct so-called *storylines* together (Davies & Harré 1999: 37). These storylines are viewed as "social conventions according

to and within the limits of which people act” (Klötzl & Swoboda 2020: 58). Thus, positioning describes the process of (not) adhering to rules of social settings and choosing speech acts appropriate to the constraints of the genre or storyline. Those rules are by no means fixed and are subject to change and adaptation. With regard to politeness this could mean that interactants would use politeness strategies according to the hierarchies in place and the roles they assume in a social interaction.

In general, positioning is viewed as a process that takes place on a conversational continuum. Many researchers defined criteria that describe the two poles at the end of said continuum and, in a way, those theories seem to use different terminology for describing somewhat similar concepts. On the one hand, the interactants want to cooperate and accommodate their counterpart. On the other hand, participants want to maintain their freedom of choices and personal space. This idea, (as noted by Klötzl and Swoboda [2020:61]) or a rather similar interpretation of it, has been called, *approach* and *withdrawal* by Terkourafi (2008), *involvement* and *independence* by Scollon, Scollon and Jones (2012) or *co-operation* and *territoriality* by Widdowson (1984). Although labelled differently, some of this terminology could be used interchangeably for similar ideas. Klötzl and Swoboda (2020: 61) also argue that those terms are not mutually exclusive but work in a “yin and yang dialectic”, because they complement each other and cannot be separated completely. Furthermore, some similarities to the positive and negative face wants, as proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987), can be observed.

With regards to politeness, it can be said that positioning plays a crucial part in how humans tend to utilise it. Terkourafi (2008) argues that politeness is considered a withdrawal strategy, as it tends to create distance between the speakers. It is especially used to counterbalance the risk of an interaction becoming overwhelming due to excessive intimacy that could otherwise occur. In this sense, “humans engage in an endless balancing act to find the right amount of closeness and distance such that they can feel the comfort of the community but also the solitude of independence” (Klötzl & Swoboda 2020: 62).

However, politeness cannot only be considered a strategy to reinforce one’s individuality and autonomy, because there is also a “pro-social aspect” inherent to the concept (Locher 2004). Therefore, politeness can also express positive and considerate feelings towards the interlocutor and thus create more closeness and connection between the interactants. Through the use of politeness as a connection-seeking strategy the participants can establish a climate of comity and appreciation, which can result in the interlocutor feeling positively reassured and the speaker feeling satisfied. This again highlights the fact that politeness can be understood as a means to achieve some perlocutionary purpose (Klötzl & Swoboda 2020: 68–69).

In conclusion, interpersonal positioning is viewed as a dynamic process of negotiating one's position (or voice, in Bakhtin's terms) in human interaction, thereby producing different storylines. It is then up to the individual to navigate between the genre level of communication with its prefabricated storylines, rules and norms and the individual level of possibly (not) adhering to said storylines/genres. Positioning is thus a flexible process of constant negotiation. In interpersonal positioning, politeness is viewed as a strategy to both assert the individual's freedom through distancing oneself from the interlocutor, but also as a useful means to make the addressee feel appreciated and to create connection.

In this chapter, different approaches to politeness theory have been introduced, compared and analysed. Politeness has been of interest for researchers for about half a century and thus, a variety of models and frameworks have been established. What started as an interest in the various ways that politeness is achieved linguistically has developed into an ever-growing field of research, not only into politeness as a linguistic construct, but also in an attempt to understand politeness as a sociocultural and interpersonal phenomenon. The following chapter 3 is now going to analyse how these different notions of politeness are viewed and managed by NNSs, ELF speakers and language learners and how they can be implemented meaningfully into teaching English in an Austrian school context.

3 Teaching Politeness

This chapter will now shift its focus from the theoretical politeness models discussed in the previous section towards the implementation of those theories in the foreign language classroom. As communicative language teaching has become the main approach of English language teaching (ELT) in recent years, it is crucial to first establish an understanding for the concept. Following this, this chapter sets out to explore in how far politeness is represented in ELT materials and how the phenomenon can be included meaningfully into English language classrooms.

3.1 Communicative competence

This section addresses one prominently discussed aspect of second language acquisition, which is the question of when a learner has actually achieved their objective of becoming a proficient language user. Therefore, it is essential to establish a frame of reference as to what linguistic competence consists of. One very prominent feature seems to be the ability to communicate one's needs effectively, therefore stressing that reaching a high level of communicative competence is often seen as the ultimate goal in Second language acquisition (SLA). The current aim of ELT, i.e. communicative language teaching (CLT), intends to make learners competent communicators in their second language (L2).

In applied linguistics, the development of the concept of communicative competence was sparked by criticism of the very grammar-based practice in language studies that had been prevalent previously (Leung 2005: 121). As a result, communicative competence with regard to SLA has been investigated in the linguistic research community for the past five decades and it has often been tied to the examination of successful language testing (see Bachman & Palmer 1996; Canale & Swain 1980; Celce-Murcia 2007; Hall, Cheng & Carlson 2006; Hymes 1972; Leung & Lewkowicz 2012).

However, the one who initially coined the term *competence*, although in a rather abstract form, was Noam Chomsky. He differentiated between *competence*, referring to the knowledge of a language, and *performance*, which describes “the actual use of the language in concrete situations” (Chomsky 1965: 4). *Competence* is then defined as the linguistic expertise of “an ideal speaker-listener in a completely homogeneous speech community, who knows his language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors (random or characteristic) in applying his knowledge of the language in actual performance” (Chomsky 1965: 3).

When examining this definition in the present day, it immediately raises the question whether speech communities are typically homogeneous, if we keep today's multicultural societies in mind, and what it means to be an ideal speaker-listener. Seidlhofer (2011: 89) calls Chomsky's definition an "idealized construct", and questions whether languages even exist as complete and enclosed entities that one can describe or define. However, Chomsky intended to use his definition merely to have a frame of reference that one can compare linguistic competence to. Obviously, today's speech communities are highly heterogeneous and different speaker-listeners have different levels of language expertise as well as knowledge gaps, even if they are highly proficient language users.

Criticism of Chomsky's definition of competence was most famously expressed by Hymes (1972), who claimed that the construct seems to be largely grammar-focused. Thus, he expanded it by stressing that there is also a social component of competence. He even goes as far as to suggest that a person only possessing the ability to form grammatically correct sentences, but lacking the knowledge of the social appropriateness of those utterances would probably be "institutionalised" (1972: 277). Therefore, he coined the term *communicative competence*, which would be taken up and later adapted by a myriad of different researchers. The term itself has retained its relevance until now and nowadays it is primarily used to describe the "knowledge of the rules for understanding and producing the referential and social meaning of language" (Kanwit & Solon 2023: 5–6). Hymes (1972: 278) stresses that this added social dimension does not interfere with the already well-established grammatical dimension of the term, but that it enhances and supports it, claiming that those social rules are equally important, because without them "the rules of grammar would be useless". In his view, "[t]he acquisition of competence for use, indeed, can be stated in the same terms as acquisition of competence for grammar" (Hymes 1972: 278).

As a result, in order to be able to display a high degree of communicative competence, a learner must ask themselves these four questions, as proposed by Hymes (1972: 281):

- 1) Whether (and to what degree) something is formally *possible*;
- 2) Whether (and to what degree) something is *feasible* in virtue of the means of implementation available;
- 3) Whether (and to what degree) something is *appropriate* (adequate, happy, successful) in relation to a context in which it is used and evaluated;
- 4) Whether (and to what degree) something is in fact done, actually *performed*, and what its doing entails. [original emphasis].

For Hymes, all the constituent parts of communicative competence are context-sensitive and when describing them, it is crucial to not only investigate the language itself (i.e. the code) but to also take the community and its “communicative activities” into consideration “so that any use of channel and code takes its place as part of the resources upon which the members draw” (Hymes 1977: 4).

Paulston (1974: 351) also agrees with Hymes and argues that learning a language only structurally might leave people unaware of social rules and etiquette until, that is, they break a rule and are confronted with the consequences of their actions, and might even be reprimanded for them. Therefore, she suggests that the cultural component of communicative competence must be learned along with the structures and grammar of the L2. She states that “[i]n language teaching we are always dealing with cross-cultural encounters, and what typically happens is that the student applies his native rules of speaking to the target language, rules which may imply a very different social significance” (Paulston 1974: 351).

Hymes’ model of communicative competence has been highly influential in the linguistic research field ever since, but Seidlhofer (2011: 90–91) criticizes that it is still based on the same idealisation of a heterogeneous language community, just as Chomsky was, through the reference to a “normal member of community [that] has knowledge with respect to all these aspects of the communicative systems available to him” (Hymes 1972: 282), although it is done more implicitly than in Chomsky’s definition. Nonetheless, the four questions that constitute communicative competence for Hymes could be detached from the native-speaking communities that he initially referred to, as in non-native-speaking communities, language users can also decide what is appropriate or feasible in their specific context. This is one reason why those concepts have stayed prominent ever since, because of their applicability to a variety of different language situations (Seidlhofer 2011: 91).

Although it was widely accepted, in 1980, the term *communicative competence* received additional attention when Canale and Swain (1980) dedicated an article called “Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing” in the journal *Applied Linguistics* to the matter. One of their main arguments was that it is by far more important to prioritise linguistic functions in a language rather than grammatically correct language forms. In their view, the most crucial aim of language acquisition should be the conveyance of meaning and therefore, learners must be exposed to realistic situations where they can communicate meaningfully with other speakers. Grammatical structures should be taught less explicitly and rather be incorporated in the acquisition of more universal aspects of language, such as e.g. the appropriate formulation of a request.

As a result, Canale and Swain (1980) introduced a very influential model to communicative competence which consists of three different types of competence and a fourth dimension added by Canale (1983).

1. *Grammatical competence*. This includes the knowledge of “lexical items and of rules of morphology, syntax, sentence-grammar semantics, and phonology” (Canale & Swain 1980: 29). Kanwit and Solon (2023: 6) state that this subcategory of competence “had received the lion’s share of contemporaneous theories of SLA and language classrooms”.
2. *Sociolinguistic competence*. Canale and Swain distinguish here between sociocultural rules of use and rules of discourse, however both of them refer to the correct interpretation of utterances “for social meaning, particularly when there is a low level of transparency between the literal meaning of an utterance and the speaker’s intention” (1980: 30). Thus, sociolinguistic competence is concerned with the appropriateness of utterances in different social situations and is viewed as highly context dependent. Hierarchies between participants, conventional norms and interactional purposes play a crucial role in developing sociolinguistic competence (Canale 1983: 7). “Appropriateness of utterances refers to [...] appropriateness of meaning and appropriateness of meaning concerns the extent to which particular communicative functions (e.g. commanding, complaining and inviting), attitudes (including politeness and formality) and ideas are judged to be proper in a given situation” (Canale 1983: 7)
3. *Strategic competence*. This part of communicative competence “was comprised of the (non-)verbal communication strategies that could be used to compensate for any breakdowns in communication due to deficits in competence (i.e., comprehension) or performance (i.e., production)” (Kanwit & Solon 2023: 6–7).
4. *Discourse competence*. This component was added by Canale in 1983 and it is concerned with the skills and knowledge needed to “combine grammatical forms and meanings to produce different types of unified spoken or written texts, e.g. oral and written narratives, business reports and so on” (Leung 2005: 124). This unity can be achieved through “cohesion in form”, which refers to the structural links in utterances that would assist in the interpretation such as the use of pronouns or linking devices, and “coherence in meaning”, which is concerned with the “relationships among the different meanings in a text” (Leung 2005: 124).

As can be observed, Canale and Swain’s (1980) framework broadened the concept of communicative competence immensely and as a result it has been transferred into the

realm of Second Language Teaching. However, the inclusion of communication strategies and context-sensitive language use has not resulted in the discreditation of the role that grammatical knowledge plays for successful SLA, as Canale and Swain view grammar as a complimentary part with the other dimensions of communicative competence (Kanwit & Solon 2023: 7).

In the years following its publication, this model has been revisited multiple times and the dimensions of communicative competence as proposed by Canale and Swain (1980) have been restructured, expanded, renamed and further elaborated on (see Bachman & Palmer 1996; Savignon 1972; Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei & Thurrell 1995). However, due to this increasing complexity, Widdowson (2003: 167–168) calls the model “a mixed bag”:

As we have seen, if we compare them with what Hymes proposes, the grammatical can be said to correspond with the possible, the sociolinguistic with the appropriate. Here one might reasonably talk about what people know (the rules of their language and the conventions of its use). But discourse and strategic ‘competencies’ have to do with how people *act* upon what they know in the immediate achievement of pragmatic meaning, and this involves a consideration of all kinds of contextual conditions. [original emphasis]

Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei & Thurrell (1995) also suggested a revised framework for communicative competence that added an extra competence to the four-part model proposed by Canale in 1983. In their model, they included *actional competence* as a fifth dimension. Actional competence is defined as the “competence in conveying and understanding communicative intent, that is, matching actional intent with linguistic form through, for example, knowledge of speech acts and speech act sets” (Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei & Thurrell 1995: 17).

Moreover, in 2007, Celce-Murcia added yet another dimension to her model, which she called *formulaic competence*, as she stressed the importance of formulaic language in learners’ communicative competence. Bachman and Palmer (1996, 2010) suggested a somewhat similar framework that distinguished between *language knowledge*, which consists of organizational knowledge (i.e. grammatical and textual knowledge) and pragmatic knowledge (functional and sociocultural knowledge), and *metacognitive strategies*, which refers to the ability of using language knowledge appropriately. Figure 2 provides an overview of the different frameworks discussed in this chapter.

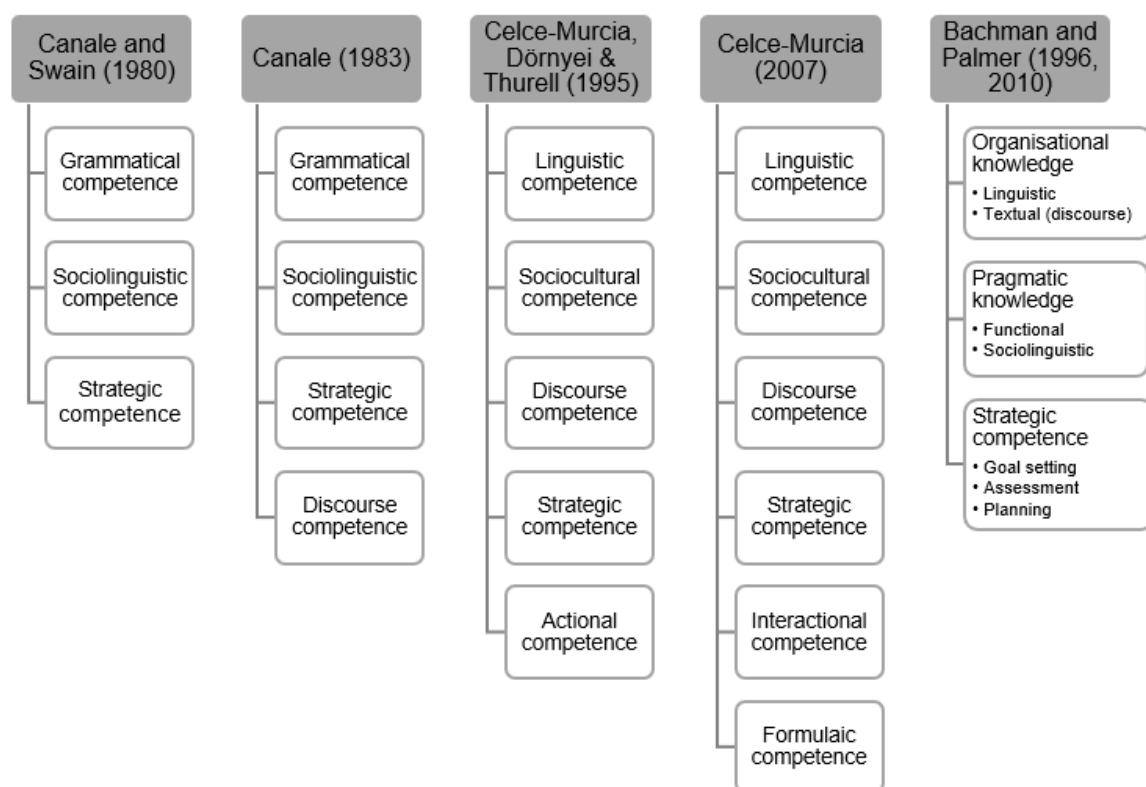


Figure 2: Schematic representation of different *communicative competence* frameworks.

Based on illustrations found in (Kanwit & Solon 2023: 9) and (Chabert Ull & Agost 2020: 58)

However, as it was with the models previously proposed, criticism was uttered by different researchers that claimed that Bachman and Palmer's framework focuses too much on language testing and thus is not adept for actual language teaching (Fulcher & Davidson 2007), which leads to it becoming a "proficiency evaluation instead of a teaching approach" (Chabert Ull & Agost 2020: 58).

Although many of those researchers proposed their own frameworks, it can be observed that the majority of them heavily rely on the model proposed by Canale and Swain (1980), who based their basic assumptions on Hymes' (1972) definition of communicative competence. Although all these models differ to some degree in their conceptualisation of the construct, it is noticeable that they all recognise the significance of grammatical knowledge and skills for successful language acquisition and competent language use.

One critic of all the communicative competence models out there up to that point is Widdowson (2003). He argues that, although the components that form communicative competence are relevant constructs in themselves, what all the frameworks fail to accomplish is to explain the relationships between the individual parts they are made of. He is especially critical about the fact that these models, such as the one from Canale and

Swain (1980) or Bachman & Palmer (1996), are presented as operational frameworks, but according to him, implementing them for language testing or assessment is rather difficult, if not entirely impossible. He believes that the frameworks have simply become too detailed: “We are, it would appear, confronted with a paradox: as frameworks for communicative testing develop to be more refined, the more remote they get from the phenomenon they are developed to test” (Widdowson 2003: 170).

Nevertheless, other researchers have not ceased to elaborate on the traditional frameworks for communicative competence and more recent representations of existing frameworks focus rather on formulaic language and extensive discourse, thereby putting the emphasising the achievement of communicative goals as this seems to facilitate SLA greatly (Kanwit & Solon 2023: 8).

As a result of the attention that communicative competence received in the field of SLA, it has been introduced into the realm of language teaching, mainly as a frame of reference for language assessment. A very influential concept linked to competence in this sphere has become Selinker’s (1972a) *interlanguage*, which intends to describe the present state of a second language learners’ knowledge of said L2. The concept shifted the focus from viewing learner language as “a hodgepodge of errors all caused by the learner’s native language” to it being considered an “autonomous linguistic system in its own right” (Tarone 2014: 7). Thereby, the field of SLA research began to consider a third linguistic system (besides the learner’s L1 and the target language) a part of the process: learner language (ibid.). Tarone (2014: 9) summarises that, in her view, learner language should be considered a linguistic system that is ever developing and evolving as the learner progresses in their language acquisition process.

Selinker (1972a: 213) generally views the interlanguage as having the goal of approximating more and more towards a certain language norm:

Regarding the ideal second-language learner who will not 'succeed' [...] and who is thus representative of the vast majority of second-language learners, we can idealize that from the beginning of his study of a second language, he has his attention focused upon *one norm of the language* whose sentences he is attempting to produce. With this statement, we have idealized the picture we wish to sketch in the following ways: the generally accepted notion 'target language' (TL), i.e. the second-language the learner is attempting to learn, is here restricted to mean that *there is only one norm of one dialect* within the interlingual focus of attention of the learner. [my emphasis]

This quote illustrates that a learner’s interlanguage is viewed as an aspiration to an idealized language, in that case the target language norm, which is eerily reminiscent of the definitions that Hymes and Chomsky put forward. Although the interlanguage is

considered an autonomous language system, it is still seen as being imperfect and the ultimate goal must be the approximation of it towards the 'perfect' target language. Referring back to communicative competence, Firth and Wagner noted that, in all of these conceptualizations, the L2 learners are treated "as a defective communicator, limited by an underdeveloped communicative competence" rather than as a language user able to successfully navigate joint conversations through relevant communication strategies" (1997: 285). Therefore, they argued, sociolinguistic and interactional components should receive more attention in SLA.

Moreover, Ortega (2013) argued for examining communication from various angles and investigating human interaction from a cross-disciplinary perspective, thereby focusing on the general human capacity for language (learning). Furthermore, she noted that L2 learners should rather be compared to bilingual speakers than to monolingual ones, as this could help researchers to focus more on the positive effects that acquiring a second language would yield.

To conclude, as outlined in this section 3.1, the construct of communicative competence has been investigated thoroughly for many years and this heightened interest in the subject has resulted in many different theories, models, and frameworks, which then have been analysed, critiqued, and restructured by researchers in the field. In sum, all these contributions have encouraged the research field to broaden and to provide a holistic overview of what L2 learners are able to achieve and they have "challenged researchers to move beyond biases that have privileged particular types of competence (i.e., the purely grammatical), varieties (i.e., [inter]national or regional standards), and registers (i.e., formal speech), among other linguistic features" (Kanwit & Solon 2023: 11).

3.2 From competence towards capability

The communicative competence models outlined above have illustrated the vast research that has been carried out on the concept in the field of applied linguistics. This section 3.2 will now examine the primary approach to the implementation of these frameworks in foreign language classrooms, i.e. in the form of *communicative language teaching* (CLT henceforth). Furthermore, certain criticism on CLT will be discussed and *communicative capability* will be introduced as a rather new concept, which could be especially suitable for ELF communication.

There is little doubt that this socio-culturally alert concept of communicative competence has had a profound influence on ELT. Indeed the term Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) was coined around this period in the mid-1970s to mark a major shift in curriculum and pedagogic approaches. (Leung 2005: 122)

As a result of this heightened interest, the construct has been introduced into the foreign language teaching sphere, where it has become a well-established teaching principle under the name *Communicative Language Teaching* (CLT henceforth). This approach to language teaching sparked what Hedge (2000: 45) calls a “communicative movement in ELT”. What is more, Johnson (2008: 182–183) goes as far as to call this shift in pedagogy a “sociolinguist revolution”. As a result, CLT has become the prevalent teaching principle illustrated in almost every teacher education book available and, moreover, the approach that the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is based on and still adheres to.

One of the first to provide a comprehensive overview of what CLT is to be understood as was Littlewood (1981) with his work *Communicative Language Teaching: An introduction*. He tried to adopt the concept of communicative competence into the pedagogic sphere, and he states that CLT is supposed to combine the functional with the structural aspects of language. Widdowson (2012: 8) describes CLT as concentrating on the restoration of “the normal relationship between the possible and the appropriate” (with which he refers to parts of Dell Hymes’ definition of communicative competence). The goal of CLT is, according to him, to expose students to a certain communicative situation or context, “which would naturally motivate the use of certain linguistic forms to achieve a communicative purpose” (Widdowson 2012: 8).

Taking the research into communicative competence as the foundation, one of the main concerns of both language teachers and applied linguists is the question of how to create a curriculum for CLT and what content to include in it, rather than the analysis of how communication is successfully accomplished in various settings. Furthermore, discussions about how to teach content under the CLT principle had to propose adequate activities and tasks for the learning content (Leung 2005: 125), because the main idea behind CLT is that learners should be able to acquire language as a resource for communication, instead of perceiving it as abstract forms, which would create a meaningful communicative context (Widdowson 2012: 9).

Teachers teach subjects. English is a subject, like history or physics. So how is this subject to be defined? What aspects of the language should be focused on, and what kind of classroom activity is most appropriate for the activation of learning? Over the years, different answers to these questions have been proposed and promoted, and the subject thereby redefined. (Widdowson 2012: 3)

One of those to propose a communicative curriculum was Yalden (1991: 86–87), who argued that a syllabus that adheres to the principles of CLT must include components such as “a detailed consideration [...] of the *purpose* for which learners wish to acquire the target language”, a description of the “*setting* in which they will want to use the target language”, as well as an indication of the *role* that the student will assume in the conversation and the different “communicative *events* in which the learner will participate [original emphasis]”. Leung (2005: 126) summarises that, according to this view of CLT, depending on the learners’ needs, curriculum designers should establish a teaching programme that is based on the various components of communicative competence, in order to establish a “language content [that] is thus built on idealized typifications of what native speakers may say and do in specified contexts”.

Generally speaking, the majority of the teacher training books (e.g. Hedge 2000; Littlewood 1981; Morrow 1983) agree that CLT is best accomplished when the focus is put on sociolinguistic-, discourse- and strategic competence rather than solely focusing on linguistic competence, which reflects what the communicative competence models discussed in the previous part of this thesis showed. This is also reflected in the probably most renowned language framework available at the moment: the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, issued by the Council of Europe. The view of the concept *competence* that the CEFR portrays is based on different models that come from a variety of disciplines, such as applied linguistics, psychology and sociopolitical approaches. Nonetheless, the CEFR, also in its most recent edition of 2020, acknowledges the vast influence that the communicative competence frameworks devised by e.g. Canale and Swain (1980) or Bachman and Palmer (1996) had on the development of the descriptors:

[T]he different competence models developed in applied linguistics from the early 1980s on did influence the CEFR. Although they organised them in different ways, in general these models shared four main aspects: strategic competence; linguistic competence; pragmatic competence (comprising both discourse and functional/actional competence) and sociocultural competence (including sociolinguistic competence). [...] These aspects, or parameters of description, are always intertwined in any language use; they are not separate “components” and cannot be isolated from each other. (Council of Europe 2020: 129)

Thereby, the CEFR established that CLT should function as the main teaching guideline for language instructors and learners in Europe. As CLT is primarily concerned with the contextual factors of a communicative situation and views language as a means to facilitate interaction, the CEFR also refers to the sociolinguistic component of communication and defines it as follows:

Sociolinguistic competence is concerned with the knowledge and skills required to deal with the social dimension of language use. Since language is a sociocultural phenomenon, much of what is contained in the CEFR, particularly in respect of the sociocultural, is also of relevance to sociolinguistic competence. The matters treated here are those specifically relation to language use that are not dealt with elsewhere: linguistic markers of social relations; politeness conventions; register differences; and dialect and accent. (Council of Europe 2020: 136)

Following this definition of sociolinguistic competence, the CEFR specifies another goal for L2 learners to achieve. Under *sociolinguistic appropriateness*, using Hymes' terminology, the CEFR lists that language learners should acquire key skills such as “showing awareness for politeness conventions”, the ability to employ “idiomatic expressions, allusive usage and humour”, as well as “adopting an appropriate register” (Council of Europe 2020: 136). Moreover, sociolinguistic appropriateness is the only subcategory of sociolinguistic competence listed by the CEFR. In contrast, the other two categories (linguistic competence and pragmatic competence) are comprised of six subcategories each, thereby making it very apparent what the primary focus of the descriptors is. Figure 3 below illustrates the CEFR's framework of communicative competence.

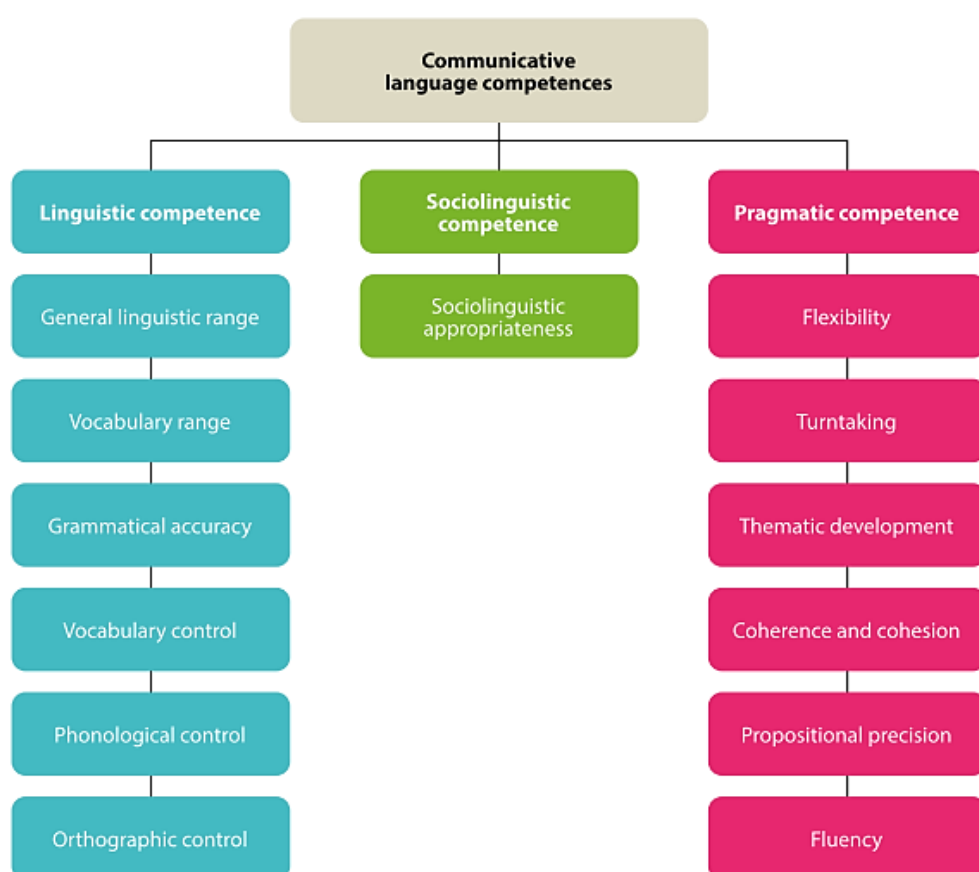


Figure 3. Overview of communicative language competences (Council of Europe 2020: 129)

It appears obvious what the developers of those descriptors had in mind when designing them: the completely proficient and eloquent English native speaker as idiomatic expressions and politeness conventions seem to be typically employed by speakers who have mastered the language to a very high degree. In the first version of the CEFR, published in 2001, this aspiration towards the English NS appears to be even more apparent when the definition for *intercultural awareness* is given: “Knowledge, awareness and understanding of the relation (similarities and distinctive differences) between the ‘world of origin’ and the ‘world of the target community’ produce an intercultural awareness” (Council of Europe 2001: 103). However, in its initial definition, which was put forward by Byram (1997: 7) *intercultural communicative competence* was viewed as the “individual’s ability to communicate and interact across cultural boundaries”. This definition does not specify which communities the different interactants belong to, but when examining the definition that the CEFR puts forward, it is implied that the “target community” does possess the qualities and characteristics that language learners should aspire to achieve, which were, at the time, mostly considered to be NSs of the target language.

Criticism on the CEFR with regards to its definition of communicative competence was raised by Leung and Lewkowicz (2012: 398), who argue that the CEFR does not “adequately capture the agentive and contingent nature of co-constructed meaning-making and meaning-taking in social interaction, particularly in situations where high levels of ethnolinguistic diversity are fast becoming the norm”. Therefore, continuous evaluation and adaptation of those frameworks is of utmost importance.

In its newest edition, the CEFR now also promotes the principle of *plurilingualism*, which is viewed as “the dynamic and developing linguistic repertoire of an individual user/learner” (Council of Europe 2020: 30) and is considered necessary for language learning in today’s globalised world. The definition is based on Coste, Moore and Zarate’s (1997) concepts of plurilingual and pluricultural competence. Although this will not be discussed in further detail here in this chapter, it suffices to know that the CEFR considers a plurilingual individual to have “a *single*, interrelated, repertoire that they combine with their general competences and various strategies in order to accomplish tasks” (Council of Europe 2020: 30) [original emphasis]. This means viewing all linguistic knowledge an individual possesses as one repertoire that is comprised of competences, instead of various different language systems.

Returning to the question of whether the CEFR is equipped for providing a framework of what English to teach in the foreign language classroom in the age of globalisation it can be summarised that, although the frameworks of interculturalism and plurilingualism (i.a. Byram 1997; Dombi 2021) were integrated into the descriptors of the CEFR, the concept of ELF has yet to be considered by it.

The fundamental issue with this is, according to Widdowson (2003, 2015), that all of the teaching approaches still adhere to the English native-speaker as the reference for what developing communicative competence is.

Teachers set up ENL as the target language and try to help learners to hit the target but most of them miss it. All kinds of new methods and approaches have been proposed over the years to improve the learners' aim –the structural approach, the natural approach, communicative language teaching, task – based language teaching, content and language integrated learning, all trying, and trying in vain, to get learners to conform to ENL norms and achieve NS competence. (Widdowson 2015: 5–6)

How then, can educational experts and linguists equip learners with the skills they need in order to meet the language requirements of today's globalised societies? Widdowson (2003) proposes that SLA needs to move away from communicative competence as the guiding principle for all second language instruction, because dividing the construct into ever more characteristics and features makes it almost impossible to incorporate it into curriculum design. Therefore, he argues, learners need to be guided towards “focus[ing] attention on the communicative potential in the language itself, and the extent to which learners are capable of realizing it”, which would then help them to establish a general *capability* for learning instead (Widdowson 2003: 172).

When analysing English as a Lingua Franca interactions, it is obvious that speakers do, in fact, oftentimes communicate effectively, although they might make mistakes and therefore not show NS competence. However, they are able to exploit the linguistic resources they have available and adjust, e.g., the degree of complexity they employ depending on who they are communicating with. The issue here is that language learners are still taught that non-conformity to the target language standard (which is primarily English as a native language - ENL) is associated with failure of acquiring language proficiency. Nonetheless, sooner or later they will realise that in a Lingua Franca context, their English is probably effective in function anyways, although it might be somewhat defective in form (Widdowson 2015: 8).

Widdowson further argues that, by setting ENL as the target language, educators impose NS norms of usage and correctness to language on learners, who cannot engage with them, because they “represent a reality that [...] is radically different from their own” (Widdowson 2015: 9). But the reality that learners can indeed relate to, at least part of it, is the language(s) they already know and typically learners draw from this knowledge of their L1 when interacting with somebody in the target language. And students know from this experience that not every grammatical mistake they make impedes or hinders successful communication and can therefore be considered redundant if the goal they are aiming for

is meaningful communication instead of structural accuracy.

So something tells them – their own experience of language tells them – that correctness is not always needed for effective communication: that they can get by without it. Most of the so-called mistakes that are so persistent and which teachers spend so much time trying to eradicate have little if any communicative value – this is why learners keep on making them. They see no point in correction. (Widdowson 2015: 11)

Nonetheless, the “native speaker has proved to be a remarkably resilient concept, and it is still part of the bedrock of transnationalized ELT” (Leung 2005: 128), possibly due to the reliance of all the early communicative competence frameworks on NS standards and because these models were so influential in the development of CLT.

In general, speakers typically feel that they know their first language (L1) best, which provides them with knowledge about what is appropriate to say in particular situations and they possess a high degree of awareness of context and knowledge about the actual use of the language (Davies 2003: 110).

But a moment's reflection makes it clear that we do not actually mean native speakers, whoever they are. Most speakers of English, even those who are to the language born, speak non-standard varieties of the language and have themselves to be instructed in the standard at school. [...] So the authority to maintain the standard language is not consequent on a natural native-speaker endowment. It is claimed by a minority of people who have the power to impose it. The custodians of Standard English are, in effect, self-elected members of a rather exclusive club. (Widdowson 2003: 37)

Thus, if CLT wants to move away from idolising NS norms and stop penalising learner mistakes that do not inhibit communication, it seems as if developing a capability for language learning, in the way that Widdowson (2003) defined it, could be a suitable option in order to equip students with the necessary means to manage Lingua Franca contexts successfully. It is to be noted that developing capability does not mean that grammatical correctness is completely irrelevant for communication, but that learners can also be considered effective communicators if they do not rigorously adhere to it at all times.

Because, clearly, there are mistakes that have more impact on successful communication than others. Using the “wrong tense” is unlikely to inhibit communication completely, but the use of a “false friend” from the learner's L1 might cause more confusion (in contrast to “true friends” [similar to cognates], which are way more frequent than their “false” counterparts and can actually facilitate ELF communication to a great deal [see Hülmbauer 2011]). Swan (2012: 380) mentions that the context of where the mistake happens is also important: a learner might not even think too closely about getting the spelling of a word right in an informal text message, but they might act differently if they have to use the same

lexical item in a letter of application. Nonetheless, “many language mistakes may be neutralised where the linguistic and situational context provide adequate clues” (Swan 2012: 380).

It could be argued that similar rules apply to ELF situations. Should “contexts and purposes arise which do require a closer conformity to NS norms, then this capability for use will enable ELF users quite naturally to adjust their language accordingly” (Widdowson 2015: 12). According to Widdowson, it is this exploitation of the language potential that enables language learners to become proficient L2 users, because linguistic structures always serve some communicative function and the learners should be guided towards a “readiness to adjust to the conventions of actual encoding as and when required” (Widdowson 2003: 173).

In order to adjust SLA to focus more on this capability, Widdowson (2003: 177) argues that it is insufficient and “highly unpredictable” to specify learning goals for “projected needs” of the learners and that it would make much more sense to concentrate on developing a general learning capability that would facilitate subsequent language acquisition.

It would therefore make better pedagogic sense, I have argued, to get learners to invest in a more strategic ability, or capability, which involves the realization, in both senses of that term, of the communicative potential of meaning encoded in the language itself. [...] Looked at it this way, the development of capability as an objective is a function of the very process of learning both during the course and beyond it. If English as a subject is to be designed with this objective in mind, it cannot, I have argued, be directly derived from linguistic descriptions of native-speaker usage.” (Widdowson 2003: 178)

To conclude, CLT as the prevalent teaching principle recommended by the majority of educational experts and even the CEFR cannot fully cater for the needs of language learners in today’s globalised societies. As NNSs of English encounter themselves more and more frequently in ELF situations, it is not feasible anymore to look at NSs for language standards and norms. A possible solution for this could be a focus towards developing capability instead of communicative competence. Hence, the following section of this thesis will examine what ELF is and how it can be a useful resource for actual language use in a diverse and globalised community.

3.3 A possible alternative: the ELF-informed classroom

As already argued before, language learners will, when confronted with a communicative need, instinctively try to connect the foreign language, in this case English, with their familiar language experiences and knowledge. This inclination prompts them to prioritise

aspects of English that are most beneficial for effective communication, which then might result in utterances that are not structurally accurate in terms of ENL (Widdowson 2015: 14).

This focus on successful communication provides an opportunity, and probably the necessity, to reconsider ELT within a new framework, which presents itself in the form of English as a Lingua Franca. As it is evident that effective communication can occur without strict adherence to NS norms, Hülmbauer (2009) and Widdowson (2015) argue for the orientation towards ELF into teaching practices.

English now becomes more like an insider language – its features made less foreign and more familiar, related more closely to the learners' own reality. There has been much talk about learner autonomy, about teachers allowing learners to take the initiative. This way of thinking of the subject, which gives primacy to *who* rather than [sic] *what* is to be taught, would be a way of putting such ideas into practice. (Widdowson 2015: 15) [original emphasis]

However, as can be deduced from the communicative teaching approaches illustrated previously, Seidlhofer (2011: 13) argues that, although the scientific discourse has acknowledged the presence of ELF as a worthwhile phenomenon to investigate, the contents of language pedagogy courses have not changed sufficiently. The result is that this “leaves English as a subject in a kind of limbo, caught between innovations in the discourse about the teaching of the language and a lack of innovation in terms of the actual language content” (ibid.).

In the previous section it has been argued that ELT should not solely focus on NS norms as a reference for defining a learner's competence in a second language. Therefore, in this section of this thesis an ELF sensitive teaching approach is proposed as a possible alternative to expand the traditional concept of communicative language teaching. First, definition of ELF will be established, which is then followed by an investigation in how far various teaching materials are equipped for teaching ELF. This investigation will serve as an important basis for the analysis part of this thesis.

3.3.1 What is English as a Lingua Franca (ELF)?

In today's globalised society English is ubiquitous in almost every scenario where international people converse with each other. It has become “not only an international language, but *the* international language” (Seidlhofer 2011: 2) as most people worldwide are learning it as their first L2 and it is the most prominent language used for international communication.

Considering the number of English speakers worldwide, it can be observed that non-native speakers of English have long outnumbered the native speakers. According to Kachru's (1992: 14) often quoted model of World Englishes, English speakers can be categorised into three different circles. The *inner circle* refers to regions where English is spoken as a first language (such as the UK, USA, or Australia). When speaking about the *outer circle*, Kachru refers to areas where English is used as an additional/second language due to colonisation (such as India or Singapore). In the outer circle, English has been institutionalised and therefore speakers are usually bilingual. However, speakers in the *expanding circle* typically acquire English as a foreign language through education.

According to Crystal (2003: 61), the inner circle counts around 380 million English speakers, the outer circle around 500 million speakers, whereas the estimation for English speakers in the expanding circle is around 1 billion speakers. It is important to note, that these estimates were made two decades ago and that the number of English speakers in the expanding circle has probably grown considerably in that timeframe due to rapid globalisation and digitalisation. In 2006, Crystal estimated that "one in four of the world's population are now capable of communicating to a useful level in English" (Crystal 2006: 425). Although there have been other international languages in the past, such as Latin during the time of the Roman Empire, the enormous reach that English possesses nowadays is a first. Seidlhofer (2011: 3) affirms that "[n]o other language called 'world language' has ever had both the global expansion and the penetration of social strata and domains of use that English now has" and goes on to mention that therefore English has become viewed a useful additional language to learn on a global level in order for its speakers to be well equipped for future international communication.

In these contexts, English is used as a convenient common means of communication among people with different native languages. It is the massive and increasing extent of these uses, stimulated by developments in electronic communication and enhanced mobility, that has been primarily responsible for establishing English globally as the predominant international language – English as a Lingua Franca. (Seidlhofer 2011: 4)

Definitions of "lingua franca" differ to some extent. Jenkins (2007: 1) defines it as "a contact language used among people who do not share a first language, and is commonly understood to mean a second (or subsequent) language of its speakers". This would mean that ELF use excludes English native speakers. The VOICE (Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English) website describes ELF as "English used as a common means of communication among speakers from different first-language backgrounds". According to this definition, NSs would also encounter themselves in ELF conversations if they speak with someone whose first language is not English. Seidlhofer (2011: 7) also considers ELF

as “any use of English among speakers of different first languages for whom English is the communicative medium of choice, and often the only option”.

As English has become the one preferred language for international communication, language learners are probably confronted with it on numerous occasions throughout their lifetime. Moreover, much of their communication in English will be with other NNS and therefore it seems vital that the educational systems prepare them for this kind of English usage. Widdowson (2003: 177) therefore argues that language instructors have to set objectives for their students that reflect their actual language needs and thus the way that the English language and its usage has evolved must be taken into account “and that this should lead us to think again about defining such objectives in reference to native-speaker norms”. This is due to the fact that English has adapted and undergone changes through its use as a lingua franca and, as a result, has become considerably independent from native speaker norms (Seidlhofer 2011: 8).

Considering the similarity of the abbreviations and their often simultaneous discussion in the field of language pedagogy and linguistics, it is crucial to distinguish between the two concepts of EFL and ELF. EFL is short for *English as a foreign language* and focuses on learners whose goal it is to acquire native-speaker-like proficiency, as it focuses on “where the language comes from” (Seidlhofer 2011: 17). Hence, it is appropriate for learners with a particular interest in an English-speaking community, possibly because they have friends or family there or they are considering emigrating there. For those learners, it would make sense to adhere to NS norms when learning English. One issue with teaching EFL is that it is often decided by socio-political factors what variety of English is being taught in different parts of the world (Jenks 2013: 97). In Austria, the geographical proximity to the United Kingdom leads to curriculums and coursebooks favouring British English when it comes to, e.g. spelling or lexical items.

ELF, on the other hand, is “guided by different wants and needs” because it is “adapted to the needs of intercultural communication”, e.g. preparing learners for international business meetings, for travelling or for an academic conference and to “make use of the (only) language shared by all the interactants, the lingua franca, in order to achieve the fullest communication possible” (Seidlhofer 2011: 17–18). In ELF contexts, the speakers will use the English language to accomplish a certain communicative goal and in such situations, speakers are no longer considered “failed native speakers” but “highly skilled communicators” as they are able to draw from their multilingual knowledge and accomplish the task at hand (Jenkins, Cogo & Dewey 2011: 284). In conclusion, Seidlhofer (2011: 11) notes that NS competence is not an appropriate aim for ELF contexts, and these will primarily be the situations that language learners will encounter themselves in the future.

It is also crucial to mention that, in ELF contexts, linguistic ‘correctness’ is not the only indicator for whether a communicative goal can be achieved. In those situations, intelligibility depends on a variety of factors such as contextual clues (e.g. gestures, intonation, background knowledge, etc.) (Seidlhofer 2011: 35). The dynamic nature of ELF prevents the standardization of it as a variety of English to be taught in schools and the attempt to formulate rules and guidelines for its ‘correct’ use would be ridiculous when taking into account its transformative and evolving nature. Nevertheless, the acquisition of an additional language is not simply “a reactive by-product of performance” in communicative contexts but a process of acquisition and adjustment of structures depending on the actual communicative needs of the speaker (Seidlhofer 2011: 110).

3.3.1.1 Characteristics of ELF discourse

Due to the myriad of speakers using ELF daily in an enormous number of different situations, it is very difficult to define clear characteristics of ELF discourse. There are, however, a few observable tendencies in a substantial amount of ELF interactions. One of the most frequently discussed features of ELF communication is enhanced explicitness, or, as it has been called in translation studies: *explication* (Mauranen 2018: 13). This means that speakers will often resort to paraphrasing or repetition when they anticipate or perceive difficulties with intelligibility. This means that complex vocabulary might be repeated or described, sentence structures could be reformulated through processes of fronting or tails in order to enhance intelligibility. ELF users might also choose their words according to the communicative fitness principle, which means that they might choose vocabulary that is easier to understand in the first place, even if they are familiar with more complex or concrete language (Mauranen 2018: 13). Another reason for the reliance on rather simple vocabulary could be the fact that ELF speakers often have not mastered the more complex forms yet, or that they are translating from their first language (Mauranen 2018: 17). In general, these tendencies of heightened explicitness have also been observed by Seidlhofer (2004) and Cogo and Dewey (2006). In the end, explication tendencies in ELF discourse might also influence grammar in general and guide it towards new emerging patterns and overall structural simplification (Mauranen 2018: 14).

Other lexico-grammatical features of ELF were outlined by Seidlhofer (2004: 220) as follows:

- ‘Dropping’ the third person present tense –s
- ‘Confusing’ the relative pronouns *who* and *which*

- ‘Omitting’ definite and indefinite articles where they are obligatory in ENL, and inserting them where they do not occur in ENL
- ‘Failing’ to use correct forms in tag questions (e.g., *isn’t it?* or *no?* instead of *shouldn’t they?*)
- Inserting ‘redundant’ prepositions, as in *We have to study about...*)
- ‘Overusing’ certain verbs of high semantic generality, such as *do*, *have*, *make*, *put*, *take*
- ‘Replacing’ infinitive-constructions with that-clauses, as in *I want that*
- ‘Overdoing’ explicitness (e.g. *black color* rather than just *black*)

In most of these cases, these language structures, that would typically be considered “faulty”, do not inhibit the overall communicative aim. Hülmbauer (2009: 324) notes that often ELF speakers can benefit from their shared “non-nativeness” as they know strategies to work around difficult expressions, which would often not be available to NSs. When lexical items are replaced or inserted in the “wrong” place in a sentence structure, it mostly does not interfere with intelligibility as most of these changes to the grammatical norm are self-explanatory. If, for instance, function words are omitted or tag questions are swapped, it is appropriate to assume that these changes do not carry much significance in terms of meaning conveyance (Klimpfinger 2009: 366).

In contrast to that, Seidlhofer (2002) found that there are indeed lexical choices that could impede intelligibility in ELF situations. She refers to the fact that idiomatic speech or phrasal verbs can be difficult to understand if the interlocutor(s) tries to derive the literal meaning from the expression. A few years later, Pitzl (2009) conducted a study on idiomatic language use in ELF discourse and found that speakers have a tendency to invent new metaphors, proverbs and idiomatic expressions through different processes. Those new metaphors could be related to already existing English ones, but with modified grammar or lexis or speakers might also translate idioms into English from other languages they know (Pitzl 2009: 317).

One of the first investigations into the characteristics of ELF was conducted by Jenkins (2000, 2002), who explored how pronunciation could influence intelligibility and how different phonological modification features were used to accommodate the interlocutors and increase intelligibility. Jenkins (2000) then established the so-called *Lingua Franca Core*, i.e. key pronunciation features that NNSs should use in ELF discourse. One important characteristic of ELF pronunciation could be summarised as the deliberate

pronunciation of consonants that NSs would often omit (e.g. the presence of the rhotic /r/, final plosives, or the intervocalic /t/). In her study, Jenkins concluded that there are some phonological features that can influence communication (such as vowel length distinctions or nuclear stress), but there are also many features which have little to no effect on intelligibility (e.g. assimilations or the use of weak forms). However, a detailed discussion of those features would go beyond the scope of this thesis and for now, it is sufficient to know that speakers do in fact modify their pronunciation with the aim of enhancing intelligibility and understanding. As a result, Jenkins (2000) argued that NS pronunciation is not ideal for learners who want to be prepared for ELF contexts.

Similar to the research into the lexico-grammatical features of ELF discourse, there is also a thriving body of research on ELF pragmatics (see Firth 1996; House 2002; Seidlhofer 2006; Cogo 2009; Cogo & Dewey 2012). Much of this research has concentrated on how speakers signal non-understanding and which strategies they then employ to resolve any instances of miscommunication. One option would be, as already mentioned earlier, the use of explication. Another tactic that ELF speakers frequently employ is the “let it pass” principle, where speakers opt to just overlook and ignore ungrammatical or confuse structures and try to derive meaning from other contextual factors (Firth 1996).

3.3.1.2 ELF sociolinguistics

Up until the present day, most of the research on ELF characteristics concentrated on what House (1999) calls “influential frameworks” such as the domains of English as Lingua Franca in Business contexts (BELF) (see Ehrenreich 2009; Bjørge 2012; Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen 2018; Kankaanranta 2020) and ELF in academic settings (ELFA, which is also the name of a corpus of spoken academic discourse) (see Mauranen, Hynninen & Ranta 2010). “[I]n other words, the use of ELF can be and is often associated with high status and elite situations and users” (Leung 2005: 135). ELF sectors that are much less researched, although in recent years a growing number of linguists is indeed interested in them, are “private ELF settings” such as friend groups, couples, Au Pairs, or online gaming communities. Presumably, this is also a continuously growing domain of language users that should be investigated further.

As ELF is used so frequently, in many different settings, by a myriad of different speakers, it is only natural to assume that it is constantly evolving and changing. However, this language change is not only happening on a linguistic level, but also on a sociolinguistic one. Mortensen (2021: 152) suggests that “the sociolinguistic notion of change should be broadened to include phenomena that [...] concern reconfigurations of language–society

relations”, because social changes are inextricably linked to language change. “Translating this to an ELF perspective allows us to appreciate that an investigation of “the use of English as a lingua franca” and “change” will not be complete if linguistic change is the only dimension that comes under scrutiny” (Mortensen 2021: 154). Yet, sociolinguistic studies on ELF discourse are sparse. Seidlhofer (2011: 70) criticises this absence of studies quite bluntly:

The unprecedented and accelerated spread of English and the resulting variation and change would seem to be precisely the kind of phenomenon that should interest (socio)linguists. But perversely, ELF is left out of account. This refusal to take ELF and ELF speakers seriously is all the more perverse since it flies in the face of everything that sociolinguists have held dear all along: interest in the intricate relationship between linguistic variation, contexts of use and expressions of identity, insistence on the intrinsic variability of all language, and the natural virtues of linguistic diversity. How then can this denial of ELF be explained?

In conclusion, ELF is the predominant international language and due to its global scale and ever-growing number of speakers it is subject to (socio)linguistic variation and change. Reliance on NS rules about correct language use do not apply in ELF contexts. Therefore, language pedagogy has to acknowledge the presence of ELF as a means of communication that, although it is impossible to institutionalise and describe it the way that regional languages can be described, is going to gain more and more significance. As a result, textbooks used by learners for acquiring a new language should also be sensitive to ELF discourse. The following section will discuss how this can be achieved.

3.3.2 Is there any ELF in ELT coursebooks?

The decision to use one textbook rather than another cannot be taken lightly. Since the textbook tends to be the main teaching-learning aid, in school systems at least, it influences what teachers teach and what and to some extent how learners learn. (McGrath 2002: 12)

Closely related to the roles of teachers and learners is the role of textbook materials. Any textbook is based on assumptions about learning, and the design of its activities implies certain roles for teachers and learners and assumes certain dispositions towards learning styles. (Hedge 2000: 36)

These two quotes illustrate that teaching materials, in this case ELT coursebooks, usually reflect the teaching approaches and principles that are prevalent at a certain point in time. Over the time, many innovations have been implemented in teaching materials in order to “update” teachers and learners about new advances in ELT pedagogy. In a time where communication has become increasingly global and international, it could be assumed that ELT textbooks would include the fields of EIL (English as an international language) or ELF, especially considering the vast amount of research that has been published on these

phenomena in recent years. Both the research areas of linguistics and applied linguistics “have shown how English cannot any longer be considered as a monolithic entity, not least in didactic terms” (Vettorel & Lopriore 2013: 484). Considering this, the purpose of ELT material should be to raise intercultural awareness and thereby equip learners with the skills necessary to become successful intercultural communicators. In this light, it would be logical to expect educational materials to provide explicit and clear instructions about methodological difficulties. Such guidelines, i.e. in the form of resource packs or teacher guides, would facilitate the successful implementation of methods suitable for an ELF-informed classroom (Vettorel & Lopriore 2013: 485). Being provided with suitable and realistic materials would enable educators to go beyond the prevalent ENL norms, where British English has typically served as the primary benchmark (at least in the Austrian context) (Cogo & Dewey 2012; Seidlhofer 2004, 2011; Vettorel & Lopriore 2013).

Research that investigated the representations of English in ELT material has shown that the majority of coursebooks still focus on the rules and norms of the Inner Circle, although the inclusion of Outer and Expanding Circle English has begun to some extent (see Kopperoinen 2011; Matsuda 2002; Vettorel 2010; Vettorel & Corrizzato 2012). For instance, Vettorel and Lopriore’s (2013) analysis of Italian ELT coursebooks aimed at secondary school learners revealed that there were almost no references to ELF and no promotion of strategies for using English in intercultural settings, although there were some tasks included which were supposed to raise awareness for the plurality of cultures. Furthermore, they found that

[c]haracters continue to be prevalently NSs, settings and accents overwhelmingly Inner Circle, Anglophone ones. The idea that interactions among nonnative bilingual users of English can be successful, which may constitute a positive and attainable model, is not taken into consideration [...]. (Vettorel & Lopriore 2013: 497)

In another study, Vettorel (2018) looked at the way that communication strategies were included in Italian ELT textbooks and discussed those strategies regarding their appropriateness for ELF contexts. The categories that those strategies were put in were *appeal for help* (both direct and indirect), *meaning negotiation* strategies (such as requests for repetition/clarification or “confirmation checks”), *responses* (e.g. repetition, rephrasing, simplification, use of fillers/time-gaining devices) and *achievement strategies* (for instance word-coinage, code-switching, or literal translations from another language) (Vettorel 2018: 61). All of these communication strategies play a fundamental role in intercultural ELF communication and were almost completely absent from the ELT material that she analysed, although ELF research has shown how effectively ELF speakers draw from their multilingual resources and hence communicate effectively in international contexts (see Widdowson 2003, 2012).

Moreover, in recent years researchers have also tried to create a list of criteria for identifying ELF-awareness in teaching materials. Matsuda (2012) proposed guidelines for the evaluation of ELT textbooks from an EIL standpoint. These criteria encompass considering the specific English variety that the material is based on, whether the variety aligns with what students in a specific environment should actually learn and whether it enhances the learners' awareness of the diverse linguistic nature of English in relation to its speakers and cultures. Moreover, Lopriore and Vettorel (2019: 99) argue that the basic criterion for the evaluation of textbooks should be whether "the plurilithic nature of Englishes" is represented in the material and in which manner those notions are developed. Thereby, they mean that materials should make reference to language variations in international ELF contexts and provide, e.g., listening activities that feature NNSs.

One of the most comprehensive frameworks for the ELF-sensitive analysis of ELT materials was proposed by Syrbe and Rose, who investigated English coursebooks for advanced learners in Germany from a "Global Englishes-oriented ideology" (2018: 157). The framework they devised for their analysis is illustrated in the figure below.

	EFL-oriented ideology	Global Englishes-oriented ideology
Who are positioned as the owners of English?	Native speakers, with an emphasis on inner circle use	Native and non-native speakers, with emphasis on global use
Who are the target interlocutors in the materials?	Native English Speakers	Native English Speakers and Non-Native English Speakers
What models and norms of English are presented in the book and audio materials?	Inner circle Native Englishes; English as standard and static	World Englishes; English as diverse and flexible
How is culture depicted in the materials?	As fixed inner circle cultures	As fluid, global cultures

Figure 4. Framework for textbook analysis from an ELF-perspective. (Syrbe & Rose 2018: 157)

Similarly, their main focus for the analysis was the question which variety of English (speakers) is portrayed as the learning target and how these notions of language are presented in the materials. These questions are particularly important as they explore the relevance of activities for the real future needs of the language learners. Regarding the target interlocutors, studies suggest that Germans are very likely to communicate in English with fellow NNSs, whether in professional environments, social groups, or while travelling (Syrbe & Rose 2018: 160).

However, although many of the analysed textbooks do not provide language instructors and learners with sufficient exposure to other language varieties than NS standards, it cannot be disregarded that many teachers already incorporate less dominant varieties in their teaching practices, because recent developments in the teacher training programmes typically encourage them to do so (Syrbe & Rose 2018: 161). Nonetheless, the lack of representation of ELF in teaching materials is a hindering factor that is probably preventing

many of them from changing their teaching practice, as they probably do not possess sufficient knowledge about how to establish an ELF-informed classroom without the guidance of teaching materials that support this approach (Matsuda 2012: 169).

Apart from updating ELT materials so that they fit an ELF-informed classroom, Guerra and Cavaleiro (2019) argued that, for now, language instructors have to add to the activities provided by textbooks themselves. In their article, they suggest concrete examples for how this can be implemented in class, typically focusing on the presentation of NNSs as proficient ELF communicators. Among other things, they suggest that teachers should use “a range of well-known and successful NNSs from a variety of different fields to demonstrate the unnecessary need to sound like a NS” (Guerra & Cavaleiro 2019: 125). This could mean exposing students to NNS varieties of English by resorting to videos, interviews or music that has been released by famous NNSs e.g. Sofia Vergara, Angela Merkel, Cristiano Ronaldo or Ban Ki-moon. Moreover, Siqueira and Vasconcelos Gonçalves Matos (2019) stress that, until teaching materials offer more guidance, it falls to the instructors to adapt the tasks provided by the textbooks in order to incorporate an ELF perspective:

In other words, it is up to the teacher to search within the materials he/she has at hand alternative ways of activating them, inserting ELF features in their praxis and showing to learners that what the book brings is not the only possibility of seeing and understanding English. (Siqueira & Vasconcelos Gonçalves Matos 2019: 151–152)

In conclusion, all of the studies that investigated the representation of ELF in ELT materials found that they were mostly absent and argued that new materials which portray the diverse and transformative nature of English worldwide need to be designed. Vettorel and Lopriore (2013: 498) state that recognizing the changes that the English language has undergone in recent years “could have an empowering effect, both on teachers and learners”. They argue for the incorporation of a plurilithic approach in ELT resources as it would validate learners and make bilingual proficiency an achievable objective, but at the same time it would promote the awareness that English is used increasingly in diverse linguistic contexts. Overall, the impact that coursebooks have on the way that ELT is practised is non-negotiable and therefore it seems to be of paramount importance that teaching materials recognise this influence and start incorporating what the thriving body of research on ELF has stated for more than two decades now: that language and its use changes and that this needs to be reflected in textbooks too.

3.4 “ELF politeness”

To tie all previously discussed topics (i.e. politeness theories, cross-cultural and interlanguage pragmatics, communicative competence, capability, ELF and its characteristics, and ELT materials) together, this following section 3.4 now investigates how politeness is achieved in intercultural ELF settings in order to identify characteristics of “ELF politeness”, which will be essential for the analysis of the politeness tasks found in Austrian Secondary School textbooks in the next chapter of this thesis.

Overall, a small number of studies exist that examined phenomena closely related to politeness in ELF settings. Walkinshaw and Kirkpatrick (2020) conducted a corpus analysis (they consulted the Asian Corpus of English *ACE*) and researched how Asian ELF speakers used conversational humour (including phenomena such as mock-impoliteness) in order to meet their communicative goals. Cogo (2009) looked at accommodation strategies employed by ELF speakers and discovered that repetition and code-switching were frequently used to “acknowledge understanding, ensure the smooth development of the conversation, the synchrony of its delivery, and alignment [...] [and they] suggest affiliation and membership in the same community of multilingual ELF speakers” (Cogo 2009: 259).

However, one of the most influential studies on “ELF politeness” was conducted by House (2008). In the majority of her publications she bases her assumptions on Watts’ definition of politeness as a discursive concept, which means that politeness research should be “offering ways of recognising when a linguistic utterance might be open to interpretation by interlocutors as ‘(im)polite” (Watts 2003: 143). This means that politeness is viewed as heavily dependent on the addressee’s understanding of an utterance. Subsequently, in her analysis House discovered that ELF speakers were inclined to use raw negations, disagreement or rejections (2008: 354). Generally, House also observed that, when speakers chose to take a turn, there was “very little recognition of sensible points of transition” which could result in a conflict in communication, as speakers show “a lack of mutual responsibility for the ongoing talk as a collective undertaking” (2008: 355). Yet, this does not seem to be the case, as speakers tend to adhere to the *Let-it-pass* principle (Firth 1996), where “inappropriate” behaviour is ignored for the sake of maintaining communication.

Another characteristic of „ELF politeness“ established by House is that the participants of her study often refrained from using discourse markers to signal turn-taking, except for one type of discourse particle which House labels *represents* (2008: 358). These represents are used to repeat (some part of) what the interlocutor has said before in order to “aid the present speaker’s working memory in his comprehension and production processes, to

provide textual coherence, signal acceptance and uptake, request confirmation and indicate to alter that one does not intend to 'steal' his turn" (House 2008: 359). Another prominent characteristic of the analysed ELF discourse was that turns were regularly prefaced by *and*, *but*, *no*, *so*, *I think* or *I don't think*, and it was observed that speakers often did not wait for the best point to take a turn and e.g. add a comment, but they jumped right in and just started talking "oblivious of the co-text" and without the use of gambits that would traditionally signal turn-taking (House 2008: 360).

Moreover, House (2008) also observed that the phrase *you know* was employed by ELF speakers in a variety of contexts, which can also signal politeness, in addition to other functions. Generally, *you know* was utilised to indicate addition, contrast or opposition to what has been said before. However, the phrase was also used when speakers were hesitant, when they lacked the right words to express what they wanted or when they wanted to repair a faulty formulation (House 2008: 362).

Generally speaking, House (2008) puts forth two hypotheses for the politeness strategies that ELF speakers adhere to: 1. The *English native norm irrelevance hypothesis*, where she refers to the fact that ELF users often ignore NS rules in conversation and 2. *The Self-centred hypothesis*, which means that speakers are mostly concentrating on themselves and their own role as a speaker in ELF discourse. However, none of the two strategies, although one might initially assume so, seem to result in impolite interpretations by ELF interlocutors. The following two quotations illustrate the two hypotheses.

The irrelevance of L1 linguaculture-specific norms means, in a nutshell, that face is saved all round: it is thus less a sign of impolite behaviour but rather a strategy of politeness in the sense that the behaviour of these ELF speakers seem to be appropriate to this communicative situation characterised by a group of co-participants with widely differing linguistic and cultural backgrounds. ELF interactants do not seem to seek to adjust to some real or imaginary L2 native speaker norms. (House 2008: 355)

[C]ommunication can be seen as a selfcentred affair, with the speaker leaving the hearer freedom of interpretation, the freedom to create assumptions. [...] The self-centred behaviour displayed by ELF speakers can be interpreted as an attempt to save their own face and improve their own interactional performance. [...] Their behaviour is not perceived by co-participants as inappropriate, rather their focus on self can be seen as shared, strategically employed, and situationally appropriate politic behaviour." (House 2008: 356)

In a different study, Ferenčík (2012) points out the issue that it is typically very difficult to investigate politeness in ELF situations if it is viewed as highly dependent on the interactants' evaluations, because the participants of those studies rarely elaborate on their interpretations of discourse as polite or impolite. Nonetheless, Ferenčík (2012) was able to establish a list of politeness features by analysing extensive ELF conversations. The

characteristics he found were: (a) adherence to, what he calls “one-at-a-time principle”, where interactants avoid overlaps when speaking; (b) the use of backchanneling elements such as *yeah* or *okay*; (c) abrupt turn-taking, often with *but*; (d) using hesitation, long pauses, repetitions or self-repairs; and (e) choosing a “safe topic” of conversation that has a shared referential background so that all participants can contribute (Ferenčík 2012: 126).

An overlap with the criteria that House (2008) established is observable, especially because Ferenčík (2012) also found instances of *represents* as well as the use of the phrase *you know* in his analysis. Overall, Ferenčík (2012: 128) concludes that the central aspect of (im)politeness in communities of ELF speakers, marked by instability, fluctuations, and transience, is their tendency towards cooperative interaction. This inclination appears to be the most significant feature at the core of ELF (im)politeness.

One FTA that is often associated with (im)politeness is when speakers want to express disagreement and, thus, several studies have examined how disagreement is expressed in ELF settings. Bjørge (2012), for instance, analysed disagreement activities found in Business English textbooks and compared them to disagreement strategies employed by ELF speakers.

As negotiators need to handle discord while maintaining a working relationship with the opposite side, the appropriate expression of disagreement is clearly one of the skills that business students need to master in their future careers. This raises the issue of what kind of advice business English textbooks give in this respect. (Bjørge 2012: 407)

She found that the textbook activities on disagreement encouraged the language learners to express disagreement indirectly and to exercise caution when considering more straightforward alternatives (Bjørge 2012: 409). Common textbook suggestions are to use phrases to mitigate the disagreement by either delaying, adding justifications, or by hedging and introducing indirectness (Stalpers 1995). This could include expressions such as *you may be right, I know what you mean, but..., I'm afraid, I don't quite agree*, etc. However, when compared to actual BELF negotiations, these expressions were either completely absent or very low in frequency in the data analysed by Bjørge (2012). It was demonstrated that the use of questions (in combination or started with *but*), phrases containing the word *think* (as in *I don't think*) or, simply, *no*, were frequent choices for initiating disagreement. However, the by far most common method of introducing disagreement was the use of *but*, which was often preceded by *yeah/yes* (Bjørge 2012: 415).

While the use of delays (which can be helpful to establish rapport with the interlocutors) and the addition of a supporting argument were frequent items in Bjørge's material, there were also instances of unmitigated “blunt” disagreement, which can sometimes be

employed to enhance mutual understanding (and are usually not perceived as being impolite) (see also Konakahara 2016)

If we compare the occurrence of mitigated and unmitigated disagreement acts, an overall perspective on the 25 ELF negotiations reveals that the speakers **prefer using some kind of mitigating strategy**. However, textbook vocabulary as reflected in Table 3 was to a large extent ignored. Little use was made of politeness formulae like *I'm afraid* or *I'm sorry* as a delaying strategy, and nobody introduced their disagreement by means of *to be honest*; *to a certain extent*, or *under the circumstances*. **This could be due to the fact that including elaborate vocabulary when using mitigation strategies may be linguistically more demanding for the ELF speaker**. Unmitigated disagreement, on the other hand, tended to be either by blunt contradiction or introduced by *no* or *but*. (Bjørge 2012: 422) [my emphasis in bold]

To sum up her findings, BELF interlocutors avoided very elaborate expressions of politeness and opted for “mainstream vocabulary” (Bjørge 2012: 423) when expressing disagreement, which can be interpreted as the use of high frequency lexical items. This is something that also NSs should be aware of when they converse with NNSs, as they might fail to understand humorous notions or idiomatic expressions that are common in informal negotiations between NSs (Bjørge 2012: 423–424).

In another study, Metsä-Ketelä (2016) examined different discourse functions of vague language in ELF interactions taken from the ELFA corpus. She discovered that in order to express either positive or negative politeness, interlocutors often used vague expressions in order to “soften the pragmatic force of an utterance” and to reduce the face threat of the message (Metsä-Ketelä 2016: 337).

Other studies that also examined how politeness is established in intercultural ELF settings have been conducted throughout the years. For instance, Batziakas (2016) looked at discourse from a group of international students in London and found that interactants showed a great amount of awareness through referring to the interlocutor's cultural and linguistic background, e.g. by using vocabulary in the interlocutor's L1. Likewise, Pölzl (2010) examined interactions between international students and Turkish academics and discovered that they adhered to Turkish politeness conventions and incorporated them into their ELF repertoire to build rapport. This included the use of certain Turkish honorifics (*effendi* and *effendim* – which mean “lord” and “my lord” in English) in order to express endearment. Elsewhere, Riekkinen (2010), when examining oral PhD defences from the ELFA corpus, observed that ELF speakers tended to use more lexical mitigation techniques compared to discourse taken from the ENL MICASE corpus.

Overall, the different ways in which politeness is achieved in intercultural ELF settings, according to the studies discussed in this section 3.4, can be summarised as follows:

- Disagreement: Raw negation, without mitigation (House 2008; Bjørge 2012), primarily initiated with *but*, sometimes prefaced with *yeah/no* (Bjørge 2012), some instances of delays or added support (Bjørge 2012), use of “mainstream vocabulary” (Bjørge 2012)
- Turn-taking: often abrupt and introduced by *and, but, no, so, I think* or *I don't think*. Use of *represents* (repeat oneself, or what the other person has said when taking a turn) (House 2008; Ferenčík 2012)
- Let-it-pass principle: Conflict avoidance strategy or “*English native norm irrelevance hypothesis*”. Learners tend to ignore mistakes if they do not impede intelligibility (Firth 1996; House 2008)
- Self-centredness (House 2008)
- “One-at-a-time principle”: interactants avoid overlaps when speaking (Ferenčík 2012)
- Backchanneling: with elements such as *yeah* or *okay* (Ferenčík 2012)
- Vague language: use of hedges to soften the pragmatic force of a message, especially *more or less* (Metsä-Ketelä 2016; Riekkinen 2010)

This illustrates that there are numerous strategies and approaches that ELF speakers apply when they intend to be polite. Although they might sometimes stray away from traditional NS rules of politeness, their behaviour cannot be considered impolite as they adhere to their own set of “ELF politeness” guidelines. What is more, this deviation from how politeness was viewed conventionally does typically not cause conflict or misunderstandings. Thus, “ELF speakers apparently engage in such interactional behaviour for their own and alter's benefit, to help their own production, to make the talk robust, to tolerantly let others' oddities pass” (House 2008: 364).

Nonetheless, Seidlhofer (2011) argues that those descriptions of ELF should not be taught in the foreign language classroom exclusively, because that would resemble the practice that has been criticised all along: some fixed rules cannot actually portray the ELF community in its linguistic diversity and would not resonate with the learners' reality. Local decisions have to be made regarding the suitable language for teaching: “So what is crucial

is not so much what language is presented as input but what learners make of it, and how they make use of it to develop the capability for languaging” (Seidlhofer 2011: 198).

The following chapter will concentrate on the analysis of various coursebooks with regards to the notions of politeness that they convey. The investigation intends to determine whether and how any of the “ELF politeness” features discussed in this section are considered in certified Austrian ELT materials.

4 Analysis and adaptation of Austrian schoolbook politeness tasks

This chapter will discuss different politeness tasks found in textbooks that are currently used in Austria at an upper secondary and adult learner level, namely *Best Shots 4-5*, *English Unlimited B1*, *Focus on Modern Business 1* and *Into English 3*. In respect to the theoretical constructs that have been discussed in the literature review of this thesis, the tasks will first be analysed regarding the notion of politeness that they convey and the information they actually teach the students about polite language. Then, if possible and suitable, adaptations and appropriations will be suggested in order to make the activities more suitable for an ELF-informed classroom and for NNSs of English.

These tasks were selected because they display a great range of different aspects of politeness that students supposedly should acquire. In most of the schoolbooks, politeness phenomena are taught in form of speaking activities for a specific purpose, such as meetings, disagreeing or interrupting. However, there are also some exercises that focus on written politeness, typically in order for language learners to use the appropriate register in letters or emails, but these will not be part of the discussion of this analysis.

In order to make the analysis coherent and reader friendly, the tasks were grouped according to the conception of politeness that they promote or the communicative situation or speech act they refer to. Therefore, some of the tasks will be discussed in more detail, whereas others will only be used as additional examples.

4.1 Methodology and research questions

The aim of this analysis is to explore the extent to which Austrian secondary school and adult learner textbooks tasks that feature politeness consider ELF use and to propose, if necessary, appropriations of those tasks to make them more suitable for ELF communication. This is important because textbooks remain an indispensable resource for educators. Nearly every teacher is equipped with a coursebook for their respective subjects, and they typically rely on the information provided in said textbook, although they might, of course, adapt tasks, add more information, or skip contents in their actual teaching practice. Thus, the critical evaluation of those contents is crucial in order to “understand what assumptions and beliefs lie beneath the surface and what effects can be anticipated; [the] analysis involves inference and deduction” (McGrath 2002: 22–23).

On a general level, checking for NNS-English representation in coursebooks is essential because sociolinguistic appropriateness (i.e. a concept that is built on models that are based on Hymes' 1972 definition of appropriateness) is considered a key skill that language learners should acquire as part of a general communicative competence. Moreover, sociolinguistic appropriateness is also mentioned in the CEFR and includes concepts such as "using polite forms and showing awareness of politeness conventions" or "adopting an appropriate register" (Council of Europe 2020: 136).

In order to evaluate whether a coursebook includes ELF as a learning target in some way, criteria with which tasks can be compared have been established by Syrbe and Rose (2018) and Vettorel and Lopriore (2013: 491–492), as already discussed in the previous chapter 3.3.2. The analysis criteria of both of their models will partly inform the analysis of the coursebook tasks in the following sections. However, their frameworks only concern themselves with identifying the possible presence of ELF-sensible activities on a general level, and thus cannot be used without adaptations for this specific analysis, as the main goal is to discover what type of politeness is being proposed to Austrian language learners and if there are any correlations with what politeness research has identified as characteristics of "ELF politeness". Hence, the research questions have to be a combination of the criteria established by Syrbe and Rose (2018), Vettorel and Lopriore (2013) and "ELF politeness" research. As a result, the characteristics of "ELF politeness" established by various studies will function as the core for the analysis of the coursebook activities.

On the basis of the two frameworks mentioned above and the "ELF politeness" phenomena developed by research in the field and discussed in section 3.4 of this paper, the following research questions have been established for the analysis of politeness tasks in Austrian school textbooks:

5. Which aspects of politeness do Austrian schoolbooks 'teach' to EFL learners?
6. To what extent do the politeness tasks in Austrian school textbooks adhere to a NS-oriented ideology or are "ELF politeness" phenomena considered?
7. How are cultures and target interlocutors depicted in the materials? (Is there a focus on diverse global cultures and ELF communication?)
8. How could those tasks be adapted to better fit an ELF-informed classroom context?

In order to answer these questions, five tokens of schoolbook activities have been selected and analysed according to the notion of politeness that they intend to convey.

4.2 Politeness through mitigation

Example 1

The first example is taken from *English Unlimited B1* (Tilbury et al. 2011: 120), which is a coursebook that is aimed at adult learners. The examples analysed are part of the so-called ‘Explore speaking’ pages, which are designed to make learners familiar with different skills needed in various speaking scenarios. Those pages are featured frequently throughout the whole book; they appear in every second unit alternating with ‘Explore writing’ pages. The book promises that students will acquire “authentic” English as it takes all its language samples from the Cambridge International Corpus, which would suggest that different variants of English are featured in the book. The coursebook description on the publisher’s website (Klett Sprachen) also claims that the material’s focus is on intercultural competence with the aim of equipping learners with the necessary skills for successful intercultural communication.

The task analysed here is part of the last unit in the book, Unit 14, which is called ‘A matter of opinion’. The unit features a variety of different activities that focus on accomplishing the goals of expressing and responding to opinions in meetings and discussions. The objective of the analysed activities is stated on the respective page in the book as using “expressions to soften opinions and disagreements” (Tilbury et al. 2011: 120).

The overall topic of the *explore speaking* page is a reference to a reading activities (about a new airport being built) that has been presented earlier in the unit, starting with comprehension questions about the already familiar text (task 1) and is then followed by a listening activity that features three different interviews where people are asked about their opinions on the topic (task 2+3). These interviews are also included as a transcript at the bottom of the page and some of the phrases in them are highlighted. In task 4, the students then are required to label the highlighted phrases as either being used to “make an opinion softer” or to “make a disagreement softer”.

Lastly, the learners should then use the proposed phrases in a speaking activity where they first state their opinions on different topics (that do not refer to the airport text or interviews in any way) and then, in a paired activity, either agree or ‘softly’ disagree with the interlocutor’s opinion (task 5). The activity in question (task 5) looks like this: (see appendix for tasks 1-4):

5 a Work alone. Choose two or three topics and make notes about your opinions and reasons.

- a good place to live • interesting TV programmes or films • a nice place to visit
- a good time of year to have a holiday • good places to shop

a good place to live – the countryside, quiet and clean.

b In pairs, take turns to give your opinions and say whether you agree or disagree. Use the highlighted expressions in the script. Ask questions to find out more.

I think the best place to live is in the countryside because it's quiet and clean.

Well, I'm not so sure because ...

1

LEONA Excuse me, I'm Leona Cook from UPC news. Can you tell us, what do you think about Sandstown airport?

KARL Well, ¹I haven't thought about it a lot, but I suppose it should be moved. It's very old. I remember when it was built ... 35, 40 years ago?

LEONA Forty-two years. What do you think about the idea of simply extending the airport by building another terminal? Wouldn't that be better?

KARL Well, ²I'm not sure about that. There isn't room, unless they build over the North Park, and I wouldn't want that. I don't think there are enough green spaces in the town as it is.

2

LEONA Excuse me. Can I ask you what's your opinion about the airport? Where do you think it should be?

CAROLE I know some people think we should move it, but ³I don't really agree. I use the airport quite a lot and it's good to have the airport near the town. ⁴It's true we need a bigger airport, but the location isn't a problem. But if they made the airport bigger, they'd have to build over the North Park, wouldn't they? Surely that wouldn't be a good thing?

LEONA Actually, ⁵I'm not so sure. I grew up near that park and I don't think it's anything special, and it's already very noisy because of all the planes. But there's lots of lovely countryside outside the town, and we don't want to lose that.

3

LEONA Excuse me, Leona Cook, UPC news. There's a lot of discussion at the moment about the airport here and where it should be. Do you have any thoughts on that?

ABBAS Well, ⁶I might be wrong, but I think they should build the airport near Sibley. But not in the Nature Reserve. **LEONA** But Sandstown already has an airport. Wouldn't it be cheaper just to make that airport bigger?

ABBAS ⁷That's a good point, but I think they could sell the land in Sandstown. ⁸I guess it's worth a lot of money. Then they could use that money to pay for the new airport. Yeah.

Here, the language learners are prompted to employ phrases containing numerous hedges to, in Metsä-Ketelä's (2016: 337) words, "soften the pragmatic force" of an opinion. All of the phrases the learners need to accomplish the speaking task are provided by the interview transcripts in the bottom half of the page. The instructions clearly say that the learners should use these expressions when stating their opinion and then reacting to their interlocutor's opinion.

As stating one's opinion clearly could be viewed as an FTA, whereby the interlocutor's negative face is threatened, it could be thought to impede their freedom of choice to state their own opinion afterwards. Through softening one's own opinion, the speaker gives redress to the FTA and intends not to presume the hearer's opinion or intentions (Brown & Levinson 1987: 145). However, the coursebook completely lacks in informing the learners about why they should do so. No reference to possibly offending somebody or of generally remaining polite is made by the authors, which means that the actual goal of the task is not, at least not explicitly, explained to the learners, which leaves it up to the teacher to clarify the goal.

The phrases that the language learners should practice in this task contain different forms of hedges, which are typically used in order to modify the degree of something in order to express that something is only partially what is claimed (Brown & Levinson 1987: 145).

These hedges can be modal verbs (*I might be wrong, but...*), words and phrases that signify only partial knowledge or presumptions of something (such as *I suppose, I assume, I guess, I am not so sure*, etc.) or acknowledging the validity of what the speaker had just said and only then adding a (counter-)argument or additional viewpoint (*That's a good point, but..., I haven't thought about it a lot, but I suppose...*).

Overall, the language provided by the authors does not correspond to what studies on ELF politeness phenomena have found, where participants often use raw negation when disagreeing to something or they simply preface their own opinion with *I think* or *but* and not with *I don't really agree*. The focus on complex vocabulary and sentence structures in the activity does not reflect a realistic intercultural communicative situation. In these particular tasks, it is two language learners speaking to each other, in other words, a very informal conversational setting, and there is only overly polite language offered to them to accomplish this task.

It seems obvious that the aim of this task is for the students to merely imitate already given expressions (they are already familiar with these interviews due to listening to them in an activity beforehand) and to only produce short chunks of language themselves. There is no real need for them to speak freely and produce a realistic communicative setting.

Suggestions for task adaptation

In order to make these two tasks more appropriate for an ELF-informed classroom, several changes could be made. First, in order for the learners to carry out the different activities, they are merely presented with target structures to copy and paste in fictional, not very realistic situations. However, the learners could be encouraged to draw from all the linguistic knowledge they possess about stating opinions and (dis)agreeing to express what they wish to say instead of only duplicating given language structures. An alternative activity could look like this:

5a. Work alone. Choose two or three topics and make notes about your opinions and reasons.

- a good place to live
- interesting TV programmes or films
- a nice place to visit
- a good time of the year to have a holiday
- good places to shop
- your own ideas

5b. Work in pairs and take turns to present your opinion and say whether you agree or disagree with what your partner has said. You can use any language you think is appropriate to perform the task.

5c. Follow up: Discuss the following questions with your partner:

- In your opinion, were you polite?
- Did you understand everything your partner has said?
- Did you use any of the highlighted phrases provided by the transcript?
- Why (not)?
- What other language structures did you use to (dis)agree with your partner's opinions?
- Did you perceive your partner's answers as polite or impolite?
- Why (not)?

Thereby, the students are invited to reflect on their language choices, and they would not be limited to the few phrases provided by the interview transcript. As a follow-up activity, the various expressions used by the learners could be collected and discussed with the whole course. Special focus can be put on any instances of misunderstanding or conflict that might have arisen during the speaking activity. It is expected that students will have used additional expressions to the ones provided by the course material and they will very likely have applied some communication strategies that are typical of “ELF politeness”, such as backchanneling (Ferenčík 2012) or mitigation strategies (Metsä-Ketelä 2016). These could then be further discussed and elaborated on with the teacher. Moreover, if not already very present in the collected phrases, the students could be provided with examples of “ELF politeness”, and they could be encouraged to rate those language samples according to their perceived politeness. In doing so, the students would learn that the phrases provided by the coursebook may be helpful in some situations, but that they are by no means the only way of being polite in intercultural situations.

Example 2

Another activity from the same coursebook, *English Unlimited B1*, can be found in Unit 6, which is called ‘Energy’. Language learners are introduced to topics such as the weather, personal habits and how to talk about individual preferences. The respective task can also be found in the ‘Explore speaking’ pages of the book and the goal of the activities is to “speak more politely by being less direct” (Tilbury et al. 2011: 56). The first task is a listening activity, where the students are introduced to a variety of vague target language forms. In task 2, the learners are informed that “you can be more polite by speaking less directly” and then there are a few varyingly direct sentences pairs presented that have the objective of identifying the politer version in each of the pairs.

Subsequently, the learners are presented with requests, opinions and refusals and are instructed to find the less direct version of them in the transcript of the conversations they

already have listened to. In task 3, statements and questions should be rewritten in a less direct manner in order to make them sound more polite and in the last activity (task 4), a phone conversation that is supposed to sound rather impolite has to be rewritten in a more polite manner using the language introduced in the previous tasks. Lastly, the learners should then present their written text to each other and ensure that they sound politer than the original version.

b Look at the conversations. Find and underline the expressions that are less direct than these.

Requests

- Can you answer a few questions?
- Can you change this ten for me?
- Can you tell me a bit more?

Refusing requests

- No, I don't want to.
- No, I don't need anything.

Opinions

- The pool is dirty.
- The staff aren't interested.
- It's boring.
- I'm not interested in football.

c 2.19 Listen to check. P

3 Make these expressions less direct using the words in (brackets). Then compare your answers.

- My parents are old-fashioned. (a bit)
My parents are a bit old-fashioned.
- We're not hungry. (really)
- Ronnie and Clara are unhappy. (don't seem)
- I hate bananas. (really like)
- George is stupid sometimes. (clever)
- Can you wait for five minutes? (Would you mind)
- Can you be quiet, please? (Do you think)
- Can you help me with my bags? (I wonder if)

4 **a** 2.20 Listen to a phone conversation between André and Sue. Do you think it sounds polite?

b Look at the script on p149. In pairs, write a more polite version of the conversation. Practise it.

c Listen to each other's conversations. Do you think they sound polite?

a fitness centre

1

BILL Would you mind answering a few questions, please? It won't take long.

SHEILA Er, yes, that's OK.

BILL Thank you. Are you happy with the fitness centre generally?

SHEILA Erm, well, it could be better.

BILL Oh. I see. Do you think you could tell me a bit more?

SHEILA Well, to be honest, the pool isn't always very clean. And the staff don't seem very interested.

BILL Oh dear. Well, I'll definitely tell the manager.

2

BEN Hi. I wonder if you could change this ten for me. I need some coins for the ticket machine.

CLODAGH Sorry, but I'd rather not. People are always asking me for change.

BEN Oh.

CLODAGH Perhaps you'd like to buy something?

BEN Erm, no, not really.

3

PHIL Here's your drink. Sorry it took so long.

CATHERINE So, what do you think of the game?

PHIL Um, it's a bit boring.

CATHERINE Boring?

PHIL Well, you know I'm not really interested in football.

CATHERINE So should we go? The second half starts in two minutes.

PHIL No, you stay here. I'll do some shopping, then come back in an hour, OK?

CATHERINE Well, OK. See you later.

The language promoted in these tasks closely resembles the phrases introduced in the previous examples about softening opinions. Again, numerous modal verbs are being utilised (*would you mind answering..., should we go?,...*) as well as hedges to signal only partial (dis)agreement or refusal (*it could be better, I'd rather not, it's a bit boring, I'm not really interested...*). Many of these phrases can be considered what Brown and Levinson (1987: 70) would call *conventionalized indirectness* as they are originally indirect requests that are no longer off record as everyone immediately recognises them as being requests due to the high frequency that they are used. As a result, it seems sensible to include these phrases in a coursebook.

Nonetheless, as argued earlier in chapter 3, studies on “ELF politeness” have shown that interactants in intercultural communication often tend to be rather direct, also when they

perform FTAs (see e.g. Bjørge 2012; House 2008). What is more, this does typically cause neither misunderstandings nor conflict between the participants. However, in the material, expressions are clearly presented, according to the authors, as being impolite, or even 'wrong' and thus not suitable, because they are too direct. In task 2b and 3 the learners are therefore required to substitute those supposedly 'harsh' or 'direct' statements with 'softer' versions that convey the same semantic meaning in order to sound more polite.

Suggestions for task adaptation

There are also some possibilities for making *Example 2* more appropriate for an ELF-oriented classroom. The aim of task 2b and 3 is to raise awareness for indirect expressions that are presumed to 'soften' an opinion. As studies have shown, in ELF discourse speakers tend to be more direct than NSs, which conflicts with the coursebook's overall statement that the focus is being put on intercultural communication. As an alternative, the less direct expressions could be presented as what they are: alternative ways of saying something in contrast to them being viewed as impolite. In these two tasks, after rewriting the expressions in task 3, the learners could be instructed to categorise them on different scales, from 'easy' to 'difficult', from 'most useful in daily conversations' to 'least useful', or from 'formal' to 'informal'. In that way, the learners create awareness that different expressions are suitable for different scenarios without learning that some of them should just be avoided altogether.

In the last task on the page, task 4, instead of simply rewriting a transcript of a phone conversation, the learners could be given a communicative need in which they would be required to utilise all the different expressions that they have been introduced to. These (intercultural) communicative situations should be ones that the adult learners are at least somewhat likely to encounter in their future. As they have already categorised some of the statements on different scales in the previously, Task 4 could thus be substituted with an activity like this:

4a. Consider the phrases introduced earlier. Now choose 5 phrases per bullet point that you think could be suitable in the following situations:

- You are at a meeting and speak with your business partner.
- You are at a restaurant and meet an exchange student from Italy that is new in your town.
- You meet a tourist that asks for recommendations for activities/restaurants/etc.

4b. In pairs, choose one of the situations from 4a and act them out.

4c. Now discuss the following questions with each other:

- In your opinion, was your partner polite?
- Why (not)?
- What would you have said differently?
- Did both of you use similar phrases?
- Were the phrases your partner used appropriate for the situation?
- Why did you use your chosen phrases?

After carrying out activity 4c in pairs, the questions could be discussed together in a plenum. Learners would thereby be required to explain their use of certain language due to its appropriateness in various context, which would in turn be beneficial for the development of sociolinguistic competence. Then, the teacher can explain that the more direct phrases can sometimes be used by the learners without the fear of seriously offending someone and that, in fact, ELF speakers do so quite frequently without causing conflict (and that facial expressions and non-verbal cues are typically more important than the actual words uttered anyways).

As a result, small changes or additions to the activities can have a big impact on making learners aware of different mitigation strategies and how they are frequently applied in a variety of communicative situations including ELF contexts.

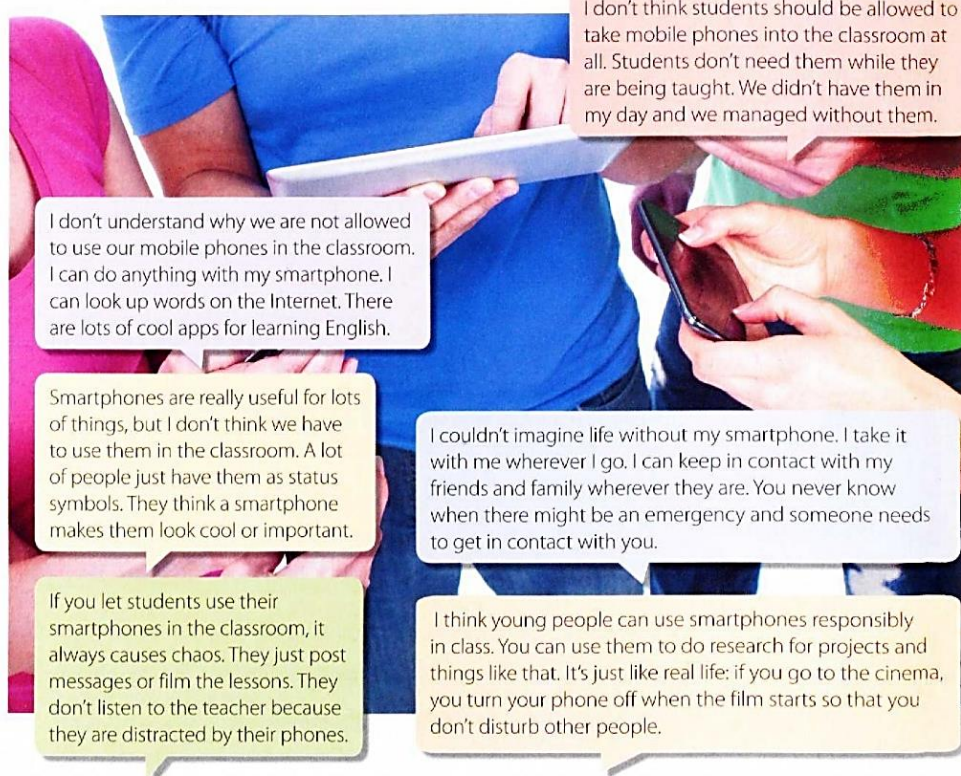
4.3 Expressing disagreement

Example 3

The next activity, *Example 3*, can be found in the coursebook *Focus On Modern Business 1* (Abram et al. 2015: 86), which is certified for the use in upper secondary business, economic and technical schools (specifically in the following school types: Handelsakademie – HAK, Höhere Lehranstalt für wirtschaftliche Berufe – HLW, Höhere technische Lehranstalt - HTL). Although it is not specified explicitly, it can be assumed that within the book the focus would be put on intercultural competence as the types of schools it is used in suggest that the language learners might need strategies for successful international (business) communication later in their professional life. The analysed task is part of Unit 7, which is called ‘Keeping in touch’, because it primarily discusses various ways of communicating and collects different information and opinions about mobile phones. In the task, the learners are presented with a range of opinions about the use of smartphones in schools. They are instructed to read these short statements and to react to them by using the expressions provided in the two boxes below. After this, the whole class are asked to compare their individual opinions together.

9 Giving an opinion

Most students and teachers have strong opinions on mobile phones in the classroom, either for or against. Use the language in the boxes below to react to the opinions you can read here. Then find out the opinion of your class as a whole.



I don't think students should be allowed to take mobile phones into the classroom at all. Students don't need them while they are being taught. We didn't have them in my day and we managed without them.

I don't understand why we are not allowed to use our mobile phones in the classroom. I can do anything with my smartphone. I can look up words on the Internet. There are lots of cool apps for learning English.

Smartphones are really useful for lots of things, but I don't think we have to use them in the classroom. A lot of people just have them as status symbols. They think a smartphone makes them look cool or important.

I couldn't imagine life without my smartphone. I take it with me wherever I go. I can keep in contact with my friends and family wherever they are. You never know when there might be an emergency and someone needs to get in contact with you.

If you let students use their smartphones in the classroom, it always causes chaos. They just post messages or film the lessons. They don't listen to the teacher because they are distracted by their phones.

I think young people can use smartphones responsibly in class. You can use them to do research for projects and things like that. It's just like real life: if you go to the cinema, you turn your phone off when the film starts so that you don't disturb other people.

Useful words

annoying	interfering with others
convenient	keep in touch with sb.
cool	multi-functional
disturb a lesson / other people	reachable
expensive	useful (in emergencies)

Discussing

Giving an opinion

- I believe / feel / think that ...
- In my opinion / view, ...
- Well, if you want my opinion, ...
- I'm not quite sure, but (on the whole) I'd say ...

Agreeing with an opinion

- I (very much) agree with / support the first / second / ... opinion that ...
- What (name) says is right / sounds sensible / makes sense because ...
- Well, I suppose that's right.
- That's a point. I've never looked at it like that before.

Disagreeing with an opinion

- No, I can't / don't agree with that / you because ...
- That can't possibly be right / true because ...
- I'm in two minds. I agree with ... , but on the other hand ...
- No, I think that's nonsense. You can't really think that ...

Surprisingly, the instruction prompt of this task is rather unspecific about how the learners are supposed to carry out the task. There is no indication as to whether it should be executed orally or in written form, nor whether the learners should work alone, in pairs or groups. Pair- or groupwork would probably be more meaningful in this case, because the students would then engage in a dialogue instead of preparing a talk or presentation about

their opinion, which would be the result if the learners carried out the task alone. However, the task just states to “use the language in the boxes below to react to the opinions”, which is then followed by a vocabulary box presenting “useful words” and another one with phrasal expressions for “discussing”. The useful vocabulary box contains words that summarise or are synonymous with the opinions presented in the speech bubbles above, whereas the second box provides the language learners with phrases that can be used to give an opinion or to agree or disagree with one.

The goal of this specific activity seems to be to introduce students to suitable language for the FTA of disagreeing. Considering that the target interlocutors, if the activity is actually carried out in pairs or groups, are NNSs of English (because they are attending an EFL class), it would be feasible to present them with language that has been proven to be used in intercultural settings. Unfortunately, items such as *but*, *I’m sorry* or *no*, which were identified by Bjørge (2012) as being frequent in “ELF politeness”, are absent from the “useful language” boxes provided by the schoolbook. Moreover, Bjørge also concluded that ELF speakers tend to use “mainstream vocabulary” (i.e. high frequency vocabulary) when they voice their opinion or disagree with an utterance. However, the phrases in the task sound rather formal and do not seem to reflect ELF disagreement. Moreover, the activity seems to aim at the mere replication of given phrasal structures and practicing target features, which does not constitute a realistic communicative scenario, neither with NSs nor NNSs. What, nonetheless, this task does better than *Example 2* earlier is that it does not present any language as faulty or inappropriate. The task simply gives examples for how you *could* (dis)agree, although the presented selection is far from representative of language use in different communicational contexts.

Suggestions for task adaptation

The easiest way to make this task more appropriate for an ELF-informed classroom would be to include a wider variety of phrases for the learners to choose from. These items should then be drawn from ELF politeness and disagreement research. Moreover, a note that the learners are allowed to use other language, not strictly limiting them to the phrases provided by the schoolbook, could be included in the task prompt. Then, similarly to the suggestions proposed in *Example 2*, the learners could be given a communicative context in which they have to take up different roles and discuss the advantages and drawbacks of the use of mobile phones in school. Creating international settings, where e.g. the students are instructed to research the customs of mobile phone use in schools in foreign countries and then act out a role play in order to compare, discuss and share their opinions about those traditions could be an option for what Vettorel and Lopriore (2013: 491–492) call the

“promotion of the use of English outside the school environment”. This would allow the learners to boost their cultural and linguistic knowledge of Outer Circle Englishes, considering that the coursebook *Focus on Modern Business* is used in business and technical schools in Austria and what it is supposed to be focusing on: modern business.

4.4 Turn-taking and interrupting

Example 4

As interrupting is mostly viewed as inherently face-threatening, it is unsurprising that instructions on how to properly perform this FTA are part of several Austrian school books as well. *Example 4* is one illustration of how coursebooks try to equip language learners with the ability to take turns tactfully and interrupt politely. The activity can be found in the textbook *Into English 3* (Puchta et al. 2014: 61), which is certified for the use in Upper Secondary Academic schools (AHS - Allgemeinbildende Höhere Schule). It is part of a section of the book that is dedicated to “Developing speaking skills”. Those pages are featured in every unit of the book, and they focus on various speech events, such as discussion, evaluation or interpretation of spoken language. In Unit 5, called “The sporting spirit”, learners are shown how to “put ideas forward” and interrupt someone politely.

Overall, the “developing speaking skills” are designed to give the students opportunities for practising the paired oral activity, which is part of the oral Matura exam in Austria. Thus, the first task is one where the learners should discuss various reasons for doing sports and decide on the ones that are most important to them. After a brief reflection of their performance, the learners should then listen to an audio file where the exact same task is executed by two narrators. In the meantime, they are required to take notes (and fill in some gaps in activity d) of the vocabulary and phrases that the speakers use. In the last activity, they are given another practice task with the aim of agreeing on the most important points of an array of quotes about sports. The target language items provided by the school book (Puchta et al. 2014: 61) are the following:

Useful phrases

Putting ideas forward

When you want to put an idea forward, you need to be clear about why you are making this suggestion.

I¹ / sincerely believe that ...

(It's) all² (learning how to win and lose) ...

Let me briefly³ on ...

I only wanted to stress that ... , plus there is another important ...

Tip

Interrupting politely

Interrupting someone is not difficult, but interrupting politely requires a certain level of empathy – putting yourself in the other person's shoes. Make sure you interrupt without hurting the other person.

Here are three ways of interrupting someone politely.

I'm sorry for butting in, but...

Do you mind if I say something here?

You know what?

It appears that here, the focus is on two separate things: on the one hand, the introduction of language used to interrupt someone and, on the other hand, language that is used to hold one's turn. The phrases used in the audio file (the transcription of the dialogue can be found in the appendix) for "putting ideas forward", i.e. not yielding the turn, are *I honestly believe that...*, *it's all about learning...*, and *let me briefly elaborate on ...*. The dialogue in the listening activity provides a considerable number of phrases that could be considered useful in this regard. However, what can also be observed is that, when it comes to interruption, the dialogue features only two instances of one speaker interrupting the other in its entirety of 2 minutes and 13 seconds. Whenever else a turn is taken, the speakers let each other finish and only start speaking after a short pause. This could be due to the textbook suggesting that in order to interrupt somebody politely, you need a 'certain level of empathy' and ensure not to hurt the other person. Then, if the spoken dialogue is supposed to do just that, it is interesting that it only provides the learners with these two examples: *I'm sorry for butting in* and *that's a good point, but*.

Studies on turn-taking and interruption in intercultural contexts have shown (albeit based on a very limited amount of data) that ELF speakers often just abruptly 'butt in' without considering appropriate transition points and without waiting for the interlocutor(s) to finish their thoughts. They tend to be rather self-centred in their conversations (see "self-centred hypothesis" by House 2008) and frequently interrupt by using expressions such as *and*, *but*, *no*, *so*, *I think* or *I don't think* (House 2008; Ferenčík 2012). Nonetheless, these instances do typically not cause any conflict or misunderstandings between the speakers. However, the coursebook promotes the use of overly considerate sounding expressions such as *let me briefly elaborate* or *all your points are worthwhile*. It seems obvious that the schoolbook's target interlocutors are NSs, especially when considering that the speakers in the audio file speak with perfect received pronunciation.

Suggestions for task adaptation

First of all, it is understandable that these activities in *Example 4* are structured in the way that they are, because the task closely resembles the ones that the learners will have to perform during their oral Matura exam. Nonetheless, some improvements could be made if the aim were to reflect authentic language usage (a discussion about whether the oral Matura is doing that in an appropriate way unfortunately goes beyond the scope of this thesis). In order to better reflect politeness patterns asserted in ELF interactions, one solution could be a change of topic. As it is presented here, i.e. two teenagers speaking about sports, it would be highly unlikely that these types of expressions would be used in a situation where two teenagers do just that.

For a rather informal topic, such as talking about hobbies or interests, the learners could be encouraged to try out using some of the phrases that ELF speakers primarily use in addition to the ones provided. The speakers in the audio file could be substituted with ELF speakers and could employ a wider range of phrases in their conversation. However, for the sake of simplicity, it is also possible to add small changes to the original audio by simply changing how the learners should work with it as it is. An alternative task could look like this:

You are going to hear two teenagers speaking about sports. Listen to the dialogue and discuss the following questions with your partner afterwards:

- Overall, did the dialogue seem polite to you? Why (not)?
- What language did the speakers use?
- Was their language use appropriate for the situation? Why (not)?
- Did they use any words or phrases that you think are useful?
- If yes, which of them?

Look at these expressions and the situations below: allocate them to one (or more) situation(s) in which you believe that they could be useful.

Expressions to interrupt somebody:

1. Can I just say something?
2. By the way, ...
3. Sorry, ...
4. Excuse me, ...
5. But ...
6. I don't think ...
7. Sorry for butting in, ...
8. No, ...
9. Do you mind if I say something here?
10. Well, ...
11. Let me briefly elaborate on ...
12. You know what?
13. That's a good point.
14. Right, so...
15. I just wanted to stress that all the points you made are worthwhile, but ...
16. I think ...

Situations: The topic of discussion is

- Students speaking about their favourite sports
- Oral Matura exam (topic "sports")
- A medical professional tells you about the importance of sports
- You want to start a campaign about the importance of sports for school children and speak with a business partner about it.
- A friend has a controversial opinion about sports (e.g. mentioning doping, injuries, violence and vandalism at sport events, etc.)

Compare with your partner. Did you do it similarly?

Then work in pairs and choose one of the situations above and act it out. Try to interrupt your partner at least once.

Now reflect on your discussion:

- Did you interrupt your interlocutor?
- Was it easy or difficult to interrupt? Why?
- Did you let your conversation partner finish their sentences? Why (not)?
- Did you use any of the expressions from the box above? Was it necessary?
- What other language did you use?
- Were the phrases helpful? Why (not)?
- In your opinion, were you polite?
- In your partner's opinion, were you polite?

With a task like this, the students could articulate themselves freely without sticking to specific linguistic expressions, although the option to use the newly introduced language would be provided nonetheless. Through allocating different phrases to certain contexts, the learners can foster an understanding that politeness is highly context dependent and has to be appropriate for the situation. The reflective questions serve to deepen this understanding of appropriate linguistic expression depending on the interlocutors and other contextual factors. Most probably, the students will take from this reflection that overly apologetic language is not always necessary and that they will not risk conflict or compromise understanding if they opt for more straightforward interruption. ELF speakers do so frequently, and they are considered highly skilled communicators.

4.5 Polite small talk

Example 5

The last activities analysed in this thesis, *Example 5*, are taken from the coursebook *Best Shots 4/5* (Gottinger, Pargfrieder & Norris 2018: 39–41) which is certified for use in Upper Secondary schools that focus on tourism, business and technology (HTL and HUM – Humanberufliche Schulen). *Example 5* consists of a series of activities aiming at teaching learners about the importance of polite small talk. The focus is being put on different situational contexts and the need for adapting one's language accordingly in order to "get the level of politeness and friendliness right" (Gottinger, Pargfrieder & Norris 2018: 39), which would correspond to the question of appropriateness, using Hymes' (1972)

terminology. As could be expected, with the exception of writing, the other three of the four receptive and productive skills – reading, listening and speaking – are featured in this section about polite small talk.

Language in use

Polite and friendly small talk

When socialising in English, it can be crucial to get the level of politeness and friendliness right. Have a look at this quick review of small talk phrases.

1 Getting started

Match these opening lines (A) with the most appropriate situation (B).

A	B
Do you mind if I join you?	1 You want to start a conversation with someone at the same event/place as you.
Excuse me, but have you been here before?	2 You want to introduce yourself to someone in a polite but assertive way.
Forgive me if I'm mistaken, but weren't you at the meeting earlier?	3 You approach two or more people who are talking together.
Hi, I'm Melinda Hofer from Innsbruck, and you are ...?	4 You want to introduce yourself in a slightly more formal way.
Hello. My name's Mick Goodman, pleased to meet you.	5 You think you may recognise someone from before.



In task 1-3, a variety of phrasal expressions are introduced, which can be used to politely start, manage, and end a conversation, according to the task prompts. Task 1 requires the learners to allocate different conversation openers to a suitable situation. This task serves to raise awareness for the context-dependence of language features. In the second activity the learners are presented with various questions 'to keep the conversation going' where all the vowels are missing. In order to carry out the task, they have to rewrite the phrases adding the missing vowels back in. Then, activity 3 is somewhat similar to the second one in that the students are presented with faulty sentences that they have to repair. In this case, it is the word order of the sentences that is mixed up.

After introducing the necessary language for the activity in the first three tasks, the students are then required to utilise the expressions in a gap-fill exercise. However, it is never the whole phrase, only one single word that they have to use to complete the gaps. Hence, there is always only one correct answer and thus no room for interpretation or experimentation on the learner's part. After doing so, an audio file is provided for comparison. One aspect that is in line with an ELF sensitive teaching approach is the fact that the two dialogues in task 4 represent two different intercultural communicative scenarios. The first dialogue is set at a coffee bar as part of an international trade fair, whereas the second dialogue is supposed to be a conversation held at a barbecue event at a private person's house with an international guest taking part. Clearly, the coursebook

aims at preparing the language learners for international ELF communication in formal and informal contexts, which could be viewed as a continuation of task 1, where different language and situations have to be matched. This type of task shows awareness and sensitivity for ELF communication and language appropriateness, and could support the development of capability.

4 Now complete these dialogues which use some of the statements from the above tasks. Write a suitable word into each gap.

In the coffee bar at an international trade fair

Stefan: Do you _____ if I join you?

Carmen: _____, not at all. I'm Carmen from Borealis and this is Marta from H&S, Zagreb.

Stefan: My name's Stefan, _____ to meet you.

Marta: _____ me if I'm mistaken, but didn't I see you on the *Siemens* stand earlier?

Stefan: Yes, that's right, I'm _____ an internship in building technologies.

Carmen: Oh, okay ... you're going to have to help me on that one, what does that exactly?

Stefan: Well, in a nutshell, I'm currently _____ in building automation, which is basically management systems that run things like heating, ventilation, air conditioning, whatever.

Carmen: Oh, that sounds right up your street, Marta. Marta's a trainee architect, and the company she works for has been commissioned to design an office building in Donau City.

Marta: That's right – and we've actually got a bit of a problem with the plans for the cooling system. Hey, maybe I can pick your brain a little?

Stefan: Sure, I'd be pleased to help, if I _____.

Carmen: Well, I think I'll leave you to it. I'd better be getting _____ to my colleagues back at the Borealis stand. It was nice _____ to you, Stefan. Perhaps we will _____ into each other later. Bye, Marta!



However, the dialogues presented are full of idiomatic expressions that the speakers are very unlikely to use in their “real lives”. Furthermore, in terms of the actual work that the learners have to do, the gap-fill activity itself is merely about retrieving information from memory or, if the learners have not yet memorised the expressions, they simply have to search for the correct phrases in the three previous tasks. Which language is appropriate for which conversation and in which succession has already been decided by the authors of the book, which means that the learners do not have to experiment with different possibilities in this task. Therefore, it remains questionable whether the students actually develop an understanding for appropriateness through carrying out this activity.

Overall, considering that the themes of the two dialogues are international communicative contexts, i.e. an international trade fair and a barbecue with a foreigner, the focus seems to be on what Locher and Watts (2008: 77) called *relational work*, due to their belief that politeness is primarily used to form and shape interpersonal relationships. Then, in order

to carry out this task, it could be assumed that the students are provided with language that has been proven useful and appropriate for situations like these. In studies on greetings and parting language, it was observed that international speakers opted for informal language items (e.g. Maíz-Arévalo 2017). However, the extent to which the expressions provided by the coursebook align with “ELF politeness” in small talk situations is difficult to determine, as there is rather little research available on ELF small talk as of now. In this particular instance, it can be observed that the coursebook recommends the use of rather formal sounding and apologetic language though: *Do you mind, if..., Forgive me if I am mistaken..., If you don't mind me asking..., Sorry, but I have to make a move*, etc. Moreover, in the second dialogue (“At a barbecue at Jack’s house”) one of the speakers (Andrés) says *may the force be with you, as they say!*, which is a reference to the popular science fiction franchise *Star Wars* and certainly not a common expression for showing politeness. This could cause problems because idiomatic expressions or metaphors were found to have a possible effect on intelligibility in ELF situations if the speakers try to derive literal meaning from them (Seidlhofer 2002).

At a barbecue at Jack's house

Stefan: Hi, I'm Stefan, a friend of Simon's. And you ...?

Andrés: Andrés. Hi, nice to ... you.

Stefan: And where ... are you from, Andrés?
I haven't seen you at Simon's before, have I?

Andrés: No, I only just moved to Bregenz. I just started working at the same company as Simon. Before that I was in Stuttgart, working for *Mercedes-Benz*. But originally I'm from Madrid.

Stefan: Right. And what ... you to Bregenz? If you don't ... me asking?

Andrés: Oh no, ... at all. My girlfriend's from round here and we decided to move here rather than live in Stuttgart, far better quality of life here.

Stefan: Yeah, I certainly agree with you on that – cheers!

Andrés: Tell me, Stefan, what do you ... ?

Stefan: Me? I'm a student at the local technical college. I'm in my final year there.

Andrés: And what do you plan to ... when you leave?

Stefan: I'm not sure yet, I've just done an internship with Siemens and now I think I might take a year off and do some travelling before I go to university or look for a job.

Andrés: Well, whatever you end up doing, may the force be with you, as they say!

Stefan: Thanks. Oh well, I'm going to have to make a ... now. I've got a paper to hand in tomorrow. ... the rest of the barbecue!

Andrés: Right then, I'd better be ... now, too. I promised to help a friend with his computer. It was good ... to you. See you later, Stefan.

Stefan: See you, Andrés. Take care.



The last task in this series is a speaking activity, in which the learners are instructed to perform a role play in which they should imagine that they are about to have a job interview. The aim is to socialise with other candidates before the interview starts. Various bullet

points explain how they should behave in this hypothetical situation and which topics they should talk about (introducing themselves, speaking about interesting experiences and career plans, etc.). Referring back to the literature, this task could be viewed as an example for how the concept of interpersonal positioning (Klötzl & Swoboda 2020) is also relevant in the EFL classroom. While performing the speaking activity, the learners have to engage in the process of trying to adhere to the rules of this particular social setting and to choose the appropriate expressions depending on the hierarchies present in the particular genre (socialising before a job interview). In the task, the use of the previously practised polite small talk expressions is encouraged, which could again limit the learners in creating their own storyline, but it would at the same time provide a frame of reference that they could draw from. This final task is probably designed to draw all the information about polite small talk together, since it can be interpreted as a mixture of formal and informal situations.

Suggestions for task adaptation

Although the series of activities clearly intends to focus on international ELF settings for which the small talk expressions are introduced, a few small changes could be made in order for them to be even better suited for the development of a capability for polite and friendly small talk. First, tasks 2 and 3 could be combined with task 1, so that the learners would match them with a situational context instead of completing them with vowels or rearranging them into grammatically correct expressions. The learners could also be presented the different situations from task 1 without any expressions next to them at first. Asking them to come up with their own way of managing such a situation first would allow the learners to initially draw from the knowledge they already possess. Another possibility would be to give the students the opportunity to classify the different phrases according to different types of scales: e.g. from least to most formal/useful/difficult or how likely they think it is that they would use them themselves.

Regarding task 4, my main critique was that the learners are not given any options on how to complete the dialogues as there is always part of the phrasal expression already provided for them and they are only required to add one single word to the text at a time. Simply letting the learners use whatever language they see fit to carry out this task could increase ELF capability. After that, they could be encouraged to take up a role in the dialogue and act it out together with peer students. Reflective questions could be added about whether they thought their partner's use of language was appropriate and polite, or whether the dialogues were even compatible when filled out by different individuals. Then, the listening activity that is proposed in the original task could be presented as what it is: one of many options (instead of the correct solution) of how to carry out the respective task.

This analysis has aimed at illustrating how different Austrian school books aimed at Upper Secondary and adult English learners portray the notion of politeness. Its goal was to explore the ELT material's underlying preconceptions about what polite language should be. For this, five examples from a range of different coursebooks that are certified for use in the Austrian educational system were analysed and it was discovered that, overall, they were rather form-focused. They primarily concentrated on presenting the learners with 'polite' expressions, which they were then to memorise and apply in various ways, such as completing dialogues or reacting to their peers' opinions in speaking activities. However, it was observed that the tasks under scrutiny tended to be quite form-focused and they showed a preference for English spoken by native speakers by making very little reference to intercultural aspects of communication and by focusing on accuracy rather than the actual communicative needs of the learners (e.g. the activity with the missing vowels in *Example 5*). This is one of the issues with ELT textbooks that is discussed in chapters 2 and 3 of this thesis.

Moreover, most of the examined tasks limited the language that the learners could use to complete the activity by presenting a range of phrases and then creating various fictional situations in which they could be utilised. This is in stark contrast to what the learners would encounter in real life situations, where a situation presents itself and one has to draw from all the language and intercultural knowledge one possesses in order to successfully communicate. Moreover, there is no initial experimentation stage in any of these analysed tasks where the students would be able to find out for themselves whether something is polite. Furthermore, the fact that cultures are very different when it comes to interpreting if an utterance is polite is not considered in any of the examples taken from the schoolbook samples. These tasks could be made significantly more appropriate for ELF communication, if variables such as situational appropriateness would be considered.

Overall, the goal of the proposed appropriations to the politeness tasks was not to present the learners with "ELF politeness" as the target language and thereby disregard traditional politeness notions altogether, but they were an attempt to raise awareness about the fact that effective communication is not solely dependent on perfect grammar and NS conceptions of polite behaviour. By acknowledging this, the learners would be able to exploit all the language resources they possess, and they would be viewed as successful communicators instead.

5 Conclusion

This study has attempted to investigate what Austrian learners of English are taught about politeness in their coursebooks. For this reason, in chapter 2, relevant literature on politeness as a linguistic and social phenomenon has been reviewed in order to establish a perception of the construct as well as the relevant terminology. This review showed that politeness research was to discover patterns and establish descriptive frameworks for language that has conventionally been considered polite. The main criticism of these traditional politeness theories was that they were too ‘Western-oriented’ and claimed universal validity. Thus, the need surfaced for more discourse-oriented research that considers politeness as heavily dependent on personal interpretations of language. Subsequently, a shift took place in the field of applied linguistics towards the inclusion of non-native speakers of English. This resulted in the emergence of cross-cultural and interlanguage pragmatics and its view of politeness as heavily dependent on cultural and societal norms. Overall, it was observed that, although this evolution of politeness research put more focus on NNSs and the way they perceive and exercise politeness in recent years, studies in the field still have mostly excluded language learners and lingua franca users and their understanding of polite behaviour and language.

Consequently, in chapter 3, an investigation of how politeness could be incorporated meaningfully into the EFL classroom was conducted. Therefore, the current approach to ELT, namely *Communicative Language Teaching* and its underlying construct of *communicative competence*, have been put under scrutiny in order to unearth whether these concepts are apt to prepare language learners sufficiently for future intercultural communicative scenarios. Therefore, the most influential models and definitions, which were proposed by Hymes (1972), Bachman and Palmer (1996), and Canale and Swain (1980), were examined. Those frameworks are the foundation that shaped CLT into what it is understood as nowadays and, furthermore, they influenced the development of the CEFR.

However, Widdowson (2003: 173) argues that these models are not able to entirely capture what it means to be a successful communicator in a foreign language and that learners would rather need to learn how to realise the “communicative potential in the language itself”, which would help them to instead develop a general *capability* for learning. These theoretical concepts were then discussed through the lens of ELF and its (socio-)linguistic characteristics, as its use has increased immensely due to globalisation. This analysis showed that, although ELF as a field of scientific inquiry has received a great deal of attention in recent years, there is still rather little consideration of ELF in ELT materials. Moreover, studies on “ELF politeness” are scarce and focused primarily on the realisation

of certain speech acts.

To answer the four research questions of this project, a critical analysis of Austrian schoolbooks was conducted. The results of this coursebook analysis with regards to the research questions can be summarised as follows:

1. Which aspects of politeness do Austrian school textbooks 'teach' to EFL learners?

It was found that most of the examined politeness tasks presented the language learners with examples of 'polite' expressions in the form of boxes with 'useful language'. The students were then supposed to apply the expressions in various different activities (e.g. speaking or writing). Most of these language samples included instances of apologetic language, 'soft expressions' or hedges to minimise the potential of conflict. Learners were also informed that personal opinions should only be uttered carefully in order to avoid offending the interlocutor(s) and that being polite requires certain skills and empathy levels. The overall impression was that the tasks tried to caution the learners about language that is regarded as too direct, interruptions that are too abrupt, and opinions that are already too formed (from an ELF perspective).

2. To what extent do the politeness tasks in Austrian school textbooks adhere to a NS-oriented ideology or are "ELF politeness" phenomena considered?

The currently available research on "ELF politeness" has shown that ELF speakers a) have a tendency to interrupt their interlocutors without considering typical points of transition, b) primarily disagree using raw negations or *but*, c) prefer to use "mainstream vocabulary" (see Bjørge 2012: 423) when performing FTAs, and d) tend to be rather self-centred in interactions. Yet, the politeness tasks encountered in the coursebooks provided many indirect and rather formal expressions when suggesting what polite language looks like. Hence, it could be summarised that the Austrian schoolbooks currently used rather want the learners to adhere to NS-standards when being polite and that they mostly disregard the characteristics established by "ELF politeness" research.

3. How are cultures and target interlocutors depicted in the materials? (Is there a focus on diverse global cultures and ELF communication?)

Most of the examined tasks did not include a focus on diverse global cultures as they lacked representation of international and intercultural communicative situations. Only one of the analysed activities (*Example 5*, which discussed polite small talk) included NNS target interlocutors and situational contexts that would require the use of ELF (international trade fair, barbecue with an attendee with a NNS background).

4. How could those tasks be adapted to better fit an ELF-informed classroom context?

Overall, the tasks demonstrated a clear preference for the English spoken by native speakers. As a result, the focus of the suggested task appropriations was put on situational appropriateness and on possibilities for the students to apply all their linguistic resources, without considering them faulty or deficient. Therefore, in most of the tasks, it was suggested that the language learners could use whatever language they see fit in order to carry them out. Moreover, reflective questions were included in most of the appropriated tasks, which could help the learners to gain a deeper understanding of the language choices they make.

It is important to note that there are various limitations of this study, which are crucial to consider when interpreting the results of this project. First, the actual number of activities that explicitly focus on politeness in a foreign language that are featured in Austrian schoolbooks is fairly low. There were almost no references to politeness in schoolbooks that are used at a lower secondary level, and, surprisingly, even in the materials designed for learners in upper secondary schools, explicit politeness activities were rare, although the oral Matura exam requires the learners to have mastered this skill (at least for the paired activity part of the exam). Moreover, it is difficult to determine the reach of the activities analysed, as there are many certified schoolbooks available for Austrian schools and some of the materials did not include any references to politeness at all. Furthermore, future curricula will have to recognise ELF capability as a desirable goal for language learners to achieve. Until this is done, it is difficult for teachers to determine which aspects to concentrate on and how or when to incorporate them into their teaching practice. And lastly, more research on how politeness is negotiated by ELF speakers is urgently needed in order to be able to include more appropriate and varied activities in ELT materials.

In conclusion, to better prepare language learners for their actual future communicational needs, educators are required to make adaptations to the tasks they are provided with in the materials currently available. Hopefully, this project has shed some light on how ELF as an ever-growing linguistic phenomenon could be included into teaching practices until coursebook publishers finally recognise this need too.

5 Bibliography

- Abram, James; Clarke, David; Cox, Roderick; Zekl, Claudia. 2015. *Focus on modern business 1 HAK/HLW/HTL*. Linz: Veritas.
- Bachman, Lyle F.; Palmer, Adrian S. 1996. *Language testing in practice. Designing and developing useful language tests*. (12th edition). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bachman, Lyle F.; Palmer, Adrian S. 2010. *Language assessment in practice. Developing language assessments and justifying their use in the real world*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bakhtin, Michail. 1997. *Dostoyevskiy. Sobraniye Sochineniy v Semi Tomakh*. Moskau: Russkiye Sloviri.
- Bardovi-Harlig, Kathleen. 2010. "Exploring the pragmatics of interlanguage pragmatics: Definition by design". In Trosborg, Anna (ed.). *Pragmatics across languages and cultures*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Batziakas, Bill. 2016. "Achieving politeness in ELF conversations: A functional-pragmatic perspective". In Tsantila, Natasha; Mandalios, Jane; Ilkos, Melpomeni (eds.). *ELF: Pedagogical and interdisciplinary perspectives*. Athens: Deree-The American College of Greece, 220–226.
- Baumgarten, Nicole; House, Juliane. 2010. "'I think' and 'I don't know' in English as lingua franca and native English discourse". *Journal of Pragmatics* 42(5), 1184–1200.
- Bergman, Marc L.; Kasper, Gabriele. 1993. "Perception and performance in native and nonnative apology". In Kasper, Gabriele; Blum-Kulka, Shoshana (eds.). *Interlanguage pragmatics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 82–107.
- Bjørge, Anne Kari. 2012. "Expressing disagreement in ELF business negotiations: Theory and practice". *Applied Linguistics* 33(4), 406–427.
- Blum-Kulka, Shoshana. 1987. "Indirectness and politeness in requests: Same or different?". *Journal of Pragmatics* 11(2), 131–146.
- Blum-Kulka, Shoshana; Olshtain, Elite. 1984. "Requests and apologies: A cross-cultural study of speech act realization patterns (CCSARP)". *Applied Linguistics* 5(3), 196–213.
- Brown, Penelope; Levinson, Stephen C. 1987. *Politeness: Some universals in language use*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Byram, Michael. 1997. *Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Canale, Michael. 1983. "From communicative competence to language pedagogy". In Richards, Jack; Schmidt, Richard (eds.). *Language and communication*. London: Longman, 2–27.
- Canale, Michael; Swain, Merrill. 1980. "Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing". *Applied Linguistics* 1(1), 1–47.
- Celce-Murcia, Marianne. 2007. "Rethinking the role of communicative competence in language teaching". In Soler, Eva Alcón; Jordà, Maria Pilar Safont (eds.). *Intercultural language use and language learning*. Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 41–57.
- Celce-Murcia, Marianne; Dörnyei, Zoltan; Thurrell, Sarah. 1995. "Communicative competence: A pedagogically motivated model with content specifications". *Issues in Applied Linguistics* 6(2).
- Chabert Ull, Alicia; Agost, Rosa. 2020. "Communicative language teaching: is there a place for L1 in L2 learning?". *European Journal of Language Policy* 12(1), 55–83.
- Chomsky, Noam. 1965. *Aspects of the theory of syntax*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.
- Cogo, Alessia. 2009. "Accommodating difference in ELF conversations: a study of pragmatic strategies". In Mauranen, Anna; Ranta, Elina (eds.). *English as a lingua franca: Studies and findings*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 254–273.

- Cogo, Alessia. 2012. "ELF and super-diversity: a case study of ELF multilingual practices from a business context". *Journal of English as a Lingua Franca* 1(2), 287–313.
- Cogo, Alessia. 2015. "English as a lingua franca: Descriptions, domains and applications". In Bowles, Hugo; Cogo, Alessia (eds.). *International perspectives on English as a lingua Franca: Pedagogical insights*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1–12.
- Cogo, Alessia; Dewey, Martin. 2006. "Efficiency in ELF communication: From pragmatic motives to lexico-grammatical innovation". *Nordic Journal of English Studies* 5(2), 59–93.
- Cogo, Alessia; Dewey, Martin. 2012. *Analysing English as a lingua franca: A corpus-driven investigation*. London: Continuum.
- Cogo, Alessia; House, Juliane. 2018. "The pragmatics of ELF". In Jenkins, Jennifer; Baker, Will; Dewey, Martin (eds.). *The Routledge handbook of English as a Lingua Franca*. London, New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, 210–223.
- Coste, Daniel; Moore, Danièle; Zarate, Geneviève. 1997. *Plurilingualism and pluricultural competence: Studies towards a Common European Framework of Reference for language learning and teaching*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe Language Policy Division.
- Council of Europe. 2001. *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching and assessment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Council of Europe. 2020. *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment. Companion volume*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing.
- Crystal, David. 2003. *English as a global language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Crystal, David. 2006. "English worldwide". In Hogg, Richard; Denison, David (eds.). *A history of the English language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 420–439.
- Davies, Alan. 2003. *The native speaker: Myth and reality*. Blue Ridge Summit, PA: Multilingual Matters.
- Davies, Bronwyn; Harré, Rom. 1999. "Positioning and personhood". In Harré, Rom; van Langehove, Luk (eds.). *Positioning theory*. Oxford: Blackwell, 32–52.
- Dombi, Judit. 2021. *Intercultural communicative competence and individual differences: A model for advanced EFL learners*. Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Economidou-Kogetsidis, Maria. 2008. "Internal and external mitigation in interlanguage request production: The case of Greek learners of English". *Journal of Politeness Research* 4(1).
- Economidou-Kogetsidis, Maria. 2009. "Interlanguage request modification: The use of lexical/phrasal downgraders and mitigating supportive moves". *Multilingua* 28(1), 79–111.
- Economidou-Kogetsidis, Maria; Woodfield, Helen (Eds.). 2012. *Interlanguage request modification*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins B. V.
- Eelen, Gino. 2001. *A critique of politeness theories*. Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing.
- Ehrenreich, Susanne. 2009. "English as a lingua franca in multinational corporations: Exploring business communities of practice". In Mauranen, Anna; Ranta, Elina (eds.). *English as a lingua franca: Studies and findings*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 126–151.
- Félix-Brasdefer, J. César. 2004. "Interlanguage refusals: Linguistic politeness and length of residency in the target community". *Language Learning* 54(4), 587–653.
- Ferenčík, Milan. 2012. "Politeness aspects of ELF interaction: a discussion of a conversational encounter from the VOICE corpus". *Prague Journal of English Studies* 1(1), 109–132.

- Firth, Alan. 1996. "The discursive accomplishment of normality: On 'lingua franca' English and conversation analysis". *Journal of Pragmatics* 26(2), 237–259.
- Firth, Alan; Wagner, Johannes. 1997. "On discourse, communication, and (some) fundamental concepts in SLA research". *The Modern Language Journal* 81(3), 285–300.
- Fraser, Bruce. 1990. "Perspectives on politeness". *Journal of Pragmatics* 14, 65–83.
- Fraser, Bruce; Nolen, William. 1981. "The association of deference with linguistic form". *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 27, 93–109.
- Fulcher, Glenn; Davidson, Fred. 2007. *Language testing and assessment: An advanced resource book*. London: Routledge.
- Garcés-Conejos Blitvich, Pilar. 2013. "Introduction: Face, identity and im/politeness. Looking backward, moving forward: From Goffman to practice theory". *Journal of Politeness Research* 9(1), 1–33.
- Goffman, Erving. 1967. *Interaction ritual. Essays on face-to-face behavior*. (1st edition). New York: Pantheon Books.
- Gottinger, Brigitte; Pargfrieder, Petra; Norris, Susan. 2018. *Best shots - HTL/HUM modular*. Wien: Verlag Hölder-Pichler-Tempsky GmbH.
- Grice, Paul. 1975. "Logic and conversation". In Cole, Peter; Morgan, Jerry L. (eds.). *Syntax and semantics 3: Speech acts*. New York: Academic Press, 41–58.
- Gu, Yueguo. 1990. "Politeness phenomena in modern Chinese". *Journal of Pragmatics* 14(2), 237–257.
- Guerra, Luís; Cavalheiro, Lili. 2019. "When the textbook is not enough: How to shape an ELF classroom?". In Sifakis, Nicos C.; Tsantila, Natasha (eds.). *English as a lingua franca for EFL contexts*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 117–131.
- Hall, Joan Kelly; an Cheng; Carlson, Matthew T. 2006. "Reconceptualizing multicompetence as a theory of language knowledge". *Applied Linguistics* 27(2), 220–240.
- Hassal, Tim. 2001. "Modifying requests in a second language". *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching* 39(4), 259–283.
- Haugh, Michael. 2007. "The discursive challenge to politeness research: An interactional alternative". *Journal of Politeness Research* 3(2), 295–317.
- Hedge, Tricia. 2000. *Teaching and learning in the language classroom*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- House, Juliane. 1999. "Misunderstanding in intercultural communication: interactions in English as a lingua franca and the myth of mutual intelligibility". In Gnutzmann, Claus (ed.). *Teaching and learning English as a global language*. Tübingen: Stauffenburg, 73–89.
- House, Juliane. 2002. "Developing pragmatic competence in English as a lingua franca". In Knapp, Karlfried; Meierkord, Christiane (eds.). *Lingua franca communication*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 245–268.
- House, Juliane. 2008. "(Im)politeness in English as a Lingua Franca discourse". In Locher, Miriam A.; Strässler, Jürg (eds.). *Standards and norms in the English language*. New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 351–366.
- House, Juliane. 2022. "The pragmatics of English as a Lingua Franca". *Applied Pragmatics* 4(2), 121–136.
- Hülmbauer, Cornelia. 2009. ""We don't take the right way. We just take the way that we think you will understand": The shifting relationship between correctness and effectiveness in ELF". In Mauranten, Anna; Ranta, Elina (eds.). *English as a lingua franca: Studies and findings*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 323–347.
- Hülmbauer, Cornelia. 2011. "Old friends? Cognates in ELF communication". In Archibald, Alasdair Neil; Cogo, Alessia; Jenkins, Jennifer (eds.). *Latest trends in ELF research*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 322–347.

- Hymes, Dell H. 1972. "On communicative competence". In Pride, John B.; Holmes, Janet (eds.). *Sociolinguistics*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 269–293.
- Hymes, Dell H. 1977. *Foundations in sociolinguistics: An ethnographic approach*. London: Tavistock Publications.
- Jenkins, Jennifer. 2000. *The phonology of English as an international language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Jenkins, Jennifer. 2002. "A sociolinguistically based, empirically researched pronunciation syllabus for English as an International Language". *Applied Linguistics* 13(1), 83–103.
- Jenkins, Jennifer. 2007. *English as a lingua franca: Attitude and identity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Jenkins, Jennifer; Cogo, Alessia; Dewey, Martin. 2011. "Review of developments in research into English as a lingua franca". *Language Teaching* 44(3), 281–315.
- Jenks, Christopher. 2013. "Are you an ELF? The relevance of ELF as an equitable social category in online intercultural communication". *Language and Intercultural Communication* 13(1), 95–108.
- Johnson, Keith. 2008. *An introduction to foreign language learning and teaching*. (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.
- Kachru, Braj. 1992. *Teaching world Englishes: The other tongue: English across culture*. (2nd ed.). Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Kankaanranta, Anne. 2020. "ELF (English as a lingua franca) in business: Dynamics of teaching for business interactions". In Terauchi, Hajime; Noguchi, Judy, Tajino, Akira (eds.). *Towards a new paradigm for English language teaching: English for specific purposes in Asia and beyond*. London: Routledge, 41–53.
- Kankaanranta, Anne; Louhiala-Salminen, Leena. 2018. "ELF in the domain of business - BELF: What does the B stand for?". In Jenkins, Jennifer; Baker, Will; Dewey, Martin (eds.). *The Routledge handbook of English as a Lingua Franca*. London, New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, 309–320.
- Kanwit, Matthew; Solon, Megan. 2023. "Introduction: Historical overview, key constructs, and recent developments in the study of communicative competence". In Kanwit, Matthew; Solon, Megan (eds.). *Communicative competence in a second language. Theory, method, and applications*. New York NY: Routledge, 1–18.
- Kasper, Gabriele. 2001. "Politeness". In Mesthrie, Rajend (ed.). *Concise encyclopedia of sociolinguistics*. Amsterdam: Pergamon, 187–192.
- Kecskes, Istvan. 2014. *Intercultural pragmatics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Klimpfinger, Theresa. 2009. "'She's mixing the two languages together': Forms and functions of code-switching in English as a lingua franca". In Mauranen, Anna; Ranta, Elina (eds.). *English as a lingua franca: Studies and findings*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 348–371.
- Klötzl, Svitlana; Swoboda, Birgit. 2020. *Interpersonal positioning in English as a lingua franca interactions*. New York: Routledge.
- Knapp, Karlfried; Meierkord, Christiane (Eds.). 2002. *Lingua franca communication*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.
- Konakahara, Mayu. 2016. "The use of unmitigated disagreement in ELF casual conversation: Ensuring mutual understanding by providing correct information". In Kuimiko, Murata (ed.). *Exploring ELF in Japanese academic and business contexts: Conceptualization, research and pedagogic implications*. Oxon: Routledge, 70–89.
- Kopperoinen, Anne. 2011. "Accents of English as a lingua franca: A study of Finnish textbooks". *International Journal of Applied Linguistics* 21(1), 71–93.
- Lakoff, Robin T. 1973. "The logic of politeness; or, minding your p's and q's". In Corum, Claudia; Smith-Stark, T. Cedric (eds.). *Papers from the Ninth Regional Meeting of the Chicago Linguistic Society*. Chicago: Chicago Linguistic Society, 292–305.
- Leech, Geoffrey. 1983. *Principles of pragmatics*. New York: Routledge.

- Leung, Constant. 2005. "Convivial communication: Recontextualizing communicative competence". *International Journal of Applied Linguistics* 15(2), 119–144.
- Leung, Constant; Lewkowicz, Jo. 2012. "Language communication and communicative competence: a view from contemporary classrooms". *Language and Education* 27(5), 398–414.
- Littlewood, William. 1981. *Communicative language teaching: An introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Locher, Miriam A. 2004. *Power and politeness in action: disagreements in oral communication*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Locher, Miriam A.; Watts, Richard J. 2008. "Relational work and impoliteness: Negotiating norms of linguistic behaviour". In Bousfield, Derek; Locher, Miriam A. (eds.). *Impoliteness in language: Studies on its interplay with power in theory and practice*. Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 77–100.
- Lopriore, Lucilla; Vettorel, Paola. 2019. "Perspectives in WE- and ELF-informed ELT materials in teacher education". In Sifakis, Nicos C.; Tsantila, Natasha (eds.). *English as a lingua franca for EFL contexts*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 97–116.
- Maíz-Arévalo, Carmen. 2017. "'Small talk is not cheap': phatic computer-mediated communication in intercultural classes". *Computer Assisted Language Learning* 30(5), 432–446.
- Marti, Leyla. 2006. "Indirectness and politeness in Turkish–German bilingual and Turkish monolingual requests". *Journal of Pragmatics* 38(11), 1836–1869.
- Matsuda, Aya. 2002. "Representation of users and uses of English in beginning Japanese EFL textbooks". *JALT Journal* 24(2), 182–201.
- Matsuda, Aya. 2012. "Teaching materials in EIL". In Alsagoff, Lubna; McKay, Sandra Lee; Hu, Guangwei; Renadya, Willy A. (eds.). *Principles and practices for teaching English as an international language*. London: Routledge, 168–185.
- Matsumoto, Yoshiko. 1988. "Reexamination of the universality of face: Politeness phenomena in Japanese". *Journal of Pragmatics* 12(4), 403–426.
- Mauranen, Anna. 2012. *Exploring ELF in academia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mauranen, Anna. 2018. "Conceptualizing ELF". In Jenkins, Jennifer; Baker, Will; Dewey, Martin (eds.). *The Routledge handbook of English as a Lingua Franca*. London, New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, 7–24.
- Mauranen, Anna; Hynninen, Niina; Ranta, Elina. 2010. "English as an academic lingua franca: The ELFA project". *English for Specific Purposes* 29(3), 183–190.
- McGrath, Ian. 2002. *Materials evaluation and design for language teaching*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Meier, Ardith J. 1995. "Passages of politeness". *Journal of Pragmatics* 24(4), 381–392.
- Metsä-Ketelä, Maria. 2016. "Pragmatic vagueness: Exploring general extenders in English as a lingua franca". *Intercultural Pragmatics* 13(3).
- Mills, Sara. 2003. *Gender and politeness*. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Mills, Sara; Kádár, Dániel Z. 2011. "Politeness and culture". In Kádár, Dániel Z.; Mills, Sara (eds.). *Politeness in East Asia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 21–44.
- Morrow, Keith. 1983. "Principles of communicative methodology". In Johnson, Keith; Morrow, Keith (eds.). *Communication in the classroom: Applications and methods for a communicative approach*. Harlow, Essex: Longman, 59–66.
- Mortensen, Janus. 2021. "Beyond language change: ELF and the study of sociolinguistic change". In Mauranen, Anna; Vetchinnikova, Svetlana (eds.). *Language change: The impact of English as a Lingua Franca*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 152–174.

- Ogiermann, Eva. 2009. *On apologising in negative and positive politeness cultures*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins B. V.
- Olshtain, Elite; Weinbach, Liora. 1993. "Interlanguage features of the speech act of complaining". In Kasper, Gabriele; Blum-Kulka, Shoshana (eds.). *Interlanguage pragmatics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 108–122.
- Ortega, Lourdes. 2013. "SLA for the 21st century: Disciplinary progress, transdisciplinary relevance, and the bi/multilingual turn". *Language Learning* 63, 1–24.
- Paulston, Christina Bratt. 1974. "Linguistic and Communicative Competence". *TESOL Quarterly* 8(4), 347.
- Pitzl, Marie-Luise. 2009. "'We should not wake up any dogs': Idiom and Metaphor in ELF". In Mauranten, Anna; Ranta, Elina (eds.). *English as a lingua franca: Studies and findings*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 298–322.
- Pitzl, Marie-Luise. 2018. *Creativity in English as a lingua franca*. Boston: Walter de Gruyter.
- Pizziconi, Barbara. 2009. "Politeness". In Mey, Jacob L.; Mey, Jacob (eds.). *Concise encyclopedia of pragmatics*. 2. ed. Amsterdam, Heidelberg: Elsevier, 706–710.
- Pözl, Ulrike. 2010. "Signalling cultural identity: The use of L1/Ln in ELF". *Views* 12(2), 3–24.
- Puchta, Herbert; Holzmann Christian; Stranks, Jeff; Lewis-Jones, Peter. 2014. *Into English 3 coursebook*. Innsbruck: Helbling.
- Riekkinen, Niina. 2010. "'This is not criticism, but...' - Softening criticism: The use of lexical hedges in academic spoken interaction". *Helsinki English Studies* 6, 75–87.
- Savignon, Sandra J. 1972. *Communicative competence: An experiment in foreign-language teaching*. Philadelphia: Center for Curriculum Development.
- Schauer, Gila A. 2004. "May you speak louder maybe? Interlanguage pragmatic development in requests". In Foster-Cohen, Susan; Sharwood Smith, Micheal; Sorace, Antonella; Mitsuhiro, Ota (eds.). *EUROSLA Yearbook. Volume 4*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins B. V., 253–273.
- Scollon, Ronald; Scollon, Suzanne B. K.; Jones, Rodney H. 2012. *Intercultural communication: A discourse approach*. (3rd edition). Malden, MA, Chichester, West Sussex, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Searle, John R. 1969. *Speech acts: An essay in the philosophy of language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Seidlhofer, Barbara. 2002. "Habeas corpus and divide et impera: 'Global English' and applied linguistics". In Spelman Miller, Kristyan; Thompson, Paul (eds.). *Unity and diversity in language use*. London: Continuum, 198–217.
- Seidlhofer, Barbara. 2004. "Research perspectives on teaching English as a lingua franca". *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* 24, 209–239.
- Seidlhofer, Barbara. 2006. "English as a lingua franca in the expanding circle: what it isn't". In Rubdy, Rani; Saraceni, Mario (eds.). *English in the world: Global rules, global roles*. London: Continuum, 40–50.
- Seidlhofer, Barbara. 2011. *Understanding English as a Lingua Franca*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Selinker, Larry. 1972a. "Interlanguage". *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching* 10(1-4).
- Selinker, Larry. 1972b. "Interlanguage". *International Review of Applied Linguistics* 10(3), 209–231.
- Sifianou, Maria. 2015. "Conceptualizing politeness in Greek: Evidence from Twitter corpora". *Journal of Pragmatics* 86, 25–30.
- Siqueira, Sávio; Vasconcelos Gonçalves Matos, Julia. 2019. "ELT materials for basic education in Brazil: Has the time for an ELF-aware practice arrived?". In Sifakis, Nicos C.; Tsantila, Natasha (eds.). *English as a lingua franca for EFL contexts*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 132–156.

- Stalpers, Judith. 1995. "The expression of disagreement". In Ehlich, Konrad (ed.). *The discourse of business negotiation*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 275–290.
- Swan, Michael. 2012. "ELF and EFL: Are they really different?". *Journal of English as a Lingua Franca* 1(2), 379–389.
- Syrbe, Mona; Rose, Heath. 2018. "An evaluation of the global orientation of English textbooks in Germany". *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching* 12(2), 152–163.
- Tarone, Elaine. 2014. "Enduring questions from the interlanguage hypothesis". In Han, Zhaohong; Tarone, Elaine (eds.). *Interlanguage. Forty years later*. Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 7–26.
- Terkourafi, Marina. 2005. "Beyond the micro-level in politeness research". *Journal of Politeness Research* 1, 237–262.
- Terkourafi, Marina. 2008. "Toward a unified theory of politeness, impoliteness and rudeness". In Bousfield, Derek; Locher, Miriam A. (eds.). *Impoliteness in language: Studies on its interplay with power in theory and practice*. Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 45–74.
- Tilbury, Alex; Clementson, Theresa; Hendra, Leslie Anne; Rea, David. 2011. *English Unlimited B1 pre-intermediate coursebook*. Stuttgart: Klett.
- Vettorel, Paola. 2010. "EIL/ELF and representation of culture in textbooks: Only food, fairs, folklore and facts?". In Gagliardi, Cesare; Maley, Alan (eds.). *EIL, ELF, global English: Teaching and learning issues*. Bern: Peter Lang, 153–185.
- Vettorel, Paola. 2018. "ELF and communication strategies: Are they taken into account in ELT materials?". *RELC Journal* 49(1), 58–73.
- Vettorel, Paola; Corrizato, Sara. 2012. "World Englishes and ELF in ELT textbooks: How is plurality represented?". In Facchinetti, Roberta (ed.). *A cultural journey through the English lexicon*. Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 201–234.
- Vettorel, Paola; Lopriore, Lucilla. 2013. "Is there ELF in ELT coursebooks?". *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching* 3(4), 483–504.
- Vorwagner, Victoria. 2018. *From communicative competence towards capability: How Austrian schoolbook tasks can be appropriated to fit in an ELF-informed classroom*. Diploma thesis. Vienna: University of Vienna.
- Walkinshaw, Ian; Kirkpatrick, Andy. 2020. "'We want fork but no pork': (Im)politeness in humour by Asian users of English as a lingua franca and Australian English Speakers". *Contrastive Pragmatics* 2(1), 52–80.
- Watts, Richard J. 2003. *Politeness*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Weizman, Elda. 1993. "Interlanguage requestive hints". In Kasper, Gabriele; Blum-Kulka, Shoshana (eds.). *Interlanguage pragmatics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 123–137.
- Widdowson, Henry G. 1984. *Explorations in applied linguistics 2*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Widdowson, Henry G. 2003. *Defining issues in English language teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Widdowson, Henry G. 2012. "Closing the gap, changing the subject". In Hüttner, Julia; Mehlmauer-Larcher, Barbara; Reichl, Susanne; Schiftner, Barbara (eds.). *Theory and practice in EFL teacher education: Bridging the gap*. Bristol, Buffalo, Toronto: Multilingual Matters, 3–15.
- Widdowson, Henry G. 2015. "Competence and capability: Rethinking the subject English". *The Journal of Asia TEFL* 12(1), 1–17.
- Wierzbicka, Anna. 1991. *Cross-cultural pragmatics: The semantics of human interaction*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Woodfield, Helen. 2008. "Interlanguage requests: A contrastive study". In Pütz, Martin; Neff-van Aertselaer, JoAnne (eds.). *Developing contrastive pragmatics: Interlanguage and cross-cultural perspectives*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 231–264.

- Yalden, Janice. 1991. *The communicative syllabus: Evolution, design and implementation*. (4th ed.). Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.
- Yu, Kyong-Ae. 2011. "Culture-specific concepts of politeness: indirectness and politeness in English, Hebrew and Korean requests". *Intercultural Pragmatics* 8(3), 385–409.

Internet sources:

- Overview English Unlimited B1. <https://www.klett-sprachen.de/english-unlimited-b1-pre-intermediate/t-1/9783125399068> (last accessed on 8th February 2024)
- Vienna Oxford International Corpus of English. <https://voice.acdh.oeaw.ac.at/aboutvoice/> (last accessed on 22nd August 2023)

7 Appendix

7.1 Coursebook examples

Politeness through mitigation: Example 1

EXPLORE Speaking

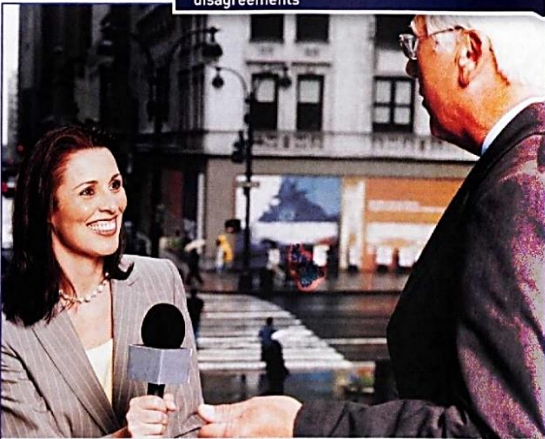
- 1 Can you remember the answers to these questions? If you need help, look back at the text on p118.
 - 1 What was the problem with the airport in Sandstown?
 - 2 What were the three possible solutions to the problem?
 - 3 What were some of the good and bad points of each solution?
- 2 3.52 Listen to interviews with three people living in Sandstown. Who thinks the airport should stay in Sandstown? Who thinks it should move?
- 3 a 3.52 Listen again. What reasons do the people give?
b Read the conversations below to check.
- 4 a Which of the highlighted expressions 1-8 make an opinion softer? (x3)
Which make a disagreement softer? (x5)
b 3.53 Listen to 1-8. Which words are stressed in the highlighted expressions?
c Listen again and repeat.
- 5 a Work alone. Choose two or three topics and make notes about your opinions and reasons.
 - a good place to live • interesting TV programmes or films • a nice place to visit
 - a good time of year to have a holiday • good places to shop

a good place to live – the countryside, quiet and clean.

b In pairs, take turns to give your opinions and say whether you agree or disagree. Use the highlighted expressions in the script. Ask questions to find out more.

Goal

use expressions to soften opinions and disagreements



Leona is a local radio journalist. She's asking people in Sandstown what they think should be done about the airport.

1

LEONA Excuse me, I'm Leona Cook from UPC news. Can you tell us, what do you think about Sandstown airport?

KARL Well, ¹I haven't thought about it a lot, but I suppose it should be moved. It's very old. I remember when it was built ... 35, 40 years ago?

LEONA Forty-two years. What do you think about the idea of simply extending the airport by building another terminal? Wouldn't that be better?

KARL Well, ²I'm not sure about that. There isn't room, unless they build over the North Park, and I wouldn't want that. I don't think there are enough green spaces in the town as it is.

2

LEONA Excuse me. Can I ask you what's your opinion about the airport? Where do you think it should be?

CAROLE I know some people think we should move it, but ³I don't really agree. I use the airport quite a lot and it's good to have the airport near the town. ⁴It's true we need a bigger airport, but the location isn't a problem.

LEONA But if they made the airport bigger, they'd have to build over the North Park, wouldn't they? Surely that wouldn't be a good thing?

CAROLE Actually, ⁵I'm not so sure. I grew up near that park and I don't think it's anything special, and it's already very noisy because of all the planes. But there's lots of lovely countryside outside the town, and we don't want to lose that.

3

LEONA Excuse me, Leona Cook, UPC news. There's a lot of discussion at the moment about the airport here and where it should be. Do you have any thoughts on that?

ABBAS Well, ⁶I might be wrong, but I think they should build the airport near Sibley. But not in the Nature Reserve.

LEONA But Sandstown already has an airport. Wouldn't it be cheaper just to make that airport bigger?

ABBAS ⁷That's a good point, but I think they could sell the land in Sandstown. ⁸I guess it's worth a lot of money. Then they could use that money to pay for the new airport. Yeah.

120

84

Achieving politeness through mitigation: Example 2

EXPLORE Speaking



1 **2.18** Listen to three conversations. Match them with the pictures.

2 a You can be more polite by speaking less directly. Which sentences are less direct, a or b?

- 1 a Would you mind answering some questions?
b Can you answer some questions?
- 2 a It could be better.
b It's bad.

b Look at the conversations. Find and underline the expressions that are less direct than these.

Requests

- 1 Can you answer a few questions?
- 2 Can you change this ten for me?
- 3 Can you tell me a bit more?

Refusing requests

- 4 No, I don't want to.
- 5 No, I don't need anything.

Opinions

- 6 The pool is dirty.
- 7 The staff aren't interested.
- 8 It's boring.
- 9 I'm not interested in football.

c **2.19** Listen to check. **P**

3 Make these expressions less direct using the words in (brackets). Then compare your answers.

- 1 My parents are old-fashioned. (a bit)
My parents are a bit old-fashioned.
- 2 We're not hungry. (really)
- 3 Ronnie and Clara are unhappy. (don't seem)
- 4 I hate bananas. (really like)
- 5 George is stupid sometimes. (clever)
- 6 Can you wait for five minutes? (Would you mind)
- 7 Can you be quiet, please? (Do you think)
- 8 Can you help me with my bags? (I wonder if)

4 a **2.20** Listen to a phone conversation between André and Sue. Do you think it sounds polite?

b Look at the script on p149. In pairs, write a more polite version of the conversation. Practise it.

c Listen to each other's conversations. Do you think they sound polite?

Goal

• speak more politely by being less direct



- 1
- BILL Would you mind answering a few questions, please? It won't take long.
SHEILA Er, yes, that's OK.
BILL Thank you. Are you happy with the fitness centre generally?
SHEILA Erm, well, it could be better.
BILL Oh, I see. Do you think you could tell me a bit more?
SHEILA Well, to be honest, the pool isn't always very clean. And the staff don't seem very interested.
BILL Oh dear. Well, I'll definitely tell the manager.

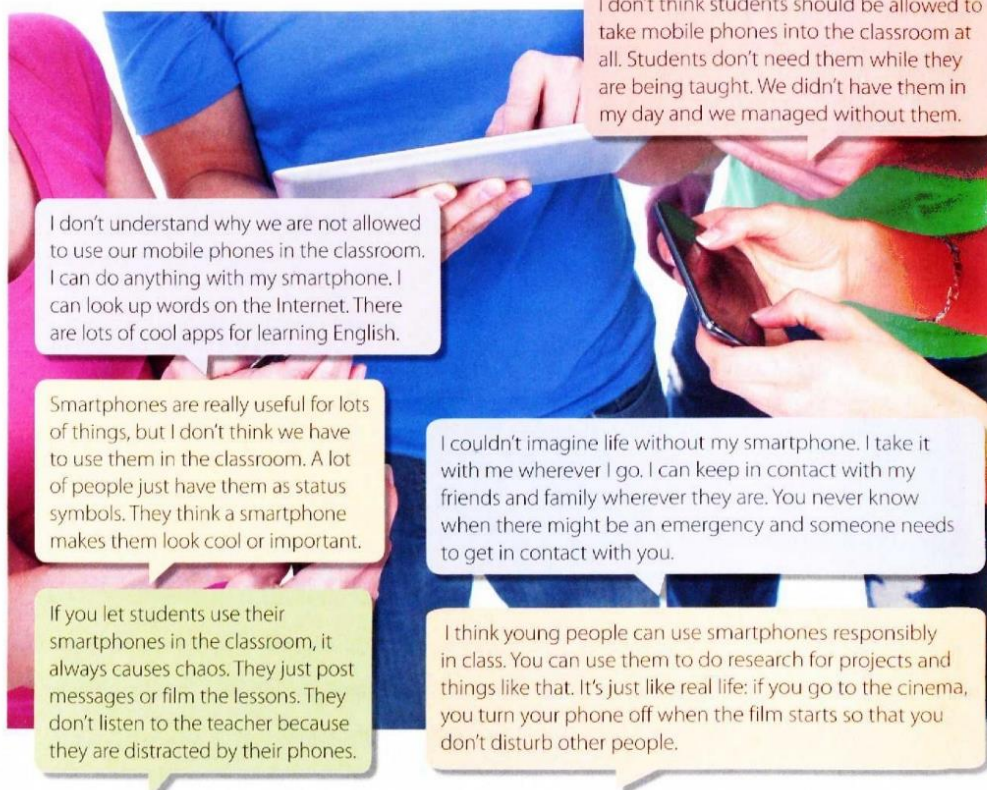
- 2
- BEN Hi. I wonder if you could change this ten for me. I need some coins for the ticket machine.
CLODAGH Sorry, but I'd rather not. People are always asking me for change.
BEN Oh.
CLODAGH Perhaps you'd like to buy something?
BEN Erm, no, not really.

- 3
- PHIL Here's your drink. Sorry it took so long.
CATHERINE So, what do you think of the game?
PHIL Um, it's a bit boring.
CATHERINE Boring?
PHIL Well, you know I'm not really interested in football.
CATHERINE So should we go? The second half starts in two minutes.
PHIL No, you stay here. I'll do some shopping, then come back in an hour, OK?
CATHERINE Well, OK. See you later.

Expressing disagreement: Example 3

9 Giving an opinion

Most students and teachers have strong opinions on mobile phones in the classroom, either for or against. Use the language in the boxes below to react to the opinions you can read here. Then find out the opinion of your class as a whole.



I don't think students should be allowed to take mobile phones into the classroom at all. Students don't need them while they are being taught. We didn't have them in my day and we managed without them.

I don't understand why we are not allowed to use our mobile phones in the classroom. I can do anything with my smartphone. I can look up words on the Internet. There are lots of cool apps for learning English.

Smartphones are really useful for lots of things, but I don't think we have to use them in the classroom. A lot of people just have them as status symbols. They think a smartphone makes them look cool or important.

I couldn't imagine life without my smartphone. I take it with me wherever I go. I can keep in contact with my friends and family wherever they are. You never know when there might be an emergency and someone needs to get in contact with you.

If you let students use their smartphones in the classroom, it always causes chaos. They just post messages or film the lessons. They don't listen to the teacher because they are distracted by their phones.

I think young people can use smartphones responsibly in class. You can use them to do research for projects and things like that. It's just like real life: if you go to the cinema, you turn your phone off when the film starts so that you don't disturb other people.

Useful words

annoying	interfering with others
convenient	keep in touch with sb.
cool	multi-functional
disturb a lesson / other people	reachable
expensive	useful (in emergencies)

V Discussing

Giving an opinion

- I believe / feel / think that ...
- In my opinion / view, ...
- Well, if you want my opinion, ...
- I'm not quite sure, but (on the whole) I'd say ...

Agreeing with an opinion

- I (very much) agree with / support the first / second / ... opinion that ...
- What (name) says is right / sounds sensible / makes sense because ...
- Well, I suppose that's right.
- That's a point. I've never looked at it like that before.

Disagreeing with an opinion

- No, I can't / don't agree with that / you because ...
- That can't possibly be right / true because ...
- I'm in two minds. I agree with ... , but on the other hand ...
- No, I think that's nonsense. You can't really think that ...



Developing speaking skills

Putting ideas forward

Conversational strategy:

- Interrupting politely

a Work in pairs and do the task below. Make sure both of you talk the same amount of time.

What are the principle reasons why someone should do sport? Choose the three most important ones from the list below. Discuss.

- learning how to win and lose
- breaking records
- making friends
- entertainment
- keeping fit

b Discuss what you thought about your performances. How well did you do?



c Listen to two students doing the same task. What's your impression?



d Look at the language in the box. Complete the missing words. Then listen again and check.

Useful phrases

Putting ideas forward

When you want to put an idea forward, you need to be clear about why you are making this suggestion.

I ¹ / sincerely believe that ...

(It's) all ² (learning how to win and lose) ...

Let me briefly ³ on ...

I only wanted to stress that ... , plus there is another important ...

Tip

Interrupting politely

Interrupting someone is not difficult, but interrupting politely requires a certain level of empathy – putting yourself in the other person's shoes. Make sure you interrupt without hurting the other person.

Here are three ways of interrupting someone politely.

I'm sorry for butting in, but...

Do you mind if I say something here?

You know what?

e PRACTICE TASK Discuss these quotations about sports and choose the three that are most meaningful for you.

- "Sports do not build character. They reveal it." (Heywood Broun)
- "Some people think football is a matter of life and death. I don't like that attitude. I can assure them it is much more serious than that." (Bill Shankly)
- "Talent wins games, but teamwork and intelligence wins championships." (Michael Jordan)
- "Whether you think you can or whether you think you can't, you're right!" (Henry Ford)
- "Why did I want to win? Because I didn't want to lose!" (Max Schmeling)

Example 4: Transcript Audio File – Into English 3 (Puchta et al. 2014: 61)

Speaker A: Well, I honestly believe that the principal reason for sport has to be health. I'm not saying that other points are not important too, but I don't think anybody in their right mind would deny that sport, if done properly, helps us to keep fit and...

Speaker B: I'm sorry for butting in, but I fully agree with you on this, so maybe we should focus more on the other points where we don't agree so much. How do you feel about the idea of sport being primarily about entertainment?

A: Well, I'm not sure I can go along with that. Of course, it can be fun to watch a good sport event on TV, but professional sport is often about betting scandals, drugs, bribing and cheating. If these things didn't exist, I'd probably agree with you. However...

B: That's a good point. Although, for me, a good football match is a good football match, no matter whether there are some black sheep among the footballers or not. But, okay, point taken.

A: You know what? It's all about learning how to win and lose, really. If you want to learn how to win a game, you need to play well, and then it's good entertainment for the people who watch it.

And learning how to lose is all about fair play, and about accepting that someone else has done it better than you, isn't it?

B: Right, so we agree on two points. Keeping fit and learning how to win and lose. Let me briefly elaborate on the social aspect of sports.

A good sports event brings people together. They become friends.

A: Okay, do you mind if I say something here?

B: Go right ahead.

A: Well, I just wanted to stress that all the points you mentioned are worthwhile, plus there is another important one.

It is through sport that people learn to understand each other, even if they speak different languages, are from different countries and cultures.

B: Yeah, that's it. Well said. And now we've got agreement on our three points.

It's all about keeping fit, learning how to win and lose, and it's about bringing people together.

A: I agree.

7 I'm used to constant **scrutiny**. (*observed*)

8 **Despite** the tricky moments, it's become a positive force in my life. (*even though*)

Language in use

Polite and friendly small talk

When socialising in English, it can be crucial to get the level of politeness and friendliness right. Have a look at this quick review of small talk phrases.



1 Getting started

Match these opening lines (A) with the most appropriate situation (B).

A B

Do you mind if I join you? 1

Excuse me, but have you been here before? 2

Forgive me if I'm mistaken, but weren't you at the meeting earlier? 3

Hi, I'm Melinda Hofer from Innsbruck, and you are ...? 4

Hello. My name's Mick Goodman, pleased to meet you. 5

You want to start a conversation with someone at the same event/place as you.

You want to introduce yourself to someone in a polite but assertive way.

You approach two or more people who are talking together.

You want to introduce yourself in a slightly more formal way.

You think you may recognise someone from before.

2 Keeping the conversation going

Reconstruct these polite questions by adding the missing vowels (a, e, i, o, u). Names have been left complete.

1 S, whr xctly r y frm, Mick?

2 Tll m, Barbara, wht d y d?

3 Y'r cvl ngnr? Wht ds tht nvlv xctly?

4 nd wht brngs y r Linz? f y dn't mnd m skng.

5 D y cm hr fn?

3

Expect the unexpected

3 Finishing the conversation

Reconstruct suitable ways of saying goodbye by putting these words in the correct order.

1 talking was it to Well, nice you. we'll into later Perhaps other bump each.

2 colleagues back get better to I'd my now. later you See.

3 but a have to move going Sorry, to now I'm make. rest conference you I the enjoy of the hope!

4 you pleasure been to a It's talking. sometime again to you Hope see!

5 I'd Bye! now then, be better off Right.

4 Now complete these dialogues which use some of the statements from the above tasks. Write a suitable word into each gap.

In the coffee bar at an international trade fair

Stefan: Do you _____ if I join you?

Carmen: _____, not at all. I'm Carmen from Borealis and this is Marta from He&S, Zagreb.

Stefan: My name's Stefan, _____ to meet you.

Marta: _____ me if I'm mistaken, but didn't I see you on the *Siemens* stand earlier?

Stefan: Yes, that's right, I'm _____ an internship in building technologies.

Carmen: Oh, okay ... you're going to have to help me on that one, what does that _____ exactly?

Stefan: Well, in a nutshell, I'm currently _____ in building automation, which is basically management systems that run things like heating, ventilation, air conditioning, whatever.

Carmen: Oh, that sounds right up your street, Marta. Marta's a trainee architect, and the company she works for has been commissioned to design an office building in Donau City.

Marta: That's right – and we've actually got a bit of a problem with the plans for the cooling system. Hey, maybe I can pick your brain a little?

Stefan: Sure, I'd be pleased to help, if I _____.

Carmen: Well, I think I'll leave you to it. I'd better be getting _____ to my colleagues back at the Borealis stand. It was nice _____ to you, Stefan. Perhaps we will _____ into each other later. Bye, Marta!



At a barbecue at Jack's house

Stefan: Hi, I'm Stefan, a friend of Simon's. And you ...?

Andrés: Andrés. Hi, nice to ... you.

Stefan: And where ... are you from, Andrés?
I haven't seen you at Simon's before, have I?

Andrés: No, I only just moved to Bregenz. I just started working at the same company as Simon. Before that I was in Stuttgart, working for *Mercedes-Benz*. But originally I'm from Madrid.

Stefan: Right. And what ... you to Bregenz? If you don't ... me asking?

Andrés: Oh no, ... at all. My girlfriend's from round here and we decided to move here rather than live in Stuttgart, for better quality of life here.

Stefan: Yeah, I certainly agree with you on that – cheers!

Andrés: Tell me, Stefan, what do you ... ?

Stefan: Me? I'm a student at the local technical college. I'm in my final year there.

Andrés: And what do you plan to ... when you leave?

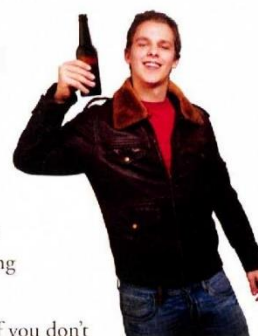
Stefan: I'm not sure yet, I've just done an internship with Siemens and now I think I might take a year off and do some travelling before I go to university or look for a job.

Andrés: Well, whatever you end up doing, may the force be with you, as they say!

Stefan: Thanks. Oh well, I'm going to have to make a ... now. I've got a paper to hand in tomorrow. ... the rest of the barbecue!

Andrés: Right then, I'd better be ... now, too. I promised to help a friend with his computer. It was good ... to you. See you later, Stefan.

Stefan: See you, Andrés. Take care.



Listen to the audio CD to check your answers.

Follow-up activity: Socialising before a job interview



Mini-scenario: Role play

You have applied for an internship at a large multinational company, whose working language is English, and have been invited for an interview. You are now in a waiting room with two other candidates who you do not know. This is already the first part of the assessment process. Your socialising skills are being observed by your future employers. Make polite and friendly small talk with the other candidates. Use the phrases on pages 39–40 (act. 1–3).

Use these guidelines to help you.

- Introduce yourself.
- Show interest in the others – ask them about themselves.
- Do not dominate the conversation!
- Tell each other about interesting experiences at job interviews or other internships.
- Talk about any career plans you have.
- Finish your conversation in a polite and friendly way.

7.2 Abstract in English

The global spread of the English language with its ever-growing number of users has resulted in the recognition of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) for international communication and it has become a frequently used linguistic resource for millions of speakers. The study at hand explores the representation of politeness phenomena in ELF contexts, specifically focusing on various coursebooks used in Austrian foreign language classrooms. The thesis investigates whether and how schoolbook activities on politeness consider ELF as a linguistic reality. The study is divided into two parts: (1) a theoretical exploration of politeness and its evolution in applied linguistics, as well an investigation into current EFL teaching approaches and (2) an analysis of politeness activities found in Austrian Upper Secondary coursebooks. The critical analysis focused on examining the suitability of the coursebook activities for ELF interactions and the extent to which these activities represent diverse international speakers in multicultural speaking scenarios. The results of the analysis illustrate that many of the activities are quite form-focused and rely heavily on native-speaker norms. For this reason, the study proposes adaptations to these activities in order make them more appropriate for an ELF-informed teaching approach, thereby ensuring that learners are quipped to navigate diverse intercultural settings.

7.3 Abstract in German

Die weite Verbreitung der englischen Sprache mit ihrer ständig wachsenden Zahl an Sprecher:innen hat dazu geführt, dass Englisch als Lingua Franca (ELF) international als das wichtigste Kommunikationsmittel anerkannt wurde. Für Millionen von Menschen ist ELF zu einer regelmäßig verwendeten sprachlichen Ressource geworden. Die vorliegende Studie untersucht das Thema „Höflichkeit“ in ELF-Kontexten und konzentriert sich dabei auf verschiedene Lehrbücher, die im österreichischen Fremdsprachenunterricht verwendet werden. Die Arbeit geht der Frage nach, ob und wie Schulbuchaktivitäten zum Thema Höflichkeit ELF als sprachliche Realität berücksichtigen. Die Studie gliedert sich in zwei Teile: (1) eine theoretische Untersuchung des sprachlichen Phänomens Höflichkeit und ihrer Entwicklung in der angewandten Linguistik sowie eine Untersuchung aktueller EFL-Unterrichtsansätze und (2) eine Analyse von Höflichkeitsübungen in österreichischen Lehrbüchern der Sekundarstufe II. Die kritische Analyse konzentriert sich auf die Untersuchung der Eignung der Kursbuchübungen für ELF-Interaktionen und auf das Ausmaß, in dem diese Übungen internationale Sprecher:innen in multikulturellen Kontexten repräsentieren. Die Ergebnisse der Analyse zeigen, dass sich viele der Übungen stark auf muttersprachliche Normen stützen. Daher werden Anpassungen dieser Übungen vorgeschlagen, um sie für eine ELF-sensible Pädagogik geeigneter zu machen. So wird sichergestellt, dass die Lernenden in der Lage sind, sich in unterschiedlichen interkulturellen Umgebungen erfolgreich zurechtzufinden.