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1. INTRODUCTION

At a first glance, politeness seems to be a straightforward concept. People have a commonsense understanding of the term and the fact that it governs human interaction will most likely meet with general approval. As a research topic, however, the field is extremely heterogeneous. Therefore, as self-evident as it may appear, there is no general agreement among scholars when it comes to the question of “What is linguistic politeness?”.

Moreover, politeness is a notion which comprises universal as well as culture-specific aspects. Within the field of politeness studies, intercultural variation has been studied in addition to universally valid features. This resulted in the insight that speakers of different languages will also have different expectations of polite verbal behaviour. In order to find out about these language-specific norms, politeness phenomena of English and Spanish will be described in this thesis.

Since politeness is a major component of a speaker’s pragmatic competence, foreign language learners will also have to acquire polite verbal behaviour. In this sense, it is crucial to discuss in how far linguistic politeness is considered an important issue in foreign language teaching. Thus, current teaching materials will serve as a valuable source to discover whether linguistic politeness is regarded as an important issue in current textbooks for the teaching of English and Spanish as a foreign language.

As an attempt to clarify the issues stated above, the present thesis is composed of three major parts: firstly, it discusses theoretical approaches to politeness; secondly, aspects of polite verbal behaviour in English and Spanish are shown; and thirdly, politeness is regarded from a foreign language teaching perspective.

The first part of the thesis is an introductory section which will describe the concept of linguistic politeness in detail. Then, an outline of the core theories of politeness will be presented in chapter 3. Eight of the most influential scientific models of polite verbal behaviour will be considered within this section in order to reveal common characteristics among them. What follows is a summary of four more theoretical approaches to politeness which constitute enhancements of the central concepts. After that, chapter 5 will highlight similarities as well as

inconsistencies throughout the field on the basis of the theories mentioned in the previous sections.

This is followed by chapter 6, an analysis of politeness phenomena in English and Spanish based on empirical studies. Culture-specific aspects of both languages will be explained and compared in order to investigate whether considerable differences can be encountered.

We will then go on to chapter 7 which introduces politeness within the context of foreign language teaching. Firstly, it will be investigated whether current Austrian curricula pay sufficient attention to politeness. Then, the notion will be presented as a central concept of a speaker's pragmatic competence. Lastly, the status of linguistic politeness in foreign language textbooks will be discussed.

The final section of the thesis will evaluate whether polite verbal behaviour is regarded as an important issue in current Austrian teaching materials for English and Spanish as a foreign language. Considering representative examples, this last chapter will discuss general strengths and difficulties of textbooks with regard to linguistic politeness.

2. WHAT IS POLITENESS?

At the beginning of a thesis about politeness it seems crucial to start with an attempt to clarify what the topic in question actually is. Since everyone has an intrinsic notion of what could be meant by the term *politeness*, the subject matter might appear almost too obvious. However, that is already where the trouble begins: how are we supposed to think of politeness? Is it a commonsense notion of showing good manners, is it a composition of certain expressions that we acquired in one or even more languages, or is it rather an abstract academic concept and the subject of scientific enquiry? When we are talking about politeness, we normally think of someone who behaves accordingly in a certain situation. Yet, that does not necessarily have to do with linguistics. A person can be polite in numerous ways, sometimes simply because of not saying anything. Furthermore, just because someone attempted to act politely does not mean that the interlocutor perceived his/her enactment the same way. That is not even sure in intracultural interaction, so politeness cannot be assumed to function smoothly in cross-cultural communication. Moreover, if politeness is culture-dependent, then it must have variable forms in different languages, which have to be acquired by foreign language learners. That should in fact make it a subject of foreign language teaching. However, as people across cultures seem to have lay conceptions of politeness, should we not assume the object of study to be a universal one?

Taking all these facts into account, it becomes clear that politeness is far from being an unambiguous matter. Actually, all the characteristics mentioned above are true to a certain extent. It seems that the term *politeness*, as straightforward as it may appear, can stand for various concepts and how the phenomenon is perceived is mostly contingent on the subjective point of view that a person takes on when s/he looks at it. Hence, these different categorisations of the topic will be described in more detail in the present chapter.

2.1 Politeness as a commonsense and theoretical concept

Initially, the duality of politeness as a lay concept in comparison to politeness as an academic concept will be outlined. According to Watts, Ide & Ehlich (1992 [2005]: 3) there is politeness that equates “to the various ways in which polite behaviour is perceived and talked about by members of socio-cultural groups” on the one hand, and on the other hand, there is the scientific model of politeness which is “a term within a theory of social behaviour and language usage”. It is argued that this distinction between the commonsense notion and the theoretical construct of the term needs to be upheld inevitably throughout an analysis of the subject matter. This claim becomes clear when we consider the difference between a lay notion of politeness as having good manners, behaving properly or showing courtesy and the scholarly concept of politeness theory as “one of the more popular branches of contemporary pragmatics, and a widely used tool in studies of intercultural communication” (Eelen 2001: *i*). Consequently, politeness can be both a non-scientific notion of people who regard others as civil since they speak or act properly in a certain situation and the abstract and theoretical concept of linguistic politeness which is used for scientific enquiry.

2.2 Politeness as a universal or culture-specific concept?

As a next step, I will now focus on the dichotomy of politeness as a universal concept and its culture-specific realisations. As mentioned in the first paragraph of this chapter, there is the possibility to view linguistic politeness either as a universal concept or to describe it in its various realisations in different languages. According to Lakoff & Ide (2005: 6) “politeness can profitably be studied from both universalist and contrastivist perspectives”. They argue that, while all cultures have a certain set of behaviour that is considered polite by its members, this set of behaviour differs from culture to culture. For them, “polite behaviour avoids conflict between [...] well-bred members of the same culture” (4). Also Held (1992 [2005]: 151) recognises the tension between the “omnipresent ambivalence between universal and culture-specific aspects” within verbal politeness. More or less explicitly, this duality is a matter of interest throughout the scholarly

literature: Coulmas (1981: 10) quotes in his introductory chapter that verbal routines (such as politeness formulae) are “a universal phenomenon of human languages [...] [h]owever, there is considerable variation between different cultures”. Furthermore, he asserts that “verbal stereotypes differ from one language to another” (Coulmas 1981: 10). For Meier (1995b: 388) “politeness can be said to be universal only in the sense that every society has some sort of norms of appropriate behavior, although these norms will vary” across cultures. In Kasper’s (1990: 198) opinion it is an “attested fact that the linguistic encoding of politeness strategies is contingent on the properties of any linguistic system” and also Watts, Ide & Ehlich (1992 [2005]: 4) recognise that there are underlying principles of human social interaction which are transformed into culture-specific behaviour.

So as to bring the last two approaches together, I suggest at this point that politeness might be seen as an abstract scientific concept which can have universal principles on the one hand, and as a commonsense notion where it is bound to culturally-specific linguistic realisations, on the other hand. Following Watts, Ide & Ehlich (1992 [2005]: 4):

the pursuit of universals will necessarily involve us in second order concepts, whereas the investigation into politeness in individual cultural frameworks will almost inevitably involve first order concepts.

In order to make this passage clear, it must be mentioned that the so-called second-order concept of politeness is a cover term that involves the theoretical/abstract scientific models and that the first-order concept involves lay notions of linguistic politeness. According to the authors, these two principles need to be strictly distinguished. Nevertheless, they point out that

[a]s long as we attempt to keep the two levels of analysis apart, there is no reason why we should not search for universal principles and certainly no reason for lamenting that linguistic politeness can only be seen in terms of cultural relativity (ibid).

Although they warn against the confusion of the theoretical model of linguistic politeness, which strives for universality, with culture-specific linguistic expressions, Watts, Ide & Ehlich regard it highly significant that the relationships between these two levels should be explored.

2.3 Politeness as an issue in foreign language teaching

If we consider now that there are universal aspects of linguistic politeness as well as culture-specific realisations of the phenomenon, which will vary from one language to another, it becomes obvious that these variations should be a subject of foreign language teaching. Universal features, in contrast, should be transferable from one language into another, so that language learners can make inferences from their native system. Yet, some sort of teaching should be required anyway, in order to make learners aware of their transferable knowledge. Obviously, it should then be the language-specific realisations of politeness (that is actual expressions) as well as the differences and similarities between pupils' native and non-native languages which need to be taught in a foreign language classroom.

According to Held (1992 [2005]: 148) linguistic politeness and its constituents are "important components of communicative competence". Dörnyei & Thurrell (1994: 47) add that "[t]here are several typical politeness strategies [...], and language learners can benefit a great deal from knowing and being able to use them". As a result, the status of politeness in the foreign language classroom is well worth to be considered.

2.4 Universal characteristics within current theories of politeness

So far, the phenomenon of linguistic politeness has rather been presented in its dichotomies than in relation to those aspects in which scholars show agreement. Since this research area is very heterogeneous, we are confronted with numerous scientific models of politeness but with only few aspects to which all authors can conform. Yet, this is exactly what the following paragraph will elaborate. As Eelen (2001: 1) argues, one common aspect of all politeness theories is that they belong either to the field of pragmatics or sociolinguistics. It is pragmatics since the phenomenon has to do with language in use and it is sociolinguistics because this research area relates language and society. The author also refers to Kasper (1990: 194-196) who defines two notions of the phenomenon, namely politeness as "strategic conflict avoidance" and as "social indexing", to connect all the major

theories. She maintains that as much as the scholars within the field may differ “they unanimously conceptualize politeness as strategic conflict avoidance” and in addition there is agreement that “no language has shown to entirely fall short of forms for social indexing, nor to lack contexts where social marking is mandatory” (ibid). In sum, it can be argued that current scientific concepts of politeness concur in the fact that the phenomenon “is involved in social indexing and functions as strategic conflict avoidance” (Eelen 2001: 29).

At this point, I will shortly recapitulate important facts about politeness, before I move on to the next section, in which the different theories will be outlined. For the purpose of analysing polite verbal behaviour in the context of foreign language teaching, it is most profitable to look at it from a dual perspective. It has been stated above that the phenomenon is composed of universal as well as culture-specific features. In this sense, some of the linguistic forms used to express politeness are subject to intercultural variation. For the foreign language learner, it can only be these culture-bound realisations of politeness that have to be acquired since the universal features should be unique for all languages anyway. In addition to concrete linguistic realisations of politeness (which vary from one language to another), there are theoretical concepts of politeness (which often claim to be universal). Clearly, the former will be the object of interest within foreign language teaching. In conclusion, a binary angle on the subject matter will be upheld throughout this thesis. In the following section, I will delineate the major theoretical concepts in the field of linguistic politeness and then, I will focus on culture-specific realisations of politeness in English and Spanish.

3. THE CORE THEORIES OF POLITENESS

The present chapter summarises the most important theories of linguistic politeness. Hence, I take a step away from the characteristics that unify current models of the phenomenon towards a review of the distinct scholarly concepts that exist in the field. The subsequent outline presents most of the models that Eelen (2001: 23) mentioned as the “core of research around which the field is built”.

3.1 Robin T. Lakoff

Robin Tolmach Lakoff is often regarded as one of the pioneers in the field of politeness theory. According to Eelen (2001: 2), she was among the first scholars who examined the subject matter from a clearly pragmatic point of view (Lakoff 1973, 1977). In her first publication, the author describes politeness as a means to avoid offence:

It is considered more important in a conversation to avoid offense than to achieve clarity. This makes sense, since in most informal conversations, actual communication of important ideas is secondary to merely reaffirming and strengthening relationships. (Lakoff 1973: 297-298)

In later work, Lakoff (1990: 35) states more concisely that

[p]oliteness is a system of interpersonal relations designed to facilitate interaction by minimizing the potential for conflict and confrontation inherent in all human interchange.

Her theory is based on the Cooperative Principle (CP) which was developed by Grice (1975) and presented in a paper in 1967 for the first time. It is composed of the four maxims of Quality, Quantity, Relation and Manner. Grice claims that within a conversation a maximum of clarity can be obtained when all the principles are followed by the interlocutors. However, this is hardly the case in everyday communication. It happens frequently that one or more maxims are flouted. Consequently, Lakoff (1973: 296-298) argues that if speakers are not maximally clear, they probably try to avoid offence, i.e. they try to be polite. The author

indicates that clarity and politeness have to be seen as opposites. Developing her argument, she names two rules of pragmatic competence:

1. Be clear
2. Be polite

This is to say that there are rules of clarity (Grice's CP), on the one hand, and rules of politeness, on the other hand, whereof the former are a subtype of the latter.

More precisely, Lakoff defines three politeness rules:

- Rule 1: Don't impose
- Rule 2: Give options
- Rule 3: Make A¹ feel good - be friendly

Within this approach, politeness is viewed as a threefold notion, ranging from polite and non-polite to rude verbal behaviour. Lakoff (1989: 103) explains that those utterances which adhere to the rules of politeness, whether or not this would be expected in a particular discourse type, can be labelled polite. Non-polite verbal behaviour occurs in situations where politeness rules are neither used nor expected and communicative behaviour, in which politeness rules would be expected but are not applied, will most likely be interpreted as rude.

In addition, Lakoff (1973: 303-304) maintains that the rules of politeness are universal. Yet, she states that different cultures seem to accentuate different rules. This is to say that notions of polite behaviour vary interculturally. According to whether one or the other rule is more prominent in a particular culture, one of the three basic strategies of politeness, i.e. distance (politeness rule 1), deference (politeness rule 2) or camaraderie (politeness rule 3), is followed. Lakoff (1990: 35-39) concludes that European societies seem to accentuate strategies of distance, such as formality or impersonality, whereas Asian societies prefer strategies of deference, such as hesitancy, and modern American culture favours strategies of camaraderie, such as informality.

¹ A=alter

3.2 Penelope Brown & Stephen C. Levinson

As a next step in this overview of scientific theories, I will now examine Brown & Levinson's model of politeness which is often regarded the most influential one. The scholars' names are frequently said to have become "almost synonymous with the word 'politeness' itself" (Eelen 2001: 3).

Brown & Levinson (1987) also see politeness as a means to avoid conflict (just like Lakoff) and describe it as a system for softening face-threatening acts. This leads us to the first one of the three basic constituents of their theory, which is the notion of *face*. As the authors (Brown & Levinson 1987: 13) put it, the concept can be understood as

a highly abstract notion [...] which consists of two specific kinds of desires ('face wants') attributed by interactants to one another: the desire to be unimpeded in one's actions (negative face), and the desire (in some respects) to be approved of (positive face).

In other words, face is everyone's wish to maintain and defend their own self-image in public. So we can conclude that, in communication, face is always in danger of being lost. The term is built on the work of Goffman (1967) and stems from the lay notion of "losing face" (Brown & Levinson 1987: 61) when being embarrassed or humiliated by an interlocutor.

Brown & Levinson's theory is not only based on Goffman's notion of *face* but it is also related to Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle. The authors perceive politeness strategies as "principled reasons for deviation" (Brown & Levinson 1987: 5) from the CP, which is assumed to underlie all unmarked communication. If interlocutors employ a politeness strategy, they flout the maxims of Grice's CP in order to reduce the face loss that may result from their speech act.

Additionally, the scholars distinguish between negative and positive face. They define the terms as follows (Brown & Levinson 1987: 61):

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

As Brown & Levinson (1987: 60) claim that in interaction some speech acts are intrinsically threatening to face, another basic concept within their theory, namely that of face-threatening acts (FTAs), will be introduced at this point.

The authors define four different types of FTAs (Brown & Levinson 1987: 65-66):

- Acts threatening to the Hearer's Negative Face (freedom of action): e.g. ordering, advising, threatening, warning
- Acts threatening to the Hearer's Positive Face (self image): e.g. complaining, criticizing, disagreeing, raising taboo topics
- Acts threatening to the Speaker's Negative Face (freedom of action): e.g. accepting an offer, accepting thanks
- Acts threatening to the Speaker's Positive Face (self image): e.g. apologizing, accepting a compliment, confessing. (Bowe and Martin 2007: 28)

Brown & Levinson (1987: 74) state that the seriousness of an FTA, and therefore the amount of politeness that has to be applied, is determined by the following social variables:

- D: the *Social Distance* between the Speaker and the Hearer (i.e. the degree of familiarity and solidarity they share, or might be thought to share)
- P: the *Relative Power* of the Speaker with respect to the Hearer (i.e. the degree to which the Speaker can impose on the Hearer)
- R: the *Absolute Ranking* of the imposition in a particular culture (both in terms of (1) the expenditure of goods and/or services by the Hearer, (2) the right of the Speaker to perform the act; and (3) the degree to which the Hearer welcomes the imposition). (Bowe and Martin 2007: 28-29)

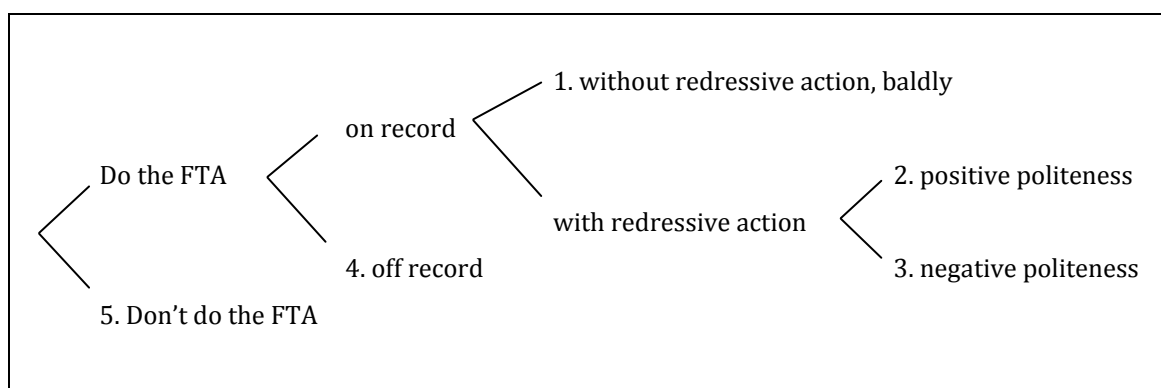
These variables can be applied in the following calculation:

$$(1) \quad W_x = D(S, H) + P(H, S) + R_x$$

Eelen (2001: 4) illustrates this formula as follows: x is the speech act, S stands for the speaker and H is the hearer. In other words, the 'weightiness' of a speech act depends on the social distance between the speaker and the hearer, as well as on the power difference between the hearer and the speaker and on the culturally specific ranking of the face-threatening act.

So, if a speaker finds herself/himself in the situation that an FTA has to be made, s/he has the choice among five different politeness strategies. These communicative choices constitute the third basic notion in Brown & Levinson's (1987: 69) model of politeness and are presented in the following figure:

Figure 1: Possible strategies for doing FTAs



In this schematic representation of verbal politeness, the linguistic choices on the top (do the FTA) are considered appropriate if the risk of face loss is comparatively low. Consequently, the bottom options (don't do the FTA) should be used in case of high risk to face. The model depicts the choices available to a speaker in order to avoid either a threat to a hearer's positive face (their self-image) or a hearer's negative face (their right to freedom from imposition).

In more detail, a speaker (hence referred to as *she*) may either decide not to do the FTA, which is not to say anything, or to do the FTA, i.e. to select one of the five possible linguistic means. If someone needs the salt but cannot reach it, she may either consider herself satisfied with a tasteless meal or make a request. There is the possibility for the speaker to go off-record, which is to avoid direct impositions. This could be done by using a hint like *These vegetables could use some more salt*. Yet, if a speaker decides to declare an intention unambiguously, most directly and clearly, she might use an imperative like *Give me the salt!* According to Brown & Levinson (1987: 69), such an utterance has to be seen as a bald-on-record strategy which leaves no room for interpretation. However, if the speaker decides to minimise the face threat, if she fears retribution from the hearer (hence referred to as *he*), a redressive action might be employed. Using either positive or negative politeness strategies, speakers "give face" (ibid) to the hearers when performing

an FTA. Applying a positive politeness strategy, the speaker would preface her request with a compliment such as *I really like the outfit you're wearing tonight...* Therefore, she would appeal to the hearer's positive face (his self image). If the speaker intends to make use of a negative politeness strategy oriented towards the hearer's negative face, she might opt for an expression of formality. Being conventionally indirect, she might say *Could you pass the salt?* in order to acknowledge his personal territory and freedom of action. (Eelen 2001: 5)

Furthermore, the authors claim the basic notions of their theory (i.e. the concepts of positive and negative face and FTAs) to be universally valid. Brown & Levinson (1987: 61-62) assume that

while the content of face will differ in different cultures (what the exact limits are to personal territories, and what the publicly relevant content of personality consists in), [...] the mutual knowledge of members' public self-image or face, and the social necessity to orient oneself to it in interaction, are universal.

However, they argue that their "universalistic account" shall not be understood to be an "ethnocentric projection" (Brown & Levinson 1987: 13). What the scholars point out is that "despite the rich cultural elaborations, the core ideas have a striking familiarity" (ibid) across cultures.

3.3 Geoffrey Leech

Beside Lakoff and Brown & Levinson, Leech is the third scholar who views politeness in the light of conflict avoidance. In an earlier publication (1980: 109), the author claims that *tact* (which is one type of politeness according to Leech) is "strategic conflict avoidance, and can be measured in terms of the degree of effort put into the avoidance of a conflict situation". Reminiscent of the models of politeness which have been outlined hitherto, it is again Grice's framework that serves as a basis for the approach under examination. Within the domain of Interpersonal Rhetoric, Leech (1983) formulates a Politeness Principle (PP) and an Irony Principle (IP) in addition to the Cooperative Principle (CP).

Again, the CP and the PP are related in as far as if one of them is flouted it might be due to the other. For example, if a speaker does not adhere to the Maxim of Quantity this might be due to an increased amount of politeness s/he wants to express. In this respect, a connection to Lakoff's formulation of polite linguistic behaviour can be discerned. Yet, Leech's definition is crucially different. For the author, the PP in its negative form is it to "minimize (other things being equal) the expression of impolite beliefs" and in its positive version, which he considers less important, it is to "maximize (other things being equal) the expression of polite beliefs" (Leech 1983: 81).

The Politeness Principle is subdivided into the following six maxims: the Tact Maxim, which is defined as minimising the costs and maximising the benefits to the hearer; the Generosity Maxim, as the minimisation of one's own and the maximisation of the other's benefit; the Approbation Maxim, which minimises dispraise and therefore maximises praise of the hearer; the Modesty Maxim, that minimises self-praise and requires the maximum amount of self-dispraise; the Agreement Maxim, which intends to maximise agreement between speaker and hearer; and finally the Sympathy Maxim, functioning to maximise sympathy between the interlocutors. (Leech 1983: 132)

In addition, Leech states that strategies and amounts of politeness vary according to different situations. He defines four types of illocutionary functions that "relate to the social goal of establishing and maintaining comity" (Leech 1983: 104). These functions are:

- Competitive: The illocutionary goal competes with the social goal; eg ordering, asking, demanding, begging, etc.
- Convivial: The illocutionary goal coincides with the social goal; eg offering, inviting, greeting, thanking, congratulating.
- Collaborative: The illocutionary goal is indifferent to the social goal; eg asserting, reporting, announcing, instructing.
- Conflictive: The illocutionary goal conflicts with the social goal; eg threatening, accusing, cursing, reprimanding.

As Leech (1983: 104-105) points out, politeness is relevant only in the first two situations. If the illocutionary function is competitive, negative politeness is

required in order to “reduce the discord implicit in the competition between what [the speaker] wants to achieve and what is ‘good manners’” (ibid). The author claims that these kinds of utterances are intrinsically impolite. A convivial situation, in contrast, involves positive politeness and is said to be intrinsically polite. If the illocutionary function is collaborative, politeness is “largely irrelevant” and in a conflictive illocution “politeness is out of question” since such a situation is “designed to cause offence” (ibid).

In order to determine the degree of politeness that has to be applied in a certain situation, Leech (1983: 123-126) identifies the following scales: the Cost-Benefit Scale, to estimate the cost or benefit of an act to speaker and hearer; the Optionality Scale, to rank illocutions according to the amount of choice the speaker gives to the hearer; the Indirectness Scale, to rank illocutions according to the workload imposed on the hearer to interpret a speaker’s intention; the Authority Scale, to identify the power one participant has over the other; and the Social Distance Scale, to identify the degree of familiarity between the participants.

At this point, a further connection to the authors mentioned earlier can be discerned: according to Eelen (2001: 9), Leech’s Cost-Benefit Scale, the Authority and the Social Distance Scale closely resemble Brown & Levinson’s R, P and D variables. Moreover, the Optionality Scale can be compared to Lakoff’s Politeness Rule 2 that says a speaker should give options to the hearer.

In his work, Leech (2007: 173) redefines the PP as

a constraint observed in human communicative behaviour, influencing us to avoid communicative discord or offence, and maintain communicative concord.

He explains that communicative discord and concord are “scalar phenomena” (ibid), that they vary in their degree just like politeness does. Furthermore, the scholar enriches his model with the Grand Strategy of Politeness (GSP). The GSP is comprised of recurrent linguistic structures that are said to be typical of polite speech acts (such as requests, offers, compliments, apologies, thanks as well as the respective responses to them). This framework is seen as a “single super-constraint” (Leech 2007: 180) and it includes all the maxims of the PP. In order to avoid misinterpretations, Leech substitutes the term *maxim* for *pragmatic*

constraint. The GSP represents the two choices a speaker has at his/her disposal in order to convey politeness: either, s/he “expresses or implies meanings which associate a high value with what pertains to [the other person]” or s/he “associates a low value with what pertains [to herself/himself]” (Leech 2007: 181). So, a speaker makes use of the GSP in order to avoid offence. Leech (2007: 182) depicts this super-constraint as follows:

Figure 2: The component constraints of the Grand Strategy of Politeness²

Constraint	related pair of constraints	label for this constraint	typical speech-act type(s)
(A) place a high value on <i>O</i> 's wants	<i>Generosity/ Tact</i>	Generosity	commissives
(B) place a low value on <i>S</i> 's wants		Tact	directives
(C) place a high value on <i>O</i> 's qualities	<i>Approbation/ Modesty</i>	Approbation	compliments
(D) place a low value on <i>S</i> 's qualities		Modesty	self-devaluation
(E) place a high value on <i>S</i> 's obligation to <i>O</i>	<i>Obligation</i>	Obligation (of <i>S</i> to <i>O</i>)	apology, thanks
(F) place a low value on <i>O</i> 's obligation to <i>S</i>		Obligation (of <i>O</i> to <i>S</i>)	responses to thanks and apologies
(G) place a high value on <i>O</i> 's opinions	<i>Opinion</i>	Agreement	agreeing, disagreeing
(H) place a low value on <i>S</i> 's opinions		Opinion-reticence	giving opinions
(I) place a high value on <i>O</i> 's feelings	<i>Feeling</i>	Sympathy	expressing feelings
(J) place a low value on <i>S</i> 's feelings		Feeling-reticence	suppressing feelings

In a comprehensive list, Leech (2007: 182-188) illustrates each constraint with sample sentences from English, Japanese, Chinese and Korean. Due to limited space, these illustrations will be omitted in this paper and I will continue with the

² It should be noted that the abbreviation *S* refers to the speaker and *O* stands for the other (who is not the speaker).

scales that the author (re)formulated to determine the appropriate degree of politeness a specific situation requires (Leech 2007: 194):

- Vertical distance between *S* and *O* (in terms of status, power, role, age, etc.) [cf. B&L's P]³
- Horizontal distance between *S* and *O* (intimate, familiar, acquaintance, stranger, etc.) [cf. B&L's D]
- Weight of value: how large is the benefit, the cost, the favour, the obligation, etc. [cf. B&L's R], i.e., the real socially-defined value of what is being transacted.
- Strength of socially-defined rights and obligations (e.g., a teacher's obligations to a student; a host's obligations to a guest, service providers' obligations to their clients or customers).
- "Self-territory" and "other-territory" (in-group membership vs. out-group). There are degrees of membership of "self-territory" and "other-territory".

Leech suggests tentatively that these scales might be able to account for cross-cultural variation of politeness phenomena. He proposes that, on the one hand, they are probably "very widespread in human societies" but, on the other hand, "their interpretation differs from society to society, just as their encoding differs from language to language" (Leech 2007: 200). Clearly, the author recognises the differences between polite verbal behaviour across societies, although he is convinced that there exists a basis that they all share. Hence, it is argued that speakers of English talking about *politeness* and speakers of Chinese talking about *lǐmào* will most certainly not refer to absolutely unrelated notions. Accordingly, the GSP constitutes an attempt to overcome the so called "East-West divide in politeness" (Leech 2007: 202). As culture-dependent differences in values can be captured by the scales of politeness, they need not be accounted for in two separate theoretical models. In this way, the model constitutes a very general framework to account for common politeness phenomena across languages on the one side, and at the same time, it is able to account for the variation in culture-specific realisations of polite linguistic behaviour.

³ Leech uses B&L as an abbreviation for Brown & Levinson.

3.4 Bruce Fraser & William Nolen

Fraser & Nolen's approach to politeness is the fourth model that will be examined within this thesis. The scholars again base their concept on Grice's Cooperative Principle and Goffman's notion of *face*. They see politeness in the light of a conversational contract (CC):

On entering a given conversation, each party brings an understanding of some initial set of rights and obligations that will determine [...] the limits of the interaction. (Fraser & Nolen 1981: 93-94)

This is to say, interlocutors recognise what they can expect from each other according to initial rights and obligations they obtain. Yet, these determinants are not constant but can always be readjusted:

During the course of time or because of a change in the context of interaction, there is always the possibility for a renegotiation of the conversational contract. (ibid)

In a conversation, interactants are said to establish rights and obligations in accordance with different types of terms. In an elaborated outline of their model, Fraser (1990: 232) states that some terms of a conversational contract, namely those that are imposed through convention, are seldom negotiable. Such general terms govern all ordinary conversations and expect speakers to take turns or to talk the same language, for instance. Terms and conditions that are imposed by social institutions, as people are obliged to whisper in a church, are also said to be rarely if ever subject to renegotiation. In contrast, terms can also be contingent on former meetings or specific circumstances of a situation. Those vary from interaction to interaction and most are renegotiable in as far as the interactants' recognition of factors like status, power, role of each other and the nature of the circumstances are concerned.

The author sums up that speakers

enter into a conversation and continue within a conversation with the (usually tacit) understanding of [their] current conversational contract (CC) at every turn. Within this framework, being polite constitutes operating within the then-current terms and conditions of the CC. (Fraser 1990: 233)

In other words, rational interactants normally “act within the negotiated constraints” (ibid). However, if a speaker violates the CC, s/he is considered impolite. Fraser states that politeness is present in any conversation, that being polite is the norm. It is only when participants fail to act within the terms and conditions of the CC that they become impolite. In short, “to be polite is to abide by the rules [of the CC]” and “any violation of the terms of the conversational contract results in impoliteness” (Fraser & Nolen 1981: 96). Moreover, the authors claim that neither sentences can be inherently polite or impolite, nor can languages be classified as more or less polite. Only speakers can be polite; and then again it is fully “in the hands (or ears) of the hearer” (Fraser & Nolen 1981: 96) how to interpret the utterance.

In addition to politeness, the authors’ approach includes the notion of *deference*. In accordance with Goffman (1971: 56), they define it as “that component of activity which functions as a symbolic means by which appreciation is regularly conveyed”. They claim that, just like politeness, deference cannot be associated with a sentence or utterance but only with an activity. Furthermore, it is noted that both terms must not be used interchangeably, that politeness and deference are not the same. The latter is described as “the conveying of relative status”; yet “the inappropriate use of deference can result in an impolite utterance” (Fraser & Nolen 1981: 98). In Fraser’s (1990: 233) point of view, it would be more adequate to characterise Brown & Levinson’s politeness phenomena as deference.

To recapitulate, I will now briefly consider a summary of definitions of politeness outlined by Watts (1992 [2005]: 45-47). The scholar cites Lakoff’s (1975: 64) interpretation of the term as the forms of behaviour that have been “developed in societies in order to reduce friction in personal interaction”. Furthermore, Watts (1992 [2005]: 46) cites Brown & Levinson’s understanding of politeness as:

“The need to minimise the imposition on the addressee arising from a verbal act and the consequent possibility of committing a face-threatening act [that] refer[s] to forms of behaviour which allow communication to take place between potentially aggressive partners”.

Leech's definition of politeness is presented as "those forms of behaviour which are aimed at the establishment and maintenance of comity", while Fraser & Nolen are said to suggest that politeness can be seen as "the result of a conversational contract entered into by the participants in an effort to maintain socio-communicative verbal interaction conflict-free" (ibid). From these various definitions of the term, Watts discerns agreement among the aforementioned scholars in as far as they all recognise that "whereas on the surface politeness may appear to fulfil altruistic goals, it is nevertheless a mask to conceal ego's true frame of mind" (Watts 1992 [2005]: 47). He then states that they all share the conceptualisation of this mask as a means of conflict avoidance which can diminish potential aggression and provide for smooth interaction.

3.5 Horst Arndt & Richard W. Janney

Arndt & Janney present an alternative to the appropriacy-based approach to politeness which, they argue, would wrongly be based on the assumption that politeness is a matter of using the right words in the right places or situations. The authors reject the idea that politeness could be related to a certain style, convention or situation. Instead, they call for a socio-psychological approach, which is a systematic account of "how people communicate by speaking" (1985: 282) and suggest focusing on "how people actually express their feelings to each other in everyday conversation" (Janney & Arndt 1992 [2005]: 22).

The notion of *emotive communication* constitutes the core idea of their model and is comprised not only of verbal but also vocal and kinesic signals. In contrast to emotional communication, they define emotive communication as "the communication of transitory attitudes, feelings and other affective states" (Arndt & Janney 1985: 282). Furthermore, they name three emotive dimensions of speech, which are confidence, positive-negative affect and intensity.

Arndt & Janney argue that

the main emotive task of a speaker who wishes to keep in good terms with his [or her] partner is not to behave politely [...] but to behave supportively. (ibid)

The authors point out that it is a speaker's task to avoid interpersonal conflicts rather than to conform to social expectations. Hence, their notion of *interpersonal supportiveness* replaces the idea of *politeness* completely:

The key idea is that there are supportive and nonsupportive ways of expressing positive and negative feelings; the effective speaker generally attempts to minimize his [or her] partner's emotional uncertainty in all cases by being as supportive as possible. (Arndt & Janney 1985: 283)

So, the authors understand the notion of *supportiveness* as a necessary constituent of effective communication. They define supportiveness as "the protection of interpersonal face" (Arndt & Janney 1985: 294) and thereby, they explicitly refer to Goffman (1967).

In an elaborated version of their theory, they distinguish between social and interpersonal politeness. The latter captures their notion of *interpersonal supportiveness* from earlier work and is also called *tact*. Tact is a sophisticated form of emotive communication and it "is rooted in people's need to maintain face, in their fear of losing it, and in their reluctance to deprive others of it" (Janney & Arndt 1992 [2005]: 23). Moreover, this term is described by means of Brown & Levinson's (1987) understanding of *face* as public self-image that everyone wishes to claim for oneself and its two manifestations of either a person's need to be approved of or the need to be unimpeded by others. In Janney & Arndt's words, "being tactful [...] is a matter of behaving in an interpersonally supportive way" (1992 [2005]: 23).

When the authors illustrate the second constituent of their refined theory, which is social politeness, they argue that it arises from "people's need for smoothly organised interaction with other members of their group" (Janney & Arndt 1992 [2005]: 22). Janney & Arndt explain that the term refers to conventions followed by speakers and equal their notion with Coulmas' (1981: 2) "conversational routines" that "are tools which individuals employ to relate to others in an accepted way". An enactment of these routines is defined as "making use of prefabricated linguistic units in a well known and generally accepted manner" (Coulmas 1981: 1). So, in accordance with Coulmas, the scholars sum up that their notion of *social politeness* provides "a framework of standardised strategies for

getting gracefully into, and back out of, recurring social situations” (Janney & Arndt 1992 [2005]: 23).

In order to discriminate the two notions, it is pointed out that

the difference between tact and social politeness is that whereas the function of social politeness is essentially to coordinate social interaction – to regulate the mechanical exchange of roles and activities - the function of tact is [...] to preserve face and regulate interpersonal relationships (Janney & Arndt 1992 [2005]: 24).

In addition, the authors claim that “it is probably not social politeness that enables people to avoid most everyday interpersonal conflicts, but tact.” (ibid).

Regarding universality issues of their theory, they argue that people must learn to be tactful, that they must learn to apply emotive strategies in order to avoid conflicts. For the scholars, the maintenance or protection of face is “a fundamental preoccupation of people around the earth” (Janney & Arndt 1992 [2005]: 27). Recognising people’s desire to maintain face and their fear of losing it as “universals transcending all cultural, ethnic, social, sexual, economic, geographical, and historical boundaries” (ibid), the authors understand being tactful as “a conventional way of avoiding threats to face in all cultures” (Janney & Arndt 1992 [2005]: 28). Hence, it is a necessity for individuals of all cultures, to develop face-saving strategies although it is doubted whether rule systems of tactfulness can be cross-culturally valid.

3.6 Sachiko Ide

Ide is an author who presents a rather different perspective on the concept, namely the Japanese notion of politeness. Basically, it is described in terms of *discernment* and *volition*. The scholar defines polite linguistic behaviour as

the language usage associated with smooth communication, realized 1) through the speaker’s use of intentional strategies to allow his or her message to be received favorably by the addressee, and 2) through the speaker’s choice of expressions to conform to the expected and/or prescribed norms of speech appropriate to the contextual situation in individual speech communities (Ide 1989: 225).

In addition, Ide points out that *politeness* has to be understood as a culturally-conditioned, neutral term that does not exclusively describe the state of being polite but that encompasses the whole range of verbal behaviour ranging from *polite* to *non-polite*. Non-polite speech is seen as an unmarked form of politeness that the author labels *zero polite*. For a description of the marked form of politeness, Ide et al. (1992 [2005]: 281) identify the notion of *plus-valued politeness*.

In order to account for Japanese politeness, Ide (1989: 230-231) illustrates two aspects of polite linguistic behaviour that have been neglected by former theories: the use of V-forms and the notion of *discernment* (or *wakimae*). Firstly, it is argued that in Japanese the use of formal forms is not dependent on a speaker's free will but on his/her "observation of the social conventions of the society" (Ide 1989: 230). Individuals are said to behave in accordance with the cultural norms of the group to which they belong. With regard to politeness in Japanese, the author formulates four social rules:

Rule 1: be polite to a person of a higher social position

Rule 2: be polite to a person with power

Rule 3: be polite to an older person

Rule 4: be polite in a formal setting determined by the factors of participants, occasions, or topics

Secondly, the concept of *wakimae* is presented as a fundamental notion: it is to demonstrate "verbally and non-verbally one's sense of place or role in a given situation according to social conventions" in order to "keep communication smooth and without friction" (ibid). According to Hill et al. (1986: 347-348), the English word *discernment* can account most adequately for this Japanese term. The discernment aspect of linguistic politeness ascribes a passive role to the speaker so that

once certain factors of addressee and situation are noted, the selection of an appropriate linguistic form and/or appropriate behavior is essentially automatic (Hill et al. 1986: 348).

In other words, the usage of formal linguistic expressions is not contingent on a speaker's free will but a matter of compulsory choices. In addition to *discernment*, the authors introduce the strategy of *volition* and explain it as:

the aspect of politeness which allows the speaker a considerably more active choice, according to the speaker's intention, from a relatively wider range of possibilities (ibid).

It is argued that, albeit both strategies ensure smooth communication, the speaker focuses either on "conforming to the expected norm" (ibid) or on his/her own intention, i.e. on the discernment or the volition aspect of linguistic politeness.

Since honorific languages, such as Japanese, do not dispose of any neutral forms, speakers are always obliged to choose among formal or informal linguistic expressions. Thus, Ide (1989: 231) argues, "the discernment aspect of linguistic politeness is a matter of constant concern in the use of language". As a consequence, in polite language usage by speakers of honorific languages, such as Japanese, discernment strategies are more frequent than volitional strategies. In non-honorific languages, however, volition dominates in polite verbal behaviour. Nonetheless, Ide (1989: 245) concludes that, to some degree, both aspects are possibly operative in nearly all languages, which makes them "both relevant in the universals of linguistic politeness".

Based on her theory of politeness, Ide (1989: 224) criticises the models presented by Lakoff, Brown & Levinson and Leech for having neglected the two most important aspects of the subject matter: the use of formal linguistic expressions (honorifics) and the concept of *discernment*. From Ide's non-Western perspective it is obvious that she denies the universal applicability of the previously mentioned frameworks, since they cannot account for linguistic politeness in Japanese. Therefore, these models seem to be a "product of Western academic tradition" (ibid), they appear to be ethnocentric.

3.7 Shoshana Blum-Kulka

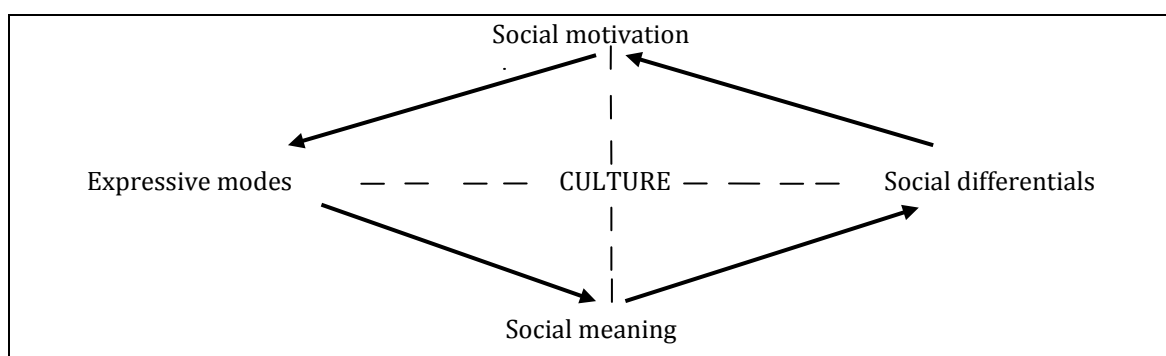
Another major contributor to the field of politeness theories is Blum-Kulka (1992 [2005]: 255-256), who aims at "accounting for culturally coloured ways of

speaking”. More precisely, her work is an attempt to relate evaluations of polite behaviour by members of Israeli society to a conceptual framework. She ascribes central importance to the notion of *culture* in her theory. The author views politeness in the light of *cultural norms* or *cultural scripts* (Eelen 2001: 12), which makes her approach a *cultural constructivist* one. She explains that

on a theoretical level this means that systems of politeness manifest a culturally filtered interpretation of the interaction between four essential parameters: social motivations, expressive modes, social differentials and social meanings. Cultural notions interfere in determining the distinctive features of each of the four parameters and as a result, significantly effect the social understanding of ‘politeness’ across societies in the world (Blum-Kulka 1992 [2005]: 270).

As can be discerned from this quote, Blum-Kulka (1992 [2005]: 275) defines politeness as a culture-dependent concept which is contingent on four parameters: firstly, there is the dimension of *social motivation*, which answers the question “why be linguistically polite?”; secondly, the dimension of *expressive modes*, which is how to be linguistically polite; thirdly, the dimension of *social differentials* or “when be linguistically polite?”; and fourthly, the dimension of *social meaning*, which is the answer to “what for be linguistically polite?”. This theoretical approach is displayed subsequently (Blum-Kulka 1992 [2005]: 271):

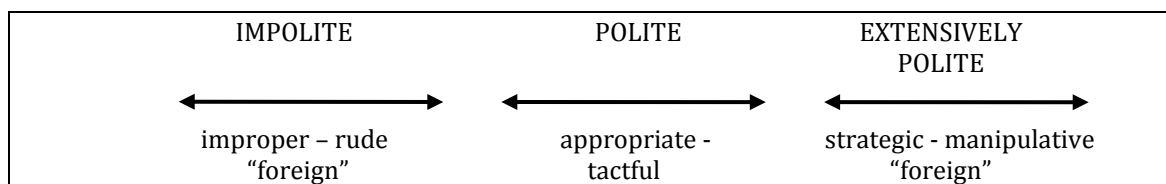
Figure 3: Culture’s constructivist role



In more detail, the aspect of social motivation, or the reason why languages around the world dispose of various linguistic means to express politeness, is explained by Goffman’s notion of *face*. Additionally, Blum-Kulka (1992 [2005]: 270) notes that cultures differ in their face needs so that “the constituents of face-wants are not necessarily universal”. The parameter of expressive modes includes all verbal and

non-verbal communicative means that a language provides to express politeness. The scholar points out that politeness-marking seems to differ cross-linguistically with reference to availability of linguistic forms and obligatory or optional choice of these forms. Social differentials, which can be equated with Brown & Levinson's P, D and R factors, account for situational assessment of politeness. In as far as social distance (D) is concerned, the author differentiates between the public and the private domain and the distinct styles of speech considered appropriate within each of them. Moreover, it is mentioned that the weight of these factors is subject to cross-cultural variation, which is explained with reference to Ide's notions of *volition* and *discernment*. The dimension of social meanings is described as "the degree to which any linguistic expression is deemed polite by members of a given culture in a specific situation" (Blum-Kulka 1992 [2005]: 275). Blum-Kulka (1992 [2005]: 276) represents these possible evaluations of politeness along the following continuum:

Figure 4: The scale of social meanings



Polite behaviour is defined as “the range of cultural expectations for what constitutes appropriate social behaviour relative to changing social situations” (ibid). Furthermore, it is mentioned that this kind of behaviour is basically taken for granted so that it will mainly pass unnoticed in interaction. It is the deviations from such appropriate behaviour that participants will perceive as impolite or extensively polite.

As has already been mentioned, Blum-Kulka adopts a dual perspective on politeness: on the one hand, she works with native evaluations, i.e. folk-notions, of polite behaviour and on the other hand, she is concerned with a scientific model of politeness. This differentiation between commonsense perceptions of polite behaviour and abstract academic concepts is what has been further developed by Richard Watts, whose work will be outlined in the next section.

3.8 Richard J. Watts

In various passages of this thesis I have already referred to the scholar who introduced the notion of *politic behaviour* within the field of politeness studies. Watts (2003: 21) defines politic behaviour as “that behaviour, linguistic and non-linguistic, which the participants construct as being appropriate to the ongoing social interaction”. Polite behaviour, in contrast, is understood as “behaviour beyond what is perceived to be appropriate to the ongoing social interaction”, analogous to impolite behaviour, which is “behaviour that is perceived by participants to be inappropriate” (ibid).

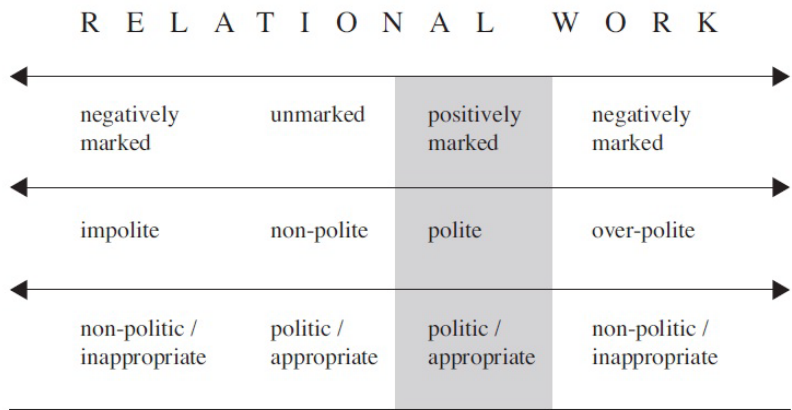
In more detail, Watts (1989: 136) argues that polite verbal behaviour is a subset of politic verbal behaviour. He states that in addition to unmarked politic (that is socially appropriate) behaviour, there are two forms of marked verbal behaviour: negatively marked, non-politic (or impolite) behaviour, which may lead to communicative breakdowns, and positively marked, polite behaviour, which can be seen as an enhancement of politic behaviour. Consequently, Watts (1992 [2005]: 51-52) would categorise many of Brown & Levinson’s (1987) positive and negative politeness strategies under the concept of politic behaviour. Moreover, features of interaction that have often been treated as instances of politeness such as terms of address, honorifics, ritualised expressions and speech events or indirect speech acts would only be open to interpretation as polite if they transcend “their normal usage as socio-culturally constrained forms of politic behaviour” (Watts 1992 [2005]: 52).

Furthermore, it is suggested that politic verbal behaviour can ideally be explained by means of Relevance Theory (Sperber & Wilson 1986) because it is “closely linked to behavior aimed at ensuring that relevant contributions are made to the ongoing verbal interaction” (Watts 1989: 136). In other words, speakers and addressees are said to cooperate in order to establish common understanding among each other in verbal interaction. Thus, verbal communication is an exchange of utterances which interlocutors can regard as being somehow meaningful. The author argues that Relevance Theory would be a powerful tool to recognise potential violations of politic behaviour and to supplement a model of

politeness. Hence, he rejects Grice’s Cooperative Principle as a basis for models of politeness (Watts 1989, 2003)⁴.

Additionally, Watts (2003: 117) postulates that “Politeness Theory can never be fully equated with Face Theory”. In other words, politeness is only a part of facework and facework does not necessarily include politeness. Instead of facework, Watts (2003) and Locher & Watts (2005: 9) use the term *relational work*, which they define as “‘work’ individuals invest in negotiating relationships with others”. The scholars argue that relational work does not exclusively describe appropriate, polite behaviour but that it “comprises the entire continuum of verbal behaviour” (ibid). Their conceptualisation of the term is outlined in the following figure (Locher & Watts 2005: 12):

Figure 5: Relational work and its polite (shaded) version



As can be discerned from this depiction of relational work, communicative behaviour is partly unmarked and will therefore not be noticed by interactants. It is only positively and negatively marked behaviour that participants will perceive (and eventually evaluate) as impolite, polite or over-polite. Since the authors understand politeness as a discursive concept, the boundaries between these categories are variable (Locher & Watts 2005: 11-12). Moreover, due to the fact that politeness is always subject to discursive struggle, also native speakers’ assessments of the term will vary and therefore “no linguistic structures can be

⁴ For further discussion of the shortcomings of Grice’s CP as a basis for models of linguistic politeness see section 5.2.1.

inherently polite” (Watts 2003: 168). This is to say that these structures are merely open to individual interpretation as polite in ongoing interaction since there is often “disagreement among participants in verbal interaction about what a term means personally for each of [them]” (Watts 2003: 274). Thus, it is argued that politeness research should focus on speakers’ evaluations of instances of verbal interaction, i.e. first-order politeness.

The need for a differentiation between first-order and second-order politeness is mentioned in Watts, Ide & Ehlich (1992 [2005]: 3) for the first time. Their exact wording has already been cited in section 2.1 of this thesis. First-order politeness, the way in which “participants in verbal interaction make explicit use of the terms ‘polite’ and ‘politeness’ to refer to their own and others’ social behaviour” (Locher & Watts 2005: 15), is distinguished from second-order politeness in as far as the latter “makes use of the terms ‘polite’ and ‘politeness’ as theoretical concepts [...] to refer to forms of social behaviour” (ibid) that do not correspond to lay conceptions of the terms. With regard to this distinction, Watts (2003: 9) suggests that

a theory of [second-order politeness] should concern itself with the discursive struggle over [first-order politeness], 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 which is frequently called Politeness Theory.

For the scholar, “investigating first-order politeness is the only valid means of developing a social theory of politeness” (ibid). Hence, he argues that his model of relational work can be understood as a means of assessing “how lay participants in ongoing verbal interaction assess social behaviour” (Watts 2003: 143), i.e. first-order politeness. Ongoing verbal interaction, the author maintains, is social practice which is determined by individuals’ previous experiences. In order to explain their “predispositions to act in specific ways in specific situations” (2005: xlii), he makes use of two different concepts: firstly, Tannen’s (1993: 53) notion of *frame*, which she defines as “structures of expectation based on past experience” and secondly, the notion of *habitus*, which is the central concept of Bourdieu’s (1990) Theory of Practice and can be defined as “the set of predispositions to act in

certain ways, which generates cognitive and bodily practices in the individual” (Watts 2003: 149).

Building on his social model of politeness (Watts 2003), the scholar develops the socio-cognitive approach to emergent social practice in later work (Watts 2008, 2011). The model is also called *socio-cognitive constructionist* since Watts (2011: 104) focuses on a person’s socio-cognitive construction of meanings. The author points out that human language is part of an individual’s cognitive abilities and that people construct and reproduce mental concepts discursively, i.e. within ongoing social practice. He argues that language is embedded within a set of complex cognitive frames in our mind which combine into conceptual spaces. The process of developing these conceptual spaces is seen as an individual, cognitive procedure which is contingent on social interaction with others: it is socio-cognitive. Such a socio-cognitive model of language focuses on emergent social practice – a fact that qualifies it as a potent tool to account for the unstable, changing and flexible nature of language. Thus, it is argued that the term *politeness* is most profitably investigated within this socio-cognitive discursive approach.

Introducing the theory of conceptual blending (Fauconnier & Turner 2002), Watts (2008: 292) intends to develop “a more integrated theory of relational work”. He discerns a direct relationship between the discursive approach to politeness and the forming of mental spaces which are defined as

small conceptual packets constructed as we think and talk, for purposes of local understanding and action. ... [They] are connected to long-term schematic knowledge called ‘frames’ (Fauconnier & Turner 2002: 40).

Since mental spaces are “constructed as we think and talk” they are of transitory character and belong to our short-term memory. However, some may also be stored in our long-term memory where they are linked to frames. Within ongoing discourse, new mental spaces merge and form cognitive blends. These blended mental spaces can be stored as knowledge frames to form long-term schematic knowledge which is available when individuals are involved in social practice or when they comment on the discursive behaviour of their interlocutors. Watts (2008: 312) suggests that within an individual’s overall conceptual space there is an almost infinite number of frames which also include conceptualisations of

politic behaviour, which is “conceptualisations of the social behaviour that is appropriate to a very large number of types of social practice”. Along with that, Watts (2011: 111) points out that the kinds of knowledge a speaker projects into that *knowledge frame politic behaviour*, as the author shall call the concept in later work (Watts 2011: 28), will clearly differ. Consequently, this approach can possibly explain individual as well as cultural differences in evaluations of emergent social practice.

Hitherto, eight of the most influential models of politeness have been outlined. Starting with Lakoff, Brown & Levinson and Leech, whose theories constitute a basis for numerous frameworks that were published subsequently, I then considered five more theories which altogether “form a core of research around which the field is built” (Eelen 2001: 23). According to Eelen’s categorisation, the frameworks that will be presented in the next section form elaborations of these core theories, since they are to a certain extent related to the approaches presented in chapter 3. It shall be noted at this point, that the following outline is by no means exhaustive but rather a selection of scholarly work which should help to broaden our view on the subject matter. Moreover, it must be mentioned that House’s (2005, 2010) and Culpeper’s (2010, 2011; Culpeper, Bousfield & Wichmann 2003) publications from later years have clearly not been part of Eelen’s taxonomy.

4. ELABORATIONS OF THE CORE THEORIES

In the present chapter, four more approaches to linguistic politeness will be described: firstly, Held's (1989, 1995, 1999) notion of *Beziehungsarbeit*; secondly, Meier's (1995) concept of *Repair Work*; thirdly, House's (2005, 2010) *multilevel model of politeness*; and finally, Culpeper's (1996, 2010, 2011; Culpeper, Bousfield & Wichmann 2003) work on impoliteness.

4.1 Gudrun Held

To begin with, Held (1989) introduces the notion of *maximization (MAX)* within the field of linguistic politeness in order to supplement the concept of *minimization (MIN)*. She challenges the fact that, in previous research, politeness has mostly been associated with indirectness and weakening (MIN) and so she opts for a complementary term (MAX) that relates politeness to forms of linguistic intensification and emphasis. As Held (1995: 130) points out, the dichotomy of MIN and MAX corresponds to Brown & Levinson's categories of negative and positive politeness.

The author understands the concept of politeness as *Beziehungsarbeit* (Held 1995: 107), which is a term in German pragmatics referring to Goffman's concept of *face-work* (Held 1992 [2005]: 143). Such *interactional work* is communicative behaviour that serves interactants as a means to establish and maintain good interactional relationships. In later work, Held (1999: 21) relates polite verbal behaviour to social power postulating that "politeness regulates social interaction, so that a minimisation of potential conflicts can lead to a maximisation of personal profit." Symbolically speaking, the stronger gives power to the weaker and this generates a mutual balance of power that stabilises existing social relationships which are constantly being reformulated. Held (1999: 24) characterises verbal politeness as a concept that:

- is associated with interactions between social individuals in which conflict-free construction of community and solidarity is suggested

- functions to protect and control individuals when faced with reciprocal contingencies
- is repeated daily and occurs in a multitude of forms that are subject to situational reformulation and modulation
- is an exchange of mutual face wants so that power is carried out on a mutual basis
- creates a power balance between *ego* and *alter* by considering participants' cost-benefit status in accordance with their social roles.

The last point of this list is related to Leech's Cost-Benefit scale and so is Held's entire approach influenced by various aspects of the core theories. It includes notions such as *face*, *conflict-avoidance*, *positive* and *negative politeness*. Moreover, she refers to Fraser & Nolen's, Watts', Arndt & Janney's and Ide's concepts of politeness (Held 1995: 98-109).

4.2 Ardith J. Meier

Meier (1995b: 387) defines politeness as *appropriateness*, which is "doing what is socially acceptable". It is argued that politeness is context-dependent, so that a certain degree of deference can either be appropriate or inappropriate within a given situation and would therefore be perceived as polite or impolite, respectively. Meier's notion of *Repair Work* is conceived as an alternative to Brown & Levinson's model. It is a means "to remedy any damage incurred to an 'actor's' image" due to "behaviour which fell below the standard expected relative to a particular reference group" (Meier 1995b: 388). As a consequence, speakers make use of Repair Work strategies to restore an interlocutor's image and to establish social harmony.

Furthermore, Meier (1995b: 386-388) points out that neither can a speech act nor languages or speakers be classified as inherently polite or impolite. The scholar says that "it would make no sense to equate politeness with particular speech acts" (Meier 1995b: 387). She also warns against classifying different cultures or languages as more polite or less polite, as such terms perpetuate national stereotypes and *linguacentricity*. Meier explains that such characterisations are always dependent on the various cultures under comparison: in contrast to (the

seemingly negatively oriented) British speakers of English, Americans might appear as a speech community oriented towards positive politeness. However, cross-cultural studies including Argentinean speakers of Spanish, for example, will make Americans appear rather negatively oriented.

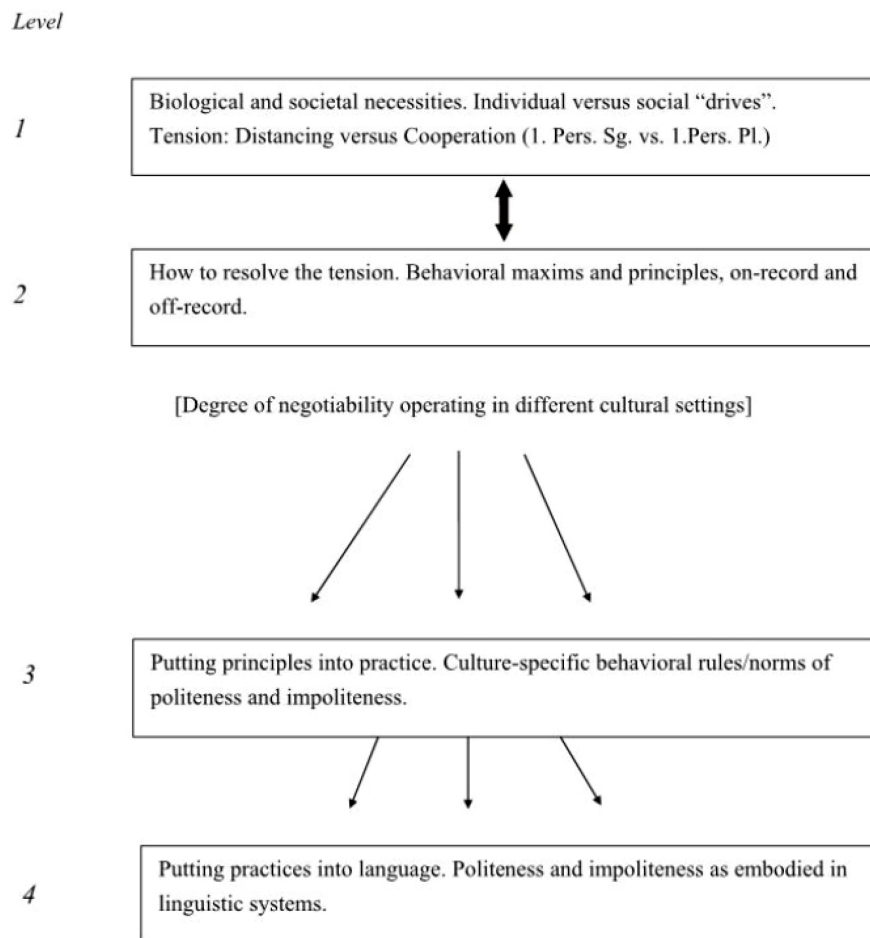
4.3 Juliane House

House (2005: 13) describes politeness as “an integral part of all human interaction” that is “reflected in interactants’ demonstrated consideration of one another” (2005: 14). Moreover, she views polite speech as an unmarked way of speaking that goes largely unnoticed in interaction – in contrast to overpoliteness or impoliteness, which are normally noticed. Politeness is regarded as the (culture-specific) norm of behaviour for interactants and so it is uniquely speakers and never utterances that can be (im)polite.

In order to account for universalities of politeness (as described in face-oriented or maxim-oriented approaches by Brown & Levinson or Leech) on the one hand, and for differences across cultures and languages (as outlined by many non-western scholars such as Ide) on the other hand, House (2010: 567) suggests the following framework⁵:

⁵ The author developed this model of politeness in an earlier publication (House 2005) and slightly revised it in later work (House 2010).

Figure 6: A multilevel model of politeness



House’s model of politeness is composed of four levels: the author explains that level 1 is bio-social, level 2 is philosophical, level 3 is cultural and level 4 is linguistic. In addition, levels 1 and 2 are universal; levels 3 and 4 are culture-specific. The first level reflects the deeply rooted tension between a human individual and society; it can be equalled with Brown & Levinson’s notion of positive and negative politeness. The second level consists of principles or maxims that account for human biological drives. The third level stands for culture-specific behavioural norms based on cultural-representations (i.e. frames) shared by individuals of a certain community. The fourth level includes real-world, socio-cultural aspects, i.e. fixed linguistic phenomena such as honorifics or the T/V pronoun distinction. In short, levels 1 and 2 are capable of accounting for universal aspects of linguistic politeness, whereas levels 3 and 4 are able to explain culture-specific norms and rules.

4.4 Jonathan Culpeper

Contrary to the theories of politeness that have been presented hitherto, Culpeper (1996: 349) works on the concept of *impoliteness*, which is the use of communicative strategies oriented towards “attacking one’s interlocutor and causing disharmony”. This approach is seen as “a complement to politeness theory” as well as “a revision of parts of it” (Culpeper, Bousfield & Wichmann 2003: 1554). Although there is clearly a relationship between the two notions, the authors argue that impoliteness should not merely be regarded as failed politeness. They lament that existing models of politeness only provide “comments on impoliteness [which] are descriptively inadequate” (ibid), i.e. these approaches are incapable of accounting fully for the notion of *impoliteness*. Therefore, it seems crucial to include Culpeper’s theory, which is conceived as an amendment to Brown & Levinson’s classical model of politeness, in order to get a clearer picture of the whole range of polite and impolite verbal behaviour.

In his latest publications, Culpeper (2011: 23) defines the notion of *impoliteness* as:

a negative attitude towards specific behaviours occurring in specific contexts. It is sustained by expectations, desires and/or beliefs about social organisation, including, in particular, how one person’s or group’s identities are mediated by others in interaction. Situated behaviours are viewed negatively – considered ‘impolite’ - when they conflict how one expects them to be, how one wants them to be and/or one thinks they ought to be. Such behaviours always have or are presumed to have emotional consequences for at least one participant, that is, they cause or are presumed to cause offence. Various factors can exacerbate how offensive an impolite behaviour is taken to be, including for example whether one understands a behaviour to be strongly intentional or not.

Identifying the need to focus not only on polite verbal behaviour but also on social interaction that is perceived as impolite, Culpeper (1996: 354) points out that impoliteness appears most frequently in situations of unequal power among interlocutors. Furthermore, the author refers to Leech’s (1983) distinction between *relative politeness* and *absolute politeness*⁶ in order to account for the (partly) inherent impoliteness of some speech acts. The scholar argues that

⁶ In a later publication, Leech (2007: 174) labels these two terms “semantic politeness scale” and “pragmatic politeness scale”.

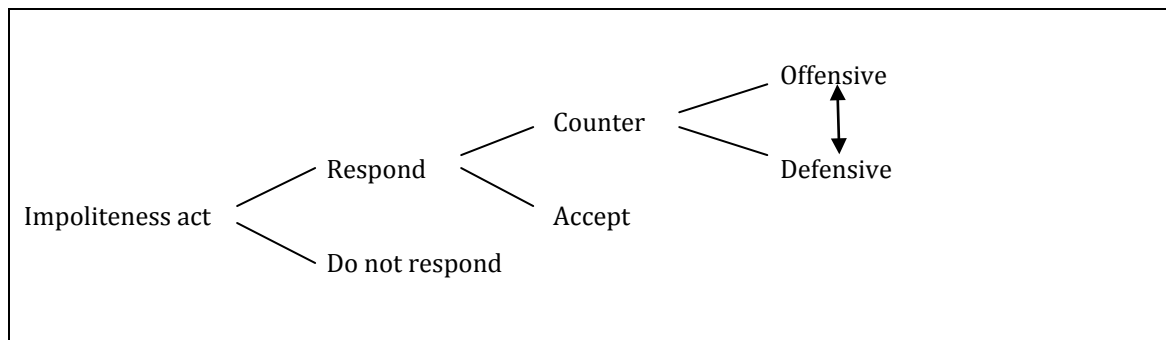
relative politeness is context-dependent whereas absolute politeness is a scalar phenomenon with a negative and a positive end which is independent of context. Within absolute politeness, Leech (1983: 83) regards “some illocutions (e.g. orders) [as] inherently impolite, and others (e.g. offers) [as] inherently polite”. Following this, Culpeper (2010: 3236) adopts such a dual view on the subject matter and sees “semantic (im)politeness and pragmatic (im)politeness as inter-dependent opposites on a scale”.

Culpeper’s framework of impoliteness is also built on Brown & Levinson’s model of politeness and contains five impoliteness strategies as an opposite to their politeness strategies. These impoliteness strategies are considered “a means of attacking face” (1996: 356) and are presented in a revised version by Culpeper, Bousfield & Wichmann (2003: 1554-1555):

1. Bald on record impoliteness: is typically deployed where there is much face at stake, and where there is an intention on the part of the speaker to attack the face of the hearer.
2. Positive impoliteness: the use of strategies designed to damage the addressee’s positive face wants (‘ignore, snub the other’, ‘exclude the other from the activity’, ‘disassociate from the other’, ‘be disinterested, unconcerned, unsympathetic’, ‘use inappropriate identity markers’, ‘use obscure or secretive language’, ‘seek disagreement’, ‘make the other feel uncomfortable (e.g. do not avoid silence, joke, or use small talk)’, ‘use taboo words’, ‘call the other names’, etc.).
3. Negative impoliteness: the use of strategies designed to damage the addressee’s negative face wants (‘frighten’, ‘condescend, scorn, or ridicule’, ‘invade the other’s space’, ‘explicitly associate the other with a negative aspect’, ‘put the other’s indebtedness on record’, ‘hinder or block the other – physically or linguistically’, etc.).
4. Sarcasm or mock politeness: the use of politeness strategies that are obviously insincere, and thus remain surface realizations.
5. Withhold politeness: keep silent or fail to act where politeness work is expected.

In addition, Culpeper, Bousfield & Wichmann (1562-1563) formulate a hearer’s response options when receiving an FTA:

Figure 7: Response options



Reminiscent of Brown & Levinson's strategies for doing an FTA (Figure 1), a hearer may either respond or not respond to a strategic impoliteness act. If the participant does not stay silent (i.e. s/he does respond), there is the possibility to accept the face attack or to counter it. Accepting the face attack would mean to apologize, whereas to counter a face attack would either involve offensive or defensive strategies. Offensive strategies are used to counter a face attack with another face attack (such as the five impoliteness strategies outlined above); defensive strategies, on the contrary, are deployed to respond to a face attack by means of defending one's own face (with strategies such as deflecting, blocking or managing the impoliteness act).

In later work, Culpeper (2010, 2011) suggests general impoliteness rules as an elaboration of his impoliteness strategies in Culpeper (1996) and presents a list of "very generally used English conventionalised impoliteness formulae" (Culpeper 2010: 3242-3243). In order to explain the basis of conventionalised impoliteness formulae, Culpeper also draws on notions such as *scripts*, *frames* and *schemata* – so, the author's understanding of the subject matter overlaps with the socio-cognitive approach to (im)politeness presented by Richard Watts (Watts 2003, Locher & Watts 2005). Furthermore, Culpeper's model serves as a point of departure for other studies within the field of impoliteness research.

Summing up, the previous chapter has been a presentation of four approaches to polite verbal behaviour which constitute amendments to the core theories of politeness. Although these scholars have developed their own frameworks, it has been highlighted that they all include elements from former theories into their models. While Maier attempts to provide an alternative to Brown & Levinson,

Culpeper complements their theory with Leech's model in order to avoid carrying over the weaknesses of the concept (Culpeper, Bousfield & Wichmann 2003: 1555). As Eelen (2001: 26-27) points out, Held's approach includes elements from all of the core theories whereby each notion is understood to be culture- as well as context-dependent. House's model of politeness constitutes an attempt to combine universal as well as culture-specific aspects of polite verbal behaviour within one socio-cognitive framework, so that it can be accounted for face- and maxim-oriented approaches as well as for non-western conceptualisations of politeness. At this point, I will move on to chapter 5 which is conceived of a wrap-up section. In other words, I will have a closer look at various categorisations of politeness theories so that some more connections between the different models can be drawn and I will consider some relevant points of criticism directed towards these scholarly concepts.

5. CATEGORISATIONS, CONNECTIONS AND CRITICISM

This section constitutes an attempt to highlight some fundamental relations between existing theories of politeness. In order to get a clearer picture of this heterogeneous field, I will begin with a classification of scholarly concepts as presented by Fraser (1990). Some critical observations by Watts, Ide & Ehlich (1992 [2005]) and Ide (1993) will also be included. Following this, I will consider Held's (1992) taxonomic viewpoint on theoretical models of politeness.

5.1 Fraser's perspectives on politeness theories

Fraser (1990) postulates four major ways of looking at politeness in the literature. He names the *social-norm view*, the *conversational-maxim view*, the *face-saving view* and the *conversational-contract view*.

5.1.1 The social-norm view

According to the author, the social-norm view associates politeness with good manners. Any society is seen to have a set of social norms, i.e. standards of behaviour, which speakers have to obey in order to be judged as polite. This normative perspective equals politeness with certain speech styles, so that the higher the degree of formality, the greater is the amount of politeness required. Watts, Ide & Ehlich (1992 [2005]: 4) maintain that this social-norm view is represented by the term *discernment* (*wakimae*) as introduced by Ide (1989) and Hill et al. (1986). In addition, they make the pertinent point that Janney & Arndt's (1992 [2005]) *social politeness* can be equalled with the concept of *wakimae*, which would therefore make it a component of this normative viewpoint as well (Watts, Ide & Ehlich 1992 [2005]: 13).

5.1.2 The conversational-maxim view

Viewing linguistic politeness from the conversational-maxim perspective is to rely principally on Grice's Cooperative Principle. Accordingly, this view comprises Lakoff's (1973, 1977) as well as Leech's (1983) approaches to polite verbal behaviour. In his paper, Fraser (1990: 223) states critically that Lakoff does not

explicitly define the term *politeness*. Furthermore, it is argued that she omits to show how speakers or hearers could figure out the level of politeness that her three politeness rules require. Reviewing Leech's work, Fraser (1990: 224) points out that, once again, the term *politeness* lacks a concrete definition. In addition, he asserts that this approach is "difficult to evaluate" (1990: 227) since it does not provide comprehensive information about application, availability, formulation, dimensions and relevance of the maxims and scales proposed. Leech's conclusion is also seen to be too strong in as far as he suggests certain speech acts to be inherently polite or impolite. Further critical comments against Leech's work are raised by Watts, Ide & Ehlich (1992 [2005]: 7) who claim that his framework would be too abstract, so that it can be neither an account of a lay concept of politeness (*first-order politeness*) nor a notion within a theoretical model of polite verbal behaviour (*second-order politeness*).

5.1.3 The face-saving view

Brown & Levinson (1987) are representative of the face-saving view since Grice's CP does not have the same status in their model as it has within the theories by Lakoff and Leech. Brown & Levinson's framework is not simply an extension of Grice's maxims but it also includes Goffman's notion of *face* in order to define polite behaviour. Only then it relates politeness to the CP, yet without elaborating on it. Fraser (1990: 228) points out that, while Brown & Levinson postulate that politeness can be seen as one of the reasons for not abiding by the conversational maxims, they do not explain other reasons for deviation such as sarcasm, humour or irony. Analogous to former approaches, Brown & Levinson do not offer an explicit definition of the term *politeness* either.

5.1.4. The conversational-contract view

The fourth perspective on linguistic politeness, the conversational-contract view, is primarily represented by Fraser & Nolen's (1981, Fraser 1990) approach. Despite also taking Grice's CP as a starting point and adopting Goffman's notion of *face*, this theory is said to be substantially different from Brown & Levinson's perspective. Although the models coincide in the assumption that a speaker chooses linguistic expressions in respect of his/her responsibility towards the hearer, they differ in

their conception of politeness in the following ways: the notion is either regarded a deviation (face-saving view) or the result (conversational-contract view) of “the most ‘efficient’ bold-on record way of using the language” (Fraser 190: 233); it is either understood as implicated or anticipated; and politeness strategies are perceived either as a means to mitigate FTAs or to obey the CP. Within the conversational-contract perspective, it is argued that politeness is neither “making the hearer ‘feel good’” (ibid), as claimed by representatives of the conversational-maxim view, nor is it “making the hearer not ‘feel bad’” (ibid), as Brown & Levinson maintain. More specifically, being polite is taken as the norm, not as a deviation from the CP. In this respect, Watts, Ide & Ehlich (1992 [2005]: 12-13) point out that Fraser and Nolen’s conception of politeness is similar to Watts’ notion of *politic behaviour*. They would also classify Janney and Arndt’s (1992 [2005]) notion of *tact* as a concept within the conversational-contract view.

Analysing this fourth perspective on politeness theories, Watts, Ide & Ehlich (1992 [2005]: 12) argue in favour of the conversational-contract view in as far as it is able to capture the dynamic and changing character of politeness. Yet, the scholars are critical of Fraser’s (1990: 233) claim that polite verbal behaviour would always go unnoticed in interaction. They argue that people frequently comment on others’ social actions as being polite, and therefore, the scholars discern a need to differentiate lay notions of the concept (*first-order politeness*) from the scientific theory of polite verbal interaction (*second-order politeness*).

In this respect, it seems crucial to refer to Ide’s (1993: 8) overview of existing models of politeness. She states that the pioneering theories by Lakoff, Brown & Levinson and Leech focus primarily on strategies for language use, what makes them concepts of *second-order politeness*. As a logical consequence, the commonsense notion of politeness (*first-order politeness*) has been neglected. Using Fraser’s (1990) categorisation, Ide maintains that the *social-norm view* as well as the *conversational-contract view* have to be understood as such first-order conceptions of politeness. Accordingly, all the approaches to polite verbal behaviour subsumed under the headings of *conversational-maxim view* and *face-saving view* are representative of second-order politeness for including merely the

scientific notion of the term. In this respect, Hill et al. (1986) and Ide (1989) criticise western-oriented theories of politeness for having omitted the aspect of *wakimae* (*discernment*), which is encoded in obligatory grammatical choices of Japanese and is therefore understood as an instance of first-order politeness. What Ide (1993: 8) calls for, is an approach which is capable of including both notions, i.e. *first* and *second-order politeness*, within one framework in order to be able to account for Western as well as non-Western languages. Subsequent work, for example Watts' outline of *relational work*, constitutes an attempt to meet these requirements.

5.2 Held's perspectives on politeness theories

Another classification of theoretical approaches to politeness has been presented by Held (1992 [2005]). Among the various categories formulated, the following seem useful to summarise the scientific approaches to polite linguistic behaviour presented within this thesis⁷: the indirectness approach to politeness, politeness as a supportive relationship and politeness as formal routine.

5.2.1. The indirectness approach to politeness

The indirectness approach to politeness comprises the theories by Lakoff, Leech and Brown & Levinson. These classical approaches, as Held (1992 [2005]: 139) labels them, made indirect verbal behaviour the focus of pragmatic perspectives on linguistic politeness. Taking Grice's CP as their point of departure, they unanimously equate politeness with indirectness. Clearly, indirectness constitutes an ideal device for the mitigation of potential conflicts and the mutual protection of face. However, as Held (1992 [2005]: 141) remarks, this has led to "a crass overestimation of Grice's approach". Along with Held, Watts criticises the approaches built on the CP. In his point of view, the researchers rely on "the default assumption that interactants aim at establishing communicative cooperation" (Watts 2003: 203). Consequently, scholars supporting the concept of

⁷ Held (1992 [2005]: 136-151) identifies further categories to group politeness theories. However, those taxonomies irrelevant for this thesis have been omitted.

indirectness are said to be mistaken in assuming that Grice would suggest a model of conversation mainly built on the principle of optimal cooperation. Yet, the philosopher established this perfect state of communicative cooperation in order to account for speaker meaning along with sentence meaning, i.e. implications, and should therefore “not be interpreted as setting up a theory of conversation” (Watts 2005: xxxvi). Nevertheless, Held (1992 [2005]: 142) concludes that

the indirectness approach, despite its one-sidedness, occupies a central position in accounting for politeness, [and has] provided definite formal and situational results.

5.2.2 Politeness as a supportive relationship

According to Held (1992 [2005]: 142-147), theories which conceptualise politeness as a supportive relationship go beyond the indirectness approach. Although the pragmatic approaches comprised by this section also build on Goffman as they view politeness as an act of considering mutual face wants, they recognise that the minimisation of potential conflict cannot merely be equated with indirectness. The notion of *Beziehungsarbeit* in Held's (1989) own work and Watts' (1989) conception of *politic behaviour* embody such elaborations of the classical approaches. As Arndt & Janney's (1985) emotive perspective on the phenomenon of *politeness* constitutes another enhancement of the indirectness approach, they are also representative of this broader view on polite verbal behaviour.

5.2.3 Politeness as formal routine

This form-oriented perspective on polite verbal behaviour focuses on the fact that politeness is essentially related to language-specific, idiomatic expressions and formulae. Clearly, this point of view is not oriented towards universal aspects of politeness but towards culture-dependent realisations of the phenomenon. Language-specific politeness formulae are said to be important components of communicative competence. Therefore, this theoretical approach to linguistic politeness is concerned with language acquisition, language didactics and intercultural communication. Held (1992 [2005]: 150) names Coulmas as a major contributor to this field of linguistic research. This author defines routine formulae

as “highly conventionalized prepatterned expressions whose occurrence is tied to more or less standardized communication situations” (Coulmas 1981: 3). Consequently, in recurring speech situations, speakers utilise recurring expressions which are known to be appropriate to that certain context. These routine formulae “guarantee the ability to anticipate social events” and therefore, they “increase the cooperation between the interactants” (Held 1992 [2005]: 150).

5.3 Further perspectives on linguistic politeness

In addition to Fraser and Held, other scholars have attempted to categorise existing conceptions of politeness. Interestingly, the authors of these overviews seem to concur in as far as politeness is twofold.

5.3.1 Politeness as a dual notion

5.3.1.1 Consistencies throughout the field

As already mentioned in section 2.4 of this thesis, Kasper (1990: 194-197) posits that linguistic politeness is either understood as *strategic conflict avoidance* or as *social indexing*. Within this dichotomy, the “early politeness theories” (Kasper 1990: 194) by Lakoff, Brown & Levinson, Leech, Fraser & Nolen conceptualise the phenomenon as *strategic politeness*, whereas non-Western politeness researchers such as Hill et al. (1986) and Ide (1989) rather associate politeness with *social indexing*, i.e. *discernment*. Kasper (1990: 196) points out that, although social indexing is obligatory in any language, the extent to which this constituent of politeness is mandatory is clearly culture-specific. Furthermore, the author makes it obvious that there are language-dependent factors of linguistic politeness, such as routine formulae, which cannot “be expected to have formal or even functional equivalences across languages” (Kasper 1990: 198). At the same time, however, she acknowledges the fact that there are expressions of politeness which are cross-linguistically related in their form and function to some degree. In this regard, politeness in its diversity as a culture-specific and universal phenomenon is again the object of interest.

Lakoff & Ide adopt a dual point of view on politeness in as far as the notion is said to include both “consideration for others” and “adherence to conventional standards” (2005: 4). In other words, if speakers stick to the rules of politeness in interaction they do not only avoid conflict, i.e. show consideration for their interlocutor, but they also show that they are well-bred members of one and the same culture, i.e. that they know the same set of rules. Along with this dichotomy, the scholars argue that *consideration for others* is either described in terms of *FTA-avoidance* or *wakimae*, contingent on the approach to politeness considered. In this regard, they discern an East/West divide in politeness research, depending on whether the concept of *face* (i.e. the volitional aspect of politeness) or the concept of *wakimae* (i.e. the discernment aspect of politeness) is more prominent. Nevertheless, they argue that Eastern and Western approaches to politeness do not refer to absolutely different systems but that they lay different amounts of stress on either the volition or the discernment trait of politeness. Therefore, Lakoff & Ide (2005: 10-11) maintain once more⁸ that a universally valid theory of polite verbal behaviour would have to be capable of uniting both notions. Moreover, in order to explain politeness as a universal and culture-specific concept at the same time, a single theory needs to be able to account for each the subsequent characteristics: firstly, the universality of politeness phenomena across languages and cultures; secondly, cultural differences in the realisations of politeness; and thirdly, intracultural forms and functions of politeness.

Similarly, Meier (1995a: 351) is of the opinion that theoretical approaches to polite verbal behaviour concur in as far as they all adopt a dual point of view on the concept as “appropriateness” and as “indexed by certain formal linguistic features”. Yet, she admits that “it is difficult to ascertain the unifying trait(s) of phenomena termed ‘polite’”. Due to the fact that functional and formal constituents of politeness are often mixed, and that the notion is frequently depicted as a dichotomy and as a scalar phenomenon at the same time, one is confronted with a field full of inconsistencies. Reviewing various definitions of politeness, she points out that scholars have often identified different types of the phenomenon. Such dual perspectives are provided by Arndt & Janney (1992), who distinguish

⁸ This point has already been made by Ide (1993).

between *tact* and *social politeness*, or Watts, Ide & Ehlich (1992 [2005]), who differentiate *politic* from *polite behaviour* (i.e. *first-order* and *second-order politeness*). Inherent in Watts' description of (*non-*) *politic behaviour*, which is similar to Meier's (1995b) (*non-*) *appropriate behaviour*, is the entire continuum from impolite and non-polite to polite and over-polite behaviour. In this respect, Meier (1995a: 347) illustrates that further scholars have proposed descriptions of politeness as a scalar phenomenon: Lakoff (1989) names *rude*, *non-polite* and *polite verbal behaviour*; Ide (1989) and Ide et al. (1992 [2005]) discriminate between the notions of *non-polite* and *plus-valued polite*; and Blum-Kulka (1992) identifies the notions of *impolite*, *polite* and *extensively polite*. Watts' unmarked form of *politic behaviour*, as representative for appropriate, unmarked behaviour, can therefore be compared with the concepts of *non-polite* by Lakoff and Ide and the concept of *polite* by Blum-Kulka.

In conclusion, some sort of agreement among the authors presented in the last section could be discerned. In this sense, the following table serves to visualise the fact that politeness is consistently regarded as a matter of duality:

Figure 8: Linguistic politeness as a dual concept part one

Politeness is a twofold notion regarded as:			
Kasper (1990)	social indexing	and	strategic conflict avoidance
Meier (1995a)	indexed by certain formal linguistic features		appropriateness
Lakoff & Ide (2005)	adherence to conventional standards		consideration for others

Before I move on, it should be noted that this schematic representation does not claim to show absolute equivalences among the concepts in the vertical columns. Although there are certainly overlaps in their descriptions, focus and scope of the respective terms vary. This is to say that the aim of this chart is it to highlight similarities among conceptions of politeness which show on the horizontal level and not to suggest an absolute equation of the concepts in the vertical dimension.

5.3.1.2 Diversity of opinion within the field

Although the last paragraphs served to highlight some similarities among the concepts, there are still numerous discrepancies within the descriptions of politeness. Ide's notion of *discernment* or *wakimae*, for example, is described as a local concept which is not polite, i.e. it is politic. According to Meier (1995a: 347-348), Watts would categorise this notion as *second-order politic behaviour* in which universality is to be sought. In Watts (2003: 17), however, *wakimae* is classified as a first-order concept. Equally, Ide (1993: 8) understands *wakimae* as the culturally-dependent form of appropriate behaviour in Japan and labels it a concept of first-order politeness. As a consequence, there does not seem to be a consensus among the scholars in the field when it comes to categorising the various concepts on the market. Eelen (2001: 75) confirms this claim when he states that "according to Watts the phenomenon of Discernment in Japanese [...] is part of politic but not polite behaviour [...] while volition strategies are polite behaviour." Yet, Eelen (2001: 56) concludes from Ide's work that she categorises the conceptions as follows:

first-order politeness	=	Discernment	=	everyday concept
second-order politeness	=	Volition	=	academic concept

Equalling now second-order politeness with politic behaviour again, as Watts does, *discernment* becomes a notion of *second-order politeness*, which directly opposes Ide's conception of the term. As a consequence of such disagreements among the scholars, it might be impossible to categorise the existing concepts once and for all.

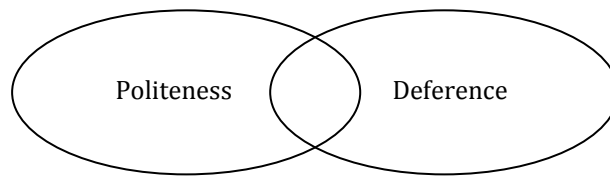
5.3.1.3 Similarities among individual approaches

In this context of politeness in its duality, I should also draw some attention to the aforementioned publications by Watts (2005) and Leech (2007). At this point, we are already familiar with Watts' distinction between *first-order politeness*, representing a speaker's perspective in culture-specific circumstances, and *second-order politeness*, as the scientific and universal perspective on the phenomenon. However, as Eelen (2001) criticises, many scholars seem to have neglected this binary angle, this is to say, it has rarely been incorporated in analysis of politeness. With reference to Ide (1993), Leech (2007: 197-199) posits his elaborated

approach to polite verbal behaviour within this distinction. He differentiates *honorific politeness* from *transactional politeness*, corresponding to the first-order and second-order domain of the notion respectively. He maintains that, in comparison to politeness usage which involves a “transaction of value” between speakers and hearers, honorific usage is rather “socially constrained and dependent on convention” (Leech 2007: 198). The fact that transactional politeness seems to differ from honorific usage makes it the main cause for Eastern and Western scholars’ (apparently) incompatible views on politeness (i.e. Ide and Brown & Levinson). Yet, Leech makes the pertinent point that “transactional politeness often involves or requires honorification” (ibid), so that the further might as well be a means for expressing the latter. In this sense, he concludes that a theory of *politeness* (or whatever the phenomenon might be called in other languages) can as well be able to incorporate both notions. This is to say that honorific politeness and transactional politeness, as “two related and overlapping kinds of communicative phenomena” (Leech 2007: 199), can be comprehended within Leech’s refined approach to linguistic politeness, the GSP. Just as Leech proposes the GSP as a means to account for both honorific and transactional politeness, i.e. first-order and second-order politeness, within one theory, Watts (2005: xliii) suggests the second-order term *politic* because it incorporates “what might be referred to in lay terms as POLITE”, i.e. first-order politeness. More specifically, polite behaviour is regarded as a part of politic behaviour whereby both notions are incorporated within the concept of *relational work*.

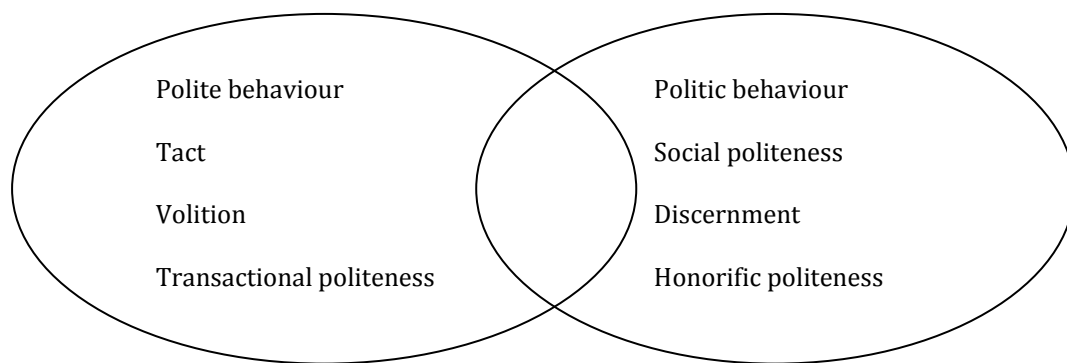
This argumentation is also supported by Fraser (2005: 68-69), when he claims that the concepts of *politeness* and the more narrow concept of *deference* have to be seen as separate notions although they are related. He uses the term *deference* as a cover term for what Ide and Watts call *discernment* and *politic behaviour* respectively. He agrees that honorifics and terms of social indexing, such as the V-forms in Spanish or the use of *Sir/Miss* in English, are not noticed when used properly. Consequently, they are a means of showing deference and in that case independent of polite verbal behaviour. The scholar depicts the relationship between these two notions as follows:

Figure 9: Linguistic politeness as a dual concept part two



Following Fraser, I would suggest at this point that Watts' notions of *polite* and *politic behaviour*, Arndt & Janney's *tact* and *social politeness*, Ide's concepts of *volition* and *discernment* as well as Leech's *honorific* and *transactional politeness* can equally be depicted this way:

Figure 10: Linguistic politeness as a dual concept part three



Again, it should be noted that these conceptions might not show absolute equivalence on the vertical level, although they seem to refer to the same 'area' of politeness. Yet it is a fact that each of these terms is either concerned with conversational routines and obligatory linguistic choices, i.e. social marking, or with verbal behaviour which is understood as more than merely politic, i.e. socially appropriate.

Moreover, figure 10 highlights the fact that *linguistic politeness* is often used as a cover term for universal as well as culture-specific features. Talking of *politic behaviour* as expressed in form of verbal routines and honorifics, one is clearly concerned with language-dependent aspects. *Tact* and other forms of consideration for others, in contrast, are often described as universal features of

human interaction. In this sense, I have now arrived at a point where it becomes quite obvious that there can be only one domain on which to focus when it comes to foreign language teaching: it must necessarily be the culture-specific realisations of politeness. This is to say that the following analysis of polite verbal behaviour in the English and Spanish-speaking context involves us in the concepts of *deference*, *discernment*, *honorific politeness*, *verbal routines*, or in any other denotation for local concepts of politeness.

Taking the findings of chapter 5 into consideration, what follows is an investigation of polite (or rather appropriate/politic) verbal behaviour on the level of culture-specific expressions and routines. So, chapter 6 will be an account of linguistic politeness in English and Spanish.

6. POLITENESS IN ENGLISH AND SPANISH

Without doubt, anyone who has been in contact with people from different parts of the world will have noticed that there are differences in our communicative behaviour. These differences are due to culture-specific norms and beliefs, resulting in varying face needs of linguistic communities. In terms of linguistic politeness, it might be confusing for interlocutors to find out that they differ in their underlying assumptions of what is considered polite. Speakers of positively polite languages could be considered impolite by speakers of negatively polite languages. Conversely, speakers of negatively polite languages could be considered quite vague. Such commonsense notions of what is considered to be polite or impolite can unfortunately lead to linguistic stereotypes. In chapter 6.1 I will highlight some reasons for such stereotypical comments and I will mention that one should be aware of some precautions in a cross-cultural comparison of languages. Talking of lay notions, there is to mention that this chapter provides not only a section on politeness and culture but also an outline of language-specific realisations of politeness in British English and Peninsular Spanish. I will have a closer look at (mostly contrastive) empirical studies of the phenomenon in both languages, so that first-order politeness will be the focus of the following sections. At this point it is important to remark that if I talk about the English and Spanish language I will always refer to British English and Peninsular Spanish if not indicated otherwise.

Before I examine cultural differences in these varieties though, it is essential to recapitulate some theoretical concerns of the previous chapters. In the subsequent part of this thesis, I am no longer involved in universal features of linguistic politeness but in local realisations of the concept in Great Britain and Spain. In Watts' terms, I am now treating culture-specific first-order politeness, as already mentioned. According to Blum-Kulka, I am investigating the parameter of expressive modes, which is exploring the linguistic means that a language offers its speakers to express politeness. Within House's model, the following sections consider politeness on the fourth level "as embodied in linguistic systems" (House 2010: 567).

6.1 Politeness and culture

In accordance with other scholars already mentioned, Sifianou (1992: 46) argues that

the concept of 'politeness' [...] is most probably universal in some form or other, even though [...] how it is realized verbally and non-verbally will most probably be culture-specific.

In this sense, different societies should prefer different types of politeness. Yet, it is important to mention that “no society is likely to be completely uniform in its politeness” (Sifianou 1992: 39). Therefore, no culture as a whole can be classified as either clearly negatively or positively polite. As Stewart points out (2005: 116), even within one culture there are “quite considerable differences between different communities”. This is to say that the means to convey linguistic politeness will vary even in intracultural settings, according to differences in speakers' age, social class, gender, education etc. With reference to Spain, Hickey (2005: 320) makes the pertinent point that there are “various intersecting variables” to consider. Accordingly, he explains that besides the Castilian language [el castellano] there are further official languages, namely Catalan [el catalán], Galician [el gallego], Basque [la lengua éuscara], Aragonese [el aragonés] and Asturian [el asturianu]. This is to say, the Spanish culture is far from being homogeneous and so is Spanish politeness.

Instead of classifying societies as being absolutely positively or negatively polite, Sifianou (1992: 40) posits that they should rather be grouped as somewhat more positively or more negatively oriented. Consequently, it has to be noted that an orientation towards positive or negative politeness is always more relative than absolute. Not even languages which share the same politeness orientation will make use of absolutely identical politeness strategies. As Meier (1995b: 387) postulates, one has to be aware of the fact that languages (just like speech acts) should not be classified as inherently polite or impolite, in order to avoid national stereotypes and *linguacentricity*. Sifianou (1992: 43) supports this argument when she states that languages which have been stereotyped as less polite are simply rather oriented towards positive politeness, whereas languages which have been stereotyped as more polite are rather oriented towards negative politeness. Hickey

& Vázquez Orta (1994: 281) agree that preferences for either positive or negative politeness devices are

a major source of misinterpretation and misjudgement which have led to negative stereotypic comments such as 'The Spaniards are impolite' or 'The English are hypocritical'.

Therefore, it is important to recognise that

no hay lenguas más o menos corteses que otras, sino que la concepción de la cortesía varía de cultura en cultura

[no languages are more or less polite than others but that the conception of politeness varies from culture to culture] (Díaz Pérez 2003: 136).

With these precautions in mind, I will now examine the culture-specific politeness phenomena in English and Spanish. First of all, some characteristics of politeness in British English and Peninsular Spanish will be shown. More precisely, the following paragraphs will depict these two linguistic communities in their orientation towards negative and positive politeness, respectively. Following this, it will be depicted how these preferences manifest in verbal realisations of politeness in the particular linguistic communities.

6.2 Orientation towards negative politeness in English

In the relevant literature, there seems to be agreement that in British English (BE), speakers show a preference for negative politeness. When Sifianou (1992: 43) states that "the English seem to prefer more negative politeness devices", she follows Brown & Levinson in as far as that negative politeness is the most elaborate and conventionalised form of FTA-mitigation in BE. Stewart (2005: 117) confirms this point of view when she describes BE as "essentially an avoidance-based, negatively-oriented culture".

In order to illustrate what negative politeness consists of, Brown & Levinson's notion of *negative face* needs to be considered once again. As presented in section 3.2, the authors describe negative face as an interlocutor's "basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction – i.e. to freedom of action

and freedom from imposition" (Brown & Levinson 1987: 61). Accordingly, orders, requests, suggestions or advice have been classified as acts that threaten a hearer's freedom of action, i.e. his/her negative face. Accepting an offer or accepting thanks have been described as acts that threaten a speaker's negative face. In order to satisfy an addressee's negative face wants, speakers make use of negative politeness strategies. Accounting for manifestations of negative politeness strategies in language, Sifianou (1992: 35) summarises Brown & Levinson's illustrations as follows:

Negative politeness⁹

Be direct

1. Be conventionally indirect

Don't presume

2. Question, hedge

Don't coerce *H* (where *x* involves *H* doing *A*)
(both (1) and (2) are included here, too)

3. Be pessimistic
4. Minimize the imposition
5. Give deference

Communicate *S*'s want not to impinge on *H*

6. Apologize
7. Impersonalize *S* and *H*: Avoid the pronouns *I* and *you*
8. State the FTA as a general rule
9. Nominalize

Redress other wants of *H*'s, derivative from negative face

10. Go on record as incurring a debt, or as not indebting *H*.

⁹ It should be noted that the abbreviation *S* refers to the speaker, *H* stands for the hearer, *x* is the speech act and *A* is a (future) act.

Furthermore, the author explains that Brown & Levinson (1987: 70) understand negative politeness to be “avoidance-based” and “characterised by self-effacement, formality and restraint”. In this sense, negative politeness is commonly perceived as familiar, formal politeness, which is what naturally comes to people’s minds when they think of polite behaviour.

6.3 Orientation towards positive politeness in Spanish

Just as researchers seem to classify BE as a language oriented towards negative politeness, there is also agreement that Peninsular Spanish tends to favour positive politeness. Quite unequivocally, Siebold (2012: 369) states that

[e]in charakteristisches Merkmal der verbalen Höflichkeit im Spanischen, das sich durch das gesamte Kommunikationsverhalten zieht, ist der vergleichsweise hohe Stellenwert der positiven Höflichkeit.

Hickey (2005: 329) supports this claim when he concludes that “Spanish politeness generally takes the positive form of effusiveness, personal enthusiasm, admiration and praise of others”. The author builds his study on “Brown and Levinson’s division of politeness into positive and negative [which] applies directly to Spanish society” (Hickey 2005: 319). In this sense, he claims that Spanish “is very close to the positive end” (ibid).

The fact that Hickey and Sifianou share Brown & Levinson’s distinction between positive and negative politeness as their methodological basis is relevant for my purposes of comparing culture-specific politeness phenomena in English and Spanish. Therefore, I will now refer to the notion of *positive face* so that I can then move on to describe realisations of positive politeness in language. As explained in section 3.2, Brown & Levinson (1987: 61) understand positive face as everyone’s desire that his/her self-image be appreciated and approved of by others. Consequently, speech acts which seem to disapprove a hearer’s wants, such as complaints, criticism or disagreement, threaten their positive face. In contrast, an apology or the acceptance of a compliment is threatening to a speaker’s positive face. At this point, positive politeness strategies come into play. Sifianou (1992: 35)

summarises Brown & Levinson's outline of means to express positive politeness as follows:

Positive politeness¹⁰

Claim 'common-ground'

1. Notice, attend to H (his [or her] interests, wants, needs, goods)
2. Exaggerate (interest, approval, sympathy with H)
3. Intensify interest to H
4. Use in-group identity markers
5. Seek agreement
6. Avoid disagreement
7. Presuppose/raise/assert common ground
8. Joke

Convey that *S* and *H* are co-operators

9. Assert or presuppose *S*'s knowledge of and concern for *H*'s wants
10. Offer, promise
11. Be optimistic
12. Include both *S* and *H* in the activity
13. Give (or ask for) reasons
14. Assume or assert reciprocity

Fulfil *H*'s want (for some *X*)

15. Give gifts to H (goods, sympathy, understanding, co-operation).

Moreover, the author cites Brown & Levinson (1987:70) when they argue that positive politeness is "approach-based" and that it indicates that the speaker's wants are identical to the hearer's wants. This can be done "by treating him [or

¹⁰ It should be noted that the abbreviation *S* refers to the speaker, *H* stands for the hearer and *X* (although not explicitly mentioned in Brown & Levinson's work) can be substituted for any of hearer's wants.

her] as a member of an ingroup, a friend, a person whose wants and personality traits are known and liked” (ibid).

Supporting Brown & Levinson’s point of view, Hickey & Vázquez Orta (1994: 279-280) point out that in a comparative study of politeness in English and Spanish:

[...] the fundamental difference between the two politeness systems can be explained in terms of differences in the significance attached to the two components of face. The English seem to place a higher value in privacy and individuality, i.e. the negative aspect of face, whereas the Spaniards seem to emphasize involvement and in-group relations, i.e. the positive aspect.

In short, they maintain that “for Spaniards the limits to personal territories seem to be looser” (ibid). Accordingly, the authors discern preference of informality and positive politeness strategies in Spain. Within this linguistic community there seems to be a tendency towards spontaneity, enthusiasm and an overt expression of feelings. As a consequence, helping and supporting each other is perceived as a duty among in-group members, which often makes thanking and apologizing superfluous.

Clearly, this orientation towards either negative or positive politeness shows on the verbal level as well. Therefore, the following chapters will outline culture-specific realisations of negative and positive politeness in British English and Peninsular Spanish, respectively. Moreover, language-specific means of communicating politeness such as the comparatively frequent use of off-record politeness in BE or peculiarities of turn-taking and the T/V distinction in Peninsular Spanish will be presented.

6.4 Realisations of linguistic politeness in British English

In a study of politeness in BE, Stewart (2005: 118) identifies two linguistic features as manifestations of a certain “Britishness”: firstly, a preference for negative politeness strategies as carried out through hedging, personal reference and deictic anchorage; and secondly, the frequent use of off-record politeness.

6.4.1 Culture-specific forms of negative politeness

Since Stewart names hedging and deictic anchorage as extensively used strategies of negative politeness, it seems important to clarify these terms before describing their verbal realisations in BE. According to Brown & Levinson (1987: 145) hedges are an important linguistic means to protect an interlocutor's face since they mitigate the force of FTAs. They can be used with both negative and positive politeness strategies to modify the expression of communicative intentions or as intensifying devices in order to claim interest, approval and sympathy with the hearer, respectively. The authors describe hedges as particles, words or phrases and group them into *weakeners* or *strengtheners*. Sifianou (1992) distinguishes between *softeners* and *intensifiers* and names for example *just*, *possibly*, *perhaps*, *absolutely* and *terribly* as adverbs which can function as hedges in English.

As mentioned above, another linguistic feature that is often applied to communicate politeness is deixis:

a term used to denote a word or phrase which [...] refers to temporal, locational, or personal characteristics of a communicative event and its participants (Sifianou 1992: 56).

Such words are *now/then*, *here/there* and *I/you*. In Stewart's terms, (2005:128) deictic anchorage is "how individuals position themselves in relation both to the face-threatening act and to the hearer through language". Accordingly, a shift in personal reference from the *I* referring to the speaker to the *you* referring to the hearer allows a speaker to distance him/herself from the FTA. A further means of distancing is the tendency among native speakers of BE to displace hedges into the past tense in order to convey negative politeness as in:

(2) *I was wondering* whether you could give me a hand (Stewart 2005: 125)

(3) *I felt* that they could *perhaps* have been given more information (Stewart 2005: 123)

Example (3) is a piece of written feedback given to a tutor by a BE monitor. It becomes clear that the BE native speaker pays considerable attention to the positive face of the addressee. To protect his/her own image and the image of the other, s/he uses not only hedges (in italics) as features of negative politeness but

also deictic anchorage, by foregrounding the students (*they*) in order to defocus the criticism from the addressee, and the modal verb *could*. Given these results of her study, Stewart (2005: 125) concludes that

speakers of BE tend, through hedging and deictic anchoring, to detach themselves more from their addressee, a key feature of negative politeness; conversely, they tend to avoid positively polite strategies such as the greater involvement of S and H.

6.4.2 Off-record politeness

In the BE data, the scholar also discerns various instances of non-conventional indirectness: a politeness strategy which Brown & Levinson (1987) label *off-record politeness*. As Sifianou (1992: 34) explains, “this means that the utterance used is ambiguous (formulated as a hint, for instance), and its interpretation is left to the addressee, because the risk of loss of face is great”. In her article, Stewart (2005: 127) cites the following sentence as an instance of non-conventional indirectness in BE:

- (4) I felt that you gave *quite thorough* information, and *a lot of* encouraging support to this student

The author then clarifies that *quite thorough*, as juxtaposed to *a lot of*, might simply implicate *not thorough enough*. Consequently, the addressee needs to be quite sensitive to culture-specific politeness norms of BE in order to interpret that case of non-conventional politeness rightly. In this sense, the British seem to be relatively tolerant of off-record strategies, since the degree of acceptance of such off record politeness varies from culture to culture and in some linguistic communities they might be regarded as “an unwelcome burden of inference” (ibid).

6.5 Realisations of linguistic politeness in Peninsular Spanish

As the last paragraphs showed, non-conventional indirectness as well as deictic means of distancing seem to be language-specific realisations of politeness in BE. Language-specific realisations of politeness in Peninsular Spanish, on the contrary, rather indicate closeness to others. In order to highlight these peculiarities of

Spanish communicative behaviour, I will refer to Hickey (2005). The scholar observes that Spanish politeness is displayed in lavish complimenting and in a certain amount of tolerance when it comes to interruptions. Moreover, he describes the use of formal and informal pronouns in Spanish, a feature which is absent in present-day English.

6.5.1 Culture-specific forms of positive politeness

Hickey (2005: 320) is another scholar who refers to the fact that positive politeness (as well as negative politeness, of course) should not be regarded as homogeneous notions. That implies its realisation will also vary from culture to culture. In this sense, the author reports that one of the manifestations of positive politeness in Spanish is the tendency towards generous complimenting and expressions of praise and appreciation such as:

- (5) ¡Qué x eres!
[How x you are]
- (6) Te aprecio mucho
[I appreciate you very much]
- (7) Mi mujer te admira
[My wife admires you]
- (8) Mis hijos te quieren mucho
[My children like you very much]

The x slot in example (5) can be filled with any adjective that connotes a positive quality such as *bueno/buena* [good], *inteligente* [intelligent], *puntual* [punctual], *listo/lista* [clever] etc. In addition, Spanish complimenting behaviour often involves physical contact and is a means to indicate friendship and solidarity. Admiring the interlocutor's qualities, actions and beliefs is a linguistic activity on which the Spanish expend much effort. Their admiration might either be expressed directly or indirectly; and it can also take the form of accepting a friend's delay and consequently waiting much longer than members of negatively polite societies would do. When the late-comer has arrived, his or her delay might, but need not, be compensated with only a conventional expression of apology.

6.5.2 Turn-taking

While the British are said to be tolerant of non-conventional indirectness, the Spanish are said to be tolerant with respect to turn-taking. As Haverkate (1988: 389-390) points out, speakers of Spanish are very liberal when it comes to the maxim *don't interrupt*. He argues that "conversational interruptions are face-threatening acts if they prevent the interlocutor from achieving his [or her] communicative goal" (ibid). Yet, this maxim is of varying importance across languages. As Hickey (2005: 318) summarises, among Spanish native speakers, talking over each other does not necessarily count as an interruption, is not intended to hinder a speaker in conveying a message but is often a means to express their point of view convincingly and to show their enthusiasm, their passion as well as positive participation in linguistic encounters. This is to say that in a society oriented towards positive politeness, such as the Spanish, behaviour which indicates involvement in a conversation is more important than any desire to be unimpeded as it would be the case in societies oriented towards negative politeness, such as the British. Leech (1983: 139) supports this claim as he identifies interruptions of an interlocutor as impolite acts in British English. Ardila (2008: 211) adds highly interesting empirical evidence to the subject matter when he presents the results of a study in which he detected 99 instances of interruptions among English native speakers and 594 instances among Spanish native speakers¹¹. Consequently, it can be concluded that interruptions occur much more frequently among the rather positively polite Spanish than among the rather negatively polite British.

6.5.3 The T/V distinction

As Hickey (2005: 319) explains, in Spanish there is an informal and a formal way of addressing someone with *you*. Speakers can either opt for the informal second-person singular and plural of the verb (*tú/vosotros-vosotras*) or they may use the formal third person singular and plural (*usted/ustedes*). *Tú/vosotros-vosotras* are common between individuals of equal status, such as relatives, friends, colleagues

¹¹ The interruptions were registered within almost 4 hours of various conversations in equal formal and situational contexts.

or young persons. *Usted/ustedes*, on the contrary, are applied in formal settings or among strangers older than 50. The respective pronouns are not always used in a reciprocal way, i.e. older people can address adolescents with the informal *tú* whereas the younger persons use *usted*. Moreover, speakers can offer a change from the formal to the informal terms without any difficulty. There is also the possibility to use a first-person plural form, as in *¿Cómo estamos?* [*How are we?*], in order to avoid the T/V distinction. This form is also used to convey involvement in the interlocutor's affairs.

Stewart (2005: 117) takes the fact that there is no T/V distinction in English as an indicator to characterise it as the language of a more egalitarian society. However, the use of honorifics (such as *Sir, Mrs, Ms*) in BE labels it as 'old English' in comparison to other varieties. Ardila (2008: 209) discovers that the British use formal address forms, such as *you + sir/madam/miss* or *you + title + surname*, much more frequently than the Spanish use *usted*. Sifianou (1992: 63) argues that the T/V alternates are a structurally rather simple means for speakers to express formality, politeness and social distance. Therefore, speakers of English need to compensate for the lack of it with elaboration and indirectness. In Sifianou's point of view

it would not be unreasonable to suggest that [...] a degree of formality and elaboration in the [English] language was [...] adopted [...] in order to counterbalance the need for the expression of the distinction between formality and informality (ibid).

6.6 English and Spanish politeness contrastively viewed

In order to highlight further language-specific realisations of polite verbal behaviour, I will now cite some authors who investigated the phenomenon on the speech-act level. This is to say, I will briefly refer to differences in the realisation of the speech acts of apologising, thanking, requesting and commanding in English and Spanish.

According to Hickey & Vázquez Orta (1994: 280-281), the preference of positive politeness in Spanish shows linguistically that its speakers express requests,

wishes, advice and suggestions more directly than speakers of English, i.e. they use imperatives and indicatives frequently. Within the rather negatively polite British, in contrast, they argue that thanks and apologies tend to be articulated as imperatives even among in-group members and for occasions of less relevance. Along with that, Siebold (2012: 372-373) observes that acts which threaten a speaker's positive face, such as apologising, thanking or accepting complaints, are often realised in an indirect, not explicit way in Spanish.

At this point it seems crucial to reconsider Leech's (1983: 104-105) classification of illocutionary functions: According to Leech, in speech acts such as requesting the illocutionary function is competitive while thanking and apologising are subsumed under the convivial function. Moreover, he identifies speech acts such as asserting or instructing as collaborative and threatening or accusing as conflictive¹². Since Leech is of the opinion that the convivial and the competitive function "chiefly involve politeness" (ibid), whereas in the other two situations the phenomenon is irrelevant, the following sections will focus exclusively on the first two functions.

6.6.1 Convivial speech acts

6.6.1.1 Apologising and thanking

In her article, Stewart (2005: 117) names studies which confirm that, when apologising, the British tend to intensify *I'm sorry* with a repertoire of adverbs (such as *terribly*, *awfully*). Additionally, they are said to justify themselves with lengthy explanations and to demonstrate an inclination to redress the hearer's negative face. Following Siebold's (2012: 370) description of apologies in Spanish, these are not necessarily expressed explicitly but often indirectly in the form of explanations. In addition, softening devices are frequently employed in order to protect a speaker's positive face:

- (9) A: ¿Usted no sabe que aquí está prohibido aparcar?
B: Sí, no no, pero es que han sido dos segundos que he dejado ahí a mi madre. (ibid)

¹² For more comprehensive information on Leech's classification of speech acts see section 3.3.

[A: Don't you know that parking is forbidden here?
B: Yes, I do, no, but it has only been two seconds that I've dropped
my mother off there.]

This example is an instance of an indirect apology and the use of a mitigating device (*han sido dos segundos*) indicates the speaker's intent to play down the seriousness of the offense.

Hickey (2005: 327) makes a similar point when he illustrates that thanking in Spanish "is not necessarily doing or saying anything that sounds like 'thanks'". Although the Spanish language provides conventionalised politeness formulae for giving thanks, its speakers do not always employ these devices. The Spanish are said to express gratitude by showing interest in the gift they received rather than to acknowledge the effort made by the giver, as negative-politeness societies would do. This form of thanking, by communicating appreciation of the object without saying *thanks* (i.e. *gracias*) explicitly, is regarded another manifestation of positive politeness. Siebold (2012: 372) explains further that small favours are often taken for granted in societies oriented towards solidarity, so that explicit thanking could even have a distancing effect in so far as that it would question the friendly, informal relationship between the interlocutors. The following example is cited to illustrate her claim:

- (10) A: Hola, Raúl, venía a devolverte las llaves. Oye, qué favor me has hecho, ¿eh?
B: No, no te preocupes, hombre.
A: Porque los autobuses tú sabes que –
B: Ya, ya lo sé, y más para ir hasta allí, ¿no?
A: Para Ikea, tío.
B: Que no pasa nada, que cuando quieras te las dejo otra vez.
A: Sí, sí, va de maravilla, ¿eh? (...)
B: Bueno, pues, cuando quieras me las pides, ¿eh? que no hay problema.
A: Venga, muchas gracias.
B: Venga, adiós. (ibid)

[A: Hi, Raúl, I came to bring back your keys. Listen, you've done me a great favour, you know?
B: Oh, don't worry, man.
A: Because the busses, you know that –
B: Oh, I know already, and even more to go there, ¿isn't it?
A: To Ikea, man.
B: Don't worry, whenever you want to, you can have them again.]

A: Yes, it goes marvellously, doesn't it?
B: Well, then, whenever you want to you ask me for them, ¿okay?
It's no problem.
A: So then, thank you very much.
B: So then, good bye.]

In (10), an expression of gratitude (*qué favor me has hecho*) and a compliment for the car (*va de maravilla*) precede the thanking formula *gracias*. Accordingly, the interlocutors emphasise their friendly relationship and express appreciation and admiration as forms of positive politeness before realising an explicit expression of thanks. Therefore, there seems to be agreement among the authors in as far as that

Spanish politeness generally takes the positive form of effusiveness, personal enthusiasm, admiration and praise of others, rather than negative forms like avoiding intrusion or apologising for any imposition inadvertently caused (Hickey 2005: 328).

6.6.2 Competitive speech acts

6.6.2.1 Requesting and commanding

Considering the speech act of requesting, Stewart (2005: 117) names Márquez Reiter's (2000) study which confirms BE-speakers' preference for indirectness strategies, their avoidance of bald-on record strategies even when the risk of face-loss is small, as well as their inclination to minimise the level of imposition, to avoid naming the hearer as an actor and their intensive use of external modifiers.

Moreover, Ardila (2006: 22) cites Márquez Reiter's (1997) investigations into English (BE) and Spanish (Uruguayan Spanish) request behaviour. What the scholar concludes is that the English speakers employ imperatives much less frequently than the Spanish speakers (10% in comparison to 29%). This is due to the fact that in Spanish "imperatives are not simply used for commands and instructions, they are also used to express hopes, desires and wishes" (Márquez Reiter 1997: 146). Interrogative constructions occur more frequently in English (86%) than in Spanish (68%) and the former formulate interrogative requests rather elaborately with modals in contrast to the latter who formulate them with present indicatives or conditional constructions. Declaratives are also more common in English than in Spanish since speakers of British English prefer the

conventionalised *I'd like* in request situations in which Spanish speakers often employ the verbs *necesitar* [*to need*] and *querer* [*to want*] which “may sound too direct and impolite to English speakers” (Márquez Reiter 1997: 147).

In both commanding and requesting, the difference between English and Spanish native speakers is most salient in their use of direct strategies. In Ballesteros Martín's study (2001) only 18.33 % of the English speakers against 32.22% of the Spanish speakers employed direct strategies for requests and commands. Hickey (2005: 321) supports these findings when he summarises other studies which prove that the Spanish often prefer direct forms to indirect forms:

(11) Cierra la puerta, mujer

[Close the door, woman]

(12) Cállate, hombre

[Shut up, man]

In these examples, the familiarity markers *mujer* and *man* are used to indicate closeness and sympathy with the hearer in order to compensate for the directness of the speech act.

Similarly, Hickey & Vázquez Orta (1994: 280-281) observe that the speech act of requesting occurs less frequently in English than in Spanish and that it is expressed in a more elaborate and indirect way within the negatively oriented speech community. In contrast, direct strategies such as imperatives are frequently employed in Spanish:

se pueden encontrar situaciones en las que se emplean libremente formas de imperativo en español [...] mientras que en inglés estas formas se considerarían totalmente inapropiadas

[in Spanish one can encounter situations in which imperative forms are employed freely, while these forms would be considered absolutely inappropriate in English] (Díaz Pérez 2003: 136).

According to Ardila (2006: 21) there is even a

desuso en español de las fórmulas y las estrategias de cortesía que en otras lenguas son condición [...] para evitar la fricción en la comunicación

[misuse of politeness formulae and strategies in Spanish which are a condition of avoiding communicative friction in other languages].

In order to support this claim, examples such as the following are cited by various authors:

- (13) C: Dame un cigarrillo, D
D: Están en mi campera andá a buscarlos (Márquez Reiter 1998: 293) ¹³

[C: Give me a cigarette, D
D: They're in my jacket go and get them]

- (14) Niña, dame cinco croissants y una barrita, anda. (Siebold 2012: 369)

[Child, give me five croissants and a baguette, go on.]

Within these speech samples, politeness strategies are not oriented towards the hearer's negative face as it would be likely in English. Instead, some means of positive politeness such as the familiarity marker *niña* or the interpersonal marker *anda* in (14) are employed in order to create a certain grade of intimacy between the interlocutors. Establishing such a friendly atmosphere redresses the face threat that might be caused due to the use of the imperative. (ibid)

In accordance with Martínez Reiter, Díaz Pérez (2003: 136) points out that in Spanish request situations, interrogatives with indicative present tense verbs, as in

- (15) ¿Me dejas los apuntes? (ibid)

[Do you lend me your notes?],

are frequently used in addition to the imperative. In English, as he adds, the same request would imply the use of a modal verb as in:

- (16) Would you lend me your notes? (my example)

Ardila (2006: 21) underpins this claim with the following examples:

¹³ This example is cited from Márquez Reiter's (1998) study of Spanish in Uruguay.

(17) Dime qué quieres

[Tell me what you want]

(18) Can you tell me what you want?

This empirical evidence shows again that while Spanish requests or commands are often realised as imperatives, the English equivalent will rather be performed as an interrogative including a modal verb.

As examples (16) and (18) illustrate, the preference of conventional indirectness in BE request behaviour, instances of non-conventional indirectness are also observed frequently. Ballesteros Martín's (2001:190) study of requests and commands, among others, demonstrates that in English the presence of non-conventionally indirect strategies is higher than in the Spanish language.

In the relevant literature, conventional indirectness is often referred to as indirect speech acts while non-conventional indirectness is labelled hints, which oblige the addressee to make appropriate inferences. As Blum-Kulka & Olshtain (1984: 201) illustrate, conventionally indirect requests in English take the following form:

(19) Could you open the window?

(20) Would you open the window?

and non-conventionally indirect requests might be realised as follows:

(21) Why is the window open?

(22) It's cold in here.

At this point, I would like to come back to Stewart's (2005: 128) study again. The author argues that "British English tends towards negative politeness and favours off-record strategies in carrying out certain face-threatening acts" while Díaz Pérez (2003: 136) concludes that

el uso tanto de imperativos como del modo indicativo en las peticiones en español puede considerarse una consecuencia de la orientación hacia la imagen positiva de la cortesía en español

[the use of both imperatives and the indicative mood in Spanish requests can be considered a consequence of the orientation towards positive face of Spanish politeness].

Providing statistical evidence, Ballersteros Martín (2001: 191) makes these opposing tendencies even clearer when he concludes:

los españoles muestran una clara preferencia por atenuar la fuerza ilocutiva de sus ruegos y mandatos con estrategias de cortesía positiva (40%) y los ingleses con estrategias de cortesía negativa (73,33%) [...]

[the Spanish show a clear preference for mitigating the illocutionary force of their requests and commands with positive politeness strategies (40%) and the English with negative politeness strategies (73,33%)].

These last quotes have led my argumentation back to the starting point, which was positive and negative politeness in English and Spanish. Therefore, I will close this chapter and move on to the next part of my thesis in which I will investigate the status of linguistic politeness in foreign language teaching. To summarise, chapter 6 was an outline of linguistic politeness in British English and Peninsular Spanish that revealed differing tendencies within the respective languages: whereas English native speakers show a preference for freedom from imposition and formality, Spanish native speakers tend towards closeness and informality. As such contradictory norms and beliefs might be a source of misunderstandings in intercultural communication, chapter 7 will emphasise the need of a pragmatic approach in foreign language teaching.

7. POLITENESS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

In order to become a competent speaker of a foreign language, one does not only need to acquire its grammatical rules but also its pragmatic features. In other words, there is more behind communicative competence than merely producing grammatically correct sentences. Linguistic politeness is part of the pragmatic knowledge that language learners have to acquire in order to communicate effectively. Therefore, linguistic politeness should be an issue in foreign language teaching. In order to investigate the importance of politeness as a teaching objective, the present chapter will first consider the curricula of Austria's secondary academic schools [allgemeinbildende höhere Schulen (AHS)]¹⁴. Following this, I will focus on politeness as included within pragmatic competence, which in turn is a major component of a language learner's communicative competence. Lastly, the (under)representation of linguistic politeness in textbooks for foreign language teaching will be outlined within chapter 7.

7.1 Politeness in the curriculum

If the main questions concerning linguistic politeness within foreign language teaching are whether the concept is an important issue and whether it can or should be taught, it seems crucial to investigate current curricula as a first step.

According to the curriculum for the lower level of secondary academic schools [AHS Unterstufe] in Austria, the teaching of a second or foreign language implies:

Sozialkompetenz und interkulturelle Kompetenz

Der Fremdsprachenunterricht hat einen Beitrag zur Entwicklung sozial angemessenen Kommunikationsverhaltens der Schülerinnen und Schüler – sei es in der Muttersprache oder in einer Fremdsprache – zu leisten

[Social competence and intercultural competence

¹⁴ Terminology according to the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture

[Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur (BMUKK)]:

http://www.bmukk.gv.at/enfr/school/gen_edu/secon.xml (08.07.2012).

Foreign language teaching has to contribute to the learners' development of socially appropriate communicative behaviour – either in the native or in a non-native language] (BMUKK 2000: 1).

As the previous chapters have demonstrated, polite verbal behaviour is not only referred to as “socially appropriate communicative behaviour” in the curriculum (ibid) but also within the scholarly literature. Consequently, such appropriate behaviour, i.e. politeness, should ideally be a topic in foreign language teaching, even at the beginner's level.

In the curriculum for the upper level of secondary academic schools [AHS Oberstufe] in Austria, politeness is explicitly mentioned as a teaching objective:

Erwerb soziolinguistischer Kompetenzen

Mit fortschreitendem Lernzuwachs sind zunehmend Registerunterschiede zwischen neutralen, formellen, informellen, freundschaftlichen bzw. vertraulichen Sprachformen zu beachten, die dazu beitragen, dass sich die Schülerinnen und Schüler sprachlich sozial angemessen verhalten; den Höflichkeitskonventionen kommt dabei besondere Bedeutung zu

[Acquisition of sociolinguistic competence

As learning progresses, differences in register between neutral, formal, informal and friendly or intimate language forms, which contribute to the learners' appropriate linguistic behaviour, have to be considered increasingly; politeness conventions are of particular importance in this respect] (BMUKK 2004: 3).

Taking these extracts into account, linguistic politeness should be an important issue of foreign language teaching in Austria. Theoretically, current curricula recognise the fundamental role of politeness as part of a language learner's communicative competence. Accordingly, the concept should already be introduced at the beginner's level and as the language learners become more proficient, it should become more significant as well.

As it has already been stated, pragmatic competence includes linguistic politeness and is part of a non-native speaker's communicative competence. This model is of major importance within language instruction and will be outlined in the following chapter.

7.2 Politeness as a component of communicative competence

Since the term *communicative competence* was mentioned in the last paragraphs, I will briefly outline this concept here. Representative of the common opinion within the field, Erndl (1998: 2) regards communicative competence as the central learning objective within foreign language instruction.

Díaz Pérez (2003: 429) supports this point of view:

El objetivo de la enseñanza de un idioma extranjero debe consistir en que el hablante no nativo consiga utilizar su conocimiento gramatical y léxico en actos creativos de comunicación. De este modo, la adquisición de la competencia comunicativa se ha considerado como uno de los objetivos más importantes en el aprendizaje de una lengua extranjera

[The objective of foreign language teaching has to be that the non-native speaker succeeds in applying his/her grammatical and lexical knowledge in creative communicative acts. In this way, the acquisition of communicative competence is considered one of the most important objectives of foreign language acquisition].

Following Canale & Swain's (1980) model, a speaker's communicative competence consists of his/her grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence (composed of sociocultural rules of use as well as rules of discourse) and strategic competence. Within this theory, pragmatic competence is not explicitly mentioned but incorporated within *sociocultural rules of use*, as maintained by Kasper & Rose (2001: 1). In fact, pragmatic competence "has been regarded as one of the main components of communicative competence" as Fernández Guerra, Usó Juan & Martínez Flor (2003: 10) affirm. Consequently, this concept will be examined more closely in the next chapter.

7.3 Politeness as a component of pragmatic competence

Before pragmatic competence is pictured as a major issue within foreign language teaching though, there is a need to give some definitions of the term *pragmatics* in general.

Leech (1983: 10) defines pragmatics as “the study of the general conditions of the communicative use of language”. More specifically, Leech (1983) and Thomas (1983) subdivide pragmatics into pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics. While the language-specific area of pragmalinguistics refers to “the particular resources which a given language provides for conveying particular illocutions”, the culture-specific field of sociopragmatics is understood as “the sociological interface of pragmatics” (Leech 1983: 10-11). With regard to this distinction, it is important to mention that pragmalinguistic features of language “can be taught quite straightforwardly as part of grammar” since their usage is highly conventionalised (Thomas 1983: 91). In contrast, sociopragmatic features of language constitute a more problematic issue of language teaching since they refer to speakers’ culture-specific assumptions and expectations, as Márquez Reiter (1998: 295) emphasises.

For Kasper (1997: 1), pragmatics is “the study of communicative action in its sociocultural context”. More precisely, she explains that pragmalinguistics includes linguistic resources such as pragmatic strategies in form of directness and indirectness, conversational routines or intensifying and softening devices. Sociopragmatics, in contrast, is described as a notion referring to speakers’ sociolinguistic knowledge and their interpretation of socially appropriate linguistic behaviour by Bou-Franch & Garcés-Conejos’ (2003: 2). A more recent definition of pragmatics is provided by Fernández Guerra, Usó Juan & Martínez Flor (2003: 9), who highlight “the importance of language use in real-life communication and speaker’s intentions when producing utterances in particular contexts”.

Interestingly, a non-native speaker’s lack of pragmatic competence can have much worse effects than his/her grammatical mistakes. In Lörcher & Schulze’s (1988: 188) words, “violations of grammatical rules relatively seldom disturb communication” whereas disobedience of the rules within the other components of communicative competence “prevents communication from taking place or leads to its breakdown”. The authors would categorise politeness strategies among these rules of interaction which disable successful verbal interaction. Cenoz, Vázquez & Barnes (1998: 199) agree entirely when they state that

los errores a nivel pragmático son en muchos casos más graves que los errores de otras áreas lingüísticas porque pueden ser atribuidos a una falta de cortesía

[errors on the pragmatic level are in many cases much worse than errors in other linguistic areas because they can be attributed to a lack of politeness].

In this respect, Márquez Reiter (1998: 196) argues quite rightly that a teacher's job "will be that of sensitising students to expect cross-cultural differences". Language learners need to be made aware of the fact that different languages use different politeness strategies. However, it must be stated that this does not make a society more or less polite than another one.

Bou-Franch & Garcés-Conejos (2003: 3) explain this phenomenon as follows: a non-native speaker's grammatical errors may easily reveal his/her lack of proficiency in the foreign language, while his/her pragmatic errors might not be recognised and thus interpreted as unfriendliness by a native speaker. Taking the fact into account that a lack of pragmatic competence on part of the non-native speaker might be interpreted as a lack of politeness, Landone (2009: 2) continues that such perceived impoliteness can lead to a confirmation of prejudices and therefore to cultural stereotypes. At this point, the foreign language teacher comes in.

In the course of the last paragraphs, it has become obvious that there is a need to teach pragmatics in the foreign language classroom. Yet, the question whether pragmatic competence can be taught still remains unanswered. The following section is an attempt to clarify this subject matter.

7.4 Politeness as a teaching objective?

Initially, the importance of linguistic politeness within foreign language teaching should be highlighted. This can be done by citing the following authors:

As Cenoz, Vázquez & Barnes (1998: 196) point out, "la teoría que más importancia ha tenido en el estudio de la competencia pragmática es la teoría de la cortesía [the

theory which has been of most importance in the study of pragmatic competence is politeness theory]". Additionally, Bou-Franch & Garcés-Conejos (2003: 8) "consider linguistic politeness to have a central place in foreign language teaching". Along with that, however, it is important to notice that

Höflichkeit gehört zu den schwer zu vermittelnden und zu erlernenden Fertigkeiten in einer Fremdsprache

[politeness belongs to the skills which are difficult to teach and to acquire in a foreign language],

as Erndl (1998: 88) points out.

7.4.1 Teaching pragmatic competence

If we want to find out about the teachability of linguistic politeness, it is obligatory to examine whether pragmatic competence can be taught, as the former concept is included within the latter. Following Bou-Franch & Garcés-Conejos (2003: 1), pragmatic competence is the most demanding component to acquire in a second or foreign language. Moreover, the scholars refer to Kasper (1997: 2-4) as she claims that many aspects of pragmatic competence will not develop sufficiently without instruction, although pragmatic competence as such cannot be taught¹⁵.

Yet, to state that some components of pragmatic competence need teaching implies that others do not. In fact, there is pragmatic knowledge which is universal (for example the knowledge that conversations are organised according to various principles such as turn-taking, the knowledge that pragmatic intent can be conveyed indirectly, the knowledge that every language consists of conversational routines for recurrent communicative situations and the knowledge that contextual factors influence the choice of communicative strategies). Clearly, these components do not require much teaching. Moreover, foreign language learners may also transfer pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge from their mother tongue if there is correspondence in some aspects of the first and the target language. However, learners do not always make use of what they know. Accordingly, they do not always transfer their universal or native language-based

¹⁵ The fact that Kasper also claims that pragmatic competence is not teachable will be elaborated in section 7.4.2.1.

pragmatic knowledge. In this sense, Kasper maintains that there is a need to make learners aware of what they already know so that they can utilise their universal or transferable pragmatic knowledge in a foreign language. (ibid)

7.4.2 Teaching linguistic politeness

With regard to politeness, Kasper & Rose (2001: 4-5) argue that the phenomenon is a pragmatic universal in as far as that it “regulate[s] communicative action and interaction throughout communities, even though what counts as [...] polite and how these principles are implemented in context varies across cultures”. In this respect, Landone (2009: 9) lists some aspects of linguistic politeness which are subject to intercultural variation. Among others, the following features are culture-specific: the linguistic forms used to express politeness, the significance and social value attributed to a certain politeness strategy, the preference and frequency of a certain politeness strategy, the social values underlying verbal interaction and expected verbal behaviour. Clearly, these pragmatic means vary from one linguistic community to another and therefore they cannot be transferred from a non-native speaker’s first language. Consequently, some form of language teaching is called for.

Additionally, it must be stressed that making inferences from one’s native language can also lead to pragmatic errors. As House & Kasper (1981: 184) claim, conversational routines such as politeness markers “should neither be used nor interpreted by reference to the learner’s native system”. The scholars point out that native cultural interference (of culture-specific politeness norms) can lead to inappropriate or even impolite behaviour. Equally, Edmondson & House (1982: 225) name a language learner’s transfer from his/her native language as one of three reasons for pragmatic failure¹⁶. As the authors explain, non-native speakers may appear impolite in a foreign language because they simply do not know how to interact appropriately in the target language.

¹⁶ The authors list avoidance strategies and the acquisition of classroom-based interaction norms as two more reasons for inappropriate/impolite linguistic behaviour on part of the language learners.

7.4.2.1 Awareness-raising tasks

Although Kasper (1997) points out that selected pragmatic aspects are indeed teachable, she remarks that pragmatic competence as such cannot be taught. Nevertheless, the scholar points out that foreign language teaching can offer learning opportunities in which this type of competence will develop. Throughout the relevant literature there seems to be an agreement that this is achieved most effectively through awareness-raising tasks. Schmidt (1993: 36) concludes his essay with a demand for “a consciousness-raising approach to the teaching of pragmatics” because mere exposure to appropriate language input will most probably not be enough for the language learners to acquire pragmatic knowledge, as he claims.

Pertaining to the teaching of linguistic politeness in particular, numerous authors agree that language learners will profit from such an awareness-raising approach (Edmondson & House 1982, Sifianou 1992, Meier 1997, Márquez Reiter 1998, Vorderwülbecke 2002, Bou-Franch & Garcés-Conejos 2003, Díaz Pérez 2003, Landone 2009). Edmondson & House (1982: 226) regard politeness as an integrative teaching objective and call for raising the learners’ “Bewusstsein darüber, wie und warum Höflichkeit im Englischen realisiert wird [awareness how and why politeness is realised in English]”. Sifianou (1992: 208) concurs that there is a need to “increase the student’s awareness of the variety of the issues involved in politeness and to help them improve their communicative performance in the target language”.

Meier’s (1997) awareness-raising approach focuses on the teaching of culture and takes the notion of appropriateness as its central concept. She criticises teaching materials that incorporate clear-cut politeness rules since they tend to oversimplify the complex nature of context-dependent appropriate behaviour. Bou-Franch & Garcés-Conejos (2003: 11), in contrast, believe that “the notion of appropriateness is too vague to constitute a useful pedagogical guideline”. The authors argue that a useful methodology for the teaching of linguistic politeness should limit the choices that language learners have to manage in communication as far as possible. As a solution, they propose genre-specific awareness-raising tasks.

Despite differing opinions, awareness-raising activities are generally regarded as a potent tool for both sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic development. Kasper (1997) proposes observation tasks in which students observe particular pragmatic features either inside or outside the classroom. The author emphasises that “authentic native speaker input is indispensable for pragmatic learning”, be it either from oral or written sources. As Bardovi-Harlig et al. (1991: 11) suggest, a native-speaker “classroom guest”, the acting out of (modified) textbook dialogues and role plays constitute excellent ways of benefiting the development of pragmatic awareness within the foreign language classroom. Numerous scholars (such as Bardovi-Harlig et al. 1991: 13, Sifianou 1992: 207-208, Márquez Reiter 1998: 296, Díaz Pérez 2003: 430-431) list radio and television programmes (e.g. talk shows), films, magazines, newspapers as well as books and plays as further sources of authentic material which can be used to raise student’s pragmatic awareness.

7.5 Politeness in textbooks

Underlining the importance of natural language input, Kasper (1997: 10) discerns “a mismatch between [...] authentic discourse and textbook dialogues”. This has been proved by scholars such as Bardovi-Harlig et al. (1991: 10) who did a textbook analysis and concluded that “teachers often lack adequate textbook materials that focus on pragmatic functions”. Moreover, Meier (1997: 24) criticises the fact that textbooks often list phrases and strategies in a simplified manner and that the notion of politeness is much more complex than any rules that appear in teaching materials. Along with that, Landone (2009: 10) states that Spanish teaching material seems to have difficulties with linguistic politeness. Her point of view is supported by de Pablos-Ortega (2011: 2424) when he says that “Spanish didactic materials [...] do not widely, or accurately, reflect the socio cultural reality of the Spanish language and its culture”. Almost 30 years earlier, Edmondson & House (1982: 226) already demand appropriate teaching materials to overcome the difference between what is considered appropriate in the target language and in the classroom. That there are indeed “deficits of politeness in classroom discourse in comparison with everyday conversation” was revealed by Lörcher &

Schulze (1988: 196). In addition, Myers Scotton & Bernstein (1988: 373) draw from their textbook analysis that “naturally-occurring dialogues differ considerably from dialogues found in most TESOL¹⁷ books”.

Both the lack of politeness in classroom discourse and inaccurate textbook dialogues may leave the language learners unaware of politeness conventions in the target language, as Lüger (1993: 234-236) states correctly. From an investigation of teaching materials for learners of German as a foreign language, he concludes the following:

Firstly, course book texts and dialogues are characterised by strongly idealised, unnatural language. This is to say that they often resemble written rather than oral discourse since instances of backchanneling, pauses or reformulations are normally not included. The dialogues do not present any complications, misunderstandings and necessary repair work. In addition, language learners are only sparingly taught how to apply indirect speech acts, how to avoid face-threatening acts, how to mitigate speech acts (through modal verbs, modes, particles, adverbs etc.) or how to make appropriate use of terms of address. For Lüger (ibid) the reason might be

daß die meisten Lehrbuchdialoge nicht für situationsangemessene Adressatenorientierung und dementsprechende Höflichkeitsgrade sensibilisieren können

[that most of the textbook dialogues cannot sensitise for situation-dependent hearer-orientation and resulting amounts of politeness].

Secondly, the scholar points out that numerous textbook dialogues disregard constitutive functions of interaction, i.e. to establish and maintain interactional relationships. In this sense, conversational routines, such as openings and closings, are often missing, which implies that the interlocutors' conversational rights and obligations cannot be indicated. The fact that communication is also a social activity is often neglected in favour of a mere transmission of information.

¹⁷ TESOL = Teaching English for Speakers of Other Languages

Thirdly, most textbooks still lack communicative acts which aim at maintaining interpersonal relationships. As Lüger (ibid) criticises, textbooks hardly ever contain speech acts which fulfil primarily social functions, such as small talk.

In sum, many textbook dialogues cannot be regarded as appropriate learning models since they provide too few instances of context-specific hearer-oriented communicative behaviour and do not facilitate the acquisition of varying amounts of politeness and familiarity.

Along with Lüger, Erndl (1998: 89) discerns from his textbook analysis that the importance of linguistic politeness is often not (sufficiently) represented in teaching materials for German as a foreign language. Investigating English and Spanish teaching materials, Moreno Pichastor (1998: 305) argues that textbooks often disregard “what politeness actually involves and that a more comprehensive treatment is needed”. She concurs with Meier (1997) that teaching materials tend to oversimplify the subject matter which results in a gap between the textbook and the target language. Instead of presenting decontextualised formulae, Moreno Pichastor is in favour of teaching materials which provide politeness strategies in a contextualised manner in order to raise students’ awareness of appropriate linguistic behaviour. Minervini (2002: 597) evaluates textbooks for the teaching of Spanish as a foreign language and concludes that

[l]os manuales de lenguas extranjeras muy pocas veces tratan estos aspectos [de la cortesía verbal] que adquieren una importancia fundamental para quien está aprendiendo una L2

[foreign language textbooks rarely treat these aspects [of linguistic politeness] that obtain fundamental importance for someone acquiring a L2].

Concerning linguistic politeness in textbooks for German as a foreign language, Vorderwülbecke (2002: 39) argues:

Insgesamt gesehen wird das Thema Höflichkeit zu wenig berücksichtigt. Besonders gravierend sind das Fehlen bzw. Nicht-Bewusstmachen beziehungsgestaltender Mittel, sodass kein systematischer Aufbau einer Gesprächskompetenz gefördert wird.

[On the whole, the topic of politeness is not sufficiently taken into account. Particularly serious is the absence or unawareness of features

to establish interactional relationships so that no systematic development of communicative competence is facilitated.]

Noticeably, it seems that he is the author who depicts most clearly “was zu tun ist” [what there is to be done] (ibid). What Vorderwülbecke (2002: 41-42) proposes is a three-step *Progressionsmodell* as a guideline for the development of linguistic politeness in the foreign language classroom. This framework is an answer to the question of how foreign language teaching can further the acquisition of politeness.

As a methodological basis, Vorderwülbecke (2002: 31-33) discriminates *conventional* from *individual politeness*, which can be compared to Watts’ (1992 [2005])¹⁸ distinction between *politic* and *polite behaviour*. Accordingly, the author is another scholar who views politeness as a dual concept¹⁹. As Vorderwülbecke (2002: 32) explains, he understands conversational politeness to be comprised of context-free linguistic features which serve to conform to social norms and conventions, whereas individual politeness consists of context-dependent, variable features which exceed these norms expressing respect and deference.

Furthermore, the author differentiates between *knowledge how to express politeness* and *knowledge about politeness*. The former includes the elaboration of linguistic features to enable polite communication (mostly conventional politeness) and awareness-raising tasks concerning the difference between literal and pragmatic meaning. The latter can develop through discussions about cultural norms, intra- and intercultural differences as well as through projects and observation tasks.

The model is based on the assumption that all the aforementioned features (conventional and individual politeness, knowledge how to express politeness and knowledge about politeness) can constitute a basis for the development of polite verbal behaviour in a foreign language. Moreover, it is variable in as far as that its constituents can be adapted according to teaching objectives and content.

¹⁸ For further information see section 3.8

¹⁹ For further information see section 5.3.1

Step 1:

- a) Introduction of oneself and others
- b) T/V distinction
- c) Forms of address
- d) Establishing and terminating contact (directly and on the telephone), opening and closing a conversation
- e) Further conversational routines in relevant situations: requests and commands (including basic forms of indirectness), apologies, expressions of thanks, basic forms of complimenting and appropriate responses
- f) Practice of intonation patterns

Step 2:

- a) Further development and individual realisations of items c) – e) of step 1
- b) Additional forms of indirectness and mitigation
- c) Reference to a third party applying varying forms of address
- d) Introduction of prosodic aspects as a means of conventional politeness through listening exercises, repetition and role plays
- e) Linguistic elements to establish interactional relationships, i.e. interjections

Step 3:

- a) Individual variation of indirectness as a mitigation device (especially in requests and commands)
- b) Face-threatening acts such as denying, rejecting, disagreeing, expressing anger, complaining and appropriate responses
- c) Improvement of prosodic aspects as a means of conventional politeness through reading out aloud
- d) Forms of politeness in formal situations
- e) Summary and reflection: conversational features to enhance or threat interpersonal relationships
- f) Discussing/speaking/reading about politeness: analysis of intra- and intercultural difficulties with politeness considering various topics and text types

As the author explains, step 1 and step 2 should be introduced within year 1 to 4 and step 3 can either be included as well or postponed to later years, depending on teaching conditions. (Vorderwülbecke 2002: 41-42)

In the preceding sections, it has become apparent that politeness is a constitutive element of communicative competence. However, foreign language textbooks seem to have disregarded important features of linguistic politeness. Various authors

criticise inaccurate textbook representations and demand authentic language in teaching material. Moreover, they highlight the necessity to include strategies of establishing and maintaining interpersonal relationships in textbooks. Consequently, a crucial question arises: Can current textbooks for the teaching of English and Spanish in Austria meet these demands? In order to find an answer to that subject matter, I will refer to Vorderwülbecke's (ibid) *Progressionsmodell* as a methodological basis for the following investigation. In short, I will move on to chapter 8 now, which constitutes the empirical part of this thesis, i.e. the textbook analysis.

8. TEXTBOOK ANALYSIS

As the last chapter could reveal, linguistic politeness is often neglected in foreign language teaching materials. Thus, the crucial question emerges, whether Austrian textbooks for the teaching of English and Spanish as a foreign language regard politeness as an important topic and incorporate the subject matter accordingly. In this sense, the subsequent paragraphs constitute the empirical part of this thesis and will elaborate on this issue by analysing examples from current textbooks with regard to polite verbal behaviour.

8.1 The study

This analysis presents tasks from widely used Austrian textbooks for English and Spanish as a foreign language, in order to find out whether these course books consider politeness as an important issue. It should be noted that the study is not designed as an exhaustive textbook analysis but as an attempt to highlight general strengths and difficulties in teaching materials with regard to linguistic politeness. In this sense, I will select representative examples from textbooks to reveal positive and negative tendencies concerning the teaching of politeness.

Vorderwülbecke's (2002: 41-42) *Progressionsmodell*²⁰ will serve as a baseline for this analysis. As the model lists all the (pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic) aspects of politeness that should be taught in a foreign language, it constitutes a suitable foundation for the subsequent research questions. This is to say that for the purpose of this investigation, the term *politeness* is conceived as a notion composed of the various features listed within this *Progressionsmodell*. Consequently, looking for tasks designed for the acquisition of politeness is equivalent to looking for tasks that include features of Vorderwülbecke's framework.

²⁰ see chapter 7.5

8.2 Research questions

In order to meet the aims of this study, the following research questions will guide me through the analysis:

- How much attention do current textbooks pay to linguistic politeness?
- can politeness be found as a topic in the textbook?
- does the textbook contain tasks designed to acquire linguistic politeness?
 - do the tasks mention politeness explicitly?
 - do the tasks further the development of politeness implicitly?

8.3 Materials

Selecting appropriate textbooks for my analysis, I chose from teaching materials approved by the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture (BMUKK)²¹. From this list of recommended course books, I limited the choice to those materials in use from the first to the fourth year of foreign language learning. For English as a second language, these textbooks would be introduced during the lower level of secondary academic schools (AHS Unterstufe), whereas for Spanish as a third language, they would be utilised in the course of the upper level (AHS Oberstufe). Focusing exclusively on these first four years of foreign language instruction ensures the comparability of the different sets of textbooks.

For the present analysis, two different series of textbooks have been selected for each language. For reasons of representativeness, I opted for the most widely used course books in Austrian secondary academic schools. According to the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture (Renner), among the most frequently ordered are the subsequent teaching materials:

Textbooks for English as a foreign language:

- MORE! (Verlag Helbling)
- The New You & Me (Langenscheidt)

²¹ https://www2.schulbuchaktion.at/sba_downloads/sba2012/1000_1100_sbl2012.pdf (30.07.2012).

Textbooks for Spanish as a foreign language:

- Caminos neu (Klett)
- El Nuevo Curso (Langenscheidt)

Referring to the curricula of English as a second language (BMUKK 2000: 5) and Spanish as a third language (BMUKK 2004: 6) in the lower and in the upper level of secondary academic schools respectively, after four years of instruction students of both subjects are supposed to have reached A2/B1 proficiency levels. In order to achieve these aims, there are four volumes of *MORE!* and *The New You & Me*. The Spanish textbooks are subdivided into three volumes each, *Caminos neu A1, A2, B1* and *El Nuevo Curso 1 to 3*. In sum, there are 14 books to consider in the course of the following analysis.

8.4 Results and discussion

8.4.1 Politeness as a topic in textbooks

After a first skim through the textbooks, it is clear that only the *Caminos neu* textbook series dedicates a whole section to the topic of politeness. In unit 12 of the second volume (pp. 89-93), exercise number 4 is called *la cortesía* [politeness] and includes awareness-raising tasks considering sociopragmatic knowledge, which is *knowledge about politeness* (Vorderwülbecke 2002).

The following exercises are embedded within material to clarify the notions of culture, intercultural differences and cultural relativity. These are the two tasks which refer especially to polite verbal behaviour:

Figure 11: Caminos neu A2, p.92²²

4 a) La cortesía.
El concepto de “cortesía” es relativo, ya que depende del país. Lea este cuestionario y decida en cada caso si usted lo haría o si en su país le parece normal hacerlo.

	yo	en mi país
- preguntarle a alguien en una fiesta cuánto gana	☐	☐
- preguntarle a una persona nueva en su empresa si está casada	☐	☐
- hablar con desconocidos mientras está esperando el autobús	☐	☐
- llegar a una fiesta media hora más tarde	☐	☐
- pedir a sus invitados que fumen en el balcón	☐	☐
- abrir un regalo inmediatamente	☐	☐
- ofrecer a los demás bombones o champán que le han regalado	☐	☐
- insistir varias veces para que sus invitados coman un poco más	☐	☐

b) En grupos de 4. Comparen las respuestas.
¿Coinciden en muchos casos? ¿En cuáles hay mucha diferencia? Según el resultado, ¿creen que se puede hablar de comportamientos típicos de su país?

c) ¿Qué piensa que van a decir algunos hispanohablantes sobre estos temas?

d) Opiniones.
Escuche ahora a un grupo de hispanohablantes y marque cuáles de estos temas mencionan. Luego, escuche otra vez y comente las diferencias con sus respuestas y las de su grupo.

²² [Translation of Figure 11:

a) Politeness

The concept of *politeness* is relative as it varies across countries. Read the questionnaire and decide for each case if you would do it or if it is considered normal to do it in your country.

- to ask someone at a party how much s/he earns
- to ask a person who is new in your company if s/he is married
- to talk to strangers while waiting for the bus
- to arrive at a party half an hour late
- to ask your guests to smoke on the balcony
- to open a present immediately
- to offer the others chocolate or champagne that you got as a gift
- to insist repeatedly in that your guests eat a bit more

b) In groups of four. Compare your answers.

Do you agree in many cases? In which cases can you find differences? According to the result, do you think that it is possible to talk about behaviour which is typical for your country?

c) What do you think will Spanish-speakers say about these topics?

d) Opinions.

Listen to a group of Spanish-speakers and mark which of these topics they mention. Then, listen again and comment on the differences to your answers and those of your group.]

Figure 12: Caminos neu A2, p. 93²³

5 a) Aspectos de la cultura.
¿Qué comportamientos son comunes a todas las personas, cuáles hemos aprendido en nuestra cultura y cuáles son individuales?
Lea primero el texto y luego decida si se trata de un comportamiento universal (u), cultural (c) o individual (i).

- ☐ Mostrarse reservado ante desconocidos.
- ☐ Tener miedo de un animal peligroso.
- ☐ Desayunar en un bar.
- ☐ Invitar a amigos a desayunar en casa.
- ☐ Sentir dolor por la muerte de una persona.
- ☐ Dejar el asiento en el autobús a una persona mayor.
- ☐ Enamorarse.
- ☐ Vestirse de negro por la muerte de un familiar.
- ☐ Quitarse los zapatos en casa.
- ☐ No fumar mientras otros comen.
- ☐ Saludar a una persona que conoce.

b) Comparen los resultados en el grupo.



Al escuchar la entrevista, usted habrá notado que no todas las personas están de acuerdo sobre qué es cortés o no. En nuestro comportamiento hay, además de los aspectos culturales que tenemos en común con otras personas de nuestra cultura, aspectos universales, comunes a todo ser humano, y decisiones individuales, que cada persona toma por sí misma.

Los aspectos universales nos ayudan a entender a otras personas de culturas muy diferentes a la nuestra, ya que, por encima de todo, todos somos seres humanos. Los aspectos culturales pueden ser similares a los de nuestra cultura o muy diferentes y, por tanto, fuente de problemas o malentendidos. Los aspectos individuales nos ayudan a no hacer generalizaciones peligrosas. Cada persona es un ser único, con una personalidad única, independientemente del sexo o del país. Hay españoles que no bailan flamenco y argentinos que no bailan tango, y a muchos alemanes no les gusta beber cerveza o prefieren conducir un coche francés.

²³[Translation of Figure 12:

a) Aspects of culture.

Which aspects of behaviour are common to all people, which are culturally acquired and which are individual? Read the text first and then decide whether it is universal (u), cultural (c) or individual (i) behaviour.

- To be reserved towards strangers.
- To be afraid of dangerous animals.
- To have breakfast in a bar.
- To invite friends for breakfast at home.
- To feel pain because someone died.
- To fall in love.
- To dress in black because one of your relatives died.
- To take off your shoes at home.
- Not to smoke while other are eating.
- To greet a person you know.

b) Compare the results in groups.

Summary of the text:

Listening to the interview you will have noticed that not everyone agrees on what is polite and what is not. Our behaviour is composed of universal and individual aspects in addition to the aspects that we share with other members of our culture. Universal aspects help us to understand persons from different countries. Cultural aspects of our behaviour can be identical or different to those of other people of the same culture and therefore often the cause of misunderstandings. Individual aspects help us not to make dangerous generalisations. Every person is unique, with a unique personality, regardless of their sex and their country. There are Spaniards who do not dance Flamenco, Argentines who do not dance Tango and a lot of Germans who do not like beer and drive a French car.]

These two examples constitute excellent awareness-raising tasks since politeness is presented as a concept of universality and cultural relativity at the same time. The textbook does not convey a simplified picture of politeness but it teaches students to expect intercultural differences, which is what so many authors call for (see chapter 7). As a consequence, cultural stereotypes can be addressed and lowered with these kinds of exercises, since they appeal to a language learner's consciousness about the culture-dependent nature of politeness norms.

A few pages later, students are introduced to politeness conventions in business:

3 a) Cortesía en los negocios. ¿Cómo es en su país?

1. En una empresa en su país, ¿quiénes se hablan de *usted* y quiénes de *tú*?
2. En una tienda, ¿los vendedores hablan de *tú* a los clientes?
3. ¿Son importantes las actividades sociales (cenas, etc.) para las relaciones comerciales?

b) Cortesía en el mundo hispano.
Lea el texto y busque las informaciones que se refieren a las preguntas anteriores.

En todos los países hispanohablantes se usa *usted* para mostrar cortesía en una situación de gran formalidad o si hay una gran diferencia de jerarquía. Sin embargo, el uso de *usted* y *tú* no es igual en todos los países. En España, por ejemplo, muchas veces los vendedores tutean al cliente en una tienda. En Latinoamérica normalmente no, y todavía menos si se trata de una persona mayor. Sin embargo, en una empresa, entre colegas de igual nivel, sobre todo si tienen la misma edad y formación, es habitual usar *tú* desde el principio. En todos los casos hay que estar atento y observar las costumbres en cada país e incluso en cada empresa, o bien preguntarle directamente a una persona de confianza.

En el mundo de los negocios, cortesía es también dedicar el tiempo necesario a los socios y clientes. Por eso, para el empresario hispanohablante las actividades sociales con los clientes y la relación de confianza que se crea en ellas son fundamentales. En Honduras existe la expresión popular “Hay más tiempo que vida”: siempre hay tiempo suficiente, e invertirlo en las relaciones personales significa una ganancia.



Recuerde que en Latinoamérica 'vosotros' no se usa.

c) Relacione estas palabras con sus definiciones.

estar atento/-a	trato amable
tutear	alguien no tan joven
confianza	diferentes niveles, p. ej. de responsabilidad
cortesía	poner mucha atención
jerarquía	hablar de <i>tú</i> a una persona
persona mayor	relación de familiaridad con una persona

d) ¿Alguien del grupo ha tenido experiencias de negocios en otro país?
¿Era diferente el uso de *tú* o *usted* para hablar con las personas?

Figure 13: Caminos neu A2, p. 99²⁴

²⁴ [Translation of Figure 13:

a) Politeness in business. How is it in your country?

1. In a company in your country, who uses the formal address forms and who uses the informal forms among each other?

2. In a shop, do the shop assistants use the *tú/vosotros-vosotras* forms to address their customers?

3. Are social activities (such as dinner) important for business relations?

First of all, these exercises address the use of the informal and formal pronouns *tú* and *usted* in a very comprehensive manner. This meets Vorderwülbecke's (2002) demand to improve the learners' understanding of the t/v distinction at a later stage of language learning. Moreover, the students are taught to make appropriate use of address terms in a formal context. They are also made aware of the fact that politeness conventions of Spanish-speakers may vary considerably in comparison to their personal understanding of appropriate behaviour. The continuous reflections concerning these politeness conventions in the language learners' own culture (*Cortesía en negocios. ¿Cómo es en tu país?* [Politeness in business. How is it in your country?]) can be considered as especially valuable. In this sense, polite verbal behaviour is presented as a context- and culture-dependent phenomenon at the same time.

8.4.2 Politeness in textbook tasks

For the rest of the teaching materials under investigation, the question whether they contain an entire unit dedicated to the topic of politeness must be negated. In neither of the other course books, politeness could be found as the heading of a section. Yet, the term is often present in a subsection of some units or it is at least

b) Politeness in the Spanish-speaking world.

Read the text and search for information that refers to the preceding questions.

Summary of the text:

In every Spanish-speaking country, *usted* is used to show politeness in formal situations or if there is a big difference between the persons' status. Yet, the use of *tú/usted* is not equal in every country. In Spain, shop assistants use the informal pronouns to address their customers. In Latin America, colleagues of equal status use the informal pronouns from the beginning. In each country and company, you have to pay attention to the conventions or ask a person of confidence.

In the world of business, politeness does also mean to dedicate enough time to your business partners and clients. In Spain, a relation of confidence and familiarity between business partners is considered fundamental. In Honduras, there is the popular expression *Hay más tiempo que vida* [There is more time than life]: there is always enough time and it is a benefit to invest it in personal relations.

c) Connect these words with their definitions.

to be attentive

to address someone informally

confidence

politeness

hierarchy

an elder person

friendly treatment

someone not so young

different levels of e.g. responsibility

to pay a lot of attention

to use the *tú*-form

relationship of familiarity

d) Has anyone in the group already gained foreign business experience?

Were the formal and informal address terms used differently?]

mentioned in a side note. What follows now is the depiction of linguistic politeness as referred to in the course books.

8.4.2.1 MORE!

Throughout the set of textbooks, linguistic politeness is never explicitly mentioned. Although the teaching materials introduce relevant linguistic features, comments on polite verbal behaviour are missing.

8.4.2.2 *The New You & Me*

In *The New You & Me 3*, polite verbal behaviour is explicitly mentioned in a subsection of unit 8, named *How polite should you be?* The realisation of requests for a bus ticket in varying degrees of politeness is incorporated in a sketch. Extracting all these requests from the text, results in the following scale from impolite to polite verbal behaviour:

- Sevenoaks, single.
- I want a single to Sevenoaks.
- A single to Sevenoaks, please.
- A single to Sevenoaks, please, Madam.
- Could I have a single to Sevenoaks, please, Madam?
- Could I possibly have a single to Sevenoaks, please, Madam?
- Would you possibly be so kind as to let me have a single to Sevenoaks, Madam?
- Would you possibly be so kind as to let me have a single to Sevenoaks, dearest Madam?
- Dearest Madam, I'm sorry to trouble you, but would you possibly be so kind as to let me have a single ticket to Sevenoaks, please. (*The New You & Me 3*: 72-73)

Unfortunately, this sketch is not followed by any comments or exercises. Consequently, the students may not notice these different realisations of (im)politeness, although this exercise could be a valuable task to raise language learners' awareness of varying degrees of politeness. In this sense, it seems to be the teacher's responsibility to comment on the phenomenon of polite verbal behaviour and situational appropriateness. Most importantly, students should be told that the requests on the polite end of this list could also result in impoliteness if a speaker is not aware of contextual factors and that the speech acts on the impolite end of the list could be equally situationally appropriate.

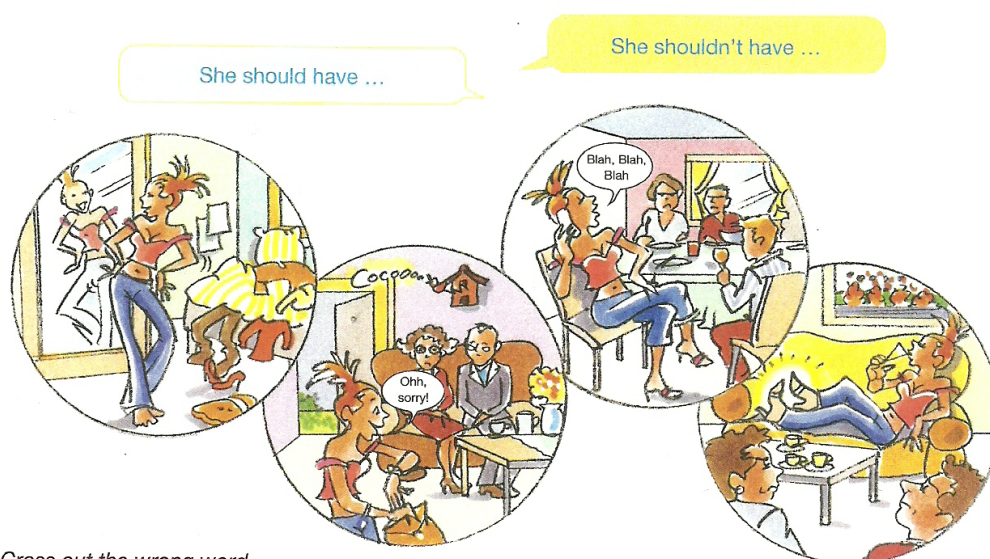
In *The New You & Me 4*, some extra units were added as the series was reprinted in 2006. One of these extra units is called *Cultural differences* (pp. 140-143) and is comprised of valuable awareness-raising activities. The language learners are provided with a definition of the term *culture* and get to know different customs and norms in different countries. Among these culture-specific conventions, varying expectations of polite behaviour are mentioned (e.g. *When you introduce yourself in Japan, it's not polite to look the person in the eye*, p. 140). After this, it is pointed out that in addition to intercultural differences, intracultural differences should be expected as well:

Figure 14: The New You & Me 4, p. 141

Anika's visit

Even within one country, there are cultural differences. Behaviour which is acceptable to some people, other people find impolite. Maybe you behave differently to your friends than you do to your teacher!

What mistakes did Anika make when she visited her boyfriend's parents for the first time?



Cross out the wrong word.

- 1 Before the visit, Anika felt really nervous / nervously.
- 2 She didn't dress very well / good.
- 3 The meal was extremely good / well.
- 4 Anika tried to behave polite / politely.
- 5 The parents thought she was a bit impolite / impolitely.

This exercise will help students to understand that politeness is an unstable concept and that it is highly context-dependent. Although the activity focuses not strictly on verbal politeness but on appropriate behaviour in general, language learners might profit from this task since it can further their understanding of the negotiable nature of this social phenomenon, i.e. their *knowledge about politeness* (Vorderwülbecke 2002).

8.4.2.3 Caminos neu

At the beginning of the first volume of *Caminos neu*, politeness is introduced with the address terms and the t/v distinction. In unit 5, *quería* [I would like] is presented as an especially polite form of *querer* [to like] for the formulation of a request. At page 91, the diminutive is introduced as a means of politeness in as far as that it can be used as a mitigating device when it comes to talking about negative aspects of people (*gordo* – *gordito* [fat – fatty]). Moreover, it is explained at the end of unit 10 that refusals of an invitation must be accompanied by a reason in order to avoid appearing impolite.

Figure 15:
Caminos neu
A1, p. 49

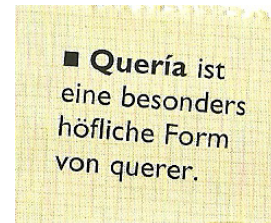
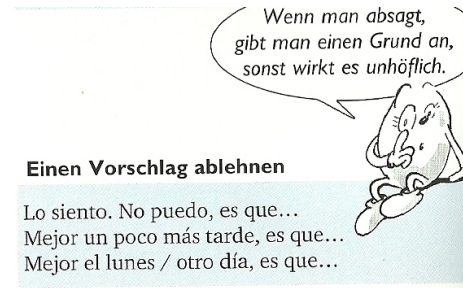


Figure 16: Caminos neu A1, p. 91



Figure 17: Caminos neu A1, p. 104



In addition to the exercises presented in chapter 8.4.1, *Caminos neu A2* mentions politeness with reference to address terms which are used to introduce others. It is explained that in formal situations the honorifics *don* and *doña* can be applied to indicate politeness. Within unit 5, the conditional form of the verb is treated more comprehensively as a means of expressing polite requests and advice as well as for politeness formulae.

Figure 18: Caminos neu A2, p. 44

Das Konditional ► 4.7		Unregelmäßiges Konditional ► 4.7.2			
	comer	decir	dir-	-ía	hay → habría
yo	comería	hacer	har-	-ías	
tú	comerías	poder	podr-	-ía	
usted, él, ella	comería	poner	pondr-	-íamos	
nosotros/-as	comeríamos	tener	tendr-	-íais	
vosotros/-as	comeríais	salir	saldr-	-ían	
ustedes, ellos, ellas	comerían				

Die Endungen des Konditionals sind für alle Konjugationsgruppen gleich und werden an den Infinitiv angehängt. Man verwendet das Konditional für höfliche Bitten (¿Podrías ayudarme a poner la mesa?), Höflichkeitsfloskeln (Me encantaría, pero...), für Vorschläge und Ratschläge (Yo, en tu lugar, llevaría unas flores.) oder für Dinge, die unter bestimmten Bedingungen realisiert werden könnten (En ese caso pediría un poco de sal.).

A side note at page 42 appeals to students' cultural awareness (*knowledge about politeness*) as it points out that not opening a present immediately after having received it is considered an offence in the Spanish-speaking world. Along with that, unit 11 contains a list with rules how to communicate with speakers of Spanish at page 84. Culture-specific communicative behaviour concerning distance, turn-taking and gestures is mentioned, with special reference to the fact that interruptions in Spanish should not be confused with impoliteness. At this point, it could be argued that giving 'rules' of communication might be misleading (see Meier 1997). However, this list is still a valid means of raising students' consciousness concerning cultural differences in interaction.

Caminos neu B1 does not treat the topic of politeness in such a comprehensive way as the second volume of this series. However, it addresses intercultural differences (e.g. p. 41) and politeness relevant speech acts, such as propositions, complaints or requests (pp. 21, 46 and 91, respectively). Additionally, the textbook seems to pay special attention to different degrees of formality, as can be seen in the following extract:

2 a) Una solicitud.
 Lea este correo.
 ¿Qué escuela le parece mejor para estas personas?

Estimados señores y señoras:
 He visto la oferta de su escuela y quisiera solicitar cursos para algunos ejecutivos extranjeros de nuestra empresa. Algunos son principiantes y otros ya han tenido clases de español. Les agradeceré que me informen si les sería posible organizar para nosotros cursos para grupos reducidos o cursos a medida en clases individuales. Ya que la lista de precios de su página se refiere a los cursos normales, les ruego que me digan también el precio en estos casos concretos.
 Si desean ponerse en contacto conmigo, mi número es el 988 54 20 11.
 En espera de sus noticias, les saludo atentamente,
Rocío Muñoz Escobar

b) Marque en el ejercicio anterior las frases que se utilizan para pedir algo y complete el cuadro.

menos formal	más formal
Quería pedir...	Les _____ que me informen...
Les pido que me informen...	_____ que me digan...
También me gustaría saber...	Si _____ conmigo...
Si quieren comunicarse conmigo...	

Figure 19: Caminos neu B1, p. 91²⁵

²⁵ [Translation of Figure 19:

a) A request

Read this mail. Which school do you regard best for these persons?

As a whole, the *Caminos neu* textbooks provide the language learner with valuable material which facilitates the development of a non-native speaker's politeness competence. In each of the three course books, politeness is mentioned explicitly, although the second volume covers the topic most comprehensively. Putting it in Vorderwülbecke's (2002) terms, the first volume contains mostly conventional politeness (such as personal pronouns or conventional indirectness), whereas the second and the third volume introduce features of individual politeness (which is highly context sensitive).

8.4.2.4 *El Nuevo Curso*

In the *El Nuevo Curso* textbooks, politeness is primarily mentioned in connection with the Conditional I. *El Nuevo Curso 1* (p. 44, 49) introduces the conditional form of *querer* [to like], which is *quería* [I would like], to make especially polite requests. Moreover, the Subjunctive II form *quisiera* [I would like] is presented as another possibility to formulate a request politely. As the language learners are not yet familiar with these verb forms, they are simply introduced as routine formulae without any comments. Vorderwülbecke (2002: 37) approves of this method when he explains that "[k]urze Routineformeln kann man im Anfängerunterricht als pragmatische Einheiten unanalysiert vermitteln [short routine formulae can be taught as pragmatic entities without any analysis at the beginner's level]."

Summary of the text:

Dear Sir or Madam,

I noticed the advertisement of your school and I would like to solicit courses for some foreign executives of our company. Some are beginners and others have already had Spanish classes. I would like to ask you for information about whether it was possible for you to organise language courses in small groups or individual lessons. Since the price list on your homepage refers to regular courses, I would like to ask you for the prices for these concrete cases.

If you would like to contact me, my telephone number is 988 54 20 11.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully,

Rocio Muñoz Escobar

b) Mark the phrases that were used for requests in the previous exercise and complete the table. (Phrases of more or less formality should be extracted from the text and matched accordingly.)]

Figure 20: El Nuevo Curso 1, p. 49

Einen Wunsch äußern

- ▲ Quería unos sellos para Alemania.
- Quisiera ver ese plano de Berlín.
- ▶ ¿Tiene(n) postales?

Quería, quisiera (querer)

quería / quisiera + *Nomen*
quería / quisiera + *Infinitiv*

▲ quería und quisiera (ich hätte gern) sind eine besonders höfliche Form, einen Wunsch auszudrücken.

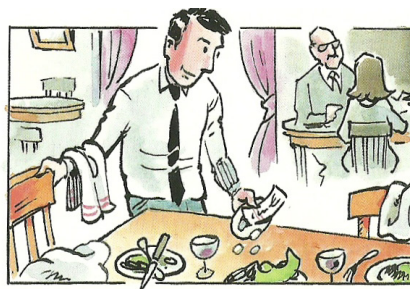
In *El Nuevo Curso 2* (pp. 55, 59), the Conditional I is presented as *el condicional de cortesía* [the conditional of politeness]. The verb *poder* [can] in its conditional form *podría* [could] is used to ask for a favour or permission in a very polite way. Moreover, the second volume includes a unit called *Otro país, otra cultura* [other country, other customs] which highlights intercultural differences and culture-specific conventions such as the Spanish custom of using the informal address terms in rather formal situations (p. 53). The following awareness-raising task is also included within this unit:

Figure 21: El Nuevo Curso 2, p. 55

el condicional de cortesía (poder)

¿Podría (yo) + *infinitivo*?
¿Podrías (tú) + *infinitivo*?
¿Podría (usted)

a) Lo «normal» cambia según el país o la región donde estamos y la lengua que hablamos. Éstas son algunas costumbres y actitudes de los países hispanohablantes que hemos visto en esta lección. Escriba lo que se hace normalmente en su país.



En España / Latinoamérica	En mi país
En restaurantes, bares, cafés... no se suele compartir la mesa con extraños. la propina se deja en la mesa, después de pagar. muchos españoles fuman, incluso durante la comida. normalmente una persona paga lo de todos.	
En la calle... los españoles suelen decir muchas «palabrotas» sin estar enfadados. en general, la gente es bastante expresiva: se tocan cuando hablan, hacen muchos gestos y a veces hablan bastante alto. sobre todo en España, se usa mucho el «tú», incluso en las tiendas o en el médico. En Latinoamérica se usa más el «usted».	

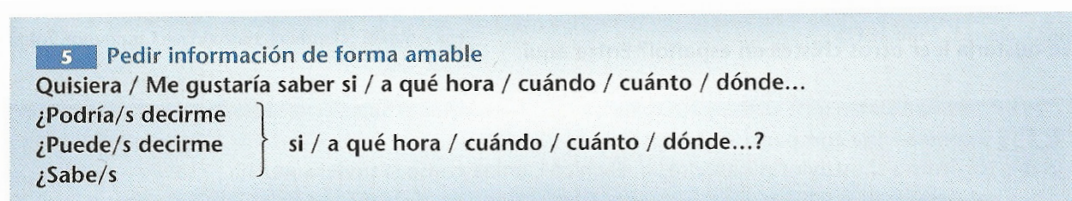
Figure 22: El Nuevo Curso 2, p. 57²⁶

²⁶ [Translation of Figure 22:

Most valuably, students are taught that norms are always culture-dependent and that customs as well as interactional behaviour in Spanish-speaking countries might well differ from appropriate behaviour in their own cultural context. Again, this exercise can help to lower prejudices and stereotypes.

In the third volume of *El Nuevo Curso* (pp. 19-21, 23), the Conditional I appears as the polite form of expressing a request, an opinion and recommendations. Interestingly, the Spanish adjective *amable* [amiable, kind] seems to be substituted for the term *polite* at some stages in the textbook. In this sense, *El Nuevo Curso 3* includes phrases to show disagreement (p. 12) and to raise complaints (p. 37) in an amiable manner. Within unit 11, various verb forms (Present Simple, Conditional I, Subjunctive II) are offered as suitable linguistic means to ask for information in a polite/amiable way:

Figure 23: El Nuevo Curso 3, p. 107



a) What we consider 'normal' depends on the country or region in which we are and the language we speak. What follows is some conventions and attitudes of the Spanish-speaking countries we have treated in this unit. Write down what people normally do in your country.

In Spain/Latin America

In my country

In restaurants, bars, cafes...

people do not normally share their table with strangers.

the tip is left on the table after having paid.

a lot of Spaniards smoke, even during the meal.

normally one person pays for everyone.

In the streets...

Spaniards normally use a lot of swearwords without being angry.

generally, people are quite expressive:

they touch each other while speaking, they

make a lot of gestures and sometimes they talk

quite loudly.

especially in Spain, the tú-form is used frequently,

even in shops or at the doctor's. In Latin America,

usted is used more often.]

Yet, the fact that different moods of the verb can be used to express different degrees of politeness is not mentioned in the course of the unit.

In sum, the *El Nuevo Curso* series mentions linguistic politeness explicitly in each of the three volumes. However, students should be made aware that indirectness and politeness are not necessarily the same things and that therefore being indirect is not necessarily polite. In this sense, it should be ensured that indirectness is presented as a context-dependent feature of politeness. Furthermore, language learners should be taught that, despite the prevailing presentation of the Conditional I in the textbooks, there are numerous other linguistic means of expressing politeness.

At this point, it seems as if the Spanish textbooks would pay considerably more attention to the topic of politeness than the English textbooks do. Yet, one has to bear in mind that only because some teaching materials do not mention politeness explicitly, does not necessarily mean that they do not contribute to the development of politeness competence at all. This is to say that although some English language teaching materials do not treat the topic of politeness, they may still contain tasks to further the acquisition of polite linguistic behaviour.

8.4.3 Politeness in English language teaching materials?

In order to reveal whether politeness is implicitly present in the English textbooks, I will take Vorderwülbecke's (2002) *Progressionsmodell* as a basis. Accordingly, I will search for the linguistic features of this framework in the textbooks to find out whether the English teaching materials enclose exercises suitable for the acquisition of politeness albeit they do not explicitly mention the phenomenon in question.

8.4.3.1 MORE!

The first volume of the *MORE!* series contains conversational routines to introduce oneself (pp. 11-13) and others (pp. 38-39), to open and close conversations (e.g. on the telephone, p. 81) or to establish contact (e.g. on the street, p. 75). Moreover, basic forms of conventional indirectness and the conditional form *would* are introduced in the course of shopping dialogues (pp. 71, 73):

(23) *Can I help you?*

(24) *What would you like?*

(25) *I'd like a...*

MORE! 2 includes further means of indirect requests (e.g. *Can I have ...?*, pp. 23, 68) and the *would*-form (e.g. pp. 67-68). In the course of the textbook, the modal verbs *should/shouldn't*, *have to/don't have to*, *must/must not*, and *might/might not* are introduced for giving advice, making orders and assumptions. The conversational routines of thanking, asking for directions and direction giving are part of unit 6 of the second volume. In addition, writing conventions of informal letters (p. 104) and postcards (p. 132) are included.

In *MORE! 3*, the speech act of criticising appears in unit 1. In the subsequent exercise, various critics give their opinion on candidates of a talent show. These comments differ in the degree of politeness applied. This activity could be a valuable awareness-raising task if comments on the different politeness strategies were included. The speech samples contain authentic language: some speakers apply various forms of mitigation when realising the face-threatening act of criticising (i.e. *Maybe you could move a little more when you're singing...*), others do not use any politeness markers at all (i.e. *You haven't got what it takes.*). Foreign language learners could certainly profit from these tasks provided that teachers take advantage of the authentic utterances and point out the linguistic means relevant for (im)polite verbal behaviour.

Figure 24: MORE! 3, p. 9

Vocabulary Audition

7 Complete what they say with the words from the box. Then listen and check.

a try
training
audition
make it
takes
give up
way up
get back

"Dave, you're a brave man, but don't ¹ your real job. Sing at home under the shower, when you're not wearing that suit. But don't waste our time, okay? You're never going to ² as a pop star."

"You're not going to be our next superstar. In fact, you're not even going to be a background singer in a band. You haven't got what it ³ But don't be too unhappy. You gave it ⁴ and that's what's important."

"Maybe you could move a little more when you're singing and not just stand there. But that's not really a problem. I think with the right ⁵ you could be a big star. We'll certainly ⁶ to you."

"There's quite a lot of work ahead, but if you're willing to work hard, then I think what Sally says is true. You could be on the ⁷ We certainly want to talk to you after the ⁸"

Get talking Giving an opinion

8 Work in pairs. You are the critics for Superstar. Listen to these three performers and say what you think.

 Steve  Tina  Jeff

... looks fantastic / doesn't look like a pop star.
... 's got a beautiful/terrible voice / needs (doesn't need) training.
... is an excellent singer / was out of tune / has(n't) got what it takes.
... could be the next pop star / is never going to make it as a pop star / is(n't) on the way up.

Furthermore, the third volume of the *MORE!* series introduces the Conditional II (*If I were you I would...*) with relation to the speech act of advice giving at page 105. The modal verb *could* is mentioned within unit 10, even though only as a linguistic means to express ability. Concerning written correspondence, the textbook treats informal letters (p. 66) and e-mails (extra unit 14).

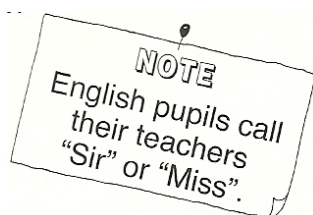
The *MORE! 4* course book depicts face-threatening acts such as giving orders (*Want someone to do something*, p. 27) and disagreeing (p. 55). Polite requests such as *I know I'm asking a lot but I really want you to wear it...* (p. 73) appear throughout the book. Additionally the modal verbs *might/may/could* are presented as linguistic features to talk about possibility (p. 75). Yet, none of the examples is related to linguistic politeness. In unit 5, it is briefly talked about inappropriate language for a job interview (*Don't use expressions like 'uh huh' or 'you know'*, p. 41) and in an article about fairness at school, language learners are advised to *use friendly language* when talking to teachers or other students (p. 88). As a whole, the last volume of the *MORE!* textbooks appears to focus increasingly on exercises raising students' awareness of intercultural differences (e.g. pp. 24, 70, 88, 127).

Summing up, the *MORE!* series does certainly provide exercises which can be modified or developed into valuable awareness-raising activities. Role plays, which appear repeatedly throughout the fourth volume, can help to improve language learners' politeness competence. To give an example, a discussion about the topic of piercing between a parent and a teenager can be found at page 69. In such a task, (im)politeness is certainly a relevant issue. Consequently, students might profit from such an exercise but the duty to sensitise them for appropriate verbal behaviour is left to the foreign language teacher.

8.4.3.2 *The New You & Me*

The New You & Me 1 does also present routine formulae for communicative acts such as saying hello and introducing oneself and others (unit 3). For requests, the conventionally indirect forms *Can you help me...?* (p. 79) and *Can I have...?* (p. 99) are introduced. For offers, the conditional form *Would you like...?* appears in various instances (pp. 87, 91, 135). Moreover, students get to know basic conversational routines to cope with recurrent communicative situations such as shopping, eating in restaurants and talking on the telephone (pp. 27, 65, 135).

Figure 25: The New You & Me 2, p. 137



In the second volume of *The New You & Me*, a note on appropriate address forms can be found (p. 137).

Moreover, routine formulae for asking and explaining the way are presented (unit 2). When *The New You & Me 2* introduces the modal verbs *should/should not*, *could/could not* and *must not*, they are only described as a means of giving advice, expressing ability or making rules and orders (p. 30, 73). The textbook features instances of written correspondence in form of informal letters and postcards as well (e.g. pp. 13, 28, 84).

In addition to the politeness task in *The New You & Me 3* (see chapter 8.4.2.2), the textbook elaborates on various topics already introduced in the second volume: shopping (p. 39), asking the way (pp. 40-41), talking about rules (unit 2), modal verbs (unit 5) as well as the writing of postcards (unit 4) and letters (unit 6). There is also a role play leading to a discussion about plans for the weekend at page 21. This exercise could be turned into an awareness-raising task if appropriate verbal

behaviour was addressed by the teacher. From a politeness perspective, however, the extra units are much more interesting. Added in 2006, these sections introduce linguistic means to make/accept or refuse invitations (extra unit 2), they explain how to make small talk (extra unit 2) and list routine formulae to establish, make and terminate conversations on the telephone (extra unit 4).

In *The New You & Me 4*, only few features which could contribute to the development of politeness competence can be found. In unit 8, the construction *want somebody to do something* is introduced to give orders (p. 81). A role play is also part of the textbook (p. 60). E-mails (e.g. p. 8) and informal letters (e.g. pp. 19, 79, 86) constitute the relevant written formats presented. Again, the extra units have much more potential to contribute to the development of politeness competence than the rest of the course book. As has already been mentioned in chapter 8.4.2.2, extra unit 2 treats the topic of intercultural differences. Additionally, extra unit 4 addresses appropriate (verbal) behaviour in job interviews and the Conditional II for advice giving.

As a whole, *The New You & Me* textbooks contain relatively few exercises which are relevant for linguistic politeness. Volume three and four do only include one role play at a time which could be turned into an awareness-raising activity. In these last two volumes, it is mostly the extra units which are of importance for the development of polite verbal behaviour. This is to say that *The New You & Me* course books do partly lack attention to the topic of politeness, although the phenomenon is not completely disregarded in these English teaching materials.

8.4.4 Final remarks

In conclusion, all the English language teaching materials under investigation do contain linguistic means which are necessary to develop politeness competence in a foreign language (Vorderwülbecke 2002). However, these language features are, with only one exception in *The New You & Me 3*, never related to polite verbal behaviour. Consequently, the teacher is in lonesome charge of introducing politeness to the foreign language classroom. The Spanish textbooks, in contrast, do mention politeness explicitly so that it is not exclusively the responsibility of the teacher to modify the tasks or to add extra material. Moreover, the Spanish

teaching materials, above all the *Caminos neu* series, present politeness in its context-dependent and culture-specific nature. In addition to knowledge how to express politeness (pragmalinguistic knowledge), the Spanish textbooks contain numerous exercises which focus on knowledge about politeness (sociopragmatic knowledge). Nevertheless, it must be appreciated that *The New You & Me 4* does also address intercultural variation of (im)polite behaviour in an extra unit. Such awareness-raising tasks help to further the language learners' understanding of cultural differences, which is very difficult to teach as Thomas (1983: 91) and Márquez Reiter (1998: 295) point out in chapter 7.3.

As a possible explanation for these differences in the representation of politeness, one might consider the varying age levels for which the respective textbooks are designed. As the *MORE!* and *The New You & Me* series are supposed to be used in the lower level of the secondary academic schools in Austria, the students are normally aged between 10 and 14. The Spanish teaching materials, on the other hand, would be introduced in the upper levels when students are at least between 14 and 18 years old. Obviously, the content of these course books cannot be absolutely identical. As a result, it would be very interesting to consider the English language teaching materials for the upper levels of Austrian secondary academic schools in order to find out whether they refer explicitly to the phenomenon in question.

Moreover, it is crucial to reconsider the fact that the English language is oriented towards negative politeness while Spanish tends towards positive politeness. In particular, both languages prefer different politeness strategies and that could be another explanation for different representations of politeness in the teaching materials.

In sum, it can be stated that all the textbooks under investigation do take politeness into account (to a certain extent) so that they do facilitate the development of communicative competence. Consequently, the points of criticism summarised in chapter 7.5 cannot be upheld completely with regard to the teaching materials analysed here.

9. CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis has been to investigate whether linguistic politeness is regarded as an important component of foreign language teaching. Therefore, current Austrian teaching materials for English and Spanish have been examined from a politeness perspective.

In order to achieve this objective, the first chapters introduced influential scientific models of politeness. In this theoretical analysis, some similarities and inconsistencies within the research area could be highlighted. In particular, it was pointed out that politeness is unanimously understood as a twofold notion. In this sense, scholars in the field seem to agree that politeness involves some sort of “consideration for others” as well as some form of “adherence to conventional standards” (Lakoff & Ide 2005).

Based on these theoretical conceptions, politeness was also presented as a notion composed of universal as well as culturally variable aspects. This made the language-specific investigation of politeness in English and Spanish especially valuable. Focussing on empirical studies, the respective orientation of British English and Peninsular Spanish towards negative politeness and positive politeness was outlined.

In the remainder of the thesis, politeness was examined from the viewpoint of foreign language teaching. Depicted as a main concept of a foreign language learner’s pragmatic competence, politeness proved to deserve thorough consideration in the foreign language classroom. Nevertheless, some scholars discerned a considerable lack of attention to the concept in textbooks.

Therefore, the empirical part of this thesis constituted an analysis of current Austrian teaching materials in order to reveal whether they incorporated the concept of politeness accordingly. The results of this study have shown that in each of the course books examined, politeness was presented either explicitly or implicitly. However, the English language teaching materials investigated (*MORE!*, *The New You & Me*) did introduce features of linguistic politeness in an implicit way only. Consequently, the responsibility to raise students’ awareness of polite verbal behaviour is entirely left to the language teacher. The Spanish course books

(*Caminos neu, El Nuevo Curso*), in contrast, did mention the phenomenon explicitly. In these teaching materials, the concept was not only introduced along with linguistic means of expressing politeness (pertaining to pragmalinguistic knowledge), but it was also depicted in its nature as a universal and culture-dependent notion at the same time (pertaining to sociopragmatic knowledge).

In search of possible explanations, differing representations of politeness in the textbooks were related to the varying age levels of students for which the teaching materials are designed. It was argued that the English course books would already be introduced during the lower level of the secondary academic schools in Austria while the Spanish course books would only be used in the upper level. Consequently, an analysis of English teaching materials for year 5 to 8 of the AHS would be highly interesting. Yet, this would have exceeded the scope of this thesis.

Finally, it can be concluded that the voices of the critics seem to be too strong when it comes to the course books analysed in the present thesis. Although the empirical part was limited to the demonstration of general tendencies in selected textbooks, it became clear that these Austrian teaching materials do pay (a certain amount of) attention to linguistic politeness. As a consequence, the claim that politeness would be disregarded in textbooks is not necessarily true for the English and Spanish language teaching materials under consideration. Quite on the contrary, the present thesis could even reveal some exceptionally positive tendencies concerning the representation of politeness in the teaching materials.

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I. GERMAN ABSTRACT

Die vorliegende Diplomarbeit befasst sich mit sprachlicher Höflichkeit im Englisch- und Spanischunterricht. Um herauszufinden, ob dem Erwerb von höflichem Sprachgebrauch angemessene Bedeutung im Fremdsprachenunterricht zukommt, werden im Rahmen dieser Arbeit gängige Lehrwerke analysiert.

Zunächst werden in einer theoretischen Auseinandersetzung mit dem Thema acht der einflussreichsten Modelle zu sprachlicher Höflichkeit dargestellt. Zusammen mit den BegründerInnen dieser Disziplin, i.e. Lakoff, Brown & Levinson, Leech, bilden die Höflichkeitstheorien von Fraser & Nolen, Andt & Janney, Ide, Blum-Kulka und Watts den Kern der wissenschaftlichen Arbeiten zum Thema. Ergänzt werden diese durch neuere Konzeptionen von Held, Meier, House und Culpeper, welche alle eine Erweiterung der Höflichkeitssicht darstellen und auf Elemente der grundlegenden Theorien Bezug nehmen.

Anschließend wird versucht, Gemeinsamkeiten dieser Höflichkeitskonzepte herauszuarbeiten. Da dieses wissenschaftliche Feld als sehr heterogen bezeichnet werden kann, gibt es bis dato keine Einigkeit unter den ForscherInnen, im Hinblick auf eine allgemein gültige Definition von Höflichkeit. Im Zuge dieser Arbeit kristallisiert sich heraus, dass ein Konsens insofern auszumachen ist, dass Höflichkeit ein binäres Konzept zu sein scheint, welches darin besteht sich einerseits an konventionelle Standards zu halten und andererseits Rücksicht auf die Bedürfnisse anderer zu nehmen.

In einem weiteren Schritt wird Höflichkeit im sprachspezifischen Kontext behandelt. Da dieses Konzept sowohl aus universellen als auch kulturspezifischen Aspekten besteht, ist die Gegenüberstellung von Höflichkeitskonventionen im Englischen (*British English*) und im Spanischen (*Peninsular Spanish*) besonders interessant. Aus dieser Betrachtung, welche sich vor allem auf empirische Studien stützt, geht hervor, dass sich die englische Sprache eher an der Distanzwahrung (*negative politeness*) orientiert, während die spanische Sprache tendenziell mehr zu Zuwendung (*positive politeness*) neigt.

Im folgenden Teil dieser Diplomarbeit wird sprachliche Höflichkeit aus der Perspektive des Fremdsprachenunterrichts betrachtet. Beginnend wird das

Konzept als wichtiger Bestandteil der kommunikativen Kompetenz eines Sprechers/einer Sprecherin beschrieben. Der Ausbau dieser Fertigkeit wird als das erklärte Ziel des Fremdsprachenunterrichts verstanden. Anschließend wird die Abhandlung von sprachlicher Höflichkeit in Schulbüchern behandelt, welche in der Literatur zum Teil stark kritisiert wird. Im Wesentlichen wird bemängelt, dass sprachliche Höflichkeit stark vernachlässigt wird und beziehungsgestaltende Mittel unterrepräsentiert sind.

Im empirischen Teil dieser Arbeit werden Beispiele aus den gängigsten Lehrwerken für den Englisch- und Spanischunterricht an österreichischen allgemeinbildenden höheren Schulen analysiert, um einen Einblick zu bekommen, inwiefern auch in diesen das Thema Höflichkeit berücksichtigt wird. Insgesamt 14 Bücher (für den Englischunterricht *MORE!*, *The New You & Me*; für den Spanischunterricht *Caminos neu*, *El Nuevo Curso*) werden daraufhin untersucht, ob Höflichkeit als Lektionsthema oder in verschiedenen Aufgaben zu finden ist. Aufgrund dieser Untersuchung zeigt sich, dass höflicher Sprachgebrauch zu einem gewissen Grad in allen Schulbüchern entweder implizit oder explizit zu finden ist. Auffallend ist, dass die Lehrmaterialien für den Englischunterricht sprachliche Höflichkeit nie ausdrücklich erwähnen, die Spanischbücher das Konzept jedoch sowohl auf pragmalinguistischer als auch auf soziopragmatischer Ebene explizit anführen. Demnach werden in den Lehrwerken für den Spanischunterricht sprachliche Mittel gelehrt, die für den Ausdruck von Höflichkeit in der Fremdsprache notwendig sind. Gleichzeitig wird das Konzept als kulturabhängiges und universelles Phänomen beschrieben, sodass die SchülerInnen sich auch Wissen über Höflichkeit aneignen.

Zusammenfassend ergibt sich, dass die in dieser Diplomarbeit betrachteten Lehrwerke für den Englisch- und Spanischunterricht das Thema Höflichkeit (zumindest in gewissem Ausmaß) berücksichtigen, sodass die geäußerte Kritik in diesem Fall als nicht vollständig gerechtfertigt erscheint. Obwohl in den Lehrwerken für den englischen Fremdsprachenunterricht kaum explizite Verweise auf das Thema zu finden sind, werden Höflichkeitskompetenzen dennoch in impliziter Weise gefördert. In Bezug auf sprachliche Höflichkeit lassen sich bei den hier analysierten Schulbüchern daher durchaus positive Tendenzen erkennen.

II. CURRICULUM VITAE

Persönliche Angaben

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