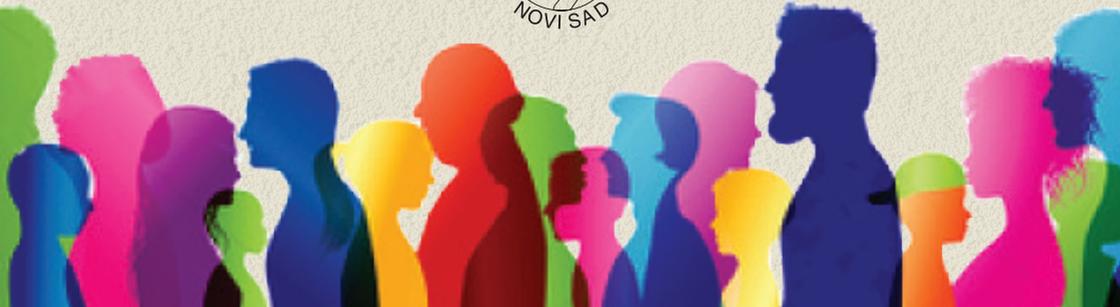


Sabina Halupka-Rešetar

**EXPLORING COMMUNICATIVE
COMPETENCE IN ENGLISH
AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE
A STUDENT'S RESOURCE BOOK**



UNIVERSITY OF NOVI SAD
FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY IN NOVI SAD

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Sabina Halupka-Rešetar
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Reviewers
Prof. dr Tvrtko Prčić
Prof. dr Biljana Mišić Ilić
Prof. dr Nadežda Silaški

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In loving memory of my mother

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Preface

The contents of this book are as much my own work as the work of my former and current students at the Department of English, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Novi Sad. Over the years, I have come to realize that English language courses, regardless of the level of education they are taught at or the level of proficiency of the learners, rarely include sufficient instruction on how the language should be used. Until very recently, EFL coursebooks focused on issues pertaining to language use within specially designed Language use boxes, often containing no more than a (limited) list of phrases which can be used, with little or no explanation as to the situations in which these phrases are appropriate.

University education in foreign languages still appears to be mainly focused on the phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics of the language in question, leaving future foreign language (henceforth FL) teachers and practitioners prone to committing a faux pas every time they are confronted with native speakers due to the cultural differences between their L1 and the L2/FL.

This practical guide aims to give a brief introduction to some of the key issues in cross-cultural communication and to draw the readers' attention to the importance of competently engaging in such communication, which implies performing not only successfully and correctly in everyday interactions in the FL but also doing so in a manner which corresponds to native speakers' expectations. No prior knowledge about cross-cultural communication is assumed, therefore the book can be used as a self-study book as well a companion to general courses on (foreign language) pragmatics. Theoretical, pragmatics-related issues are tackled in Part I of the book in the form of bite-sized chapters, which give a brief overview of the relevant terms and concepts needed to discuss how and why developing learners' communicative (primarily, pragmatic) competence in a foreign language is important. Each chapter in this part of the book opens with several questions to

get the reader thinking about the issues addressed in the chapter. Also, each chapter includes several tasks, questions and exercises which the reader is expected to be able to tackle at the point where they occur and it ends with a Suggestions for further reading section.

Part II of the book is aimed at familiarizing students with research in the field of FL pragmatics. It opens with an overview of research in L2/FL pragmatic competence and the methodology most frequently employed in such studies, followed by samples of research conducted on various speech acts, from previous publications of my own. Chapter 10 deals with the extent to which EFL learners at different levels of proficiency understand conversational implicatures; Chapter 11 explores the types of verbal abuse Serbian and Hungarian EFL learners direct at people who have hurt them in some way, in an attempt to pinpoint cultural differences and the influence of L1 on EFL pragmatic competence. Chapters 12 and 13 present the results of research into EFL learners' production of suggestions and compliment responses, respectively. The remaining two chapters feature studies conducted with learners of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and focus on the speech act of refusals (Chapter 14) and request modification (Chapter 15).

While the book is essentially on English as a foreign language, the principles outlined in it are easily applicable to other second and/or foreign languages. Similarly, the L1 of the EFL learners who participated in the studies described in Part II of the book is invariably Serbian (and Hungarian in Chapter 11), but the methodology (and in some cases, the results of the studies) may prove to be relevant for other languages as well (especially the languages of the Balkan Sprachbund). This resource book is, thus, aimed not only at developing the readers' own communicative competence in (E)FL (Part I) but also at giving them guidelines for conducting research in this field (Part II), as well as highlighting the importance of explicit instruction in the L2/FL classroom and suggesting how the results of research can be used to accomplish this demanding task.

Though I am the sole author of this book, it was actually only shaped by myself. The material for it has been building up over the past twenty years in my own classes, in communication with my students, in the state exams for EFL teachers I have set, in my own faux pas and the blunders my friends and colleagues admitted to having made in the past. The students in the Communicative competence course I taught in the spring of 2018 have been a great source of inspiration and have made invaluable contributions to the contents and organization of the book and for this, I am thankful to them. I would also like to extend my appreciation to all my dear friends and colleagues at various universities in Serbia and abroad (University College London, University of Kent), who have kindly allowed me to test their students over the years – I would hate to leave out anyone’s name so I will not compile a list, I am sure you will all recognize yourselves in the pages that follow. I would like to express my gratitude to all of you who were as excited about this book (for one reason or another) as I am – I hope it fulfils your expectations. Last, but not least, special thanks go to my family for their support and encouragement during the period I spent planning and writing this manuscript.

Needless to say, all the mistakes that still remain in this book are my own.

Novi Sad, December 2018

Sabina Halupka-Rešetar

PART I – Theoretical considerations

Chapter 1. Communication and language

“One cannot not communicate.” (Watzlawick, Beavin, and Jackson 1967)

What is communication? Are humans the only species that communicate? What is the purpose of communicating? How does the ability to communicate develop? What forms of communication are there?

Every form of behaviour qualifies as a form of communication. In fact, even when we decide not to say anything, we also communicate. This is so because communication is much more than using language. Aristotle dubbed humans as the ‘speaking animal’ (Peters 1999: 1), but as we shall see, unlike language, the ability to communicate is a trait that is not specific to humans.

Communication has been defined in various ways over the past millennia. The first systematic study of speech was probably undertaken by the ancient Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle. However, as Peters (2000: 7) points out, in Latin, “*communicatio* did not signify the general arts of human connection via symbols, nor did it suggest the hope for some kind of mutual recognition. Its sense was not in the least mentalistic: *communicatio* generally involved tangibles. In classical rhetorical theory *communicatio* was also a technical term for a stylistic device in which an orator assumes the hypothetical voice of the adversary or audience; *communicatio* was less authentic dialogue than the simulation of dialogue by a single speaker”. Thus, the notion of rhetoric in ancient Greece, as well as the notion of communication in ancient Rome somewhat later, did not refer to transfer, interchanging, mutuality, reciprocity or to dialogue, “but rather pointed to acknowledging and performing specific social functions and group memberships, or to knowing and utilizing concrete

technical devices for conveying specific social functions and group memberships” (Erdogan 2005: 4).

The eclectic definition of communication adopted in this book is based on the numerous definitions of the concept published so far (and it is worth noting that nearly half a century ago, Dance & Larson (1976: 23) found 126 of them) as the process of generating and exchanging information using symbols and signs that are influenced by multiple contexts (cf. Canale 1984: 111, Unknown 2016: 3). Such a definition implies that humans are not the only species that communicate – all communication systems share this ability to exchange information. But while a number of nonhuman systems share some features of human language, non-human communication is characterized by instinctive reactions, stereotyped and predictable. Human behaviour, on the other hand, is mostly under voluntary control, and crucially, human language is creative and unpredictable, which is why it is generally assumed that only humans have language (Hedeager 2012: 1). The repertoire of signs animals use to communicate is vast: bees dance, birds chirp and sing, snakes hiss, chimpanzees grunt, bark, pant, wail, laugh and use calls, whales and dolphins sing and whistle, monkeys howl, lizards bob their heads up and down to communicate, some squid can regulate the colour of their skin, etc. And while the exchange of information taking place among members of the animal kingdom certainly deserves to be termed communication, it significantly differs from the basic way of human communication, i.e. language. Thus, humans, like animals, are capable of nonlinguistic communication - we can laugh to express happiness or amusement, smile to express satisfaction or pleasure, frown to express dissatisfaction or even anger, we can widen our eyes to show surprise, but in humans, these non-linguistic ways of exchanging information are more often than not accompanied by various forms of linguistic communication.

As Hauser, Chomsky and Fitch (2002: 1569) stress, “animal communication systems lack the rich expressive and open-ended power of human language (based on humans’ capacity for recursion)”. In other words, the system which makes it possible to construct an

unlimited number of sentences relying on a limited set of linguistic units and rules for combining them is not found in any other species. In addition to this, we humans are the only species capable of using symbols to refer to things outside our immediate temporal and spatial reality: we can talk about abstract or imagined things like *pride* or *zombies* just as we can talk about what happened yesterday or what we might expect to happen at some point in the future. And while some animals (primates, birds, cetaceans, dogs and other species) certainly do have the ability to imitate humans and even to communicate with them, it would be wrong to claim that in doing so they actually use language for they cannot create an infinite number of comprehensible combinations using a finite set of elements (such as words) and a set of rules (grammar and syntax). So what is unique about human language is not the fact that it allows us to communicate with each other, but that it allows us to do so with infinite variety. This is something even the most notable examples of animals using “language” fail to do. Let us list just a few of the most famous examples. Birdsong, like language, develops by experience, it can be divided into smaller units, which are strung together and fitted into intonational patterns and rhythm and may vary to a certain extent. Different dialects may be recognizable in the song of a single species of bird (variation) and some species can even pick up the song of another species, much in the way that children can pick up any natural language they are exposed to (Fromkin, Rodman & Hyams 2017, Chapter 9).

One of the most well-known examples of a talking bird was the African grey parrot Alex, who learnt a rather lengthy list of colour words, shapes, numbers, names for objects, etc. He could produce these words to answer questions by labelling objects, he could ask for objects (even if they were not present) and say what he wanted. He could identify the shape (2, 3, 4, 5, 6-corner) material (wood, paper, cork) and colour of an object, give the number of objects that meet some criteria (e.g. How many four-corner wood?) out of a larger set and could classify colours, shapes, materials, and quantities together. However, while Alex’s achievement was indeed impressive for a bird, since he could obviously attach a sense to the words and combine them to a certain

extent (there is no evidence of an internal constituent structure) as well as use the words to refer (e.g. to a nut he wants but does not see), his utterances were largely instrumental (served to obtain a reward) and there was little creativity in what he produced.

There have also been several more or less successful attempts at teaching apes American Sign Language (ASL), a language which has all the essential structural characteristics of natural languages, only it uses gestures rather than speech (note that human spoken languages are inaccessible to most other animals because they lack the apparatus necessary for producing speech; parrots employ different means in vocalization than humans, Anderson 2006: 264). In the four years she spent with human sign language trainers, the famous chimp Washoe learnt an impressive 160 signs. However, we do not know whether she ever signed about things that were not present in the immediate environment. Also, while she did often produce multiple signs in sequence, it is questionable whether these sequences should be treated as complex combinations representing a single concept or merely as one sign after another. In any case, there is little evidence for any syntactic structure beyond individual signs and no evidence for substantial command of human language in Washoe's production (Anderson 2006: 269-275).

Even though chimpanzees are genetically closest to humans, there have been language-learning experiments with other great apes, too. Much like Washoe, the gorilla Koko was initially also trained with molding signs and by the age of 5 she had acquired about 250 signs. However, since the materials and transcripts of Koko's signing have not been made available to outside researchers for analysis and assessment, we know little about the abilities of gorillas to learn and use arbitrary symbolic gestures and about the relationship between these abilities and other aspects of language and communication (Anderson 2006: 285-287).

As opposed to the above cases, Kanzi, a male bonobo was taught a completely artificial system of symbols based on associations between arbitrary graphic designs called *lexigrams* and meanings. The lexigrams

were presented on a keyboard connected to a computer and Kanzi was expected to communicate by pressing the right key(s). His keyboard now contains over 250 lexigrams, he can match pictures, lexigrams, and spoken words. He also uses his lexigrams in ways that show clear extension from an initial specific reference to a more generalized idea. He can understand a lot (including relative clauses, theta roles, etc.) but there is no evidence that he has acquired an understanding of the syntactic structure of a natural language (in fact, he mostly disregards information provided by grammatical words, such as prepositions or conjunctions, cf. Anderson 2006: 290-293).

As we have seen, in spite of the many attempts to train apes, no ape can speak human language nor have any of them learnt to produce long, complex sentences though their comprehension of language is somewhat better. As Anderson (2006: 298) concludes, the parts of language that form discrete combinatory systems, including phonology and syntax, seem not to be accessible to these primates.

Other species have also been taught to respond to hand gestures and have been reported to be able to interpret new utterances correctly. Napoli (2012: 74) reports that “dolphins who learned that the sequence of gestures PERSON SURFBOARD FETCH means ‘bring the surfboard to the person’ easily understood SURFBOARD PERSON FETCH as ‘bring the person to the surfboard’ – they recognized a system and used it”. And more recently, border collies have been found to be capable of responding appropriately to language, some even to the extent of over a thousand words. However, the systematicity and creativity of animal communication systems is still far from being comparable to human language.

So, communication is acting on information. In the case of humans, this acting on information can be achieved using spoken language, but also its derivatives, most notably writing and symbolic gestures (Yingling 2009: 125). The basic distinction in forms of human communication is between verbal communication, in which we use words to convey a meaning (either in speech or writing) and non-verbal communication, in which information is conveyed using (voluntary or involuntary)

non-linguistic representations such as gestures, facial expressions, touching, body language, eye contact, etc.

Task 1: Look up the various meanings of *communication* in learner's and encyclopedic dictionaries. Which of these senses of the word are you already familiar with? Which of the senses listed do you think are going to be relevant for the study of communicative competence?

Task 2: If communication implies an exchange taking place, is the delivery of mail or e-mail enough to constitute communication? If yes, why? If not, what do you think is missing?

Task 3. Are verbal and non-verbal communication mutually exclusive?

Task 4. Provide at least two examples of each type of non-verbal communication listed above. Do you think that these representations convey the same meaning in different languages? If yes, does this imply that not only *langue* is innate but also *parole*? If not, what could be the reason for the supposed difference?

Task 5. Find examples of culturally dependent aspects of non-verbal communication.

Suggestions for further reading

Anderson (2006) offers a very accessible explanation of what is meant by communication, what the difference between communication and language is and what the essential characteristics of language, a uniquely human trait, are. Napoli (2012) also discusses how animals communicate between themselves and why this form of communication cannot be considered language.

Hauser, Chomsky & Fitch (2002) argue that an understanding of the faculty of language requires substantial interdisciplinary cooperation.

They claim that the faculty of language in the narrow sense (only including recursion and as the only uniquely human component of the faculty of language) may have evolved for reasons other than language and so comparative studies might look for evidence of such computations outside of the domain of communication (for example, number, navigation, and social relations).

Watch brief documentaries

- on Alex at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p0E1Wny5kCk> (1:15 – 10:00)
- on Washoe at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OUwOvF7TqgA> (0:00 – 2:38)
- on Koko at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SNuZ4OE6vCk&t=125s>
- on Kanzi at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wRM7vTrIIs&t=72s>
- Hand gestures in different cultures at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6MhJxPffkhY>
- English hand gestures at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xY_xiGadcgk&t=699s

Chapter 2. Communicative competence

What does it mean to KNOW a language? What kind of knowledge does this imply? What does it take to learn a language well?

What does it mean to be a communicatively competent speaker of a language? Which areas do you have to master to become communicatively competent in a language?

In the previous chapter we saw that language is an extremely elaborate system, highly structured and with a rich expressive and open-ended power and these traits make language available only to humans. In this chapter, we are going to explore what it means to know a language.

A naïve answer to the question what it means to know a language might be “the words of that language”. However, we need much more than that: in order to encode and decode messages in any language we also need to know how to arrange the words in an appropriate order. And as we shall see, this process of arranging smaller units into larger ones does not only require knowledge of the syntax of a language. As Corbett (2003: 21) points out, “[o]ne has to be aware of the diverse ways of constructing a message, of the guidelines which, rarely obvious and definable, constitute unquestioned principles of presenting the sound and word patterns together with other symbols. This code for our verbal conduct is our communicative competence and it fulfils a multitude of social functions and is largely determined by the sociocultural system”. In this chapter, we give an overview of the development of the notion of (communicative) competence from the very beginnings, over half a century ago, to some of the most important contemporary views.

In 1965, Chomsky introduced into modern linguistics the term ‘competence’ to refer to the ideal native speaker-hearer’s knowledge

of his language as an internalized system (grammar and other aspects of language) and the term 'performance' to refer to his actual use of language in concrete situations, i.e. the "psychological factors that are involved in the perception and production of speech, e.g. perceptual parsing strategies, memory limitations and the like" (Canale and Swain 1980: 3). However, like Saussure's (1959) distinction between *langue* and *parole* in structuralism, Chomsky's (1965) early generative transformational model of grammar based on the notion of *competence* and *performance* failed to take into account the real use of language in a particular context. In other words, they both completely neglected the notion of communication.

Even though the ideas proposed by Chomsky were revolutionary, not everyone accepted them with equal enthusiasm. Many (socio)linguists, psychologists and anthropologists criticized Chomsky's view, claiming that it did not take into account the communicative dimension of the language and that he only focused on the theory of grammar without taking into consideration the appropriateness of the sociocultural features of an utterance. This led authors like Campbell and Wales (1970) and Hymes (1972) to introduce the term 'communicative competence', which, in addition to Chomsky's grammatical aspect of the language also included the contextual factors that have close links with language use. To quote Campbell and Wales (1970: 247), "the most important linguistic ability is to produce or understand utterances not so much grammatical but appropriate to the context in which they are made". In a similar vein, Hymes (1972: 277) claimed that "there are rules of use without which the rules of grammar will be useless". He stressed that linguistic theory needs to be seen as part of a more general theory incorporating communication and culture and criticized Chomsky's version of the competence-performance distinction (based on the ideal native speaker), pointing out that it fails to take into account whether and to what extent an utterance is socioculturally *appropriate* in the situational and verbal context in which it is used (Canale and Swain 1980: 4). Thus, he added the sociolinguistic perspective into Chomsky's linguistic view of competence and defined communicative competence not only as an inherent grammatical competence but also as the ability

to use grammatical competence in a variety of communicative situations (Bagarić & Mihaljević Djigunović 2007: 95). For Hymes (1972: 281), any adequate theory of language users and language use should actually strive to answer the following questions:

- whether (and to what degree) something is formally *possible* (judgement of grammaticality, which pertains to competence);
- whether (and to what degree) something is *feasible* in virtue of the means of implementation available (i.e. acceptability, which pertains to performance);
- whether (and to what degree) something is *appropriate* (adequate, happy, successful) in relation to a context in which it is used and evaluated; and
- whether (and to what degree) something is in fact done, actually *performed*, and what its doing entails.

So, for example, a sentence may be grammatical, awkward (e.g. given our knowledge of the world) and tactful (i.e. appropriate in the given context, e.g. *Yo!* as an interjection or greeting in American slang) and still occur rarely, Hymes (1972: 281-282) points out.

Since the 1970s, there has been a shift from the study of language in isolation towards the study of language as communication¹ and this resulted in the emergence of a new concept of communicative competence, which differs to a very large extent from the initial model of linguistic competence proposed in Chomsky (1965). As Cenoz (1999) points out, while linguistic competence is a static concept based on grammatical rules and related to individuals, communicative competence is a dynamic concept based on the negotiation of meaning between two or more speakers.

At about the same time, Savignon (1972) used the term *communicative competence* to characterize the ability of classroom language learners

¹Even Chomsky (1980: 224) himself took into account the notion of *pragmatic competence*, which he defined as the “knowledge of conditions and manner of appropriate use (of the language), in conformity with various purposes”, as opposed to *grammatical competence*, which was understood as “the knowledge of form and meaning”.

to interact with other speakers and to make meaning, as distinct from their ability to recite dialogues or perform on discrete-point tests of grammatical knowledge (Savignon 1991: 264). In Savignon's (1983: 249) interactional approach the development of learners' communicative competence is defined as "expression, interpretation, and negotiation of meaning involving interaction between two or more persons or between one person and a written or oral text". She proposed the following main features of communicative competence, reflecting the same focus on the social aspect of communication competence which Hymes also stressed:

- It is a dynamic concept, it is interpersonal and depends on the negotiation of meaning between two or more persons who share to some degree the same symbolic system
- It applies to both written and spoken language as well as to many other symbolic systems
- It is context specific. There is an infinite variety of situations in which communication takes place. Success in a particular situation depends on the extent to which one understands the context
- It is a relative concept, dependent on the cooperation of all participants, which is why it is reasonable to view communicative competence in terms of degrees rather than a simple opposition.

On a similar note, Canale and Swain (1980: 29) "understand communication to be based on sociocultural, interpersonal interaction, to involve unpredictability and creativity, to take place in a discourse and sociocultural context, to be purposive behaviour, to be carried out under performance constraints, to involve use of authentic (as opposed to textbook-contrived) language, and to be judged as successful or not on the basis of behavioural outcomes". They define communicative competence as the relationships and interactions between grammatical competence (the rules of grammar) and sociolinguistic competence (the rules of language use), while the actual demonstration of this knowledge in real second language situations and for authentic

communication purposes they term communicative performance. The model of communicative competence these authors propose consists of three basic competencies:

- (1) grammatical competence, concerned with mastery of the language code itself, i.e. the rules of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, spelling, etc.
- (2) sociolinguistic competence, which helps the learner interpret the social meaning of utterances. It subsumes knowledge of the sociocultural rules of use (i.e. of appropriateness of the utterance within a given socio-cultural context) and the rules of discourse (i.e. achieving cohesion and coherence, information structuring etc.)
- (3) strategic competence, composed of mastery of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies that may be used to compensate for breakdowns in communication by resorting to the use of various strategies (e.g. grammatical and lexical paraphrasing, requests for repetition, clarification, slower speech, etc). In other words, it refers to the ability to produce and interpret language beyond the sentence level.

Canale (1983) pointed out that a distinction should be made between communicative competence, which refers to the underlying knowledge of the rules of communication, and actual communication. He also recognized that sociolinguistic competence, as defined in Canale and Swain (1980), was too broad a concept and so in his model, sociolinguistic competence refers only to mastery of the socio-cultural rules (the appropriateness of both form and meaning to context, i.e. pragmatic knowledge) and he introduces a separate component, discourse competence, which he defines as the ability to produce 'a unified spoken or written text in different genres' (1983: 9) using cohesion and coherence.

Bachman and Palmer's (1982) framework of communicative competence was the first framework in which the term *pragmatic competence* is incorporated as a category which subsumes vocabulary, cohesion, and organization/coherence, alongside grammatical competence (including

morphology and syntax) and sociolinguistic competence (including aspects like the use of the appropriate register, nativeness, nonliteral language, etc). The components of communicative competence were also addressed in Bachman’s (1990) model of communicative language ability, in which *pragmatic competence* is a central component incorporating the ability to use language to express a wide range of functions, and interpret their illocutionary force in discourse according to the sociocultural context in which they are uttered (Rueda 2006: 173). Bachman (1990) and Bachman and Palmer (1996) subdivided language competence in the way illustrated in the figure below:

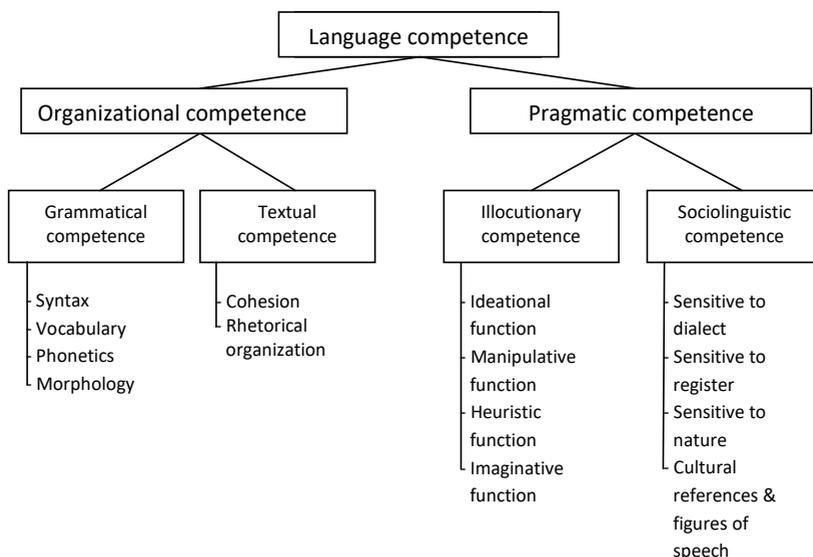


Figure 1. Components of language competence (Bachman 1990: 87)

Organizational competence, Bachman (1990: 87) explains, incorporates those “abilities involved in controlling the formal structure of language for producing or recognizing grammatically correct sentences, comprehending their propositional content, and ordering them to form texts”. It is subdivided into two types of abilities. On the one

hand, there is grammatical competence which, similarly to Canale and Swain (1980), includes knowledge of vocabulary, morphology, syntax, phonology and graphology. On the other hand, textual competence enables comprehension and production of (spoken or written) texts structured according to the rules of cohesion and rhetorical organization. The same competence has been regarded by Canale and Swain (1980) and Savignon (1997) as discourse competence. Bachman (1990) also suggests that textual competence involves aspects of conversational analysis. Thus, organizational competence concerns the structuring of linguistic signals in communication (both oral and written). In today's world, in which English has become the first language of world communication and today's global lingua franca, Prčić (2014: 147) proposes that the system-oriented, language-based, linguistic knowledge be expanded by Contact Linguistic Competence (CLC), a type of linguistic knowledge related to the use of elements, i.e. words and names, from English as the nativized foreign language in a non-English language that regularly comes into contact with it.

One of the most important contributions of Bachman (1990) as well as Bachman and Palmer (1996) compared to the previous models is the incorporation of another component, pragmatic competence, and the importance he attributes to this component for mastery of a given language. Pragmatic competence pertains to two significant aspects of communicative language use: the relationships between linguistic signals and their referents on the one hand (i.e. functional knowledge), and language users and the context of communication on the other (i.e. sociolinguistic competence) (Laughlin et al. 2015: 10).

The first component of pragmatic knowledge, illocutionary competence, refers to the knowledge of pragmatic conventions for using language to express a wide range of functions, and for interpreting the illocutionary force of utterances or discourse, i.e. our ability to use language to exchange information and our feelings about that information, to affect the behaviour of others, to extend our knowledge of the world around us and also to play with language. Sociolinguistic competence, on the other hand, concerns "the sensitivity to, or control of the conventions

of language use that are determined by the features of the specific language use context” (Bachman 1990: 94), i.e. the knowledge of sociolinguistic conventions necessary for creating and interpreting utterances appropriate to a particular context of language use. For example, the utterance *Could you shut the door?* is probably intended as an indirect request rather than a question and as such, it requires a response in terms of action (closing the door) rather a verbal response such as *Yes, I could*. The latter, though it is literally and grammatically correct in the given context, neglects the illocutionary force of the first utterance as a request to close the door and is therefore inappropriate.

Building on Canale and Swain’s (1980) model, but also recognizing its shortcomings, Celce-Murcia et al. (1995) proposed that the notion of communicative competence should also include actional competence, which they defined as the ability to comprehend and produce all significant speech acts and speech act sets. These authors also proposed that Canale and Swain’s (1980) sociolinguistic competence be re-labelled into sociocultural competence (envisaged as the cultural background knowledge needed to interpret and use a language effectively) and that grammatical competence be termed linguistic competence, to explicitly include the sound system and the lexicon as well as the grammar (i.e., morphology and syntax). However, many of these changes had already been introduced in Bachman’s (1990) highly influential model.

The model put forward by Celce-Murcia et al. (1995) is represented as a pyramid enclosing a circle and surrounded by another circle. The circle inside the pyramid symbolizes discourse competence, understood as the core or central competence in this model. The top point of the triangle harbours sociocultural competence (sociocultural context), while the two bottom ones represent linguistic competence (the lexico-grammatical resources) and actional competence (organizing skills of communicative intent). The arrows suggest that the various components are constantly interacting with each other and the discourse component, and together, they shape the discourse. The circle enclosing this triangle stands for strategic competence, “an

available inventory of communicative, cognitive, and metacognitive strategies that allow a skilled interlocutor to negotiate meanings, resolve ambiguities, and to compensate for deficiencies in any of the other competencies” (Celce-Murcia 2007: 44).²

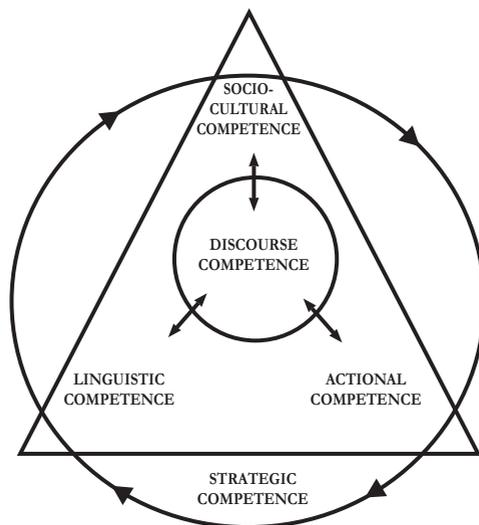


Figure 2. Schematic representation of communicative competence in Celce-Murcia et al. (1995: 10)

Relying on Celce-Murcia et al.'s (1995) view that discourse competence is the core of communicative competence, Alcón (2000: 262) offered an updated model of communicative competence, consisting of three competencies: (1) discourse competence (subsuming linguistic competence, i.e. all aspects of the linguistic system, as well as textual competence and pragmatic competence, cf. Bachman 1990), (2) psychomotor skills and competencies (including listening, speaking, reading and writing, which all influence discourse competence), and

² The above model was revised later to include and emphasize the role of formulaic language (within a newly introduced component, formulaic competence, in contrast to language as a system, i.e. linguistic competence) and the paralinguistic aspects of face-to-face oral communication (within interactional competence, Celce-Murcia 2007: 49).

(3) strategic competence (which involves communication strategies and learning strategies).

A more recent model of communicative competence proposed by Uso-Juan and Martínez-Flor (2006) includes five components, namely, discourse, linguistic, pragmatic, intercultural and strategic competence. Similarly to Celce-Murcia et al.'s (1995) model, this new framework has discourse competence at its centre. The idea is that successful communication involves the ability to interpret and produce a piece of discourse, either spoken or written. Hence, discourse competence is situated in a position where the rest of the competences serve to build this very competence which, in turn, serves and affects each of them (Segueni 2016: 153).

On a slightly different strand and heavily relying on Bachman's (1990) model of language competence, Rose (1999) proposed a working definition of *pragmatic competence*, which has been extensively accepted by researchers in the field of interlanguage pragmatics (ILP). For this author, pragmatic competence represents the ability to use available linguistic resources (pragmalinguistics) in a contextually appropriate fashion (sociopragmatics), that is, the ability to do things appropriately with words (cf. Thomas 1983, Leech 1983). The terms pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics had already been defined by Kasper (1997: 1) at the time: pragmalinguistics was said to "include[s] strategies like directness and indirectness, routines, and a large range of linguistic forms which can intensify or soften communicative acts"; sociopragmatics, on the other hand, referred to the social perception of communicative action (see also Chapter 7). As pointed out in Kasper and Rose (2002), "pragmalinguistic knowledge requires mappings of form, meaning, force, and context, that may be obligatory as when prepackaged routines are used, or not as when non-conventional indirectness is needed" (Rueda 2006: 173). In other words, pragmalinguistic knowledge includes knowledge of both formulaic and non-formulaic language.

As we have seen in this chapter, traditional theoretical frameworks, which solely focused on the acquisition of grammatical rules slowly started being expanded by frameworks in which a more communicative approach is adopted. This important change had a profound effect on language teaching and learning, which we will discuss in the coming chapters. Canale and Swain's (1980) rather simple model appears to dominate the fields of second and foreign language acquisition even though Bachman and Palmer's (1996) model of communicative competence is much more comprehensive. However, as Bagarić and Mihaljević-Djigunović (2007: 98) rightly point out, "[t]he easiness with which the model of Canale and Swain can be applied is probably the main reason why many researchers of communicative competence still use it".

Task 1. Draw a map/diagram showing the various ways in which the concept of communicative competence has developed over the years.

Task 2. Compare the various models in the diagram you have drawn in Task 1 and say which of the competencies/components **you** think should not or should also be included in communicative competence. Justify your ideas.

Task 3. Canale and Swain's (1980) 'sociolinguistic competence' was later re-labelled into 'sociocultural competence' and 'grammatical competence' into 'linguistic competence'. Why do you think these new terms were found to be more appropriate? Do they convey anything in addition to what the original terms did?

Suggestions for further reading

Brief overviews of approaches to and models of communicative competence can be found in Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei & Thurrell (1995), Bagarić & Mihaljević Djigunović (2007), Celce-Murcia (2007) and Laughlin, Wain & Schmidgall (2015).

Chapter 3. Communicative competence and language teaching/learning

How many languages would you say you are a communicatively competent speaker of? Are you equally strong in all the different areas? If not, which areas do you find yourself lacking knowledge/competence in? Why do you think this is the case?

In the previous chapter, we looked at how the definition of communicative competence changed over the years, especially with respect to the competencies it subsumes. In this chapter, we are going to explore the relevance of pragmatics to the concept of communicative competence. Before we delve into this subject matter, do the tasks below.

Task 1. Following Canale & Swain (1980), Canale (1983) argues that the ability to communicate requires four sub-competencies: grammatical, sociolinguistic, strategic and discourse competence. In your opinion, which of these four competencies receive the most attention and which the least attention in foreign language education? Why do you think this is so?

Task 2. Think about your own communicative competence in a second or third language.³ Are you equally strong in all four competencies? If not, why? What can be done/could have been done so that you become equally communicatively competent in all areas?

³ The label second or third language is used to refer to any non-native language.

Grammar and pragmatics

What do you think is the relationship between pragmatic development and grammatical development? Can L2 speakers learn pragmatics without the grammar to express it? Or do they have to master the grammar first?

Empirical research undertaken in linguistics, psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics over the past six decades has revealed the complex nature of language learning. While in structural linguistics and generative transformational grammar of the 1960's the main (or rather, exclusive) emphasis was on formal aspects of language, the 1970's and 1980's witnessed a growing interest in language use. It is widely accepted among language educators today that it is not only linguistic but also a multitude of psycholinguistic and sociocultural factors that play an important role in the process of language learning. This change in philosophy resulted in establishing communication as the main objective in language learning, and this in turn led to the emergence of an important approach in language pedagogy called Communicative language teaching (CLT), which is premised on the belief that the development of communicative ability in the target language is the goal of classroom learning (cf. Nunan 1991, Mitchell 1994, Savignon 1997, 2000, Richard & Rogers 2001, Whong 2011). The ultimate goal of this approach is thus to enable speakers to communicate effectively (Savignon 1997), to successfully convey their own communicative intentions and to successfully perceive the communicative intention of their interlocutor, to produce and understand language that is appropriate in the given communicative situation and is in accordance with the sociocultural parameters of the target language (Anderson 1990, Olshtain & Cohen 1983, Wolfson 1981).

As we have already seen, in defining the concept of communicative competence many scholars included the pragmatic component as an essential element in the context of a second (or foreign) language, reflecting the importance attributed to the appropriateness of

sentences to the context in which they are used. Today, language learning is aimed at acquiring pragmatic competence, i.e. the ability to convey communicative intent in various situations. Therefore, learners must acquire not only linguistic rules (at the level of phonology, morphology, syntax) and vocabulary, but they must also acquire the sociocultural norms of language use.

However, pragmatic development usually fails to go hand in hand with the development of grammatical competence. And though the development of the two types of competence is often mentioned together, there is no consensus in the literature regarding the exact relationship between them. Namely, some scholars hold that second or foreign language (henceforth L2/FL) learners have to master grammar before their pragmatic competence can be developed, i.e. that pragmatic competence builds on grammatical competence and that a certain level of language proficiency is required for the development of pragmatic competence (cf. Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei 1998, Niezgodá & Roever 2001). This view fails to acknowledge the fact that learners are already pragmatically competent speakers of their L1 and that they can transfer (some of) this ability to the L2/FL. In addition, such a viewpoint disregards the existence of universal pragmatic competence, which allows speakers to notice sociopragmatic variability and make linguistic choices accordingly, recognizing the role of discourse in the construction of social identities and relations (Kasper & Rose 2002). This includes the ability to distinguish between familial and formal contexts, to employ the principles of turn taking and repair, to recognize communicative acts, conversational implicatures, politeness conventions, to recognize and use the major strategies for communicative acts, etc. Ultimately, if pragmatic development were conditioned by a sound knowledge of grammar, we would not expect advanced L2/FL learners to employ their perfect grammar in a non-target-like fashion, i.e. in a way which is not in accordance with NS practices (cf. Bardovi-Harlig 1999, 2001, Kasper 2000, 2001a, Kasper & Rose 2002, see Rueda 2006: 174 on the three forms in which pragmatics may depend on grammar).

On the other hand, those who consider pragmatic competence to be independent from grammatical competence support their claims by

showing that pragmatic and interactional competence can develop in spite of restricted grammatical knowledge, especially when language learners acculturate to the L2/FL community (Walters 1980, Eisenstein & Bodman 1986, 1993, Schmidt 1993, Salisbury & Bardovi-Harlig 2001). After all, if this were not the case, we would never expect to find pragmatically appropriate language realized by ungrammatical forms. Quite on the contrary, research has shown that when learners do not have the grammatical resources needed to perform an action in L2/FL, they rely on their pragmatic knowledge, which supports the claim that pragmatics precedes grammar. The literature abounds in examples of L2 learners who have developed grammatical competence in the absence of corresponding pragmatic competence (Olshtain & Blum-Kulka 1985, Bodman & Eisenstein, 1988, Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford 1990, 1993, Ebsworth, Bodman & Carpenter 1996, Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei 1998, Chen 1996, Bardovi-Harlig 1999, 2000, 2001). In fact, even advanced language learners often display a severe lack of balance between the lexico-grammatical level and the level of communicative intent and sociocultural context (Celce-Murcia et al. 1995: 13) of their communicative competence, their grammatical competence being at a much higher level than their pragmatic competence (Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei 1998: 234, Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper 1989: 10). This is a very important finding since, as Thomas (1983) points out, failure to master the sociocultural norms of language use may cause misunderstandings, uncomfortable communication breakdowns as well as the stereotyping of the target language learners as insensitive, rude, or inept. Research has also shown that grammatical errors are more easily forgiven by native speakers than pragmatic misses (Campbell & Roberts 2007, Yates 2010), which are often taken on a social or personal level (Bardovi-Harlig & Mahan-Taylor 2003). This is why it is of paramount importance in language teaching and learning to ascertain that the learners' grammatical and pragmatic competence develop simultaneously, i.e. that pragmatic competence does not lag behind grammatical competence.

The picture of the interplay of grammatical and pragmatic competence is obviously not a clear one, but as Rueda (2006: 175) suggests, the two

contradictory approaches outlined above can be reconciled if we adopt a developmental perspective and assume that in the initial stages of L2 acquisition learners rely on their L1 pragmatic competence or on pragmatic universals to communicate, even with a limited command of L2/FL. As their development progresses, learners start realizing the secondary meanings of the grammatical forms they have already mastered and form starts taking precedence over function and in this way, both grammatical (linguistic) and pragmatic competence develop. The developmental approach outlined here stresses the importance of teaching L2/FL pragmatics from the early stages since it can aid the acquisition/learning of (grammatical) forms.

Regardless of the perspective argued for, what the two approaches have in common is the equal importance they attribute to mastering not just the form and the content (grammatical competence) but also the relationship between form and context (pragmatic competence), which enables the speaker to express and interpret the intended meaning accurately and appropriately (Murray 2009: 239) with respect to the sociocultural context (Fraser 2010: 15). Chapter 8 of this book is devoted to the ways this can be achieved in foreign language teaching. At this point, we shall just stress that in order to develop the learners' pragmatic competence, they should be made pragmatically aware. What this means is that they should be enabled to recognize "how language forms are used appropriately in context" (Eslami-Rasekh 2005: 200), to pay attention to different variables in language use and to learn to apply their pragmatic awareness in various settings, to be able to analyze, think and reflect upon their own language use and to adapt it to communication in whatever setting outside the classroom (Kondo 2004, Eslami-Rasekh 2005). If this task is not approached with utmost seriousness, i.e. if the learners' pragmatic awareness is at a low level, this may well lead to pragmatic failure, "the inability to understand what is meant by what is said" (Thomas 1983: 91) and cause misunderstandings or even lead to communication breakdown, as suggested above (Thomas 1983, Baron 2003).

Having pointed out the central importance of (developing) pragmatic competence in language learning, let us now offer a brief overview of the field of pragmatics, of what it encompasses and why it is so important for expressing and interpreting messages.

Task 3. Find examples of non-target-like pragmatic production by L2/FL speakers of English. You may resort to using video clips from Youtube (e.g. samples of language exams).

Task 4. Analyze the data you have collected and state which of the two approaches described above do your data support, the *Grammar before pragmatics* or the *Pragmatics in spite of grammar* approach?

Task 5. What is being misunderstood in the following exchange and why?

EFL learner: *John, I have just been informed that I got the 1st prize!*

John: *Noooo, get out of here!*

EFL learner: *I don't understand why you are being rude. I thought you would be happy to hear this...*

Task 6. How do you think learners come to understand what is meant by what is said? Does spending time in an L2 environment suffice? If not, what else do you think is necessary?

Suggestions for further reading

For more on the pragmatic development of L2/FL learners the reader is referred to Anderson (1990), Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1993), Cenoz (1999), Bardovi-Harlig (2000), Kasper (2001b), Kasper & Rose (2002), Kondo (2004), Rueda (2006) and Segueni (2016).

The raising of pragmatic awareness of L2/FL learners is discussed in more detail in Niezgodna & Roever (2001) and Murray (2009).

Chapter 4. What is pragmatics?

How would you define pragmatics? What kind of phenomena would fall into the scope of pragmatics as a science?

We have established already that the understanding of communicative competence has been influenced by the field of pragmatics and the philosophy of language. Remember that in Bachman's (1990) model of communicative competence pragmatic competence subsumes (a) illocutionary competence (speech acts, language functions) and (b) sociolinguistic competence (i.e. sensitivity to differences in varieties, register and naturalness, as well as the ability to interpret cultural references and figures of speech). But what is pragmatics?

Pragmatics is a subfield of linguistics which has been defined in various ways over the years, most simply as the theory of language use or the theory of the relation between language and language users. Stalnaker (1972: 383) interprets it as "the study of linguistic acts and the contexts in which they are performed". Yule (1996: 3) is more specific and claims that pragmatics is concerned with the study of meaning as communicated by a speaker and interpreted by a listener. LoCastro (2003: 15) also stresses the interaction between the interlocutors in a given sociocultural setting when he defines pragmatics as "the study of speaker and hearer meaning created in their joint actions that include both linguistic and non-linguistic signals in the context of socioculturally organized activities" and so does Mey (2001: 6), when he explains that "pragmatics studies the use of language in human communication as determined by the conditions of society". Crystal (2001) gives perhaps the most comprehensive description of pragmatics as "the study of language from the point of view of users, especially of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction and the effects their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication". Thus, pragmatics uses the context to

explore the meaning and communicative purpose behind the words (LoCastro 2012), or, as Yule (1996: 3) puts it, it is “the study of how more gets communicated than is said”. Huang (2007: 2) gives his own working definition of pragmatics, according to which it is “the systematic study of meaning by virtue of, or dependent on, the use of language” and hastens to add the major topics that fall within the scope of pragmatics: implicature, presupposition, speech acts, and deixis.

The study of pragmatics originates in the philosophy of language but it became a discipline with its specific field of research only around the 1970's, following the hugely important works of Austin (1962), Searle (1969) and Grice (1975). As pointed out by Segueni (2016: 83-84), with focus on meaning in use and naturally occurring conversation appeared Grice's Cooperative principle (1975) and the Politeness Principle by Leech (1983) and later by Brown and Levinson (1987). In what follows, we briefly present the main ideas behind the seminal works cited above.

The Speech Act Theory

Perhaps the most widely known tool in discourse analysis and pragmatics is the Speech Act Theory. The key question it seeks to answer is not what language is, but rather what is done with language in the course of interaction and how it is done. The theory revolves around the concepts of (in)directness as well as literal and intended meaning.

Task 1. What is the role of language? Is it to explain, inform, describe, and say something about the world or maybe (also) something else? If so, what?

Task 2. Are messages always communicated directly? Justify your claims.

People are often misled into thinking that the role of language is (solely) to explain, inform, describe, and say something about the world. However, language is also used to **do** things, such as promise, bet, request, threaten, warn, apologize, swear (in court), etc. The main tenet of Austin's (1962)

Speech Act Theory is that speaking is doing and that words are deeds. From this it follows that every speech act (the basic unit of communication, the way in which a specific social function is carried out in speaking, e.g. complaining, refusing, etc.) performs an act. Some examples of such acts are stating a fact or an opinion (*Mary's new hairdo is awful*), confirming or denying something (*It is true that I talked to the accused on that day*), making a prediction (*Mary will ace the exam*), promising (*I'll send you my new single when it's published*), making a request (*Pass me a towel, will you?*), offering thanks or an invitation (*Thanks, that's really sweet of you*), issuing an order (*Get up!*), giving advice or permission (*I think you should be more careful*), naming (*I name this child 'Mark'*) or swearing an oath (*I swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth*) (Austin 1962). Wittgenstein also insisted on seeing language as a vehicle for social activity and on focusing not on the meaning of utterances but rather on the act which speakers perform when issuing utterances.

In order to describe what is done with language, Austin (1962: 100-102) proposed every speech act has the following three aspects:

(1) Locutionary act: the actual utterance, i.e. the physical act of constructing the utterance and the meaning as determined by the rules of the language; the meaningful linguistic expression produced, e.g. *It's 10 o'clock*.

(2) Illocutionary act: the intended meaning of the utterance; the function of the words, the action the speaker wishes to accomplish by producing the utterance. In the context of a family evening at home, *It's 10 o'clock* might be intended as a parent's warning to a child to go to bed or as a request to switch the TV to another channel because a show the speaker wants to see is about to start.

(3) Perlocutionary act: the effect of the locution and illocution, the consequence/effect of issuing the utterance, the hearer's reaction to it, e.g. if the child understands the mother's hint in saying *It's 10 o'clock*, he/she will go to bed.

Or, to use Austin's (1962: 101) own explanation and example, a speaker can simultaneously perform three acts in issuing an utterance:

the locutionary act is the act **of** saying something with a certain sense and reference; the illocutionary act is the act performed **in** saying something, i.e. the act named and identified by the explicit performative verb. The perlocutionary act is the act performed **by**, or as a consequence of, saying something, e.g.

Act (A) or Locution - He said to me *You can't do that!*

Act (B) or Illocution - He protested against my doing it.

Act (C. a) or Perlocution - He pulled me up, checked me.

Act (C. b) - He stopped me, brought me to my senses, etc. /He annoyed me.

Similarly, in *Would you close the door, please?* the surface form and also the locutionary act of this utterance is a question with a clear content (*Close the door*). The illocutionary act conveys a request from the part of the speaker and the perlocutionary act expresses the speaker's desire that the hearer should go and close the door.

Austin afforded illocutionary acts a prominent role and the reason for this is rather straightforward: as the above examples illustrate, if the hearer fails to comprehend the illocutionary force of the utterance, i.e. the speaker's intention in producing that utterance, the purpose the speaker wishes to fulfil, then the speech act will fail. This misunderstanding may lead to funny situations and hence it is an unfailing source for various jokes, as is the case in the cartoon below (taken from Unknown):



It is worth noting that an illocutionary act is a culturally-defined speech act type, characterized by a particular illocutionary force, such as complimenting, promising, complaining, etc. There are different devices which help the hearer identify the illocutionary force of an utterance, i.e. how the utterance should be interpreted. Flores Salgado (2011: 9) illustrates this with the examples *Open the door* and *Could you open the door*, both of which “have the same propositional content (open the door), but they represent different illocutionary acts – an order and a request, respectively”.

Task 3. The simple declarative sentence *The door is there* in the form of statement can be interpreted in at least two ways. Explain how.

Task 4. Identify the locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts in the following two situations:

(a) (There are three people in the elevator. A and B know each other, C is holding a cat on a leash.)

A (to B): *Ahem, did I ever tell you that I have a cat allergy?*

(b) (A is filling in a form for a job in a cleaning service)

A (writing on form): *I have a cat allergy.*

Task 5. Discuss the locution, illocution and perlocution in the following conversation.

Three co-workers are at an office party to celebrate the end of a successful business year.

A: *I think I might go and have another cocktail.*

B: *I was going to get another one, too.*

C: *Could you get me one of those sandwiches please?*

B: *Me, too?*

Task 6. What illocutionary acts can you associate with the following examples:

(a) *I'll be back.* (Terminator)

(b) *The coffee tastes great.*

(c) *Do you have to stand in front of the TV?*

What perlocutionary acts do you think could be associated with each of these examples?

Task 7. Consider a negotiation with a hostage-taker under siege. The police negotiator says: *If you release the hostages, we'll allow the local TV channel to publish your demands.* Identify the locution, illocution and perlocution in this example.

Task 8. The imperative mood is often taken to encode the speech act of command. Comment on the speech act communicated in each of the utterances below:

- (a) *Leave immediately.*
- (b) *(Please) don't make me eat that.*
- (c) *Turn left at the crossroads.*
- (d) *Finish the game, then.*
- (e) *Have a nice weekend.*
- (f) *Come on. Say it.*
- (g) (to the phone) *Please ring.*

Task 9. Provide (real life or constructed) examples of situations in which there was mismatch between what the speaker thought he said and what the hearer understood.

Later, Austin's (1962) Speech Act Theory was further developed by Searle (1969), who distinguished between propositional content (for Austin's locution) and illocutionary force (which Austin termed as illocution). The latter is oftentimes indicated by illocutionary force indicating devices (IFIDs), which encompass performative verbs (verbs that explicitly convey the kind of speech act being performed, such as *promise, invite, apologize, predict, vow, request, warn, insist, and forbid*), mood (indicative, imperative, subjunctive), word order, intonation and stress. Searle (1969) distinguished between those acts where the effects produced are governed by the rules underlying the illocutionary force indicating devices and those in which the effects "are achieved indirectly as by-products of the total speech act" (Sadock 2004: 68). The former, in which "the illocutionary force is in line with the linguistic form" (O'Keefe et al. 2011: 87), can be referred to as direct speech acts. An example of this could be *Get up!* The

linguistic form constitutes an imperative and the illocutionary form is a command. Both illocutionary force and linguistic form complement each other and in such cases, no mismatch occurs. However, ambiguity may well occur when there is non-alignment between the linguistic form and the illocutionary force. This happens in indirect speech acts, as in *It's ten o'clock*. Namely, the linguistic form could suggest a simple case of asserting the time; however, the illocutionary force is that of a request, command or even warning for the hearer to get up. In indirect speech acts, as we have seen, there is a mismatch between linguistic form and illocutionary force and it is up to the hearer to disambiguate the utterance. We return to this issue after the tasks below.

Task 10. Look back at the example in Task 3 above and the two illocutionary forces we identified in it. Which interpretation resulted in a direct speech act and which was an indirect one?

Task 11. What IFIDs are used in the following examples:

- (a) *You will leave.*
- (b) *You will leave?*
- (c) *Will you leave?*
- (d) *You WILL leave!*

Task 12. For each of the following utterances, say what the direct and what the indirect speech act is:

- (a) *Would you mind opening the window?*
- (b) *Go ahead, try it. See where that'll get you!*
- (c) *Honey, there's someone at the front door!*
- (d) *I have always wanted a bracelet like that.*
- (e) *I bet my hair's a real mess.*

Task 13. "Linguistic meaning radically underdetermines the message conveyed and understood" (Horn 2004: 3). How do you understand this quotation?

As pointed out by Laughlin et al. (2015: 13), what a speaker intends to communicate is characteristically far richer than what he directly

expresses because the hearer's perspective may add another layer of meaning to the utterance. While a speaker says *x*, implicating *y*, he counts on the hearer(s) to decode the implicature *y* and understand what the speaker meant. Thus, pragmatic meaning goes beyond the literal meaning of a word, phrase, or utterance and competent speakers and hearers of a language "are expected to see through the forms to retrieve the speaker's intentions" (Bialystok 1993: 43), i.e. to have the ability to understand the illocutionary force of an utterance. This is particularly important in cross-cultural encounters since the same form can vary in its illocutionary force depending on the context in which it is made. For example, at a family dinner, the utterance *Are you going to finish that?* (referring to the dessert) might be a request, as in *May I have your dessert?* or else, a warning such as *Don't you think you should finish what is on your plate?*

In conclusion to this chapter, let us note that the recognition of interlocutor intentions is fundamental to pragmatics (cf. Litman & Allen 1990, Thomason 1990, Roberts 2004). The creation of pragmatic meaning is only possible because language users share certain presumptions about how people should (linguistically) behave in a given socio-cultural context. This is the reason why it is of utmost importance that language learners become pragmatically competent speakers of the target language and thereby learn to avoid cross-cultural misunderstandings.

Socio-culturally appropriate behaviour is partly conditioned by the politeness principles operative in a language, which is why we turn to this topic next.

Suggestions for further reading

For an overview of the Speech Act Theory, the reader is referred to Cutting (2008, with interesting and challenging exercises), Mey (2001), LoCastro (2003), Huang (2007) and O'Keefe et al. (2011), among others. A deeper and more detailed discussion of speech acts is offered in Leech (1983), Levinson (1983) and Cruse (2000).

Chapter 5. The Cooperative Principle

Is it important to state explicitly everything we intend to communicate or do you think there are situations in which this is superfluous? What enables the hearer to interpret the intended meaning in the latter case?

In any human language there are various ways in which speakers can word their messages, depending on various factors. For example, in answer to the question *Who organized the workshop?* one might simply say *John did* or *It was John who organized it* (in which case contrast is also involved, e.g. ... *and not Peter*). Similarly, there is no semantic difference between *John organized the workshop* and *The workshop was organized by John*. However, the former is more appropriate in a context centered around John, while the latter is more likely to be used when talking about the workshop. The speaker's choice of the way in which the message is to be conveyed is also heavily influenced by the socio-cultural context. For example, the choice between *Get me a glass of water, will you?* and *Could I please get a glass of water?* depends on the relationship holding between the speaker and the hearer, their age, etc. Cases like the latter one show the pragmatic phenomenon of politeness at work. It can be defined as "a system of interpersonal relations designed to facilitate interaction by minimizing the potential for conflict and confrontation inherent in all human interchange" (Lakoff 1990: 34).

One of the earliest theories of linguistic politeness and an attempt at explaining how a hearer gets from what is said to what is meant, i.e. from the level of expressed meaning to the level of implied meaning (Thomas 1995: 56) is Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle. It rests on the idea that language users share presumptions about how people should (linguistically) behave in a given socio-cultural context. More specifically, it holds that participants in a conversation obey certain

rules and assume that others involved in the conversation obey them, too. Grice (1975: 45) subsumed these ideas in the following way: *Make your contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged.* Later, Grice (1989) elaborated this principle further in a series of maxims:

- The maxim of quantity: Give the most helpful amount of information as is needed, and no more.
- The maxim of quality: Do not say what you believe to be false.
- The maxim of relation: Be relevant, and say things that are pertinent to the discussion.
- The maxim of manner: Put what you say in the clearest, briefest, and most orderly manner.

These general ideas provide the guidelines for hearers to follow the speaker's intentions and assumptions (for a detailed overview of conversational and relevance principles see Grice 1975, 1989).

It is important to note that the Cooperative Principle is bidirectional: speakers observe the maxims and listeners assume that speakers are observing them (unless they receive a signal that they should do otherwise, e.g. when talking to a child who may not yet be aware of conversational norms). And it is this assumption that allows for implicatures, meanings that are not explicitly conveyed in what is said, but can nonetheless be inferred – “an additional level of meaning, beyond the semantic meaning of the words uttered” (Thomas 1995: 57). As an illustration, consider the following exchange from the TV series *House*:⁴

Patient: *You don't have a family, do you?*

Dr. House: *Left them all back on Krypton.*

Dr. House's response to the patient's question is apparently uncooperative and untrue, but actually this type of a sarcastic reply

⁴ The exchange is from the episode *Painless* (2009) available at <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1273715/>.

occurs very often in everyday conversations. If the patient in this scene assumes that the Doctor is actually adhering to the Cooperative Principle (even though this may not appear to be the case at first sight), he will look for an alternative interpretation, one that rests on implicatures. Implicatures have been identified as one of the main ways in which non-native speech act production may vary from native speaker production and this is why devote attention to them in this book.

The maxims (or, more precisely, their violation) form the basis for inferences that we draw in conversation, which Grice called implicatures to distinguish them from formal logical implications illustrated below, where the first two statements logically imply or allow us to make the inference in the third sentence:

All babies cry.

Jamie is a baby.

Jamie cries.

(If all babies cry and Jamie is a baby, it logically follows from this that Jamie cries, too.)

Two types of implicatures need to be distinguished: conventional implicatures and conversational implicatures. The former type of implicatures does not depend on the Cooperative Principle (the four maxims) and requires no special contexts for interpretation. Instead, it is associated with specific words (e.g. the conjunctions *and*, *but*, *even*, *yet*, etc.) and results in additional conveyed meanings. For example, if somebody says *She is rich but lonely*, the conjunction *but* creates the implicature of a sense of contrast.

Conversational implicatures, on the other hand, arise in a conversation as a result of the participants failing to adhere to the conversational maxims listed above. For example, if somebody says *Can you close the door?*, the hearer is expected to draw the inference that they should close the door. Similarly, if an employer is asked to write a reference letter for an employee and she writes *He was always very elegant in meetings*, what inference is the addressee expected to draw?

Grice asserted that different ways of non-adhering to the maxims give rise to different types of implicatures. Violating a maxim occurs when someone in a conversation fails to observe one or more maxims with the intention to deceive the recipient. Very importantly, violating a maxim prevents or discourages the hearer from seeking for implicatures and encourages their taking utterances at face value. A very neat example of how a maxim can be violated is given in Thomas (1995: 73), who describes a situation in which a man asks his wife about her assumed love affair with a man. The wife states that she is not seeing any man, which is true. However, she deliberately fails to add that she is in fact seeing a woman. Thus, the wife did not lie to the husband but did not say the whole truth, either, and in doing so has violated the maxim of quantity. However, there is nothing in the wife's response that would lead the husband to assume that she is withholding any information. Instead, the violation of the maxim generates the intentionally misleading implicature that the wife is not having an affair with anyone. Similarly, when I ask my child, who has just returned from a birthday party *Did you have fun?* and he answers *Yes*, supposing that he did not in fact have a lot of fun (but e.g. answers *Yes* to avoid any further questions) violates the maxim of quality; hence, he tells a lie but does not allow me to generate an implicature.

One can also overtly opt out a maxim and thereby indicate that one is unwilling to cooperate in the way required by the maxim, e.g. when a colleague asks *How is the research on violating maxims going?* and I answer *Sorry, that's confidential*, what I am really doing is giving explicit information that the maxim of quantity cannot be satisfied and therefore no additional implicature is needed.

However, there are situations in which the speaker chooses to ignore one or more of the maxims by using a conversational implicature. Ignoring maxims by using conversational implicatures means that the participant adds meaning to the literal meaning of the utterance and expects the hearer to recognize that a maxim is not being adhered to and to look for meaning different from or additional to the meaning expressed by the speaker. The conversational implicature that is added when flouting a maxim is thus not intended to deceive the recipient of

the conversation, but the purpose is to prompt the recipient to look for other meaning (Thomas 1995: 65). To illustrate this, imagine the following conversation:

A: *Strasbourg is in Germany, right?*

B: *Sure, and Madrid is in Greece.*

In this example, rather than directly telling A that he/she is wrong, B chooses to breach the maxim of quality (avoid falsehood), but expects that A will recognize this and realize that he/she is wrong in assuming that Strasbourg is in Germany.

It is important to note that there are certain expressions which speakers can use to mark that they might be in danger of not fully adhering to the maxims. Such expressions are called hedges and they can informally be described as cautious notes about how an utterance should be taken when giving information. For example, to mark that the speaker may be failing to adhere to the maxim of quality (be truthful), he/she may use the hedge *as far as I know* or *if I'm not mistaken/I may be mistaken but...* as well as *I'm not sure...* or *I guess...*, etc.

Before moving on to other theories of linguistic politeness, you can check your understanding of implicatures and the Cooperative Principle by tackling the tasks below.

Task 1. What additional meanings do you think *and*, *even* and *yet* might convey? Provide examples to illustrate your claims.

Task 2. Which maxims do you think are being flouted in the following examples and why?

(a) A: *What are you baking?*

B: *L-A-S-A-G-N-E.*

(b) A conversation held on a train ride, where a person who just wants to read a book is being disturbed by a talkative stranger. (Thomas 1995: 68)

A: *What do you do?*

B: *I'm a teacher.*

- A: *Where do you teach?*
 B: *Outer Mongolia.*
 A: *Sorry I asked!*
- (c) Army Officer: *Name?*
 Neddy Seagoon: *Neddy Seagoon.*
 Army Officer: *Rank?*
 Neddy Seagoon: *Private.*
 Army Officer: *Sex?*
 Neddy Seagoon: *Yes, please.* (Flowerdew 2012: 98)
- (d) A: *Has anyone seen my make-up?*
 B: *The kids seem to be having a lot of fun decorating their bedroom walls.*
- (e) A: *Would you like to go out with Beatrice?*
 B: *Is the Pope Catholic?*
- (f) A: *So, how do you like my new hairdo?*
 B: *Er ... what's on TV tonight?*
- (g) A: *How are your parents getting on?*
 B: *Well, mum's having a lot of fun travelling with her friends. They've already been to most countries in Europe and half of Asia!* [silence follows]
- (h) A: *Let's stop and get something to eat. The kids must be hungry.*
 B: *Okay, but not that doughlike thing with stuffing on it...*
- (i) A: *Hi, George! What are you reading?*
 B: *A book.* [abrupt silence]
- (j) A: *How do I make my hair as thick and healthy as yours?*
 B: *Choose your parents carefully.*
- (k) (from *Big Bang Theory*, Season 3, Episode 17)
 Sheldon, Leonard, Raj and Howard are at lunch.
 Howard: *So I was doing some checking ... on the ring.*
 Raj: *Hold on, Sheldon, is there ketchup on the table?*
 Sheldon: *Um, yes, there is. Here's a fun fact: ketchup started out as a general term for sauce, typically made of mushrooms or fish brine with herbs and spices, some popular early main ingredients included blueberry, anchovy, oyster, kidney bean, and grape.*
 Raj: *No, that's okay, I'll get it.*

Task 3. Which hedges do you think could be used to signal non-adherence to the other maxims?

Task 4. Non-adherence to which of the maxims do the hedges in the following examples signal?

(a) *All I know is, alcoholic drinks are harmful to your health.*

(b) *He told me that he was an FBI agent.*

(c) *I am not entirely sure if all of this will make sense to you, but here's what I know.*

(d) *By the way, has Monica called you?*

Task 5. Think up different ways in which the question below could be answered, violating one or more of the maxims. Discuss your answers in small groups.

(Husband to wife): *Honey, how much did those new boots cost?*

Suggestions for further reading

Grice (1989) is the basic literature on the Cooperative principle. Thomas (1995) gives a thorough and accessible account of the Cooperative principle with numerous illustrations. For a more detailed and more advanced approach, the reader is referred to Levinson (2000), Mey (2001) and Huang (2007).

Chapter 6. Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory

How would you define linguistic politeness? Do you think it is possible to provide a universal definition of it? If so, what comprises linguistic politeness in your opinion? If not, why do you think this is the case?

Any linguistic interaction is necessarily also a social interaction. Social interaction may occur between complete strangers as well as between people who are very close to each other and, as we shall see very shortly, the factor of social distance has proven to be a very important external factor in interactions. Of course, this is not to say that there are no other factors that are negotiated in interaction – the amount of imposition, the power relations between the interlocutors, the degree of friendliness, etc. are all factors which need to be taken into account in any interaction. We assume that participants in an interaction are generally aware of the cultural norms and principles of politeness which are regarded as polite social behaviour within a culture.

Politeness can roughly be defined as the features of language which serve to mediate norms of social behaviour, in terms of such notions as courtesy, rapport, deference, and distance. The words people use are to a large degree (though not exclusively) determined by their relationship to other interlocutors, the need to make sure that theirs as well as others' needs and identities are accepted, maintained and enhanced to the full.

Several views of the politeness theory have been developed. Robin Lakoff's (1975) and Leech's (1983) theories both view politeness as a device used in personal interaction to avoid friction by using tact. Also, they both assume (explicitly or implicitly) that the principles of linguistic politeness are universal. However, the most influential theory of politeness is the face saving view proposed by Brown and

Levinson (1987). Their theory “argues for a universal principle of language usage in mitigating face-threatening acts based on the concept of face in human interaction” (Aoki 2010: 291-292). What the theory in effect says is that in daily discourse, we try to avoid subtle and personal topics, we tend to reassure our interlocutors and to avoid sharp disagreement. We also try to make our messages clear by highlighting important items or important information, as pointed out in the previous section. Also, we often use non-verbal feedback if we do not understand others. In brief, we are taking face of ourselves and our interlocutors. In this sense politeness is an activity which serves to enhance, maintain or protect face (Segueni 2016: 111).

‘Face’ was defined by Goffman (1967: 5) as “the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact”. Brown and Levinson (1987) redefined the notion of ‘face’ and divided it into two related aspects: positive face and negative face. Positive face denotes one’s desire for one’s positive self-image to be appreciated and approved (in other words, to be liked, accepted and respected by others) or as Brown and Levinson (1987: 62) put it, “the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others”. Negative face, on the other hand, denotes one’s desire for his or her freedom and self-autonomy not to be imposed on by others (i.e. the desire to preserve our own territory and be able to act freely and independently) – in Brown and Levinson’s (1987: 62) terms, “the want of every ‘competent adult member’ that his action be unimpeded by others”. What this theory relies on is the belief that people universally cooperate in maintaining each other’s face because of their mutual vulnerability of losing it.

Nevertheless, in everyday communication people often threaten each other’s individual self-image by producing certain illocutionary acts which we call “face threatening acts”(FTAs henceforth). What this means is that certain speech acts are FTAs by definition since they are (as a rule) liable to damage or threaten another person’s face, either by impeding their freedom of actions (and thereby threatening their negative face) or their wish that their wants be desired by others

(which is a threat to their positive face). This can naturally be done either by the addressor or the addressee.

FTAs which threaten the speaker's negative face are those that pose an offence to his face, e.g. expressing thanks or making unwilling promises, offers, etc. The speaker's positive face is threatened by acts which indicate that one has made a transgression or lost control over the situation, e.g. apologies, confessions, admissions of guilt or responsibility, acceptance of compliments, etc. As pointed out already, the hearer's face can also be threatened, e.g. an insult or an expression of disapproval of anything the hearer holds dear will have the potential to damage his positive face, while an order, a request or a threat, for instance, will naturally impinge upon the hearer's freedom of action and therefore represent a threat to the hearer's negative face (Thomas 1995: 169).

In an attempt to reduce the possibility of damage either to the hearer's or the speaker's own face interlocutors may resort to using various strategies which serve the purpose of minimizing the threat according to a rational assessment of the face risk to participants. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), participants in an interaction have two options to reduce any possible offence. They may decide to do the FTA or to avoid doing the FTA altogether if they decide that the degree of face threat is either too great or too small. People often prefer having their needs recognized over having to express them linguistically. And if their needs are indeed recognized (rather than made explicit), more has been communicated than what was said. However, even if the participants opt for doing the FTA, they still have two ways to go: they can do the FTA either (a) off record or (b) on record. In the first case, participants may express their intentions through hints or indirect suggestions in such a way that their intentions are not directly explained (e.g. *Oh, I forgot my pen*, which should be interpreted as a request for a pen). In the case of bald on record FTAs, the speaker's intentions are clearly and directly expressed (e.g. *Give me a pen* or *Lend me a pen*). On record FTAs can be softened by using redressive action in the form of (positive or negative) politeness strategies.

Redressive action simply means the effort made by the participants to soften the force of the speech act, to 'give face' to the addressee, to signal that the speaker recognizes the hearer's face wants. Depending on the aspect of face that is being stressed, redressive action may occur in the form of either positive or negative politeness. Positive politeness strategies in an interaction indicate that the speaker shares (at least some of) the hearer's wants. This can be achieved by the speaker expressing that the addressee is admirable, by claiming that the interlocutors belong to the same group or share the same interests, including the addressee in the activity, being optimistic, offering, promising, being optimistic, etc. (e.g. *Let's stop for a cup of coffee* includes the addressee in the activity, even though it is the speaker who wants to have a cup of coffee). Negative politeness is avoidance-based and the strategies used serve to assure the hearer that the speaker will not (be likely to) interfere with the hearer's freedom of action. This is usually achieved by the use of indirect formulae or direct means of hedging and mitigation, formality and apologies, by impersonalizing, etc.

To illustrate all the above described concepts and relationships, let us use as an example the speech act of requesting a pen.

- A **bald-on record** request for a pen (without redressive action) would be a direct, explicit request, without employing any politeness strategies, for example *Give me a pen.*
- An **on record** request for a pen **with redressive action** would still be an explicit request, but softened by **positive politeness redress**, as in *How about lending me a pen?* or **negative politeness redress**, as in *Would you lend me a pen, please?*
- An **off record** request would not involve a direct request but rather giving the listener a hint so that he or she can infer that the speaker is requesting something, e.g. *Oh, I forgot my pen...* or *Hm, I wonder where I put my pen...*
- **Not doing the FTA** means completely giving up requesting.

The weightiness of the FTA, i.e. the amount of face risk of a FTA can be calculated on the basis of three parameters: the asymmetric relation of

relative power between the speaker and the hearer (P), social distance or solidarity, i.e. the degree of familiarity between the speaker and the hearer (D), and ranking of imposition (R), i.e. how a particular imposition is ranked in a specific culture.⁵ Taken together, the values of these parameters will influence the speaker's next step, his decision about whether he is going to do the FTA and if so, which strategy he will apply. As we have pointed out above, Brown and Levinson (1987) believe that the notion of face itself is universal. However, they think that the specific manifestations of face wants may vary across cultures with some acts being more face-threatening in one culture than in another. In other words, different cultures might choose different politeness strategies and therefore it is of utmost importance for foreign language learners to be aware of the potential differences between their L1 culture and the FL culture in the ranking of imposition as well as the politeness strategies employed in particular situations.

Having outlined briefly the essence of Brown and Levinson's (1987) approach to politeness, in the final section of Part I of the book we focus on the subfields of pragmatics that have developed over the years. We end this part of the book by examining the two sides of pragmatics, namely pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics, and we explain their relevance to foreign language learners.

Task 1. Study the following examples and for each one, say

- (i) whether it represents a FTA to the addressee's positive or negative face,
 - (ii) what maxim is flouted,
 - (iii) what kind of a FTA is produced and
 - (iv) the speech act involved.
- (a) (Teenager to mother) *Mom, this is the last pack of Oreos on the shelf!*
- (b) (A Human Resources officer to an applicant for a job at the company) *You might be happier at a smaller – or a larger – company, sir!*

⁵ The role of these parameters in calculating the weightiness of the FTA will be illustrated in the research samples in Part II of the book.

Task 2. Imagine that you are in the kitchen with Peter. It's getting rather cold but you are kneading the dough to make pizza and so you can't close the window yourself. What is more, you don't know whether Peter is also getting chilly and would prefer the window to be closed. Which of the levels of politeness strategy do the following ways to deal with this situation illustrate?

- (a) *Isn't it chilly in here?*
- (b) *Close the window, Peter.*
- (c) *I'm sorry. Could you do me a favour and close the window?*
- (d) *You look cold, Peter. Should we close the window?*
- (e) (Say nothing and keep on freezing.)

Task 3. Say whether the following examples threaten the positive or the negative face of the addressee. Explain your reasoning.

- (a) *Come on, let's have a cup of coffee next week!*
- (b) *I'm wondering if you could join us for a cup of coffee next week.*
- (c) *Could you, please, join us for a cup of coffee next week?*
- (d) *I don't mean to impose, but I thought, if possible, we could have a cup of coffee next week.*

Task 4. We have seen that the less direct you are, the more polite you seem to be. Imagine now that you want your neighbours to turn down the music they have been playing really loud all day. Provide an off record FTA, an on record FTA with a positive politeness strategy as redressive action, an on record FTA with a negative politeness strategy as redressive action, and an on-record FTA with no redressive action.

Suggestions for further reading

Brown and Levinson (1987) provide a full description of strategies and social distance, power and status and other cultural aspects of politeness. LoCastro (2012) provides a review of politeness theory and introduces key terms and concepts, followed by a summary of important

criticisms of earlier approaches. A thorough, yet accessible explanation of the Politeness Principle and its relation to the Cooperative Principle is given in Thomas (1995). More detailed accounts of politeness as a pragmatic phenomenon are to be found in Huang (2007) and Cutting (2008).

Chapter 7. Second/Foreign language pragmatics and its subfields

What does pragmatics study? Do you think this applies to L1 pragmatics only or do L1 and L2/FL pragmatics deal with the same areas?

We have already identified deixis, conversational implicature, speech acts, presupposition and conversational structure as the main areas of interest in pragmatic research (Levinson 1983). However, the study of L2/FL pragmatics has a somewhat different scope, as we shall see in this chapter.

The reasoning behind the first contrastive studies of languages undertaken in the 1970s was to determine the similarities and differences between languages. It was assumed that what is similar between languages will be easily transferred from the native language into L2 and what is different will have to be learned in L2. These latter issues would then receive special attention in the development of teaching materials. This approach, however, soon proved wrong since not all the similarities were found to be easily transferred from L1 into L2 nor did the differences between L1 and L2 necessarily cause problems in foreign language teaching. But more importantly for us, it soon became clear that culture plays a very important role in language learning. In fact, culture and language are inseparable, since “language is not a matter of neutral codes and grammatical rules, because each time we send messages, we also make cultural choices” (Varner and Beamer 2005: 40ff).

Eventually, a subfield of pragmatics emerged, dealing with pragmatic phenomena relating to cultural differences, termed cross-cultural pragmatics. Relying on the assumption that members in different cultural societies speak differently and act differently, cross-cultural pragmatics investigates how the underlying values, beliefs, cultural

assumptions and communication strategies of the speakers influence their use of language. It “provides synchronic studies of first language use. It involves contrastive studies of the language of two or more social groups, using comparative data obtained independently from the different groups” (Cutting 2008: 66-69). While all aspects of pragmatics are equally fit to be studied from a cross-cultural perspective, it is interesting to note that two areas dominate in cross-cultural research: Speech Act Theory and (Brown and Levinson’s 1987) theory of politeness. The Cross-cultural study of speech act realization patterns (CCSARP) initiated by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain in 1982 (see Blum-Kulka & Olshtain 1984) was a pioneering project aimed at providing an analysis of various speech acts across a range of languages and cultures with the aim of establishing whether universal pragmatic principles exist in speech act realization and if so, what their characteristics are. The research instrument that was used to collect data from both native and non-native speakers of eight languages or varieties was the discourse completion task (DCT), which allowed researchers to collect large amounts of data fairly easily and quickly. Politeness, an area found conspicuously lacking in L2/FL learners’ production, has received considerable attention in cross-cultural studies, too, though more often than not only in conjunction with another topic.

LoCastro (2003) classifies cross-cultural pragmatics into contrastive pragmatics and interlanguage pragmatics. While the former is devoted to the comparison of speech acts between cultures and languages and seeks to determine how the users’ backgrounds are reflected in their linguistic actions, the latter is centred around exploring non-native speakers’ acquisition and use of pragmatic competence in L2/FL. Other researchers consider interlanguage pragmatics to be a separate subfield within pragmatics, or a different perspective from which pragmatics in L2/FL research can be investigated (see below).

The third subfield of L2/FL pragmatic research that has emerged fairly recently is intercultural pragmatics, which focuses on intercultural interaction and uses data obtained from people from different cultural groups interacting with each other (Trosborg 2010: 2). It studies “how

the language system is put to use in social encounters between human beings who have different first languages, communicate in a common language and, usually, represent different cultures” (Kecskés 2012: 608). In the 21st century, communication has become ever more intercultural and there is a growing number of people using English as a lingua franca (ELF) who have to acquire sufficient intercultural knowledge to be successful language users. In other words, intercultural pragmatics “provides synchronic studies of second language (L2) use by non-native speakers with other non-native or native speakers. Using interactional data obtained when people from different societies or social groups communicate with each other using a lingua franca, it examines the effect of their different norms and values” (Cutting 2008: 66-69). For example, an intercultural study of politeness would have focus on interactions between individuals and the cognition underlying those interactions, but would also have to take into account how norms of and expectations about language use are distributed across social groups and cultures (Trosborg 2010: 9). In today’s globalized world, with inevitable contacts between languages and cultures, intercultural competence is of crucial importance for successful intercultural communication, especially so in business contexts.

The process of globalization has resulted in a steadily growing demand for language learning across borders. As a result of this, a new subfield of applied linguistics appeared from cross-cultural pragmatics, termed interlanguage pragmatics. Unlike the first contrastive studies of pragmatics in the early 1970s, which focused on comparisons of how native and target cultural routines differ, the main concern of interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) lies in the issues faced by language learners as well as language instructors and assessors. ILP is the study of L2 learners’ developing (unstable, deficient, permeable) pragmatic knowledge and the development and use of strategies for linguistic action by nonnative speakers. According to Cutting (2008: 66-69), interlanguage pragmatics “provides synchronic or diachronic/developmental studies of second language learning. The synchronic ones describe one level of language learner; the diachronic ones compare two levels or follow the development of one level”. Similarly,

Kasper and Blum-Kulka (1993) define interlanguage pragmatics as focusing on how learners acquire and make use of pragmatic norms in L2. The central tenet of this field is that in learning a language (L2/FL), the learner constructs a system of abstract linguistic units and rules, an interlanguage, which represents a continually changing system in which the learner gradually substitutes target language for mother-tongue rules. At the early stages of language learning, this interlanguage exhibits clear signs of L1 transfer but as the learner becomes more and more competent in L2/FL, the interlanguage may fossilize. Apart from these developmental questions and problems related to L1 transfer, the field of interlanguage pragmatics also encompasses topics such as the development of L2/FL pragmatic competence in various contexts (classroom, online communities, study abroad, etc.) and the effectiveness of various methods of teaching and assessing pragmatics. The results of this wide range of research topics in the field of ILP should provide an invaluable source of data for L2/FL materials developers and textbook writers.

According to Alcón Soler and Martínez-Flor (2008: 3) investigations of speech acts, conversational structure and conversational implicature are among the main topics covered in ILP research. They can be studied either from a comparative perspective (similarly to cross-cultural pragmatics) or an acquisitional perspective, focusing on developmental issues that affect learners' acquisition of pragmatics. With regard to the latter, Leech (1983) and Thomas (1983) make a very important distinction between two components of pragmatics: pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics. We turn to this distinction next.

Pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics

Today pragmatics is an independent subfield of linguistics dealing with how people comprehend and produce a communication act or a speech act in a concrete speech situation. However, the boundaries between pragmatics and other areas have not always been clear-cut. In order to delimit the scope of pragmatics and its field of research

many terms have been used for the classification of the wide range of topics dealt within pragmatics. Leech (1983: 10-11), for example, uses the term *pragmalinguistics* to refer to “the more linguistic end of pragmatics” and *sociopragmatics*, which he describes as “the social interface of pragmatics”.

Recall from Chapter 3 that Rose (1999) defines pragmatic competence as the ability to use available linguistic resources (*pragmalinguistics*) in a contextually appropriate fashion (*sociopragmatics*), that is, the ability to do things appropriately with words (Thomas 1983 and Leech 1983). According to Thomas (1983), *pragmalinguistics* has to do with highly conventionalized usage of the language to convey communicative intentions. In Cohen’s words (1996a: 22), it refers to “the respondent’s skill at selecting appropriate linguistic forms to express the particular strategy used to realize the speech act (e.g. expression of regret in an apology, registration for a grievance in a complaint, specification of the objective of a request, or the refusal of an invitation). [...] the speaker’s control over the actual language forms used to realize a speech act (e.g. *sorry* vs. *excuse me*, *really sorry* vs. *very sorry*, as well as their control of register or formality of the utterance from most intimate to most formal language)”. In other words, *pragmalinguistics* relates to the speaker’s ability to recognize and produce communicative intent in a given context based on knowledge of linguistic resources typically used by native speakers in conveying particular speech acts such as complaints, compliments, apologies, etc. This competence also describes the speaker’s ability to interpret illocutionary force or conversational implicature of utterances, e.g. the fact that *Would you like to leave your belongings here, madam?* at the entrance to a museum is not a question but rather a request.

On the other hand, *sociopragmatics* concerns the relationship between linguistic action and social structure and it represents the social side of communication, the speaker’s knowledge of what is socially or culturally appropriate in a particular speech community. This component of pragmatics, thus, refers to the various social factors which influence language use like the relative power of the

interlocutors, their status, the social distance between them and the degree of imposition (Brown & Levinson 1987), but also the interlocutors' mutual rights and obligations, taboos and conventional procedures (Thomas 1983) that govern the communication acts and how they are performed. Consequently, sociopragmatics subsumes appreciation of politeness and social conventions, taboo topics and non-verbal factors such as kinesics and proxemics. For Cohen (1996a: 23), it refers to "the respondents' skill at selecting speech acts strategies which are appropriate given (1) the culture involved, (2) the age and sex of the speakers, (3) their social class and occupations, and (4) their roles and status in the interaction".

Kasper gives a similar definition of pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics. For her (1997a: 1), pragmalinguistics "includes strategies like directness and indirectness, routines, and a large range of linguistic forms which can intensify or soften communicative acts," while sociopragmatics refers to the social perception of communicative action. For Kasper and Rose (2002), pragmalinguistic knowledge requires mappings of form, meaning, force, and context, which may be obligatory as when prepackaged routines are used, or not as when non-conventional indirectness is needed.

Much like Kasper (1997a), Alcón Soler and Martínez-Flor (2008: 3) take pragmalinguistics to refer to the linguistic resources for conveying communicative acts and interpersonal meanings (see also Rose & Kasper 2001, Cenoz 2008). Pragmalinguistic competence, thus, implies knowledge of how the force of an utterance can be strengthened or weakened depending on the situation, i.e. how to harmonize linguistic resources (form and meaning) to express contextually adjusted message of an appropriate force (Kasper 2001b: 51). The linguistic resources which are used to intensify or soften a speech act are selected in accordance with the intended directness or the degree of imposition (Rose & Kasper 2001: 2). Sociopragmatics, on the other hand, refers to the social perceptions underlying participants' interpretation and performance of communicative acts and therefore involves knowledge of the particular means that are likely to be most successful for a given

situation. In other words, it is about proper social behaviour modulated according to “social power, social and psychological distance and the degree of imposition involved” (Rose & Kasper 2001: 3). Thus, it deals with the connection between the socio-cultural environment and the communicative action in which it takes place, e.g. deciding whether to complain about the neighbour playing music very loud (cf. Kasper 2001a: 51). Naturally, the routines and forms of particular speech acts and the contextual factors of particular situations are to be viewed in interaction, which in turn means that politeness should be seen as a pragmatic phenomenon. In order to understand why participants in communication use particular linguistic devices from among the array at their disposal and how contextual factors (primarily, the type of interaction) determine this choice, one has to demonstrate a certain level of competence regarding the performance of FTAs (Brown & Levinson 1987) and an awareness of the universal principle of avoiding friction in conversation (Leech 1983), as well as view politeness as a social norm (like Fraser 1990).

It goes without saying that language learners often make pragmatic mistakes, even at rather advanced levels of (grammatical) proficiency. The typical pragmatic failure (Thomas 1983: 101) made by L2/EFL learners is the wrong mapping of the force of an expression (e.g. if they answer the teacher’s question *Would you like to read?* with *Yes/No* instead of starting to read), i.e. failure to understand what is meant by what is said. Thomas (1983) identifies two kinds of failures, pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic. The former type occurs as a consequence of differences between the learner’s L1 and L2/FL in the linguistic encoding of pragmatic force, as in the above example. In this type of failure, the learner uses “linguistic elements which do not correspond to native forms and can produce breakdowns in communication or socially inappropriate utterances” (Cenoz 2008: 131). The latter type of failure is the result of cross-culturally different perceptions of what forms linguistic behaviour. It happens when a learner “produces an inappropriate utterance because he/she is not aware of the social and cultural rules affecting speech act realization in a foreign language. These rules can involve a different perception of

social psychological elements such as social distance, relative power and status or legitimization of a specific behavior” (Cenoz 2008: 131). Economidou-Kogetsidis (2011: 3200) gives a very nice illustration of sociopragmatic failure by showing what levels of directness and forms of address Greek speakers of English use in writing e-mails to faculty members in a university context, e.g.

*Mr. LN,
did you talk to Dr? what did she tell you?
Will she allow me to take sociolinguistics?
Thank you.
C.*

There is ample literature suggesting that the pragmatic competence of L2/FL learners seriously lags behind their linguistic (grammatical) proficiency (see Chapter 3) and that one of the main reasons for this is the very limited amount of pragmatically appropriate information in EFL syllabuses and coursebooks, especially in terms of the lack of authentic language samples (Bardovi-Harlig, Hartford, Mahan-Taylor, Morgan & Reynolds 1991, Boxer & Pickering 1995, Cane 1998, Grant & Starks 2001, Wong 2001) as well as of explicit discussion of conversational norms and practices, which often results in failure to adequately portray communicative practices or ideological constructs in the target language (Boxer & Pickering 1995, Burns 1998, Cane 1998, Berry 2000, Grant & Starks 2001, Gray 2002). The fact that numerous syllabus writers and material developers rely on intuitions about language rather than on empirical research often results in FL teaching being limited to developing lexicogrammatical competence only, and leaving the FL learner ignorant regarding the appropriate usage of language. The effects of such instruction can be very grave: research in the field of sociopragmatics has revealed significant variation in behavioural norms around the world and this may result in sociopragmatic failure, miscommunication, negative stereotyping and clashes when various cultural groups interact with each other. While linguistic difficulties are generally tolerated and normally recognized by NSs, sociopragmatic misses are harder to identify for a FL learner

because of cultural differences between participants. However, such blunders are also taken much more seriously by native speakers and will instantly reveal that the interlocutor is a non-NS, regardless of the level of his/her linguistic proficiency (see Chapter 3, Bardovi-Harlig & Mahan-Taylor 2003, Campbell & Roberts 2007, Ishihara & Cohen 2010, Yates 2010, among others). No less important is the adequate use of gestures, facial expressions, gaze, spatial behaviour and touch, as there may be considerable cultural variation in non-verbal communication. Thus, language learners should acquire the rules of language use and ways of speaking as well as linguistic competence (Gumperz 1982, Wolfson 1983) in order to achieve native-like competence.

Task 1. Given the above descriptions, say whether the following examples illustrate pragmalinguistic or sociopragmatic failure.

a) A: *I like your new hairdo!*

B: (says nothing)

b) (on the telephone)

A: *Is that eight hundred forty-one, eighty-two, fifty-one?*

c) A: *Is this coffee sugared?*

B: *I don't think so. Does it taste as if it is?*

d) *I was sorry to hear your Grandma tripped over the cat, cartwheeled down the stairs and brained herself on the electricity meter.*

e) (a Japanese student expressing gratitude for a present)

A: *Look what I've got for you!*

B: *Oh, I'm sorry.*

A: *Why sorry?*

f) (a Spanish student accepting an invitation to a party)

A: *Will you be coming to my party on Saturday?*

B: *Well...*

A: *Well what?*

g) (Englishman to a Japanese lady traveller burdened with two suitcases, baby, etc.)

A: *Can I help you with that?*

B: *So sorry, so sorry, you are very kind!*

h) (in a Russian EFL classroom):

Teacher: *Ivan, would you like to read?*

Ivan: *No, I wouldn't.*

i) (English teacher trainee from Serbia calling on a pupil)

A: *Please.*

j) A visiting professor from Japan enters the office of his British colleague. After a brief introduction (shaking hands, sitting down) he says *How old are you?*

k) A fourteen-year-old boy who had lived almost all his life in France went to camp in England. He wrote the following postcard to his 81-year-old maiden aunt in that country: *Dear Aunty, camp is fine but very hard. The food is disgusting and I am knackered. Love F.*

l) (Hostess to foreign visitor who has given her a small present)

A: *Oh, you really shouldn't have!*

B (anxious and puzzled): *But I ... why not?*

Task 2. Take another look at Task 1 and say what the expected utterance or response should have been (i.e. how a native speaker of English would have reacted in the give situations).

Suggestions for further reading

The subfields of L2/FL pragmatics are discussed in detail in LoCastro (2003, 2012), Cutting (2008), Trosborg (2010) and Kecskés (2012). For more on the distinction between pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics, as well as on pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic failure, the reader is referred to Thomas (1983), Alcón-Soler and Martínez-Flor (2008), Trosborg (2010) and LoCastro (2012).

Chapter 8. Teaching pragmatics. Developing foreign language learners' pragmatic competence

Have you ever been taught how to do things with words in L2/FL? If so, have the methods used proved successful? If not, do you find your competence in L2/FL lacking because of this?

Do you think FL pragmatics can/should be taught? If so, how do you suggest this should be approached? If not, how can the learners' pragmatic competence in L2/FL be developed?

In this chapter, we focus on how and why developing learners' communicative (primarily, pragmatic) competence in a foreign language is important and how it should be approached. Before that, however, we need to address the question of why pragmatics is important for L2 learners.

We have established by now that grammatical competence does not suffice for pragmatic performance – it is not uncommon even for an advanced learner who lives in the target language context to sometimes show a lack of understanding of L2 norms and linguistic conventions of social interaction. Another complex aspect of pragmatic competence is its sociocultural nature. Taguchi (2012: 3-4) points out that learners need to know not only the linguistic forms associated with a particular sociocultural situation (e.g. a job interview) but also the conventions used (the roles of the interviewer and the interviewee, etc). And as we stressed earlier, while some pragmatic functions are universal, the linguistic and nonlinguistic means to practice them, as well as the norms and conventions behind the practice, may exhibit considerable variation across cultures, as becomes evident from an extensive body of literature in the field of contrastive pragmatics and cross-cultural

communication (e.g. Blum-Kulka et al. 1989, Boxer 2002, Gudykunst & Kim 2004). The sometimes striking variation observed across languages in their realizations of pragmatic acts is often interlaced with norms and values in a given culture. And since it is usually very challenging to go beyond the literal meaning of what is said or written in order to interpret the intended meanings, assumptions, purposes or goals, and the kinds of actions that are being performed (Ishihara & Cohen 2010: 5), L2/FL learners usually struggle to notice the appropriate use of levels of politeness or how meaning can be conveyed indirectly to avoid friction in communication.

As Ishihara and Cohen (2010: 12-13) stress, in order to accurately interpret the pragmatics behind human behaviour one has to be familiar with both social and cultural norms. The former represent rules of when and how something could or should or should not be said and are based on some degree of group consensus. The cultural norms of a community, on the other hand, are more difficult to define due to the multitude of phenomena which make them up, including traditions, customs, beliefs, assumptions, value systems, worldviews, etc. Obviously, since even native speakers of a language vary among themselves with respect to the way in which they perform pragmatic routines in a given discourse situation (sometimes to a remarkable degree, cf. Trosborg 2010), the speakers of a community may regard certain pragmatic behaviour more or less preferred or appropriate in a given situation. In the context of foreign language teaching, the question of which sociocultural norms to follow becomes even more important – the choices which are at hand to L2 learners often create additional pressure rather than making things easier (cf. Rose 1994, LoCastro 2003, Hinkel 2014). In the case of English, the fact that its spread around the globe has led to several distinct varieties makes the decision about the choice of the pragmatic norms that should be taught mostly the teacher's responsibility. This is the main reason why it makes much more sense to envisage pragmatic norms as generally preferred rather than absolute or fixed conventions for pragmatic language use.

In light of the above, the learning of pragmatics should be viewed “not only as a cognitive process but also as a social phenomenon, looking into how speakers construct and negotiate their identities as they become socialized into the L2 community” (Ishihara & Cohen 2010: x). And since the interpretation of pragmatic meaning may present a problem not only to L2/FL learners but also to native speakers of a language due to the possibility of communicating indirectly, speakers and listeners need to collaborate to assure that genuine communication takes place. From this it follows that pragmatics deals with meaning that the speaker needs to *co-construct* and negotiate along with the listener within a given cultural context and given the social constraints.

In the past five decades, increasing importance has been given to the development of learners’ pragmatic knowledge and as a consequence, there is extensive research on how to foster communicative language use. There is ample evidence in the literature that L2/FL pragmatics can and should be taught, with the aim of facilitating “the learners’ sense of being able to find socially appropriate language for the situations that they encounter” (Bardovi-Harlig & Mahan-Taylor 2010: 1, cf. Mišić Ilić 2006). It has been shown that learners differ substantially from native speakers in the area of language use, in the execution and comprehension of certain speech acts, in conversational functions such as greetings, turn taking, feedback, and repair mechanisms, and in conversational management such as back channeling and short responses (Bardovi-Harlig 1996, 1999, Kasper & Schmidt 1996, Kasper & Rose 1999). With no pragmatic instruction and relying purely on in-class contact with L2/FL, with very limited exposure to naturally occurring linguistic input and rare opportunities for interaction with native speakers, differences will occur in the pragmatics of non-native speakers regardless of their L1 or level of proficiency in L2/FL.

Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei (1998: 234) claim that the observed differences stem from two key factors related to input: its availability and the salience of relevant linguistic features in the input from the point of view of the learner. Regarding the availability of input, Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1996) and Kasper (1997) have found that

learners fail to acquire a sufficient level of L2 pragmatic competence because the language they encounter in the L2/FL classroom simply lacks a sufficient range and emphasis of relevant exemplars. In teacher-fronted talk it is impossible to include a variety of speech acts and their realizations that would equal everyday native speech and teacher-fronted interaction is heavily restricted in providing pragmatic input since it presents shorter and less complex openings and closings, a limited range of discourse markers and little politeness marking (Kasper 2001a: 36). These gaps can be naturally filled by conversations available in teaching materials, e.g. course books but, as highlighted by Bardovi-Harlig et al. (1996) and Boxer and Pickering (1995), even language teaching course books are lacking in this respect (see also the textbook evaluations regarding pragmatic information in Boxer 1993, Bardovi-Harlig 2001, Wong 2002, Vellenga 2004, Bowles 2006, Delen & Tavil 2010, Nguyen 2011, Diepenbroek & Derwing, 2013, Petraki & Bayes 2013, Stojanović 2015, among others). Studies of the influence of instruction (Wildner-Bassett 1984, House 1996) and proposals for greater authenticity in pedagogical materials for classroom language learners also address the issue of availability of input, although from the proactive perspective of making input available to learners. (For proposals for improving input to learners see, for example, Holmes & Brown 1987, Scotton & Bernsten 1988, Williams 1988, Sharwood Smith 1991, 1993, Bardovi-Harlig et al. 1996, Takahashi 2001, Takimoto 2009, Nguyen et al. 2015, etc).

Ishihara and Cohen (2010: 77) identify a longer list of common causes for learners' divergence from the pragmatic norms of L2:

- limited grammatical ability in L2 (e.g. when the learner misunderstands or fails to understand an interlocutor due to his/her lack of knowledge of a grammatical form),
- overgeneralization of perceived norms in L2 (e.g. when the learner masters one way of requesting and uses it in every situation),
- negative transfer of pragmatic norms (e.g. when the speaker applies his L1 pragmatic norms to L2),

- the effect of instruction or instructional materials (e.g. when the teacher or the coursebook presents an oversimplified or wrong picture of the L2 pragmatic norms) or
- the learner's resistance to using perceived L2 pragmatic norms (because he/she finds it annoying, inappropriate, unacceptable, ridiculous, etc. i.e. as a way of asserting their own identity, which is often the case with immigrants, cf. House 2003).

Whatever the potential causes of breaking L2 pragmatic norms are (and the reasons listed often occur in combination), research has shown that exposure to L2/FL alone is enough for pragmatic development. However, by effective teaching and assessing the learners' pragmatic development the awareness of learners about the pragmatic norms of L2 can be raised and their communicative competence can be significantly improved (Alcón-Soler & Martínez-Flor 2005, Kasper & Roever 2005, Rose 2005, Takahashi 2005, Taguchi 2008a, Martínez-Flor 2008, 2016, Alcón-Soler 2013). This can be achieved by making the learners aware of the variation that exists in various contexts in L2 and of the ways in which language can or should change in order to match the context.

This brings us to the question of how pragmatics should be taught. Numerous studies have shown that explicit pragmatic instruction has beneficial effects on successful L2/EFL pragmatic performance (Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper 1989; Norris & Ortega 2000, Rose 2005, Cohen 2008, etc). This kind of instruction provides metapragmatic information via explanation, discussion, and description so that learners are made aware that they are being taught how to use L2/FL. In other words, explicit instruction involves sufficient input exposure, discussions about communicative action and its underlying metapragmatic knowledge as well as conversational activities which challenge the learners' linguistic abilities (Gharibeh et al. 2016). No less important is the extensive use of authentic materials, particularly audio-visual ones since they offer a rich source of input which can be exploited in different ways and at different levels to develop learners' communicative competence.

Conversely, implicit instruction implies simply that the learners are presented with what they are expected to acquire but without any explanations. There is ample research on the effects of the two types of instruction, but the conclusions are at times contradictory. On the one hand, numerous studies provide evidence for the superiority of explicit over implicit pragmatic intervention (Wildner-Bassett 1984, 1986, House 1996, Tateyama et al. 1997, Rose & Ng 2001, Rose 2005, Chen 2009, Takahashi 2010). On the other hand, however, there are also studies that suggest that implicit teaching should be preferred (e.g. Kubota 1995) or studies which fail to offer conclusive evidence as to which of the two approaches yields better results (Fukuya et al. 1998, Fukuya & Clark 2001, Tateyama 2001, Martínez-Flor & Fukuya 2005). It is also worth mentioning here that some aspects of the target language may require a combination of explicit and implicit teaching (see e.g. Kasper & Rose 1999) and that the results of research also allow the possibility of the development of L2/FL learners' pragmatic competence in spite of a lack of any explicit instruction (e.g. Kim & Hall 2002). In view of all these results, Norris and Ortega (2000) point out a very important issue regarding the interpretation of the cumulative findings for explicit/implicit instructional treatments. They claim (2000: 501) that one has to be careful in arguing that one or the other method is more effective, since the "[t]esting of learning outcomes usually favours explicit treatments by asking learners to engage in explicit memory tasks and/or in discrete, decontextualized L2 use; the explicit treatments are typically more intense and varied than the implicit ones;⁶ and, implicit treatments may require longer-post intervention observation periods for non-linear learning curves to be detected".

By this point, the reader should have acquired enough theoretical knowledge to be able to address the research samples presented in Part II of the book.

⁶ Explicit intervention partly rests on the learner's knowledge about the language system and therefore presupposes familiarity with at least some basic terms and concepts in linguistics.

Task 1. Discuss: if even native speakers of a language vary among themselves with respect to the way in which they perform pragmatic routines in a given discourse situation, what kind of pragmatic instruction should L2/FL learners receive?

Task 2. In this era of globalization, English has spread to all parts of the world. As a consequence of this, considerable differences may occur between its varieties. What does this mean for L2/FL learners? Which variety should be the preferred one, the one whose sociocultural norms and conventions learners should be expected to master?

Task 3. The globalization of English, understood as its rapid spread as a L2/FL has led to the number of non-native speakers of English vastly outnumbering its native speakers (by a ratio of 3 to 1, as calculated by Crystal 2003: 6 and this ratio has increased since). This means that communication between non-native speakers of English appears to be increasingly more common these days than interaction between native speakers of English or a native speaker with a non-native speaker. In other words, English used as a lingua franca (ELF) is by far the most common form of English in the world today (Murray 2006). Does/should this affect the norms and conventions L2/FL learners are expected to conform to when using English?

Task 4. Native speakers are often unaware of their language behaviour, of the politeness conventions they use, the intonation accompanying a particular speech act, etc. Can a quick introspection provide us with a full picture of how pragmatics works in L1? Why (not)?

Task 5. To test whether your claims made in Task 4 are correct, choose a speech act and think about how it is typically realized in your L1. Then ask several people what they think and compare your answer to theirs. How do you explain the differences?

Suggestions for further reading

The possibility and the necessity of teaching L2/FL pragmatics is argued for at length in Bardovi-Harlig and Mahan-Taylor (2003), as well as Ishihara and Cohen (2010), Trosborg (2010), LoCastro (2012) and Taguchi (2012).

PART II – Researching communicative competence in EFL

Chapter 9. Research in second/foreign language pragmatic competence

Which aspects of L2/FL competence do you think deserve special attention and why? How do you think they should be studied? How can we uncover the reasons behind L2/FL speakers' non-targetlike language use?

Taguchi (2012: 5) claims that “[t]he last few decades have seen rapid development in studies on L2 pragmatic competence. This trend corresponds to growing recognition among researchers and teachers that proficient use of a language involves mastery of functional usage of the language within a social context”. In line with this observation, the past three decades have indeed witnessed an ever increasing interest in pragmatic competence, which has resulted in a large body of works published on topics such as the pragmatic performance of particular individuals and groups (Trosborg 1995, Gass & Neu 1996, Yamashita 1996, Ohta 2001, Achiba 2003, Barron 2003, Roever 2005, Kinginger 2008, Schauer 2009, Taguchi 2012), cross-cultural pragmatics (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989, Kasper & Blum-Kulka 1993, Gass & Houck 1999, Spencer-Oatey 2005), pragmatic development (Kasper & Rose 2002), pragmatic teaching (Rose & Kasper 2001, Bardovi-Harlig & Mahan-Taylor 2003, LoCastro 2003, Martínez-Flor et al. 2003, Yoshimi & Wang, 2007, Alcón Soler & Martínez-Flor 2008, Ishihara & Cohen 2010), pragmatic assessment (Hudson et al. 1995, Yamashita 1996, Roever 2005), pragmatics in institutional context (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford 2005) and others. The vast majority of existing studies in interlanguage pragmatics have focused on English as an L2/FL, though there is scant literature on other languages as well (see e.g. Kasper 1992b, 1995, Márquez-Reiter & Placencia 2004, Taguchi 2009). Another common feature of the studies listed above (as well as those that have been left out) is that they are cross-sectional in nature, which

means that they analyze data from a population at a specific point in time. Very few studies have examined pragmatic comprehension in a longitudinal design, where observations are repeated with the same population over short or long periods of time (e.g. Ohta 2001, Barron 2003, Kinginger 2008, Schauer 2009). There are even fewer studies that have tackled both the pragmatic comprehension and production of L2/FL learners or those that have addressed the relationship holding between comprehension and production (e.g. whether one precedes the other or whether they are related at all). Thus, it is clear that the field of L2/FL pragmatics and of interlanguage pragmatics is yet to be fully conquered.

As pointed out in Chapter 7, interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) studies the usually transitory stage of L2/FL acquisition, which represents a combination of the speaker's L1 and the L2/FL, an intermediate linguistic system characterized by transfer from L1, overgeneralization of patterns in L2 and potential fossilization (persisting non-targetlike features in L2, regardless of age and length of instruction). In other words, it explores non-native speakers' development, comprehension and usage of L2/FL pragmatic rules and behaviors. Much of the research in the area of ILP has focused on topics such as language transfer (positive or negative; pragmalinguistic or sociopragmatic), acquisition of grammar and pragmatics (cf. Chapter 3), stages of L2/FL pragmatic development as well as individual variables (e.g. personality type and aptitude (Kuriscak 2010), individual characteristics of learners (Taguchi 2012), and contextual variables affecting acquisition of pragmatics, e.g. length of residence (Olshtain & Blum-Kulka 1985, Matsumura 2001, Félix-Brasdefer 2004, Schauer 2009; Taguchi 2010, 2012), instructional effect (cf. Chapter 8, House 1996, Rose & Ng 2001, Martínez-Flor 2006, Takahashi 2010) and others). All of these topics are significant for the study of L2/FL development.

Within L2/FL studies and teaching, pragmatics has been claimed (Bardovi-Harlig & Mahan-Taylor 2003) to encompass areas of language and language use which have not traditionally been addressed in language teaching curricula, including speech acts, conversational structure,

conversational implicature, conversational management, discourse organization, and sociolinguistic aspects of language use such as choice of address forms. Therefore, the aim of Part II of this resource book is to raise the reader's awareness about pragmatics (their *metapragmatic* awareness) and show how some of these areas of L2/FL use can be studied and what common pitfalls learners should avoid.

From the conception of ILP in the 1980s, one of the most frequently studied areas within it has been non-native speakers' acquisition, comprehension and production of speech acts (Kasper & Dahl 1991), often accompanied by considerations of politeness. The recognition that there are often very sharp pragmalinguistic differences in the realization of speech acts in different languages or between speech acts performed by native and non-native speakers of particular languages has led to the conclusion that there are important differences in the selection, distribution and realization of speech acts in particular languages as well as among speech acts performed by L2 speakers coming from different linguistic and sociocultural backgrounds (Cenoz 2008). Therefore, research should determine what the universal norms of speech behaviour are and which norms are language-specific and may therefore affect interlanguage behaviour (Ishihara & Cohen 2010). Kasper (1992a: 205) also stresses that the issues typically addressed by ILP research are whether non-native speakers differ from native speakers in the range and contextual distribution of strategies and linguistic forms used to convey illocutionary meaning and politeness.

The most frequently occurring differences in the use of speech acts by native and non-native speakers of English (henceforth NSs and NNSs) are found in (a) the choice of speech act (e.g. an apology is the usual way to express gratitude in Japanese but not in English; Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford (1993) report that in authentic academic advising sessions, NSs produce more suggestions than NNSs per advising session, whereas NNSs produce more rejections per advising session than NSs do), (b) the choice of formulas for the same speech act (e.g. in rejecting a suggestion, NSs use alternatives more often than avoidance, a strategy preferred by NNSs, cf. Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford 1993), (c) the use of similar formulas

whose content is different (e.g. NSs of American English tend to offer more detailed explanations in their refusals than Japanese speakers of English, who favour vague explanations, cf. Beebe, Takahashi & Uliss-Weltz 1990), or (d) the linguistic forms of the speech acts (e.g. English NS rejections typically contain downgraders like *I'm not sure that I can really do that*, whereas NNS rejections may contain upgraders like *I can't do that at all*, cf. Hartford & Bardovi-Harlig 1992).

As pointed out in Ishihara and Cohen (2010: 8), the performance of common speech acts usually involves choosing from a set of possible strategies, some of which are relatively unique to that particular speech act, such as an offer of repair in apologies, while others could be viewed as strategies that can be applied to other distinct speech acts or even various speech acts, such as a greeting like *Hi*, which may serve as an attention getter in various speech acts (Ishihara & Cohen 2010: 9). This is the reason why the term *speech act set* has been introduced to refer to "the set of potentially universal realization patterns, any one of which would be recognized as the speech act in question, when uttered in the appropriate context" (Cohen 1996a: 21). The realization of a speech act in context may include only one strategy from the speech act set, e.g. *I can't* to refuse a request, but it may also feature various other strategies, e.g. an expression of regret, an excuse, perhaps an offer of alternative, etc. as in the following example: *I'm sorry, but I can't, I have theatre tickets that night. Maybe we could come by later for a drink*. Similarly, the speech act set of complaint in American English has been found to contain components such as an explanation of purpose, a complaint, a justification, and a candidate solution, usually a request (Murphy & Neu 1996).

Each speech act occurs in communication under the right preconditions and with a specific interactional goal: we do not tend to apologize if (we think) there is nothing to apologize for, we use greetings when we meet/come across someone but not (normally) to e.g. compliment, and so on. The goal of each speech act therefore has to be taken into consideration in accounting for the realization patterns of individual speech acts. In addition to this, if we are to establish the extent to

which L2/FL learners' materialization of a speech act resembles their L1 or the production of NSs of the target language, we have to undertake considerable empirical investigation to adequately define and describe the given speech act sets in both native languages before analyzing the learners' interlanguage. In other words, conducting a cross-cultural study of a given speech act set (or sets) prior to examining L2/FL learners' pragmatic competence is very revealing and makes it easier to ascertain to what extent the non-target forms in L2/FL can be attributed to the learners' L1.

One of the most comprehensive studies of speech acts was undertaken within the Cross-cultural study of speech act realization patterns (CCSARP) project (CCSARP, Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper 1989). Within this pioneering study, cross-cultural, sociopragmatic and interlanguage variation in the speech act realization patterns of requests and apologies of native speakers of six languages (including three different dialects of English) was compared with the speech act production of non-native speakers of these languages. The present book is a much more modest project. Aware of the fact that a resource book like this one cannot give a comprehensive overview of all the existing research in the field of L2/FL pragmatics, let alone of communicative competence, in the following chapters, we present some of the results obtained by studying the pragmatic competence of learners of English whose L1 is Serbian. Some of the studies address areas of language and language use which have already received a fair amount of attention in cross-cultural and/or interlanguage pragmatics, such as the speech act of refusals (Chapter 14). Others topics, like conversational implicatures and certain sociolinguistic aspects of language use, such as the choice of address forms, remain understudied, which prompted us to include Chapters 10 and 11 into this book.

There are several other issues that need to be pointed out here regarding the upcoming chapters. Though the L1 of the research participants is invariably Serbian (and Hungarian in Chapter 11), in some of the chapters to follow, they are EFL learners (Chapters 10-13), while in others, ESP learners (encouraged to develop their communication skills

in a particular discipline) were used as research participants (Chapters 14-15). The same research instrument is used in all of the studies, a printed questionnaire. The chapter on conversational implicatures is the only study on comprehension, while all the other chapters present the findings of studies on learners' production. Also, in all cases but one (Chapter 10) the research instrument contained written discourse completion tasks (WDCTs), a data elicitation method that was introduced within the CCSARP project and which has gained a lot of ground since and is one of the measures most frequently used to assess pragmatic competence (Billmyer & Varghese 2000, Chaudron 2005, Woodfield 2008). WDCTs are "written questionnaires including a number of brief situational descriptions followed by a short dialogue with an empty slot for the speech act under study" (Kasper & Dahl 1991: 221). They are easily administered and allow the researcher to gather large amounts of data in a fairly short period of time, while easily controlling for contextual variables (Beebe & Cummings 1985, Houck & Gass 1996, Yamashita 1996, Kasper 2000). However, the WDCT has also been criticized for not reflecting real communication because participants are required to write down how they would react in a possible, yet imaginary situation (cf. Beebe & Cummings 1996, Sasaki 1998, Golato 2003, Martínez-Flor & Usó-Juan 2011, among others).⁷ In Chapter 10, data were collected using multiple-choice questions.

Regardless of the minor differences in the methodology pointed out above, we feel that the following chapters add to the otherwise fairly sparse literature not only on Serbian L1 speakers' pragmatic competence in English (whether EFL or English for Specific Purposes, ESP) but also on the definition and description of various speech act sets in Serbian. To the best of our knowledge, the latter topic has been dealt with in Ličen (1997), Halupka-Rešetar & Radić (2003), Mišić Ilić & Dimitrijević (2006), Milosavljević (2007), Mišić Ilić (2010), Lanc (2013, 2014), Popović (2013), Halupka-Rešetar (2013b, 2014b, 2015), Stamenković (2013), Panić Kavgić (2014), Vekarić and Jelić (2015), Mitić

⁷ Another shortcoming of any data collection technique other than recording spontaneous speech is that the research participants have some time to think about their responses and can go back and modify them later, making their answers less authentic.

(2015), Nedeljković (2015), Zečević (2016), Đokić (2018), Jovanović (2018). Serbian L1 speakers' pragmatic competence in English is a topic tackled even less frequently and has been addressed in Paunović (2011, 2013), Savić (2012 et seq.), Halupka-Rešetar (2013a, 2014a, 2015, 2016, 2018) and Halupka-Rešetar and Knežević (2016). Clearly, a lot remains to be explored, both in terms of the pragmatics of individual native languages (in this case, Serbian and English) and L2/ (E)FL learners' interlanguage pragmatics and the chapters to come will hopefully incite readers to undertake research of their own.

The remaining chapters are organized as follows: Chapter 10 deals with the extent to which EFL learners at different levels of proficiency understand conversational implicatures. The next chapter explores the types of verbal abuse native speakers of Serbian, Hungarian and English, as well as Serbian L1 EFL learners direct at people who have hurt them in some way, in an attempt to pinpoint cultural differences and the influence of L1 on EFL pragmatic competence. Chapters 12 and 13 present the results of research into EFL learners' production of suggestions and compliment responses, respectively. The remaining two chapters feature studies conducted with ESP learners and focus on the speech act of refusals (Chapter 14) and request modification (Chapter 15).

Task 1. In your own experience (or the experience of someone close to you), does living in an L2 environment aid the development of both grammatical and pragmatic competence? If yes, how? If not, why do you think think is the case?

Task 2. It was pointed out in the chapter that very few studies have examined pragmatic comprehension in a longitudinal design – why do you think this is the case? What kind of information do you think longitudinal studies are more likely to reveal than cross-sectional studies?

Task 3. Why is it important to study both comprehension and production? How do you think the data obtained in a comprehension study and in a production study differ?

Task 4. Think of illustrative examples to show how native and non-native speakers of English differ in the choice of speech act and/or the choice of formulas for the same speech act.

Task 5. Why do you think conversational implicatures may present a problem for L2/FL learners? How do you suggest that these difficulties be overcome?

Task 6. As pointed out above, in all of the chapters to come, a written discourse completion task was used to elicit data from research participants. What other methods of data collection do you think would prove useful for studying the pragmatic competence of L2/FL learners?

Task 7. To raise your metapragmatic awareness in L1, over the next week, while you are running errands or spending time with friends/family, talking to your fellow students and/or instructors, pay close attention to people who apologize. Keep a journal or use your smart phone to take notes about the status and the social distance of the people you observe. How severe was the imposition? What apology strategies were used? Did the strategies match the degree of imposition?

Task 8. Watch a movie or an episode or two of a series, a talk show with English NSs or a similar programme. Pay close attention to people who request something. Keep a journal or use your smart phone to take notes about the status and the social distance of the people involved in the exchanges. How big was the favour being asked for? Did the form of the request mirror this? How would you react to the requests noted down – would you comply with them or reject them? To what extent does your answer to the previous question depend on the strategies employed in the requests?

Suggestions for further reading

Descriptions of research on various aspects of L2/FL pragmatics are given in Kasper & Blum-Kulka (1993), Kasper (1998), Ellis (1999), Kasper & Rose (2002), Taguchi (2009, 2012), Spencer-Oatey (2010) and Roever (2011), among others. Ishihara & Cohen (2010) offer a very nice overview of methods for obtaining language samples to be used for pragmatics-focused instruction and of the advantages and disadvantages of each method.

Chapter 10. Conversational implicatures

How often do people use conversational implicatures and why? Why might the interpretation of conversational implicatures present a problem for L2/FL learners? How do you think these problems can be addressed in L2/FL teaching?

This chapter (originally published as Halupka-Rešetar 2016) focuses on the interpretation of non-literal meanings (implicatures), the use of which in cross-cultural interaction is a potential barrier to effective communication, according to Keenan (1976). This is why the L2/FL classroom should focus on developing the learners' skill in the interpretation of implicatures and also the motivation behind conducting the research described here, which was aimed at finding out whether correlations can be established between the pragmatic competence of EFL learners and their level of general language proficiency in an instructional setting.

Relying on Grice's Cooperative Principle (Chapter 5) as the theoretical background for the discussion of implicatures, in what follows we first summarize the empirical research studies aimed at assessing L2 implicatures (10.1). This is followed by a description of the present research (10.2) and its results, implications and limitations (10.3). The chapter closes with suggestions for further directions of research.

10.1. An overview of research on L2/FL implicatures

A speaker may violate a maxim and thus create misunderstanding, he/she may not be willing to communicate, may opt for one maxim over another when the two clash or he/she may flout (i.e. deliberately not adhere to) a maxim, which results in creating a conversational implicature, where the listener is required to make inferences.

Grice introduced a distinction between two types of conversational implicatures: generalized as opposed to particularized implicatures. A particularized implicature is an implicature “carried by saying that *p* on a particular occasion in virtue of a special feature of the context” (Grice 1975: 56). On the contrary, generalized conversational implicatures are implicatures that are “NORMALLY carried by saying that *p*” (Grice 1975: 56).

Tests of implicature primarily focus on violations of Grice’s maxim of relevance, requiring that the speaker’s words be relevant to the interlocutor’s previous utterance. “Where the contribution is *prima facie* unrelated, and the interlocutor operates on the assumption that the Cooperative principle (Grice 1975) is still in force, the interlocutor needs to activate her knowledge of the context to discover implicated meaning. This context can be the immediate situational context or the larger sociocultural context (see also Sperber & Wilson 1995)” (Roever 2013: 44). But while the processing of some implicatures requires very little background knowledge, there are also implicatures that cannot be processed without a great deal of background knowledge or knowledge “specific to the speaker and the hearer in terms of their history or shared knowledge about aspects of the world, academic field, work experience, sporting interests etc.” (Roever 2013: 44). Research has shown that there are rules which underlie all conversational interaction in any language (Grice 1975, Fraser 1980, Brown & Levinson 1987), however, the rules for using language pragmatically may also significantly vary crossculturally. Similarly, while forms of implicit meaning commonly occur in social discourse through the use of conversational implicature, the process of interpreting implicatures is especially problematic to EFL learners due to the fact that people from different cultural backgrounds may derive different messages from the same utterance in the same context. Avoiding such wrong inferences is the primary reason why EFL learners need to attain not only linguistic but also pragmatic competence.

Not all implicatures found in natural communication are conversational, as meanings can be manifested and attributed to signs and gestures

as well (Mey 2001). However, to the best of our knowledge, tests of implicature do focus on conversational implicatures and they assess to what degree test takers can comprehend a speaker's likely implicated meaning (Roever 2013). Keenan's (1976) was the first study to address the question whether speakers of different languages will employ implicature in interpreting an utterance, given essentially the same external context. She found that, unlike the American society, where the primary objective of communication is to exchange information, in Malagasy culture, speakers are expected to say less than required in order to avoid providing incorrect or damaging information (i.e. flouting the quality maxim does not result in implicature).

Unlike the ethnographic approach Keenan (1976) assumed, Bouton's (1988, 1994, 1999) groundbreaking work in the area of L2 implicature testing has been rather pedagogical and acquisitional. In the longitudinal study he began in 1986, he used a written elicitation instrument administered to a large number of international students on their arrival to campus in the US in order to compare their ability to interpret implicatures with that of American native speakers of English. The research instrument followed a multiple choice format, in which subjects were given a series of situations containing a dialogue in which one of the utterances required resorting to implicature in order for it to be interpreted appropriately. Four possible interpretations followed each dialogue and the research participants' task was to opt for the one they thought was closest to the message the utterance conveyed. Bouton (1988) went to great lengths to develop a test with items that contained "sufficient contextual information to permit American native speakers (NS) to recognize and interpret the implicatures present in the dialogues" and to ensure "that in each case, there was a single interpretation that most of those NS would assign to the implicature involved" (Bouton 1994: 158). The results of this study showed that the NNSs had arrived at the same interpretation of the implicatures as the American NSs about 79% of the time. These results were also supported by replications of the study 5 and 12 months later, which made it clear that, as Keenan (1976) had suggested, the use of implicature in cross-cultural interaction was a potential barrier to effective communication

and that developing NNS skill in the interpretation of English language implicatures should be one of the objectives of the ESL classroom. Given that at the time very few instances of EFL texts were found in which any real attempt was made in this direction (Bouton 1990), the question to address next was how NNSs, who are not systematically taught to interpret implicatures in English, learn to do so effectively on their own. In search of an answer to this question, Bouton (1994) conducted a follow-up study four and a half years later, with 30 research participants who had taken the test when it was first given in 1986. The test battery was exactly the same one which had originally been used and the results suggested that the number of items that were interpreted differently by NSs and NNSs was greatly reduced, and that there was no longer any specific type of implicature that was, in itself, a serious problem for the NNSs. Also, pedagogical intervention was shown to improve NNS ability to interpret formulaic implicature (following a re-utilized schema, e.g. indirect criticism, irony, topic change, etc. to be discussed below), but not idiosyncratic implicature (generalized conversational implicature), which however was found to improve over time without instruction (Bouton 1999).

Roever (2005, 2006) used a modified version of Bouton's test instrument, with only 12 multiple choice items to test the pragmalinguistic ability of NSs and NNSs of English. He found that idiosyncratic implicature was significantly easier to learn than formulaic implicature for the NNS group of research participants (Ross & Kasper 2013: 45) but he also concluded that it is the increase in L2 proficiency that leads to improvement of performance on measures of implicature comprehension (McNamara & Roever 2006: 59) rather than length of stay in the target language country.

Based on a series of studies he conducted in order to determine the speed and accuracy of NNSs in comprehending idiosyncratic and formulaic implicatures, Taguchi (2005, 2007, 2008a, 2008b) also reached the conclusion that higher proficiency is conducive to comprehending implicature accurately and quickly (Roever, Fraser & Elder 2014: 37) since it allows learners to exclude lack of vocabulary comprehension as

a reason for difficulties in interpreting an utterance, which leads them to look for implied meanings. In contrast, proficiency is less important for learning routine formulae as these can be learned as chunks and they allow learners to perform beyond their L2 competence. Naturally, with more exposure to L2, learners will produce an increasingly wide repertoire of formulae, including less frequent formulae, in an increasingly target-like way (Bardovi-Harlig 2009, Bardovi-Harlig & Bastos 2011, Roever 2012). However, as Bardovi-Harlig (2009) points out, even advanced learners may not use routine formulae at the same frequency or in the same situations as native speakers.

As shown above, there is no consensus among researchers regarding the correlation between general linguistic competence in L2 and the ability of learners to interpret implicatures. While Bouton (1988, 1994, 1999) has repeatedly shown that (long term) L2 immersion is what enables NNSs to effectively recognize and interpret implicatures in English, Roever (2005, 2006, 2012) and Taguchi (2005, 2007, 2008a) have suggested that there is a strong link between higher proficiency and the ability to comprehend implicature accurately and quickly. Of course, numerous other theorists and practitioners have addressed this issue but due to lack of space, we will not discuss this matter further. Rather, we refer the reader to Ross & Kasper (2013), Roever, Fraser & Elder (2014) and the works cited therein.

10.2. The present research

As pointed out earlier, the aim of the present research was to establish whether there is a correlation between the pragmatic competence of EFL learners, more precisely their ability to recognize and interpret implicatures accurately and their level of general language proficiency. Very importantly, the research was conducted in an instructional setting, hence the length of stay in the target language country was excluded as a variable. Such an approach is in sharp contrast with Bouton's (1988, 1994) longitudinal study, which suggests that immersion is needed in order to attain native-like competence in

understanding and interpreting conversational implicatures and that even then some culture-specific implicatures could only be successfully dealt with if given the opportunity to live in an English-speaking community like the U.S. long enough – say 4, 5 years. Nevertheless, we attempted to provide an answer to the following three research questions:

- (1) Does EFL learners' pragmatic competence correlate with their overall language proficiency?
- (2) To what extent does the understanding of conversational implicatures of Serbian EFL learners at different levels of proficiency differ from that of (American English) native speakers?
- (3) Can native-speaker competence in understanding conversational implicatures be attained in an instructional setting?

Corresponding to these research questions, we propose the following three hypotheses:

- (1) EFL learners' pragmatic competence positively correlates with their overall language proficiency.
- (2) The understanding of conversational implicatures of Serbian EFL learners at lower levels of proficiency significantly differs from that of (American English) native speakers but this difference decreases with linguistic proficiency.
- (3) It is possible to attain near-native-speaker competence in understanding conversational implicatures in an instructional setting.

Note that what we take to be an instructional setting is private language schools, in which there are normally up to 8 students per group, the teachers (and the students) are generally more motivated and the course materials are usually more up-to-date than in state schools.

A total of 98 Serbian EFL learners participated in this research (N=98). They had all studied EFL only in instructional settings (school and/or private language school) and had not spent extended periods of time in an English-speaking country. They had had no experience in studying

conversational implicatures during their formal education or in their English classes.

Table 1 below summarizes the distribution of the research participants according to sex, age, education and level of general linguistic proficiency:

Distribution by sex			
Male		Female	
42 (42.85%)		56 (57.14%)	
Distribution by age			
15-25	25-35	over 35	N/A
80 (81.63%)	12 (12.24%)	5 (5.1%)	1 (1%)
Distribution by education			
high school	college	university	N/A
47 (47.96%)	1 (1%)	44 (44.89%)	6 (6.12%)
Distribution by level of proficiency			
B1	B2	C1	C2
22 (22.45%)	32 (32.65%)	34 (34.69%)	10 (1.2%)

Table 1. Overview of the distribution of research participants

As pointed out above, the test instrument used in this research was a questionnaire including 4 background questions (age, sex, education, level of EFL proficiency), followed by a conversational implicature test consisting of 20 items (see Appendix A). Each item in the test consisted of a situation, a dialogue and a question containing the conversational implicature (CI) that students were to interpret. The items were selected from those of the CI test items designed by Bouton (1994) and used by other researchers, including Lee (2002) and Tuan & Hsu (2012). The items in the test covered implicatures based on the violation of one of the four maxims, resulting in a Pope Question (quality, e.g. item 8), understated negative criticism (quantity, e.g. item 6), flouting of the maxim of relevance (e.g. item 9), irony (quality, e.g. item 11), sequence of events (manner, e.g. item 17), etc. (see Tuan & Hsu 2012).

The research participants were allowed 20 minutes to complete the test. Their task was to choose one of the four interpretations following the dialogue. Each participant was given a score of 1 for each task if their answer matched the correct answers, provided in Bouton's (1988) research and Tuan and Hsu's (2012) study. The total scores ranged from 0-20 on the conversational implicature test, though none of the participants scored less than 6. The test scores were analyzed by using descriptive statistics, namely percentage, mean, and standard deviation. Following this, they were compared with the results of a reference group of 10 native speakers, whose performance data were taken from Tuan and Hsu (2012).

10.3. Results and discussion

Bouton (1988) found that even reasonably proficient NNSs of English (with an average TOEFL score of 550, corresponding to B2/C1 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, CEFR) interpret implicatures differently from American native speakers (NSs) 21% of the time. In this study, we replicated the implicatures test used by Tuan and Hsu (2012) and the NSs these authors used in their research were not as successful in interpreting implicatures. We have not been able to obtain the detailed results of the NSs who participated in Tuan and Hsu's (2012) study, but their mean scores and standard deviation will be used here as a basis for the comparison of NNS performance with NS performance.

The following table gives an overview of the descriptive analysis of the data obtained in this research.

	Non-native speakers (NNS)				Native speakers (NS)
	B1	B2	C1	C2	
N	22	32	34	10	10
Total score	330/440	496/640	568/680	177/200	N/A
%	75%	77,5%	83,5%	88,5%	N/A
Mean score	15	15.5	16.7	17.7	16.9
SD	3.16	2.96	2.05	6.64	2.33

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of NNS and NS data

Clearly, the NNS groups were not of the same size and the reason for this is that C2-level learners are scarce. Nevertheless, the results do reveal a very interesting pattern that could easily be taken as support for the claim that there is a strong link between higher proficiency and the ability to comprehend implicature accurately and quickly (Roever 2005, 2006, 2012, Taguchi 2005, 2007, 2008a). This claim is corroborated by the percentage of correct answers the research participants provided, but also the mean score of correctly interpreted implicatures per level of general linguistic proficiency. It is surprising to see that the C1-NNSs who participated in this research had approximately the same mean score as the NSs. In fact, in spite of the generally very high standard deviance (SD) between the participants in the C2 group (which is largely due to the small number of participants, compared to the other three groups), their mean score was even higher than that of NSs. This result might suggest that the participants in the C2 group paid more attention to the interpretation of non-literal language than NSs, who may have taken some of the statements at face value. However, this is only a stipulation, as the NS results reported are fully taken from Tuan and Hsu (2012).

Looking at correlations between the research participants' pragmatic competence and their overall language proficiency, we find a positive correlation (total $r=.308^{**}$, $p=.002$). In other words, the learners' pragmatic competence is a crucial element to predict their language proficiency. Therefore, if students' English proficiency is to be adequate, their understanding and conveyance of implicature

must correspond. Regardless of the reason why the NS participants underscored in Tuan and Hsu's (2012) research (which was based on Bouton's (1988, 1994) research instrument, which in turn rested on NS choices of the correct way to interpret implicatures; cf. Lee 2002), the steady rise in the percentage of correctly interpreted implicatures among the four groups of research participants is remarkable and certainly needs more attention, especially with respect to the types of implicatures the NNSs failed to interpret correctly, both at lower levels and at higher levels, too. This is what we turn to next by giving an overview of the percentage of correct answers per group and per item in the implicatures test:

Maxim violated		item	Success at interpreting implicatures (%)			
			B1	B2	C1	C2
Relevance		1	82	78	88	100
		2	100	100	100	100
		3	91	94	100	100
		4	73	59	82	70
		5	91	90	97	100
		9	86	87	97	90
		10	91	100	97	90
		12	82	87	100	100
		14	77	72	79	70
Quality	Pope Q	8	77	75	85	90
		13	86	90	97	90
	Irony	11	41	37	44	80
Quantity	Understated criticism	6	22	37	41	70
		7	64	78	91	100
		16	59	62	79	90
	Truism	20	73	87	82	100
Manner	Sequence	17	59	75	73	90
	Obscurity	19	68	75	70	80

Table 3. Overview of successfully interpreted implicatures per type of CI and level of research participants' general linguistic proficiency

As the above table reveals, the types of CIs that proved to be most difficult to master at all levels of proficiency were formulaic implicatures/understated negative criticism (items 6, 7 and 16) and irony/sarcasm (e.g. item 11). Compared to other types of CIs, research participants scored much lower in the case of these four items. On the other hand, implicatures which result from violating the maxim of relevance generally seemed to pose least difficulty for the subjects in this research. Although occasionally they did score below 79%, which, in Bouton's (1988) study was the frequency with which reasonably proficient NNSs interpreted implicatures the same way NSs did, overall, their performance was very good, revealing that most students can interpret implicature based on logical reasoning without much difficulty and that NNSs perform similar pragmatic strategies as NSs to arrive at the same interpretation of this kind of conversational implicature which appears to be logically universal in its use (Lee 2002). Still, one note is in order here: the relatively low score of the C2 group with respect to items 4, 14 and 18 is probably due to the fact that there were only 10 participants in this group and thus, any incorrect answer had a significant effect on the overall result of the group.

What the above table also reveals is that in most cases, the percentage of correctly interpreted conversational implicatures steadily rises with the development of general linguistic ability. This is especially obvious in the case of the most problematic types of CIs, understated negative criticism and irony. Such a result supports the conclusions reached in earlier studies, namely that regardless of the length of exposure to the target culture (which, in our study, equalled zero exposure),⁸ learners with high linguistic proficiency seem to have the linguistic and pragmatic strategies that will allow them to derive the meanings as native speakers (cf. Lee 2002: 7). It also corroborates Lee's (2002) claim that conversational implicatures which are sensitive to cultural context and suprasegmental features (often accompanying e.g. sarcastic remarks) are more difficult for EFL learners to interpret. Given that the present research was conducted using printed questionnaires,

⁸ Exposure is understood in the sense of immersion in the target language and culture (study-abroad context).

suprasegmental features could not be used as signals of conversational implicatures.

Comparing the results of the present study to earlier research, in Bouton (1988), the difference between NS and NNS interpretations was found to be quite systematic. Whole sets of implicatures were found that seemed to be more difficult for the NNS to interpret than they were for the NS, especially understated criticism, implicatures involving a sequence of events, and the Pope Question implicature (a seemingly unrelated response indicating that the answer is obvious). When the same test was run 4.5 years later, however, “the only items that were still causing trouble were related to *specific points of American culture* in the *substance* of the test item and not to the *type* of implicature involved, and in that sense, the problems caused by these items were arbitrary and idiosyncratic” (Bouton 1994: 163). This does not fully correspond with the results obtained in this study even though the test items were the same. Namely, value judgements (understated criticism) and sequence implicatures were reported to pose a problem to EFL learners but in our study, this only proved true at lower levels (B1 and B2). Similarly, the Pope Question implicature turned out to cause slight difficulties only at levels B1 and B2, but even these are negligible as 75-77% of these participants derived the implicatures correctly. On the other hand, relevance based implicatures have generally been found to be relatively easy to understand and interpret. In the present research the C2-level group scored worse than all other groups with respect to items 14 and 18. This, however, is probably due to the small number of participants in this group, a conclusion which is supported by the extremely high standard deviation, compared to all other groups of participants.

The results obtained in this study thus largely contradict those of Bouton (1988, 1994) and support the opposite line of research, e.g. Kasper and Rose (2002) by showing that spending time in the target community is not a must and length of residence is not a reliable predictor of the development of pragmatic competence. Thus, the learning context is not the most important influence on learners’ pragmatic awareness

(Niezgoda & Roever 2001) and pragmatic comprehension seems to develop over time regardless of the context (Taguchi 2008a). The reason why the learning context no longer seems to play such a crucial role in the pragmatic development of EFL learners and their ability to understand and interpret implicatures could lie in the fact that curricula and textbooks have changed substantially over the past 25 years. Today, developing pragmatic competence is one of the goals of language teaching and is an integral component of all EFL coursebooks, making residence in the target community much less important than it used to be in the last decades of the 20th century.

10.4. Summary and suggestions for further research

The present research focused on determining whether a significant correlation can be established between EFL learners' level of proficiency and their ability to recognize and understand conversational implicatures. The results of the research suggest that although certain types of conversational implicatures do appear to be more difficult than others to understand, a steady increase can be observed in the number of correctly interpreted implicatures with the increase of general linguistic ability of the research participants, even in an exclusively instructional setting. In other words, all three initial hypotheses were confirmed: (1) EFL learners' pragmatic competence positively correlates with their overall language proficiency, (2) the understanding of conversational implicatures of Serbian EFL learners significantly differs from that of (American English) native speakers at lower levels of proficiency but this difference decreases with an increase in linguistic proficiency, and (3) it is possible to attain near-native-speaker competence in understanding conversational implicatures in an instructional setting.

However, due to the limited sample size and the non-availability of NSs and the type of tests used to measure the general linguistic proficiency of the research participants, the findings of this research should be

interpreted carefully. Extensive, large-scale follow-up studies should be conducted in order to reach sounder conclusions as limited sample size, placement tests to determine the linguistic competence of subjects and the type and number of test items used to measure the overall pragmatic competence in terms of implicature will make generalization of the findings to a larger population impossible.

Task 1. Discuss how conversational implicatures are worked out – what needs to be taken into account in order to recognize a conversational implicature? Do you think age plays a role? If so, what lends support to your claim?

Task 2. Study the test items in Appendix A and construct 3-5 short exchanges containing a conversational implicature. Discuss which maxim is being violated in each case.

Task 3. Test to what extent your fellow-students or friends can work out what is being implied in the exchanges you constructed.

Suggestions for further reading

A number of studies have examined L2 learners' ability to comprehend implicature and indirect speech acts. The most often cited works in this area are the Bouton's studies (1992, 1994, 1999), but see also Koike (1996), Roever (2005, 2006, 2013), Taguchi (2005, 2007, 2008a, 2008b, 2009, 2011) and Roever, Fraser & Elder (2014). For a discussion of the correlation between general linguistic competence in L2 and the ability of learners to interpret implicatures, the reader is referred to Ross & Kasper (2013), Roever, Fraser & Elder (2014) and the works cited therein.

Chapter 11. Addressing the interlocutor

What forms of address do people generally use in your L1? How do people usually react in your culture when somebody hurts them in some way? Do you think foreigners might find unusual the explicit or implicit norms of address behaviour in your L1?

How competent an L2/FL learner do you think you are in the domain of addressing the interlocutor in English?

This chapter, originally published as Halupka-Rešetar (2015), reports the results of a descriptive, single-moment study. Based on a survey conducted among 3rd and 4th-year students majoring in English at the University of Novi Sad, Serbia, the research is aimed at determining the degree of pragmatic competence of undergraduate students of English in addressing an interlocutor who has hurt them in some way. Given that this is an area in which EFL students do not receive pedagogical instruction, the initial hypothesis is that their performance in English will be the result of transfer from their L1 (Serbian or Hungarian). Thus, forms of address are assumed to belong to those aspects of L2 pragmatics which Bardovi-Harlig (2001) claims are not acquired without the benefit of instruction, or in the best case, they are learned more slowly, which makes instruction at least facilitative if not necessary.

After the introductory section discussing the status of vocatives in linguistics, Section 11.2 presents the research methodology employed, including the participants, the data collection instruments and the procedures. The results and findings of the research are reported on in Section 11.3, followed by pedagogical implications and suggestions for directions of future research in the concluding section (11.4).

11.1. Vocative as a linguistic form

According to the *Longman Online Dictionary of Contemporary English*, invective denotes rude and insulting words that someone says when they are very angry. Linguistically, most invectives are morphosyntactically realized as vocatives (i.e. vocative function, not vocative case), which, according to Levinson (1983: 71) are noun phrases that refer to the addressee, but are not syntactically or semantically incorporated as the arguments of a predicate. Rather, these highly idiosyncratic and complex forms, which belong in the larger class of deictic expressions, are set apart prosodically from the sentence that may accompany them.

There are two types of vocatives: (a) calls and (b) addresses (Zwicky 1974, Levinson 1983, Quirk et al. 1985: 773). Calls serve “to catch the addressee’s attention” (Zwicky 1974: 787) or to single “them out from others in hearing” (Quirk et al. 1985: 773) and can be found at the beginning of an utterance. Levinson claims they can be regarded as independent speech acts (1983: 71). Addresses, on the other hand, are used to “maintain or emphasise the contact between speaker and addressee” (Zwicky 1974: 787), or to express “the speaker’s relationship or attitude to the person or persons addressed” (Quirk et al. 1985: 773). Levinson likens addresses to parentheticals, stating that they “can occur in the sorts of locations that other parentheticals can occupy” (1983: 71). The examples in (1-2), taken from Zwicky (1974) illustrate calls and addresses, respectively:

- (1) *Hey lady, you dropped your piano.*
- (2) *I’m afraid, sir, that my coyote is nibbling on your leg.*

Zwicky (2004), however, gives a more elaborate classification of isolated NPs, which can either stand alone (3) or interrupt sentences (4) but crucially, they do not serve as syntactic arguments:

- (3) *Hey, idiot!*
- (4) *I’m afraid, you idiot, that your hair is on fire.*

Namely, he says that they can have two kinds of uses: vocative/exclamative and telegraphic (shading off from fragment NPs, which covertly serve as syntactic arguments, as in the request *Two linguists! Over here, and be quick about it*). In the first use, in addition to addresses (*Welcome, linguists, to the annual meeting*) and calls (*Linguists! Stand on this side of the room*) we also find epithet exclamatives (*You goddam linguist!*), dismay exclamative (*Mother! How can you say that?!*) and astonishment exclamatives (*You linguists! I just never know what you'll do*). The degree of conventionalisation for vocative expressions is very high (Zwicky 1974), with different classes of expressions available as calls, as addresses, as exclamations, in telegraphic uses, and in integrated uses (serving as syntactic arguments), as the following examples show (all taken from Zwicky 2004):

- (5) a. *Cabby, take me to Carnegie Hall.* (call)
 b. **I don't think, cabby, that the Lincoln Tunnel is the best way to go to Brooklyn.* (address)
 c. *The cabby drove me to Jersey.* (integrated)
- (6) a. *You idiot, take me to Carnegie Hall.*
 b. *I don't think, you idiot, that the Lincoln Tunnel is the best way to go to Brooklyn.*
 c. **You idiot drove me to Jersey.*
- (7) a. **I wonder, brother-in-law, if you recall the 1915 flood.*
 b. *My brother-in-law recalls the 1915 flood.*

Given that the aim of this research was to explore how advanced EFL learners would react verbally to being hurt either physically or emotionally, the expectation was that at least in some cases examples of verbal abuse would surface. The fact that verbal abuse is an available linguistic resource in every society suggests that it must be functional as a part of human existence. And yet, in spite of the numerous anthologies of insults which have been published in the past four decades, the area of pragmatic competence often referred to as verbal abuse or insults is an area of study which may be said to be a largely uncharted territory. Linguists have probably ignored the topic due to its emotion-ladenness and its unquantifiable nature. Admittedly, it has been well-known at

least since Brown and Levinson (1978) that politeness is one of the major underlying motives or principles organizing human discourse. And as politeness conventions are realized linguistically, it follows that the effort to be polite (or impolite) determines the linguistic forms to be used in a given context.

However, more aggression seems to be carried out today using linguistic means than by nonlinguistic means, and given that cultures intertwine in a way and to a degree never documented before, the need arises for devoting serious critical attention not only to various forms of verbal abuse within a language but also to the ways in which languages differ with respect to this area, especially in relation to English, the global language of today. It is in this respect that the present research hopes to advance the field of interlanguage pragmatics.

Given that to the best of the author's knowledge, no research has so far been done into the pragmatic behaviour of Serbian and Hungarian L1 speakers in addressing an interlocutor who has hurt them in some way, in order to establish the degree of pragmatic competence of the research participants, who were advanced EFL students, and whether their L2 (English) competence would show transfer from their L1, two experiments had to be conducted. Using a questionnaire containing numerous real life situations, the aim of the first experiment (E1) was explore the use of invectives in the subjects' L1 (Serbian, Hungarian, or both), while in the second experiment (E2), conducted with a time lapse of 3 months, the goal was to test the subjects' competence of (refraining from) the use of invectives in L2. A comparison of the results obtained in the two experiments was expected to give an answer to the following research question:

RQ: Do advanced EFL students know how to address someone who has hurt them or is their pragmatic competence and production in L2 a reflex of their L1 pragmatic knowledge?

11.2. Research methodology

Responses were elicited using the form of an open-ended written discourse completion test (WDCT), i.e. a questionnaire containing written prompts (brief descriptions of real-life situations) followed by a space in which the respondent was required to produce a response, in this case, a verbal reaction to a situation in which another participant in the discourse has hurt them physically or emotionally. The questionnaire used in this research (see Appendix B) involved twelve situations, with varying values for the sociopragmatic variable of social power, concerning the power of the interlocutor over the research participant (more power, equal power or less power). The subjects were asked to react to the situations by addressing the person who has hurt, frightened, surprised, offended or embarrassed them, without using swearwords, i.e. without using complete sentences (especially verbs).

An example of a task is given below:

You are walking down the street when suddenly, two boys jump out from behind the corner, screaming at you. They frighten you to death.

You: _____

In the first experiment, the questionnaire was in the subjects' native tongue. There were 42 native speakers of Serbian (S), 25 native speakers of Hungarian (H), as well as 19 balanced bilingual (Skutnabb-Kangas 1984) subjects, tested on two different occasions and with the situations ordered differently. All the participants were students at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Novi Sad. The performance of the last group of respondents will be ignored in this chapter due to the fairly limited size of the sample but also because it is beyond the scope of this research.

The second experiment was conducted with a time lapse of three months. This time, the questionnaire was in English, but the situations

it contained and the power relations between the interlocutors were exactly the same as in the first experiment. This time there were a total of 35 subjects, all of them 4th year students of the Department of English and at an advanced level of general linguistic competence in English (C1 or C2 according to CEFR). Only three respondents were native speakers of Hungarian, which is why in presenting the results of this experiment no difference will be made between the participants based on their L1.

The participants in this research were instructed to imagine finding themselves in the 12 situations described in the questionnaire and were asked to write down how they would address the person who has hurt them. They were also encouraged to put their address into parentheses if they would prefer not to verbalize their thoughts. In presenting the results of the research only the explicit addresses were taken into account.

Also worth noticing is that there were five scenarios (hurt/frighten/surprise/offend/embarrass) and there are three values for power relation between the interlocutors (superior respondent/equal interlocutors/inferior respondent) but there were only twelve situations in the questionnaire; thus, not all the power relations were exemplified in all five types of situations.

The initial hypotheses of the research were the following:

- (1) In their L1, subjects are likely to use explicit terms of abuse if the other participant is equal or inferior to them, but
- (2) with participants who are superior to them, informants are not expected to use invectives explicitly (but may well use them “silently”)
- (3) In lack of explicit instruction, subjects are likely to transfer their L1 pragmatic competence to L2.

11.3. Results and findings

In what follows, the results of the research are presented in percentages, for each scenario individually, but by comparing the L1 production of the two groups of participants (labelled S for Serbian and H for Hungarian) and their L2 production (coded simply as E for English). The labels +/-power/age refer to the social status of the research participant's interlocutor.

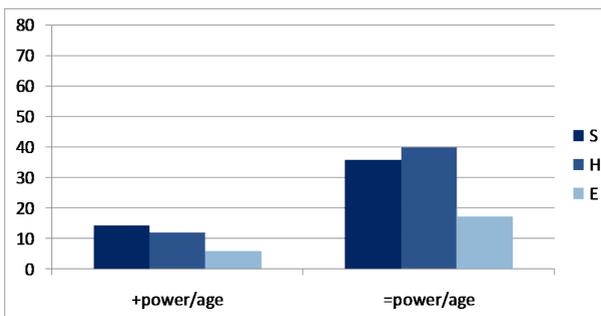


Figure 3. Frequency of occurrence of invectives in the HURT scenario

In this scenario, the difference in the number of explicit addresses in the research participants' L1 as opposed to their L2 is quite large in both situations. It seems that whether the interlocutor is superior in power or age to the research participant or whether the interlocutors are equal with respect to this variable, invectives occur (more than) twice as often in the respondents' native tongue than in their L2. Overall, the use of invectives is much more restricted in the first situation, suggesting that people of similar age and equal power are more likely to use abusive terms of address. However, the fact that invectives are used considerably more rarely in L2 than in the respondents' L1 challenges the initial hypothesis that transfer from L1 will be observable in the respondents' pragmatic production in English.

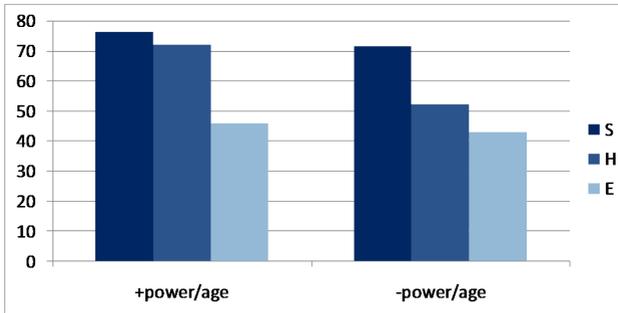


Figure 4. Frequency of occurrence of invectives in the FRIGHTEN scenario

A very high percentage of Serbian speakers decided to react with an invective in this scenario, regardless of the power relations involved. This is very surprising, especially in the first column, given that the interlocutor in this situation is socially superior to the research participant. With Hungarian L1 speakers, the situation is partly similar only: while 72% of the respondents in this group would address abusively a superior interlocutor, only 52% would do so if the interlocutor were socially inferior, another result which is contrary to the initial hypotheses of this research. In English, the research participants were somewhat more reluctant to use invectives than in their L1, but nearly every other questionnaire contained an abusive address in this situation, unlike the HURT scenario described above.

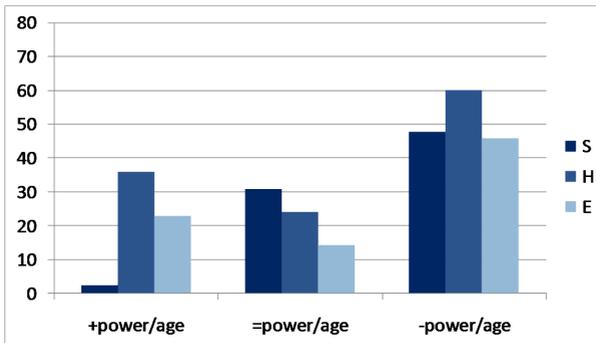


Figure 5. Frequency of occurrence of invectives in the SURPRISE scenario

The results obtained for this scenario are puzzling. Serbian native speakers appear to be “well-behaved” with respect to the initial hypotheses of the research as they used the fewest invectives with a socially superior interlocutor and the highest number of these terms in responding to a socially inferior interlocutor. Interestingly, Hungarian L1 respondents also used many more abusive address forms in addressing a socially inferior interlocutor than in either of the other two situations, though this number is higher in addressing a superior interlocutor than when responding to someone who is socially equal to them. The L2 results only partly meet the researcher’s expectations: namely, while the highest percentage was expected in the last column (or the middle and the last), it is unclear why there were some many invectives used in responding to a socially superior interlocutor in English but not in Serbian (note that only three of the research participants in experiment 2 were native speakers of Hungarian).

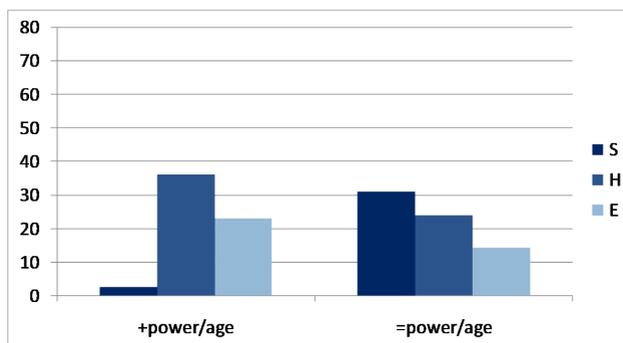


Figure 6. Frequency of occurrence of invectives in the OFFEND scenario

In this scenario, the performance of the Serbian native speakers was exactly as expected: only 2% of them used an invective with a socially superior interlocutor, as opposed to the 30% in the equal interlocutors situation. However, the results of the Hungarian native speakers call for an explanation we cannot offer at this point. The fact that 36% of them entered an invective in the questionnaire in the situation which involved addressing someone who is socially superior, but only 24% of the respondents did so with someone who is their equal in power is no

less surprising than the fact that this tendency can also be observed in the L2 data. As pointed out earlier, the number of Hungarian speakers in the second experiment was relatively low (only 3 out of 35, i.e. about 8.5% of the total research participants) and thus the observed similarities in the production of the two groups cannot be due to the number of Hungarian L1 speakers in this experiment. Note also that the results obtained for this scenario resemble the results of the SURPRISE scenario and differ significantly from the results of the HURT scenario reported in Figure 3.

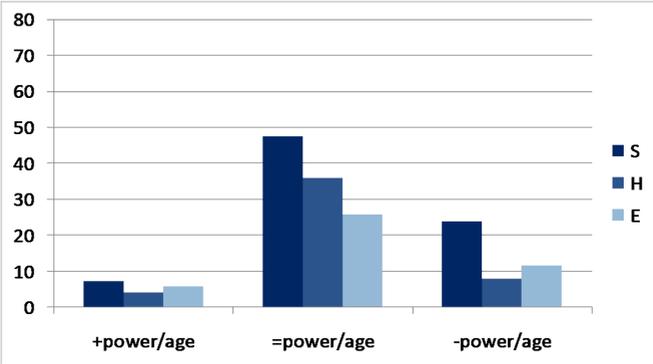


Figure 7. Frequency of occurrence of invectives in the EMBARRASS scenario

Finally, the EMBARRASS scenario is quite in line with the initial hypotheses of the research, with the smallest number of invectives occurring in all three languages when the interlocutor is socially superior. In this situation, the L1 and the L2 data are very similar, unlike any of the previous scenarios. In the equal interlocutors situation just under 50% of the Serbian L1 informants decided to use an invective, as opposed to 33% in the situation which involves an inferior interlocutor. Though the numbers differ, the tendency is the same with Hungarian L1 participants (36% vs 8%) and English L2 production, too (26% vs 11%).

The analysis of the participants' responses reveals that the invective terms most frequently used in both the participants' L1 and in their L2 fall into one of the following three categories:

(1) words referring to intellectual capacity:

S - *kreten* 'idiot', *idiot*, *moron*, *retard*, *debil* 'mildly retarded person', *šupljoglavac* 'rattle brain'

H - *idióta* 'idiot', *hülye* 'moron, retard'

E - *idiot*, *jackass*, *jerk*, *moron*, *fool*, *retard*

(2) animal names:

S - *krava* 'cow', *majmun* 'monkey', *stoka* 'cattle', *konj* 'horse', *magarac* 'donkey', *skot* 'animal'

H - *majom* 'monkey', *barom* 'livestock', *liba* 'goose'

E - *bitch*, *cow*, *pig*, *primate*

(3) words referring to primitive behaviour:

S - *seljak* 'boor', *šaban* (!) 'yokel'

H - *tahó* 'yokel', *bunkó* 'boor', *paraszt* 'bumpkin', *köcsög* 'uncouth person'; descriptive adjective with elided noun *neveletlen* 'ill-bred', *szemtelen* 'insolent'

E - *wanker*, *bastard*, *creep*, *asshole*, *prick*, *savage*, *douche*

The structures employed in L1 and L2 also show a large degree of similarity. In Serbian, the vocative case marked noun is optionally premodified by an adjective and also optionally postmodified by the indefinite pronoun (in the corresponding gender and number) and/or an adjective. In Hungarian and in English, the vocative can optionally be preceded by the pronoun *you* and/or an adjective. The patterns are shown in the following table:

<i>Kretenko!</i> idiot _{FVOC} 'You, idiot!'	<i>Veštice matora!</i> witch _{FVOC} old _{FVOC} 'You old witch!'	<i>Kretenu jedan nenormalni!</i> idiot _{M.VOC} one _M abnormal _{M.VOC} 'You crazy idiot!'
<i>Majom!</i> monkey 'You, monkey!'	<i>Hülye köcsög!</i> crazy uncouth person 'You crazy pillow biter!'	<i>Te elkényeztetett liba!</i> you spoilt goose 'You spoilt goose!'

<i>Idiot!</i> <i>You, cow!</i>	<i>Lying bastard!</i> <i>Old crow!</i>	<i>You spoiled brat!</i> <i>You stupid old witch!</i>
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Table 4. The structures used in addressing the interlocutor abusively

In addition to these structures, occasionally there occurred some language-specific structures, too, such as the vocative of the augmentative in Serbian, optionally postmodified by an adjective or the pronoun *one* (*Lažovčino jedna!* - liar_{FEM.AUG} one_{FEM.AUG}), the invective term (noun or adjective) premodified by *you little*, as a form of attenuation (*Te kis majom/pimasz!* - you little monkey/insolent) and in English, the phrase *What a...* preceding the invective, optionally premodified by an adjective (*What a jerk! What a silly old woman!*).

Based on the above data, one may conclude that abusive terms (mostly animal names and words referring to intellectual capacity or primitive behaviour) are most frequently used to address people who have frightened us, even if they are of a higher social status. This holds not only of the research participants' L1, but also their EFL production. In the other scenarios, the majority of the informants refrain from using an invective. With regard to the social status of the interlocutors, invectives appear to be used most often to address an interlocutor of equal or inferior status, as initially hypothesized, though in the SURPRISE and OFFEND scenarios both the Hungarian L1 data and the EFL data show a higher percentage of invectives in addressing a socially superior interlocutor than an equal or inferior interlocutor. Thus, the initial hypotheses are only partly confirmed and the results of this research, aimed at determining the level of correspondence which can be observed in the way the subjects react to the same situations in these languages (S/H vs EFL) appear to lack a pattern. Obviously, invectives are one of those areas of language in which learners do not receive explicit instruction, which is why the expectation was that subjects would be likely to transfer their L1 pragmatic competence to L2. However, the research participants showed varying degrees of readiness to use abusive language in their L1, to start with. On the other hand, one of the very first things any learner of English is taught is that the English are very polite, which could be one of the reasons why the

invective production of the research participants was generally lower in EFL than in their L1. However, the significant cultural differences between English and Serbian/Hungarian with respect to what is meant as opposed to what is said are shown to be virtually non-existent in the tested subjects' use of invectives, i.e. the frequency of use of invectives, the situations they are used in, as well as the terms employed, reflect to a very large degree the subjects' pragmatic competence in their L1, demonstrating a case of pragmatic failure, which occurs when learners transfer first language (L1) pragmatic rules into second language (L2) domains.

In order to attain a clear picture of the pragmatic competence of the participants in this research, as a follow-up experiment, the same questionnaire was also distributed to 10 English L1 respondents, all studying at the University of Kent.⁹ In the total of 120 situations, there were only 2 examples of an invective being used, both in the FRIGHTEN scenario, namely *Stupid idiot!* (+power/age interlocutor) and *Idiots!* (-power/age interlocutor). Once these results were obtained, there could no longer be any doubt that the EFL invectives the participants in experiment 2 used were the result of transfer of pragmatic competence from L1.

Given that invectives are shown to be used quite freely among students who are native speakers of Serbian and Hungarian but should by all means be avoided in English, in the next section we turn to the pedagogical implications of the study reported here.

11.4. Pedagogical implications and suggestions for further research

The results of the research aimed at studying the verbal reaction of advanced EFL students in addressing an interlocutor who has hurt them physically or emotionally, reveals that their pragmatic competence in

⁹ The author wishes to express her gratitude to dr Vikki Janke from the University of Kent for her help in collecting data from native speakers of English.

refraining from the use of invectives is significantly below their linguistic competence. Even though in their L1 the research participants used abusive terms quite frequently, it must be noted that in English they did so less often (with the exception of the socially superior interlocutor in the SURPRISE and OFFEND scenarios, where more invectives occurred in English than in Serbian).

Invectives and abusive language generally are not dealt with in coursebooks, nor should the results of the research presented here be taken to suggest in any way that they should be included in EFL teaching materials. However, it is clear that sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic instruction is required in this culture specific domain. Thus, the pedagogical implications of the present study are obvious: the amount and type of materials contained in most syllabi for advanced EFL learners need to be supplemented with explicit instruction regarding the pragmatics of English. Especially relevant in this respect are those areas which have already proven to be problematic for learners, such as indirect responses or implicatures, discourse markers and strategies, speech act behaviour and realization and, as shown in this study, refraining from verbal aggression. Special focus needs to be put on the differences between the learners' L1 and the L2, a goal which is best achieved by using authentic audiovisual input from both L1 and L2 (video, films and TV), followed by various tasks such as discussing, interpreting, analyzing the input, role play, various discourse completion tasks, etc. (cf. Bardovi-Harlig & Mahan-Taylor 2003). Since pragmatic competence is thought to be difficult to teach but at the same time, it can have serious consequences for second language learners, the results of the research presented in this chapter confirm Kasper's (1997) findings that a real challenge for foreign or second language teaching is to arrange learning opportunities in such a way that they benefit the development of pragmatic competence in L2.

The findings of the research only partly confirm the initial hypotheses that in their L1, subjects would use explicit terms of abuse if the other participant is equal or inferior to them, but with participants who are superior to them, informants would not use invectives explicitly. It

appears that this holds true of Serbian speakers in all scenarios but the FRIGHTEN scenario, while L1 speakers of Hungarian used more invectives in addressing a socially superior interlocutor in three of the five scenarios (FRIGHTEN, SURPRISE and OFFEND), i.e. in 58% of the situations. The third initial hypothesis, that in lack of explicit instruction, subjects would transfer their L1 pragmatic competence to L2, is also largely confirmed. Namely, the results of this small scale, single moment research show that advanced EFL learners use invectives in various situations and with interlocutors of various social power. While it is true that generally speaking, the research participants used fewer invectives in English than in their L1 (though there were exceptions to this in the SURPRISE and OFFEND scenarios), a comparison of their production with the results of English native speakers proves that transfer from L1 was indeed what governed the pragmatic behaviour of the non-native respondents in Experiment 2.

Invectives are a cultural phenomenon and therefore research into the use of invectives within a language (community) or in languages in contact may shed light on the politeness conventions operative in a language. The benefits of studying invectives for language teaching lie in developing learners' pragmatic competence, in spite of the numerous features of the EFL context which hinder pragmatic learning, including but not limited to the narrow range of speech acts and realization strategies included in the syllabi, the typical interaction patterns which restrict pragmatic input, large classes, limited contact hours and little opportunity for intercultural communication. The conclusions of the research presented here can hopefully be used by researchers to focus on the numerous areas of interlanguage pragmatics that are still understudied in EFL, but also to show EFL educators and curriculum developers the importance of teaching L2 pragmatics.

Task 1. As illustrated in this chapter on the use of invectives, there is whole range of options for addressing people, but speakers do not make their choices haphazardly but rather in interaction with their interpretation of various sociolinguistic variables such as social status, distance, power, etc. (DuFon 2010). Discuss how you would address people in the following situations:

- (a) to catch the bartender's attention to order a drink in a New York bar
- (b) to get your shopping cart back from the elderly lady who has absent-mindedly taken it
- (c) in a letter to your professor/boss asking him/her to read the report you have written
- (d) to address a group of friends you want to take a photo of
- (e) when you want to ask your 10-year old sister's friends to keep their voices down
- (f) to call your professor's attention to the fact that the class is over
- (g) to point out to a teenager on the bus that he is standing on your foot.

Task 2. The choice of address forms is rule governed, but these rules may differ significantly between two cultures. What forms do superiors use to address their subordinates in your L1 – first name, last name, title with last name or some other? And in English? What about students and lecturers/instructors (language assistants, PhD students)?

Task 3. Terms of endearment (e.g. *love*) are fairly frequently used address forms in English. Do speakers of your L1 find this unusual? Can you think of a similar difference between your L1 and English in terms of address forms?

Task 4. Does your L1 distinguish between *tu/vous* (T-V) pronouns? If so, does having a single form rather than two in English cause uneasiness to you?

Suggestions for further reading

In addition to the classical introductory literature on vocatives and address forms (Zwicky 1974, 2004, Levinson 1983, Quirk et al. 1985, to name a few), research on forms of address and address strategies is presented in Hwang (1991), Dickey (1997), DuFon (2010), Formentelli (2009), Rendle-Short (2010). Norrby and Wide (2015) offers an up-to-date overview of address research, followed by empirical studies of address and social relations in a variety of contexts and European languages.

Chapter 12. The speech act of suggestion

Are suggestions face-threatening acts? If so, whose face do they threaten?

Is it always a good idea to make a suggestion? If so, what does the wording of the suggestion depend on? If not, in what situations do you think it is better not to offer a suggestion?

It has been pointed out already that learning any foreign language faces learners with two major obstacles: not only do they need to master the linguistic system of the target language, but they also have to be sensitized to using the language appropriately. This observation is not a new one – Hymes (1967, 1972) pointed out that a “competent speaker” should be able to use the target language appropriately in different contexts and this means taking into account (oftentimes rather sharp) cross-cultural differences. Surely, the learner can also make use of his L1 pragmatic competence, provided the same pragmatic feature is used in the two languages. But considerably more interesting and more important are cases of lack of L2/FL pragmatic competence between speakers who belong to different cultures, such as e.g. knowing the rules of politeness in the target language. Such cases may lead to pragmatic failure, resulting in potentially grave consequences for the communication (misunderstanding, being considered rude or even a complete breakdown of communication). And since “it is not the linguistic form alone which renders the speech act polite or impolite, but the linguistic form + the context of utterance + the relationship between the speaker and the hearer” (Thomas 1995: 157), L2/FL learners should be made aware of the importance of pragmatic competence in the target language and should be (explicitly) trained in it, using contextualized language.

Since Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) pioneering Cross-cultural study of speech act realization patterns (CCSARP) project, there has been abundant cross-cultural but also interlanguage pragmatic literature exploring the negative influence exerted by the learner's L1 pragmatic competence, both at the level of sociopragmatics (i.e. the learners' awareness of a particular speech act being appropriate to the context in which it is performed) and of pragmalinguistics (form-force mapping, i.e. the selection of the linguistic realization of a speech act). The speech act of suggesting, which could be defined as "an utterance that the speaker intends the hearer to perceive as a directive to do something that will be to the hearer's benefit. Therefore, the speaker is doing the hearer a favour, because it is not obvious to both the speaker and the hearer that the hearer will do the act without the suggestion being made" (Martínez-Flor 2005: 179) has received comparatively little attention so far. However, it is a truly interesting speech act to study, given that on the one hand, the speaker believes that the suggestion is to the benefit of the hearer, but on the other hand, suggesting something also involves impinging on the hearer's personal space. Thus, issues related to politeness also have to be taken into account in research carried out in the field of interlanguage pragmatics.

We adopt Brown and Levinson's (1987) view of politeness (based on Goffman's 1967, 1969 notion of face, see Chapter 6), as consisting of a person's feeling of self-worth or self-image, which needs to be enhanced, maintained or protected by using politeness. Some speech acts (e.g. suggestions) are intrinsically face-threatening, and so the speaker may choose not to perform them at all or else to perform them but to try to reduce any possible offence (e.g. by using hints or positive/negative politeness strategies, see Table 6 below). And since the politeness strategies employed in different languages/cultures may differ significantly, one of the major goals of this research was to explore the extent to which the influence of L1 pragmatic competence can affect the production of suggestions in EFL.

The chapter, originally published as Halupka-Rešetar (2018) is structured in the following way: Section 12.1 offers a brief overview

of previous research on the speech act of suggesting. The research methodology employed in this study is described in Section 12.2, which is followed by the results of the research and their discussion in Section 12.3. Section 12.4. summarizes the chapter and announces directions of future research into suggestions.

12.1. Previous research on the speech act of suggestion

The existing literature on the speech act of suggestion (whether referred to as suggestion or advice) has adopted either a cross-cultural perspective (i.e. contrasting pragmatics across cultures, e.g. Rintell 1979, Boatman 1987, Banerjee & Carrell 1988, Altman 1990, Hu & Groove 1991, Wierzbicka 1991, Hinkel 1994, 1997) or an interlanguage-pragmatic perspective (studying non-native speakers' pragmatic competence in a foreign language, e.g. Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford 1990, 1993, 1996, Koike 1994, 1996, Alcón 2001, Matsumura 2001, 2003, among others). Rintell (1979) explored Spanish students' communicative competence in producing requests and suggestions in Spanish and ESL. Banerjee and Carrell (1988) is the first study to focus on the production of suggestions only, among Malay and Chinese ESL students compared with NSs of English. Hinkel (1994) used both NSs and NNSs of English to judge the appropriateness of advice in 26 different situations. Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1990) compared the linguistic negotiation of status in suggestions by NSs and NNSs and found that despite being highly competent linguistically, NNSs "did not have the ability to employ the status preserving strategies in accordance with their status" (Martínez-Flor 2004: 65). In another study, Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1993) examined the change over time in the students' ability to improve their pragmatic competence. Alcón (2001) has shown that exposure to a language does not suffice for developing learners' pragmatic competence and that pedagogical intervention is necessary. Matsumura's (2001) research compared Japanese students' perception of social status in advice acts in an ESL and an EFL setting and concluded that the ESL setting has a positive

impact on NNS development of pragmatic competence, while EFL students require pedagogical intervention. The amount of exposure to the target language is also identified as a potentially crucial factor in the development of learners' pragmatic competence in Matsumura (2003), while a high level of proficiency in the target language does not necessarily correlate with a high level of pragmatic improvement in an ESL setting.

The most important findings of the studies on suggestions can be summarized as follows:

- (a) ESL learners use the same basic speech act strategies as native speakers of English but with some differences, which might be the result of transfer of pragmatic rules from L1
- (b) EFL learners' pragmatic competence often lags behind their linguistic competence
- (c) being exposed to a language is not enough to develop EFL learners' pragmatic competence, pedagogical intervention is necessary.

Nelson (2002: 164) claims that it is difficult to know whether pragmatic failure results from L1 transfer or from another source unless the teacher or researcher knows the strategies of both the L1 and the L2. To the best of our knowledge, there have so far been no studies of the speech act of suggesting in Serbian or by Serbian L1 EFL learners other than Zečević (2016), who studied suggestions on a corpus of feature films. Therefore, this study is aimed at exploring the production of suggestions by EFL learners whose L1 is Serbian. By comparing the type of suggestions and the use of politeness strategies employed in advanced EFL learners and NSs of Serbian as well as NSs of English, we seek to investigate whether the pragmatic competence of advanced EFL learners matches their linguistic competence and whether there is evidence of transfer from the learners' L1. Once these questions are answered, we hope to be able to suggest ways in which the learners' pragmatic competence in EFL might be developed by pedagogical intervention.

In line with the points made above, the research questions we aim to answer in this chapter are the following:

- (1) What are the suggestion strategies and politeness strategies typically used by NSs of Serbian?
- (2) What are the suggestion strategies and politeness strategies typically used by NSs of English?
- (3) What are the suggestion strategies and politeness strategies typically used by advanced EFL learners whose L1 is Serbian? What kind of pragmatic transfer (if any) can be detected in the production of suggestions by Serbian EFL learners in intercultural communication?

Given that Serbian is a language of the Balkan Sprachbund and that speakers of this Sprachbund have been found to be more direct than NSs of English, for example (cf. Perović 2009), the assumption underlying this research is that NSs of Serbian (henceforth NSS) will use more direct strategies and fewer hedges than NSs of English (henceforth NSE) (who, in turn, are more direct and use fewer hedges than e.g. NSs of Chinese, cf. Hinkel 1997).

12.2. Research methodology

To answer the research questions listed above, we recruited three fairly balanced groups of participants:

- (a) 25 native speakers of English (NSE), all of whom were students at University College London. There were 24 female respondents and only one male respondent, all aged 20-26.
- (b) 31 native speakers of Serbian (NSS), all students at the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad, Serbia. All of the respondents were female and aged 20-24.
- (c) 28 advanced EFL learners whose L1 is Serbian. They were all in their 2nd or 3rd year of studies at the Department of English, Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad, 24 female respondents and 4

male respondents, all aged 20-25. All EFL learners were C1/C2 level of proficiency according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), had scored over 85% in their last exam in English language skills (continuous assessment of all 4 language skills) and had not spent extended periods of time (over 3 months) in an English speaking country.¹⁰

The research instrument used to elicit the required data was an anonymous discourse completion task (DCT) questionnaire. DCTs can elicit unrepresentative data mostly because they require subjects to produce written responses in lieu of speech acts (Hinkel 1997). Still, they are useful for gathering large amounts of data fairly easily and quickly.

The twelve situations included in the questionnaire (see Appendix C) were designed largely on the basis of situations in existing literature (Banarjee & Carrell 1988, Hinkel 1997, Martínez-Flor 2005, Aufa 2014). Modifications were occasionally made in order for the situations to be more plausible in both Serbian and English cultures and some new situations were added where the existing situations were judged to be inadequate. Namely, the survey was conducted in such a way as to systematically vary power relations, social distance between the interlocutors, and degree of embarrassment to the addressee as three factors possibly influencing the frequency, directness and forms used in making a suggestion. In order to ensure that the NSS subjects understood what they were required to do in the DCT questionnaire, the questionnaire distributed to them was translated into Serbian. Back translation technique was employed to check the equivalence in the questionnaire translation and to reduce threat to the reliability and validity of the research. As for the EFL and the NSE groups, the instruction and the situations were exactly the same, the only difference between the two versions of the questionnaire lay in the general questions preceding the task itself (related to time spent in an English speaking

¹⁰ We disregarded a further 29 EFL subjects due to their level of proficiency (based on their exam results) and 3 subjects because they had spent 10 months each in the US as exchange students.

country and the mark in the last examination in English language skills for the EFL participants as opposed to information regarding the first language for the NSE participants). The participants were required to write down the exact words they would use in response to each of the given situations. They were also allowed not to react linguistically, but this had to be marked (in order to tease such answers apart from situations which the participants skipped for some reason).

The data collected were analyzed both quantitatively, in terms of frequency, directness and type of suggestion employed, and qualitatively, focusing on the use of politeness strategies and redressive forms when producing suggestions.

12.3. Results and discussion

The suggestions produced by the three groups of research participants were first classified according to the taxonomy of suggestion linguistic realization strategies proposed by Martínez-Flor (2005: 175) and illustrated in Table 5 below:

Type	Strategy	Example
Direct suggestions (any suggestion that included an indication of the desired or suggested action, for instance)	Performative Verb	<i>I suggest that you ... I advise you to... I recommend that you ...</i>
	Noun of Suggestions	<i>My suggestion would be...</i>
	Imperative	<i>Try using ...</i>
	Negative Imperative	<i>Don't try to...</i>

Conventionalized forms (the hearer understands the speaker's intention behind the suggestion since the illocutionary indicator appears in the utterance only the suggestion is less direct)	Specific Formulae (Interrogative Form)	<i>Why don't you...? How about ...? What about...? Have you thought about ...?</i>
	Possibility/Probability	<i>You can ... You could ... You may ... You might ...</i>
	Should	<i>You should ...</i>
	Need	<i>You need to ...</i>
	Conditional (irrealis)	<i>If I were you, I would ...</i>
Indirect suggestions (do not state the desired or suggested action, i.e. the speaker's true intentions. There is no indicator of the suggested force and the hearer has to infer that the speaker is making a suggestion)	Impersonal	<i>One thing (that you can do) would be ... Here's one possibility ... There are a number of options that you ... It would be helpful if you ... It might be better to ... A good idea would be ... It would be nice if ...</i>
	Hints	<i>I've heard that ...</i>

Table 5. Taxonomy of suggestion realization strategies

Since, to the best of our knowledge, the production of the speech act of suggesting has not yet been analyzed in Serbian,¹¹ the first step in this research was to establish the strategies typically employed by NSS. In what follows, we assume that the types of suggestions hold crosslinguistically and also, that the taxonomy given above in Table 5 extends to other languages. The results for the three groups of respondents are presented in Table 6.

¹¹ Based on a corpus of three recent feature films in Serbian (*Nebeska udica* (2000), *Ljubav i drugi zločini* (2008) and *Žena sa slomljenim nosom* (2010)), Zečević (2016) puts forward a classification of suggestion realization strategies for Serbian but due to the nature of the corpus, gives no quantitative data regarding the frequency of occurrence of these strategies. However, in order to be able to compare the production of the three groups of participants in this research, we shall adhere to Martínez-Flor's (2005) taxonomy presented in Table 5 above.

Type	Strategy	NSS	NSE	EFL
Direct	Performative Verb	1	-	9
	Noun of Suggestions	-	-	-
	Imperative	80	44	57
	Negative Imperative	42	20	18
Total direct strategies		123/153 (80.39%)	64/101 (63.37%)	84/181 (46.41%)
Conv. form	Specific Formulae (Interrogative Form)	11	18	7
	Possibility/Probability	5	1	10
	Should	7	7	60
	Need	-	1	1
	Conditional (irrealis)	3	9	15
Total conventionalized forms		26/153 (17%)	36/101 (35.64%)	93/181 (51.38%)
Indirect	Impersonal	1	1	3
	Hints	3	-	1
Total indirect strategies		4/153 (2.61%)	1/101 (0.99%)	4/181 (2.21%)
TOTAL SUGGESTIONS PRODUCED		153/372 (41.13%)	101/300 (33.67%)	181/336 (53.87%)

Table 6. Suggestion strategies in the production of NSS, NSE and EFL participants

As can be seen in Table 6, NSS produced more suggestions than NSE, who produced much fewer suggestions than reported in Banerjee and Carrell (1988) (33.67% of the time, as opposed to 55.7%, respectively). The difference between the NSS and NSE groups is 7.46%. A chi-square test of the significance of this difference in proportions yielded $\chi^2= 1.0453$, $p=0.306584$. Thus, the result is not significant at $p < .05$. Compared to these two groups of native speakers, EFL learners produced suggestions even more frequently, in over half of the cases (53.87%). The chi-square test of the difference between NSS and EFL proved not to be statistically significant ($\chi^2=3.3885$, $p=.065654$), unlike the difference between NSE and EFL participants ($\chi^2=8.1169$,

$p=.004385$, respectively), which is a puzzling result. One would expect that NSSs generally produce more suggestions due to greater confidence they have in using the language and in the different social situations described in the DCTs. The fact that EFL learners overachieved could be the result of their insecurity in using English and their awareness of cultural differences between their native language and English, as well as the research participants' wish to show that they are competent users of English (though they might not react in the same way in spontaneous speech).

Focusing on the results of the NSS respondents, a significantly larger number of the suggestions produced by this group was realized by a direct strategy than by a conventionalized form or an indirect strategy. This points to the rather direct way of communicating, typical of the Balkan languages (cf. Perović 2009 for apologies). Conventionalized forms (e.g. *Bolje ti je da...* 'You'd better...'; *Hoćeš da...* 'Would you like to...'; *Nećeš valjda...* 'You're not going to...' etc.) were employed fairly infrequently and indirect strategies (e.g. *Možda bi bilo bolje da...* 'It might be better to...') occurred in only four cases. Of all the strategies, imperatives and negative imperatives were used in nearly 80% of the NSS responses, supporting the claim that NSS are rather direct. Moving on to the results of the NSE group, we see that even though direct strategies are still most frequently employed (only the imperative and the negative imperative), their proportion is significantly lower than in the case of NSS ($\chi^2=7.0912$, $p=.007747$), supporting the claim that NSE tend to be less direct in expressing suggestions. Additionally, over a third of the suggestions produced were realized by a conventionalized form – in fact, twice as many conventionalized forms occurred in the responses of NSE than in the responses of NSS, making this difference significant, too ($\chi^2=9.2671$, $p=.002333$). The forms most often employed by NSE were specific (interrogative) formulae like *Why don't you...?* or *Have you thought about...?* Indirect strategies occurred only on one occasion.

As already pointed out, EFL learners produced far more suggestions than either the NSS or the NSE group. This alone is a very interesting finding, which is topped by the fact that over a half of these suggestions

were realized by applying a conventionalized form, most frequently the modal *should*, in 33.15% of the total number of suggestions produced, as opposed to merely 6.93% in the case of NSE. A chi-square test of the significance of this difference in proportions yielded $\chi^2=21.125$, $p=.000004$. The overall difference between the proportion of conventionalized forms employed by the EFL respondents as opposed to the NSE respondents proves significant ($\chi^2=4.5774$, $p=.032397$), as well as in comparison with NSS ($\chi^2=25.7576$, $p=.00001$).

Along with Banerjee and Carrell (1988), we assumed the respondents' willingness to make a suggestion to vary inversely with the degree of embarrassment caused by the situation to the hearer. The degree of embarrassment relates to the relative importance or rank of the situation or event in society. Thus, six of the DCTs involved a slightly embarrassing situation for the hearer, whereas in the other six situations the respondents were asked to react in a potentially embarrassing situation. Table 7 summarizes the distribution of suggestions produced by the respondents depending on the degree of embarrassment to the hearer.

Degree of embarrassment	NSS	NSE	EFL
Slightly embarrassing	73 (47.71%)	63 (62.38%)	110 (60.77%)
Potentially embarrassing	80 (52.29%)	38 (37.62%)	71 (39.23%)

Table 7. Degree of embarrassment as a factor influencing the distribution of suggestions

Participants in the NSS group proved to be slightly more willing to produce a suggestion in situations which are potentially embarrassing for the hearer. This is surprising, given that by doing so they threaten the hearer's face. While this result is somewhat unexpected, it turns out that EFL learners patterned with NSE in this respect ($\chi^2=0.0211$, $p>.05$), given that there is no significant difference in the two groups' production of suggestions depending on the degree of embarrassment to the hearer – both groups produced more suggestions in situations which were only slightly embarrassing for the hearer, as expected. However, while the difference between the NSS and NSE group in

this respect is significant ($\chi^2=3.9596$, $p=.046605$), it is not significant between the NSS group and the EFL group ($\chi^2=3.4076$, $p=.064897$).

Another hypothesis was that the potentially embarrassing situations would yield a lower proportion of direct suggestions, whereas the slightly embarrassing situations were expected to give a higher proportion of direct suggestions. However, our results show that NSS were virtually equally direct in the slightly embarrassing and the potentially embarrassing situations (81.25% vs 79.45%, $\chi^2=0.125$, $p=.723674$, i.e. not significant), while in the case of NSE and EFL respondents, the expectations were borne out (NSE 74.6% vs. 44.74%, $\chi^2=18.75$, $p=.000015$; EFL 56.36% vs. 30.99%, $\chi^2=12.7149$, $p=.000363$), with most suggestions in the potentially embarrassing situations being realized by a conventionalized form.

Finally, we also expected the production of the speech act of suggesting to be influenced by the power relations between the interlocutors. These were systematically varied in the DCTs, so that in four situations, the research participant was superior in power to the hearer (+P), in four the interlocutors were equal in power (=P) and in the remaining four situations the participants were inferior in power (-P). The analysis of the data is given in Table 8 below.

Power relations	Strategy	NSS	NSE	EFL
+P	Direct	65 (88%)	31 (64.58%)	43 (51.19%)
	Conventionalized form	8 (10.67%)	17 (35.42%)	40 (47.62%)
	Indirect	1 (1.33%)	-	1 (1.19%)
=P	Direct	47 (83.93%)	25 (69.44%)	30 (57.7%)
	Conventionalized form	7 (12.5%)	11 (30.56%)	21 (40.38%)
	Indirect	2 (3.57%)	-	1 (1.92%)
-P	Direct	10 (45.45%)	8 (47.06%)	11 (24.44%)
	Conventionalized form	11 (50%)	8 (47.06%)	32 (71.12%)
	Indirect	1 (4.55%)	1 (5.88%)	2 (4.44%)

Table 8. Social power as a factor influencing the production of suggestions

As shown in Table 8, in the situations where the respondents were superior in power, all three groups mostly used direct strategies, though the difference in the frequency of use is significant between any two groups (NSS vs. NSE $p=.000125$, EFL vs. NSE $p=.044884$, EFL vs. NSS $p=.00001$). The frequency of use of the indirect strategies is negligible. All three groups use direct suggestion strategies with interlocutors who are equal in power, too, but the difference between EFL and NSE is not significant (NSS vs. NSE $p=.012365$, EFL vs. NSE $p=.106172$, EFL vs. NSS $p=.000051$). EFL learners showed greater insecurity in choosing the right suggestion strategy in cases where they were socially inferior: the number of direct suggestions produced in this situation is significantly lower than in the case of either NSS or NSE (EFL vs. NSS $p=.001786$; EFL vs. NSE $p=.000677$). In the overwhelming majority of cases, EFL respondents resorted to using a conventionalized form (typically, *should* and conditionals, as pointed out above and in Table 6). This is presumably the result of the stereotype of speakers of English being very polite and indirect (the famous English understatement), which is proven to be wrong, like so many other stereotypes.

Based on the data presented so far, it seems that even advanced EFL learners whose mother tongue is Serbian need explicit instruction in order to attain NS pragmatic competence in performing the speech act of suggestion. Also worth pointing out here is that the performance of the EFL group seems not to be the result of L1 interference, given that their production systematically resembles NSE production more than NSS production. However, nearly in every aspect compared, there was a statistically significant difference in the results of the EFL group compared to the NSE group, which substantiates the claim that in spite of their grammatical proficiency, EFL learners need to be made more aware of the importance of using pragmatically appropriate language in L2/FL.

The other major issue under investigation here is the degree of politeness involved in making a suggestion. In studying politeness, we generally rely on Brown and Levinson (1987), who claim that redressive action, done by the speaker to reduce any possible face damage of

the face-threatening act, can happen either in the form of positive politeness (solidarity) or negative politeness (formality). Brown and Levinson (1987, cf. Chapter 6) suggest a taxonomy which contains four super-strategies for the speakers to choose when attempting to conduct FTAs, to increase or reduce the level of FTAs: (a) bald on record strategy (no redressive action, e.g. *Close the window!*), (b) positive politeness strategy (FTA with redressive action directed to the interlocutor's positive face, e.g. *Close the window, mate!*), (c) negative politeness strategy (FTA with redressive action directed towards the interlocutor's negative face as in the form of conventionally indirect *Could you close the window?*) and (d) off record strategy (FTA that may have more than one meaning, allowing the speaker to avoid the responsibility for doing the act, as in the non-conventionally indirect form *It is really cold in here*). However, following Banerjee and Carrell (1988), we define a direct suggestion as any suggestion that includes an indication of the desired or suggested action (*It would be a good idea to close the window* as well as *Close the window, you moron!*), while an indirect suggestion does not include such an indication (e.g. *It is really cold in here*). Under this view, then, directness does not necessarily correlate with politeness (cf. Brown & Levinson 1987), as evidenced by the comparison of the following suggestions (e.g. in the situation when the hearer has opened the window on a winter day).

Direct suggestion	Degree of politeness	Indirect suggestion
<i>It would be a good idea to close the window.</i>	>	<i>It is really cold in here.</i>
<i>Close the window, you moron!</i>	<	<i>I'm freezing, aren't you?</i>

Table 9. Degree of politeness and level of directness

A rather large proportion of suggestions (71.58% suggestions by NSS, 60.39% by the NSE group and 72.37% of the suggestions produced by the EFL participants) included some form of redress to the hearer's face that tended to soften the suggestion, such as the following forms, as listed in Banerjee and Carrell (1988).

Traditional politeness forms	Modals (past/present tense forms of modals)	<i>Shall we go outside? Would you like to...?</i>		
	Interrogatives	<i>How about...?</i>		
Positive politeness forms	Showing concern, noticing	<i>Did you know/ realize/ notice/need/want/ like...?</i>		
	Seeking opinion	<i>Do you think...?/Don't you feel...?</i>		
	Offering help	<i>May I help?</i>		
	Solidarity markers	Names (Proper/ In-group names)	<i>Tom buddy, pal, dude Madam/Sir</i>	
		Inclusive "we"	<i>Let's/we...</i>	
		Slang/Colloquial expressions/ Profanity/ Exclamations/Ellipsis	<i>Oh,God!/Oh, no! Nice hairdo.</i>	
		Seeking agreement/ Tags	<i>Yeah/Sure/...or what?/You know? It's quite windy, isn't it?</i>	
	Giving reasons			
Changing focus from addressee to speaker	<i>If I were you... Do you think I'm overdressed?</i>			
Negative politeness forms	Hedges	<i>I think/It seems/looks like/appears/is supposed to/sort of.../or something.</i>		
	Apologies	<i>No offense/Sorry/Excuse me/I'm afraid...</i>		
	Please			
	Asking for reasons/ explanations	<i>Why don't you..?/ What happened?</i>		

Table 10. Banerjee and Carrell's (1988) classification of redressive action

The distribution of politeness forms, per strategy and group of respondents, is given in the table below:

Strategy /respondent group		NSS	NSE	EFL	
Traditional politeness forms	Modal	-	-	1	
	Interrogative	-	1	-	
	TOTAL	-	1 (0.36%)	1 (0.27%)	
Positive politeness forms	Showing concern	25	29	13	
	Seeking opinion	-	-	-	
	Offering help	12	8	21	
	Solidarity markers	Names	47	27	38
		“we”	3	1	2
		Exclamation/ellipsis	2	19	2
		Seeking agreement	1	6	5
	Giving reasons	168	116	173	
Changing focus to speaker	9	23	29		
TOTAL	267/319 (83.227%)	229/275 (83.27%)	283/372 (76.08%)		
Negative politeness forms	Hedges	25	36	49	
	Apologies	22	6	30	
	Please	2	0	3	
	Asking for explanation	3	3	6	
	TOTAL	52/319 (16.3%)	45/275 (16.36%)	88/372 (23.65%)	

Table 11. Distribution of politeness forms in the research

As the above table shows, the frequency of use and the type of redressive forms do not differ between the two groups of native speakers: positive polarity markers are used most frequently, in accordance with expectations, negative politeness forms are employed only occasionally and traditional politeness forms only occur at the level of chance. Looking at the various forms of redress, however, we

note that NSE use names (including group names like *buddy, pal, dude* and address forms like *Professor*) less frequently than NSS (*profesore* 'teacher/professor', *komšinice* 'neighbour', *kolega* 'colleague', (*h*) *e(j)* 'hey', *bato* 'bro', *brate* 'bro', *debeli* 'fatso') and they also provide explanations less frequently. However, NSE tend to use exclamations (*o(o)h, hey, ah, uh, what!, Watch out!, sweetheart*) and ellipsis much more often than NSS and they also often resort to the redressive strategy of changing the focus to the speaker (*I don't like them; I didn't think they were so yummy; I've found that cheaper in another shop; I haven't had the best experience with it; I have noticed/seen that ...*). Among the negative politeness forms, hedges occur most frequently in the responses of the NSE group (*I'm not (so) sure; I think...; Just for you to know...; Maybe...; It appears that...; Just a quick tip...*) whereas NSS use hedges (*Mislím da..* 'I think'; *Samo da napomenem...* 'Let me just note that...'; *Iskreno da ti kažem...* 'To be honest...'; *Ne bih da budem bezobrazna...* 'I don't want to be rude but ...', *Ne bih da pomisliš... ali...* 'I wouldn't like you to think that ... but ...', *Čini mi se da...* 'It seems to me that ...') and apologies (*Izvini(te)...* 'sorry'; *izvinjavam se...* 'I apologize') with approximately equal frequency.

Regarding advanced EFL learners' production of suggestions, it is interesting to note that even though (due to the often low percentage of frequency) the chi-square test does not show this, there does seem to be a rather obvious difference between the EFL group and the two NS groups. The first difference concerns the overuse of redressive forms, compared to the other two groups. Another important difference lies in the frequent use of negative politeness forms, especially hedges (*I'm not sure...; I think...; It would be best ...; Maybe..., I believe that ...; It seems that...*) but also apologies (*Sorry; I'm sorry...; Excuse me*). In this latter respect, the production of the EFL group resembles closely the production of the NSS group and points to potential interference of L1 pragmatic competence. Concerning the positive politeness forms, the EFL learners who participated in this study proved to have attained near-native-like pragmatic competence only in terms of changing focus to the speaker, a form very rarely used by NSS. In all other respects, however, their production resembles the production of NSS much

more than the production of the NSE group, which supports the initial hypothesis that the level of EFL learners' pragmatic competence is almost as a rule far below their level of linguistic competence.

12.4. Concluding remarks

The research reported on in this chapter is based on a survey containing written discourse completion tasks (WDCTs) distributed to three groups of university students: a group of native speakers of Serbian, a group of native speakers of English and a group of advanced EFL students whose native language is Serbian. The aim of the research was to explore the suggestion strategies and the politeness strategies typically employed by the two groups of NS participants, as well as to establish whether the pragmatic competence of the advanced EFL group of participants is comparable to their grammatical competence in English, based on their production of suggestions. We were also interested in learning whether pragmatic errors are due to transfer from the learners' L1.

Following Banerjee and Carrell (1988), the survey was conducted in such a way as to systematically vary power relations, social distance between the interlocutors, and degree of embarrassment to the addressee as three factors possibly influencing the frequency, directness and forms used in making a suggestion. The data obtained were classified, analyzed and interpreted both quantitatively (frequency, directness and type of response) and qualitatively (politeness strategies). The results of the research show that EFL students' pragmatic competence is below their level of linguistic/grammatical competence, a conclusion which is in line with previous research on various speech acts (e.g. Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford 1990, 1993, cf. Hasbún 2001). The fact that in some respects (e.g. degree of embarrassment) the advanced EFL group's production resembles NSE but mostly it patterns with NSS production suggests that there might be some negative transfer from L1. However, one needs to be careful when drawing such conclusions, especially since there are many types of native speakers and pragmatic norms may change from community to community (Hasbún 2004: 277)

so much so that the pedagogic model based on the native speaker-based notion of communicative competence proves “to be utopian, unrealistic and constraining in relation to English as an international language” (Alptekin 2002: 57).

In addition to making students more aware that pragmatic functions exist in language, specifically in discourse, in order for them to become more aware of these functions as learners (as suggested in Bardovi-Harlig et al. 1991: 5), it seems that the pragmatic competence of EFL learners can be significantly improved if speech acts are explicitly taught (cf. Fernández Guerra & Martínez-Flor 2005) in contextualized language (Koike 1996). Longitudinal studies should be conducted to explore the effect of such intervention.

Task 1. Study the questionnaire in Appendix C. If you have access to groups of less advanced EFL learners (pre-intermediate or intermediate), replicate the study presented in this chapter and report on the results.

Task 2. Translate the DCTs in Appendix C into your L1 (the Serbian translation is available from the author). Check with native speakers whether the situations described in the DCTs are natural and make any necessary changes. Next, select a group of NSs who are over 40 years of age and replicate the research described above. Do the results you obtained suggest that the speaker’s age influences the choice of suggestion strategies?

Task 3. Analyze the EFL coursebook(s) you have access to and check whether they offer any instructions on how suggestions should be used.

Suggestions for further reading

A cross-cultural analysis of suggestions is offered in Rintell (1979), Banerjee and Carrell (1988) and Schmidt et al. (1996). Among the

interlanguage pragmatic studies of suggestions, Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1990, 1993) explore different speech acts in academic advising sessions, while Matsumura (2001) and Jiang (2006) focus on suggestions only (the latter on a corpus). Jiang (2006) and Ekin (2013) describe how the speech act of suggestion is presented in a selection of current EFL coursebooks.

Chapter 13. Compliment responses

How often do you hear people complimenting each other in English and in what situations? How do people respond to compliments in English?

What do people say when they give and receive compliments in your L1? What do people compliment others on? Who is more likely to exchange compliments?

Numerous studies of speech acts have established that speech act behaviour and realization is heavily influenced by sociocultural norms and constraints, which may result in significant differences between two culture's interactional styles. It is not surprising then that speech acts in different social contexts are but one area where advanced EFL students typically show poor command. This chapter, originally published as Halupka-Rešetar (2014b), presents the results of a study on compliment responses (CRs) produced by advanced L2 learners of English whose L1 is Serbian.

Similarly to the previous chapters, the first section introduces the speech act of compliments and compliment responses and provides a brief overview of existing research on this topic. Section 13.2 lays out the methodology of the present study, followed by the results of the research and their discussion in Section 13.3. The chapter ends with Section 13.4, which sums up the main findings of the paper and gives pedagogical implications along with suggestions for directions of future research.

13.1. Compliments and compliment responses – a brief overview of research into this speech act

Compliments have been claimed to have an ambiguous interpretation (Brown & Levinson 1987). On the one hand, they are considered a positive politeness strategy and on the other hand, they also present a face-threatening act against the hearer because they (may) express a desire of the speaker towards the hearer or his/her possessions. In other words, the speech act (compliments) is used as a way to be polite (politeness strategy) and at the same time as an act which can reverse their hearer-based framework (Karafoti 2007). Similarly, compliment responses are certainly among the more difficult speech acts to perform in an L2, given that they are restricted by two conflicting conditions, “agreeing with the complimenter to be polite, and disagreeing with the complimenter to avoid self-praise” (Pomerantz 1978, Herbert 1989).

There is a substantial body of research in interlanguage pragmatics dealing with cross-cultural differences in the content of compliment responses (CRs). This phenomenon has been extensively investigated both by comparing CRs of native speakers of English with CRs of non-native speakers of various L1 backgrounds (American and Chinese in Chen 1993, British and Spanish in Lorenzo-Dus 2001, American and Thai in Cedar 2006, Australian and Chinese in Tang & Zhang 2009, as cited in Boonkongsan 2011, see also Al-Humaidi 2006 and Al Falasi 2007 for American and Arabic), as well as by studying the similarities and differences in the content of CRs produced by English learners of various L1 backgrounds, such as Korean (Han 1992), Chinese (Liu 1995, Qu & Wang 2005, Yu 2003, 2004), Turkish (Bulut & Ozkan 2005), Vietnamese (Tran 2007, 2008), among others (Phoocharoensil 2012). As pointed out by Cheng (2011: 2204), corpus studies have shown native English speakers to “apply multiple types of compliments in a wide range of contexts, such as initiating conversation, greetings, farewells and expressing gratitude. Responses to compliments usually mirror the social-cultural values and politeness varieties of the speakers. While acceptance of the compliment was shown to be most commonly adopted by native English speakers (Chen 1993, Herbert 1986, Holmes

& Brown 1987), downgrading and rejections were usually used by speakers of other languages, especially those from Asian regions such as China, Taiwan, Japan and Vietnam (Chen 1993, Baba 1996, Tran 2006, Yu 2004). This distinctive difference in CRs produced by speakers of different L1s was given as one of the main reasons for difficulties faced by L2 learners in producing target-like compliment responses (Baba 1996, Tran 2006, Yu 2004)". Thus, in the majority of cases, speakers transferred their L1 pragmatic and discourse knowledge to L2, which, according to Tran (2002), is likely to occur when L1 and L2 cultural norms differ noticeably. Since English and Serbian both belong to the common European culture, the CR strategies employed by advanced EFL learners whose L1 is Serbian were not expected to differ dramatically either from their CRs in English or from the typical CRs of native speakers of English. However, the expectation was that due to lack of explicit instruction and very limited exposure to real-life communication in English, EFL learners' CRs will largely reduce to *Thank you!* and that even in the rare cases where the CR production of the research participants was more extensive, it was expected to show very limited variation with respect to the strategies employed. The pragmatic production of the advanced EFL learners who participated in this research was thus predicted to be the result of pragmatic transfer and to be at a significantly lower level than their linguistic development.

Compliment responses belong to the class of expressive speech acts. In CRs, the speaker has to balance two conflicting constraints, namely (1) to agree with the speaker and (2) to avoid self-praise. If the recipient of a compliment responds by agreeing with the speaker, the response goes against the sociolinguistic expectations of the speaker because it will contain self-praise. If, on the other hand, the speaker does not accept the compliment in order to avoid self-praise, the response will be face-threatening for the speaker as it will violate the first condition (Pomerantz 1978). To mediate this conflict, recipients of compliments may resort to a variety of solutions. The taxonomy of CRs that will be employed in this paper was put forward by Holmes (1988, 1993), based on Pomerantz's (1978) discussion. It involves three macro strategies (Accept, Reject and Deflect/Evade) and ten micro-strategies, as shown in Table 12.

Macro level CRs	Micro level CRs	Examples
Accept	Appreciation token	<i>Thanks; Thank you; Cheers; Yes; Good</i>
	Agreeing utterance	<i>I know; I am glad you think so; I did realize I did that well; Yeah, I really like it.</i>
	Downgrading/ Qualifying utterance	<i>It's nothing; It was no problem; I enjoyed doing it; I hope it was ok; I still only use it to call people; It's not bad.</i>
	Return compliment	<i>You're not too bad yourself; Your child was an angel; I'm sure you will be great; Yours was good too.</i>
Reject	Disagreeing utterance	<i>Nah, I don't think so; I thought I did badly; Nah, it's nothing special; It is not; Don't say so.</i>
	Question accuracy	<i>Why?; Is it right?</i>
	Challenge sincerity	<i>Stop lying; Don't lie; Don't joke about it; You must be kidding; Don't, come on.</i>
Evade	Shift credit	<i>That's what friends are for; You're polite; No worries; My pleasure.</i>
	Informative comment	<i>It wasn't hard; You can get it from [store name]; It's really cheap.</i>
	Request reassurance	<i>Really?</i>

Table 12. Holmes' (1988) taxonomy of compliment responses

In Section 13.3 (Results and discussion), the analysis of the CRs will be presented both with respect to the macro level and the micro level.

13.2. Research methodology

The overall aim of the present study is to contribute to attaining a clearer picture of advanced EFL students' pragmatic competence by examining the compliment responses they produce, specifically:

- (1) by establishing the similarities and differences between the CRs used by speakers of Serbian and speakers of English,
- (2) by exploring the extent to which advanced Serbian L2 learners produce targetlike CRs in English and
- (3) by determining whether pragmatic transfer is shown to occur.

In line with these aims, there were two groups of research participants: group 1 consisted of 39 third-year students of humanities (29 female, 9 male, mean age: 21.63) whose L1 is Serbian and who completed the Serbian version of the questionnaire, while group 2 totalled 35 fourth-year students (31 female, 4 male, mean age: 22.71) of the Department of English at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Novi Sad, Serbia and they were given the English version of the questionnaire.

The participants' responses were elicited using a three-part questionnaire (see Appendix D). In the first part, the respondents were required to state their sex and age. The aim of the second part of the questionnaire was to determine how often the research participants compliment others, what they most often compliment on (interlocutor's appearance, ability/achievement or possession), as well as who they most often address compliments to. For all three questions a list of items was provided and the respondents were asked to indicate their answers using the numbers 1 (often), 2 (sometimes) or 3 (never).

The participants' pragmatic competence was tested in the third part of the questionnaire, in the form of an open-ended written discourse completion test (WDCT), i.e. a questionnaire containing written prompts (brief descriptions of real-life situations) followed by a space in which the respondent was required to produce a response to a compliment.

This part of the questionnaire involved nine situations in which the situational setting was intertwined with the sociopragmatic variable of social power.¹² The first variable concerns the topic of complimenting (appearance, ability/achievement and possession), while the

¹² Some of the situations were replicated from Yuan (2012).

second one is related to the power of the complimenter over the complimentee (more power, equal power or less power). Previous research (Manes 1983, Holmes 1986, Creese 1991) has shown that Americans tend to compliment most on appearance, but that ability is the largest category of compliments with the British (Creese 1991).¹³ A great majority of compliments have been found to be addressed to people of similar age and status to the compliment giver (Knapp, Hopper & Bell 1984). Given that to the best of the author's knowledge no research has been conducted in Serbian (but see Ivanetić 1999 on compliments in Croatian), in order to find out whether there is transfer to L2 it was necessary to learn more about the habit of complimenting in the research participants' L1.

An example of a WDCT used in the questionnaire is given below:

You are wearing a new Rolex watch. You meet a friend at your office.

Friend: Wow! What a nice watch! I wish I had one like that!

You: _____

Research participants were asked to complete the questionnaire in order to determine their pragmatic competence in responding to compliments in their L1, Serbian (group 1) and in English (group 2), as their L2. For the responses collected in the second part of the questionnaire, the mean value was determined for each item and the results of the two groups were compared. The participants' responses in the WDCTs were classified in line with Holmes' (1988) taxonomy of CRs given above in Table 12. Then, the total frequency and percentage of both the macro and the micro strategies used by the participants were calculated, both for Serbian and for English. Finally, these were compared with the findings reported in the literature on CRs in English (Creese 1991, Lorenzo-Dus 2001, Cheng 2011).

¹³ In a corpus of 73 American compliments and 138 British compliments, Creese (1991) identifies 65.8% vs. 53% compliments pertaining to appearance, 32.9% vs. 54.3% concerning ability and only 1.3% vs. 7.3% of the compliments have to do with possession.

13.3. Results and discussion

The analysis of the complimenting behaviour of the two groups of respondents suggests that compliments are paid slightly more frequently in Serbian (1.53) than in English (1.8). It appears that in Serbian, achievements are the largest category of compliments (1.72), followed by appearance (1.77) and possessions (2.31), while in the participants' L2 appearance is complimented on most often (1.77), followed by achievement (1.80) and possessions (2.16). It has to be noted that the top four topics in both languages are passing an exam (which is understandable, given the population), hairstyle, clothes and accessories. An overview of compliment topic scores is given in Figure 8 below, where the vertical axis corresponds to the frequency of complimenting, ranging from 1 (often) to 3 (never) while the categories of compliments are listed on the horizontal axis.

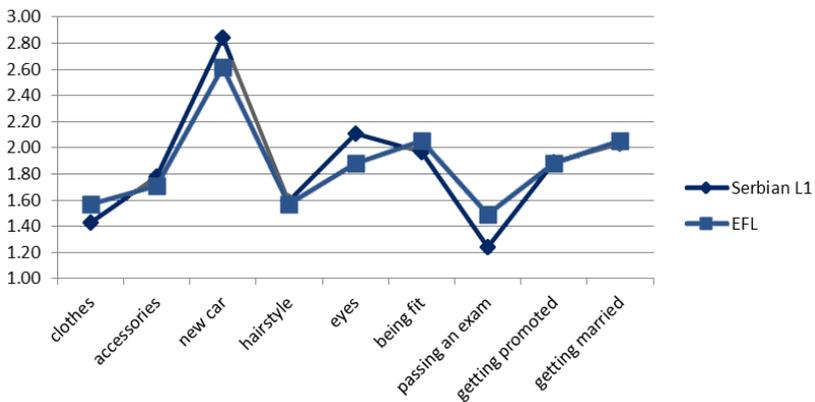


Figure 8. Compliment topics in L1 and L2

Figure 9 shows the scores of the compliment addressees listed in the questionnaire for both groups of research participants. It is clear from the graph that in many cases the trend line for English follows the trend line for Serbian. Friends of both sexes, partners and fellow students are the typical recipients of compliments for both groups of research participants.

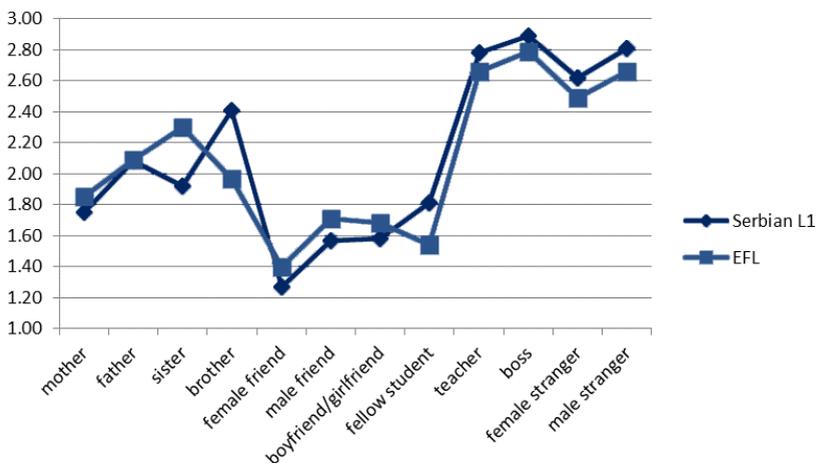


Figure 9. Compliment addressees in L1 and L2

Moving on to the WDCTs and the analysis of CRs, Table 13 shows the general patterns of CRs (macro strategies). Columns 2 and 3 give the data for Serbian (group 1) and for EFL (group 2), as established in the research presented here. The last two columns give comparative data for American and British NSs, as recorded in Creese (1991).

	Serbian	EFL	American	British
Accept	76.55%	73.95%	54%	45.9%
Deflect	21.68%	25.39%	29%	40.6%
Reject	1.77%	0.66%	17%	13.5%

Table 13. Comparative results of CRs in Serbian NS, EFL and two English NS populations

Clearly, the CR production of the EFL students shows a striking similarity to the production of the participants in group 1, in their Serbian L1. Though there is a significant difference in the distribution of macro strategies between the two NS populations, too, especially with respect to the frequency of the evade/deflect strategy, it is obvious that the results of the EFL group show pragmatic transfer from L1.

Following Chen (2011) and Cheng (2012), the data obtained in the questionnaires were submitted to an analysis of the micro strategies used by the two groups of research participants. As mentioned earlier, the nine situations in the WDCTs varied with respect to the situational setting (i.e. the topic of complimenting) and the sociopragmatic variable of social power (which will, due to lack of space, not be commented on here). In what follows, we give an overview of the CRs for each compliment situation. Note that while the expected number of CRs is number of participants multiplied by the number of situations (i.e. 342 for group 1 and 315 for group 2), the participants sometimes combined the micro strategies (e.g. appreciation token followed by an informative comment) and these were counted as two separate CRs,¹⁴ resulting in a larger total number of responses (452 for group 1 and 453 for group 2, respectively).

In responding to compliments on appearance, the majority of both groups of research participants showed appreciation (*Hvala! Thanks/ Thank you*), while other strategies were used fairly infrequently. In the Serbian data there are 12 examples of agreeing (e.g. *Hvala, i meni se sviđa!* 'Thank you, I like it, too!' in situation 5), and 11 instances of using an informative comment as a compliment evading strategy (e.g. *Hvala, kupila sam ga u second-hand prodavnici, jeftino.* 'Thank you, I bought it at a second hand shop, it was cheap.' in situation 3), while other micro strategies were few and far between, as shown in Figure 10. The second group of participants, whose EFL pragmatic competence was being tested, also used appreciation almost to the exclusion of all other micro strategies: there were only 8 examples each of acceptance (e.g. *Thank you, I think so too!* in situation 3, or *Thanks, everyone says that!* in situation 5), informative comments (e.g. *Thanks, I'll give you*

¹⁴ Cheng (2011: 2207) treats such cases as the Combination macro strategy, which refers to a situation in which both Acceptance and Evasion are adopted in a single compliment response sequence. Note also that this author modifies Holmes' (1988, 1993) and Yu's (2004) categories of CR strategies and uses an adapted CR strategy framework, which consists of three macro strategies (Accept, Evade and Combination) and 11 micro strategies (for details see Cheng 2011).

the number of my hairdresser if you want in situation 5) and requesting assurance (e.g. *You think?* or *You really think so?* in situation 5).

In Cheng’s (2011) data, the distribution of the micro strategies observed in the CRs of American NSs is approximately as follows: appreciation tokens 40%, informative comments and return compliments each about 20%, with downgrading and qualifying utterances and request reassurance totalling the remaining 20% of CRs.

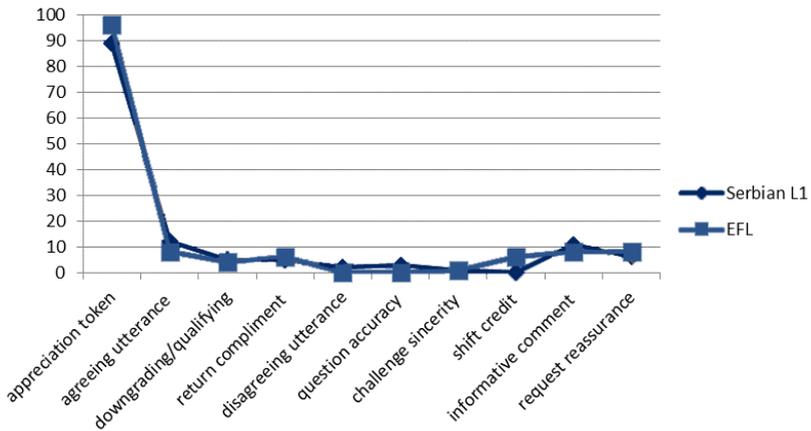


Figure 10. CR micro strategies for appearance

The trend lines representing the use of CR micro strategies in responding to compliments on achievement show a similar tendency for the two groups of participants. Though here, too (Figure 11), appreciation tokens are by far the most widely used strategy, a relatively large number of agreeing responses are found in the CRs of both groups of participants. Also worth mentioning is the occurrence of informative comments (mostly in situation 6 in both Serbian and English) and the occasional use of downgrading and shifting credit (the latter is only found in the EFL data). Note that there are only two examples of rejection strategies per language, which is unexpected given Creese’s (1991) data.¹⁵

¹⁵ Note that in the CR strategy framework put forward in Cheng (2011) the macro strategy of rejection does not figure at all.

Cheng's (2011) results of the ability/work situation are comparable to the achievement situation tested here. According to this author, American NSs will use appreciation tokens just as frequently as qualifying utterances (each accounting for about 23% of the total CRs), followed by informative comments (15%), downgrading utterances and request reassurance (each about 12%), while agreeing utterances and offering (an evasion strategy which does not exist in Holmes' (1988) taxonomy) are used even less frequently.

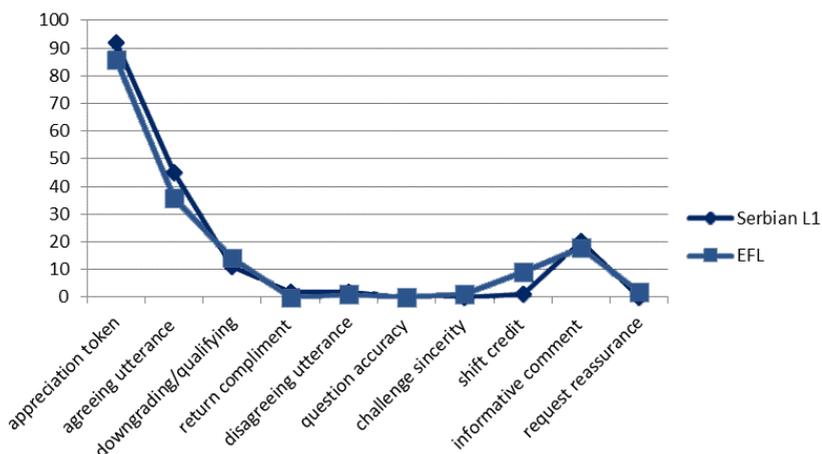


Figure 11. CR micro strategies for achievement

In this research, apart from appreciation, among the most frequent CRs on achievement were *Drago mi je da vam se sviđa!* ('I'm glad you like it') in Serbian and *I'm glad you liked it* in English – obviously, this is another instance of pragmatic transfer from the participants' L1 to their L2. Downgrading was most frequent in situation 2 in Serbian (complimenting on delicious cakes), with the usual CR being (variations of) *Jako ih je lako napraviti* ('They are very easy to bake.').

The last group of data also shows a strong tendency towards using appreciation as the major CR strategy in both groups of research participants. In addition to this strategy, informative comments are used with considerable frequency in both languages, e.g. *Kupila sam*

ih u Beogradu ('I bought them in Belgrade', referring to the boots in situation 4) or *Dobio sam ga na poklon* ('I got it as a present', in reference to the Rolex in situation 7) in Serbian. With the EFL respondents, the typical comments include e.g. *It is my father's* in situation 9 or *I got/You can buy them/it ...* in situations 4 and 7.

The trend line for the two languages under consideration shows a striking similarity, once again suggesting that the English data are the result of pragmatic transfer from the respondents' L1. Comparing the results in Figure 12 with the data reported in Cheng (2011) confirms this assumption, since American NSs are claimed to employ appreciation tokens, informative comments and agreeing utterances each in about 25% of the CRs analyzed, whereas the EFL results obtained in this research replicate the Serbian compliment responding practice and make less use of informative comments (though strikingly more in this situational setting than in the other two) and employ agreeing utterances extremely rarely.

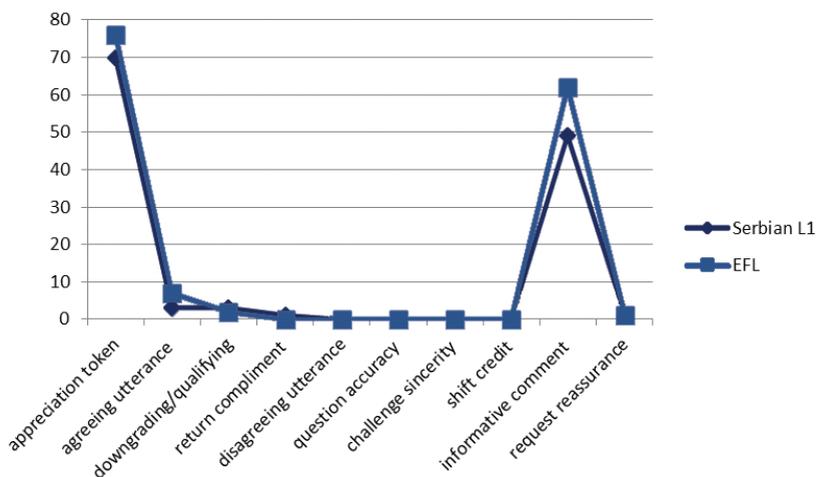


Figure 12. CR micro strategies for possessions

All the results presented here suggest that advanced EFL learners mostly rely on transferring their L1 pragmatic competence to their L2. It is

clear that very little attention is paid to developing the communicative competence of EFL learners. And though it is true some features of the EFL context hinder pragmatic learning, such as the narrow range of speech acts and realization strategies, typical interaction patterns which restrict pragmatic input, large classes, limited contact hours and little opportunity for intercultural communication (Alcón-Soler 2005), this results in advanced EFL learners attaining a fair degree of linguistic competence but with little awareness of how to use language appropriately in various situations. In order to improve this situation, EFL learners must clearly receive explicit pragmatic instruction, some guidelines for which are suggested in the next section (see also Halupka-Rešetar 2014a, b).

13.4. Pedagogical implications and suggestions for further research

The results of the analysis of CRs in the pragmatic production of NSs of Serbian and advanced EFL learners whose L1 is Serbian reveals that in the overwhelming majority of the cases, the CR either contains or reduces to an appreciation token while the other CR micro strategies are employed significantly less frequently. Namely, in the Serbian data, appreciation tokens represent over 70% of the total accepting strategies, followed by agreeing (18.49%), whereas the other two strategies occur only occasionally. Among the evading strategies, informative comments are used almost to the exclusion of the other two strategies (i.e. in over 90% of the cases). The results of the second group (EFL) mirror these data: here, too, appreciation tokens top the list of compliment accepting responses (77%), agreeing is employed in just over 15% of the cases, whereas most deflecting responses contain an informative comment (76.52%), credit shifting and request assurance being used fairly infrequently (in 13% and 10.43% of the cases, respectively). The occurrence of all the other strategies in both groups of participants' responses can be attributed to chance.

The results of the research presented sharply contrast with the CR behaviour of native speakers of English found in the literature (for a recent study, see Cheng 2011) and confirm the initial hypothesis that the CR production of advanced EFL learners will show very limited variation and will mainly reduce to the appreciation token *Thank you*. Other strategies are rarely used, either alone or in tandem with an appreciation token, though the sum CRs representing the macro strategy evade/deflect add up to a quarter of EFL CRs (which is actually quite close to the 29% of such responses reported in Creese (1991) for American NSs). Thus, it is clear that the results obtained in the current study confirm that the pragmatic competence of the advanced EFL learners who participated in this research is significantly below their linguistic competence and is the result of transfer from their L1. However, a closer comparison of the micro strategies used by the two samples in this research reveals almost identical distribution, which means that even though strategies other than appreciation tokens do occur in the CRs of the EFL learners (agreeing utterances in 11.26% and informative comments in 19.43% of the total number of CRs), this happens most probably due to the fact that it is exactly these two strategies that speakers of Serbian tend to use in their L1 CRs (agreeing utterances in 14.16% and informative comments in 19.91% of the total number of CRs).

The pedagogical implications of the present study are obvious: the amount and type of materials contained in most syllabi for (advanced) EFL learners need to be supplemented with explicit instruction regarding the pragmatics of English (specifically, speech act behaviour and realization, with special focus on the differences between L1 and L2). This may be achieved by using authentic audiovisual input (video, films and TV) for various tasks, e.g. discussing, interpreting, analyzing the input (and comparing it with the students' L1), role play, various discourse completion tasks (DCT), etc. (cf. Bardovi-Harlig & Mahan-Taylor, 2003). And though developing (advanced) EFL learners' pragmatic competence is clearly not an easy task, it is hoped that the conclusions arrived at in this chapter will help researchers, EFL teachers, educators and curriculum developers alike focus on the numerous areas of interlanguage pragmatics that are still understudied

and thus bring considerable benefit to the realm of cross-cultural communication.

Task 1. Do you think compliments are FTA? If so, for whom, the speaker or the hearer?

Task 2. Why might a NS of English be offended by a compliment made by a NNS?

Task 3. Compliments occur in everyday situations. Who do you think is more likely to receive compliments, status equal or status unequal interlocutors? People of the same age or different ages? Do men pay compliments to women equally frequently as women do to men?

Task 4. The literature abounds in examples of amusement, embarrassment or offense unwittingly caused by or given to EFL learners from different cultural backgrounds. Read the following example and comment on what makes them inappropriate.

A Malaysian male student complimenting his university tutor as she enters the classroom:

Complimenter: *You are wearing a very lovely dress. It fits you.*

Recipient: *Oh-thank you.*

Task 5. Compliments serve as “social lubricants” and often accompany or even replace other speech act formulas. Illustrate this with examples of your own and discuss the role of the compliment in each case.

Task 6. How many different speech acts could the following utterances serve?

(a) *I really admire your energy.*

(b) *That’s a very large hat.*

(c) *You look very happy this morning.*

(d) *David’s really good at ironing.*

(e) *Your office is cosy and big enough for meetings. How lovely to see you.*

(f) *That’s a very cunning plan.*

- (g) *Your dogs are so well behaved.*
(h) *That was an interesting speech.*

Task 7. Study the DCT items in Appendix D. Translate them into your L1 (the Serbian translation is available from the author). Check with native speakers whether the situations described in the DCTs are natural and make any necessary changes. Next, select a group of NSs who are over 40 years of age and replicate the research described above. Do the results you obtained suggest that the speaker's age influences the choice of compliment responses?

Suggestions for further reading

The speech act of complimenting is discussed in Wolfson (1981, 1983), Manes and Wolfson (1981), Manes (1983), Holmes (1988), Herbert (1990), Nelson et al. (1993), Jucker (2009), Rees-Miller (2011) and others. Compliments responses are dealt with in Holmes (1986), Chen (1993), Golato (2003) and Cedar (2006), while Golato (2005) devotes a whole monograph to research on compliments and compliment responses. Rose (2001) analyzes these two speech acts on a corpus of films and Grossi (2009) focuses on the teaching of these speech acts.

Chapter 14. The speech act of refusal

Why might refusals present a pitfall for L2/FL learners of a language? What does the wording of a refusal depend on?

In your culture, is it impolite to refuse requests? What about invitations?

It has been pointed out earlier in the book that one of the areas which are especially problematic for L2/FL learners are speech acts in different social contexts (starting with the pioneering work of Gumperz 1977, 1979 and Tannen 1981, as well as the CCSARP project in the late 1980s (see Blum-Kulka et al. 1989); for refusals, see the references listed in the next section). The overwhelming majority of studies take English as the target language and explore the linguistic possibilities available for speech act realization in the learners' L1 as well as the effect of cross-cultural differences on second language performance and on how native speakers of English interpret language learners' speech acts. Several studies have dealt with the speech act production and pragmatic transfer of learners whose L1 is Serbian (Paunović 2011, 2013, Savić 2012, 2013 a-b, 2014, Halupka-Rešetar 2013, 2014a, 2014b, 2015, 2016, Đokić 2018) but no studies have so far have focused on speech acts within an ESP context. This chapter and the next one explore the pragmatic competence of ESP learners by analyzing their production of various speech acts in English.

The present study (originally published as Halupka-Rešetar & Knežević 2016) focuses on the speech act of refusals and explores how they are realized in the production of ESP learners whose L1 is Serbian. The chapter is structured in the following way: Section 14.1 presents the taxonomy of refusals put forward by Beebe, Takahashi and Uliss-Weltz (1990) and employed in this chapter. Section 14.2 gives a brief overview of the interlanguage pragmatic literature on refusals. This

is followed by a description of the experiment which was conducted (14.3), along with the results of the data obtained in the research and a discussion of these results (14.4). The main findings of the chapter are summarized in Section 14.5, followed by suggestions of possible avenues for further research.

14.1. Taxonomy of refusals

Drawing on previous research, the informants' refusals are analyzed as sequences of semantic formulas, where a semantic formula is defined as "a word, phrase, or sentence that meets a particular semantic criterion or strategy; any one or more of these can be used to perform the act in question" (Cohen 1996b: 265). Given that refusals are often complex constructions, in addition to the head act (the main refusal) they often include pre-refusal strategies and/or post-refusal strategies. The former serve the purpose of preparing the addressee for the upcoming refusal while the latter tend to emphasize, justify, mitigate, or conclude the refusal expressed in the head act. For example, following Takahashi and Beebe (1987), if a respondent refused an invitation to a college professor's house for a party saying *I'm sorry, I have theatre tickets that night. Maybe we could come by later for a drink*, this response would be coded as consisting of three formulas: [expression of regret] [excuse] [offer of alternative].

In their study of pragmatic transfer in Japanese ESL refusals Beebe, Takahashi and Uliss-Weltz (1990) put forward the following taxonomy of semantic formulas:

Type	Semantic formula	Example
Direct	Performative	<i>I refuse</i>
	Nonperformative statement	<i>No</i> Negative willingness/ability (<i>I can't/I won't. I don't think so.</i>)
Indirect	Statement of regret	<i>I'm sorry...; I feel terrible...</i>
	Wish	<i>I wish I could help you...</i>
	Excuse, reason, explanation	<i>My children will be home that night; I have a headache.</i>
	Statement of alternative	I can do X instead of Y (e.g. <i>I'd rather..., I'd prefer...</i>) Why don't you do X instead of Y (e.g. <i>Why don't you ask someone else?</i>)
	Set condition for future or past acceptance	<i>If you had asked me earlier, I would have...</i>
	Promise of future acceptance	<i>I'll do it next time; I promise I'll...</i>
	Statement of principle	<i>I never do business with friends.</i>
	Statement of philosophy	<i>One can't be too careful.</i>
	Attempt to dissuade the interlocutor (threatening, criticizing, letting the interlocutor off the hook, requesting help, etc.)	<i>It won't be any fun tonight; That's a terrible idea!; Don't worry about it; I'm trying my best.</i>
	Acceptance that functions as a refusal	unspecific/indefinite reply lack of enthusiasm
Avoidance	nonverbal (silence, hesitation, doing nothing or physical departure) verbal (topic switch, joke, repetition of part of request, postponement (e.g. <i>I'll think about it.</i>) or hedging (e.g. <i>Gee, I don't know. I'm not sure.</i>)	

Table 14. Beebe, Takahashi and Uliss-Weltz's (1990) taxonomy of semantic formulas in refusals

They also added that these refusals may be preceded by adjuncts, which accompany refusals but which cannot by themselves be used to express a refusal, such as:

- (a) Statement of positive opinion/feeling or agreement (*That's a good idea... / I'd love to...*)
- (b) Statement of empathy (*I realize you are in a difficult situation.*)
- (c) Pause fillers (*uhh/well/oh/uhm*) and
- (d) Gratitude/appreciation

In very many studies, the classification proposed by Beebe, Takahashi and Uliss-Weltz (1990) was adopted without modifications, while in others certain changes were introduced (see Salazar, Safont Jordà & Codina-Espurz 2009). In the present study the semantic formulas produced by ESP learners will be analyzed using the taxonomy outlined above to see to what extent Serbian ESP learners make use of them.

14.2. Interlanguage pragmatic literature on refusals

As pointed out earlier, speech acts exist crosslinguistically and crossculturally, but the degrees of politeness and the way a particular speech act is executed can vary to a large extent across languages and cultures. But apart from this, refusals are known as a 'sticking point' in cross-cultural communication (Beebe, Takahashi & Uliss-Weltz 1990) also because they are face-threatening acts since they essentially represent instances of rejection of the interlocutor's initiation of social interaction, be it an invitation, a request, an offer or anything else. Thus, the way a refusal is worded is extremely important since the possibility of offending the interlocutor is inherent in the act itself (Kwon 2004).

Failure to refuse appropriately can risk the interpersonal relations of the speakers, which is why refusals usually include various strategies to avoid offending one's interlocutor(s). However, once again, different languages and cultures will opt for different strategies to avoid offending the interlocutor. Kwon (2004), for example, has shown that Mandarin Chinese speakers are much less likely to express positive opinion (e.g.

I would like to ...) in refusing requests than American English speakers because they are concerned that if they express positive opinions, then they will be forced to comply. Similarly, while American English speakers often use softeners (e.g. *I'm afraid I can't, I really don't know*) and express gratitude in refusing invitations, offers, etc. speakers of Egyptian Arabic rarely do so. Also, American English speakers have been found to favour more specific reasons in their refusals, while Japanese speakers tend to use reasons that are not specific as to place, time, or parties (Beebe, Takahashi & Uliss-Weltz 1990). In addition to being inherently face-threatening acts to the interlocutor because they contradict his or her expectations, refusals are typically complex constructions, usually negotiated over several turns and very frequently involving a degree of indirectness to mitigate them. Indirect refusals have an even higher level of complexity because the speaker must choose or create a suitable structure in order to alleviate the inherent face-threatening effects of a direct refusal (Félix-Brasdefer 2009). The form and content of refusals also depends on the type of speech act that elicits them (request, offer, etc). If one adds to all this the societal variables that regularly have to be taken into account in communication (age of interlocutors, relations of social power and distance, gender, degree of imposition, etc.) it becomes clear that refusals require a high level of pragmatic competence, which even linguistically proficient L2/FL learners may not possess.

The first major cross-cultural pragmatic examination of refusal acts was undertaken by Beebe, Takahashi and Uliss-Weltz (1990) to show that pragmatic transfer occurs in the content, regularity and organization of semantic formulas. Nelson et al. (2002a) performed an investigation of Egyptian and US English refusals in the two languages separately and simultaneously but with no discussion of interlanguage transfer. In a similar study, Nelson et al. (2002b) challenged the results of previous studies which found that Jordanians used more indirect strategies than Americans. Their study indicated that both Egyptians and Americans used comparable strategies with a similar frequency, but these differences in findings may result from a difference in methodology (data collection via written discourse completion tasks versus interviews,

since the written form of Arabic is formal and differs significantly from the spoken variety). Kwon (2004) performed a comparative study of English and Korean refusals and found the same general strategies in the two languages but with different frequency of usage and wording. The Korean informants proved to be more hesitant during the speech act and used more apologies and provided more reasons for their refusal than their American peers and also paid much more attention to the interlocutor's status. All these differences present potential pitfalls for Korean EFL learners. Chang (2008) specifically examined refusal acts and their usage by native speakers of Mandarin speaking English as well as native speakers of Mandarin Chinese and of American English and concluded that Americans prefer a more explicit and direct style of discourse that is also assertive while the Chinese avoid the word *no* with great persistence and prefer a more unassertive, indirect and implicit style of communication.

The relevant literature of Serbian ESL/EFL learners' refusals is very scarce, as pointed out before and reduces to only three studies (Savić 2012, 2014, Đokić 2018), which explore the issues of politeness in Serbian advanced EFL learners' production and perception (university students majoring in English). To the best of the author's knowledge, there is yet no existing study dealing with the production of refusals of Serbian ESP learners, i.e. learners with a non-English major.

14.3. Research methodology

The research presented here was aimed at investigating the extent to which Serbian ESP learners' production of refusals resembles English native speakers' production. Specifically, it sought to establish which semantic formulas are used in Serbian ESP learners' production of the face-threatening speech act of refusal, with which frequency and in what order and how this compares to the production of refusals by native speakers of English. The research was also expected to establish how the speech act used for elicitation and the social status of the interlocutors influence the refusal strategy employed.

The participants in this experiment were 20 undergraduate students from the Department of Mathematics and Informatics (Faculty of Sciences, University of Novi Sad) whose L1 is Serbian and are between 20 and 22 years of age. None of them had spent extended stretches of time (over 3 months) in an English-speaking country. They were all intermediate level of proficiency in English (B1-B2 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages), based on the *Quick Placement Test* (OUP, 2001) administered prior to the research.

Given that no native speakers of English participated in this experiment, the research instrument was fully replicated from Kwon (2004), who used an open-ended modified version of the 12-item discourse completion test developed by Beebe, Takahashi and Uliss-Weltz (1990) to test the realization of refusals in twelve male and twenty-five female university students aged between 18 and 22. The test consisted of situations in which the respondents were required to refuse three requests, three invitations, three offers, and three suggestions (of which we only analyze refusals to invitations and requests in this chapter). To test the effects of the variable of social power each situation type included one refusal to a person of higher status, one to a person of equal status and one to a person of lower status. Thus, in the experiment, the following six situations were used:

Situation	Power relation (informant's perspective)
Refuse boss's invitation to party (4) ¹⁶	-
Refuse friend's invitation to dinner (10)	=
Refuse salesman's invitation to dinner (3)	+
Refuse boss's request to stay at work late (12)	-
Refuse classmate's request for notes (2)	=
Refuse worker's request for increase in pay (1)	+

Table 15. Distribution of the social power variable in the DCTs

¹⁶ The number in parentheses indicates the number of the DCT in the test (see Appendix E).

The respondents were allowed up to 30 minutes to complete the questionnaire. The test is given in Appendix E of the book.

14.4. Results and discussion

The data analysis proceeded in the following way: the semantic formulas were counted and then classified according to the taxonomy proposed by Beebe, Takahashi and Uliss-Weltz (1990) and presented above in Table 15. Next, the frequency of each semantic formula was calculated in each situation (by dividing the number of occurrences of the formula by the number of respondents) and finally, the results of the ESP learners were compared to the results of native speakers of American English (cf. Kwon 2004). A total of 115 responses were obtained in this experiment, with a total of 241 semantic formulas (2.09 per response, which is considerably lower than the average number of formulas used by American respondents, which is 4.00).

Regarding the order of semantic formulas in refusals, the ESP respondents typically started their refusal with an expression of regret, followed by a direct refusal and an excuse or reason for rejecting the interlocutor. Takahashi and Beebe (1987) point out that starting off with regret sounds a little abrupt to the American ear. Félix-Brasdefer (2008: 170) also found that among Americans (mostly participants from Minneapolis, Minnesota) a reason or explanation (often prefaced by partial agreements/positive opinion) is the preferred means of refusing in formal and informal situations. However, Kitao (1986) stresses that in British English, a refusal to a request is more likely to be expressed through an apology or an expression of regret followed by a reason or excuse. Thus, it might be the case that the ESP respondents who used an expression of regret before actually refusing the request or invitation were following the British pattern.¹⁷ Also, note that direct refusals are used quite often by Serbian ESP learners, which might

¹⁷ This assumption is supported by the fact that the leading publishing companies providing ESP/EFL teaching material in Serbia are mostly British, e.g. Oxford University Press, Pearson Education, Cambridge University Press, etc.

be a consequence of transfer from their L1, given that this type of semantic formulas is not featured in the production of native speakers of (American) English. The overall findings of the experiment are presented in the following table:¹⁸

	Serbian ESP learners						American English NSs					
	I-	I=	I+	R-	R=	R+	I-	I=	I+	R-	R=	R+
Direct refusals	47%	58%	40%	6%	47%	55%	24%	27%	32%	43%	30%	49%
Statement of regret	53%	74%	30%	56%	58%	65%	43%	35%	27%	54%	54%	46%
Excuse, reason, explanation	95%	100%	85%	100%	89%	55%	97%	97%	81%	-	-	-
Gratitude/appreciation	-	-	-	-	-	-	22%	30%	14%	-	-	-
Statement of positive opinion	-	5%	-	-	-	10%	22%	11%	14%	-	-	-
Wish	-	-	5%	17%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Statement of alternative	5%	5%	25%	17%	16%	-	-	11%	-	-	-	-
Statement of philosophy	-	-	-	-	-	5%	-	-	-	-	-	-
Statement of principle	-	-	5%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8%	-
Request for empathy	-	-	-	6%	5%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Verbal avoidance	-	5%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Statement of empathy	-	-	-	-	-	5%	-	-	-	5%	3%	11%
Pause filler	-	5%	-	-	-	-	8%	24%	3%	3%	-	8%

¹⁸ Elaboration of reason, address forms and statements of solidarity are also featured as semantic formulas in Kwon (2004) but we disregard them here since they were not originally introduced in Beebe, Takahashi and Uliss-Weltz (1990).

Letting the interloc. off the hook	-	-	-	-	-	5%	-	-	-	-	-	-
Postponement	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8%	3%	8%	-	3%
Criticize the request(er)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	14%	-

Table 16. Frequency of semantic formulas used in refusals by Serbian ESP learners and NSs of American English

The data in the above table only partly confirm the results of previous research, which has shown that the excuse/reason semantic formula was the most frequent formula in a refusal speech act (e.g. Chang 2008). Namely, in refusing an invitation, native speakers and the ESP learners who participated in this study provided excuses, reasons and explanations approximately with equal frequency regardless of the social power of the interlocutor (somewhat less frequently with people who are socially inferior, though, see the I+ columns). However, in refusing a request, not one of the native speakers used this semantic formula, while ESP learners systematically did so with almost equal frequency as in the invitation scenarios. What is also obvious from the data in Table 16 is that there are significant differences in the production of refusals by native speakers of English and the ESP learners who participated in this study. The most obvious difference concerns the significantly higher number of direct refusals produced by ESP learners in the invitation scenario (approximately twice as many with socially inferior or equal interlocutors). However, in the request scenarios the situation is significantly different: it seems that the ESP respondents were reluctant to directly refuse the request of a person who is socially superior (see the R- columns) and often only used an explanation of reason (e.g. *I was thinking to go home at the end of the day, I'm really tired; I'm exhausted; I was hoping to go home, my wife is waiting for me*),¹⁹ occasionally supported by a statement of regret (e.g. *I'm sorry but I have some important business after; My friends are*

¹⁹ The subjects' responses are given here in the exact form in which they occur in the tests.

waiting for me, we go to a party. I'm sorry; I'm sorry, but I already made plans with my family, etc). On the other hand, native speakers are least likely to utter a direct refusal when the interlocutor is equal in social power. Statements of regret (typically *I'm sorry*) occur in the ESP learners' responses somewhat more frequently than in native speakers' responses, but significantly more often in the invitation scenario with a socially equal interlocutor. Of the remaining semantic formulas in the ESP learners' responses, statements of alternative appear to occur almost regularly (though with a rather low frequency), e.g. *We can meet another time; Ask someone else; It's better to leave it for tomorrow,* etc. There are also a few examples of expressions of wish (particularly in the R- scenario), e.g. *I wish I could but...; I would like to but...*, while other formulas are few and far between. This sharply contrasts with the native speakers' production of refusals, which is characterized by a systematic use of expressions of gratitude and statements of positive opinion in the invitation scenarios. Pause fillers are another semantic formula found in the invitation scenarios (especially the I= situation), but not in refusing a request, where a rather insignificant number of respondents from the native speakers' group used statements of empathy instead. These, however, are hardly ever used by any of the ESP learners who participated in the experiment.

Comparing the production of the ESP respondents and the native speakers of English, we see that there are many similarities but also some striking differences, not only in refusing a request, but also with respect to the production of refusals to invitations. Generally speaking, the ESP learners who participated in the experiment do not seem to have attained a level of pragmatic competence that would equal their level of linguistic competence. Their production of refusals is characterized by excessive usage of direct refusal strategies and expressions of regret (especially when refusing an invitation) and also by providing an excuse, reason or explanation systematically, regardless of the speech act used to elicit a refusal or the social relations between the interlocutors. For native speakers of English, these two variables influence to a large extent the way a refusal will be worded, as evidenced by the fact that e.g. in refusing a request, excuses, reasons

and explanations are never provided. On the other hand, in refusing an invitation, native speakers of English occasionally express their gratitude, add a statement of positive opinion or use pause fillers or postponement to soften the refusal. These semantic formulas are not used by Serbian ESP learners. One final comment concerns statements of alternative. In the experiments, ESP learners used this formula in both types of scenarios. This might be the result of L1 transfer, given that native speakers of English only employed it in the I= situation. In any case, further research is required to characterize precisely the linguistic behaviour of native speakers of Serbian in the speech act of refusing before any sound conclusions can be drawn with respect to what may or may not count as transfer from L1.

14.5. Summary and limitations of the study

In this chapter we explored the speech act of refusals in the production of ESP learners whose native language is Serbian. Since speech acts exist crosslinguistically and crossculturally, but the way a particular speech act is executed can vary to a large extent across languages and cultures, the aim of this research was to establish the degree of pragmatic competence of the respondents by analyzing the extent to which their refusals resemble the refusals produced by native speakers of English.

An experiment was conducted using a questionnaire with DCTs in which we manipulated the types of speech acts used for elicitation (requests and invitations) and the relation of social power between the interlocutors. The general conclusion that can be drawn from the research is that Serbian ESP learners use considerably more direct refusal strategies than native speakers of English and do not employ expressions of gratitude/appreciation or statements of positive opinion. This is an important finding, given that due to this, native speakers of English may find Serbian ESP learners rude or impolite. On the other hand, the respondents' production is also characterized by a consistent use of excuses, reasons and explanations – while such

behaviour is also typical of native speakers of English, this only extends to refusing an invitation but by no means to refusing a request. And while the ESP learners' production is probably the result of analogy in the latter respect, their systematic providing an alternative in refusals is more likely to be the effect of L1 transfer.

The limitations of the present study are numerous. Firstly, the respondents in the study were of the same age and major, therefore the findings may not be generalizable to other age groups or students of other majors (e.g. History, Arts or Agriculture). A larger number of respondents may also have given different results, which could be important for those semantic formulas which did not occur frequently in the existing data. The research instrument (DCT) also has its drawbacks, since some situations may put the informants into roles with which they are unfamiliar and thus create unnatural utterances, as well as because the space provided on the sheets may constrain the length of the informant's response. Lastly, there is no existing study of refusals in Serbian which could be used to determine the extent to which the respondents in this study transferred their L1 pragmatic knowledge to English.

In spite of all the limitations pointed out, we feel that the present study contributes to the existing literature of interlanguage pragmatics by discovering the potential pitfalls of Serbian ESP (and EFL) learners' production of refusals in English. The pedagogical implications of the study are thus clear: pragmatic competence has to be developed – interlanguage pragmatics can and has to be taught if FL learners are to attain a level of pragmatic competence closely corresponding to their level of linguistic competence. This is equally important both for EFL learners and ESP learners, therefore the syllabus for a modern, use-centred ESP course should be enriched with more authentic materials, which would aid the development of the learners' communicative competence.

Task 1. Study the following short exchanges and identify the refusal sequences and strategies in B's answers.²⁰

(a) (A is B's boss)

A: *I was wondering if you might be able to stay a bit late this evening, say, until about 9:00 pm or so.*

B: *Uh, I'd really like to but I can't, I'm sorry, I have plans, I really can't stay.*

(b) (A is a fellow student of B but they do not know each other well)

A: *Could you give me a lift home? We both live in the same part of the city...*

B: *I'm sorry, but I am not going straight home. There are quite a few things I need to do before heading home! Perhaps another day.*

(c) (A is a student, B is a teaching assistant, who has scheduled a test for next Friday)

A: *Can I take the test one day earlier so that I can go on holiday with my family? We have already bought tickets for next Friday...*

B: *Sorry, it's not possible, as all students must sit the exam on the scheduled date. I can't make exceptions for you as then I would have to do so for everyone.*

(d) (A is a student, currently in a café, in search of participants willing to fill out a questionnaire for her. B is a business woman on a 30-minute lunch break)

A: *Excuse me, would you mind filling out a 30-minute questionnaire – I need this as part of a work project.*

B: *In your dreams! I'm a busy person.*

Task 2. Study the questionnaire in Appendix E. Single out the DCTs in which the interlocutor is asked to refuse an offer or a suggestion. Discuss the power relations holding between the interlocutors.

Task 3. Complete the DCTs you singled out in the previous exercise and if possible, discuss your answers in class.

²⁰ This exercise is partly adapted from Martínez-Flor and Usó-Juan (2011).

Task 4. Choose one of the situation types in the questionnaire and conduct your own small-scale research with at least 10 L2/FL learners of English, making sure that they are at the same level of linguistic proficiency in English.

Task 5. In order to explore the speech act of refusing in your L1, translate the DCTs in Appendix E into your L1. Check with native speakers whether the situations described in the DCTs are natural and make any necessary changes. Next, select a group of at least 10 NSs (making sure the group is balanced in terms of age and educational background) and conduct the research described above. Analyze your research participants' responses in the way presented above in Section 14.5. What do your results reveal about the speech act of refusing in your L1?

Suggestions for further reading

Refusals are analyzed from a cross-cultural perspective in Beebe, Takahashi and Uliss-Weltz (1990), Nelson (2002a, 2002b), Kwon (2004), Chang (2008) and Félix-Brasdefer (2008), among others. The difference in the refusal strategies employed by native and non-native speakers of English is explored in Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1991), Morrow (1996), Gass and Houck (1999), Félix-Brasdefer (2004, 2009), Allami and Naeimi (2011), Martínez-Flor and Usó-Juan (2011) and Ren (2012).

Chapter 15. Request modification

In which situations do you make requests? Are requests face-threatening acts? If so, which requests have the greatest face-threat? What does the wording of a request depend on?

Think about requests in your L1. What do they consist of?

Request production and perception has been a very fruitful area of interlanguage pragmatic research in the past three decades. As Savić (2013a) points out, Faerch and Kasper (1989) explored internal and external modification in request realizations of Danish learners of English and German, Kim (1995) studied levels of directness and supportive moves in advanced Korean learners' production of requests, Fukushima (2003) conducted research on request and request response behaviour in British English and Japanese, Economidou-Kogetsidis (2009a, 2010) investigated the use of downgraders and external supportive moves in requests made by Greek learners of English and compared the requestive behaviour of advanced Greek EFL learners with that of British native speakers'. This chapter, however, will not make such comparisons, as the only research question it aims to address is the following: what types of internal and external modificational devices are used most frequently by intermediate-level ESP students who are native speakers of Serbian?

The results of this study can be compared with the production of various other populations, e.g. advanced ESP students, EFL students who are native speakers of Serbian (for advanced students see Savić 2013a and Jovanović 2018), ESP students who are native speakers of other languages, as well as with the production of native speakers of English (both British and American, see Creese 1991).

The chapter (originally published as Halupka-Rešetar 2014a) is organized in the following way: Section 15.1 introduces the speech act of requests. Section 15.2 presents the typology of request modifications

that will be adopted in this research. Section 15.3 presents the research methodology employed, including the participants, the data collection instruments and the procedures, while Section 15.4 brings the results and findings of the research and is followed by 15.5, which sums up the study, gives pedagogical implications and suggests directions for future research.

15.1. The speech act of request

Requests are one of the most important speech acts: they occur very frequently in everyday situations, the desired aim of the request utterance can involve a very diverse number of actions or things and also a variety of interlocutors (ranging from equal status individuals, e.g. friends or flatmates to higher status individuals, e.g. landlady or professor), there may be significant cross-cultural differences in the linguistic forms used for formulating requests, therefore L2 learners will need to correctly assess the contextual conditions of the situation and then choose the appropriate linguistic forms to express their request (Schauer 2009: 25) as inappropriate use of the request act by non-native learners of language can serve to make them look rude or impolite and even cause the communication to break down. An interesting conclusion that various researchers have reached is that some native speakers consider pragmatic errors to be more serious than phonological or syntactic errors (Thomas 1983). As Blum-Kulka (1991) points out, requesting style is a good index of a cultural way of speaking. However, in order to appropriately make requests and also perceive the illocutionary force of an utterance as a request, learners have to acquire sociopragmatic knowledge such as the relative degree of imposition of a speech act in the target language/culture, as well as pragmalinguistic knowledge such as the degree of politeness of utterances in the target language in order to avoid being considered rude by native speakers.

Given that requests are face-threatening for the hearer, because they create pressure on the hearer to either perform or not perform an act

and thus threaten his/her self-esteem (Brown & Levinson 1978), and that they involve high social stakes for both interlocutors, requests call for redressive action and require mitigation to compensate for this impositive effect on the hearer (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989). The speaker can minimize the imposition by preferring an indirect strategy to a direct one, i.e. by activating choice on the scale of indirectness. In addition to this, even within a given strategy, there is a variety of verbal means available with which to manipulate the degree of imposition involved (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain 1984).

Within the CCSARP (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain 1984), requests are defined as consisting of three parts: (a) the alerter or address term, (b) the head act, and (c) the adjuncts to the head act (also known as supportive moves). The head act is the core of the speech act sequence and its only obligatory part. Within the head act, three different strategies have been observed: direct (or impositive), conventionally indirect, and nonconventionally indirect (for a more detailed account of this continuum see Blum-Kulka et al. 1989, Spencer-Oatey 2008). Alerters are opening elements and include items like attention getters (e.g. *Pardon me...*) and terms of address (e.g. *Mrs. Smith*), whereas supportive moves are modifications that precede or follow the head act and affect the context in which the actual act is embedded as they serve the purpose of either mitigating or aggravating the force of the request.

15.2. The typology of request modifications

Among the verbal means which can be used to modify requests, Faerch and Kasper (1989) distinguish between internal and external modifications. The former type of modification is achieved through devices within the same head act, while the latter type is localized not within the head act but within its immediate context. In neither case does the modification affect the level of directness of the act, nor does it alter its propositional content. The CCSARP's coding manual contains a classification scheme for internal and external request

modification based on earlier work by the researchers involved in the project (Kasper 1981, as cited in Blum-Kulka & Olshtain 1984, House & Kasper 1981, Blum-Kulka & Olshtain 1984, Blum-Kulka 1987) and was also partly influenced by literature on speech acts and politeness (e.g. Lakoff 1973, Brown & Levinson 1978). While the present study rests on a slightly modified version of this typology, which is based on grammatical and syntactic considerations (see also House & Kasper 1981, Trosborg 1995, Achiba 2003 among others) note that there are other typologies, too, notably the functional typology of Alcón-Soler, Safont Jordà and Martínez-Flor (2005), which takes into account interactional and contextual factors and is thus more pragmatics-based.

The request data were analyzed according to the taxonomy in Woodfield and Economidou-Kogetsidis (2010), which incorporated categories from the CCSARP (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989) and Sifianou (1999) but without the four additional categories they introduce, as the linguistic proficiency of the participants in the research did not call for the introduction of these categories.

External modifications (also called supportive moves) are external to the head act. They are additional statements, whose function is merely to support the request proper, to set the context for it, i.e. to indirectly modify its illocutionary force, either by mitigating it or by aggravating it. Table 17 below gives the final taxonomy of external modifications used in this research (taken from Woodfield 2012, following Blum-Kulka et al. 1989 and Sifianou 1999):

²¹ Italics are used only for the devices in question (which sometimes represent only part of the utterance).

Name	Definition	Devices
Grounder	A clause which can either precede or follow a request and allows the speaker to give reasons, explanations or justifications for his or her request.	I would like an assignment extension <i>because I could not deal with the typing time</i> ²¹
Disarmer	A phrase with which “a speaker tries to remove any potential objections the hearer might raise upon being confronted with the request” (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989: 287)	<i>I know that this assignment is important but could you ...?</i>
Preparator	The speaker prepares the hearer for the ensuing request.	<i>I really need a favour...</i>
Getting a precommitment	The speaker checks on a potential refusal before performing the request by trying to get the hearer to commit.	<i>Could you do me a favour?</i>
Promise	The speaker makes a promise to be fulfilled upon completion of the requested act.	Could you give me an extension? <i>I promise I'll have it ready by tomorrow.</i>
Imposition minimizer	“The speaker tries to reduce the imposition placed on the hearer by this request.” (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989: 288)	I would like to ask for an extension. <i>Just for a few days.</i>
Apology	The speaker apologises for posing the request and/or for the imposition incurred.	<i>I'm very sorry but I need an extension on this project.</i>
Discourse orientation move	Opening discourse moves which serve an orientation function but do not necessarily mitigate or aggravate the request in any way.	<i>You know the seminar paper I'm supposed to be giving on the 29th...</i>

Table 17. The taxonomy of external modifications used in the research

Internal modifications, on the other hand, refer to those linguistic elements which, according to Sifianou (1999: 157-158) occur within the same head act. They are linguistic or syntactic devices that are used by speakers to modulate the illocutionary force of their request and can be further subcategorized as *downgraders* (i.e. modifiers that decrease the illocutionary force of a request) and *upgraders* (i.e. modifiers that increase the illocutionary force of a request [Schauer, 2009: 167]). In the CCSARP coding manual (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989) downgraders fall

into two classes: lexical/phrasal and syntactic downgraders. The final taxonomy of internal modifications used in this research is presented in Tables 18 and 19 below:

Name	Definition	Devices
Marker <i>please</i>	“An optional element added to a request to bid for co-operative behavior” (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989: 283)	<i>Please</i>
Consultative devices	“expressions by means of which the speaker seeks to involve the hearer directly bidding for co-operation” (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989: 283)	<i>would you mind; do you think; would it be all right if...; is it/would it be possible; do you think I could...; is it all right</i>
Downtoners	“modifiers which are used by the speaker in order to modulate the impact his or her request is likely to have on the hearer” (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989: 284)	<i>possibly; perhaps; just, rather; maybe</i>
Understaters/ Hedges	“adverbial modifiers by means of which the speaker underrepresents the state of affairs denoted in the proposition” (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989: 283)	<i>a bit, a little; sort of; kind of</i>
Subjectivizers	“elements in which the speaker explicitly expresses his or her subjective opinion vis-à-vis the state of affair referred to in the proposition, thus lowering the assertive force of the request” (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989: 284)	<i>I’m afraid; I wonder; I think/suppose</i>
Cajolers	“conventionalized, addressee-oriented modifiers whose function is to make things clearer to the addressee and invite him/her to metaphorically participate in the speech act” (Sifianou 1992: 180)	<i>you know; you see</i>
Appealers	Addressee-oriented elements occurring in a syntactically final position. They may signal turn availability and “are used by the speaker whenever he or she wishes to appeal to his or her hearer’s benevolent understanding” (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989: 285)	<i>Clean the table, dear, will you?... ok/right?</i>

Table 18. Lexical downgraders

Name	Illustration
Conditional structures	<i>Could you give me an extension...</i>
Conditional clause	<i>...if it's possible to have an extension...</i>
Tense	Is it all right if I <i>asked</i> for an extension...
Aspect	I <i>was wondering</i> if it's possible to have an extension for the assignment.
Interrogative	<i>Would you mind</i> doing the cooking tonight?
Negation of preparatory condition	I <i>don't</i> suppose there is any chance of an extension?

Table 19. Syntactic downgraders

Unlike downgraders, upgraders may only be lexical and may include any of the items listed in Table 20, individually or in combination:

Name	Illustration
Intensifiers	You <i>really</i> must open the window.
Commitment indicators	<i>I'm sure/certain</i> you won't mind giving me a lift.
Expletives	You still haven't cleaned up that <i>bloody</i> mess!
Time intensifiers	You'd better tidy your room <i>right now</i> !
Lexical uptoners	Clean up that <i>mess</i> !

Table 20. Lexical upgraders

They may also include some less frequently used devices, such as determination markers, repetition of request, orthographic or suprasegmental emphasis, emphatic addition and pejorative determiners.

Having listed and illustrated the type of elements whose occurrence is explored in ESP students' request performance, we next turn to the methodology employed in the current study.

15.3. Research methodology

Since the aim of the present chapter is to contribute to attaining a clearer picture of ESP students' request performance by examining the modifications they use, the research participants totalled 37 undergraduate students from the Department of Mathematics and Informatics at the Faculty of Sciences, University of Novi Sad, Serbia. All of the participants were native speakers of Serbian, aged 20-22, whose level of proficiency in English was evaluated as intermediate (B1-B2 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages), based on the *Quick Placement Test* (OUP, 2001) administered prior to the research.²²

ESP students' responses were elicited using the form of an open-ended written discourse completion test (WDCT). The questionnaire used in this research (see Appendix F) involved six situations in which the sociopragmatic variables of social power and degree of imposition were intertwined. The first variable concerns the power of the requester over the requestee (more power, equal power or less power), while degree of imposition refers to the importance or degree of difficulty in the situation (asking for a small favour or a large one). As for the third social factor that is commonly taken to affect the politeness of an utterance, social distance, which refers to the degree of familiarity between the interlocutors, in all the situations in the questionnaire, the interlocutors knew each other.

An example of a task is given below:

You are terribly late for class. On the way to the university, you see your classmate, Andy, who, it turns out, is also late for the same class as you. How do you ask for a ride?

You: _____

²² The author wishes to express her gratitude to dr Ljiljana Knežević for her help in collecting the data.

Research participants were asked to complete the questionnaire in order to find out their interlanguage pragmatic competence in making requests in English. The responses collected were then classified in line with the taxonomies of modifications listed in the previous section (15.2). Then, the total frequency and percentage of both external and internal modifications used by participants were calculated. In the next section, we present the results along with a description and comparison of the differences in the linguistic forms used first as external modification, and following this as internal modification in each discourse situation.

15.4. Results and discussion

Most studies focusing on FL learners' request production have concentrated on advanced learners rather than lower level learners (Economidou-Kogetsidis 2009a). And while the production of the latter population is more easily comparable to the production of native speakers, this paper aims to make a contribution to the still fairly understudied area of intermediate level FL learners' request performance. We follow Economidou-Kogetsidis (2009a) in assuming with Bardovi-Harlig (1999:677) that "although grammatical competence may not be a sufficient condition for pragmatic development, it may be a necessary condition" and given that the participants in this research had limited linguistic ability, we were interested in how this would affect their pragmatic performance, specifically the range and frequency of usage of internal and external request modification.

In order to calculate the type and frequency of usage of modification strategies in Serbian ESP students' request performance, the responses were first analyzed and classified in a table according to strategy (rows), degree of imposition (colour) and social power (columns). The strategies which could not be found in any of the responses have been left out. However, before presenting the results of the analysis it is important to mention that although the majority of the participants produced the targeted speech act in the majority of cases (and they

most frequently did so using a conventionally indirect speech act), this was not always the case. Namely, among the Low degree of imposition scenarios, in the Inferior participant case one participant used a hedged performative (*I would like to ask you...*), two respondents did not understand the task, while two further participants opted for a mood derivable direct request (*Tell Dennis...*). In the Equal participants scenario ten participants produced the wrong speech act (nine of them agreed with the interlocutor instead of making a request and one offered to help). Lastly, in the Superior Participant situation as many as fifteen mood derivable direct requests occurred in the data (*Turn down the music*) followed by *please* in only four of these cases. Among the High degree of imposition scenarios, in the Inferior participant case two participants stated they would lie to their superior (thus, they did not produce the targeted speech act), one participant left a blank line and one other student opted for an explicit performative (*I'm asking you...*). Similarly, one student failed to respond in the Equal participants situation, one apologized instead of making a request and there was also one instance of a mood derivable direct request with *please*. In the Superior participant situation there were four mood derivable direct requests (with *please*) and three participants did not respond to this situation.

15.4.1. External modifications in ESP learners' request performance

As Table 21 below suggests, the participants in this research showed very limited interlanguage pragmatic competence not only with respect to the range/types of external modification devices used but also with respect to the frequency of these in the participants' responses.

	Low degree of imposition			High degree of imposition			TOTAL
	Inferior participant	Equal participants	Superior participant	Inferior participant	Equal participants	Superior participant	
Grounder	1	3	13	29	14	2	62
Preparator	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Getting a precommitment	-	-	-	-	1	1	2
Promise of reward	-	-	-	2	2	-	4
Imposition minimizer	-	2	-	-	-	-	2
Apology	-	-	1	2	-	-	3
EXTERNAL MODIFICATIONS TOTAL	1	5	14	34	17	3	74

Table 21. Types and frequency of external modifications in ESP learners' request performance

Not one example of a disarmer was found in any of the 6 situations in any of the 37 participants' responses. Only one instance of a preparator was found in the 222 responses (*I have an important question*), two examples each of getting a precommitment (*Can you do me a favour?*) and of imposition minimizers (*If you're (already) going to the library,...*), only three apologies (*I'm sorry*), four promises of a reward (*I'll make it up one day soon; We can go out for coffee after class, my treat; I will work (sic!) those hours tomorrow; I'll treat you at the Pub*) but a total of 62 grounders, usually following the request (*My friend is getting married today; I'm late for class; I don't have time right now; I have a terrible headache, etc*). Interestingly enough, two participants even decided to use a threat, an example of an aggravating supportive move, which was not expected at all – in both cases this occurred in the Low degree of imposition/Superior participant scenario.

Looking at the difference in the use of external modifiers relative to the social power variable, the current research provides no

conclusive evidence for assuming that an inferior participant will use more mitigating supportive moves: as can be seen in Table 21, the distribution of the total number of external modifications in the first three columns is the mirror image of the figures in the next three columns, thus there is no reason to believe that this variable in itself should affect the use of supportive moves. Degree of imposition, on the other hand, does seem to have an effect on the employment of mitigating supportive moves in the request production of intermediate ESP students: a total of 54 such moves in the three situations which involved a high degree of imposition is a significant increase compared to the 20 examples of external modifications in the situations which implied a lower degree of imposition. Still, while these devices are expected to occur most frequently in the High degree of imposition/Inferior participant scenario, it remains unclear why in the Low degree of imposition/Inferior participant scenario only one instance of this device was found.

Thus, while several studies conducted within the CCSARP framework have found that non-native speakers overuse external modifications in making requests, this is often due to cultural differences between the speakers' L1 and the target language (e.g. Eastern culture vs. British culture). However, numerous studies have also supplied evidence that intermediate (and advanced) learners modify their requests less frequently than native speakers (e.g. House & Kasper 1987, Trosborg 1995, Economidou-Kogetsidis 2008 and 2009b, to name but a few). In other words, given that at lower levels of proficiency learners (are required to) focus almost exclusively on grammatical competence, the low frequency and poor variation found in the supportive moves collected in this research is not entirely surprising.

15.4.2. Internal modifications in ESP learners' request performance

An overwhelming majority of the participants' responses were conventionally indirect requests involving the *Could you/Would you/*

Can I type of structure, which is clearly the result of instruction, as these are the common forms for expressing requests taught at lower levels of proficiency (Economidou-Kogetsidis 2009a). The politeness marker *please* is also introduced at a very early stage in language learning, in fact it is one of the first things any learner of English is taught. Thus, similarly to external modifications, apart from the two devices mentioned, internal modifications also varied little in the request production of intermediate ESP learners.

As Table 22 below shows, among the lexical/phrasal downgraders, *please* was used most often, in a total of 78 instances (out of the over 200 requests made). There were 8 instances of an understater (3 times *a bit*, 4 instances of *a little bit* and one of *a little*) and only one example of a consultative device being made use of (*Any chance I could ...*, though used inappropriately in making a request to one's superior at work). Among the syntactic downgraders, the conditional structure was employed in the overwhelming majority of cases (174 times), other strategies occurred in the participants' responses extremely rarely. Only five examples of the conditional clause were found (*I would be very grateful if you...; If you are going to the library... (2 instances); I would appreciate it ... (2 instances)*) and only two interrogative sentences (both *Will you ...?*).

		Low degree of imposition			High degree of imposition			TOTAL
		Inferior participant	Equal participants	Superior participant	Inferior participant	Equal participants	Superior participant	
Downgraders								
Lexical	Please	15	10	18	6	12	17	78
	Understater	1	-	7	-	-	-	8
	Consultative device	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Syntactic	Conditional clause	-	2	-	2	1	-	5
	Conditional structure	34	26	20	31	34	29	174
	Interrogative	-	1	-	-	-	1	2
DOWNGRADERS TOTAL		50	39	45	40	47	47	268
Upgraders								
Intensifier		-	1	1	1	-	-	3
Time intensifier		-	-	1	-	-	-	1
UPGRADERS TOTAL		-	1	2	1	-	-	4
INTERNAL MODIFICATIONS TOTAL		50	40	47	41	47	47	272

Table 22. Types and frequency of internal modifications in ESP learners' request performance

The use of upgraders was even more limited. Of the five types of upgraders commonly used by native speakers the participants in this research used only intensifiers (*really* in all three cases) and only one of the participants used just one instance of a time intensifier (*right now*).

Examining the participants' use of internal modifiers relative to the social power variable, the current research again provides no conclusive evidence for assuming that an inferior participant will use more internal modifications, either downgraders (lexical or syntactic) or upgraders. The distribution of the politeness marker *please* and of the conditional

construction show no significant differences with respect to the social power variable and all the other examples of internal modifications are used too rarely to provide reliable data for valid conclusions. One exception might be the use of understaters, although the occurrence of *a bit/a little/a little bit* in the participants' responses seems to be motivated by the age of the addressee (an imagined niece) rather than any other factor.

In terms of the degree of imposition, the use of *please* is fairly balanced in the six discourse situations, except for the High degree of imposition/Inferior participant scenario, where fewer instances of this politeness marker are found. The use of the conditional structure does not differ significantly between the two sets of discourse situations, however in the Lower degree of imposition/Superior participant scenario fifteen participants used a mood derivable direct request (of which only four were accompanied by *please*).

All the results obtained in this research suggest that very scant attention is paid to developing the communicative competence of ESP learners. And while Alcón-Soler (2005) points out that some features of the EFL context hinder pragmatic learning, such as the narrow range of speech acts and realization strategies, typical interaction patterns which restrict pragmatic input, large classes, limited contact hours and little opportunity for intercultural communication, the ESP context seems to be even more constrained by these factors. The results are obvious: ESP learners may ultimately attain a fair degree of linguistic competence (especially in terms of the vocabulary pertaining to their field of study) but with little awareness of how to use language appropriately in various situations. In order to improve this situation, ESP and EFL learners must receive explicit pragmatic instruction, some guidelines for which are suggested in the next section.

15.5. Pedagogical implications and directions of future research

The results of the analysis of the use of request modifications in the pragmatic production of ESP learners reveal that while most participants did use a conventionally indirect request strategy in most cases, their pragmatic competence in using request modifications, both external and internal, is significantly below their linguistic competence. Namely, supportive moves reduce to the occasional use of a grounder, almost as a rule in the High degree of Imposition/Inferior participant scenario, only sometimes in the High degree of imposition/Equal participants and the Low degree of imposition/Superior participant scenarios and hardly ever in the remaining three situations. The occurrence of all other supporting devices in the participants' responses can be attributed to chance.

The only strategies that the participants systematically used for request internal modification, regardless of the degree of imposition, were the lexical downgrader *please* and among the syntactic downgraders, the conditional structure. Other downgraders, but also upgraders were few and far between in the data. The results of the research presented here point to the conclusion that the request performance of intermediate ESP learners is characterized by a significant underuse of modifications, both external and internal. The strategies occurring in the participants' responses are clearly the result of instruction. However, this is not to suggest in any way that no sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic instruction is required. On the contrary, the pedagogical implications of the present study are obvious: the amount and type of materials contained in most syllabi for B1/B2 level EFL/ESP learners need to be supplemented with explicit instruction regarding the pragmatics of English (specifically, speech act behaviour and realization, with special focus on the differences between L1 and L2). This may be achieved by using authentic audiovisual input (video, films and TV) for various tasks, e.g. discussing, interpreting, analyzing the input (and comparing it to the students' L1), role play, various discourse completion tasks (DCT), etc. (cf. Bardovi-Harlig & Mahan-Taylor 2003).

Task 1. In what contexts do you think the following requests may occur? Who are the interlocutors and what is the relationship holding between them?

- (a) *It'd be really great if you could move up one.*
- (b) *I'm aware that the presentation is 30% of my final grade but would it be ok if I gave mine next week?*
- (c) *Get us a Coke, mate.*
- (d) *If you could just hold on to that for a moment.*
- (e) *I was wondering if I could have a deadline extension? Just a few days really.*
- (f) *Could you just pop that up there for me?*
- (g) *Move a bit, will you?*
- (h) *Will you be able to perhaps drive me?*
- (i) *Clean up this mess, it's disgusting.*

Task 2. Discuss how the requests above would sound if the relationship between the interlocutors were different.

Task 3. Look at the requests in Task 1 above and identify the modifications they contain.

Task 4. Study the DCTs in the questionnaire in Appendix F. Conduct your own small-scale research with at least 10 L2/FL learners of English, making sure that they are at the same level of linguistic proficiency. Do the request modifications in your corpus resemble the ones reported on in this chapter?

Task 5. In order to explore the speech act of requests in your L1, translate the DCTs in Appendix F into your L1. Check with native speakers whether the situations described in the DCTs are natural and make any necessary changes. Next, select a group of at least 10 NSs (making sure the group is balanced in terms of age and educational background) and conduct the research described above. Analyze your research participants' request sequences. What do your results reveal about the speech act of request in your L1?

Suggestions for further reading

Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984), Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) and Blum-Kulka (1991), Kim (1995), Woodfield (2006, 2012), Economidou-Kogetsidis (2011) offer comprehensive analyzes of the speech act of requests, with classifications of requests, also to be found in Spencer-Oatey (2008). Creese (1991) and Fukushima (2001) explore requests from a cross-cultural perspective. Request modifications are dealt with by Faerch and Kasper (1989), Kim (1995), Economidou-Kogetsidis (2009a, 2009b, 2010) and Savić (2013a, 2014), among others, relying on the typologies of modifications put forward in Kasper (1981), House and Kasper (1981, 1987), Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984), Trosborg (1995), Sifianou (1999), Achiba (2003), Alcón-Soler, Safont Jordà and Martínez-Flor (2005), Woodfield and Economidou-Kogetsidis (2010) and Woodfield (2012).

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What does Carrie probably mean?

- a. She does not want to listen to Shrek's story.
- b. She thinks Jerry can play with Shrek.
- c. She asks Jerry to help her fix dinner.
- d. She likes Jerry to tell her more about Shrek.

3. Linda and Al are having lunch at the campus cafeteria.

Linda: The Beetles are coming this Saturday.

Al: I have two term papers due next Monday.

What does Al mean?

- a. He thinks Linda will help him write his term papers.
- b. He has no idea about who the Beetles are.
- c. He wants to discuss the Beetles in his term papers.
- d. He is unable to go the Beetles show with Linda.

4. Frank wants to know what time it is, but he doesn't have a watch.

Frank: What time is it, Helen?

Helen: The postman has been here.

What does Helen probably mean?

- a. She is telling him approximately what time it is by telling him that the postman has already been there.
- b. By changing the subject, Helen is telling Frank that she doesn't know what time it is.
- c. She thinks that Frank should stop what he is doing and read his mail.
- d. Frank will not be able to interpret any message from what Helen says, since she did not answer his question.

5. Jack is talking to his housemate Sarah about another housemate, Frank.

Jack: Do you know where Frank is, Sarah?

Sarah: Well, I heard music from his room earlier.

What does Sarah probably mean?

- a. Frank forgot to turn the music off.

- b. Frank's loud music bothers Sarah.
- c. Frank is probably in his room.
- d. Sarah doesn't know where Frank is.

6. John and Tanya are professors at a college. They are talking about a student, Mark.

John: How did you like Mark's term paper?

Tanya: Well, I thought it was well typed.

How did Tanya like Mark's term paper?

- a. She liked it; she thought it was good.
- b. She thought it was important that the paper was well typed.
- c. She really hadn't read it well enough to know.
- d. She did not like it.

7. Toby and Ally are trying the new buffet restaurant in town. Toby is eating something but Ally can't decide what to have next.

Ally: How do you like what you're having?

Toby: Well, let's just say it's colorful.

What does Toby probably mean?

- a. He thinks it is important for food to look appetizing.
- b. He thinks food should not contain artificial colors.
- c. He wants Ally to try something colorful.
- d. He does not like his food much.

8. Maria and Frank are working on a class project together but they won't be able to finish it by the deadline.

Maria: Do you think Dr. Gibson is going to lower our grade if we hand it in late?

Frank: Do fish swim?

What does Frank probably mean?

- a. He thinks they should change the topic of their project.
- b. He thinks they will get a lower grade.
- c. He thinks their grade will not be affected.
- d. He did not understand Maria's question.

9. Jenny and her housemate Darren go to college in Southern California. They are talking one morning before going to class.

Jenny: Darren, is it cold out this morning?

Darren: Jenny, it's August.

What does Darren probably mean?

- a. It's surprisingly cold for August.
- b. It's so warm that it feels like August.
- c. It's warm like usual in August.
- d. It's hard to predict the temperature in August.

10. Max and Julie are jogging together.

Max: Can we slow down a bit? I'm all out of breath.

Julie: I'm sure glad I don't smoke.

What does Julie probably mean?

- a. She doesn't want to slow down.
- b. She doesn't like the way Max's breath smells.
- c. Max is out of breath because he is a smoker.
- d. Max would be even slower if he smoked.

11. At a recent party, there was a lot of singing and piano playing. At one point, Matt played the piano while Brian sang. Jill was not at the party, but her friend Linda was.

Jill: What did Brian sing?

Linda: I'm not sure, but Matt was playing "Yesterday".

What does Linda probably mean?

- a. She was only interested in Matt and didn't listen to Brian.
- b. Brian sang very badly.
- c. Brian and Matt were not doing the same song.
- d. The song that Brian sang was "Yesterday".

12. During a coffee break, Sue is talking to her co-worker Brian about their supervisor, Mrs. Jenkins.

Sue: I do think Mrs. Jenkins is an old windbag, don't you?

Brian: Huh, lovely weather for March, isn't it?

What does Brian probably mean?

- a. He thinks weather in this season is nice.
- b. He thinks it is not good for Mrs. Jenkins to take a walk outside in a windy day.
- c. He does not want to talk about Mrs. Jenkins.
- d. He knows Mrs. Jenkins promised to give Sue a nice raise in March.

13. Mike is trying to find an apartment in New York City. He just looked at a place and is telling his friend Jane about it.

Jane: So, is the rent high?

Mike: Is the Pope Catholic?

What does Mike probably mean?

- a. He doesn't want to talk about the rent.
- b. The rent is high.
- c. The apartment is owned by the church.
- d. The rent isn't very high.

14. After Jill has withdrawn money from an automated teller machine, her friend Mike approaches her.

Mike: Jill, I need some cash.

Jill: Your credit card also works on this machine.

What does Jill probably mean?

- a. She suggests Mike to use his bank card to withdraw some money.
- b. She thinks Mike can buy what he wants using a credit card.
- c. She does not plan to lend money to Mike.
- d. The automated teller machine offers an on-line shopping service.

15. Larry and Mary are talking about a test they recently took.

Mary: Do you think you got an "A" on the test?

Larry: Do chickens have lips?

What does Larry mean?

- a. He doesn't want to talk about the subject.
- b. His answer to Mary's question is "no".

- c. He is not sure what grade he could get on the test.
- d. He is curious whether chickens have lips.

16. Lee has spent a lot of money on a new sweater and he asks his friend, Sam, about it.

Lee: How do you like my new sweater?

Sam: It's an interesting color.

What does Sam mean?

- a. He doesn't like the sweater.
- b. He is interested in the color of the sweater.
- c. He thinks it's boring to discuss the sweater.
- d. He thinks Lee is color-blind.

17. Two friends, Maria and Tony, are talking about what happened the night before. They had dinner with Sean, a friend of theirs, in a little town just outside Philadelphia. Then, after dinner, Sean left and got into trouble. Now, this morning, Maria and Tony are trying to figure out what Sean did after he left them.

Maria: Hey, I hear Sean went to Philadelphia and stole a car after he left us last night.

Tony: Not exactly. He stole a car and went to Philadelphia.

Maria: Are you sure? That's not the way I heard it.

What actually happened is that Sean stole the car in Philadelphia. In that case, which of the two friends has the right story—Maria or Tony?

- a. Maria.
- b. Tony.
- c. Both are right. Since they are both saying essentially the same thing, they really have nothing to argue about.
- d. Neither of them has the story right.

18. Pat is in a store, looking around, confused.

Clerk: May I help you?

Pat: _____.

Clerk: It's over there by the back entrance – on your right...

What does Pat probably say?

- a. Yes, please. I'd like to buy some toothpaste.
- b. Hi. Do you have size C flashlight batteries?
- c. Hello. I am just calling to ask if you have Marlboros.
- d. I have had a serious headache for two days.

19. Hilda is babysitting her two nephews, Tommy and Frankie at home. Her friend, Peter, calls her up and makes a suggestion.

Peter: Let's get the kids something.

Hilda: Okay, but I veto I-C-E C-R-E-A-M.

What does Hilda mean?

- a. She teaches the two boys to spell out ice cream.
- b. She would rather give the kids a surprise.
- c. She would rather not have ice cream mentioned directly in the presence of the children.
- d. She gives the boys a guessing game. If they win, they can have ice cream as an award.

20. Hilda is babysitting her two nephews, Tommy and Frankie at home. The two boys' father, John, picks up the kids in the evening.

John: What did Tommy and Frankie do today?

Hilda: Boys are boys.

What does Hilda probably mean?

- a. Tommy and Frankie were very energetic and helped her do a lot of household chores.
- b. Tommy and Frankie missed their parents so they spent the day crying and nagging.
- c. Tommy and Frankie had a very good appetite and had many meals and lots of snacks.
- d. Tommy and Frankie have the kind of unruly behavior we could expect from boys.

Appendix B – Questionnaire on EFL pragmatic competence in using impolite address forms

Dear respondent,

The aim of the following anonymous survey is to find out what your verbal reaction is to people who have hurt you physically and/or emotionally. Specifically, I am interested in the expressive language you (would) use to **address** someone who jumps out of the dark and frightens you on purpose: *You, idiot!* Or something else? I am not interested in exclamative sentences like *Drop dead!* nor in swearwords so please do not use these in your answers.

Imagine you find yourself in the situations described below. Please write down **how you would address** the person who has hurt you. If you would prefer not to verbalize your thoughts, please put your address into parentheses. If you would not react at all, put a cross on the response line.

1. There is an elderly lady queuing in front of you at the shop. She loses her balance and steps on your foot with her high heeled shoes.

2. A young man bumps into you on the bus and knocks your bag off your shoulder. He does not apologize, in fact he acts as if nothing has happened.

3. In the street, you see a boy spitting as he passes you by. Unfortunately, the spit hits your new shoes.

4. You are sitting on a bench in the park. Two business people walk past the bench and the young man sitting next to you makes a

rude but loud remark about them. When the shocked people turn around, he says it was you who behaved inappropriately.

5. The phone rings. You pick it up only to learn from the police captain at the other end of the line that your father has been beaten up badly and is being taken to hospital. Before you come to your senses, you hear the alleged police captain roaring with laughter – you have been scammed.
-

6. You are standing at the bus stop. An elderly lady approaches you but rather than chatting about the weather she asks you why you have such dark rings around your eyes – do you have a sleep disorder?
-

7. You are walking down the street when suddenly, two boys jump out from behind the corner, screaming at you. They frighten you to death.
-

8. You are driving to work/school. The police stop your car because, apparently, you forgot to switch on the headlights. They inform you that the fine for this amounts to 10,000 RSD. You are baffled and ready to argue because you remember having switched the lights on. At this point, the police officers grin at you and tell you that they were joking, you may go.
-

9. Your mother's boss asks you to translate four pages of text for him as he doesn't speak a word of English. You accept the job and finish it the next day. You send a mail with the translation only to be informed that you will not be paid because your customer is not satisfied with the quality of the work you did.
-

10. You are at the doctor's with your 7 year-old brother Tommy, who should be vaccinated. When the doctor approaches the little fellow with a syringe in his hand, Tommy kicks the doctor in the shin.

11. Two girls pass you by in the street as you are walking your lovely little dog. One of the girls says "Look at that ugly dog!", loud enough for you to hear her comment.

12. You are queuing at the box office. The young woman standing behind you sneezes on you without covering her mouth.

Appendix C – Questionnaire on EFL pragmatic competence in producing suggestions

Dear Informant,
thank you for your time and help. This is an anonymous questionnaire, the aim of which is to find out what strategies learners of English use to make suggestions in various situations.

Your age: _____

Gender: _____

Year at university: _____

Have you spent extended periods of time (over 3 months) in an English-speaking country? If yes, where and how long?

What mark did you get in your last exam in English language skills?
(please circle)

below 64% 65-74% 75-84% 85-94% 95% or above

Please read the following situations in which you are expected to **make a suggestion** to the interlocutor. Please write **the exact words** you would say in the given situation.

1. You are sitting in the classroom, waiting for the class to begin. One of your classmates walks into the classroom and sits right in front of you. You notice that the price tag of his T-shirt has not been removed and it can be easily seen. What do you say to him?

You: _____

2. Your 8-year-old cousin confesses to you that the children at school often make fun of the fact that she has freckles. What suggestion do you make in this situation?

You: _____

3. You younger brother is rather overweight. In an attempt to impress the girl he likes, he puts on a pair of really tight jeans that do not suit his figure. What suggestion do you make in this situation?

You: _____

4. A lecturer who you are not very close with is a heavy smoker. You think that he should stop smoking. While you are talking with him, he smokes again. What suggestion do you make in this situation?

You: _____

5. You go to a restaurant to have lunch. You are very disappointed when you taste what you have ordered because it tastes terrible. A fellow student who is not very close with you enters the restaurant. What suggestion do you make in this situation?

You: _____

6. A little boy you don't know stops you in the street to ask for directions. While explaining to him which road to take, you notice that his flies are undone. What suggestion do you make in this situation?

You: _____

7. A professor whom you know quite well asks you to help her with a presentation. She has to present an important research article in a conference next week. She knows that you are very good at using presentation software, so she asks you for suggestions.

You: _____

8. You see one of your new classmates working in the library very late in the evening, browsing the Internet in order to find new information about electronics. You have just met him but you can tell that he looks very tired. What suggestion do you make in this situation?

You: _____

9. You go to a sweets shop and buy some delicious looking sweets. You are very disappointed when you taste them because they taste awful. A little girl whom you don't know comes to buy the same sweets. What do you suggest to her?

Girl: What delicious looking sweets!

You: _____

10. You see your language instructor working in the department office. She looks ill and clearly does not feel very well. What do you say in this situation?

You: _____

11. You're at a grocery store with your neighbour. She is about to buy some potato chips which are on sale. You notice that the expiry date is September 2015; this is March 2016. What do you suggest to her?

You: _____

12. In a bookshop, you run into a lecturer whom you are not very close with. She is about to buy an expensive book about research methods. Nevertheless, you know that the book costs less in another bookshop. What do you say to the lecturer?

You: _____

Appendix D – Questionnaire on EFL pragmatic competence in responding to compliments

Instructions: as part of a research project, I would like you to complete the following questionnaire about your pragmatic competence in using English. Your answers will help me ensure the accuracy of the data. You do not need to write down your name. The information obtained will only be used for the purposes of academic research. Thank you very much for your help.

Sex: M / F Age: _____

Please indicate your answer to the questions below using the following scale:

- 1 – often
- 2 – sometimes
- 3 – never

How often do you compliment people in English? _____

Which of the following are you most likely to compliment people on?

- _____ clothes
- _____ accessories
- _____ new car
- _____ hairstyle
- _____ eyes
- _____ being physically fit
- _____ passing an exam
- _____ getting a promotion
- _____ getting married
- _____ other (please list: _____)

Which of the following people do you address compliments at?

- _____ mother
- _____ father
- _____ sister
- _____ brother
- _____ female friend
- _____ male friend
- _____ boyfriend/girlfriend
- _____ fellow student
- _____ teacher
- _____ boss
- _____ female stranger
- _____ male stranger
- _____ other (please list: _____)

Now read the following 9 situations and write a response in the blank after “you”. The questions are meant to investigate how you respond to a compliment in the real world in your daily conversations.

1. You have given a presentation in an English class. After the presentation one of your classmates comes to you.
Classmate: You did an excellent job! I really enjoyed your presentation.

You: _____

2. You are a teacher at a language school. You have invited a group of students to your house for coffee and cake that you baked.
Student: I didn't know you were such a good cook! This cake is delicious!

You: _____

3. You work at an international company. After a business meeting with clients your boss approaches you.
Boss: This jacket looks amazing on you!

You: _____

4. You are a teaching assistant at a university department. One of your students approaches you after class.

Student: Your boots are absolutely gorgeous! I wish they were mine!

You: _____

5. You have just had your hair cut in a fashionable style and you bump into a friend in the street.

Friend: That haircut makes you look great! You look a lot younger!

You: _____

6. You started a computer course three months ago. At the end of a lesson your teacher comes up to you.

Teacher: You seem to be very intelligent and you certainly have a flair for computers. And I have noticed that you show a lot of interest in what we do in the lessons.

You: _____

7. You are wearing a new Rolex watch. You meet a friend at your office.

Friend: Wow! What a nice watch! I wish I had one like that!

You: _____

8. You have been appointed sales manager of a large department store recently. You are out of office with a group of colleagues. One of your employees says:

Employee: You've got beautiful eyes.

You: _____

9. The company you have just started working for has arranged an outing for employees. You arrive at the meeting point driving your father's Porsche. Your boss is surprised.

Boss: Now that's a car! I wish I had one like that!

You: _____

Appendix E (taken from Kwon 2004) – Test on the production of refusals

Please read the following 12 situations. After each situation you will be asked to write a response in the blank after 'You'.

1. You are the owner of a bookstore. One of your best workers asks to speak to you in private. Worker: As you know, I've been here just a little over a year now, and I know you've been pleased with my work. I really enjoy working here, but to be quite honest I really need an increase in pay.

You: _____

Worker: Well ... then I guess I'll have to look for another job.

2. You are a junior in college. You attend classes regularly and take good notes. Your classmate often misses class and asks you for the lecture notes.

Classmate: Oh God! We have an exam tomorrow but I don't have notes from last week. I am sorry to ask you this, but could you please lend me your notes once again?

You: _____

Classmate: Well ... then I guess I'll have to ask someone else.

3. You are the president of a big printing company. A salesman from a printing machine company invites you to one of the most expensive restaurants, Lutece, in New York.

Salesman: We have met several times now, and I'm hoping you will buy my company's printing machine. Would you like to have dinner with me at Lutece to sign the contract?

You: _____

Salesman: Well ... maybe we can meet another time.

4. You are an executive at a very large software company. One day the boss calls you into his office.

Boss: Next Sunday my wife and I are having a little party at my house. I know it's sudden ... but I'm hoping all my executives will be there with their wives/husbands. Will you come to the party?

You: _____

Boss: Well, that's too bad ... I was hoping everyone would be there.

5. You are at a friend's house watching TV. Your friend offers you a snack.

You: Thanks, but no thanks. I've been eating like a pig and I feel just terrible. My clothes don't even fit me.

Friend: Hey, why don't you try this new diet I've been telling you about?

You: _____

Friend: Well ... you should try it anyway.

6. Your boss just asked you to bring a report to him. You can't find the report on your desk because your desk is very disorganized. Your boss walks over.

Boss: You know, maybe you should try to organize yourself better. I always write things down on a piece of paper so I don't forget them. Why don't you try it?

You: (However, you don't like the boss' suggestion.)

Boss: Well ... it was only an idea anyway.

7. You arrive home and notice that your cleaning lady is extremely upset. She comes rushing up to you.

Cleaning lady: Oh God, I'm so sorry! I had a terrible accident. While I was cleaning, I bumped into the table and your china vase fell and broke. I feel very bad about it. I'll pay for it.

You: (Knowing that the cleaning lady is supporting three children.)

Cleaning lady: No, I'd feel better if I paid for it.

8. You teach English at a university. It is just about the middle of the semester now. One of your students asks to speak to you.

Student: Ah, excuse me, some of the students were talking after class yesterday. We kind of feel that the class would be better if you could give us more practice in conversation and less on grammar.

You: _____

Student: Well ... it was only a suggestion.

9. You are at a friend's house for lunch. Friend: How about another piece of cake?

You: _____

Friend: Come on, just a little piece?

You: _____

10. A friend invites you to dinner, but you really don't like this friend's husband/wife.

Friend: How about coming to my house Sunday night? We're having a small dinner party.

You: _____

Friend: Well ... maybe next time.

11. You've been working in an advertising company now for some time. The boss offers you an increase in salary and a better position, but you have to move to another town. You don't want to go. Today, the boss calls you into his office.

Boss: I'd like to offer you an executive position in our new office in

Hicktown. It's a great town only 3 hours from here by airplane! And, your salary will increase with the new position.

You: _____

Boss: Well ... maybe you should think about it some more before refusing.

12. You are at the office in a meeting with your boss. It is getting close to the end of the day and you want to leave the office.

Boss: If it's okay with you, I'd like you to spend an extra hour or two tonight so that we can finish up with this work. Can you stay little longer at the office?

You: _____

Boss: Well, that's too bad ... I was hoping you could stay.

Appendix F – Test on the production of requests

Imagine you are in an English-speaking country. Please complete the following dialogues/situations in the way you consider most suitable.

1. You are terribly late for class. On the way to the university, you see your classmate, Andy, who, it turns out, is also late for the same class as you. How do you ask for a ride?

You: _____

2. You call your friend Dennis. Dennis isn't home but you would like the person who answered the phone to tell Dennis something.

You say: _____

3. At work, you want a subordinate to work over the weekend so you can finish a project. What do you say?

You: _____

4. George is going to the library. You ask him to return a library book.

George: Well, I'll see you later. I've got to go to the library to return my books.

You: _____

5. Emmy, your niece is listening to music. The music is very loud and is disturbing you. What do you say to Emmy to get her to turn down the volume?

You: _____

6. Today you need to take a half-day leave to go to your friend's wedding party. What do you say to your boss?

You: _____.

UNIVERSITY OF NOVI SAD
FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY IN NOVI SAD
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Dr Zorana Đinđića 2
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