POLITENESS IN INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION: SOME INSIGHTS INTO THE PRAGMATICS OF ENGLISH AS AN INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE

by

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To my parents, Vera and Gennady Kuchuk,

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ABSTRACT

Taking a social constructionist perspective, this dissertation explores politeness-as-practice (Eelen, 2001) of L2 English speakers in intercultural communication encounters. The study is situated within the English as an International Language (EIL) paradigm which suggests that pragmatic norms in interaction between EIL speakers are dynamic and flexible, and therefore, instead of measuring EIL speakers' success in interaction against a "native-speaker" norm, the research should focus on how speakers themselves define and (co-)construct pragmatic norms and successful interaction (e.g., House, 2003a; McKay, 2009). The view of politeness taken in this study is based on postmodern approaches to politeness, which submit that politeness is dynamic and that the politeness meanings of particular strategies, utterances, and linguistic forms are assigned to them by participants within an interaction.

Data were collected through background questionnaires, written questionnaires in the form of critical incidents, and semi-structured informal interviews. The data were analyzed qualitatively, relying primarily on discourse analysis complemented by the theories of "third place", facework, and politeness.

The results of this study offer insights into the nature of pragmatic competence in EIL, the processes of the development of such competence, and challenges that L2 English speakers face in this process. Specifically, this study investigates how L2 speakers of English conceptualize politeness, the hybrid and dynamic nature of their pragmatic competence in general and politeness-in-practice in particular, and the interrelationship between politeness and other factors that determine the speakers'

pragmatic choices in situations that have potential for misunderstanding, conflict, and face loss.

This dissertation contributes to the theory and research in the fields of Second Language Acquisition (SLA), EIL, Intercultural Communication, Interlanguage Pragmatics and Politeness by providing insights into the pragmatic competence and politeness of L2 English speakers. This work deepens the body of scholarship in these fields in that it provides the speakers' own perspectives on the processes of their pragmatic competence development and their concepts of politeness. It is also hoped that insights provided by this study will benefit English language teachers who aim to develop intercultural communicative competence in their classrooms.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Rationale for the Present Study

Recently, there has been an increase in research on communication between the speakers of English as a second/foreign/additional language, commonly referred to as L2 speakers of English. However, the majority of studies that claim to be "intercultural" are still studies in which aspects of L2 English speakers' performance and/or competence are compared, in one way or another, to those of "native English speakers." This emphasis reflects an ideology that positions the L2 speakers of English as inferior to "native speakers," which reinforces the power inequality between these groups, continues to serve gate-keeping purposes, and leads some scholars to label English as a "killer language", referring to the effect English has on other community languages.

According to Graddol (1997), English was the dominant language in the world in the twentieth century, and Graddol predicts that while it will be sharing this position with other languages by the middle of the twenty first century, it will still remain one of the most widely used languages (as cited in Maurais, 2003, p. 17). In terms of English language users, it has been claimed that presently over 80% of interactions in English are between L2 speakers (McKay, 2009, p. 233). An unprecedented spread of English across countries and domains of use demands the recognition of the L2 English speakers' contribution to the current shape of English as a language of global uses. Some scholars have argued that "'non-native' speakers need to be regarded as language users in their own right (Cook 1999)" (Seidlhofer, 2002, p. 270-271). It has been suggested that this perspective questions the deference given to "native speaker" norms across all contexts of language use, emphasizes the legitimacy of variation in different communities, and highlights the need to pursue the attitudinal and linguistic implications of the global spread of English (Seidlhofer, 2004, p. 214).

Given the fact that the majority of communication currently conducted in English around the world involves non-native speakers, and in many instances none of the interlocutors is a native-speaker of English (e.g., House, 2003a), characteristics of such evolving communication contexts must inform and add to traditional research foci. As claimed by some scholars, with English spreading across speech communities, the native speaker model of English cannot and should not be the only valid and acceptable model for English language acquisition (e.g., Kachru, 1986; Seidlhofer, 2004; Widdowson, 1994). Emerging new functions and varieties of English call for a new model that would allow learners to communicate successfully not only with L1 speakers of English, but with other L2 speakers of English as well.

While research in cross-cultural pragmatics and intercultural pragmatics involving English language speakers has been abundant, there have been very few studies that look at the pragmatic behavior of L2 speakers of English in communication with each other, even though the findings of these studies provide a very different perspective on the nature of pragmatic competence that demands further exploration (e.g., House, 2003a; Knapp, 2002; Meeuwis, 1994; Meierkord, 2002). The purpose of the present study is to deepen our understanding of this phenomenon.

The present work is situated within the paradigm of English as an International Language (EIL) (cf. Sharifian, 2009) and contributes to the body of research on EIL and the related fields of Second Language Acquisition (SLA), Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), Interlanguage Pragmatics, and Intercultural Communication by investigating the pragmatic competence of L2 speakers of English. This study aims to enrich our understanding of factors that affect the development of L2 English speakers' pragmatic competence and the factors that affect their pragmatic choices in intercultural encounters.

Specifically, this study will focus on the place of politeness among the factors that affect L2 English speakers' pragmatic choices and the relation of politeness to other facework strategies. Thus, this dissertation also contributes to the body of research on Politeness and Face. The approach taken in this study draws on the so-called postmodern approaches to face and politeness (e.g., Arundale, 2006, 2009; Eelen, 2001; Spencer-Oatey, 2005, 2009; Watts, 2003). By adopting this approach, the present work attempts to expand the scope of empirical work on politeness beyond the traditional frameworks, most notable of which is the Politeness Theory of Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987), that have been dominating the research on politeness.

Research Questions

Within the EIL paradigm, pragmatic competence in English has been treated as a highly dynamic, flexible ability to negotiate meaning and norms of interaction within a given context (e.g., House, 2003a; McKay, 2009). Some studies of interactions between L2 speakers of English observed that the communicative behavior of these speakers exhibits a variety of characteristics, some of which can be attributed to the respective first languages/cultures of the speakers while others cannot be attributed to either their first languages/cultures or the target language/culture (e.g., Meierkord, 2002). Such findings have led some researchers to suggest that the nature of L2 English speakers' pragmatic competence is hybrid. Moreover, some have argued that such hybrid pragmatic competence should be the very target of EIL acquisition (e.g., House, 2003a).

Since pragmatic competence is a very broad notion, the present study focuses on one aspect of the pragmatic competence of L2 English speakers: linguistic politeness. Drawing on the postmodern perspective on linguistic politeness, this study adopts the notion of politeness-as-practice, originally developed by Eelen (2001) and based on the distinction between "first-order (im)politeness" and "second-order (im)politeness", originally introduced by Watts, Ide and Ehlich (1992). First-order (im)politeness, or (im)politeness1, refers to the "folk interpretation of (im)politeness" and second-order (im)politeness, or (im)politeness2, refers to "a concept in a sociolinguistic theory of (im)politeness" (Watts, 2003, p. 4).

Drawing on this distinction, Eelen (2001) suggested the conceptualization of first-order politeness as "politeness-as-practice", which is divided into three kinds: expressive, which is the "politeness encoded in speech, to instances where the speaker aims at 'polite' behaviour"; classificatory, which is "politeness used as a categorizational tool [that] covers hearers' judgments (in actual interaction) of other people's interactional behaviour as 'polite' or 'impolite'"; and metapragmatic, which is "instances of talk about politeness as a concept, about what people perceive politeness to be all about" (p. 35).

Postmodern approaches to politeness emphasize that politeness should be studied "bottom-up" and that judgments of politeness meanings of linguistic forms and strategies should also come from participants in any given interaction. For example, Watts (2003) argues that "a theory of [second-order] politeness should concern itself with the discursive struggle over [first-order] politeness, i.e. over the ways in which (im)polite behavior is evaluated and commented on by lay members" (p. 9).

Based on the approaches to pragmatic competence in EIL and politeness outlined above, the present study addresses the following set of research questions:

- What is the nature of L2 English speakers' notions of politeness? Specifically, how are these notions affected by the hybrid nature of L2 English speakers' pragmatic competence?
- What is the place of politeness among other factors (e.g., interactional goals) that affect L2 English speakers' communicative behavior in interaction with other L2 English speakers? What is the place of politeness among other types of facework?
- How do L2 English speakers' notions of politeness and their interaction with other factors affect their performance in real-life situations that have potential for misunderstanding and conflict?

Overview

Chapter 2 of this dissertation presents a review of the literature to situate the present study in the body of scholarship to date. The main purpose of this chapter is to introduce the theoretical frameworks for the study and to review the empirical work conducted within these frameworks pertinent to the present study. Specifically, this chapter will provide an overview of EIL as a paradigm for research, theory, and practice, and will identify how this paradigm transforms the treatment of such notions as communicative competence in general and pragmatic competence in particular. This chapter will also briefly introduce the field of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), which is closely related, and at times even conflated, with EIL. Then, this chapter will present an overview of postmodern approaches to politeness and traditional (e.g., Goffman, 1967) and postmodern (e.g., Arundale, 1999, 2006, 2009; Spencer-Oatey, 2005, 2009) treatments of the relationship between politeness and face(work).

Chapter 3 presents the methodology used in this study. First, it will explain the rationale behind the choice of data collection instruments used in this study: background questionnaires, written production questionnaires based on critical incidents, and semi-structured informal interviews. Benefits and limitations of these data collection techniques will also be discussed. Then, this chapter will describe the research site, participants and procedure, and will outline the methods of data analysis.

Chapters 4 and 5 present the data analysis and discussion. Chapter 4, titled "Pragmatic Competence and Politeness in the 'Third Place'", addresses the first research question and focuses on the hybrid nature of pragmatic competence of the study participants and the hybrid nature of their politeness-as-practice. The data in this chapter are analyzed using discourse analysis through the framework of "third place", an approach to language acquisition that sees language learning as the process of exploration rather than assimilation (e.g., Lo Bianco et al., 1999). The concept of the "third place" in application to SLA refers to the place “between the native linguaculture and the target linguaculture” which is hybrid, “dynamic and is being renegotiated with every intercultural interaction and with every opportunity for new learning” (Lo Bianco et al., 1999, p. 181). The chapter will begin with an introduction of the notion of the “third place” and its application to the development of pragmatic competence in EIL. Then, the chapter will present data analysis that examines the data from five participants in order to provide a “thick description” (Geertz, 1973) of the processes of construction of these hybrids and the challenges that L2 English speakers face during this process. The chapter will conclude with a summary of the analysis.

Chapter 5, titled “Facework and Politeness in EIL Interactions”, addresses the second and the third research questions. The data in this chapter are analyzed using discourse analysis through the framework of facework theories and Speech Act Theory. Speech Act Theory is used to identify the specific strategies employed by the participants rather than to categorize their politeness meanings. In addition, the analysis in this chapter draws on Agar’s (1994) notions of “rich point” and “intercultural frame”. In order to provide a “thick description” (Geertz, 1973) of the range of facework strategies and the interplay of the speakers’ face concerns with other factors in EIL interactions, the data analyzed in this chapter are limited to the responses to one particular critical incident, namely, CI 1 “Peer Review” (see Appendix B). The chapter will begin with explaining the rationale for the choice of data, followed by the overview of peer review as a pedagogical activity, a context of EIL interaction, and a site of facework. Next, the chapter will present the analysis of the data from the participants’ written responses to CI

1 “Peer Review” and interview excerpts pertaining to the discussion of their written responses, organized according to the strategies they chose to deal with the situation. The chapter will conclude with a summary of the analysis.

Chapter 6 concludes this dissertation with a brief overview of the study and its findings. It will also discuss the pedagogical implications of this work, its significance and limitations, and directions for future research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

English as an International Language/a Lingua Franca

English as an International Language (EIL) is a paradigm for research, theory, and practice that seeks to provide a more adequate framework for the fields of SLA and TESOL in light of the global spread of English (cf. Sharifian, 2009). One of the crucial features that differentiate EIL from traditional English as a Second/Foreign Language (ESL/EFL) approaches is that it is based on the recognition of World Englishes as legitimate varieties of English regardless of which "circle" (cf. Kachru, 1986) they come from[1]. The major consequence of this recognition is the reconsideration of the target or model for learners of English. In traditional ESL/EFL approaches, the target has been the so-called "native speaker" of English. Within EIL, L1 speakers of English are being treated just the same as speakers of any other World English and have no more symbolic power than speakers of any other World English. The main premise of EIL is that English can be used and taught across the globe as a means of intercultural communication without promoting the power inequality and devaluing or threatening other languages spoken in a community, thus rejecting the idea that the global spread of English is a threat to multilingualism (cf. House, 2003b).

One of the areas most closely associated with EIL is the research on English as a Lingua Franca (ELF). Because a noticeable terminological confusion exists in the field, where some scholars use the terms EIL and ELF interchangeably while others disagree on the aspects in which EIL and ELF differ, it appears necessary to address the difference

[1] Also see Canagarajah (2006) for a discussion of how recently the distinction between Kachru's three concentric circles of World Englishes has become less clear (as cited in Sharifian, 2009, p. 3).

between the terms EIL and ELF in more detail to clarify the usage of the term EIL in this work. While this study adopts the perspective that identifies some significant epistemological differences between ELF and EIL, the research done within the ELF framework is seen as having a potential to inform EIL theory and practice.

One major difference is that ELF scholars approach ELF as a new variety of English. They attempt to understand "the nature of the language itself as an international means of communication, and in what respects English as a lingua franca (ELF) differs from 'English as a native language' (ENL)" (Seidlhofer, 2002, p. 271). House (2009) also refers to ELF as "a special form of language use operating under different conditions than both native/native and native/non-native interactions" (p. 141). Consequently, ELF scholars direct research efforts primarily at describing and codifying ELF variety, searching for a "common core", including such aspects as phonology, grammar, and pragmatics (House, 2009, p. 142; Seidlhofer, 2002, p. 271-272). From the perspective of pedagogy then, it has been suggested that the ELF model "should aim at a formulation of minimal requirements for intelligibility and maximal flexibility for actual use" (Seidlhofer, 2002, p. 274). EIL, on the other hand, does not refer to any particular (natural or constructed) variety of English. According to Smith (1983), "*English as an International Language* refers to functions of English, not to any given form of the language. It is the use of English by people of different nations and different cultures in order to communicate with one another" (p. vi, italics in the original). Sharifian (2009) also submits that EIL "rejects the idea of any particular variety being selected as a lingua franca for international communication" and "emphasizes that English, with its many varieties, is a language of international, and therefore *intercultural* communication" (p. 2, italics in the original). Therefore, EIL seeks insights "not only into the nature of World Englishes but also about communication *across* Englishes, an issue which lies at the heart of EIL" (Sharifian, 2009, p. 4, italics in the original). In other words, ELF scholars are primarily interested in identifying the "common core" across L2 speakers' Englishes that would be the model of ELF, while EIL scholars recognize that L2 speakers of English might use it for a wide variety of functions across a wide variety of contexts, including communicating with L1 speakers; therefore, they focus on the interaction among speakers of World Englishes.

Another major difference is that ELF scholars tend to limit their scope to exclusively L2/L2 interactions. According to Jenkins, "in its purest form, ELF is defined as a contact language used only among non-mother tongue speakers" (cited in Roberts & Canagarajah, 2009, p. 210; cf. House, 2002, p. 246). Recently, however, some calls for expanding such a narrow scope of ELF are being heard. Roberts and Canagarajah (2009), for example, call for inclusion of native speakers of English in ELF research to see how the presence of a native speaker affects the dynamics of ELF interactions. They label it ELF2 (p. 210), although since it refers to the "contact language [used] by all speakers, irrespective of their English language acquisition history" (ibid.), ELF2 coincides with the definition of EIL as it is used in this study (cf. Sharifian, 2009; Smith, 1983). That is, EIL includes speakers of all varieties of English in its scope. It might seem awkward to refer to the speakers of American, British or Australian English as EIL speakers, but it is important to remember that EIL is not a variety of English, it is a *function* of English.

From this perspective, labeling an interaction between, for example, an American, an Indian, and a Russian as an "EIL interaction" appears adequate.

Particularly important for EIL is the question of how to facilitate communication in EIL. In their attempt to answer this question, Roberts and Canagarajah (2009) have arrived at what they call "a radical conclusion", namely, that "the center [of communication in EIL] will not be … lexicogrammar at all. Rather it will be the negotiation strategies which speakers of all communities bring to the interaction" (p. 225). It is in this area that ELF research can provide especially valuable insights into EIL theory and practice. Many EIL as well as ELF researchers agree with the assumptions that negotiation of meaning lies in the core of intercultural communication and that successful communication depends on speakers' negotiation skills more than on any other aspect of their competence (e.g., House, 2002; McKay, 2009). Thus, to understand how communication in EIL proceeds and how it can be facilitated, it is necessary to consider what constitutes competence in EIL.

Communicative Competence in EIL

According to Knapp (1987), "competence in EIL is primarily competence to communicate interculturally by means of E[nglish]. Teaching EIL or 'E[nglish] for intercultural communication' presupposes a specification of both the intercultural and the E[nglish] domain of this competence as educational objectives" (p. 1026). Therefore, this section will look at communicative competence in EIL in light of the theories of intercultural communicative competence (ICC).

According to Chen and Starosta (2008), the definition of ICC has been built on a more general definition of communicative competence as an ability to interact effectively and appropriately with others but with a larger emphasis on contextual factors, as "effective and appropriate interaction between people who identify with particular physical and symbolic environments" (p. 219). From the effectiveness perspective, communicative competence is "the ability of an interactant to choose among available communicative behaviors in order that he[she] may successfully accomplish his[her] own interpersonal goals during an encounter while maintaining the face and line of his[her] fellow interactants within the constraints of the situation" (Wiemann, 1977, p. 198, as cited in Chen & Starosta, 2008, p. 218). As for appropriateness, its main criteria, according to Spitzberg and Cupach (1984), are that "the interactants perceive that they understand the content of the encounter and have not had their norms and rules violated too extensively" (as cited in Chen & Starosta, 2008, p. 218).

One very important ability that Chen and Starosta (2008) identify from the past research and theories of ICC is that in order to achieve appropriateness in intercultural communication encounters interactants must possess "the ability to recognize how context constrains communication, so that one acts and speaks appropriately by combining capabilities and social knowledge to recognize that different situations give rise to different sets of rules" (p. 218). On this basis, Chen and Starosta formulate their definition of ICC as "the ability to negotiate cultural meanings and to execute appropriately effective communication behaviors that recognize the interactants' multiple identities in a specific environment" (ibid.). Thus, their definition "emphasizes that competent persons must know not only how to interact effectively and appropriately with people and environment, but also how to fulfill their own communication goals by respecting and affirming the multilevel cultural identities of those with whom they interact" (ibid).

Based on this and similar definitions of ICC, several models of ICC have been proposed to identify specific constituents of ICC. There are a number of ICC frameworks, but most of them identify three major dimensions[2]: behavioral, cognitive, and attitudinal (e.g., Byram, 1997; Chen & Starosta, 2008; Matveev, 2004; Ruben, 1989). While the terminology might differ and there might be some inconsistencies and disagreements on what each dimension involves, the set itself remains quite consistent across frameworks. Ruben (1989) was one of the first to identify knowledge, behavior, and attitudes dimensions of ICC and to call for future research to investigate the role of each of these dimensions and their interrelationships (p. 234). Empirical research in the years following Ruben's call has led to significant developments of theoretical models by providing a more in-depth understanding of what each component encompasses. The second question posed by Ruben (1989), how the components are related, has also been addressed in research and has led the creators of ICC models to claim that all components are equally important (e.g., Byram, 1997; Sercu, 2004; Spitzberg, 2000; Wiseman, 2002), and, as Chen and Starosta (2008) put it, theoretical models now conceptualize ICC as "a

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[2]While the word "dimensions" is used here, ICC scholars have used other words such as "aspects" (e.g., Sercu, 2004), "factors" (e.g., Byram, 1997), "categories" (Bradford et al., 2000), and "perspectives" (e.g., Chen & Starosta, 2008) to refer to the constituents of ICC.

transformational process of symmetrical interdependence [between the three major components]" (p. 221).

One comprehensive model has been suggested by Chen and Starosta (2008), who have provided a more in-depth description of the components of their model: affective/intercultural sensitivity, cognitive/intercultural awareness, and behavioral/intercultural adroitness. The affective perspective is based on four personal attributes: self-concept, open-mindedness, nonjudgmental attitudes, and social relaxation, which lead to one's ability "to be sensitive enough to acknowledge and respect cultural differences" (p. 223). The cognitive perspective encompasses self-awareness and cultural awareness (referring to one's own culture and others' cultures), which help one to adapt to new situations, "develop an awareness of cultural dynamics and discern multiple identities in order to maintain a state of multicultural coexistence" (p. 223). Finally, the behavioral perspective corresponds to communication skills, includes verbal as well as non-verbal behaviors, and also message skills, appropriate self-disclosure, behavioral flexibility, interaction management, and social skills.

Another model, suggested by Byram (1997), is geared specifically to foreign/second language acquisition and presents a good framework for the study of EIL. Byram proposed a model that divides intercultural competence into five *savoirs*: knowledge (*savoirs*) and education (*savoir s'engager*), skills (*savoir comprendre* and *savoir apprendre/faire*), and attitudes (*savoir être*) (p. 34). The following figure represents these factors and the relationships among them:

	Skills interpret and relate (*savoir comprendre*)	
Knowledge of self and other; of interaction: individual and societal (*savoirs*)	**Education** political education critical cultural awareness (*savoir s'engager*)	**Attitudes** relativising self valuing other (*savoir être*)
	Skills discover and/or interact (*savoir apprendre/faire*)	

Figure 2.1 Factors in intercultural communication (from Byram, 1997, p. 34).

These *savoirs* represent the same three areas of knowledge, behavior/skills, and attitudes, but Byram purposefully presents them in their relation to the competencies that language teachers can attempt to develop in their learners (p. 31) and provides a very detailed description of each of the factors formulated as “objectives” (pp. 57-64). And since Byram designs his model specifically for foreign/second language teaching and learning, he ties his intercultural competence component to the already existing models of communicative competence established in the field of second language acquisition (SLA). Specifically, Byram uses van Ek’s (1986) model, which has six components or competencies: linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse, strategic, socio-cultural, and social (cited in Byram, 1997, p. 10). There is, however, one major difference between van Ek’s and Byram’s approaches in that van Ek envisions a native speaker as a model in his definition of communicative competence, while Byram rejects the notion of the native speaker and proposes the intercultural speaker as a model for language learners (p. 70). It is not the imitation of the native speakers in regard to the mastery of the standard language and the culture of the country where the language is spoken that makes a language learner a competent intercultural speaker, but his or her skills, knowledge, and attitudes, as outlined in Byram's model. The adoption of a new model speaker causes Byram to refine the strategic, socio-cultural, and social competencies and redefine linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse competencies to refer to the following:

- *linguistic competence*: the ability to apply knowledge of the rules of a standard version of the language to produce and interpret spoken and written language;
- *sociolinguistic competence*: the ability to give to the language produced by an interlocutor - whether native speaker or not - meanings which are taken for granted by the interlocutor or which are negotiated and made explicit with the interlocutor;
- *discourse competence*: the ability to use, discover and negotiate strategies for the production and interpretation of monologue or dialogue texts which follow the conventions of the culture of an interlocutor or are negotiated as intercultural texts for particular purposes. (p. 48)

Byram's model is a good fit for the study of communicative competence in EIL not only because this model has been designed specifically with foreign/second language learners in mind, but also because of its use of an intercultural speaker instead of a native speaker as a model. Traditionally, ICC studies have looked at communication between native speakers and learners of a certain language, and consequently, ICC theories have also been largely concerned with the competence of a language learner required to communicate appropriately and effectively in a target language, presuming that the native speaker is the target model. Thus, it might, in fact, be more appropriate to refer to such competence as "target-cultural" rather than truly intercultural. The rejection of a native speaker as a model is a very important common feature between Byram's account of ICC and the EIL framework, as discussed in the previous section, in that these two approaches offer a broader understanding of intercultural competence than in terms of a specific target culture. In addition, Byram emphasizes that he is proposing an abstract model the realizations of which have to take into account the specific context in which the language is being acquired, which would account for a wide variety of particular contexts in which English is being learned and used. For example, in the discussion of the threshold for ICC he writes: "A threshold for ICC is therefore likely to differ from context to context in terms of which components are emphasized and which objectives are prioritized or even excluded from each component. The decision will be partly in terms of foreseeable needs and opportunities for intercultural communication and partly in terms of the cognitive and affective development of the learners" (p. 78). These two features of Byram's model make it exceptionally well-fit for the EIL context.

In fact, Byram explicitly addresses the application of his model to the teaching of *lingua franca* languages, specifically ELF, although he does so in little detail, addressing this complex issue on just a few pages in the concluding chapter of his book. The most important issue to consider is the content of the knowledge component of ICC in EIL context. Byram has defined his knowledge component or *savoirs* as "[the knowledge] of social groups and their products and practices in one's own and in one's interlocutor's country, and of the general processes of societal and individual interaction" (p. 58). Sercu (2004), based on Byram's model, adds that "*savoirs* includes both culture-specific (of own and foreign culture) and culture-general knowledge as well as the knowledge regarding the many ways in which culture affects language and communication" (p. 77). However, an EIL speaker can find herself or himself communicating with a person from a country she or he is unfamiliar with, and no language teacher can anticipate such an encounter and equip the student with the necessary culture-specific knowledge in preparation for it. Thus, the notion of "culture-specific" knowledge presents a great challenge for EIL education.

Byram acknowledges that in the case of ELF we can expect minimal common ground or none at all when it comes to the knowledge of each other's cultural beliefs, meanings, and behaviors (p. 112). Meier (2003) also suggests that in an international context there exists a "potentially greater variety of unshared and unknown expectations for language behavior" (2003, p. 196). In this light, one solution might be to reconsider the knowledge component of ICC. For example, Bredella (2003) suggests a new conceptualization for the notion of "understanding" in his flexible model of intercultural understanding. This model would allow the speaker to (a) make use of background knowledge, memories of experiences, and contexts, (b) mediate between relativism and ethnocentrism to develop a third position that transcends the values of one's own and other culture(s), and (c) be aware how interaction with another culture affects identity to help individuals make their own decisions (p. 46-47). Although this reconceptualization was not designed specifically for EIL, it appears to offer a viable alternative in this context. Bredella's reconceptualization of "understanding" is also closely tied to the concept of the "third place", which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

Pragmatic Competence in EIL

This section will provide an overview of the traditional approaches to (the development of) pragmatic competence in English and analyze how the reconceptualization of communicative competence in EIL affects (the development of) pragmatic competence in EIL.

Pragmatic competence, one of the major components of communicative competence, has received a substantial amount of attention in SLA scholarship. In some frameworks of communicative competence, other terms, such as "sociolinguistic competence", are being used in place of "pragmatic competence" (e.g., see Byram's framework discussed above), but "pragmatic competence" is used more widely. For example, in Bachman's (1990) framework of communicative competence, one of the major components is "language competence", which includes the following:

Language Competence			
Organizational Competence		Pragmatic Competence	
Grammatical Competence	Textual Competence	Illocutionary Competence	Sociolinguistic Competence
Vocabulary; Morphology; Syntax; Phonology/Graphology	Cohesion; Rhetorical Organization	Ideational Function; Manipulative Functions; Heuristic Function; Imaginative Function	Sensitivity to (differences in) dialect or variety; Sensitivity to (differences in) register; Sensitivity to naturalness; Ability to interpret cultural references and figures of speech

Figure 2.2 Components of language competence (adapted from Bachman, 1990, p. 87).

Thus, pragmatic competence in Bachman's (1990) framework includes illocutionary competence, which he defines as the "knowledge of the pragmatic conventions for performing acceptable language functions" (p. 90), and sociolinguistic competence, which he defines as the "knowledge of the sociolinguistic conventions for performing language functions appropriately in a given context" (ibid.).

Among the areas that have devoted attention to pragmatic competence and that are the most relevant to EIL pragmatics are cross-cultural pragmatics and interlanguage pragmatics (McKay, 2002, p. 73), which focus on cultural differences in pragmatic competence/behavior and the pragmatic competence/behavior of second language learners respectively. There are, however, some fundamental differences between traditional interlanguage pragmatics and pragmatics of EIL, arising from epistemological differences between the EIL paradigm and traditional approaches to SLA. The major difference, as discussed in the section on EIL, is that interlanguage pragmatics scholars have assumed that the goal of English language learners is/should be to acquire native speaker-like pragmatic competence while EIL scholars reject the native speaker model, including in the area of pragmatics. However, even within interlanguage pragmatics, some scholars have expressed doubts that the native speaker model is a feasible and desirable model for English language learners. For example, according to Kasper (1997, as cited in McKay, 2002, p. 74-75), there are several reasons why a native speaker model cannot serve as a viable model for the acquisition of pragmatics:

- "native speaker of English" is not a homogeneous group, and conversational styles can differ greatly among the speakers sharing a common culture;

- adult learners of English might not be able to develop native-like pragmatic competence because pragmatic competence in L2 appears to be increasingly difficult to acquire with age;
- in some contexts English language learners might lack the input and opportunities necessary for gaining a native-like degree of pragmatic competence;
- some sociopragmatic aspects of the target language and culture might conflict with the learner's values and beliefs;
- native-like pragmatic competence exhibited by English language learners might be seen negatively by some native speakers of English.

While all these considerations apply to EIL as well, in EIL the "native speaker" model is even less relevant, especially in those instances of EIL communication where neither interlocutor is an L1 speaker of English. Even if we assume that there can be a single, attainable "native speaker's" pragmatic competence, the communicative styles of two L2 English speakers might have more shared features with each other than their styles have in common with the "native speaker's" style.

In addition, even if it were possible to identify a single set of pragmatic competence elements, "native speaker" or otherwise, it would go against the foundations of pragmatics as a field of study, from which pragmatic competence takes its name. Pragmatics can be broadly defined as "the systematic study of meaning by virtue of, or dependent on, the use of language" (Huang, 2007, p. 2). But what is of great importance is that such meaning is dynamic. As Thomas (1995) puts it, "pragmatics [is] *meaning in interaction.* This reflects the view that meaning is not something which is inherent in the words alone, nor is it produced by the speaker alone, nor by the hearer alone. Making meaning is a dynamic process, involving the negotiation of meaning between speaker and hearer, the context of utterance (physical, social, and linguistic) and the meaning potential of an utterance" (p. 22, italics in the original). Thus, pragmatic competence is not a static ability or a fixed set of skills that allows one to use language appropriately to create and comprehend meaning in a given context, but a highly dynamic, flexible ability to *negotiate* meaning and norms of interaction within a given context. As McKay (2009) puts it in terms of pedagogical goals, "[t]here are then many reasons for rejecting a native-speaker model in the teaching of EIL pragmatics, some of them related to the nature of pragmatics itself and others to the fact that English as a global language is used in a great variety of social contexts by many legitimate speakers of English" (p. 232).

These differences between traditional approaches to intercultural pragmatics and EIL pragmatics mean that the results of the research conducted within this area, while relevant to EIL, have to be approached with caution. Such research has produced valuable insights into the nature of pragmatic competence, but they are not always relevant to EIL contexts.

As for cross-cultural pragmatics research, the majority of it has focused on differences and similarities in pragmatic norms and behaviors between different cultural groups. Of particular interest to the field of ESL/EFL has been the research that identified similarities and differences between the groups of "native speakers" of English and other groups. However, this research did not investigate how these differences/similarities affect the communicative outcomes or how they are negotiated in interaction; that is, the focus of such research has not been on the actual process of communication. But this is the focus of EIL (cf. Sharifian, 2009, p. 5). The majority of the research on intercultural pragmatics, then, has focused on the so-called "gaps" in English language learners' pragmatic competence as measured against the "native English speaker's". Not only has this research failed to explain how these "gaps" affect communicative outcomes, but it has also ignored the fact that a great extent of communicative encounters where English is spoken does not include "native English speakers" (cf. McKay, 2009), and therefore its results are of limited use.

The Role of L1 and Pragmatic Failure in EIL

As Canagarajah (2006) suggests, in EIL, speakers' L1s and C1[3]s are viewed as resources rather than problems, which is a significant epistemological difference between traditional interlanguage pragmatics and EIL pragmatics. House (2003a) also argues that "[w]hile conventionally in Second Language Acquisition and Interlanguage research, the possession of other languages - in particular learners' L1 - was suppressed or ignored, valuing hybrid procedures in the teaching and learning of ELF clearly aims at recognizing the existence and potential usefulness of other languages" (p. 149).

Thomas (1983), in her discussion of "pragmatic failure", has identified two types of failure, one of them being "pragmalinguistic failure", which "occurs when the pragmatic force mapped by [the speaker] onto a given utterance is systematically different from the force most frequently assigned to it by native speakers of the target

[3] C1 stands for first/native culture.

language, or when speech act strategies are inappropriately transferred from L1 to L2" (p. 99). Such "inappropriate" transfer has also been labeled "negative transfer" - "the influence of L1 pragmatic competence on [interlanguage] pragmatic knowledge that differs from the L2 target" (Kasper & Blum-Kulka, 1993, p. 10). Transfer can also be "positive", which refers to the instances of "pragmatic behaviors … consistent across L1, [interlanguage], and L2" (ibid.). However, whether positive or negative, both definitions of transfer make it obvious that the appropriateness of language use is judged by the "native speakers" of the L2. Kasper and Blum-Kulka (1993) have pointed out that negative pragmatic transfer does not necessarily imply lack of competence in the pragmatics of the target language/community, since it can be a matter of choice, for example, used as a marker of cultural identity (p. 11). In addition, they point out that negative pragmatic transfer does not necessarily result in pragmatic failure (p. 13). Thomas also warns that "[t]o give the learner the knowledge to make an informed choice and allowing her/him the freedom to flout pragmatic conventions, is to acknowledge her/his individuality and freedom of choice and to respect her/his system of values and beliefs" (p. 110). However, as a result of establishing the "native speaker" as the target, subsequent empirical research has accepted as a corollary of the definitions of transfer that the behavior that is seen as inappropriate by the "native speakers" constitutes a failure, that is, a problem that has to be fixed if learners are to succeed.

For example, Kobayashi and Rinnert (2003), in their study of the performance of requests by Japanese learners of English, have compared the performance of requests in English by Japanese learners with the performance of requests in Japanese and performance of requests in English by L1 speakers of English. They have observed some evidence of pragmatic transfer, for example, in the use of grounders[4]: learners tended to place grounders before the requests, just like Japanese speakers do when speaking in Japanese and opposite to English speakers who tend to place grounders after requests when speaking in English (pp. 169-170). In the discussion of the pedagogical implications of their findings, then, Kobayashi and Rinnert concluded that their findings "suggest that EFL learners may use certain L1 preferred strategies persistently in performing the act of requesting, regardless of proficiency level" (p. 178), which leads them to "suggest specific ways for EFL learners to overcome persistent L1 preferred request strategies" (p. 179). Even though Kobayashi and Rinnert do not use the word "failure", it is obvious that the L1 transfer of which they speak is seen as a problem that needs to be overcome. Their methodology and conclusions are typical of interlanguage pragmatics research. In the EIL framework, at least two questions would need to be asked about the L1 transfer that Kobayashi and Rinnert have observed before suggesting that Japanese speakers of English should remove a certain request strategy from their repertoire: How was this strategy of pre-request grounders evaluated by the hearers? Even if it were evaluated negatively by the L1 speakers of English, was it evaluated as such by other L2 speakers of English? Only when these questions are answered can a conclusion about the appropriateness of given strategies in EIL interactions be made.

Thus, it is important to be careful when labeling certain behaviors as failures in EIL. As House (2003a) claims, "[w]hile in the past studies in the field of pragmatics have

[4] A grounder is an explanation/reason/justification for why a request is being made.

enjoyed examining “pragmatic failure”, it seems necessary in the particular case of English as a lingua franca to examine the type of divergent, but still successful non-native-non-native communication … and to engage in a radical re-thinking of the norm against which ELF speakers pragmatic competence is to be matched” (p. 149). Roberts and Canagarajah (2009) also suggest that the findings of the research done in the eighties (e.g., research on pragmatic failure by Thomas, 1983, cited above) might not apply anymore and that the patterns of (the use of) English might have changed with “increased interactions in the context of globalization, diaspora communities and transnational relations, added to the linguistic shift of power between ‘native’ and ‘non-native’ speakers” (pp 212-213).

In addition, Sridhar (1996) claims that in a cognitive view of language acquisition “transfer is an efficient and economical psycholinguistic process in which the tried and tested rules of the first language are used as hypotheses in mastering a second language. Transfer reduces cognitive dissonance and contributes to processing economy” (p. 62). In this light, in EIL, L1 transfer can be a highly useful strategy, even when it differs from the preferred strategy of one’s interlocutor. For example, when the speaker does not know what would constitute appropriate behavior in a given situation, he or she might use a strategy transferred from his or her L1 as a starting point for the negotiation process.

Empirical Research on Pragmatic Competence of EIL Speakers

The research that adopts the ELF or EIL approach, although quite small in number, offers evidence for the claim that pragmatic competence different from the "native English speaker's" does not necessarily negatively affect communicative outcomes in ELF/EIL contexts. It appears useful, however, to look at interactions that do not involve L1 speakers of English and those that do involve them separately, as the research indicates that there might be noticeable difference in the dynamics of those interactions and in what is judged as appropriate behavior within them.

As for L2-L2 interaction, which is typically referred to as NNS-NNS[5] interaction, the research suggests that the lack of native-like pragmatic competence of L2 speakers does not necessarily affect communicative outcomes negatively. Studies such as the ones by Firth (1996) and Meierkord (2000) seem to indicate that L2-L2 interactions are characterized by high degrees of cooperativeness and that misunderstandings are rare in those contexts.

On the other hand, after a closer look it appears that the smoothness of and cooperation in L2-L2 interactions might be only superficial and might mask some deeper communication problems. The lack of explicit attention to problems, such as repairs, observed in the studies by Firth and Meierkord, for example, does not necessarily indicate the absence of such problems or need for repairs, but rather that they go unattended. In the study conducted by House (2002), she has also observed that the ELF speakers exhibit highly cooperative, supportive and consensus-oriented behavior, for example, through the use of co-construction of utterances and explicit expressions of agreement (pp. 257-258). However, her data also indicate that participants often engage in what she labels "parallel monologues", in which each participant pursues his or her

[5] NNS stands for "non-native speaker".

own agenda rather than respond directly to other interlocutors' contributions and attend to their expectations and needs (e.g., in turn management); thus, the whole encounter leaves very little room for the actual dialogue, and the questions or remarks that are seen as potentially confrontational or challenging one's viewpoint are ignored (p. 251-257). Moreover, during the introspective interview, one of the participants claimed that she was "struck" by the fact that her questions were not answered, while another participant said that it was more important to reach a consensus than to give direct answers to the questions. These results led House to conclude that the superficial consensus can indeed hide misunderstanding and cultural differences (pp. 260-261). In addition, this study underscores the need for research that includes introspective reports that allow the elicitation of participants' own interpretations and analysis of the interaction, including their own and their interlocutors' behavior, which can greatly enhance the researcher's analysis of other data sources.

In addition, it has been observed that when misunderstandings in L2-L2 communication occur, they tend to be resolved by topic change more often than by overt negotiation through strategies such as rephrasing and repetition (cf. Seidlhofer, 2004, p. 218). Changing the topic might be perceived as a more cooperative, face-supportive strategy than attracting overt attention to the problem that has occurred by some of the interlocutors, but that does not mean that all interlocutors share this perception. Also, it might not bode well for the achievement of some participants' goals since the topic that has been dropped for comity's sake might have been of great importance to the interlocutor who introduced it, as is illustrated by the reaction of the participant in

House's (2002) study who was "struck" by the fact that her interlocutors ignored her questions.

The seeming absence of communication problems might also be due to the fact that L2 speakers avoid topics that they perceive as challenging and interactions that require them to use English for a wider variety of functions. For example, Meierkord (2002) observed that in L2-L2 interactions speakers use a limited number of speech act realization strategies and exhibit a preference for the "here-and-now" topics while avoiding others that might be less acceptable, such as politics or religion (pp. 126-127). Interestingly, she also points out that these topics, while accounting for less than five percent of all interaction, when initiated, result in exchanges that are above the average length (p. 127). Without a more thorough investigation, however, it is not possible to determine the reasons for either the narrow choice of topics or the longer duration of the exchanges on the "less acceptable" or sensitive topics. The longer duration might result from the deep interest of participants in such topics or from a larger number of mitigation moves and increased indirectness during the discussion. The limited range of topics and speech act strategies, similarly might be attributed to the (perceived) lack of pragmatic competence to handle more complex/sensitive topics, or it might result from the (perceived) gaps in other components of communicative competence, such as limited vocabulary, of the speakers themselves or their interlocutors. Ironically, such perceived gaps in L2 speakers' competence, pragmatic or otherwise, might be a consequence of the "native speaker" norm that makes L2 speakers feel inadequate and incapable of more complex and diverse language use. More research in this field, and especially studies that would include introspective reports, is highly needed to determine the reasons for the behaviors observed by Meierkord (2002).

EIL research which includes interactions involving L1 speakers of English in its scope further complicates the picture. Some research has pointed out that the presence of a native English speaker in a group of L2 speakers might raise the bar for L2 speakers, force them to converge with the "native speaker's" norms, and limit the flexibility of norms. For example, Knapp (2002) has demonstrated in his study that in interactions dominated by L1 speakers of English or highly proficient L2 speakers of English, the less proficient L2 speaker cannot participate equally. He cites examples of less proficient L2 speakers being neglected, pushed out of interactions, faced with overt lack of cooperation and even rudeness, and one particularly striking example of one L2 speaker being laughed at upon having produced as a slip of the tongue a non-existent English word "examplation" (p. 235). It is important to note, though, that in Knapp's data there are examples of cooperation between L1 and L2 English speakers in EIL contexts as well, but it is obvious that such cooperation is not a necessary attribute of EIL interaction. In addition, his data illustrate that the distinction between L1 and L2 speakers of English is an oversimplification. In his data, speakers whom Knapp labels "qns" or "quasi-native speakers", that is, advanced L2 speakers of English (pp. 224-225), exhibit behaviors closer to L1 than to L2 speakers. Another very important finding from Knapp's research indicates that whether a speaker is "native-like" in regard to his or her communicative competence in general and pragmatic competence specifically might not be the major factor in deciding the success of the interaction. He provides several examples of successful interactions, successful in both transactional and interpersonal senses, between "nns" (non-native speakers) and "qns" despite noticeable differences in "nns's" behavior (pp. 228-230). One interaction between a German "nns" and a Taiwanese "qns" participating in a simulation of a United Nations meeting is particularly illustrative, so it is reproduced here:

1 nns: Sorry, I need another sign for my resolution?
2 qns: What's it about?
3 nns: Prohibition of land mines
4 qns: That's in a subcomission of disarmament, isn't it?
5 nns: Yeah, disarmament. (2 secs.)
6 qns: Okay, I still have one vote, let me see
((qns reads resolution for 2:30 minutes))
7 [qns: Hey, not ba:d. [I'll sign] it ((5 secs., qns signs paper))
8 [nns: [@@] [@@, @@]
9 nns: Yes, (3 secs.) @@@
10 qns: Okay .. See you.
11 nns: Okay, yes. @@
12 qns: @@ Bye then. @@
13 ((qns leaves, waving))
Example 3, from Knapp (2002), p. 229.

"Nns" exhibits multiple examples of what would readily be labeled "gaps in pragmatic competence" or "failures" in traditional interlanguage pragmatics research. For example, she uses "sorry" instead of "excuse me" - a very common feature of L2 speakers' communicative behavior caused by the fact that both expressions can have the illocutionary force of apology, but it is "excuse me", not "sorry", that functions as an attention-getter. In addition, the "nns" does not provide an explicit expression of gratitude after the "qns" does her the favor of signing her resolution. However, all these "failures" do not seem to affect either "qns's" comprehension of "nns's" intentions nor the outcomes of the interaction. For example, even though it appears that the "qns" is waiting for the actual request to read and sign "nns's" resolution indicated by the pause in line 5, her utterance in line 6 seems to indicate that she had no problem interpreting "nns's" utterance in line 1 as a request grounder, so even though the actual request was never produced, the grounder and the information provided in it were sufficient. The success is determined by the knowledge of the context that interlocutors share. They know that a resolution has to be signed by at least twenty people to move forward and that each person has three votes that they can give to any three resolutions that they approve (Knapp, 2002, p. 222). Therefore, both interlocutors understand that what is not overtly expressed by the "nns" is the question of whether the "qns" has any votes left and the requests to read and sign, if approved, the "nns's" resolution. Also, toward the end of this interaction the "qns" adopts the "nns's" communicative style and also employs laughter to show good disposition and comity. Finally, as indicated by laughter and friendly waving as they part, the pragmatic "failures" of the "nns" did not have a negative effect on the outcomes, both transactional and interpersonal, of this interaction.

The differences observed by Knapp (2002) are quite striking. Obviously, multiple factors affect one's (pragmatic) behavior, and individual characteristics might have an effect as strong as the level of one's (pragmatic) competence or the norms of the speech community to which one belongs. Other significant factors include the context of the interaction and participants' goals (pp. 238-239). In less formal contexts, such as small talk, differences are more likely to be tolerated and more cooperative behavior is likely to be exhibited. But in more formal or competitive situations, where the performance of the participant is evaluated or a certain transactional, "selfish" goal is being pursued by each interlocutor, there appears to be less room for the tolerance of differences and cooperation.

In addition, the composition of a group can also affect the perception of norms in a given interaction. Some studies indicate that if the interaction is dominated by L1 speakers of English, L2 speakers might be forced to conform to L1 speakers' communicative style and pragmatic norms (e.g., Lesznyák, 2004, as cited in Roberts and Canagarajah, 2009, p. 213). However, Lesznyák has looked only at the norms of topic management, so we cannot be sure if her results can be extrapolated to other components of pragmatic competence. Similar explanation can be applied to Knapp's (2002) study: within interactions dominated by "ns" (native speakers) and "qns", the "nns" are at a disadvantage, but it is not clear what causes it. "Qns" appear to exhibit the behavior that is closer to "ns", but while it might be suggested that "qns" are trying to align themselves with "ns" so that they could claim an equal amount of symbolic power, such behavior might be explained by the specific characteristics of the speech event in Knapp's study. For example, it is not unreasonable to suggest that in pursuance of one's own specific transactional goal, "qns" are sacrificing relational goals without consciously alienating "nns" as less proficient. Perhaps the dynamics seen in Knapp's study would have been different if "nns" were in the majority even in the same formal or competitive situation, although again we cannot say that with certainty, because the empirical studies in this area are very scarce and their results are far from conclusive.

Some research indicates that if L1 speakers are in the minority, they are the ones who have to, and do, adapt to L2 speakers' communicative style. As Roberts and

Canagarajah's (2009) study illustrates, when there is one L1 speaker among several L2 speakers (four in their study), the L1 norms are not imposed on other speakers, instead they are negotiated in the process of interaction, just as they are observed to be in L2-L2 encounters, and the L1 speaker participates equally and exhibits the same behavioral pattern as his L2 interlocutors. Unfortunately, there is little focus on the negotiation of pragmatic norms in Roberts and Canagarajah's (2009) study, but the L1 speaker's willingness and ability to negotiate the norms of topic management and his adaptation to the communicative style of his L2 interlocutors hold promise for L2 speakers of English which needs to be explored in future research in EIL.

On the other hand, the presence of an L1 speaker in some cases might be beneficial. For example, in the study of the expressions of gratitude, Eisenstein and Bodman (1993) have found that the lack of shared knowledge and understanding, common in L2-L2 interactions, causes frequent communication breakdowns while in the L1-L2 interactions such breakdowns are less frequent. They have found that "[t]he nonnatives' language flowed better when they had the support of a native speaker" (p. 73). According to them, thanking is a speech act that is "mutually developed" (p. 74); thus, L1 speakers who have more confidence in their behavior in situations where thanking is required are better able to supply in a fluent manner supporting moves that prompt the L2 speakers to produce an appropriate return move/thanking strategy.

Clearly, the inclusion of the speakers of different varieties of English complicates the empirical investigations of EIL interaction and communicative competence in EIL. However, if the goal of EIL scholarship is a realistic account of how English is being used in real-life communicative encounters, it seems to be inappropriate to artificially simplify the picture and continue to approach the so-called NS[6]-NNS and NNS-NNS communication as separate phenomena. In any study of L2 English speakers' communicative competence in general and pragmatic competence in particular, it is necessary to remember that in light of the global spread of English any speaker might need to use English in a wide variety of contexts with speakers of different World Englishes and of different levels of proficiency.

Features of Pragmatic Competence in EIL

Based on the findings of the studies discussed above, certain features of pragmatic competence in EIL have been identified:

- pragmatic norms need to be open, flexible, and changeable to accommodate the potential for negotiability of "linguistic-cultural" norms (House, 2003a, p. 149);
- the norm against which the pragmatic competence of an ELF/EIL speaker would be assessed should be "the stable bilingual or multilingual speaker under comparable social, cultural, historical conditions of language use with comparable goals for interaction in different discourse domains" (House, 2003a, p. 149);
- in the development of pragmatic competence, particular emphasis should be given to strategic competence because "[i]n an international context, strategic competence perhaps bears a greater than normal burden due to the potentially greater variety of unshared and unknown expectations for language behavior"

[6] NS stands for "native speaker".

(Meier, 2003, p. 196), and the ELF/EIL speaker should be trained to use a wide variety of communicative strategies, including:

  - code-switching and borrowing from other languages he/she speaks (House, 2003a, p. 150),
  - repair strategies such as asking for clarification, repetition and rephrasing (McKay, 2009, p. 239),
  - discourse strategies pertaining to topic and turn management, initiating and closing conversations, pausing, etc. (House, 2003a, p. 151; McKay, 2009, p. 239),
  - negotiation strategies such as suggesting alternatives, arguing, and seeking consensus (McKay, p. 239).

- increased metapragmatic awareness - insight into speakers' own communicative potential, strengths and deficiencies in realizing their communicative intentions (House, 2003a, p. 153). Metapragmatic awareness should also include sensitivity to one's interlocutor's communicative needs and a deeper understanding of the interlocutor's communicative intentions (p. 154) as well as the awareness of cultural differences in communicative preferences (p. 155).

Politeness and Face in EIL Communication

Traditional Theories vs. Postmodern Approaches to Politeness

One of the phenomena that have received a substantial amount of attention in the field of pragmatics in general and cross-cultural and interlanguage pragmatics in particular is politeness. A number of theories attempting to describe and explain the phenomenon of "linguistic politeness" have been proposed (cf. Eelen, 2001). In her overview of politeness theories and research, Kasper (1990) has identified two major trends: politeness as strategic conflict avoidance and politeness as social indexing. The first trend is represented by such theories as Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987) and Arndt and Janney's (1985), and the second one is represented by Ide's (1989) and Gu's (1990) among others. However, the distinction between the two trends is not clear-cut. For example, Kasper (1990) submits that Fraser and Nolen's (1981) politeness theory represents the "strategic" trend (p. 194), but Eelen (2001) in his review notes that in their theory "politeness is not involved in any form of strategic interaction" (p. 14). This lack of clear distinctions between different approaches illustrates the problem with conceptualizations of politeness and the difficulty of cross-theory comparisons that have consequently caused confusion among researchers.

There have been attempts to create finer distinctions in theoretical and research trends. For example, Fraser (1990) has suggested the following four views on politeness: social-norm (e.g., seeing politeness as "good manners"), conversational-maxim (e.g., Leech, 1983), face-saving (e.g., Brown & Levinson, 1978, 1987), and conversational contract (e.g., Fraser & Nolen, 1981). However, neither do finer distinctions between approaches clarify what politeness means and how it should be studied nor does the new research within these traditional trends (e.g., Holtgraves, 2005; Kallia, 2004) offer significant amendments that would confront the major inadequacies. Ultimately, as Eelen (2001) puts it in his critique of politeness theories to date, "it is not always easy to determine the status of any new piece of research in terms of its precise place within the field, or in terms of the relationship of its empirical data and claims vis-à-vis those of other researchers" (p. i).

While each of the traditional approaches has made some contribution to the study of politeness, Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory (1978, 1987) being arguably the most influential, they have also been extensively criticized. These criticisms have addressed, for example, their epistemological and methodological problems (e.g., Arundale, 2006; Eelen, 2001), their applicability to the study of politeness within particular cultures (e.g., Lee-Wong, 1994; Matsumoto, 1988, 2003; Wierzbicka, 1985; Yu, 2003), and their potential for cross-cultural and intercultural research (e.g., Meier, 2004). Thus, none of these approaches provides an adequate framework for the study of politeness in EIL.

One major problem is that traditional approaches to politeness have conceptualized politeness as static and have assumed that particular politeness meanings are inherent in certain strategies and lexical items, which is incompatible with the claims that pragmatic norms in EIL should be of a flexible, negotiable and open nature (House, 2002, 2003a; McKay, 2009). In addition, traditional approaches to the study of politeness have largely relied on a top-down approach in which they attempted to establish theories and explain speakers' linguistic behavior largely neglecting speakers' own conceptualizations and evaluations of politeness and reasons behind the choices of particular communicative strategies and linguistic forms.

The investigation of politeness as an aspect of pragmatic competence in EIL could benefit from being placed in the framework of postmodern approaches to (linguistic) politeness (e.g., Eelen, 2001; Haugh, 2007; Locher, 2006; Watts, 2003). While there is disagreement between scholars on individual aspects of these postmodern approaches, they agree in their underlying assumptions that politeness is not static but dynamic, and not pre-determined but constructed by participants through discourse/interaction. In addition, these scholars agree that there can be no pre-assigned politeness meanings in linguistic forms and behavioral strategies.

One important contribution of postmodern approaches to politeness is the distinction between first-order (im)politeness ((im)politeness1) and second-order (im)politeness ((im)politeness2), introduced by Watts, Ide and Ehlich (1992). The former refers to "folk interpretation of (im)politeness" and the latter to "a concept in a sociolinguistic theory of (im)politeness" (Watts, 2003, p. 4). Also Watts (2003) claims that "a theory of [second-order] politeness should concern itself with the discursive struggle over [first-order] politeness, i.e. over the ways in which (im)polite behavior is evaluated and commented on by lay members and not with the ways in which social scientists lift the term (im)politeness out of the realm of everyday discourse and elevate it to the status of a theoretical concept" (p. 9). As such, his theory emphasizes that politeness is a dynamic notion that should be studied "bottom-up" rather than imposing researchers' categories on participants and that judgments of politeness should also come from participants in any given interaction.

To Watts' basic distinction, Eelen (2001) added that politeness1 should be not only the concept or notion of politeness, as suggested by Watts, but should also include practice, that is, people using politeness (pp. 32-34). Thus, he proposed the term "politeness-as-practice", which includes three kinds: expressive politeness1, which is the "politeness encoded in speech, to instances where the speaker aims at 'polite' behaviour"; classificatory politeness1, which is "politeness used as a categorizational tool [that] covers hearers' judgments (in actual interaction) of other people's interactional behaviour as 'polite' or 'impolite'"; and metapragmatic politeness1, which "covers instances of talk about politeness as a concept, about what people perceive politeness to be all about" (p. 35). Postmodern theories emphasize that it is (im)politeness1 that should be the primary focus of empirical study of politeness and that an investigation of politeness should start with investigating individuals' concepts of politeness and politeness-as-practice in everyday communication (Eelen, 2001; Watts, 2003). As Eelen (2001) points out, this is the kind of research that has been most scarce (p. 254). Some studies have been done, but they are either intracultural (e.g., Blum-Kulka, 1992) or cross-cultural in nature (e.g., Ide et al., 1992), and therefore their results are of limited use for the study of intercultural communication and EIL. While such research is invaluable in that it provides insights into conceptualizations of politeness by the members of a given culture or illustrates how these conceptualizations differ among members of different cultures, the questions of how these concepts change within and affect one's behavior in intercultural encounters remain unanswered.

The postmodern approaches to politeness are pioneering works that attempt not only to resolve the problems of traditional approaches to politeness but also to bring a new, critical perspective into the field of linguistic politeness. However, since these postmodern approaches to politeness are quite new, their assumptions have not been sufficiently tested in empirical studies yet.

Politeness and Face(work)

Although the definition of politeness is by no means clear, and as Eelen (2001) has noted, “each theory more or less has its own (private) definition of politeness” (p. 1), theory and research, including the postmodern approaches, have heavily relied on notions of face and facework in their definitions/conceptualizations of politeness. The notions of face and facework go back to the works of Goffman (e.g., 1967), who adapted the Chinese notion of “face” and defined it as “the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself [or herself] by the line others assume he[/she] has taken during a particular contact” (1967, p. 5). Facework, then, he defined as “the actions taken by a person to make whatever he [she] is doing consistent with face. Facework serves to counteract “incidents” - that is, events whose effective symbolic implications threaten face” (1967, p. 12). Goffman also touched upon other ways in which face might be affected in an interaction: “[i]f the encounter sustains an image of him [her] that he [she] has long taken for granted, he [she] probably will have few feelings about the matter. If events establish a face for him [her] that is better than he [she] might have expected, he [she] is likely to ‘feel good’; if his [her] ordinary expectations are not fulfilled, one expects that he [she] will 'feel bad' or 'feel hurt'" (1967, p. 6). However, it seems that Goffman viewed the moves that make one "feel good", for example, as different from facework.

Subsequent works on politeness and face range in their interpretations of both concepts. For example, Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987), taking Goffman's notions as their basis, distinguished between positive and negative face and defined positive face as the individual's "want that one's wants be desirable at least to some others" and negative face as one's want "that one's actions be unimpeded by others" (Brown & Levinson, 1978, p. 67). Notion of facework seen through the lens of their theory, then, has been limited to satisfying the face wants and mitigation of face-threatening acts (FTAs), that is, acts that threaten one's positive or negative face. In another example, Shimanoff (1994) takes a broader perspective on facework and defines it as "behaviors which establish, enhance, threaten, or diminish the images/identities of communicators [which are] linked to the basic needs of approval and autonomy" (pp. 159-160).

Some scholars have criticized the positive-negative face distinction, at least the claim that it is a universal phenomenon, but there is a range of opinions on how this issue should be resolved. Some suggest that Brown and Levinson's concepts of face and facework require some adjustments but in general provide a valuable framework for the study of face and politeness (e.g., Holtgraves, 2005; O'Driscoll, 2007). Others insist that Goffman's interpretation of face should be used (e.g., Bargiela-Chiappini, 2003). There are also suggestions that theory and research would benefit from going back to the original Chinese notion of face (e.g., Ho, 1994; Spencer-Oatey, 2005). Finally, there are those who suggest that a re-evaluation of face is necessary but the concept itself can be adopted by postmodern approaches to face(work) and politeness (e.g., Arundale, 2006; Haugh, 2007).

One problem caused by the heavy influence of Brown and Levinson's theory on the field is that "facework has been employed too often in the literature to refer only to the description of the mitigation of face-threatening acts" (Locher, 2006, p. 250). Because of this restrictive conceptualization of facework, Watts and his followers suggest that politeness theories should go back to Goffman's original notion of face rather than rely on positive-negative face distinction (Watts, 2003, p. 25). They also suggest that the term "relational work" be used instead of "facework" (ibid., p. 23). Locher defines relational work as comprising "the entire continuum of verbal behavior from direct, impolite, rude or aggressive interaction through to polite interaction, encompassing both appropriate and inappropriate forms of social behavior" (Locher, 2004, p. 51, cited in Locher & Watts, 2005, p. 11). Based on this more comprehensive conceptualization, Watts' discursive theory of politeness adopts a dynamic approach to face and facework, suggesting that relational work is "the "work" individuals invest in negotiating relationships with others" (Locher & Watts, 2005, p. 10).

Spencer-Oatey (2000, 2005), drawing on the notion of face, has suggested a notion of "rapport management" which defines rapport as "the relative harmony and smoothness of relations between people" and rapport management as "the management (or mismanagement) of relations between people [which includes] not only behavior that enhances or maintains smooth relations, but any kind of behavior that has an impact on rapport, whether positive, negative, or neutral" (2005, p. 96). Thus, similar to "relational work", rapport management is more inclusive than Goffman's original understanding of facework.

Arundale criticizes Goffman's concepts in light of recent theoretical developments and the emergence of the social constructionist theories of interaction and suggests that "face is not a matter of the individual actor's public self-image. Instead, because social selves emerge in relationships with other social selves, face is an emergent property of relationships, and therefore a relational phenomenon, as opposed to a social psychological one" (2006, p. 201). He acknowledges, however, that in his original work on face Goffman indicated that "the person's face clearly is something that is not lodged in or on his [her] body, but rather something that is diffusely located in the flow of events in the encounter" (1967, p. 7). However, he suggests that Goffman did not sustain this interpretation, therefore causing the majority of his followers to treat face as a personal possession (Arundale, 2009, p. 35). As an alternative to Goffman's notions of face and facework, Arundale (1999, 2006, 2009) proposed Face Constituting Theory that treats face as a dynamic and "dyadic" phenomenon and suggests that face should be viewed as "a relational and an interactional, rather than an individual phenomenon, in that the social self is interactionally achieved in relationships with others" (Arundale, 2006, p. 193). The "relational" account of face emphasizes that the distinction between "self-face" and "other-face" is not straightforward, and treating face as an "interactional achievement" emphasizes that no utterance has an inherently encoded face meaning or action (p. 207-208). Finally, Arundale joins those who suggest a more inclusive conceptualization of facework. His alternative approach to face "provides a framework for theory and research addressing the full scope of human facework, including the commonly examined strategic redress of face threat, the much less examined use of outright threat, the largely overlooked phenomena of outright face support, and the relatively unexamined indexing of social position apart from threat or support" (Arundale, 2006, p. 195).

Thus, the notions of face, facework, and politeness appear to be interrelated, and the study of politeness might benefit from being placed under a broader umbrella of facework and from being studied in connection with other facework strategies employed to achieve similar goals.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

As has been discussed in the previous chapters, the research in cross-cultural pragmatics and intercultural pragmatics involving L2 English speakers has been abundant, but there are few studies that look at the pragmatic behavior of L2 speakers of English in communication with other L2 English speakers (e.g., House, 2003a; Knapp, 2002; Meeuwis, 1994; Meierkord, 2002). The findings of these studies suggest not only that the pragmatic competence of L2 English speakers is quite different from that of L1 or "native" speakers, but also that the nature of interactions between L2 English speakers requires that their pragmatic competence possess certain characteristics that are not necessarily typical of L1 speakers' pragmatic competence. It has been suggested that pragmatic competence in EIL, or English for intercultural communication, needs to be dynamic and flexible rather than be based on the "native speaker" model. The major components of this pragmatic competence are the ability to negotiate meaning and norms of interaction within a given context and increased metapragmatic awareness (e.g., House, 2003a; McKay, 2009). These suggestions demand further exploration, and the purpose of this study is to investigate L2 English speakers' communicative behavior in intercultural interactions in order to contribute to our understanding of the nature of L2 English speakers' pragmatic competence and the processes that affect its development. Since pragmatic competence is a very broad notion, this study primarily focuses on one aspect of it, namely, linguistic politeness.

Among the relatively small number of studies that explore the pragmatic competence of L2 English speakers, particularly scarce are those that investigate the speakers' own perspectives on intercultural interactions and on their own and their interlocutors' communicative behavior in these interactions. However, the studies that have included the speakers' own perspectives in their data suggest that eliciting participants' own interpretations and analysis of the interaction, their own and their interlocutors' behavior can greatly enhance the researcher's analysis of other data. For example, House (2002) observed that L2 English speakers' behavior in interaction appears to be highly cooperative, supportive and consensus-oriented, but introspective interviews revealed that superficial consensus can hide misunderstanding.

The need to explore the speakers' own perspectives on their pragmatic competence, intercultural interactions, and their own as well as their interlocutors' communicative behavior is echoed in the field of politeness studies by scholars such as Eelen (2001) and Watts (2003). These scholars criticize earlier approaches to the empirical study of linguistic politeness, such as Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987), for imposing researchers' definitions and categories on actual language users, suggest that politeness should be studied "bottom-up", and submit that judgments of politeness meanings of linguistic forms and strategies should come from participants themselves in a given interaction. In light of these criticisms, the purpose of this study is to contribute to the scholarship on politeness by investigating L2 English speakers' own conceptualizations and evaluations of politeness and their reasons behind the choices of particular communicative strategies and linguistic forms, or in other words, their "politeness-as-practice" (Eelen, 2001).

Therefore, based on the suggestions of EIL scholars regarding the nature of pragmatic competence of L2 English speakers and postmodern approaches to politeness outlined above (and discussed in more detail in Chapter 2), this study focuses on the speakers' own perspectives on their communicative behavior, pragmatic competence, and concepts of politeness. The major questions that the present study addresses are as follows:

- What is the nature of L2 English speakers' notions of politeness and how are these notions affected by the hybrid nature of L2 English speakers' pragmatic competence?
- What is the place of politeness among factors that affect L2 English speakers' communicative behavior in interaction and what is the place of politeness among other types of facework?
- How do L2 English speakers' notions of politeness and their interaction with other factors affect their performance in real-life situations that have potential for misunderstanding and conflict?

In order to answer these questions, this study employed three data collection instruments: background questionnaires, written production questionnaires and qualitative interviews, with qualitative interviews being the major source of data.

This chapter will describe the data collection instruments used in this study, explain the rationale behind the choice of these instruments, and discuss their benefits and limitations in the context of the present study. This chapter will also describe the research site, participants and data collection procedure. Finally, it will outline the methods of data analysis.

Data Collection

The data for this study were collected with three data collection techniques: background questionnaires, open-ended DCT-type written production questionnaires in the form of critical incidents (CIs), and semi-structured informal interviews. The data collection procedure will be described in detail later in this chapter.

Background Questionnaire

The background questionnaire (see Appendix A) included demographic questions, questions related to participants' experience of learning and using English, and questions related to their experience of learning and using other languages. As McKay (2009) points out, collecting demographic information, including speakers' level of proficiency in English, is essential in reaching generalizations since it "allows the researcher to determine if features delineated are typical of proficient bilingual users of English or if they are rather a feature of learner discourse" (p. 238). In the context of this study, the collection of participants' background data was necessary for the purposes of data triangulation and aided in the analysis and interpretation of the data from participants' responses to production questionnaires and interviews.

Critical Incidents

Critical Incidents (CIs) are broadly defined as "situation[s] that [are] problematic for cross-cultural communication" (Ebsworth & Ebsworth, 1997, p. 197). CIs are more often used in intercultural competence development and/or assessment (e.g., Brislin, 1981), but they have been used as data collection techniques in intercultural research as well (e.g., Ebsworth & Ebsworth, 1997). CIs can be presented as situations occurring with third parties (e.g., Brislin, 1981) or with the respondents themselves (e.g., Ebsworth & Ebsworth, 1997), and the latter technique was used in this study. In addition, while CIs are usually presented as situations followed by a number of responses from which participants have to choose the most appropriate one (Brislin, 1981; Ebsworth & Ebsworth, 1997), the CIs in this study were open-ended, leaving it up to the participants to respond as they decided to be appropriate.

The questionnaire used in this study contained ten CIs (see Appendix B). Each CI included a detailed description of a hypothetical scenario to which participants were asked to respond. CIs 1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, and 10 presented a situation in a classroom context, CI 2 - a situation with a roommate, CI 3 - a situation with a classmate outside of classroom, and CI 6 - a situation with a fellow student worker at a part-time job. Each scenario was followed by a set of questions such as "Would you say anything to your partner? If no, please explain why not. If yes, please write down what you would say and briefly explain why you would say it." Questions for different CIs varied slightly to reflect the specifics of that situation.

In addition to ten CIs that presented hypothetical scenarios, the questionnaire contained an additional item (see Appendix B) which asked participants to provide a retrospective account of a CI-type of situation that they had encountered in real life. This item allowed the elicitation of a retrospective account of a realistic communicative encounter. Also, it provided a more comprehensive picture of a communicative encounter including not only the account of the participant's own (verbal and non-verbal) behavior but also the behavior of his or her interlocutor.

Benefits and Limitations of Critical Incidents as a Type of Written Production Questionnaire

Compared to other widely used data elicitation techniques such as Discourse Completion Tasks (DCTs) and multiple-choice questionnaires, CIs have some advantages crucial for the research questions posed in this study.

On the one hand, CIs are a type of written production questionnaire, as are DCTs, which are typically used in pragmatics research because they allow the researcher to control the context of the scenarios to which participants are asked to respond, are inexpensive, quickly and easily administered, and allow the gathering of a large amount of data (Schauer, 2009, p. 66). On the other hand, the design of CIs in this study, while preserving the advantages of DCTs described above, offers participants more response options, including the option of responding non-verbally or not responding at all, that is, opting out.

Typically, DCTs are structured to elicit a specific type of response. For example, in the “classic” DCT, not only is the situation described but a rejoinder is also provided (cf. Kasper 1999, p. 81), thus making this type of data elicitation technique particularly restrictive. However, in a real-life encounter, a speaker might not produce the speech act required by the DCT or might opt out of any action, verbal or non-verbal. The questionnaires used in this study have the ability to capture a wider range of speech acts, speech act realization strategies, and politeness strategies. Therefore, they have a higher validity than traditional written DCTs. In addition, it has been argued that in the study of pragmatics, it is necessary to “consider not only ‘the said’, but also ‘the unsaid’ responses” of the participants (Marti, 2006, p. 1838). For example, Bonikowska (1988) suggests that studying opting out can “shed light on the nature of the act under study (its conditions, relationship to S[peaker]’s goals, and to S[peaker]-H[earer] mutual relationship), factors influencing sociopragmatic decisions, and the role of contextual factors in speech-act performance” (pp. 179-180). Unlike typical DCTs, CIs in the present study can capture such ‘unsaid’ responses for further study.

Thus, the choice of open-ended CIs as a data collection technique for this study was based on the hypothesis that respondents’ choices not only of the verbal realization of a given speech act but also of the choice of the act itself or non-action will lead to gaining insight into their pragmatic competence. In addition, unlike most other data elicitation techniques, such as questionnaires, role-plays and DCTs, which usually present scenarios that do not necessarily involve a potential conflict of face loss, CIs suggest scenarios in which a conflict and/or face loss is inherent, thus presenting a bigger challenge for L2 English speakers (e.g., Kotani, 2008) and putting more pressure on the participant who opens the interaction, requiring her/him to consider with greater care the choice of communicative strategy and its realization. Even if politeness is not mentioned among the factors affecting participants' behavior, it is also a valuable finding as it provides insight into which interactional events do, and which do not, elicit evaluations of politeness, when it is irrelevant, and what other notions are related to/associated with politeness, all of which are also the crucial questions for postmodern theories of politeness (cf. Eelen, 2001, p. 255). Thus, participants' responses to CIs allow the researcher to explore the relationship between politeness and other factors that affect communication and the place of politeness among other types of facework (Arundale, 2006; Goffman, 1967) or relational work (Locher, 2004; Watts, 2003).

Finally, as Eelen (2001) points out, some kind of elicitation procedure is necessary in the study of politeness. Naturally occurring spontaneous examples of politeness would have been preferable, but they are difficult to obtain as "in everyday interaction people only seldom verbalize evaluations of (im)politeness" (Eelen, 2001, p. 255). Besides, for comparison purposes, it is necessary to collect participants' responses to similar/identical communicative situations, which is nearly impossible to capture in real-life encounters.

The most obvious and significant limitation of using CIs is that they elicit written not spoken responses and are not spontaneous productions of discourse in a natural setting. Thus, they are likely to elicit one-utterance responses and do not allow the investigation of actual *interaction* between participants. As such, they cannot provide any information on the dynamics of the conversation and such discourse features as the structuring of talk exchanges, speaker-listener coordination, and participants' joint achievement of transactional and interpersonal goals (Kasper, 1999, p. 72, 80). However, elicited interactions can be very useful data collection procedures and production questionnaires are useful, although for a more limited range of research questions than spoken interaction methods (ibid., p. 73, 80). For example, Golato's (2003) study, in which she compared responses to compliments in DCTs and naturally occurring interaction, led her to conclude that,

> [written DCTs] are in a crucial sense metapragmatic in that they explicitly require participants not to conversationally interact, but to articulate what they believe would be situationally appropriate responses within possible, yet imaginary, interactional settings. As such, responses within a DCT can be seen as indirectly revealing a participant's accumulated experience within a given setting, while bearing questionable resemblance to the data which actually shaped that experience. (as cited in Woodfield, 2008, p. 46)

This observation is crucial for the purposes of the current study. Discursive approaches to politeness argue that politeness is "discursive" not only in the sense that it is constructed in immediate discourse but also in the sense that it is a result of multiple discourses. As Locher (2006) explains, "[i]t is argued that every Community of Practice draws on knowledge about appropriate relational work[7] established in previous

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[7]According to the discursive approach to politeness, politeness constitutes a behavior within a broader range of relational work (e.g., Locher, 2006).

interactions" (p. 253). In this sense, responses to written production questionnaire are a useful way to capture the discursive politeness of EIL speakers in the latter sense.

Another disadvantage is that the situations in the ten CIs are hypothetical, and in that sense, not authentic. This is a significant limitation because as Kasper (1999) notes, "the overall purpose of an interaction is its most powerful structuring force" (p. 72). However, measures were taken to increase the authenticity of the CIs used in this study. Specifically, all situations chosen for the questionnaire deal with everyday type of communicative encounters, in naturalistic contexts, that are consistent with participants' identities, that is, they are not required to imagine being someone they are not. Thus, it was anticipated that participants would not find the CIs unnatural and would have no difficulty imagining experiencing such a situation even if they had not experienced it in real life. However, when participants indicated that they had not experienced certain situations, such situations were excluded from the discussion during the interviews and data analysis.

The usefulness and effectiveness of production questionnaires as data collection technique is best summarized in the words of Kasper (1999):

> When carefully designed, production questionnaire are useful for gathering information about speakers' *pragmalinguistic knowledge* of the strategies and linguistic forms by which communicative acts can be implemented, and about their *sociopragmatic knowledge* of the context factors under which particular strategic and linguistic choices are appropriate. Whether or not speakers use exactly the same strategies and forms in actual discourse is a different matter, but

> the questionnaire responses indicate what strategic and linguistic options are consonant with pragmatic norms and what context factors influence their choice (although recent studies show some qualifications…). In interlanguage pragmatic research, we may be interested in finding out what L2 learners *know* as opposed to what they can *do* under the much more demanding conditions of conversational encounters. (p. 84, italics in the original)

Thus, since this study focuses on EIL speakers' (im)politeness1, what participants *know* about politeness is as pertinent a question as how exactly participants *do* politeness. As Kasper (1999) and the research briefly discussed above indicate, production questionnaires can provide important insights into what speakers *do* as well. Johnston and colleagues (1998) also contend that "the strategies and linguistic forms used in speech act performance - the conventions of means and form of linguistic action under given contextual conditions - are believed to be adequately represented in responses [to production questionnaires]" (p. 158, cited in Woodfield, 2008, p. 45).

Semi-structured Informal Interviews

The disadvantages of CIs discussed above suggest that CIs alone cannot be sufficient for this study as they are unable to provide data rich enough to answer the research questions. However, combined with interviews which strategically employ individualized questions to make participants elaborate on their responses to CIs, they create an effective combination. Interview questions allow the investigation of whether politeness is among speakers' pragmatic considerations, what its significance and relationship with other factors are, and how speakers conceptualize politeness on the metapragmatic level. As with CIs, even if politeness is not mentioned by participants as a factor affecting their communicative choices, it is an important result as it allows the researcher to explore the place of politeness among other types of facework. Also, as Woodfield (2008) observed in her study, “the voices of the respondents … (as evidenced in their verbal report) suggest that at times such reports may be at odds with their written performance” (p. 61). Thus, the interviews were also a crucial means of written performance validation and data triangulation in this study.

There were two sets of questions in the interviews (see Appendix C for a sample list of questions). The first set of questions was similar to the questions that are used in retrospective “verbal reports” (e.g., Cohen, 2004) or “verbal protocols” (e.g., Schauer, 2009) in order to “reconstruct psycholinguistic processes that the speakers utilized in an effort to produce the given speech acts in given situations” (Cohen, 2004, p. 321). They allow the researcher to see “what the respondents actually perceived about each situation (e.g. what they perceived about the relative role status of the interlocutors) and how their perceptions influenced their responses . . . how they planned out their responses, and what they thought of the social event of going through the tasks altogether” (Cohen, 2004, p. 321). While Cohen justifies the use of verbal reports in speech act studies, other aspects of pragmatic competence can also be tapped into using this method, and the participants in this study were expected to produce speech acts in at least some CIs.

This study relied on a combination of CIs and interviews not only to remedy the problems of CIs but also because it has been pointed out that with all advantages they have on their own, verbal reports work best when combined with other data elicitation techniques: “when combined with other forms of data elicitation, verbal report data may provide researchers with added insights into language learners’ pragmatic knowledge and their choice and formulation of speech act strategies” (Woodfield, 2008, p. 44). Woodfield (2008) also observed that “research studies of pragmatics employing performance data only do not provide respondent perspectives on their task performance, thus difficulties that research participants experience with the elicitation instrument may pass unobserved” (p. 61). Moreover, as the study conducted by House (2002) and discussed in the previous chapter illustrates, introspective reports reveal problems, cultural differences and misunderstandings that might be hidden below the surface of the cooperative, supportive and consensus-oriented behavior of the interlocutors.

In addition, as Schauer (2009) points out,

> verbal protocols … can provide researchers with information on what other possible answers the participants may have considered and what made them select their final choice. Thus employing self-reports can help to answer whether learners rejected certain options because of non-pragmatic considerations such as grammatical complexity of certain structures or because of specific pragmatic considerations. (p. 61)

Grammatical complexity and participants’ real or perceived lack of grammatical competence are rarely explicitly addressed in data analysis in the studies of pragmatic competence, whether it be the study of speech acts or politeness (strategies). However, it has been pointed out that it might affect speakers’ performance. For example, in her study of Japanese speakers' behavior in problematic communicative encounters with Americans, Kotani (2008) found that it was the lack of confidence in their English skills that led some of the participants in her study to avoid engaging in the problematic interaction rather than considerations of face. Therefore, the ability to account for grammatical considerations affecting participants' behavior in CIs provided by verbal report questions increases the validity of data and their analysis in this study.

Finally, relevant to the purposes of this study is Spencer-Oatey's (2009) suggestion that "face sensitivity [is] a subjective evaluation that cannot always be judged from the discourse data alone" (p. 152). She claims that "[s]upplementary data, in the form of post-event interview comments, which if possible include playback comments, are needed in order to gain insights into people's rapport-related concerns and reactions, as well as into their interactional goals" (p. 152).

After the verbal report types of questions, tailored to individual speakers' answers to CIs, another set of interview questions were addressed to all participants aiming specifically at investigating the speakers' concepts of politeness (see Appendix C). Since interviews aimed at eliciting participants' own concepts and evaluations of politeness, they allowed for the study of (im)politeness1 without superimposing researcher's views and categorizations, thus enhancing the validity of the data.

Data Collection Procedure

The data were collected over a period of two academic semesters: the Fall semester of 2010 and the Spring semester of 2011. The researcher made recruitment visits to each ESL Composition class offered at the University of Arizona whose instructor gave her or his consent for such a visit. During the visit, the researcher made a recruitment speech, the text of which can be found in Appendix D. At the end of the visit, the researcher distributed cards with her contact information so that the students interested in the study could contact her privately, via phone or e-mail, with questions or to begin their participation. On several occasions when the recruitment speech was given at the end of the class per instructor's request, students approached the researcher right after the speech, and in those cases the copy of the consent form and the questionnaires were given to the participant at that time.

When a potential participant contacted the researcher by phone or e-mail, a meeting was scheduled at the participant's convenience to receive the study consent form. In the case when the participant read and signed the consent form at the time of this meeting, he or she immediately received the questionnaires. Participants were offered a choice of receiving either a hard copy of both questionnaires to be filled out by hand or an electronic copy to be filled out on their computers at their convenience.

After the participants completed their questionnaires, they contacted the researcher via phone or e-mail to schedule the time to return the questionnaires and the time for the interview at their convenience. Participants were asked to complete the questionnaires within one week of receiving them. One week was given so that participants would not feel pressured and would be able to devote enough time to the task and provide thoughtful responses to all items. However, in many cases the participants took longer to complete their questionnaires, and on several occasions the researcher had to send follow-up e-mail reminders to the participants. If they had requested more time, more time was allowed to ensure participant retention. A number of potential participants did not return their questionnaires and did not respond to the reminders, and thus were withdrawn from the study.

Those participants who received electronic copies of the questionnaires typically e-mailed the filled-out ones to the researcher at the time of scheduling their interview. Those who received hard copies either gave back the filled-out questionnaires to the researcher on one day and scheduled the interview for another day or brought the filled-out questionnaires to the interview. Upon submitting the filled-out questionnaire, the participant was given a ten-dollar gift certificate.

Typically, the interview was scheduled not earlier than one week and not later than one month after the return of their completed questionnaires. This timeframe allowed the researcher to conduct a preliminary analysis of questionnaire responses and prepare the individualized questions for the interview. In addition, the responses and the thought processes involved in the decision-making were fresher in participant's memories than after a longer period of time between the submission of the questionnaires and the interview. However, due to the constraints of the everyday lives of the participants, following this timeframe was not always possible. All interviews were conducted not later than a month after the submission of questionnaires, but on some occasions the participants requested that the questionnaire be returned and the interview be held on the same day. Typically, the researcher made a copy of the filled-out questionnaire so that during the interview both she and the participant would have a copy to consult while discussing the participant's answers, but if the participant brought the filled-out questionnaires to the interview, one copy of the questionnaires was shared by the researcher and the participant. Also, in this case, the researcher had only several minutes for preliminary analysis of the questionnaires responses and the adjustment of the interview questions.

As was anticipated, not all of the participants chose to proceed to the second part of the study, the interview. However, the retention rate was unexpectedly high, and sixteen out of twenty participants took part in the interview. The interview began with small talk to make the participant feel comfortable with the interview situation and with the researcher. Next, some questions seeking an explanation of or elaboration on the answers to the background questionnaire were asked. After that, each participant was asked a set of questions related to his or her responses to selected CIs. Due to the time constraints of the interviews, about three CIs were typically selected by the researcher for a detailed discussion based on the preliminary analysis of participants' responses.

Three major criteria determined the selection of CIs for the interview: authenticity, relevance, and the level of comfort. Authenticity here refers to the question of whether the participant experienced the particular, or similar, situation in real life. Relevance refers to the question of how relevant the participant's response to the situation was to the issues of politeness and facework. That is, those situations in responses to which the participant had expressed some politeness considerations of orientation to face were prioritized. Finally, if the participant showed reluctance to discuss a certain situation, the interviewer moved to a different one to prevent the participant's withdrawal. In addition to selected CIs, a detailed discussion was conducted around each participant's response to item 11 (narrative/retrospective account).

In the last part of the interview, a set of questions related to participants' concepts of politeness and the sources of their knowledge of these concepts was asked. Interview questions were guided by participants' responses to CIs, and follow-up questions were sometimes asked to clarify or expand on their responses. Special care was taken by the researcher not to introduce words such as "polite(ness)", "rude(ness)" and "face", so that any discussion of these concepts would be initiated by participants themselves. Only in the few cases when these words were not introduced by the participant herself or himself during the discussion of CIs did the researcher introduce them in the last part of the interview.

The time of the interviews ranged from 35 minutes to 1 hour. Each interview was audio recorded.

Research Site

Participants for this study were recruited in ESL sections of English Composition classes at the University of Arizona (English 107, 107+, and 108). Permission to conduct the recruitment at this site was granted by the English Department Writing Program that offers these classes. During the academic year 2010-2011 when this study was conducted, the ESL sections of English Composition classes at the University of Arizona typically enrolled 23 students, but the actual number of students in a class differed, due to students dropping out as the semester progressed. The non-ESL sections of these classes are titled

First-Year Composition, but students in both non-ESL and ESL sections are not necessarily freshmen. Although the majority of students do indeed enroll in these classes in their first year, some students do it in their sophomore or junior year.

This research site was chosen for several reasons. The main reason is that these classes are rich intercultural environments. Students in these classes come from a variety of linguistic and cultural backgrounds, and they regularly engage in group- and pair-work as a part of classroom activities. Moreover, for many L2 English speaking students at the University of Arizona these classes are the primary, and according to some participants in the present study the only, context where they have an opportunity to interact with peers other than L1 English speakers or their co-nationals. In addition, the researcher was well familiar with this context as she had been teaching English Composition classes, including ESL sections, at the University of Arizona for three years prior to the beginning of the study, and was teaching ESL sections during both semesters when the data for this study were collected.

The demographics of ESL sections of English Composition classes at the University of Arizona change with time, but at the time when this study was conducted, the majority of students in these classes came from East Asian countries, primarily from China, with a number of students from Thailand and Korea. A significant number of students came from Middle Eastern countries such as Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Egypt. And some students came from other parts of the world, such as South America, Central America, Europe, Africa and other parts of Asia.

Participants

A total of twenty students participated in the first part of this study (completion of questionnaires), and sixteen of them participated in both parts of the study[8].

The group of participants in the study, although recruited from different sections of ESL Composition classes, reflected the typical demographic composition of such classes in terms of the countries and languages they represented. Out of 20 students who submitted their questionnaires, 10 students were from China (7 female and 3 male), 2 from Korea (1 female and 1 male), 2 from Saudi Arabia (1 female and 1 male), 2 female students from Kuwait, 1 female student from Iran, 1 female student from Central America[9], 1 female student from East Africa[10], and 1 male student from India. The only characteristic of the group of study participants that was somewhat atypical is that it was dominated by females. While this might be just a coincidence, it is not unreasonable to suggest that it was caused by the fact that the researcher is a female and thus females felt more comfortable volunteering to participate in the study that potentially involved face-to-face interviews between the participant and the researcher.

The age of the participants ranged from 18 to 27 years, although the majority of the participants were 19 to 21 years old. 11 participants were freshmen, 6 sophomores, 2 juniors and 1 transfer student, and the amount of time they spent in the US by the time of

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[8] Two students were withdrawn from the study after the first part and are not included in the total number of participants. One student failed to properly sign the study consent form, and the other indicated on her questionnaire that she is a minor, although during the recruitment speech the researcher indicated that only students 18 years old or older were eligible to participate in the study. The questionnaires of these two students were not used in data analysis. However, both students received gift certificates for completing the questionnaires as a token of gratitude for their cooperation.

[9] The specific country was concealed to protect the participant's identity.

[10] The specific country was concealed to protect the participant's identity.

the study ranged from 2 months to 4 years, although the majority of participants had been in the US for only 3-4 months[11].

The names of the participants were changed for the purposes of reporting the data and in data analysis in order to protect their identities.

While the level of proficiency in English differed to some extent among the participants and no tests of English proficiency were conducted for this study, all of the participants were proficient users of English, which is indicated by the fact that they were enrolled in regular classes at a major US university, although some participants self-identified their proficiency level in their responses to background questionnaires as "intermediate".

Data Analysis

Responses to CIs were collected, and the handwritten responses were typed. Interviews were audio recorded, and the audio recordings were transcribed. Transcription notations can be found in Appendix E. Interviews are considered to be the main source of data in this study. Responses to CIs, while being an invaluable source of data, primarily constitute the basis for further exploration of the participants' reflections on their notions and experiences.

The data were analyzed using qualitative methods. The main methods used were discourse analysis (e.g., Gee, 2005) and ethnography of communication (e.g., Saville-Troike, 2002), complemented by such theoretical frameworks as postmodern approaches

[11] More detailed information about each participant is provided in the data analysis chapters.

to politeness and face(work), “third place”, and Agar’s (1994) notion of “intercultural frame”. Each of these frameworks is discussed in more detail in the corresponding data analysis chapter.

Speech Act Theory, specifically the classifications of speech act strategies from Trosborg (1994), was used to identify the specific strategies used by the participants in their responses. However, following the social constructionist perspective and the theoretical assumption of postmodern approaches to politeness (e.g., Arundale, 2006; Eelen, 2001; Watts, 2003), no politeness meanings were assigned to these strategies based on Trosborg’s (1994) classification.

In the constructionist perspective participants’ interview data and the researcher’s analysis of them do not represent “objective” reality or “true” knowledge. As Eelen (2001) explains, “[w]ithin a view that focuses on the processes of construction of social reality, politeness should be seen as such a constructional process, with evaluations of politeness as particular ‘representations of reality’ instead of as factual references to an objective reality” (p. 247). Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) also emphasize that, “[i]nterview knowledge is socially constructed in the interaction of interviewer and interviewee. The knowledge is not merely found, mined, or given, but is actively created through questions and answers, and the product is co-authored by interviewer and interviewee” (p. 54).

Finally, it is important to note that in qualitative interviews, data analysis is not limited to the analysis of the interview transcriptions. As Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) submit, “the analysis may also, to varying degrees, be built into the interview situation itself. In such forms of analysis - interpreting “as you go” - considerable parts of the analysis are “pushed forward” into the interview situation itself. The final analysis then becomes not only easier and more amendable, but also rests on more secure ground. Put strongly, the ideal interview is already analyzed by the time the sound recorder is turned off” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 190). While it might be unrealistic to have the complete analysis done by the end of the interview, in the present study some analysis was indeed “built into the interview”. For example, the choice of follow-up questions during the interview was based on the researcher’s analysis of the interviewee’s response to the previous question and the preceding discourse.

CHAPTER 4: PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE AND POLITENESS IN THE "THIRD PLACE"

The Notion of the "Third Place"

The notion of the "third place"[12] essentially refers to the assumption that the development of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) or communicative competence in any given additional language requires not the adoption of the "target" culture but the creation of a new culture, which emerges from interaction between individuals through their negotiation. This "third place", however, is not just a new static culture born out of the two different static cultures. On the contrary, it is a dynamic, dialogic process, with the focus on the creation of new meanings through negotiation. The theories of the "third place" in the field of SLA are closely related to Bhabha's (1990) construct of the "third space" and have received a noticeable amount of attention in recent research (e.g., Delanoy, 2006; Casmir, 1999; Li & Girvan, 2004; Lo Bianco et al, 1999; Kramsch, 1993). Bhabha's (1990) concept of the "third space" was not originally related to the fields of intercultural communication or SLA, but it affected these fields by suggesting a new look on the concept of culture as *hybrid* in nature. Bhabha (1990) explains the "third space" in the following way:

> … all forms of culture are continually in a process of hybridity. But for me the importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges, rather hybridity to me is the 'third space' which enables other positions to emerge. This third space displaces the histories that constitute it,

[12] Also referred to as the "third culture" (e.g., Casmir, 1999), "third space" (Bhabha, 1990), or "transculturality" (e.g., Delanoy, 2006).

> and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives, which are inadequately understood through received wisdom…[T]he importance of hybridity is that it bears the traces of those feelings and practices that inform it, just like a translation, so that hybridity puts together the traces of certain other meanings and discourses. (It does not give them the authority of being prior in the sense of being original: they are prior only in the sense of being anterior.) The process of cultural hybridity gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognisable, a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation. (p. 211)

Casmir (1999) applied the concept of the "third culture" to the study of intercultural communication. He suggested that earlier studies and theories of intercultural communication neglected the dynamic nature of cultures and studied cultures as "endstates". He also claimed that they approached intercultural communication "as an artifact of culture-comparisons and -contrasts", disregarding the actual communication processes involved in the interaction between individual human beings (pp. 91-92). His third-culture building approach was designed to address these inadequacies in earlier works, specifically, their failure to provide a deeper understanding of "reasons why and how human beings build or construct communication systems, relationships, and new models for their socio-cultural existence, which go beyond their supposedly constraining cultural repertoires" (p. 92). Casmir suggested that communication is "an ongoing *negotiation* of meaning" (p. 98, italics in the original). This new understanding of culture or "culture-building" led Casmir to criticize traditional intercultural communication research and "simplistic dichotomies", such as Hofstede's "cultural dimensions" (e.g., 1980), for the failure to "explain or help us understand how, why and when individuals overcame their differences in actual intercultural, dialogic interactions" (p. 101). Casmir's concept of "third culture", however, has significant limitations for EIL. First of all, Casmir views "third cultures" as the results of a long-term process. He suggests that "[i]t is impossible to build third-cultures, with their lasting relationships and value systems, in a short time. In fact, the possibility of establishing and maintaining meaningful relationships and truly dialogic, interactive communication will probably be severely limited in short-term interactions" (p. 112). However, EIL communication encounters are very frequently limited to such short-term interactions, and while what participants in EIL interactions are building might be "limited", they are nevertheless "third cultures".

This notion has been adopted by SLA scholars as well, who often use the label "third place". According to Kramsch (1993), in relation to second/foreign language acquisition and teaching, the "third place" refers to the development of a "third perspective, that would enable learners to take both an insider's and an outsider's view on C1 and C2" (p. 210). According to Lo Bianco and his colleagues (1999), language learning is the process of exploration rather than assimilation, and in light of this view, the "third place" refers to the place "between the native linguaculture and the target linguaculture" (p. 181).

Similarly to the concepts discussed above, the "third place" in foreign language education contexts is hybrid, "dynamic and is being renegotiated with every intercultural interaction and with every opportunity for new learning" (Lo Bianco et al., 1999, p. 181).

Lo Bianco and colleagues add that, “the third place is not a fixed point which will be common to all learners, rather the nature of the third place is negotiated by each user as an intersection of the cultural perspectives of self and other” (p. 181).

The “Third Place” and Pragmatic Competence in EIL

As was discussed in the previous chapters, within the EIL paradigm pragmatic competence in EIL is seen as a highly dynamic, flexible ability to negotiate meaning and norms of interaction within a given context. Many EIL as well as ELF researches agree with the assumption that successful communication depends on speakers’ negotiation skills more than on any other aspect of their competence (e.g., House, 2002; McKay, 2009). Thus, the concept of the “third place” can offer a useful framework for the investigation of the development of pragmatic competence in EIL. While few of the scholars in the fields of EIL/ELF use the notions of the “third culture” or “third place” explicitly, some refer to essentially the same notion, evoking the notion of hybridity as the major characteristic of pragmatic competence in EIL/ELF.

For example, a study by Blum-Kulka (1990) found that the requesting behavior of Hebrew-English bilinguals exhibits “an ‘intercultural style’ - a third, hybrid way” in which the speakers “realize requests differently in each language, and … differ significantly from monolingual speakers’ performance - but not because of lack of competence” (as cited in House, 2003b, p. 573).

In another example, Meierkord (2002) found the metaphor of the “third culture” or “third space”, and especially the notion of hybridity, useful in her discussion of the role of culture in lingua franca communication in English. She observed that in the interaction among ELF speakers a number of characteristics of their communicative behavior could be attributed to their respective L1/C1s, such as the use of proverbial expressions and certain forms of routine formulae (p. 114). However, she also observed that some characteristics of the communicative behavior of ELF speakers in her study did not reflect the communicative norms of their respective L1/C1s, and in fact, some speakers exhibited characteristics that were quite the opposite from the norms of their L1/C1s (pp. 117-118). In addition, some features of the speakers' communicative styles seemed to be characteristic of the lingua franca interactions while they could not be attributed to either the speakers' L1/C1s or the target language/culture, such as the use of laughter as a substitute for verbal back-channels and pauses as markers of topic and phrase boundaries (p. 120). While it might be difficult to trace the roots of such behaviors, it is clear that communicative styles of the speakers are influenced by more that one culture, and it is not simply a sum of two cultures, native and target, but a more complex hybrid.

House (2003a) argues that the community of English as a lingua franca speakers is "a kind of "intersociety" which interactants must create from scratch with each new ELF event" (p. 148). She also argues that ELF speakers must develop

> a kind of "in-between" style of interaction, a third or hybrid way. Thus, rather than looking at ELF talk as an instance of Interlanguage, one might consider ELF as a hybrid variety - something derived from heterogeneous sources. Hybridity seen here as something positive, as border-crossing, as a procedure to create

> multiphone texts where multiple voices show an "inner dialogicity" despite being enacted in one particular language - English. (p. 149)

Burger (2000) also claims that "it will be characteristic of a future global standard of English - if any may ever emerge - that it will be of a hybrid character and open to any influence from existing varieties of English. However, the resulting hybrid will necessarily be of a dynamic nature, shaped by the participants of the individual interactions" (as cited in Meierkord, 2002, p. 125).

It might be suggested that hybrid pragmatic competence sets L2 speakers up for pragmatic failure, but it is important to understand that the "third place" does not mean that any behavior the speaker chooses is appropriate. As Thomas (1983) explains, "[t]o give the learner the knowledge to make an informed choice and allowing her/him the freedom to flout pragmatic conventions, is to acknowledge her/his individuality and freedom of choice and to respect her/his system of values and beliefs" (p. 110). On the other hand, not all pragmatic norms are equal, and not all of them can be flouted, at least not without negative consequences. Thomas (1983) also suggests that

> [i]t is not the responsibility of the language teacher *qua* linguist to enforce Anglo-Saxon standards of behaviour, linguistic or otherwise. Rather, it is the teacher's job to equip the student to express her/himself in exactly the way s/he chooses to do so - rudely, tactfully, or in an elaborately polite manner. What we want to prevent is her/his being *unintentionally* rude or subservient. It may, of course, behove the teacher to point out the likely consequences of certain types of linguistic behaviour. (p. 96, italics in the original)

Thus, the ability to construct "third places" requires critical cultural awareness and increased metapragmatic awareness so that the learner would make *informed* choices "about what to hold and what to relinquish, what to adopt and what to let pass" (LoBianco et al., 1999, p. 181).

Constructing the "Third Place" of Pragmatic Competence and Politeness in EIL

When it comes to the notions, evaluations, and expressions of politeness, which constitutes a part of pragmatic competence in a language, the notion of the "third place" appears to offer a valuable framework for the analysis of the metapragmatic knowledge and pragmatic behavior of L2 English speakers in intercultural encounters. In the present study all participants revealed, in one way or another, the hybrid and dynamic nature of the pragmatic norms and concepts of politeness that affect their use of English. However, individual participants' accounts differed significantly; and therefore this chapter will present the data from five participants' responses to CIs and interviews, which pertain to their "third place"-building processes, in order to illustrate some commonalities and differences in L2 English speakers' experiences.

Ahmed

Ahmed is a 19-year-old Saudi Arabian, a native speaker of Arabic, who self-assesses his proficiency in English as intermediate-advanced. He had studied English in Saudi Arabia for about 8 years and had been in the United States for about 4 months as a university student at the time of this study.

In his response to CI 9 “Hurt Hand” (see Appendix B) Ahmed wrote the following:

> I would have thanked him every time I see him, because he has helped me in a critical time. That student will hate me because of how many times I will thank him ;pp

Although in his written response Ahmed did not provide a specific thanking strategy that he would use, during the interview he confirmed that despite the joking nature of the second part of his written response indicated by the “smiley faces”, he would, indeed, thank that person multiple times. He explained his belief that it would be an appropriate behavior by referring to Saudi Arabian cultural norms:

> when somebody is doing something good to you - in my country - you have - like you owe something [aha] because you know some people here - in the United States - you do a lot of things for them and they just ignore you next day that’s - I dunno why they do - it’s maybe their culture - but in my culture if somebody do you something - and the next day you see them he’s waving his hand for you and you ignore him [uhum] that’s a big thing - that’s - you shouldn’t do that you should thank him [okay] and I would really thank him too many times until he says oh man shut the fuck up - I can’t - okay I know you’re welcome just go [uhum] I would thank him too many times … it’s my customs

Ahmed used the words “in my country”, “in my culture”, “it’s my customs”, which clearly identify this behavior as his L1 cultural norm. He also exhibited an awareness that such behavior might differ from the L2 cultural norm when he said: “some people … in the United States - you do a lot of things for them and they just ignore you next day that’s … it’s maybe their culture”. It appears from this excerpt that Ahmed deliberately chose to conform to his L1 norms in thanking behavior, at least in these particular circumstances, since he repeated more than once that he would thank the person who had done him a favor multiple times. However, the following interview excerpt shows that it is not as straightforward. First of all, Ahmed explained the variability of norms pertaining to expressing gratitude in Saudi Arabia/Arabic:

> it is enough in my country to thanks one time - but it is - it's the same thing here they thanks for one time or - in my country sometimes we do it more than one time but the problem is when you see that person [aha] the other day [okay] you would appreciate - like for example if somebody do something for me [uhum] I would appreciate that all my life

He also appeared to be aware of the variability of norms in the United States/English:

> some Americans do the same thing as I do [uhum] not all Americans like just ignore [aha] but most yeah I mean I have some friends sometimes they ask me for cigarettes - and I give them the cigarette - oh man I really appreciate that and they see me the next day -- I don't know I don't remember him but he's * I gave him a cigarette ** I really appreciate that [uhum] some people come to me and give me like one dollar and like give me a cigarette [aha] I say keep it - I don't want your money [uhum] just take the cigarette - and he just appreciate that and see me next time he just said - hi

The awareness of the variability of judgments of appropriateness illustrates Ahmed's metapragmatic and cultural awareness. Ahmed displayed his awareness of all three types of variability in pragmatic behavior: intra-cultural or situational, cross-cultural, and individual (Blum-Kulka & Olstein, 1984). Individual variability was acknowledged when Ahmed observed that in the United States some people do not thank when he expects it: "some people … in the United States - you do a lot of things for them and they just ignore you next day", while on some occasions speakers thank explicitly: "I gave him a cigarette **[*and he said*] I really appreciate that", or implicitly express their gratitude through some expression of positive feelings, in Ahmed's example, a friendly greeting: "see me next time he just said - hi". Situational variability was referred to when he explained that in Saudi Arabia thanking multiple times is not always required, but "sometimes" it is. Cross-cultural variability, then, could be seen in the first excerpt where he differentiated between "my culture" and "their culture". Thus, Ahmed's choice of behavior in a given situation is based on his awareness of different behaviors and shows that he draws on his knowledge of both C1/L1 and C2/L2 in making his choice from the repertoire of thanking strategies. Thus, while Ahmed's written response illustrated one of such choices, it is evident that his pragmatic competence in regard to thanking is more complex than a simple rule such as "somebody did some thing for you - express your appreciation multiple times/every time you see that person".

These experiences and observations made within the English language speaking community affect Ahmed's pragmatic competence, but they do not result in simply adopting one or another set of norms when he notices the differences between C1/L1 and C2/L2. Rather, he critically examines options available in C1/L1 and C2/L2 and selectively adds certain strategies to his repertoire, thus creating a hybrid. As LoBianco and his colleagues (1999) explain, the main way the "third place" is constructed is through the learner "mak[ing] choices about what to hold and what to relinquish, what to adopt and what to let pass" (p. 181). Ahmed appears to follow this process in his "third place" building.

The hybrid nature of Ahmed's pragmatic competence is evidenced throughout his interview. In some situations, he claimed to be as comfortable following the pragmatic norms of C2/L2 as he is following the norms of C1/L1. For example, to the question of whether he feels comfortable changing his ways to fit the American[13] way, such as with

[13] In data analysis and discussion the use of the labels such as "Americans", "Saudis", "Chinese", "natives", "native speakers", etc., follows the participant's usage. That is, since Ahmed used the label "Americans" in his interview, the researcher also used this label during the interview with him and in the analysis/discussion of Ahmed's interview data.

thanking strategies, he replied, “I have no problem to do that”. In other cases, he expressed his preference for American English pragmatic norms over the norms of Saudi Arabian Arabic. For example, shortly after claiming that he is comfortable with following the American English norms of thanking behavior, Ahmed spontaneously engaged in a narrative that gave an example of another speech event. He described exceedingly long telephone conversation-closing sequences in Arabic that his mother and aunt usually engage in and expressed his preference for the shorter American English sequences: “here it’s bye and that’s it”. In his narrative Ahmed explained that while he likes the Saudi behavior with all the kind wishes and other expressions of positive feelings that the interlocutors address to each other within such sequence, it often feels to him to be “a waste of time”.

Ahmed’s account of his thanking behavior also illustrates the dynamic nature of his pragmatic competence in English. He claimed that he adjusts his behavior to follow the norms of American English in interaction with Americans:

> Ahmed: … I would definitely change here [uhum] especially with Americans - I will tell you why [aha] when somebody uhh when somebody would do me a favor I would say thank you [uhum] I really appreciate that - and that’s it [uhum] now - when I came here - I was like when somebody do me a favor oh thanks man I really appreciate that thank you thank you I really appreciate - something like that [uhum] and then I feel like they say - look at this fool - they just like consider you - a weakling and have no personality and always like looking for help from people [aha] that’s why I wanted to change [I see] for example thanks with confidence - thanks I really appreciate that and that’s it - I will move - that’s it
>
> R[14]: aha so you have changed this [this behavior right?
>
> Ahmed: [yeah it depends on the people I’m trea- I’m dealing with [aha] Americans I change Saudis no

[14] R in interview excerpts stands for the researcher.

In this excerpt Ahmed explained that he adjusts his pragmatic behavior with Saudis and Americans based on his experience of interacting with the members of these different speech communities and on his observations of the behavior of the insiders of a given community, in such a way as to prevent potentially negative interpretation of his behavior by his American interlocutors. On the one hand, it is an important feature of Ahmed's pragmatic competence, which can insure his success in EIL interactions. For example, Canagarajah (2006) suggests that while the traditional approach to English language teaching viewed language learning as "a way of joining a community" a more appropriate approach would "help students to think about shuttling between communities" (p. 210). He suggests that this new approach is more appropriate for EIL because EIL speakers are likely to interact with L1 and other L2 speakers of many different varieties of English. Ahmed appears to do this "shuttling" by differentiating between different speech communities and adjusting his pragmatic behavior accordingly to his understanding of norms characteristic of these communities. It is also a positive feature of his pragmatic competence in that he shows awareness of the fact that negative personality judgments might be attributed to the speakers who make pragmatic choices deemed inappropriate by their interlocutors. In her discussion of pragmatic failure Thomas (1983) submits that,

> [p]ragmatic failure … is rarely recognized as such by non-linguists. If a non-native speaker appears to speak fluently (i.e. is grammatically competent) a native speaker is likely to attribute his/her apparent impoliteness or unfriendliness, not to any linguistic deficiency, but to boorishness or ill-will. While grammatical error

> may reveal a speaker to be a less than proficient language-user, pragmatic failure reflects badly on him/her as a *person*. (p. 96-97, italics in the original)

Thus, adjusting his pragmatic behavior appears to be an effective choice on Ahmed's part.

On the other hand, however, Ahmed did not explain what made him conclude that his thanking strategy is seen by his interlocutors as the display of a weak personality and helplessness; and thus, it is possible that he made a wrong conclusion from his observations. He explained his understanding of why Americans English speakers seem to look down on elaborate expressions of gratitude in the following way: "I feel like they say - look at this fool - they just like consider you - a weakling and have no personality and always like looking for help from people". However, the difference in the presence or absence of an expression of gratitude or the difference in the linguistic formulae (more vs. less elaborate, emphatic, lengthy, etc.) may in fact indicate either the pragmalinguistic level difference between American English and Saudi Arabian Arabic (encoding the pragmatic force intended), or sociopragmatic level difference (what circumstances require such an expression), or both (cf. Thomas, 1983, p. 105).

In other parts of the interview, Ahmed exhibited his awareness of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic differences between these languages. In the following excerpt, for example, he explained his understanding that the same behavior might have different interpretations in different cultures and that in different languages/cultures people might express the same intent in different ways:

> I can't say like for example American is like - he's very rude or something and then the same time it would be very polite in his culture and everybody accept that except me - I would be a fool [aha okay] this is what I'm trying to say - every culture has its standards of politeness

Thus, Ahmed shows his understanding of the fact that the pragmatic behavior, and specifically politeness, should be judged in context, and that it is important to be familiar with the others' pragmatic norms to fully understand their communicative intent. However, such metapragmatic awareness might be difficult to apply to the interpretation of the everyday interactions that one observes or engages in, as illustrated by the previous example where Ahmed perceived that his American interlocutors were attributing negative judgments to his excessive thanking, while in fact it might have been a non-judgmental response strategy. For example, in their study on expressions of gratitude in American English, Eisenstein and Bodman (1993) observed that the person being thanked "often indicated his or her intent to end the thanking episode by abruptly nominating a change of topic" (p. 72). Such response does not mean, however, that the thanking sequence itself, which might have been very lengthy and elaborate, was not welcome or appropriate.

In addition, it appears that Ahmed has overgeneralized a particular pattern of thanking behavior, most likely due to his limited interactions with American English speakers. Ahmed found long and emphatic thanking expressions to be inappropriate in interactions with American English speakers, but the data on naturally-occurring expressions of gratitude suggest that it is not the case. As for the length and linguistic content of expressions of gratitude, Eisenstein and Bodman (1993) observed that the native speakers of American English vary the expressions of thanks significantly depending on the context, and that thanking strategies range "from short, formulaic expressions that [appear] to be highly ritualized to intricate and lengthy interchanges conveying deeply felt emotions” (p. 65). As for the re-occurrence of thanks, Eisenstein and Bodman found that the native speakers of American English express gratitude not only at the time of giving but also later and claimed that this “reentry of thanks is as important as the original thanks” (1993, p. 73). In some cases it can be a note or a telephone call, but this reentry can also occur at the next face-to-face meeting between the giver and the receiver. Ahmed, however, while having noticed some differences in how his American interlocutors handle thanking: “some Americans do the same thing as I do - not all Americans like just ignore”, decided to adjust his thanking behavior to what he perceived to be a more common American norm and made it his strategy of choice in communication with Americans: “thanks with confidence - thanks I really appreciate that and that’s it”.

The question of larger social context in which an interaction takes place also plays a role in determining the appropriateness of pragmatic behaviors. However, according to Ahmed, the expectations and norms of his interlocutor, as exhibited in his/her behavior, take precedence. In his interview, Ahmed explained that after his graduation he intends to return to Saudi Arabia to work at a multinational company where English is used as a lingua franca. And to the question of which norms he would follow in an interaction with an American co-worker, Ahmed responded that:

> it depends … so what I’m trying to say - if this American still has his American customs [uhum] in Saudi Arabia - I would deal the same way with him [uhum] I will be very formal and thank you I appreciate it - have good day [uhum] but for example if he’s like Saudis - and he would - like if he did something big for me I would thank him all the day

Navigating the complexities of pragmatic norms of L2/C2 is a daunting task in itself, and it becomes even more complex in case of EIL, where speakers might find themselves engaged in communication with a speaker of whose L1/C1 and "third place" they know little to nothing. One such example can be seen in Ahmed's narrative describing how he formed his understanding of the appropriate thanking behavior in interactions with Chinese speakers of English:

> R: … you have told me that you have some Chinese friends - how do you behave with them? like with Saudis? or like with Americans? or some other way?
>
> Ahmed: well - I tried to do it the Saudi way [uhum] but I didn't feel like - I remember I was talking to Chinese I said thank you very much I really appreciate it he just said uhuh and he walked [aha] he made me feel like if I am nothing so - I change my way - I just do that with Saudis … that's why with Chinese I just say thank you and I walk I had many s- I dunno why I had many situations with Chinese

What Ahmed described started as a promising "third place"-building. He began with a probing behavior, in this case, employing his C1/L1 thanking strategy: "I tried to do it the Saudi way … I said thank you very much I really appreciate it". As was suggested in the literature discussed in Chapter 2, in EIL L1 transfer can be a highly useful strategy initiating the norm-negotiation process (cf. Sridhar, 1996). But when Ahmed received a more reserved response: "he just said uhuh and he walked", he changed his strategy: "with Chinese I just say thank you and I walk". Ahmed also claimed to have had multiple encounters with Chinese speakers of English that gave him the opportunity to observe their behavior and led him to regard the "just say thank you and walk" behavior as appropriate. Thus, it seems that Ahmed is negotiating the norms and adjusting his behavior to fit what he understands as appropriate behavior from the perspective of his interlocutor. However, Ahmed made a crucial mistake, most likely, due to the insufficient metapragmatic knowledge.

The speech event in question, thanking, involves two different speech acts: thanking and response to thanking. The behavior of his Chinese interlocutor that Ahmed observed and described in his narrative is *a response to thanking,* while the behavior that he claimed to have adjusted is *thanking* itself. In other words, Ahmed observed that his Chinese interlocutors were more reserved in their responses than he expected based on his elaborate thanking strategy, but instead of adjusting his responses to thanking in interactions with Chinese, Ahmed adjusted his thanking strategy. As the study by Eisenstein and Bodman (1993) illustrated, “the receiver [might continue] to thank the giver using a variety of strategies until the giver [indicates] that enough had been said. The giver [has] often indicated his or her intent to end the thanking episode by abruptly nominating a change of topic” (p. 72). While Eisenstein and Bodman referred to the American English norm and cautioned that there exists a significant cultural variation in language values and customs that can contribute to potential misunderstanding (1993, p. 73), the absence of an elaborate response to thanking by itself is not evidence for the dispreference of profound and elaborate expressions of gratitude. However, Ahmed conflated the two speech acts, and thus it is possible that he chose the wrong thanking strategy in his interactions with Chinese speakers despite all his efforts at negotiating the norm pertaining to thanking behavior.

Some interview excerpts discussed above might imply that Ahmed’s pragmatic competence is in fact static, not dynamic, and that he has fixed categories and notions of appropriateness rather than negotiates them in interactions. In another interview excerpt, Ahmed initially hesitated in his response but then expressed what appears to be a pre-established idea of what would constitute appropriate behavior with a (in this case hypothetical) German speaker of English, which seems to demonstrate the lack of willingness to negotiate the pragmatic norms in the way he did with his Chinese interlocutors:

> R: ... so what would be about some other person from some other culture - like say you meet a person from - Germany - what would you do - how would you behave? …
>
> Ahmed: uhm I dunno know - I would say thank you I I- like Americans actually [uhum] not like Saudis - Saudis are as I told you - I just would deal with that with Saudis not all Saudis - Saudis - who did me something big

In this excerpt it also appears that Ahmed has established for himself the distinction: Saudis vs. others, and has ascribed different appropriate thanking strategies to each of these categories of interlocutors. While Ahmed would certainly be not the only EIL speaker who draws such distinction between the cultural group to which he belongs and all others[15], it is also possible that it is the limitations of the data collection techniques used in this study that are giving the impression that Ahmed's behaviors, notions and categorizations are pre-established and static.

One piece of evidence that suggests that Ahmed's patterns of pragmatic behavior might not be as stable and static as some of his interview responses imply is the discrepancy observed in Ahmed's responses. For example, in the beginning of the discussion of his thanking behavior, Ahmed unequivocally stated that he indeed would

[15] For example, another study participant, a 21-year-old female from China, expressed this distinction in the following way: "in my mind uhh - there are two group of people - Chinese and not Chinese".

thank the person who would have helped him take notes in class multiple times, even though it was made clear in the text of that CI that the person is not Saudi:

> I would really thank him too many times until he says oh man shut the fuck up - I can't - okay I know you're welcome just go [uhum] I would thank him too many times

Later, however, he claimed that he would only behave this way with other Saudis:

> I change my way - I just do that with Saudis even though Saudis sometimes tell me we are your friends you don't have to thank us all the time but I'm talking about Saudis who are not my friends

And furthermore, only in specific situations:

> I just would deal with that with Saudis not all Saudis - Saudis - who did me something big

On the other hand, Ahmed claimed that he would behave this way with a non-Saudi if that person typically followed Saudi Arabian norms:

> if this American still has his American customs [uhum] in Saudi Arabia - I would deal the same way with him [uhum] I will be very formal and thank you I appreciate it - have good day [uhum] but for example if he's like Saudis - and he would - like if he did something big for me I would thank him all the day

Thus, it becomes impossible to determine in advance what strategy Ahmed would use in a given real-life situation. As Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) submit in their discussion of qualitative interviews as a research method:

> the subject may also give apparently contradictory statements during an interview … [the] task of the interviewer is to clarify, as far as possible, whether the ambiguities and contradictory statements are due to a failure of communication in the interview situation, or whether they reflect genuine inconsistencies, ambivalence, and contradictions in an interviewee's life situation. The

> contradictions of interviewees need not merely be due to faulty communication in the interview, nor to the interviewee's personality, but may be adequate reflections of objective contradictions in the world in which they live. (p. 31)

It should be kept in mind that the interviews in this study were conducted in the participants' L2, so despite the fact that all of them were proficient speakers of English, there might have been gaps in their linguistic competence that might have affected their responses to the interview questions. However, the discrepancy in Ahmed's answers does not seem to imply that he has difficulty expressing his ideas, or is not telling the truth, or that his memory is failing him, rather it appears to confirm that his pragmatic competence is dynamic, perhaps more so than he is consciously aware. In this light, Ahmed's initial hesitation in the excerpt above: "uhm I dunno know", gains more significance and perhaps gives a more realistic representation of the reality of his pragmatic competence than his following definitive statement: "I would say thank you … like [to] Americans".

The importance of specific contextual factors in the pragmatic decision-making process is also evidenced in Ahmed's statements of "it depends", abundant in the interview data, and detailed narratives of specific speech events to illustrate how contextual factors affect his choice of pragmatic behaviors and politeness strategies.

Patricia

Patricia is an 18-year-old student from Central America[16], a native speaker of Spanish, who had been in the US for about 3 months as a university student at the time of

[16] The specific country was concealed to protect the participant's identity.

the study. She considers her English language proficiency to be at an intermediate level, even though she had been studying English in her home country for about 13 years before coming to the US.

As has been discussed in the previous sections, EIL speakers make their own choices of what to incorporate into their "third places" and what to leave behind, be it a C1/L1 or C2/L2 pragmatic norm. In Patricia's interview she illustrated the impact of one of the factors that determine whether a certain norm will be incorporated into one's "third place", namely, the compatibility of this new norm with one's system of values and beliefs. Patricia expressed reluctance to follow the norms that she observes in American English speakers' behavior:

> R: … do you think it's similar between how students talk to teachers in X[17] and how students talk to teachers in the United Sta[tes?
>
> Patricia: [it is simi- -- I think that in my math class here it's quite a different - they talk with teacher like you and you [aha] with you and you - kind of friends - some students make that [aha] but in X we - we don't do that - it's kind of awkward because it's ir- irrespectful …
>
> R: when you notice these kind of differences - how do you behave? do you behave how you are used [to
>
> Patricia: [yes I still behave like I w- I was in X
>
> R: do you think you need to change? do you think it's important to behave like native speakers behave to each other? …
>
> Patricia: I think I will use my way to - to express myself [uhum] I* comfortable with my - my attitude and how I express myself - I think it is fine how I do it

In this excerpt Patricia explained that the informal style that her classmates, American English speakers, use in communication with their teacher gives her the impression of disrespect, which contradicts her cultural norms, and thus she is unwilling

[17] The name of the country was concealed to protect the participant's identity.

to adopt this style. She also explained that the relationship between the teacher and the student, in her system of beliefs, is not close enough for informal style. Unfortunately, Patricia did not illustrate her claim with any specific examples of how other students talk to the teacher in her class or how she would talk to her teacher; and thus, we cannot see to what extent her style diverges from that of her classmates and whether her choice to hold on to her L1/C1 norm is appropriate in this context.

On the one hand, while flouting some pragmatic norms might lead to negative consequences, it is unlikely that in an interaction between her and her teacher Patricia's communicative style, more formal than that of other students, would lead to negative judgments. However, to deliberately flout pragmatic norms, one has to have sufficient metapragmatic awareness. There is no single "rule of thumb" when it comes to appropriate behavior in a particular context, and, for example, erring on the side of formality is not advisable in all circumstances as a more formal style might be seen as the sign of unfriendliness, arrogance or unwillingness to cooperate.

Similarly to Ahmed's data, Patricia's interview data are also full of contradictions. For example, the excerpt above illustrates Patricia's awareness of differences in communicative styles in interactions between students and teachers in the US and her home country. Moreover, she labeled the informal style of the students in the US as "irrespectful" and claimed that, "in [my home country] we - we don't do that". However, on other occasions she stated that there are no differences in how politeness and respect are conveyed in the US and her home country:

> R: so did you notice any difference between how people are being polite - like in X when they are speaking in Spanish and here when they are speaking in English?

> like for example you just mentioned that when you are speaking to a person who is older you are being more polite you're showing more respect - so did you notice any differences?…
>
> Patricia: I think it is the same [the same?] all young people show respect to older people in every country ** I don't find a difference

The explanation for this contradiction might be similar to the one in Ahmed's case. However, in Patricia's interview there are also instances of misunderstanding of the interviewer's questions and struggles to find an English word or expression, so it is possible that gaps in Patricia's linguistic competence might have contributed to the contradictions in her answers.

Another possible explanation for this contradiction is Kvale and Brinkmann's (2009) claim that "[i]n the course of an interview, the subjects can change their descriptions of, and attitudes toward, a theme. The subjects may themselves discover new aspects of the themes they are describing, and suddenly see relations that they had not been aware of earlier" (p. 31). On some occasions in the present study, participants explicitly stated that an interview question addressed something they had not thought about before, and thus it is inevitable that emerging reflections would have internal inconsistencies and contradictions.

In Patricia's interview, the evidence of the processes described by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) can be seen, for example, in the first interview excerpt when she changed her answer about teacher-student interactions in mid-utterance: "it is simi- -- I think that in my math class here it's quite a different". It appears that at first she intended to claim that there are no differences between these interactions in the US and her home country, but a specific example that came to mind made her change her statement. As

Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) suggest, "[t]he questioning can … instigate processes of reflection where the meanings of themes described by the subjects are no longer the same after the interview. An interview may be a learning process for the interviewee" (p. 31). It is possible that the experience of participating in this study became a learning experience for Patricia by making her reflect on her experiences of using English, and thus has contributed to her "third place".

In addition, similarly to Ahmed, Patricia often prefaced her responses to interview questions with "it depends" statements, illustrating the importance of specific contextual elements in her pragmatic decision-making process. However, perhaps due to linguistic difficulties, she often limited her answers to the interview questions to "yes" or "no", and so the lack of elaboration does not allow for deeper insights into the way that contextual factors affect her choice of pragmatic behaviors and politeness strategies.

Yanbo

Yanbo is a 21-year-old Chinese male, a native speaker of Mandarin, who had been in the US for about 3 months as a university student and one additional month in a summer language camp at the time of the study. Like Patricia, he assesses his English language proficiency as intermediate, even though he had been studying English in China for about 15 years.

Yanbo exhibits at the same time a high level of awareness of cultural differences and their impact on one's pragmatic behavior and a strong orientation toward acquiring the pragmatic norms of American English.

In his response to CI 1 “Peer Review” (see Appendix B), Yanbo commented on his partner’s actions in the following way:

> Without knowing my partner’s culture custom, I couldn’t determine whether he’s been polite or impolite, tried hard or not.

Yanbo exhibits the same metapragmatic awareness as does Ahmed, in that Yanbo believes that the knowledge of the others’ pragmatic norms is necessary to fully understand their communicative intent, and also that cultural differences affect speakers’ pragmatic norms and behaviors. Yanbo further confirmed this understanding in the discussion of CI 1 during the interview, where he explained his choice of pragmatic behavior strategies as follows:

> R: so you think that people who come from different cultures are being polite in different ways?
>
> Yanbo: yes
>
> R: when you are talking to different people - are you trying to be polite to them?
>
> Yanbo: yes - of course (laughter) usually I try to be polite to everybody
>
> R: so then are you being polite in different ways to those different people if you think that they have a different understanding of what’s polite and what’s not?
>
> Yanbo: how do I behave? [yeah] for mostly- mostly cause I don’t know their culture so - so I have to behave - I’ll try to behave polite in American ways cause I speak in English [okay] cause I speak English - unless I know their culture - and know their behavior on this
>
> R: so if you knew their culture and knew their behavior you would change your way of being polite?
>
> Yanbo: maybe I will act polite in their ways - in their culture

In this excerpt Yanbo revealed preference for American English pragmatic norms. However, unlike Ahmed, who justified his choice of certain norms of American English from a more personal perspective, Yanbo exhibits a more social-norm oriented approach. The discussion preceding this excerpt set the US as the larger social context, so Yanbo’s answer may also be interpreted as his belief that it is the larger social context that determines the appropriate behaviors rather than personal preferences: “I’ll try to behave polite in American ways cause I speak in English [*in the US*]”. However, Yanbo also left a possibility of adjusting his pragmatic behavior to match his interlocutors’ behaviors if they are different from those of American English speakers: “maybe I will act polite in their ways - in their culture”. Earlier in his interview, Yanbo said that so far he had had little opportunity to interact with other L2 English speakers, so his knowledge of their pragmatic norms is very limited, and therefore he could not be sure whether he would adjust his behavior or not. It is not unreasonable to suggest that other factors such as the compatibility of the systems of values and beliefs, as in Patricia’s case, and other preferences of a more personal nature, as in Ahmed’s case, might later take precedence for Yanbo in his pragmatic/politeness choices in those interactions.

Yanbo’s orientation toward the norms of American English appears to be affected not only by the fact that he was residing in the US at the time of the study, that is, by the immediate context of his interactions, but also by his goals for the future, as he wishes to remain in the US after graduating. Yanbo is making a conscious effort to learn the norms of American English. In his interview, he claimed that while in his English language classes in China he did not learn much about these norms, he had been making an effort to learn from movies, computer games, and other sources of pragmatic knowledge produced by American English speakers: “anything that is made - made by native Americans [uhum] tho- those medias that speaks Americans not- not something like Chinese Americans”. Yanbo also claimed that after arriving in the US, he has been learning primarily from observations of people's behaviors, but at this point in time he considers his knowledge of American English pragmatic/politeness norms to be incomplete, and he claimed that he is "still learning".

Furthermore, in his interview Yanbo said that the only occasion on which he deliberately resorts to the Chinese pragmatic norms is in the situations when he does not know the appropriate American English norm: "I would try to d- do it exactly the same way - as Americans [okay] although sometimes I don't know how they do it". In these latter cases, Yanbo follows the Chinese notion of politeness and Chinese pragmatic norms, as he explained in the following excerpt, describing how he would make a polite request:

> R: … if you wanted to ask a friend to help you with your essay - how would you ask - what would you say?
>
> Yanbo: let me first ask- say - are you free now? - and my - if the answer is free and my second asking may be just very directly - * my essay here - can you please help me - comment on it?
>
> R: would you be trying to be polite in that situation?
>
> Yanbo: at least uh that- at least in Chinese culture that is for the first question - the first question are you free now that's- that's the way Chinese * does it
>
> R: do you think they do the same in English? have you noticed?
>
> Yanbo: I didn't notice- I didn't notice [okay] I don't really know
>
> R: but you would do that- you would say that thinking that you're being polite right? you would do that because you think it's polite?
>
> Yanbo: (nods) cause that's the only way I know

Yanbo also claimed that in interactions in the US, with American English speakers, he follows the norms of American English:

> R: so when you say from my perspective - do you think it's because of how you were brought up in China or it's because of what you have learned about English from all the movies and computer games? … you just said - from my perspective

> this is polite - so my question is - how did you form that perspective? your own understanding of politeness - where does it come from?
>
> Yanbo: from both [both] and- and I would label- label them differently -- one from- one from where I grew up [uhum] and one from from the American ways - I will separate them [uhum] but both will come- come to (trails off) [okay] … so I mean- I mean [uhum] in China I will not use ways Americans use [uhum] and in American- in America I will try not to use the ways I do in China

Thus, Yanbo envisions the “third place” of his pragmatic competence as the one which would allow him to “shuttle” easily from one set of norms to another, although he appears to conceptualize the ideal pragmatic competence not as a repertoire that he would draw upon depending on the context, but rather as two separate, compartmentalized sets of norms and corresponding behaviors. However, as has been mentioned earlier, Yanbo’s understanding might change as his “third place” develops through interactions with American English and other English speakers and as he gains more experience of interacting in a variety of contexts.

Mei

Mei is a 19-year-old female from China, a native speaker of Mandarin. She had been studying English in China for about 8 years and had been in the United States as a university student for about 2 years at the time of the study.

Unlike Yanbo, Mei had both more time to learn about the pragmatic norms of American English and more opportunities to interact with other EIL speakers, and her “third place” shows more openness for negotiating and mixing norms as well as for “shuttling” between different speech communities. In her interview, she suggested that two years in the US had been enough time for her to gain some knowledge of the US cultural norms and integrate them into her "third place": "maybe I stay here for like almost two years so like - I kind of think like - I don't know - kind of accept the p- like American culture". However, other parts of the interview show that Mei still identifies herself as Chinese.

In her response to CI 6 "Saturday Shift" (see Appendix B), Mei wrote the following:

> 1. if she is my good friend, I think I would. 2. if not, I may tell her "I do not really have time on Saturday, and I have to go shopping for some food" kind of excuse.

During the interview, she explained her choice of strategy to decline the request as a preference for Chinese pragmatic norms:

> Mei: … if I I don't like the person I may like give them something- some excuse I - I I don't think I will tell her directly cause it's not very good (laughter)
>
> R: why is it not good?
>
> …
>
> Mei: I think it's - I think it's different American than China- Chinese culture
>
> R: what is the difference?
>
> Mei: I think American people say all- most - most of all the things directly [uhum] but Chinese people we're kind of like - not very directly find some like uhh softer way to say that [uhum] but not too directly
>
> R: uhum and why is that?
>
> Mei: I don't know I think the culture I grew up it's like this so - our thoughts and our opinion is - that -- yeah [uhum] cause when I come here I think American people say all things so directly but not a- Chinese people won't say that

In this excerpt Mei identified herself with "Chinese people" through her use of pronouns "we" and "our"; and thus, her choice of strategy in this situation seems to be determined by her L1/C1 pragmatic norms. Mei's explanation in this excerpt also implies a general preference for indirectness in pragmatic behavior as a Chinese norm. However, during the interview Mei also claimed that she does not necessarily evaluate directness negatively: “I like the way Ch- the way American people say it [uhum] I like people say directly [okay] yeah”, and suggested that in real-life interactions she might “shuttle” between different levels of directness, depending on the preference of the speech community to which her interlocutor belongs:

> R: so if you notice this difference [uhum] between how Americans speak and how Chinese speak [uhum] when you’re speaking in English [uhum] - do you say things like Americans say things or do you say things like Chinese say things?
>
> Mei: oh it’s hard (laughter) ** think [yeah] -- I think it’s also depending on what people I’m talking about if I talk with Chinese people [uhum] I won’t say so directly [uhum] like say some words but for American people - now I’m learning like to begin involved in American culture and learning how American people do those things and they think about those things and- cause uhm cause - I spent a lot of time with my American friends [uhum] and - our thoughts is totally different so I’m trying to understand the words they think about
>
> R: so how about somebody who is neither Chinese nor American [uhum] but comes from a different culture? would you be direct? would you be indirect? [uh] I mean if you were talking in English with that person?
>
> Mei: (long pause) I had a Korean roommates before [aha] and she is very directly so I talk with her very directly [uhum] and I told her what I’m thinking about about all the stuff [uhum] I’m not sure about other people [uhum] cause - uhm - cause I don’t know about their culture and I don’t want to be - show rude to them like [aha] yeah - I think it’s depending on the person cause uh - cause for my Korean roommate she’s very directly so [uhum] I talk with her very directly that’s the matter cause we have a good friendship [uhum] so it won’t be hurts- hurt our like - hurts us [uhum] if we s- if both of us say all things very directly [uhum] yeah but it’s totally different - different kind - different person ** so I dunno

Similarly to Ahmed and Yanbo, Mei does not bring pre-established ideas of appropriateness into interactions with people with whose culture and communicative style she is not familiar. In communication with her Korean roommate, Mei adjusted her pragmatic behavior, specifically, the level of directness, to match her roommate’s, which resulted in successful interactions and did not cause any problems for their relationship.

However, she also claimed that she would not know how to behave appropriately if she did not know her interlocutors' cultural norms. Thus Mei, similarly to Ahmed, appears not to have pre-established categories of interlocutors with appropriate pragmatic behaviors ascribed to each category. On the one hand, it can be a positive aspect of her pragmatic competence, an indication of openness, which is a pre-requisite for the negotiation of norms; but on the other hand, it appears that it is more likely to be a result of a lack of experience and knowledge of what to do in such situations rather than an indication of Mei's metapragmatic awareness.

Apart from providing the evidence of successful "shuttling", this excerpt illustrates the dynamics of Mei's notions of politeness. Her statement: "I had a Korean roommates before - and she is very directly so I talk with her very directly - and I told her what I'm thinking about about all the stuff - I'm not sure about other people - cause - uhm - cause I don't know about their culture and I don't want to be - show rude to them" implies that Mei considers directness to be rude in some cultures. However, when she and her roommate were direct to each other, Mei was comfortable with that and did not see this behavior as rude, hurtful or damaging for the relationship. Thus, it appears that her evaluations of politeness, while drawing most strongly on Chinese notions acquired through her L1/C1 socialization: "it's like - it's hard to describe cause it's - inside like inside the * - just we think it's polite but maybe not other people don't think of that [uhum] I think it's the way of -- learning when we grow up", have changed due to her interactions with people whose notions, evaluations, and behaviors (in other words, their "politeness-as-practice" (Eelen, 2001)) differed from her own, and thus have affected her own politeness-as-practice.

Finally, similar to other participants, Mei's interview responses are full of apparent contradictions. For example, in one excerpt quoted above, she expressed preference for indirectness in some circumstances: "I don't think I will tell her directly cause it's not very good", while in other excerpts she claimed to have a positive attitude toward directness: "I like people say [things] directly". But in Mei's case, as well as in others', this also appears to be a reflection of the complexities, inconsistencies, and ambivalence of the world in which she lives rather than the inability to express her ideas, personality faults or communication problems (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009, p. 31). Preference for directness as well as the very understanding of what is direct or indirect might be context-dependent.

Maria

Maria is a 20-year-old student from East Africa[18], a speaker of Kalenjin and Swahili. She had been in the US for about 3 months at the time of the study, and while she had been studying English in her home country for about 6 years, she self-identifies her English proficiency as intermediate.

Similar to other participants, Maria claimed that she did not have much experience interacting with other L2 speakers of English, and even in her English

[18] The specific country was concealed to protect the participant's identity.

Composition class she had few opportunities for interaction with her classmates, as she explained in her interview:

> for the non-native speakers I've not been- been - associated with them - like some in my class [uhum] and - most of them don't talk much so - I don't know much about them

Thus, her "third place" was constructed primarily through the interactions with L1 speakers of English in addition to her educational experiences, and unlike most other participants in this study, Maria identified the communicative style of L1 English speakers as less direct than that of the people in her home country:

> especially the native speakers they are soo indirect - like they are so - I can call it polite [uhum] yeah - and - not r- in my country - because I also didn't go like out of town - just within - you know - but just used to people - yeah which is not bad - but here - it's yeah - someone says please and you know and - people kind of - try - kind of respect you - because I feel when you are so polite you are so indirect you respect that person

This excerpt also illustrates that, for Maria, there is a direct correlation between indirectness and politeness, which she interprets as an indication of respect. Because of such positive interpretation of indirectness, Maria claims to be comfortable adjusting her own communicative behavior, although she acknowledged that initially she had experienced some difficulties with it:

> in the beginning it was still difficult like because I was here and -- like at home I would say -- to my sister - give me that cup -- but - here I would say oh H[19] could you please - give me that cup? [aha] because she also does like that - and I feel like oh that's the best way being * [uhum] and I feel okay- I feel really good you know - I don't feel offended when - they talk like that [aha] and I talk like that to them [uhum] things look okay

[19] The name (first, female) has been removed.

In this excerpt, where Maria gave a hypothetical example of how she would make a request to her American roommate, she said that she "does not feel offended" by a more indirect style that her roommates use in interactions with her. In another excerpt, Maria suggested an even more positive orientation toward indirectness, interpreting it as a sign of warmth of the relationship:

> I just feel like - according to me I feel like being- being indirect is a positive - thing positive [uhum] yeah you can be more indire- like direct but yeah it's still positive - but uhh - it's not that warm you know - you'll just be like - cruel (laughter) or something - I don't know if I would use that - with my roommates because they'll be like okay (doubtful intonation)

As for interactions with other L2 English speakers, Maria claims that she typically adopts a more indirect style because she considers it "safer" than a more direct style. On several occasions she claimed that she tries to be indirect with her classmates in the English Composition class:

> because we come from different backgrounds you know - and you n- never know how someone will react - and the best way is to be polite [aha] to be general

She also suggested that using indirectness is the primary strategy she would adopt in any other interaction with a person with whose culture she is not familiar:

> I don't know so much about - culture [aha] yeah so - I'm kind of sensitive to that - kind of * suggest generally be polite [uhum] in speech and everything

Thus, it appears that Maria prefers the same strategy as Mei, but while the preference for indirectness in Mei's case is largely attributed to her L1/C1, as she suggests that Americans are more direct than Chinese, in Maria's case the preference for indirectness seems to contradict her L1/C1 norms. Although Maria did not make cultural generalizations about the culture of her home country as being more direct and suggested that her perception of the communicative style that she and others around her were using in her home country might be specific to her home town, she did claim that the behavior that she observes in the US is more indirect than the behavior she is used to.

Interestingly, Maria explained that she had learned about the pragmalinguistic differences between indirectness and directness in her English language classes in her home country, but had had little introduction to sociopragmatic dimension of this distinction. When asked whether she had learned about the contexts of use of directness and indirectness, Maria responded that her teachers had not sufficiently introduced the sociopragmatic level:

> they didn't actually say like - in the United States - you know they'd give us exams [uhum] quizzes asking okay - differentiate between direct and indirect - and you would feel like - oh direct- indirect is so positive [aha] you know so that's - I dunn- I dunno it's natural automatic like - I just feel like - according to me I feel like being being indirect is a positive - thing positive

The lack of the awareness of sociopragmatic differences is illustrated in Maria's claim that she would use the same request strategy and the same utterance to request help with her essay from her classmate, roommate and teacher:

> I think I would just say the same [the same?] the same - framing the same sentence - like - could you please if you have some time today or any time - could you please check on my paper? [uhum] just describe what I want - you know [aha]

Maria explained that the "description" of what exactly she wants the reviewer to pay attention to and comment on would be different because her teacher and classmate are likely to be more familiar with the specifics of the assignment, but the actual request strategy would be the same for any of these addressees.

On the other hand, Maria's pragmalinguistic knowledge also seems to be problematic. For example, in her written response to CI 1 "Peer Review" (see Appendix B), she wrote:

> I would tell him "Maybe you still have to analyze more critically, because I feel like there is still more I have to do. This time ensure that the concept is right, grammar is good and sentences are short but clear." I would say this to him to ensure that he knows and understands all what the professor wants us to write in our essays.

Maria's request in the first utterance, while being prefaced with a downtoner "maybe" as an internal modifier to downtone its impositive force (Trosborg, 1994, p. 212) and followed with a supportive reason "because I feel like there is still more I have to do" as an external modifier (Trosborg, 1994, p. 218), is still very direct. Maria employed one of the more direct strategies to perform her request, a statement of obligation: "you still have to analyze more critically", which makes her utterance an order, although in its weaker form (Trosborg, 1994, p. 202). Maria's following utterance is an even more direct request strategy. "This time ensure that the concept is right, grammar is good and sentences are short but clear" is an imperative, and moreover, it is not modified either externally or internally, which makes it particularly authoritative (Trosborg, 1994, p. 204).

During the interview, Maria added that she also might request more feedback from her partner in less direct ways, such as with questions: "I would ask like okay what do you think about my essay?" The discrepancy between Maria's written responses and examples provided during the interview might be attributed to the specifics of the written questionnaire as the data collection instrument, in that the responses to written questionnaires do not represent natural speech with respect to many characteristics, including specific speech act realization strategies (cf. Kasper, 1999). However, during the interview Maria confirmed that she would use the utterances she listed in her written response. As Kasper (1999) suggests, despite some limitations of written questionnaire responses, in general, they do “indicate what strategic and linguistic options are consonant with pragmatic norms [of the respondent]” (p. 84). Thus, it appears that although in real-life interactions Maria might use a wider range of request strategies than her written responses imply, including less direct ones, she does not view her written responses as inappropriate.

These choices of direct strategies in Maria’s written response appear to contradict her claims that she tries to be indirect and considers directness to be impolite. Thus, the fact that she considers directness to be impolite and yet does not consider highly direct request strategies to be impolite might suggest a pragmalinguistic failure, that is, the failure to recognize directness in linguistic forms. This is somewhat surprising in light of Maria’s claims that in her English language classes she had been explicitly taught to differentiate between direct and indirect forms: “they’d give us exams [uhum] quizzes asking okay - differentiate between direct and indirect”. Unfortunately, without more detailed information on Maria’s experience with these kinds of pedagogical activities, it is not possible to tell whether they have contributed positively or negatively to the development of her pragmatic competence. That is, it is possible that without such activities Maria’s pragmatic competence in English would have been even more problematic, but it is also possible that such activities have resulted in misunderstanding and confusion. However, it is apparent that the current state of Maria's pragmatic competence has some gaps that might have a negative effect on communicative outcomes of her interactions.

Summary

In the present study all participants revealed, in one way or another, the hybrid and dynamic nature of their pragmatic competence and politeness norms, captured in the metaphor of the "third place". Kramsch (1993) submits that:

> At the intersection of multiple native and target cultures, the major task of language learners is to define for themselves what this 'third place' that they have engaged in seeking will look like, whether they are conscious of it or not. Nobody, least of all the teacher, can tell them where that very personal place is; for each learner it will be differently located, and will make different sense at different times. (p. 257)

As the data illustrate, L2 speakers of English do indeed construct their very own "third places", and on many occasions they appear to be unconscious of both the hybrid nature of their pragmatic competence in English and the processes through which they have built these "third places". However, some participants in this study have exhibited difficulties in the construction of their "third places". In some cases, they are aware of these difficulties, and in others, they are completely oblivious. One example of the latter can be seen in the case of Ahmed. Despite his quite well-developed intercultural awareness, evidenced in many of the narratives he shared during the interview, on some occasions he exhibits the lack of metapragmatic knowledge that leads him to draw the wrong conclusions from his observations of others' behavior and to develop his own behavioral strategies based on these wrongful conclusions.

It has been suggested that hybridity, flexibility of pragmatic norms and the ability to "shuttle", in Canagarajah's (2006) terms, between different speech communities are critically important for successful communication in EIL. However, the ability to "shuttle" requires not only a broad communicative repertoire but also a solid basis of critical awareness, which would allow the speakers to adjust their communicative behavior not only according to their own views of communicative norms, but also taking into account their interlocutors' expectations and behaviors, based on what the speakers know about their interlocutors or observe in interaction.

L2 English speakers in this study exhibited this ability to "shuttle", but they did not appear to be aware of its full potential; rather, their "shuttling" seems to be a by-product of their trial-and-error process, and as such, may result in misunderstanding, pragmatic failure, and cultural stereotypes. In addition, "shuttling" does not imply having separate sets of norms for different speech communities. Despite some participants' expectations that becoming fully competent in English would allow them to switch between two separate sets of norms, it might not be an attainable or even a desirable goal, especially in the case of EIL. As some studies suggest, hybridity might be a natural and unavoidable characteristic of competence of any multilingual speaker, so that in either language their pragmatic behavior would differ from the behavior of monolingual speakers of that language (e.g., Blum-Kulka, 1990, as cited in House 2003b). Some scholars also suggest that hybridity is not only a natural but a desirable characteristic of an EIL speaker's communicative style that could lead to more successful interactions in intercultural encounters (e.g., House, 2003a).

Finally, the data illustrate that the hybridity of the participants' pragmatic competence and concepts of politeness itself is dynamic, not only in the sense that it is ever-changing as one gains higher levels of proficiency, engages in communication with diverse interlocutors and so on, but also in the sense that it allows one to choose different communicative styles and norms from his/her repertoire to use in a particular communicative context.

CHAPTER 5: FACEWORK AND POLITENESS IN EIL INTERACTIONS

Introduction

To provide a “thick description” of facework (Geertz, 1973), the analysis in this chapter will be limited to the analysis of one CI and corresponding interview excerpts. Specifically, this chapter will provide a detailed analysis of the participants’ responses pertaining to CI 1 “Peer Review”. There are several reasons for choosing this CI over all others:

- the communicative situation presented in this item is an intercultural “rich point” (Agar, 1994);
- the scenario presented in this item is highly realistic, as all participants have had an experience of interacting with other L2 English speakers during peer reviews in their ESL Composition classes, and many participants claimed in their responses that they had experienced identical or similar situations, thus increasing the authenticity and reliability of their responses;
- the situation in this CI presents rich opportunities for a range of facework strategies, including but not limited to those pertaining to face-threat;
- the results of the analysis of this item can have the most useful pedagogical implications (for English language teachers in general and for writing/composition teachers in particular).

The chapter will begin with an introduction of peer review as a pedagogical activity and a site of facework. Then, it will introduce the strategy of “opting out” and explore how the participants in this study utilized this strategy in their responses to CI 1

“Peer Review”. Next, other facework strategies will be analyzed. The chapter will conclude with a summary of the analysis.

Peer Review in Teaching ESL Writing

Peer review, also known in teaching writing as peer feedback, peer response, or peer editing, is defined by Liu and Hansen (2002) as “the use of learners as sources of information and interactants for each other in such a way that learners assume roles and responsibilities normally taken on by a formally trained teacher, tutor, or editor in commenting on and critiquing each other’s drafts in both written and oral formats in the process of writing” (p. 1). There are many potential cognitive, social, linguistic, and practical benefits of this activity, but some potential constraints exist as well (Liu & Hansen, 2002, p. 8-11). Studies have found that multiple factors affect students’ experiences during peer review, thus affecting their attitudes toward it and its effects. Usually, the factors that are addressed in the studies include linguistic and sociocultural backgrounds of the students, their proficiency levels, the task, the genre, and the format/mode of reviewing (Liu & Hansen, 2002, p. 19).

Peer reviews in multicultural ESL writing classrooms are complex situations. Many ESL students who received schooling in their home countries did not have any previous experience with peer reviews, and while the process itself might be well explained by the teacher, some might still struggle with the notion that the authority reserved for the teachers is now delegated to their peers. Academic writing presents its own challenges, demanding not only more sophisticated language than these students might possess but also a formal L2 rhetorical schemata, the lack of which might result in inappropriate expectations about the content and the structure of their own and their peers' essays (Liu & Hansen, 2002, p. 11). Moreover, as intercultural encounters, peer reviews are laden with all the complexities discussed in the previous chapters. Thus, multicultural ESL writing classrooms become intercultural "rich points", situations that "strike [one] with their difficulty, their complexity, their inability to fit into the resources [one uses] to make sense out of the world" (Agar, 1994, p. 230). As Agar (1994) argues, to understand such a "rich point", one needs to build a new frame for interpretation, and to do that, "you have to realize that your old frames, ones that you may not have known you had, are only one of a number of possibilities, an arbitrary rather than a "natural" way of seeing, thinking, and acting. You have to become aware of and distance yourself from an identity that shapes who it is that you always thought you were" (p. 232). Thus, understanding a "rich point" requires critical cultural awareness.

At the University of Arizona, English Composition is a required course which is taught as a two-semester sequence, the first course being English 101 and the second being English 102, with corresponding ESL equivalents English 107 and English 108. In these classes, peer reviews are used on a regular basis, although the frequency of peer review sessions and specific ways of conducting peer reviews, of which there are many, are at the discretion of individual instructors. All participants in this study were recruited from these ESL Composition classes (see Chapter 3), and thus are familiar with this activity.

The specific scenario for CI 1 “Peer Review” (see Appendix B) was developed on the basis of a situation that had been informally narrated to the researcher on several occasions by her own students; and therefore represents not only a realistic but also a relatively typical scenario.

Peer Review as a Site of Facework

The data analysis in this chapter is based primarily on the concepts of face and facework as originally introduced by Goffman (e.g., 1967) and complemented with some more recent approaches in the study of face and facework (see Chapter 2). The following section will address the applications of face and facework as theoretical frameworks to the analysis of participants’ pragmatic behaviors and expectations in peer reviews.

The very definition of peer review as a pedagogical activity emphasizes that students are expected to *critique* each other’s drafts (cf. Liu & Hansen, 2002, p. 1). As such, this activity is an example of an “incident”, that is, an activity in which face might be threatened (Goffman, 1967).

In peer review, facework might take very complex forms. Multiple goals and face concerns might interact and clash, and it might be difficult to determine which action would cause face loss. As Goffman (1967) explains, “[a] person may be said to *be in wrong face* when information is brought forth in some way about his [her] social worth which cannot be integrated, even with effort, into the line that is being sustained for him [her]” (p. 8, italics in original). But what will put one in “wrong face”? What is the line that is being sustained, for example, for the reviewer? On the one hand, peer review as a pedagogical activity ascribes to the reviewer the role of an expert and the responsibility to help the other, so if that is the line sustained for him/her, then *not providing* critical feedback would put the reviewer in “wrong face”. On the other hand, the reviewer is still a peer, classmate, or even a friend of the other, so if that is the line sustained for him/her, then it will be *providing* critical feedback that will put the reviewer in “wrong face”. So understanding what line is being sustained for an individual in a peer review situation might be quite a challenge in itself.

Goffman (1967) underscores that an important characteristic of facework is that the face-saving actions that one takes are habitual, standardized practices, and as such, different cultures are likely to have different repertoires of face-saving practices (p. 13). He also warns that “[i]f a person is to employ his [her] repertoire of face-saving practices, obviously he [she] must first become aware of the interpretations that others may have placed upon his [her] acts and the interpretations that he [she] ought perhaps to place upon theirs. In other words, he [she] must exercise perceptiveness” (p. 13). This consideration is crucial in EIL interactions.

The complexity of facework in multicultural settings if further exacerbated by the multiplicity of faces and face concerns. First, each interactant has his or her self-face to consider. However, some have argued that in certain cultures self-face might be regarded as less important than the other’s face. For example, Kotani (2008) writes:

> Individuals who subscribe to collectivistic values, including Japanese, have been found to have a tendency to use an indirect, high-context conflict style to maintain other-face or mutual-face and to use more obliging and avoiding styles. Those

> who subscribe to individualistic values, by contrast, including U.S. Americans, tend to use a direct, low-context conflict style to maintain self-face and use more competitive or dominating styles (Oetzel et al., 2001; Ting-Toomey, 2005). (p. 340)

However, not only is this “a tendency” rather than a rule, but also we cannot predict how this tendency will play out in the “third place”, as has been discussed in the previous chapter. Therefore, the analysis of facework should take into account the possibility of each interactant having a concern for his or her own face regardless of which culture they come from.

Second, as Kotani (2008) implies and as Goffman originally suggested, a person has not only his or her own face to consider in an interaction: “[a] person will also have feelings about the face sustained for the other participants, and while these feeling may differ in quantity and direction from those he [she] has for his [her] own face, they constitute an involvement in the face of others that is as immediate and spontaneous as the involvement he [she] has in his [her] own face” (Goffman, 1967, p. 6). Thus, each interactant might need to consider the other’s face as well as one’s own. Moreover, there might also be the so-called “mutual-face” concern to attend to, that is, “the concern for both parties’ images and the image of the relationship” (Ting-Toomey, 2009, p. 228).

Third, face concerns and other goals create a complex interplay in a communicative encounter. In any interaction a person is likely to have more than one goal, and it is reasonable to suggest that face concerns might not always be the top priority for him or her. For example, Spencer-Oatey (2005, 2009) proposes that rapport management judgments are affected by three key elements: behavioral expectations, face sensitivities, and interactional wants or goals. She suggests that the role of interactional/transactional goals can be analyzed in terms of how they interact with relational/interpersonal goals (2009, p. 150). At any given time a person might need to balance a number of interactional goals and face concerns, which are not only context-dependent but also dynamic. Therefore, it is important to consider the whole range of interlocutors' goals to fully understand how their interaction with face concerns affects interlocutors' behavior.

Finally, Spencer-Oatey (2007, 2009) suggests that face is context-dependent. In her discussion of the relationship between face and identity, she suggested that while they are similar in that "both relate to the notion of one's 'self'-image (including individual, relational and collective construals of self…) and both comprise multiple self-aspects or attributes", "face is only associated with attributes that are affectively sensitive to the claimant" (2009, p. 141). Thus, a person has positively-evaluated attributes that he/she wants others to acknowledge and negatively-evaluated attributes that he/she wants others not to ascribe to him/her, and a person will feel a loss, threat, or gain to face only when a positive attribute is not acknowledged or a negative attribute is ascribed (ibid.). Spencer-Oatey also claims that these sets of attributes might be different not only for different people but also for the same person in different contexts; and thus, theoretical frameworks and researchers should not make *a priori* assumptions about face sensitivities (2009, pp. 141-142, italics in the original). This caveat is very important for the analysis of facework in peer reviews, especially in a multicultural context, because different students are likely to have not only a different repertoire of facework strategies as Goffman (1967) suggested, but also different values placed on this activity in terms of interactional and relational goals (cf. Spencer-Oatey, 2009).

Opting Out

This section will introduce "opting out" as a strategic choice of (non-)action and will analyze the type of encounter in which the receiver of (no) feedback in peer review does not engage in any further discussion of this matter, in other words, chooses to opt out. As the analysis will show, opting out is not always employed as a facework strategy, but alternative reasons for opting out will be briefly addressed as they provide important insights into the dynamics of face and facework in EIL interactions.

Not performing a particular speech act that might otherwise be expected in that situation is quite common. According to Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987) Politeness Theory, opting out is a type of a strategy to deal with communicative acts that threaten face, or Face-Threatening Acts (FTA). According to these scholars, opting out is obviously quite effective in avoiding face threats but is associated with one major pay-off, namely, that the speaker does not achieve her/his desired communication (1978, p. 77). Therefore, the strategy of "not doing the FTA" is expected to be employed when the estimated risk of face loss is the greatest (p. 65). Other scholars agree that "this strategic choice is more likely to be made if S[peaker] is faced with a situation calling for the performance of a highly face-threatening act … such as, for example, *criticizing* or *complaining*, than a less threatening one, such as, for example, inviting or offering"

(Bonikowska, 1988, p. 170, emphasis mine). However, Bonikowska (1988) also suggests that speakers can utilize non-linguistic means to convey their intentions and thus still achieve their communicative goals even when employing this strategy (p. 178).

In their discussion Brown and Levinson (1978) chose to “ignore” not doing the FTA as “there are naturally no interesting linguistic reflexes of this last-ditch strategy” (p. 77), but some have argued that studying opting out can offer valuable insights into the speakers’ pragmatic competence and behavior (e.g., Bonikowska, 1988; Marti, 2006). Moreover, investigating opting out is important in light of the claims that many of the principles of Brown and Levinson’s Politeness Theory do not hold across languages (e.g., Ide, 1989; Lee-Wong, 1994; Matsumoto, 1988, 2003; Meier, 2004; Wierzbicka, 1985; Yu, 2003), and thus it might not be true across all contexts that speakers use this strategy because they perceive it to be the least face-threatening.

It is not uncommon for L1 speakers of a language to opt out as some speech act studies have illustrated (e.g., Bonikowska, 1988; Marti, 2006; Olshtain & Weinbach, 1993; Trosborg, 1994). In L1 contexts, opting out is utilized because the speaker sees it as the most appropriate behavior in a given situation. At the very least, it cannot be said that native speakers of a language lack pragmatic and/or linguistic competence to perform a speech act in question in a socially appropriate way. In L2 speakers’ case, however, it might be very difficult to distinguish between opting out as the result of a strategic choice and opting out as the result of other considerations or lack of pragmatic/linguistic competence, perceived or real.

For example, in her study of Japanese speakers' behavior in "problematic" communicative encounters with native English speakers in the US, Kotani (2008) found that her participants attributed their choice to avoid engaging in a problematic situation to the lack of confidence in their linguistic abilities (p. 351), problems with establishing a close, friendly relationship with native English speakers (which, in fact, were at least partially due to their (perceived) lack of linguistic abilities) (p. 352), and the difference they perceived between themselves as a group and "Americans" as a group (p. 353). Even though Kotani did not explicitly discuss the pragmatic competence of her participants, some data in her study suggest that the (perceived) lack of pragmatic competence also contributed to their decision to opt out. For example, one of Kotani's participants explained her decision not to engage in an interaction by stating that she does not know how to convey her intended meaning in a "polite" manner:

…And it would be easier to say [in Japanese]. If it were in Japanese, I could ask in a soft tone of voice like, "Do you have money?" Americans are straightforward, so I don't know how to say politely [in English], "Give the money back to me." … Maybe it's not harsh in English, but if we translate it, it sounds harsh, like, "Give it back."…
Excerpt 2, from Kotani (2008), p. 348.

In another study Davis (2007) observed that resistance to pragmatic norms of a particular speech community might lead L2 learners to avoid certain pragmatic routines characteristic of that speech community. Also, cultural and linguistic backgrounds of L2 speakers have an effect on their choice to opt out. Olshtain and Weinbach (1993) cite an example of Russian immigrants in Israel who tended to opt out of complaining in a hypothetical situation when a friend refused to loan them money while Moroccan immigrants used a wide variety of complaint strategies in the same situation. On the other hand, in another hypothetical situation when someone took the parking spot they were about to take, Russians tended to use very severe complaint strategies, including threats and cursing, while Moroccans opted out or used softer strategies.

These studies, although few in number, suggest that it might be very informative "to consider not only 'the said', but also 'the unsaid' responses of the informants, [including] deliberate choices of opting out" (Marti, 2006, p. 1838).

Opting Out as Facework

In his discussion of facework strategies, Goffman (1967) suggests that:

> the person will have two points of view - a defensive orientation toward saving his [her] own face and a protective orientation toward saving the other's face. Some practices will be primarily defensive and others primarily protective, although in general one may expect these two perspectives to be taken at the same time. In trying to save the face of others, the person must choose a tack that will not lead to loss of his [her] own; in trying to save his [her] own face, he [she] must consider the loss of face that his [her] action may entail for others. (p. 14)

The basic type of avoidance, avoiding the face-threatening contact altogether (p. 15), cannot be employed by the students in peer reviews, unless, of course, they choose not to attend the class for which a peer review is scheduled, but that is not a practical solution. There are so many class meetings that include or are solely devoted to peer review that the student would fail the class for poor attendance should he/she choose to employ this strategy.

Other avoidance strategies Goffman (1967) categorizes into two groups, defensive measures and protective measures:

- defensive measures include such strategies as avoiding threatening topics/activities, being modest and using hedging in any claims made about oneself;
- protective measures include such strategies as showing respect, politeness, employing discretion and ambiguous statements, preemptively providing explanations if one is about to commit a potentially offensive act, employing a joking manner when making a face-threatening remark, "not noticing" the other's action that has caused the other loss of face (pp. 15-18).

Opting out, then, is a strategy that potentially can be either defensive or protective, or both at the same time.

Juchun, a 20-year-old female from China, who had been in the US for about 1.5 years at the time of the study, first as a student in an intensive English program and later as a university student, wrote in her response to CI 1:

> No, I would not say anything to my partner.
> This thing happened to me all the time, and I do the same thing sometimes. I wouldn't say anything because I don't wanna embrrace my partner, and it is really ok for me if he/she didn't write anything on my paper. As long as I read creaful on his/her essay, I would be happy about it.

Unfortunately, Juchun did not participate in the interview, so she could not be asked to explain her own reasons for not providing feedback for her partners and what, in her opinion, might be the reason for her partner not providing feedback for her. However, her choice to opt out of further interaction on this matter is undoubtedly a face-saving move, and she identified it as a primarily protective measure to avoid causing her partner a loss of face: “I don’t wanna embrrace (*embarrass*) my partner”. Also, it is evident that Juchun had considered her own interactional goals when making the decision. She stated that, “it is really ok for me if he/she didn’t write anything on my paper. As long as I read creaful (*carefully*) on his/her essay, I would be happy about it”. According to the scholarship on teaching writing, responding to peers’ writing “builds the critical skills needed to analyze and revise one’s own writing” (Leki, 1990, as cited in Liu & Hansen, 2002, p. 8). Composition teachers often address this aspect when introducing peer review activities in their classes, and it appears that Juchun is familiar with it. Thus, even though Juchun did not receive any useful feedback from her partner, she had still gained something from her work during this peer review session, and thus had at least partially achieved her practical goal to a satisfactory extent, as she indicated in her statement: “I would be happy about it”.

Ji Hye, a 28-year-old female from Korea, who had been in the US for about 3 months as a university student at the time of the study, explained her view of the situation in the following way:

> I think, if he/she didn’t write anything except “good job” on my essay, it means he/she didn’t enjoy reading it. The given situation mentioned that I know my essay was far from being good, so I assume my classmate who read my essay didn’t consider my essay was good. He or she just wanted to be nice. Maybe he or she couldn’t find anything that intriguing from my essay. I will figure out why that student wasn’t interested in my essay, with reviewing my essay by myself. Reading and writing comment on each other’s drafts are not give-and-take. It’s a part of studying, but it’s not a labor for price. I would learn something from other people’s essay with reading those and writing comments on those.

Ji Hye's response indicates that her own choice to opt out of further discussion of her essay was based on her interpretation of her partner's actions. She saw the lack of critical feedback as a protective measure by which her partner was trying to protect her face. Ji Hye further confirmed such interpretation in her interview: "he or she said it's nice - which means they wanna be polite - they [*don't*] wanna hurt my feeling". Therefore, to reciprocate her partner's concern for her face, Ji Hye chose not to pursue the matter. If she were to complain or request more feedback, she would not only force her partner to do what she/he tried to avoid, but also put her partner in "wrong face" by indicating that he/she had failed to fulfill Ji Hye's expectations and/or the responsibilities of the reviewer. In addition, attention to practical goals is also evident in Ji Hye's response when she wrote that, "I would learn something from other people's essay with reading those and writing comments on those". Thus, similarly to Juchun, Ji Hye balances her interactional and relational goals.

It also appears that in this situation opting out does not preclude one from achieving his or her desired communication, contrary to Brown and Levinson's claim (1978, p. 77). Bonikowska (1988) suggested that the speaker can utilize non-linguistic means to convey her/his intention (p. 178), but in this case the very absence of critical feedback was interpreted by Ji Hye as a "polite" strategy, an indirect criticism, the lack of anything "interesting", "intriguing", "good", or "enjoyable" in her essay, and she took it as a suggestion to revise her essay in the same way as she would have taken more direct criticism. Of course, the success of this strategy in these circumstances is contingent on the writer's awareness of the deficiencies in his or her draft, otherwise he or she might take the lack of critical feedback as the evidence of the lack of issues to criticize. It is also contingent on the writer's awareness that opting out might be used as a face-saving or politeness strategy. In Ji Hye's case, she appears to have developed such an awareness in her previous interactions with her classmates:

> …he or she said it's nice - which means they wanna be polite - they [don't] wanna hurt my feeling
> …they can't write like - oh your essay is terrible - they can't write that (laughter) or they can't say that [that would be impolite?] ohh the- uh maybe they think it is impolite - sometimes they are really care about me [uhum] especially when I go to English class - uh there is another Korean but - usually I talk to Chinese or other - friends [uhum] and they uh we - basically we come from different culture - so they are very careful yeah very care about me (laughter)

Based on her previous interactions with her classmates in the English composition class, the majority of whom were Chinese, Ji Hye constructed a frame of interpretation (Agar, 1994, p. 232) through which the actions of her classmates were interpreted primarily as the acts of "really caring about" her. This frame allowed her to interpret the lack of critical feedback as indirect criticism and an act of good will. Jiang (2003), who studied Chinese students' attitudes toward and behaviors during peer review activities in an ESL composition class, has made a compelling argument that their face concerns and face-saving orientation have a strong effect on their attitudes and behaviors. The majority of participants in his study expressed concerns about "hurting" or "embarrassing" their partners with negative/critical feedback and avoided providing such feedback, sometimes even when urged to by their partners (e.g., pp. 116-117). Thus, at least in case of her Chinese classmates, Ji Hye's interpretation is likely to be correct.

Ji Hye's response also shows evidence of metapragmatic awareness when she indicated the variability of her politeness judgments. In her assessment of her partners' intentions, she used the word “maybe”, suggesting that there is a possibility that providing negative feedback might be considered impolite: “maybe they think it is impolite”.

Similar facework pattern is exhibited by Zhiwei, a 21-year-old female from China, who had been in the US for about 1.5 years at the time of the study, first as a student in an intensive English program and later as a university student:

> I wouldn’t say anything to my partner. Because, he/she thinks my draft is too boring but he/she is kind and doesn’t want to point out the drawbacks in my so poor draft.

Zhiwei also interpreted her partner’s lack of comments as a face-saving strategy and an act of “kindness”, so she reciprocated by not asking for more feedback, which might be perceived as face-threatening. Thus, Zhiwei’s behavior seems to correspond to Jiang’s (2003) findings about typical Chinese behavior in peer review contexts. So it appears that Zhiwei used the Chinese cultural frame, that is, that she transferred a familiar frame into a new context, although it is possible that she developed it on the basis on the interactions with her classmates, as did Ji Hye. Unfortunately, Zhiwei did not participate in the interview, so we do not know how she had built this frame or why she though it was appropriate to transfer it.

Conflicting Frames of Interpretation

While research supports the assumption that Chinese speakers have a very strong orientation toward protecting the other’s face and that such an orientation often leads them to avoid providing negative feedback during peer reviews (e.g., Jiang, 2003), it does not mean that all Chinese students have such a frame of interpretation or exhibit such behavior in peer reviews. For example, a study by Spencer-Oatey (2009) illustrated that Chinese speakers' behavior is affected by an interplay of different face sensitivities and interactional goals, and thus is more complex than simply following the other- or mutual-face orientation. Jiang (2003) also observed differences in attitudinal and behavioral patterns between the members of the seemingly homogeneous group of Chinese ESL students in a writing class[20]. According to Tracy (2001), "people's communicative responses [in problematic situations] are not uniform, even among those who speak the same language, so that their conversational choices or strategies become consequential" (as cited in Kotani, 2008, p. 340). When interlocutors come from different languages and cultures, the difficulty increases due to the different expectations and understandings of appropriate ways to handle problematic situations.

For example, Huan, a 19-year-old Chinese male, who had been in the US for 4 years at the time of this study, first as a high school student and later as a university student, did not interpret his partners' behavior as facework:

> I don't talk to him directly, Because it only means, he didn't spend any effort on my paper, not a responsable person, I will find another student to comment on my draft.

Huan's frame of interpretation did not involve face concerns, and neither did it involve the aspect of "caring". In fact, it was quite the opposite. Huan labeled his reviewer as "not responsible", which implies the lack of caring about either the obligations of the reviewer or Huan's needs.

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[20] Participants in Jiang's study were all from Mainland China, between 18 and 19 years old, mostly male (13 males and 5 females) (see Jiang, 2003, pp. 33-34, for a more detailed description).

Another Chinese student, Haidan, a 20-year-old female, who had been in the US for about 3 years as a university student at the time of the study, suggested a similar interpretation of her partner's actions:

In her response to CI 1 she wrote the following:

> I won't say anything to him/her since him/her is also an international student. Maybe there are some grammar or organization problems make my essay no clear. However, I hope to get advice from others

In her interview Haidan offered another possible interpretation:

> actually in the class when somebody - they don't have - anything to told you - an advice - it kind of means they didn't see that paper or essay - like in detail or they don't care about it

However, in neither of her interpretations did she consider her partner's behavior to be a face-saving strategy. Haidan's first interpretation attributed the lack of feedback to either the deficiencies of her own draft or the lack of linguistic or schemata knowledge on behalf of her reviewer rather than face concerns. Her second interpretation attributed it to her partner's negative personal traits, as did Huan. Moreover, she explicitly applied a "lack of caring" frame to interpret her partner's behavior.

Manal, a 19-year-old female from Saudi Arabia, who had been in the US for about 8 months at the time of the study, had a similar interpretation of her partner's behavior. She explained her choice not to engage in further discussion of the matter in the following way:

> I wouldn't say anything to him/her because everyone should do the work in correct and complete manner. However, if she/he sees that this is what he/she can do that is fine, but if not he/she is going to lose credits and I can have many other revision options.

Manal’s statement, “everyone should do the work in correct and complete manner”, implies that she attributed her partner’s actions to the lack of either ability or willingness to “do the work in correct and complete manner”, the latter being a variation of the “lack of caring” frame.

Manal has quite an extensive experience of living in a variety of European and Asian countries and has some knowledge of several other languages in addition to Arabic and English. Prior to coming to the US, she had studied English for 6 months at a school in England and had lived in other countries for periods ranging from 1 month to 1.5 years. Given such a wealth of intercultural experiences, Manal is more likely to have a higher level of cultural awareness than other participants whose intercultural experiences are more limited. In this light the certainty of her response and the lack of flexibility in the interpretation of her partner’s behavior and intentions are somewhat surprising.

Kwan Woo, a 20-year-old male from Korea, who had been in the US for 3 months at the time of the study and had previously studied English for 2 years in a full-time immersion school in Cambodia, also attributed the lack of feedback to either linguistic or personality faults of his partner:

> I wouldn’t be satisfied but wouldn’t really complain or ask for more comments on my draft since I know she/he wouldn’t be either not as fluent in English as I am or concerned of my paper at all. I would just try my best to find a native speaker who can review the paper or go visit the instructor in his office hour.

While it is not clear what affected the way Haidan and Huan had built their frames of interpretation, Kwan Woo had built his on the observations of his classmates’ behavior. He did not participate in the interview but had narrated his experience in response to question 11 on the questionnaire:

> Well the similar things usually happen in my English 107 class. Most of them are hardly able to understand the vocabulary and words that I use which are more of academics and sophisticated, so everytime I ask them for the peer-review on my draft I don't usually expect anything big. They most likely end up getting lost in the reading and giving me general advices which I already know. And sometimes it really pisses me off because I don't feel like learning and improving. The level of peer-reviewing between my high school friends was way higher and helpful in improving the quality of paper than the current english class which is supposed to be college-level.

In this narrative, Kwan Woo made it clear that he had constructed his frame of interpretation in his English 107 class. Of particular interest in Kwan Woo's case is that in the past he had positive experience with peer reviews, which suggests that he is not prejudiced against this activity in general. Moreover, his previous experience made him realize that his peers' feedback is "helpful in improving the quality of [his] paper". This is especially important because Kwan Woo had studied in a full-time English immersion school where his classmates were from a variety of linguistic and cultural backgrounds, similarly to his English 107 classmates. It suggests that he is not prejudiced against other ESL speakers as reviewers in general, even though in his other statement he claimed that he would seek help from a "native [English] speaker". So it appears that his interpretation of his partner's actions is context-specific, and it was this particular group of peers to which he attributed these negative characteristics.

On the one hand, such alternative interpretations are not surprising. According to the studies of students' perceptions of peer reviews in college ESL composition classrooms, some students distrust their peers' ability to provide feedback and critique their essays (e.g., Jiang, 2003; Mangelsdorf, 1992; Nelson & Carson, 1998). Nor are these interpretations necessarily incorrect: it would be naïve to suggest that university students are always highly motivated, responsible, and diligent.

What is of importance, however, is the process of construction of these frames of interpretation. Both Haidan and Zhiwei are Chinese, but their frames of interpretation directly contradict each other: “lack of caring” (Haidan) vs. “caring” (Zhiwei). Both Ji Hye and Kwan Woo are Korean and had built their frames of interpretation through interactions in their English composition classes, but Ji Hye had built a “caring” frame, while Kwan Woo, “lack of caring”, evidenced in his statement: “I know she/he wouldn’t be either *not as fluent in English as I am or concerned of my paper at all*” (emphasis mine). The problem indicated by these conflicting frames is not that one frame is better than another, as in “caring” is necessarily better than “lack of caring”. Neither is it that one frame is correct and the other is not, because in EIL interaction both participants should be equally engaged in the negotiation of meaning. The problem appears to be that, in Goffman’s (1967) terms, the participants in this study lack perceptiveness, the “aware[ness] of the interpretations that others may have placed upon his [her] acts and the interpretations that he [she] ought perhaps to place upon theirs” (p. 13).

It is reasonable to expect variability in speakers’ judgments, but the issue with the judgments of the study participants’ is that they rarely consider alternative explanations of their partners’ behaviors. As is evident from examples above, the participants are not flexible in their interpretations. Kwan Woo says “I *know* that”, Huan says “it *only* means”, and Zhiwei says “he/she *is* kind” (emphasis mine). Others, such as Ji Hye and Haidan, hedge their statements with “I think” or “maybe”, but they do not provide alternative interpretations. A significant difference in the latter case that might have an impact on the social relationship between the interactants is that Ji Hye's frame of interpretation ascribes positive intentions to her partners rather than attributes their behavior to their lack of abilities or negative personality traits, as does Haidan.

In other words, participants in this study appear to lack the flexibility which is needed for the negotiation of meaning. And, as many EIL scholars agree, negotiation of meaning lies in the core of intercultural communication, and successful communication depends on speakers' negotiation skills more than on any other aspect of their competence (e.g., House, 2002; McKay, 2009). The reality is that in case of EIL communicative encounters, simply building a new frame is not enough. As has been discussed in the previous chapter, EIL encounters are "third places" and, as House (2003a) suggests, the "community of ELF[/EIL] speakers is "a kind of "intersociety" which interactants must create from scratch with each new ELF[/EIL] event" (p. 148). Thus, the ability to create multiple frames and choose one accordingly to the situation is crucial, and the data suggest that participants in this study lack this ability.

The lack of understanding of the other's frames of interpretation might lead to the development of cultural stereotypes. For example, Ahmed, a 19-year-old Saudi Arabian, after having experienced similar situations in his ESL Composition class with a Chinese classmate, had developed the following understanding:

> I believe that Chinese have like - if you want to do something you have to do it your own - I can't like for example help you all the time [uhum] that's what I saw

On the one hand, Ahmed added a qualifier to his statement: “I don’t believe that all Chinese do that”, but later he returned to this point and contrasted the behavior of his Chinese partner with the Saudi Arabian cultural value:

> it’s not like they don’t want to help me just like - why should I do it for him - [uhum] myself - I have something to do [okay] * in my culture [uhum] we have something I don’t know it’s called in Arabic * - if you have something to do very important - but somebody needs your help - and you do it for him - it’s like it’s my culture [uhum] if you do it for him it’s like give you some values and I don’t know how to explain that but this is how we do it in my culture [uhum] we like give help to other people [uhum] ** more than they give us

In this excerpt, Ahmed shifts between singular and plural pronouns when talking about his Chinese partner and Chinese as a cultural group, which might imply that although he does not wish to overgeneralize this behavior, he sees it as typical for the Chinese. Moreover, Ahmed contrasts the behavior of his partner not just with his own behavior, but with the behavior of Saudi Arabians as a cultural group, evidenced in his use of expressions such as “my culture” and the pronouns “we” and “us”. Thus Ahmed seems to be contrasting not just the behaviors of individuals but cultural values that underlie such behaviors.

Ahmed appears to attribute his partner’s behavior to the cultural group to which his partner belongs as a result of the ultimate attribution error. Ultimate attribution error, the notion introduced by Pettigrew (1979), suggests that when individuals witness what they perceive to be a negative behavior by a member of a different group (outgroup), they are more likely to attribute it to the personality of the actor who is seen as representative of the whole group rather than situational factors, and as a result, attribute negative characteristics to the other group and form and/or reinforce stereotypes about them (as cited in Kotani, 2008, p. 340).

Other Facework Strategies

The participants who chose to engage in the interaction exhibited preference for requesting feedback rather than complaining about not having received any/enough. Some interlanguage pragmatics research has suggested that “newcomers to the target community attempt to sound less offensive and less face-threatening” (Olshtain & Weinbach, 1993, p. 120). Thus, one of the reasons to avoid complaining might be the perception of this speech act as more face-threatening and/or impolite. Rather than opt out or complain then, some participants in this study chose to conceal their intention to complain and utilized a variety of strategies to engage in an interaction with their partner to receive more feedback.

Avoidance of Complaining

Trosborg (1994) defines the complaint as “an illocutionary act in which the speaker (the complainer) expresses his/her disapproval, negative feeling, etc. towards the state of affairs described in the proposition (the complainable) and for which he/she holds the hearer (the complainee) responsible, either directly or indirectly” (pp. 311-312). Complains might be seen as highly threatening to the social relationship between the speaker and the hearer (Trosborg, 1994, p. 312).

The avoidance of complaining as facework is explained by Yanbo, a 21-year-old Chinese male. In his written response he explicitly stated that he would not complain:

> I wouldn't complain about it.
> Without knowing my partner's culture custom, I couldn't determine whether he's been polite or impolite, tried hard or not.
> Since he didn't write down useful comments, I would ask, in hope that he would tell me in speaking instead of by writing down. I may ask like this: "What do you think about my draft?", "Will it better if I change this?" "Do you have any idea if I could improve my draft?"

Yanbo's statement that he "wouldn't complain about it" implies that complaining is a strategy that he had considered but decided against. The reason for this decision is his lack of confidence in his partner's reasons and intentions. In his interview, Yanbo explained that he believes that people from different cultures are being polite in different ways. When he lacks knowledge of his interlocutor's notions of politeness, he chooses to give that person the benefit of the doubt, so to speak, and act as if the person had been polite. Yanbo says: "if I knew that [*whether the partner was acting politely according to his notion of politeness or not*] certainly I might act differently - if I do not - I will just act as if he's polite". If his partner was trying to be polite, a proper response would be to reciprocate, and thus complaining, as a more face-threatening strategy, would not be appropriate, as Yanbo himself explained in the following interview excerpt:

> R: in situation one you wrote - I wouldn't complain about it ... why did you think about complaining in this particular situation and why did you decide that you're not going to complain?
>
> Yanbo: something - something maybe- maybe in my understanding that complaining is - is not polite - is impolite
>
> R: it's never polite or in this particular situation it's not polite?
>
> Yanbo: (long pause) is not- it isn't never - it isn't never [uhum] maybe just in this situation

R: so why do you think in this situation it's not polite?

Yanbo: (long pause) I don't really know (laughter) … I don't really know the reason - I just feel like that

R: … do you think that it's not good for you - or it's not good for the other person - if you complain? …

Yanbo: I guess- I guess I think it's bad for me -- yes I think- I thought like this [uhum] ** then I thought it's a bad behavior to c- complain … just in this situation [uhum] maybe - say if I want the other person to - write more about- more comments so - his companion would - would know better - if I want to do this I may- I may use other methods- other than complaining [uhum] cause -- so that's -- and complaining - I think - I think complaining - might- might have- might achieve the- the same goal but - but also it will make other people - not feel good [uhum] although a- complaining - can make my compa- my companion - know that he should write more [aha] but he- he will also -- not feel good [okay] so that's what I thought

First, Yanbo stated that, in his opinion, complaining, at least in this particular situation, is not a "polite" behavior; and therefore, complaining in this situation would not be appropriate if the other person was trying to be polite. Yanbo's explanation of his opting out of complaining also illustrates the decision-making process, and specifically, the process of weighing face concerns against interactional goals. In the given situation Yanbo's main interactional goal was to receive comments from the reviewer, and Yanbo realized that complaining might achieve this goal. However, because complaining is "a bad behavior" and would make the reviewer "not feel good", he decided to use "other methods". From the perspective of facework then, this excerpt shows a discursive struggle over the question of whose face is being threatened in this situation and whose face needs protection. Interestingly, Yanbo started with the statement that "it's bad for me", stressing the pronoun "me", but later he continued to say that it "will make the other people not feel good". Thus, Yanbo's self-face and the face of his interlocutor appear to be mutually dependent and connected. His statement that complaining is "bad for me" illustrates his concern for self-face, as he later acknowledged that complaining might help him achieve his interactional goal. In addition, his assessment of complaining as "bad behavior" also points to face considerations: were he to behave "badly", he would be in "wrong face".

Yanbo's choice of the line of behavior also illustrates the interplay of face concerns and interactional goals. Rather than opt out of any action and thus any face-threat altogether, he decided to choose a less face-threatening strategy because the practical goals were still of importance to him. Having assumed that his partner had attempted to be polite in not providing critical comments, and having decided that he should be polite in return, Yanbo chose to ask his partner some questions that elicit more detailed negative feedback in a less direct way: "What do you think about my draft?", "Will it (sic.) better if I change this?", "Do you have any idea if (sic.) I could improve my draft?"

Most likely Yanbo's preference for a less direct strategy is based on Chinese politeness norms. Initially, he struggled with an explanation of the source of his knowledge about the (im)politeness of complaining: "I don't really know the reason - I just feel like that". However, a later interview excerpt suggests that he views this perception as the result of his L1/C1 socialization:

> the cultures - make - different answers [yeah] it is very specific [yeah] although they also would think their answer- why they answer that- why they polite - they will think -- it's just like that - as I do - I think - it's polite just like that

In this excerpt Yanbo explained his belief that different cultures have different notions of politeness, so that the members of these cultures unconsciously, "just like that", adopt these notions. In this light, his later statement "as I do" implies that his conceptualization of politeness come from his, that is, Chinese, culture.

Questions can also function as indirect complaints. For example, Rajpal, a 19-year-old male from India[21], who had been in the US for about 2 years at the time of the study, wrote in his response:

> I would [say something] but not in an angry tone. I probably would ask something like "Did you really not find anything wrong?", because I won't like to make him feel angry/weird. And may be in future, I will choose some other partner if possible.

In the explanation of his choice of strategy during the interview, Rajpal revealed that, in addition to trying to elicit more negative feedback from his partner, his question: "Did you really not find anything wrong?" was meant to replace another one: "Why didn't you write anything?" He explained that a more direct question might anger his partner:

> it might be like uhh he might be feeling why is he talking to me like that or something … if I asked why didn't you write anything then he might find it - offensive or something

That is, this question "Did you really not find anything wrong?" was intended as an indirect expression of disapproval of his partners' actions. This question is more ambivalent and might be interpreted as a request for confirmation that there are indeed no problems with Rajpal's essay. The question "Why didn't you write anything?", as a direct accusation, has a stronger illocutionary force of complaint (Trosborg, 1994, p. 317-318).

[21] Rajpal identifies himself as a native speaker of Punjabi and Hindi, and he considers English to be only a subject that he has studied in school. Thus, although India is considered an "outer circle" country (Kachru, 1986) or the country where English is an "Institutional L2" (Siegel, 2003), Rajpal's experience of learning and using English before coming to the US is similar to other study participants' who are all from the "expanding circle" countries (Kachru, 1986) or the countries where English is an "External L2" (Siegel, 2003).

Thus, Rajpal relies on indirectness as the other-face saving strategy, in order to prevent causing his partner offense. Rajpal also stated that he would avoid working with this person in the future, which indicates that the social relationship between him and his partner had already been significantly damaged, even though there had not been any overt confrontation between then.

Similarly to Rajpal, Patricia, an 18-year-old student from Central America, who had been in the US for about 3 months at the time of the study, also used questions to fulfill two functions:

> I would say: "do you like it? … everything … really … Why you like it? you found everything right" […] and maybe I would ask what part you like it the most to verify if the student really read the essay and make him/her realize he/she is not doing a good work

On the one hand, she attempted to elicit more feedback, and on the other, employed questions as an indirect complaint strategy, as she explained in her interview:

> Patricia: because I think it is mean - like - can you write something - that sounds mean
>
> R: why does it sound mean?
>
> Patricia: I don't know - I don't like to do it like that - I always - uhh make the person realize - indir- indirectedly [uhum] because - I don't know - I would feel bad

An utterance "Can you write something?" is a conventionally indirect request (Trosborg, 1994, pp. 197-198), but for Patricia it appears to be too direct and thus inappropriate for this situation. Interestingly, she disapproved of her partner's behavior: "he/she is not doing a good work", but she did not find it a sufficient condition to raise the level of directness of her requests or to express her disapproval as a complaint strategy (Trosborg, 1994, p. 316). Also, Patricia suggested that she avoids excessive directness out of concern for self-face rather than her partner's face when she stated: "I would feel bad", if she were to use a more direct strategy to express her intention.

Another strategy that might be used to address face concerns is humor. Jianfei, a 21-year-old female from China, who had been in the US for about 9 months at the time of the study, appears to use a complaint strategy in her written response:

> Did you notice that our English teacher just said 'good job' is not an accepted comments? If you can't understand my draft, just ask me & I really need your advise.

The first part of her response appears to be a complaint in the form of an indirect accusation (Trosborg, 1994, p. 317), but in her interview Jianfei explained that she would employ a joking manner in saying this: "I think I'm gonna like - talk her and like just make a joke like - did you hear - did you hear what - our teacher said and just like this". Such manner might mitigate the face-threatening force of the complaint or even transform the illocutionary force of complaint altogether, and thus can be an effective face-saving strategy, but the danger lies in the possibility that the hearer might fail to interpret this utterance as a joke. The second part of Jianfei's written response might be a mild hint, but it is more likely to be used as a supportive move for the request. So in real-life interaction Jianfei would likely use such statement in combination with another request strategy.

Request Strategies

The speech act of request can be defined as "an illocutionary act whereby a speaker (requester) conveys to a hearer (requestee) that he/she wants the requestee to perform an act which is for the benefit of the speaker" (Trosborg, 1994, p. 187). As Trosborg emphasizes, the characteristic feature of a request is that it is an act that is performed for the benefit of the speaker and at the cost to the hearer, which distinguishes it from other speech acts such as warnings or suggestions (1994, p. 188). However, a request may be presented as a warning, or suggestion, or advice (1994, p. 189). Therefore, in this study, following Trosborg, the acts that have "the illocutionary point of "getting somebody to do something" which is "primarily to the benefit if the hearer" [and] may range in illocutionary force from ordering to begging" (1994, p. 189) are analyzed as requests.

"Giving Face"

The request strategies chosen by Haiwen, a 21-year-old female from China, who had been in the US for about 3 months at the time of the study, are primarily oriented toward the other's face and mutual-face, but she attends to her own interactional goals as well:

> I will say "thank you" first, then say: "I know I still have some shortcomings in my essay, I don't know how to fix it, could you give me some advice, How do you think my topic sentence.
> I think communication is the best way to improve.

Haiwen wants to improve her writing and believes that her partner's feedback can help her improve, so she needs this "communication" enough to engage in a potentially face-threatening situation. She needs specific feedback that would provide her with information that she needs to "improve". However, her concern for the potential face loss that her partner might suffer as the result of her pursuing this interactional goal is evident.

First, Haiwen's decision to say "thank you" instead of expressing discontent might be a strategy of "outright face support" (Arundale, 2006, p. 195). She "gives face" to her partner, that is, "[arranges] for another to take a better line than he [she] might otherwise have been able to take, the other thereby gets face given him [her], this being one way in which he [she] can gain face" (Goffman, 1967, p. 9). She also considers this a politeness strategy that is oriented toward mutual-face:

> maybe he or she didn't help me a lot but uhm - but I think saying thanks is - plat? - uhh polete? [polite?] yeah [aha] it's polite uhm - it will makes us more comfortable to continue our communication

Haiwen's use of "thank you" in this situation is a move to facilitate further interaction rather than an expression of gratitude. In fact, in her interview she acknowledged that she did not have much to be grateful for because her partner did not help her "a lot", but she did not convey that to her partner.

After Haiwen had "given face" to her partner, she used another facework strategy: explicitly acknowledging deficiencies of her essay, "I know I still have some shortcomings in my essay", and her own lack of ability to deal with this problem, "I don't know how to fix it". On the one hand, this strategy can be a protective measure for Haiwen's self-face. Goffman (1967) suggests that by making claims about oneself "with belitting modesty", one "will have prepared a self for himself [herself] that will not be discredited by exposure, personal failure, or the unanticipated acts of others" (p. 16). So by preemptively admitting that she has "shortcomings" in her essay, Haiwen prevented face loss that her partner's negative comments might have caused her.

On the other hand, Haiwen's behavior is consistent with some features of Chinese politeness identified by Gu (1990), who introduced an alternative to Leech's (1983) Politeness Principle to explain the Chinese concept of politeness (*limao*). Gu (1990) submits that Chinese politeness rules or maxims include self-denigration (denigrate self and elevate other) (p. 246), so it is possible that Haiwen admits her incompetence following this maxim as a social norm and does not employ it strategically as a protective measure.

In this interaction Haiwen appears to have a much stronger orientation toward mutual-face than toward her self-face. According to Gu (1990), for Chinese face might be threatened when "self cannot live up to what s/he has claimed, or when what self has done is likely to incur ill fame or reputation" (p. 242). So, if by implying that the reviewer had failed to fulfill her/his obligations Haiwen caused her/him face loss, she balanced it by inflicting some face loss upon herself for the sake of comity[22].

Haiwen also used the word "polite" in her explanation, and it appears that, for her, the major function of polite behavior not only in this situation but in general is to protect not one's individual face, but mutual-face:

> Haiwen: I think it's important to be polite - it's good for me - for other people [uhum]

[22] Another participant's explanation of the choice of a similar strategy employed in another situation confirms that other- and mutual-face orientation might supersede self-face concerns and result in what on the surface appears to be a self-inflicted face loss. Fan, a 21-year-old female from China, in her written response to CI 3 "Borrowed Money" (see Appendix B), explained her choice of the following utterance: "I don't have any money now. I'm facing a financial difficulty. I need the money I used to lend to you to repay others…", as an other- and mutual-face saving strategy:

> I think this is not- this not- that would not hurt the- my classmate because [aha] I put myself in in- I mean- how to say it - a lower position in the communication [aha] because I say oh I have a problem - so I want the money not because you are s- some kind of person - it's because I need money so I think that not- that would not hurt him or her [uhum] so - uhh I think - and a - I think maybe this is uhm a - matter that - uhh has least- least influence on our - uhh I mean relationship.

> R: why is it good for you?
>
> Haiwen: uh it's good for have a communication - it's good for have a relationship [okay] yeah because it make us more- have more and more uhh - uhm - like trust - trust each other [uhum] it would makes us trust each other - yeah

In her explanation: "it's good for me - for other people … for have a relationship", all faces are interdependent. Thus, for Haiwen, her self-face and face of her interlocutor are mutually dependent and connected, and it is through protecting the connection that she protects her self-face and face of her partner rather then address them as separate entities.

<u>Face Concerns and Interactional Goals</u>

Naima, a 21-year-old female from Kuwait, who had been in the US for about 5 months at the time of the study, appears to employ a similar strategy. In her response she wrote that she would request more feedback from her partner in the following way:

> please write down the useful comments to help me
> I need your help
> I know my essay is not good… please help me find my problems

On the one hand, Naima also used a strategy of openly admitting the problem with her work: "my essay is not good", and the inability to deal with the problem on her own: "I need your help". However, she was more direct than Haiwen in her request for help. The first statement, "please write down the useful comments to help me", is an imperative, and even though it is internally modified with a politeness marker "please", it is still an order, the most direct request strategy (see Trosborg, 1994, pp. 202-204, 212). The second part of Naima's third statement, "I know my essay is not good… please help me find my problems", uses the same request strategy, although in this case it is modified internally with the same politeness marker "please" and externally with a preparator, a supporting statement that prepares the other for the request by indicating the particular problem that Naima has (ibid., p. 216). Her second statement, "I need your help", can be a mild hint, but it is unlikely that Naima would use it on its own since it might be too vague (ibid., pp. 192-194). Alternatively, it can be another type of preparator, in this case a supporting statement to let her interlocutor know that a request is coming, which Naima then would follow by a more specific request, indicating what exactly she needs help with (ibid., p. 216). Internal and external modification serves to decrease the degree of directness of the request, but even with these modifications Naima's requests might appear too direct to her interlocutors. In addition to being quite direct, her first statement might sound face-threatening because of the way she uses the word "useful". "Please write down the useful comments to help me" may be interpreted as an indirect complaint or accusation: "You have not given me any useful comments" or "You have given me useless comments".

Obviously, the written responses provided by Naima in the questionnaire do not represent a full range of the strategies that she might use in such a situation and do not illustrate how she might organize and combine multiple strategies in a speech event. The following excerpt provided a glimpse into the interactional aspect of her requesting behavior, even though it obviously is not an accurate account since it is not the discourse data:

> once - uhh - like a classmate with me - a Chinese classmate - wrote - you have- you have a good essay I like it - that's a comment - for the whole essay and I said

> - please can you write another comment just - like - not a comment a compliment - if you can say - can- can you just complain about the e- the essay - can you just tell me anything about it - can you just - like read it more deeply and- and he said - I like it - and I said ok - I like it too - but I know that I'm having a mistakes and I- I don't want - I- I want you to point me that mistake - probably I can see that's a correct way but it's a- it's a mistake…

First of all, it is apparent that Naima's requesting strategies in this excerpt are not exactly the same as the ones she listed on the written questionnaire, although there are noticeable similarities. For example, "I know my essay is not good" and "I know that I'm having a mistakes" are quite similar. However, there are also differences. For example, "please can you write another comment?" is less direct than "please help me find my problems", as the former is not an order but a conventionally indirect request (Trosborg, 1994, pp. 197-198). In addition, there are more supportive moves in this excerpt and a wider variety of request strategies, including a demand: "I want you to point me that mistake". Although this strategy is categorized as conventionally indirect, it can be impolite in its unmodified form (ibid., pp. 201-202).

But unlike Haiwen, whose behavior appears to be heavily based on her L1/C1 norms, Naima's requesting behavior appears to contradict the descriptions of Arabic communicative style. According to Feghali's (1997) review of studies of Arabic communicative style, indirectness is among its typical characteristics (pp. 358-359), and Naima is being quite direct on a number of occasions. Such "atypical" pragmatic behavior has at least two possible interpretations. On the one hand, there are some studies that contradict the generalization that Arabic speakers' communicative style is indirect (Nelson et al, 1993, cited in Feghali, 1997; Nelson et al. 2002). On the basis of their findings, Nelson and colleagues (2002) have argued for the "importance of examining communication style and language use according to particular speech act situations" (p. 52). On the other hand, it is also likely that Naima's unexpectedly direct requesting behavior represents her "third place". Naima had been in the US as a university student for only 5 months by the time of the study, but she is a very well-traveled person who has used English in her many travels to countries in Europe and Asia, as well as to Australia and the previous visits to the US, thus her choice of direct strategies in the given interaction might represent her "shuttling" between different speech communities.

Naima's interview also illustrates the transformation of the interplay of face concerns and interactional goals over time:

> for- first time I was like feeling shy not to talk to someone like please just write the comments the right way [aha] or that - and then I just realized I'm- I'm not getting any points for that it's like workshopping we need to help each other [uhum] the doctor said you need to help each other

She explained that initially she had felt "shy" to request more satisfactory feedback, but later she gained a better understanding of the purpose of this activity as well as the responsibilities of the reviewer: "we need to help each other", based on what the teacher had told the students about this activity. This example underscores that one's competence is dynamic and that the speakers' pragmatic norms, behaviors, notions of politeness and face sensitivities change over time.

Naima's narratives of her experience with peer reviews also underscore the importance of dyadic co-construction of pragmatic norms in an intercultural interaction. In some cases it might not be enough if only one interlocutor makes an effort toward the negotiation of norms. For example, in the following narrative Naima illustrates that even when she is being very persistent in her requests, her partners do not provide her with more feedback:

> once - uhh - like a classmate with me - a Chinese classmate - wrote - you have- you have a good essay I like it - that's a comment - for the whole essay and I said - please can you write another comment just - like - not a comment a compliment - if you can say - can- can you just complain about the e- the essay - can you just tell me anything about it - can you just - like read it more deeply and- and he said - I like it - and I said ok - I like it too (smiling) [haha] but I know that I'm having a mistakes and I- I don't want - I- I want you to point me that mistake - probably I can see that's a correct way but it's a- it's a mistake [um-hum] and still they they didn't (laughter) didn't put any comments for me [okay] and you know I just like every time every workshopping I just say it but - nothing happens

In Naima's experience, which she claims to be typical, reviewers provide neither specific positive feedback, "a compliment", nor negative feedback, "complain about the essay", despite multiple requests. It is possible that her choice of the words "compliment" and "complain" confuse her reviewers, although this is not discourse data, so we cannot be sure that Naima indeed uses these particular words in her requests. Other requests, however, are unlikely to be misunderstood due to her lexical choices. Such utterances as, "I want you to point me that mistake", are quite explicit in informing her reviewers that she wants their negative feedback. In other words, by making it explicit that she welcomes negative feedback, Naima lets her reviewers know that such feedback will not cause her face loss or that her other interactional goals, such as receiving feedback that would help her improve her essay, take priority in this particular interaction. However, even this strategy does not have the desired effect.

Naima's laughter throughout this narrative indicates that she is not discouraged by her partners' behaviors, but she does not attribute their reluctance to provide feedback to face concerns. She sees her partners' behavior as a result of the lack of confidence in their linguistic abilities: “they are not confident this is a right way - so they wa- they don’t want like - do mistakes”. While this certainly is a plausible interpretation, provided that her reviewer in the situation which she narrates is Chinese, the findings of Jiang’s (2003) study suggest that the face-related explanation is just as, if not more, likely. Jiang’s (2003) study of Chinese ESL students’ participation in peer reviews suggests that reviewers’ face concerns might be so dominant that they might not provide negative feedback even when explicitly and persistently asked by the essay writers (e.g., pp. 116-117).

Thus, despite the fact that Naima informs her reviewers that her self-face concerns have very low priority, or none at all, in this interaction, her partners appear to be unwilling to abandon their frames of interpretation, adopt Naima’s perspective on the desirable outcomes of this interaction, and negotiate interactional norms. Ironically, the reviewers might have what they think are Naima’s best interests at heart as they consider their actions as protecting her from face loss, but because of their unwillingness to adopt her perspective on the interplay between relational and interactional goals, their actions do not let Naima achieve her interactional goals and threaten their relationship because she misinterprets their reasoning and intentions.

Preemptively Addressing Face Concerns

Mei, a 19-year-old female from China, who had been in the US for about 2 years at the time of the study, used an indirect strategy to request more feedback from her partner similar to the one used by Yanbo, that is, she chose to ask questions that elicit more detailed negative feedback:

> I may reask them some question like "What do you think of my essay? Do you understand what I am talking about? Which part is confused?"
> They may feel bad or uncomfortable to write bad commons, and I would let them know I am ok with all the advices.

Mei interpreted the lack of negative feedback from her partner as a protective measure: "They may feel bad or uncomfortable to write bad commons (*comments*)", and to reciprocate, employed indirectness as a way to protect her partner's face. In the written response, she used hints as the request strategy. As Trosborg (1994) explains, "[a] speaker who does not want to state his/her impositive intent explicitly has resort to *hinting strategies* … by asking a question, the requester can imply to his/her listener what he/she wants done" (p. 192, italics in the original). Mei chose to ask questions about her essay in order to let her partner know indirectly that she welcomes his/her criticism. Also, in the context of peer reviews, the questions such as the ones asked by Mei: "What do you think of my essay? Do you understand what I am talking about? Which part is confused?", are also intended to elicit specific feedback from the reviewer. On the one hand, a reviewer might find them face-threatening as they leave very little room to avoid an answer. On the other hand, the form of these questions still leaves the reviewer the option to avoid providing negative feedback.

In real-life peer reviews Mei may also use a more direct way to make her partner feel comfortable providing critical feedback. In the interview she explained how she might assess the situation and plan the interaction to preemptively deal with face concerns:

> I think for Chinese cause - they may think uhh if - they write something bad for you and uh - like -- I dunno I'm good like -- when I ask someone to review my paper I will let them know you can write anything - like [uhum] any opinions you want to - you have and you can give me any opinions [uhum] but I don't think all the people can accept opinions [uhum] cause I think some of the Chinese people don't s- such opinions [uhum] cause when- cause you don't know them well if you write something bad and it's some - like if they don't accept it's - not very good for the - friendship I guess

As Mei indicated in her interview, she typically preemptively informs her reviewers of her expectations, so that they will not risk being in "wrong face": "when I ask someone to review my paper I will let them know you can write anything - like [uhum] any opinions you want to - you have - and you can give me any opinions". Mei also anticipates that her partners might be uncomfortable receiving negative feedback, so she preemptively asks those whose essays she is about to review what kind of feedback they expect: "I would ask them do you- like do you want me to make all opinions I have or - just go over the grammar or something". The former strategy is primarily a protective measure. The latter strategy, then, is primarily defensive, but it is also protective. Mei is ensuring that she would not cause her partners face loss by providing more critical feedback than they are prepared to take, while also learning about their expectations, so that she would not find herself in "wrong face".

Requesting information might be a very effective strategy in intercultural interactions. As Meier (2003) suggests, in the context of an intercultural interaction, there is a "potentially greater variety of unshared and unknown expectations for language behavior" (p. 196). The need to negotiate these expectations is what underscores the importance of having a repertoire of negotiation strategies as a part of one's pragmatic competence. It has been suggested that strategic competence is, in fact, a crucial component of pragmatic competence in EIL/ELF (e.g., House, 2003a; Meier, 2003).

Also, according to Goffman, “it is the rules of the group and the definition of the situation which determine how much feeling one is to have for face and how this feeling is to be distributed among the faces involved” (1967, p. 6). In a multicultural ESL writing classroom, one is likely to have very little, if any, knowledge of the other’s rules and expectations. In this context, explicitly asking questions might be the most effective and efficient way to gain insight into the other’s norms and expectations, considering that students do not have sufficient opportunities for observations and inductive learning.

This short-term nature is typical for EIL interactions in general; and thus, explicit requests for information might be very effective. However, as Naima’s example illustrates, even explicit requests do not guarantee that the interlocutor will provide the required information if that information is perceived as sensitive/offensive.

Summary

The fact that many participants claimed to have had experienced situations identical or similar to the one described in CI 1 suggests that such situations are not uncommon in peer reviews in multicultural writing classrooms, which points to significant interactional as well as pedagogical problems. In terms of pedagogy, needless to say that to benefit from a peer review, one has to *be engaged* in this activity, and if it is common for the students to withdraw from this activity, we can hardly expect positive effects. In terms of interaction, peer reviews appear to be a site of potential conflict as the interactants' expectations may clash, negative feelings toward each other may develop, tensions may remain unresolved, and cultural stereotypes may arise or be reinforced.

Taken to the extreme, the desire to minimize offense and face-threat as much as possible, which appears to be a characteristic of pragmatic competence of L2 speakers (cf. Olshtain & Weinbach, 1993), might lead to the choice to opt out. In this study, 12 out of 20 participants indicated that they would opt out of any further interaction with their partners on the topic of their drafts, although not all 12 gave politeness- or face-related explanations for their choice. Opting out is an inadvisable choice of strategy for many reasons. An obvious one has been addressed earlier: by opting out one might fail to realize his or her communicative intentions (Brown & Levinson, 1978). Opting out of interactions with their partners during peer reviews also means that L2 English speakers would miss an opportunity to improve their draft and develop their writing skills.

Negative consequences of opting out of problematic situations might also include the reinforcement of stereotypes and the missed opportunity to learn a new code element, negotiate contrasting codes, and learn to appropriately manipulate different sets of code elements for future interactions (Kotani, 2008, p. 354-355). In her study, Kotani has found that Japanese learners of English often chose not to engage in so-called *remedial exchanges*, complex speech events defined as "restorative sequences of behaviour occurring in problematic situations" (Morris, 1985, p. 74, as cited in Kotani, 2008, p. 343), in the situations where they were the offended party. She has also found that consequences of opting out were negative for the Japanese speakers: "their perception of their difficulty expressing themselves in English stayed as it had been before, their relationships with others did not develop, and their perception of the difference between themselves and *Americans* was reinforced" (p. 354, italics in the original). The data in the present study also indicate that clashing frames of interpretation and the participants' avoidance of engaging in interaction to address their concerns and misunderstandings caused by such clashes are likely to result in deeper misunderstanding and stereotypization of cultural groups in addition to a missed opportunity to develop pragmatic competence and negotiation skills.

When participants chose to engage in interaction, they did not exhibit systematic awareness of differences and willingness and/or ability to negotiate expectations and communicative norms within interactions. Rather, they tended to rely on their own frames of interpretation and their own interpretations of the needs and concerns of their interlocutors in communicative encounters, in some cases, despite the evidence of differences between their own and their interlocutors' interpretations of their needs and concerns. In some cases, it led to misunderstanding and conflict. It appears that L2 English speakers' ability to abandon their own familiar frames of interpretation and the ability to develop intercultural frames that would allow them to interpret the interaction from the perspective of their interlocutors are stronger determinants of the success of an intercultural interaction than a positive orientation toward one's interlocutor. In other words, even when an L2 English speaker aims at being "polite" or "not offensive", his or her behavior might have the opposite effect if he/she fails to understand his/her interlocutor's communicative intentions, as is illustrated in Naima's narrative of her experience with Chinese classmates during peer reviews.

Finally, the data illustrate that a variety of face concerns and their interplay with individuals' interactional goals affect L2 English speakers' communicative behavior and choice of strategies. Thus, a more in-depth study of L2 English speakers' politeness and facework, especially in intercultural encounters, is highly needed. As the data and their analysis indicate, the nature of L2 English speakers' concepts of politeness and their understanding of the relationship between politeness and face concerns is more complex than can be accounted for by any one Politeness Theory, even such an influential one as Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987) or culture-specific ones, such as Gu's (1990). As postmodern approaches to politeness suggest, it appears necessary as well as more fruitful to investigate "the ways in which (im)polite behaviour is evaluated and commented on by lay members" (Watts, 2003, p. 9) rather than try to fit the speakers' behavior in one or another existing Politeness Theory.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

Summary of the Study

Situated within the paradigm of English as an International Language (EIL), this study focused on one aspect of L2 English speakers' pragmatic competence: linguistic politeness. Politeness has received a substantial amount of attention in previous research, and there is an impressive body of literature that includes empirical studies and theoretical models, coming from a variety of scholarly fields and dealing with a variety of languages and cultures. However, the EIL paradigm calls for a new perspective on the phenomenon of politeness. Built on the recognition of World Englishes as legitimate varieties of English, EIL rejects the "native speaker" model for English language acquisition and the idea that any particular variety of English, already existing or constructed, be designated as a lingua franca for international communication (cf., Sharifian, 2009).

Within EIL, communicative competence in general and pragmatic competence in particular are seen as having a dynamic, flexible and open nature. As Canagarajah (2006) suggests, "we need to orientate to English as a hybrid language. It is a multinational language that constitutes diverse norms and systems, represented by the global community of English speakers" (p. 209). The crucial aspect of communicative competence in EIL, then, is the ability to negotiate differences that speakers of different varieties of English bring to the interaction (Canagarajah, 2006; House, 2003a; McKay, 2009; Roberts & Canagarajah, 2009). In this light, politeness also needs to be reconceptualized as a dynamic and negotiable construct. The awareness of differences between the speakers of different varieties of English in general and their concepts of politeness in particular combined with the ability to negotiate these differences in real-life interactions are seen as more adequate predictors of positive outcomes of EIL interactions than the mastery of particular politeness norms and behaviors.

Postmodern theories of politeness (e.g., Arundale, 2006; Eelen, 2001; Watts, 2003) offer valuable frameworks for the study of politeness as a dynamic construct, and therefore were adopted in this study. However, as of yet there is little empirical research done within these frameworks, especially in intercultural communication contexts where the speakers are using their L2. This study represents an attempt to gain some insights into the nature of politeness in these contexts.

Specifically, this study sought the answers to the following questions:

- What is the nature of L2 English speakers' notions of politeness? Specifically, how are these notions affected by the hybrid nature of L2 English speakers' pragmatic competence?
- What is the place of politeness among other factors (e.g., interactional goals) that affect L2 English speakers' communicative behavior in interaction with other L2 English speakers? What is the place of politeness among other types of facework?
- How do L2 English speakers' notions of politeness and their interaction with other factors affect their performance in real-life situations that have potential for misunderstanding and conflict?

Taking a social constructionist perspective, this study approached politeness as socially constructed by L2 English speakers in interactions. Following Eelen's (2001) notion of politeness-as-practice, this study explored L2 English speakers' processes of construction of the notions of politeness, evaluations of politeness, and polite behaviors.

The data in this study were obtained through background questionnaires, open-ended DCT-type written production questionnaires in the form of critical incidents, and semi-structured informal interviews[23]. The data were analyzed qualitatively, drawing on a number of theoretical frameworks, the main ones being discourse analysis (e.g., Gee, 2005) and ethnography of communication (e.g., Saville-Troike, 2002), complemented by the theories of the "third place" (e.g., Kramsch, 1993; Lo Bianco et al., 1999) and politeness and face(work) (e.g., Arundale, 2006, 2009; Goffman, 1967; Spencer-Oatey, 2007, 2009).

Summary of the Findings

To answer the first research question: "What is the nature of L2 English speakers' notions of politeness? Specifically, how are these notions affected by the hybrid nature of L2 English speakers' pragmatic competence?", the analysis of data was done within the framework of the "third place" (e.g., Kramsch, 1993; Lo Bianco et al., 1999)[24]. In the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA), the "third place" is seen as a place "between the native linguaculture and the target linguaculture", which is "dynamic and is being renegotiated with every intercultural interaction and with every opportunity for new learning" (Lo Bianco et al., 1999, p. 181).

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[23] See Chapter 3 for a detailed description of data collection instruments and procedures.
[24] See Chapter 4 for detailed data analysis and discussion.

The data in this study suggest that the concepts of politeness reflect the hybridity of L2 English speakers' pragmatic norms. Consistent with the idea of the "third place", the study participants' pragmatic competence and the notions of politeness are indeed drawing on the norms of their first language(s) and culture(s) as well as English and US culture. However, the participants' experiences of traveling and living in countries other than their native country and the experience of communicating with other L2 English speakers also contributed to their "third places". Thus, in the case of EIL it appears appropriate to suggest that the speakers' "third places" are constructed as the places between one's own linguaculture(s) and the linguaculture(s) of his/her interlocutor(s) rather than a single L2/C2.

All participants in this study exhibited evidence of hybridity of their pragmatic competence and politeness, although they differed significantly in the ways they used their L1/C1, English/US culture, and linguaculture(s) of their interlocutors in the construction of this hybrid. They also differed in the level of awareness of the hybridity of their pragmatic norms in general and politeness in particular. As Kramsch (1993) has suggested,

> [a]s they become more and more proficient in a second language and familiar with a second culture, language learners try to articulate their new experience within their old one, making it relevant to their own lives, one day this way, one day that way, creating their own popular culture. This popular culture will be as conservative or as progressive as each learner wishes it to be. (p. 238)

Consistent with this assumption, the participants in this study exhibited the creative approach to the construction of their “third places”. In addition, some differences in “third places” were observed among the participants who share the same L1/C1.

The analysis of data also identified some difficulties that L2 English speakers experience in the construction of their “third places”. The lack of experience communicating with other English speakers, L1 as well as L2, and the lack of emphasis on metapragmatic awareness, cultural awareness and strategies to negotiate meaning in the participants’ experience of learning English have led to gaps in the participants’ pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence that hindered the successful development of their “third places”.

To answer the second and the third research questions: “What is the place of politeness among other factors (e.g., interactional goals) that affect L2 English speakers’ communicative behavior in interaction with other L2 English speakers? What is the place of politeness among other types of facework?” and “How do L2 English speakers’ notions of politeness and their interaction with other factors affect their performance in real-life situations that have potential for misunderstanding and conflict?”, the analysis focused on the data pertaining to CI 1 “Peer Review” (see Appendix B)[25].

This subset of data was chosen because it dealt with a communicative situation which all participants had experienced and with which the researcher was well familiar. In addition, it dealt with a context in which a number of relational and interactional goals might become relevant and which presented a wide range of opportunities for facework

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[25] See Chapter 5 for detailed data analysis and discussion.

and the use of politeness evaluations and strategies. The analysis of the data was done within the frameworks of facework (e.g., Goffman, 1967; Spencer-Oatey, 2009) and used Agar's (1994) notion of intercultural frames.

The data from written questionnaires and interviews confirmed that politeness and face considerations play a crucial role in participants' choices of behavioral strategies and that behavioral strategies are based on the speakers' evaluations of their own and their partners' face concerns and interactional goals. In addition, participants' choices of strategies were based on their interpretation of the reasons for the lack of specific/negative feedback provided by their partner. In cases when the participants attributed the lack of feedback to their partners' concerns for the face of the participants as feedback recipients, the participants prioritized the face concerns of their partners in the choice of the follow-up strategy. Prioritizing other-face concerns in some cases resulted in the choice of the most radical other-face-saving strategy: opting out of further interaction to avoid any threat to the face of their partner. On the one hand, opting out is not an unusual choice, but the risk of employing this strategy lies in the potential sacrifice of the interactional goals for the sake of face concerns. In this particular situation, participants who opted out of further interaction did not receive any specific feedback on the drafts of their essays that could have helped them improve not only their drafts but their writing skills in general[26].

Face concerns and politeness considerations also affected the participants' choices of strategies in the cases when participants attributed the lack of feedback to reasons

[26] While CI 1 "Peer Review" presented a hypothetical situation, many participants claimed that they had experienced similar situations in their ESL Composition classes.

other than face concerns. That is, even when the participants interpreted the lack of feedback as their partners' unwillingness to help them or lack of linguistic abilities, they still chose the follow-up strategies that they considered to be polite.

The data in this study also suggest that the study of (linguistic) politeness might benefit from being situated within a broader framework of facework as understood by Arundale (2006, 2009), which includes not only face-saving strategies but "the full scope of human facework, including the commonly examined strategic redress of face threat, the much less examined use of outright threat, the largely overlooked phenomena of outright face support, and the relatively unexamined indexing of social position apart from threat or support" (Arundale, 2006, p. 195)[27]. The data in this study suggest that the speakers utilize a wide range of facework strategies, from self-inflicted face loss to "giving face" to the other, as a part of their polite behavior.

The data also confirm Spencer-Oatey's (2009) claims that face concerns are intertwined with interactional goals, that different speakers might prioritize different goals in a given interaction, and that face concerns and interactional goals are dynamic.

Participants' evaluations of the peer review situation showed that they indeed see this situation as a site of potential misunderstanding and even conflict, and as such, tend to be very careful in their behavioral choices. Almost all participants[28] expressed face-related concerns or specifically politeness considerations in explanations of their choices. Even those who expressed a strong dissatisfaction with or disapproval of their partner's

[27] A similar approach is represented in the concept of relational work (e.g., Locher; 2006; Locher & Watts, 2005) or rapport management (e.g., Spencer-Oatey, 2002, 2005).

[28] Sufficiently detailed data were not available for each participant as not all of those who responded to the written questionnaires participated in the interviews.

behavior attempted to conceal or indirectly express these feelings in order to prevent overt argument or conflict with their partner. However, the data showed that in some cases when there might have been no verbalized confrontation between the interlocutors, the conflict might still have occurred as several participants dissatisfied with their partners' behaviors claimed that they would avoid working with this person in the future. Some of these conflicts might have been the results of misunderstanding. As was suggested by some participants' responses, the lack of feedback might have been the strategy to protect the feedback recipient's face, but, having mistakenly ascribed the lack of feedback to other reasons, the recipients developed negative feelings toward their partners.

The main cause of these misunderstandings and conflicts appears to be the lack of critical (inter)cultural awareness. The majority of participants relied on their own frames of interpretation to make sense of the situation, interpret the behavior of their partners, and select a strategy to engage (or not) in further interaction. Few participants attempted to take a more open-minded perspective, apply a frame that would offer alternative evaluations of the situation, and consider alternative explanations of their partners' behavior.

The findings of this study suggest that in EIL interactions there is no "correct" behavior that would be a fail-safe choice across interactions due to the complex interplay of the speakers' communicative goals and differences in their communicative expectations. Even the most positive attitude toward the other and an attempt to act in a way that one understands as "nice", "polite", and that which will "not hurt" the other might have a diametrically opposite effect if one's actions contradict the other's expectations and goals. For example, the data showed that even when one's reason for not providing critical feedback during peer review is to protect the other's face, this is an inappropriate choice of behavior if for the other the interactional goals of receiving feedback to improve his or her draft and writing abilities take precedence over self-face concerns.

These data also suggest that a speaker's attempt to be polite might have the opposite effect not simply because the other person misinterprets this intent. The very notions of "misinterpretation" and "intent" are far from straightforward, especially in EIL contexts. As the situation narrated by Naima[29] illustrated, the problem arises not when one fails to recognize the other's behavior as a politeness strategy, but when the interlocutors refuse to engage in the negotiation of each other's expectations and communicative norms in an interaction.

To create a "third place" comfortable for all involved, each interlocutor should do her or his part in the negotiation of norms, so that the interlocutors would meet each other half-way, so to speak. All interlocutors should equally engage in the negotiation of norms in a particular interaction. Suggesting that one has "misinterpreted" the "intent" of the other might imply that the other should have accepted the other's goals, communicative expectations, and notion of appropriateness to govern this particular interaction and should have adjusted his or her behavior to satisfy the other. However, requiring one interlocutor to adjust his or her behavior to match the expectations of the other is just as

[29] See Chapter 5 for Naima's narrative and a more detailed discussion of this example.

inappropriate as claiming that one's pragmatic norms and notions of politeness are more correct or legitimate than the other's.

Pedagogical Implications

As the data in this study illustrate, L2 speakers of English are capable of constructing their very own "third places", although on some occasions they appear to be unconscious of the processes through which they have built these "third places" (cf. Kramsch, 1993). However, some participants in this study exhibited difficulties in the process of their "third place"-building. Moreover, in some cases, the participants were not aware of the problems with their communicative behavior and their "third places".

In addition, some participants who exhibited the ability to "shuttle" between different communities (cf. Canagarajah, 2006) appeared not to realize its full potential. Instead of strategically drawing on the repertoire of their communicative competence depending on the context of the interaction, the participants in this study appeared to be using their repertoires randomly, and thus the success of their real-life interactions is highly unpredictable. These examples suggest that while L2 English speakers are capable of constructing "third places" on their own through observation and participation in interactions, they could benefit from teachers' help in acquiring the skills and awareness necessary for effective "third place"-building.

Also, the data in this study illustrate that L2 English speakers do not exhibit systematic awareness of differences and willingness and/or ability to negotiate the norms within interactions. These findings support Kramsch's (1993) claim that "[i]n most foreign language classrooms, interculturality is not being taught as a systematic *apprenticeship of difference*" (p. 235). Rather, L2 English speakers defer to their own frames of interpretation in EIL interactions and rely on their own interpretations of the needs and concerns of their interlocutors in these communicative encounters, in some cases despite the evidence of differences between their own and their interlocutors' interpretations of their needs and concerns. These examples further reinforce the need to address these issues in English language classrooms. The models of intercultural communicative competence such as Byram's (1997) offer a pedagogical framework that can effectively target these problematic issues. Teachers who wish to assist their students in the development of their "third places" can also draw on the critical language pedagogy (e.g., Kramsch, 1993).

However, the adoption of the EIL perspective might require more substantial shifts in the way that the teaching of English is currently approached. For example, Canagarajah (2006) suggests that instead of teaching English as a "target language" educators should teach "in terms of a *repertoire* of language competence" (pp. 209-110, italics in the original). Teaching towards such a repertoire does not imply teaching every variety of English used in the world but rather developing a deeper language awareness and the ability to negotiate differences between different varieties (ibid., p. 210). This new pedagogical approach to English language teaching would help learners view language as process rather than product and would require some major changes in pedagogical goals and approaches:

- from mastery of grammar rules to metalinguistic awareness;

- from focus on rules/conventions to focus on strategies;
- from correctness to negotiation;
- from language/discourse as static to language/discourse as changing;
- from language as homogeneous to language as hybrid;
- from language as context-bound to language as context-transforming;
- from language as transparent/instrumental to language as representational;
- from L1 or C1 as problem to L1 or C1 as resource. (Canagarajah, 2006, p. 210)

To summarize, the data in this study exposed some crucial gaps in L2 English speakers' pragmatic competence that endanger the success of their intercultural interactions. It is important for English language teachers to be aware of the problems that their students experience in daily interactions in order to address them in language classrooms. It is believed that pedagogical intervention that follows the frameworks outlined by Byram (1997), Canagarajah (2006), and Kramsch (1993) might benefit the students while still allowing them to use English critically and creatively, helping them to communicate successfully with a variety of interlocutors while not suppressing their own identities, values and needs.

Significance of the Study

This study expands the body of scholarship on EIL, Intercultural Communication, Politeness, SLA, TESOL, and Interlanguage Pragmatics. It sought to bring the insights from each of these fields to explore the notions of politeness of L2 English speakers. As the review of the pertinent literature indicates[30], scholars in each of these areas have contributed to our understanding of this phenomenon, but because they have been approaching it from different epistemological, theoretical and methodological perspectives, we are still far from having a comprehensive picture of it. It is believed that this goal is best achieved by adopting an interdisciplinary perspective, and therefore such an interdisciplinary perspective was taken in this study.

This study contributes to the fields of EIL and Intercultural Communication by investigating the nature of pragmatic competence and notions of politeness of L2 English speakers, which are of decisive importance for their communicative competence in intercultural encounters. According to Sharifian (2009), "communication *across* Englishes [is] an issue which lies at the heart of EIL" (p. 4, italics in the original). Therefore, it is crucial to understand what competencies are required to facilitate this communication. Sharifian (2009) also notes that while EIL is closely related to the field of Intercultural Communication, the research on intercultural communication in English to date has primarily focused on the interactions between L1 and L2 English speakers (p. 4). He argues that "what is needed in the EIL paradigm is an expansion of the scope of speech communities and interlocutors engaged in intercultural communication, especially as most instances of intercultural communication in English today takes place (sic.) between its non-native speakers" (Sharifian, 2009, p. 4). This study was designed to bridge this gap by investigating the development of pragmatic competence in interaction between L2 English speakers who belong to different speech communities.

[30] See Chapter 2 for a detailed review of the literature.

However, consistent with the EIL paradigm (cf. Sharifian, 2009, pp. 4-5), this study did not entirely exclude L1 English speakers from its scope. As the data indicate, every opportunity to engage in or to observe an interaction might become an opportunity for learning and expanding their communicative repertoire for L2 English speakers. Their pragmatic competence and nature of their concepts of politeness might be affected by a communicative encounter with an L1 as well as an L2 English speaker, so that even in interactions with other L2 English speakers they might draw on the strategies developed in previous interactions with L1 English speakers.

Thus, this study further impacts the field of EIL by providing some empirical support to the claim that L1 or "native" speakers of English should not be excluded from the scope of research, which is one of the main premises that distinguish EIL from the closely related field of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF). As Jenkins (2006) claims, "ELF researchers specifically exclude mother tongue speakers from their data collection" (as cited in Roberts & Canagarajah, 2009, p. 210). However, even though it can be argued that the majority of interactions in English are presently conducted between L2 speakers (cf. McKay, 2009; Sharifian, 2009), it cannot be presumed that an L2 English speaker will never engage into or observe an interaction involving an L1 English speaker, especially considering the current unprecedented spread of English across countries and domains of use. Most importantly, while excluding L1 English speakers from the scope of the research might have had some positive results, such as questioning the deference given to "native speaker" norms across all contexts of language use, the researchers who exclude L1 English speakers might overlook the significance of their contribution to L2 English speakers' communicative repertoires.

This work also contributes to the body of scholarship on politeness by bridging the gap in research on the speakers' own concepts of politeness. As Eelen (2001) pointed out more than a decade ago, such research had been (and still remains) most scarce in politeness studies (p. 254). While a number of studies in interlanguage and cross-cultural pragmatics have explored the polite *behaviors* of L2 English speakers, their *notions* of politeness have rarely been addressed.

While the empirical work on politeness has been dominated in the last several decades by an influential Politeness Theory of Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987), this study drew on the postmodern approaches to face and politeness (e.g., Arundale, 2006, 2009; Eelen, 2001; Spencer-Oatey, 2005, 2009; Watts, 2003). This study sought to address some of the criticisms expressed by the postmodern approaches to politeness, specifically the problem of top-down definitions of politeness. While there have been a number of definitions of politeness as a scholarly concept suggested by different frameworks, "ranging from a general principle of language use governing all interpersonal aspects of interaction, to the use of specific linguistic forms and formulae" (Eelen, 2001, p. i), too often no attempt was made to investigate the relation of the definition of politeness adopted by a particular framework to the speakers' own conceptualizations of politeness (cf. Watts et al, 1992; Watts, 2003). Watts (2003) rejects politeness "as a concept which has been lifted out of the realm of lay conceptualizations of what constitutes polite and impolite behaviour and how that behaviour should be evaluated" (p. 11). He argues that "[if] there is a scientific concept which transcends our everyday notions of (im)polite behaviour, to call it 'politeness' is not only confusing, it is also misleading" (p. 11). Following these criticisms, rather than adopting any particular definition of politeness, the present study explored the speakers' own notions of politeness. It has specifically focused on the L2 English speakers' notions of politeness in the context of interactions in English and offered some insights into the nature of these notions that appear to be hybrid and dynamic.

In addition, this study has significant implications for the field of SLA, TESOL and Interlanguage Pragmatics in that it identifies some problematic areas in L2 English speakers' pragmatic competence that should be of interest to English language teachers who aim to assist their learners in the development of intercultural competence so that they would be successful communicators in a variety of contexts and with a variety of English-speaking interlocutors. Also, this study makes an argument for a paradigm shift in TESOL. The data from this study suggest that teaching toward intercultural communicative competence (e.g., Byram, 1997) or a "repertoire of language competence" (e.g., Canagarajah, 2006) might be more beneficial for L2 English learners than the traditional approaches in light of the global spread of English.

Limitations of the Present Study and Directions for Future Research

While this work has provided some valuable insights into L2 English speakers' pragmatic competence and concepts of politeness, it has a number of limitations that need to be kept in mind in the interpretation and use of its findings.

First of all, the data for this study were obtained through the written questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, but no real-life spontaneous expressions and evaluations of politeness were collected. As Eelen (2001) suggests, (im)politeness evaluations obtained in natural settings would be an important contribution to the study of politeness. Elicited evaluations, such as the ones obtained in the present study, might be a necessity as speakers rarely verbalize their evaluations of (im)politeness in everyday interactions, but they "introduce particular social aspects and motivations that warrant their classification as separate social practices" (Eelen, 2001, p. 255). Thus, it is important to remember that the evaluations of politeness obtained in this study might differ from the evaluations expressed spontaneously in natural settings.

In addition, while written questionnaires are considered useful for gathering information about both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic *knowledge* of the speakers (cf. Kasper, 1999, p. 84), the expressions of politeness and data on polite behaviors obtained through questionnaires might differ from the ones utilized by the speakers in real-life interactions. Also, written responses do not allow the researcher to capture the pragmatic features of the oral interactive discourse, features of speech production, and non-verbal behaviors of the speakers that may have pragmatic import (cf. Kasper, 1999, p. 80). Therefore, future studies would benefit from employing a wider variety of data collection techniques, complementing questionnaires and interviews with authentic spoken discourse data, preferably collected via videorecording in order to capture the non-verbal elements of interactions.

The analysis of data from these recordings will need to take longer discourse as a unit of analysis rather than a single utterance or speech act, if it is to follow the postmodern approaches to politeness, which have suggested that politeness is dynamic, dyadic, and interactionally achieved (e.g., Arundale, 2006; Haugh, 2007; Watts, 2003). The present study was designed to expand the unit of analysis by eliciting participants' examples of their polite behaviors/utterances situated within a larger discourse of a communicative event, although questionnaire responses were largely limited to individual utterances. Besides, elicited examples or even spontaneous narratives offered by participants that described their real-life communicative encounters cannot replace naturally occurring interaction because these discourses are reconstructed from memory and might be affected by the data collection procedures and setting. Therefore, the data obtained in this study have to be understood in the specific context of its setting (cf. Eelen., 2001, p. 256).

Secondly, because this study was conducted in a specific context with a specific group of participants, its findings are not generalizable to other contexts or other L2 English speakers. Studies conducted in other contexts and with other participants might produce different results. Specifically, the participants in this study came from ESL Composition classes at a major Southwestern university. While they shared some characteristics, such as learning English in their home countries in an EFL environment, and had some experience living in the US and interacting with other L2 English speakers in their multicultural ESL composition classes, there were significant differences between the participants as well, from the duration of English language study in their home countries, to the opportunities for interaction with other L1 and L2 English speakers, to the duration of stay in the US by the time of the study. While such diversity of experiences exhibited by the participants in this study represents the reality of L2 English speakers' life experiences (as it might be said that no two L2 English speakers' life experiences are exactly alike), future studies might benefit from a more systematic approach to the selection of the participants, so that the effects of their previous experiences on their concepts of politeness could be investigated.

Finally, one specific suggestion for future research introduced in Chapter 5 deserves to be reiterated here. Studies of pragmatic competence and behavior have largely neglected the pragmatic strategy of opting out despite some calls to study not only "the said" but also "the unsaid" responses of the speakers (Marti, 2006, p. 1838). The studies that included opting out in their scope have suggested that is not an unusual choice of strategy and that it offers valuable insights into the speakers' pragmatic competence and behavior (e.g., Bonikowska, 1988; Marti, 2006; Olshtain & Weinbach, 1993). This study employed the written questionnaire design that allowed participants to opt out of engaging in an interaction, and this strategy was used by at least some of the participants in all situations in which they were the initiator of the interaction[31]. The only situations in which opting out was not used by any of the participants were those in which the interaction had already been initiated by their interlocutor. Opting out is a behavior that is not easily observed in spoken interaction, so researchers might need to utilize other techniques, such as open-ended discourse completion tasks (DCTs) and interviews, but

[31] See Chapter 5 for a more detailed analysis of participants' opting out behavior in CI 1 "Peer Response".

the study of opting out can contribute to our understanding of L2 English speakers' pragmatic behavior as well as expose the problems they experience in the development of pragmatic competence and during their interactions in intercultural communication encounters (cf. Kotani, 2008).

In summary, despite some limitations of this work, it provides directions for future research that will complement the findings of this study and deepen our understanding of L2 English speakers’ pragmatic competence and concepts of politeness in relation to the effect they have on their interactions with other English speakers, both L1 and L2.

APPENDIX A: BACKGROUND QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaire 1.

Please answer the following questions. All personal identification information will be kept confidential.

1. Name:
2. Age:
3. Gender:
4. Course of study at the U of A:
3. Please list your native language(s) and other languages you speak (identify proficiency level, e.g., beginner, intermediate, advanced):
5. How many years have you been studying English?
6. Where have you been studying English? Please list all the places including the ones in your home country, the US, and other countries (e.g., school, university, summer school, CESL):
7. What are your reasons for studying English?
8. What do you think it means “to know English well” or “to be proficient in English”?
9. Do you think you know English well?
10. What is the most difficult thing for you when you speak English?
11. How long have you been in the US?
12. Please list any other countries, not including your home country and the US, that you have been to and indicate how long you have been in those countries:
13. If you have been to countries other than the US and your home country, what language(s) did you speak there?
14. Please describe briefly with whom you speak English and for what purpose(s) now that you are in the US:
15. How are you planning to use English in the future?

APPENDIX B: CRITICAL INCIDENTS QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaire 2.

Instructions: *Please read carefully the situations described below and write responses to the questions following each situation. Maybe you have been in a similar situation, and maybe not. If you have been in a similar situation, write down how you behaved and what you said (if anything) in the space provided. Also, please explain why you did and/or said that. If you haven't been in such a situation, try to imagine what you would do and what you would say (if anything) and write it in the space provided. Also, please write a brief explanation of why you would do and/or say that. There are no right and wrong answers, so please write what you think you would really say or do and why. Please complete this task on your own. (And there's no need to worry about grammar.)*

Note: *In each situation, the other person involved is described as an "international student." That means a student who is not a native speaker of English, not an American, and not from the same country as you are.*

1. In your English Composition class, you have been working with a partner, another international student, reviewing each other's essay drafts. You have been trying hard to help your partner, writing detailed comments on the draft. However, when you get your draft back, you see that your partner has not written any useful comments except for "good job!" at the end of the draft, even though you know that your draft is far from being good at this point and still has a lot of problems. Would you say anything to your partner? If no, please explain why not. If yes, please write down what you would say and briefly explain why you would say it:

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2. You have a roommate who is also an international student. Usually, you get along pretty well, but there is one problem. Your roommate always calls his/her family around midnight on Sundays and talks for a couple of hours. She/he talks quite loudly and you can't sleep, but you have an 8am class on Monday. Would you say anything to your roommate? If no, please explain why not. If yes, please write down what you would say and briefly explain why you would say it:

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3. One of your classmates, another international student, has borrowed from you $20 and promised to return it the next day. It has been two weeks from that day now, and the student still has not returned the money and has not said anything to you about it. What would you do? Would you say anything to that student? If no, please explain why not. If yes, please write down what you would say and briefly explain why you would say it:

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4. In one of your classes, with several hundred students in a lecture hall, the teacher is lecturing on a topic related to your country. At some point, the teacher stops and asks the students in the audience if any of them have been to this country and could share their experience. You don't feel like speaking in front of such a big audience, so you don't volunteer. Suddenly, a student sitting next to you, another international student with whom you have worked on a group project before, gets up and tells the professor that you are from that country. Upon hearing that, the professor asks you to come to the front. You end up going there and answering teacher's questions while everybody else is listening. What do you think about the actions of that student? Would you say anything to that student? If no, please explain why not. If yes, please write down what you would say and briefly explain why you would say it:

5. In one of your classes you have been paired up with another international student to work on a presentation. You both have done a good job on preparing that presentation, but on the day when you are scheduled to present, your partner doesn't show up. You can't make that presentation alone because you don't have all the materials, so you end up not presenting. Your teacher says that the presentation cannot be rescheduled and both you and your partner lose points for this assignment, which is 10% of the grade for the class. Would you say anything to your partner when you see your partner next time? If no, please explain why not. If yes, please write down what you would say and briefly explain why you would say it:

6. At your part-time job, one of other student-workers, who is also an international student, approaches you and asks you for a favor: to work a 3-hour shift on Saturday. That student has some business to attend to and has to miss Saturday's shift, but has to find a substitute to avoid problems with the manager. On the one hand, you don't have any special plans for that Saturday, but on the other hand, you don't really want to work on Saturday. What would you do? Would you agree to substitute for that person? Please explain why yes or why not. Please write down what you would say to that person and briefly explain why you would say it:

7. In one of your classes you have been assigned a project on which you have to work with a partner. Right after the class, a classmate, who is also an international student, approaches you and suggests that you work on this project together. This student seems to be a nice and smart person, but you don't know this student very well. Also, you have been actually thinking about working with another student whom you know better. What would you do? Would you agree to work with the student who approached you? Please explain why yes or why not. Please write down what you would say to that student and briefly explain why you would say it:

8. You had a complicated homework assignment for one of your classes. You have worked hard to complete it, and you think that you have done a good job. You are confident that you will get a good grade for it. When you come to class on the day this assignment is due, you take it out of your bag and put it in front of you. A classmate sitting next to you, who is also an international student, sees your completed homework and asks for your permission to look at it and copy some answers. Would you let your classmate see and copy your homework? Please explain why yes or why not. Then, please write down what you would say to your classmate and briefly explain why you would say it:

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9. You have hurt your hand and temporarily can't do any writing in your English Composition class. When you tell about it to your teacher, the teacher gives you an extension on assignments but also pairs you up with one of your classmates, another international student, who volunteers to take notes for you during this class. What would you say to that student? Please write down what you would say and briefly explain why you would say it:

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10. You are working on a project for one of your classes in a group with other international students. One of them suggests doing something that you disapprove of: you think that your groupmate's suggestion contradicts the assignment and that it will make the project worse, so you all will get lower grades. What would you do? How would you respond to your groupmate's suggestion? Would you say anything? If no, please explain why not. If yes, please write down what you would say and briefly explain why you would say it:

---

11. Can you remember a situation similar to the ones described above that has happened between you and some other international student? Please describe that situation below in as detailed manner as you can.
Who was that other person? What was the relationship between the two of you?
What happened between you? Where did it happen? What did you do in that situation? What did the other person do? What did you say? What did the other person say? How did you feel about the situation? What did you think about your behavior and the other person's behavior? What did you think about the things you said to each other?

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Sample list of questions for the discussion of selected CIs and the retrospective account/narrative of a CI-type of encounter:

- In the situation #... you wrote "…" Could you explain why you decided to do … (or say "…")?
- Why do you think that it was the best thing to do (say) in this situation?
- You have mentioned that you would say "…" because it is polite. What do you think makes it polite? Why do you think it is important to be polite in this situation?
- What if the other person was not your classmate but a good friend of yours? Would you still do/say the same thing? (Would it still be polite?)
- What if the other person was much older than you are? Would you still do/say the same thing? (Would it still be polite?)
- What if the other person was from the same country as you are? Would you still do/say the same thing? (Would it still be polite?)
- What if the other person was an American? Would you still do/say the same thing? (Would it still be polite?)
- What if the situation took place in another country, not the US, would you still do/say the same thing? (Would it still be polite?)
- What if there were other people listening? Would you still do/say the same thing? (Would it still be polite?)
- Do you try to be polite when you speak? Always? What affects you decision to be or not to be polite?
- In your description of the situation that you have been in you mentioned that you said "…" Could you explain why you decided to say it? What did the … (interlocutor) respond?
- After the … (interlocutor) told you "…" what did you answer? And then what did she/he say? What did you think about it?
- In your description of the situation that you have been in you mentioned that you were displeased/surprised/... by the behavior of … (interlocutor). Could you explain what made you feel that way?
- What would you have done/said if you were … (interlocutor)? Why would you do/say that?
- What if a situation like this (in the CI #... or in the narrative) happened to your friend and your friend asked you for advice? If your friend asked: "What should I do/say in this situation?" what would you advise? Would you tell your friend that it is an appropriate thing to say to anybody? In any situation?

Sample list of questions addressing the notions of politeness:

- In your own words, explain what you think the word "politeness" means.

- Do you have a word or words that mean(s) similar thing in your language? What is that word(s)? Could you write it down for me? How is this word(s) different from/similar to “politeness”?
- Could you give some examples of things that you would call “polite” or people who you would call “polite”? Is that “polite” in the English sense or … (participant’s native language) sense?
- Do you think that when you try to be polite you do it differently when you speak in English from when you speak in … (participant’s native language(s))?
- Did your English teachers talk with you about what the word “politeness” means? Did they teach you to be polite in English? Do you always follow what you have been taught? Why yes or why not?
- Do you think it is important to be polite when you are talking with someone? In your native language? In English?
- Do you think that people should try to be polite when they talk to others? To anyone? In any situation?
- Could you give a couple of examples of what you would do or say when you want to be polite while talking with someone in English? What makes … polite? Does that depend on who that “someone” is? On what exactly does it depend? Could you give an example?
- Do you think that your ideas of what is polite ever change? What makes them change? Could you give an example?

APPENDIX D: RECRUITMENT SPEECH

I am here to invite you to participate in a study that explores the use of English by speakers of English as a second or foreign language in the situations of intercultural communication. You are asked to participate because you are the speakers of English as a second language, and your participation in this study will be invaluable. It will enrich the data and will help improve the teaching of English as a foreign language and will help English language learners to develop English language skills that would help them communicate better. There will be no risks for you while participating in this study, and before you begin your participation you will sign the consent form that explains the study and what you will be doing during it. Your participation will be highly appreciated, but it is completely voluntary – you do not have to do it if you do not want to - and whether you participate or not will not affect your standing in or grades for this class. Any person who is 18 or older can participate in this study, and you do not have to worry about your English language proficiency – this study looks at how you use English regardless of whether you are an intermediate or advanced speaker. Also, if you agree to participate but later change your mind, you can withdraw from the study at any point with no consequences for you. If you agree to participate, there will be two parts in this study. The first part is written, and in this part you will fill out two questionnaires. The first one has some questions about your experience of learning and using English, and in the second you will read and respond to several situations that could happen with a person in intercultural communication - you will be asked to write how you would behave and what you would say if you were in such a situation. The second part of the study is oral. In this part, you will meet with me individually to talk about your responses to the questionnaires and talk more about your ideas about intercultural communication and your experience of using English. You can choose to participate in either the first one or both parts of the study. For the first part, you will be able to take the questionnaires home with you and you will have 7 days to complete those tasks and return them to me. And if you would like to participate in the second part of the study, we will schedule a one-hour interview, at your convenience, after you return to me your filled out questionnaires. The interviews will be audio recorded to make sure that your answers to the questions are represented accurately in my analysis. There will be no direct benefits to you from this study, but you will be compensated for your participation with a ten-dollar gift certificate for each part of the study. If you are interested in participating, here is my contact information [distributing cards with PI's e-mail and phone number]. Write me an e-mail or give me a call and we will schedule a time when you come to my office and sign the consent form and receive your questionnaires. Also feel free to contact me at any time if you have any questions about this study or your participation in it.

APPENDIX E: TRANSCRIPTION NOTATIONS

R stands for the researcher

[text] (text in square brackets) - researcher's back-channeling during the participant's speech (e.g., "one from where I grew up [uhum] and one from from the American ways")

(text) (text in parenthesis) - non-verbal behavior or the researcher's note on the speaker's verbal behavior (e.g., (trails off) indicates that the participant's utterance has faded away)

… (ellipsis mark) - omitted excerpt

- (single dash between the words) - noticeable but very brief pause, approximately less than one second (e.g., "I think it is mean - like - can you write something - that sounds mean")

text- (single dash latched to a word, a part of a word, or a letter) - self-correction (e.g., "if we s- if both of us say all things very directly")

-- (double dash between the words) - pause approximately more than one second (e.g., "like -- I dunno I'm good like -- when I ask someone to review my paper I will let them know you can write anything")

* (asterisk) - unintelligible word, one * (asterisk) per word

? (question mark) - questioning/rising intonation

[(right square bracket) - overlapping speech (e.g.:
"R: aha so you have changed this [this behavior right?
Ryan: [yeah it depends on the people I'm trea- I'm dealing with")

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[32] The article has a typo in the spelling of the name of the author: the name is spelled CASRNIR instead of CASMIR.

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