

# **Politeness in Cypriot Greek: A frame-based approach**

A dissertation submitted in candidature for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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## **Declaration**

This dissertation in its entirety is the result of my own work, and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration.

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## Abstract

This research combines elements in pragmatics, sociolinguistics, and cognitive linguistics, using empirical data to contribute to our understanding of the processing of polite discourse. One hundred and five hours of spontaneous conversational data produced by native Cypriot Greek speakers of both sexes and of various ages and socio-economic backgrounds were recorded in various settings. The semi-phonological transcription of realisations of offers and requests yielded a corpus of 2,189 observations. Extra-linguistic variables considered during the analysis of these data included the interlocutors' sex, age, and social class, the relationship between them, the setting of the exchange, and the order of occurrence of the speech act in the flow of the conversation. Linguistic variables included the presence/absence of a main-clause verb, its type (lexico-semantically defined), the subjective modality, and number+person for which this was marked, as well as additional markers of politeness (address terms, diminutives, etc.). To test the validity of Brown and Levinson's (1987) prediction that the degree of indirectness of an utterance realising an FTA<sub>x</sub> is commensurate with the sum of the Distance between interlocutors, the Power of the hearer over the speaker, and the Ranking of the imposition which FTA<sub>x</sub> entails in the culture in question, frequencies of co-occurrence between these variables were investigated. This investigation revealed an arbitrary association of particular combinations of linguistic features with particular combinations of extra-linguistic features. It is proposed that, to the extent that particular expressions are conventionalised for some use, and to the extent that such expressions constitute our main resource for achieving politeness, politeness is presumed given a minimal context. Such context is modelled as a frame combining information about extra-linguistic features of the situation and the (socio-culturally defined) appropriate use of language therein. The presumptive nature of the implicatures arising when a frame of this kind is instantiated guarantees that politeness, defined as a perlocutionary effect consisting of the addressee holding the belief that the speaker is polite, is achieved *all else being equal*. A natural explanation is thus provided for the oft-repeated observation that politeness commonly passes unnoticed. This account departs from previous approaches, which view politeness as tied to speakers' intentions and communicated by means of particularised implicatures. In the proposed schema, speakers' intentions come into play only when the expression used is not conventionalised for some use relative to the (minimal) context of utterance. They then give rise to particularised implicatures which necessitate a reference to the nonce context of utterance.

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## Table of Symbols and Abbreviations

A=MG	Indicates utterances addressed to a Mainland Greek
ACC.	Accusative case
AI	Artificial Intelligence
AV	Action Verb (see 4.1.2 below)
B&L	Brown & Levinson 1987 (see References)
CA	Conversation Analysis
CC	Conversational Contract
CG	Cypriot Greek
CP	The Co-operative Principle
D	The distance between the speaker and the hearer
dep.	Dependent (perfective non-past)
dim.	Diminutive
FN	First Name
FP	Future Particle
FTA	Face-Threatening Act
GCI	Generalised Conversational Implicature
*GCI	Generalised Conversational Implicature presumed given a minimal context (see 5.4.5 below)
GEN.	Genitive case
H/h	Hearer
iff	If and only if
imp.	Imperative mood
imperf.	Imperfective aspect
ind.	Indicative mood
LC	Locutionary Cooperation



LN	Last Name
NOM.	Nominative case
non-fin.	Non-finite
NP	Noun Phrase
P	The power of the hearer over the speaker
part.	Participle
pass.	Passive voice
past	Past tense
PCI	Particularised Conversational Implicature
PCP	Perlocutionary Cooperative Principle
perf.	Perfective aspect
PP	Politeness Principle
R <sub>x</sub>	The ranking of an FTA <sub>x</sub>
RT	Relevance Theory
S	Speaker
SAV	Speech Act Verb (see 4.1.2 below)
SEG	South Eastern Greek (see 3.2 below)
SMG	Standard Modern Greek
SP	Subjunctive particle
T	Second person singular of verbs and pronouns
UG	Universal Grammar
V	Second person plural of verbs and pronouns
VOC.	Vocative case
VP	Verb Phrase
W <sub>x</sub>	The weightiness of an FTA <sub>x</sub>
(1)	Arabic numerals in brackets denote examples in the text
1:	Arabic numerals followed by a colon indicate turns at talk
1sg.	First person singular of verbs and pronouns
1pl.	First person plural of verbs and pronouns
2sg.	Second person singular of verbs and pronouns
2pl.	Second person plural of verbs and pronouns
3sg.	Third person singular of verbs and pronouns
3pl.	Third person plural of verbs and pronouns
<i>parakalo</i> , ‘please’	Greek words are rendered phonologically and italicised, followed by an English equivalent in single quotes.
+>	‘conversationally implicates’
>	When used in examples, a rightward-pointing angled bracket indicates turns at talk discussed in the text. When used in tables, it indicates the CG form

	corresponding to a SMG one.
...	Ellipses indicate talk omitted from the data segment
[ ]	Square brackets between lines indicate the beginning (l) and end (r) of overlapping talk
(.)	A dot enclosed in parenthesis indicates a brief silence
((pause))	The word 'pause' enclosed in double parentheses indicates longer silences (lasting a second or longer)
-	The hyphen indicates incomplete utterance of a word
end of line= =start of line	Equal signs are latching symbols. When attached to the end of one line and the beginning of another, they indicate that the latter talk was "latched onto" the earlier talk without hesitation.
This is a (rehash)	Parentheses around words indicate transcriber doubt about what those words are, as in the case of softly spoken or overlapped talk. On occasion, nonsense syllables are provided, in an attempt to capture something of the produced sounds.
This is a ( )	Empty parentheses indicate that some talk was not audible or interpretable at all
((laughing))	Double parentheses enclose transcriber comments.
{ }	Curly brackets enclose material inserted to make translation more comprehensible
.hh	The h preceded by a period represents an audible inbreath. Longer sounds are transcribed using a longer string: .hhhh.
h	The h without a leading period represents audible exhaling
pt	The letters pt by themselves represent a lip smack, which occasionally occurs when a speaker begins to talk
<i>DilaDi?</i> 'that is?' <i>prot'ap'ola</i> 'to start with' <i>ne jatre.</i> 'yes doctor.' <i>na po oti, i</i> <i>simetoCes</i> 'let me say that, participation'	Punctuation marks are generally used to indicate pitch level. The question mark shows a rising pitch (not necessarily a question). The apostrophe marks missing speech sounds and normal contractions. The period indicates a drop in pitch, while the comma represents flat pitch. When used, the exclamation point shows animated speech.
<i>apandiste s'<u>afto</u> to</i> <i>erotima</i> 'answer <u>this</u> question' <i>to»ra</i> 'now'	Underlining shows an emphatic rise in pitch
<i>ce~~~</i> 'and' <i>al~a</i> 'but'	The prime sign indicates accentuation (especially when this is non-standard)
	Colons indicate elongated sounds. The more colons, the more the syllable or sound is stretched. This convention is also used for the long consonants of CG.

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## List of Abbreviations used in Figures

Acquaintances	The speaker and addressee are acquaintances
Add: offer	Offer sequentially following an offer or a request and used as an additional marker of politeness
Add: request	Request sequentially following an offer or a request and used as an additional marker of politeness
Agreement	The lexical items <i>endaksi/orait</i> , ‘alright’ with rising intonation used as agreement seeking devices
AT: Ate	The exhortative particle <i>ate</i> as an additional marker of politeness
AT: FN	First Name (unmodified) as an additional marker of politeness
AT: FN+mu	First Name+possessive pronoun <i>mu</i> , ‘my’ as an additional marker of politeness
AT: Kori	The address term <i>kori</i> , ‘daughter-VOC.’ used as an additional marker of politeness
AT: Mana mu	The address term <i>mana mu</i> , ‘my mother’ used as an additional marker of politeness
AT: Professional TI.	Professional title used as an additional marker of politeness
AT: Re	The particle <i>re</i> , ‘hey’ used as an additional marker of politeness

AT: Title+FN	Title+First Name as an additional marker of politeness
AT: Title+LN	Title+ Last Name as an additional marker of politeness
audience-speaker	The speaker is a member of the audience at a formal discussion addressing a/the keynote speaker
colleagues	The speaker and addressee are colleagues (length of relationship unknown)
Cond.cl.-AV	Conditional clause containing an action verb used as an additional marker of politeness
Cond.cl.-THELO	Conditional clause containing the verb <i>Telo</i> , 'I want' used as an additional marker of politeness
DIM: Diminutives	Derivational diminutives as an additional marker of politeness
DIM: Ligo	Periphrastic diminution via the lexical item <i>lifo</i> , 'a little' as an additional marker of politeness
DIM: Mono	Periphrastic diminution via the lexical item <i>mono</i> , 'just' as an additional marker of politeness
DIM: Timehedges	Periphrastic diminution via such lexical items as <i>ena lepto</i> , 'one minute', <i>mja stifmi</i> , 'one moment' as an additional marker of politeness
employee-employer	The speaker is an employee addressing his/her employer (length of relationship unknown)
employer-employee	The speaker is an employer addressing an employee (length of relationship unknown)
family	The speaker and addressee are members of the same family
friends	The speaker and addressee are friends
inter/wee-inter/wee	The speaker is an interviewee addressing another interviewee during a live broadcast on radio/TV
inter/wee-inter/wer	The speaker is an interviewee addressing an interviewer during a live broadcast on radio/TV
inter/wer-inter/wee	The speaker is an interviewer addressing an interviewee during a live broadcast on radio/TV
new cust-salesperson	The speaker is a new customer addressing a salesperson

O-AV-IMP	Offer performed using an Action Verb in the imperative with non-rising intonation
O-AV-SUBJ	Offer performed using an Action Verb in the subjunctive with non-rising intonation
O-AV-INDRI	Offer performed using an Action Verb in the indicative with rising intonation
O-AV-IND	Offer performed using an Action Verb in the indicative with non-rising intonation
O-AV-SUBJRI	Offer performed using an Action Verb in the subjunctive with rising intonation
O-AV-FUT	Offer performed using an Action Verb in the future tense with non-rising intonation
O-AV-FUTRI	Offer performed using an Action Verb in the future tense with rising intonation
O-AV-PAST	Offer performed using an Action Verb in the past tense with non-rising intonation
O-AV-PASTRI	Offer performed using an Action Verb in the past tense with rising intonation
O-SAV-IMP	Offer performed using a Speech Act Verb in the imperative with non-rising intonation
O-SAV-SUBJ	Offer performed using a Speech Act Verb in the subjunctive with non-rising intonation
O-SAV-INDRI	Offer performed using a Speech Act Verb in the indicative with rising intonation
O-SAV-IND	Offer performed using a Speech Act Verb in the indicative with non-rising intonation
O-SAV-SUBJRI	Offer performed using a Speech Act Verb in the subjunctive with rising intonation
O-SAV-FUT	Offer performed using a Speech Act Verb in the future tense with non-rising intonation
O-SAV-PASTRI	Offer performed using a Speech Act Verb in the past tense with rising intonation
O-THELO-INDRI	Offer performed using the verb <i>Te lo</i> , 'I want' in the indicative with rising intonation



O-THELO-IND	Offer performed using the verb <i>Te lo</i> , 'I want' in the indicative with non-rising intonation
O-THELO-PAST	Offer performed using the verb <i>Te lo</i> , 'I want' in the past tense with non-rising intonation
O-EXO-INDRI	Offer performed using the verb <i>exo</i> , 'I have' in the indicative with rising intonation
O-EXO-IND	Offer performed using the verb <i>exo</i> , 'I have' in the indicative with non-rising intonation
O-BORO-IND	Offer performed using the verb <i>boro</i> , 'I can' in the indicative with non-rising intonation
O-PREPI-IND	Offer performed using the verb <i>prepi</i> , 'it must' in the indicative with non-rising intonation
O-INDIRST-IN	Offer performed using an indirect statement
oldemployee-employer	The speaker is a long-standing employee addressing his/her employer
oldemployer-employee	The speaker is an employer addressing a long-standing employee
old colleagues	The speaker and addressee are colleagues (established relationship)
old cust-salesperson	The speaker is a long-standing customer addressing a salesperson
PARAKALO	The lexical item <i>parakalo</i> , 'please' used as an additional marker of politeness
Purpose	Embedded clause or prepositional phrase expressing purpose used as an additional marker of politeness
R-AV-IMP	Request performed using an Action Verb in the imperative with non-rising intonation
R-AV-SUBJ	Request performed using an Action Verb in the subjunctive with non-rising intonation
R-AV-INDRI	Request performed using an Action Verb in the indicative with rising intonation
R-AV-IND	Request performed using an Action Verb in the indicative with non-rising intonation

R-AV-SUBJRI	Request performed using an Action Verb in the subjunctive with rising intonation
R-AV-FUT	Request performed using an Action Verb in the future tense with non-rising intonation
R-AV-FUTRI	Request performed using an Action Verb in the future tense with rising intonation
R-AV-PAST	Request performed using an Action Verb in the past tense with non-rising intonation
R-AV-IMPRI	Request performed using an Action Verb in the imperative with rising intonation
R-AV-COND	Request performed using an Action Verb in the conditional with non-rising intonation
R-AV-PASTRI	Request performed using an Action Verb in the past tense with rising intonation
R-SAV-IMP	Request performed using a Speech Act Verb in the imperative with non-rising intonation
R-SAV-SUBJ	Request performed using a Speech Act Verb in the subjunctive with non-rising intonation
R-SAV-IMPRI	Request performed using a Speech Act Verb in the imperative with rising intonation
R-SAV-INDRI	Request performed using a Speech Act Verb in the indicative with rising intonation
R-SAV-IND	Request performed using a Speech Act Verb in the indicative with non-rising intonation
R-SAV-SUBJRI	Request performed using a Speech Act Verb in the subjunctive with rising intonation
R-SAV-FUT	Request performed using a Speech Act Verb in the future tense with non-rising intonation
R-SAV-PAST	Request performed using a Speech Act Verb in the past tense with non-rising intonation
R-SAV-IMPRI	Request performed using a Speech Act Verb in the imperative with rising intonation
R-SAV-COND	Request performed using a Speech Act Verb in the conditional with non-rising intonation

R-THELO-IND	Request performed using the verb <i>Telo</i> , 'I want' in the indicative with non-rising intonation
R-THELO-COND	Request performed using the verb <i>Telo</i> , 'I want' in the conditional with non-rising intonation
R-THELO-INDRI	Request performed using the verb <i>Telo</i> , 'I want' in the indicative with rising intonation
R-THELO-PAST	Request performed using the verb <i>Telo</i> , 'I want' in the past tense with non-rising intonation
R-THELO-PASTRI	Request performed using the verb <i>Telo</i> , 'I want' in the past tense with rising intonation
R-EXO-INDRI	Request performed using the verb <i>exo</i> , 'I have' in the indicative with rising intonation
R-EXO-PAST	Request performed using the verb <i>exo</i> , 'I have' in the past tense with non-rising intonation
R-BORO-INDRI	Request performed using the verb <i>boro</i> , 'I can' in the indicative with rising intonation
R-BORO-IND	Request performed using the verb <i>boro</i> , 'I can' in the indicative with non-rising intonation
R-BORO-COND	Request performed using the verb <i>boro</i> , 'I can' in the conditional with non-rising intonation
R-PREPI-IND	Request performed using the verb <i>prepi</i> , 'it must' in the indicative with non-rising intonation
R-PREPI-FUT	Request performed using the verb <i>prepi</i> , 'it must' in the future tense with non-rising intonation
R-INDIRST-IN	Request performed using an indirect statement
R-EPITREPO-IMP	Request performed using the verb <i>epitrepo</i> , 'I allow' in the imperative with non-rising intonation
R-EPITREPO-SUBJ	Request performed using the verb <i>epitrepo</i> , 'I allow' in the subjunctive with non-rising intonation
R-EPITREPO-INDRI	Request performed using the verb <i>epitrepo</i> , 'I allow' in the indicative with rising intonation
R-EPITREPO-FUT	Request performed using the verb <i>epitrepo</i> , 'I allow' in the future tense with non-rising intonation

R-INDIRREQ-IN	Indirect request performed without making reference to the speaker or the addressee
R-INDIRREQ-SUBJ	Indirect request containing a reference to the speaker or the addressee performed using the subjunctive with non-rising intonation
R-INDIRREQ-INDRI	Indirect request containing a reference to the speaker or the addressee performed using the indicative with rising intonation
R-INDIRREQ-IND	Indirect request containing a reference to the speaker or the addressee performed using the indicative with non-rising intonation
R-INDIRREQ-FUT	Indirect request containing a reference to the speaker or the addressee performed using the future tense with non-rising intonation
R-INDIRREQ-COND	Indirect request containing a reference to the speaker or the addressee performed using the conditional with non-rising intonation
R-INDIRREQ-PAST	Indirect request containing a reference to the speaker or the addressee performed using the past tense with non-rising intonation
R-IME-INDRI	Request performed using the verb <i>ime</i> , 'I am' with rising intonation
Reason	Embedded clause or prepositional phrase expressing reason used as an additional marker of politeness
salesperson-cust new	The speaker is a salesperson addressing a new customer
salesperson-cust old	The speaker is a salesperson addressing a long-standing customer
SIGNOMI	The lexical item <i>sifnomi</i> , 'I'm sorry' used as an additional marker of politeness
speaker-audience	The speaker is a/the keynote speaker at a formal discussion addressing a member of the audience

“[T]here are no giant leaps from any particular perspective to universal truth. Instead, there is only patient, incremental growth in understanding, as one concrete, particular language/worldview after another is encountered, acknowledged, and grappled with.”

Schultz (1990:45)

## Preface

The motivation to study the expression of politeness in Cypriot Greek (henceforth CG) came from native Cypriot Greek speakers' remarking on the extensive use of derivational diminutives (e.g. *neraci*, 'small water', *kafedaci*, 'small coffee') in Standard Modern Greek (henceforth SMG), and Mainland Greek speakers' remarking on the extensive use of the 2nd person singular in CG, in situations where SMG would have stipulated the use of the polite plural. Both derivational diminution and the polite plural are conventionally used in SMG to express politeness (Sifianou 1992b; Bakakou-Orfanou 1989); and both achieve this effect by somehow making the speaker's utterance more indirect. Could it be, then, that conversational exchanges in CG are generally relatively direct? Is it possible to be direct and still be polite? If politeness is an important reason for deviating from rational efficiency in conversation captured in Grice's (1989a[1975]) Cooperative Principle, as often assumed (e.g., R. Lakoff 1973; Leech 1983; Brown & Levinson 1987), then how might politeness as directness be accounted for theoretically?

Clearly, these questions could not be settled without undertaking an empirical investigation of what speakers actually say during face-to-face interaction in Cyprus. Both derivational diminutives and the polite plural are also used in CG to express politeness. The remarks motivating this study, then, were prompted more by the differences in the extent to which politeness is achieved by means of these devices in the two communities, than by differences in the possibility itself of being polite by using these devices. Consequently, the investigation should not focus on how politeness *can* be expressed in CG (i.e. describe the full range of linguistic means available in CG for conveying politeness), but should concentrate on how politeness is *customarily* expressed therein (i.e. identify those linguistic means which CG speakers regularly have recourse to when being polite). To study when and to what extent linguistic means which previous research on SMG has identified as markers of politeness in Modern Greek (e.g., Sifianou 1992a) are drawn upon by native speakers of CG, recordings of

spontaneous urban CG speech were conducted, and an extensive corpus of utterance-sequences realising offers and requests was compiled.

The point of departure for the ensuing discussion has been succinctly formulated by Peter Matthews (p.c.): “one has no difficulty, in ordinary English, in saying that, on a particular occasion, a particular person is “being impolite” or, perhaps, that they are falling over backwards to “be polite”. In either case, one is talking of departures from a norm, on which, since it is the norm, one usually does not comment.” The analysis of the data collected provides the platform from which to elucidate the nature of this norm for CG, and its role in speakers’ online production and interpretation of utterances. In particular, the aim is to establish (a) the relationship between extra-linguistic features of the situation (such as the interlocutors’ sex, age, and social class, the relationship between them, the setting of the exchange, and the order of occurrence of the speech act) and the linguistic means deployed each time to perform offers and requests respectively, (b) how this relationship may be formalised for theoretical purposes, and (c) to what extent and based on what evidence this formalisation might be claimed to model part of what native CG speakers know about their language.

The review of selected previous research on linguistic politeness in chapter 1 yields theoretically motivated hypotheses regarding the relationship between linguistic politeness and the central notions of face, rationality, presumptive inference, frames, and universality. Chapter 2 outlines the processes of data collection and corpus compilation, and sets out the objectives of the data analysis. Chapter 3 introduces the reader to the structure and use of CG. The attempt to analyse the collected data using the framework of Brown and Levinson (1987[1978]) in chapter 4 highlights several difficulties with applying their framework to empirical data. These failings prompt the formulation of a frame-based approach to politeness in the following two chapters. Chapter 5 explores the relationship of politeness to speaker-meaning, and argues that politeness constitutes a perlocutionary effect achieved (to the extent that it passes unnoticed) automatically by virtue of presumptive inferences arising given a minimal context. Chapter 6 explores the usefulness of the notion of frames, developed within the fields of Artificial Intelligence, psychology, linguistics and sociology, in accounting for linguistic politeness, given their role as ‘structures of expectations’ in default (presumptive) reasoning. This investigation is completed by chapter 7 which applies the proposed frame-based approach to the collected data and discusses its psycholinguistic implications and limitations. The proposed approach has far-reaching theoretical implications for the nature of co-operativeness and its relationship to the notion of face, the role of context in presumptive inference, and the interaction of linguistic and real-world knowledge, all of which constitute central concerns of pragmatics broadly construed.

“One has to escape from the realism of the structure, to which objectivism, a necessary stage in breaking with primary experience and constructing the objective relationships, necessarily leads when it hypostatizes these relations by treating them as realities already constituted outside the history of the group — without falling back into subjectivism, which is quite incapable of giving an account of the necessity of the social world. To do this, one has to return to practice.”

(Bourdieu 1990:52)

## Chapter 1

### Theoretical preliminaries: placing politeness in context

#### 1.1 Two meanings of politeness

Traditional grammars of many languages are interspersed with remarks about politeness. Probably the earliest phenomena targeted by such remarks concern the use of address terms: address systems are said to have included indirect variants used to indicate politeness as far back as Proto-Indo-European times (Seebold 1983:33; Ehlich 1992:82ff.). Syntactico-semantic phenomena, such as neg-raising,<sup>1</sup> morpho-syntactic phenomena regarding tense and aspect,<sup>2</sup> and derivational phenomena<sup>3</sup> are also associated with politeness in this context. In such descriptive accounts of languages, politeness is indicated by a deviation from rational efficiency (as captured by Grice’s (1989a[1975]:26-7) Cooperative Principle (henceforth CP) and the subsumed maxims)<sup>4</sup> either at the level of the

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<sup>1</sup> This is the phenomenon where a narrow-scope negation operator (internal) takes wider scope over the sentence (external). In an early account, use of the ‘illogical’ neg-raised form is attributed to “le dessein d’atténuer la rigueur de la défense” (Martinon 1927:536).

<sup>2</sup> Thus, Jespersen (1933:285) notes that “*It would seem or one would think* is a more polite or guarded way of saying ‘it seems’.”

<sup>3</sup> For example, Triantafyllidis (1963[1927]:147) notes the use of diminutives in Modern Greek “to phrase something more politely”. This use of diminutives is not a recent occurrence in the language: writing in the second century AD, Herodianus informs us that diminutives may be used “*dia% to% pre%pon*”, ‘for decency’ (ibid.:148).

<sup>4</sup> The CP reads: “Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged”. Four maxims spell out its content:

The maxim of Quantity

- (i) Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange).
- (ii) Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

The maxim of Quality

- (i) Do not say what you believe to be false.



lexicon or at that of syntax or of morphology: politeness is inherent to certain terms or constructions in virtue of this deviation.<sup>5</sup> It can thus be described as a phenomenon internal to the Saussurean *langue*, although of course its origins may lie within *parole* (the kinds of situations in which the ‘polite’ variants are used; cf. Braun 1988:52; Held 1992:136-9).

This notion of politeness as an inventory of terms/constructions, which we may refer to as ‘politeness-outside-context’, is reminiscent of the everyday use of the term ‘polite’. The OED defines this as: “1. having good manners, courteous 2. cultivated, cultured 3. refined, elegant”. Clearly, these are properties that individuals may also exhibit outside a dyad, once a standard has been set. Politeness then becomes a given, a static notion within the synchrony of any language. Eelen (1999:47ff.) outlines the following characteristics of this everyday understanding of ‘politeness’: evaluativity (evaluating others’ behaviour as polite or impolite), argumentativity (using such evaluations to achieve a social effect), focussing on ‘polite’ forms and attitudes (on a macro-socially — rather than micro-socially — defined scale ranging from ‘polite’ through ‘neutral’ to ‘impolite’), normativity (a matter of social norms), modality (the optionality of ‘polite’ interactional strategies), and reflexivity (the society’s investing of particular forms with politeness, what was referred to above as the setting of ‘polite’ standards).

Such commonsensical understanding of ‘politeness’ is inappropriate as a starting point for a theory of linguistic politeness. Not only is an equivalent term not found in some languages (Ehlich 1992:94; Nwoye 1992:315), but corresponding terms in different languages do not necessarily cover the same semantic fields (Hill et al. 1986; Watts 1992:49; Luksaneeyanawin 1999). Everyday perceptions of politeness are equally changeable over time (Ehlich 1992:94ff.), and speakers’ perceptions of what is polite might be particularly uncertain or diverging during periods of flux (R. Lakoff 1979:74). But perhaps the most compelling argument against taking the everyday notion as the basis for a theory of linguistic politeness is that the use of grammarians’ ‘polite’ variants of neutral terms or constructions may well lead to a contrary effect in context. Garfinkel’s experiments, in which he asked students to behave “in a circumspect and polite fashion” (1972a:9) towards the members of their families, provide an eloquent example of this (for

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(ii) Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

The maxim of Relation

Be relevant.

The maxim of Manner

(i) Avoid obscurity of expression.

(ii) Avoid ambiguity.

(iii) Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity).

(iv) Be orderly.

<sup>5</sup> This is clearly a one-way correspondence only: not all deviations from rational efficiency are explicable in terms of politeness. The relevant intuition would seem to be ‘no deviation from rational efficiency, no politeness’.

an example from the CG data, see 4.2.6 below). Being part of widely varying social practices, the everyday notion of politeness turns out to be ambiguous and imprecise, and cannot serve as the basis for a theoretical definition with reference to which politeness phenomena may be identified and described.

The search for a more sound basis for theorising has led all of the approaches discussed in 1.2 below to incorporate in one form or another a reference to the context of utterance, thus moving toward a more dynamic notion of politeness-in-context. Compared to the everyday notion, politeness within current linguistic research emerges as a non-evaluative, non-argumentative notion, (aiming at) encompassing all forms which may be appropriate in a cultural (macro-social) and situational (micro-social) context.<sup>6</sup> However, it remains a normative (and by extension a reflexive) notion (Eelen 1999:59ff.), as well as a modal one.

Challenging this line of research, Eelen (1999:57-8) suggests that a technical construal of politeness must be non-normative. He justifies this claim with reference to the theoretical and empirical difficulties of delimiting cultural or societal 'norms' (1999:170ff.): the empirical variability which such norms exhibit both cross-culturally and intra-culturally simply argues against the theoretical usefulness of this notion. While subscribing to the existence of these difficulties, I would argue that any theory of linguistic politeness must incorporate a reference to norms, drawing on the possibility of inappropriate usage giving rise to impoliteness (whether accidental or intended; chapters 5, 6 below), a point not refuted by Eelen himself (1999:179). How is such inappropriateness to be captured theoretically, if not with reference to norms which may well be contested even at the micro-level? Admittedly, this raises the question whether contested norms may be thought of as norms at all. Observation of real usage (addressees' reception of, and responses to, actual utterances) provides an answer here (Gumperz & Tannen 1979:306-7; Gumperz 1982:5-6): intra-cultural interaction on a day-to-day basis is, for the most part, unproblematic; its non-memorableness, if I may coin a term, would seem to point in this direction. Contested norms show up as the exception rather than the rule in this picture. There is therefore room for a more flexible construal of politeness norms as norms underlying behaviour which is adequate in context (Braun 1988:49; Escandell-Vidal 1998:46), to the extent that this adequacy remains uncontested. Eelen's objection to a normative notion of politeness can thus be usefully recast as a methodological one: rather than rejecting norms altogether, elaborating our definition of context can help pin down this otherwise elusive notion. The present study seeks to achieve this by analysing actually observed behaviour (including participants' reactions to this behaviour): starting from the

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<sup>6</sup> Ide (1989:225) puts this nicely: "[p]oliteness is a neutral term. Just as 'height' does not refer to the state of being 'high', 'politeness' is not the state of being 'polite'."

view that the uncontested use of an expression in context is evidence of its adequacy *with respect to this context*, it seeks to identify those features in the context of utterance which regularly co-occur with the expression in question, and with which use of this expression must, in virtue of this regularity, be associated.<sup>7</sup>

The distinction drawn above between the two meanings of politeness is not new. Braun (1988:49-53) and Held (1992:136ff.) distinguish politeness as a marked inventory of forms from politeness as social adequacy, while Watts et al. (1992:11) distinguish first-order politeness as an everyday notion from second-order politeness as a technical term within linguistic theory, a distinction taken up by Eelen (1999:143ff.). The point of repeating this here is to emphasise the commonsensical bias of approaches which seek politeness in deviations from the CP (R. Lakoff 1973, Leech 1983, Brown & Levinson 1987) in a move consonant with the intuition “no deviation from rational efficiency, no politeness” which implicitly guides traditional accounts. While this intuition may have been useful at an initial stage to draw attention to the phenomena of linguistic politeness, it nonetheless has the effect of confining politeness to instances of deviation from the CP, when, on closer investigation, such deviations only achieve politeness in association with the context of utterance. Reference to the context of utterance is therefore unavoidable. At the same time, once a theory incorporates such a reference, it must account for attested instances of achieving politeness without deviating from the CP (Arundale & Ashton 1992; chapter 5 below). Appealing to the above intuition, then, proves inadequate to account for the full range of politeness-in-context. This inadequacy of (at least some) approaches proposed to date may be traced back to their equivocal placement in view of the distinction between politeness as an everyday notion and as a technical term.

## **1.2 Setting the scene: an overview of the main themes in politeness research to date**

An increasing number of studies pertaining to linguistic politeness have appeared in the last three decades, witness the recent fifty-one-pages-long ‘Bibliography on linguistic politeness’ (DuFon et al. 1994). While it is impossible to devote separate attention to all the theoretical proposals put forward,<sup>8</sup> one may identify some recurring themes which provide the theoretical background for any discussion of politeness. This section focuses on those approaches which, incorporating empirical considerations, have given prominence to these themes. The order of presentation is roughly chronological, and is intended to bring in relief the gradual shift of emphasis from politeness as deviation from rational efficiency in earlier accounts to a more comprehensive notion of politeness-in-context in later ones (1.1 above).

<sup>7</sup> On how context may be conceptualised for our purposes, see chapters 6, 7 below.

<sup>8</sup> For a fairly comprehensive review, see Eelen 1999, chapter 2.

### 1.2.1 Politeness as a matter of rules or maxims

The idea that politeness can be accounted for by appealing to rules originates in the work of Robyn Lakoff (1973). Lakoff introduces the notion of pragmatic rules, that is, rules which decide whether an utterance is pragmatically well-formed or not. Pragmatic well-formedness in this context is identified with the acceptability of an utterance, which is the result of the interaction between syntax and semantics with pragmatics. Pragmatic rules also come into play in cases of pragmatic ambiguity, i.e. when the force of an utterance cannot be decided without reference to context, understood here as “the speaker’s assumptions about his relations with the addressee, his real-world situation as he speaks, and the extent to which he wishes to change either or both” (1973:296). Pragmatic competence subsumes two general rules: clarity, or speaking in accordance with Grice’s maxims of conversation, and politeness. Different conversations accord a variable weight to these two rules, depending on their purposes, resulting in a continuous trade-off between clarity and politeness. Three further rules spell out the content of politeness in Lakoff’s (ibid.:298) scheme:

- (1) Don’t impose
- (2) Give options
- (3) Make the addressee feel good — be friendly

Rule (1) in fact dictates clarity, which is thus subsumed under politeness (1973:303). These rules are applicable to different situations, and in the same situation to different extents. Being polite is thus defined — but only implicitly so — as operating according to those rules which are in effect each time, and doing so in “speech and actions alike” (ibid.:303). A different ordering of the three rules is responsible for cross-cultural differences in politeness assessments, while the rules in themselves remain universal (ibid.:304).

Another proponent of a maxim-based view of politeness is Geoffrey Leech. Leech (1980, 1983) introduces three pragmatic scales, inter-related in a causal/deterministic way in guiding politeness<sup>9</sup> assessments: the scale of cost-benefit for the hearer, the optionality scale, and the politeness or indirectness scale. Leech also incorporates Brown and Gilman’s (1972 [1960]) notions of power and solidarity, which he sees as interacting with the first of these scales in determining the need for the speaker to give the hearer options, or, in other words, to be indirect. These scales motivate a Politeness Principle (PP), subsuming six

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<sup>9</sup> Leech (1980:109) differentiates ‘tact’ as “strategic conflict avoidance” from ‘negative politeness’ as “the degree to which the individual behaviour of a particular person [...] exceeds the normal degree of tact required in a given situation”. His ‘tact’ is, then, closer to the traditional understanding of ‘politeness’, while his ‘politeness’ partly overlaps with what is traditionally termed ‘strategic politeness’ (and is distinct from politeness achieved by means of strategies, simply referred to as ‘politeness’; cf. Escandell-Vidal 1998:46-7, 55n.6). This justifies currently adopting the term ‘politeness’ as part of retaining a homogeneous meta-language across theories, and avoiding confusion with the more specialised application of ‘tact’ to Leech’s Tact Maxim (1980:109; 1983:107).

maxims — Tact, Generosity, Approbation, Modesty, Agreement, and Sympathy — which jointly spell out polite behaviour in general. The importance of these maxims varies cross-culturally and according to the situation, allowing for clashes between them to be resolved variably, depending on which maxim carries greater weight in the situation at hand. These six maxims relate to the content of the conversation. A seventh, Phatic, maxim, dealing with the way the conversation is managed by participants, is intended to account for obviously uninformative utterances, which serve to extend the common ground between participants. Leech's primary concern in proposing the PP is to show that the CP should not be abandoned just because it is so commonly breached. The maxims of the PP explain why participants breach the CP: they give rise to implicatures in the same way as the maxims of the CP. Behaviour which cannot be accounted for with reference to the PP necessitates the introduction of two further principles, the Irony Principle, and the Banter Principle. These are second-order principles, which fulfill their purpose by breaching the PP, which is a first-order principle alongside the CP. Further aspects of conversational behaviour, which are not directly linked to the relationship between interlocutors, require the postulation of the Interest Principle, and the Pollyanna Principle. The resulting complex of first- and second-order principles and maxims combine in an Interpersonal Rhetoric, where rhetoric is defined as "the effective use of language in its most general sense, applying primarily to everyday conversation" (Leech 1983:15). Regarding their applicability, Leech notes that "[...] such principles being the general functional 'imperatives' of human communication, are more or less universal, but [...] their relative weights will vary from one cultural, social, or linguistic milieu to another" (1983:150). Unfortunately, as in R. Lakoff's scheme, no indication is provided of how to come to grips with this variation.

The practice of appealing to politeness rules/maxims to account for conversational phenomena is adopted by Ide (1982) and Gu (1990), who suggest further rules in order to account for the facts of Japanese and Chinese conversation respectively. The need to proliferate the rules/maxims as soon as one moves into a new culture points to perhaps the greatest weakness of this practice: the lack of a principled explanation as to what motivates such rules (Watts 1992:46). The theories outlined in the following section address this weakness.

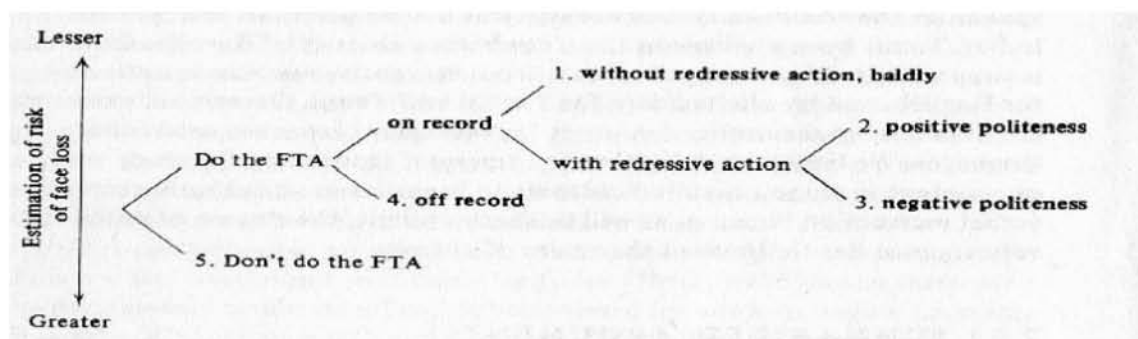
### 1.2.2 The (re)discovery of face

Brown and Levinson's (1987[1978]; henceforth B&L) theory has overall been greatly influential in the field of politeness studies (2.6 below), but perhaps their most important contribution is their (re)discovery of Goffman's notion of 'face'.<sup>10</sup> Providing a social-

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<sup>10</sup> This is further discussed in 1.3.1 below.

psychological motivation for politeness, they write: “politeness [...] presupposes [a] potential for aggression as it seeks to disarm it, and makes possible communication between potentially aggressive parties” (B&L:1). This fiction of the ‘virtual offence’ orientates participants to their mutual face-wants, conceptualised as: “the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself, consisting in two related aspects: (a) negative face: the basic claim to [...] freedom of action and freedom from imposition (b) positive face: the positive consistent self-image or ‘personality’ claimed by interactants, crucially including the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of” (B&L:61). Maintaining a Gricean framework, Brown and Levinson propose considerations of face as the reason for interlocutors’ deviations from the CP. They make two important assumptions from the start: that interlocutors are rational, and that they are endowed with face, which they wish to maintain. In their theory, every speech act is potentially face-threatening to an aspect of either the hearer’s or the speaker’s face. Although face-threat is imminently present, it is so in varying degrees, represented as the seriousness or weightiness of an FTA<sub>x</sub>. Interlocutors calculate this using the formula  $W_x = D(S,H) + P(H,S) + R_x$ , where  $D(S,H)$  is the social distance between the speaker and the hearer,  $P(H,S)$  is the power of the hearer over the speaker, and  $R_x$  is the ranking of the imposition that FTA<sub>x</sub> entails in the culture in question.<sup>11</sup> As the weightiness of an FTA increases, interlocutors move upwards along a scale of increasing indirectness represented as a hierarchy of strategies (fig.1). These five strategies, as well as their relative ordering, are claimed to be universal. However, the weightiness of a particular FTA, as computed based on the values of  $D$ ,  $P$  and  $R_x$  pertaining to this act, will be culture-specific, thereby theoretically justifying the theory’s claim to universality: in different cultures, different acts will be FTAs, and to a different degree. This claim is also empirically grounded, since Brown and Levinson based their investigation on data from three languages: Tzeltal, a Mayan language, Tamil, of the Dravidian language-group, and English (from both sides of the Atlantic).



**Figure 1: Strategies for performing FTAs (from B&L:60)**

<sup>11</sup> For fuller definition of these variables and discussion, see 4.2 below.

Brown and Levinson's theory has been dubbed "the face-saving view" (Fraser 1990:228-232). Recently, however, an alternative "face-constituting" view has also been put forward (Arundale 1999). This is grounded in a co-constitutive model of communication, which departs from the Gricean model in two important ways: meaning is now seen as emerging within a dyad rather than as an individual psychological attainment; moreover, it is continuously in the process of being constituted in the light of both past and future actions. Arundale proposes two principles which spell out how communication as emergence is achieved: the Sequential Interpreting Principle, and the Recipient Design Principle (1999:131, 135; original emphasis). In appealing to the first one,

"Recipients **interpret** the utterance currently being produced by another individual using expectations invoked in producing/interpreting their own prior utterance; they **integrate** this current interpreting with their own evolving interpreting of the interaction; and they **invoke** expectations for another subsequent interpreting of the recipient's own next utterance (to be used in producing that next utterance)"

while in appealing to the second one,<sup>12</sup>

"Speakers **frame** an utterance to be produced using both expectations invoked in their interpreting of another's prior utterance, and recipient interpretations yet to be formulated; they **attribute** to the future recipient knowledge of certain resources and procedures; they **project** the interpreting, integrating, and invoking processes the recipient will employ in formulating an interpreting of the utterance to be articulated; they **produce** the utterance by selecting and articulating utterance constituents; and they **presume** that their recipients will hold them accountable for their contribution to the conversation."

By integrating both speakers' and recipients' expectations in this way, the co-constituting model of communication can account for a broad range of phenomena left unaccounted for in the Gricean model, from the handling of conversational turns, topics, and adjacency structures, to the emergence and maintenance of language as a social construction. Of greater interest to us here, it can account for the co-constituting of face in interaction, through two further principles operating within the framework of the Sequential Interpreting Principle. The default interpreting principle captures how normal ways of designing utterances give rise to expectations regarding on-going interpretations, while the nonce interpreting principle comes into play when such expectations have not been invoked, or have been explicitly cancelled. As Arundale notes, "[f]or Brown and Levinson [...] politeness in language use is always accomplished by means of particularised conversational implicature" (1999:144). Consequently, in their scheme facework is conceptualised as "an extrinsic or exogenous factor that simply motivates language use"

<sup>12</sup> This principle recognises the importance of the notion of recipient- or audience-design, which is central to CA accounts of conversation and Accommodation Theory (Sacks & Schegloff 1979; Giles & Powesland 1998 [1975]; Bell 1984).

(1999:147). However, once it is recognised that in conversation face may not only be threatened but it may also be maintained by not creating any imbalance, the conceptualisation of politeness as balancing threat with redress is no longer viable.<sup>13</sup> In Arundale's words, "[c]onversants can and do attend to their own and other's face even when redressing a threat is not an issue. This *stasis* mode of maintaining face involves routine means of attending to face following the default interpreting principle, hence it is *not* explained within Brown and Levinson's theory." (1999:145; original emphasis). Face Constituting theory puts back into prominence a conceptualisation of facework as fully intrinsic to conversation, which is more in line with the original Goffmanian notion of face as "located in the flow of events" (1967:7) and "on loan from society" (1967:10), and of face maintenance as "a condition of interaction, not its objective" (1967:12). As such, it provides a theoretical response to criticisms of Brown and Levinson's notion of face as being "the sole 'prerogative' of the individual" (Mao 1994:469).

### 1.2.3 Discernment and volition: two ends of a continuum?

Another facet of Brown and Levinson's theory which has come under attack, mainly in the work of Japanese scholars such as Ide and Matsumoto, is its focus on politeness as an act of individual volition: implicatures of politeness arise through purposeful breaches of the CP. This "strategic conflict avoidance" view of politeness leaves out a range of phenomena in which politeness functions as "social indexing" (Kasper 1990:194-7). Acknowledging one's understanding of the situation and of the relation between conversational participants, and indicating this understanding by means of an appropriate linguistic choice are essential to this latter function of politeness, for which Hill et al. (1986:348) have introduced the term 'discernment'. Politeness as discernment is pervasive in obligatory markings of nominal and predicate forms, the choice amongst which appears to be more a matter of social convention than of the speaker's FTA-specific intention (Ide 1989:244; 1990). In Ide's (1989:231) words "[w]hereas Brown and Levinson dealt with face wants, the discernment aspect of linguistic politeness is distinguished by its orientation toward the wants of roles and settings". Ide (1989:227) summarises as follows the differences between the choice of formal forms and the use of strategies to achieve politeness: "[f]ormal forms are 1) limited in choice, 2) socio-pragmatically obligatory, 3) grammatically obligatory, and 4) made in accordance with a person who is not necessarily the addressee, the referent or the speaker him/herself."

The motivation for including these under the rubric of 'politeness' is threefold. First, they give rise to implicatures in much the same way as breaches of the Gricean maxims do:

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<sup>13</sup> This point is taken up in 1.3.2 below.



only this time, the resulting implicatures are “interactional” (Matsumoto 1989:210), in that they are generated by an unexpected choice between utterances which are otherwise equally informative, truthful, relevant, or perspicuous. Second, an inappropriate choice is “almost certain to result in loss of face” (Matsumoto 1989:218; cf. Hill et al. 1986:351). And third, they do not occur in isolation from volitional strategies in actual usage (Ide 1989:232), neither are they restricted to ‘honorific’ languages such as Japanese (Ide 1989:226; R.Lakoff 1972:926). Volition and discernment are thus said to constitute two ends of a continuum, captured within Weber’s typology of social actions, which ranges from instrumental rational action (cf. volition) through value-rational action and affectual action to traditional/conventional action (cf. discernment) (Ide 1989:244). Different cultures pay variable attention to these different aspects of politeness (Hill et al. 1986), witness the fact that discernment (i.e. recognition of relative position) is linguistically encoded in Japanese in the form of honorifics (Matsumoto 1988:419). However, they must both be accounted for within a truly universalising theory of politeness.

Or must they? According to Watts (1992:69; original emphasis), politeness consists in “a conscious choice of linguistic forms which, in accordance with the dictates of the time and the fashion, are conventionally understood to be an attempt on the part of *ego* to enhance his/her standing with respect to *alter* [...] its functions may easily be non-altruistic and clearly egocentric.” Watts proceeds to doubt “that linguistic politeness is a universal of language usage, unless it can be shown typologically that every culture makes use of volitional strategies of marked *ego*-centric behaviour” (ibid.). Such volitional strategies include “highly ritualised, formulaic behaviour [...], indirect speech strategies [...], and conventionalised linguistic strategies for saving and maintaining face” (Watts 1989:136; references omitted). On Watts’s account, face underlies only such a narrow conceptualisation of politeness as (individual) rational behaviour, since it only emerges with reference to a self-identity developed within a ‘closed’ group, in the Bernsteinian sense of a group in which the interests of the group — of the ‘we’ — supersede those of the individual — the ‘I’ (Bernstein 1971). Face considerations not being prior to the development of this self-identity, they only come into play in the transition from closed group- to open group-interaction, where the ‘I’ supersedes the ‘we’.

A rather different motivation is proposed as guiding interaction in closed groups, namely “maintaining group cohesion” (Watts 1989:161). This is achieved by means of relational work, which takes into account

1. the nature of the social activity in which the interactants are involved
2. the type of speech event they are engaged in within that activity
3. the degree to which [they] share a common set of cultural assumptions relating to the social activity and the speech event (i.e. the degree to which the group is closed or open)
4. the stock of commonly shared assumptions in relation to the informational state of the discourse

[...] 5. the social distance between and the status of interactants with respect to the social activity” (ibid.:137).

The result is socially appropriate behaviour — now termed ‘politic’ — and may be seen as: universal, in that it presupposes a process of socialisation; omnipresent in verbal interaction, to which it gives cohesion and continuity; and oriented towards ensuring relevance (Sperber & Wilson 1995[1986]). Upholding “the *perceived fabric of interpersonal relationships within the social group*” (Watts 1989:133) is the essence of politic behaviour, which subsumes polite behaviour as a marked subset. However, while providing an explanation for native English speakers’ often negative evaluations of the term “politeness” (Watts 1992:43), Watts’s schema has yet to provide a motivation for interactants’ upholding “the *perceived fabric of interpersonal relationships within the social group*”. Inasmuch as the search for Relevance itself may be subject to considerations of face,<sup>14</sup> restricting the application of face to volitional strategies may not be a viable option after all (see also 1.3.1 below).

#### 1.2.4 Contracts and conventions

Fraser (1990, 1999, forthcoming; Fraser & Nolen 1981) proposes a conceptualisation of politeness according to which “[b]eing polite does not involve making the hearer ‘feel good’, à la Lakoff or Leech, nor does it involve making the hearer not ‘feel bad’, à la Brown/Levinson. It simply involves getting on with the task at hand in light of the terms and conditions of the C[onversational] C[ontract]” (1990:233). On this view, a Conversational Contract (hence CC), consisting in each participant’s understanding of his/her rights and obligations, is continuously operative in every conversation. The terms of the CC draw on three resources: convention (such as general terms relating to mutual intelligibility and the turn-taking system), the social institutions within the framework of which the conversation is taking place, and previous encounters or the particulars of the situation. Terms emanating from the first two are seldom renegotiable. Terms emanating from the third resource are however continuously updated depending on participants’ perceptions of factors such as the status, power, and role of each speaker, and the nature of the circumstances. The kind of messages which may be expected, both in terms of force and content, depends to a large extent on these latter factors. Impoliteness results when the terms of the CC are violated. It follows that “[p]oliteness [...] is not a sometime thing. Rational participants are aware that they are to act within the negotiated constraints and generally do so. [...] Politeness is a state that one expects to exist in every conversation” (Fraser 1990:233). Viewing politeness as the expected state in conversation has some

<sup>14</sup> See 5.2 below, on Sperber and Wilson’s (1995) rejection of the CP.

important theoretical implications. First, “[the] Speaker selects the form of the utterance to meet [the] rights and obligations [constituting the CC] and in terms of: the Nature of the message (content and force) [and the] Anticipated perlocutionary effect” (Fraser 1999:15). Ultimately, however, politeness is “totally in the hands (or ears) of the hearer” (Fraser & Nolen 1981:96). Being a concomitant of rational efficiency, it is not signalled by deviations from the CP, in other words, it is not implicated.<sup>15</sup> Second, politeness is defined as “a property associated with a voluntary action” (Fraser & Nolen 1981:96). This may initially seem to be at odds with its being said to be the expected state in conversation. However this is not so, if ‘voluntary’ in the case of politeness is interpreted, in light of the feature of ‘modality’ (in the sense of optionality; 1.1 above), as constituting the preferred option or alternative, i.e. the expected one. Finally, the notion of intended deference as “that component of activity which functions as a symbolic means by which appreciation is regularly conveyed” (Goffman 1967:56) is now brought in to account for utterances which “in virtue of their meaning, encode speaker intention to convey deference” (Fraser forthcoming:19).

A contractual view of politeness brings into prominence the notion of participants’ expectations in conversation. These expectations emanate to a large extent from participants’ knowledge of conversational conventions, and of constraints imposed by social institutions, participant roles and the nature of the circumstances, all of which rely heavily (if implicitly) on convention. The importance of this notion is brought to the fore in the work of Blum-Kulka (1987a, 1987b, 1990). Based on analyses of Israeli and American English requests and parents’ control acts, Blum-Kulka concludes that conventionality, rather than unqualified indirectness, is the essence of politeness. She interprets this finding by appealing to a principle of pragmatic clarity, according to which lengthening the inferential path beyond ‘reasonable limits’, set by norms which are subject to situational and cultural constraints, constitutes an imposition in itself, which subtracts from the politeness of an utterance (1987a:141). Balance between two aspects of minimisation (of the imposition, and of the length of the inferential path) is achieved by means of conventional indirectness, which is now placed at the high end of the politeness scale (1990:271-3; cf. Holtgraves & Yang 1990:722-724). One important contribution of Blum-Kulka’s research is the finding that pragmatic clarity correlates not only with the length of the inferential path, but also with the type of speech event (Hymes 1974) which encompasses the scene, the participants, the message content, the message form, the rules of interaction and the norms of interpretation in which an act occurs (Blum-Kulka 1990:263). In this respect, “conventionality of situation can act similarly to other types of conventionality in ensuring that [a particular] interpretation becomes the default one”

<sup>15</sup> This point is taken up in 5.4 below.

(1987a:142fn.9). This type of conventionality needs to be taken into account in discussing politeness phenomena, since “the definition of the speech event, as constructed by the participants, creates event-specific frames which affect both the repertoire and the interpretation of politeness values” (1990:261). For Blum-Kulka, then, politeness can only be studied from an emic, culturally relativistic perspective (1987b:260ff.;1990:260, 262). However, I would argue that, if the products of conventionalisation are culturally specific, the mechanisms need not be, as Lewis’s (1969) study of the rational basis for conventions has shown (cf. Garrod & Doherty 1994). A study of politeness phenomena may still be universalising in this underlying sense.

### 1.2.5 Is politeness communicated?

The view that politeness is the expected state in conversation, rather than communicated by means of implicatures, is introduced by Fraser (1990:233), and further explored within the framework of Sperber and Wilson’s (1995[1986]) Relevance Theory (Escandell-Vidal 1996, 1998; Jary 1998). Jary (1998:11) summarises the problem as follows:

“many examples of what an observer could term instances of polite behaviour might go unnoticed by the interactants. In such a case, one either has to give up the claim that they are communicating politeness or extend one’s definition of communication to include some sort of subliminal communication, unattended by the interactants.”

Instead, Jary suggests, (im)politeness constitutes an additional message only when it makes *mutually* manifest a divergence in the speaker’s and the hearer’s assumptions concerning their relative standing for the purposes of an act. To determine such standing, Jary retains Brown and Levinson’s formula for computing the weightiness of an act, but refrains from making any claims regarding the relationship between linguistic form and values of D, P and R<sub>x</sub> (ibid.:2). The use of polite forms, then, makes manifest assumptions regarding the participants’ relative standing. These assumptions are not necessarily relevant, and the use of polite forms may therefore pass unnoticed. Nevertheless, evidence of the absence of, or a mismatch between, these assumptions is relevant enough: the hearer will then infer that the speaker holds him in a lower (or higher) standing than what he had previously assumed and a change in his cognitive environment will occur. However, this does not mean that politeness has been communicated as yet. For this to happen, the hearer must take it that it was the speaker’s intention to make manifest such an assumption. This would produce a change in the participants’ mutual cognitive environment, thereby fulfilling the preconditions for communication as defined within RT to occur. It is in this sense that the strategic use of politeness to achieve certain effects is parasitic on its unselfconscious/social indexing use. As a motivation for the latter, Jary suggests “a longer term aim of most people to either maintain or increase their standing in the eyes of group co-members”

(1998:12). One engages in the pursuit of shorter-term aims while trying to simultaneously fulfill/not jeopardise this longer-term aim. While the notion of face is not explicitly discussed in this light, one senses it is never far away.

Similar to Jary's remark that the use of polite forms most often passes unnoticed, Escandell-Vidal's (1996,1998) discussion of politeness within RT stems from the remark that

“[c]onversational strategies, or conversational efforts, can only have their *raison d'être* as exploitations of a default, ‘unmarked’ behaviour. [...] being able to prevent undesirable results or to enhance positive effects entail having first a precise knowledge of expected courses of events (including, obviously, linguistic events and behaviour), and their social consequences. If so, politeness must primarily be a matter of social adequacy, established in terms of expectations.” (1998:46; footnote omitted)

Exploring the nature of such expectations, Escandell-Vidal draws on Schank and Abelson's (1977) distinction between general knowledge, shared by all human beings in virtue of their sharing standard needs, and specific knowledge, pertaining to frequently experienced events. Because specific knowledge presupposes exposure to a situation, it is acquired, and can therefore be assumed to be culture-specific (1996:643). Knowledge pertaining to politeness, which is acquired through socialisation, is of this latter type, which elegantly accounts for the differences encountered cross-culturally (1996:645). Escandell-Vidal further suggests that expectations are a particular kind of mental (meta-)representations. Their distribution across a group can thus be accounted for within Sperber's (1996) theory of culture as epidemiology of representations (Escandell-Vidal 1998:47-8). Expectations having to do with the use of certain linguistic expressions “will contain a characterisation both of the expression and of the conditions under which it will be appropriate” (ibid.). To capture such expectations, Escandell-Vidal (1996:635) suggests the AI notion of a frame.<sup>16</sup> Frames are triggered not only by the use of linguistic expressions, but also by extra-linguistic situations. On this account, once a frame is activated, it makes a preselection of a structured set of assumptions from which the specific context, that which ensures optimal relevance, can be chosen (1996:641). For Escandell-Vidal, the fact that both social relationships (based on created categories such as status, power, distance, social role, or face) as well as language use are defined by social conventions, and are therefore culture-specific (1998:48-9), does not preclude the possibility of a universalising account, as is argued by Blum-Kulka (1.2.4 above). However, universality is not sought at the level of a rational choice between strategies either, as attempted by Brown and Levinson (1.2.2 above). Rather, it is now placed at an underlying level, reminiscent of the practice adopted in generative grammar:

<sup>16</sup> This notion is defined and further discussed in 1.3.3 and in chapter 6 below.

“universals have the form of abstract principles [...] subject to parametric variation. It seems reasonable to depart from the same hypothesis also for pragmatic universals [...] The conception of interpersonal relations (i.e. of *distance* and *power*), and the notion of *face* (with its *positive* and *negative* sides) are constitutive parts of any politeness system; again, the differences between cultures depend on different selections for their values” (1996:647).

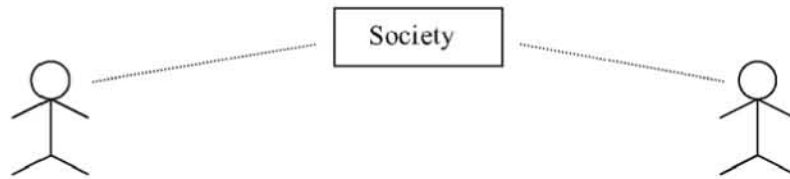
Given problems pertaining to Brown and Levinson’s definitions of D, P and R<sub>x</sub>, and the proposed formula (Turner 1996:5; 4.2 below), Escandell-Vidal’s allowing greater flexibility in this domain constitutes an improvement over Jary’s (1998) account. The approach proposed in this thesis retains from her proposal the notion of frames, exploring their status and content and proposing specific frames for politeness in CG (chapter 6, 7.3 below). It also elaborates on her suggestion to view pragmatic universals as subject to parametric variation, by probing the socio-historical factors involved in producing such variation (1.3.4, 7.3 below). However, it parts with Escandell-Vidal’s claims in arguing against the theoretical adequacy and the psychological plausibility of the three sociological variables as currently defined (4.2 below). It also distances itself from the theoretical framework of RT, arguing instead that politeness is a perlocutionary effect (5.3, 5.4 below).

### **1.3 Delimiting the scope of a theory of politeness**

The overview provided in the previous section shows politeness theorising to date to be defined by two parameters. The first is the notion of face: one can follow how, once this is identified as the underlying principle at work, theories of politeness start moving away from the narrow commonsensical notion of politeness as marked by some deviation from rational efficiency to broader conceptualisations calling for “a general theory of politeness as a particular subsystem in a cognitive pragmatic theory” (Escandell-Vidal 1996:647). The second is the equivocal placement of accounts of politeness to date in view of the parallel distinctions between intention vs. convention, or agency vs. structure. The conventional/structural component of politeness is emphasised by those theorists who introduce rules, maxims, or conventions to account for politeness phenomena, either intra- or cross-culturally (R. Lakoff 1973; Leech 1983; Ide 1989, 1990; Blum-Kulka 1987a, 1987b, 1990). At the opposite end lie approaches which stress the importance of rationally derived strategies and individual volition (B&L; Watts 1989, 1992; Arndt & Janney 1985, 1992), while most recently, a number of theorists (Fraser 1990, 1999; Escandell-Vidal 1996, 1998; Jary 1998; Arundale 1999) have given prominence to the notion of interlocutors’ expectations, by means of which socio-cultural factors would seem to find their way into individual agents’ rationalising.

These two parameters, face and the intention vs. convention antinomy, are in fact not unrelated. Taking as a starting point Goffman’s definition of face as “an image of [a

person] that is internally consistent, that is supported by judgements and evidence conveyed by *other participants*, and that is confirmed by evidence conveyed through *impersonal agencies in the situation*" (1967:6-7; emphasis added), an agent's face may be viewed as the society's mark of approval, the positive sanctioning of particular behaviours, emerging in interaction with another agent; clearly, the latter's partaking of evaluative practices which are closely related to those of the former is crucial, both for the recognition, and for the positive sanctioning of these behaviours (fig.2).



**Figure 2: A schematic representation of face as socially constituted**

The antinomy between intentions and conventions thus turns out to be only apparent: it only emerges if evaluations are attached directly to particular behaviours (fig.3).



**Figure 3: A schematic representation of face as constituted through rational individual action alone**

The evaluative practices through which face emerges in interaction may be seen as the product of the *habitus*, a system of dispositions that can be traced back to the objective conditions of existence (Bourdieu 1990:52ff.). Bourdieu (1990:53; emphasis added) describes the relation between these dispositions and the practices they give rise to as follows:

“The conditionings associated with a particular class of conditions of existence produce *habitus*, systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organise practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes *without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them.*”

In this way, the *habitus* functions as a principle of “conductorless orchestration” (ibid.:59), which is produced neither by conscious co-ordination (i.e. the recognition of intentions), nor by mechanistic repetition (i.e. the application of conventions), but which can — so long as the importance of this notion is not properly acknowledged — create the appearance of being the product of either of these.

Significantly, for our current purposes, the ‘objective adaptation of practices to their outcomes’ mentioned in the above excerpt is not temporally restricted to some point in time prior to the occurrence of these outcomes — if such a point can be identified at all

(Bourdieu 1990:60ff.; Good 1995:144ff.). Theories which attempt to account for the structuring and interactional significance of discourse by appealing solely to interlocutors' expectations — i.e. the way in which they project into the future, and attempt to anticipate others' re-actions to their action — fail inasmuch as they are oblivious to the fact that interlocutors do not possess perfect knowledge of the preferences and competences of other participants. Recognising, on the other hand, that past experiences not only shape new ones, but may also be re-interpreted in their light (Arundale 1999), allows us to account for the efficiency with which interlocutors handle everyday exchanges — as this is brought out *post facto* by, for instance, the analysis of conversational transcripts — an efficiency which nevertheless cannot be put down to 'all-knowledgeable' action which is the hallmark of rationality (Bourdieu 1990:61). Through its (temporal) omni-relevance, the *habitus* provides the unifying principle which constrains expectations pertaining to future outcomes and re-interpretations of these outcomes alike (ibid.:60).

Bourdieu's insights, developed within a social-theoretical framework, provide a useful reminder of a point which is central to the theoretical argument outlined below, and empirically grounded and further developed in the following chapters: that individual intentions are not elementary, but are socially constituted and (re-)negotiated. Individual rationality is constrained by — or, functions within the boundaries of — a societal rationality,<sup>17</sup> which sets the limits for variation within it (in which resides the potential for change over time). The politeness practices of a community — the sanctioning of a linguistic behaviour as appropriate in context — may thus be seen as the outward manifestation of this over-arching rationality, which, though motivated (7.3 below), and therefore not reducible to convention (in the Saussurean sense of the term, rather than that of Lewis 1969), does not reduce to individual rationality either, because it is historically constituted. Consequently, rather than being grounded in individual agents' rationalising about ends and means (cf., e.g., B&L), universality will now be sought at the interface of societal and individual rationality. Establishing the evidence for this interface, as well as teasing apart its intricacies, will remain central concerns throughout this thesis.

### 1.3.1 The umbilical link to Face

Linking the Goffmanian notion of face to conversational phenomena in different cultures — Goffman (1956, 1967, 1971) mainly explored its application to verbal and nonverbal behaviour in an English-speaking environment — is an important advancement afforded by Brown and Levinson (1987). However, their conceptualisation of the two aspects of face

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<sup>17</sup> This term, suggested in a linguistic context (1.3.3 below), may be seen as parallel to Bourdieu's *habitus*. However, the two remain distinct: defining the latter as bodily *hexis* (1991:81ff.), Bourdieu assigns to it a distinctly embodied character, which is not claimed of the former.



(1.2.2 above) has been criticised as inadequate to account for both intra- and cross-culturally observed facts. For these authors, considerations of face enter the picture only when the speaker is about to perform a Face Threatening Act (B&L:65-8). Some acts are said to be intrinsically face threatening, the threat concerning either the speaker's or the addressee's positive or negative face. These claims are not tenable in light of evidence showing that face is commonly negotiated over conversational turns (Good 1995:146), a finding which has been used to link conversation-analytic terms such as preference organisation to face (Bayraktaroglu 1992a, 1992b:318-9; Lerner 1996). Face considerations cannot therefore be attached to particular FTAs,<sup>18</sup> unless, departing from the Brown and Levinson view, one is prepared to dub all acts FTAs, thereby advocating "an overly pessimistic, rather paranoid view of human interaction" (Schmidt 1980:104). But even this avenue is closed, given Matsumoto's (1988) and Bayraktaroglu's (1992a) discussion of examples from Japanese and Turkish, in which they show that acts may not only threaten face, but also enhance it (Mao 1994:456); Arndt and Janney's (1985) discussion of interpersonal supportiveness focuses on both verbal and nonverbal mechanisms by which this is achieved. Acts cannot be intrinsically face-threatening for the added reason that participants' face can only be mutually maintained: in Matsumoto's (1988:410) Japanese examples, enhancing one's interlocutor's face enhances one's own face at the same time. Participants' mutual orientation to each other's as well as their own face is established in a number of studies, investigating the balancing effect of different types of conversational moves (Bayraktaroglu 1992a, 1992b) and strategies (Held 1989:169). Based on the analysis of arguing exchanges in English, Muntigl and Turnbull (1998:243) conclude: "face-work may be directed to own [*sic*] and/or to other's [*sic*] face, and the effects on face of a face-work attempt include not only maintenance and restoration, but also enhancement and damage." It would appear, then, that face is "endogenous" to conversation (Arundale 1999); put succinctly, "*there is no faceless communication*" (Scollon & Scollon 1995:38). Attempts to limit the application of this notion to a marked subset of strategic behaviour (Watts 1989, 1992; Janney & Arndt 1992) are lacking precisely because they fail to acknowledge this.

Cross-culturally, it is Brown and Levinson's construal of face as individual wants which has prompted criticisms of a bias toward western notions of individuality.<sup>19</sup> Attempts to account for conversational exchanges in a non-western context have opposed 'group face', "the individual's desire to behave in conformity with culturally expected forms of behaviour", to 'self-face', "the individual's desire to attend to his/her personal needs and to

<sup>18</sup> The act-by-act approach adopted by Brown and Levinson can be traced back to the influence of Speech Act theory on their account (B&L:10-1).

<sup>19</sup> This bias extends to the Gricean basis of their approach, which consequently focuses on the individual as a rational agent (Werkhofer 1992:156). 1.3.3 below attempts to redress the balance.

place his/her public-self image above those of others”<sup>20</sup> (Nwoye 1992:313), or proposed the notion of ‘relative face orientation’, “an underlying direction of face that emulates [...] one of two interactional ideals [...]: the ideal social identity, or the ideal individual autonomy”, and which may further be ‘centripetal’ or ‘centrifugal’ (Mao 1994:471-3). The prioritising of negative face over positive face (B&L:64, 73-4) can similarly be traced back to this individualistic bias, and appears to be misguided in light of evidence from such diverse languages as Japanese, Chinese, Ojibwa, Igbo, Polish and Greek (Matsumoto 1988:405; Gu 1990:241-2; Rhodes 1989:254-257; Nwoye 1992:324; Wierzbicka 1991; Sifianou 1992b). It seems that, in these languages, considerations of in-group membership and/or social hierarchy replace the emphasis on individualism characteristic of western societies — with variable importance attributed to negative face even in the latter, as attested by differences between West-coast and East-coast Americans (B&L:245; Tannen 1981:229fn.4). Both Goffman and Durkheim — on whose discussion of positive and negative religious rites Goffman bases his distinction between supportive and remedial interchanges — are careful about such generalisations:

“If we examine what it is one participant is ready to see that other participants might read into a situation and what it is that will cause him to provide ritual remedies of various sorts [...], then we find ourselves directed back again to the core moral traditions of Western culture. And since remedial ritual is a constant feature of public life, occurring among all the citizenry in all social situations, we must see that the historical centre and the contemporary periphery are linked more closely than anyone these days seems to want to credit” (Goffman 1971:184-5).

“Whatever the importance of the negative cult may be, [...], it does not contain its reason for existence in itself; it introduces one to the religious life, but it supposes this more than it constitutes it” (Durkheim 1976[1915]:326).

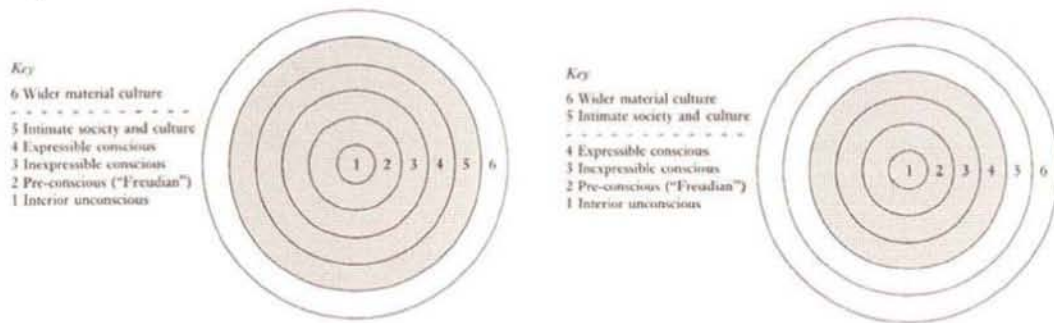
The variable claims made by politeness theorists as to interpersonal supportiveness (Arndt & Janney 1985:282) or non-imposition (Ide 1982:382) being the essence of polite behaviour suggest that decisions as to the priority of one aspect of face over the other are arbitrary. Consequently, no such decision will be made here. However, I take it that the need for both aspects, as well as their paradoxical inter-relation (Scollon & Scollon 1995:36), are well established theoretically in Goffman’s and Durkheim’s writings, and as such must be retained. Positive and negative face will be seen as wants (rather than properties) of the self co-constituted in conversation (Arundale 1999). And since notions of ‘self’ cannot arise without reference to ‘other’, such wants necessarily arise and find fulfilment in a dyad, which accounts for their omni-relevance to communication.

At the same time, one must bear in mind that definitions of the self are subject to variation, as can be seen in Scollon and Scollon’s visual representation of the Chinese and

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<sup>20</sup> In virtue of encompassing this second clause, the definition of self-face departs from B&L’s definition of face.

western concepts of the person, which draws on Hsu's (1983) analysis of the self (fig.4). This representation brings into relief the different ways in which cultures delimit conceptualisations of the self: in a Chinese context, one's self includes one's intimate society and culture; consequently, one's face-wants cannot be captured with respect to the narrower western — and one must also allow for variation within 'western' — conceptualisation of the self.



**Figure 4: The Chinese and the Western concepts of the person  
(from Scollon & Scollon 1995:132-3)**

Exotic as the Chinese concept of the person may sound to western ears, it is grounded in the cultural and biological non-viability of the biologically isolated individual (Scollon & Scollon 1995:133), also acknowledged by Aristotle in his definition of man in Book One of the *Politics* as *fu%sei zw`/on politiko%n* (*Politics*, 1253a3). As mental representations, conceptualisations of the self are distributed across a group like other cultural representations (Sperber 1996). Zegarac's (2000) analysis of face in Serbo-Croatian suggests that it can indeed be accounted for as such a culturally and historically constituted representation. Incorporating variation at the level of conceptualisations of the self enables us to give an economical account of cross-cultural conceptualisations of face without having to give up claims as to the universal importance of this notion.

### 1.3.2 Politeness as the unmarked way of speaking in a community

It is common in the recent literature on linguistic politeness to view speaking politely as the unmarked way of speaking within a community, a view stemming from the observation that politeness most often passes unnoticed, while what is commented on is impoliteness (Kasper 1990:193; Jary 1998:1-2; Escandell-Vidal 1998:46). Another way of putting this is to claim that in conversation, politeness is the expected state (Fraser 1990:233). Fraser moreover claims that "being polite is a hallmark of abiding by the CP" (*ibid.*). Given that politeness is more often than not identified with deviations from the CP, how can we make sense of Fraser's claim?

I should like to argue that to be polite is indeed to be rational; and that interlocutors' harbouring expectations of politeness about each other follows from their mutually assuming each other's face-wants and rationality. The relevant reasoning is as follows: if to be polite is to be rational, and if efficient cost-and-effect accounting is at least part of this rationality, then being polite must be less costly than some marked, more costly alternative. Interaction under conditions of hostility and distrust is costly, because it requires continuous alertness and second-guessing on the part of both interlocutors. On this view, it is less costly to achieve one's immediate goal in interaction — be it to direct another's actions, or simply to induce a belief in one's interlocutor — in situations where there is no need for hostility or distrust. It follows that interlocutors will view situations that require them to interact under conditions of hostility and distrust as marked, while situations which do not require them to take up the extra effort will be viewed as unmarked. Rational interlocutors are then likely to *assume* that a situation does not call for hostility and distrust, and will need to be provided with a reason before they are prepared to give up this initial assumption.

Two types of evidence support this line of reasoning. First, experimental evidence suggests that being "less polite" involves some effort, much as being "more polite" does, and therefore cannot be the unmarked alternative. Werkhofer (1992:173-4) presented subjects with scenarios asking them to assume the role of speaker and produce utterances which would be "more polite" or "less polite" in the situation. He found that "[i]n generating ["less polite" utterances], subjects did not just eliminate "polite" elements, using less of the same, but they now added elements of another, markedly "rude" sort, so that the less polite utterances were again longer." The second type of evidence comes from folk literature. Being both a record of collective experience, and part of the culture one is socialised into, folk literature can provide an insight into worldviews shared by a group, and as such may be appealed to in the search for similarities and divergences among different groups' perspectives. Tales of mildness producing the expected results when aggression did not are common in European languages (Spanish, Greek, Lithuanian, Estonian, Russian) and also found in other parts of the world (Indonesia, Africa, India) (Thompson 1957:20-1). Particularly widespread is the tale of the contest between the wind and the sun: the sun with its warmth causes the traveller to remove his coat, while the wind, blowing violently, causes him to pull it closer around him. Politeness or kindness are similarly rewarded in Irish, Missouri French, Greek, Buddhist, Chinese, African (Bankon, Bulu, Duala), Icelandic, Breton, Spanish, and Italian tales (ibid.:187-8). What one may extract from these tales is a common perception that one fares further with politeness than with aggression. As this perception is shared across many unrelated cultures, there is a

good case for claiming a rational basis for it. Appealing to rational cost-and-effect accounting provides such a basis: being polite is rational because it yields greater effects.

Politeness is then expected because it is rational; as such, it constitutes the unmarked way of speaking in a community, which accounts for use of polite forms passing unnoticed. This marks a departure from Brown and Levinson's theory (1.2.2 above), which rests on the premise of the 'virtual offence'. In their scheme of things, it is recognition of the speaker's polite intention that provides the addressee with evidence that face-threat is not intended: politeness must be recognised as intended, i.e. it must be communicated by means of an implicature in order to be achieved. Contrary to their view, what is now claimed is that, rather than needing to be continuously provided with evidence that a face-threat is not intended, people routinely enter in conversational exchanges *assuming* that a face-threat is not intended: no face-threatening intention is attributed *a priori*, needing to be dispelled by means of politeness. By the same token, a polite (i.e. face-anointing) intention is not attributed *a priori* either. Politeness is now construed as a broader notion, which encompasses all instances in which face is constituted as a 'by-product' of — if you prefer, falls out from — interlocutors' adhering to the interactional norms of the community within which they are operating, as outlined in the following section.

### 1.3.3 A frame-based approach

I claimed earlier that it is less costly to achieve one's goals in situations where hostility and distrust are uncalled for. It may, however, be objected that hostility and distrust arise naturally when 'self' meets 'other'; hostility and distrust are, in other words, natural concomitants of all communicative situations. I do not disagree. Indeed, it is because 'self' is defined as such only in relation to 'other', that the possibility exists for interactants to appeal to a common collective 'self', to which they both belong, and which is defined as such in contrast to some 'other'. Such a common collective 'self' is invoked in conversation when one demonstrates one's familiarity with the interactional norms of the community within which one is operating. As Lerner (1996:303) puts it, "[t]o maintain face is to fit in." A different, 'societal' aspect of rationality can be seen to be in operation here, and to constrain individual agents' choices:

“context is already pre-figured, pre-cast, so to speak, in the mould of society. It is actually society itself that 'speaks' through the interactants when they try to influence each other [...]. The classical approach which bases itself upon the rational action performed by the single individual fails inasmuch as it does not take into account the degree to which this rationality itself is societal, hence supra-individual.” (Mey 1993:263)

The lasting neglect of this aspect of rationality by theories of politeness (Ide 1989:243) leaves them unable to account for the fact that “[t]he act or behaviour of being polite is

performed by an individual agent and yet it is, at the same time, an intrinsically social one, social, that is, in the dual sense of being socially constituted and of feeding back into the process of structuring social interaction” (Werkhofer 1992:156).

In Brown and Levinson’s theory, rationality is defined in a vacuum. It is identified with the ability to select those means that will realise one’s ends most efficiently and at least cost (B&L:64-5). The appropriateness of these means to realise the desired end is construed as a purely quantitative notion: speakers are claimed to compute the weightiness of an  $FTA_x$  based on their assumptions regarding the context-dependent values of  $D$ ,  $P$ , &  $R_x$ , and then use that as a guide to select the appropriate strategy from the proposed hierarchy of strategies. However, the same linguistic means may well show different situational distributions in different communities (Terkourafi 1997, 1999). This means that, in selecting the most efficient means to realise one’s goal, one must take into account the interactional norms of the community within which one is operating. The appropriateness of a certain linguistic means to achieve a desired end, then, is more usefully construed as a qualitative notion, which may be explicated as appropriateness relevant to what is usual or expected in a certain situation within a community (4.1.4 below).

Once the appropriateness of a linguistic means to achieve a desired end is construed in qualitative terms, assessing it involves knowing what is usual or expected in a certain situation within a community. One way of formalising this is by appealing to the notion of a frame. Informally, we may, following Minsky (1975:212), think of a frame as a “data-structure for representing a stereotyped situation.” Evidence that cross-cultural preferences for different politeness modes arise early in life (Ide 1978:289-91) suggests that the community one is socialised in crucially defines one’s knowledge pertaining to politeness. Frames are acquired in the course of socialisation by abstracting away from, or generalising over, actual situations. They combine, as separate components, information about a situation (who are the participants, what is the setting of the exchange, etc.; chapters 6, 7 below) with information about the appropriate use of language therein (Escandell-Vidal 1998:48) and are stored in long-term memory with default values filling in particular component-slots. Given that social categorisation is largely dependent on culture (Escandell-Vidal 1998:47), such default values may be usefully conceptualised in terms of radial categories (G. Lakoff 1987). Perceptually encountering a novel situation, then, provides data to be matched with data stored in memory. The greater the number of features of the perceived situation matching default values filling in component-slots of a particular frame, the more strongly this particular frame will be recalled from memory. In this way, expectations are set up. Note that, because frames combine information about both the extra-linguistic features of a situation, as well as the appropriate use of language therein,

whichever of these is available first will give rise to expectations about the other.<sup>21</sup> In this way, we can account for politeness assessments regarding utterances which are produced and interpreted in the course of an actual situation (where expectations are set up with recourse to the extra-linguistic features of the situation); but also, for politeness default values which cultures attribute to specific linguistic behaviours seemingly independently of context (where expectations are set up with recourse to linguistic information).<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, once the similarity driving the matching of perceived information and information stored in memory is construed as a matter of degree, along the lines of G. Lakoff (1987), the proposed approach turns out to be constraining enough to account for different politeness assessments of the same linguistic means within different cultures, while at the same time being general enough to allow for the observed creativity of linguistic politeness.

Frames contribute to the understanding process by making available background knowledge which is relevant to the eventuality at hand. However, since such knowledge is acquired through socialisation within a community, as opposed to following from logical necessity, inferences based on it are defeasible. That is, interlocutors go ahead and draw such inferences in normal circumstances, unless there occurs to them an alternative or reason to the contrary. Frames act as a pointer as to what such ‘normal circumstances’ are in different situations for different communities. Thus, they naturally complement an account of understanding along the lines of Levinson’s (1995, 2000:73ff.) default heuristics. Inferences drawn with reference to these heuristics do not constitute additional propositions, the recovery of which follows from, and relies on, the recovery of the propositional content of the utterance.

Consider the classic example of someone at the dinner table asking for the salt by saying “Can you pass me the salt?” In an English-speaking context, the speaker’s utterance meets the addressee’s general expectations about how language is used given the setting (the dinner table) and the activity interlocutors are engaged in (having dinner). There is therefore no need for the speaker’s polite intention to be recovered on the basis of his/her utterance, since, were this to be so, one would need to subscribe to the counter-intuitive claim that the addressee computes the speaker’s request first as a literal question (Searle 1996a[1975]).<sup>23</sup> Rather than the proposition expressed, what is recovered in this case is simply the fact that the speaker has made a request. Politeness is achieved as a perlocutionary effect, just in case the addressee also holds the belief that asking for the salt

<sup>21</sup> On holistic storing and recall of stereotypical events as less effortful, see Sperber & Wilson (1995:186).

<sup>22</sup> Our ability to make such judgements provides evidence for the claim that frames are stored in memory with default values filling in particular component-slots.

<sup>23</sup> For problems with this view, see Groefsema 1992.

by saying “Can you pass the salt?” is polite given the circumstances.<sup>24</sup> On the other hand, if the speaker’s utterance did not meet the addressee’s general expectations about how language is used, the latter would draw specific inferences pertaining to the former’s intentions. Contrary to politeness, then, impoliteness or excessive politeness *are* part of what is recovered based on the speaker’s utterance, which accounts for their being marked (also in the sense of being noticed) in relation to politeness.

In the example above, while the inferential mechanism (Levinson’s heuristics) may well be universal, it is the frames appealed to by participants (who is speaking to whom, in what setting) that determine the output of the inferential process.<sup>25</sup> In this sense, Levinson’s default heuristics help account for the unmarked way of speaking within a community. In speaking politely, interlocutors set themselves and each other up as competent members of the community, in other words, they constitute each other’s and their own face. But this is not achieved by means of some additional layer of meaning, or speaking politely would have to be construed as marked relative to some unmarked way of speaking which would not be carrying this additional layer of meaning. Rather than being mediated by recognising the speaker’s intention (which thus becomes — for the most part — irrelevant), face-constituting, i.e. the setting up of oneself and of one’s interlocutor as competent members of the community within which one is operating, falls out directly from one’s uttering an expression which one’s interlocutor believes to be appropriate relative to the situation. The account outlined above also accords with the intuition that speaking politely constitutes the unmarked (less costly) way of speaking within a community in that it ascribes to interlocutors less cognitive processing compared to Brown and Levinson’s theory. Rather than motivating an intermediate level of assumptions about the context-specific values of sociological variables such as D, P and  $R_x$ , immediately perceivable features about the situation now enter directly interlocutors’ assessments about politeness.

### 1.3.4 The question of universality

Considerations of language structure, history and use, all enter in politeness assessments. An eloquent example of this is provided by Braun’s (1988:58-9) discussion of varieties of American Spanish where — contrary to what is observed in many other languages, including Standard Spanish — the 2pl. pronoun *vos* is considered to be less polite than the 2sg. *tú*. Investigating address systems in different languages, Braun is led to the conclusion that “the underlying forces of address behaviour [...] cannot always be summarised into the dimensions of status and distance” (1988:42). Explaining the homogeneity of Brown and Gilman’s (1972[1960]) findings in this domain, she points both to the “long and successful

<sup>24</sup> This point is taken up in 5.3-4 below.

<sup>25</sup> 5.4.5 below elaborates on this point.



process of standardisation” (ibid.:24) which the languages they draw on have undergone, and to their restricted selection of informants (upper-middle-class males from urban areas).

A recent example of the interplay between structural, historical and usage factors in determining politeness assessments comes from French (Allen-Mills 2000). French companies’ attempts to encourage use of the familiar pronoun *tu* amongst company staff reportedly failed in the face of comments that France is not ready for “this kind of Anglo-Saxon cheek.” What the proponents of this move seem to have underestimated is both the history of English ‘you’, which was initially the 2pl. pronoun contrasting with ‘thou’, and the subsequent displacing of ‘thou’ by ‘you’, which has now become the universal form of address appropriate in all situations. French *tu* contrasts with the 2pl. pronoun *vous*, and as such is only appropriate in a limited number of situations. The two forms are therefore not equivalent in politeness connotations, a fact which can be traced back to their history, their current placement in the structural system of English and French respectively, and their use in terms of both the types and the number of communicative situations that they are appropriate to.

There is, in other words, plenty of evidence to suggest that politeness is a matter of language-specific and synchronically defined conventional (if underlyingly rational) beliefs, while universality has commonly been sought, most notably in the work of Brown and Levinson, in the direction of a rational principle of diachronic and cross-cultural applicability. Is there room for a synthesis between the two views? I would argue that there is. I base this claim on the observation that the linguistic means/strategies discussed by Brown and Levinson are associated with politeness functions in many languages, including the CG data on which the present study is based. Arguably, therefore, there is indeed something inherent in the linguistic strategies which Brown and Levinson identify that makes them suitable vehicles of politeness connotations. One may go so far as suggesting that this ‘intrinsic’ property is to be traced back to the two aspects of face as wants of the self (1.3.1 above).

Perhaps what is needed is a three-way distinction analogous to that drawn in the social sciences among structures, *habitus*, and practices (Bourdieu 1990:52ff.), a distinction which interposes between the ‘formal’ meaning potential of an expression as part of a system and in virtue of its relation to other forms in that system, and the ‘actual’ meaning of that expression on an occasion of use, a level of socio-historically constrained preferred interpretations. As Bourdieu (1990:139) notes:

“While, on the one hand, it has to be shown, contrary to mechanistic objectivism, that symbolic forms have a logic and an efficacy of their own which make them relatively autonomous with respect to the objective conditions apprehended in distributions, on the other hand it also has to be pointed out, contrary to marginalist subjectivism, that the social order is not formed, like an election result or a market price, by simple mechanical addition of individual orders.”

My proposal is therefore to consider the linguistic means/strategies discussed by Brown and Levinson as “symbolic forms” whose potential a historically constituted “social order” transforms into concrete possibilities — what appear to be conventional beliefs operative locally and in real time. What this proposal amounts to empirically — and therefore one way of testing it — is that politeness realisations in different cultures should be best accounted for by appealing, rather than to a rational principle of diachronic and cross-cultural applicability, to culture-specific frames, as introduced in 1.3.3 above, which bring extra-linguistic features of the situation in direct co-relation with particular linguistic forms, thus capturing the (socio-historically established) evaluative link between the two (5.4.3.3, 6.5 below). The universal validity of this scheme depends on the extent to which a common core of extra-linguistic features of the situation can be shown to directly affect polite usage, while at the same time not reducing to an intermediate level of assumptions about sociological variables such as Brown and Levinson’s D, P and R<sub>x</sub> (B&L:76ff.). This would provide grounds for arguing that these features are organised into “data-structures representing stereotyped situations”, i.e. into frames, which are involved in the processing of polite discourse. In other words, what would now be claimed to be universal would be the mechanism, i.e. frames, and its component parts, while the content of frames, the specific values filling in component slots, and therefore the politeness import of any particular linguistic means, can be expected to vary across cultures. The viability of this proposal is ultimately a matter of the empirical investigation of politeness realisations in different cultures. The present study takes a step in this direction, following Glick’s (1996:167) injunction that “we need to turn to a more explicit investigation of the actual empirical facts associated with politeness in order to discover the empirical bases for universalising schemes of and for regularities of usage.”

“Participant observation is only a fiction inasmuch as we treat it as an activity *significantly different from that of the people under observation*: we are participant observers only as far as we are also prepared to accept our informants’ right to the same title.”

(Herzfeld 1987:90-1; original emphasis)

## **Chapter 2**

### **Data collection and the choice of variables**

#### **2.1 Brief description of the project**

In this chapter I outline the processes of data collection and analysis which led to the compilation of a corpus of conversational data from Cypriot Greek. This corpus provides the basis for testing the empirical validity of approaches to politeness proposed to date, and for proposing an alternative account in later chapters. Relevant data were extracted and analysed from a total of eighty one-hour-long audio tapes recorded using a Philips D6350 portable cassette recorder with a Sony ECM-150T condenser microphone, and seven two-hour-long video tapes used to record some of the television broadcasts analysed. This material was collected between October and December 1998 in the four major towns of the Republic of Cyprus (Lefkosia, Lemesos, Larnaka and Pafos). Native speakers of CG of both sexes and from various socio-economic backgrounds were recorded in a variety of settings, classified under three general headings as: at home/informal social gatherings, at work (mainly offices and shops), and in formal discussions/on radio/TV (only unscripted broadcasts were used). To ensure the comparability of the data across settings, only adult speakers’ speech was taken into account. A total of six hundred and seventy-two informants took part in ninety-one sessions. Utterance-sequences realising offers or requests were subsequently identified and transcribed, yielding a database of 2,189 observations. Transcripts of data sessions are available in a bound hard copy (236pp.).

#### **2.2 Sampling**

Following in the steps of the Milroys’ Belfast studies (Milroy 1980:43ff.), informants were approached informally and in person by myself. As the initial sample consisting of

family and friends grew to include informants from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds and in different geographical areas, personal introduction following a friend's recommendation (where possible) provided the opportunity for explicit reference to my Cypriot family background, which could not have otherwise been detected (this was only very marginally detectable on the basis of accent). In line with previous observations about the definition of in-group in contemporary Cypriot society (Terkourafi 1999:114), such reference helped establish a climate of trust as well as overcoming initial embarrassment by providing an opening topic for the conversation other than the research project itself. Occasionally, a purpose-obtained document from the Cypriot Ministry of Education granting official permission for the research was presented, as written evidence confirming the scientific interest of the project. This practice was adopted in the case of public institutions and large corporate companies (schools, branches of the Cyprus Electricity Authority, insurance companies, banks, radio and television stations). Permission to conduct a recording was always requested in advance, and the cassette recorder was kept visible at all times. When the recording session was taking place in a shop, permission was sought by the owner or salesperson(s) prior to the beginning of the session. Exceptionally, no permission was asked to record public group discussions or exchanges in the open-air market, because of the already established public character of these activities.

The 'friend of a friend' sampling procedure, as described above, was preferred because it balances the demands of objectivity — which would call for a random selection of informants along the lines of Trudgill's Norwich studies (Trudgill 1974:20ff.) — against the need to ensure informant cooperation for a linguistic study in a community where, on the one hand, language has commonly been the focus of heated controversy (3.4.2-3 below), and, on the other hand, a personal appeal to help a friend has more chances of success than an appeal to contribute to an impersonal project.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, the informants recorded do not constitute a self-selecting sample for two reasons. First, efforts were explicitly directed at including as wide a range of ages and socio-economic backgrounds as possible. Second, given the importance Cypriots attach to interpersonal relationships, the linguistic interest of the study played little, if any, part in securing informants' cooperation.

### **2.3 Fieldwork strategy**

The fieldwork strategy adopted was participant observation (Milroy 1987:60ff.). As Milroy (*ibid.*:61) notes, “[f]or linguists, the main advantage of the method lies in its capacity to offset [...] the worst effects of the observer's paradox.” In particular, two of

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<sup>1</sup> Elsewhere (Terkourafi 1999:113) I refer to this attitude as indicative of a *Gemeinschaft* type of social organisation (Scollon & Scollon 1995:135-7; George 1990).

the basic tenets of this technique were followed in the present study.<sup>2</sup> First, speakers were recorded in groups rather than individually. Compared to evoking a situation during an interview or through a questionnaire, this process ensured the authenticity of the data since

“the members of the group themselves exercise social constraint on one another’s language. It would be quite unacceptable for someone in the group to put on an act during the recording and use a form of language which was not normally used in that speech community or among the individual speakers.” (Nordberg 1980:7; quoted in Milroy 1987:63)

This point is of particular importance for the present study, since the extra-linguistic variables whose impact on polite expression is being investigated crucially include features of the addressee and of the relationship between interlocutors. Second, considerable effort was devoted to breaking down the asymmetrical relationship between researcher and informant, by means of my participation in ongoing group activities and willingness to answer questions. My claim to a common cultural background and ability to partly take on the local accent facilitated this task.

The use of the method of participant observation meant that a number of further considerations, beyond the authenticity of the data collected, could be satisfactorily dealt with. First, the resulting corpus of conversational data is homogeneous, in that it originates in face-to-face interaction (as opposed to telephone conversations or written replies to a questionnaire). My presence throughout all but eight hours of the recorded conversations readily satisfied further requirements, such as the observation of visual cues for the assessment of informants’ age and social class, and for the subsequent identification of speaker and addressee and of non-verbal uptakes during the transcription of the data. Finally, the availability of the data in recorded form enables us to follow the sequential unfolding of the discourse, crucially registering the occurrence of an uptake and intonational variety, and to detect accent changes which in general are indicative of standardisation tendencies (3.4.3 below).

Recording sessions seldom lasted longer than an hour and each session took place in a different setting. While increasing the burden of promptly securing informants’ trust — the sampling procedure outlined earlier aimed at minimising this difficulty — this practice was dictated by the large number of extra-linguistic variables under investigation (2.7.1 below). Sessions generally proceeded as follows: once permission was granted, informants were instructed to carry on with their usual routine, a task more easily guaranteed in working environments. No fewer than two informants were present at any one time, numbers rising up to a dozen in work settings. Informants came and went freely during sessions. When not dictated by professional considerations, the topic of the conversation usually pertained to news items and various aspects of life in Cyprus; I made no effort to manipulate this in any way. References to personal issues

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<sup>2</sup>Focussing on adolescent speech and using several fieldworkers were *a priori* excluded for the present study.

were avoided, as were indeed times and places where confidential matters would be discussed, e.g. private consultations in a bank or in the doctor's surgery.<sup>3</sup>

Information about the project was provided as requested. In the first instance, informants were told that data were being collected as part of a personal postgraduate project, and that the object of study was the use of language in urban settings. If further information was sought, they were told that this did not refer to dialectal features of the discourse, such as accent or lexical items, but rather to the negotiation of interpersonal relationships through language. Finally, they were told that the data would be analysed and quantified anonymously to be presented to a university in the UK. The provision of accurate and detailed information to informants was judged desirable on the following grounds. First, the naturalness and spontaneity of exchanges was enhanced by ensuring informants that their speech was being studied as a linguistic code in its own right and not in contrast with SMG, in other words that it was the regularities of their speech as such, and not the ways in which it deviated from the Athenian norm, that were of interest to this study. Promoting awareness of my own Cypriot roots and of the fact that the study would be submitted to a non-Greek institution further abated informants' reservations in this respect. Moreover, since the method adopted did not involve conducting interviews or making use of a questionnaire, it was important to encourage informants to interact while minimally interfering with their usual routines, something which could only be achieved by making clear that it was such interaction that was of interest. Considering the importance of internal group dynamics for the control of stylistic level (cf. Nordberg's remark quoted above), providing detailed information about the project was not felt to undermine the naturalness of the data. Given the informants' lack of familiarity with linguistics as a discipline and with studies of spontaneous speech,<sup>4</sup> rather than having biased the data obtained, the accuracy of the information provided contributed significantly toward overcoming the reservations and embarrassment generated by the novelty of the situation.

## **2.4 Compiling the corpus**

The analysis of utterance-sequences from the data collected focuses on task-oriented verbal exchanges which present one with the possibility of immediate action and can be readily complied with in the course of the same session. Typically, this includes offers and requests for action (including verbal action), but excludes questions (i.e. information-seeking utterances which are not introduced by an illocutionary verb specifying the act performed by the speaker or to be performed by the addressee). For example, in (1) below, the interviewer's utterance constitutes a request for verbal action

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<sup>3</sup> As a result of this and of informants' awareness that they were being recorded, FTAs of high R (B&L:77-8) are virtually absent from the data collected.

<sup>4</sup> Spontaneous urban CG speech has not been previously recorded. Newton (1972b) recorded narratives in rural areas in 1963.

(“I would like you to tell us, Mr Nikolaidis, ... ?”), and, as such, it is included in the analysis.<sup>5</sup>

- (1) [88.03; On TV; Speaker: male, 31-50, middle-class; Addressee: male, 31-50, middle-class; Relationship: interviewer to interviewee]

prin mbume ston tropo me ton opion eksetazete, opos poli  
sosta ipete, i kaθe periptosi eCi tin IDieterotitan tis,  
*Ta iTela* na mas pite cirie nikolaiDi, ipete oti, molis  
xTes, proxTes, enimerotTicete?

before enter-dep.-1pl. at-the-ACC. way-ACC. with the-ACC. which-ACC. examine-  
ind.-2pl., as very correctly say-past-perf.-2pl., the-NOM. each case-NOM. have-ind.-  
3sg. the-ACC. peculiarity-ACC. its, *FP want-past-imperf.-1sg.* SP us-GEN. tell-  
dep.-2pl. Mr-VOC. nikolaidis-VOC., say-past-perf.-2pl. that, just yesterday, the-day-  
before-yesterday, brief-pass.-past-perf.-2pl.?

‘Before coming to the way in which you examine, as you said very correctly, each case is unique, *I would like* you to tell us, mister Nikolaidis, you said that, you were briefed only yesterday, or the day before?’

Had the interviewer sought to obtain the same information by means of a question (e.g. “You were briefed only yesterday?” or “When were you briefed?”), his utterance would not have counted as an observation under the present analysis.

In classifying requests for verbal action alongside requests for non-verbal action and subsequently distinguishing these from questions, the current analysis departs from the traditional view which classifies questions under the class of directive speech acts (Searle 1996b[1979]:147-8; Bach & Harnish 1979:47-8; Allan 1986:199).<sup>6</sup> This move is warranted by the following considerations. From a theoretical perspective, requests for verbal action are more like speech acts of the directive class in that they have compliance conditions, whereas questions have answerhood conditions (Harnish 1994:415; Vanparys 1996:35).<sup>7</sup> Therefore, speakers’ choice between a question and a request for verbal action is significant and the two cannot be conflated without some loss in descriptive accuracy. Utterance-sequences selected for analysis thus exhibit a certain homogeneity of content along the lines of a very general distinction between action-focussing and information-focussing utterances, the latter characteristically not encoding features of the discourse situation in any interesting way. From a practical point of view, this move ensures that selected utterances are addressed to one specific addressee (rather than anyone capable of providing the information sought), so that s/he may be identified for the purposes of the analysis. Utterances addressed to more than

<sup>5</sup> Arabic numerals in brackets number examples. “88.03” means session 88, observation 03. Examples are followed by a word-per-word translation and a gloss (in single inverted commas). Expressions discussed in the text are italicised in the original, as well as in the translation and the gloss. See the Table of Symbols and Abbreviations and 2.5 below for transcription conventions.

<sup>6</sup> Labov and Fanshel (1977:64) point out the ambiguous use of the term ‘question’ to refer equally to interrogative utterances, requests for information and expressions of doubt.

<sup>7</sup> The analysis of questions as a class of speech acts in their own right, distinct from statements and directives, is also proposed by John Lyons (p.c.), who draws attention to the felicitous performance of unanswerable and Socratic questions for which a definition as “requests for information” would be misleading (Lyons 1995:254; Récanati 1987:158; Sperber & Wilson 1995[1986]:249-54; Vanparys 1996:73).

one participant were discarded, as the plural number used in such cases is literal (on the variable of number & person of verb forms, see 2.7.2.4 below).

The distinction between utterances which have different ‘satisfaction’ conditions (answerhood vs. compliance) emanates from the notion of ‘direction of fit’ (Searle 1996b:142; Harnish 1994:415). Prioritising this notion in his analysis, Récanati (1987:157ff.) contrasts performative acts to constative acts. Utterance-sequences constituting the present corpus fall under the category of performatives, which exhibit the world-to-words direction of fit, and may be broadly distinguished into directives and commissives. These are defined as “performative acts involving an agent, to be distinguished according to the specific agent (speaker or hearer) responsible for bringing about the state of affairs referred to” (Récanati 1987:160).

In Récanati’s (1987:163) analysis, the distinction between directives and commissives is achieved with reference to the intention that the speaker expresses by means of his/her utterance, and not on the basis of the utterance’s propositional content (but see 2.7.1.2 below). The notion of an uptake, which registers the addressee’s recognition of the speaker’s intention, is thus central to the present analysis. Austin (1962:115-6; original emphasis) introduces this as follows:

“An effect must be achieved on the audience if the illocutionary act is to be carried out. [...] Generally the effect amounts to bringing about the understanding of the meaning and of the force of the locution. So the performance of an illocutionary act involves the securing of *uptake*.”

Subsequent analyses of speech acts downplayed the importance of this notion, to the point that the unit of linguistic communication has been identified with “the production or issuance of the symbol or word or sentence in the performance of the speech act” (Searle 1969:16) without any reference to the addressee’s uptake whatsoever. At the opposite end, Mey (1993:251) writes

“What is important is not what a speaker (more or less arbitrarily) decides to question, order, request, etc., but the effects the ‘speech acts’ in question (however widely interpreted) have on the development of the conversational interaction.”

Evidence that, rather than any inherent meaning, linguistic strategies possess a potentiality of meaning, which may be exploited according to the context, the conversational styles of participants and the interaction of their styles and strategies (Tannen 1994:23-4), has led to remarks that “[s]peaker’s meaning is a type of intention that can be discharged only through joint actions” (Clark 1996:139). The addressee’s uptake constitutes the second part of an act jointly performed by the speaker and the addressee (Clark 1996:198). Introducing the addressee once more into the picture allows us to study the interactional norms that s/he shares with the speaker (1.1, 1.3.3 above). Furthermore, by constituting evidence of the addressee’s understanding of the speaker’s utterance (Clark 1996:200), the addressee’s uptake (verbal or non verbal) can help us identify the type of speech act that has taken place, a process commonly



referred to as “validation through ‘next turn’” (Peräkylä 1997:209). As Goffman (1976:279) notes,

“what is available to the student (as also to the actual participant) is not the possibility of predicting forward from a statement to a reply — as we might a cause to its effects — but rather quite a different prospect, that of locating in what is said now the sense of what it is a response to.”

Goffman goes on to note the importance of the addressee’s perception of the phrasal stress, facial gestures, and body orientation of the speaker in determining the former’s understanding of the latter’s utterance. This information, as well as the addressee’s background knowledge of the events at hand, is made accessible to us through his/her uptake.

The present study takes the addressee’s uptake into account in three ways. First, this helps to determine the type of speech act performed. The occurrence of an uptake thus guards against potential bias on the part of the researcher to associate specific constructions with particular speech acts. Second, it helps identify the addressee, when this is not possible with reference to the speech-act-designating utterance. Third, speech-act-designating utterances which constitute (part of) the uptake are analysed separately (i.e. under ‘uptake’, see plate 1). This is because, coming in response to the original speaker’s utterance, the addressee’s choice of expression in the uptake is often conditioned by that of the original speaker, and must be assessed in relation to, rather than independently of it. For example, in (2), the interviewee’s compliance with the interviewer’s requests replicates not only her choice of the subjunctive mood and of the first person plural, but also her choice of verb (‘to start’).

(2) [1.3,4; On the radio; Speaker1: female, 31-50, middle-class; Speaker2: male, 31-50, middle-class; Relationship: interviewer (S1) to interviewee (S2)]

S1: *na ksecinisume ap' afto nomizo etsi?* [na mas to eksiji-  
S2: [e (.) *na ksecinisume ap' afto*

S1: *SP start-dep.-1pl. from this-ACC. think-ind.-1sg., so?* [SP us-GEN. it-ACC. expl-  
S2: [e (.) *SP start-dep.-1pl. from this-ACC.*

S1: ‘*Let’s start* from this, shall we? [Would you explain it to us’

S2: [er (.) *Let’s start* from this’

In sum, the current analysis combines the theoretical apparatus of speech act theory (in distinguishing questions from directives, and defining directives and commissives; 2.7.2.1 below) with insights from conversation analysis (the notion of ‘uptake’), in an effort to draw generalisable conclusions based on actual conversational data.<sup>8</sup>

## 2.5 A note on transcription

Transcription conventions are based on Sacks et al. (1974:731-4; see Table of Symbols and Abbreviations). A period in parenthesis “(.)” indicates brief silences. Longer silences are marked “((pause))”. Rising intonation, non-standard accentuation of lexical

<sup>8</sup> Van Rees (1992) discusses the advantages of this approach over a singularly conversation-analytic one.

items, and emphatic rises in pitch are indicated, but intonational patterns are otherwise not transcribed. The segments of CG speech are rendered by IPA symbols, yielding a semi-phonological transcription, which does not represent post-lexical processes. This ensures that the phonological image of lexical items is preserved, while sociolinguistically significant information, such as accent shifts indicative of standardisation tendencies, is obtainable.

## 2.6 Objectives of the data analysis

The analysis of the data collected aims to reveal which theoretical framework accounts for them accurately and economically. The starting point for this investigation will be Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness (1987; 1.2.2 above), in particular their predictions regarding the combined effect of interlocutors' assumptions about Distance, Power and Ranking of the imposition on the choice of specific strategies ranked along a scale of increasing indirectness. There are at least two reasons for focussing on Brown and Levinson's theory when analysing empirical data.<sup>9</sup> First, Brown and Levinson present us with a thoroughly worked out theoretical proposal about how sociological variables relate to linguistic ones, a proposal which stems from their analysis of empirical evidence from three genetically unrelated languages, and as such should be readily applicable to the analysis of further cross-linguistic evidence. Second, their theory has been perhaps the most influential within the field of politeness studies since it was first put forward in 1978. A large body of studies pertaining to the expression of politeness in various languages have been conducted within their framework, or have at least taken it as their point of departure.<sup>10</sup> As Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1997:11) put it, "it is impossible to talk about [politeness] without referring to Brown and Levinson's theory". If reasonable doubt can be established as to whether politeness assessments in CG are guided by interlocutors' assumptions regarding Distance, Power and Ranking of the imposition — Brown and Levinson's three sociological variables — the details of an alternative proposal will turn out to be well worth exploring.

At this point, one may want to object that Brown and Levinson's theory was never intended as a psychologically plausible account of politeness assessments made in the course of actual conversations by speakers of a language, but merely as a theoretical *post facto* explanation of the observed facts. However, on closer scrutiny this objection turns out to be untenable: Brown and Levinson explicitly discuss the formula yielding

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<sup>9</sup> Other approaches to politeness proposed to date are briefly outlined in 1.2 above.

<sup>10</sup> A non-exhaustive list includes: Arundale 1999; de Ayala 2001; Bayraktaroglu 1992a, 1992b; Blum-Kulka 1987a, 1990; Boutoulousi 1994; Calvo & Geluykens 1994; Carrell & Konneker 1981; Chen 2001; Culpeper 1996; Georgiadou 1997; Glick 1996; Gu 1990; Hayashi 1996; Held 1989; Hernandez-Flores 1999; Hill et al. 1986; Holmes 1988; Ide 1989; Jary 1998; Kong 1998; Mao 1994; Matsumoto 1988, 1989; Mehrotra 1995; Meier 1995; Nwoye 1992; Pavlidou 1991, 1994; Rhodes 1989; Scollon & Scollon 1983; Sifianou 1991, 1992a, 1992b, 1993, 1995, 1997a, 1997b; Snow et al. 1990; Subbaraq et al. 1991; Turner 1996, 1999; Tzanne 1995; Werkhofer 1992.

$W_x$  as “at least a partially accurate representation of cognitive process” (B&L:81). Moreover, they attribute specific *assumptions* to the speaker regarding the social distance between himself and the hearer, the power of the hearer over him, and the culture-dependent ranking of the FTA in question (B&L:74-5); while the speaker’s choice of expression is modelled as a decision-making process along the lines of a specific mode of reasoning about means and ends (B&L:64-5). As Eelen (1999:64; original emphasis) notes, “[Brown and Levinson’s] theory *is* in fact about real human beings, and the wants and rationality characteristics of the Model Person are attributed psychological reality”.

The objectives of the current analysis may therefore be spelt out as follows: first, to test whether the definitions of Distance, Power and Ranking of the imposition (B&L:76-8) are ‘operationalisable’; by this, I mean whether a consistent way of assessing the values of these variables across situations can be established for CG, such that interlocutors may plausibly be said to appeal to these dimensions rather than any others in making decisions about politeness. This first test essentially amounts to checking the falsifiability of Brown and Levinson’s theory. A second objective is to test the psychological plausibility of their theory. More specifically, one may question whether interlocutors indeed undertake the amount of cognitive processing which Brown and Levinson’s framework implies in postulating that interlocutors appeal to an intermediate level of assumptions about D, P and  $R_x$ , which follows the perception of extra-linguistic reality and precedes politeness assessments. If an alternative approach can be found which accounts for the CG data, while assigning less cognitive processing to interlocutors by allowing for the perception of the situation to be directly linked to politeness assessments, then, on this latter count, it should be preferred.

## 2.7 Choice of variables

A number of linguistic devices are available in Modern Greek for the performance of offers and requests (Sifianou 1992a:125ff.). The present analysis takes into account: the presence or not of a verb predicating an act *A* of the speaker or of the addressee, the type of main-clause verb, the subjective modality expressed by it, and the combination of number+person for which it is marked, as well as the contribution of address terms, diminutives, and of the lexical items *liyo*, ‘a little’, and *parakalo*, ‘please’, to the politeness import of the speech-act-realising utterance. Although in principle it may be possible to relate each of these to one or more of Brown and Levinson’s politeness strategies (B&L:91ff.), the complex interplay between their politeness potentials as a result of their co-occurrence in the same utterance makes this a dubious, if not self-defeating, task.<sup>11</sup> Such a classification of the politeness import of an utterance would

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<sup>11</sup> Terkourafi (1999:110-2) discusses this point with reference to diminutives. On the difficulties of assessing indirectness see 4.1.3, 4.1.4, 7.3.1-4 below.

level the subtlety of expression afforded by each of the possible combinations of these devices, thereby *a priori* assuming that such combinations are in some way equivalent, and can therefore be used interchangeably according to the requirements of Brown and Levinson's proposed formula for computing the weightiness of an FTA<sub>x</sub> (B&L:76-8). Aiming precisely to test the validity of this assumption, the present study refrains from taking this step. Rather, the CG conversational data are used to put Brown and Levinson's predictions to the test.

Brown and Levinson claim that the degree of indirectness opted for by a speaker in realising an FTA is commensurate with the sum of the values that the speaker assigns to the variables of Distance, Power, and Ranking of the imposition for that FTA, i.e. D, P and R<sub>x</sub> are subjectively assessed by each participant. To test this claim, it is desirable to propose a way of assessing the values of these variables which remains consistent across a group, i.e. which is not (wholly) idiosyncratic. For if this requirement for consistency is given up, not only does Brown and Levinson's theory become unfalsifiable, it also becomes hard to explain how two interlocutors may agree on their assessment of the FTA-specific values of D, P and R<sub>x</sub>, and therefore perceive each other to be polite, if not wholly by coincidence. It will therefore be a fundamental assumption held throughout this thesis that extra-linguistic features of the communicative situation, such as the sex, age, and social class of the speaker and of the addressee, the relationship between them, the setting of the exchange, and whether the speech act performed occurs for the first time or is repeated, may be drawn upon to assess the situation-specific values of D, P and R<sub>x</sub>, in accordance with Brown and Levinson's definitions of these variables (B&L:76-8). In what follows, extra-linguistic features of the situation are referred to as independent variables and the linguistic devices opted for as dependent ones. A more general aim of the analysis is to spell out the existing relationships between these components of the speech situation for CG (Hymes 1972:66).

### 2.7.1 Independent variables

#### *2.7.1.1. The kind of speech act*<sup>12</sup>

The present analysis is concerned with two classes of performative speech acts: a generic class of requests, referring to states of affairs desirable from the speaker's point of view, and a generic class of offers, referring to states of affairs desirable from the addressee's point of view. Usually, but not always, the responsibility for bringing about the state of affairs referred to lies with the addressee for requests, and with the speaker for offers.

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<sup>12</sup> For present purposes, the kind of speech act performed constitutes an independent variable, insofar as it determines the values of the dependent variables (2.7.2 below), and is not determined by them. This should not be taken to mean that its own value is determined independently of other factors, such as the addressee's uptake (2.4 above).

Compared to definitions of offers and requests within existing classificatory accounts, the above definitions combine theoretical motivation with empirical implementability. Classifications of speech acts generally follow one of two directions: some specify individually necessary and jointly sufficient conditions for different types of speech acts (Searle 1969, Labov & Fanshel 1977, Bach & Harnish 1979, Hancher 1979, Allan 1986, Récanati 1987), whereas others propose a classification of speech act verbs<sup>13</sup> according to their propositional content and/or the syntactic complements which they may take (Austin 1962, Verschueren 1980, Ballmer & Brennenstuhl 1981, Pavlidou 1987, Vanparys 1996). Neither of these proposals is unproblematic. In fact, the possibility of reaching a universally valid classification of speech acts remains itself an open question (Lyons 1995:251) which cannot be settled independently of challenges to the Wittgensteinian dictum that there is an indefinite number of things people can do with words (Searle 1996b:155).

Classifications of speech acts following the first direction have variously prioritised one of the following criteria: illocutionary point, psychological state, perlocutionary intention, direction of fit, content restrictions, or preparatory conditions. Critics of this view start by suggesting a number of properties, emanating from set-theoretical laws, that any classification must meet (Ballmer & Brennenstuhl 1981:58-9; Vanparys 1996:26). Classifications of speech acts along the aforementioned lines, they argue, fail to exhibit some or all of these properties, and should be rejected as inadequate.<sup>14</sup> On the other hand, a classification of speech act verbs based on speakers' intuitions about their meaning (Ballmer & Brennenstuhl 1981:19), or on actual usage (Vanparys 1996:127ff.) can help reach "the ultimate goal, a classification of illocutions" (Vanparys 1996:133). Such an analysis is first and foremost an analysis of an area of a language's lexicon, and as such it must be attempted anew for every language studied. Theoretical preoccupations aside, this option is not currently open to an analysis of CG illocutions, the only work currently available for (standard) Greek (Pavlidou 1987) being limited in scope as to both the material studied (performative verbs and expressions), and the classification criteria used (valency relations).

However, in the days following the abandonment of the performativity hypothesis, the practical value of a classification of speech act verbs in guiding us toward a classification of spontaneous illocutions seems itself open to question. For explicit performatives are seldom used in conversation. Rather, their primary conversational function is to clarify one's intentions, as in exchanges of the type "Are you asking me?" "No, I guess I'm telling you". As many theorists have since noticed, speech acts are essentially pragmatic events and can be studied only as such (Leech 1980:84-5; Allan 1986:280). In other words, an adequate specification of their force is possible only after

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<sup>13</sup> Not all speech act verbs can be used performatively (consider \*I boast that ... , \*I threaten that ... ). Performative verbs constitute a proper subset of the class of speech act verbs (Verschueren 1980:3-18).

<sup>14</sup> See Vanparys (1996:27ff.) for a comprehensive review of the relevant literature.

they have actually occurred (sometimes not even then, as requests for clarification demonstrate). Consequently, an appeal to a speech act verb when none is present, in order to describe the illocutionary force of a speech act, would constitute an undesirable interference with the facts on the part of the analyst (Leech 1980:99).<sup>15</sup>

As a result, we seem compelled to appeal to a generic notion of speakers' intentions, which, variously construed, have motivated classifications of the first type. Drawing on previous definitions of directive and commissive acts (Searle 1996b:147-8; Bach & Harnish 1979:47-51; Allan 1986:195-7, 199-200), we may formulate the traditional distinction between them as follows: directives express the attitude of the speaker towards some future act of the addressee, along with his/her intention that his/her utterance be taken as reason for the addressee to act, while commissives express the speaker's commitment to a future course of action, specified in the propositional content of his/her utterance, along with the intention that his/her utterance be taken as reason for the addressee to believe that s/he commits him/herself to this course of action. These definitions include a reference to the propositional content of the utterance, echoing Searle's suggestion of a propositional content condition (Searle 1969:63; Bach & Harnish 1979:55-7). However, a common way to perform a request is to state one's desire:

- (3) [74.2; Informal social gathering; Speaker: female, over 51, middle-class; Addressee: male, over 51, middle-class; Relationship: friends]

*θelo lifon neron, arjire*  
*want-ind.-1sg. a-little water-ACC., Arjiros-VOC.*  
 'Arjire, I'd like some water.'

Similarly, an offer may be performed by predicating a future act of the addressee:

- (4) [76.33; At work; Speaker: male, 31-50, middle-class; Addressee: male, 31-50, middle-class; Relationship: colleagues]

*xristo pinis kafe?*  
*Christos-VOC. drink-ind.-2sg. coffee-ACC.?*  
 'Christo, will you have some coffee?'

Judgements about their indirectness notwithstanding, (3) is intuitively classified as a request and (4) as an offer, even though the act (of providing the water) requested of the addressee in (3) remains implicit, and so does the act (of providing the coffee) to which the speaker commits himself in (4). The present analysis, then, will follow Récanati's (1987:163) suggestion that "[any] proposition whatever can be the content of a directive

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<sup>15</sup> This is not the type of analysis proponents of classifications of the second type have in mind anyway. Rather, their intention is to study in detail the semantic dimensions involved in the expression of illocutionary force cross-linguistically, so as to explore the possibility of establishing a universal set (more likely, a universal core) of speech acts. Nevertheless, any study of speech act verbs takes as its starting point the fact that the meaning of the verb can be asserted in an unqualified manner on an occasion by the speaker. Lyons's caution regarding the non-existence of the indicative mood in some of the world's languages (1995:178-9, 332) may prove to be an insuperable obstacle in this respect.

or a commissive; it suffices that the speaker's utterance express his intention that the addressee (or the speaker), by virtue of this utterance expressing this intention, behave in such a way as to make the proposition true." The act requested of the addressee or committed to by the speaker can subsequently be inferred on the basis of background knowledge about the structure of events (Bach & Harnish 1979:76ff.).

If an offer or a request may be performed by focussing on either participant, including the opposing one of the actual 'locus of action' (meaning the participant responsible for bringing about the state of affairs referred to), identifying such locus of action is not always a straightforward affair. Consider (5):

(5) Take a vacation.

Addressed by one spouse to the other during a conversation about the importance of spending quality time together, (5) could be interpreted as a request, and the responsibility for bringing about the state of affairs referred to would lie with the addressee. Addressed, however, by an employer to an employee, the responsibility for bringing about the state of affairs referred to would lie with the speaker. Moreover, were the employer content with the employee's performance, (5) could be interpreted as an offer, which the addressee could, in turn, accept or decline; but were the employer discontent with the employee's performance, (5) could be intended as a command, and indeed asserted as such if challenged. Knowledge of the intonational contour of the utterance, and of the situation in which it was uttered is therefore required to infer its illocutionary force. The addressee's uptake can also be of help in this respect, by demonstrating his/her intuitive understanding of the speaker's utterance, and thus providing grounds for further clarification should the illocutionary force perceived diverge from the one intended. That this interpretation is along the correct lines is shown by the fact that (6) and (7) below can be used by the aforementioned employee to report this exchange to a friend.

(6) The boss was pleased with my work and offered me a vacation.

(7) The boss was worried about my work and ordered me to take a vacation.

Two conclusions may be drawn from this discussion. First, the illocutionary force of an utterance can be determined by the analyst only *post facto*, that is, when information about its intonational contour, context of utterance, and the addressee's uptake is available. This is merely another way of stating the widely accepted fact that speech acts are pragmatic events (Allan 1994:4132). Second, the distinction between commissive and directive acts may sometimes depend not so much on which of the two participants is responsible for bringing about the state of affairs referred to (*pace* Récanati 1987:163) as on to whom (the speaker or the addressee) this state of affairs is desirable. The present analysis thus departs from Récanati (1987; 2.4 above) in taking the propositional content of the utterance into account, since this is necessary to

determine the ‘locus of desirability’ of the speech act. As the two different interpretations of (5) rendered by (6) and (7) above demonstrate, the illocutionary force inferred based on the ‘locus of desirability’ of the speech act may on occasion be different from the illocutionary force inferred based on which of the two participants is responsible for bringing about the state of affairs referred to. In such cases, the illocutionary force inferred based on which of the two participants constitutes the locus of desirability appears to yield the intuitively correct result, and should therefore take precedence.

If the preceding discussion settles the issue of distinguishing commissive from directive acts in the data, the question of distinguishing between subtypes of directive acts remains. The relevant speech acts in the data are requests and commands. Traditionally, these are distinguished by appealing to the power relationship between interlocutors (Searle 1969:70). A command is issued when the speaker’s *utterance* is to be taken as sufficient reason for the addressee to act, while a request is performed when the speaker’s *attitude*, as expressed in his/her utterance, is to be taken as reason for the addressee to act (Bach & Harnish 1979:47-9). On an alternative definition, a request, as opposed to a command, explicitly concedes to the addressee the right of non-compliance (Lyons 1995:255). Theoretically motivated as this distinction may be, in practice it becomes hard to apply, especially in work settings. We are here in danger of classifying all directives by speakers of higher power as commands, while on occasion the addressee may have the option of non-compliance — an option which, unless s/he chooses to take as manifested by his/her uptake, we as analysts will have never known to have been available. The difference between requests and commands being one of strength (Searle 1996b:143, Hancher 1979:2), different tokens of each act may occupy different positions on the strength continuum, making a categorical distinction between them difficult, if not impossible, to draw. It then seems preferable to follow Labov & Fanshel (1977:78, original emphasis; cf. *ibid.*:63-4), who use the term ‘request’ generically as follows:

#### “RULE FOR REQUESTS

If A addresses to B an imperative specifying an action X at time T<sub>1</sub>, and B believes that A believes that

- 1a. X should be done (for a purpose Y) [*need for the action* ]
  - b. B would not do X in the absence of the request [*need for the request* ]
  2. B has the *ability* to do X (with an instrument Z)
  3. B has the *obligation* to do X or is willing to do it.
  4. A has the *right* to tell B to do X,
- then A is heard as making a valid request for action.

Subtypes of requests in the data can subsequently be distinguished on the basis of the interaction between the dependent variables (2.7.2 below), the variable of the order of occurrence of the speech act (2.7.1.2 below) and the addressee’s uptake (2.4 above), which subsume the additional distinctions drawn by these authors on the basis of



mitigation or aggravation of expression (direct versus indirect requests) and of the conversational handling of requests (putting off, relaying, embedding or reinstating requests). To replicate this information under the variable of the type of speech act performed would be not only redundant, but also misleading, since it would create the false impression that subtypes of requests can be distinguished independently of a number of other factors.

The methodological decision to currently distinguish between offers and requests along a general dimension of *desirability* (to the speaker or to the addressee) of an act predicated of the speaker or of the addressee in an utterance of a sentence (Sperber & Wilson 1995[1986]:250-1) is supported by empirical evidence which suggests that speech-act theoretical descriptions play no actual role in comprehension (Good MS, reported in Geis 1995:31).<sup>16</sup> As (5)-(7) above, and (8)-(9) below from the CG data show, even direct formulations are not uniquely associated with particular illocutionary forces. Both (8) and (9) use the imperative *vale*, ‘put-imp.-perf.-2sg.’; yet (8) is interpreted as an offer, while (9) as a request, based on the propositional content expressed each time jointly with other features of the situational context. The desirability of an act predicated of the speaker or of the addressee can be inferred based on the propositional content of the utterance and features of the situational context, even if the illocutionary force of the utterance cannot be further clarified.<sup>17</sup>

- (8) [80.3; At home; Speaker: female, 18-30, middle-class; Addressee: female, 18-30, middle-class; Relationship: friends]

marina, *vale* fai  
 marina-VOC., *put-imp.-perf.-2sg.* food-ACC.  
 ‘Marina, *help* yourself’

- (9) [89.6; At work; Speaker: male, 31-50, working-class. Addressee: female, 18-30, middle-class; Relationship: salesperson to new customer]

ela *vale* mila ftina  
 come-imp.-perf.-2sg. *put-imp.-perf.-2sg.* apples-ACC. cheap-ACC.  
 ‘Come and *buy* cheap apples’

### 2.7.1.2. *The order of occurrence of the speech act*

Labov and Fanshel (1977:93) remark that, “[a]n appropriate use of requests involves more than the form: the timing of the request is also important”. In fact, the form of a request is not independent of its timing:

“Because repeated requests are an aggravated form of criticism, challenging the other’s competence quite sharply, it is common practice for speakers to mitigate their repetitions by varying their form. [...] This principle applies to requests

<sup>16</sup> Sperber and Wilson (1995:244-5) base their critique of speech-act theory on a similar argument.

<sup>17</sup> Capturing this intuition, Thomas (2000) proposes to distinguish utterances which are ‘ambivalent’ (i.e. which make clear the perlocutionary effect sought by the speaker, but not the illocutionary force of his/her utterance) from those which are ‘indirect’ (i.e. which do not make clear what is the perlocutionary effect sought by the speaker).

repeated after B has responded to the first request by refusing or putting it off, as well as to the case where B has not responded at all.”(Labov & Fanshel 1977:95)

Repetitions of the first type have been termed ‘emphatic’ or ‘emotive’, and are attributed to internal factors (the emotive urge in the speaker), while repetitions caused by failure to elicit a response are classified as ‘purposive’ (Persson 1974:89, 160ff). The present study distinguishes between the following possibilities: a) the first occurrence of the speech act is immediately followed by an uptake (verbal or non verbal), or b) it is not, which sometimes causes c) repetition of the speech act, until uptake (preferably compliance) is secured. The repetitions we are presently concerned with arise under possibility c): they are pragmatic repetitions, defined as such on the basis of identity of illocutionary force (Merlini Barbaresi 1996:105), and realised as self-repetitions, where any number of turns may elapse between the original speech act and its repetition.

### *2.7.1.3 The participants’ sex, age, and social class*

The participants’ sex, age, and social class were noted during the collection of the data. Visually assessing interlocutors’ sex is relatively straightforward in the large majority of cases. A speaker or an addressee will be male or female. Assessments of age, in the absence of prior information about it, are approximate. In the present study adult informants are classified in three age groups: 18 to 30, 31 to 50, and over 50. These correspond to major turning points in an individual’s personal social and professional development. As it happens, the above distinction also registers the occurrence of major historical events in the history of Cyprus. The over 50s group would have been at least entering adolescence by the time the island became an independent state in 1960, whereas the group of those between 31 and 50 would have had little, if any, direct experience of the old regime. Finally, informants aged 30 years or younger would have been no older than five at the time of the Turkish invasion of 1974, which once more changed the political situation on the island. In any case, it is the relative ages of speaker and addressee (whether one perceives one’s addressee to be of the same age, younger or older) that is most relevant to assessments of politeness, and for that purpose interlocutors commonly rely on approximate estimates on the basis of visual evidence.

The variable of social class, on the other hand, is notoriously difficult to study (Milroy 1987:29ff.). In aiming for as accurate a distinction as the occasional absence of prior information about informants would allow, the present study draws a general distinction between two groups: working- and middle-class. However, no unitary criterion was found that could afford one with the correct predictions. Criteria currently appealed to include information about one’s profession, level of education, or financial capacity. On the few occasions when such information was unavailable, one’s appearance and non-verbal behaviour provided indications as to the value of this variable. Nonetheless, since interlocutors appear to handle exchanges with complete strangers without noticeable difficulty, an appeal to such superficial evidence may not be completely unwarranted methodologically, as it probably mirrors the actual

procedure followed by interlocutors in the above case. As such, the success of this move is not independent of the researcher's native intuitions about the linguistic community under study.

#### *2.7.1.4 The setting of the exchange*

Hymes (1972:58ff.) uses the term 'setting' to refer to "the time and place of the speech act and, in general, to the physical circumstances." Following Aijmer (1996), the conversational settings presently studied are grouped under three general headings: at home/informal social gatherings, at work (shops and offices), and in formal discussions /on radio/TV. The channel of communication (Hymes 1972:61-2) invariably consists in face-to-face oral interaction, realised as unscripted conversation between native Cypriot Greek speakers.

The interactional importance of setting may be traced back to two reasons. First, the types of participants (and non-participants) one may expect to find in different settings will vary. Clark (1996:14-5) distinguishes between 'participants', including side participants, and all other listeners (eavesdroppers and bystanders), whom he defines as 'overhearers'. Each of the settings presently studied will normally be associated with some of these categories. Clark (1996:15) comments that "side participants and overhearers help shape how speakers and addressees act toward each other". The interactional significance of the presence of an audience is also noted by Brown and Levinson (B&L:16) who, nevertheless, do not comment further on how the presence of an audience influences the assessment of the three sociological variables. Setting is interactionally important for the further reason that it helps delimit participants' social roles, and the duties and obligations that are presumed to go with them (Goffman 1976:294; Schiffrin 1994:104; Scollon & Scollon 1995:34). The actions that a participant can be legitimately expected to perform may, as a result, involve little verbal negotiation, often taking place with little or no verbal input from either participant. On the other hand, participants generally refrain from performing actions that fall within another's duties, and if they do so, greater verbal negotiation is involved (as when one of the participants in a formal discussion asks the co-ordinator of the discussion for the right to speak). Such roles, being socially constructed, rather than factual, can subsequently assume an existence of their own, independently of the setting of the exchange, and be invoked with the same consequences as if the current setting was the one that originally motivated their ascription. Hymes (1972:60) refers to "the cultural definition of an occasion as a certain type of scene" as its "psychological setting" which is distinct from its physical counterpart. However, "[s]ince scene implies always an analysis of cultural definitions, setting probably is to be preferred as the informal, unmarked term for the two" (ibid.). An analysis of cultural definitions in terms of this last remark would introduce a fair amount of subjective interpretation of the facts on behalf of the analyst, and is not currently undertaken for this reason. Rather,

the present study confines itself to studying the impact of physical setting on the verbal enactment of politeness, while at the same time attempting to capture to an extent the distinction between physical and psychological setting by a reference to the relationship between participants.

#### *2.7.1.5 The relationship between participants*

As defined in the present study, the relationship between interlocutors combines the variables of the social distance between participants, and of the power of the hearer over the speaker (B&L:74ff.). The reason for this decision lies with the observation that participants' assessments of these variables proceed in parallel, rather than independently of one another (Holtgraves & Yang 1990:725; Watts et al. 1992:9; Tannen & Kakava 1992:13).<sup>18</sup> The interdependence of power and distance can in fact be traced back to Brown and Levinson's definitions of these variables. The hearer's power over the speaker is defined as "the degree to which H can impose his own plans and his own self-evaluation (face) at the expense of S's plans and self-evaluation" and emanates from "material control (over economic distribution and physical force) and metaphysical control (over the actions of others, by virtue of metaphysical forces subscribed to by those others)" (B&L:77). Thus defined, P is, under normal circumstances,<sup>19</sup> not wholly unrelated to the frequency of interaction between interlocutors, which constitutes a criterion for assessing the social distance between them (ibid.). Note here that, trivially, assessments of power and distance cannot come into existence independently of each other: the possibility of control is created the moment one becomes aware of the possibility of interaction.

Following these considerations, a more direct way of referring to the relationship between participants was sought, in order to register the possible values of this variable with the greatest possible detail, while ensuring that generalisation, i.e. abstraction from the facts, may still be possible at a later stage. The following possibilities are distinguished: members of the same family, friends, acquaintances, long-standing colleagues, new colleagues, long-standing customer and shop-attendant/waiter, new customer and shop-attendant/waiter, long-standing superior and subordinate, newly-collaborating superior and subordinate, member of the audience and speaker, interviewer and interviewee, complete strangers.

There are two reasons for preferring such a faithful representation of the facts. First, it helps avoid arbitrary decisions on behalf of the analyst. For example, whether the power of the customer or the shop-attendant is greater in a shop setting may remain

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<sup>18</sup> *Pace* B&L:80-1. The alleged independence of D, P, and R<sub>x</sub> fails, in my view, to be demonstrated by the examples which they furnish, alternative explanations for which include, among others, a difference in speakers' sociolects, currently studied as a separate variable of social class (2.7.1.3 above).

<sup>19</sup> Exceptionally, the hearer's high power over the speaker is established independently of any prior interaction, as when the hearer is carrying a weapon, is a head of state, or carries signs of legitimate authority.

ambiguous. The former may be said to possess economic power over the latter, however it is the latter who has control over the goods that the former desires. This situation is accentuated when the shop attendant is also the owner of the shop. On the other hand, classifying the two as of equal power will be inaccurate on those occasions where they obviously are not. Idiosyncratic factors may also play a part here. A comparable indeterminacy characterises the relationship between interviewer and interviewee, when the interviewee is an important and famous figure. Examples of this kind suggest that the power differential is subject to constant negotiation through discourse, thus making it inappropriate for consideration as an independent variable in the analysis of empirical data. Second, the above categories, while representing possible combinations of power and distance, do not reduce without residue to such combinations. They contain additional information about participants' rights and obligations which interlocutors draw on when handling conversational exchanges. That this information is also prototypically attached to the setting of the exchange does not argue against its reduplication here, since there is no one-to-one correspondence between the values of the variable of 'setting' and those of the variable of 'relationship'. Separate reference to the setting of the exchange and the relationship between participants thus affords us with all the information also available to participants in an exchange. Based on this, we may subsequently generalise over situations, drawing on observed similarities in linguistic expression. For example, it may turn out that the relationships of (long-standing/new) customer and shop-attendant, and (long-standing/newly collaborating) superior and subordinate are indeed comparable in virtue of similarities in linguistic expression. The motivation for these similarities may then be sought in the direction of underlying common features between these relationships. To start at the opposing end, i.e. by assuming that these relationships share some underlying feature, and to group these relationships together as a result, would, in my view, be assuming more than is warranted by the facts.

### 2.7.2 Dependent variables

#### *2.7.2.1 Presence/absence of main-clause verb*

Offers and requests may be realised without using a verb, as in (10):

- (10) [04.4; On the radio; Speaker: male, 31-50, middle-class; Addressee: male, 31-50, middle-class; Relationship: interviewer to interviewee]

o lofos ston cirio mavrom<sup>˘</sup>ati

the-NOM. speech-NOM. to-the-ACC. Mr-ACC. mavromatis-ACC.

'Mr Mavromatis, the floor is yours'

- (10) contrasts with (11), where a similar offer is performed using a full VP:

- (11) [03.4; On the radio; Speaker: male, 31-50, middle-class; Addressee: male, 18-30, middle-class; Relationship: interviewer to interviewee]

.hhh (na Dosumen ce<sup>˘</sup>) to lofo ston andrean,

(*SP give-dep.-1pl.* and) *the-ACC. speech-ACC. to-the-ACC. andreas-ACC.*  
 ‘(Let me) bring in Andreas.’

Sifianou (1992a:152ff.) discusses requests performed without using a verb as elliptical constructions, and relates their occurrence with service encounters where the repetitive, familiar nature of the tasks involved allows information that can be easily inferred from the context, linguistic or otherwise, to be omitted (*ibid.*). This explanation is along the lines of Brown and Levinson who associate such instances of ellipsis with positive politeness (B&L:111).<sup>20</sup> An alternative explanation for verb-less utterances in Modern Greek draws on structural properties of the language, namely the fact that verbs must be inflectionally marked for the categories of number and person among others. Speakers may avoid using a verb when they prefer to leave these unspecified, as in (10). Compared with (11), which is addressed to a younger addressee who is subsequently addressed by FN and in the 2sg., the omission of the verb in (10) — no doubt in conjunction with the title+LN used — produces a more, rather than less, formal effect.

### 2.7.2.2 *The type of main-clause verb*

In realising performative acts, the utterances selected for analysis point to a state of affairs to be brought about by the speaker or by the addressee. This may be done by means of a reference to an act *A* predicated of the speaker or the addressee, or it may be left implicit.

(12) [26.3; Speaker1: female, over 51, working-class; Speaker2: female, 31-50, middle-class; Relationship: family]

S1: zina to moron pai po tSi

S2: ne

S1: zina-VOC. the-NOM. baby-NOM. go-ind.-3sg. from there

S2: yes

S1: ‘Zina, the baby is going to the other room.’

S2: ‘Yes.’

To explore how indirectness is expressed in such utterances, the following distinctions are drawn based on the notion of preparatory conditions (Searle 1969:57ff.): (a) an utterance is referred to as an ‘indirect statement’ if it does not contain a reference to a preparatory condition for the act requested/offered, as in (12); (b) if an utterance contains such a reference, then (i) if this condition pertains to the existence of goods (e.g. prior to purchase; (3) in 4.1.2, (4)-(5) in 7.3.3 below), specific note is made of the main-clause verb used (usually *exo*, ‘I-have’, but also *ime*, ‘I-am’, or *iparxo*, ‘I-exist’), since this lexical choice is significant (contrary to *ime* and *iparxo*, *exo* allows reference to the addressee); (ii) if a preparatory condition other than the existence of goods is referred to, utterances are referred to as ‘indirect requests/offers’.

<sup>20</sup> Instances of ellipsis which involve incompleteness and fall under the off-record strategy (B&L:227; Sifianou 1992a:155-6) were not encountered in the CG data.

When the state of affairs to be brought about by the speaker or by the addressee is specified by means of a reference to an act *A* predicated of the speaker or the addressee and *A* is designated by way of a verb, this may be in the main clause or in a subordinate one. In the latter case, the main-clause verb may be impersonal (e.g. *prepi*, ‘it-must’, *epitrepete*, ‘it-is-allowed’) or personal. Personal main-clause verbs may further express volition (e.g. *θelo*, ‘I-want’, *epitrepo*, ‘I-permit’) or ability (e.g. *boro*, ‘I-can’). In this way, we may include in our analysis lexicalised, as opposed to grammaticalised, realisations of modalities which are not expressed in the inflectionally marked mood system of Modern Greek.

Impersonal *prepi* and *epitrepete* signal speaker or addressee commitment. *prepi* shows a high degree of commitment toward the act to be performed. Of interest here are occurrences of *prepi* which express obligation (as opposed to strong probability in inference). In such cases, *prepi* occurs in the present indicative, the future, or the conditional, and is followed by the act-designating verb in the 1sg./pl. or 2sg./pl. introduced by the subjunctive particle *na* (Holton et al. 1997:201). Whereas initially *prepi* may appear to be incompatible with requests (Sifianou 1992a:145), (13) and (14) below show that this is in fact equally used to indicate that an obligation is undertaken by the speaker or placed upon the addressee:<sup>21</sup>

(13) [21.29; At work; Speaker: male, 31-50, middle-class; Addressee: male, 18-30, middle-class; Relationship: old colleagues]  
 epiDi en˘ ' apoxoriso en˘ a prepi na su ta˘ sumaro  
 because FP depart-dep.-1sg. *FP must* SP you-2sg.-GEN. them-ACC. sum-up-dep.-1sg.,  
 ‘I’ll have to sum them up for you because I’m going to leave.’

(14) [12.3; At work; Speaker: female, over 51, middle-class; Addressee: male, over 51, middle-class; Relationship: old colleagues]  
 ce (.) prepi na mas pis ti ores ise DiateTimenos na  
 pijenis ...

and, (.) *must* SP us-GEN. tell-dep.-2sg. what hours be-ind.-2sg. prepare-pass.-past-part.-NOM. SP go-non past-imperf.-2sg. ...

‘You *must* also let us know what times you are prepared to be there’ ...

Impersonal *epitrepete*, on the other hand, signals a lesser degree of commitment and is typically used to perform requests:

(15) [20.19; At work; Speaker: male, 31-50, middle-class; Addressee: male, 31-50, middle-class; Relationship: old colleagues]  
*epitrepete?* ((to look at the newspaper lying on the table))  
*allow-pass.-ind.-3sg.?*  
 ‘May I?’

Offers or requests performed using one of the personal verbs *epitrepo*, *boro*, and *θelo* (Sifianou 1992a:142,144,150) focus attention on the attitude of the main-clause subject toward the act specified in the subordinate clause, as opposed to offers

<sup>21</sup> This accords with the definition of offers and requests as, among other things, desirable from the addressee’s or from the speaker’s point of view (2.7.1.1 above).

and requests performed by means of the act-designating verb alone (i.e. when this is in the main clause), which focus attention on the act to be performed. *epitrepo* is used to perform requests and typically occurs in the 2sg./pl. of the imperative, indicative, future or subjunctive, followed by the act-designating verb in a clause introduced by the subjunctive particle *na*:

- (16) [04.3; On the radio; Speaker: male, 31-50, middle-class; Addressee: male, 31-50, middle-class; Relationship: interviewer to interviewee]  
*epitrepste mu epitrepste mu na sineCiso omos akomi akoma*  
*lifo*  
*allow-imp.-perf.-2pl. me-GEN. allow-imp.-perf.-2pl. me-GEN. SP continue-dep.-1sg.*  
*but yet yet a-little*  
 ‘Allow me to say something more.’

*boro* and *θelo* may be used to perform both offers and requests.<sup>22</sup> They then occur in the 1sg./pl. or 2sg./pl. of the present indicative or the conditional, and are followed by the act-specifying-verb in a subordinate clause introduced by *na*:

- (17) [62.5; At work; Speaker: male, 31-50, middle-class; Addressee: male, 31-50, middle-class; Relationship: salesperson to old customer]  
*mborumen na zitisumen amesa prosfores*  
*can-ind.-1pl. SP ask-dep.-1pl. directly offers-ACC.*  
 ‘We can ask for offers immediately.’

### 2.7.2.3 *Subjective modality*

Lyons (1995:328ff.) draws a distinction between objective and subjective modality, associating the latter with speakers’ “expressing their own beliefs and attitudes or their own will and authority, rather than reporting, as neutral observers, the existence of this or that state of affairs” (ibid.:330). This potential for expressing subjectivity makes devices which realise modality in natural languages apt for the expression of politeness. Modality may be grammaticalised in two ways: via verbal mood (ibid.:255), and (some uses of) tense (ibid.:319). The two are in fact interdependent (ibid.:196, 327, 332-3). Prosodic structure may also realise modality, with the occurrence of rising intonation marking interrogativity in languages such as Modern Greek, where this is not signalled structurally (ibid.:185-6; Sifianou 1992a:137-9). Finally, modality may be realised by means of negation (Lyons 1995:175-6; Sifianou 1992a:146ff.). In the relevant instances, negation is interpreted as having wide scope over the proposition expressed as a result of a process of neg-raising, which has been attributed to politeness (Horn 1989:333ff.).

Alongside the three moods traditionally recognised in Modern Greek (Tzartanos 1946[1928]; Triantafyllidis 1941; Joseph & Philippaki-Warburton 1987; Holton et al. 1997:203ff.), i.e. the indicative (for current purposes, what is referred to as ‘indicative’ in the transcribed examples is restricted to the imperfective non-past; (17) above), the

<sup>22</sup> Impersonal *bori*, ‘can-ind.-3sg.’, which expresses weak possibility, is of no interest here (Holton et al. 1997:202).



subjunctive (referred to as ‘SP (*na*) + dependent’;<sup>23</sup> (24) below),<sup>24</sup> and the imperative (referred to as ‘imperative perfective/imperfective’; (16) above), I will also note: the future (referred to as ‘FP (*θa* (SMG)/ *en̄a* (CG)) + dependent; (20) below, (13) above),<sup>25</sup> the past (referred to as ‘past perfective/imperfective’; (26) below), and the conditional (referred to as ‘FP (*θa*) + imperfective past’; (18) below). The present indicative, subjunctive, imperative, future, past, and conditional forms in Modern Greek are distinguished morphologically (Holton et al. 1997:119ff.), and with respect to the negative particles with which they may co-occur (*Den* for the present indicative, future, past and conditional; *min* for the subjunctive; cf. Mackridge 1985:243, 279; Joseph & Philippaki-Warburton 1987:179), and the position of clitics (clitics follow imperatives but precede indicatives and subjunctives; cf. Joseph & Philippaki-Warburton 1987:183; Holton et al. 1997:206). Yes/no questions are distinguished from statements on the basis of intonational contour ((4) above) and may be accompanied by the particles *mipos/min* (Mackridge 1985:39-40, 126-7; Joseph & Philippaki-Warburton 1987:4, 19; Holton et al. 1997:412-3).

#### 2.7.2.4 *Number & person*

Modern Greek has a T/V distinction, making it possible to express politeness by means of verbal number and person (Brown & Gilman 1972[1960]; B&L:198ff.; Bakakou-Orfanou 1989; Sifianou 1992a:60ff.). These are studied together, since they are morphologically compounded in the same inflectional endings (Holton et al. 1997:119ff.). In general, use of the 2nd person focuses on the addressee as the locus of the action to be performed, while use of the 1st person focuses on the speaker. These two devices interact variably with the locus of desirability of the act in achieving the polite effect (2.7.1.1 above).

Bakakou-Orfanou (1989:140) defines the ‘social’ plural as expressing “the kind of social relationships [between participants] and secondarily other features of their social identity” and distinguishes between the social plural proper (2nd person reference), and the secondary social plural (1st person reference). The former may also be termed ‘relative’, in that it implies that the social standing of the addressee or the social distance between interlocutors is assessed from the speaker’s point of view (ibid.:159). Its use in SMG is associated with two features of the situation: the type of the relationship between speaker and addressee, and the formality of the setting (Mackridge 1985:77-8; Holton et al. 1997:197-8). V usage prompted by the formality of the setting

<sup>23</sup> The term ‘dependent’ is introduced by Holton et al. (1997:110, 220ff.) to indicate the verb form combining perfective aspect (in the stem) with non-past inflectional endings, what is traditionally referred to as ‘aorist subjunctive’.

<sup>24</sup> Pavlidou (1991:13fn.2) and Sifianou (1992a:141fn.3) discuss the non self-evident status of the subjunctive in Modern Greek.

<sup>25</sup> This is variably classified with the indicative (Holton et al. 1997:204, Joseph & Philippaki-Warburton 1987:180), or with the subjunctive (Mackridge 1985:274ff.).

is symmetric, while V usage relating to the relationship between interlocutors may be symmetric, if interlocutors are of equal social standing, thereby signalling increased social distance; or asymmetric, with the person of higher standing giving T and receiving V (Bakakou-Orfanou 1989:183). However, V may also be adopted by the person of higher standing prompted by middle-class values (Makri-Tsilipakou 1983:226), or in an attempt to give respect (Sifianou 1992a:62). In general, V usage depends on the aspect of the relationship between interlocutors that the speaker is foregrounding, and may be symmetric or asymmetric as a result (Petrits 1990:141). The relative plural falls under ‘honorary’ plural (where only the Verb agrees with its logical subject, while the Noun and Adjective agree with the real subject), which contrasts to the ‘semantic’ plural (where the predicate agrees with its logical subject; cf. Bakakou-Orfanou 1989:185ff.). It therefore constitutes a conventional implicature in SMG, whereby what is communicated is the grammatical meaning of the 2sg. accompanied by the honorary element (Levinson 1983:128-9).

However, evidence suggests that V usage is not similarly conventionalised in CG (Terkourafi 2001:463ff.). When using the 2pl. toward a single addressee in the data collected, speakers often fluctuate between the singular and the plural, often switching between the two a number of times.<sup>26</sup>

- (18) [85; Setting: On TV; Speaker: male, 31-50, middle-class. Addressee: female, over 51, middle-class; Relationship: interviewer to interviewee]  
*ciria vasiliu kliste mas aftin ti sizitisi. ti Ta lefate*  
 ((one turn))  
*na se Diakopso? ixa Djavasi akrivos afto pu lete ...*  
*parakalo olokliroste*  
 Mrs-VOC. *vasiliou close-imp.-perf.-2pl.* us-GEN. this-ACC. the-ACC. discussion-ACC. . what *FP say-past.-imperf.-2pl.*  
 ((one turn))  
 SP *you-2sg.-ACC.* interrupt-dep.-1sg? have-past.-1sg. read-non-fin. exactly this-ACC. which *say-ind.-2pl.* ... please *conclude-imp.-perf.-2pl.*  
 ‘Mrs Vasiliou, *close* this discussion for us. What *do you think?*’  
 ((one turn))  
 ‘May I interrupt? I had read exactly what *you are saying*’ ... ‘Please *do conclude.*’
- (19)[42; At work; Speaker1: female, over 51, middle-class; Speaker2: female, 18-30, middle-class; A=MG; Relationship (all): acquaintances]  
 S1: *katsete*  
 ((some turns later))  
 S2: *Telete na parete ena˘n, paksimaDi?(.) e˘˘ kolokoti*  
 ((a few turns later))  
 S2: *ise apo el˘aDa?jati ( )*  
 ((one turn))  
 S2: *eci jeniTices?*  
 ((one turn))  
 S2: *ne? i fonis su ciprei?*  
 ((some turns later))  
 S1: *mbori na eCete Dicon ...*  
 ((a few turns later))

<sup>26</sup> Occurrences of pronouns and verbs in the 2sg./pl. are italicised in this section for the purposes of illustration.

- S1: ((laughing)) *ise tis lemesu esi i tis lefkosias*  
 S1: *sit-imp.-perf.-2pl.*  
 ((some turns later))  
 S2: *want-ind.-2pl. SP take-dep.-2pl. one, biscuit-ACC.? er, a kolokoti-ACC.*<sup>27</sup>  
 ((a few turns later))  
 S2: *be-ind.-2sg. from Greece? because ( )*  
 ((one turn))  
 S2: there *be-born-past-perf.-2sg.?*  
 ((one turn))  
 S2: yes? the-NOM. parents-NOM. *your-2sg. Cypriot?*  
 ((some turns later))  
 S1: *can-ind.-3sg. SP have-dep.-2pl. right*  
 ((a few turns later))  
 S1: ((laughing)) *be-ind.-2sg. the-GEN. lemesos-GEN. you-NOM.-2sg. or the-GEN. lefkosia-GEN.*  
 S1: ‘*Have a seat*’  
 ((some turns later))  
 S2: ‘*Would you like a biscuit? er, a kolokoti*’  
 ((a few turns later))  
 S2: ‘*Are you from Greece? Because*’...  
 ((one turn))  
 S2: ‘*Were you born there?*’  
 ((one turn))  
 S2: ‘*Yes? Are your parents Cypriot?*’  
 ((some turns later))  
 S1: ‘*Maybe you are right*’...  
 ((a few turns later))  
 S1: ((laughing)) ‘*Are you from Lemesos or from Lefkosia yourself?*’

Based on the speakers’ fluctuation between the plural and the singular in these examples one may hypothesise that non-literal use of the 2pl. is felt by Cypriot Greeks to belong to the SMG code, and therefore occurs when this code is called for, i.e. in formal settings, and when the addressee is classified as a Mainland Greek. It may thus be interpreted as an instance of code-switching (McCormick 1994:581). This hypothesis is supported in three ways. First, when used non-literally, the 2pl. can only combine with the SMG future particle  $\theta a$ , and not with its CG equivalent  $en \sim a$  (5 in table 2, 3.3 below; (20)). Furthermore, combinations of the 2sg./pl. with address terms diverge from SMG usage (Sifianou 1992a:64; Bakakou-Orfanou 1989:175; (21), (22)), and so do replies in the 1pl. ((23)). Attributing the non-literal use of the 2pl. in the examples below to code-switching accounts for the observed divergences from SMG usage: speakers may perform less than optimally when using a code for which they do not have native-speaker intuitions (3.4.4 below).

- (20) [59.10; At work; Speaker: female, 18-30; middle-class; A=MG; Relationship: acquaintances]

*Ta pjite kati? na sas cerasume?*  
*FP drink-dep.-2pl. something? SP you-2pl.-ACC. treat-dep.-1pl.?*  
 ‘*Will you have something to drink? May I offer you {something}?*’

- (21) [6; On TV; Speaker: male, 31-50, middle-class; Addressee: male, 31-50, middle-class; Relationship: interviewer to interviewee]

<sup>27</sup> Local sweet pie.

s'efxaristo cirie fetHa  
*you-2sg.-ACC. thank-ind.-1sg. Mr-VOC. fetas-VOC.*  
 'Thank *you* Mr Fetas.'

- (22) [82; Formal discussion; Speaker: female, 31-50, middle-class; Addressee: male, 31-50, middle-class; Relationship: speaker to member of the audience]

cirie panajo÷ ciriako Ta mu *epitrepsete*, aplos Telo na  
 mas to *anaptiksete* afto ...

Mr-VOC. panayo- kyriako-VOC. *FP* me-GEN. *allow-dep.-2pl.*, simply want-ind.-  
 1sg. *SP* us-GEN. it-ACC. *develop-dep.-2pl.* this-ACC. ...

'Mr Panayo- Kyriakos, *allow* me, I would just like *you* to *expand* on this for us' ...

- (23) [42.8; At work; Speaker1: female, over 51, middle-class; Speaker2: male, over 51, middle-class; Relationship: new colleagues]

S1: *sas* cerasumen kati?

S2: *imasten* endaksi

S1: *you-2pl.-ACC.* offer-dep.-1pl. something?

S2: *be-ind.-1pl.* alright

S1: 'May we offer *you* something?'

S2: 'I'm fine.'

In these examples, non-literal use of the 2pl. is assessed as polite in the context of the formality of the setting, or of the Mainland Greek identity of the addressee. Indeed, when occurring in a different context, informants commented on this usage as 'stand-offish', or 'inappropriate' (Terkourafi 1997:38-9). Nevertheless, evidence suggests that at least some speakers consider this usage to be polite independently of such a context.

(24) is an instance of non-literal use of the 2pl. by a female service-provider to a Cypriot Greek addressee with whom she is not familiar:

- (24) [59.2; At work; Speaker: female, 18-30, middle-class; Addressee: male, over 51, working-class; Relationship: salesperson to new customer]

na mu *pite* ton ariTmon tis asfalias *sas?* ton ariTmon pu  
*eCete* (mazi) *sas?*

*SP* me-GEN. *tell-dep.-2pl.* the-ACC. number-ACC. the-GEN. insurance-GEN. *your-2pl.?* the-ACC. number-ACC. that *have-ind.-2pl.* with *you-2pl.-ACC.?*

'*Can you tell* me the number of *your* insurance? The number *you have* with *you?*'

Similar occurrences have been recorded in a secretarial office, an insurance company, a legal firm, and a number of shops fewer than half of which may be considered 'upmarket', and were independent of the recipient's sex, age, or social class. Speakers were always female and younger than 50 years of age; in fact, 71.43% were 30 years old or younger. Young working women's usage of V forms is consistent throughout their utterances ((24) above) and across turns. That is, they do not hesitate or switch between the 2sg. and the 2pl., as happens in instances of code-switching, such as (25), where the verb is marked for 2pl., but the pronoun for 2sg.

- (25) [71.32; Informal social gathering; Speaker: male, 31-50, middle-class; A=MG; Relationship: acquaintances]

e *Doste* mas to ~ *Doste* to tu andrea ksipna olus osi ksipna  
 o andreas 'a se ksipnisi

*give-imp.-perf.-2pl.* us-GEN. the-ACC., *give-imp.-perf.-2pl.* it-ACC. the-GEN. andreas-GEN. wake-up-ind.-3sg. all-ACC. who-NOM. wake-up-ind.-3sg. andreas-NOM. *FP you-2sg.-ACC.* wake-up-dep.-3sg.

‘Give us the, give it to Andreas, he wakes everyone up, Andreas will wake *you* up.’

It is therefore possible that, in line with findings regarding phonological change in the United States, where

“[i]n the course of change from below, the most advanced vowel systems are found among younger speakers [...] these innovators are found among [...] the upper working class and lower middle class [...] In most of the vowel shifts [...], women are considerably more advanced than men.” (Labov 1994:156)

young working (not necessarily working-class) women are leading a change pertaining to the non-literal use of the 2pl. in CG. In generalising its use to settings which are not formal, and addressees who are not Mainland Greeks, young working women are dissociating this from the SMG code ((18) to (23) above), and introducing it into the CG code as a conventional marker of politeness.

Compared to non-literal use of the 2pl., non-literal use of the 1pl. “focuses [...] on the speaker, whom it presents as a member of a real or fictional group” (Bakakou-Orfanou 1989:176). Bakakou-Orfanou (1989:81ff.) divides this into ‘psychological’, ‘minimising/maximising’, and ‘social’. The first serves to demonstrate the speaker’s emotional participation in, or attitude toward, the meaning of the verb, or to give directions and instructions (Mackridge 1985:81; Bakakou-Orfanou 1989:94; Sifianou 1992a:103-4; Holton et al. 1997:198-9). When it expresses the speaker’s emotional participation in the meaning of the verb, it can be ‘inclusive’ (Tzartanos’s (1946:54) “first person plural of community”), expressing friendliness toward the addressee whom it includes in the action alongside the speaker, an option open to speakers whose standing is higher than, or equal to, that of their addressees; or ‘exclusive’, including in the action a third person toward whom friendliness is now expressed (Bakakou-Orfanou 1989:88-9). Appealed to in criticisms and control acts by speakers of higher or equal standing, the 1pl. may function as a minimiser. It can then be inclusive, replacing the 2sg., or exclusive, replacing the 1sg. Or it may function as a maximiser. It is then always exclusive, replacing the 1sg. (Bakakou-Orfanou 1989:115ff.). Finally, the secondary social plural (1st person reference) is always exclusive. This functions either to enhance ego’s standing based on the association of plurality with power and is used by speakers of high standing<sup>28</sup> or to lower ego’s standing, when the speaker is of lower standing than the addressee (Bakakou-Orfanou 1989:176ff); Sifianou 1992a:105).

The 3sg. may also be used to achieve a polite effect (Makri-Tsilipakou 1983:229; Mackridge 1985:81; Petraris 1990:134-5; Sifianou 1992a:62).

(26) [32.3; Formal discussion; Speaker1: male, 31-50, middle-class; Speaker2: female, 31-50, middle-class; Relationship: speaker (S1) to member of the audience (S2)]

S1: kati iTele i maria

S2: ne. kati iTela 'a simbliroso ...

S1: something *want-past.-imperf.-3sg.* the-NOM. maria-NOM.

<sup>28</sup> Sifianou’s (1992a:104) “royal” plural, which she associates with lower groups’ speech also falls under this.

- S2: yes. something want-past-imperf.-1sg. SP add-dep.-1sg. ...  
 S1: ‘Maria *would like* to say something.’  
 S2: ‘Yes, I would like to add something’...

### 2.7.2.5 *Additional markers of politeness*

In practice, the four dependent variables described above often achieve the polite effect in conjunction with further politeness markers occurring in the same utterance. Most common in Modern Greek are address terms (Makri-Tsilipakou 1983:220ff.; Bakakou-Orfanou 1989:169ff.; Petrits 1990:131ff.; Sifianou 1992a:63ff.), diminutives (Triantafyllidis 1963[1921]:146-49; Babiniotis 1969:21-3; Mackridge 1985:158; Daltas 1985:63; Joseph & Philippaki-Warburton 1987:217; Sifianou 1992a:165ff.; Sifianou 1992b), and the lexical items *liyo*, ‘a little’, and *parakalo*, ‘please’ (Sifianou 1992a:169-71, 191ff.; Sifianou 1992b:168ff.).

From a conversation analytic point of view, one possible function of address terms is as “an attention-getting device” or “a summons” (Schegloff 1972:357-9). In the data, address terms are generally used to select the participant next in line to speak, and can thus help identify the intended recipient of an utterance. However, by involving the speaker in the selection of an appropriate expression from the inventory of terms available in a language, they also constitute an important — Levinson (1978) claims universal — marker of politeness. The relevant inventory of terms in Modern Greek ranges from formal address by title+LN (*cirie/ciria*, ‘Mr/Mrs’+LN) or professional/ honorary title (*jatre*, ‘doctor’, *sevazmiotate*, ‘respected’), through title+FN, to informal FN, and kinship terms which may co-occur with expressions demonstrating familiarity or endearment, such as (*v*)*re* (an uninflected semantically void lexical item) and the possessive pronoun *mu*, ‘my’ (cf. the non-literal use in CG of *re kumbare*, ‘hey best man’, to male addressees, *je mu*, ‘my son’, *kori mu*, ‘my daughter’, to younger male and female addressees respectively, and *mana mu*, ‘my mother’, used indiscriminately of sex or age; Terkourafi 1999:114).

Diminutives constitute a well established device for expressing politeness in a number of languages (Jurafsky 1996:557-8). Babiniotis (1969:19) distinguishes three types of morphological/functional diminution in SMG (derivational via suffixation, derivational via compounding, and periphrastic) which may also appear in combination. Diminution is used in conversation to convey a variety of senses, only some of which are relevant to CG. Derivational diminution via suffixation by means of the dialectal suffixes *-u(D)a/-u(D)i(n)*, *-i(n)*, and *-ikuri(n)* predominates in CG. Their conversational occurrences are invested with strong connotations of affection, and are consequently restricted to exchanges with in-group members (Terkourafi 1997:19ff).

The lexical item *liyo*, ‘a little’, is usually treated as a marker of periphrastic diminution (or diminution via syntactic modification; cf. Sifianou 1992a:169-71). Instances of similar periphrastic or analytic diminutives are attested in a number of languages (Jurafsky 1996:569), and can function as politeness markers (B&L:139, 157).

*liyo* can occur in collocations with both nouns and verbs. “Theoretically”, Sifianou (1992b:168) observes, “in collocations with nouns, *liyo* can be ambiguous: it can be a simple quantifier, or a semantically void but pragmatically meaningful lexical item.” In collocations with verbs, on the other hand, “*liyo* has lost its literal force and serves strictly politeness purposes. [...] Thus viewed, it is a kind of informal variant of *parakalo*, please” (ibid.). The present analysis considers occurrences of *liyo* both as an adjective and as an adverb during the performance of a speech act. These are studied separately from occurrences of morphological diminutives in an effort to further explore the hypothesis that such occurrences of periphrastic diminution relate to the influence of SMG on the speech of Cypriot Greeks. This hypothesis is based on the observation that this type of diminution is only marginally used in CG and then mainly in the presence of Mainland Greeks (Terkourafi 1997:24).

Finally, the present analysis considers occurrences of the lexical item *parakalo*, ‘please’. Situational factors determining its use in SMG “seem to be a relative social distance between interactants and a requested task falling, to a certain extent, beyond the normal everyday tasks people perform for each other easily” (Sifianou 1992a:195). Morphologically, *parakalo* is a verb, and can be used performatively as well as to report the occurrence of a requestive act. When *parakalo* constitutes the main-clause verb it is entered under ‘type of main-clause verb’ ((27); 2.7.2.2 above).

(27) [12.20; At work; Speaker: female, 31-50, middle-class; Addressee: male, 31-50, middle-class; Relationship: old customer to salesperson]

ta exo proplirosi prin Djo mines? (.) *parakalo* na mu ta Dosete.

them-ACC. have-ind.-1sg. pre-pay-non-fin. before two months-ACC.? *ask-ind.-1sg.*  
SP me-GEN. them-ACC. give-dep.-2pl.

‘I paid for them two months ago. *I ask* that you give them to me.’

When *parakalo* marks the occurrence of a requestive speech act, it is classified as an additional marker of politeness.

(28) [56.29; Speaker: female, 31-50, middle-class; Addressee: male, 31-50, middle-class; Relationship: family]

mu Dinis lifon to psomi, *parakalo*?

me-GEN. give-ind.-2sg. a-little the-ACC. bread-ACC., *please*?

‘Can you pass the bread, *please*?’

## 2.8 Summary

In this chapter I discussed the methodological considerations which informed the compilation of a corpus of conversational data for the investigation of politeness in CG. Plate 1 provides an example of a recording session, as transcribed and analysed for the independent and dependent variables discussed above. The analysis of these data aims to examine whether combinations of the independent (extra-linguistic) variables relate to combinations of the dependent (linguistic) ones via a principle reducing the values of

the former into a single index which then guides the choice of linguistic expression (4.2 below), or via a more direct correlation, which can be formulated in the form of frames (chapters 6, 7 below). Before proceeding to explore which theoretical framework best accounts for these data, an overview of the structural and usage properties of CG will help set the linguistic ‘scene’ in which informants’ choices occurred, and against which they must consequently be assessed.



Utterance	Speaker	Speaker's sex	Speaker's age	Speaker's class	Address	Addresser's sex	Addresser's age	Addresser's class	Relationship	Setting	Town	Speech Act	(Order of appearance)	Verb	Subjective modality	Number+ person	Additional markers	Uptake
26.01	MZ	f	3	w	ZiMa	f	2	m	family	at home	Lefkosia	request	1	AV	imp	2sg	ena lepto-reason	ne
26.02	MZ	f	3	w	ZiMa	f	2	m	family	at home	Lefkosia	request	2	AV	imp	2sg		offer (AV-subj?+lsg)
26.03	MZ	f	3	w	ZiMa	f	2	m	family	at home	Lefkosia	request	1	indirect st.	indirect	indirect		ne
26.04	SiMa	m	2	m	MT	f	1	m	acquaint	at home	Lefkosia	offer	1	AV	imp	2sg	FN-reason	verbal
26.05	SiMa	m	2	m	ZiMa	f	2	m	family	at home	Lefkosia	request	1	AV	imp	2sg	ne+FN-reason	verbal
26.06	ZiMa	f	2	m	SiMa	m	2	m	family	at home	Lefkosia	request	1	AV	subj?	2sg	ligo	
26.07	ZiMa	f	2	m	SiMa	m	2	m	family	at home	Lefkosia	request	2	AV	imp	2sg	ne+FN-na xaris	
26.08	SiMa	m	2	m	ZiMa	f	2	m	family	at home	Lefkosia	offer	1	AV	subj?	1sg		ne mana mu-parakalo-reason
26.09	SiMa	m	2	m	ZiMa	f	2	m	family	at home	Lefkosia	request	1	AV	imp	2sg		purpose

<p>Session 26                      Utterances: 1-9                      Setting: At home, Spiro Zimas &amp; Stavrou, Lefkosia                      Date: 2/12/98                      Participants: Zina (2,m)                      Miera Zimas (3,w)                      Stavros (m,2,m)</p> <p>(1) MZ: ( ) na su po kati ela ena lepto grin na fiume                      ( ) eksixaxa                      ZiMa: ne                      (2) MZ: el' 'a su po                      ZiMa: a na 'rfo konda?                      (3) MZ: zina to moron pai po tsi                      ZiMa: na                      (4) St.Ma: en'a pasosis marina, katse tšase                      M.L.: i Ta paro maksilari, i Ta katso edo                      (5) St.Ma: oi sto stona e' leromeno re zina p'jas' tu to                      [en' oio xonata [ilpon? De ( )                      eval' amen to mes tus am'ua pu kame kakhon o scil'os                      ((they have just noticed the smell, talk is about supplies))                      (6) ZiMa: stavro na pais pano na feris l'io kanja ( )                      ((other turns))                      (7) ZiMa: [(fero) mu (ena wethis) re stavro na xaris ( )                      na fto pano]                      SiMa: [ilpon ( ) endaka' I'... pafites?]                      ((come turns))                      (8) St.Ma: na fero pa'a tše wethis?                      ZiMa: ne mana mu se parakalo 'en mboro na fko pano                      ((about opening jar))                      (9) St.Ma: val' tin pa' s' ena ksilo na me'' ( )                      ((no audible uptake))</p>
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Example of a transcript and corresponding spreadsheet excerpt

“Sometimes —  
I can’t explain it — memory  
grows harsher in this light, dough  
dried by the sun ...”  
(Seferis, *In the Kerynia district*)

## Chapter 3

### Cypriot Greek: a survey of its structure and use

#### 3.1 Introduction

For the purposes of this dissertation, Cypriot Greek is broadly defined as the variety of Greek spoken today in the major urban centres of the Republic of Cyprus — Lefkosia, Lemesos, Larnaka, and Pafos (Cyprus Tourism Organisation 1997:7; map 1). While no attempt will be made at present to tackle the theoretical questions posed by the characterisation of linguistic varieties as (standard) languages as opposed to dialects, arguments commonly appealed to, such as mutual intelligibility, codification, the variety used in education and by the media, speakers’ attitudes to different linguistic varieties, as well as structural differences between varieties, constitute some of the criteria with reference to which CG will be described in what follows. This exercise aims to provide an overview of the linguistic situation in Cyprus today, so that speakers’ choices regarding the expression of politeness in the recorded data may be incorporated into, and assessed against, the wider spectrum of linguistic choices open to them at any one time.

#### 3.2 A glance at the history of the Cypriot dialect

As with the other dialects of Greek, the beginnings of the Cypriot dialect lie in the period of the hellenistic *koiné* (Beaudouin 1884:19; Hadjiioannou 1990[1961]:243; Christodoulou 1972:114). However, partial insulation “from the influence of the capital in the middle Byzantine period when, from the middle of the seventh century till the campaigns of Nikephóros Phokas in 965, [Cyprus] was under Arab or joint Arab-Byzantine rule” (Horrocks 1997:284), led to the early weakening of the Byzantine tradition. Byzantine

administration on the island was eventually disrupted by the Frankish<sup>1</sup> conquest of 1191, following which Cypriot emerged as “the first modern dialect to appear in its distinctive modern guise” (ibid.). After the Lusignans came the Venetians, then the Turks, and finally the British, leading up to the formation of the independent state in 1960.

Written sources date back to the thirteenth century with the Cypriot translation of the law of the Lusignan kingdom, the *Assises of the kingdom of Jerusalem and of Cyprus*. A more fluent literary language survives in the fifteenth century *Chronicle* of Leontios Machairas, and its sequel, the *Chronicle* of Georgios Boustronios, and in the *Love Poems* of the sixteenth century, placing the active formation of Mediaeval Cypriot, the predecessor of the modern dialect, within the intervening centuries (Beaudouin 1884:13; Horrocks 1997:286, 306-7; *pace* Menardos 1969a[1909]:210).<sup>2</sup> Throughout the three centuries of Ottoman rule, literary production in the dialect thrived in the mouths of the ‘*poihta%rhde*’, professional verse-makers for weddings and feasts. The advent of the twentieth century saw the appearance of dialectal poetry in print.<sup>3</sup> Significantly, during this period, the language spoken on the island remained largely unaffected by the linguistic debate unfolding on the Mainland (Horrocks 1997:344ff.) and by the purist tendencies which rid Modern Greek of many words of foreign provenance.<sup>4</sup> Today, dialectal prose appears occasionally in the press, especially when recounting funny or unusual incidents often involving direct speech, while the theatrical genre termed ‘Cypriot sketch’ has been a stable feature of radio and television productions over the last few decades. A recent development concerns the use of the dialect in the media for advertisements appealing to traditional aspects of Cypriot life (Pavlou 1996).

### 3.3 An overview of the main structural features of the modern dialect

Cypriot, along with the dialects of Chios and the Dodecanese, form the group of South-Eastern Greek dialects (Newton 1972a:15ff.).<sup>5</sup> Their morpho-phonological characteristics are shown in table 1. Further defining features of the Cypriot dialect are listed in table 2.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Following the three-century-long rule of the Lusignan dynasty, Cypriot is the only dialect of Greek to have received the influence of French (Contossopoulos 1969:93fn.3)

<sup>2</sup> For texts see: Sathas (1873, 1877), Dawkins (1932), Siapkaras-Pitsillides (1952).

<sup>3</sup> See Lipertis 1923, 1930, 1934; Liasidis 1933; Michaelidis 1960. Yangoullis (1986) provides a brief overview of dialectal poetry to the present day.

<sup>4</sup> Beaudouin (1884:16) relates this to infrequent contact with the Mainland due to distance, the isolation of the people who in most cases did not travel outside the island, and the scarcity of Greek newspapers on the island around that time.

<sup>5</sup> Christodoulou (1969:119-23) discusses alternative classifications based on (a) historical, (b) geographical, or (c) phonological criteria.

<sup>6</sup> The variety described in table 2 is that of the Mesaoria plain (3.4.2 below). The reader is referred to the works cited for a more comprehensive account of the Cypriot dialect.

<i>SEG phenomena</i>	<i>Additional CG phenomena</i>	<i>Examples</i>
1 'softening' of one or more of the velar consonants /k/ /x/ /ɣ/ before a front vowel or glide to [tʃ] [ʃ] [ʒ] respectively		SMG <i>ce</i> , 'and' > CG <i>tʃe</i>
2 /ɣ/ epenthesis in verbs in -εύγω		SMG <i>pistevo</i> 'believe-ind.-1sg.' > SEG <i>pistevyo</i>
3 retention of long consonants	These involve tenser articulation, responsible for Cypriot aspirated voiceless stops [p <sup>h</sup> ], [t <sup>h</sup> ], [k <sup>h</sup> ] (Newton 1972a:89-93; Arvaniti 1999:173-4). On their phonological status in CG see Newton 1972b:32-5; Charalambopoulos 1982.	SMG <i>lakos</i> , 'well'-NOM. > CG <i>lak<sup>h</sup>os</i>
4 deletion of the voiced fricatives (/v/, /ð/, /ɣ/) in intervocalic position		SMG <i>ðen, oçi</i> (negative particles) > CG <i>en, oi</i>
5 retention of final /n/	Re-interpretation of final -n as a marker of neuter gender; addition of final -n to verb forms mainly in the 3sg.; re-distribution of word boundaries following rapid co-articulation of article + common noun. (Menardos 1969b[1894]:17-8; Hadjiioannou 1990:249-50).	SMG <i>ɣala</i> , 'milk-NOM.' > CG <i>ɣalan</i> SMG <i>iðe</i> , 'see-perf.-past.-3sg.' > CG <i>iðen</i> SMG <i>ton oron</i> , 'the-ACC. whey-ACC.' > CG <i>o noros</i> , 'the-NOM. whey-NOM.'
6 manner dissimilation of obstruent+obstruent into fricative+stop.	Following manner dissimilation, devoicing of stops (unless they are placed between a nasal and a vowel or sonant) occurs in some SE dialects, including Cypriot (Newton 1972a:110).	SEG <i>pistevyo</i> , 'believe-ind.-1sg.' > CG <i>pistefko</i>
7 Retention of the ancient 3rd person plural verb endings -usi(n), -asi(n) (Contossopoulos 1969:93)		SMG <i>ɣrafun</i> , 'write-ind.-3pl.' > CG <i>ɣrafusin</i>

Table 1: Morpho-phonological characteristics of CG as a SEG dialect

<i>CG phenomena</i>	<i>Remarks</i>	<i>Examples</i>
Phonology and suprasegmentals		
1 /j/ following /v/, /ð/, /θ/, /p/, or /f/ yields [ç] (Menardos 1969b[1894]:14-5; Newton 1972b:30, 53; Arvaniti 1999:176)		SMG <i>ðjavazo</i> , 'read-ind.-1sg.' > CG <i>θcavazo</i>

Table 2 (continued)			
2	devoicing of /b/, /d/, /g/ occurs word-initially and intervocalically (Menardos 1969b:9-11; Newton 1972b:28; Panayotou 1996a:124)	In other SEG dialects devoicing occurs only word-initially (Newton 1972a:122).	SMG <i>ade</i> , exhortative particle > CG <i>ate</i>
3	/i/ prothesis affecting certain verbs when immediately preceded in the same intonation group by the pronouns <i>ton</i> , <i>tin</i> , <i>tis</i> , <i>tes</i> , the negative particles <i>en</i> , <i>men</i> , or the conjunction <i>an</i> , 'if' (Menardos 1969b: 19-20; Newton 1972b:83) <sup>7</sup>	Relates to /n/ retention (5 in table 1 above). /e/ prothesis is reported for other SEG dialects (Menardos 1969c [1925]:142ff.).	SMG <i>mi stathis</i> , 'not stand-imp.-perf.-2sg.' > CG <i>men istathis</i>
4	possibility of dynamic stress on the fourth syllable from the end of an intonation group (Menardos 1969b:22-3; Newton 1972b:43-4; Arvaniti 1999:177)		SMG <i>to po' dilato mu</i> , 'the-NOM. bicycle-NOM. my' > CG <i>to po' dilato mu</i>
5	non-standard accentuation of individual items		SMG <i>'tora</i> , 'now' > CG <i>to'ra</i>
Morphology			
6	obsolescence of the genitive plural of male adjectives and nouns, which is now rendered by the accusative (Beaudouin 1884:66, 98; Menardos 1969d [1896]:32-4, 1969e[1912]:53)		SMG <i>to fai ton scilon</i> , 'the-NOM. food-NOM. the-GEN. dogs-GEN.' > CG <i>to fain tus filus</i> , 'the-NOM. food-NOM. the-ACC. dogs-ACC.'
7	accusative plural of the female article and of the unstressed third person plural of the female pronoun <i>tes</i> (Newton 1972b:62-4; Panayotou 1996a:124)		SMG <i>tis polis</i> , 'the-ACC. cities-ACC.' > CG <i>tes polis</i>
8	dialectal diminutive suffixes <i>-u(ð)in</i> , <i>-u(ð)a</i> , <i>-in</i> (Menardos 1969b:5-6, 1969e:47, 1969f[1929]:126)		SMG <i>çeraci</i> > CG <i>feruin</i> 'hand-dim.-NOM.'
9	interrogative pronoun <i>inda</i> (Menardos 1969e:65; Hadjiioannou 1990:251)		SMG <i>ti</i> > CG <i>inda</i> , 'what'
10	verbs in <i>-isko</i> (Beadouin 1884:94-5; Menardos 1969e:103)	Imperfective aspect of the imperative mood in <i>-isce</i> and <i>-n:e</i> (Kolitsis 1986:221; Menardos 1969b: 22fn.1, 1969e:87)	SMG <i>meno</i> > CG <i>mi' nisko</i> 'stay-ind.-1sg.' SMG <i>mene</i> > CG <i>'minisce</i> 'stay-imp.-imperf.-2sg.' SMG <i>vuta</i> > CG <i>'vut<sup>h</sup>in:e</i> 'dive/soak-imp.-imperf.-2sg.' SMG <i>vutikse</i> > CG <i>vut<sup>h</sup>a</i> 'dive/soak-imp.-perf.-2sg.'

<sup>7</sup> Anaksagrou (1987:145) restricts occurrences of this phenomenon to instances of negation with *ðen*.

Table 2 (continued)		
11	dialectal 3rd person singular present indicative of the verb 'to be' (Menardos 1969e:67-8)	SMG <i>ine</i> > CG <i>eni</i> 'be-ind.-3sg.'
12	dialectal 2sg. perfective imperative of the verbs 'to look', 'to tell' (Menardos 1969e:75; Newton 1972b:80-1)	SMG <i>des</i> > CG <i>de</i> 'look-imp.-perf.-2sg.' SMG <i>pes</i> > CG <i>pe</i> 'tell-imp.-perf.-2sg.'
13	sigmatic aorist in free fluctuation with one in /k/ of verbs <i>a'fin:o</i> , 'leave alone', and <i>di'o</i> , 'give' (Newton 1972b:86; Panayotou 1996a:125)	SMG <i>afisa</i> , 'leave-perf.-past-1sg.' > CG <i>efika/efisa</i> , SMG <i>eðosa</i> , 'give-perf.-past-1sg.' > CG <i>eðoka/eðosa</i> SMG <i>n'afiso</i> , 'SP leave-dep.-1sg.' > CG <i>na'fiko / na'fiso</i> , SMG <i>na ðoso</i> , 'SP give-dep.-1sg.' > CG <i>na ðoko / na ðoso</i>
14	retention of the syllabic augment as a marker of the past tense (Menardos 1969e:70; Newton 1972b:73; Kolitsis 1986:217)	SMG <i>katalava</i> , 'understand-perf.-past-1sg.' > CG <i>ekatalava</i>
15	dialectal future particle <i>en:a</i> , irrealis particles <i>iðen:a/ eðen:a</i> (Menardos 1969e:75-6; Newton 1972b:67; Aerts 1983)	SMG <i>ða</i> , 'will' > CG <i>en:a</i> SMG <i>ðe ða/ na min</i> , 'will not' > CG <i>endʒ'en:a/en:a men</i> SMG <i>ða</i> , 'would' > CG <i>iðen:a/ eðen:a</i>
16	dialectal negative particles <i>men</i> , <i>endʒe</i> (Menardos 1969g[1931]:150; Hadjiioannou 1990:249)	SMG <i>ðe ðelo</i> , 'not want-ind.-1sg.' > CG <i>endʒe ðelo</i>
17	dialectal adverbs of quantity and of place (Beaudouin 1884:96; Menardos 1969e:60; Hadjiioannou 1990:251; Panayotou 1996a:124-5)	SMG <i>poli</i> , 'very' > CG <i>pol:a</i> , SMG <i>te'lios</i> , 'completely' > CG <i>'teλ:a</i> , SMG <i>eðo</i> , 'here' > CG <i>ðame</i> SMG <i>eci</i> , 'there' > CG <i>tʃame</i>
18	widespread apocope of syllables and ensuing sandhi phenomena (Newton 1972b:121-3; Hadjiioannou 1990:251)	The deictic pronoun in CG is <i>tutos,i,on</i> rather than SMG <i>aftos,i,o</i> . Menardos comments on using <i>aftos</i> as an imitation of standard speech ("ελληνικούρα"; 1969e:63). SMG <i>pano sto</i> , 'on the' > CG <i>pa sto</i> SMG <i>apo kato apo to</i> , 'underneath' > CG <i>pu ka sto</i> , SMG <i>afton ton</i> , 'this' > CG <i>tun don</i> , SMG <i>ðen ine/ðen ine?</i> 'it isn't / isn't it?' > CG <i>en:e<sup>n</sup>/ en:e<sup>n</sup>?</i>

Table 2 (continued)		
Syntax		
19	clitic pronoun postposition (Menardos 1969e:71-2; Terzi 1999a,1999b; Petinou & Terzi in press)	Terzi (1999a,b) relates this to the licensing requirements of CG clitics. SMG <i>su to ipa</i> , 'you-GEN-2sg. it-ACC. tell-perf.-past-1sg.' > CG <i>ipa su to</i>
20	extensive (inherited and novel) use of genitive complements (Menardos 1969d:34ff.)	SMG <i>rota ton iosif</i> , 'ask-imp.-perf.-2sg. the-ACC. Joseph' > CG <i>arota tu iosif</i> 'ask-imp.-perf.-2sg. the-GEN. Joseph'
Semantics		
21	divergences in the meaning of individual items	SMG <i>pjano</i> = 'touch' vs. CG <i>pcan:o</i> = 'buy, take, pass', SMG <i>opoz dipote</i> = 'certainly' vs. CG <i>'opozdipote</i> = 'anyway'
22	extensive use of the aorist (simple past tense) (Menardos 1969e:76-7; Karyolemou 1995)	In addition to denoting definite past time (Quirk et al. 1972:86), this has subsumed the senses expressed in SMG by the perfect (completely) and by the pluperfect (to a large extent) SMG <i>eçis fai?</i> 'have-ind.-2sg. eat-non-fin.?' vs. CG <i>efaes?</i> 'eat-perf.-past-2sg.?'
Lexicon		
23	Lexemes deriving from: a) ancient Cypriot, which forms a single dialect group with Arcadian, b) poetic words, rare in Attic prose, c) archaic words, scarce in other modern dialects, d) rare words of the hellenistic <i>koiné</i> , e) Byzantine words, scarce in other modern dialects, f) loanwords from Provençal, Italian, Arabic and Turkish g) recent compounds which are typically Cypriot (Hadjiioannou 1990:246-9; Panayotou 1996a:125; Horrocks 1997:7)	a) <i>ejoni, esuni</i> , 'me', 'you' (SMG <i>eyo, esi</i> ) b) <i>vuro</i> , 'I run' (SMG <i>trexo</i> ) c) <i>ka'ni</i> , 'it's enough' (SMG <i>'ftani</i> ) d) <i>ilandron</i> , 'old tree' (no SMG equivalent) e) <i>kapira</i> , 'toast' (SMG <i>friyania</i> ) f) <i>xal:umin</i> , Cypriot cheese (no SMG equivalent) g) <i>sovarom'i lo</i> , 'I speak seriously' (SMG <i>milo sovara</i> )
24	Lexical relationship of Cypriot to standard Greek: the translation of a glottochronological list in Athenian	"[I]n spite of such striking differences in superficial forms, it is possible SMG <i>m'i lo</i> 'talk', <i>'leo</i> 'say' vs. CG <i>sindi' xan:o, la' lo</i>

and Cypriot Greek showed non-cognate correspondences in 16% of cases, the exact proportion varying according to semantic field (e.g., nil for numerals, high for animal terms) (Newton 1972b:110-1)	that the partitioning of semantic space varies but little from village Cypriot to Athenian" (ibid.).	
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**Table 2: Defining features of the Cypriot dialect**

### 3.4 The composition of contemporary urban Cypriot Greek speech

The picture which emerges from the data is not that of a single homogeneous (geographically and/or socially defined) variety. Rather, one may identify in contemporary urban CG speech elements of (i) localised Cypriot varieties, (ii) an urban Cypriot Greek *koiné*, (iii) Standard Modern Greek, and (iv) English. Different speakers are familiar with, and have recourse to, these varieties to different extents, in line with Le Page and Tabouret-Keller's (1985:182) following remark:

"We can only behave according to the behavioural patterns of groups we find it desirable to identify with to the extent that:

- i) we can identify the groups
- ii) we have both adequate access to the groups and ability to analyse their behavioural patterns
- iii) the motivation to join the groups is sufficiently powerful, and is either reinforced or reversed by feedback from the groups
- iv) we have the ability to modify our behaviour."

Cypriot Greeks can, and do indeed, identify different 'groups' as is evidenced by the existence of distinct names for the concomitant linguistic varieties. Localised "patois"<sup>8</sup> speech is referred to as *xorkatika*, a variant informants clearly felt to be different from what they speak, which may be referred to as *cipriaka* ((1) below) to distinguish it from *kalamaristika*<sup>9</sup> (=SMG) and *eNglezika* (=English) (Karyolemou 1998:10).

#### 3.4.1 Localised patois speech

I use this term to refer to the varieties of the Cypriot dialect spoken in different parts of the island. As Newton (1972b:19) notes, "'Village Greek' itself is not in fact a unitary dialect. It is a continuum of closely related types of speech linked by a series of independent

<sup>8</sup> This term denotes regional varieties which are not written (Haugen 1972[1966]:99).

<sup>9</sup> From the verb *kalama'rizo*, 'to speak like a Mainland Greek'. This derives from *kalama'ras* (fem. *kalama'ru*), 'Mainland Greek' (on the process of naming linguistic systems after the groups who use them, see Le Page & Tabouret-Keller 1985:235). Following a period of derogatory use, today *kalama'ras* is used more or less neutrally, although seldom in the presence of newly arrived Mainland Greeks. For its etymology, see Babiniotis (1998) s.v. *kalamara*"%/kalama%ri.



phonological, morphological and lexical isoglosses.”<sup>10</sup> The *Big Cypriot Encyclopaedia* (1986:126-7; Contossopoulos 1969:97ff.) lists the characteristics of 18 local oral varieties (map 2). However, “local linguistic idiosyncracies” are described as being “in retreat” as early as the end of the 1960s (Contossopoulos 1969:93). The relocation of refugees from northern to southern areas following the Turkish invasion of 1974 advanced this trend further, with varieties previously spoken in northern areas afflicted the most (Anaxagorou 1987:129; Panayotou 1996a:122). Today, regional variation can be mainly observed at the phonological and suprasegmental levels of analysis, and native speakers often comment on how inhabitants of other areas *sirnun ti foni*, ‘drawl their voices’,<sup>11</sup> or pronounce some words differently.<sup>12</sup> Localised patois speech will not occupy us further, seeing as (i) it is first and foremost a characteristic of rural speech, while the present study focuses on urban speech, and (ii) local dialectal features have not been attested in informants’ speech, possibly as a result of the recording situation.

#### 3.4.2 The *koiné*

The existence of a Cypriot *koiné* is reported by many authors. Some associate this with the operation of social factors such as urbanisation, the impact of technological progress, education, and the media, (Contossopoulos 1969:92-3; Kolitsis 1986:215), to which others add the relocation of refugees to the south after 1974, and the establishment of the first University on the island in 1989<sup>13</sup> (Anaxagorou 1987:129; Panayotou 1996a:122). For these authors, the emergence of the Cypriot *koiné* constitutes a relatively recent phenomenon.

However, the language analysed by Newton (1972b)<sup>14</sup> is already said to form the basis of a “local *koiné*, heard commonly, especially on the lips of younger speakers, in villages whose indigenous dialect may differ in various respects from it” (1972b:21; emphasis added). Newton (ibid.) considers the language used by Cypriot communities in Britain and South Africa — migration to the latter having largely occurred in the first decades of the twentieth century (Saint John-Jones 1983:99-100) — to have been based on this *koiné*.<sup>15</sup> Geographically, this variety is associated with the inhabitants of the Mesaoria plain

<sup>10</sup> Contossopoulos (1969:90) cites the size of the island (9251 km<sup>2</sup>), the high proportion of mountainous areas, and historical events (colonisations, various linguistic and ethnic substrata since ancient times, foreign conquests) as formative factors of these local varieties.

<sup>11</sup> Said by inhabitants of Pafos of those of Lefkosia, and by the latter of those of Lemesos.

<sup>12</sup> Over a century ago, Menardos (1969b[1894]:26) reports a much similar situation.

<sup>13</sup> The first students were admitted in 1992.

<sup>14</sup> His study is based on material collected almost a decade earlier, in 1963 (Newton 1972b:8).

<sup>15</sup> Attesting to the existence of a *koiné* before the recent social changes with which its emergence is often associated, Christodoulou (1973:310) laments the receding of the “Lefkosia *koiné*” in favour of local varieties in the schoolyards of the capital over the preceding twenty five years.

(Newton 1972b:19; map 2). Hadjiioannou (1990[1961]:246) also notes the prevalence of the variety of Mesaoria:

“by modern Cypriot dialect, we mean the dialect spoken by the inhabitants of the towns and of the villages in the plain area of Cyprus as the inhabitants of mountainous areas ... have preserved a more archaic linguistic variety closer to the mediaeval dialect”.

According to these remarks, the Cypriot *koiné* represents an instance of “elevation of a dialect to a position of *primus inter pares*” (Jones 1998:289), as opposed to cases of koinéisation (Trudgill 1986:107; Kerswill & Williams 2000:66) when “the proliferated variety is [...] a non-geographically locatable amalgam in which the regional dialects have been reduced to a common core” (Jones 1998:290).<sup>16</sup> The selection of the variety of Mesaoria accords with the prediction that such selection “is frequently influenced by factors such as political centralisation, with the language of the power-base often gaining in importance” (Jones 1998:261). Spoken in Lefkosia, which has been the administrative centre of the island at least since the time of the Lusignans (1191-1489),<sup>17</sup> this regional variety was already enjoying increased prestige at the end of the nineteenth century, when Menardos (1969b[1894]:13) commented, referring to some phonetic features of the Pafos dialect:<sup>18</sup> “τα πλείστα τούτων [...] είν’ ιδιωματικά, πολλάκις διασυρόμενα υπ’άλλων Κυπρίων ” (‘most of these [...] are idiomatic, frequently ridiculed by other Cypriots’). If certain regional features provoked laughter, this was not due to their inherent ridiculousness, but rather because of their departure from some accredited variety (Chambers 1995:232).

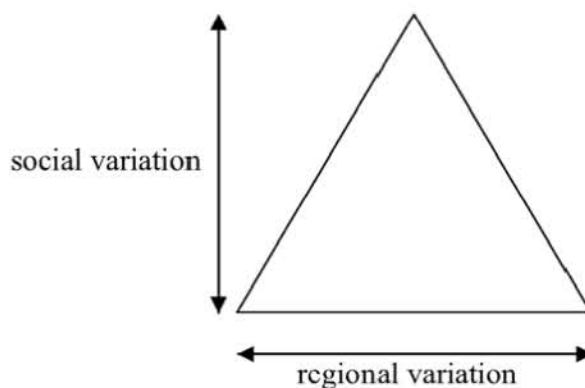
Trudgill (1983a:186ff.) attributes the variability in degree of linguistic distance between regional varieties and the accredited one, with some varieties being closer to it than others, to the relationship between social and regional varieties of a language, which he represents by means of the ‘pyramid model’ (fig.1). According to this, regional differentiation is greatest among lower-working-class speakers, and smallest at the top of the pyramid, i.e. amongst speakers from the upper-middle-class. To the extent that social stratification characterises human societies in general, it seems reasonable to assume that

<sup>16</sup> Pace Karyolemou (1998:10). The distinction may be considered a matter of degree, and the two processes need not be mutually exclusive, as evidenced by the loss in the *koiné* of one of the distinctive phonological features of the dialect of Mesaoria, /t/ in items such as *pettera*, (Menardos 1969e:99fn.3; Newton 1972b:20, 98-9), which was replaced by the /θθ/ of western and southern areas. This development may be explained with reference to Principle 2 of Kerswill & Williams (2000:85-9), which states that “[m]arked regional forms are disfavoured”: *pettera* is markedly regional compared to SMG *peθera*; /peθθera/ is also the CG underlying phonological form (Newton 1983:62).

<sup>17</sup> “Instead of 14 or 15 bishoprics, as during the Byzantine period, four Latin bishoprics were now founded, and the Latin archbishop was based in Lefkosia” (Spyridakis 1964:83). The Lefkosia district has dominated the urban system of the island throughout the years, already accounting for approximately 30% of the total Cypriot population at the first census of 1881 (Constantinou 1994:222).

<sup>18</sup> This belongs to Hadjiioannou’s (1990:246) group of “archaic” varieties.

there will at all times exist a linguistic variety enjoying more prestige than others. Based on these remarks, one may want to challenge the assumed recent emergence of the Cypriot *koiné*, and in particular the pivotal role of contact with SMG (claimed by Contossopoulos and Kolitsis, see above) in this process. On the other hand, the rapid pace of social change in Cyprus in the years following the Second World War is undeniable (Saint John-Jones 1983:39). Internal migration and the concentration of people in the towns, at least during the day, with the concomitant retreat of rural ways of life (Constantinou 1994:227), the transformation of Cyprus into a service-oriented economy (Christodoulou 1994:614), and financial prosperity,<sup>19</sup> along with the factors suggested at the beginning of this section, are likely to have accelerated the process of adoption of a Cypriot *koiné*, especially by the continuously increasing numbers of speakers populating the ranks of the middle class (cf. fig.1).



**Figure 1: Dialect variation in the UK (after Trudgill 1983a:188)**

This *koiné* is the dominant variety spoken at home and at work in towns today. It is used by Cypriots of all socio-economic backgrounds in their daily transactions with each other. Its use by the media is generally restricted, though not negligible: this is the language of the 'Cypriot sketch' and of a limited range of advertisements (3.2 above), as well as of a small number of local TV productions depicting contemporary urban life. It is occasionally heard on the radio from callers to popular talk shows, and it features in short pieces of non-serious prose in the daily press. However, this variety has not been codified.<sup>20</sup> Authors with a particular interest in the spoken language, as well as laymen who occasionally write in it for informal purposes<sup>21</sup> have recourse to a variety of orthographic conventions, none of which adequately render the phonological features of Cypriot speech (Contossopoulos 1972:94-5; Panayotou 1996b). The intelligibility of this variety to speakers of SMG is considerably higher than that of localised patois speech. Nevertheless, a number of features

<sup>19</sup> In 1988 Cyprus passed the threshold of *per capita* gross national income reckoned as the boundary between middle-income and high-income economies (Christodoulou 1992:xvii).

<sup>20</sup> Codification constituting a defining feature of a standard language (Jones 1998:262), the term 'standard' is currently reserved for SMG (3.4.3 below).

<sup>21</sup> One middle-class middle-aged male informant from Larnaka stated that he uses this variety in letters to his daughter.

at all levels of analysis affecting high frequency words and constructions, not least of which a range of sounds exotic to the Mainland Greek ear,<sup>22</sup> are areally restricted to Cyprus. As a result, CG speech retains a distinctive flavour, which renders intelligibility of allegro enunciated speech by speakers of SMG partly a matter of personal motivation and familiarisation with the speech of individual speakers (Hudson 1996[1980]:35-6).<sup>23</sup> The following excerpt reveals Cypriots' linguistic self-awareness, as expressed by two middle-class informants, S1 (male, aged 18-30) and S2 (female, aged 31-50).

(1) [58; At work, Pafos]

S1: opos tʃ' eʝo stin arçin eksecinisa na su milo pjo- pjo kaθara elinika to'ra itan kaθara usiastika en' kalamaristika ðioti, ola kaθara ine nomizo

S2: 'en: en' o- ((laughs)) ul:a kaθara,

MT: 'en: en' ul:a kaθara e?

S1: e' ðici mu apopsi. iparxun para pol:es Ieksis tes opies kovume, (.) 'en tes

MT: 'en tes lalumen (.) ul:es ((laughs))

S2: imasten praktici a'θropi

((several turns))

S1: ena ðiastima eðocimasa to, jati e'lea mu tʃ' emena, tʃ'ekama to tʃ' ekatala'venan pliros. tʃ' ekamna to: 'milun ka-, opos milumen kanonika as pumen cipriaka ... tʃ'arescen tus. usiastika en (.) e' laθos mas pu milumen pu al:as:umen ti: tin omilia mas. ðilaði arescen tus pu se akuan na milas tin ta cipriaka as pume

S2: ne afu katalavenun etsi tʃ' aλ:os. jati i roðites exun poli: ðiaforan [pu tus cipreus?

S1: [oçi

S2: ala 'e mbori na tus milisis teλa kaθara cipriaka mes tin el:aða. kseris kapu θa tus siçisis ((laughs))

S1: ama milas arça katalavenun ta endaksi

S2: ma, tʃe, ena lepto tʃe na prospiiθumen pale opu mbume, ap' tin cipro iste- oli to iðion etsi.

S1: 'Same as me at the beginning I started talking to you more? more clearly in Greek now whether it was clearly in essence it's 'kalamaristika' because, they're all clear I think.'

S2: 'There're not a- ((laughs)) all clear.'

MT: 'They're not all clear eh?'

S1: 'That's my opinion. There are many words that we cut (.) we don't'

MT: 'We don't say them (.) whole.' ((laughs))

S1: 'We are practical people.'

((several turns))

S1: 'I tried it for a while, because they said that to me too, and I did it and they understood fully. And I did it I spoke nor-, as we speak normally in Cypriot so to speak ... and they liked it. In fact it's (.) it's wrong that we speak that we change our, our speech. That is, they liked listening to you speak the, Cypriot say'

<sup>22</sup> These are the sounds resulting from 'softening', as well as the geminates (including aspirates) of Cypriot speech (table 1, 1 and 3), previously encountered also in other SE dialects. "[U]niversal education, access to the mass media, the flight of the young to the cities, and the advent of easy mobility" (Horrocks 1997:301) have resulted in the retreat of regional varieties in the mainland, and the emergence of Cypriot as "the only living Modern Greek dialect" (Contossopoulos 1969:92). This development is not unrelated to the particular historical events of the last 50 years and their impact on the ideological orientation of Cypriot Greeks (Stamatakis 1991, Persianis 1994).

<sup>23</sup> Newton (1983:56) notes that "careful enunciation results in phonetic realisations which may well occur normally in other typically more prestigious dialectal levels".

- S2: 'Yes since they understand anyway. Why, are Rhodians much different [from Cypriots?]  
 S1: [No'  
 S2: 'But you can't speak to them in proper Cypriot in Greece. You know that you will confuse them.' ((laughs))  
 S1: 'When you speak slowly they understand alright.'  
 S2: 'But, wait a moment, even if we pretend, wherever we enter, are you from Cyprus? It's always the same.'

The excerpts below, from the recorded data, exemplify the main features of the *koiné*.<sup>24</sup>

- (2) [35; At work, Lefkosia]  
 end<sub>3</sub>' ipa tus tetjon prama  
 [end<sub>3</sub>e: 1.1 (softening), 2.16 (negative particle); ipa tus: 2.19 (clitic postposition); tetjon: 1.5 (final /n/retention)]  
 'I didn't tell them such a thing.'
- (3) [53; At work, Pafos]  
 ja na poja'tisumente kamjan: eksindarka metra: tetrayonika. posin posotita?  
 [poja'tisumente: 2.4 (dynamic stress on the fourth syllable); eksindarka: 1.6 (manner dissimilation); posin: 1.5 (final /n/ retention)]  
 'To paint about sixty square metres. How much?'
- (4) [39; At home, Lemesos]  
 1: inda psarin eferes?  
 2:  $\gamma\text{op}^{\text{h}}\text{an}$ .  
 3: e na pa na tin tianisis.  
 [inda: 2.9 (interrogative particle); psarin,  $\gamma\text{op}^{\text{h}}\text{an}$ : 1.5 (final /n/ retention);  $\gamma\text{op}^{\text{h}}\text{an}$ : 1.3 (long consonants); tianisis: 1.4 (voiced fricative deletion)]  
 1: 'What fish have you brought?'  
 2: 'Whitebait.'  
 3: 'Well, go and prepare it.'
- (5) [51; At work, Pafos]  
 ena zefkarin pandofles. ektos pu kotjines  
 [zefkarin: 1.6 (manner dissimilation), 1.5 (final /n/ retention), pu: 2.17 (apocope); kotjines: 1.1 (softening)]  
 'A pair of slippers. Except for red.'
- (6) [18; Formal discussion, Lefkosia]  
 jati i peris:oteri andres ðen klesi ...  
 [peris:oteri: 1.3 (long consonants), klesi: 1.7 (3pl. in *-usi*)]  
 'Why most men don't cry' ...
- (7) [44; At work, Lemesos]  
 1: ... ta: tuta tus etsi zavonusi ta  $\zeta\text{er}\theta\text{ca}$  tus ta  $\rho\theta\text{ca}$  tus indalos en' pu kamnun, inda 'n' pu ta lalusi? ...  
 2: ( ) tjinon pu to tsilas pu kato c' ine stravoni ta?

<sup>24</sup> These are noted in square brackets; "1.1" means table 1, phenomenon 1 (3.3 above).

[tuta: 2.18/note (deictic pronoun *tutos*); zavonusi: 1.7 (3pl. in *-usi*), 2.23 (dialectal word); çeruθca: 2.8 (diminutives in *-uði*); çeruθca, poθca: 2.1 (/ð/+j/→[c]); en': 2.11 (3sg. 'to be'); inda 'n' pu: 2.9 (dialectal interrogative pronoun), 2.18 (apocope+sandhi), lalusi: 1.7 (3pl. in *-usi*), 2.21 (differences in lexical meaning); tsilias: 1.3 (long consonants), 2.23 (dialectal word); stravoni ta: 2.19 (clitic postposition)]

1: ... 'their, these so they twist their little arms their legs how is it that they do, what are they called?' ...

2: '( ) the one that you pull from underneath and it twists them?'

- (8) [37; At work, Lefkosia]  
 efi:s pol:es tʃe: efi:s tes potʃi- var' tes mes to folter su, jati en tes valis  
 [efi:s, tʃe, potʃi: 1.1 (softening), pol:es: 1.3 (long consonants), tes: 2.7 (female pronoun); var' tes mes to: 1.6 (manner dissimilation), 2.18 (apocope+sandhi); folter: 2.1 (/d/ devoicing), en: 1.4 (voiced fricative deletion)]  
 'You have many and, you have them there- put them in your folder, why don't you put them'
- (9) [44; At work, Lemesos]  
 arçisen i meyalı na men izilefci tʃ' i mitʃa ...  
 [men: 2.16 (negative particle); izilefci: 2.3 (/i/ prosthesis), 1.2 (/v/ epenthesis), 2.1 (/v/+j/→[c]); tʃ': 1.1 (softening); mitʃa: 2.23 (dialectal word)]  
 'The older one started not to be jealous and the young one' ...
- (10) [30; At work, Lefkosia]  
 ksirin:e to pu pano?  
 [ksirin:e: 2.10 (verbs in *-isko*); pu: 2.18 (apocope)]  
 'Cut a bit off at the top?'
- (11) [37; At work, Lefkosia]  
 maria po n:a'rt'i koru, ðo m:u t'ala ekama tis ta painding ( ) seliðes en:a tis ta fiko etsi.  
 [po n:a'rt'i: 2.15 (future particle), 2.18 (apocope+sandhi); koru: 2.8 (diminutive in *-u*); ðo m:u, en:a fiko: 2.13 (dialectal aorist); painding: 2.2 (/b/ devoicing); 'ekama tis ta: 2.19 (clitic postposition), 2.4 (dynamic stress on the fourth syllable)]  
 'Maria when the lass comes, give me the others I bound them for her ( ) pages I'll leave them like this'
- (12) [47; At work, Pafos]  
 to'ra ekopsamen teʎa me asxolumaste me θorume me:, sa na tʃ' endʒ' exume maθca  
 [to'ra: 2.5 (non-standard accentuation); ekopsamen: 2.14 (syllabic augment), 2.24 (differences in lexical meaning), 2.22 (extensive use of aorist); teʎa: 2.17 (dialectal adverb), me ... me ... me:: 2.16 (dialectal multiple negation), θorume: 2.23 (dialectal word); endʒe: 1.1 (softening); 2.16 (negative particle) maθca: 2.1 (/θ/+j/→[c])]  
 'Now we've completely stopped we neither worry nor see nor, as if we don't have eyes'
- (13) [54; At work, Pafos]  
 pe mu, e:: eðoka tu iosif mazin tu:: tʃe ferni, opote an ixriasti an ixriastite en:a 'ji mazin tu tʃe kanonizete t' a' ðen efete alko ... tipota 'en esifonisa mazin tu (.) a' θeli tʃ' en:a to sasete en:a θelete tin turpinan ( ) arota tu iosif tʃe::,

[pe: 2.12 (dialectal imperative); eðoka: 2.13 (dialectal aorist); eðoka/arota tu iosif: 2.20 (genitive complements); ixriasti, ixriastite: 2.3 (/i/ prosthesis); mazin: 1.5 (final /n/ retention); sasete: 2.23 (dialectal word); turpinan: 2.2 (/b/ devoicing)]

‘Tell me, er, I gave {them} to Joseph and he’s bringing {them}, so whenever it’s necessary if you need {any} he’ll have with him and you can settle that if you don’t have another one ... I didn’t agree anything with him (.) if he wants to and you’ll fix it you’ll need the turbine ( ) ask Joseph and,’

(14) [22; At work, Larnaka]

1: en' elipsi?

2: e [(name of retailer)] pu ti ferni tʃ'en pol:oercete

[en': 2.11 (3sg. 'to be'), 2.20 (difference in lexical meaning); elipsi: 1.3 (long consonants); pol:oercete: 2.17 (adverb pol:a), 2.23 (dialectal compound word)]

1: 'Is it out of stock?

2: 'Er ((name of retailer)) that brings it and he doesn't come very often.'

(15) [65; At work, Pafos]

o ariθmos tis solines ( ) pun:a valume sto ðromon, na valo oxto?

[tis solines: 2.6 (accusative plural instead of genitive);<sup>25</sup> pun:a: 2.15 (future particle), 2.18 (apocope+sandhi)]

'The number of tubes ( ) that we'll use in the street, shall I put down eight?'

Examples (2) to (15) show that the defining features of the Cypriot dialect as spoken in the Mesaoria plain have been preserved, to a greater or lesser extent, in the modern *koiné*. What is more, while these are not numerous, they are prominent in everyday speech, as they affect high-frequency items (conjunctions, prepositions, adverbs, commonly used verbs such as 'see', 'say', 'ask', 'give', 'take').

### 3.4.3 Standard Modern Greek

The term Standard Modern Greek refers to the variety of Greek used in Mainland Greece, particularly in Athens, and which has, since 1976, also been the official language of the Greek state.<sup>26</sup> In Cyprus, this is used in written discourse, as well as in education and by the media (but see 3.4.2 above).<sup>27</sup> Not surprisingly, Cypriot Greeks do not possess native intuitions for this variety, but only for Greek as spoken in Cyprus (Christodoulou

<sup>25</sup> Contrary to the noted obsolescence of the genitive plural of male nouns and adjectives, the noun concerned here is female (*i solina*, 'tube'), potentially indicating a contemporary tendency for the generalisation of rule 2.6.

<sup>26</sup> The education act of 1976 determined that the language of instruction in all classes should be 'Modern Greek', "defined as 'the Demotic language shaped by the Greek people and classic national writers as a Panhellenic instrument of expression, codified, without local peculiarities and extremes'"(Horrocks 1997:361). For a general overview of SMG, see *ibid.*:362ff.

<sup>27</sup> Following the constitutional arrangements of 1960, an official organisation, simultaneously legislative and executive, the Greek Communal Chamber, was founded for the promulgation of Greek national education (Persianis 1994:104). Use of the Cypriot *koiné* in schools is nonetheless widely tolerated (Contossopoulos 1969:93), while particular political groups have called for its active promotion in literature and in education (Persianis 1994:97).

1973:309). Most Cypriot Greeks, however, have a good passive knowledge of the standard variety — although instances of hypercorrection are not lacking (Newton 1983; Terkourafi 1997:32) — and will accommodate to the speech of Mainland Greeks in conversation or merely in their presence ((16)-(26) below). The degree to which individual speakers will standardise on these occasions varies, depending on their personal attributes — previous contact with SMG being the most important (cf. condition (ii) of Le Page & Tabouret-Keller's remark quoted in 3.4 above) — and idiosyncratic features, as well as the situational context. Some excerpts from the recorded data indicative of Cypriots' use of SMG follow.

- (16) [35; At work, Lefkosia]  
 1: e vasika pistevo oti oti eçi na kani me to:: piotitan paroçis =  
 2: =ndaksi=  
 3: =en' kala na ta ðumen mazi  
 4: na ta ðumen to t' iðela na po omos, ...  
 [pistevo: ≠1.2 (suspension of /y/ epenthesis); eçi: ≠1.1 (suspension of softening); t': ≠2.9 (interrogative *inda*)]  
 1: 'Er basically I believe that whatever is related to quality of provision=  
 2: ='alright'  
 3: ='it's good to look at all together'  
 4: 'We'll do that. But what I wanted to say' ...
- (17) [48; At work, Pafos]  
 katalaves pos ine i miroðja tus? poli apali  
 [katalaves: ≠2.14 (no syllabic augment); ine: ≠2.11 (3sg. 'to be'); miroðja: ≠2.1 (suspension of /ð/+j/ → [c]); po'li: ≠2.17 (adverb *pol:a*)]  
 'Can you tell how they smell? Very lightly.'
- (18) [40; At work, Lemesos, A=MG]  
 ja pes mu, etsi eçi afton to misticizmon tu peru opos akujete? opos ðjavazume?  
 [pes: ≠2.12 (dialectal imperative); eçi: ≠1.1 (suspension of softening); afton: ≠2.18/note (deictic pronoun *tutos*); akujete: ≠1.3 (suspension of fricative deletion); ðjavazume: ≠2.1 (suspension of /ð/+j/ → [c])]  
 'Tell me, does it have this mysticism of Perù that we hear about? that we read about?'
- (19) [56; At home, Pafos, A=MG]  
 rotise me oti ðelis ja poðosfero. (leo), an ðen, an kseris. (.) jati exo tin endiposi pos ðe, ksero oti andipaðas to poðosfero  
 [rotise me: ≠2.19 (genitive complements); an kseris: ≠2.3 (suspension of /i/ prosthesis); ðen: ≠2.16 (negative particle); endiposi: ≠1.5 (final /n/ deletion)]  
 'Ask me what you will about football (I say), if you don't, if you know. Because I have the impression that you don't, {I don't} know you dislike football.'
- (20) [12; At work, Lefkosia]  
 ta exo proplirosi prin ðjo mines?



[ta exo proplirosi: ≠2.22 (perfect), ≠2.19 (suspension of clitic postposition);<sup>28</sup> ðjo: ≠2.1 (suspension of /ð/ +/j/→[c])]

'I paid for them two months ago?'

- (21) [46; At work, Lemesos]

vazis eðo ti fraulitsa su? (.) na min ta valo ce t' al:a

[eðo: ≠2.17 (adverb *ðame*); fraulitsa: ≠2.8 (diminutive suffix *-itsa*), min: ≠2.16 (negative particle *men*); ce: ≠1.1 (suspension of softening)<sup>29</sup>]

'Can you put your strawberry-dim. here? (.) so that I don't put the other ones too'

- (22) [65; At work, Pafos]

ða protimusa na tus iðopiumen telefonikos i proforikos

[ða: ≠2.15 (future particle *ena*); telefonikos, proforikos: learned adverbs in *-os*]

'I'd rather we notified them by phone or in person'

The preceding examples already reveal a degree of mixing of the two varieties (Cypriot *koiné* and SMG). This is more striking in the following examples, in which pauses, repairs or false starts attest to Cypriot Greeks' uncertainty about the use of particular lexical items or constructions.

- (23) [68; At home, Pafos, A=MG]

a' ða ðis kamja ðialexton etsi ksexoristin as pume pu aksizi ton kopon eprepe na se parome ston dinon tji kato

[ða ðis: ≠2.15 (future particle *ena*); ðialexton: SMG word with manner assimilation (1.6) and final /n/ (1.5); tji: 1.1 (softening)]

'If you are to see a dialect that's special so to speak that's worthwhile we should take you down to Dinos.'

- (24) [54; At work, Pafos]

fernis mu ti::n e (.) (.) sfrajiðula tis eterias?

[fernis mu: 2.19 (clitic postposition); sfrajiðula: ≠2.8 (diminutive suffix *-ula*)]

'Can you bring me the, er, company stamp-dim.?'

- (25) [41; At work, Lemesos]

mitfi::, mikri, pjo siya ((explaining)) mitfi, e amesos esiniðitopiisa oti: mas (.) ((laughing)) pernun to pos milumen c' ekama to mitfi mikri

[mitfi::, mikri: ≠2.23 (replacement of dialectal lexical item which involved softening (1.1)); esiniðitopiisa: 2.14 (syllabic augment); milumen: 1.5 (final /n/)]

'Lads, guys, keep it down ((explaining)) lads, er I immediately realised that we (.) ((laughing)) are being recorded how we speak and I turned 'lads' into 'guys'.'

- (26) [34; At work, Lefkosia]

1: pji ða lavete meros stin ti: ti: pji ða lavete meros is ti sineðria simera

2: exun suneðrion o xristos, o steλos

<sup>28</sup> Judging by its occurrence with the pluperfect:

ixa mas pi oti ... , 'They had told us that' ... (57; Formal discussion; Pafos)

clitic postposition is probably structurally (though not stylistically) independent from use of the present perfect.

<sup>29</sup> On the stigmatisation of the sounds *ts/dz* and *tʃ/dʒ* in SMG, see Joseph 1992.

((several turns later))

3: *pjos θa pjos θa pjos θa proedrevsi ti sinandisi?*

4: *e:yo ime*

[*θa lavete: ≠2.15* (future particle *ena*); use of SMG *sineðrion*, ‘conference’, instead of *sineðria*, ‘meeting’; *θa proedrevsi ti sinandisi*: complementation in accusative instead of SMG construction with genitive; *e:yo ime*: reply ‘I am’ instead of ‘I will’]

1: ‘Who will take part in the, the, who will take part in today’s meeting’

2: ‘Christos, Stelios have a conference’

((several turns later))

3: ‘Who will who will who will chair the meeting?’

4: ‘I am.’

This brief account of the use of SMG in Cyprus raises the question whether what actually occurs is an instance of diglossia (Ferguson 1959:325). Examination of all nine proposed criteria (ibid.:328-336) reveals that this is indeed so. (In what follows, SMG is referred to as the H(igh) variety, while the Cypriot *koiné* as the L(ow) one.)

1) Specialisation of function for H and L with minimum overlap between the two sets occurs, with H used for religious sermons, personal letters (but see fn.21 above) political speeches, university lectures, news broadcasts, newspaper editorials and poetry,<sup>30</sup> while L is used for instructions to waiters and clerks, conversation with family, friends and colleagues, the ‘Cypriot sketch’, captions on political cartoons and folk literature.

2) Speakers regard H as superior to L in a number of respects, and this belief is also held by speakers whose command of H is quite limited. Investigating language attitudes on the island by means of a matched-guise test, Papapavlou (1998) found that the use of SMG is associated with the qualities of being more: attractive, ambitious, intelligent, interesting, modern, dependable, pleasant, and educated, but not more: sincere, friendly, kind, or humorous. These findings echo Trudgill’s (1983a:198) remarks pertaining to the more favourable evaluation of English RP speakers as opposed to regionally accented speakers, and support the higher prestige of SMG over Cypriot speech (Sciriha 1995, 1996; Pavlou 1997).<sup>31</sup>

3) There is a sizeable body of written literature in H, which is held in high esteem by the speech community. This body of literature is in continuous production in another speech community (Mainland Greece) in which H serves as the standard variety.

<sup>30</sup> E.g. the poetry of Kostas Montis.

<sup>31</sup> Implicit evaluations of Cypriot speech are also found in the writings of linguists. Contossopoulos (1972:95-6) echoing Hadzidakis and Pantelidis (quoted ibid.), finds Cypriot articulation to be “généralement relâchée”, a characterisation reminiscent of the argument from “ease of articulation”, based on which non-standard speech is often criticised as being “lazy” or “sloppy” (Chambers 1995:233). However, as Newton (1983:61) points out, by preserving underlying forms of earlier periods, as well as applying Cypriot-specific rules on underlying SMG forms, Cypriot speech is both phonologically conservative and innovative compared to SMG. This observation counters the claim that “the standard dialect inhibits many of the low-level, variable processes of phonetic conditioning that characterise spoken language”, which underlies the “ease of articulation” argument (Chambers 1995:232).

4) Children invariably learn L in what may be regarded as the “normal” way of learning one’s mother tongue, while learning H is chiefly accomplished by means of formal education. As a result, Cypriot Greeks never quite ‘feel at home’ using H (cf. above on native speakers’ intuitions and instances of hypercorrection).

5) There is a strong tradition of grammatical study of H, as opposed to L, including an established orthography which allows little variation. Significantly,

“[i]n the case of relatively small speech communities with a single important centre of communication, [...] a kind of standard L may arise which speakers of other dialects imitate and which tends to spread like any standard variety except that it remains limited to the functions for which L is appropriate” (Ferguson 1959:332).

In Cyprus, this role is fulfilled by the Cypriot *koiné*.

6) Diglossia may be a relatively stable situation, typically persisting at least several centuries. Two remarks by Menardos (1969e[1912]:63fn.1, 87fn.2), to the effect that some learned forms attributed to Cypriot Greek by Sakellarios must have been obtained by educated Cypriots, testify that diglossia in Cyprus is not a modern phenomenon.

7) H has indeed grammatical categories not present in L, such as the participle, reported by Menardos (1969e:93ff.) to be obsolete in the modern dialect. Furthermore, the obsolescence of the genitive plural from the inflectional paradigm of male adjectives and nouns (2.8, 3.3 above), and that of the present perfect from the inflectional paradigm of verbs (2.22, 3.3 above) attest to the reduction in L of the inflectional system of nouns and verbs found in H.

8) Technical terms and learned expressions are borrowed from H (examples (16),(22)), while popular expressions and the names for familiar objects come from L (examples (5),(7)). At the same time, one finds “*many paired items, one H and one L, referring to fairly common concepts ..., where the range of meaning of the two items is roughly the same*” (Ferguson 1959:334; (25), and the examples in Newton 1972b:111).

9) As regards the underlying phonological forms of lexical items, speakers appear to have a single inventory of oppositions for the whole H-L complex, while extensive interference in both directions occurs in terms of the distribution of phonemes in specific lexical items. As Newton (1983) shows, stylistic variation between localised patois speech, the Cypriot *koiné* and SMG generally involves suspension of rules already internalised by speakers. On the other hand, the persistence of long consonants, final /n/, and aspirates in the speech of Cypriot Greeks (even after many years of living in Athens) must be attributed to the fact that production of their standard counterparts would involve *acquiring* new rules. Thus, the H voiced stops /b/, /d/, /g/ are rendered in CG with some degree of prenasalisation even word-initially (cf. CG [mboro] vs. SMG [boro], ‘I-can’), in the absence of a contrast of voice for stops in L (Newton 1983:63). Newton therefore assumes

that L forms, rather than their H counterparts, constitute the point of departure, and illustrates this claim by discussing likely and actual instances of hypercorrection.

A further feature of diglossic situations, namely *when* this situation begins to be problematic, is also exemplified in Cyprus. Determining factors for such change of attitude are “(a) more widespread literacy [...], (b) broader communication among different regional and social segments of the community [...], (c) a desire for a full-fledged standard “national” language as an attribute of autonomy or sovereignty” (Ferguson 1959:338). Indications that Cyprus meets the first two conditions have already been provided (3.4.2 above). Karyolemou (1996a) discusses several indications that it probably meets the third condition as well. Interestingly, both the adoption of H or of one form of L (the Cypriot *koiné*) as the standard have been supported. Echoing Ferguson’s (1959:338-9) predictions, arguments given in support of H include its natural ability to act as a unifying factor (with Mainland Greece), and its higher expressiveness and accuracy compared to L (Karyolemou 1997), while arguments given in support of L refer to the resolution of educational problems and the need for modernisation (Persianis 1994).

These observations leave little reason to doubt that the linguistic situation in Cyprus constitutes an instance of diglossia. The two varieties remain distinct in their functions and in speakers’ perceptions, while instances of standardisation in phonology and syntax provide indications that these are realised as suspension of Cypriot-specific rules, rather than acquisition of new ones (Newton 1983; Terzi (p.c.) notes that clitic preposition in finite contexts as a result of V-to-T movement involves the suspension of a Cypriot-specific rule of T-to-M verb movement). No process of koinéisation (Kerwsill & Williams 2000) may therefore be in sight. That said, the importance of linguistic accommodation during face-to-face interaction (e.g. Cypriots’ standardising in the presence of Mainland Greeks) in disseminating change under the right social conditions (*ibid.*:66; Trudgill 1986:4ff.) can hardly be underestimated.

#### 3.4.4 English

The final component of contemporary urban Cypriot Greek speech is English. Contrary to the varieties discussed so far, its appearance on the scene is relatively recent. The British assumed administration of the island in 1878. Cyprus was declared independent in 1960. Since then, British influence has remained pervasive in a number of occupational milieus. In the administrative sector, statistical reports and agricultural instructions are compiled in English (Ioannou 1991:36; Panayotou 1996b), while the policies of semi-governmental organisations often reflect the corresponding British ones (including the use of imperial measures; data sessions 35, 57). In the legal profession, Greek law was recently introduced alongside Commonwealth law, translation of which is under way. In the medical

profession, reports are commonly written in English (Panayotou 1996b). Last, but not least, in the educational sector, English-speaking education is widely available at all levels, Ioannou 1991:25-7; Karoulla-Vrikkis 1991:51-4).

Use of the English language in Cyprus has not uncommonly been the focus of heated debate (Karyole mou 1993).<sup>32</sup> Nevertheless, the data show that, though extensive at the lexical level, this remains structurally marginal to Cypriot speech, as expected in a community whose first language is the vehicle of an important body of literature, despite its recent colonial past.<sup>33</sup> The aforementioned debate may then have largely resulted from a general preference for vocabulary and pronunciation, rather than syntax, as markers of social differences (Hudson 1996:45). Some examples of Cypriot Greeks' use of English from the recorded data follow (English words in the original are italicised in the translation).

- (27) [21; At work, Lefkosia]  
tʃ'en mboro na pien:o tʃe na'rkume sto t<sup>h</sup>oilet en:a pao na pjaso wet<sup>h</sup>is alo pos  
'And I can't go to the *toilet* all the time. I think I'll go buy some *wetties*.'
- (28) [34; At work, Lefkosia, A=MG]  
eçi ap'afta ta mats  
'There are some *mats*.' ((for placing drinks on))
- (29) [35; At work, Lefkosia]  
eyrapsa sinandisi me to prodʒekt manadžer  
'I wrote down meeting with the *project manager*.'
- (30) [35; At work, Lefkosia]  
inda 'n' pu kamno to sekretari eyo re peθca?  
'What am I going to be the *secretary* guys?'
- (31) [35; At work, Lefkosia]  
xoris' ta se θco set tʃe na ta valumen to'ra e ... kame ta k<sup>h</sup>omplit  
'Divide them into two *sets* and let's put them now er ... make them *complete*.'
- (32) [30; At work, Lefkosia]  
ma cinos ma cinos pu pies pu kaname prefar t<sup>h</sup>est?  
'That one that one you went to that we did a *pressure test* on?'
- (33) [37; At work, Lefkosia]  
a e tot' en epia n' al:akso to k<sup>h</sup>aʃ ak<sup>h</sup>aunt akoma. po 'vale pu evalen to tʃek buk o andonis,  
'Ah er, in that case I haven't been to change the *cash account* yet. Where did he put where did Andonis put the *cheque book*?'
- (34) [40; At work, Lemesos]

<sup>32</sup> Akse los (1994) summarises the controversy following a citizen's request to have her passport issued in Greek rather than English. Karyole mou (1995, 1996b) summarises the debate prompted by the question of the language of the newly-founded University.

<sup>33</sup> On the linguistic issues commonly facing post-colonial societies, see Le Page & Tabouret-Keller 1985.

panajia mu i kopel:es tu ðikastiriu ðilaði. epira tus ta dʒadzment pu to ðekato, to ðekato, ... a: sori ðilaði. xa. enevriase me  
 ‘God with the girls at court. I brought them the *judgements* from October, from October, ... ha, well I’m *sorry*. She made me angry.’

- (35) [60; At work, Pafos]  
 ðelo ena k<sup>h</sup>opi tin imera pu kanun to it<sup>h</sup>ereifon ( ) stin praksi tis imeras apo pano to it<sup>h</sup>ereifon na yrafti. ... ce? na pane meta ston andrea na ipoyrafun ta eņgrafa. ekames to ofer let<sup>h</sup>er?  
 ‘I want a *copy* on the day they make the *iteration* ( ) on the act of that day at the top (I want) the *iteration* written ... and? then the documents must go to Andreas to be signed. Have you prepared the *offer letter*?’

The borrowing of individual lexical items, as exemplified in the above excerpts, shows that (a) English words are rendered using sounds already existing in the phonological inventory of CG, while phonological rules such as devoicing are also applied ((8), (11) in 3.4.2 above), (b) they are typically rendered in Greek as neuter gender ((30) above), (c) plural number is sometimes indicated using the suffix –s ((28), but see also (31) above), and (d) they are typically used instead of the SMG equivalents to render technical or otherwise non-traditional terms. This last feature would appear to account for their preponderance in work settings (as opposed to at home). With regard to style, English words mainly co-occur with features of the Cypriot *koiné* — although this is by no means restrictive, as shown by the predominance of SMG features in (28) and (35). They therefore appear to belong to a more informal register, since not only are they not used by all social classes alike, but their use is also largely avoided in the presence of Mainland Greeks and on radio/TV (but see (37) below where the speaker is expressing personal feelings, and (40) where the speaker and addressee are familiar with one another).

In addition to individual lexical items, whole expressions are borrowed, and incorporated into Cypriot speech either (partly) translated, or untranslated. In contrast to individual loanwords, these expressions are not subject to the application of Cypriot phonological rules (e.g. manner dissimilation is suspended in (38) below), and they appear to constitute the exclusive domain of middle-class speakers, since a good command of English is required for their correct use.

- (36) [35; At work, Lefkosia]  
 vasika kseris sto telos tis imeras inda'n'pu 'ni?  
 ‘Basically do you know *at the end of the day* what it is?’
- (37) [90; On TV]  
 cirie pavlu, e, ofilo na ðoso ce tulaçiston to k<sup>h</sup>redit epiis sto- ston armoðion ipuryo, para oti ime pikramenos  
 ‘Mr Pavlou, er, despite being deeply hurt, I ought to at least *give some credit* also to the- the minister in charge,’
- (38) [57; Formal discussion, Pafos]

e ena θco pramata etsi of ði rekord tora tʃa fiume. mjan dʒ'irtame?  
 'Er one or two things like *off the record* now and we'll go. Since we've come?'

- (39) [46; At work, Lemesos]  
 e tor' an içete to xrono tʃe parakoluθusate afto etsi t<sup>h</sup>u start γuiθ, ðioti en' poli kalos o  
 isijitis tʃ' en:a, mbori na sas katefθini ...  
 'Er, if you had the time and you attended that just *to start with*, because the  
 presenter is very good and he will, he can direct you' ...
- (40) [40; At work, Lemesos, A=MG]  
 to daiari as satʃ ine seliða tu failofaks. ean to ðis ((pause))  
 'The *diary as such* is a page of the *filofax*. If you look at it ((pause))

### 3.5 Summary

This chapter provides a brief description of contemporary urban Cypriot Greek speech, and an overview of the main issues surrounding language use in Cyprus. Apart from localised patois speech, which is not represented in the data, three varieties were identified: the Cypriot *koiné*, which has inherited almost all of the features of the variety of Mesaoria, Standard Modern Greek, and English. The prevailing situation of diglossia means that Greek — spoken as a first language by just over 620,000 Greek Cypriots living on the island, and, alongside Turkish, one of the two official languages of the Republic of Cyprus — is used by speakers in its standard or in its local form distinctively, as predicted by Le Page and Tabouret-Keller (1985:182, quoted in 3.4 above). Following Papapavlou's (1998) findings, situations in which one wants to emphasise one's social or professional competence will call for conformity with the grammatical and lexical choices of SMG — within the limits of the speaker's previous experience with this variety — while situations in which one wishes to foreground one's sincerity and friendliness will call for the use of the Cypriot *koiné*. Typical examples of the former type of situation are in the presence of Mainland Greeks and on radio/TV, while typical examples of the latter are with family and colleagues. Nevertheless, this crude distinction does not do justice to the multiple intermediate shades of speakers' intentions, which may be expressed by various combinations of standard and local forms.

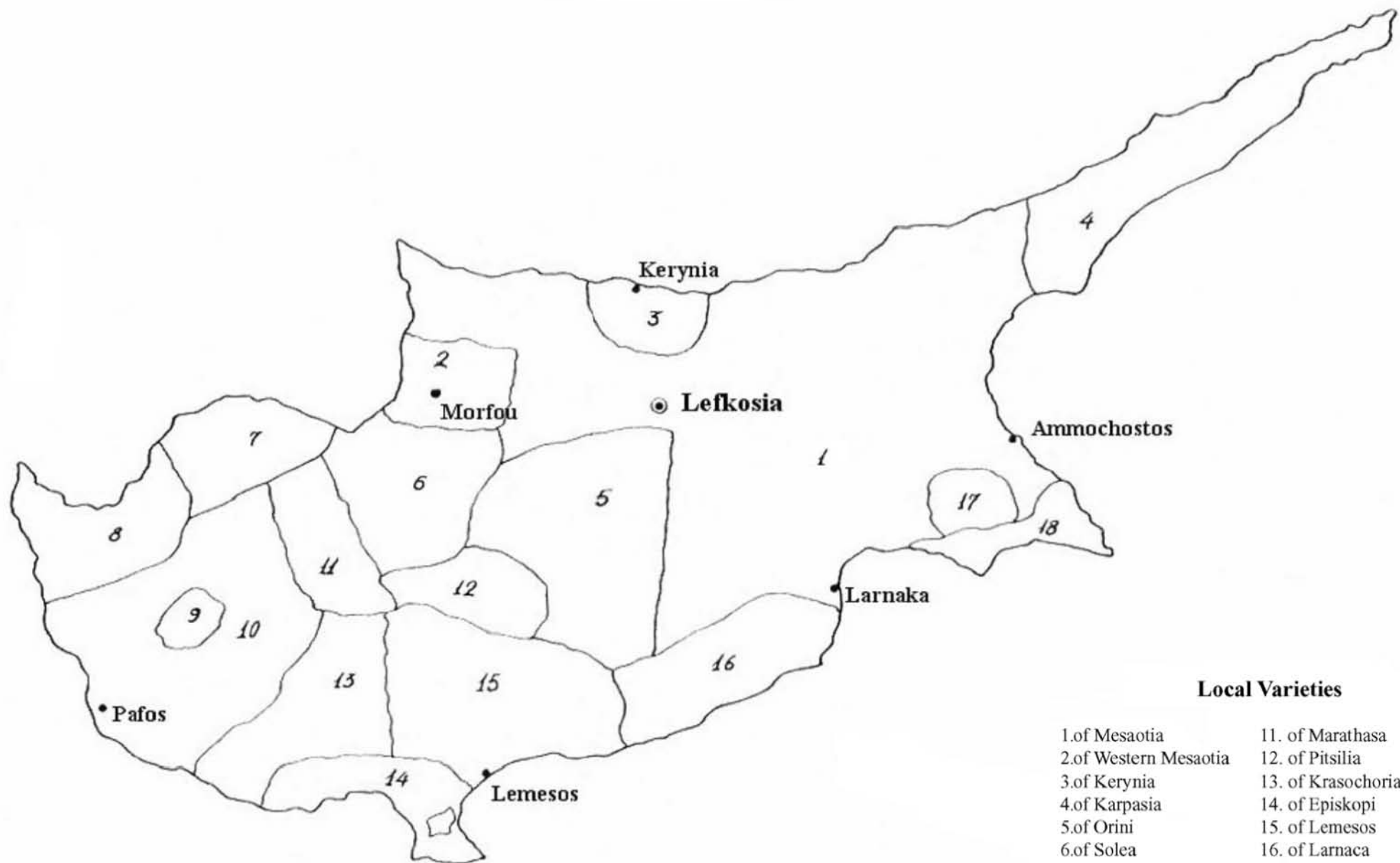
It is therefore possible to gain an insight into the stance that the speaker is adopting at any one time by analysing his/her choice of standard and/or local forms, as these are evidenced in the grammatical and lexical details of his/her utterance. Examining how these choices co-vary with the formal means used for expressing politeness (2.7.2 above) can shed some light on those considerations which motivate the choice of particular linguistic devices for expressing politeness in CG. In what way and to what extent are these considerations related to the notion of face, as outlined in 1.3.1? How do such considerations relate to the situation at hand? Can they be derived from it via a principle such as Brown and Levinson's  $W_x = D(S,H) + P(H,S) + R_x$ ? Or do they relate to the extra-

linguistic features of the situation in a more direct way, i.e. without having recourse to a principle? These are some of the questions to which the following chapters attempt to provide answers.





Map 1: Geo-political map of Cyprus (adapted from "A Visitor's Map of Cyprus" ' Cyprus Tourism Organisation 1998)



**Local Varieties**

- |                           |                     |
|---------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. of Mesaotia            | 11. of Marathasa    |
| 2. of Western Mesaotia    | 12. of Pitsilia     |
| 3. of Kerynia             | 13. of Krasochoria  |
| 4. of Karpasia            | 14. of Episkopi     |
| 5. of Orini               | 15. of Lemesos      |
| 6. of Solea               | 16. of Larnaca      |
| 7. of Tyliria             | 17. of Kokinochoria |
| 8. of North-Western Pafos | 18. of Paralimni    |
| 9. of Central Pafos       |                     |
| 10. of Southern Pafos     |                     |

**Map 2: Local Varieties of the Cypriot Dialect (from Contossopoulos 1969:105)**

## **Chapter 4**

# **Quantitative and qualitative aspects of politeness in Cypriot Greek**

### **4.1 Methodology of the data analysis**

Chapter 2 outlined the data collection process which led to the compilation of a corpus of spontaneous conversational data from CG. To test the validity of Brown and Levinson's predictions as regards this corpus (2.6 above), two lines of enquiry are possible. First, one may construct hypotheses regarding the values of D, P and  $R_x$  for observed situations and examine whether interlocutors' utterances tend indeed to become more indirect as the values of the three sociological variables increase. Second, one may work one's way back from the actual utterances observed to the purported values of D, P and  $R_x$  which motivated them, and examine whether these values can consistently be obtained using Brown and Levinson's definitions of the Distance, Power and Ranking of the imposition. The present chapter explores these possibilities by undertaking a descriptive statistical analysis of these data, complemented by the discussion of individual examples.

#### 4.1.1 The statistical analysis of the data

The analysis undertaken consisted of counting frequencies of (a) occurrence of the possible values of the variables considered (2.7 above), and (b) co-occurrence of the most frequently encountered values of these variables. These frequencies were initially explored through tables, and subsequently charted in diagrams (approximately two-hundred and fifty diagrams were produced in total). The software package used was SPSS, version 9. It was

thus possible to establish frequencies of co-occurrence of values of the extra-linguistic variables considered (certain types of speaker and addressee standing in a certain type of relationship to each other performing a particular speech act for the first — or for the second — time in a certain type of setting) with values of the linguistic variables (presence of a particular type of verb occurring in a certain modality, number and person). Such analysis allows us to establish whether, when particular values of D, P and  $R_x$  are operative, speakers opt for a general level of indirectness realised as various combinations of linguistic features all falling under the same strategy from Brown and Levinson's proposed hierarchy (fig.1, 1.2.2 above), or a more direct co-relation holds between particular combinations of values of the extra-linguistic and linguistic variables considered.

The descriptive statistical analysis outlined above was dictated by the type of data collected, and by our current objectives. The spontaneity and accuracy of the data guided the process of data collection (2.2, 2.3 above). Given the non-standard nature of CG speech (3.4 above), recordings were preferred over questionnaires, and the sampling procedure targeted friends and friends of friends. In addition, gaining access to the workplace often proved easier than to people's homes, since no special arrangements (e.g. finding a convenient time when more than two informants may be present) had to be made in the former case. Consequently, different age-groups and social classes, as well as different settings, are unequally represented in the collected data (4.1.2 below).

The nature of the data posed further restrictions to the types of analysis potentially applicable. The variables considered assume values which are nominal (categorical) rather than numerical or ordinal (Hinton 1995:21; Woods et al. 1986:8-13), so that only non-parametric tests are suitable for their analysis (Siegel & Castellan 1988:35). However, the chi-square test — widely used for the analysis of categorical data (Hinton 1995:240) — was rejected, since an independent- or a related-samples test (Siegel & Castellan 1988:169) could not be carried out without manipulating the data. This is because, in the collected data, utterances are not uniformly distributed between pairs of speakers and addressees. An utterance may be one of many addressed by a speaker to the same addressee, or the only utterance addressed by the particular speaker to a different addressee, or uttered by an altogether different speaker, while summarising utterances by speaker was found to be not only extremely complicated practically — since it would involve deciding whether to count speakers or pairs of speakers and addressees (or perhaps triplets of speakers, addressees and settings) — but also theoretically dubious. Criticisms of the chi-square test as not sufficiently powerful (Owen & Jones 1982:331; but contrast Siegel & Castellan 1988:50), and the small number of utterances attained per combination of variables (Woods et al. 1986:144-5; Siegel & Castellan 1988:199) constituted further reasons for not applying the chi-square test to these data.

The first step taken to overcome these restrictions was to obtain a large enough corpus by recording a correspondingly large sample of speakers. Six hundred and seventy-two informants were recorded, yielding a corpus of 2,189 realisations of offers and requests. This move was judged appropriate on both theoretical and practical grounds. Not only do “large samples impose fewer restrictions on testing” (Owen & Jones 1982:323), but also the larger the corpus of data collected, the greater the number of utterances which may ultimately fall under each combination of variables (although there was no guarantee that this number would always be higher than the minimum of five cases per cell required for a chi-square test; Siegel & Castellan 1988:49-50).

Secondly, a descriptive statistical analysis of these data was opted for. Rather than providing a basis on which to draw inferences about the population (whether of speakers, or of realisations of offers and requests) at large, the data collected were described and summarised as an object in its own right (Woods et al. 1986:48), as outlined above. While this move limits the number of conclusions one may draw from these data — since each time a variable is added to the list of co-occurring features, the number of utterances concerned decreases — it nevertheless does not compromise the objectives of the current analysis. This is because the analysis does not aim to provide an exhaustive description of the possibilities open to speakers for expressing politeness in CG, but rather to test the validity of Brown and Levinson’s theory of politeness, in particular their tenet that the degree of indirectness of an utterance correlates positively with the sum of D, P and  $R_x$ , with respect to the collected data.

#### 4.1.2 An overview of the variable values encountered in the data

Variable values encountered in the data were initially entered into a purpose-built Microsoft Excel 98 Workbook. Generalisations carried out at this stage were kept to a minimum, so as to compile a detailed record of all the values exhibited by the variables under consideration, while avoiding assumptions about their impact on D, P and  $R_x$  (for extra-linguistic variables) or their indirectness (for linguistic variables). The values registered for different variables are given below in order of frequency of occurrence.

#### **Extra-linguistic variables** (cf. 2.7.1 above)

<b>Type of speech act</b>		<b>Order of occurrence of the speech act</b>	
<u>Value</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
request	1,486	first time	1,721
offer	703	subsequent times	468
<i>Total</i>	2,189	<i>Total</i>	2,189

<b>Sex of the speaker</b>		<b>Sex of the addressee</b>	
<u>Value</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
male	1,279	female	1,151
female	910	male	1,038
<i>Total</i>	2189	<i>Total</i>	2,189
<b>Age of the speaker</b>		<b>Age of the addressee</b>	
<u>Value</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
31-50	1,430	31-50	1,127
51 and over	433	18-30	692
18-30	326	51 and over	370
<i>Total</i>	2189	<i>Total</i>	2189
<b>Social class of the speaker</b>		<b>Social class of the addressee</b>	
<u>Value</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
Middle	1,772	Middle	1,744
Working	410	Working	430
Middle?	4	Middle?	12
Working?	2	Working?	3
?	1	<i>Total</i>	2,189
<i>Total</i>	2,189		

‘?’ indicates that a participant’s social class could not be inferred with certainty.

<b>Relationship between interlocutors</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
<u>Value</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
Old colleagues	365
Acquaintances	227
Old customer to salesperson	201
Employer-employee*	191
Interviewer to interviewee	186
Family	164
Friends	160
Salesperson to old customer	158
Salesperson to new customer	119
New customer to salesperson	89
Interviewee to interviewer	72
Employer to long-time employee	65
Employee to employer*	61
Speaker to audience member	30
Employee to long-time employer	27
Colleagues*	22
Audience member to speaker	14
New colleagues	10
Strangers	10
Interviewee to interviewee	7
Customer to salesperson*	5
Salesperson to customer*	4
(relationship unknown)	1
Employer to new employee	1
<i>Total</i>	2,189

‘\*’ indicates unknown length of the relationship. The characterisations ‘new’ and ‘old’/‘long-time’ are used when the length of the relationship was known, or could be inferred from observation (e.g. knowledge of first names, reference to habitual or past events). The relationship between interlocutors does not necessarily remain unchanged throughout the discourse. In such cases, the topic of the conversation provides an index of the relationship which is applicable every time.

- (1) [47.10, 47.11; Setting: At work; Speaker1: female, 31-50, middle-class; Speaker2: female, 18-30, working-class; Relationship: 47.10: friends, 47.11: old customer (S2) to salesperson (S1)]

(47.10) S1: katse na pjumen kafen kori

S2: oi ena pao

((some turns later))

S2: pavlina?

S1: ne

(47.11) S2: endʒ'efis tipote: kolan ala oi etsi kala

S1: pe mu. ti?

S2: e' ja ti jortin tora pu ta iða tuta tʃe sceftika. in' akriva tuta

(47.10) S1: sit-imp.-perf.-2sg. SP drink-dep.-1pl. coffee-ACC. girl-VOC.

S2: no FP go-dep.-1sg.

((some turns later))

S2: pavlina?

S1: yes

(47.11) S2: not have-ind.-2sg. any tights but no so good

S1: tell-imp.-perf.-2sg. me-ACC. . what?

S2: be-ind.-3sg. for the-ACC. event-ACC. now that them-ACC. see-past-perf.-1sg. these and think-past-perf.-1sg. . be-ind.-3pl. expensive these

(47.10) S1: ‘Stay for coffee lass.’

S2: ‘No I’ll go.’

((some turns later))

S2: ‘Pavlina?’

S1: ‘Yes’

(47.11) S2: ‘You don’t happen to have any tights, not fancy ones.’

S1: ‘Tell me. What?’

S2: ‘It’s for the event. I just saw these and thought. These are expensive.’

#### Setting of the exchange

Value	Frequency
At work	1,520
At home	192
On TV	171
At informal social gatherings	152
On the radio	96
Formal discussion	58
Total	2,189

#### Town

Value	Frequency
Lefkosia	960
Pafos	841
Lemesos	291
Larnaka	97
Total	2,189

**Linguistic variables** (cf. 2.7.2 above; values occurring less than five times in the corpus are omitted)

<b>Type of verb</b>	
<u>Value</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
Action Verb	1,243
Speech Act Verb	285
<i>thelo</i> , 'to want'	277
<i>exo</i> , 'to have'	89
(Missing)	58
<i>boro</i> , 'to be able to'	37
<i>prepi</i> , 'it-must'	37
Indirect statement	34
<i>epitrepo</i> , 'to allow'	26
Indirect request	16
<i>ime</i> , 'to be'	14
<i>ksero</i> , 'to know'	11
Speech Act Formula	11
<i>thelo</i> -formula	11
Addressee focussed	8
<i>parakalo</i> , 'to ask'	8
<i>iparxo</i> , 'to exist'	6
Omitted	18
<i>Total</i>	2,189

The above classification reflects both grammatical and lexical considerations influencing indirectness (2.7.2.1-2 above). Missing values in this and subsequent tables, correspond to speech acts performed without using a verb form. 'Action verb' refers to main-clause verbs whose propositional content expresses the act to be performed, when this act is not verbal. Common examples are *dhino*, 'I-give', *pjano*, 'I-pass, I-take, I-buy', *pino*, 'I-drink'. 'Speech act verb' refers to verbs whose propositional content expresses the act to be performed when this act is verbal. These include *milo*, 'I-speak', *sxoliazo*, 'I-comment', *apando*, 'I-answer'. When an established periphrasis is chosen instead of a speech act verb, the relevant expressions are termed 'speech act formulae'. These include *ime olo aftja*, 'I-am all ears', *dhino ena paraðiyima*, 'I-give an example', *dhino to loyo*, 'I-grant the floor', *kano mja erotisi*, 'I-ask a question'. In a similar vein, *thelo*-formulae include expressions used as alternatives to the verb *thelo*, 'I-want', such as *notho tin anañji*, 'I-feel the need to', and *protimo*, 'I-prefer'. Sometimes the act to be performed must be inferred from a verb whose propositional content expresses lack of action on behalf of the speaker or the addressee ((2) below). Such verbs are termed 'addressee focussed'. *akuo*, 'I-listen', *cito*, 'I-look' are commonly used in this way.

(2) [2.7; On the radio; Speaker: male, 31-50, middle-class; Addressee: male, 31-50, middle-class; Relationship: interviewer to interviewee]



*n' akusume. ti simeni kultura tu cipriaku fajitu.*

*SP hear-dep.-Ipl. what mean-ind.-3sg. culture-NOM. the-GEN. Cypriot-GEN. food-GEN.*

'Let us hear what 'Cypriot food culture' means.'

### Modality

<u>Values</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
Imperative↘	702
Subjunctive↘	392
Indicative↗	325
Indicative↘	217
Subjunctive↗	136
Future↘	94
(Missing)	58
Future↗	43
Imperative↗	39
Past↘	39
Indirect	37
Conditional↘	36
Past↗	36
Indicative↗-negative	15
Past↘-negative	6
Omitted	14
<i>Total</i>	2,189

Upward and downward arrows indicate rising and falling intonation respectively. The term 'indirect' in this and the following table corresponds to indirect statements and indirect requests/offers performed without making reference to the speaker or the addressee (2.7.2.2 above).

### Number and person of the verb-form

<u>Values</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
2nd singular	1107
1st singular	476
1st plural	212
2nd plural	150
3rd singular	136
(Missing)	58
Indirect	37
3rd plural	12
Omitted	1
<i>Total</i>	2,189

'3rd singular' encompasses (a) occurrences of impersonal verbs in the main clause (reference to the 'type of verb' used helps differentiate among these; (13), (14) in 2.7.2.2 above), (b) references to the existence of goods as a preparatory condition for the act requested/offered ((5) in 7.3.3 below), and (c) utterances in which the recipient of the speech act is referred to in the 3sg. (various possibilities are further marked as

‘clause subject: 3sg.’ under ‘additional markers’ below; (26) in 2.7.2.4 above). ‘3rd plural’ typically covers reference to the existence of goods as a preparatory condition for the act requested/offered.

- (3) [29.36; At work; Speaker: male, 31-50, working-class; Addressee: female, over 51, working-class; Relationship: new customer to salesperson]  
 mipos *iparxun* tipote potiraca mikra (.) ja ton kafe (.) plastika  
 whether *exist-ind.-3pl.* any glasses-dim.-ACC. small-ACC. (.) for the-ACC. coffee-ACC. (.) plastic-ACC.  
 ‘Are there any little glasses by any chance (.) for coffee (.) plastic ones’

#### **Additional markers of politeness**

<u>Values</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
(No additional marker)	1,284
FN	117
Embedded clause/prepositional phrase expressing purpose	93
Embedded clause/prepositional phrase expressing reason	62
<i>cirie</i> , ‘Mr’+LN	53
FN+ <i>mu</i> , ‘my’	29
Conditional clause ( <i>thelo</i> -indicative-2sg.)	25
<i>liyo</i> , ‘a little’	19
<i>re</i> , ‘hey’+FN	17
<i>ena lepto</i> , ‘one minute’	15
Clause subject: 3sg.(FN/NOM.)	15
Diminutive	12
<i>parakalo</i> , ‘please’	12
<i>re</i> , ‘hey’	11
<i>ciria</i> , ‘Mrs’+LN	10
Honorary Title	9
<i>cirie</i> , ‘Mr’+FN	9
<i>ciria</i> , ‘Mrs’+FN	9
<i>kori</i> , ‘daughter’	9
Kinship term (literal)	8
Tag question	8
Conditional clause ( <i>thelo</i> -indicative-2pl.)	7
FN+embedded clause/prepositional phrase expressing purpose	6
Professional Title	6
Clause subject: 3sg.	6
Add:offer (AV-subjunctive-1sg.)	6
Conditional clause (AV-indicative-2sg.)	6
<i>mana mu</i> , ‘my mother’	5
<i>oi na</i> , ‘not to’	5
<i>ena lepto</i> , ‘one minute’+embedded clause/prop. phrase expressing purpose	5
<i>ate</i> , exhortative particle	5
Clause subject: 3sg.(passive)	5
Conditional clause (AV-indicative-3sg.)	5
Omitted	296
<i>Total</i>	2,189

In addition to the expected address terms (*cirie/ciria*+LN, professional/honorary title, *cirie/ciria*+FN, FN, FN+*mu*, *re*(+FN), *kori*, *mana mu*, kinship terms), diminutives, and

the items *liyo* and *parakalo* (2.7.2.5 above), the following markers are significant for our discussion: giving reasons for the speaker's utterance, by means of an embedded clause or prepositional phrase expressing purpose or reason (B&L:128, 170; Sifianou 1992a:185-7); hedging the illocutionary force of the speaker's utterance, by means of a conditional clause questioning the addressee's desire for, or willingness or ability to do, the act (*θelo*/AV- indicative-2sg./pl.; B&L:162-3; Sifianou 1992a:188; Boutoulousi 1995); hedges oriented to the relevance of the speaker's utterance (AV-indicative-2sg./3sg.; B&L:169); offers accompanying requests ((4) below).

- (4) [10.4; At work; Speaker: female, 31-50, working-class; Addressee: female, over 51, working-class; Relationship: salesperson to new customer]

*ðocimase na kamo telefono*

try-imp.-perf.-2sg. SP make-dep.-1sg. call

'Try it on while I make a telephone call' ((to check availability of customer's shoe size at other shop))

'Clause subject: 3sg.(FN/NOM.)' and 'clause subject: 3sg.(passive)' differentiate instances where the 3sg. (with or without FN) refers to the addressee ((26) in 2.7.2.4 above) from instances where the main-clause verb is in the passive ((5) below).

- (5) [60.19; At work; Speaker: male, 31-50, middle-class; Addressee: female, 18-30, middle-class; Relationship: employer to employee]

*stin praksi tis imeras apo pano to itereifon na yrafti.*

on-the-ACC. act-ACC. the-GEN. day-GEN. from above the-NOM. iteration-NOM. SP write-pass.-dep.-3sg.

'The iteration should be written at the top of the day's Act.'

#### 4.1.3 The notion of indirectness in Brown and Levinson (1987)

One possible definition of indirectness is "any communicative behaviour, verbal or non-verbal, that conveys something more than or different from what it literally means" (B&L:134). The difficulties in applying this definition empirically are twofold. First, it is a matter of considerable debate whether utterances express any literal meaning, and if so, how that may be delimited.<sup>1</sup> Bach (1994) advocates a notion of literal meaning which encompasses the semantic representation of sentences together with referent assignment to deictic and referring expressions, but stops short of identifying this with the minimal truth-evaluable proposition which may be the result of further saturation or completion. However, theorists who defend common pre-theoretical intuitions as a guide to fleshing out 'what is said' by an utterance (Récanati 1991[1989]) would not be prepared to take this step, since it renders most of everyday speech nonliteral thereby going against such intuitions. The second problem posed by the above definition of indirectness is that it does not yield any predictions as to the relative indirectness of different expressions. Consequently, even granting that it may be used for classificatory purposes (distinguishing direct expressions from indirect ones), it cannot be used

<sup>1</sup> Leezenberg (2001:300ff.) discusses some of the related problems.

comparatively. But it is this latter type of definition that is called for if we are to be able to rank observed utterances along a scale of indirectness.

Elsewhere, Brown and Levinson suggest drawing on the notion of a generalised conversational implicature (henceforth GCI) to explain the intuitively different politeness import of the following offers (B&L:6-7):

- (6) (a) Will you have anything to eat?  
 (b) Will you have something to eat?  
 (c) Won't you have anything to eat?  
 (d) Won't you have something to eat?

Leech (1983:157ff.) proposes a Gricean analysis of these sentences, according to which their semantic structure (positive vs. negative polarity of *something* vs. *anything*, non-informativeness of negative questions) is key to deriving the corresponding 'default' implicatures.<sup>2</sup> Their indirectness resides in the increasing complexity of deriving these implicatures, which is thus responsible for their increasing politeness import (cf. Leech 1980:109ff.). Ultimately, the interpretation of (a) to (d) as increasingly polite is a matter of semantics, and as such ought to be universal: all cultures will derive the same GCI from an utterance of, say, (d) — although, as Blum-Kulka's (1987a) investigation of Israeli requestive hints and Sifianou's (1992a) investigation of Greek requests have shown, different cultures may *assess* this differently as to its politeness import. However, the ranking of (a) to (d) as increasingly polite along these lines turns out to be culturally biased: the derivation of the corresponding GCIs is not independent from background knowledge which is partly culturally specific (5.4.3 below). Indeed, it can be argued that (at least some) GCIs depend on the existing consensus between interlocutors, and as such cannot be universal in the absolute sense postulated previously (5.4.5 below). Consequently, no universally valid scale of indirectness along which to rank observed utterances is forthcoming.

In spelling out the details of their proposal, Brown and Levinson outline four verbal super-strategies — silence is a fifth<sup>3</sup> — under each of which are listed a number of distinct sub-strategies (B&L:94ff.; fig.1, 1.2.2 above). When attempting to characterise observed utterances as more or less indirect, one may appeal to these concrete realisations of different super-strategies. Unfortunately, this task is not unproblematic either, as the same linguistic forms may well fall under different super-strategies. Diminutives are a case in point. These are listed now as an instance of positive politeness (in their guise as in-group identity markers; B&L:109), now as an instance of negative politeness (in their function as hedges/minimisers, B&L:157, 177). Inclusive 'we' is another. When this indicates a switch in personal centre, or serves to

<sup>2</sup> Although Leech does not use the term GCIs, his reference to implicatures derived "by default" from the conversational maxims, and which are "provisional, and liable to subsequent cancellation" (1983:164-5) warrants use of the term in this case. The content of such GCIs roughly amounts to a gradual superimposition of polite beliefs as these are understood in Leech's scheme (ibid.:169-71).

<sup>3</sup> Sifianou (1995, 1997a, 1997b) argues against the inclusion of silence in this hierarchy on a par with other super-strategies suggesting instead that it is best viewed as a sub-strategy falling sometimes under positive politeness, and sometimes under negative politeness.

include both the speaker and the addressee in the activity, it constitutes an instance of positive politeness (B&L:119-20, 127-8), but it can also be negatively polite if prompted by the desire to impersonalise the speaker or the addressee (B&L:202-3). The same is true of the subjunctive, which can serve to avoid disagreement, and is then positively polite (B&L:117), or to deny the truth of the speaker's utterance or show pessimism, when it falls under negative politeness (B&L:157-8, 173-5). Similarly, giving reasons can be positively polite by assuming that the addressee can see the speaker's point (B&L:128), or negatively polite by making an implicit claim to being relevant (B&L:170). Such indeterminacies, which follow from the potential multifunctionality of all utterances (Turner 1996:4), are presumably resolved in Brown and Levinson's approach by recourse to the assumed values of D, P and  $R_x$ . However, this renders their approach unfalsifiable: if the degree of indirectness of an utterance is a concomitant of the assumed values of D, P and  $R_x$ , then it will always correspond to the weightiness of the  $FTA_x$  (the sum of the values of D, P and  $R_x$ ), since these values can be manipulated by the speaker according to the effect s/he is trying to achieve (B&L:228ff.). Differently put, if the values of the components on both sides of the equal sign in the formula  $W_x \supset (S,H) + P(H,S) + R_x$  cannot be determined unambiguously or independently of each other, the formula becomes an analytic truth. Consequently, while being true to the facts, Brown and Levinson's classification of linguistic realisations renders less than straight-forward the application of their hierarchy of strategies to the analysis of empirical data. Their ranking of super-strategies along a uni-directional scale of indirectness which is hard to implement — not to mention the fact that no indication is given as to how to choose between sub-strategies of the same super-strategy (Terkourafi 1999; 7.3 below) — must therefore be counted as a weakness of their approach.

#### 4.1.4 Toward a qualitative notion of indirectness

Taking the principle of iconicity as a starting point, an alternative proposal suggests that the more morpho-phonologically complex the expression used, the more indirect it is (Öman 1989; Irene Philippaki-Warburton p.c.). For example, use of the conditional, which is formed in SMG by adding the future particle *tha* to the inflectional paradigm of the imperfective past, would be more indirect than use of the future. Allowing for intonation to enter the picture, use of the indicative with rising intonation would be more indirect than use of the indicative with intonation which falls sentence-finally (Cruttenden 1997[1986]:163-4; Ladd 1996:113ff.).

However, appealing to this principle will not always do: both the subjunctive and the future are formed in Modern Greek periphrastically, by adding the particles *na* and *tha* respectively to the inflectional paradigm of the present. In this case, the iconicity argument fails to indicate one of the two forms as more indirect than the other. The matter is further complicated by the fact that, in some analyses, the future is subsumed

under the subjunctive on semantic grounds (Mackridge 1985:274ff.). Yet, while not yielding a scale of indirectness on which the values encountered in the data may be ranked without overlap, an appeal to iconicity does allow partial orderings of these values. Thus, the imperative turns out to be less indirect than the subjunctive, which is in turn less indirect than the conditional; using the 2pl. will be more indirect than using the 2sg.; and an utterance where the act requested/offered is expressed in the main clause by an Action Verb will be more direct than an utterance in which the act requested/offered is expressed in a subordinate clause introduced, say, by the verb *thelo*, ‘I-want’, all else being equal.

The addition of the last proviso points to the same difficulty which Brown and Levinson attempt to resolve by appealing to Leech’s semantic analysis (4.1.3 above): indirectness is ultimately a matter of the whole utterance, and as such any attempt to define it restricted to individual categories provides only a partial solution to the problem (B&L:22). In this study, I attempt to pin down the degree of indirectness of observed utterances with reference to the morpho-phonological realisation of the main-clause verb — in which the values of the first four linguistic variables considered (2.7.2.1-4 above) are combined — in conjunction with additional elements which do not contribute to truth-conditional content, but are interactionally significant and are interpreted as markers of politeness. The resulting picture is one of indirectness as a qualitative notion rather than a quantitative one: utterances may coincide as to their degree of indirectness (whether semantically or morpho-phonologically construed) but be distinguished as to the situations in which their use is deemed appropriate. While this approach may not seem very far removed from Brown and Levinson’s original proposal — for what are they trying to capture by means of their formula  $W_x \mathfrak{D}(S,H)+P(H,S)+R_x$  if not the situational appropriateness of different expressions? — it remains distinct, in that it assumes neither that expressions may be consistently ranked on a uni-directional scale of indirectness, nor that speakers’ choices will always move upwards along this scale — which is thus awarded psychological reality — when the values of D, P and  $R_x$  increase. It is to this last assumption that we now turn.

#### 4.2 D, P and $R_x$ under the microscope<sup>4</sup>

With reference to an utterance realising an  $FTA_x$ , Brown and Levinson define the social distance (D) between the speaker and the hearer as “a symmetric social dimension of similarity/difference within which S and H stand for the purposes of this act” (B&L:76). Frequency of interaction and the kinds of material or non-material goods (including face) exchanged between interlocutors, as well as stable social attributes, all play a part in determining the value of D on a particular occasion. The power (P) of the hearer over

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<sup>4</sup> This section deals with D, P and  $R_x$  as defined within Brown and Levinson’s framework. Theoretical discussions of some problems pertaining to the operation of these variables are found in Turner (1996, 1999). For a discussion of alternative terms and construals of these notions, see Spencer-Oatey 1996.

the speaker, on the other hand, is an asymmetric social dimension based on “the degree to which H can impose his own plans and his own self-evaluation (face) at the expense of S’s plans and self-evaluation” (B&L:77).<sup>5</sup> Material and metaphysical control are sources of power thus defined. The last variable,  $R_x$ , “is a culturally and situationally defined ranking of impositions by the degree to which they are considered to interfere with an agent’s wants of self-determination or of approval” (B&L:77). Assessments of these variables are context-dependent; D, P and  $R_x$  are assessed anew for each FTA. Moreover, once combined into the weightiness value of the  $FTA_x$  according to the formula  $W_x = D(S,H) + P(H,S) + R_x$ , the particular values of D, P and  $R_x$  become untraceable, thereby “mak[ing] the sources of the final assessment [of W] ambiguous” (B&L:81).

In this section, I shall argue that the above definitions of the three sociological variables, as well as the formula which combines their values in one numerical estimate of the weightiness of an  $FTA_x$ , fail to account for the data collected on the following grounds:

1. There is no change in the degree of (in)directness of realisations of offers and requests when observable features of the situation which, according to these definitions, have a bearing on the values of D and P, are directly manipulated to yield low D+P values and high D+P values respectively.
2. According to the above definitions, instances of asymmetrical usage point to the unequal status of interlocutors and must be associated with P. However, certain instances of asymmetrical usage in the data cannot be accounted for under the current definition of this variable. To account for these, the definition of power must be extended to allow for symbolic/metaphorical control of the addressee over the speaker, a move which renders the notion so elusive as to be practically unfalsifiable.
3. When calculating D, P and  $R_x$ , a speaker may not be starting from a clean slate: a high W may result from an interactional imbalance caused by a prior FTA.
4. Problems with  $R_x$ : an increase in R may be accompanied by a shift to more intimate address forms.
5. Even for those sets of expressions which can be ordered along a scale of increasing indirectness based on morpho-phonological criteria (4.1.4 above), speakers’ choices in different contexts reveal discontinuities in the application of the scale which cannot be captured with reference to the values of D, P and  $R_x$ .

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<sup>5</sup> The authors view both situations where the hearer has increased power over the speaker and those in which the speaker has increased power over the addressee as involving high P, thereby explaining choice of the off-record strategy (B&L:77, 83). This move conflates under the same rubric (high P) two types of situations which are intuitively different. However, they do not explore the obvious alternative of conceptualising high P of the speaker over the hearer as negative, i.e. represented by numerical values below zero.

6. There appears to be a division of labour between two general means of achieving indirectness: varying the morpho-phonology of the main-clause verb, and the use of additional modifiers. Rather than combining these to achieve a gradual increase in indirectness in keeping with increasing values of D, P and  $R_x$ , speakers opt for one or the other in predictable ways. The choice between the resulting two 'modes' of indirectness is therefore significant for speakers and is obscured if the corresponding formal means are placed along a uni-directional scale of indirectness.
7. Speakers' choices of linguistic means can sometimes be traced back to specific features of the situation, thus reducing ambiguities as to the source of the final assessment of W.

#### 4.2.1 The combined effect of the three sociological variables on degree of indirectness

If we estimate the values of D, P and  $R_x$  on particular occasions of use, we find that the degree of indirectness of the utterances involved does not increase analogously to the increasing values of the three sociological variables. The most straightforward hypothesis in this respect is that requests and offers exchanged between speakers of the same sex, age and social class (low D) who occupy similar positions in the professional hierarchy (low P) should be more direct than offers and requests exchanged between speakers of different ages and sexes (high D, withholding assumptions about the power relations between different age-groups and sexes) occupying different positions in the professional hierarchy (high P). Figure 4.1 shows the frequencies of different combinations of type of verb and modality (as distinct bars) and number+person (as colours within bars) used in requests performed for the first time by middle-class men, aged 31-50, addressing middle-class men, aged 31-50, who are old colleagues at work.<sup>6</sup> The situation being one of low D and low P, directness, in the guise of AV-imperative-2sg., is preferred (24/56, or 42.85% of utterances; (7) below).

- (7) [43.01; At work; Speaker: male, 31-50, middle-class; Addressee: male, 31-50, middle-class; Relationship: old colleagues]

*anikse tin porta re rik<sup>h</sup>o anikse tin porta re jati re*  
*open-imp.-perf.-2sg. the-ACC. door-ACC. hey rikos-VOC. open-imp.-perf.-2sg. the-ACC. door-ACC. hey because hey*  
 'Hey Riko *open* the door *open* the door because' ((addressee opens door))

This preference persists in requests performed for the first time by middle-class<sup>7</sup> women, aged 18-30, addressing middle-class men, aged 31-50, who are their employers at work, a situation of high D and high P (3/8, or 37.5% of utterances; fig.4.2, (8) below).

<sup>6</sup> Abbreviations are explained in the List of Abbreviations used in Figures.

<sup>7</sup> There were not enough instances of working-class women addressing middle-class men under the same circumstances to allow a comparison. High P is ensured by the speakers' position in the professional hierarchy, which is lower than that of their addressees.



- (8) [37.15; At work; Speaker: female, 18-30, middle-class; Addressee: male, 31-50, middle-class; Relationship: employee to employer]  
 efis poles tʃe: efis tes potʃi- var' tes mes to folter su, jati 'en tes val:is  
 ((several turns later))  
 var' tin tʃe tutin mes' to folter su na men ti xasume  
 have-ind.-2sg. many and, have-ind.-2sg. them there- *put-imp.-perf.-2sg.* them-ACC.  
 in the-ACC. folder-ACC. your-2sg., why not them-ACC. *put-imp.-perf.-2sg.*  
 ((several turns later))  
*put-imp.-perf.-2sg.* the-ACC. and this-ACC. in the-ACC. folder-ACC. your-2sg. SP  
 not her-ACC. lose-dep.-1pl.  
 'You have many {sheets of paper} and you have them over there, *put* them in your  
 folder why don't you?'  
 ((several turns later))  
 'Put this one too in your folder so we won't lose it.'

A similar picture emerges with regard to offers. Figure 4.3 shows offers performed for the first time by middle-class men, aged 31-50, addressing middle-class men, aged 31-50, who are old colleagues at work. The preferred realisations are: *θelo*, 'I-want'-indicative with rising intonation-2sg. (4/20, or 20% of utterances; (9) below), and AV-subjunctive with rising intonation-1sg. (3/20, or 15% of utterances; (10) below).

- (9) [83.02; At work; Speaker: male, 31-50, middle-class; Addressee: male, 31-50, middle-class; Relationship: old colleagues]  
 ((address term)) ela na su po re, e niko, *θes* na su kanoniso n' al:aksis imerominian?  
 ((address term)) come-imp.-perf.-2sg. SP you-2sg.-GEN. say-dep.-1sg., hey nikos-VOC., *want-ind.-2sg.* SP you-2sg.-GEN. arrange-dep.-1sg. SP change-dep.-2sg. date-ACC.?  
 ((address term)) 'Hey Niko, listen, *do you want* me to arrange a change of date for you?'
- (10) [76.18; At work; Speaker: male, 31-50, middle-class; Addressee: male, 31-50, middle-class; Relationship: old colleagues]  
 aku re (ðimitri tin pempti) stis kosioxto tu oktovri (.) en:a kami enjenia tʃi kato (.) ... *na rto* na se pcao na pame?  
 listen-imp.-perf.-2sg. hey (dimitris-VOC. the-ACC. thursday-ACC.) on-the-ACC. twenty-eighth the-GEN. october-GEN. (.) FP do-dep.-3sg. opening-ACC. down there (.) ... SP *come-dep.-1sg.* SP you-2sg.-ACC. pick-up-dep.-1sg. SP go-dep.-1pl.?  
 'Hey Dimitri, listen on Thursday October twenty-eight (.) he'll do the opening down there (.)... *Shall I come* to pick you up and go together?'

*θelo*-indicative with rising intonation-2sg. similarly accounts for 3/5 (60%) of offers performed for the first time by middle-class women, aged 18-30, addressing middle-class men, aged 31-50, who are their employers at work (fig.4.4; (11), (12) below).

- (11) [40.24; At work; Speaker: female, 18-30, middle-class; Addressee: male, 31-50, middle-class; Relationship: employee to employer]  
*na paranjilo* tin idian posotitan i *θes* na paranjilo pjo poles  
 SP order-dep.-1sg. the-ACC. same-ACC. quantity-ACC. or *want-ind.-2sg.* SP  
 order-dep.-1sg. more many-ACC.  
 'Shall I order the same quantity or *do you want* me to order more?'
- (12) [60.61; At work; Speaker: female, 18-30, middle-class; Addressee: male, 31-50, middle-class; Relationship: employee to employer]  
 ena si θru *θelis* na su fkalo k<sup>h</sup>opi?  
 one see-through *want-ind.-2sg.* SP you-2sg.-GEN. take-out-dep.-1sg. copy?

*'Do you want me to make you a transparency?'*

In both offers and requests, then, different combinations of the values of the extra-linguistic variables under consideration (sex, age, relationship between the interlocutors) which, according to Brown and Levinson's definitions of D and P, should produce an increase in the context-specific values of these variables, have no effect on speakers' preferences regarding the degree of indirectness of the main-clause verb of their utterances.

Interestingly, the similarity in degree of indirectness between situations of low D+P and those of high D+P also concerns additional markers of politeness used (fig.4.5). The relevant mitigation mechanisms include: (a) diminution: this may be derivational via suffixation, or periphrastic including time-hedges (*ena lepto*, 'one minute', *mja stiyimi*, 'one moment') and the adverb *liyo*, 'a little' (2.7.2.5, 4.1.2 above); (b) embedded conditional clauses using an Action Verb or the verb *thelo*, 'I-want' (4.1.2 above); (c) embedded clauses or prepositional phrases expressing purpose or reason (4.1.2; (7), (8) above). Twenty out of seventy-six utterances (26.31%) exchanged between middle-class men, aged 31-50, who are old colleagues at work (low D+P), and three out of fourteen utterances (21.42%) by middle-class women, aged 18-30, to middle-class men, aged 31-50, who are their employers at work (high D+P), make use of one of these mitigation mechanisms. These ratios are sufficiently close to suggest that an increase in the values of D+P produces no increase in the overall degree of indirectness of the observed utterances. What is more, there is no qualitative difference in the mitigating mechanisms preferred: giving reasons for one's utterance (possibility (c)) prevails in situations of both low and high D+P.

Two objections may be raised to this interpretation of the data. First, could the variable of Ranking of the imposition be responsible for the relatively direct realisations observed? This is currently taken into account in distinguishing requests from offers,<sup>8</sup> and in distinguishing between the first time and subsequent times an offer or a request is performed (2.7.1.1.-2 above). Is it possible that  $R_x$  was high when D and P were low, and *vice versa*, thus offsetting the combined effect of D+P? This is unlikely for two reasons. First, realisations of greater directness than any observed should be available for use in situations where all three variables are low. However, the preferences described above concern the most direct realisations from the range of formal possibilities available in CG. Second, as the examples cited show, conversational topics largely concerned mundane issues. As a result,  $R_x$  is generally stable at a low level throughout the data (B&L:251; fn.3, 2.3 above). It therefore does not balance the variations in D+P in the data. Brown and Levinson's predictions regarding the

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<sup>8</sup> In Brown and Levinson's account, both constitute intrinsic FTAs threatening the hearer's negative face (B&L:65-6). Moreover, offers are amongst few FTAs which may be performed baldly-on-record (B&L:99). These predictions fail to explain why preferred realisations of offers in the data are relatively more 'indirect' (by pushing the act offered in complement position, or using rising intonation) than preferred realisations of requests.

combined effect of the three sociological variables on the degree of indirectness of observed utterances are simply not confirmed.

The second objection may still contain an element of truth, though it invalidates Brown and Levinson's predictions in a different respect. In the above instances, more requests and offers are exchanged between interlocutors when D and P are low (76 between 21 pairs, average 3.62 per pair) compared to those exchanged when D and P are high (14 between 6 pairs; average 2.34 per pair). To account for this finding within Brown and Levinson's theory, one would have to appeal to their fifth super-strategy, 'Don't do the FTA'.<sup>9</sup> While increased D and P values may well result in non-realisation of the FTA, this is something which cannot be empirically verified. In addition, one would then have to explain why an increase in the values of D and P causes a polarisation of speakers' choices around the two extremes of Brown and Levinson's hierarchy of strategies (fig.1, 1.2.2 above), rather than a shift toward higher-numbered strategies. Alternatively, drawing on the notion of a Conversational Contract (Fraser & Nolen 1981, Fraser 1990), I would propose that it is part of the terms of the CC (the negotiated rights and obligations of interlocutors) that employees conform to the wishes of their employers rather than express their own, whereas no such restriction applies between equals on the professional hierarchy. This view has the advantage of accounting for both the lesser number of offers and requests addressed by employees to employers, as well as their direct performance: offers and requests falling within the terms of the CC have been pre-negotiated, so to speak, thereby requiring no further explicit negotiation each time.

#### 4.2.2 Metaphorical Power?

The most common address terms in the data are FN+*mu* (the possessive pronoun 'my'), FN, title+FN, and title+LN (4.1.2 above). The distribution of two of these in the data, FN+*mu* and title+FN, is mostly asymmetrical, and as such calls for explanation under the variable of Power. Instances of FN+*mu* are surprisingly homogeneous: out of thirty pairs of speakers and addressees, twenty-four use this asymmetrically. In the majority of cases, a speaker who receives FN+*mu* replies with FN or a kinship term, such as '*mam:a*, 'mum'. In only two out of thirty pairs is the speaker male; moreover, in only three pairs is s/he younger than the addressee. The emerging pattern is one where FN+*mu* is used asymmetrically by older women when addressing younger addressees. Being a typical address term used by mothers to children, FN+*mu* could then be associated with the addressee's low P over the speaker. This interpretation explains why a male employer can use it to address a female employee:

- (13) [76.14; At work; Speaker: male, over 51, middle-class; Addressee: female, over 51, middle-class; Relationship: employer to employee]  
 lipon kitakse, kane telefonima esi *marula mu*

<sup>9</sup> For problems with this strategy, see fn.3 in 4.1.3 above.

so look-imp.-perf.-2sg., make-imp.-perf.-2sg. phone-call you-2sg.-NOM. *Marula-VOC. my*  
 ‘OK look, you make the call, *Marula dear*.’

However, only five out of twenty-four pairs using FN+*mu* asymmetrically are employers addressing employees. Five more instances are exchanged between family members, while the remaining eleven instances are exchanged between friends, acquaintances or old colleagues. To account for these last eleven instances in terms of the speaker’s Power over the addressee, this must now be construed metaphorically. Power based on the speaker’s older age relative to the addressee no longer emanates from control over the addressee, whether this is understood as material control (over economic distribution and physical force) or metaphysical control (over the actions of the speaker by virtue of metaphysical forces subscribed to by the speaker). It therefore cannot be captured within the current definition of this variable (B&L:77). Instances in the data where the addressee’s ‘real’ (as opposed to metaphorical) power over the speaker is not low, yet FN+*mu* is used, make this point rather dramatically.

- (14) [48.17; At work; Speaker: female, 31-50, middle-class; Addressee: female, 31-50, working-class; Relationship: salesperson to new customer]  
 ean eçis opjoðipote enðiazmo ðelo, e *jan:a mu*?  
 if have-ind.-2sg. any hesitation want-ind.-1sg., eh *yana my*?  
 ‘If you have any questions, *Yana dear*?’

In (14) the addressee is a customer entering the shop for the first time. The salesperson’s repeated offers (of services and advice) indicate her desire to see the client return. In this sense, the addressee can be said to have at least some power over the speaker. Use of FN+*mu* in this example is obviously an instance of positive politeness. But by using this asymmetrically, the speaker is asserting her power over the addressee. This power, however, does not emanate from her relationship to the addressee; in fact, it runs contrary to it. She can therefore claim power over the addressee only metaphorically: by behaving the way a mother would toward a child, she conveys her desire to treat the addressee well.

A closer look at instances of title+FN reveals that this is used asymmetrically in twelve out of twenty-four speaker-addressee pairs. This usage consists of one party giving title+FN and receiving, variably, FN, LN (without title, a usage nowadays confined to the army and the classroom), or *mana mu*, literally ‘my mother’, an endearing form of address (2.7.2.5 above). The problem with accounting for these twelve pairs is that the person who receives title+FN does not always have control over the speaker. Consequently, according to Brown and Levinson’s definition, s/he should not have Power over the speaker. Only one out of the twelve is a pair of employer and employee. Six further pairs are old colleagues: in four of these the recipient of title+FN is older, while in two more s/he is of the same age-group as the speaker. The remaining five pairs are salespersons and old customers, and the recipient of title+FN (whether salesperson or customer) is always older. Older age in a work setting thus turns out to

be the guiding principle in asymmetrical title+FN usage.<sup>10</sup> However, age can only in a metaphorical/symbolic way be construed as a source of Power of the addressee over the speaker. Power based (solely) on age is, so to speak, ‘nominal’: it cannot be enforced in the direct way that Brown and Levinson’s definition implies.

By extension, then, title+FN comes to encode appreciation/respect: enhancing his/her own positive face by showing him/herself to be a competent member of society is the speaker’s primary concern in expressing these feelings, rather than attending to the addressee’s real power over him/her. As such, the expression of appreciation/respect can override considerations of social class or relationship, even when these would normally tip the balance of power in favour of the speaker.<sup>11</sup> This is especially obvious in examples such as (15) below, where a younger working-class female salesperson receives title+FN by an older, middle class old customer.

(15) [66.11; At work; Speaker1: male, over 51, middle-class; Speaker2: female, 31-50, working-class; Relationship: old customer (S1) to salesperson (S2)]

S1: *ela ciria* (.) *ela ciria eleni*. *ðistixos ena*

S2: [ti na kratiso?]

S1: [ena çimon mono.] *ena çimon mono*. *kratis' to tje in' endaksi*

S1: come-imp.-perf.-2sg. Mrs-VOC. (.) come-imp.-perf.-2sg. Mrs-VOC. *eleni-VOC*. . unfortunately one-ACC.

S2: [what SP charge-dep.-1sg.?)

S1: [one-ACC. juice-ACC. only.] *one juice only*. charge-imp.-perf.-2sg. it-ACC. and be-ind.-3sg. OK

S1: ‘Come Mrs (.) come Mrs Eleni. Unfortunately one’

S2: ‘[What shall I charge for?]

S1: ‘[Just one juice.] Just one juice. Take that and keep the change.’

In sum, asymmetrical instances of FN+*mu* and title+FN may be explained only if we extend the current definition to include a notion of power which may be impossible to implement in any real sense. Such metaphorical construal leaves us with an elusive notion which is hardly constrained: it can be in conflict with concrete sources of power, and may even override them as shown above. How is a speaker to decide which to attend to, real or metaphorical Power, if we extend its definition in this way? Moreover, asymmetrical uses of FN+*mu* and title+FN cannot be attributed to re-ranking P (B&L:228ff.). In re-ranking variable values, speakers aim to achieve particular effects, i.e. engage in strategic use of language, whereas FN+*mu* and title+FN are established as a form of address used by older women to younger addressees, and by younger speakers to older addressees in a work setting respectively.

However, calculations of Power need not come into the picture. Use of FN+*mu* and title+FN can be directly tied to extra-linguistic features of the situation, the speaker’s female sex and/or older age relative to the addressee, and the addressee’s older age in

<sup>10</sup> Recipients of title+FN were older than 50 years of age in sixteen out of twenty-four pairs, and between the ages of 31 and 50 in a further seven pairs. This suggests an absolute ‘age-threshold’ of around 45 years of age for addressing someone by title+FN. While testing this hypothesis necessitates information about the exact age of informants, which was not available, the existence of an absolute age-threshold points even more strongly to age rather than power as the determining factor in title+FN usage.

<sup>11</sup> Schwenter (1993:38) reaches a similar conclusion based on evidence from Spanish.

work settings, respectively.<sup>12</sup> Strategic exploitations of these are then possible, as in (13), (14), (15) above, and (16) below. Indeed, it is because these last examples deviate from established usage that they can achieve the particular effects the respective speakers are seeking to achieve each time.

#### 4.2.3 Isolated FTAs?

The following marked usage of title+FN occurred at home:

- (16) [56.7; At home; Speaker: male, 31-50, middle-class; Addressee: male, 18-30, middle-class; Relationship: family]

o nikos? niko ela na sistiθis me ti marina. o nikos ine fititis sti lefkosia,  
((two turns))

katse *cirie niko*. θelis na mas kanis ta neskafe esi pu kseris i na mas ta kan'i fanitsa?

nikos-NOM.? nikos-VOC. come-imp.-perf.-2sg. SP introduce-pass.-dep.-2sg. with the-ACC. marina-ACC. . the-NOM. nikos-NOM. be-ind.-3sg. student-NOM. in-the-ACC. lefkosia-ACC.

((two turns))

sit-imp.-perf.-2sg. *Mr-VOC. nikos-VOC.* . want-ind.-2sg. SP us-GEN. make-dep.-2sg. the-ACC. coffees-ACC. you-2sg.-NOM. that know-ind.-2sg. or SP us-GEN. them-ACC. make-dep.-3sg. the-NOM. fani-dim.-ACC.?

Nikos? Niko come say hi to Marina. Nikos is studying in Lefkosia.

((two turns))

Have a seat *Mr Nikos*. Do you want to make us some coffee since it is your speciality or shall Fani make them?

*cirie niko* in (16) is marked both because the addressee is a younger member of one's family and the setting is at home. What is more, it cannot be explained as a momentary shift to a more 'formal' address term, as proposed by Brown and Levinson in cases of an increase in R (4.2.4 below). It occurs as part of an offer to the addressee to sit down, something he was about to do anyway. Even the ensuing request to prepare coffee, to which the offer may be said to function as a prelude, cannot in any way be considered to be an imposition of high R: it is an everyday occurrence at home. What, then, prompted this marked use of title+FN, which is unique in the data and was perceived as marked in context?

Goffman's (1967:19) notion of interactional imbalance is relevant here:

"When the participants in an undertaking or encounter fail to prevent the occurrence of an event that is expressively incompatible with the judgements of social worth that are being maintained, and when the event is of the kind that is difficult to overlook [...] one or more participants find themselves in an established state of ritual disequilibrium or disgrace, and an attempt must be made to re-establish a satisfactory ritual state for them."

Based on this notion, Bayraktaroglu (1992a:15) proposes the notion of Face Boosting Acts, acts which *satisfy* (rather than threaten) the face-wants of the addressee and/or the speaker. The postulation of FBAs is necessary to account for what happens when the interactional balance has been disturbed, and face loss has occurred for one of the

<sup>12</sup> Revising their original stance, Brown and Levinson allow address forms to be directly tied to the social relationship between interlocutors (B&L:18).

participants. The father addressing his son with title+FN in (16) may be construed as such an FBA. Face loss has occurred for the son in closely preceding discourse through another participant's noticing of his physical disability. Arguably, the father's marked use of title+FN attempts to correct this prior loss of face by boosting his son's face: addressing him as an older person worthy of respect.

In exemplifying how a "negative" politeness strategy can be used to redress positive face needs, this example highlights the fact that attempts to associate particular politeness sub-strategies with specific face-wants (as in B&L) are poorly motivated. Moreover, if the motivation for choosing a more 'formal' address term in this case does indeed reside with an increase in  $R_x$ , this  $R_x$  does not narrowly correspond to the  $FTA_x$  in which the address term occurs; rather, it is the result of an interactional imbalance caused by another speaker in prior discourse. That is, the seriousness of the  $FTA_x$  is not in this case compounded of the risk which  $x$  engenders for the addressee's positive face (B&L:78), but of the threat to the addressee's positive face left unmitigated by another participant in  $x-1$ . This possibility is not captured under the authors' notion of context-dependence of the three sociological variables (B&L:78ff.), since, judging from their examples, what they seem to have in mind is dependence on *extra*-linguistic context, rather than on the linguistic context immediately preceding an FTA. Examples such as (16), then, are in line with previous findings regarding the negotiation of face over conversational turns (1.3.1 above) and call into question Brown and Levinson's claim that in calculating D, P and  $R_x$ , the speaker always starts with a clean slate (B&L:76).

#### 4.2.4 Problems with Ranking

Although FTAs of high R are generally absent from the data (4.2.1 above), one such instance, which directly refers to the ongoing recording, is notable. In (17), the husband reminds his wife that the conversation is being recorded, after she has been referring to business matters with names and facts.

- (17) [13.15; At home; Speaker: male, over 51, middle-class; Addressee: female, over 51, middle-class; Relationship: family]  
 katayrafi ta tuto re: *aynula*  
 register-ind.-3sg. them-ACC. this-NOM. hey *agni-dim.-VOC.*  
 'Hey *Agni-dim.* this is recording it.'

D and P on this occasion are low: the conversation is taking place at home amongst family members and the researcher who is a family friend. This leaves  $R_x$  to account for the speaker's choice of the off-record strategy. Discussing business is a delicate matter, much more so with a tape-recorder turned on; his wife should have known better, and his reminding her requires a lot of tact to avoid emphasising her *faux pas*. But if  $R_x$  is high, then how is the use of the endearing address term (*agni-dim.-VOC.*) to be explained? This is not the established form of the addressee's name. Rather, it constitutes a momentary shift to a more intimate address form than usual. With respect to such shifts, Brown and Levinson note: "[w]hat we did not expect, and have not

found, is that there might be a shift to more ‘intimate’ address forms with an *increase* in R” (B&L:18; original emphasis). (17) exemplifies the possibility of such a shift.

One possible explanation for the husband’s choice of address term in (17) is to enhance the chances of his wife’s compliance with his remark. CG derivational diminutives have strong connotations of affection, and are therefore appropriate for use with only a restricted range of addressees (Terkourafi 1997:24). By asserting his intimacy with his wife, the speaker attempts to present his remark as a piece of advice rather than a reprimand. In this sense, his choice of address term could have hardly been more appropriate: indeed, it is *because*  $R_x$  is high that a reassertion of this intimacy is in order. However, this explanation diverges from Brown and Levinson’s account, according to which, “if shifts [in address term usage] are permissible at all, we should merely expect a shift towards a more ‘formal’ address form than normally used [...] when R-values increase between the same interlocutors” (B&L:18).

Arguably, what we have in (17) is a case of mixture of strategies. This can result in either a hybrid strategy (something between positive and negative politeness), or a continuous approaching and distancing of interlocutors (B&L:230-1). However, (17) exemplifies a third possibility: a combination of the off-record strategy with positive politeness as a way of concurrently attending to both aspects of the addressee’s face. The fact that the speaker prefers this strategy over using the off-record strategy alone is evidence that expressing respect for the addressee’s freedom of action as well as asserting familiarity with the addressee can be more efficient in achieving redress in situations of high W than any of these strategies in isolation. In other words, the two aspects of face can be equally important, so that none can be ignored without a loss in efficiency. Such evidence argues against according priority to the negative aspect of face over its positive counterpart (B&L:73-4), and supports the stance that, if such a decision is possible at all, it cannot be taken independently of cultural and situational factors (1.3.1 above).

#### 4.2.5 Problems with scalability

As mentioned in 4.2.2, the most commonly encountered address terms in the data are FN+*mu*, FN, title+FN, and title+LN. Intuitively, this order of presentation corresponds to a scale of increasing formality/decreasing familiarity. However, using morphological criteria, FN+*mu* is ranked as more indirect than FN. That is, the expression of familiarity may prompt increased indirectness in much the same way as the expression of formality. This is nicely captured in Brown and Levinson’s positive politeness strategy, which is more indirect than bald-on-record usage. The problem is that direct usage (FN) is applicable to situations of higher D+P than positive politeness (FN+*mu*), e.g. by employees addressing employers ((18) below). The association of increasing W with increasing indirectness can no longer be defended in such cases.



- (18) [91.15; At work; Speaker: female, 18-30, middle-class; Addressee: male, 31-50, middle-class; Relationship: employee to employer]

*mixali?* na 'rtis na ðis kati?

*michael-VOC.?* SP come-dep.-2sg. SP see-dep.-2sg. something?

'*Michael?* Come and see something?'

Attempts to rank the above set of address terms along one continuous scale of increasing indirectness are faced with the additional problem that discontinuities occur in the application of the scale in different settings.<sup>13</sup> Address terms used at work range from FN+*mu* through FN to title+FN, and occasionally title+LN (fig.4.6). However, title+FN does not feature amongst address terms used on radio/TV and in formal discussions (fig.4.7).<sup>14</sup> The possibilities now range from FN+*mu* through FN to title+LN. Older addressees are consistently addressed with title+LN (and 2pl.), while younger addressees receive FN (and 2sg.):

- (19) [03.11; On the radio; Speaker: male, 31-50, middle-class; Addressee: male, 31-50, middle-class; Relationship: interviewer to interviewee]

e:h *cirie maruxo* na *sas* ðoso *esas* to l:oyon (.)

er Mr-VOC. maruxos-VOC. SP *you-2pl.-GEN.* give-dep.-1sg. *you-2pl.-GEN.* the-ACC. speech-ACC. (.)

'Er, *Mr Maruxos*, can I bring *you* in now?'

- (20) [03.05; On the radio; Speaker: male, 31-50, middle-class; Addressee: male, 18-30, middle-class; Relationship: interviewer to interviewee]

ce: *andrea* vevea:: na rotisume: (.) e-i zoi *su* meta ta ðekates:era (.) e-eçi al:aksi?

and *andrea-VOC.* certainly SP ask-dep.-1pl. (.) er the-NOM. life-NOM. *your-2sg.* after the fourteen (.) have-ind.-3sg. change-non-fin.?

'And *Andrea* of course let us ask. Has *your* life changed after the age of fourteen?'

(21) below provides further evidence of the restriction against use of \*title+FN in formal settings: this never seems to constitute an option, even when doubt exists as to the appropriate address term:

- (21) [88.01; On TV; Speaker: male, 31-50, middle-class; Addressee: male, 31-50, working-class; Relationship: interviewer to interviewee]

o: *nikos* o *cirios* t<sup>h</sup>*erlas* ðeli na pi kati

the-NOM. *nikos-NOM.* the-NOM. *Mr-NOM.* *terlas-NOM.* want-ind.-3sg. SP say-dep.-3sg. something

'*Nikos*, *Mr Terlas* would like to say something.'

This qualitative difference cannot be captured with reference to D, P and R<sub>x</sub>: if the type of setting produced an increase in the values of these variables, we would expect a wholesale shift toward more formal address in formal settings. However, this is not what we find, since intimate address by FN+*mu* is still appropriate in some cases, and so is FN, while title+FN is excluded. If, on the other hand, title+FN and title+LN are viewed as different realisations of the same strategy, it is important to recognise that

<sup>13</sup> Braun (1988:38-42) discusses difficulties in ranking address terms along a single scale drawing on evidence from English, Arabic and Spanish.

<sup>14</sup> Title+FN is a common address term in SMG also (Bakakou-Orfanou 1989:170-1). Therefore, its absence from more formal settings in CG cannot be attributed to standardising tendencies.

these realisations are not interchangeable. But if the strategy used is determined by  $W_x$  (the sum of D, P and  $R_x$ ), Brown and Levinson's theory contains no indication as to how to choose between different realisations of the same strategy. The exclusion of title+FN from formal settings suggests that its use is constrained directly by the type of setting, rather than — or in addition to —  $W_x$ . Consequently, its use in the CG data can be more adequately described with reference to extra-linguistic features of the situation: the type of setting (at work) and the addressee's older age relative to the speaker. In this case, allowing extra-linguistic features of the situation to enter directly into decisions regarding the applicable set of expressions yields the correct predictions, as it enables us to reflect qualitative differences between expressions which cannot be captured solely with reference to D, P and  $R_x$ .

#### 4.2.6 Two 'modes' of indirectness

In 4.1.4 above, a 'qualitative' construal of indirectness was proposed, and was contrasted to the quantitative one current in most accounts to date (e.g. Fraser & Nolen 1981; Leech 1980, 1983; Blum-Kulka 1987a; B&L). Evidence of problems with scalability (4.2.5 above) and of two different 'modes' of expressing indirectness in CG in the data collected supports the case for this alternative notion.

A comparison of the overall range of combinations of type of verb, modality and number+person used at home to perform requests (fig.4.8) and offers (fig.4.9) to the overall range of additional markers of politeness used at home (fig.4.10) reveals a concentration on a few combinations so far as verb forms are concerned, accompanied by a wide range of additional markers of politeness. Utterances recorded at work repeat this pattern (figs. 4.11, 4.12, 4.13): a small number of combinations of type of verb-modality-number+person prevail in the first two diagrams (4.2.1 above), while the range of additional markers of politeness accompanying them is inversely analogous to this. This division of labour between (limited) modification in the main-clause verb and (extensive) modification via additional elements is inverted on radio/TV and in formal discussions (figs. 4.14, 4.15, 4.16). In the latter settings speakers draw on a wide range of combinations of type of verb-modality-number+person. While speech act verbs' newly noted prevalence over action verbs (R-SAV-IMP, R-SAV-SUBJ in fig.4.14; O-SAV-SUBJ in fig.4.15) may be readily explicable given the shift of focus to verbal activity in these settings, the high occurrence of other combinations (*thelo*, 'I-want'-indicative-1sg., *thelo*-conditional-1sg., and *epitrepo*, 'I-permit'-imperative-2pl. for requests (R-THELO-IND, R-THELO-COND, R-EPITREPO-IMP in fig.4.14); *thelo*-indicative-3sg., *boro*, 'I-can'-indicative-1pl. for offers (O-THELO-IND, O-BORO-IND in fig.4.15)) is not similarly directed to the verbal nature of the activity. Their occurrence thus suggests the speakers' increased tendency to modify the main verb forms of their utterances in these settings. Inversely, speakers now use additional

markers of politeness a lot more sparsely (fig.4.16): LN is the prevalent address term, with FN used a lot less.

Looking at figures 4.8 through 4.16, we may draw a number of conclusions. First, exchanges at home and exchanges at work show extensive similarities. The set of expressions which interlocutors draw on at home is a proper subset of the set of expressions on which they draw at work. As one informant put it, when asked how he would address his superior at work (in the fire brigade), “*ðen exumen emis tetja*”, ‘we don’t have such things’, referring to the power differential between superiors and inferiors in the professional hierarchy. While his remark is probably inaccurate as it stands (witness the small number of requests/offers addressed by employees to employers; 4.2.1 above), it is revealing of native speakers’ perception of verbal interaction at work: explicit verbal negotiation at work is highly reminiscent of the informal style found at home.

Second, considerations of standardisation must be brought into the picture. A number of additional markers of politeness observed in this study are either variants of SMG ones (e.g. CG *re* for SMG *vre*, ‘hey’; CG *ate* for SMG *ade*, an exhortative particle; CG *kori* for SMG *kope’la*, ‘girl, lass’; CG diminutive suffixes *-u(ð)in*, *-u(ð)a* for SMG *-aci*, *-ula/-itsa*) or occur only marginally in SMG (e.g. *mana mu*, ‘my mother’). They are therefore excluded from use on radio/TV and during formal discussions, which favour standardising tendencies much as do discussions with Mainland Greeks.<sup>15</sup> To an extent, then, figures 4.8-4.16 reveal the anatomy of two different registers: a non-standardising one (at home and at work) and a standardising one (on radio/TV/during formal discussions). The sharp divide between modification of main verb forms and modification by means of additional markers of politeness must be partly attributed to the existence of these two registers. Nevertheless, if politeness is defined as adequacy or appropriateness of verbal expression in relation to extra-linguistic context (1.1, 1.3.2, 1.3.3 above), it follows that, in selecting an appropriate register for the conversation, interlocutors are guided by their concern for politeness. An inappropriate selection of register can indeed be interpreted as impolite. A telling example of this occurred when the researcher (of SMG upbringing) was reprimanded by a family member for

<sup>15</sup> Evidence which supports the comparability of the two situations includes switches between 2pl. and 2sg. (2.7.2.4 above), and between SMG and CG diminutive suffixes in successive turns of the same speaker, as below:[69.19, 69.20; At work; Speaker: male, 31-50, working-class; AIMG; Relationship: acquaintances; Addressee2: female, 31-50, working-class; Relationship: family]

S to A1: *ðos mu ena: ena tsiyarac?*

A2 ((commenting)): *tsiyaraci?*

((some turns))

S to A2: *tota? val' mu mjan ipoyrafuða ðame ...*

S to A1: *give-imp.-perf.-2sg. me-GEN. one, one cigarette-dim./SMG-ACC.?*

A2: *cigarette-dim./SMG-ACC.?*

((some turns))

S to A2: *tota-VOC.? put-imp.-perf.-2sg. me-GEN. one signature-dim./CG-ACC. here and have-ind.-2sg.*

...

S to A1: ‘Give me a, a cigarette-dim./SMG?’

A2: ‘A cigarette-dim./SMG?’

S to A2: ‘Tota? Put a signature-dim./CG here for me? ...’

addressing another family member older than herself in the 2pl. abiding by an established usage in Mainland Greece. While the recipient of the 2pl. defended her usage as polite (taking into account her SMG upbringing), her choice of register was obviously inappropriate given the extra-linguistic features of the exchange, thereby exposing her to criticism. In other words, choice of register (standardising vs. non-standardising) has an impact on politeness assessments in CG, and therefore falls within the scope of any study of politeness in CG.

To account for the existence of these two registers within Brown and Levinson's theory would require some way of comparing the overall indirectness of an utterance using relatively direct verb forms and one or more additional markers of politeness (most commonly, expressions of reason/purpose, hedges, and conditionals, often accompanied by an appropriate address term) to the overall indirectness of an utterance using more elaborate main-clause verb forms (with the act offered/requested often being relegated to an embedded clause) but no additional markers of politeness. The task seems impossible. Clearly, however, speakers do not draw on the two resources (modifying the main-clause verb vs. using additional markers of politeness) in parallel as they vary the indirectness of their utterances. Rather, they draw on one *instead of* the other. Significantly, it is not up to the speaker to choose which resource to draw on each time, as the researcher's experience with use of the 2pl. to family members shows. Extra-linguistic features of the situation guide a choice between what we may call two different 'modes' of being indirect in the data collected. Conflating these two modes on a uni-dimensional scale of indirectness blurs a qualitative distinction which is essential to politeness considerations in CG.

#### 4.2.7 Transparent sources of W assessment

Brown and Levinson claim that "in compounding the variables into a single index,  $[W_x \ominus (S,H) + P(H,S) + R_x]$  makes the sources of the final assessment ambiguous" (B&L:81).<sup>16</sup> That is, the proposed formula operates on a summative basis which implies that, so long as the 'right' amount of indirectness is invested, the polite import of an utterance is ensured. The fact that "[a] number cannot reflect the considerations that formed it" (Minsky 1975:275; original emphasis) becomes problematic in the light of examples suggesting that, even in the same socio-cultural context, certain polite forms may be more attached to the implications of one variable rather than another. Discussing asymmetrical uses of FN+*mu* (4.2.2 above), I concluded that an appeal to the speaker's sex (female) and/or age (older than the addressee) yields more accurate predictions than an appeal to the variable of Power as defined by Brown and Levinson. Similarly, asymmetrical uses of title+FN are more adequately accounted for in terms of

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<sup>16</sup> Brown and Levinson suggest that these values may be measured arithmetically on a scale of 1 to n (n possibly corresponding to 7; B&L:76, 287n.18). Previous findings challenging the appropriateness of addition in this case are summarised in Turner (1996:5).

the addressee's age (older than the speaker) and the setting of the exchange (at work). This is not to say that all asymmetrical uses of FN+*mu* and title+FN will actually exhibit these extra-linguistic features. However, they all aim at invoking the emotive connotations of relationships which are characterised by these extra-linguistic features. In this sense, rather than being ambiguous as to the sources which prompted the speaker's choice of address, asymmetric occurrences of these address terms make such sources transparent: the speaker's asymmetric use of these address terms would be infelicitous if there were any ambiguity as to the particular combination of extra-linguistic features which s/he is trying to invoke and with which the expression of certain feelings is associated.

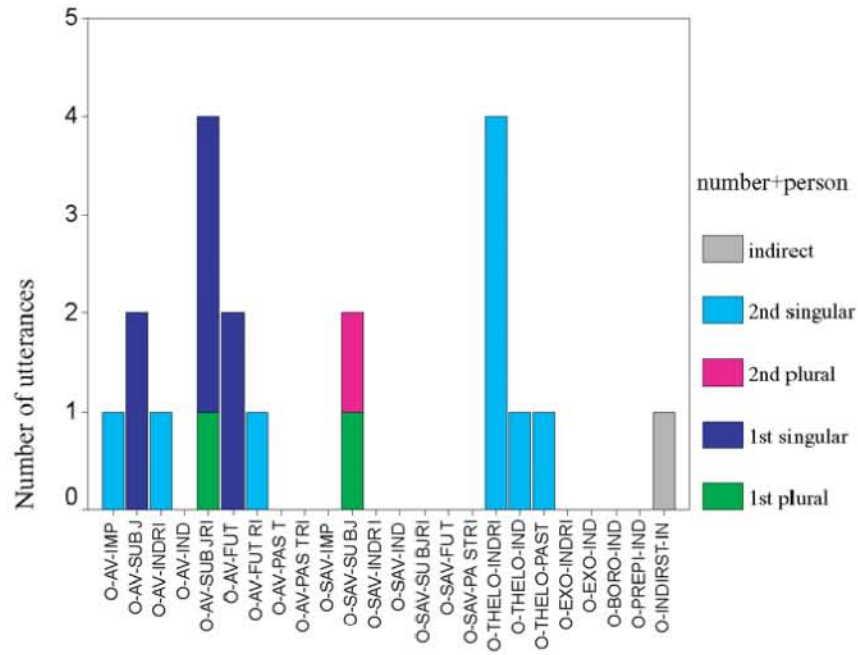
Similarly, if the setting of the exchange constrains the applicable set of address terms to a proper subset of the total set of address terms available in the culture as a whole, as argued in 4.2.5 above, the speaker's choice of address term will have the effect of revealing something of the source of his/her final assessment. In formal settings, title+LN is the standard way of addressing older addressees; in work settings, the same addressees are most likely to receive title+FN. Finally, the speaker's choice to be indirect by (primarily) modifying the main-clause verb of his/her utterance, or by using additional markers of politeness can also reduce ambiguities as to the source of his/her final assessment: to the extent that these two resources are drawn upon differentially in CG (4.2.6 above), opting for one rather than the other reveals something of the reasons which prompted the speaker's choice of expression.

### 4.3 Summary

This chapter attempted to account for the CG conversational data within Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness. Their main claims concern the existence of a continuous scale of indirectness along which speakers' choices move upwards as the weightiness ( $W_x$ ) of the FTA<sub>x</sub> increases, where  $W_x$  is compounded of the assumed values of D, P and R<sub>x</sub>. The descriptive statistical analysis of the data and discussion of individual examples challenge this view. On the one hand, current definitions of indirectness do not indicate a universally valid way of assessing the relative indirectness of utterances, rendering the quantitative notion which underlies Brown and Levinson's hierarchy of strategies (B&L:60; fig.1, 1.2.2 above) hard to implement empirically (4.1.3 above). But, were this possible in the first place, it is doubtful whether such a move would be in the right direction. Evidence that speakers do not use expressions which are 'equally' indirect (using the proposed hierarchy, or morpho-phonological criteria) interchangeably (4.2.6 above) suggests that the choice between these expressions is significant for politeness assessments and calls for a qualitative construal of indirectness (4.1.4 above). On the other hand, the variables of Distance, Power and Ranking of the imposition calculated for individual acts are not adequate, as currently defined, to account for speakers' choices of address terms, whether these concern

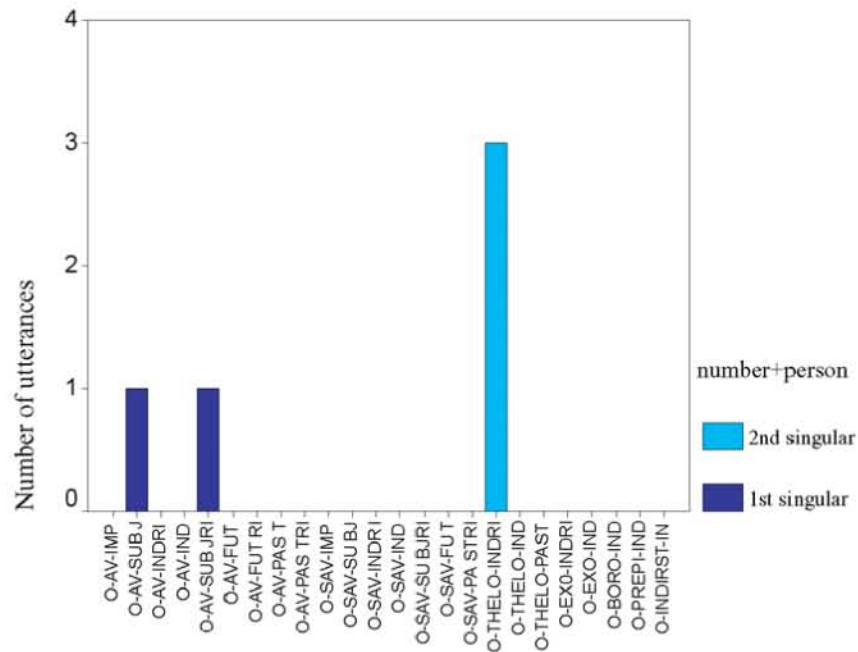
established forms of address, or strategic exploitations of these (4.2.2, 4.2.3, 4.2.4 above). Furthermore, they do not seem to have any psychological validity in guiding interlocutors' assessments of politeness (4.2.1 above). In the above cases, a direct appeal to extra-linguistic features of the situation such as the interlocutors' sex, age, and social class, the relationship between them, and the setting of the exchange, yields the correct predictions.

In conclusion, it appears that the extra-linguistic features of a situation do not reduce without residue to D, P and  $R_x$  values. What speakers seem to have internalised in this case is not a principle such as  $W_x \exists (S,H)+P(H,S)+R_x$ , but knowledge of what expressions to use in what situations. The following two chapters examine how politeness as a societally rather than individually oriented notion is achieved (chapter 5) and conceptualised (chapter 6), while the final chapter applies these theoretical proposals to the CG data.



Combinations of type of verb and modality

**Figure 4.3: Offers performed for the first time by middle-class men, aged 31-50, addressing middle-class men, aged 31-50, who are old colleagues at work**

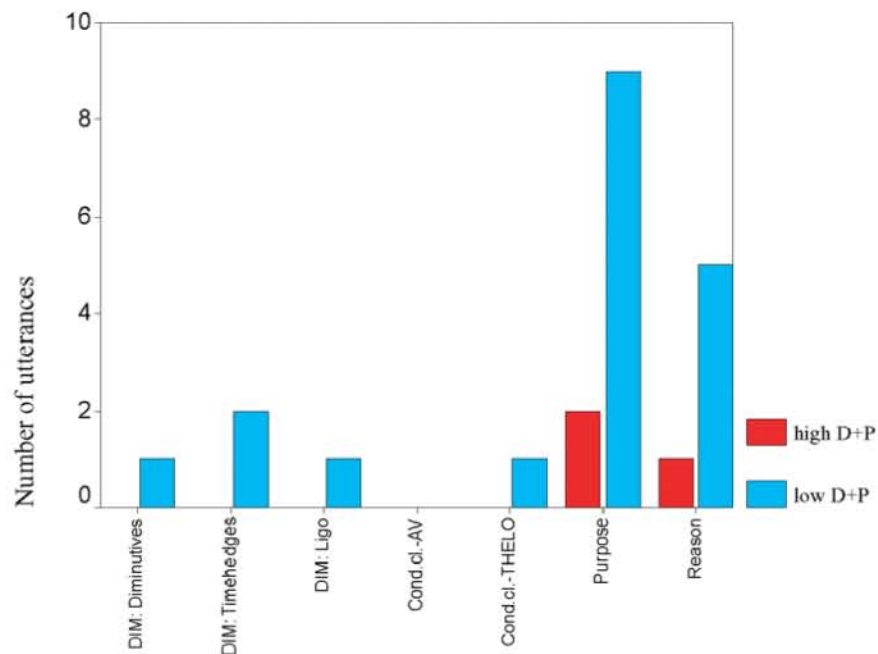


Combinations of type of verb and modality

**Figure 4.4: Offers performed for the first time by middle-class women, aged 18-30, addressing middle-class men, aged 31-50, who are their employers at work**

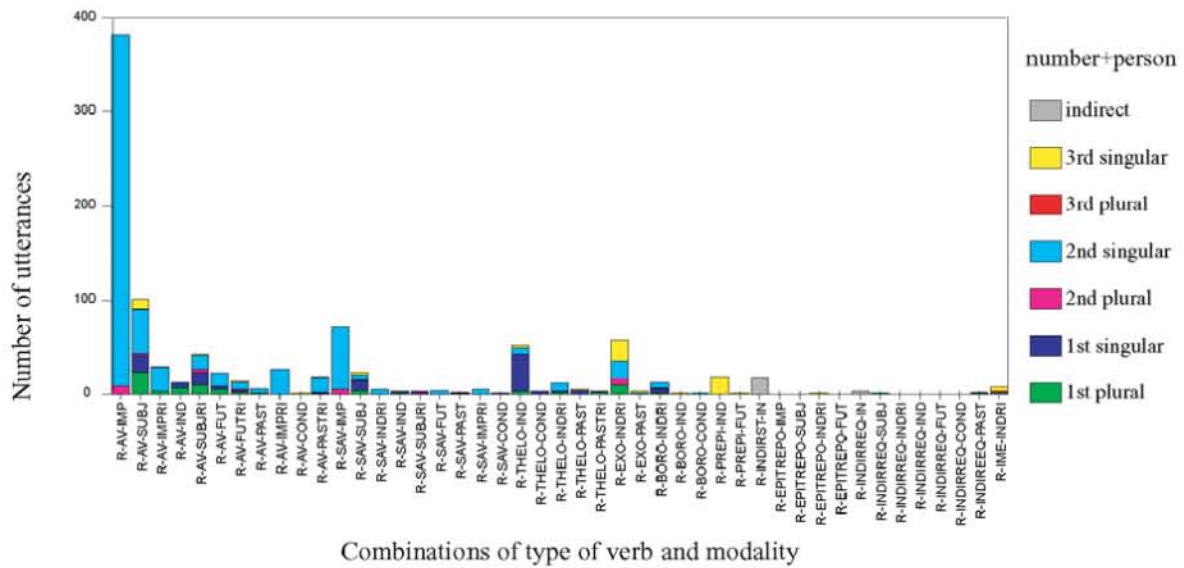




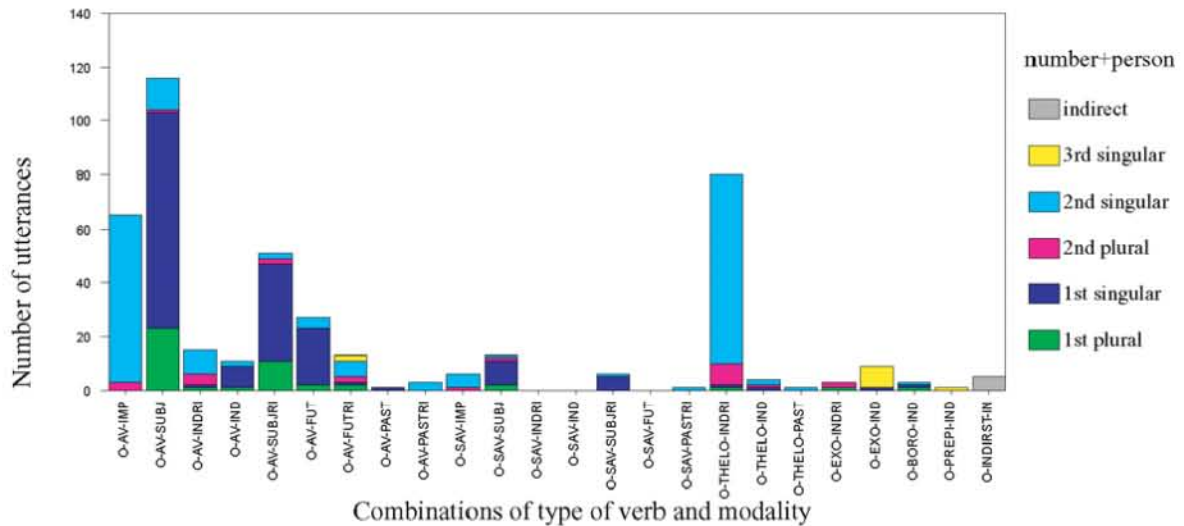


Additional markers of politeness

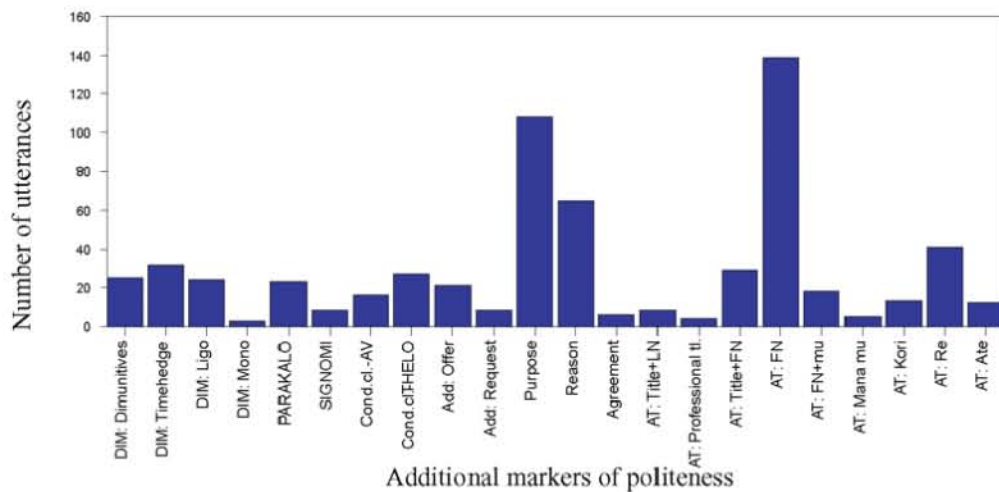
**Figure 4.5: Additional markers of politeness used in requests and offers performed for the first time by middle-class men, aged 31-50, addressing middle-class men, aged 31-50, who are old colleagues at work (low D+P), and by middle-class women, aged 18-30, to middle-class men, aged 31-50, who are their employers at work (high D+P)**



**Figure 4.11: Requests performed at work**

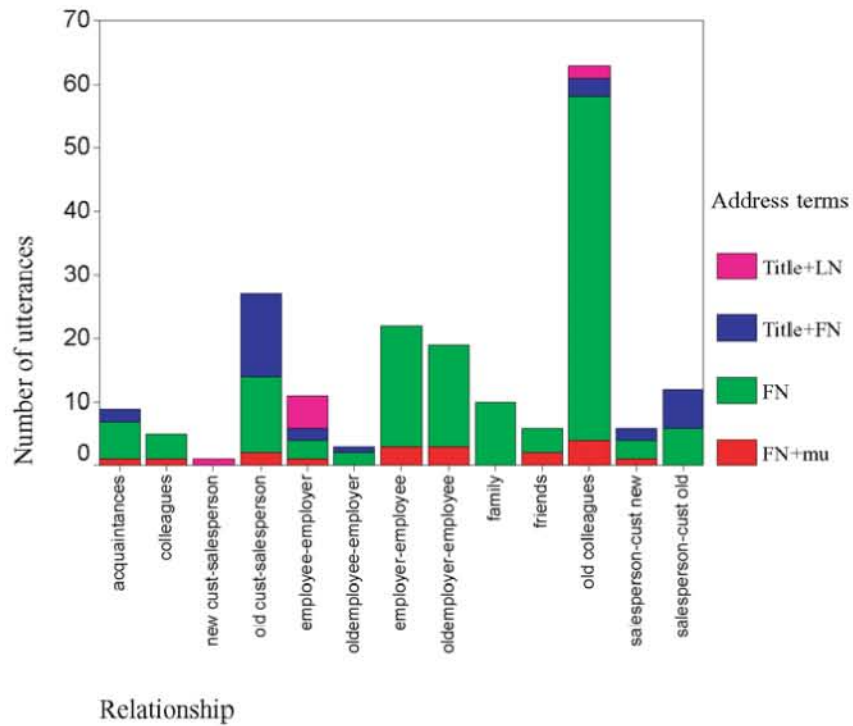


**Figure 4.12: Offers performed at work**

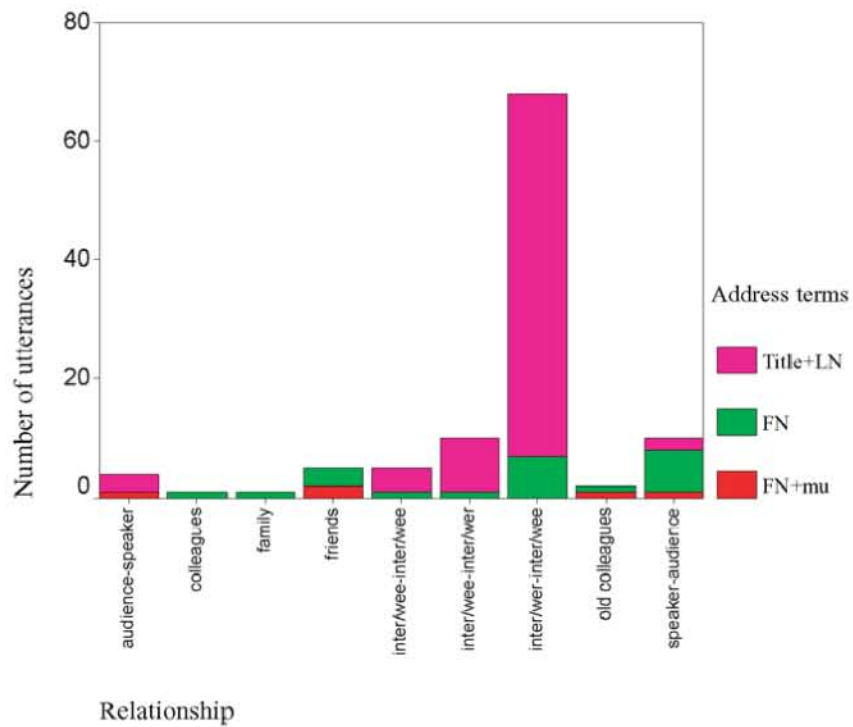


**Figure 4.13: Additional markers of politeness used in requests and offers\* performed at work**

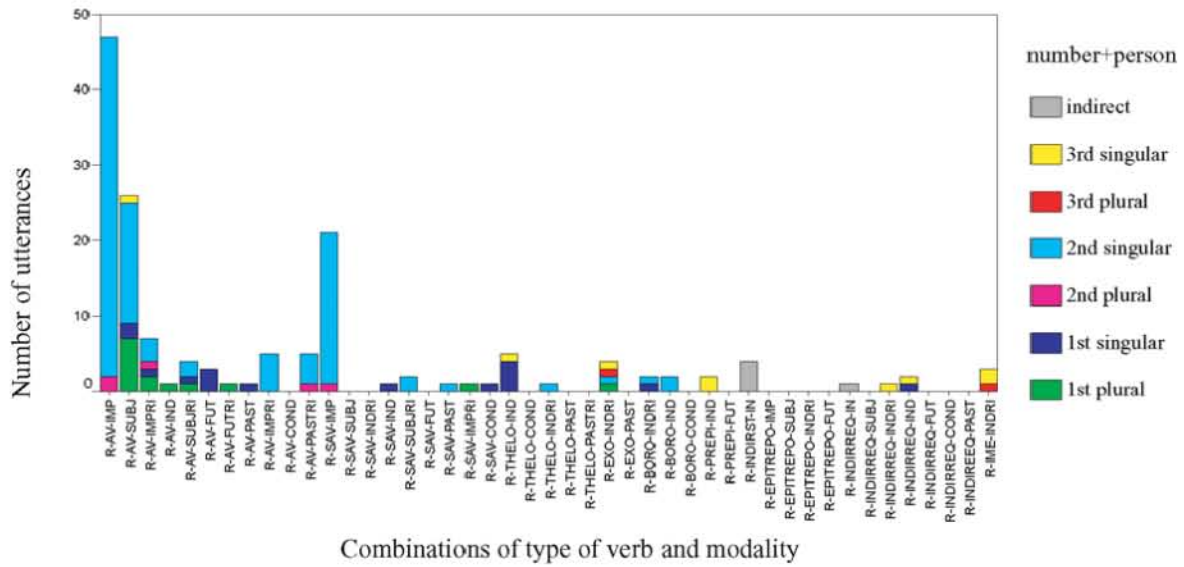
(\*The two are here conflated, as the additional markers used in each case were quantitatively and qualitatively similar)



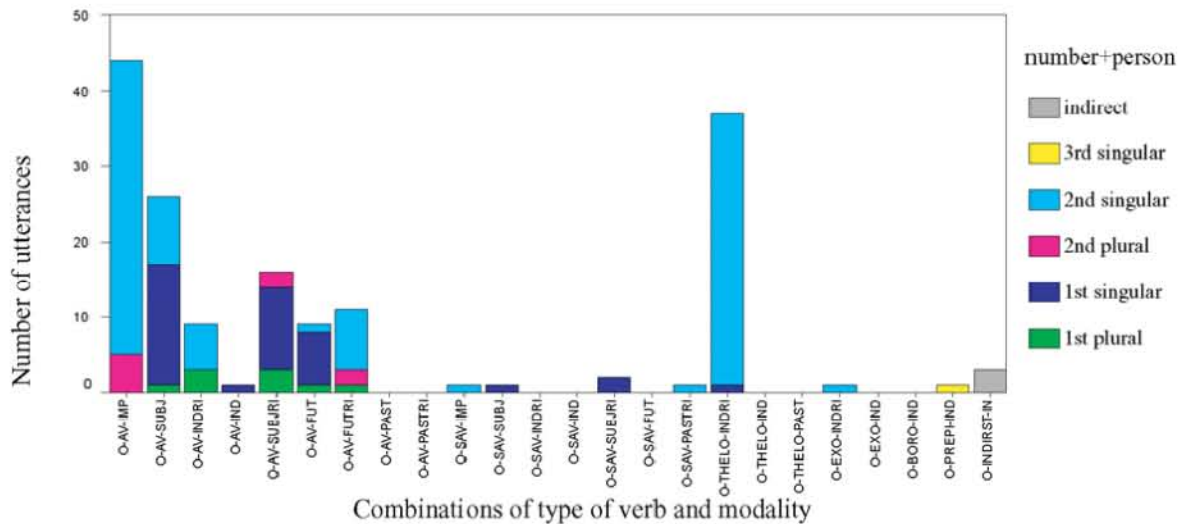
**Figure 4.6: Address terms used at work by type of relationship**



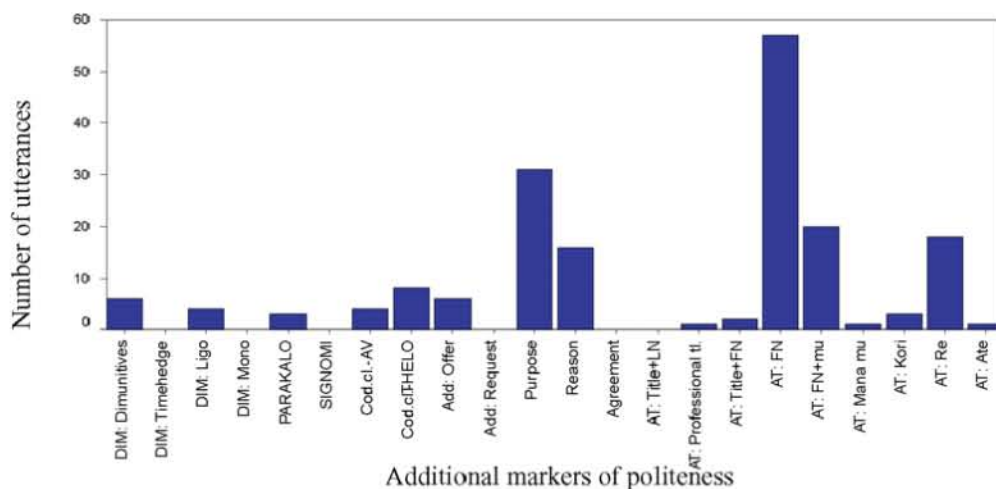
**Figure 4.7: Address terms used on radio/TV and in formal discussions by type of relationship**



**Figure 4.8: Requests performed at home and at informal social gatherings**

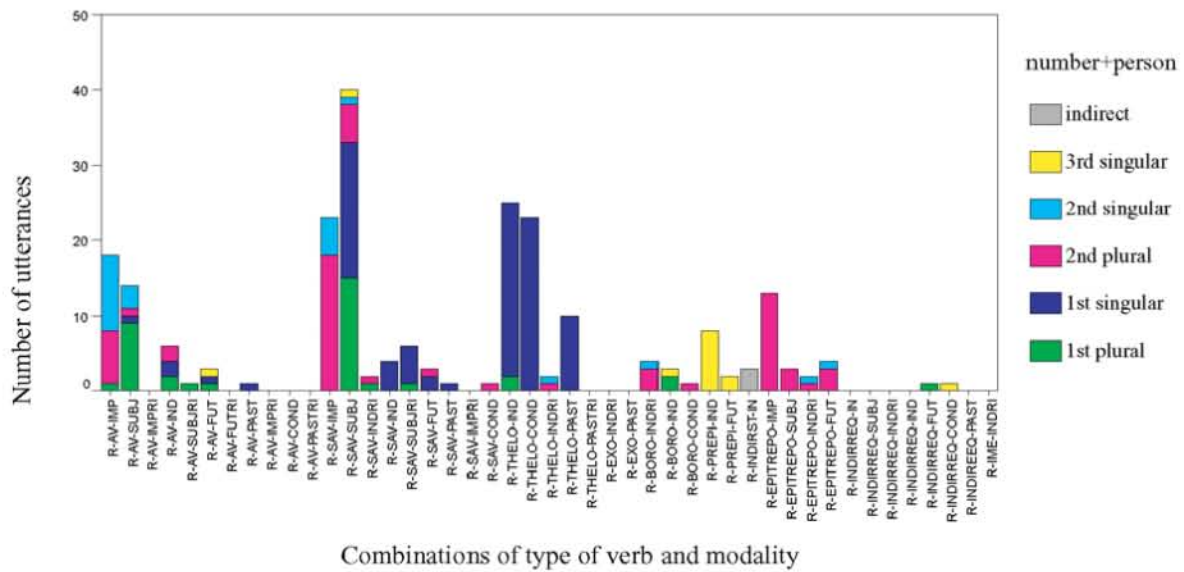


**Figure 4.9: Offers performed at home and at informal social gatherings**

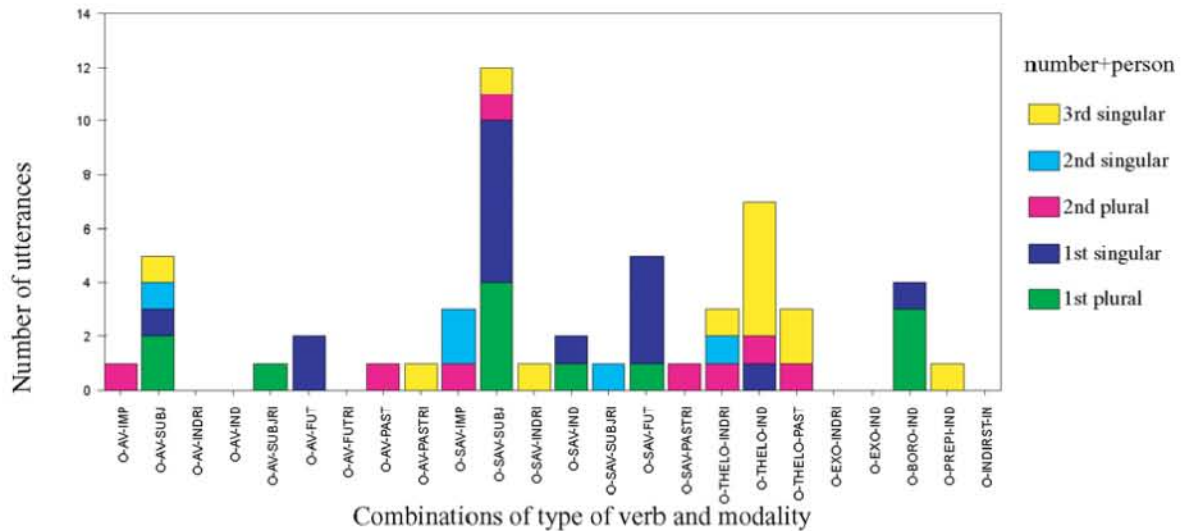


**Figure 4.10: Additional markers of politeness used in requests and offers\* performed at home and at informal social gatherings**

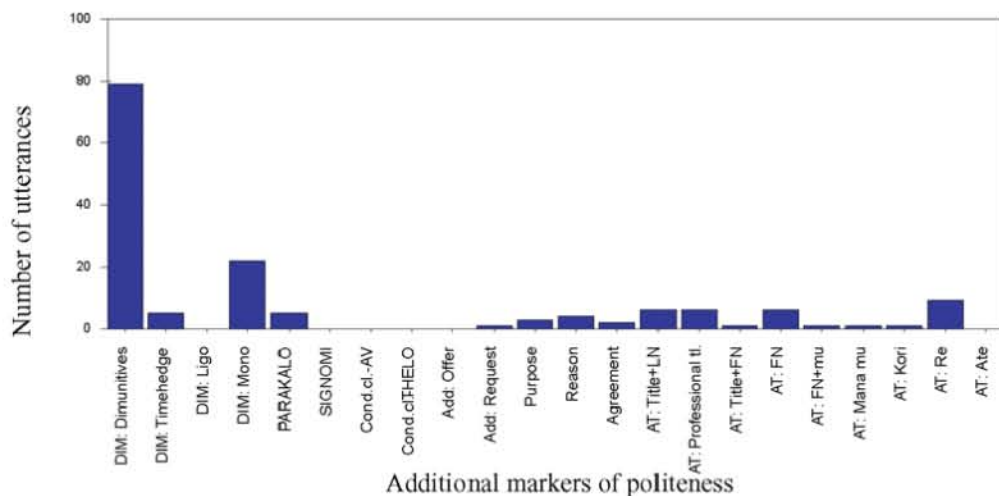
(\*The two are here conflated, as the additional markers in each case were quantitatively and qualitatively similar)



**Figure 4.14: Requests performed on radio/TV and in formal discussions**



**Figure 4.15: Offers performed on radio/TV and in formal discussions**



**Figure 4.16: Additional markers of politeness used in requests and offers\* performed on radio/TV and in formal discussions**

(\*The two are here conflated, as the additional markers used in each case were quantitatively and qualitatively similar)

“Automatic and impersonal, significant without a signifying intention, ordinary practices lend themselves to an understanding that is no less automatic and impersonal.” (Bourdieu 1990:58)

## Chapter 5

### The rationality of politeness

#### 5.1 Introduction

It is a common assumption of politeness theories that rational communication, as captured by Grice’s Cooperative Principle and the concomitant maxims (fn.4, 1.1 above), provides the canvas against which linguistic politeness can be seen to function. Thus, Lakoff (1973:296) writes:

“[T]wo basic rules are involved [in pragmatic behaviour], sometimes coinciding in their effects and reinforcing each other, more often in apparent conflict, in which case one or the other, depending on circumstances, will supersede. [...] [These] Rules of Pragmatic Competence [are]: 1. Be clear. 2. Be polite. [...] [T]he rules of clarity have been formulated [...] in Grice’s (1967) work on the rules of conversation.”

Similarly, Leech notes:

“I shall want to introduce into pragmatics not only a Cooperative Principle (CP), but other principles, such as a Politeness Principle (PP).” (1983:7; reference omitted)

“[T]he PP can be seen not just as another principle to be added to the CP, but as a necessary complement.” (ibid.:80)

Perhaps the most comprehensive discussion of the relationship between linguistic politeness and the CP is undertaken by Brown and Levinson:

“The C[ooprative] P[rinciple] defines an ‘unmarked’ or socially neutral (indeed asocial) presumptive framework for communication; the essential assumption is ‘no deviation from rational efficiency without a reason’. Politeness principles are, however, just such principled reasons for deviation. Linguistic politeness is therefore implicated in the classical way, with maximum theoretical parsimony, from the CP. [...] [P]oliteness has to be communicated, and the absence of communicated politeness may, *ceteris paribus*, be taken as absence of the polite attitude. [...] In our model then, it is the mutual awareness of ‘face’ sensitivity, and

the kinds of means-ends reasoning that this induces, that together with the CP allows the inference of implicatures of politeness.” (B&L:5ff.)

These authors assume that an inherent tension exists between linguistic politeness and the CP: roughly, either may take precedence in context, but both may not be satisfied simultaneously.<sup>1</sup> This is made explicit in Brown and Levinson’s account, where deviations from the CP, i.e. implicatures, are assumed to be the vehicle of politeness. Their proposal of five politeness strategies which correspond to increasing degrees of potential face-threat (fig.1, 1.2.2 above) rests on the further assumption that, the greater the deviation from the CP, the greater the face-risk the speaker assumes to be involved (ibid.:93), as this is represented in the value of *W* (1.2.2 above). This allows for the possibility of speaking in accordance with the CP, if the face-risk involved is small (because *P* or *R<sub>x</sub>* are low), or the activity is task-oriented, or a matter of (real or metaphorical) urgency (ibid.:94-101).

The picture painted above can be challenged. Speaking in accordance with the CP may well be a case of speaking politely in context<sup>2</sup> even in cases where considerations of face-risk are relevant and/or not minimal. In the CG data, bald-on-record requests (i.e. in the imperative-2sg.) lacking mitigation (in the form of, e.g., rising intonation, endearment terms, or diminutives) are perfectly acceptable also when the exchange is not urgent. The examples below constitute complete, one-off exchanges, or appear at the beginning of longer exchanges (cf. (7) in 4.2.1 above). Nor are such requests the sole prerogative of speakers of higher *P* (cf. (8) in 4.2.1 above, (5) below). Consequently, positing an inherent tension between linguistic politeness and speaking in accordance with the CP seems hardly justified in this context: considerations of face-risk are both pertinent and not minimal, but these are not frustrated by speaking baldly.

- (1) [68.37; At home; Speaker: female, 18-30, working-class; Addressee: male, 18-30, working-class; Relationship: family]

*vasili fepase tʃe ton artemi*

vassilis-VOC. *cover-imp.-perf.-2sg.* and the-ACC. artemis-ACC.

‘Vassili, *cover up* Artemis too.’

- (2) [47.30; At work; Speaker: female, 31-50, middle-class; Addressee: female, 31-50, working-class; Relationship: friends]

*fkar'ta friθca su. indalos efkales ta xondrinis pale?*

*pluck-imp.-perf.-2sg.* the-ACC. eyebrows-ACC. your-2sg. how pluck-past-perf.-2sg. them fatten-dep.-2sg. again?

‘*Pluck* your eyebrows. You plucked them, now you’re growing them back?’

- (3) [54.4; At work; Speaker: female, 31-50, middle-class; Addressee: male, 31-50, middle-class; Relationship: salesperson to old customer]

( ) *pienze* pano en' o kostas.

<sup>1</sup> That is, openly satisfied. As Brown and Levinson note: “Politeness is [...] a major source of deviation from such rational efficiency, and is communicated precisely by that deviation. But even in such departures from the [Gricean] Maxims, they remain in operation at a deeper level” (B&L:95). The authors are here referring to the mechanism of maxim-flouting, introduced by Grice (1989a:30) as one that “characteristically gives rise to a conversational implicature.”

<sup>2</sup> In the sense of interlocutors constituting their own and each other’s face (1.3.3 above).

- ( ) *go-imp.-imperf.-2sg. up be-ind.-3sg. the-NOM. kostas-NOM.*  
 ( ) ‘Go upstairs, Kostas is there.’
- (4) [10.12; At work; Speaker: female, 31-50, working-class; Addressee: male, 18-30, working-class; Relationship: old customer to salesperson]  
 andoni (.) *ela pjas'ta misa*  
 andonis-VOC. (.) *come-imp.-perf.-2sg. get-imp.-perf.-2sg. the-ACC. half-ACC.*  
 ‘Andoni. Come and get half {of them}.’
- (5) [53.62; At work; Speaker: male, 18-31, working-class. Addressee: male, 31-50, middle-class; Relationship: employee to employer]  
 kosta *ela na ipoyrapsis eđo đame*  
 kostas-VOC. *come-imp.-perf.-2sg. SP sign-dep.-2sg. here here-CG*  
 ‘Kosta come to sign here, here.’

The above constitute a small sample of similar instances in the data when speaking in accordance with the CP does not allow for any implicatures — commonly viewed as the vehicle of politeness — to arise, yet politeness has been achieved. This raises some important questions. First, what is the relationship between linguistic politeness and the CP? Second, is politeness always communicated? And third, if politeness is sometimes communicated, sometimes anticipated, how can we draw this distinction in a principled way, and what are its implications for pragmatic theory? This chapter explores possible answers to these questions.

## 5.2 The nature of cooperation

Several arguments discussed in the literature support the existence of degrees of cooperation, cross-culturally and intra-culturally. After taking stock of claims that Grice’s formulation of the CP is too weak (e.g., Leech 1983; Attardo 1997) or too strong (e.g., Kasher 1998[1976]; Sperber & Wilson 1995[1986]) to account for common conversational practices, I propose that, in accounting for what is communicated, cooperation should not be taken as the point of departure, but may well constitute a derived notion in need of explanation. The need to distinguish between degrees of cooperation is seen as symptomatic of the derived nature of the CP. A more economical account may rely on the premises of interlocutors’ rationality and mutual face-wants, which yield different degrees of cooperation depending on the cultural and situational context.

Grice (1989a[1975]:26) introduces the CP based on the observation that “[o]ur talk exchanges do not normally consist of a succession of disconnected remarks, and would not be rational if they did.” Rather, participants recognise in conversation “to some extent, a common purpose or set of purposes, or at least a mutually accepted direction. This [...] may be fixed from the start [...], or it may evolve during the exchange” (ibid.). This recognition underlies the expectation that the CP will be observed. Explaining *why* people are “(*ceteris paribus*) expected to observe” the CP (ibid.), or why our talk exchanges would not be rational if they were not cooperative, Grice remarks:



“anyone who cares about the goals that are central to conversation/communication [...] must be expected to have an interest, given suitable circumstances, in participation in talk exchanges that will be profitable only on the assumption that they are conducted in general accordance with the Cooperative Principle and the maxims.” (1989a:29-30)

Since Grice, the notion that people talk cooperatively has become deeply entrenched. However, the scope of ‘cooperation’ has been a matter of considerable debate. Whereas Grice (1989a:28) saw cooperation as governing non-linguistic exchanges as well, Bach and Harnish (1979) (cf. Harnish 1998[1976]:304fn.31; Bach 1987) restrict its application to linguistic communication. Closer to the spirit of Grice’s original formulation, which saw “talking as a special case of purposive, indeed rational behaviour” (Grice 1989a:28), Cohen and Levesque (1990:229-30) attribute to cooperative agents the properties of being “sincere and helpful”, which they also define formally, while Thomason (1990:332) suggests an implicature-enabling notion of accommodation defined as “acting to remove obstacles to the achievement of desires or goals that we attribute to others”.

Attempting to clarify matters, Attardo (1997:756) distinguishes two levels of cooperation. Locutionary Cooperation (LC) refers to “the amount of cooperation, based on the CP, that two speakers must put into the text in order to encode and to decode its intended meaning”, while Perlocutionary Cooperation (PC) captures “the amount of cooperation two speakers must put into the text/situation to achieve the goals that the speaker (and/or the hearer) wanted to achieve with the utterance.” Illustrating this point with examples, Attardo argues that the speaker can be LC cooperative (s/he can abide by the CP) without necessarily being PC cooperative (taking into account the hearer’s goals in the situation). He then proposes the following Perlocutionary Cooperative Principle (PCP):

“Cooperate in whatever goals the speaker may have in initiating a conversational exchange, including any non-linguistic, practical goal. (Or in other words, be a good Samaritan).” (1997:766)

The PCP is more general than the CP, and takes precedence over it. Other principles governing our actions, such as self-interest, may nevertheless override the PCP in cases of conflict (1997:777).

One difficulty with implementing Attardo’s proposal lies in formulating a precise definition of ‘goal’. While it is clear, empirically, that people do make assumptions regarding other people’s goals (Lindsay et al. 1993; Lindsay & Gorayska 1994), it is less clear how such assumptions differ from, and interact with, the notion of the speaker’s intention, which lies at the heart of (post-)Gricean accounts of meaning (Grice 1989b). More importantly, Attardo’s formulation of the PCP is rather strong: examples where the PCP does not conflict with any overriding principles, yet it is not observed, are readily available — a Zipfian principle of Least Effort is perhaps in operation here. Granting, however, that Attardo is right in pointing out that the CP may on occasion

prove ‘too weak’ to account for conversational facts, I would constrain the application of any complementary principles with reference to interlocutors’ considerations of face (1.3.1 above, see below): interlocutors will be PCP cooperative only if this move somehow contributes to constituting their own and each other’s face (which subsumes constituting their own face by means of constituting the face of another party). On this view, even genuinely being a good Samaritan can be construed as constituting one’s own face — though not consciously aiming at this.<sup>3</sup>

Attardo’s PCP goes some way toward accounting for common conversational practices, but provides no insights as to why this principle should hold. Taking a step in this direction, Leech remarks:

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

In other words, it is important to be polite (or PCP cooperative)<sup>4</sup> because *not* doing so makes pursuing one’s aims a lot harder. In this sense, Leech’s remark is in line with the prediction that to be polite is to be rational (1.3.2 above). However, whereas he introduces the PP as a principle functioning on a par with the CP to account for this intuition, I would argue that the same result can be obtained by appealing to interlocutors’ rationality and claims to face alone.

To account for the rationality of face-constituting, Kasher’s (1998[1976]) Rationality Principle (R) provides a useful starting-point:

“Given a desired end, one is to choose that action which most effectively, and at least cost, attains that end, *ceteris paribus*.” (1998:188)

Some of our ends may be intimately related to the actions of others, in that they can only be attained — or attained at a lesser cost — through coordination with another person. In such cases, reasoning in accordance with R yields the conclusion that coordination is to be preferred (ibid.:191).

In attempting to answer the question why it is rational for people to talk cooperatively (Grice 1989a:29-30),<sup>5</sup> Kasher in fact spells out how face considerations

<sup>3</sup> Rather than merely take precedence if in conflict, as Attardo suggests, the said principle of self-interest would now constrain the operation of the PCP.

<sup>4</sup> The two attitudes are equivalent inasmuch as they are concerned with the fact that people often cooperate beyond what is necessary for understanding and being understood.

<sup>5</sup> Kasher derives the conversational maxims directly from R, without appealing to the CP. He also distinguishes ‘limited cooperation’, which is warranted by R, from the CP, which is too strong, and therefore “wrong and needless” (1998:192).

can both motivate, and deter, cooperation between parties.<sup>6</sup> It is useful here to distinguish two levels of rational behaviour: face-constituting is rational at a deeper level, on which it orientates participants to maintain social equilibrium (1.3.2 above). For this reason, face-constituting can, at surface level, become an end in itself. In this sense, it constitutes perhaps the prototypical case of an end “intimately related to the actions of others” (Kasher 1998:191; cf. Goffman’s (1967:6) definition of face quoted in 1.3 above). Understanding considerations of face as desired “ends” motivating specific “plans” (Kasher 1998:191), we may view conversation as a plan in itself, whose preferability is judged relative to that aspect of face (positive or negative) which is given precedence in context. This may initially create the impression that only positive face is concerned: after all, conversation will constitute the ‘preferred’ plan — in the sense current within CA — only if considerations of positive face are given precedence. Nevertheless, negative face is not completely out of the picture: on considerations of negative face alone (avoiding imposition), conversation constitutes a ‘dispreferred’ plan, one that will be purposefully avoided. Unless some gain, then, (e.g. in positive face) can be posited as an ‘additional benefit’ of conversations which do not serve any practical ends, it would be quite irrational to engage in such conversations — yet people widely do. Trudgill’s (1983[1974]:13) example of two Englishmen who have never met before, and who, upon coming face to face with each other in a train compartment, start talking about the weather, is perhaps the paradigmatic case of such an exchange.<sup>7</sup> This example suggests that it is indeed legitimate to view considerations of face as desired ends that people aim to fulfil through rational cost-and-effect accounting.

Incorporating considerations of face into interlocutors’ desired ends enables us to account not only for cases where cooperation is preferred, but also for instances where it may be opted out of, or otherwise not fully provided. The Malagasy’s systematic<sup>8</sup> reluctance to provide personal information when asked, even when they could truthfully do so (Keenan 1998[1976]), is often cited as an instance of less than full cooperation. However, rather than constituting downright refutation of the Gricean maxims, Keenan’s findings highlight the need to constrain their application with reference to the operative cultural norms (Harnish 1998[1976]:304fn.29; B&L:288-9fn.27; Horn 1988:130-1; G.Green 1996[1989]:100-1; Mey 1993:74). Similarly, analysing interaction in an Egyptian village, Harris (1996) discusses apparent evidence of violations of the

<sup>6</sup> Scollon and Scollon’s (1995:36ff.) “paradox of face” refers to the potential of face to both motivate, and lead to avoiding, interaction. Essentially the same intuition underlies Leech’s (1983:82) allocating the PP a higher regulative role than the CP.

<sup>7</sup> But only under his first explanation, that “it can often be quite embarrassing to be alone in the company of someone you are not acquainted with and *not* speak to them” (ibid.; cf. Leech 1983:141). Advanced in an Anglo-Saxon context, this claim challenges Brown and Levinson’s assumption that negative face generally takes precedence over positive face (B&L:73-4).

<sup>8</sup> ‘Systematic’ points to the fact that, in Malagasy society, the amount of information provided in conversation is regulated by situational constraints (Keenan 1998:224ff.).

maxim of Quality,<sup>9</sup> only to uncover a complex system of face considerations underlying what, at first sight, constitutes practically no cooperation at all. In conclusion, she proposes that:

“[C]onversational inference along Gricean lines must include two separable aspects, roughly corresponding to Grice’s notions of ‘cooperative’ and ‘rational’ behaviour respectively. Firstly the constraints on cooperative behaviour are provided by the applicability of social norms and sanctions to all interactional acts, both in ritual (politeness) and other aspects of exchange. Such norms are not rules, but are open to violation and what Grice called flouting or exploitation, as are the Maxims. [...] The second aspect is the assessment of what is communicated according to potential goals and effects, in other words, the interpretation of utterance meaning. [...] Such interpretation would presumably be a matter of the Maxims of Relevance [*sic*] and Manner working together, with the social norms as well as the situational context forming an input into them. *On this view the social aspect does not cause deviations from the most rational and efficient mode of communication, but is prior to it: communication is always and foremost a social act within a socially defined situation.*” (1996:49; emphasis added)

Harris makes here several important points. First, she points out the possibility of purposefully flouting or exploiting not only Gricean maxims, but also social norms — a possibility also attested in the CG data. Thus, the father addressing his son with title+FN ((16) in 4.2.3 above), an address term normally reserved to older addressees, can be interpreted as boosting his son’s positive face.<sup>10</sup> (6) below, on the other hand, is an instance of ‘teasing’. This involves openly threatening the (in this case, positive) face of a familiar addressee, in a way reminiscent of Leech’s Banter Principle.<sup>11</sup> Harris’s approach is, however, more economical than Leech’s, in that, by explicitly recognising the possibility of flouting social norms, she does not have to postulate separate principles to account for the same facts.

(6) [21.13; At work; Speaker1: female, 31-50, middle-class. Speaker2: female, 18-30, middle-class. Speaker3: male, 18-30, middle-class. Relationship (all): colleagues]<sup>12</sup>

S1: pu en:a pais is ti rena?

S2: ne *na paro* tipote?

((two turns))

S1: 'a tis stilumen enan anapsiktikon tis renas ja [xai xui]

S3: [ne ne

((pause; two turns))

>S1 ((handing can to S2)): ja to peðin me iðices anañjes *pe* tis

((two turns; pause))

S1 ((to S3)): 'a mas fai

<sup>9</sup> The importance of at least the first sub-maxim of Quality is appreciated once one recalls that “other maxims come into operation only on the assumption that this [sub-]maxim is satisfied” (Grice 1989a:27).

<sup>10</sup> Significantly, this and the following example extend beyond using positive and negative politeness as a social accelerator and brake respectively (B&L:231). ‘Flouting’ is the only appropriate term in this case, since some default or unmarked behaviour must now be assumed first (Escandell-Vidal 1998: 46).

<sup>11</sup> This reads: “In order to show solidarity with h, say something which is (i) obviously untrue, and (ii) obviously impolite to h” (Leech 1983:144-5; cf. B&L:229).

<sup>12</sup> Strictly speaking, (6) involves only the planning of an act of teasing. As such, its linguistic expression is directly relevant to the relationship between interlocutors. The age, and social class of the woman being teased (Rena) are not known, but may reasonably be expected to approximate those of the interlocutors.

- S1: where FP go-dep.-2sg. to the-ACC. rena-ACC.?  
 S2: yes *SP take-dep.-1sg.* anything?  
 ((two turns))  
 S1: SP her-GEN. send-dep.-1pl. one-ACC. soda-ACC. the-GEN. rena-GEN. for [a-laugh]  
 S3: [yes  
 yes]  
 ((pause; two turns))  
 >S1 ((handing can to S2)): for the-ACC. child-ACC. with special-ACC. needs-ACC. *tell-imp.-pef.-2sg.* her-GEN.  
 ((two turns; pause))  
 S1 ((to S3)): FP us-ACC. eat-dep.-3sg.  
 S1: 'Where are you going, to see Rena?'  
 S2: 'Yes, *shall I take* anything {to her}?'  
 ((two turns))  
 S1: 'Let's send Rena a soda [for a laugh.]'  
 S3: '[Yes yes.]'  
 ((pause; two turns))  
 >S1 ((handing can to S2)): 'Tell her, this is for the child with special needs.'  
 ((two turns; pause))  
 S1 ((to S3)): 'She's gonna hate us {for this}.'

Second, Harris proposes an approach to utterance interpretation along the following lines: social norms constrain the operation of the CP, as well as providing, together with the situational context, the input to the operation of the maxims of Relation and of Manner. This proposal may be elaborated in three directions. First, one may ask which social norms are relevant to cooperative behaviour and how they may be delimited. Can their impact on cooperative behaviour be predicted — and how?<sup>13</sup> Second, how does the notion of face (Harris 1996:47) enter the picture Harris paints in her conclusions? Third, the term 'situational context' covers disparate kinds of information made available through different channels; which of these features are relevant to determining what is communicated? Do these remain constant across situations/cultures? The first and second points are in fact not unrelated: cooperative behaviour presupposes the interaction of two agents; it is thus by definition subject to face considerations, since these arise, and can find fulfilment, only in a dyad (Arundale 1999). Social norms which are relevant to cooperative behaviour can, then, be delimited by appealing to the notion of face: to the extent that such norms promote the constituting of (both aspects of) face,<sup>14</sup> they will constrain cooperative behaviour as well. The third point is taken up in 5.4.5 below.

Instances when people cooperate less than fully are not restricted to particular cultural contexts. They are also a matter of situational context — even outside institutional discourse. Discussing Grice's (1989a:32) example

- (7) A: Where does C live?  
 B: Somewhere in the South of France

<sup>13</sup> This should be possible if specific social norms are *motivated* by rationality, rather than just *observed* because of it (Davis 1998:173). In 7.3 below, I defend the former view, arguing on the basis of the CG data.

<sup>14</sup> Flexibility has to be allowed here for the fact that such norms are historically constituted (1.3 above): what remains constant is their relationship to the constituting of face, rather than their content.

Sperber and Wilson (1995:273ff.) point out that, in addition to Grice's analysis, in which B's utterance flouts the first submaxim of Quantity thereby giving rise to the implicature that B does not *know* exactly where C lives, B's utterance may also be taken as implicating that B does not *want to reveal* exactly where C lives. For instance, A and B may be planning a trip to France. A wants to know where C lives so they may pay him a visit — only B cannot stand the sight of C, and is therefore not inclined to give out the requisite information that would allow A to go ahead with his plan. Now, if A has reason to believe that, contrary to appearances, B is in fact in possession of this information (say, because B has said so in the past), A may well interpret B's utterance as indicative of B's reluctance to reveal this information. In this case, only if A reasons on the assumption that B is not being cooperative (in the sense of not sharing A's goal), will A infer B's reluctance based on B's utterance. What is more, the implicature that B does not want to say exactly where C lives arises contrary to Gricean prediction, since the CP is obviously not operative at a deeper level. Based on this discussion, Sperber and Wilson conclude that the CP is sometimes too strong — predicting that interlocutors always share some common goals and will cooperate toward their achievement — and “neither always at work, nor always presumed to be at work” (1995:274).

Sperber and Wilson's claim that the CP is not operative at a deeper level may be challenged. One possibility is to assume that B is opting out (Grice 1989a:30). However, this entails that the CP must first be operative, for A to derive from B's reply the implicature 'B does not know exactly where C lives', then contrast this with a piece of background knowledge (that A knows that B knows exactly where C lives), and based on the resulting contradiction infer that B has in fact opted out of the CP. This is problematic, since the CP is first assumed to be operative, and subsequently not to be. Also, in this case, B's opting out is inferred, while Grice (1989a:30) only predicts that the CP may be opted out of explicitly (e.g., by saying 'my lips are sealed').

A further possibility is to assume that the CP remains operative throughout. Two lines of argument are now possible. First, one may argue that, in view of the blatancy of B's performance, B is trying to mislead A (Grice 1989a:30). Again, this will not work if A already knows that B has the requisite information, and B knows that A knows that. Alternatively, we may allow the maxims to operate not just on what is said, but also on what is implicated. Quantity operates first and gets A from B's reply to the implicature that B does not know where C lives. Then Quality enters the picture, and when the implicature that B does not know is contrasted with the piece of background knowledge that B in fact knows, the implicature that 'B does not want to tell' is derived. This time, rather than B's utterance, it is the *implicature* that 'B does not know' which breaches Quality, since B has now *implicated* something which s/he believes to be false. However, what could prompt A to apply the maxims not only to what is said, but also to what is implicated, so as to derive this further implicature? Interlocutors' reciprocal

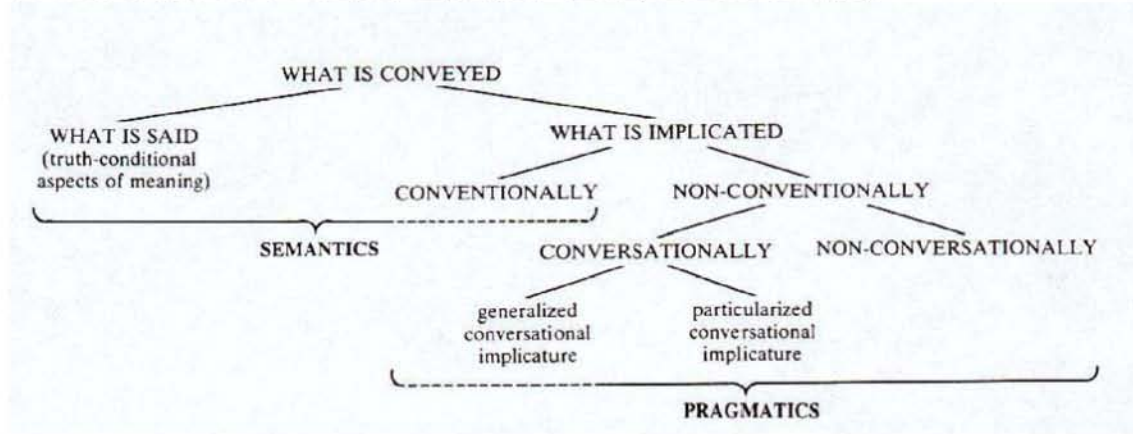
sensitivity to face-wants suggests itself here. As Brown and Levinson note, “respect for face involves mutual orientation, so that each participant attempts to foresee what the other participant is attempting to foresee” (B&L:99). A may derive the further implicature that B does not want to reveal where C lives only if A is sensitive to the fact that, by not openly expressing disregard for A’s wishes, B may be avoiding to threaten A’s positive face. This is an opportune example of how face considerations can motivate (and be taken as motivating) different degrees of cooperation.

It is difficult to tell whether Grice in fact had in mind such operation of the maxims on two levels. Discussing (7) above, he only derives the ‘don’t know’ implicature (1989a:32-3). On the other hand, the proposed operation of the maxims on two levels is distinct from the possibility, which he recognises, that conversational implicatures are indeterminate, and may on occasion take the form of a “disjunction of [...] specific explanations” (1989a:40). The proposed account is nevertheless compatible with Grice’s scheme, which in fact it may be viewed as spelling out more fully. In addition, the proposed account provides us with a glimpse into interlocutors’ reasons for abiding by the CP. This now falls out from rationality and interlocutors’ mutual face-wants, and does not have to be independently stipulated. Rather than the CP, it is these two premises that are assumed by default. It is important (read: rational) for interlocutors to co-operate not only in order to avoid damage to the other’s face, but also in order to ensure that their own face will not be damaged. Given variability as to definitions of the self, and as to which aspect of face, defined as wants of the self, is prioritised in context (1.3.1 above), this move enables us to account for the cultural and situational variation in degrees of co-operation exemplified above. To the extent that rationality motivates face-constituting directly (1.3.2, and the discussion of Kasher (1998) above), and Gricean co-operation only derivatively, face-constituting rather than the CP must be placed at the basis of a general theory of communication as providing the situational order that interlocutors expect in interaction. Only by according priority to the social aspect (Geis 1995:13ff.; Harris 1996:94) can we account for examples such as (1)-(5) above (cf. Arundale & Ashton 1992), where face is constituted by speaking in accordance with the CP, and not by means of deviations from it.

### **5.3 Politeness as a perlocutionary effect**

According to Brown and Levinson, “politeness has to be communicated, and the absence of communicated politeness may, *ceteris paribus*, be taken as absence of the polite attitude” (B&L:5). Following Horn (1988:121), ‘what is communicated’ by an utterance will be taken to encompass ‘what is said’ and ‘what is implicated’ by that utterance. Information may be implicated ‘conventionally’ or ‘conversationally’, where the latter may be implicated in a ‘generalised’ (i.e. in normal circumstances), or a ‘particularised’ manner (in virtue of the speaker’s intentions; cf. fig.1). Consequently,

Brown and Levinson's claim can be understood in several ways: politeness may be part of 'what is said', or of 'what is implicated' (in any number of ways).



**Figure 1: What is communicated by an utterance (from Horn 1988:121)**

Clarifying the above claim, Brown (1995:169) notes:

“Politeness inheres not in forms, but in the attribution of polite intentions, and linguistic forms are only part of the evidence interlocutors use to assess utterances and infer polite intentions. [...] [Interlocutors] must continuously work at inferring each other's intentions, including whether or not politeness is intended.”

This point is also stressed by Arundale (1999:144): “[f]or Brown and Levinson, then, politeness in language use is always accomplished by means of particularised conversational implicature.”

This section explores the relationship between politeness and recognising the speaker's intention. Drawing on theoretical and empirical considerations, it introduces the notion that politeness constitutes a perlocutionary effect, which can be achieved independently of recognising the speaker's intention (Fraser & Nolen 1981:96; Fraser 1999). I explore how politeness as a perlocutionary effect is conceptualised, and argue that, thus understood, politeness is sometimes anticipated, and sometimes communicated by means of particularised implicatures, whereupon it relies on recognising the speaker's polite intention. This claim is subsequently strengthened by showing that politeness is not part of 'what is said', nor conventionally implicated by an utterance (this section, 5.4.2 below). Anticipating somewhat, we may summarise the main points as follows: politeness consists of the hearer holding the belief that 'the speaker is polite'. This is different from the hearer recognising that the speaker holds this belief or intends to be recognised as holding this belief, and that is why politeness is not part of 'what is said' by an utterance. Furthermore, politeness is not conventionally implicated by an utterance, because it is not a property of linguistic expressions, but of utterances of linguistic expressions in context. Politeness may, however, be presumed *in context*. It is then implicated in a generalised manner by uttering a particular expression in a particular context. Yet, following from applying general heuristics, and not with recourse to the speaker's intention, politeness is now anticipated. Politeness may only be communicated as a particularised implicature, consisting of the hearer's recognising



the speaker's polite intention.<sup>15</sup> Based on this implicature, the hearer can come to hold the further belief that the speaker is polite. Significantly, deriving this implicature is not required for the hearer to come to hold the belief that the speaker is polite, and that is why politeness is more adequately viewed as a perlocutionary effect, achieving which may, but need not, rely on recognising the speaker's polite intention.

The notion of intention lies at the heart of the Gricean account of meaning:

“‘U meant something by uttering x’ is true iff, for some audience A, U uttered x intending:

- (1) A to produce a particular response *r*
- (2) A to think (recognise) that U intends (1)
- (3) A to fulfil (1) on the basis of his fulfilment of (2).” (Grice 1989b[1969]:92)

Communicative intentions, then, have two properties: (a) they are reflexive, i.e. they are intended by the speaker to be recognised by the hearer as intended by the speaker; (b) they are at once fulfilled once the hearer recognises them as intended by the speaker in this way (Bach & Harnish 1979:15). That is, in cases of linguistic communication, the response *r* sought by the speaker consists of hearer understanding.

For the purposes of this section, we shall define communication:

“not as meaning something, but, for greater generality, as expressing a propositional attitude [where] [f]or S to express an attitude to H is for S reflexively to intend H to take S's utterance as reason to think S has that attitude. H identifies S's utterance if H identifies the attitude in question [...] It is another question whether H takes S actually to possess that attitude, much less forms a corresponding attitude.” (Bach 1990:391)

Richard (1997:197) defines propositional attitudes as “those mental states which (normally) have truth conditions (or the like) in virtue of their involving a representation of such.”<sup>16</sup> On this view, the speaker's polite intention may be modelled as the speaker's expressing the propositional attitude ‘belief’ toward the proposition ‘uttering expression *x* in situation *y* is polite’.<sup>17</sup> On the above definition of communication, politeness is communicated if the hearer recognises this intention as one that the speaker wants him/her to recognise.

Politeness, however, amounts to more than this recognition: even if I do hold the belief that ‘uttering expression *x* in situation *y* is polite’, my felicitous use of expression *x* in situation *y* (i.e. my uttering expression *x* in situation *y* and thereby constituting my

<sup>15</sup> In agreement with Bach's definition quoted below, communication will, from now on, be understood as involving recognising the speaker's intentions. This move helps distinguish instances of anticipated politeness (where politeness is presumed in context) from instances of communicated politeness (where politeness is implicated in virtue of the speaker's intention).

<sup>16</sup> The caveat ‘normally’ covers beliefs which are held though they do not, given the corresponding representation's failure to refer, have truth conditions; while the parenthetical ‘or the like’ refers to such attitudes as desire and wishing whose objects have satisfaction, rather than truth, conditions (Richards 1997:217fn.1).

<sup>17</sup> The need to refer to the situation relative to which an expression is evaluated as polite provides *prima facie* evidence that beliefs about politeness and the concomitant implicatures are not wholly context-independent (5.4.3, 5.4.5 below). On the nature of such beliefs, see 6.2 below.

own and your face) is wholly contingent upon your holding (or coming to hold) a corresponding belief that ‘uttering expression  $x$  in situation  $y$  is polite.’ In this sense, politeness constitutes a perlocutionary effect, which can be identified as your holding the belief that I (the speaker) am polite. For you to hold this latter belief, it is necessary for you either already to possess a similar attitude of belief toward ‘uttering expression  $x$  in situation  $y$  is polite’ (in which case whether you take me to intend you to think that I hold this belief is besides the point), or to come to possess an attitude of belief toward something like ‘when  $S$  utters expression  $x$  in situation  $y$ ,  $S$  is polite’ on the basis of your taking me actually to believe ‘uttering expression  $x$  in situation  $y$  is polite.’<sup>18</sup> Put simply, achieving politeness is different from your recognising that I intend you to think that I am polite: it involves you *actually thinking* that I am polite.

Trivially, achieving politeness is not part of ‘what is said’ by an utterance. Consider utterances of the following sentences:

(8) Close the door.

(9) I am being polite.

(8) counts as a request if you recognise my expressing, by means of (8), the propositional attitude ‘desire’ toward the proposition ‘you close the door’. Similarly, my intention in uttering (9) will have been fulfilled once you recognise my expressing, by means of (9), the propositional attitude ‘belief’ toward the proposition ‘I am being polite’. However, (9) does not count as polite on the basis of this recognition. For this to happen, you must come to hold a corresponding belief that I (your interlocutor) am polite; you are unlikely to hold such belief based on my asserting that I am.<sup>19</sup> Rather, you will require some evidence of this in my behaviour: only my behaving in a way which you think is polite — say, my providing evidence that I hold the belief ‘uttering expression  $x$  in situation  $y$  is polite’ when you already hold a similar belief — counts as my being polite. Utterances such as

(10) I know she was trying to be polite, but she came across as rude.

<sup>18</sup> In this case, you will come to hold ‘uttering expression  $x$  in situation  $y$  is polite’ based on my uttering expression  $x$  in situation  $y$  only if you think that I myself hold this belief, and not if you think that I merely intend you to think that I hold it, i.e. you must not only recognise my intention (a condition sufficient for communication on Bach’s definition quoted above), but also take it to be *sincere*. This stronger condition is required for you to come to hold, based on this first belief, the further belief that I am polite.

<sup>19</sup> It is perhaps because of this that (9) sounds odd: if politeness consisted of your recognising my intention to make you believe that I believe that I am being polite, then (9) would be the most direct way for me to achieve that, and should, arguably, be common in everyday usage. However, as it stands, (9) has a corrective flavour to it: one can only imagine the speaker in (9) attempting to establish a previous piece of behaviour as polite, after it has become clear that the addressee did not think of it as such. The same is not true of (8): (8) can also be uttered correctively, but this is not its most common — much less its only possible — usage. In terms of the discussion in 1.3 above, this difference stems from the fact that (9) *evaluates* a particular behaviour, but it does not constitute it. (8), on the other hand, constitutes a particular behaviour (a request) in and of itself. This can be formally represented by construing politeness as a function  $P$  that relates behaviours ( $B$ ) to contexts ( $C$ ): given that  $P(B, C)$ ,  $P$  cannot appear in its own domain, since it is a function and not an argument in the first place.

can be felicitously uttered only if the speaker's polite intention has been recognised, yet politeness has not been achieved.

However, if politeness does not *consist* of recognising the speaker's polite intention, achieving it as a perlocutionary effect may be *dependent* (as opposed to incidental) on the hearer's recognising the speaker's polite intention. Strawson (1964) draws a distinction between what we may call intention-based communication and convention-based communication. In the latter, but not in the former, recognition of the speaker's intention amounts to producing a particular perlocutionary effect conventionally associated with the speaker's utterance:

“The speaker who abides by the conventions can avowably have the intention to further the procedure in the way to which his current linguistic act is conventionally appropriated *only* if he takes it that the conventional conditions for so furthering it are satisfied and hence takes it *that his utterance will not only reveal his intentions but give them effect*. There is nothing parallel to this in the case of the illocutionary act of a kind not essentially conventional.” (Strawson 1964:458; original emphasis)

The production of a particular perlocutionary effect in the case of convention-based communication is secured through convention. The claim, then, that the fulfilment of the speaker's intention *consists* of its recognition applies both to intention- and to convention-based communication. On this view, politeness would be achieved either as a result of convention-based communication if the appropriate conventions are satisfied, or as a result of intention-based communication, contingent on the hearer's situated<sup>20</sup> interpretation of the speaker's utterance. In either case, recognition of the attitude which the speaker is expressing by means of his/her utterance would be necessary for politeness to be achieved.

This is a view I wish to challenge. I argued earlier that your believing, based on my uttering expression *x* in situation *y*, that I am polite is solely contingent upon your believing that, roughly, ‘uttering expression *x* in situation *y* is polite’.<sup>21</sup> How you come to hold this latter belief in the first place is irrelevant. It is *whether* you hold it or not that is important: politeness is achieved in the former case, but not in the latter. Your taking me to intend you to believe that I hold the belief that ‘uttering expression *x* in situation *y* is polite’ — that is, your recognising my polite intention — is required for your coming to hold that ‘uttering expression *x* in situation *y* is polite’ *just in case you did not hold this prior to my uttering expression *x* in situation *y**. If, on the other hand,

<sup>20</sup> The idea that interaction is situated first appears within the framework of symbolic interactionism (Blumer 1969:85-9; Denzin 1998:198). Later, Garfinkel (1972b:302) used the term ‘situated meaning’ to refer to “meaning constructed in specific contexts by actors who must actively interpret what they hear for it to make sense.” More recently, this term has been used to highlight the fact that the inferences we draw in discourse are jointly determined by our perception at a ‘micro-level’ of the current situation and by our knowledge at a ‘macro-level’ of what typically happens during this kind of situation (Schiffrin 1994:109ff.; Gumperz 1996:375).

<sup>21</sup> Specifically, you will hold one of two beliefs: ‘uttering expression *x* in situation *y* is polite’, or ‘when *S* utters expression *x* in situation *y*, *S* is polite’.

you already held that ‘uttering expression *x* in situation *y* is polite’, it would be in virtue of your holding this belief that you would come to hold, upon my uttering expression *x* in situation *y*, the further belief that I am polite, and *not* in virtue of your recognising whatever intention I may have had in uttering expression *x* in situation *y*. This is different from Strawson’s (1964) convention-based communication mentioned above. The speaker who counts on the existence of a convention for the achievement of some perlocutionary effect takes it “*that his utterance will not only reveal his intentions but give them effect*” (Strawson 1964:458). That is, s/he must still have the intention to produce this perlocutionary effect in the first place. However, this is not always required for politeness to be achieved. Characteristic of cross-cultural miscommunication in this respect, is Tannen’s (1981:221-2) following example: she describes how, during a stay in Crete, her “careless questions” as to whether her hostess ever prepared eggs by beating them, and why she had not seen grapes since she had arrived in Greece, had been interpreted by her hosts as “hints”, indirectly expressing her desire for scrambled eggs at breakfast and grapes at dinner, which they had then sought to provide at their great inconvenience. In making these remarks, Tannen (1981:222) “had not intended to hint at anything, but had merely been trying [...] to make conversation”. These remarks had been read as polite requests by her hosts, who had then complied with them without further ado.<sup>22</sup> Cases such as this, when politeness is achieved in the absence of a corresponding intention on behalf of the speaker, remain unaccounted for, if achieving politeness as a perlocutionary effect is made contingent upon recognising the speaker’s polite intention. In sum, whether politeness is achieved or not is *always* a matter of the *hearer* holding certain beliefs in context based on which s/he comes to hold the belief that the speaker is polite, but only incidentally a matter of the hearer’s recognition of the speaker’s polite intention. In this sense, politeness is more often anticipated than communicated.

Two types of evidence support the claim that recognising the speaker’s intention is not required for achieving politeness. First, consider instances when one is polite to one’s addressee not so much to constitute that addressee’s face, but rather to constitute one’s own face in the eyes of some audience. Take (11) below:

(11) [85.34; On TV; Speaker: male, 31-50, middle-class. Addressee: female, over 51, middle-class. Relationship: interviewer to interviewee)

na se ðiakopso? ixa ðjavasi akrivos afto pu *lete* ...

SP *you-ACC.-2sg.*, interrupt-subj.-perf.-1sg.? have-past-1sg. read-inf. exactly that which *say-pres.-ind.-2pl.* ...

‘May I interrupt? I read exactly what *you* are saying’...

<sup>22</sup> Significantly, the intention to perform a request remains distinct from the intention to be polite. Tannen’s hosts could have interpreted her remarks as requests without for that matter taking them to be polite. In this respect, other than pointing to their eagerness to satisfy her wishes, it is impossible to assert with certainty whether they took such requests to be polite. However, to the extent that this interpretation cannot be excluded, this is an instance of politeness as a perlocutionary effect which may be ‘unintended and successful’ (Fraser 1999:3).

The interviewer's fluctuation between the 2sg. and the 2pl. can hardly have been caused by a change in his relationship with the addressee within the space of a few words. Rather, their relationship is perfectly compatible with using the 2sg.:<sup>23</sup> using this expression constitutes the addressee's face. However, the speaker is interested in more than the addressee's recognition of his polite intention: by using the 2pl., he displays his familiarity with the linguistic norms of the current setting, thus establishing himself as a competent member of society, and thereby constituting his own positive face. This second desire of the speaker is not directed to any particular audience. The perlocutionary effect of constituting his own face is achieved if anyone and everyone watching this broadcast, including those present in the studio (including the hearer), thinks he is familiar with the operative linguistic norms, in virtue of his addressing the hearer in the 2pl. However, it is clear from Grice's (1989b:92, see above) definition of speaker-meaning, which models the speaker's intention to produce a response *r* as directed to a particular audience, that the second desire of the speaker in (11) cannot be so modelled.<sup>24</sup> Nevertheless, the perlocutionary effect of constituting his face is achieved. Consequently, politeness must be construed as a perlocutionary effect, which can be achieved irrespective of the recognition of the speaker's polite intention by any particular audience.

The second piece of supporting evidence comes from the observation that, more often than not, face-constituting takes place over several conversational turns rather than in single utterances. Building on Goffman's concept of interactional imbalance, Bayraktaroglu (1992a:13ff.) shows how certain kinds of acts may be required to ensure face-constituting, given the kinds of acts that have preceded them. In such cases, politeness is the overall result of the co-occurrence of all of these acts, rather than being achieved by any one of them in isolation. This possibility remains unaccounted for if achieving politeness depends on recognising the intention with which the speaker uttered a particular utterance. Each time a speaker utters an utterance, s/he is held to do so with a particular intention, and each time this intention is recognised, some further perlocutionary effects may or may not be achieved. Consequently, a perlocutionary effect which is contingent upon recognising the speaker's intention in uttering a particular utterance is either achieved or not following the understanding of this utterance alone; its achievement cannot be distributed over several utterances occurring sequentially in discourse, since a distinct intention corresponds to each of these. This is not to deny that a particular perlocutionary effect can in principle follow the recognition of each of these speaker-intentions. However, this perlocutionary effect alone does not amount to politeness: only when taken jointly do these perlocutionary effects — what Bayraktaroglu (1992:15) terms 'changes in face-values' — achieve politeness. Again,

<sup>23</sup> Terkourafi (2001) argues that the 2sg. in CG does not carry connotations of familiarity/equality as it does in SMG.

<sup>24</sup> The difficulty lies in that the audience cannot be delimited in any circumspect way, such that the speaker may be said to have designed his utterance with a particular audience in mind rather than another.

politeness must be construed as a perlocutionary effect achieved independently of the recognition of the particular intention with which the speaker uttered any one particular utterance.

Recognition of the speaker's intention *is*, nevertheless, required in the case of strategic politeness (B&L:93).<sup>25</sup> In such cases the speaker is manipulating the situational context within which his/her utterance is to be interpreted, rather than taking it to be as both participants have perceived it to be so far. Furthermore, the speaker is seeking to secure the hearer's concurrence to his/her manipulation of the situational context. If the hearer concurs with this, the situational context will actually *be perceived* differently by both participants in future. But the hearer's concurring to whatever the speaker is trying to achieve depends on the hearer's recognising what the speaker is trying to achieve. That is, it depends on the recognition of the intention with which the speaker utters a particular utterance. This recognition takes the form of a particularised implicature. Significantly, the perlocutionary effect now sought is manipulation of the situational context, above and beyond face-constituting. In this way, instances of strategic politeness appear as marked in relation to the unmarked linguistic behaviour which aims at constituting face, and "can only have their *raison d'être* as exploitations of [this] default, 'unmarked' behaviour" (Escandell-Vidal 1998:46; cf. Jary 1998:11).

In sum, recognising the speaker's intention when s/he is behaving linguistically in an unmarked way is not required for the hearer to take him/her to be polite on the basis of his/her utterance.<sup>26</sup> Politeness as a perlocutionary effect consists of the hearer holding the belief that the speaker is polite. This, the hearer comes to hold upon the speaker's uttering expression *x* in situation *y* on the basis of the hearer's holding another belief, roughly, 'uttering expression *x* in situation *y* is polite.' If the hearer already held this latter belief prior to the speaker's utterance, politeness is achieved independently of the hearer's recognition of the speaker's intention, i.e. it is anticipated. To the extent that politeness passes unnoticed (Kasper 1990:193; Jary 1998:1-2; Escandell-Vidal 1998:46), this is the primary way in which it is achieved. Nevertheless, achieving politeness as a perlocutionary effect depends on the hearer's recognising the speaker's intention on two occasions. First, if the hearer did not already hold the belief that 'uttering expression *x* in situation *y* is polite' — a situation potentially common during language acquisition and L2 learning. Second, if the speaker utters an expression other than *x* in situation *y*, or expression *x* in a situation other than *y*, i.e. in instances of strategic politeness. On both occasions, the hearer cannot come to hold the belief that the speaker is polite until s/he has recognised the speaker's intention, i.e. until s/he has derived a particularised implicature pertaining to the speaker's polite intention.

<sup>25</sup> Strategic politeness encompasses using strategies as a 'social accelerator' or a 'social break' (B&L:93, 228ff.), and is distinct from politeness generically achieved by means of strategies (fn.9, 1.2.1 above).

<sup>26</sup> Working within the framework of RT, Escandell-Vidal (1998) similarly dissociates politeness as standard linguistic behaviour from the speaker's intentions, associating the latter with strategically exploiting expectations.

### 5.4 Politeness and linguistic form

Viewing politeness as a perlocutionary effect helps account for the observation that it typically passes unnoticed: politeness as a perlocutionary effect is most often anticipated, and only exceptionally does it rely on recognising the speaker's polite intention. Perlocutionary effects are however open-ended and indefinite, even more so than conversational implicatures (Grice 1989a:39-40): a conversational implicature is licensed (by the speaker) and calculated (by the addressee) on the assumption that certain assumptions are mutually available to both, and known by them both to be so available — in RT terms, they are mutually manifest. The same is not true of perlocutionary effects: these depend *upon the set of assumptions held by the addressee alone*, i.e. no constraint of mutual availability of assumptions applies to them. Consequently, the speaker is even less in a position fully to predict what the perlocutionary effects of his/her utterance will be. This raises the question: if achieving perlocutionary effects is very much what we may call a 'hit-and-miss' operation, how is it that, usually, when a speaker thinks s/he is polite, the addressee thinks so too?

To answer this question, I first distinguish 'ambivalent' from 'indirect' utterances. This distinction interacts with the degree to which an expression is conventionalised for some use in determining how politeness as a perlocutionary effect is achieved. Conventionalisation will be understood in a broad sense: it refers to an experientially established statistical likelihood that a particular expression will be used in a particular context. Consequently, it is a matter of degree, and subject to variation both cross-linguistically and intra-linguistically. Evidence from the CG data suggests that polite discourse largely involves using conventionalised expressions (chapter 7 below). Subsequently, I explore how an implicature to the effect that the speaker is being polite<sup>27</sup> might be derived, and show that such an implicature will be particularised if the speaker's utterance in context is indirect or ambivalent, or conventionalised for some use but used in a context other than that relative to which it is conventionalised. However, such an implicature will be generalised if the speaker uses an expression which is conventionalised for some use relative to the (minimal) context of utterance. Finally, the role of a particular form of words (Grice's 'what is said') in achieving politeness is explored. These findings suggest a direction in which the three-tiered picture of utterance interpretation advocated within Neo-Gricean approaches may be extended.

#### 5.4.1 Ambivalent vs. indirect utterances

Building on an idea by Thomas (2000; fn.17, 2.7.1.1 above), we may distinguish (12)-(15) below in two general classes:

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<sup>27</sup> The phrasing 'the speaker is polite' vs. 'the speaker is being polite' makes explicit the difference between the content of a belief held by the addressee (perlocutionary effect sought/achieved) vs. the propositional content of an implicature of the speaker's utterance.

- (12) Open some windows.  
 (13) I was wondering if it would be OK to open some windows.  
 (14) I was asking myself if it would be OK to open some windows.  
 (15) It's hot in here.

(12), (13), and (14) are 'ambivalent': they make clear how the speaker's utterance may be complied with — namely, by opening some windows, or explaining why this is not possible — although their illocutionary force may remain unclear: is (12) an order or a request? Is (13) a request for action, or for permission to act? Is (14) a request or an assertion of what's on the speaker's mind? (15), on the other hand, to the extent that it is not conventionalised for some use, is 'indirect': it may be a request, a criticism, or a mere statement of fact; in each of these cases, it will be complied with differently.

The distinction between ambivalent and indirect utterances parallels Brown and Levinson's (1987) distinction between on-record and off-record strategies. The reason for adopting a different terminology here is that their reference to strategies can only too easily obscure the fact that "many of the classic off-record strategies [...] are very often actually on record when used, because the clues to their interpretation (the mutual knowledge of S and H in the context; the intonational, prosodic and kinesic clues to speaker's attitude; the clues derived from conversational sequencing) add up to only one really viable interpretation in the context" (B&L:212). This point, I argue in 5.4.3 below, is central to the question of when and how implicatures of politeness are derived. Consequently, contrary to the authors' distinction between on- and off-record, the distinction between ambivalent and indirect applies exclusively to utterances in context.

To illustrate this point, consider first Brown's (1995) discussion of irony in Tzeltal. In Brown and Levinson's classification, irony is an off-record strategy (B&L:221-2). Discussing its extensive use between Tzeltal women, Brown shows how, in this case, irony has been conventionalised as a positive politeness strategy. However, she claims, conventionalisation cannot account for all observed instances of Tzeltal irony. Building on this claim, she argues that recognising the speaker's intention is always necessary for the attribution of politeness (Brown 1995:154-5). This conclusion, I would argue, does not necessarily follow from her examples. In one of these, irony is used by both plaintiff and defendant in court (*ibid.*:162-4). Brown calls this 'angry irony'; positive politeness is not what is aimed at (or for that matter achieved). Nevertheless, there is an important difference between this and the cases of conventionalised irony discussed as instances of positive politeness: the setting of the exchange in court, which sets this example apart from the other (informal) exchanges. To account for achieving politeness, conventionalisation must not be understood in a narrow sense, whereby some expressions in a particular language are conventionalised compared to some others. It is not a property of linguistic expressions, "inhering in particular linguistic forms" (Brown 1995:154). Rather, an expression is conventionalised for some use only *in relation to some context*. Uttered in a different context, the same expression will no longer be conventionalised, and recognising the speaker's intention will now be necessary to infer



its meaning. Indeed, it will be the discrepancy between the context in relation to which the expression is conventionalised, and that in which it is actually uttered, that will serve as a trigger for the inferential process. In Brown's court-case example, the setting of the exchange in court may well trigger the face-threatening interpretation of irony. Arguably, irony in Tzeltal is only conventionalised as a positive politeness strategy when used between women in informal settings.

The above example illustrates how utterances which, in terms of their propositional content, are indirect become ambivalent when used in the context in relation to which they are conventionalised. A further example, this time from CG, supports this claim:

- (16) *irten o protos*  
 come-past-perf.-3sg. the-NOM. first-NOM.  
 'The first one has arrived.'

This was the standard utterance with which my paternal grandmother sent her two young sons to bed every evening. According to my father, when uttered in this context (by my grandmother in the evening, prompted by one of her sons' yawning), (16) could only be complied with in one way: by going to bed. In this case, an indirect utterance had, in virtue of its regular co-occurrence with a particular context, become ambivalent. However, this was so only for the small set of speakers involved, who were aware of the relevant constraints on the interpretation of this utterance. While this 'micro-social' perspective lies one step before the 'macro-social' one demonstrated by Brown's example of conventionalised irony between Tzeltal women in informal settings, the mechanisms involved — conventionalisation, as defined in the next section — are essentially the same.

#### 5.4.2 Conventionalisation of form and politeness

Based on the preceding discussion, conventionalisation will be defined as a relationship holding between utterances and contexts, which is a correlate of the (statistical) frequency with which an expression is used *in one's experience* in a particular context. It is thus a matter of degree, and may well vary for different speakers, as well as for the same speaker over time. This does not preclude the possibility that a particular expression may be conventionalised in a particular context for virtually all speakers of a particular language, thereby appearing to be a 'convention' of the language.<sup>28</sup> However, it does highlight the rational bases of the relevant conventions (Lewis 1969). Conventionalisation is thus akin to the notion of standardisation, recently outlined as follows:

"A form of words is standardised for a certain use if this use, though regularised, goes beyond literal meaning and yet *can be explained without special conventions*. In each case, there is a certain core of linguistic meaning attributable on

<sup>28</sup> This will depend on the extent to which speakers' experience is similar. Two factors are essential for this: their objective conditions of existence, and communication. These are captured under Bourdieu's (1990; 1.3 above) notion of the 'habitus'.

compositional grounds but a common use that cannot be explained in terms of linguistic meaning alone. The familiarity of the form of words, together with a familiar inference route from their literal meaning to what the speaker could plausibly be taken to mean in using them, streamlines the process of identifying what the speaker is conveying. The inference is *compressed by precedent*. But were there no such precedent, in which case a more elaborate inference would be required, there would still be enough contextual information available to the hearer for figuring out what is being conveyed. That is why special conventions are not needed to explain these cases.” (Bach 1998:713; emphasis added)<sup>29</sup>

Conventionalisation, thus understood, is a broader notion than Strawson’s (1964) convention-based communication. An expression is conventionalised for some use under constraints which are not stipulated, as are conventions such as those of a game of bridge, but experientially established. Consequently, such constraints are subject to reinforcement, modification, or cancellation through experience. Moreover, absence of knowledge of the relevant constraints does not preclude the possibility that the intended inference may still be derived, whereas absence of knowledge of the conventions of bridge would render one incapable of understanding the utterance “I bid you five no trumps.”<sup>30</sup> For these reasons, politeness cannot be conventionally implicated by an utterance. Politeness is not inherent in linguistic expressions in the same way as the contrastive meaning is part of the conventional meaning of ‘but’ independently of context. Rather, politeness resides in the implicit evaluation of an expression relative to a context of utterance (5.4.3.3 below).

Several experimental studies highlight the importance of conventionalisation for achieving politeness. Having asked native speakers of English and Hebrew to rank utterances according to their politeness import in particular scenarios, Blum-Kulka (1987a) found that “the highest level of politeness in both English and Hebrew is achieved by the use of *conventional indirectness*” (1987a:136; original emphasis) as opposed to ‘hints’ (utterances which are non-conventionally indirect). Similarly, researching the impact of requestive strategy on degree of perceived politeness in American English and Korean, Holtgraves and Yang (1990:724; cf. Holtgraves

<sup>29</sup> Early remarks stress the importance of standardisation as ‘short-circuiting’ intended inferences (Bach 1975, Harnish 1998[1976]:267, Morgan 1978, Brown & Levinson 1987[1978]:248, Atlas & Levinson 1981:5). Arguing from the essentially rational (capable of being worked out) vs. conventional (requiring special conventions) character of the inferences involved each time, standardisation has been subsequently distinguished from conventionalisation (Bach & Harnish 1979:192-202, Zegarac 1998:341ff.). I adopt the latter term here to emphasise the fact that, if an inference is “compressed by precedent”, it may still be learnt as conventional by any individual speaker. To the extent that s/he has never actually calculated the intended inference — as when children learn to associate particular expressions with particular perlocutionary effects sought through explicit instruction (Snow et al. 1993:303; see below) — his/her knowledge of the conditions for felicitous use of the expression carrying this inference will be conventional, yet, unlike knowledge of conventions, subject to modification through experience.

<sup>30</sup> The difference is one of degree. ‘Convention’, in this respect, should be understood as one end of a continuum, with ‘intention’ lying at the opposite extreme. Inasmuch as instances of linguistic communication involve the intentional deployment of signs which are essentially conventional, they are of the “intermediary” type which Strawson (1964:459) explicitly acknowledges.

1997:110) found that “hints were not rated as the most polite strategy.” While, contrary to Blum-Kulka, Holtgraves and Young are careful to note that subjects’ advance knowledge that all utterances were requests effectively made the hints used in their study on-record (*ibid.*), it is significant that in both studies, conventional indirectness was consistently preferred over hints. What is more, whereas non-English subjects’ evaluation of hints was highly variable — with Hebrew speakers rating these relatively low on the politeness scale (Blum-Kulka 1987a:137) and Korean speakers preferring them for small rather than large requests (Holtgraves & Yang 1990:723) — English speakers consistently ranked hints second only to conventional indirectness. The fact that this was so for American (used in both studies) as well as British and Australian English (included in Blum-Kulka’s data) provides *prima facie* evidence that Brown and Levinson’s ranking of off-record indirectness at the high end of the politeness scale (B&L:60; fig.1, 1.2.2 above) may be traced back to a convention of the (English) language, rather than being a universal trait of polite discourse. Similar results are reported for a number of languages.<sup>31</sup>

Studies of a developmental guise also support the importance of conventionalisation for politeness, by showing that the use of conventionalised expressions and the acquisition of politeness by children are often explicitly linked, as below:

Father: (to child) Say ‘please could I have some ketchup’.

Child: Please.

Father: Please may I have some ketchup.

Child: Please.

Father: Just say the whole sentence for a change: Please may I have some ketchup.

Child: Please.

Father: No. We’re gonna wait till you say ‘Please may I have some ketchup.’

Child: Please can I have the ketchup.

(from Snow et al. 1990:235)

Drawing on a large corpus of conversational data from American families, Snow et al. (1990:303) identify “direct teaching of the child about what forms to use in various situations” as one of two major sources of information about the politeness system available to children. The second source was manipulating relevant contextual dimensions such that the child can observe their correlation to language forms, while a third potential source, direct teaching about the nature of the rules, was rarely resorted to in their data (*ibid.*).

Studies of L2 learners’ polite behaviour point in the same direction. While discourse completion tasks found that L2 learners and native speakers perform similarly with respect to the production of hints, with L2 learners producing these as frequently and in the same situations as native speakers (Weizman 1992), L2 learners’ ability to recognise and produce polite requests using conventionalised means preferred by native

<sup>31</sup> See Weizman 1992:125, Turner 1996:5-6, Marquez Reiter 2000.

speakers was found wanting (Phillips 1993). Taken jointly, these results, though expected, appear perplexing for an account of politeness in terms of rationally assessing payoffs and weighing risks (B&L:83-4). To the extent that conventionalised indirectness falls under negative politeness (B&L:132ff.), L2 learners should be able to derive this strategy on independent grounds, and thereby use it approximately as efficiently as native speakers. However, this is not what these studies found. While the use of hints may be rationally motivated as claimed, that the use of conventionalised indirectness is similarly motivated remains to be proven.

Furthermore, the fact that conventionalisation may also be linked to positive face-wants argues against its construal as effectuating a desirable compromise between the wish to be direct and the wish to avoid imposition, which motivates placing it under the negative politeness super-strategy (B&L:130ff.). As Manes and Wolfson (1981) have shown, conventionalised expressions are central to American English complimenting behaviour, a type of behaviour viewed as intimately, if superficially, linked to the hearer's positive face-wants. Analysing data collected in a variety of everyday speech situations between men and women of different ages and from a wide range of occupational and educational backgrounds, they found that a single syntactic pattern (*NP is/looks really ADJ*) accounted for well over 50% of observed compliments, while a total of 85% were fully describable with reference to only three syntactical patterns. In addition, compliments showed regularities in their semantic composition: speakers showed an overwhelming tendency to use one of only five adjectives (*nice, good, beautiful, pretty, great*) and two verbs (*love* and *like*). Commenting on these findings, Manes and Wolfson (1981:123) point out that

“[t]he combination of a restricted semantic set and an even more restricted set of syntactic structures makes it clear that what we are dealing with here is not simply a matter of frequency. Rather, we are forced to recognise that compliments are formulas, as much as thanks and greetings. [...] they are highly structured formulas which can be adapted with minimal effort to a wide variety of situations in which a favourable comment is required or desired.”

Rhodes (1989) draws a similar conclusion regarding the use of positive politeness in Ojibwa. Based on observational data from requests, he argues that in this American Indian language positive politeness is conventionalised, which, he claims, explains its predominance over negative politeness in this culture (Rhodes 1989:255ff.). Finally, Brown's (1995) discussion of conventionalised irony in Tzeltal as a positive politeness strategy may also be seen as evidence that the politeness super-strategy realised by any particular linguistic means on an occasion of utterance is intimately linked to the degree to which this linguistic means is conventionalised for some use (5.4.1 above).

In conclusion, experimental and observational data, as well as data from language acquisition and L2 learning, converge on the central role which conventionalised expressions play in achieving politeness. These indications accord with our current findings regarding politeness realisations in CG (chapter 7 below). While the

importance of conventionalised expressions has thus been repeatedly acknowledged, the possibility that this translates into essentially different inferential paths involved in achieving politeness when an expression is conventionalised for some use as opposed to when it is not, though intuitively evident, has not been previously explored.<sup>32</sup> In 5.4.3 below, I argue that this distinction, alongside the distinction between ambivalent and indirect utterances, holds the key to how politeness as a perlocutionary effect is achieved.

### 5.4.3 Calculating implicatures of politeness

Following Grice (1989a:39-40; cf. Levinson 1983:114-8), a proposition will count as a conversational implicature of an utterance, if it meets the conditions of cancellability (i.e. it is defeasible in context), non-detachability (i.e. it is not dependent on the form of words used — excepting implicatures arising due to the maxim of Manner), and calculability.<sup>33</sup> Remarking on this last condition, Récanati (1998[1993]:523; original emphasis) writes:

“Many followers of Grice have (wrongly) interpreted this as requiring that *the theorist* be capable of working out whatever conversational implicature is posited to explain a given semantic phenomenon; but Grice clearly had in mind the participants in the talk-exchange themselves: it is the speaker and hearer who must be capable of working out the implicatures.”

Calculability may thus be understood as a condition of psychological plausibility, predicting a potential end-point for the inferential process: of all the inferences arising from an utterance of a sentence in context, the hearer may plausibly draw only those which can be calculated based on assumptions which s/he takes to be mutually available to both participants. Below, I argue that a particularised implicature to the effect that the speaker is being polite is drawn at different points in the inferential process depending on whether the utterance is indirect or ambivalent but not conventionalised for some use. However, such an implicature is generalised when an utterance is conventionalised for some use, i.e. presumed *unless* there occurs to the hearer a reason to the contrary.

#### *5.4.3.1 When the speaker's utterance is indirect*

When the speaker's utterance is indirect, it may give rise to two distinct implicatures in context: one regarding the speaker's intention in making the utterance, and another concerning the speaker's polite intention, which remain distinct propositions. I outline four inferential paths demonstrating that, in the case of indirect utterances, the proposition concerning the speaker's polite intention is cancellable, non-detachable, and calculable, and thus qualifies as a particularised implicature of the speaker's utterance.

<sup>32</sup> In a work which came to my attention after completing this research, Escandell-Vidal (1995) advances a similar proposal, although she does not theoretically work it out.

<sup>33</sup> Despite criticisms of the adequacy of these criteria (Sadock 1998[1978]), they jointly yield accurate predictions in most cases.

In line with the premises of speakers' mutually assuming each other's rationality and face-wants (5.2 above), the indirect utterance in (15), repeated below,

(15) It's hot in here.

addressed by a guest to the host during a dinner-party at the latter's house, can give rise to the implicature in (17)

(17) The speaker wants me to somehow make it 'not-hot' for him/her.

as follows (1st path):<sup>34</sup> in uttering (15), the speaker is expressing the attitude of belief toward the proposition 'it's hot in here' (step I: recovery of propositional content). Interlocutors' propositional attitudes being private, the speaker would not go to the trouble of revealing his/her attitude toward any particular proposition of his/her own will, if s/he did not have some other intention s/he intends me to recognise (step II: assumption about speaker's rationality). People do not generally like being hot (step III: background knowledge). The speaker knows that I, as the host, can somehow make it 'not-hot' for him/her (step IV: background knowledge). So, in addressing (15) to me, the host — as opposed to another guest — the speaker could be expressing his/her desire that I somehow make it 'not-hot' for him/her (step V: inference from steps I, III and IV). Yet, the speaker has not done this but has asserted instead that 'it's hot in here' (step VI: propositional content). If the speaker has not explicitly expressed his/her desire that I somehow make it 'not-hot' for him/her, it is probably because s/he is trying to give me options/avoiding to impose on my negative face, i.e. s/he is being polite (step VII: inference from assumption about interlocutors' mutual face-wants). Therefore, the speaker's intention in uttering (15) is probably to request that I somehow make it 'not-hot' for him/her (step VIII: inference from steps V, VI and VII). In this case, the inference about the speaker's polite intention (step VII) precedes the recognition of the speaker's intention (step VIII) and directly plays a part in it. And since recognising the speaker's intention arguably marks the end-point of the inferential process, the implicature to the effect that the speaker is being polite will have been drawn as part of that process, i.e. at no extra cost.

However, the assumption that 'giving options' is polite is subject to cultural constraints. Studies of non-conventional indirectness in a number of languages (5.4.2 above) reveal that this kind of behaviour can also be perceived as an imposition, since the responsibility for bringing about the perlocutionary effect sought is now placed exclusively with the addressee (as opposed to utterances where the speaker's

<sup>34</sup> This and following accounts parallel that of Searle (1996a[1975]). The difference is that Searle's account explicitly refers to Speech Act theory and the CP, whose psychological reality remains doubtful (on Speech Act Theory, see 2.7.1.1 above; on various revisions of the CP, see 5.2 above), whereas the accounts in this section draw on the premises of speakers mutually assuming each other's rationality (from which their mutual face-wants emanate; 5.2 above), background knowledge, and inferring goals from plans, whose psychological plausibility has been tested in a series of experiments (fn.37, 5.4.3.2 below).

commitment to bringing about some perlocutionary effect is made explicit, and therefore the speaker carries this responsibility jointly with the addressee). In such cases, deriving (17) from an utterance of (15) in the above situation could be modelled as follows (2nd path): steps I to VI: as above. If the speaker has not explicitly asked me to somehow make it ‘not-hot’ for him/her, it is probably because s/he is reluctant to assume the responsibility for bringing about a particular perlocutionary effect, and prefers to leave that responsibility with me (step VII: inference from assumption about interlocutors’ mutual face-wants — *nota bene*, this step differs from an implicature of politeness because the speaker is now imposing on (*threatening*) the negative face of the addressee).<sup>35</sup> Therefore, the speaker’s intention is probably to request that I somehow make it ‘not-hot’ for him/her (step VIII: inference from steps V, VI and VII). This time, the implicature in (17) has been derived without the mediation of an implicature to the effect that the speaker is being polite.

(15) may also be uttered without giving rise to the implicature in (17). It may, for example, be taken as a criticism. The inferential process after step III would now run roughly as follows (3rd path): in uttering (15), the speaker is expressing discontent at being in this setting (step IV: inference from steps I, II and III). The speaker knows that I, as the host, am responsible for temperature conditions in this setting (step V: background knowledge). So, by addressing (15) to me, the host, the speaker is conveying a criticism of my hosting abilities (step VI: inference from steps IV and V). (15) is no longer understood as a request, but neither is the implicature that the speaker is being polite drawn. Or, (15) may be taken as small talk. The inferential process after step III would then run roughly as follows (4th path): the speaker has no reason to believe that I can somehow make it ‘not-hot’ for him/her — the addressee may be another guest, or the assumption binding the owner of the house to provide for those present may be culturally or situationally suspended (step IV: background knowledge). So, the speaker’s intention in (15) is probably to establish contact, i.e. s/he is being polite (step V: inference from assumption about speaker’s rationality, step IV and interlocutors’ mutual face-wants). In this last case, the only implicature drawn is one regarding the speaker’s polite intention, i.e. politeness is identified as the perlocutionary effect sought by the speaker.

The four possibilities analysed above illustrate how an indirect utterance can give rise to the proposition that the speaker is being polite. This proposition is functionally independent from the implicature in (17) — the requestive reading of (15) — that is, it has its own truth conditions (Levinson 1983:144-5; Carston 1988:158): either may be true while the other is simultaneously false (paths 2 and 4), or both may be true (path 1)

<sup>35</sup> Simultaneously, VII may constitute the addressee’s *positive* face: ‘the speaker leaves that responsibility with me out of respect (because I am older/wiser/etc.)’. Provided, then, that positive face-wants took precedence in context (*contra* B&L:64, 74; see 1.3.1 above), VII could amount to an implicature of politeness. This would parallel the use of formulaic expressions by Japanese speakers who, when introduced to powerful addressees, ask them to ‘please treat me well’ (Matsumoto 1988:409ff.).

or false (path 3). It is thus — like (17), but independently of it — cancellable based on an utterance of (15). Moreover, it is non-detachable: (15) could read ‘it’s [rather] hot in [this room]’, or ‘il fait chaud ci-dedans’, and still give rise to the implicature that the speaker is being polite along paths 1 and 4. Finally, it is calculable, since its derivation — subject to cultural and situational constraints — is part of, rather than an extension of, the inferential process leading to recognising the speaker’s intention. The hearer may, then, plausibly draw the implicature that the speaker is being polite if the speaker’s utterance in context is indirect. However, whether s/he will actually draw such an implicature — in other words, which of the inferential paths open to him/her given the speaker’s utterance s/he will follow — is wholly dependent on the particulars of the situation. These include the speaker’s intonation and non-verbal behaviour when uttering (15), the addressee’s prior impression of, and/or familiarity with, the speaker, as well as the addressee’s mood of the moment. In such cases, the recognition of the speaker’s polite intention needs to be secured before politeness as a perlocutionary effect can be achieved.<sup>36</sup> And while this recognition is at least partly subject to the interlocutors’ mutual contextual — including cultural — beliefs, such beliefs do not go all the way toward securing it: idiosyncratic factors play a part too. Consequently, when the speaker’s utterance in context is indirect, the implicature that the speaker is being polite, if derived, will be particularised.

#### *5.4.3.2 When the speaker’s utterance is ambivalent and not conventionalised for some use*

A different inferential path will be followed if the speaker’s utterance in context is ambivalent but not conventionalised for some use. The derivation of the proposition concerning the speaker’s polite intention now follows, temporally and causally, the recognition of his/her intention in making an utterance. Nevertheless, this proposition is still cancellable, non-detachable, and (potentially) calculable based on the speaker’s utterance, and thus qualifies as a particularised implicature of his/her utterance.

Consider (14), repeated below

(14) I was asking myself if it would be OK to open some windows.

Addressed by a guest to the host during a dinner party at the latter’s house, (14) can give rise to the implicature in (18)

(18) The speaker wants some windows opened.

via the following inferential process: in uttering (14), the speaker is informing me of his/her attitude toward the proposition ‘it is OK to open some windows’ (step I: recovery of propositional content). Interlocutors’ propositional attitudes being private, the speaker would not go to the trouble of informing me of his/her attitude

<sup>36</sup> This is not the same as the hearer actually thinking that the speaker is polite (5.3 above): politeness as a perlocutionary effect relies on the recognition of this intention, but is not guaranteed by it.



toward any particular proposition out of his/her own will if s/he did not have some other intention which s/he intends me to recognise (step II: assumption about speaker's rationality). So, what is the speaker's intention in this case? First, despite having reason to believe that 'it is OK to open some windows' is true (e.g. because this is a house, as opposed to an exhibition of paintings, where temperature and humidity need to be controlled) (step III: background knowledge), the speaker has not asserted 'it is OK to open some windows', but merely that s/he is entertaining 'it is OK to open some windows' as a possibility (step IV: propositional content). Second, this being my house, the speaker has reason to believe not only that I am in a privileged position to know whether 'it is OK to open some windows' is true, but also that I am in a privileged position to make this proposition true (step V: background knowledge). So, by choosing to inform me (rather than a guest) that s/he is entertaining 'it is OK to open some windows' as a possibility, the speaker is actually asking me to confirm whether this proposition is true (step VI: inference from steps I, IV and V). Normally people express an interest in finding out whether some proposition is true to help further their goals<sup>37</sup> (step VII: as in step II). Whether 'it is OK to open some windows' is true can help further the goal of opening some windows (step VIII: associating plan elements with desired goals). So the speaker's intention in uttering (14) must be to request that some windows be opened (step IX: inference about speaker's intention).<sup>38</sup> Recognising the speaker's intention in this way amounts to establishing how his/her utterance may be complied with — in this case, by opening some windows, or explaining why this is not possible.

However, to derive from (14) the implicature in (19)

(19) [In uttering (14)] the speaker is being polite.

the hearer needs to take some further steps. S/he must reason as follows: if the speaker's intention is to request to open some windows, s/he could have expressed his/her desire to open some windows (step X: background knowledge/theory of speech acts).<sup>39</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Goals are appealed to here based on experimental results establishing the psychological reality of people's ability to associate plan elements with desired goals (Lindsay et al. 1993, Lindsay & Gorayska 1994). Both in selecting appropriate plan elements and in interpreting their significance, subjects consistently appealed to, and relied on, goal-directed planning processes, rather than a set of general semantic interconnections. The goal-directedness of human behaviour recurs in the literature on utterance understanding (e.g., Attardo 1997:769; Cohen & Levesque 1990:268-9; Geis 1995:38; G.Green 1996:90; M.Green 1995:103ff.; Harris 1996:49; Kasher 1998:186; Lindsay et al. 1993:4-5; Lindsay & Gorayska 1994:3; Litman & Allen 1990:365; Sperber & Wilson 1995:268; Thomason 1990:356-7), and may indeed be viewed as emanating from speakers' rationality (G.Green 1996:97). Given the lack of widely accepted definitions of 'goals' and 'plans' as technical terms (for a proposal, see Lindsay & Gorayska 1994:22), the following informal definitions are currently adopted: "Goal: the object of a person's ambition or effort; a destination; an aim"; "Plan: a formulated and especially detailed method by which a thing is to be done" (COD, 9th ed.).

<sup>38</sup> Our experience of misunderstandings as speakers of natural languages renders the defeasibility of this inference intuitively appealing (Searle 1996a:170, B&L:89).

<sup>39</sup> By implying the conscious availability of a ranking of possible realisations of requests according to their degree of (in)directness, this step cannot be taken unless (14) has been previously understood as a request. This will only be possible to the extent that the illocutionary force of the speaker's utterance may

However, the speaker has instead chosen to inform me that s/he is entertaining ‘it is OK to open some windows’ as a possibility (step XI: propositional content). The speaker has, then, expended more effort than minimally required for me to recognise this intention; so s/he must have some other intention that s/he also intends me to recognise (step XII: assumption about speaker’s rationality). Requesting for something to be done by means of expressing one’s corresponding desire is normally<sup>40</sup> avoided, given that it encroaches on the other’s negative face (step XIII: inference from step X and interlocutors’ mutually assuming each other’s face-wants). So, the speaker has avoided to express his/her desire to open some windows to avoid imposing on my negative face, i.e. to be polite (step XIV: inference from steps XI, XII and XIII).

The derivation of the ‘polite’ implicature in (19) from an utterance of (14) as outlined above suggests that (19) is cancellable: (14) may be understood as conveying the request in (18), but it will only give rise to the implicature in (19) if negative face-wants take precedence over positive face-wants in context. (19) will then be derived subject not only to cultural constraints, but also to situational ones.<sup>41</sup> (19) is also non-detachable: (13) above, repeated below, could still give rise to it.

(13) I was wondering if it would be OK to open some windows.

However, the availability of (13) may well hamper the calculability of (19) based on an utterance of (14). This is because deriving (19) depends on the prior derivation of (18): for the hearer to think that the speaker intends to be polite in uttering (14), the hearer must first infer that the speaker is thereby performing a request. Only if (14) counts as a request can its propositional content be compared to alternative ways of making requests, and the speaker’s polite intention recognised. However, it seems doubtful that the hearer would actually expend the extra effort needed to derive (19) from an utterance of (14) (steps X to XIV above), once s/he has established how (14) may be complied with by deriving (18) (step IX). To do this, the hearer would need a reason. The phrasing of (14) may provide such a reason. It will have been noticed that (14) sounds rather odd in English.<sup>42</sup> (13) above is a much more natural way of expressing (roughly) the same propositional content. Given that (13) is conventionalised in English

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be jointly determined by the propositional content of his/her utterance and the situational context. However, given that this may not always be possible (fn.17, 2.7.1.1 above), the possibility itself of calculating (19) on the basis of (14) must be left open.

<sup>40</sup> This qualification is important: this assumption can be safely drawn only when negative face-wants are prioritised in context. Where positive face-wants are prioritised, on the other hand, expressing one’s desire for some thing/action may well constitute one’s own positive face, by making one appear confident about one’s own desires.

<sup>41</sup> For Brown and Levinson, positive face-wants may take precedence only if the speaker takes him/herself to belong to the group of others whose opinion matters for the addressee (B&L:63-4). This will be a case of positive face-wants taking precedence in context, even when they may not do so in the culture as a whole. On the possibility of positive face-wants being prioritised depending on cultural constraints, see 1.3.1 above.

<sup>42</sup> The difficulty in safely assuming that (18), and, based on that, (19) will be calculable by native speakers of English may explain why they are unlikely to use (14) to convey (18), and (19) based on that.

for conveying the request in (18), the speaker's *not* using (13) on this occasion could serve as a trigger for the addressee to expend the extra effort needed to derive (19) based on an utterance of (14). However, the fact that (13) is so conventionalised could also hamper the derivation of (18) based on an utterance of (14) via an M-type implicature (Levinson 1995:97; 2000:135ff.).<sup>43</sup> That is, given that (13) is conventionalised in English to convey the request in (18), the addressee could be deterred from understanding (14) as a request in the first place, and instead take it to be an assertion of what is on the speaker's mind. In this case, the calculability of (19) depends on whether the addressee thinks that (13) is equally available to the speaker as a conventionalised expression for conveying the request in (18). If the addressee takes it that this is so, s/he is likely to take (14) as an assertion and not as a request. If, however, s/he has reason to think that the speaker does not hold (13) to be so conventionalised — say, because s/he takes the speaker to be an L2 learner based on the latter's accent — s/he may still understand (18) as a request. That is, whether (19) is calculable or not depends on the assumptions that the speaker and the hearer mutually take it that the other holds in context (Récanati 1998:523; 5.4.3 above). In conclusion, (19) is cancellable, non-detachable, and calculable on the basis of (14). It is, then, a potential implicature of (14), which will necessitate referring to the particulars of the situation as outlined above to be derived, i.e. it will be particularised.

<sup>43</sup> Levinson (1995:97; 2000:73ff.) proposes three heuristics. The first one, Q, is constrained to expression alternates, defined as such on the basis of their semantic content rather than form, and is therefore not applicable to inferences associated with conventionalised expressions. Specific inferences based on the form of the words used are motivated by the remaining two heuristics (the shorter 1995 definitions of Q2 and M are cited under the 1987/2000 headings I and M):

I: 'What is simply described is stereotypically and specifically exemplified'

(a) unmarked expressions warrant rich interpretations to the stereotype;

(b) minimal forms warrant maximal interpretations.

*Constraint:* only of unmarked, minimal expressions

*Characteristics:*

not fundamentally metalinguistic;

invokes world-knowledge of stereotypical relations;

positive inference to specific subcase.

M: 'Marked descriptions warn "marked situation"'

*Constraint:* only of marked, unusual or periphrastic expressions

*Characteristics:*

metalinguistic (marked compared to unmarked)

the inference is to the *complement* of the inference that would have been induced by the unmarked expression.

These heuristics have default application: they operate unless the context or the content of the utterance explicitly indicates that they should not be. They thus yield inferences falling under a third layer of meaning,

"intermediate between coded meaning and nonce speaker meaning [...] a level of systematic pragmatic inference based *not* on direct computations about speaker-intentions, but rather on *general expectations about how language is normally used.*" (Levinson 1995:93; original emphasis)

### 5.4.3.3 *When the speaker's utterance is conventionalised for some use and used in the context relative to which it is conventionalised*

So far, I have argued that politeness may be communicated by means of particularised implicatures if the speaker's utterance in context is indirect or ambivalent but not conventionalised for some use. When the speaker's utterance in context is conventionalised for some use and used in the context relative to which it is so conventionalised — which renders it ambivalent *ipso facto* (5.4.1 above) — politeness will be implicated in a generalised manner from a first implicature pertaining to the perlocutionary effect sought by the speaker's utterance. In requiring a minimum of contextual information, this “second-level” implicature will be more context-dependent than GCIs as proposed by Levinson (1995, 2000), yet will be presumed once such minimal context is available. It is thus not particularised, in that it does not require referring to the speaker's intention (though it may, of course, be cancelled in virtue of such intention).<sup>44</sup>

Uttered by a guest addressing the host during a party at the latter's house, (13), repeated below

(13) I was wondering if it would be OK to open some windows.

will give rise to (18) without recourse to a full-blown inferential process (steps I to IX, 5.4.3.2 above).<sup>45</sup>

(18) The speaker wants some windows opened.

However, the further proposition that the speaker is being polite, something like

<sup>44</sup> Such construal of GCIs implies an extension of Levinson's scheme; fuller exposition of the argument will have to wait until 5.4.5 below. Briefly — *pace* Levinson (2000:24), who differentiates standardised inferences, which rely on compression by precedent, from GCIs, which are “driven by general heuristics, and not dependent on routinisation”— I view the kind of social unmarkedness associated with standardised inferences as lying one step before the linguistic unmarkedness of Levinson's GCIs (especially, I-type GCIs). By a gradual increase in ‘frozenness’ (exemplified in 5.4.5.1 below), standardised inferences can acquire linguistic reflexes of their characteristic use, such that the socially unmarked alternative also becomes the linguistically unmarked one. Levinson's I- and M-heuristics (fn.43, 5.4.3.2 above) yield the correct predictions in both cases. Below, inferences presumed in normal circumstances are indicated as GCIs, while inferences presumed with reference to a minimum of contextual information are indicated as \*GCIs.

<sup>45</sup> (18) is established as an implicature of (13) as follows: it is defeasible — (13) can be meant as a question rather than a request. Tense seems to make a difference: ‘I *am wondering* [present continuous] / I *wonder* [simple present] if it *is* [simple present] OK to open some windows’ are more likely than (13) to be understood as questions. This suggests that (18) is an implicature of (13) attributable to the form of words used (i.e., detachable), which may be overridden by the speaker's intentions in context. In this case, the relevant inferential process will be akin to applying Levinson's (2000:112ff.) I-heuristic: (13) is the unmarked (*qua* shorter) way of conveying roughly the same propositional content as (14) above. Hence, (13), rather than (14), is by default associated with the more specific request reading. Nevertheless, (13) may be meant as a question in context, and a polite one at that. (13) may be so understood only in virtue of the speaker's intentions (i.e. via a particularised implicature), which will override its generalised reading as a request. Deriving a particularised implicature of politeness, based on first understanding (13) as a question, then comparing it with alternative ways of asking questions (e.g. a direct question), remains possible along the lines discussed in 5.4.3.2 above.

(20) [In uttering (13)] the speaker is being polite.

would now be presumed in all contexts relative to which (13) is conventionalised.

A survey of native speakers' understanding of (21) below uttered by a friend confirmed the presumptive nature of the 'polite' implicature in the case of conventionalised expressions.

(21) I was wondering if you could help me and I'm not trying to be polite.

While finding (21) odd, respondents<sup>46</sup> suggested two possible interpretations. First, by explicitly cancelling the 'polite' implicature, the second clause also cancels the request understanding of (21), expressing doubt as to the addressee's ability to help instead. However, the majority interpreted (21) as a pressing request. Significantly, respondents did not feel that (21) was necessarily impolite, although they would seek further clues (body language, subsequent turns) to understand how it was meant. This would suggest that politeness is impossible to cancel explicitly, which should be the case with all implicated content. It thus confirms the view that politeness constitutes a perlocutionary effect (5.3 above); as Fraser and Nolen (1981:96) put it, politeness is "totally in the hands (or ears) of the hearer." It also confirms the prediction that politeness is assumed by default (1.3.2 above): to abandon this initial assumption, respondents would need substantial indications of the contrary — even explicitly denying it is not *ipso facto* interpreted as impolite. To account for the two interpretations suggested by respondents, one must consider the incrementality of interpretation. The first clause of (21) is interpreted as polite by presumption. However, politeness is not part of speaker-meaning: once achieved as a perlocutionary effect in virtue of this presumptive interpretation of the first clause of (21), it cannot be cancelled by its second clause, which accounts for several respondents' comments of the two clauses as unrelated, or of the utterance as unclear, or a *non sequitur*. Indeed, respondents who would be inclined to interpret the first clause of (21) literally in the light of the second clause, suggested they would do so in retrospect.

To return to (13) above, this suggests that the addressee's thinking that (13) is a conventionalised expression under the circumstances for conveying the request in (18) amounts to his/her holding the belief that, roughly, 'uttering (something like) (13) when one is a guest at another's house and one wishes to perform (something like) the request in (18) in English is polite'. The evaluative judgement is part of this belief, rather than an *a posteriori* evaluation of the belief: the expression, *qua* conventionalised, cannot be held to be so conventionalised independently of this evaluation (or it would not be so conventionalised, whereupon the evaluation would be arrived at each time anew). Generally put, when one learns (through experience or through explicit instruction) that this is the way to do some thing — for example, the way to eat is by holding a knife in one's right hand and a fork in one's left — one is effectively learning an *evaluation* by a

<sup>46</sup> Twenty-two Trinity Hall graduate students.

set of agents of a particular way of doing a particular thing. Consequently, if (13) is conventionalised as a request in the context above, it does so by counting as a polite request in this context.

(20) enjoys this presumptive status in all contexts relative to which (13) is conventionalised to convey the request in (18). Nevertheless, (20) is defeasible in context (Grice 1989a:39; 5.4.3.4 below). (20) would also be detachable: were (14) above used instead of (13), (20) would not necessarily be derived (on the difficulties of calculating an implicature of politeness from an utterance of (14), see 5.4.3.2 above).<sup>47</sup> Finally, (20) would now be presumed (by way of an \*I-implicature) in virtue of the addressee's holding the belief that, roughly, 'uttering (something like) (13) in a situation when one is a guest at another's house and one wishes to perform (something like) the request in (18) in English is polite.'<sup>48</sup> The addressee will form the further belief that the speaker is polite in virtue of this \*I-implicature. Since politeness as a perlocutionary effect consists of the addressee's holding this further belief, politeness will now have been achieved without the recognition of whatever intention to be polite the speaker may have had, i.e. it will have been anticipated. To the extent that previous studies, as well as the analysis of the CG data (chapter 7 below), have shown conventionalised expressions to be the prevailing means of achieving politeness, this is the primary (i.e. usual) way in which politeness is achieved. Used in the context relative to which they are conventionalised, conventionalised expressions are presumed to be polite, and therefore pass unnoticed.

<sup>47</sup> This is attributable to the maxim of Manner, which has led Fraser (1999:19) to propose that "Be polite" is a sub-maxim of the Maxim of Manner. The unmarked case, then, is to speak politely." However, this proposal produces a contradiction. On the one hand, the unmarked sequences would be those characterised by avoidance of prolixity and brevity of expression: 'Miss x sang "Home Sweet Home"' is unmarked vs. 'Miss x produced a series of sounds that corresponded closely with the score of "Home Sweet Home"' (Grice 1989a:37). Whereas, on the other hand, the unmarked sequences would not necessarily be characterised by these properties: 'I was wondering if it would be OK to open some windows' would be unmarked (in English, *qua* polite) vs. 'Open some windows'. Consequently, "Be polite" and the other sub-maxims of Manner appear to be mutually exclusive, while lacking an indication as to how each may constrain the others' application in context (as, e.g., with the first and second sub-maxim of Quantity), this proposal cannot be implemented.

<sup>48</sup> Arguably, (20) would not be calculable as a nonce-implicature of (13). Recall that for a proposition to be calculable, the speaker must take it that the addressee is able to calculate this on the basis of his/her utterance in context. For the speaker to take it that the addressee is *able to calculate* a particular proposition, the speaker must first take it that the addressee does not already *hold* this proposition to be true. But this is not the case for the speaker who utters (13) taking it to be conventionalised in English to convey the request in (18). This time, the speaker does so on the assumption that 'uttering (something like) (13) when one is a guest at another's house and one wishes to perform (something like) the request in (18) in English is polite' is already mutually held by both him/herself and the addressee, i.e. that the addressee already *holds* as true the proposition which the speaker would *otherwise* take the addressee to be able to calculate on the basis of his/her utterance. The addressee, on the other hand, will have no reason this time to continue the inferential process (infer steps X to XIV, 5.4.3.2 above) beyond (18) based on which s/he may comply with the speaker's utterance. Based on his/her prior experience in similar communicative situations, s/he will already hold a belief that, roughly, 'uttering (something like) (13) in a situation when one is a guest at another's house and one wishes to perform (something like) the request in (18) in English is polite.' No further inferencing is triggered (as in 5.4.3.2 above, leading to a particularised implicature of politeness), since this time the context of utterance is in harmony with the content of this belief.

#### 5.4.3.4 *When the speaker's utterance is conventionalised for some use and used in a context other than that relative to which it is conventionalised*

Uttered by a husband addressing his wife at home, (13) would sound odd. Two things may plausibly happen next. First, in virtue of (13) conveying (18) *in normal circumstances*, the wife may still presume (13) to be a request. Second, (13) not being conventionalised *in this context*, the husband's choice will appear as socially 'marked', its markedness residing in the (unexpected) relationship between the expression used and the context of utterance (cf. the definition of conventionalisation in 5.4.2 above). The social 'markedness' of her husband's choice will now generate an \*M-implicature to the complement of the \*I-implicature that would have arisen from the (socially) unmarked expression (Levinson 2000:155). Yet, this does not amount to impoliteness (which must be communicated; 1.3.2-3 above).<sup>49</sup>

Rather, the addressee is now provided with a reason to continue the inferential process beyond understanding (13) as a request. For this, she would appeal to further features of the context: is there a reason why her husband might think windows should not be opened even though he would so desire, for example, is one of those present ill, or is a storm expected? Are further parties present, in whose presence her husband may wish to sound more formal than usual? Has a rift between them occurred prior to this utterance, such that her husband may be communicating this by means of his choice? Based on what she takes to be the case, she may attribute to her husband the intention to be polite; or she may not. However, deriving a 'polite' implicature will now require recognising the speaker's intention. In other words, politeness, if achieved, will be communicated.<sup>50</sup>

#### 5.4.3.5 *Implications of the analysis and summary*

Defining conventionalisation as "a correlate of the (statistical) frequency with which an expression is used *in one's experience* in a particular context" (5.4.2 above) allows one to include under this rubric expressions which are direct in the sense that their use can

<sup>49</sup> The relevant \*M-type implicature may be explicated as "[In uttering (13)] the speaker is not being polite (in the normal way)", which is different from an implicature of impoliteness ("[In uttering (13)] the speaker is being impolite"). This analysis is supported by respondents' claims that they would not think the speaker is being impolite until subsequently provided with proof of this (5.4.3.3 above).

<sup>50</sup> Jary (1998:7ff.) argues that only cases such as this last one give rise to implicatures of (im)politeness, because only if it turns out that the addressee's assumptions about the degree of politeness required somehow diverge from the speaker's corresponding assumptions, is (im)politeness relevant enough to be worth the addressee's while to process. While agreeing that, more often than not, politeness does not constitute an additional message (Jary 1998:2), I find his account incomplete, in that it does not tackle how a conventionalised expression such as (13) achieves politeness when the addressee's assumptions about the necessary degree of politeness *are in harmony* with the speaker's corresponding assumptions, in which case no (particularised) implicatures about the (im)politeness of the speaker's utterance are licensed (5.4.3.3 above); or how the implicature that the speaker is being polite may arise in the absence of any discrepancy between the interlocutors' assumptions about the necessary degree of politeness when an utterance in context is indirect (5.4.3.1 above) or ambivalent but not conventionalised for some use (5.4.3.2 above).

be explained in terms of their compositionally derived linguistic meaning. Utterances such as (12) above, repeated below:

(12) Open some windows.

are always ambivalent in context, in that they make clear how they may be complied with (5.4.1 above). Moreover, they do so on compositional grounds alone, i.e. not in virtue of heuristics or otherwise rational conversational activity. Nevertheless, the frequency of (12) in a particular context may still qualify it as a conventionalised expression for conveying the speaker's intention that s/he wants some windows to be opened. This observation holds the key to accounting for the CG data presented in 5.1 above.

Utterance	Inferential process $\longrightarrow$	
Indirect e.g. <i>'It's hot in here'</i>	Implicature of politeness potentially derived as part of inferring request understanding (how the utterance may be complied with); <b>PCI of the utterance;</b> (if achieved) <b>politeness communicated</b>	Request reading: derived independently of implicature of politeness; PCI of the utterance
Ambivalent not conventionalised for some use e.g. <i>'I was asking myself if it would be OK...'</i>	Request reading: derived before implicature of politeness; PCI	Implicature of politeness derived after request understanding; <b>PCI of request PCI;</b> (if achieved) <b>politeness communicated</b>
Conventionalised for some use, used in the context relative to which it is conventionalised e.g. <i>'I was wondering if it would be OK...'</i> <i>by guest to host during party at host's house</i>	Request reading: I-type GCI (unmarked relative to other ways of expressing (roughly) the same coded content)	Implicature of politeness: <b>I*-type GCI of I-type (request) GCI</b> (expression unmarked relative to what is expected in context, i.e. due to conventionalisation); <b>politeness anticipated</b>
Conventionalised for some use, used in a context other than the one relative to which it is conventionalised e.g. <i>'I was wondering if it would be OK...'</i> <i>by husband to wife at home</i>	Request reading: I-type GCI (as above)	M*-type GCI of I-type (request) GCI (expression marked relative to what is expected in context) motivates implicature of politeness as <b>PCI of I-type (request) GCI;</b> (if achieved) <b>politeness communicated</b>

**Table 1: Communicated vs. anticipated politeness**



Direct expressions (e.g. requests phrased in the imperative-2sg. with no additional markers of politeness) are the most frequent means by which offers and requests are performed in a number of contexts in CG (figs. 4.8, 4.9, 4.11, 4.12 above). Nevertheless, such expressions are not perceived as impolite. I would argue that this is so because, based on their experience as CG speakers, the informants recorded hold such direct expressions to be polite (*qua* socially adequate; 1.1 above) in a number of contexts. When such an expression is used in a context relative to which it is, in their experience, conventionalised, politeness as a perlocutionary effect is automatically achieved in virtue of this experience, condensed in their holding the above belief (5.4.3.3 above). However, uttering such an expression in a different context will no longer automatically achieve politeness. Politeness must now be communicated. The discrepancy between their prior experience of similar contexts and the use of the direct expression therein will now trigger the operation of the M-heuristic, and the particulars of the situation will be taken into account in search of a plausible reason for this discrepancy. Once more, if the addressee comes to hold the proposition that the speaker is being polite as true, this will be because s/he will have derived this as a particularised implicature of the speaker's utterance (5.4.3.4 above). Table 1 summarises schematically the four possibilities outlined in this section (parentheses indicate provisional inferential stages).

#### 5.4.4 The argument from 'what is said'

In this section, I discuss evidence supporting the existence of a level of 'what is said' akin to Grice's understanding of this level as "closely related to the conventional meaning of the words (the sentence) [the speaker] has uttered" (1989a:25). This is the level at which conventionalised expressions are consciously accessible as distinct from each other, and as such it plays a direct role in the acquisition of, and memory for, polite forms.

The fact that the determination of Gricean 'what is said' does not always yield a truth-evaluable proposition, even after reference assignment and disambiguation have taken place, is widely acknowledged.<sup>51</sup> The level at which truth conditions are assigned has correspondingly shifted from that of Gricean 'what is said' to the level of the proposition expressed, variously referred to as an 'implicature' (Bach 1994:272ff.), an 'explicature' (Carston 1988; Sperber & Wilson 1995[1986]:176ff.), or a pragmatically enriched level of 'what is said' (Récanati 1991[1989]:105ff.),<sup>52</sup> calling into question the motivation for distinguishing a separate (Gricean) level of 'what is said'. While Bach (1994:273) defends a strict notion of 'what is said' as the (not necessarily consciously available) level of the literal meaning of the utterance, which in turn provides the

<sup>51</sup> For an overview, see Jaszczolt 1999:27ff.

<sup>52</sup> These terms are not co-extensive, but share the property of constituting the starting point for calculating (particularised) implicatures (for a schematic representation, see Levinson 2000:195).

grounds on which the implicature is worked out, within the framework of RT this level is abandoned in favour of pragmatically enriched explicatures derived as developments of the logical form of the sentence uttered. Carston (1999:109) defends the latter view:

“[Bach’s] conception of what is said seems to be redundant in a cognitive processing account of utterance understanding, since it plays no role in the interpretation which is not already played by the independently motivated level of logical form.”

In a series of experiments testing subjects’ intuitions concerning the difference between ‘what is said’ and what is implicated by an utterance, Gibbs and Moise (1997) found that, not only did subjects differentiate between the two notions, they consistently interpreted ‘what is said’ as the product of pragmatic enrichment beyond reference assignment and disambiguation. Based on these findings, they argue in favour of the relevance-theoretic approach to utterance interpretation, according to which ‘what is said’ by an utterance of a sentence cannot be made consciously available until it has been pragmatically enriched, i.e. until it has been developed into a full-fledged explicature in accordance with the Principle of Relevance (ibid.:65ff.; Sperber & Wilson 1995:158; Carston 1988:168-9). Noting that “it may be that Gibbs and Moise’s experiments tell us more about how the word *say* is interpreted than about whether people have reliable intuitions concerning what is said in contrast to what is implicated” (1999:349), Nicolle and Clark point out a number of difficulties with accepting these results as conclusive (ibid.:342-4). After conducting further experiments, they conclude that “people can very easily be made aware of ‘what is said’ as distinct from what is communicated (that is, implicated), even though they do not normally interpret the term ‘what is said’ in this way” (ibid.:349).

Evidence from conventionalisation corroborates Nicolle and Clark’s last claim. Consider, first, replies which address (solely) the conventional meaning of the words uttered, rather than the pragmatically enriched inference (lacking an indication that such inference should not be drawn).

- (22) (a) Can you open some windows?  
 (b) Yes, I can. (without proceeding to do so)

We have all been confronted with similar replies on some occasion. And, while we may be upset, or amused by them, we cannot accuse the addressee of providing an irrelevant reply, merely an unhelpful one. Nevertheless, this was clearly not the reply we had expected: our being amused or upset is indicative of this. Such examples suggest that a strict notion of ‘what is said’, identified with the conventional meaning the words uttered, may still be theoretically useful in accounting, not for how we *normally* understand utterances, but for how we are *capable* of understanding them: the fact that we can see the relevance of (22b) to (22a) — (22b) addressing the conventional meaning of the words in (22a) — argues in favour of recognising a level of ‘what is said’ which is prior to pragmatic enrichment, since such a level is recovered (by back-

tracking our steps, as it were) when the need arises (i.e. when our expectations were frustrated).

A second type of evidence comes from the acquisition of polite forms. As noted in 5.4.2 above, direct teaching of polite forms is an important source of information for the politeness system. The emphasis in this case is on the exact forms to be used, rather than on the pragmatically enriched inferences they normally give rise to. Consider (23)-(26) below:

(23) I was wondering if it would be OK to open some windows.

(24) Would it be OK to open some windows?

(25) It's OK to open some windows, isn't it?

(26) I don't suppose it would be OK to open some windows.

In the absence of any indication or reason why the addressee should take into account the particulars of the situation,<sup>53</sup> these may be reported to a third party by saying either of (27) or (28) below:

(27) S/he asked (me) if it's OK to open some windows.

(28) S/he asked me to open some windows.

Furthermore, they may be replied to by saying something like "Sure" or "Certainly", or "No, I'm afraid not/that's not possible (because ...)". Either way, the addressee would not be responding to the conventional meaning of the words uttered, but to their reading as requesting that some windows be opened.<sup>54</sup> In addition to such reading, (23)-(26) may give rise to particularised implicatures in context (cf. 5.4.3.4 above). The fact that only (27) or (28) above — that is, the request reading of (23)-(26) rather than the conventional meaning of the words uttered — can plausibly be reported or replied to strongly suggests that (27) and/or (28) are a necessary step toward guaranteeing the optimal relevance of these utterances in context. At the same time, the evidence supports the case for a separate level of 'what is said' which is prior to pragmatic enrichment,<sup>55</sup> yet — unlike the level of logical form, understood (at least on some

<sup>53</sup> Significantly, a characteristic intonational pattern is part of the conventionalisation of form as defined above (on the language-specific intoning of social formulae, see Cruttenden 1997[1986]:164). (26) is a case in point: its request reading is associated with an utterance-final rising intonation. While this is not the only intonation that licenses a request reading of (26) — intonational variation being a matter of degree rather than of categorical distinction — a token of the same utterance using flat intonation would hamper its reading as a request, even if this were a possible inference on all other counts (e.g. setting, participants, and so on). Fretheim (1998[1992]) discusses the role of intonation in deriving scalar implicatures, which are one type of GCIs. While he sees the claim that intonation can affect the derivation of scalar implicatures as weakening the argument for the *existence* of GCIs, I would argue that it merely supports the proposed *contextualisation of their scope* (5.4.5 below).

<sup>54</sup> Not all conversational implicatures share these properties. Consider (15) above:

(15) It's hot in here.

licensing (17) in context:

(17) The speaker wants me to somehow make it 'not-hot' for him/her.

Understanding (15) as implicating (17), the addressee still could not report (15) by saying "S/he asked me to somehow make it not-hot for him/her", or reply to it by saying "Sure" or "No, I'm afraid ...".

<sup>55</sup> Jaszczolt (1999:8) distinguishes logical forms from semantic representations, and points out that only the latter can be enriched. The two terms are used interchangeably within RT, where pragmatic enrichment may concern either (Sperber & Wilson 1993; 1995:73, 175, 179).

accounts) as “an abstract, underspecified level of semantic content” (Levinson 2000:240) — is consciously accessible.<sup>56</sup> For (23)-(26) to be taught as different, they must remain distinct at a level which is consciously accessible.<sup>57</sup> The level of ‘what is said’ suggests itself as such a level. Acknowledging a distinction at this level, “direct teaching of the child about what forms to use in various situations” (Snow et al. 1990:303) becomes possible.

Finally, naturalistic experiments testing subjects’ ability spontaneously to recall a prior speaker’s utterance, found that ‘what is said’ — the conventional meanings of the words uttered — was accurately recalled more frequently when the speaker had used a conventionalised expression, as opposed to a hint (Holtgraves 1997). Moreover, memory was enhanced when an otherwise conventionalised expression had been used in a context relative to which it was not conventionalised (ibid.:109). These findings support the analysis in 5.4.3 above: off-record hints, being indirect in context, require inferencing to derive how they may be complied with: “the extra effort involved in recognising the speaker’s meaning probably reduces the likelihood that the exact words will be encoded” (ibid.:111). The use of an otherwise conventionalised expression in a context relative to which it is not conventionalised, on the other hand, enhances the verbatim recall of the utterance, since it is the discrepancy between the wording of the utterance and the context in which this is uttered that sets the inferential process in motion in the first place. That such discrepancies are noticed — and remembered — supports the claim that the wording of conventionalised expressions must be represented at a level prior to pragmatic enrichment.

Taken jointly, the evidence presented above strongly suggests that a level of ‘what is said’ which is prior to pragmatic enrichment has a place in a theory of linguistic communication: the information represented at this level can be made consciously available, although it normally (i.e. so long as our expectations of the situation are met) is not. Yet this level cannot be reduced to that of logical form, identified with the output of grammar. The same logical form may be applicable to sentences (29) and (30) below,<sup>58</sup> and both may be uttered to request that some windows be opened.

<sup>56</sup> The conscious accessibility of the level of logical form is ruled out by Sperber & Wilson: “Semantic representations are incomplete logical forms. [...] [They] [...] never surface to consciousness” (1995:193; cf.285n.7). Levinson (2000:240-1) is more tentative: “Few theorists would [...] deny that such an abstract, underspecified level of semantic content should play an important role in a semantic theory [...] what one is left with is an extremely impoverished level of representation. Kempson (1986) recognises this: on her account, logical forms will have [...] subpropositional status. [...] The recognition of the existence of this level is one of the important sea changes in the history of semantics — it is real enough, but it is relative *terra incognita*.” For an alternative view, see Jaszczolt 1999, esp. pp. 5-8.

<sup>57</sup> This cannot be the level of the proposition expressed (which is consciously accessible), since (23)-(26) do not yet express unique propositions until the referents of ‘I’ and ‘some windows’, and the time and place of the utterance have been fixed.

<sup>58</sup> The possibility that lexical items such as ‘OK’ and ‘bad’ may not be represented as distinct concepts in the logical forms of these sentences is suggested by our ability as hearers to construct logical forms for sentences containing lexical items we have not yet acquired. Arguably, in such cases, a variable specifying general syntactico-semantic information about the (as yet unacquired) lexical item is initially inserted in place of the fully-specified concept. This last one may emerge as distinct from neighbouring

Nevertheless, while potentially coinciding in their logical forms and in ‘what is communicated’ (fig.1, 5.3 above), the two utterances remain distinct at the level of ‘what is said’.

(29) Would it be OK to open some windows?

(30) Would it be bad to open some windows?

Consequently, contrary to Carston’s (1999:109) claim, a strict notion of ‘what is said’, such as that advocated by Bach (1994:277ff., 1999:77-9), appears to play a role in the interpretation of utterances not already played by the independently motivated level of logical form, and as such it must be retained.

#### 5.4.5 On the notion of minimal context

In 5.4.3.3 above, I argued that, when an expression is conventionalised for some use relative to the context of utterance, the polite reading is an \*I-type GCI following from the expression being *socially* unmarked given the context. At first glance, allowing contextual information to determine the output of the proposed heuristics (Levinson 1995, 2000) may seem to defeat the point which originally motivated the proposal of these heuristics: the observation that expressions can have default, preferred interpretations in virtue of their linguistic properties alone, and that when uttered, they will license these interpretations, *all else being equal*. In this section, I set out the reasons why the proposed approach does not amount to a reduction of GCIs to PCIs (as proposed within RT; cf. Levinson 2000:25-6), but is more appropriately viewed as extending Levinson’s scheme.<sup>59</sup>

Some preliminary evidence against adopting an RT framework was discussed in 5.4.4 above.<sup>60</sup> More serious difficulties arise when we attempt to characterise the status of the ‘polite’ implicatures discussed in 5.4.3 above within RT. On the RT view, the proposition expressed by an utterance (its explicature) is the product of inferential enrichment of its logical form in keeping with the Principle of Relevance. Higher-order explicatures are derived by optionally embedding this proposition under a higher-level description, such as a speech-act, or propositional attitude, description, or in general, any assumption schema typically expressing an attitude toward it (Sperber & Wilson 1993:5ff.; 1995:181-2). Implicatures, on the other hand, are not such developments of the logical form of the utterance; they do not include this as one of their sub-parts. Rather than combining decoding and inference, implicatures are derived wholly by inference. Thus, while (18) (5.4.3.3 above) can perhaps be construed as a higher-order

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concepts following repeated encounters of the lexical item in discourse, or explicit definition of it. Ultimately, the logical forms of (29) and (30) are a matter of the semantic framework adopted.

<sup>59</sup> Similar insights underlie Horn’s Q- and R- principles (Horn 1988, 1989, 1998[1984], 2000). Contrary to Levinson (1987:72), Horn does not distinguish between semantic minimisation and expression minimisation. While conflating these two notions is warranted by both Zipf’s (1949) Principle of Least Effort (which motivates Horn’s approach) and empirical considerations (Levinson 1987:73; Huang 1994:263fn.5), the present adoption of Levinson’s proposals is justified by an appeal to scientific perspicacity.

<sup>60</sup> For general criticism of RT, see Gazdar & Good 1982, Levinson 1989.

explicature of (13),<sup>61</sup> the ‘polite’ inference in (20) cannot be so modelled. The proposition expressed by means of (13)

(13) I was wondering whether it would be OK to open some windows.

is that the speaker is wondering whether it would be OK to open some windows, where the referents of ‘I’ and ‘some windows’ have been identified, and the time and place of utterance fixed. Were it this proposition that is being assessed as polite in (20), the RT account would predict — contrary to intuition — that (14)

(14) I was asking myself if it would be OK to open some windows.

is as easily (indeed, at least partly due to its coded content) assessed as polite. Rather, what is assessed as polite in (20) is the speaker’s *utterance*, the particular expression he used to convey this proposition.<sup>62</sup> Consequently, (20) is not an explicature of (13). (20) is, therefore, necessarily an implicature of (13). However, once (20) is so construed, it becomes impossible to account for its presumptive nature, as exemplified by the difficulty of cancelling the politeness of (13) without cancelling its understanding as a request (see the discussion of (21) in 5.4.3.3 above). To explain this, we would have to assume that

“all inferences are constructed *de novo* without reference to a default rule or a preferred interpretation, by hypothesising that the background premises remain sufficiently constant to yield the observable bias in interpretations. It may not be easy to distinguish between this view [attributed by Levinson to some RT theorists; MT] and a theory of default interpretations [proposed by Levinson; MT], especially because such a contextual bias might itself be sufficient to engender a mental counterpart, a default rule of inference. The material difference would be that instead of having two different kinds of inference and one kind of context (as in GCI theory [...]), we will have one kind of inference and two kinds of context, the default context and the fully particular nonce context (amounting to a reduction of GCIs to PCIs).” (Levinson 2000:26)<sup>63</sup>

In the account in 5.4.3 above, the social (un)markedness of an expression relative to the context of use motivates default inferences pertaining to politeness, which would perhaps not be obtainable as nonce inferences of the utterance (fn.48, 5.4.3.3 above). A rather different type of inference was involved if an expression was indirect or ambivalent but not conventionalised for some use. Thus acknowledging the need for two types of inference, one yielding preferred interpretations (GCIs) and another

<sup>61</sup> This should be possible along the lines of Groefsema’s (1992:123ff.) proposed re-analysis of requests traditionally termed ‘indirect’, although the details remain to be worked out.

<sup>62</sup> The ‘polite’ inference in (20) could perhaps be an explicature of (13), if ‘echoic mention’ of the form used (rather than the developed logical form/proposition expressed) were allowed to be embedded in an assumption schema typically expressing an attitude to it. A potential problem with this proposal is that the speaker’s utterance would be implicitly echoic, where implicit echoic use typically triggers garden-pathing (Carston 1996:320-1), a property the interpretation of (13) as polite would seem to lack.

<sup>63</sup> The possibility of a strong contextual bias engendering a mental counterpart is taken up in 6.5 below.

drawing on the particulars of the context, the account proposed in this thesis departs from the RT framework, wherein all implicatures are particularised.

At the same time, the proposed account suggests a direction in which the picture painted by Levinson in the quotation above may be enlarged. To be entertained as a working hypothesis is a third possibility, namely that acknowledging two kinds of inference and two kinds of context may yield a powerful account of utterance interpretation, where the seeming lack of economy is offset by a potential to account for a wide(r) range of phenomena. This proposal elaborates on previous suggestions that meaning becomes gradually conventionalised along the following ‘cline of conventionalisation’ (Traugott 1999; Levinson 2000:262-3):

PCIs	▷	GCIs	▷	coded meaning
(utterance-token meaning)		(utterance-type meaning)		(sentence meaning)

This cline implies a gradual detachment of meaning from context: inferences arising from speakers’ intentions become defeasible inferences associated with properties of linguistic expressions which in turn become part of those expressions’ coded meaning (hence indefeasible). If the right-hand part of this cline has been relatively researched into (e.g., Horn 1998[1984]:407ff.; Levinson 1987:98ff.; 2000:261ff.), such is not the case with its left-hand part — perhaps because this would involve “a theory of default or preferred or statistically normal contexts [which] should be a rather more empirical matter” (Levinson 2000:27). Empirical evidence from CG (5.4.5.1 below) provides grounds on which to hypothesise that, as part of becoming gradually detached from context on the way from PCIs to GCIs, inferences go through a stage at which contextual input is still required, yet this is minimal and well-circumscribed; the corresponding inferences are now presumed in virtue of general heuristics, rather than derived in virtue of the speaker’s intentions.<sup>64</sup> That is, on closer scrutiny, the left-hand part of this cline may turn out to look as follows:

PCIs	▷	*GCIs	▷	GCIs
(utterance-token meaning		(utterance-type meaning		(utterance-type
meaning		presumed in minimal context)		presumed in all
derived in nonce context)				<i>ceteris paribus</i> )
contexts				

The theoretical viability of this proposal depends on finding a consistent way of delimiting those contextual variables which constitute the ‘minimal context’ in relation to which an expression is assessed as polite. One possibility is to distinguish between (i) that contextual information which is perceivable prior to making any particular utterance, and can thus give rise to expectations about an agent’s goals, and (ii) that which is not.<sup>65</sup> The former would include information (which may be simply presumed)

<sup>64</sup> Franken (1998:7) also associates default reasoning with a narrower conception of context.

<sup>65</sup> Because the setting of an exchange constrains the goals that may plausibly be sought therein, if one is interested in pursuing a particular goal, one will physically render oneself in the particular setting where this goal may plausibly be pursued (Lindsay & Gorayska 1994:37). Pursuing different goals also makes

about the interlocutors' sex, age, and social class, the setting of the exchange, and the timing of a particular utterance, while the latter would encompass explicit cultural assessments of specific behaviours, idiosyncratic factors, and further intonational and kinesic clues.<sup>66</sup> If we compare the derivation of (18) from (13)

(13) I was wondering if it would be OK to open some windows.

(18) [In uttering (13)] the speaker is being polite.

to that of (19) from (14)

(14) I was asking myself if it would be OK to open some windows.

(19) [In uttering (14)] the speaker is being polite.

we find that different contextual information is indeed appealed to each time (5.4.3.2, 5.4.3.3 above). For (13), this included a reference to attributes of the speaker (a guest), and the addressee (the host), as well as the setting (the host's house) and the timing (a party at the host's house) of the exchange. However, for (14), an additional appeal to cultural assessments of particular behaviours, and further contextual factors (intonational and kinesic clues, idiosyncratic factors) was necessary. This comparison suggests that, when an utterance contains a form of words which is conventionalised for some use relative to the context of utterance, the 'polite' implicature requires minimal contextual input, i.e. it is *presumed* given a minimal context. However, when such form of words is used in a context relative to which it is not conventionalised (5.4.3.4 above), or lacking such a form of words (5.4.3.1, 5.4.3.2 above), the fully actualised (nonce) context of utterance must be taken into account before the 'polite' implicature can be drawn.

Intuitively, it seems reasonable to hypothesise, given the observation that politeness most often passes unnoticed, that inferences motivated by *social* (un)markedness are presumed much like inferences motivated by linguistic unmarkedness. Experimental evidence confirming that conventionalised expressions are better recalled if used in a context relative to which they are not conventionalised (Holtgraves 1997:109) also suggests that the perceived markedness of such expressions resides in their relationship to the context of utterance. Thus, by extending the relevant

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available different roles to be assigned to participants in an exchange. The association of different kinds of goals with different settings thus results in different roles being operative in different settings. Since assigning such roles amounts to delimiting interlocutors' rights and obligations (including their rights and obligations toward each other), such role-assignment enhances the contextual salience of certain items of background knowledge compared to others. Consequently, features of the situational context such as who is talking to whom and where, act as pointers to the kinds of goals that the speaker may be assumed to be pursuing at any one time.

<sup>66</sup> Bach (1999:72) proposes a parallel distinction between narrow and broad context as a way of drawing the theoretical boundary between semantics and pragmatics:

"There are two sorts of contextual information, one much more restricted in scope and limited in role than the other. Information that plays the limited role of combining with linguistic information to determine content (in the sense of fixing it) is restricted to a short list of variables, such as the identity of the speaker and the hearer and the time and place of an utterance. Contextual information in the broad sense is anything that the hearer is to take into account to determine (in the sense of ascertain) the speaker's communicative intention."



notion of markedness, generalised inferences, whether presumed in normal circumstances, or with reference to a minimum of contextual information, remain obtainable with reference to the same inferential mechanisms (Levinson's I- and M-heuristics). In Levinson's account, markedness is construed as "covering formal prolixity, infrequent expressions or those of unusual formation" (1995:104; cf. 2000:137). However, once conventionalisation relative to a context has taken place, markedness turns out to be a function not so much of the formal properties of a certain form of words alone, as of such properties in conjunction with the (minimal) context in which the words are used. Expressions are conventionalised (i.e. they give rise to \*I-type inferences) only in relation to some context, best captured with reference to a minimal context (which, contrary to nonce context, is available *a priori*, and can thus give rise to expectations about the speaker's goals).

Blurring the boundary between PCIs and GCIs as it may do, this revision does not abolish it. The resulting inferences are still generalised because they are independent from nonce context. However, they are dependent on a minimal context, and are therefore universal (Levinson 1995:110) only inasmuch as the mechanism for their derivation is also universal. This move is in accordance with evidence from scalar implicatures, based on which Hirschberg (1985:43) concludes that "generalised implicatures, while more context-independent than particularised [ones], are still context-dependent", as well as evidence corroborating the context-dependent nature of stereotypicality (Barsalou 1987:104ff.).<sup>67</sup> And it is perhaps not wholly unwarranted given Levinson's own observation that "[i]nferences to the stereotype are [...] not 'generalised' in the sense that they are independent of shared beliefs [...] but [...] in the sense that they follow a general principle — restrict the interpretation to what *by consensus* constitutes the stereotypical, central extensions" (1995:103; emphasis added), i.e. they are still somehow tied to context.

#### *5.4.5.1 Empirical evidence supporting the extension of the operation of the Levinsonian heuristics*

The determining factor for a PCI to become generalised given a minimal context is frequency of use in this context.<sup>68</sup> The expression most frequently associated with a particular communicative function relative to a context becomes the unmarked means of fulfilling this function in this context. The expression is at this stage the unmarked

<sup>67</sup> Barsalou (1987:104) includes under factors determining an exemplar's typicality of its category, the properties an exemplar should have best to serve the goals associated with this category, and the frequency with which a particular exemplar is perceived to instantiate this category. Minimal context relates to both these factors. First, it gives rise to expectations about interlocutors' goals, which in turn motivate plans of which specific plan-elements may be typical or non-typical exemplars. Second, once an expression is conventionalised for some use, if minimal context does not inhibit such interpretation, the corresponding implicature will be presumed, i.e. it will be derived more frequently compared to implicatures requiring a reference to nonce context.

<sup>68</sup> Such frequency may be intimately related to a notion of social power, as proposed by Leezenberg (2000; cf. Braun 1988:59; Bourdieu 1991).

alternative relative to other expressions potentially used in that context. Such social unmarkedness starts acquiring linguistic reflexes as the range of contexts in which a particular expression is used most frequently to fulfil a certain function expands. Its unmarkedness now resides in its relation to other expressions in the language irrespective of context. This prediction is borne out by evidence from the use of conventionalised expressions for performing offers and requests in CG.

Minimisation of form and content (i.e. linguistic unmarkedness; Levinson 1987) as a concomitant of frequency of use (i.e. of social unmarkedness) is manifested most clearly by the expressions *ase*, ‘let’, *aku*, ‘listen’, and *el'a su po*, ‘let me tell you’, all phrased in AV-imperative-2sg.<sup>69</sup> In the data collected, their very high frequency goes hand in hand with their being morphologically truncated (from *afise*, *akuse*, and *ela na su po* respectively) and occurring utterance-initially, both of which suggest that these forms are in fact frozen or fixed in CG (Jespersen 1924:20). Indeed, when these expressions are used, the act to be performed is typically expressed by a further verb, such as *na rotisumen* in (29) (Klamer 2000:76).

(29) [60.29; At work; Speaker: male, 31-50, middle-class; Addressee: male, 31-50, middle-class; Relationship: salesperson to old customer]

endaksi. *ase na rotisumen* ton andrea

O.K. *let-imp.-2sg. SP ask-dep.-1pl. the-NOM. andreas-NOM.*

‘O.K. Let me ask Andreas.’

The way they combine with other elements in discourse provides further evidence of their being frozen. Whereas *el'a su po* is literally a request, i.e. the first part of an adjacency pair, the speaker seldom waits for the hearer’s uptake before continuing (and one is hardly ever provided). Paralleling Klamer’s (ibid.) hypothesis that the absence of an intonational break after a report verb marks its function as a complementiser, we can interpret a lack of speaker change at the end of this intonational unit as signalling the non-requestive function of *el'a su po*. In the case of *aku* and *ase*, it is their argument structure which is affected: *aku* occurs without a complement, whereas *ase* occurs with a clausal complement, and is consequently not felt to have the full semantic content of ‘leaving (something)’, which it has when followed by an NP. Both processes (loss of arguments and acquisition of new ones) have been associated with an expression’s becoming frozen/fixed as “the result of frequently occurring in appropriate surface contexts” (Klamer 2000:96). *ase*, *aku*, and *el'a su po* may therefore be interpreted as ‘prefaces’ (Nofsinger 1991:134-5): they serve to attract or ensure the addressee’s continued attention, while contributing little, if anything, to the proposition expressed by the utterance.

<sup>69</sup> Phonological reduction is a very early reflex of such routinisation. That it is routinisation (social unmarkedness) that causes phonological reduction (linguistic unmarkedness) and not *vice versa* has been experimentally established by studies of dyadic conversations, e.g. within the HCRC Map Task project (Ellen Bard, p.c.).

This explanation essentially amounts to the claim that increased frequency of use is associated with both brevity and semantic versatility as suggested by Zipf (1949) in his statistically-informed analysis of the Principle of Least Effort (Horn 1998[1984]:405). A similar suggestion can be traced back to Meillet's (1958[1912]:135ff.) reflections on the processes by which grammatical forms originate, for which he coined the term "grammaticalisation". Viewing "changes in form and meaning as a function of frequency of use in discourse" (Hopper & Traugott 1993:60) has led to conceptualising grammaticalisation in terms of "use of lexical item in discourse > grammatical item" (ibid.:81) along the following lines (ibid.:75-92): initially, an association develops if, when a certain expression is used, some condition happens to be fulfilled, such that frequent co-occurrence of the two in discourse results in the condition coming to be understood as an integral part of the meaning of that expression. The addition of a new meaning opens up new distributional possibilities for the expression, thereby accounting for its increased textual frequency. Thus, expressions gradually become semantically "bleached", or general, where semantic generality is associated with low (semantic) informativeness (Atlas & Levinson 1981).

However, if "[f]requency demonstrates a kind of generalisation in use patterns" (Hopper and Traugott 1993:103), one might expect more than the semantic (truth-conditional) informativeness of the expression to be affected (Coulmas 1981:4). Given the association of textual frequency with unmarked segments in typological studies (Greenberg 1960), and the fact that the notion of markedness operates on different levels of analysis, I would suggest that expressions which are used frequently also become *interactionally* unmarked.<sup>70</sup> The relevant process may be explicated as follows: if we accept that use of an expression on a particular occasion can convey assumptions regarding the management of face-relations in an exchange, then the wider the range of contexts in which an expression occurs, the larger the set of such assumptions compatible with its use. If we call the set of these assumptions the expression's 'interactional' informativeness, it follows that the addition of new truth-conditional meanings, by creating new distributional possibilities for the expression, will also affect its interactional informativeness. More specifically, the set of face-related assumptions compatible with use of the expression will be expanded, resulting in use of the expression on any particular occasion being interactionally less 'informative', or more 'general'. In this way, 'interactional generality' accompanies semantic generality, and both are linked to increased frequency of use.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>70</sup> On this view, interactional unmarkedness follows from social unmarkedness, understood as frequency of occurrence.

<sup>71</sup> An explanation for the relative frequency of additional markers of politeness in different settings in the recorded data (figs. 4.8-16 above) naturally falls out, if the notion of interactional informativeness is taken on board. If the performance of offers and requests at home and at work is largely a matter of choosing one of two widespread formulae for each speech act, it follows that these formulae will be interactionally general. Additional markers of politeness would then be charged with narrowing down the set of face-related assumptions compatible with the utterance, i.e. as a means of increasing its

The statistical aspect of this process is not to be overlooked. As Hopper and Traugott (1993:114) point out, “specialisation [the process whereby the choice of grammatical forms becomes reduced as certain ones become generalised in meaning and use] does not necessarily entail the elimination of alternatives, but may be manifested simply as textual preferences, conditioned by semantic types, sociolinguistic contexts, discourse genres, and other factors.” In other words, when the range of senses conveyed by an expression is expanded or generalised compared to another expression, the difference between the two will show up as a statistical, not a categorical one.

Parallel to the idea that expressions may be grammaticalised to different degrees, advanced in a historical linguistic context, the idea of a scale of formulaicity, on which expressions range “from completely fixed and lexicalised to completely free, novel occurrences” (Lambrecht 1984:776) has been proposed to account for the syntactico-semantic combinatorial possibilities and pragmatic acceptability of expressions synchronically. In his analysis of German Bare Binomials (pairings of two nouns where no determiner precedes the nouns, e.g. ‘Man und Frau’, ‘Katz und Maus’), Lambrecht (*ibid.*) suggests that “[t]he scale from fixed to free types is also a scale from greater to lesser contextual autonomy, in such a way that the most lexicalised phrases are also those which occur with greatest freedom from contextual constraints.” Lambrecht (1984:777ff.) distinguishes three types of Bare Binomials — irreversible, pre-schematised, and contextualised — which differ with respect to the amount of context necessary to guarantee their acceptability. To account for these differences, Lambrecht appeals to Fillmore’s frame semantics (6.4.1.3 below). He claims that the stronger the pre-existing cognitive relation between the concepts denoted by the two conjoined nouns, in virtue of their participating in the same semantic frame, the higher the chances that a binomial will become lexicalised and irreversible. As a result, irreversible binomials evoke their own frames, while for contextualised ones “linguistic context and semantic frame would need to be close to identical for [the] phrase to become acceptable” (*ibid.*:784). Consequently, “the acceptability of B[are] B[inomials] can vary, depending on the degree to which the conjunction of two things is pre-schematised in the mind of the speaker/hearer” (*ibid.*:788).

Two aspects of Lambrecht’s discussion are currently relevant. First, as will be shown shortly, combinations of a type of verb-modality-number+person which are most frequent over a wide range of contexts in CG are also subject to paradigmatic and syntagmatic constraints. Second, their acceptability appears to be influenced by cognitive frame structure in a way similar to how the acceptability of Bare Binomial phrases is influenced by semantic frame structure (Lambrecht 1984:785). Lambrecht explains the analogical relation shown to hold between the degree of lexicalisation of an expression and its contextual autonomy with reference to a pre-existing cognitive

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interactional informativeness. Inversely, speakers’ realisations in formal settings being more evenly distributed would explain the low occurrence of additional markers of politeness in these settings.

relation holding between the different components of a semantic frame. Arguing backwards, if it turns out that the higher the degree to which particular combinations of type of verb-modality-number+person are fixed, the higher their degree of contextual autonomy (the range of situational contexts in which they occur), then this can be appealed to as evidence that the use of polite expressions in CG is indeed guided by cognitive frames, in which a cognitive relation is established between linguistic expressions and extra-linguistic features of the situation. As the strength of this relation will vary for different speakers (of different cultures, professional groups, or generations), different expressions will become fixed to different degrees in different (sub)cultures (*ibid.*:788).

To exemplify how increased contextual autonomy (an expression's occurring in a wide range of situational contexts, crucially including contexts of both high and low D+P; 4.2.1 above) goes hand in hand with its being highly fixed on both the paradigmatic and the syntagmatic axes, the combination *theo*-indicative with rising intonation-2sg. realising offers will be used. This is not to say that offers performed using alternative combinations of verb-modality-number+person are ungrammatical, strange to the ear, or difficult to elicit from native speakers in isolation (Hopper & Traugott 1993:162). Rather, what we are dealing with is a marked skewing in the data collected such that *theo*-indicative with rising intonation-2sg. is preferred to perform offers at home and at work over a wide range of contexts, in each of which it constitutes the preferred (most frequent) realisation.

A number of criteria have been proposed to determine the extent to which an expression is grammaticalised/fixed (Lambrecht 1984, Lehmann 1985, Klamer 2000).

	<b>paradigmatic</b>	<b>syntagmatic</b>
<b>weight</b> (the degree to which a sign is distinct from members of its class)	<i>integrity</i> (degree of semantic generality)	<i>scope</i> (extent of the construction it helps to form)
<b>cohesion</b> (the degree to which a sign systematically contracts certain relations with other signs)	<i>paradigmaticity</i> (degree of integration into a paradigm)	<i>bondedness</i> (degree of cohesion with/attachment to other signs in a syntagm)
<b>variability</b> (the degree to which a sign enjoys momentary mobility /shiftability with respect to other signs)	<i>paradigmatic variability</i> (degree of interchangeability with other signs (including $\emptyset$ ) from the same paradigm)	<i>syntagmatic variability</i> (degree of freedom of movement within a syntagm)

**Table 2: Parameters of grammaticalisation (after Lehman 1985: 306)**

Below, I draw on Lehmann's (1985) classification, which, appealing to the notions of syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations of the language sign, is theoretically motivated and subsumes empirically-based proposals. Lehmann (1985:306) suggests that the freedom with which a linguistic sign is used can be measured on three dimensions: weight, cohesion, and variability, each of which has a syntagmatic and a paradigmatic aspect (table 2). A loss in weight and variability, and/or an increase in cohesion translate into a gradual loss of freedom for the sign. The loss in paradigmatic weight (or 'integrity') for *θelo*-indicative with rising intonation-2sg. realising offers at home and at work concerns two levels. At the level of form, its surface realisation, *θelis*, can be reduced to monosyllabic *θes*, *'lis*, or *θe* (Lambrecht 1984:781); 18 out of 106 offers (17%) using *θelo*-indicative with rising intonation-2sg. are thus truncated, with *θes* accounting for 15 (84%) of these. At the level of content, 15 out of 33 times (45.5%) when an uptake is provided, this consists in thanking or providing a request, showing that *θelo*-indicative with rising intonation-2sg. is not so much interpreted as a literal question about the addressee's desires but as a token of the speaker's availability/willingness to satisfy these, i.e. as an offer. Characteristically, a statement of the addressee's desires using *θelo*-indicative with rising intonation-1sg. is never provided in response to *θelo*-indicative with rising intonation-2sg., attesting to the type of shift in meaning as a result of pragmatic inferencing which can lead to semantic bleaching mentioned above. On the other hand, the fact that *θelo*-indicative with rising intonation-2sg. cannot be adverbially modified (e.g. by an adverb denoting degrees of desire) testifies to a loss in syntagmatic weight (or 'scope'; Lehmann 1985:308). An increase in paradigmatic cohesion (or 'paradigmaticity'; *ibid.*:307) also appears to be taking place: of 129 occurrences of *θelo*-indicative with rising intonation-2sg. at home and at work, 106 (82.17%) perform offers, while only 23 (17.82%) perform requests. That is, *θelo*-indicative with rising intonation-2sg. is typically associated with the pragmatic paradigm of the offer. Moreover, the lexeme *θelo* occurs in combination with the indicative with rising intonation-2sg. in 129 out of 201 (64.2%) occurrences at home and at work, i.e. a high degree of syntagmatic cohesion (or 'bondedness') appears to exist between these particular values for type of verb-modality-number+person. In addition, a loss in paradigmatic variability means that desire in offers at home and at work is overwhelmingly expressed by using *θelo* (118 occurrences, 96%; 106 of these (90%) are in the indicative with rising intonation-2sg.) rather than other semantically equivalent expressions (5 occurrences, 4%). Finally, a loss in syntagmatic variability (*ibid.*:309) means that 98 times out of 106 (92.5%) *θelo*-indicative with rising intonation-2sg. occurs utterance-initially, with the only items that can precede it being address terms, or the conjunction *lipon*, 'so'.

The evidence presented above shows how an expression which is conventionalised relative to a (range of) context(s) (i.e. which is socially unmarked in these contexts *qua* the one most frequently used) can gradually develop linguistic reflexes of this

conventionalisation (i.e. become reduced in both form and content, as well as less flexible in its combinatorial possibilities with other items in discourse). The tendency to grammaticalise, now observed as a generalised tendency accompanying the gradual detachment of the meaning of expressions from context, rather than restricted to the boundary between utterance-type meaning and sentence meaning, remains unaccounted for if a level of preferred interpretations is not theoretically acknowledged. At the same time, frequency of occurrence — which precedes, and actually motivates, the observed gradual increase in frozenness — does not concern all possible cultural contexts. Rather, it is restricted to a subset of these, which supports the proposal of an intermediate stage between PCIs and GCIs where preferred interpretations arise with respect to a minimal context (5.4.5 above).

### 5.5 Summary

Based on the observation that “[c]ompetent adult members’ comment on absence of politeness where it is expected, and its presence where it is not expected” (Kasper 1990:193), politeness was defined as the unmarked way of speaking in a community (chapter 1 above). In this chapter, I sketched an account of how politeness, thus understood, may be achieved. This account rests on the premises of interlocutors’ mutually assuming each other’s rationality and face-wants. Interlocutors’ mutual face-wants orientate them to the goals which each may plausibly be pursuing in context. This is why expectations as to interlocutors’ goals arise once a minimal context is available, i.e. prior to the making of any particular utterance. Once an utterance is made, two paths are possible. First, it may conform with these expectations, and therefore be presumed to be polite by way of an \*I-implicature. Politeness as a perlocutionary effect — the addressee’s holding the belief that the speaker is polite — is then achieved if the addressee holds a belief to the effect that uttering the form of words used by the speaker in the particular situation is polite; in this case, politeness will have been anticipated. Second, the speaker’s utterance may not conform to the addressee’s expectations. An \*M-implicature pertaining to the complement of the ‘polite’ \*I-implicature will now arise, and interlocutors reciprocal sensitivity to face will trigger particularised implicatures as to the speaker’s intention with reference to nonce context. This time, if politeness as a perlocutionary effect is achieved, it will rely on the prior recognition of the speaker’s intention. That is, politeness will have been communicated by means of a particularised implicature. The two possibilities outlined above suggest that politeness may, after all, not be a unitary phenomenon. While this should not be surprising given divergences between the common-sense understanding of the term (anything exceeding an expected norm, which would now fall under communicated politeness) and its technical understanding (an expected norm, now falling under anticipated politeness), this issue must remain open for further research.

“For generations, scientists and philosophers have tried to explain ordinary reasoning in terms of logical principles — with virtually no success. I suspect this enterprise failed because it was looking in the wrong direction: common sense works so well not because it is an approximation of logic; logic is only a small part of our great accumulation of different, useful ways to chain things together. Many thinkers have assumed that *logical* necessity lies at the heart of our reasoning. But for the purposes of psychology, we’d do better to set aside the dubious ideal of faultless deduction and try, instead, to understand how people actually deal with what is *usual* or *typical*.”

(Minsky 1986:187)

## Chapter 6

### Politeness and cognition

#### 6.1 Introduction

In the preceding chapter, I argued that politeness as a perlocutionary effect is more often than not achieved independently of the recognition of the speaker’s polite intention. In this case, the addressee’s holding the belief that the speaker is polite is arrived at in virtue of the addressee’s first holding another belief, namely that ‘uttering expression  $x$  in situation  $y$  is polite’. In this chapter, I shall investigate how one may come to hold, and draw on, beliefs of this latter kind. My point of departure will be that holding such beliefs consists of sharing in the evaluative practices of a group of agents (1.3 above). This evaluative character of beliefs about politeness sets them apart from beliefs concerning the truth or falsity of propositions. The latter are reached via principles of logical necessity which hold in all possible worlds.<sup>1</sup> The former are socio-historically constituted (Werkhofer 1992; chapter 7 below), and as such emerge within, and are bound by, an agent’s partaking in a ‘societal’ rationality which constrains the specific functions (out of the multitude of potential functions) that a linguistic means is employed to perform in the particular place and time of utterance (1.3.3 above). Primary socialisation within a community thus results in holding a set of beliefs about the expression of politeness therein. Such beliefs are held implicitly, in that, in the normal case, one will act based on them, and will not reason explicitly about them unless the expectations they help construct are frustrated. These beliefs are both ‘stored’ in memory and brought to bear on a situation in the form of frames, which can be viewed as structuring — and thus bringing to bear upon each other — prototypical information

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<sup>1</sup> Recent accounts which incorporate contextual considerations (e.g., Heim 1988; Forbes 1990; Kamp 1984; Kamp & Reyle 1993) do so with a view to assessing the truth or falsity of utterances, and as such remain within the truth-conditional tradition in linguistic semantics.



about a situation and the appropriate use of language therein. Contrary to Brown and Levinson's (1987) intention-based approach, in which the face-redressing potential of a linguistic expression is a function of its deviation from speaking in accordance with Gricean maxims, and therefore stable across cultures, a frame-based approach to politeness implies an evaluating of linguistic expressions which, being socio-historically determined, supersedes individual rationality and may vary across cultures and over time. The universality of this latter approach lies in proposing frames as the cognitive *mechanisms* by means of which the aforementioned societal rationality is implemented, while the *contents* of this rationality — which forms are appropriate in which situations — can be changeable.

## 6.2 Beliefs about politeness and implicit real-world knowledge

This section aims at tackling three questions:

- (i) what are the possible causes of beliefs about the communication of politeness?
- (ii) how do these beliefs contribute to the reasoning process which underlies the production and the interpretation of polite utterances?
- (iii) what is the epistemological status of such beliefs, as this can be inferred from (i) and (ii) above?

Two causes of beliefs are generally accepted: other beliefs, and organism/environment interactions (Fodor 1989:2). Beliefs about the politeness of a particular utterance in a certain situation emanate from the former, in that they always involve other beliefs, pertaining for example to the outcome of the exchange, viz. whether the speaker's goals were promoted as a result of his/her using the utterance in question. This is also true when direct observation of the outcome of the exchange is not possible, as for example when, rather than being the result of personal observation of, or participation in, an exchange, a representation of the outcome of the exchange is provided by an educator. In this last case, the authority one is prepared to acknowledge to the educator will be directly relevant to ultimately holding the belief or not (Sperber 1996:96). Thus, whether based on personal experience or formal instruction, the process by which a belief about politeness comes to be held always involves communication, in the sense that, the (virtual) presence of an audience is instrumental to the promotion of the speaker's goals.<sup>2</sup>

Linguistic politeness was earlier defined as the unmarked way of speaking in a community (1.3.2 above). The question to be answered next is: how do beliefs about politeness contribute to the reasoning process underlying the production and interpretation of polite utterances to achieve this? Let us begin by considering some remarks about the nature of human understanding. Schank and Abelson (1977:30)

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<sup>2</sup> The presence of an audience constitutes a necessary condition for the Gricean account of meaning (Avramides 1989:65-6).

define understanding as that process during which we make sense of the world by establishing causal links between eventualities.<sup>3</sup> However, these links are not always explicitly stated. It then becomes the task of the understander to provide such links in order to discover local coherence, which will in turn help him/her conceptualise the eventuality as of a certain type and understand its significance. To explain how this is achieved, researchers have commonly suggested that people draw on implicit real-world knowledge to fill in the missing links (Schank & Abelson 1977:9; Zacks & Tversky 2001:13). The application of such knowledge takes the form of default assumptions, inferences that people draw unless there occurs to them an alternative or reason to the contrary (Bach 1984:38). However, to be of any use, such knowledge must be structured. In other words, to understand an eventuality, one must be able to call up knowledge which is relevant to the eventuality at hand.<sup>4</sup> By thus taking part in ordinary reasoning, implicit real-world knowledge sets up *expectations* about eventualities. It is exactly when such expectations are met that things go unnoticed. According to this line of thought, when, and to the extent that, speaking politely passes unnoticed, this is because it meets interlocutors' expectations about the exchange at hand, based on their implicit real-world knowledge about verbal interaction.

Significantly, real-world knowledge is relevant only inasmuch as it applies to understanding a situation in the absence of an alternative or reason to the contrary. That is, it is desirable to be able to override such knowledge (i.e. reason explicitly about the situation), should one at any point have reason to believe that the default no longer applies. Having implicit real-world knowledge about a situation could then be described as weakly rationally holding a set of beliefs about the situation, such that these beliefs may be overridden — albeit not abandoned — if they fail to yield an understanding of the eventuality at hand. According to Sperber (1985:57-8), different criteria of rationality apply to different kinds of beliefs. A subject's beliefs are factual only if they are representations directly stored in the subject's encyclopaedic memory, or derived from other factual beliefs by inference (Sperber 1985:54). Representational beliefs, on the other hand, are representations embedded in some other (factual or representational) belief that the subject holds about them (Sperber 1985:56). Being indirectly stored in this way, representational beliefs only conform to weak criteria of rationality. Their rationality depends on their being (ultimately) embedded in a factual belief, and although they may well be found to be mutually consistent with closely related (factual) beliefs, this is not a necessary condition prior to their being held as rational.

Beliefs about politeness would seem to be representational on two counts. First, they are caused by other beliefs. Consequently, holding 'uttering expression *x* in situation *y* is polite' is embedded in holding 'one's uttering expression *x* in situation *y*

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<sup>3</sup>'Eventuality' is used as a generic term covering both states (including 'static' situations, e.g. the perception of objects), and the dynamic unfolding of events (Kamp & Reyle 1993:509).

<sup>4</sup>This observation is central to what has been termed 'the frame problem'.

will *ceteris paribus*<sup>5</sup> help promote one's goals', and can be rationally held only in virtue of this embedding. Second, their distribution, i.e. their acquisition and acceptance, crucially — as opposed to incidentally — involves communication (Sperber 1985:59; 1996:95). Being representational, beliefs about politeness may be weakly rationally held, such that they can account for the unmarked sequences *all else being equal*, and be overridden when the default does not apply.

The fact that beliefs about politeness are representational affords us with an explanation of how politeness comes to be socially and historically constituted and reconstituted, as in Werkhofers's (1992:182ff.) suggested analogy with monetary exchanges. It is generally accepted that linguistic forms possess a potentiality of meanings, rather than any fixed meaning, and that they can in virtue of this fulfil different functions. It is then plausible to assume that any linguistic form will, at a certain time and place, be employed to fulfil a subset from this potential set of functions. There is nothing however to prevent this subset from being an essentially changeable one, resulting in roughly the same functions being taken up by different linguistic forms across communities and over time. Claiming that beliefs about politeness are only weakly rationally held allows for the possibility that, in any given community, politeness functions may essentially be taken up by any linguistic form that can potentially (in virtue of its meaning) perform such functions, while the motivation for the particular forms actually attested may be found in the socio-historical constitution of politeness in the community in question. At the same time, the situated functioning of a particular form as polite in a particular situation will render marked the use of other forms in that particular situation, or the use of this particular form in other situations. In this case, a particular expression's polite import on an occasion of use will be not so much a matter of the set of functions which it may potentially fulfil (in virtue of its meaning) — and thus reached via individual rationalising about ends and means, as in Brown and Levinson's (1987) approach — as a matter of the set of functions it is actually used to fulfil at the time and place of utterance, thereby requiring a familiarity with the norms of the community in question.<sup>6</sup>

The three questions posed at the outset can now be answered as follows: beliefs about politeness are caused by other beliefs and owe their distribution to communication. They contribute to the reasoning process which guides the production and interpretation of polite utterances in an implicit way, i.e. by setting up expectations about an exchange, in the absence of an alternative or reason to the contrary. Given that they are caused by other beliefs, and distributed via communication, beliefs about politeness are representational, that is, they conform to weak criteria of rationality. This

<sup>5</sup> Significantly, the *ceteris paribus* clause refers to considerations of urgency and cultural affinity between interlocutors, as well as the usual considerations of perceptual proximity, intelligibility and the like.

<sup>6</sup> The failure of L2 learners to use conventionalised expressions as efficiently as native speakers (Phillips 1993, discussed in 5.4.2 above) could be explained on these grounds.

provides a natural explanation for a wealth of evidence (Escandell-Vidal 1995; 1.3.4 above) suggesting that such beliefs vary across communities and over time.

### 6.3 Frames as structures of implicit real-world knowledge

Given the role of implicit real-world knowledge in understanding (6.2 above), it is easy to see why a significant gain in processing time and effort can be achieved if this knowledge is structured. As Bach (1984:45) remarks:

“[T]here are always more inferences to be made. If we didn’t generally jump to conclusions, we would make hardly any of the inferences that we needed to make. But if we are generally right in the conclusions we jump to, surely this is no monumental coincidence. Somehow our inferences must take relevant information into account without getting bogged down in irrelevancies.”

From this viewpoint, frames may be thought of as just such structures of implicit real-world knowledge which is relevant to the eventuality at hand. This is at once a claim about the organisation of memory as about the way in which perceptual mechanisms function. In understanding a current eventuality, not only will relevant implicit real-world knowledge be called up from memory, but also attention will be directed to what are considered determining features of the type of eventuality we think we are dealing with.<sup>7</sup> Inasmuch as eventualities in our everyday life are pre-planned (Alterman et al. 1998), this means that, in understanding an eventuality, we are attuned to paying attention to certain pieces of information over others. In this sense, frames can function as “structures of expectation” (Tannen 1993:21).

Schank and Abelson (1977) base their claims about the organisation of memory on a similar argument. According to this, “any pattern matching that needs to be done against information stored in memory requires a canonical form for the information” (1977:16; cf. Minsky 1975:236). It is the repeated co-occurrence of certain features in an eventuality which prompts us to group these together and remember the whole eventuality as an episode by virtue of these co-occurring features:

“An episodic view of memory claims that memory is organised around personal experiences or episodes rather than around abstract semantic categories. If memory is organised around personal experiences then one of the principal components of memory must be a procedure for recognising repeated or similar sequences. When a standard repeated sequence is recognised, it is helpful in ‘filling in the blanks’ in understanding. Furthermore, much of the language generation behaviour of people can be explained in this stereotyped way.” (Schank & Abelson 1977:17-8)

In support of this view, recent experimental results have shown inferences based on statistical co-occurrence to play an important part in language learning and event

<sup>7</sup> That the two processes go hand in hand was already remarked by Bartlett (1932:220): “To adequately serve the demands of a constantly changing environment, we have not only to pick items out of their general setting, but we must know what parts of them may flow and alter without disturbing their general significance and functions”.

learning, and to precede (and indeed motivate) the causal or intentional understanding of an eventuality (Zacks & Tversky 2001:12).

Frames understood as such experientially established ‘structures of expectations’ naturally complement (post-)Gricean accounts of meaning,<sup>8</sup> and in particular Levinson’s reformulation of the maxims in terms of heuristics (fn.43, 5.4.3.2 above). A key term relating to the operation of the I and M heuristics is that of a ‘stereotype’. While this term applies both to linguistic descriptions and to real-world situations, it does so independently (i.e. the motivation for describing a linguistic description as stereotypical lies in its relationship with other linguistic items rather than in its relationship to the real-world situation it is a description of). For this reason, the relationship between stereotypical linguistic descriptions and the real-world situations they describe needs to be stipulated by means of the proposed heuristics: the fact that a linguistic description is stereotypical prompts me to look for a stereotypical real-world situation it is a description of; but it does not tell me which one. The claim presently put forward, on the other hand, is that frames *combine* information about linguistic descriptions with information about real-world situations (6.5 below). The presence of one acts as an indication to the presence of the other — albeit a weak one, given that reasoning which is exclusively frame-based (i.e. wholly implicit) applies only in the unmarked case. In bringing knowledge about stereotypical situations to bear on knowledge of the appropriate use of language therein, the reconciliation of a frame-based account of understanding with the Levinsonian heuristics thus appears not only feasible, but also theoretically desirable.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> A proposal to analyse ‘other items of background knowledge’ — which Grice (1989a:31) lists among the data the hearer relies on in working out the presence of a conversational implicature — as frames is found in Schiffrin (1994:368). The view that the frames called up by features of the event during the process of understanding constrain the operation of the conversational maxims may indeed provide an answer to various difficulties which researchers have pointed out over the years. For example, it has been argued that the two injunctions of the maxim of Quantity (fn.4, 1.1 above) must be complemented by considerations of relevance to help draw the intended implicature (Harnish 1998[1976]:276; Carston 1998:182-3). Regarding the maxim of Relation, Grice himself (1989a:27) remarked that it “conceals a number of problems [...]: questions about what different kinds and focuses of relevance there may be, how these shift in the course of a talk exchange, how to allow for the fact that subjects of conversation are legitimately changed, and so on”. Even implicatures generated by the “Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity)” clause of the maxim of Manner may be impossible to draw with certainty until what constitutes ‘necessary prolixity’ has been established. The maxims in question should then be viewed only as guidelines for deriving the intended implicature. As such, they do not operate on masses of unstructured background knowledge but rather within the boundaries of the selected frames, which set up expectations as to the applicable level of informativeness, relation and ‘necessary prolixity’.

<sup>9</sup> In an earlier article (1987:65), Levinson himself uses Charniak’s notion of frames within the AI tradition to account for the stereotypical inference from “John pushed the cart to the checkout” to “John pushed the cart full of groceries to the supermarket checkout”, drawn in virtue of the relevant knowledge about carts and checkouts. In fact, several examples from the same article can be explained using frames, given Schank and Abelson’s (1977:41) observation regarding the use of the definite article, when this occurs as part of an instantiated frame (rather than frames, the authors refer to ‘scripts’ as encompassing detailed sequential information about events; 6.4.1.2 below):

“Scripts allow for new references to objects within them just as if these objects had been previously mentioned; objects within a script may take ‘the’ without explicit introduction because the script has already implicitly introduced them.”

## 6.4 Frames in previous research

### 6.4.1 Historical background

The intellectual roots of the concept of a frame may be traced back to Kant's conception of a 'schema', understood as providing a picture of a pure concept, and thus bridging perception and cognition (Nerlich & Clarke 2000:141). Early in the twentieth century, Kant's ideas were influential within the German school of Gestalt psychology, and in Bartlett's (1932) seminal work on memory. Since then, scholars in a variety of disciplines have undertaken research to confirm the existence of experientially-based knowledge structures and their role in understanding.<sup>10</sup> A set of related terms such as 'frames', 'schemas', and 'scripts' have been used to cover a range of conceptualisations, from the perception of static scenes and objects (Minsky 1975) to the organisation of word-senses in the lexicon (Fillmore 1976, 1977, 1982), and from the sequential unfolding of events (Schank & Abelson 1977) to the emergence of meaning therein (Goffman 1974, 1976).<sup>11</sup> What remains constant throughout these approaches is a reference to an experientially acquired piece of stereotypical knowledge which is stored in memory in such a way as to be easily retrievable — indeed automatically — when features of the current situation are reminiscent of it. This piece of knowledge functions as a bridge between perception and cognition, by providing a representation for the situation; however, the degree of abstraction of this representation remains a matter of considerable debate.<sup>12</sup> Directly observable features of an encountered situation are then matched with features of this representation, thereby recalling it from memory, so that it provides a platform from which the 'missing links' (not directly observable features of the situation) may be projected, or filled in.

Interest in this kind of experientially-conditioned understanding has been fuelled by two observations which recur in the relevant literature: first, events in the world tend to follow recurring patterns, and second, humans are able to, and commonly do, act based on incomplete information. Experientially-conditioned understanding — and action which is based on it — essentially exploits the implications of the first observation to overcome the limitations of the second. Indeed, recent trends in AI propose to view even creative reasoning as an extension of this kind of understanding (Wills &

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Thus (cf. Levinson 1987:65-66; emphasis added):

"John unpacked the picnic. *The* beer was warm." +> The beer was part of the picnic.

"John was put in a cell. *The* window was barred." +> The cell has a window.

"The baby cried. *The* mummy picked it up." +> 'The mummy' was the mother of the crying baby.

"John said 'Hello' to *the* secretary and then he smiled." +> The secretary was female.

The last inference requires conjoining two beliefs, one prompted by the definite article (viz. secretaries in scripts are typically female) and another one, viz. typically smiling is desirable when a male is addressing a female, at least more so than when addressing a male. This last belief is heavily socially conditioned, which accounts for the weakness of the resulting inference compared to the previous ones.

<sup>10</sup> 'Experientially' is used informally, to highlight the not necessarily truth-preserving character of the inferences involved. In particular, no claim to innateness is advanced, as within cognitive approaches.

<sup>11</sup> Tannen (1993:15-20) provides a brief overview of related disciplines and terms used.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. the controversy between viewpoint-dependent and viewpoint-independent representations in research on vision (Liu 1996; Tjan & Legge 1998).

Kolodner 1996). The overview which follows aims at highlighting the recent research tradition within which the notion was developed — approaches within AI, psychology, linguistics, and sociology which have often been mutually influential — and is not intended as exhaustive. Some applications of the four theoretical frameworks outlined to discourse are subsequently presented, while the section closes with a re-assessment of the significance of the notion of frames in the light of recent empirical evidence.

#### *6.1.1 Artificial Intelligence*

Often cited as representative of related research within AI is Minsky's work on visual frames. Minsky (1975:212) defines a frame as "a data-structure for representing a stereotyped situation". He proposes to think of a frame as

"a network of nodes and relations. The 'top' levels of a frame are fixed, and represent things that are always true about the supposed situation. The lower levels have many terminals — 'slots' that must be filled by specific instances of data. Each terminal can specify conditions its assignments must meet" (ibid.; original emphasis).

Loosely attached to a frame's terminals are default assignments embodying a subject's expectations about the situation. These can however "be easily displaced by new items that better fit the current situation" (1975:218). The evocation of a frame "on the basis of partial evidence or expectation" initiates a matching process which aims at assigning to each of its terminals a value consistent with the terminal's assignment conditions (ibid.:218-9). This process is controlled partly by information associated with the frame (i.e. how to use it, what one can expect to happen next, what to do if these expectations are frustrated), and partly by knowledge about the subject's current goals (ibid.). However, the necessary conditions for the activation of a frame may require more than recognising the presence of certain features: the related agencies must also recognise that those features are in suitable relationships (Minsky 1986:252). On this view, the matching process is more usefully viewed as dependent on "specific, learned knowledge about differences between pairs of frames rather than on broad, general principles" (Minsky 1975:250). Minsky also suggests that "[c]ollections of related frames are linked together into *frame systems*. [...] Different frames of a system share the same terminals. [...] The frame systems are linked, in turn, by an information retrieval network" which provides a replacement frame when the matching process fails to successfully assign values to the terminals of a previously proposed frame (ibid.:213; original emphasis). Knowledge about interactions between frames can help explain potential discrepancies between the perceived situation and the proposed frame, so that the latter ought not necessarily to be abandoned if it fails to be substantiated (ibid.:250).

Frames result from a process of de-specialising (1986:228). The repeated observation of similar situations results in their representations taking the form of a frame with constraints built into it concerning the possible range of each of its terminal

values. Specific values are thus gradually replaced by ‘variables’ ranging over well-constrained domains in a way reminiscent of the formation of open sentences in formal logic.<sup>13</sup> Frames are stored in long-term memory, with their default assignments generating stereotypes (1975:228). During an ongoing interaction, every new piece of information is kept in short-term memory and an effort is made to match it with what has come before. New memory-units must be activated to accommodate information which remains unmatched. However, given our limited supplies of short-term memory, this tends to slow down understanding and make subsequent matching more difficult (1986:234). A frame called up from long-term memory makes available additional information (not explicitly provided during interaction) to which the new information can be matched. In this way, short-term memory is relieved of having to accommodate unmatched information, and hence can be fully applied to what comes afterwards.

Minsky saw these proposals as specifically applicable to language. He argues that, in the same way that frames referring to syntactic rules and generating transient semantic structures are used in understanding sentences, so the understanding of larger discourses (e.g., stories, explanations, conversations, discussions, and styles of argument) involves frames stemming from linguistic conventions. Such frames operate across wider spans, and generate larger structures, distinct from the transient semantic structures built during the understanding of sentences (1975:236, 246). Every human community develops such conventions, and the corresponding frames must be learnt, just as grammar-forms must be learnt (1986:272).

### *6.1.2 AI/Psychology*

Schank and Abelson’s (1977) proposals about the structuring of implicit real-world knowledge cut across the fields of AI and cognitive psychology. Their concern is to model the understanding of stories by machines on the understanding of stories by people. To answer what they term “the knowledge structure game of where-does-that-come-from” (1977:148), they propose four types of conceptual entities: scripts, plans, goals and themes. Each of these contains more detailed information about an event compared to the next, and their application follows a hierarchical order starting with the more specific one available for the current situation (1977:97). In this way, knowledge about the world forms a continuum, ranging from specific knowledge (“knowledge [we use] to interpret and participate in events we have been through many times” (1977:37)) represented by scripts, to general knowledge (“knowledge [which] enables a person to

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<sup>13</sup> This remark is general enough to allow that, in principle, the representation of any previously encountered situation approximating the current one can help to understand it (cf. the example of a two-year old deciding on an itinerary based on the memory of the previous day’s itinerary in Leake 1996:3). This interpretation accords with viewing beliefs about politeness as weakly rationally held: the more a particular frame becomes de-specialised, the stronger it will be rationally held, although its rationality, when frames about politeness are concerned, will never satisfy the strong criteria of rationality applicable to factual beliefs.



understand and interpret another person's actions simply because the other person is a human being with certain standard needs who lives in a world which has certain standard methods of getting those needs fulfilled" (ibid.). Moreover, a generative relation holds between these four types of entities (1977:97): themes generate goals, which generate plans, which give rise to scripts. The determining factor is repetition: the more frequently a certain sequence of events is recognised, the more likely it is to be represented as a script (1977:55). Thus, scripts emerge as "made up of slots and requirements about what can fill those slots. The structure is an interconnected whole, and what is in one slot affects what can be in another. Scripts handle stylised everyday situations. They are not subject to much change, nor do they provide the apparatus for handling totally novel situations" (1977:41). The advantage of using scripts when available is that they make more predictions about the event, thereby allowing us to do less processing and wondering about frequently experienced events (1977:99).

For a script to be instantiated, certain conditions must hold. These roughly amount to at least two of its features appearing in an appropriate relationship (1977:47-8). More than one script may be active at the same time, so long as it is clear which events fall under which script (e.g. a 'romance' script and a 'restaurant' script may be simultaneously operative; 1977:57). However, when an incoming event could fall under either of the activated scripts, 'scriptal ambiguity' can occur. This persists until future input helps decide in favour of one of them, unless other knowledge (e.g. about the personal character of a protagonist) is available (1977:58-9). In other words, previous inferences can be undone when future input contradicts them. This is possible if we mark such inferences with a lack of certainty as we draw them (1977:61). Indeed, 'comments' like these on the application of a script are not the only possible sort. Similar markers aid us to 'keep in mind' events with strong future implications (1977:45; cf. Ryle 1979:82; Lascarides & Oberlander 1993:27).

Significantly, scripts "are written from a particular role's point of view" (1977:42). The "personal script" in one's mind may then be at variance with the "actual or situational script", which can cause errors in understanding (1977:59). The notion of an 'actual or situational' script is however not unproblematic given the authors' definition of scripts as "a predetermined, stereotyped sequence of actions that defines a well-known situation" (1977:41): one cannot assume a situation to be 'well-known', unless there is someone around to do the knowing. In other words, scripts are by definition constructed by people and cannot exist outside their minds. One way out of this difficulty would be to define the 'actual or situational' script as that script which, given a specific situation, and given a set of socio-culturally affiliated individuals, most individuals in this set would agree is applicable to the situation at hand.

Schank and Abelson add to this account of the structuring of implicit real-world knowledge an account of the acquisition of this knowledge. Drawing on observational data, they argue that information is not only stored by humans in episode form but is

also acquired in this way (1977:222): “the pattern of learning would seem to be that first, definitions of objects are learned as episodes. Then, scripts are learned to connect events. Finally, scripts are organised by goal structures that are used to make sense of the need for them” (1977:227).

### 6.1.3 *Linguistics*

An early proponent of frames within the field of linguistics is Fillmore. Contrary to the AI approaches outlined above, his proposal does not include a detailed account of the way in which frames operate. Rather, he provides an argument for complementing traditional linguistic descriptions of languages based on analyses of their grammar and lexicon with “an inventory of the frames that have linguistic reflexes, paying attention to the number of frames, to the areas of special elaboration, to the degree to which complex frames have been pre-packaged in lexical meanings, to the structure and complexity of the frames and so on” (1976:29). Fillmore’s interest in frames originated in his writings about case grammar, where he described “the case frame associated with a particular predicating word as the imposition of structure on an event (or on the conceptualisation of an event) in a fixed way and with a given perspective” (1977:58; cf. 1982:112ff.).<sup>14</sup> Extending the notion to lexical meanings, Fillmore proposes to think of a frame as “a kind of outline figure with not necessarily all the details filled in” (1976:29). His aim is to avoid the misleading assumption that, by separating a word’s semantic description from the contexts in which it appears, we succeed in capturing in one formulation the common features of these different contexts (1977:68).

A distinction may be drawn between scenes and linguistic frames. Scenes include “visual scenes, [...] familiar kinds of interpersonal transactions, standard scenarios, familiar layouts, institutional structures, enactive experiences, body image; and, in general, any kind of coherent segment, large or small, of human beliefs, actions, experiences, or imaginings” (1977:63; cf. *ibid.*:72-4). Scenes are formed through abstraction, as schematic representations are developed with some of the positions left blank. Frames, on the other hand, refer to “any system of linguistic choices (the easiest cases being collections of words, but also including choices of grammatical rules or grammatical categories) that can get associated with prototypical instances of scenes” (1977:63). The two categories must be distinguished because a scene may well be formed in the speaker’s mind without there being any linguistic options available for its encoding within the frame most directly activated by that scene (1977:66). However, when such options are available, as is generally the case, scenes and frames will, “in the minds of people who have learned the associations between them, *activate* each other” (1977:63). This activation process is described as follows:

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Schank & Abelson’s view of scripts as written from a particular role’s viewpoint (6.4.1.2 above).

“Particular words or speech formulas, or particular grammatical choices, are associated in memory with particular frames, in such a way that exposure to the linguistic form in an appropriate context activates in the perceiver’s mind the particular frame — activation of the frame, by turn, enhancing access to the other linguistic material that is associated with the same frame.” (1976:25)

Frames are associated in memory due to shared linguistic material, while for scenes the relevant associations emerge due to “sameness or similarity of the entities or relations or substances in them or their contexts of occurrence” (1977:63). Consonant with the view that meaning acquisition begins with pragmatics and is only subsequently taken up by semantics (Schank & Abelson 1977:222; Dressler & Merlini Barbaresi 1994:408; Werkhofner 1992:194), Fillmore claims that the labelling of whole scenes or experiences precedes the labelling of individual, isolable parts of these, to finally produce “a repertory of labels for schematic or abstract scenes and a repertory of labels for entities perceived independently of the scenes in which they were first encountered” (1977:62). Psychological evidence of the greater cognitive complexity of handling decontextualised behaviours and objects of perception (1976:24) supports this last claim.

Acknowledging a debt to Hymes’s (1972) ethnography of speaking, Fillmore also draws a methodological distinction between interactional and cognitive frames (1976:25; 1982:117). The former encapsulate information about the different contexts of interaction in which speakers of a language can expect to find themselves, together with information about the appropriate linguistic choices relevant in each case, while the latter are comparable to the semantic domains which relate to particular events or activities (Paltridge 1997:51-2). Knowledge of a language implies a familiarity with a large number of both types of frames. While Fillmore’s work is primarily focused on the latter kind of frame, the frames proposed in the present thesis may indeed be viewed as falling under the former category (6.5 below): they investigate speakers’ ability to “schematise the situation in which [a] piece of language is being produced” (1982:117), focussing on the interaction between speakers and hearers.

If Fillmore’s earlier proposals were heavily influenced by AI approaches, his later work stresses the “speech community” as providing the motivating contexts in which frames emerge (1982:112). In this concern, he approximates Goffman’s interest in the relationship between the individual and society.<sup>15</sup> Fillmore now defines a frame as “any system of concepts related in such a way that to understand any one of them you have to understand the whole structure in which it fits” (1982:111). Contrary to formal semantics, frame semantics emphasises “the continuities, rather than the discontinuities, between language and experience” (ibid.): frames emerge in motivating contexts encompassing social practices and institutions, and are thus inextricably linked to particular historically situated perspectives on the world (1982:119ff.). A frame may be

<sup>15</sup> Unlike Fillmore, Goffman explicitly adopts the perspective of the individual on this relationship (6.4.1.4 below).

'evoked' by linguistic material, but it can also be 'invoked' in the search for coherence by an interpreter (1982:124). Later research emphasises this dialectic relationship between 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' processes during understanding (6.4.3 below). Fillmore exemplifies the existence of frame structure in lexical meanings with reference to various phenomena, such as polysemy, metaphor, and semantic change (1982:125ff.).

#### *6.1.4 Sociology*

Within sociology, the notion of a frame is associated with the work of Goffman. Like researchers working within the frame tradition in AI, psychology and linguistics, he is concerned with the need to appeal to some sort of interpretative framework in recognising a particular event (what we have so far called the unmarked or stereotypical case). He refers to a framework of this kind as 'primary' (1974:21). Crucially, the organisational principles which define a situation as such are imputed therein by society, and are only derivatively a matter of individual cognition (1974:1-2, 247; Schmitt 1998:1070). Society may, in this respect, be likened to the author of instructions for handling a device, instructions which a process of socialisation makes agents adept at recognising. This observation serves as a premise to Goffman's subsequent analysis (1974:13) which aims at showing how "a given activity, one already made meaningful in terms of some primary framework, is transformed into something patterned on this activity but seen by participants to be something quite else" (1974:44; footnote omitted). Driven by this interest, he investigates how such transformations are achieved, a process referred to as 'keying'. This is described with reference to a set of conventions which participants in an activity are assumed to mutually know and acknowledge as constituting such a key (1974:45). Interpreting a 'strip' of ongoing activity involves applying (whether in the sense of recognising, or imposing) a set of organisational principles to it: such principles emanate from society, which ultimately emerges as the unifying factor behind both processes (1974:10-1). Matters of psychological plausibility and the organisation of memory thus remain untouched: the emphasis is now not on the mechanisms by which perception and cognition are inter-related, but on the ways social events are organised such that this inter-relation can take place.

Goffman's views on the way frames function in conversation acquire their full significance in the light of the above remarks. When analysing talk, frames provide a way of uncovering "how contexts might be classified according to the way they affect the illocutionary force of statements made in them" (1976:306). In this respect, they approximate Fillmore's interactional frames, although no claim regarding their psychological reality is advanced, as in Fillmore's earlier work. The analyst's task is to specify a limited set of basic frames potentially applicable to the 'same' event, e.g. an utterance, such that the meaning of the utterance in each case can be derived in a principled way with reference to the frame which is currently applicable (1976:310).

From the speaker's perspective, this derivation of meaning from the surrounding context is by no means a straightforward operation:

“our basic model for talk perhaps ought not to be dialogic couplets and their chaining, but rather a sequence of response moves with each carving out its own reference, [...] . In the right setting, a person next in line to speak can elect to deny the dialogic frame, accept it, or carve out such a format when none is apparent.” (1976:293)

One's choice of expression will then 'betray' one's way of defining the situation at hand. Significantly, the possibility to make such choices depends on knowing the range of frames applicable. However, although managing to impose one's frame on a situation constitutes a powerful tool for achieving one's goals, it is arguable whether this can be expected to be the case in unmarked situations, where roles are fairly fixed and little margin left for negotiating the applicable frame.<sup>16</sup> In sum, Goffman's insights into conversation emphasise societal input into arriving at a framework for the situation at hand, a process by no means as simple, or uni-dimensional, as the AI emphasis on perception of a situation may have led one to believe (fn.18, 6.5 below).

#### 6.4.2. Some applications to discourse

The research tradition surveyed above has motivated linguistic analyses of both written and oral discourse. An early application of frames to the analysis of text is found in van Dijk and Kintsch (1983). Their notion of 'superstructure schemata' (1983:236, 308) may be traced back to the AI tradition, particularly Schank and Abelson's scripts (6.4.1.2 above), while the theme of a 'canonical schema' which constrains the transformations that can be applied therein (1983:240) echoes Goffman's interest in the process of 'keying' (6.4.1.4 above). Superstructure schemata are culture-specific (and therefore learnt; 1983:236, 238) and situation-specific within cultures (1983:138-9, 244). Van Dijk and Kintsch are explicit about the psychological underpinnings of their program: they are interested in “the *cognitive* properties of such postulated schemata [...] in what ways superstructure schemata actually can and do play a role in comprehension, storage and retrieval of discourse” (1983:236; original emphasis). To this end, they report previous, as well as their own, experiments, showing that narrative stories are more accurately and speedily recalled when conforming to an established canonical form, and the events in them are reported in a canonical order even when they had not been presented in such an order. In addition, stories are better summarised when subjects are familiar with the culture-specific narrative schema that the text follows (1983:251ff.).

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<sup>16</sup> Of course, what little margin *is* left for negotiation is proof that the very notion of an 'unmarked' situation is an idealisation in itself — albeit a useful one, if we are to avoid “wish[ing social life] further into unreality” (Goffman 1974:2) — and that few real-world situations are actually unmarked in this way.

Tannen's (1993) investigation of reports on a short film by Greek and American subjects during an interview reveals a 'story-telling' frame embedded in an 'interview' frame. An analysis of the subjects' use of language when later recounting the plot (omissions, repetitions, additions, incorrect statements, generalisations etc.) reveals that they are conforming with different sets of expectations, that is, the contents of the two types of frames, as well as the interaction between the two levels, are different for the two sets of subjects (1993:41ff.). Watanabe (1993) investigated the differential handling of group discussions (initiating, giving reasons, building an argument, and ending) by American and Japanese students (1993:182ff.). The frustration of the Japanese students' expectations about this type of event is now taken as evidence that different cultures organise knowledge about the same type of event in different frames. Shifting to an intra-cultural perspective, Tannen and Wallat (1993) explicitly focus on the interaction between knowledge schemas (a participant's knowledge at the macro-level about what happens in a particular type of event) and interactive frames (how a definition of the situation is actively negotiated between participants at the micro-level), as indexed by changes in a speaker's style (intonational patterns, length and elaboration of utterances; 1993:63ff.). Similarly, Schiffrin (1993) investigated speakers' prompting and alignment strategies, by means of which they make manifest not only their understanding of a previous utterance (at the micro-level), but also the contextual presuppositions with which they approach the current event (at the macro-level). These four studies follow in the Goffmanian tradition, whereby a subject's use of language 'indexes' his/her understanding of the situation (6.4.1.4 above).

Gumperz's (1996) discussion of contextualisation cues as indexing interpretive [*sic*] frames invoked in conversation remains within the Goffmanian tradition. Remarking that, due to current processes of globalisation, language and culture can no longer be assumed to be co-extensive (1996:377), Gumperz analyses naturally occurring exchanges where miscommunication occurs because, although participants in the event speak the same language, they come from different cultural backgrounds. Gumperz attributes these breakdowns in communication to the different discursive practices which participants in the event have acquired through experience in their own culture, and which they carry over to exchanges with people who do not necessarily share these (1996:383). Such practices include 'contextualisation cues' defined as "a cluster of indexical signs produced in the act of speaking that jointly index, that is invoke, a frame of interpretation for the rest of the linguistic content of the utterance" (1996:379; cf. *ibid.*:383). The fact that such cues can be located and studied is appealed to as evidence of "cognitively significant systematic differences in contextualisation conventions, acquired over time in the course of informal interaction" (1996:390). General metapragmatic assessments, as to "what is to be expected in the exchange, what should be lexically expressed, what can be conveyed only indirectly, how moves are to be positioned within an exchange, what interpersonal relations are involved, and what

rights to speaking apply” (1996:396) also depend on such conventions. The relation between such general metapragmatic assessments and contextualisation conventions can only be justified if we appeal to frames, which bring to bear on the interaction more than is explicitly there.

Reminiscent of Minsky’s focus on the perception of the situation within the AI tradition (6.4.1.1 above), but also sensitive to Fillmore’s cultural anchoring of language use (6.4.1.3 above) is Aijmer’s (1996) account of conversational routines in English (1996:26-8). Based on the analysis of a large corpus of naturally occurring data, she suggests frames for the use of each formula, combining formal features (e.g. function, intonation, possible continuation patterns, discourse-specific features, i.e. whether the exchange is face-to-face or on the phone, etc.) and situational features (e.g. setting, participants, timing, i.e. when the formula is used relevant to the speech act performed). Although the proposed frames are an analyst’s tool — the result of the statistical analysis of naturally occurring data — Aijmer subscribes to AI claims regarding their storing in, and recall from, memory (1996:26), citing psycholinguistic evidence regarding the importance of pre-planned, routinised sequences in language acquisition and fluent production (1996:7-9).

### 6.4.3 Recent directions

Various types of evidence have been adduced to support the existence of cognitively significant frame-structure in discourse. Comprehension experiments<sup>17</sup> showed enhanced recall for material which conforms to expectations, whether about events described (Bower et al. 1979; Brewer & Dupree 1983) or about the canonical narrative form of a text (van Dijk & Kintsch 1983), as well as recall of stereotypical material which was not explicitly present in the discourse (Paris & Lindauer 1976; Tannen 1993:51), and inaccurate recall of presented material so as to conform to expectations (Tannen 1993:50). Moreover, recall of stereotypical events followed a canonical order (Bower et al. 1979), even when this had not been the actual order of presentation (Lichtenstein & Brewer 1980), though in the latter case comprehension was slower (Kintsch, Mandel & Kozminsky 1977). Cultural familiarity with the type of situation (whether narrative or action sequence) was also found to enhance recall accuracy in comparison with situations which were not familiar (e.g. narratives/events from another culture), for which recall was poor (Kintsch & Greene 1978; Steffensen et al. 1980, reported in van Dijk & Kintsch 1983:253). Finally, free-recall of stereotypical events was found to be more accurate in healthy as opposed to schizophrenic subjects with regard to content and judgements about degree of stereotypicality; sequential ordering of highly stereotypical events however remained unaffected, which has been interpreted

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<sup>17</sup> These have used both texts and videotaped material as stimuli.

as a 'bottom-up' gradual breakdown of schematic structures for events in schizophrenic subjects (Chan et al. 1999).

Nevertheless, as Whitney et al. (1995:138) point out, evidence obtained by means of recall tasks is inconclusive: it is unclear whether frame-structure is imposed during comprehension (an online process), or during (and as required by) subsequent testing (an offline process). The same is true of the linguistic analyses presented in 6.4.2 above. Even when the material analysed was naturally occurring talk (e.g. Watanabe 1993; Tannen & Wallat 1993; Schiffrin 1993; Gumperz 1996; Aijmer 1996), frame-structure was uncovered following *post facto* analysis. Its role in informants' online processes of discourse production and comprehension remains to be proven. On the other hand, the claim that frame-structure guides retrieval but not encoding of information found support in experiments showing that subjects asked to recall material from a previously read passage from a particular participant's perspective were later able to recall previously unrecalled material, when the perspective from which they were asked to recall the passage was shifted (Anderson & Pichert 1978).

To assess the validity of postulating frames as a bridge between perception and cognition, researchers have subsequently turned to studying subjects' online processes of object recognition and text comprehension. The issue now is to what extent, when recognising an object or understanding a text, subjects do so based on abstract knowledge, i.e. building a representation in a bottom-up fashion based on the information provided, or operate within the boundaries of stored representations, i.e. calling on top-down processes. Evidence of top-down processing has been found in consistently (i.e. across subjects and over time) learning-dependent variable performance at object recognition, which is best accounted for by postulating viewpoint-dependent representations of objects (Liu 1996). Similarly, studies of lexical access during text comprehension found that access was faster when unambiguous words appeared as part of a well-known script to which they were relevant, while for ambiguous words meaning access was selective in strongly biasing contexts (Whitney et al. 1995:144-7). Top-down effects were also noted in elaborative inferences: typical category members were inferred from general terms in strongly biasing contexts, while atypical category members were less likely to be inferred even when the context was strongly biasing toward their inference (Whitney et al. 1995:152).

However, researchers in both object/scene recognition and text comprehension are increasingly coming to appreciate that bottom-up and top-down processes actively interact during perception. While earlier research may have overestimated the role of top-down processes, recent evidence suggests that the extent to which top-down processes influence perception depends on both the nature of the task at hand, and the individual. Top-down processes would seem to contribute more to perception, increasing the number of elaborative inferences being generated, when contexts are highly-constraining, and when subjects do not possess expert knowledge or have



limited working memory resources. More specifically, investigating the categorisation of objects/scenes based on visual perception, Schyns (1998) presents experimental evidence suggesting that perceptions are flexible: there is a continuous interaction between visual cues which are available in the input stream of information and those which are diagnostic of a category. Object/scene categorisation does not begin where perception ends, because the available cues may be low in diagnosticity, the latter being a function of both task-related and individual-based constraints (1998:148ff.). Similarly, Whitney et al. (1995:148ff.) suggest that control of information active in working memory during text comprehension is distributed between online processes (concepts activated in working memory can enhance or inhibit the activation of further concepts in the general knowledge base) and offline processes (planning processes pertaining to the type of text and the reader's goals can equally have activating or inhibiting effects). The latter constitute context-based factors which interact with reader-based factors in guiding comprehension (1995:155). Transcripts of informants' protocols (verbal reporting of their thoughts while reading ambiguous passages) support the context- and reader-dependence of the degree of top-down processing in text comprehension (1995:157). Computational implementation of event recognition adds to these factors the degree of specificity and expected duration of the activated schema/frame: highly specific schemata (i.e. rich in attributes), and schemata expected to continue for a long time can influence sensitivity to new input data (Hanson & Hanson 1996:128).

In sum, the evidence from vision and text comprehension research supports the claim that perception and cognition mutually constrain each other. Although the internal workings of this interaction remain to be explicated, little reason is left to doubt its existence. Given the observation that linguistic politeness most often passes unnoticed, this interaction may be fruitfully investigated to explain how politeness is achieved. The following section outlines some preliminary theoretical and empirical grounds for this proposal, which is more fully elucidated in the following chapter.

### **6.5 On the proposed notion of frames**

The approach to linguistic politeness proposed in this thesis may be termed 'frame-based' in that it argues for two main points. First, a large part — albeit by no means all — of polite discourse consists in using conventionalised expressions for achieving politeness, as defined in 5.4.2 above (also 7.2-3 below). Second, linguistic expressions and the extra-linguistic contexts in relation to which they are conventionalised (i.e. in relation to which they function as formulaic; 7.2 below) may be described with reference to frames. This claim also has a strong version, suggesting that the relevant linguistic and extra-linguistic information is 'stored' in memory holistically (this section, 7.4 below). The extra-linguistic features which jointly constitute such frames are limited in number, and specific in kind: they pertain to immediately perceivable

information about a situation, and include a reference to the identities of the speaker and addressee (which may be broken down to information about their respective ages, sexes, and social classes), and the place and the time of utterance (i.e. the setting in which a speech act was realised, and its order of occurrence in the flow of discourse).<sup>18</sup> Joint reference to these extra-linguistic variables provides the ‘minimal context’ against which an utterance is both understood as realising an act of a particular kind and evaluated as a polite way of performing that particular act (5.4.5 above). When an expression is conventionalised for some use relative to such minimal context, and used in that particular context, the information contained in the corresponding frame is all that is required for this evaluation. The socio-cultural evaluation, a manifestation of societal rationality which supersedes individual rationality both temporally and ontologically,<sup>19</sup> provides the link between expressions and minimal contexts, or between the linguistic and extra-linguistic information jointly constituting a frame. In other words, this evaluation is the reason why frames come into being in the first place. The approach is frame-based in that it argues that such frames are part of speakers’ knowledge of their language (Fillmore 1982:117; 6.4.1.3 above), and acquired in the process of socialisation within a community. This claim is based on two considerations. First, speakers’ choices in the recorded CG data repeatedly coincide on the same expressions, down to particular phonetic realisations of these (7.3, esp. 7.3.3, below), above and beyond a preference for a general ‘level’ of indirectness, e.g. for one of Brown and Levinson’s four verbalisable strategies (fig.1, 1.2.2 above). Second, this consistency in speakers’ linguistic choices cannot be obtained on the basis of Brown and Levinson’s proposed formula for computing  $W_x$  by compounding the values of  $D$ ,  $P$  and  $R_x$ , as these variables are currently defined. This is because speakers are not afforded with a bird’s-eye view over the languages they use and contribute to changing. Unlike the linguist who carries out a *post facto* analysis of the data, speakers do not have access to the socio-historical circumstances which shape their languages. Before elaborating further on the interactional motivation for this approach, and the empirical evidence which supports it in the following chapter, this section presents some theoretical and empirical arguments why such an approach is both justified and needed.

Frames, as originally proposed within the fields of AI and psychology, were intended to deal with the perception of objects (e.g. Minsky 1975). Subsequently, frames have been appealed to as an explanatory device for various phenomena which involve a dynamic unfolding of events, such as speech events (6.4.2 above). Recent research has unveiled both philosophical and psychological reasons why the perception

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<sup>18</sup> These features pertain to categories which are socially constructed to a greater or lesser extent. Nevertheless, they are currently characterised as immediately perceivable since, in the absence of indications to the contrary, participants operate on default assumptions about them, partly based on sensory data.

<sup>19</sup> In the sense that it is socio-culturally defined means and ends that the individual as a rational agent manipulates.

of objects (which form part of a natural environment) and the perception of events (including those which form part of a social environment, such as linguistic exchanges) may be amenable to similar treatment. One possible definition of events is to treat them as objects:<sup>20</sup> both events and objects may be regarded as bounded regions of space-time. From the point of view of an observer, the perceptual experience of an object is similar to that of an event, in that both involve the perception, during a segment of time and at a given location, of an entity conceived to have a beginning and an end. On this view, “[e]vent perception can be regarded as the temporally extended analogue of object perception” (Zacks & Tversky 2001:5). Defended on philosophical grounds, this definition has the additional advantage of approximating psychologists’ proposals that events are dynamic objects, while what people call objects are concrete objects (Miller & Johnson-Laird 1976:87). Recent findings support these proposals. Both objects and events may be characterised in terms of partonomies (hierarchical organisation of their constituent parts and subparts) and taxonomies (hierarchical classification based on kind-of relationships) and these characterisations appear to be psychologically significant for their perception.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, both object and event perception seem to be guided by local maxima in the number of features which are changing (Zacks & Tversky 2001:7), and agreement about such boundaries among experimental subjects is generally high (Hanson & Hanson 1996:119). These insights provide a theoretical grounding for extending frame-based explanations from the perception of objects to the perception of events, which has remained unspelt in previous research.

The frames proposed in the following chapter are based on regularities of usage detected in the corpus of data collected. As such, they are first and foremost proposed as an analyst’s tool. The fact though that such specific tendencies regarding the co-occurrence of linguistic and extra-linguistic features of the context can be detected in a large corpus of spontaneous conversational data opens up the possibility that speakers may directly attend to such features and the relations between them when formulating their utterances. Similarly, building on their own experience with the use of language in a particular situation — and thereby trading the possibility of error for speed in understanding — listeners may appeal to these features in interpreting the speaker’s utterance, unless an alternative or reason to the contrary occurs to them. This possibility must be taken seriously in light of a growing body of evidence suggesting that humans are sensitive to statistical properties of language, and that such properties play an important part in language learning (Zacks & Tversky 2001:12). By paying attention to objectively observable frequencies of co-occurrence of these features in spontaneous discourse we are afforded with an insight into the circumstances under which native speakers acquire their languages, and thus into the notion of conventionalisation,

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<sup>20</sup> This view is advanced in the writings of Davidson and Quine (Zacks & Tversky 2001:4-5).

<sup>21</sup> For an overview of relevant experimental findings, see Zacks & Tversky 2001:5-6.

defined in 5.4.2 above as the statistical likelihood that a particular expression will be used in a particular context to one's (subjective/individual) experience.

Frames thus understood may be viewed as an aspect of the 'habitus' (1.3 above), proposed as a system of regulating dispositions whose locus is the individual, but which emanate from social conditions of existence, and are thus objectively regulated (Bourdieu 1990:53). The habitus is responsible for producing anticipations which bear "no resemblance to conscious calculation" (Bourdieu 1991:77), but are more like "practical hypotheses based on past experience" (Bourdieu 1990:54), anticipations which "give disproportionate weight to early experiences" (*ibid.*). The importance of early experiences for the formation of the habitus allows for the emergence, under similar conditions, of habitus which are homologous, in the sense that they will inadvertently (*i.e.* naturally and automatically) both construe an event as such and respond to it in similar ways.

"The genesis of a system of works or practices generated by the same *habitus* (or homologous *habitus*, such as those that underlie the unity of the life-style of a group or a class) cannot be described either as the autonomous development of a unique and always self-identical essence, or as a continuous creation of novelty, because it arises from the necessary yet unpredictable confrontation between the *habitus* and an event that can exercise a pertinent incitement on the *habitus* only if the latter snatches it from the contingency of the accidental and constitutes it as a problem by applying to it the very principles of its solution; and also because the *habitus* [...] is what makes it possible to produce an infinite number of practices that are relatively unpredictable (like the corresponding situations) but also limited in their diversity. In short, being the product of a particular class of objective regularities, the *habitus* tends to generate all the 'reasonable', 'common-sense' behaviours (and only these) which are possible within the limits of these regularities, and which are likely to be positively sanctioned because they are objectively adjusted to the logic characteristic of a particular field [...]" (Bourdieu 1990:55-6; footnote omitted)

In analogy with these insights, the data collected for the present thesis may be viewed as a body of practices, and the frames abstracted from them as an aspect of the individual, yet homologous, habitus of the speakers who generated these practices. Moreover, the positive sanctioning of the behaviours produced by the habitus — referred to earlier as 'the evaluative link between the linguistic and extra-linguistic features of any particular frame' — follows from the same objective regularities which form the habitus in the first place. The repeated co-occurrence of linguistic and extra-linguistic features in the data collected affords us with a glimpse at some of these regularities.

The account of politeness in CG given in the following chapter also builds on Fillmore's notion of interactional frames, which he introduces as follows:

"The interactional frames amount to a categorisation of the distinguishable contexts of interaction in which speakers of a language can expect to find themselves, together with information about the appropriate linguistic choices

relevant to these interactions. [...] A part of knowing a language is knowing or recognising a large number of such frames, and knowing what linguistic choices are relevant for each of them.” (1976:25)

In the account proposed in this thesis, speakers’ knowledge of language includes a knowledge of repertoires of frames which are constrained by their socio-cultural affiliation, while at the same time being constantly subject to change in light of the interaction between previous experience and potentially changing social conditions of existence.

This view allows for a unified account of what would seem to constitute, on Brown and Levinson’s approach, two types of competence, depending on whether one is actively producing or interpreting language. According to Brown and Levinson, “the world of the upper and middle groups is constructed in a stern and cold architecture of social distance, asymmetry, and resentment of impositions, while the world of the lower groups is built on social closeness, symmetrical solidarity, and reciprocity” (B&L:245). This statement leaves the nature of the interaction between the two ‘worlds’ largely unspecified. On the one hand, examples such as the use of endearment terms (e.g., “love”) by working-class till-operators to middle-class customers in British supermarkets,<sup>22</sup> and examples of increased indirectness by professional Japanese women addressing subordinates (Matsumura & Chinami 1999), and by senior academics addressing college porters (with whom they are in daily contact; Peter Matthews p.c.) suggest that speakers always assess variable values from the viewpoint of their social stratum. On the other hand, to explain the fact that speakers’ choices in the above instances do not normally result in miscommunication across social strata, one would have to assume that, when they are the recipients of such forms, speakers are able to adopt the viewpoint of social strata different from theirs. In this case, interlocutors’ production and interpretation of others’ utterances would appear to conform to different principles. Their active production of language would seem to reflect their social affiliation, while their interpretation of others’ discourse would seem to reveal an ability to adopt another’s viewpoint. If interlocutors are indeed capable of such shift in perspective, the question arises naturally why they should not also effectuate this when actively producing language.

A plausible reason for this lies with the notion of an act of identity on behalf of the speaker (Le Page & Tabouret-Keller 1985:182, quoted in 3.4 above; for some examples from CG, see 7.3.3-4 below). In acquiring language both by hearing it and by actively producing it, speakers develop repertoires of frames which include frames of which they only have a ‘passive’ knowledge. For example, in sexually segregated societies, men will be aware of women’s ‘ways of speaking’, although they themselves will not use them. In Bourdieu’s terms, the anticipations of the habitus tend “to function as a

<sup>22</sup> This use is culture-specific (and hence only acceptable given a familiarity with the norms of British culture), witness the indignation of a Swedish customer so addressed (Birgit Finstad p.c.).

practical sense of the acceptability and the probable value of one's own linguistic productions *and those of others* on different markets" (1991:77; emphasis added). The notion of a linguistic market adds to linguistic exchanges an economic dimension, "established within a particular symbolic relation of power between a producer, endowed with a certain linguistic capital, and a consumer (or a market), and which is capable of procuring a certain material or symbolic profit" (Bourdieu 1991:66). Bourdieu (1991:37ff.) argues at length for the necessity to differentiate "the *capacity to speak*, which is virtually universal" from "*the socially conditioned way of realising this natural capacity*, which presents as many variants as there are social conditions of acquisition" (1991:54-5; original emphasis), and for the need for linguists to extend their attention from the former into the realm of the latter. Viewing polite discourse as the result of speakers appealing to their respective repertoires of frames which form part of their linguistic capital, and in anticipation of the profits which are a function of the market to which this capital is presented, affords us with an explanation for interlocutors' differential 'competence' as active producers and as recipients of language.

On a more empirical note, the account put forward in this thesis proposes that joint reference to such extra-linguistic features of the situation as the sex, age, and social class of the speaker and the addressee, the relationship between them, the setting of the exchange, and the order of occurrence of the speech act in the flow of the conversation, affords us with more accurate predictions regarding the expression of politeness in the CG data, compared to Brown and Levinson's three sociological variables. The preliminary analysis of the data in 4.2 above yielded some indications supporting this proposal. A frame-based approach is more economical than Brown and Levinson's account, in that it allows for immediately perceivable extra-linguistic features of the situation to be directly linked with the appropriate linguistic expressions. The claim that participants appeal to a level of assumptions of D, P and R<sub>x</sub> which is intermediate — hierarchically as well as temporally, if Brown and Levinson's account is to be given psychological plausibility — between the perception of the situation and the choice of linguistic expression should thus be abandoned on grounds of both empirical adequacy, and theoretical parsimony. In the light of the observation that politeness most often passes unnoticed (1.3.2 above), such theoretical parsimony can be invoked to support the psychological plausibility of the proposed account. Clearly, the claim that the extra-linguistic features listed above, and only these, are necessary and jointly sufficient to account for politeness phenomena across cultures, currently put forward on the basis of the data analysed, remains to be confirmed by future research. In the meantime, the emphasis on agents' expectations which underlies research on the notion of frames to date — expectations the confirmation of which allows for eventualities to pass unnoticed — provides a strong motivation for considering a frame-based approach to politeness, and unravelling its implications and limitations.

## 6.6 Summary

The purpose of this chapter has been to provide an overview of the research tradition within which the notion of frames, introduced in 1.3.3 above, has emerged, and to outline the usefulness of this notion for politeness studies. The chapter began by considering the nature of speakers' beliefs about politeness. It emerged that such beliefs are part of speakers' implicit real-world knowledge, that is, speakers will act based on them unless there occurs to them an alternative or reason to the contrary. Frames may be viewed as structures of implicit real-world knowledge, which make available knowledge which is relevant to the eventuality at hand. By linking extra-linguistic information about a situation with information about the appropriate use of language therein, they naturally complement an account of linguistic politeness in terms of Levinson's (1995, 2000) proposed heuristics. Frames were originally proposed as a bridge between perception and conception. Although different approaches have attributed variable weights to each of these two factors, recent findings confirm their interaction, to varying degrees, during the process of understanding. *Post facto* analysis of empirical data reveals frames in the form of objective regularities of co-occurrence of extra-linguistic and linguistic features of a situation. In light of evidence establishing the importance of statistical properties of language for language learning, a case can be made for viewing frames as the cognitive trace, so to speak, of such regularities on speakers' knowledge of their languages. In the proposed approach, emphasis is placed on the social conditions of language acquisition. These result in speakers developing repertoires of frames whose degree of proximity reflects similarities in the speakers' social conditions of existence. The following chapter presents a detailed analysis of CG data, in an attempt to substantiate the claim that the situated realisation of polite discourse cannot be adequately explained as the result of the application of a principle which is universally valid — at least not without further elaboration of this principle — but requires a reference to speakers' repertoires of frames which are part of their socio-culturally constrained competences.

“Theoretical linguists, in the last two decades, have been trained to investigate the generative capacity of language. [...] So prevailing was the study of the undoubtedly essential property of language to allow the production of ever new sentences that the assumption that almost every sentence has an occurrence probability of close to zero was never questioned, much less put to a rigorous test. [...] much of what is actually said in everyday interaction is by no means unique. Rather, a great deal of communicative activity consists of enacting routines making use of prefabricated linguistic units in a well-known and generally accepted manner.”

(Coulmas 1981:1)

## Chapter 7

### Toward a psychologically plausible account

#### 7.1 Introduction

Chapters 5 and 6 outlined the theoretical motivation for a frame-based approach to politeness, and the research tradition within which it is placed. It was argued that politeness is a perlocutionary effect which is mostly (i.e., to the extent that it passes unnoticed) automatically achieved when the speaker utters an expression which s/he takes to be mutually held by participants to be conventionalised relative to the (minimal) context of utterance. The relationship between expressions and (minimal) contexts can be captured in terms of frames, which thus emerge as experientially-based structures of expectations. Empirically, frames take the form of observable regularities of usage. This chapter aims to provide empirical support for these claims. It begins by defining a notion of formulaicity which brings to the fore its interactional importance for politeness, and proceeds by proposing some frames for the expression of politeness in CG based on the data collected. An interim summary assesses Brown and Levinson’s (1987) approach and the proposed frame-based one in the light of these findings, while the final section delves into the psycholinguistic implications of the proposed approach, and reviews recent evidence which argues in its favour.

#### 7.2 Politeness and formulaicity

In chapter 4, I investigated the impact of different combinations of observable features of the situation on the linguistic realisations of requests and offers in CG. One outcome of that investigation was that speakers did not always choose to be more indirect as the sum of D and P increased (4.2.1 above). Rather, speakers’ choices of specific linguistic realisations (such as Action Verb-imperative-2sg., or Action Verb-subjunctive-2sg. for requests, and Action Verb-subjunctive-1sg., or *Telo*, ‘I-want’-indicative with rising intonation-2sg. for offers; figs.4.8-9, 4.11-12 above) proved to be so robust across



different combinations of extra-linguistic features that one may speak of these linguistic realisations as ‘formulae’ for the realisation of requests and offers respectively in CG.

The term ‘formula’ in this context refers to a fully specified morpho-phonological surface realisation of a VP, where the head of the VP is subject to lexical and/or semantic constraints (in the examples above, it is either an Action Verb, or the verb *Telo*, ‘I-want’). Politeness formulae thus defined fall under what Pawley and Syder (1983:208ff.) term ‘lexicalised sentence stems’. In these, “the sentence structure is fully specified along with a nucleus of lexical and grammatical morphemes which normally include the verb and certain of its arguments; however, one or more structural elements is a class, represented by a category symbol such as TENSE, NP, or PRO” (Pawley & Syder 1983:210). One distinctive property of lexicalised sequences is that they are ‘social institutions’ (ibid.:209): they are, to some extent, arbitrarily chosen among synonymous expressions, as the standard way of expressing a particular culturally authorised meaning (ibid.:211). In Coulmas’s scheme, this property of politeness formulae is captured by placing them under “routine formulae”, that is, “fixed expressions for highly recurrent communicative tasks” (1994:1292; cf. 1981:2-3).

That a large proportion — albeit by no means all — of polite discourse should consist in using formulaic speech is hardly surprising. From the point of view of online processing, psycholinguistic evidence shows that possessing a sufficiently large stock of formulae allows more time for planning thus promoting fluency in speech (Pawley & Syder 1983; Wray & Perkins 2000:15-7). The normal order of acquisition by which receptive competence precedes production is also often reversed in the case of routines and politeness formulae (Saville-Troike 1989[1982]:241; Wray & Perkins 2000:19-20). Saville-Troike (ibid.) associates this reversal with the fundamental importance of using politeness formulae for effectively assuming the role of social actor. That is, formulae “embody accepted ways of responding verbally to a variety of situations [...]. Using the expected formulas is a strong indication of belonging, social identity or acculturation” (Coulmas 1994:1293; cf. Wray & Perkins 2000:13-5). This property of formulaic speech renders it particularly apt for maintaining face, an integral part of which, I argued in 1.3.3 above, is demonstrating familiarity with the norms of the community within which one is operating. The psycholinguistic and interactional significance of formulaic speech may in fact be seen as two sides of the same coin:

“[T]he driving force behind the processing short-cuts is ensuring that the speaker’s production is fluent and that information is available when required: formulaic language by-passes, partially or entirely, depending on the form, the generative system. The driving force behind the socio-interactional formulas is ensuring that the speaker gets what he/she wants and is perceived as an individual within the group. Significantly, formulaic language is better suited to this than novel language is, because a hearer is more likely to understand a message if it is in a form he/she has heard before, and which he/she can process without recourse to full analytic decoding. [...] . just as the processing short cuts are a means of ensuring that the *speaker* achieves successful production, so the

socio-interactional formulae are a means of ensuring that the *hearer* achieves successful comprehension.” (Wray and Perkins 2000:17-8, original emphasis and spelling; cf. Condon 2001:510-1)

Viewed from this perspective, our results come as no surprise: the uniformity of speakers’ choices in the data collected is explained by “the speakers’ self-interest in matching their output to what the hearers will understand” (Wray & Perkins 2000:18fn.6). The importance of formulaic speech to politeness is of course by no means a new finding. Numerous studies discuss the use of formulaic expressions to achieve specific goals in interaction (e.g., Overstreet and Yule (2001) on the disclaimer ‘not X or anything, but Y’ in English; Matsumoto (1985) on the hedge ‘chotto’, Ide (1998) and Takekuro (1999) on the expressions ‘sumimasen’ and ‘onegaishimasu’ respectively in Japanese; Nwoye (1989) on proverbs in Igbo; Ferguson (1981) on greetings and responses to them in Arabic). What I am arguing for, however, is a much broader definition of formulaicity, and consequently its wider distribution across situational contexts. Formulaicity may be viewed as the synchronic analogue of grammaticalisation, and can be assessed using diachronically-inspired criteria (5.4.5.1 above). One significant property of formulaic expressions is arbitrariness: formulaicity cannot be predicted based on morpho-phonological, syntactic, semantic, or pragmatic criteria alone, although, jointly considered, these can provide indications of the extent to which an expression synchronically functions as formulaic (7.3-4 below). The CG results thus re-cast the standard picture both qualitatively and quantitatively: in the data collected, formulaic speech carries the burden of polite discourse. This finding, explained above as a concomitant of the psycholinguistic and interactional significance of formulaic speech, raises the possibility that the use of formulae may be a prominent feature of polite discourse in any culture. While the confirmation of this prediction must necessarily await further quantitative studies of polite discourse across cultures, it does suggest the need for an account in which emphasis is placed, not on a universally valid principle motivating nonce inferences, but on experientially acquired structures of anticipated ‘default’ behaviour.

### **7.3 Proposed frames for the use of some politeness formulae in CG**

In the analysis which follows, speakers’ preferences for particular combinations of verb, modality, and number+person are first located in the data collected, and the difficulties of accounting for them as rationally-derived realisations of a universal principle within Brown and Levinson’s scheme are discussed. To overcome such difficulties, sociolinguistically and diachronically informed insights are appealed to. Each subsection closes by proposing a suitable frame, which captures the intimate relationship between such combinations of linguistic features and their contexts of use. The analysis reveals a small number of ‘formulae’ as defined in 7.2 above, characterised by two properties: (i) they have greater or lesser currency in the culture, in

the sense that they are applicable to a wide or limited range of situations respectively; (ii) they are not freely interchangeable, in that particular combinations of extra-linguistic features systematically co-occur with specific expressions, even if alternative expressions falling under the same super-strategy from Brown and Levinson's five-part hierarchy (fig.1, 1.2.2 above) are available. That is, given a particular combination of extra-linguistic features, speakers appear to opt for concrete, fully specified, linguistic realisations rather than a general level of indirectness, or politeness super-strategy. Thus, the linguistic expressions analysed below constitute formulae on both counts of Coulmas's (1994:1292, quoted in 7.2 above) definition: they are 'fixed' both in form, compared to other expressions in the language which are created anew every time, and in function, in that they fulfil specific highly recurrent communicative tasks. It is this intimate connection between form and function — a connection which makes it possible to anticipate the one given the other — that an account in terms of frames aims to elucidate.

### 7.3.1 AV-subjunctive-2nd singular

In the data collected, two combinations of verb, modality and number+person — AV-imperative-2sg. and AV-subjunctive-2sg. — account for the majority of requests performed at home and at informal social gatherings, and at work (figs.4.8, 4.11 above). Evidence discussed in 4.2.1 above suggested that the use of these combinations remains unaffected by an increase in the values of D+P. Moreover, AV-imperative-2sg. is preferred over the more indirect AV-subjunctive-2sg. in almost all situational contexts in these two settings. However, in requests performed for the first time at home or at informal social gatherings between middle-class women of the same age who are friends,<sup>1</sup> this order of preference is reversed ((1) below; fig.7.1).

(1) [75.3; Informal social gathering; Speaker: female, over 51, middle-class; Addressee: female, over 51, middle-class; Relationship: friends]

θelma mu *na fais* tin, kolokotin su tʃe na pamen ap' eci

thelma-VOC. my *SP eat-dep.-2sg.* the-ACC. pastry-ACC. your-2sg. and *SP go-dep.-1pl.* from there

'Thelma dear, *do eat up* your pastry so we can go to the other room.'

In the above example, D and P are presumably low: interlocutors are of the same sex, age, and social class, so the distance between them is small. Similarly, the power of the addressee over the speaker is low, as they are friends who have known each other for years. One may want to claim that the increased indirectness of the speaker's request should be put down to middle-class values (B&L:245). However, in requests addressed by middle-class men to middle-class men of the same age at home/informal social gatherings, a similar preference for increased indirectness is not found (fig.7.2).

<sup>1</sup> There are not enough instances of requests exchanged between friends of different ages, or of working-class background, or from different social classes, to ascertain the effect of age and class on this preference.

Pavlidou (1991:38) notes women's pronounced tendency to phrase requests in the subjunctive in SMG: where women used the subjunctive, men tended to use modalised performatives. Due to this association with SMG speech, use of the subjunctive would constitute a prestigious variant in CG, when compared to use of the imperative (the other variant commonly used to perform requests in CG). This suggests an explanation of the speaker's choice in (1) along the lines of social network theory (Milroy 1980). According to this, the more prestigious variant would occur more in the speech of those speakers who have less ties within their local network. This explanation makes two assumptions. First, men's social network ties in Cypriot society are more dense/multiplex than those of women. While this may be a valid assumption, it is not easy to ascertain within the boundaries of the present study; I therefore confine myself to pointing it out. The second assumption concerns the prestige attached to use of the subjunctive. If explained within the framework of social network theory, one would expect the preference for AV-subjunctive-2sg. to characterise women's speech in all situations. However, an examination of requests addressed by women to men, or exchanged between women of the same age who are friends at work, or which are performed for the second time, shows that AV/SAV-imperative-2sg. is the preferred realisation in these cases (figs.7.3, 7.4, 7.5). Arguably, in these latter cases, women are accommodating to the speech patterns of their addressees (when they are men), or considerations of urgency predominate in the exchange.

Several conclusions may be drawn from this discussion. First, Brown and Levinson's definitions of Distance and Power (B&L:76-7) constitute general guidelines, rather than categorical predicaments. More accurate predictions regarding assessments of these variables in any particular culture require appealing to further insights, such as those of Social Network Theory (Milroy 1980)<sup>2</sup> or Accommodation Theory (Giles & Powesland 1997[1975]; Giles and Coupland 1991). Significantly, these insights can only be appealed to *post facto* by a theorist: they do not form part of speakers' pre-theoretical intuitions. The fact that, contrary to observable features of the situation, these further theoretical insights are not available to guide speakers during the production of polite discourse, argues against the psychological reality of Brown and Levinson's notions of D and P. Second, taking these latter insights into account raises the question of how they affect assessments of D and P. It seems plausible that they would affect D and P values simultaneously; in this case, the claim that these two variables are assessed independently of each other (B&L:80) is no longer tenable. Finally, the indirectness of a linguistic expression is not the only factor determining its appropriateness on a particular occasion. Women's preference for phrasing requests to their women friends in informal settings in AV-subjunctive-2sg. can be explained as a result of less strong network ties only on the assumption that this variant is somehow

<sup>2</sup> Brown (1998:98) takes a step in this direction, when associating positive politeness with relatively multi-stranded relationships in her study of Tenejapan speech.

more prestigious in CG compared to its more direct counterpart. In conjunction with the observation that inappropriateness can be interpreted as face-threatening (1.3.2 above), this finding leads to the conclusion that politeness cannot be seen as a concomitant of indirectness alone. An account of this preference in terms of frames summarises the empirical findings, while not imposing an association of greater indirectness with increased W values which is unsolicited by the facts in this case. Thus, theoretical interpretation can follow empirical observation, rather than precede it, allowing for a more multi-layered and fine-grained account than would otherwise be possible. The (online) interpretation of AV-subjunctive-2sg. as a polite request follows from jointly taking into account the speaker's and the addressee's sex, the relationship between them, the setting of the exchange, and the order of appearance of the speech act in the flow of the conversation (table 1).<sup>3</sup>

Sex of speaker: <i>female</i>	Sex of addressee: <i>female</i>
Relative age of speaker and addressee: <i>(same)</i>	
Social class of speaker: <i>(middle)</i>	Social class of addressee: <i>(middle)</i>
Relationship: <i>friends</i>	Speech act: <i>request</i>
Setting: <i>at home/informal social gatherings</i>	Occurs for the: <i>1st time</i>
<i>Aksubjunctive-2sg.</i>	

**Table 1: Proposed frame for AV-subjunctive-2sg. as the preferred formula for performing requests**

### 7.3.2 AV-subjunctive-1st plural

As with requests, two combinations of verb, modality, and number+person — AV-subjunctive-1sg. and *Te1o*-indicative with rising intonation-2sg. — account for the majority of offers performed at home/informal social gatherings or at work in the data collected (4.2.1 above, figs. 4.9, 4.12). However, middle-class<sup>4</sup> male salespersons addressing middle-class male old customers of the same age prefer a third possibility, namely AV-subjunctive-1st pl. ((2) below; fig.7.6).

- (2) [62.3; At work; Speaker1: male, 31-50, middle-class; Speaker2: male, 31-50, middle-class; Relationship: salesperson (S2) to old customer (S1)]  
 S1: ... . tʃe pos na ðis solines mana mu?  
 >S2: oi ena tis ðumen pu pano pu fcenun, *na metrisumen*  
 S1: ... . and how SP see-dep.-2sg tubes mother-VOC. my?  
 >S2: no FP them-ACC. see-dep.-1pl. from above that come-out-ind.-3pl., *SP measure-dep.-1pl.*  
 S1: ... . 'And how will you see the tubes my friend?'  
 >S2: 'No, we'll see them from above where they're sticking out, *to measure* them.'

Assessing the indirectness of this last variant relative to the other two is not straightforward: *te1o*-indicative with rising intonation-2sg. can be an instance of

<sup>3</sup> In this and subsequent tables, extra-linguistic features whose impact on the preferences discussed could not be ascertained based on the collected data are placed within parentheses.

<sup>4</sup> The importance of the speaker's class for this preference cannot be ascertained based on the data collected.

negative politeness, by way of questioning the addressee's desire for some thing/action (B&L:131), while AV-subjunctive-1sg. can be positively polite, since it presupposes the speaker's knowledge of, and concern for, the addressee's wants (B&L:102). On this view, AV-subjunctive-1pl. would be positively polite, while also tinted with negative politeness, since it uses pluralisation, an impersonalisation device (B&L:198-203).<sup>5</sup> Alternatively, the 1pl. may be interpreted as inclusive (B&L:127), strengthening the positive politeness of AV-subjunctive-1pl.

This account fails to explain why AV-subjunctive-1sg./pl. do not occur when addressing *working*-class male old customers (whose power over middle-class salespersons should be less than that of middle-class old customers) at least as often as (the negatively polite) *theo*-indicative with rising intonation-2sg. (fig.7.7); or why AV-subjunctive-1sg. — the 'least' polite variant if AV-subjunctive-1pl. is interpreted as negatively tinted — is preferred when addressing *female* middle-class customers (fig.7.8), since any potential decrease in P due to the addressee's sex would presumably be offset by an increase in D, the sum of D+P remaining essentially unchanged.

One complication is introduced here by the category of number+person. Arguably, the existing T/V opposition in Modern Greek (however limited in CG usage; 2.7.2.4 above) taints the 2sg. with connotations of directness. Hence, the negative politeness of *theo*-indicative with rising intonation-2sg. is not untainted by bald-on-record echoes, which male salespersons may be trying to avoid when addressing middle-class customers, but which are acceptable if the addressee is working-class. The 1pl. effects a desirable compromise in this respect. It is more indirect than the 1sg. while simultaneously avoiding the 2sg. contained in the negatively polite variant.

However, this explanation does not account for examples such as (31) in 5.4.5.1 above, where the 2sg. co-occurs with the 1pl. If use of the 2sg. in *ase*, 'let-imp.-2sg.', is possible with middle-class addressees, why should this same choice of number+person present a problem when it occurs in *theo*-indicative with rising intonation-2sg.? Recall here the discussion of *ase*, 'let', *aku*, 'listen', and *el/a su po*, 'let me tell you' (5.4.5.1 above). There, their high frequency of occurrence in morphologically reduced form and in utterance-initial position in the collected data, jointly with their limited combinatorial possibilities with other items in discourse, were interpreted as indicating their being frozen in CG. Use of the 2sg. where such frozen forms are involved does not argue against its association with bald-on-record strategies *when the combination of verb, modality, and number+person is not frozen*.

Frozenness is, however, a matter of degree rather than categorical distinction. Thus, while less frozen than *ase*, 'let', *aku*, 'listen', and *el/a su po*, 'let me tell you', *theo*-indicative with rising intonation-2sg. is still less than fully autonomous (5.4.5.1 above). To the extent that it is fixed — witness its loss in weight and variability, and gain in

<sup>5</sup> Appealing to iconicity similarly predicts that AV-subjunctive-1pl. is more indirect than AV-subjunctive-1sg.

cohesion — *thelo*-indicative with rising intonation-2sg. will “occur with greatest freedom from contextual constraints” (Lambrecht 1984:776). Indeed, it is used time after time to perform offers at home and at work across a wide range of combinations of extra-linguistic features. As its distributional possibilities expand, *thelo*-indicative with rising intonation-2sg. becomes ‘interactionally general’, that is, compatible with a wide set of face-related assumptions. Its association with negative politeness reached on the grounds of its propositional content (B&L’s strategy ‘question, hedge’) is thereby loosened. Put differently, its interactional generality ‘subtracts’ from its negative politeness. This could explain why *thelo*-indicative with rising intonation-2sg. is used comparatively more with working- rather than middle-class male old customers (fig.7.7).

Yet, this does not mean that *thelo*-indicative with rising intonation-2sg. is inappropriate for use with middle-class male old customers, merely that it is not sufficiently interactionally informative. Interactional informativeness is thus one of two reasons motivating male salespersons’ preference to phrase offers to middle-class male old customers using AV-subjunctive-1pl. (fig.7.6). As Braun (1988:59) points out, when polite forms expand, both in the sense of being used by more speakers and in a higher number of communicative situations, their politeness ‘wears out’ (which is another way of saying they become interactionally general). Consequently, while *thelo*-indicative with rising intonation-2sg. is more indirect than AV-subjunctive-1pl., the latter is more interactionally informative, by virtue of its much more restricted distribution across situational contexts. Note that the set of face-related assumptions compatible with AV-subjunctive-1pl. may encompass both negative- and positive-face oriented ones (asserting knowledge of, and concern for, H’s wants, and impersonalising) or positive-face oriented ones alone (asserting knowledge of, and concern for, H’s wants, and including both S and H in the activity). Consistent with the impossibility of assigning priority to one aspect of face over another independently of cultural and situational factors (1.3.1 above), what matters is that the set of these assumptions is narrower than the corresponding set of assumptions compatible with use of *thelo*-indicative with rising intonation-2sg. Thus, speaker effort to communicate particular face-related assumptions constitutes another factor alongside speaker effort to be indirect (whether indirectness is defined as length of the inferential path, or a matter of iconicity; 4.1.3-4 above) determining an expression’s appropriateness in context.

To account for the observed restriction of AV-subjunctive-1pl. to offers to *male* addressees, an additional appeal to social network theory is needed. If network ties are stronger for middle-class men, they will use more vernacular forms. The 1pl. turns out to be just such a non-standard form, when contrasted to the other ‘pluralised’ variant, the 2pl. (on the standard flavour of the 2pl. in CG, see 2.7.2.4 above, 7.3.3 below). If the 1pl. constitutes the vernacular norm and men’s network ties are stronger, its use would stress male group-solidarity, making it inappropriate for use to female

addressees. Significantly, male speakers' preference for phrasing offers using AV-subjunctive-1pl. is restricted to the relationship of salesperson to old customer. Changing the relationship to one between old colleagues marks a return to the more widespread variants (*thelo*-indicative with rising intonation-2sg., and AV-subjunctive (with rising intonation)-1sg.; fig.7.9). Male salespersons' stressing their solidarity with middle-class customers thus emerges as a means for them to foreground the shared aspects of their relationship, a move which seems desirable given the commercial nature of the transaction, but would be redundant between old colleagues.

In sum, male salespersons' preference for AV-subjunctive-1pl. when addressing offers to male middle-class old customers is explained less as a result of the 2sg. tainting *thelo*-indicative with rising intonation-2sg. with connotations of directness, than of the fact that this combination, being interactionally general, fails to delimit the particular face-related assumptions which speakers want to convey on these occasions. The extra-linguistic features jointly promoting the interpretation of AV-subjunctive-1pl. as a polite offer are the speaker's sex, the addressee's sex and social class, and the relationship between them (table 2).

Sex of speaker: <i>male</i>	Sex of addressee: <i>male</i>
Relative age of speaker and addressee: <i>(same)</i>	
Social class of speaker: <i>(middle)</i>	Social class of addressee: <i>middle</i>
Relationship: <i>salesperson to old customer</i>	Speech act: <i>offer</i>
Setting: <i>at work</i>	Occurs for the: <i>1st time or subsequently</i>
<i>A#subjunctive-1pl.</i>	

**Table 2: Proposed frame for AV-subjunctive-1pl. as the preferred formula for performing offers**

### 7.3.3 *exo*-indicative with rising intonation-2nd plural/3rd singular

The possibility that an expression may be 'negatively polite with bald-on-record echoes' (as in *thelo*-indicative with rising intonation-2sg.), or 'positively polite with negative politeness connotations' (as in AV-subjunctive-1pl.) exemplifies the difficulties faced by an approach which assumes that utterances can be placed along a uni-dimensional scale of indirectness. Contrary to what one might expect if a summative quantitative assessment of their indirectness were all that mattered, these expressions are not situationally interchangeable (7.3.2 above). Evidence from the use of two further combinations of verb-modality-number+person supports the need for a notion of 'qualitative' indirectness based on which expressions may be distinguished from each other (4.1.4. above).

In Brown and Levinson's hierarchy of strategies, *exo*, 'I-have'-indicative with rising intonation-2pl. and *exo*-indicative with rising intonation-3sg. both fall under negative politeness: they realise strategy 1, 'be conventionally indirect', by seeking to confirm whether the preparatory condition regarding the existence of goods requested holds



(B&L:137), and strategy 7, ‘impersonalise S and H’ (B&L:190ff.). However, the two expressions are differentially used in the data collected. While both are used by new customers making first requests of salespersons, *exo*-indicative with rising intonation-2pl. is preferred by middle-class speakers and is almost absent from the speech of working-class speakers, where it is replaced by *exo*-indicative with rising intonation-3sg. ((4), (5) below; figs.7.10, 7.11). Similarly, working-class salespersons receive more *exo*-indicative with rising intonation-3sg. compared to middle-class salespersons (figs.7.12, 7.13). The division of labour between the two expressions is also sensitive to the sex of the speaker, with working-class women preferring *exo*-indicative with rising intonation-3sg. more than working-class men (figs.7.14, 7.15), and age, with sameness of age increasing occurrences of *exo*-indicative with rising intonation-3sg. (figs.7.16, 7.17).

- (4) [17.02; At work; Speaker: male, 31-50, middle-class; Addressee: female, 18-30, working-class; Relationship: new customer to salesperson]

*eçete: p<sup>h</sup>inats?*

*have-ind.-2pl., peanuts?*

‘Do you-2pl. have some peanuts?’

- (5) [89.01; At work; Speaker: female, 31-50, working-class; Addressee: male, 31-50, working-class; Relationship: new customer to salesperson]

*eçi mikres pu na min exun sçedïa pano? aspro*

*have-ind.-3sg. small {socks} that SP not have-ind.-3pl. patterns on? white*

‘Are there any small plain ones? In white.’

These findings appear perplexing if the two expressions are equivalently indirect, as Brown and Levinson predict. Middle- and working-class speakers’ consistently different solutions to the task of impersonalising the addressee suggest that, when requesting something for the first time from a salesperson they are not familiar with, speakers are also performing an act of identity (LePage & Tabouret-Keller 1985:182, quoted in 3.4 above). To the extent that non-literal use of the 2pl. in CG marks instances of standardising speech (2.7.2.4 above), it is constrained by both having access to the standard code, and the extent to which the speaker finds identifying him/herself with ‘the group of standard speakers’ desirable in the situation at hand. Middle-class speakers have greater access to SMG than working-class speakers, in that they have more opportunities to interact with Mainland Greeks, either in Greece, where they travel regularly to study, on holiday, or on business trips, or in Cyprus, where Mainland Greeks often hold short-term contracts in white-collar jobs. Being socially stratified as a result, non-literal use of the 2pl. constitutes an outward manifestation of middle-class identity, to be called upon when asserting this identity is judged desirable. The financial implications of a commercial exchange make requesting something for the first time from a salesperson with whom one is not familiar just such an occasion. However, this motivation is constrained by the desire to accommodate one’s speech to that of one’s addressee. Consequently, middle-class speakers tend to use *exo*-indicative with rising

intonation-2pl. more with middle-class addressees than with working-class ones. A desire to avoid connotations of conceitedness or femininity associated with middle-class speech (Edwards 1979) could then account for the limited appearance of the 2pl. in men's speech, this tendency being more pronounced in the speech of working-class men.

*exo*-indicative with rising intonation-2pl. and *exo*-indicative with rising intonation-3sg. thus emerge as representing different norms, to which speakers tend or which they avoid depending (a) on the degree to which they have access to them, and (b) on their desire to present themselves in a certain way, which subsumes the wish to accommodate their speech to that of their addressees. This analysis finds support in the phonetic realisations of the two variants, which largely conform to the rules of SMG and CG respectively: *exo*-indicative with rising intonation-2pl. is realised as *eçete*, i.e. with suspension of a Cypriot-specific rule of softening of /x/ to [ʃ] (1 in table 1, 3.2 above), five out of six times (83.34%), while *exo*-indicative with rising intonation-3sg. is realised as *eʃi*, i.e. applying softening of /x/ to [ʃ], six out of eight times (75%). The discovery of consistency in speakers' choices down to the level of phonetic detail argues strongly in favour of the formulaic character of these expressions. Rather than creating them anew based on nonce calculations of D, P and R<sub>x</sub>, speakers appear to retrieve them in a holistic manner when encountering particular combinations of extra-linguistic features. The extra-linguistic factors jointly determining use of these expressions in the data collected are the relationship between interlocutors, the order of appearance of the speech act, the speaker's social class, and to a lesser extent his/her sex and age relative to the addressee, as well as the addressee's social class (tables 3, 4).<sup>6</sup>

Sex of speaker: <i>female, male</i>	Sex of addressee: <i>any</i>
Relative age of speaker and addressee: <i>younger to older, older to younger, same</i>	
Social class of speaker: <i>middle</i>	Social class of addressee: <i>middle, working</i>
Relationship: <i>new customer to salesperson</i>	Speech act: <i>request</i>
Setting: <i>at work</i>	Occurs for the: <i>1st time</i>
<i>exo-indicative with rising intonation-2pl.</i>	

**Table 3: Proposed frame for *exo*-indicative with rising intonation-2pl. as the preferred formula for performing requests**

Sex of speaker: <i>male, female</i>	Sex of addressee: <i>male, female</i>
Relative age of speaker and addressee: <i>same, any</i>	
Social class of speaker: <i>working</i>	Social class of addressee: <i>working, middle</i>
Relationship: <i>new customer to salesperson</i>	Speech act: <i>request</i>
Setting: <i>at work</i>	Occurs for the: <i>1st time</i>
<i>exo-indicative with rising intonation-3sg.</i>	

**Table 4: Proposed frame for *exo*-indicative with rising intonation-3sg. as the preferred formula for performing requests**

<sup>6</sup> In these and subsequent tables, extra-linguistic variants are listed in order of frequency, with most frequent ones placed first.

### 7.3.4 *θelo*-conditional-1st singular

The polite formulae discussed so far concern the realisation of offers and requests at home and at work. An examination of offers and requests performed during formal discussions or interviews on the radio and television reveals a very different picture. Speakers' choices of combinations of type of verb-modality-number+person are now more evenly distributed among the various formal possibilities (figs.4.14, 4.15 above). Nevertheless, closer inspection reveals certain preferences for particular combinations of verb categories. To an extent, these concern the expected shift from Action Verbs to Speech Act Verbs, since the focus of the activity is now verbal, and the virtual substitution of the 2sg. by the 2pl., in keeping with the standardising flavour of the latter (2.7.2.4 above) which makes it appropriate for use by the media. Most preferred though are two further combinations, *θelo*, 'I-want'-indicative-1sg. and *θelo*-conditional-1sg. ((6), (7) below).

- (6) [2.12; On the radio; Speaker: male, 31-50, middle-class; Addressee: female, 31-50, middle-class; Relationship: interviewer to interviewee]

*θelo* na apandisumen is ton akroatin pu ton afisamen (.) eh

*want-ind.-1sg.* SP answer-dep.-1pl. to the-ACC. listener-ACC. that him-ACC. leave-past-perf.-1pl.(.) er

'I'd like {us} to answer the listener that we left (.) er'

- (7) [85.2; On TV; Speaker: female, 31-50, middle-class; Addressee: male, 31-50, middle-class; Relationship: interviewee to interviewer]

*θα iθela* na proθeso kati eðo omos.

*P want-past-imperf.-1sg.* SP add-dep.-1sg. something here though.

'I would like to add something here though.'

The first thing to note about these combinations is their attachment to the formal discussion/radio/TV setting. While *θelo*-indicative-1sg. and *θelo*-conditional-1sg. constitute indirect requests by affirming the sincerity condition<sup>7</sup> in the same way that *exo*-indicative with rising intonation-2pl. and *exo*-indicative with rising intonation-3sg. constitute indirect requests by questioning the preparatory condition concerning the existence of goods sought (B&L:137; 7.3.3 above), the two types of requests have clearly defined — and different — domains of application. And whereas questioning the preparatory condition referring to the existence of goods sought may be absurd when action, rather than goods, is being requested, the same is not true of affirming the sincerity condition: affirming one's desire for some thing functions equally well as a request as questioning its availability (compare English 'Do you have NP' with 'I'd like NP'). Nevertheless, the preferences for *exo*-indicative with rising intonation-2pl./3sg. as opposed to *θelo*-indicative/conditional-1sg. are clear. *θelo*-conditional-1sg. in particular is used only once in sixty one requests by a new customer addressing a salesperson (1.64%). In other words, although they all fall under negative politeness,

<sup>7</sup> Being unprompted, these express acts desirable from the speaker's point of view, hence qualifying as requests under the definition proposed in 2.7.1.1 above.

these combinations of verb-modality-number+person are not interchangeable. Rather, they are attached to observable features of the situation — in the case of the *exo*-variants the type of relationship, in the case of the *thelo*-variants the setting of the exchange — in a way that an account based on the sum of D, P and R<sub>x</sub> fails to predict.

Focussing on the two variants prevailing in requests performed for the first time in formal discussions and on radio/TV, we find that even more detailed predictions are possible. *thelo*-indicative-1sg. is favoured by interviewers addressing interviewees and by men (figs.7.18, 7.19), while *thelo*-conditional-1sg. is clearly favoured by interviewees addressing interviewers, and by women (figs.7.20, 7.21). Based on these findings, one may suspect that the choice between these two variants relates to the power of the hearer over the speaker: with interviewers or men, P is low, and this is reflected in these speakers' choice of *thelo*-indicative-1sg. However, interviewers and men favour *thelo*-indicative-1sg. only weakly. In this case, it is the much more pronounced tendency of women and interviewees to use *thelo*-conditional-1sg. that calls for an explanation.

To provide this, one needs to consider the relative salience of the two variants. According to the criteria Auer et al. (1998:163-7) propose for this purpose, *thelo*-conditional-1sg. is more salient than *thelo*-indicative-1sg. both objectively and subjectively. The surface realisation of *thelo*-indicative-1sg. is *thelo*, whereas *thelo*-conditional-1sg. is realised as *tha iθela*. While *thelo* remains the same whether in CG or SMG, *tha iθela* noticeably belongs to the SMG code, as it contains the SMG particle of futurity *θa*. This contrasts to the CG particle of futurity *ena*, which is phonetically distant from its standard counterpart, the difference between the two being phonemic rather than phonetic, and lexicalised (cf. Auer et al.'s criteria of articulatory and perceptual distance, phonemicity, and lexicalisation). Moreover, *ena* is written differently (when written), is areally restricted to Cyprus, and cannot co-occur with the 2nd person polite plural ((20), 2.7.2.4 above), which has a distinctly standardising flavour in CG (cf. Auer et al.'s criteria of representation in lay dialect writing, areal distribution, and usage in code-alternation). According to Auer et al. (1998:163), “[d]ialect features which are perceived by the speakers as ‘salient’ are taken up and given up more easily and faster than those which are perceived as ‘less salient’”. Considering that *thelo*-conditional-1sg. is virtually exclusive to formal discussions and radio and TV settings, I would argue that this variant is not only associated with these settings, but is also a salient feature of ‘media-speak’ in CG. This explains its more frequent adoption compared to the less salient *thelo*-indicative-1sg. by speakers wishing to demonstrate their familiarity with ‘media-speak’ and the corresponding settings. Clearly, interviewees are particularly keen to demonstrate such familiarity: they do not appear on radio and TV as regularly as their hosts, but wish to present themselves as competent discussants nevertheless. Women too seek to confirm themselves as competent users of ‘media-speak’, as they appear on radio and TV less frequently than men. Women make up just over a quarter of interviewers recorded (5 out of 18, or

27.8%), and only a fifth of interviewees (8 out of 40, or 20%). By opting for *Te1o*-conditional-1sg. women and interviewees perform an act of identity (cf. 7.3.3 above): they seek to identify themselves with a particular group of speakers (the group of ‘media-speakers’ as represented by interviewers and by men) by selecting a salient variant characteristic of this group’s speech.

The discussion of *θe1o*-indicative/conditional-1sg. performing first requests in formal settings highlights two advantages of an account of polite discourse in terms of observable features of the situation summarised as frames over Brown and Levinson’s principle-based account. First, as in the case of *exo*-indicative with rising intonation-2pl./3sg., the choice between ‘equally’ indirect forms is not random but constrained by their differing domains of application. Within a frame-based approach, appealing to combinations of extra-linguistic features of the situation enables us to make this prediction. Second, by not abstracting away from the particular linguistic forms used, a frame-based approach allows us to assess the salience of an expression in addition to its indirectness, which, in conjunction with information about the relationship between interlocutors and about the sex of the speaker, enables us to predict not only which particular expressions speakers will choose, but also to what extent. The proposed frame for use of *θe1o*-conditional-1sg. as a polite request is given in table 5.

Sex of speaker: <i>female, male</i>	Sex of addressee: <i>any</i>
Relative age of speaker and addressee: <i>same, younger to older</i>	
Social class of speaker: <i>(middle)</i>	Social class of addressee: <i>(middle)</i>
Relationship: <i>interviewee to interviewer, interviewer to interviewee</i>	Speech act: <i>request</i>
Setting: <i>at formal discussions, on radio/TV</i>	Occurs for the: <i>1st time</i>
<i>θe1o</i> -conditional-1sg.	

**Table 5: Proposed frame for *Te1o*-conditional-1sg. as the preferred formula for performing requests**

### 7.3.5 Interim summary

The preceding discussion of the use of polite formulae in CG has shown an account of speakers’ choices for performing offers and requests in the collected data based on Brown and Levinson’s hierarchy of strategies and the proposed formula for computing W to fail on the following counts. First, their hierarchy of strategies classifies linguistic expressions as more or less indirect based on the propositional content which they express, i.e. using semantically oriented criteria. However, uttered in a particular socio-historical and linguistic context, linguistic expressions are at once standard or vernacular, more or less interactionally informative, and more or less salient; nothing is new about that. What *is* new, however, is that notions of standardness, interactional informativeness, and salience, *interact* with indirectness (whether defined as a question of inferential length, or as a matter of iconicity) in determining speakers’ choices in context.

The second reason why Brown and Levinson's approach fails to account for the CG data concerns their definitions of the three sociological variables, D, P and  $R_x$ . Their approach places the emphasis on the relationship between interlocutors, i.e. on the dyad. This is clear in their association of politeness strategies with particular pay-offs (which may also take the form of assumptions) that the speaker seeks to secure *on the part of the addressee* (B&L:71-4). In choosing a particular strategy, the speaker assesses these pay-offs against the sum of the proposed sociological variables (B&L:83-4). In particular, s/he assesses D, P and  $R_x$  as s/he perceives them to be, or as s/he wants to *appear* to perceive them to be (cf. their discussion of politeness as a social accelerator or brake, B&L:228-31). Finally, variable values are generally higher in the world of the higher social strata and dominating groups, and this may extend to whole cultures, which can thus be distinguished into positive- and negative-politeness oriented ones (B&L:245). While allowing enough flexibility for the way the values of D, P and  $R_x$  are assessed in context, these predictions fall short of accounting for the fact that in speaking politely, speakers position themselves not only in relation to their addressees, but also in relation to the whole of the culture, with which they seek to identify themselves to a greater or lesser extent. Consequently, the 'pay-offs' sought may transcend the dyad, and as such they may not always be possible to secure via the medium of the addressee. This is an insight which cannot be incorporated in Brown and Levinson's account, where the pay-offs sought apply exclusively at the micro-level (the level of the dyad), and such pay-offs provide the motivation for particular strategies.

Take young women's non-literal use of the 2pl. during service encounters (2.7.2.4 above). Their choice cannot be justified on the grounds of setting (at work) or of the identity of the addressee (all recipients of such forms being Cypriot Greeks). Rather, the young women who choose the 2pl. on such occasions are performing an act of identity. They seek to identify themselves with the group of SMG speakers, by means of adapting their verbal behaviour to that of the latter. At the same time, though, they are extending the non-literal use of the 2pl. to new environments, to relationships (that of salesperson to customer) and settings (that of work) where it was not previously used in any systematic (i.e. amenable to generalisation) way. As the distributional possibilities of the 2nd person polite plural expand, its interactional informativeness is affected. From primarily indicating a switch to the standard code under appropriate contextual circumstances, this is now becoming a proper (i.e. conventionalised) marker of politeness. In this way, CG may be moving in the direction of a T/V pronominal system comparable to that of SMG. Only time will show if this prediction is correct. What is of immediate importance is that pronominal systems (a widely used type of politeness sub-strategy) can and do change, and they do so as a result of usage (for further examples, see Braun 1988:57-61).

Brown and Levinson suggest a functionalist explanation of language change based on considerations of face (B&L:255ff.). However, this proves impossible to implement

empirically, as the authors nowhere relate this to speakers' assessments of D, P and  $R_x$ . Presumably, what changes is not speakers' ways of assessing these variables, but the concrete forms realising different strategies over time. This leaves open the question of why exactly these forms are re-ranked in the first place, i.e. what prompts speakers to use them with W values with which they previously would not have, if speakers' ways of assessing D, P and  $R_x$  have not changed, and considerations of W (i.e. the sum of  $D+P+R_x$ ) are the only ones determining use of these forms. To their credit, Brown and Levinson recognise that "linguistic patterns will vary to the extent to which face redress may reasonably be supposed to be a major functional source [...] there are many possible systemic and cognitive functions for [any linguistic pattern], and face redress [may be] (at most) a complementary source" (B&L:262). If this statement saves the credibility of their account as a (partial) explanation of language change, it detracts from its psychological plausibility. Inasmuch as systemic and cognitive functions other than assessment of potential face-threat underlie the use of polite forms, confirmation of their theory should not be sought in empirical data, but at a theoretical level where other functions can be abstracted away from. This is exactly the point that this thesis is trying to make (cf. 1.3.4 above).

An account in terms of frames which summarise speakers' choices in context, rather than trying to pre-empt them, suggests itself as a powerful tool with which to analyse polite discourse synchronically (and potentially diachronically, as the above analysis of young working women's non-literal use of the 2pl. suggests). In accounting for the CG data, we invoked sociolinguistically informed analyses regarding the strength of speakers' social networks and their desire to present themselves in a certain way, which subsumes their desire to accommodate to their addressees' speech. It emerged that, when speaking politely, speakers both *are constrained* by their position in social space — which also determines the varieties of speech to which they have access — and *use* polite discourse to position themselves in it. In other words, in speaking politely, speakers also act out a social persona which transcends the narrow considerations of the dyad and transforms them into social actors who have the ability not only to passively use language, but also to actively change it. It is in this sense that we must understand Klein's observation that "where semantic systems are postulated, one must also consider the possibility of shifts in the predominant *pragmatic strategies* or 'norms' of actual use [...] the possibility of *interaction* between these two kinds of bias [...] [can] lead to the reinterpretation of pragmatic preferences as social norms" (1980:61; original emphasis). What paves the way for changes in semantic systems is speakers' active use of language: who is talking to whom, what is the relationship between them, and in what setting.

An account in terms of frames also lays a claim on psychological plausibility as an account of interlocutors' online processing of polite discourse. To the extent that variation is found in every society, and to the extent that linguistic forms are

characterised as standard or vernacular, interactionally more or less informative, or more or less salient, based on extra-linguistic (socio-historical) and linguistic (structural) considerations, speakers cannot be operating using Brown and Levinson's formula for computing *W* and their proposed hierarchy of strategies *in vacuo*. The notions of *D* and *P* and of indirectness are adequate to account for what goes on synchronically only after they have been 'contextualised' taking into account the particularities of the society and of the language at hand.<sup>8</sup> However, untangling the underlying principles at work necessitates close scrutiny using theoretical tools a lay-person cannot be assumed to master, much less have the time to resort to during online processing. Brown and Levinson are not unaware of this:

“[our] analysis focusing on the non-arbitrary order evident in linguistic styles allows for the relationship between language styles and social structure to be spelled out in detail. It is along these lines that we hope to be able to use our model of the universals of linguistic politeness to characterise the cross-cultural differences in ethos [...] in different societies.” (B&L:252-3; endnote omitted)

Perhaps, contrary to prior perception (Eelen 1999:64) — undoubtedly fuelled by claims that the formula yielding *W* constitutes “at least a partially accurate representation of cognitive process” (B&L:81) — Brown and Levinson did not intend their theory as a psychologically plausible account of the production and interpretation of polite discourse. However that may be, the fact remains that, while their theory may be applicable at an abstract level, it does not by itself take us all the way to the concrete predictions which the data allow. As such, it cannot model speakers' choices at the micro-level. To effectuate the leap from the abstract to the psychologically plausible, a different approach is required.

In chapter 5, I sketched a theoretically motivated account, according to which politeness is achieved as a perlocutionary effect consisting in the addressee holding the belief that the speaker is polite upon the speaker's uttering an expression *x* (in our case, a combination of type of verb-modality-number+person) in a situation *y* (a certain combination of extra-linguistic features). In chapter 6, I argued that the evaluative link between expressions and (minimal) contexts of utterance motivates the direct association of these components of the situation in the form of frames. Significantly, the rationality of this link emerges only as a result of *post facto* analysis, such as the analysis of CG politeness formulae undertaken above. Such rationality is not available to speakers at a micro-level, and thus cannot be assumed to provide the link in their calculations of means and ends (B&L:64-5). Rather than the application of a universally valid principle which associates the sum of *D*, *P* and *R<sub>x</sub>* with semantically defined degrees of indirectness, the analysis of speakers' choices in context reveals a knowledge of which expressions to use in which situations. The conventional character of this knowledge is supported in three ways. First, it is constrained by such attributes of interlocutors as sex, age, and social class. Second, expressions which are equally

<sup>8</sup> For a proposal along these lines, see Turner (1999).



indirect on semantic criteria are not used interchangeably, but are tied to observable features of the situation. The sex, age and social class of the speaker and of the addressee, the relationship between them, the setting of the exchange and the order of appearance of the speech act are extra-linguistic features of the situation available to interlocutors through perception, from which further items of background knowledge (e.g. participants' rights and obligations) are derivable. Crucially, it is the co-occurrence of particular values of these features that accounts for speakers' use of politeness formulae in the data. Joint reference to all these features is therefore necessary to delimit the range of situations to which specific formulae are applicable, though all may not be equally determining for the use of any particular formula.<sup>9</sup> Third, given a combination of extra-linguistic features, speakers' choices cluster around concrete, fully specified linguistic realisations. In this respect, the resources of grammar and phonology are not creatively drawn upon by speakers. Rather, the consistency in speakers' choices extends to the level of phonetic detail, providing a strong indication of the formulaic character of the corresponding expressions.

These findings allow two versions of the argument advanced by the present thesis to be formulated. On the weak version, a frame-based approach to politeness enables us to capture the detailed predictions which the data allow, and is therefore preferable as an observationally adequate account of the data collected. According to a strong version, the proposed frames constitute part of speakers' knowledge of their language, and the processing of polite discourse is to be explained along the lines of the interaction between perception and cognition lying at the centre of research on frames to date (6.4 above). The theoretical reasons for formulating this strong version were expounded in 6.5 above. The following section takes up some of its psycholinguistic implications, investigating the type of memory organisation this strong version of the argument implies, and the evidence for its existence.

#### **7.4 Creativity vs. formulaicity: some open issues**

The empirical manifestation of the existence of politeness formulae in the previous section, coupled with the observation that polite discourse most often passes unnoticed which points both to its pervasiveness and speed of processing, make pertinent the question of a psychologically plausible account of the processing of polite discourse. Is this best accounted for as a generative process which follows syntactic rules, or are politeness formulae stored in memory in a fashion similar — though by no means identical — to items in the lexicon and retrieved as such according to observable features of the situation? Brown and Levinson's account is compatible with the former view. It views linguistic expressions as the output of the operation of the universal

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<sup>9</sup> Thus, *Tel*-indicative/conditional-1sg. are primarily attached to setting, and only subsequently distinguishable based on the identities of the speaker and the addressee (7.3.4 above).

principle  $W_x = D(S,H) + P(H,S) + R_x$ , which takes as input the values of D, P and  $R_x$ , calculated on the spot and anew for every  $FTA_x$ . The frame-based approach currently proposed, on the other hand, implies a holistic processing of patterns integrating both linguistic and extra-linguistic subpatterns, which is compatible with the latter view. The questions raised by these two views (and the possibility of interaction between them) have exercised (psycho)linguists at least since the early 1960s and it is not the purpose of this thesis to contribute to the ongoing debate. However, this debate has yielded several observations supporting a frame-based approach to politeness which so far I have defended on theoretical and empirical grounds. First, the human memory capacity may well be more extensive than previously assumed. Second, holistic processing may precede analytic processing during language acquisition, and may indeed remain central (or primary) at later stages as well. Finally, real-world knowledge is inherently drawn upon by the human brain during language processing. This section reviews these claims and outlines their significance for our present thesis.

According to the prevailing view within the generative linguistic tradition, lexical knowledge pertains to idiosyncratic properties of lexical items, i.e. properties which do not follow from general principles (either of UG or of the language in question). This view is central to X-bar theory, and hence remains current within Government and Binding and Minimalism (Chomsky 1995:235; Webelhuth 1995:32). The emphasis on economy of storage and subsequent reliance on rule-based production means that any sequence of words, and indeed of morphemes, which *can* be produced by rule, *must* be produced by rule. Such a view has been judged problematic in the face of certain sequences' 'privileged' status over others, manifested in two ways.<sup>10</sup> First, native speakers' preferences tend to cluster around particular expressions of an idea over other, equally grammatical ones (cf. our current findings; Coulmas 1979:239). Second, dysfluency in production (e.g. pauses, repetitions, false starts, etc.) and/or difficulty in understanding are more likely to occur the more novel the idea being formulated, or the expression used to formulate it (Pawley & Syder 1983:222-3n.12). In fact, discourse which is novel on both these dimensions sounds highly poetic as a result (Wray & Perkins 2000:12). At the same time, knowledge of this sort seems to be what differentiates native speakers' choice of expression and fluency from that of L2 learners (Phillips 1993; Syder & Pawley 1983:215), and as such must be accounted for within a theory which aspires to provide a model of native speakers' knowledge of their language.

This is where formulaicity comes in. In the Chomskian scheme of things, formulaic expressions are stored in the lexicon and retrieved as wholes. This accounts for their non-compositional semantics and syntactic irregularity (Kiparsky 1976:78-9). However,

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<sup>10</sup> One should note that the generative view does not purport to offer an account of linguistic processing in real time. As Chomsky (1995:32) remarks, "[t]he means by which knowledge is arrived at is not invariably reflected in the form that the knowledge ultimately takes."

neither semantic, nor syntactic irregularity are necessary conditions for formulaicity (Kiparsky 1976:74-5; Pawley & Syder 1983:211; Wray & Perkins 2000:4-5), and the same holds for (overall) frequency of occurrence (Wray & Perkins 2000:7). Rather, the essence of formulaicity resides in its arbitrariness: expressions whose meaning can be predicted from their internal structure, and which are not always the shortest and simplest of the grammatical alternatives (Pawley & Syder 1983:197), may be conventionalised for particular uses, and as such show arbitrarily limited distribution across contexts. Consequently, several discussions of formulaicity have found it to be a gradable concept (Fraser 1970; Bolinger 1976:5ff.; Kiparsky 1976:92; Pawley & Syder 1983:192; Lambrecht 1984:776ff.; Fillmore et al. 1997[1988]:5; Wray & Perkins 2000:1).

The existence of degrees of formulaicity challenges the possibility of accounting for it within an essentially compositional view of language production and comprehension. For, if only the most rigid formulae are stored whole in the lexicon, while the rest have their parts listed separately and provided with contextual restrictions specifying their possible phrase-mates and contexts of occurrence, such restrictions would sometimes have to be open-ended to allow for novel exploitations of existing patterns which may well be syntactically deviant (Lambrecht 1984:794-5).

A further difficulty with allowing only the most rigid formulae to be stored in the lexicon is the extent to which everyday language appears to be formulaic (Fillmore 1979:92). As Wray and Perkins note, “[i]f we take formulaicity to encompass [...] also the enormous set of ‘simple’ lexical collocations, whose patterns are both remarkable and puzzling from a formal grammatical point of view [...], then possibly as much as 70% of our adult native language may be formulaic” (2000:1-2; references omitted). Formulaicity has been shown to be central to native-like selection and fluency (Pawley & Syder 1983), L1 acquisition (Rowland & Pine 2000; Wray & Perkins 2000:19-22), and L2 learning (Phillips 1993). Furthermore, it has been associated with the verbatim recall of utterances in oral style discourse and oral literature, and is more prominent on the interactional, rather than the referential, dimension of use (Long 1994, Kiparsky 1976:91-9).<sup>11</sup> In other words, formulaicity is by no means marginal to our everyday use of language. This means that, if formulaic expressions are to be produced by rule, as hypothesised above, the items supplemented in the lexicon by a large number of complex (and potentially open-ended) rules of co-occurrence, i.e. the most burdensome ones to produce, would indeed be the ones most frequently called upon. This scenario is untenable in view of experimental findings that formulaic usage promotes both fluency in production (Pawley & Syder 1983:199ff.) and the verbatim recall of utterances (Long 1994:232).

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<sup>11</sup> This second finding constitutes *prima facie* evidence supporting the hypothesis that formulaic usage is central to polite discourse (7.2 above).

The emphasis on rule-mediated production within the generative tradition emanates from the assumption that humans are endowed with limited memory but unlimited generative capacity. However, evidence from phonology and spoken word recognition suggests otherwise. Investigating the reality of units such as distinctive features for speech production, Ladefoged (1972:282) notes:

“The indications from neurophysiology and psychology are that, instead of storing a small number of primitives and organising them in terms of a large number of rules, we store a large number of complex items which we manipulate with comparatively simple operations. The central nervous system is like a special kind of computer which has rapid access to the items in a very large memory, but comparatively little ability to process these items when they have been taken out of memory. There is a great deal of evidence that muscular movements are organised in terms of complex, unalterable chunks of at least a quarter of a second in duration (and often much longer) and nothing to indicate organisation in terms of short simultaneous segments which require processing with context-restricted rules.”

Similarly, contrasting previous views on the organisation of the mental lexicon with recent trends in human memory research, Lively et al. (1994:292; original emphasis; references omitted) conclude:

“the traditional linguistic perspective on the mental lexicon [...] is based on economy of storage and heavy reliance on the computational machinery of syntactic rules. However, a radically different view of the mental lexicon is suggested by several recent models in the human memory literature. These so-called EPISODIC or INSTANCE-BASED models suggest that a highly detailed representation of every stimulus pattern is encoded and retained in long-term memory [...]. Representations include the stimulus and information about its surrounding context. Retrieval is accomplished by comparing new inputs to all traces stored in long-term memory in parallel [...]. Stored traces that are similar to the input are counted as strong evidence toward the recognition of the input.”

If the human memory capacity is indeed more powerful than previously assumed, as these authors suggest, there is nothing preventing partially productive formulae from being stored and recalled from memory as wholes, without being built from scratch with the mediation of rules, even when such rules are available. Bolinger (1976:8ff.) and Pawley and Syder (1983:215ff.) propose that linguistic units which speakers perceive to be productive are in fact stored in memory twice, both as individual units available to manipulation by rule, and in ready-made sequences ranging from morphemes to words and to whole collocations of words (Bolinger 1976:9). Based on an investigation of formulaic usage by child and adult native speakers, child and adult L2 learners, and aphasics, Wray and Perkins (2000:19; reference omitted) propose that

“the default setting is formulaicity, both for production and for comprehension. This enables the individual to focus his/her analytic abilities away from the linguistic ‘packaging’ and onto the production and evaluation of propositions, the updating of contextual information and the making of predictions about what is going to happen next [cf. Pawley & Syder 1983:204, 208; MT]. Focus can switch to an utterance itself if there is any irregularity or breakdown in comprehension or production. This is often marked by dysfluency in the speaker and/or by a

hearer failing at first to decode it, until suitable attention is brought to bear upon it.”

Within this model, both holistic and analytic processing of utterances are predicted. What differs from previous accounts is where the emphasis is placed. Holistic processing is seen as central, while analyticity remains “on hand to pick up any difficulties, [...] caused by a speaker’s thick accent or non-native grammar, background noise, dysfluency, poetry, word games, and so on” (Wray & Perkins 2000:13; footnote omitted).

The possibility of ‘double storage’ of partially productive formulae allows for one type of processing of a particular unit to be constrained by the applicability of the other.<sup>12</sup> The more prominent the holistic trace of a particular sequence in memory — as a result of the speaker’s perception of its (restricted) productivity, or of the frequent (if not exclusive) co-occurrence of its parts in discourse, or of both — the fewer and more restricted the chances that the sequence will be processed analytically, and *vice versa*. This insight may hold the key to many of the observed properties of formulaic usage. It accords with the top-down nature of language acquisition, whereby individual items are first encountered in fully specified constructions (Bolinger 1976:8ff.; Rowland & Pine 2000). Different speakers achieve different levels of abstraction from these constructions and for different items, which accounts for the variability in native speakers’ intuitions regarding the naturalness, acceptability, and even the grammaticality of specific sequences (Pawley & Syder 1983:196; Bolinger 1976:8ff.; Lambrecht 1984:788), as well as for the fact that such judgements may change over time. At the same time, holistic processing of frequently co-occurring items enhances fluency and memory performance, and thus remains central, the more so as a large part of everyday discourse turns out to be formulaic in nature (i.e. arbitrary, in the sense that its form and/or meaning, both referential and interactional, may not be fully predictable by rule). Increased frequency of co-occurrence of particular items can feed back into their being processed as a whole, setting in motion processes of grammaticalisation, (5.4.5.1 above).

Further to opening up the possibility of double storage of productive linguistic items, evidence that the human potential for storage in memory may well be greater than previously assumed suggests that the holistic processing of extra-linguistic and linguistic subpatterns which are seen to co-occur in the real world may in fact be less effortful for the human brain than analytically breaking them down into their component parts and re-assembling them via a principle of the type  $W_x = D(S,H) + P(H,S) + R_x$  — notwithstanding the fact that this would have to be a more complicated version (or rather many derivative instantiations) of the proposed formula, in order to take account of all the societally- and linguistically-specific contextual restrictions (Turner 1999).

<sup>12</sup> This suggestion accords with the analyses of various constructions within Construction Grammar (Kay 1997), and recent computational approaches to the lexicon (Copestake 2001).

The importance of holistic processing is brought to the fore by recent research suggesting that this may also precede analytic processing during L1 acquisition. Rowland and Pine (2000) examined data from one child's early production of *wh*-questions to test the assumption of rule-based theories of syntax acquisition that, in producing multi-word speech, children are manipulating abstract syntactic categories such as subject, verb and auxiliary to produce rule-governed grammatical sequences. Such theories claim that, in correctly producing object *wh*-questions, children are applying a subject-auxiliary inversion rule, and so cannot produce object *wh*-questions correctly until this rule has been acquired. However, the data show that correctly inverted *wh*-questions co-occur with uninversion errors in the same developmental stages. Moreover, correct production appears to be guided by lexical, rather than abstract category, considerations (lexically specific *wh*+aux combinations), and corresponds to *wh*+aux combinations which are frequent in the mother's input (Rowland & Pine 2000:173ff.). Rowland and Pine (2000:177; references omitted) see these results as:

“add[ing] to a growing body of evidence that suggests that children's early multi-word speech may reflect low scope lexically specific knowledge, not abstract category-general rules [...]. This evidence seems to support the suggestion that a distributional learning mechanism capable of learning and reproducing lexically specific patterns that are modelled in the input may be able to explain much of the early multi-word speech data.”

According to this interpretation, holistic (lexically-based) temporally precedes analytic (rule-based) processing, which comes into play only later, and builds upon the former by identifying the constituent structure of items acquired holistically (Rowland & Pine 2000; Wray & Perkins 2000:19-22). Crucially, what appears to be rule-based production can be an epiphenomenon of what is in fact a lexically-based process. In addition, lexically-based production depends on frequency of occurrence of particular lexical items in the input (Bolinger 1976:4).

The suggestion that linguistic knowledge may not only be (largely) stored holistically, but also acquired in this way accords with the claim of the current frame-based approach that experientially established frequencies of co-occurrence of linguistic and extra-linguistic features of a situation can prompt their association in memory in the first place (6.5 above). In the case of polite discourse, there are two reasons why holistic processing of the resulting frames may in fact never yield to analyticity. First, formulaic discourse presents inherent interactional advantages which creative discourse lacks (7.2 above). The need to secure these advantages, and to do so consistently and speedily poses a difficult formal task which may be efficiently solved by appealing to ready-made solutions, i.e. the proposed frames. Second, as is often remarked, the distinction between knowing what an expression means and how to use it can be hard to defend (Fillmore 1979:92). By the same token as knowledge of language is presumed to include knowledge of the lexicon which in fact represents knowledge about the world

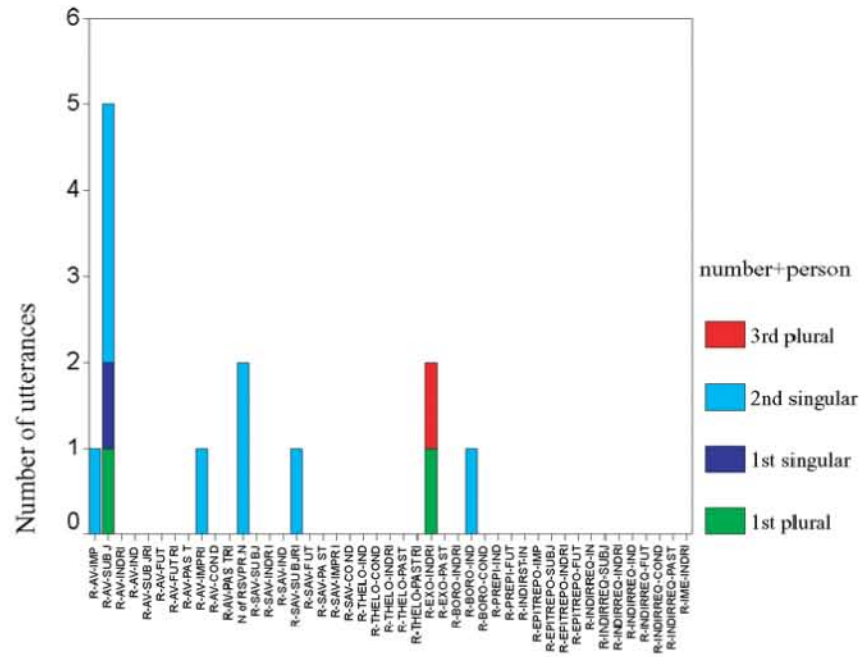
(*ibid.*:97), it arguably also includes knowledge of a repertory of frames, in the sense of unanalysed, experientially acquired structures of default behaviour.

The literature reviewed above focuses on the holistic processing of linguistic expressions, i.e. the knowledge involved remains (largely) linguistic. However, the claim that real-world knowledge is drawn upon at the same time as linguistic knowledge during the online processing of polite discourse is of a rather different order, and finding hard evidence supporting it is clearly a matter for future research.<sup>13</sup> For the time being, I have argued that this possibility is theoretically desirable. Postulating an intermediate level of assumptions about D, P and R<sub>x</sub> adds to the effort of processing polite discourse, while both its pervasiveness and speed of processing suggest that this is the unmarked way of speaking in a community (1.3.2 above). In addition, notions of standardness, interactional informativeness and salience interact with that of indirectness in determining speakers' output (7.3.1-5 above), so that room would have to be made for them also, further burdening the online processing of polite discourse. The frame-based approach proposed in this thesis resolves these difficulties by defending a view of polite discourse as largely conventionalised. As the quantitative analysis undertaken in 7.3 above has demonstrated, what emerges as rationally motivated linguistic production at the macro-level is in fact only an epiphenomenon of what constitutes for native speakers conventionalised knowledge of which forms to use in which situations.

All in all, the psycholinguistic analyses reviewed in this section suggest a certain degree of continuity between knowledge of language and real-world knowledge. Rather than relying on real-world knowledge exclusively as input from which to abstract any applicable generalisations, speakers appear to be operating on the basis of low scope, specific knowledge to a greater or lesser extent, depending on both individual features, and the nature of the task at hand. These analyses thus provide encouraging evidence of the psychological plausibility of a frame-based approach to politeness.

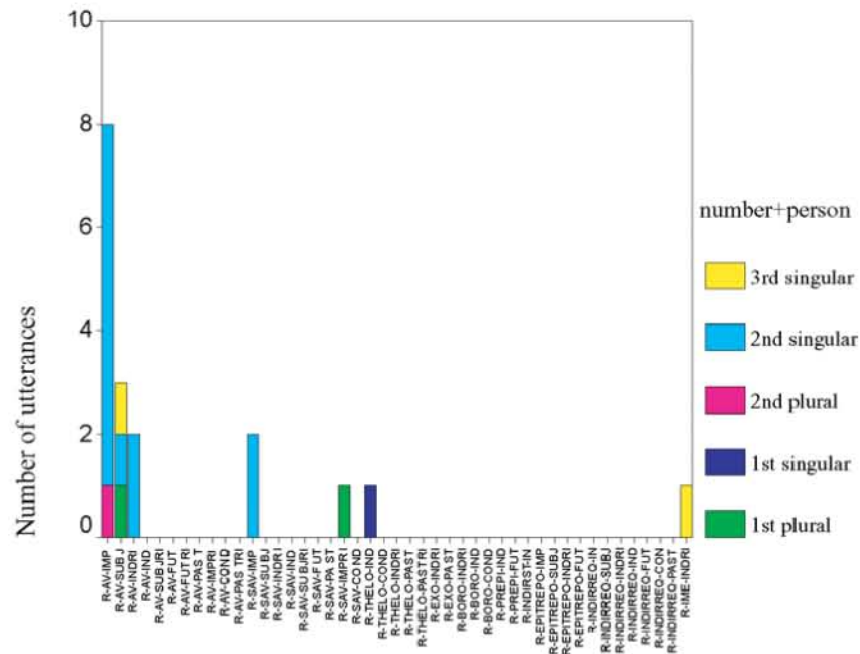
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<sup>13</sup> Encouraging indications for the psychological plausibility of the interaction of real-world knowledge and linguistic knowledge in real time are furnished by recent research into the event-related brain potentials of native speakers during language comprehension tasks using electrophysiological techniques (Federmeier & Kutas 1999).



Combinations of type of verb and modality

**Figure 7.1: Requests performed for the first time by middle-class women addressing middle-class women of the same age who are their friends at home and at informal social gatherings**



Combinations of type of verb and modality

**Figure 7.2: Requests performed for the first time by middle-class men addressing middle-class men of the same age who are their friends at home and at informal social gatherings**



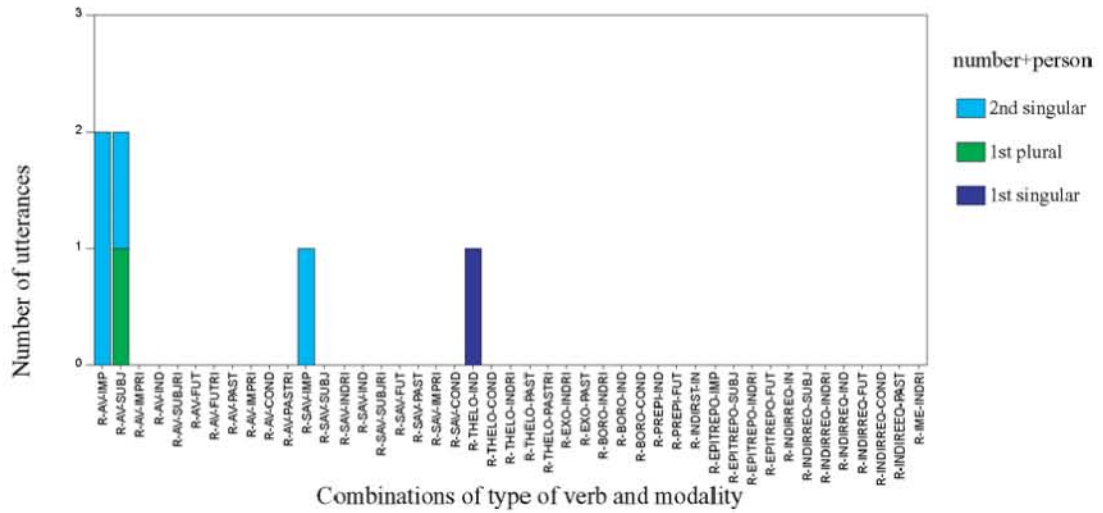


Figure 7.3: Requests performed for the first time by middle-class women addressing middle-class men of the same age who are their friends at home and at informal social gatherings

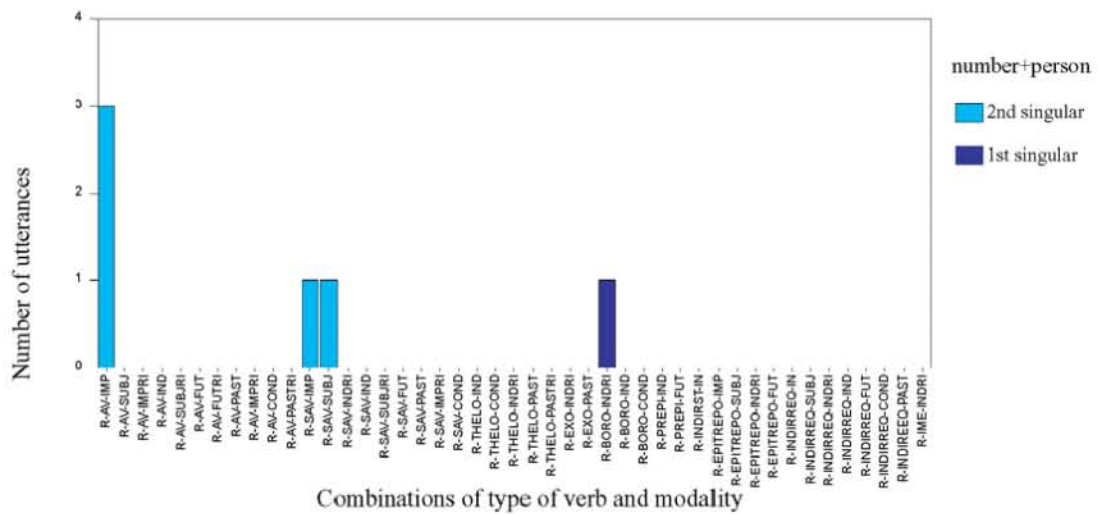


Figure 7.4: Requests performed for the first time by women addressing women of the same age who are their friends at work

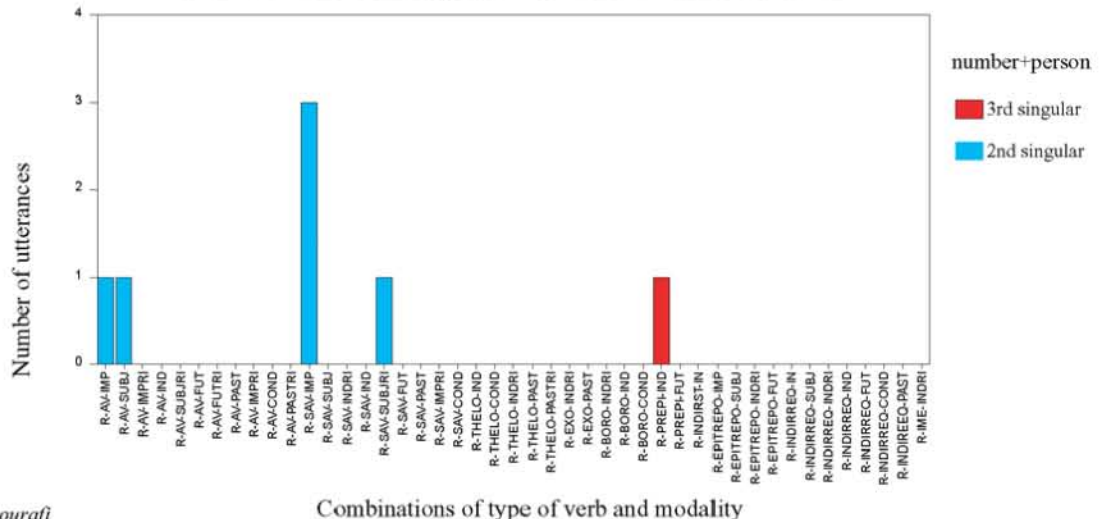
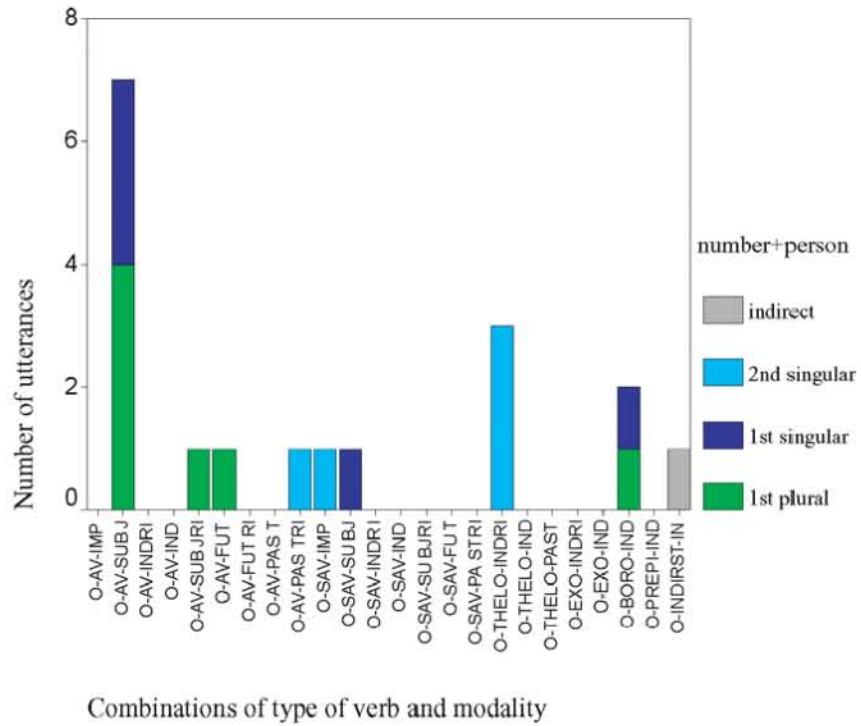
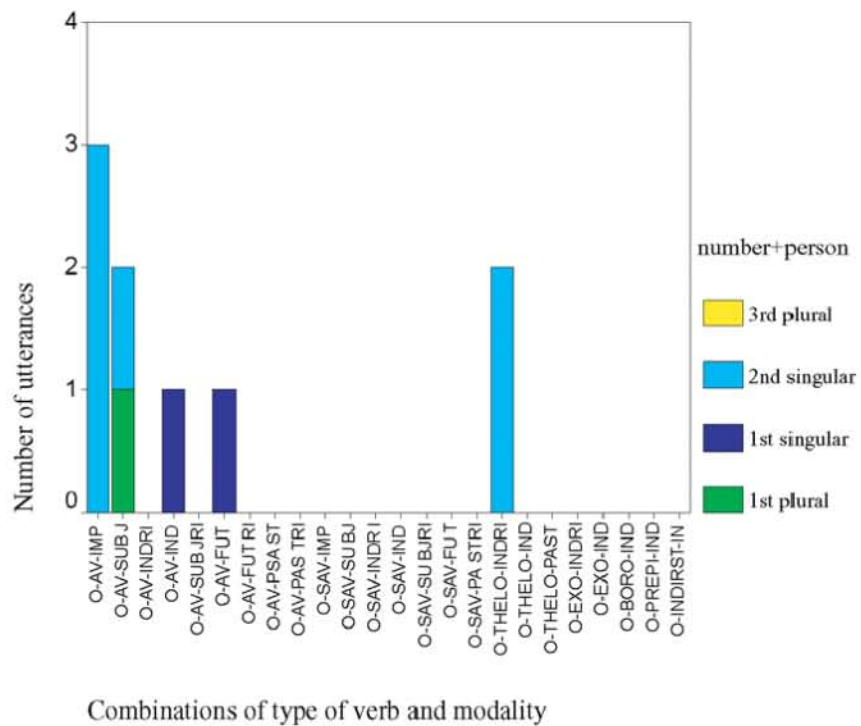


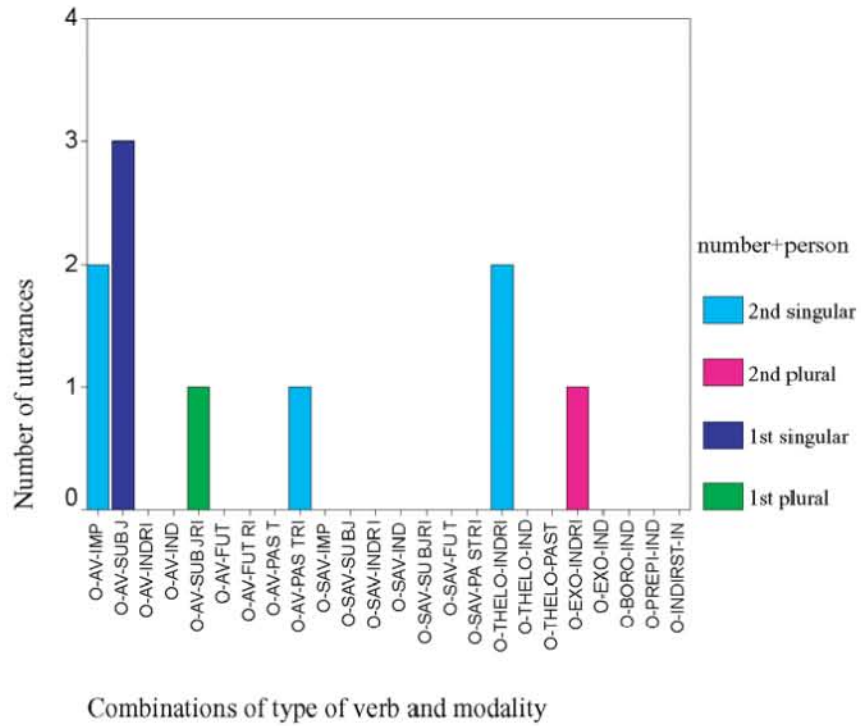
Figure 7.5: Requests performed for the second time by middle-class women addressing middle-class women of the same age who are their friends at home or at informal social gatherings



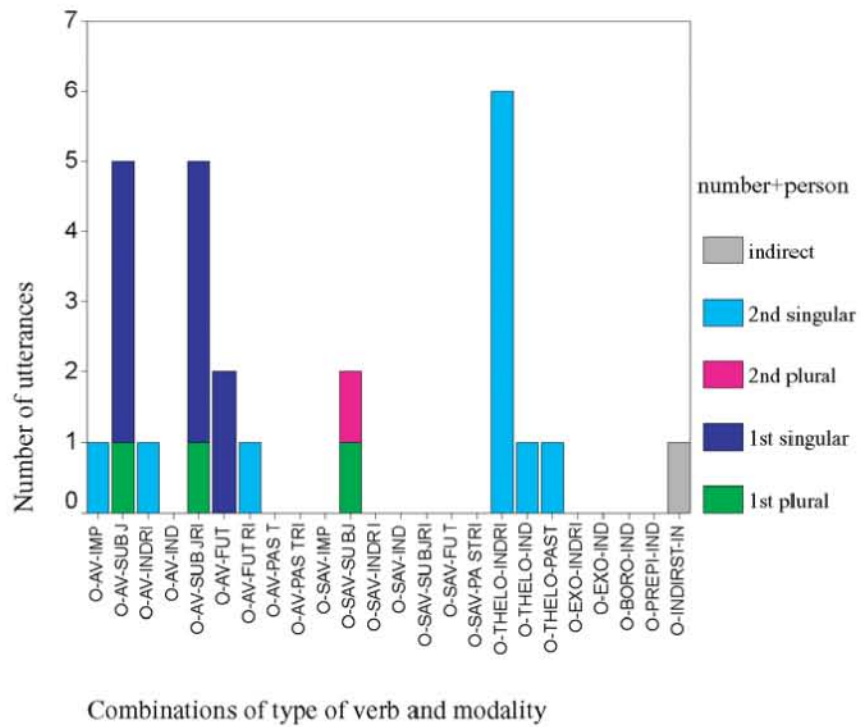
**Figure 7.6: Offers by male salespersons to middle-class male old customers of the same age at work**



**Figure 7.7: Offers by male salespersons to working-class male old customers of the same age at work**



**Figure 7.8: Offers by male salespersons to female old customers at work**



**Figure 7.9: Offers by men to middle-class men of the same age who are old colleagues at work**

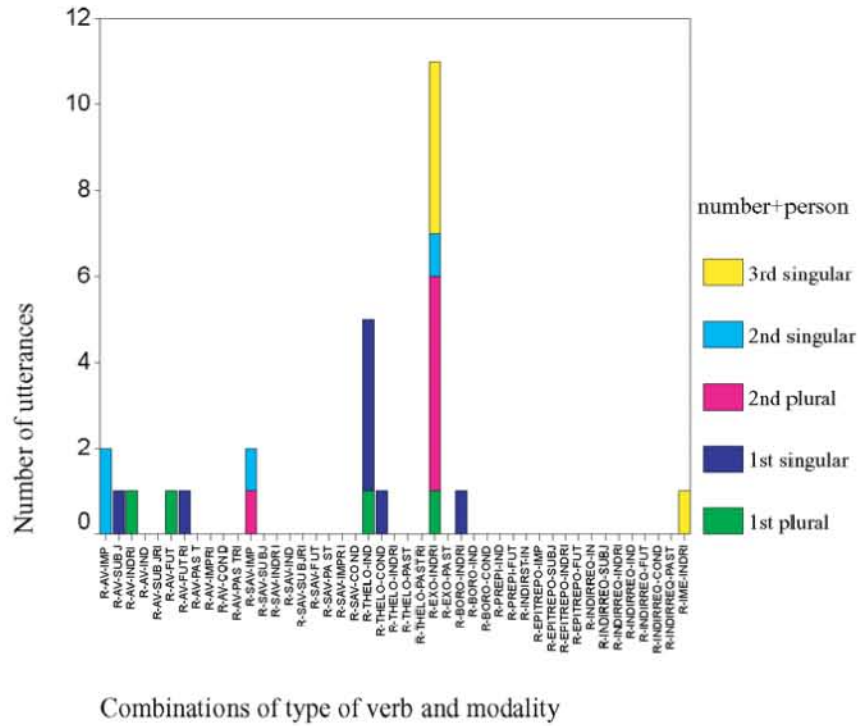


Figure 7.10: Requests performed for the first time by middle-class new customers addressing salespersons at work

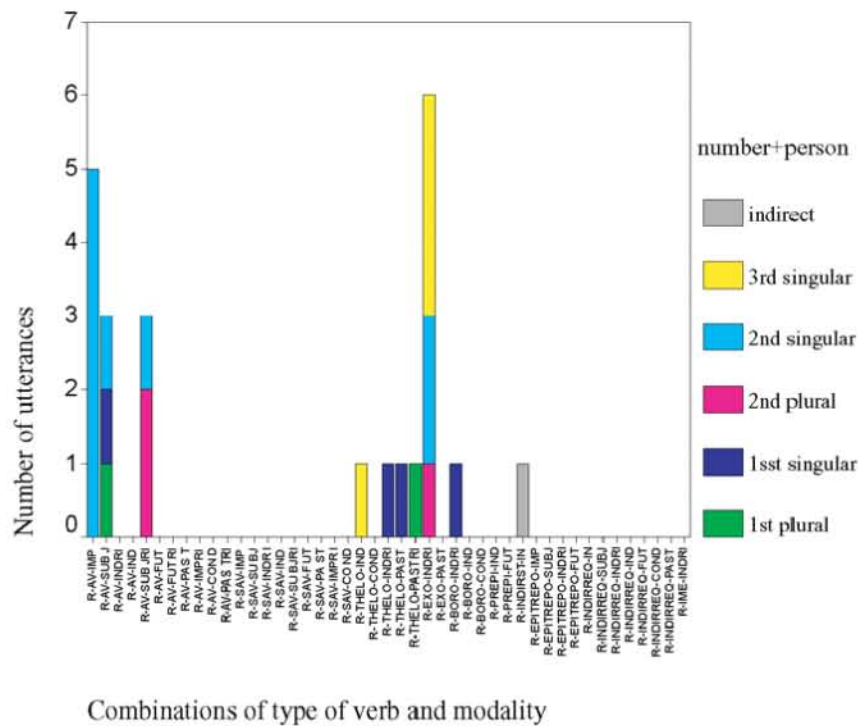
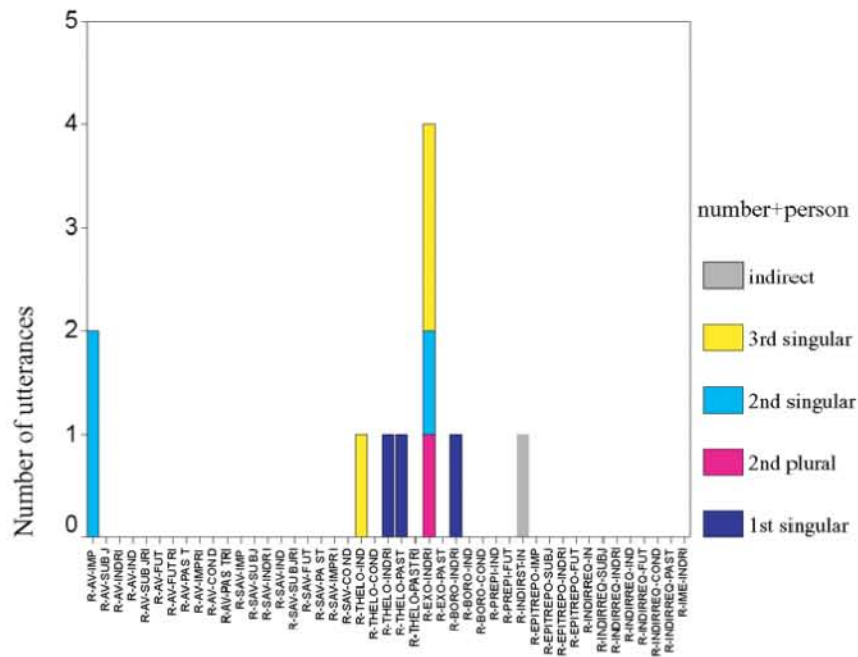


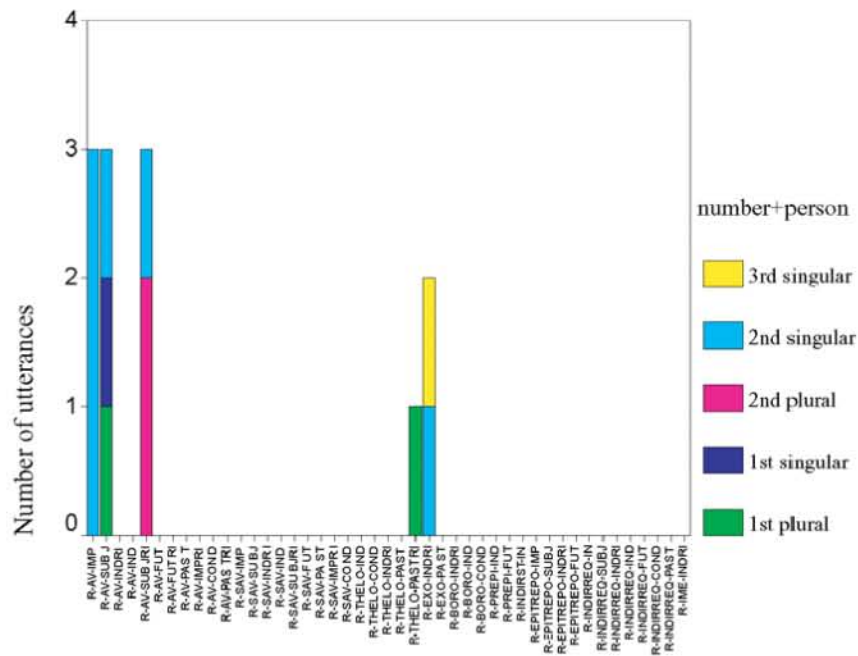
Figure 7.11: Requests performed for the first time by working-class new customers addressing salespersons at work





Combinations of type of verb and modality

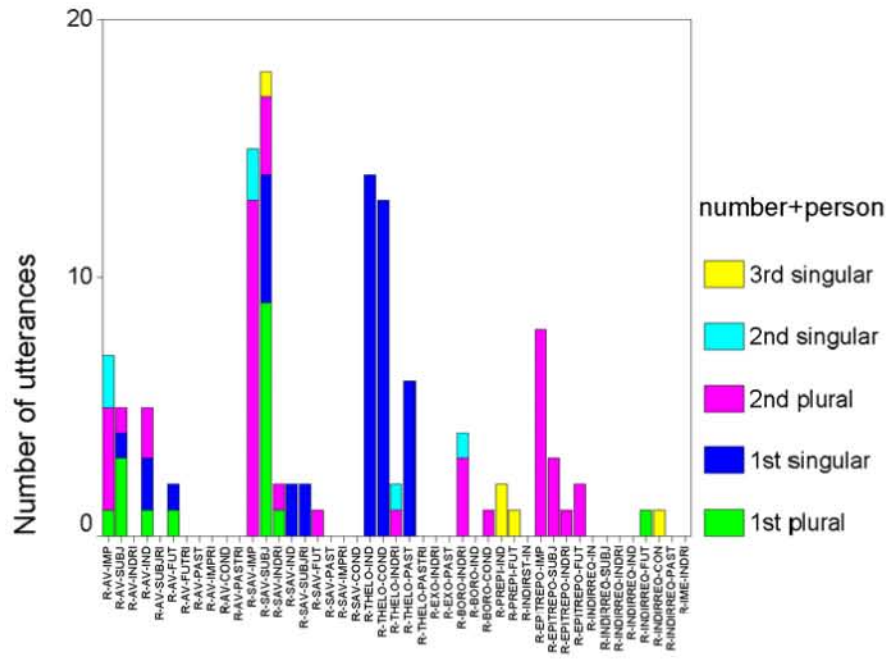
**Figure 7.14: Requests performed for the first time by working-class female new customers addressing salespersons at work**



Combinations of type of verb and modality

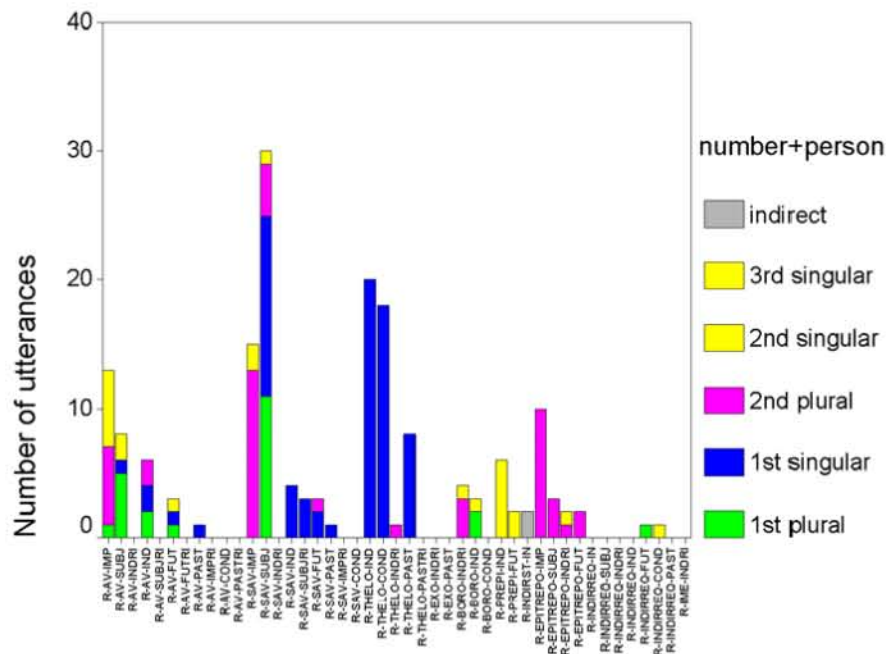
**Figure 7.15: Requests performed for the first time by working-class male new customers addressing salespersons at work**





Combinations of type of verb and modality

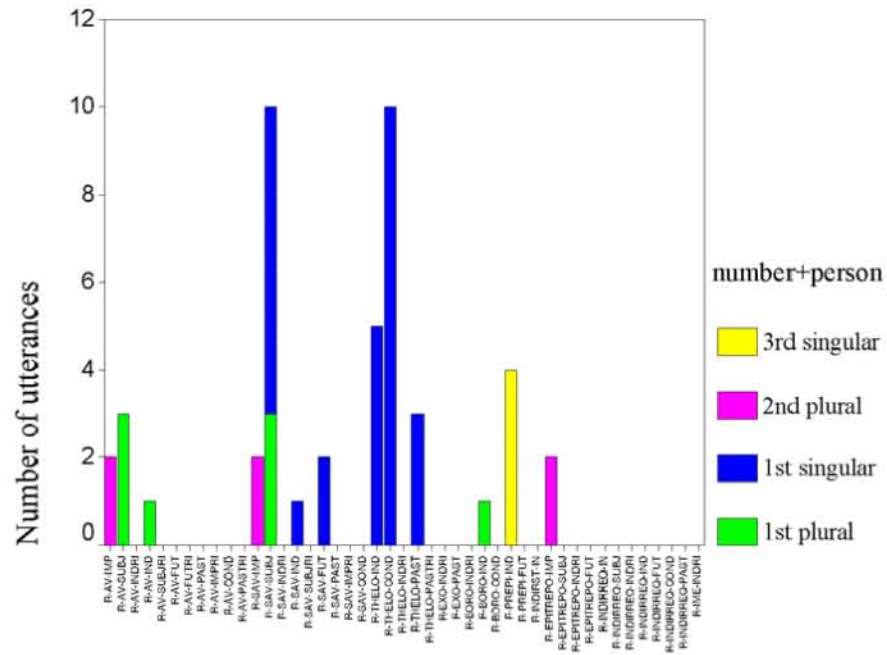
Figure 7.18: Requests performed for the first time in formal discussions and on radio/TV by interviewers addressing interviewees



Combinations of type of verb and modality

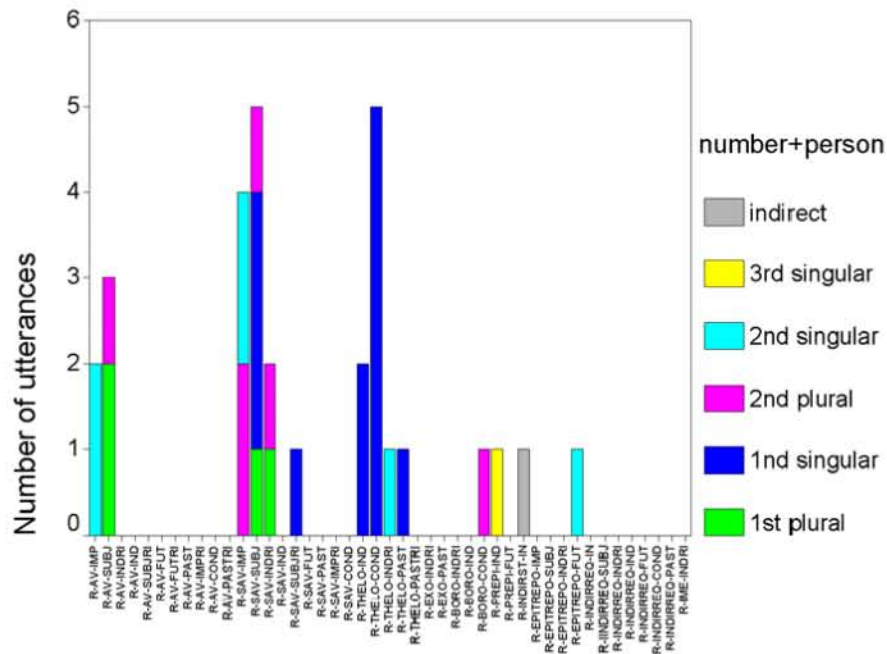
Figure 7.19: Requests performed for the first time in formal discussions and on radio/TV by male speakers





Combinations of type of verb and modality

**Figure 7.20: Requests performed for the first time in formal discussions and on radio/TV by interviewees addressing interviewers**



Combinations of type of verb and modality

**Figure 7.21: Requests performed for the first time in formal discussions and on radio/TV by female speakers**

## Conclusions

The observation that linguistic politeness most often passes unnoticed (Kasper 1990:193) has more and more led researchers to think of politeness as a norm underlying behaviour which is adequate in context (Braun 1988:49; Escandell-Vidal 1998:46). This thesis set out to explore the theoretical implications of this view on the basis of a corpus of spontaneous realisations of offers and requests in CG.

The quantitative and qualitative analysis of the collected data revealed several difficulties with explaining CG polite discourse with reference to a universal principle such as Brown and Levinson's formula for computing  $W_x$  (B&L:76). These difficulties are attributable to the micro-level perspective adopted by these authors. The proposed formula implies that the polite import of an utterance is a function of its degree of indirectness, assessed on semantic criteria. Interlocutors then assess the values of the three sociological variables, D, P and  $R_x$ , applicable to the current  $FTA_x$  and choose to be more indirect as the sum of these values increases. However, language is first and foremost a public, or shared medium, and only derivatively the sum of individual competences. It is thus not amenable to individual rationalising about means and ends prior to, or independently of, this public character. The assumed direct motivation of politeness strategies by pay-offs which they secure for the speaker, and by interlocutors' either positive or negative face-wants (where the latter always take precedence over the former) falls short of accounting for this.

To overcome these difficulties, a shift in perspective is necessary. Only when viewed against the backdrop of the alternatives available in the culture as a whole do speakers' choices in the collected data emerge as rational. Speakers are, however, 'anchored' within the culture, and consequently they do not have a bird's-eye view over it. What appears to be rational 'all-knowledgeable' action at the macro-level is therefore more adequately explained as action based on low-scope, specific knowledge of what expressions to use in what situations, which is of a rather more conventional type.

This knowledge was formalised above as a repertory of frames associating linguistic expressions with extra-linguistic features of the situation such as the interlocutors' sex, age, and social class, the relationship between them, the setting of the exchange, and the order of occurrence of the speech act performed. These extra-linguistic features jointly constitute a minimal context which, when encountered, licences presumptive inferences regarding the polite import of particular linguistic expressions therein. It is by virtue of such presumptive inferences that politeness as a perlocutionary effect consisting of the addressee's holding the belief that the speaker is polite is achieved, at least to the extent that it passes unnoticed. Such frames are acquired through primary socialisation in a community, and as such are intimately tied to, and reflect the peculiarities of, the language and the community at hand. They thus belong to a middle level linking Brown and Levinson's proposed scheme (which abstracts away from such peculiarities) with the level of everyday conversational practice taking place in fully specified (nonce) contexts (from which frames abstract).

This research puts on the agenda four proposals to be appraised by future research. First, face-wants may be universally construed as wants of the self, where definitions of the self can vary cross-culturally. At the same time, the essentially paradoxical nature of positive and negative face-wants must be retained, although priority cannot be assigned to one aspect independently of the applicable situational and cultural context. Sociologically oriented studies of verbal and nonverbal behaviour in several cultures inspired by Goffman's work in an Anglo-American context (e.g. Goffman 1956, 1967, 1971) are required to empirically validate this proposal.

Second, face-wants along with rationality underlie co-operative discourse. In other words, politeness as face-constituting is one of the 'design features' of co-operative discourse. This proposal, stemming from the re-analysis of instances of apparent 'non-cooperativeness', opens up the possibility of theoretically accounting for politeness as the unmarked way of speaking in a community, hence for the observation that it most often passes unnoticed. A corollary hypothesis is that situational and cross-cultural variability in degrees of co-operation are explainable with reference to the variable nature of face-wants suggested above. Empirical confirmation of this second hypothesis would provide indirect empirical support for the motivating role of face-wants in co-operative discourse.

Third, linguistic expressions become *gradually* detached from the context of utterance. An essential stage in this gradual conventionalisation of meaning is the progressive lessening of contextual clues required to recover the (primary) contribution that an utterance makes to the ongoing discourse (how it may be complied with). Implicatures, in this respect, have been previously distinguished into two genera: particularised, necessitating a reference to the nonce context of utterance, and generalised, which are presumed *all else being equal*. My current proposal is to enrich this picture, by admitting implicatures which are likewise presumed using the

mechanisms proposed for generalised implicatures (Levinson's (1995, 2000) I- and M-heuristics), yet which are so presumed in virtue of being unmarked not relative to other expressions in the language, but relative to a minimal context. Information constituting such a minimal context is restricted to a short list of variables available prior to making any particular utterance, such as who is talking to whom, when and where. Confirmation of this proposal lies with statistically-informed analyses of language use, which can help establish frequencies of use of particular expressions relative to particular contexts, as well as the effect of potentially frequent use on the formal properties of an expression. In particular, two components of this proposal may be profitably refined: the exact list of variables constituting a minimal context, and whether/ to what extent a cross-culturally and cross-situationally consistent list of such variables can be established; and the precise effects of gradual 'decontextualisation' on the formal properties of an expression. Future research along these lines may eventually lead to a unified view on the role of context in inference (Levinson 2000:23ff.).

Finally, the present research suggests a degree of continuity between knowledge of language and real-world knowledge, implied by the holistic processing of the proposed frames. One is no longer viewed as input to determining the other. Rather, the two are processed in parallel, and each can provide clues to elucidating the nature of the other. The possibility of this interaction is generally acknowledged, and well documented, though not yet well understood. One prominent field of enquiry charged with this explicating task is that of connectionism (e.g., Rumelhart et al. 1986; Bechtel & Abrahamsen 1991; Chater 1995). While comments on the limitations of Fodor's (1983) view of a modular mind are not new (e.g., Tanenhaus et al. 1987; Tanenhaus & Lucas 1987; Shillcock & Bard 1993), neither the connectionist nor the modular view of the mind are uncontroversial. A significant amount of research will no doubt continue to aim to untangle the limitations of, and potential for reconciliation between, the two approaches. In the meantime, to the extent that the proposed frame-based approach finds empirical support in studies of polite discourse in other cultures, including studies of speakers' potentially failing to be polite (along the lines proposed by Gumperz & Tannen 1979), it will provide another example of the interaction between knowledge of language and real-world knowledge.

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