A POLITENESS VIEW OF PERSUASION IN ESL/EFL

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Resumen
El presente artículo intenta teorizar sobre el fenómeno de la persuasión desde un punto de vista pragmático, en concreto, desde la Teoría de la Cortesía de Brown y Levinson (1987) en conversaciones cotidianas llevadas a cabo en inglés como segunda lengua o lengua extranjera entre aprendices de ésta y hablantes nativos de la misma, los cuales mantienen una relación de amistad. Para ello se define primero qué se entiende por persuasión y cortesía al igual que se argumenta y se describe el vínculo entre ambos conceptos. En base a ciertas investigaciones sobre persuasión y cortesía en el campo de la pragmática y teniendo en cuenta la tipología de relaciones sociales establecida por Scollon y Scollon (1995), se ofrece una propuesta teórica sobre la posible realización de la persuasión en inglés como segunda lengua o lengua extranjera en la situación anteriormente descrita con un cierto grado de éxito, entendiéndose éste como la implementación de este fenómeno comunicativo por parte del aprendiz de inglés según las expectativas lingüísticas, discursivas, relacionales y socio-culturales que dicho fenómeno implica en la lengua meta. Este trabajo concluye apuntando el carácter descriptivo y probabilístico de dicha propuesta.

Abstract
The present article attempts to theorise about the phenomenon of persuasion from a pragmatic perspective, in particular, Brown and Levinson's (1987) Politeness Theory, in daily conversational exchanges between learners of English as a second/foreign language (ESL/EFL), and native speakers of this language whom they are friends with. To this end, a definition of persuasion and politeness is first offered, and the interrelation between both concepts is accounted for and described. According to some studies of persuasion and politeness in the field of pragmatics, and Scollon and Scollon's (1995) typology of social dyads, a theoretical scheme on the potential enactment of persuasion in ESL/EFL with certain degree of success in the aforementioned conversational exchanges is put forward. Success here refers to the implementation of this communicative phenomenon on the part of the learners in keeping with the linguistic, discursive, relational and socio-cultural expectations it entails in the target language. This paper concludes underscoring the descriptive and probabilistic nature of this theoretical scheme.

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper theorises about the phenomenon of persuasion in ESL/EFL exchanges from Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness perspective. First, research on persuasion has traditionally been dominated by rhetorical and psychological approaches, and studies

of this phenomenon in pragmatics 1) are not common, and 2) primarily focus on public versus 'private' discourses, thus bringing about a shortage of information on the nature and functioning of persuasion in ordinary conversational contexts, one of them being ESL/EFL daily interaction. Second, contrary to some criticism against Brown and Levinson's (B & L) approach in the ESL/EFL teaching and learning literature (e.g. Meier, 1997), and in keeping with researchers like Bou-Franch (2001), Bou-Franch and Garcés-Conejos (2003), Evans Davies (2004), Lörscher and Schulze (1988), and Slama-Cazacu (1987), among others, it is believed that this framework is a useful tool for the teaching and learning of sociopragmatic knowledge in the second/foreign language (L2/FL) classroom not without certain adjustments entailing the consideration of contextual matters, which have their origin in an individual's cognition.

Persuasion in this article amounts to a S's attempt to affect the conduct, feelings, opinion, etc. of his/her addressee in and by means of communication. Politeness here is viewed as the cognitive-based linguistic instantiation of social relations in context. Considering the fact that in communicating with someone a speaker (S) not only takes into account the relationship s/he holds with his/her interlocutor(s), but unavoidably enacts such relationship in and through communication, politeness and persuasion as the specific communicative phenomenon it is, cannot be stripped off one another.

2. PERSUASION IN PRAGMATICS: DEFINITION AND APPROACH

Persuasion research has traditionally been dominated by rhetorical and psychological perspectives, thus overwhelmingly emerging as a result in the fields of rhetoric and social-psychology. Rhetoricians have generally concentrated on the study of persuasion in public discourses while social-psychologists have usually looked at this phenomenon in discourses that belong to the interpersonal sphere giving place to what Gallardo-Paúls (1998) refers to as 'la corrent conductista' (the behaviourist trend) and 'la corrent retoricopragmàtica' (the rhetorical-pragmatic trend) respectively. Investigations of persuasion in pragmatics are not as common and have been conducted mostly in relation to public discourses such as the discourse of advertising, and political discourse, thereby revealing their origin in the rhetorical-pragmatic trend as stated by Gallardo-Paúls. For instance, Lakoff (1981) centres on the discourse of advertising and establishes that persuasion appears here in the form of a communicator's 1) non-reciprocal, hence unilateral kind of interaction with his/her audience, 2) non-spontaneous interventions, and 3) continuous thirst for novelty. This last feature is especially salient with all sorts of novelties, i.e. lexical, morpho-syntactic, syntatic, semantic, and pragmatic, which includes humour and especial intonation, abounding in TV commercials. As for pragmatic investigations of persuasion in political discourse, most of them are not studies of persuasion per se but investigations of determinate aspects of political discourse that are somehow related to this phenomenon (e.g. Atkinson, 1988; Blas-Arroyo, 2001, 2003; Chilton & Schäffner, 1997; Fernández-García, 2000; García-Pastor, 2001, 2002; Lakoff, 1990; Wilson, 1990; Zupnik, 1994). Jucker's (1997) analysis of a party political broadcast is one of the few

studies in pragmatics that focus principally on the phenomenon of persuasion in the context of political discourse illustrating some of this phenomenon's features in terms of a speaker's inferential moves, so that the audience itself makes certain inferences guided, hence controlled, by S.

As opposed to advertising and political discourse, pragmatic studies of persuasion in OC are scarce[1] and examine this phenomenon in relation to politeness as it is discussed in section 4.1. In keeping with the approach to persuasion that can be observed in these investigations, persuasion in this article is conceived as "[...] the attempt or intention of one participant to change the behavior, feelings, intentions or viewpoint of another by communicative means [...] [that] are abstract and symbolic" (Lakoff, 1981: 28). This approach is thus a 'source-centered' versus a 'receiver-oriented' perspective in Gass and Seiter's (1997) words, since the emphasis lies in the speaker as the source of the persuasive attempt unlike the hearer (H) and the effects of persuasion on him/her. However, the interlocutor's reactions to a communicator's persuasive attempt are also considered part of this phenomenon here in such a way that a S is expected to adjust his/her communicative conduct throughout an interaction according to the feedback s/he is receiving from the addressee on the potential success or failure of his/her persuasive utterances. Persuasive effects different from the hearer's replies to the speaker in the here and now of the conversation have been excluded from the definition of persuasion embraced in this article.

3. B & L'S POLITENESS THEORY: SOME ADJUSTMENTS

Brown and Levinson's (1987) Politeness Theory is based on the premise that communication a) is constitutive of social relationships, and b) is potentially aggressive, that is, it may damage the *face* or self-image individuals want for themselves in a determinate socio-cultural system. Consequently, these authors establish that communicators are expected to soften or mitigate such face-threat inherent to communication in their interactions with others in order to create, maintain, and enhance harmonious social bonds. In their conceptualisation of face, B & L distinguish between an individual's *positive* and *negative* face, with the former referring to the desire to be approved of by others, and the latter alluding to the desire to have freedom of action. Bearing all these theoretical propositions in mind and the results from their anthropological work, these researchers devise a framework of conversational strategies they label *politeness strategies* interactants are expected to use in their communicative exchanges with one another. These strategies consist of 1) *bald-on-record strategies* or highly direct conversational strategies that convey little concern for face and are normally deployed in emergency situations, 2) *positive politeness strategies*, which are aimed at mitigating threats to an individual's positive face, 3) *negative politeness strategies* or strategies oriented to soften threats to a com-

(1) I do not consider research on requests, compliance-gaining strategies, and the like representative enough of what the communicative phenomenon of persuasion as a whole entails.

municator's negative face, and 4) *off-record strategies* or highly indirect and implicit strategies such as hints, metaphors, etc. (see Table 1. in section 4. 2. for further detail).

In spite of constituting a powerful device to explore communication, B & L's politeness approach needs to undergo certain modifications in order to overcome some shortcomings at discursive, relational, and socio-cultural levels as the vast amount of research invoking the model in the past and present times proves. I believe such shortcomings could mainly be resumed under a single one: The disregard of context. In this paper discursive aspects of context are taken into account by contemplating the sequentiality of conversation, and the type of discourse which intercultural exchanges between English native speakers and ESL/EFL apprentices are instances of, i.e. ordinary conversation (OC). Relational aspects of context are also considered by narrowing down these exchanges to communicative encounters involving 'solidarity politeness systems' or dyads (Scollon & Scollon, 1995), namely, relationally close power equals amounting to friends in this particular case. Finally, socio-cultural aspects of context are also contemplated by dealing with them in the theoretical politeness-based scheme on persuasion suggested in this paper.

Additionally, context in its different aspects, i.e. discursive, relational, and socio-cultural, has a cognitive basis that should also be addressed by politeness researchers in order to achieve a more complete and comprehensive picture of the nature of politeness and its functioning in specific communicative situations. Some work has already been done in this respect by scholars taking a relevance theoretic approach to politeness phenomena (cf. Escandell-Vidal, 1996, 1998; Jary, 1998; Jucker, 1988).[2] Nevertheless, taking cognition into account concerning politeness issues in a given context is beyond the scope of this paper.

According to all the above, politeness in this article is conceptualised as the linguistic encoding of social relationships in a determinate discursive, relational and socio-cultural context which is grounded in individuals' cognition. This definition of politeness compiles the adjustments that B & L's Politeness Theory needs in order to be suitable enough for the learning and teaching of sociopragmatic knowledge in ESL/EFL, thereby contravening claims raised to the contrary.

4. PERSUASION IN ESL/EFL: A POLITENESS VIEW

4. 1. Persuasion and politeness

As previously mentioned, persuasion and politeness are interrelated concepts. Politeness seen as the linguistic codification of social bonds necessarily entails the premise that social relations cannot be stripped off communication coming into being in and

(2) Such approach stems from Sperber and Wilson's (1995) Relevance Theory, a cognitive theoretical perspective on communication whose main postulate refers to the idea that individuals produce and interpret utterances guided by relevance, which is understood in terms of cognitive effects utterances produce balanced against the amount of processing effort interlocutors employ in communication.

through it. Taking into consideration that persuasion is a communicative phenomenon like any other, it follows that when a speaker is trying to persuade another, s/he is unavoidably relating to the latter at the same time (Carl & Duck, 2004; Duck, 1998; Leichty & Applegate, 1991). Additionally, as relational contexts in which communicative phenomena take place, social bonds cannot stop having an effect in persuasion either in such a way that an individual is expected to persuade differently more powerful (+P) more or less distant (+/-D) others, equally powerful (=P)[3] more distant (+D) others, and equally powerful (=P) and close distant (-D) others (cf. Scollon & Scollon, 1995). In other words, persuasion and relationships go hand in hand in communication, the latter also constituting a dynamic background in which the former takes place and is shaped. Investigations such as Cherry's (1988), Wood and Kroger's (1994), and Schulze's (1987) in the field of pragmatics provide evidence on this point illustrating how persuasion and politeness intertwine in academic letters of appeal, and OC. Out of these three studies, Schulze's work has been the more closely followed, since, the OC communicative exchange she explores is similar to the kind of encounters informing the theoretical proposal outlined here.

Schulze (1987) examines persuasion in everyday conversation concentrating on a buying and selling exchange between a worker unloading a lorry full of logs in the street, and a man who wants to purchase logs for his fireplace. Both parties are interested in selling and buying respectively; however, they need to agree first on the price and the terms of the delivery of the goods, which are up to negotiation in this sort of exchanges. Schulze nicely illustrates how the buyer intends to persuade the seller to sell him logs at a reasonable price and deliver them to him on the same day of the purchase without damaging his own face, that is, preserving his image before his interlocutor. The buyer enacts his relationship with the seller consisting of equal power (=P) and great social distance (+D) between the two in and through his persuasive attempts constituted by mitigating strategies. Notwithstanding their (=P), the seller holds 'expert power' in the communicative encounter, i.e. "some special knowledge or expertise that another person [...] wants or needs" (Spencer-Oatey, 2000: 33), which could be indicated (=+P) in this specific case. At some point in the interaction though, the seller looses his 'expert power' producing a change in the (P) term of the relationship that also brings about a change in the purchaser's persuasive actions shaping them accordingly.

Schulze's (1987) work together with Cherry's (1988), and Wood and Kroger's (1994) illustrate the interrelation between persuasion and politeness in interactions where participants' first language (L1) is English, and their system of beliefs and premises may be identified as 'Anglo-American' culture in spite of its heterogeneity (cf. Prodromou, 1992). Studies on distinct aspects of communication in pragmatics based on interactions between native speakers of English, who, in talking to one another bring into their con-

(3) (=P) here is equivalent to Scollon and Scollon's (-P) symbol, which has been dismissed to avoid confusions where it could be taken to mean 'low power' or 'less powerful'.

versations their Anglo-American cultural baggage in a more or less implicit or explicit way, may provide the ESL/EFL teacher with valuable conceptual frameworks to help students develop sociopragmatic competence in the target language (Evans Davies, 2004). It is in this light that the previously mentioned investigations on politeness and persuasion are considered in the theoretical scheme on persuasion in ESL/EFL put forward in this paper with a focus on Schulze's work.

4. 2. Proposal

According to Schulze's (1987) study on persuasion and politeness discussed in the preceding section, and Scollon and Scollon's (1995) considerations on politeness strategy usage and relational dyads, it is contended that ESL/EFL learners can be highly successful[4] in attempting to persuade English native speakers with whom they hold a friendship relation by employing mitigating strategies in their persuasive appeals, more specifically, positive and negative politeness strategies. Schulze reports that the conversational party playing the role of 'buyer' in the exchange object of her study deploys positive and negative politeness strategies in persuading his addressee (the seller) to sell him logs for his fireplace. Buyer and seller are not friends but strangers whose communicative encounter is primarily established for the purpose of accomplishing the task of buying and selling. Consequently, Schulze describes their relationship as one of power equals (=P) with great social distance (+D) between them emerging from their lack of mutual relational knowledge. Such relationship is representative of a 'deference politeness system' at work in Scollon and Scollon's (1995) typology as opposed to a 'solidarity politeness system', i.e. equally powerful (=P) and relationally close (-D) parties, which exemplifies the kind of relationship between interlocutors in this proposal. Scollon and Scollon establish that friends tend to reciprocally address each other with positive politeness strategies, but these authors are mute as for the use of negative politeness strategies in a friendship. Although this relational mismatch between conversational parties in Schulze's study and those sustaining a communicative encounter here may lead to think that in a 'solidarity politeness system' communicators may use other strategies different from positive and negative politeness strategies with their persuasive targets, some empirical research on politeness and compliance-gaining (e.g. Baxter, 1984; Craig *et al.*, 1986), which can be deemed an aspect or specific manifestation of persuasion,[5] attest that this is not so.

Out of the positive and negative politeness strategies in B & L's framework, Schulze (1987) points out that positive politeness strategies related to the claiming of common ground, hence the reduction of social distance between interactants, and negative polite-

(4) Success here is not meant to imply that the learner achieves his/her persuasive goal, rather that his/her enactment of persuasion conforms to the expectations involving the instantiation of this phenomenon in the target language.

(5) Compliance-gaining focuses on individuals' motives and means (commonly determinate message strategies) for the production of persuasive messages in the interpersonal sphere (see O'Keefe, 1990), usually associated with the formulation of requests, while persuasion is a more general and broader phenomenon by no means relegated to the private interpersonal realm and the production of these communicative acts (see footnote 1 in this paper).

ness strategies concerned with the decrease of the imposition weight conveyed by certain utterances appeared as those strategies most commonly utilised by the persuader. These findings somewhat coincide with the results obtained from Baxter (1984) and Craig *et al.* (1986) in their respective investigations. Brown and Levinson's positive and negative politeness strategies are resumed in Table 1 with the following considerations: a) no hierarchy of politeness strategies from most to least mitigating is alleged in this article, b) mutual exclusivity of strategies in the same intervention is disregarded, c) the possibility that a determinate strategy orients to both positive and negative faces, thereby performing more than one function at the same time, is contemplated, and d) some strategies have been modified (synthesised or dismissed) in light of studies such as Fernández-Amaya's (2002) and García-Pastor's (2001).

Table 1: Positive and Negative Politeness Strategies.

Positive Politeness Strategies	Negative Politeness Strategies
1. Notice, attend to Hearer (H): "You got a haircut".	1. Be conventionally indirect: "Can you pass me the salt?".
2. Exaggerate interest, approval, sympathy with H: "You look great!".	2. Question, hedge: "I wonder if you could help me".
3. Intensify interest to H: "and you know what?".	3. Give deference: "After you, sir".
4. Use in-group identity markers: "Sweetie come over".	4. Apologise: "I'm really sorry I couldn't go".
5. Seek agreement: "Yes, you're right".	5. Impersonalise S and H: "It's necessary you do this John".
6. Presuppose, raise, and assert common ground: "People say he's broke", "Yes, I've heard".	6. State the communicative act as a general rule: "No smoking in this room".
7. Joke: "and as they say in that millionaire show, 'what's your final answer Sue?'".	7. Nominalise: "Her failure in the test" v. "she failed the test".
8. Assert or presuppose S's knowledge of and concern for H's wants: "I know what you need".	
9. Offer, promise: "I promise you I'll go".	
10. Be optimistic: "You'll love it".	
11. Include both speaker (S) and H in the activity: "Let's go".	
12. Give (or ask fro) reasons: "Why don't we leave?".	
13. Assume or assert reciprocity: "Mary and I have been happily married for 12 years".	
14. Give gifts to H (goods, sympathy, understanding and cooperation): "You'll be alright".	

Consequently, learners are more likely to succeed in performing their persuasive exchanges by employing strategies like positive politeness strategies # 4, 6 and 13 ('use in-group identity markers', 'presuppose, raise, and assert common ground', and 'assume or assert reciprocity'), and negative politeness strategies # 2, 6 or 7 ('question, hedge', 'state the communicative act as a general rule', and 'nominalise'). In this way, ESL/EFL students can be said to be meeting the behavioural expectations underlying persuasive encounters between friends whose L1 is English at discursive, relational, and socio-cultural levels. At a discursive level the deployment of these strategies as opposed to others reveals some sociopragmatic knowledge about the sort of communicative phenomenon at stake in the target language (persuasion), and the discourse type in which it is embedded, viz. OC, in the specific situation of interacting with a native speaker friend. For instance, the use of negative politeness strategies shows a specific premise on communication and discourse types at work: the preference for indirectness in communicative encounters that may suppose an impingement on the individual's freedom. At a relational level, the employment of positive politeness strategies is especially indicative of students' relational closeness with their hearers as the politeness literature based on Anglo-American societies generally postulates. Thus, at a socio-cultural level, using these politeness strategies also shows something about the way in which friendships are enacted in an Anglo-American cultural system. Finally, the deployment of negative politeness strategies is also telling at this level, since it signals that learners somewhat embrace cultural premises, beliefs and values on personhood and social bonds such as, for example, the negative politeness-oriented cultural ethos rooted in an individualistic notion of the self defining Anglo-American culture (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Nonetheless, ESL/EFL students would not only be showing sociopragmatic aspects of the target language in and through their persuasive interventions, but they would concurrently partake in their upholding, reification, and reproduction by 1) the very performance and shaping of persuasion, 2) the instantiation and maintenance of their relations with their addressees, and 3) the enactment of the premises, beliefs and values of the target Anglo-American culture.

All this contributes to ensure and enhance learners' positive image before their interlocutors, since sociopragmatic competence is related to the presentation of the self so that the greater the former, the more positive the latter and vice versa (Bou-Franch & Garcés-Conejos, 1994; Thomas, 1983). Thus, if the reverse situation took place, that is, ESL/EFL students evincing a poor level of sociopragmatic competence in the target language, then it would be expected that native speakers in the conversational exchange perceived their image or face as negative or rude. Following Bou-Franch and Garcés-Conejos, and Thomas, this would particularly affect students with a noticeable command of the L2/FL versus learners whose level of competence in the target language is low on the basis that the image or face of the latter is overprotected precisely because of such lack of competence. Native speakers in this case tend to value the effort learners are making to communicate in their mother tongue, and underestimate issues of competence, face, and possible rudeness involving the latter. In the kind of interchanges theorised about in this article, it is believed that the friendship relation between the ESL/EFL learner and the nati-

ve speaker would soften or compensate for a potential negative image and any token of impoliteness of the former most significantly than his/her level of competence.

However, how can this theoretical scheme on persuasion be implemented in the classroom? In other words, how can persuasion in ESL/EFL as depicted in this paper be taught?. Although this matter is worth another whole paper, some highlights can be provided here. First, in keeping with scholars concerned with the teaching and learning of sociopragmatic aspects in L2/FL (e.g. Adbedali & Davis, 1989; Bou-Franch, 2001; Bou-Franch & Garcés-Conejos, 2003; Evans Davies, 2004; Garcés-Conejos, 2001; Hall & Ramírez, 1993; Mantle-Bromley, 1992; etc.), it is contended that awareness-raising on the discursive, relational, and socio-cultural aspects surrounding communication in learners' L1 and L2/FL is pivotal in this regard. In the same fashion as Bou-Franch and Garcés-Conejos (2003) on the teaching of politeness, and Mantle-Bromley (1992) on the teaching of culture, defining persuasion and politeness could be the first step in the teaching of persuasion in ESL/EFL along with making the interrelation between these two concepts explicit. Learners should be warned that the definition of persuasion and politeness offered, and the explanation of their interrelation could be accounted for differently depending on the approach to communication one favours, and examples should be supplied accordingly. Students could then be introduced to Brown and Levinson's (1987) PT, the relevant literature on the possible adjustments that could be made to improve it, and studies on persuasion in pragmatics.

A second step would consist of presenting students with instances of persuasion not only in OC, but also in other discourse types (e.g. political discourse) in their L1 and L2/FL for contrastive analysis. The philosophy behind this pedagogical point is that L2/FL teaching and learning should be structured around speech events or activities as the best way to develop learners' cross-cultural awareness, hence their consciousness on distinct socio-cultural assumptions operating in specific communicative situations and informing determinate pragmalinguistic choices (Bou-Franch 2001; Bou-Franch & Garcés-Conejos 2003; Evans Davies 2004).[6] The analysis of the diverse realizations of persuasion in different discourse types within students' own language first, and target language later, should focus on those instantiations of persuasion in OC, and within these, it should centre on examples of persuasion between friends. All these enactments of persuasion may amount to real life texts or audio/video-tape recorded materials. In any case, it is expected that the contrastive analysis of these materials will promote what Evans Davies (2004) calls a 'particular habit of mind' in the learners consisting of the ability to look for patterns in a text that are revealing as for discursive, relational, and socio-cultural premises, beliefs and values in the target culture, thereby fostering autonomous learning. According to Prodromou (1992: 47), "training students to infer culturally-determined meanings from clues in a text is a particularly valuable approach".

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(6) See Bou-Franch and Garcés-Conejos (2003) on this point.

In order to reinforce and exploit this particular habit of mind, learners should be encouraged to become 'ethnographers' themselves, that is, observers and interpreters of their own and target languages (Bou-Franch & Garcés-Conejos, 2003; Evans Davies, 2004; Hall & Ramírez, 1992). In this way, they could be given assignments related to the observation, recording, and interpretation of communicative exchanges in OC constituting performances of persuasion in friendships in their L1 and L2/FL. These ethnographic assignments should not be taken lightly though, and prior to them, it is believed that learners should be given some guidelines and training in the classroom on how to do ethnography. After their completion, learners could bring their ethnographic assignments to the classroom for further analysis and discussion as proposed by Evans Davies (2004) concerning social interaction in their first and target languages. Teachers could reinforce students' understanding and practice of persuasion between friends in ESL/EFL by means of additional activities such as role-plays, group exercises, listening tasks, and the like.

All the above methodological steps are aimed at increasing students' awareness of their own assumptions on discourse, relationships, society and culture, and those underlying the use of the English language with regards to the communicative phenomenon of persuasion in general, and between friends in particular. As a result, learners would be expected to develop a basis for cross-cultural comparison that contributes to improve their L1 and L2/FL sociopragmatic knowledge. Nevertheless, similarly to what has been advocated in relation to the teaching and learning of politeness in L2/FL (e.g. Bou-Franch, 2001; Bou-Franch & Garcés-Conejos, 2003; Lörscher & Schulze, 1988; Slama-Cazacu, 1987), it is contended that none of this could be possible without supplying the students first with the linguistic tools enabling the realization of persuasion in friendships in the target language adequately contextualised, described, and accounted for. The theoretical scheme put forward in this article has intended to be a frame for the contextualisation, depiction, and explanation of these tools.

5. CONCLUSION

This article has attempted to theorise about how ESL/EFL learners may persuade their English native speaking friends in OC taking Brown and Levinson's (1987) PT as a point of departure. A brief account of persuasion in the pragmatics literature has first been offered pointing out the scarcity of investigations of this phenomenon in the context of OC, and establishing the definition of and approach to persuasion adopted in this paper. A short description of Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness framework follows together with some of its general caveats and the adjustments it needs to undergo in order to become a more powerful device in the teaching and learning of sociopragmatic knowledge in L2/FL. Then an argument for the interrelation between politeness and persuasion has been presented in light of the conceptualisation of politeness embraced here, viz. the cognitive-based linguistic codification of social relations in context, and the findings of investigations on politeness and persuasion in the pragmatics field. Such findings,

especially Schulze's (1987), have been closely followed in the theoretical scheme on persuasion in ESL/EFL put forward in this article. This proposal intends to be no more than a mere descriptive rather than prescriptive theoretical suggestion on how persuasion might be performed with some degree of success in OC by ESL/EFL students interacting with friends whose L1 is English. Methodological guidelines on the implementation of this scheme in the classroom have also been provided.

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