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Barbara Pizziconi and Miriam A. Locher

1 Introducing the ‘teaching’ and ‘learning’ of (im)politeness

Abstract: This chapter outlines the editors’ conceptualization of the key terminology that gives the collection its title, such as (im)politeness, ‘teaching’ and ‘learning.’ It describes the relationship between the field of (im)politeness research and various strands of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) studies, highlights important developments in these respective domains, and advocates an enhanced dialogue between them that can lead to positive cross-fertilization. It then outlines selected issues raised in individual chapters, as well as a theme that emerged consistently across the contributions, i.e. the role of ‘awareness’; its presence or absence is seen as variously affecting individuals’ ability to achieve accurate representations of (im)politeness notions, offsetting difficulties in language learning and the development of intercultural competence, or enabling the very perception of some facets of interpersonal relationships.

Keywords: (im)politeness, second language acquisition, pragmatic transfer, interlanguage pragmatics, intercultural competence, interpersonal pragmatics

1 Setting the research interface

This collection on *‘Teaching’ and ‘Learning’ (Im)Politeness* (the inverted quote marks will be explained at the end of this section) combines research from the field of politeness studies with research on language pedagogy and language learning. Our aim is to fill the unfortunate gap between these research traditions in an endeavour to enrich the outlook of both constituencies, and to further engender a useful dialogue between (im)politeness theorists, language teachers, and Second Language Acquisition (SLA) researchers.

Throughout the collection, we use the term ‘(im)politeness’ as a shorthand for a broad range of semiotic phenomena which index and regulate social relations. We are interested in politeness and impoliteness phenomena and, more generally, in the interpersonal side of communication¹ and its relation to ‘teaching’ and ‘learning.’ It is well known that the field of politeness has experienced

¹ On ‘relational work,’ see Locher and Watts (2005, 2008); on ‘rapport management,’ see Spencer-Oatey (2000, 2005, 2011); on ‘interpersonal pragmatics,’ see Locher and Graham (2010; Haugh, Kádár and Mills 2013).

a dramatic boom in the last 40 years. Studies which pioneered a scientific approach (Lakoff 1973; Leech 1983; Brown and Levinson 1978 [later reprinted and enhanced in 1987]) provided conceptual frameworks to discuss politeness as a pragmatic phenomenon; all of them attempted to highlight broad, even universal pragmatic mechanisms of production and interpretation, but at the same time had to tackle the question of culturally specific realizations which could account for variation. From the vast sea of research which set out to apply and test these frameworks in various linguistic and cultural contexts, some studies began to appear which addressed the natural pedagogical implications of this variation – e.g. how speakers of one language would go about learning and negotiating politeness in another, and whether or how politeness could be taught. However, with some exceptions, which tackled politeness issues/theory directly (House and Kasper 1981; Davies 1986; Lörcher and Schulze 1988; Geis and Harlow 1995; Meier 1997; Snow et al. 1990), the vast majority of studies which emerged from the field of second language acquisition gave politeness theory a minor role, or discussed politeness almost perforce, as (sometimes unproblematic) explanatory principles for interlanguage pragmatic difficulties, typically in speech acts realizations (e.g. Scarcella 1979; Blum-Kulka and Kasper 1989; Kasper 1992; Bouton 1995; Marriott 1995; Kasper and Schmidt 1996; Rose and Kasper 2001). The same applies to studies that looked at L1 acquisition within the field's broader interest in language socialization and caretaker induction practices (Schieffelin and Ochs 1986; Clancy 1985; Snow et al. 1990). The applied fields of first and/or second language acquisition and language pedagogy were more concerned with the operationalization of the Hymesian concept of “communicative competence” and saw politeness as one of many indices of that competence.

Critiques and further developments in the theory of politeness which broadened the scope of research further began to appear from within the field of politeness theory in the last decade of the past century (concise reviews can be found in Pizziconi, this volume, chapter 4; Locher 2012, 2014). These developments targeted the restrictive interpretation of politeness as an abstract, a-social, pragmatic principle, and focused intensely on its socially constructed and indexical nature. Broad sociological parameters such as status differential or social distance increasingly came to be seen as overgeneralizing determinants, which were themselves subject to a great deal of subjective ‘interpretation’ and manipulation in context. Users’ variable evaluations of these categories, the negotiation of identities, positions and stances enacted in situated contexts were put under the spotlight. Politeness theory of this kind (Watts 1989, 1992; Watts et al. 1992; Eelen 2001), opened up new avenues of investigation such as the discursive nature of politeness (Watts above and 2003; Locher 2004, 2006, 2008; Locher and Watts 2005, 2008; Mills 2011) and the strategic nature of

honorific usage (Pizziconi 2003; Cook 1998, 2013), the pro-social character of polite behaviour (Sifianou 1992) as well as deliberately confrontational impolite behaviour (Culpeper 1996, 2011; Culpeper, Bousfield and Wichmann 2003; Locher and Bousfield 2008; Bousfield 2008, 2010). These trends also showed many synergies and the contributions of different disciplinary traditions, from theories of identity to social cognition, conversation analysis, interactional sociolinguistics, and others (see Locher 2012 for a review). This interdisciplinarity is an inevitable development in view of the fact that (im)politeness considerations are always *potentially* triggered in communication.

Those strands of SLA with a more “sociocultural” orientation have also started to discuss (im)politeness from an increasing variety of disciplinary perspectives and in different contexts of use, beyond the language classroom. While some studies extend the previous tradition (i.e. studies of speech acts) even in recent times (Takahashi 1996; Pearson 2006; Spencer-Oatey 2000; Barron 2003; Shimizu 2009; Tateyama 2009; Félix-Brasdefer and Hasler-Barker 2012), a few also tackle (im)politeness in L2 users’ performance from newer angles: gender construction in intercultural encounters (Siegal 1994, 1995, 1996; Siegal and Okamoto 2003; Thomson and Otsuji 2003; Ishihara and Tarone 2009), self presentation and social identity (Cook 2001, 2006, 2008; Mori 2003; Iwasaki 2010); the negotiation of interactional stances in classroom contexts (Ohta 1999, 2001a, 2001b), or a number of these overlapping themes in Taguchi’s (2009) collection, as well as the role of honorific markers in children socialization (Burdelski 2013). Much less work has focused on the teaching aspect: a theoretical study (Bou Franch and Garcés-Conejos Blitvich 2003), some reviews of instructional material (Matsumoto and Okamoto 2003; Brown 2010) and a few empirical studies on the effects of specific instructional treatments and metapragmatic awareness (Ishida 2009; Tateyama 2009). Incidentally, the presence of so many works on Japanese language in these new developments is not a coincidence: as noted by Kasper (2009: xiii), while work on other languages tends to focus on speech act realization, Japanese constitutes a case in which indexicals of various kinds, among which honorifics, play a conspicuous role in the communication of other meanings not necessarily related to politeness (e.g. political or affective stances, identities) in interaction. An indexical view of language can of course highlight how these meanings are achieved in honorific-poor languages (Ochs 1992; Eckert 2003) but, to the best of our knowledge, this approach has not received much attention in the pedagogical literature.

While these and other studies testify to the omnirelevance of “(im)polite” considerations in interaction, they have left only a minor mark in the field of politeness theorizing, arguably because they are driven mostly by the disciplinary interest of SLA researchers in which (im)politeness is often presented as an aspect of communicative competence development and language/culture-

specific pragmatic development. With rare exceptions (e.g. Burdelski, 2013, as can be noted by the works referenced above), they are scattered in journals and volume series targeting the SLA audience. However, we understand the notions of learning and teaching in a broader sense than in the field of SLA and feel that many of the questions raised in this volume have a legitimate place in (im)politeness theorization. For example, questions regarding the affordances of different theoretical frameworks for (im)politeness pedagogy, the role of meta-language in the development of linguistic (and sociocultural) awareness (or simply ‘maturity’), the tension between universal (innate?) vs. culture-specific aspects of (im)politeness ‘knowledge’ (cf. House 2005; further developed and revised in House 2010: 566), not to mention the translation of theoretical, scientific constructs into emically meaningful constructs – all of which are imperative questions arising from pedagogical contexts –, clearly have much broader implications which the field of (im)politeness theory ought to discuss. Moreover, especially at a time when the field of (im)politeness theorizing appears to be moving away from a purely cognitive understanding of language use to one which privileges its social dimensions, discussing matters of ‘teaching’ and ‘learning’ can bring the role of the ‘social,’ or rather the ‘sociocognitive,’ right to the centre of the debate.

Indeed some scholars (e.g. Atkinson 2002: 526) have explicitly called for a more integrated view of SLA which can reconcile in one complex ecology learners and teachers, acquisitional contexts and social practices, products, and tools. The following compelling metaphor shows the advantages of a socio-cognitive perspective:

A recurring image comes to mind when I read much second language acquisition (SLA) research and theory. It is the image of a single cactus in the middle of a lonely desert – the only thing except sand for miles around. The cactus sits there, waiting patiently for that rare cloud to pass overhead and for that shower of rain to come pouring down. Like the solitary cactus, the learner in mainstream SLA research seems to sit in the middle of a lonely scene, and, like the cactus, the learner seems to wait there for life-giving sustenance (or at least its triggering mechanism) – input – to come pouring in. At that point, the real action begins, and we watch the learner miraculously grow and change.

A contrasting image sometimes also occurs to me, though more often when reading in fields other than SLA, such as language socialization and cultural anthropology. This is the image of a tropical rainforest, so densely packed and thick with underbrush that it would be hard to move through. This forest is constantly wet with humidity and teeming with life, sounds, growth and decay – a lush ecology in which every organism operates in complex relationship with every other organism. Each tree grows in and as a result of this fundamentally integrated world, developing continuously and being sustained through its involvement in the whole ecology. And this image satisfies me at a deeper level, because it corresponds to how I (and others) believe language acquisition “really works.” (Atkinson 2002: 525–526).

What the “tropical rainforest” scene describes, however, is no more than the conditions of language *use*, a flexible and adaptive process taking place constantly in the real world, an environment which language affects and is affected by (as noted in theories of indexicality and constructivism). From this perspective, language *learning* is another name for the “permanent process of dynamic adaptivity” (Atkinson et al. 2007: 171), and hence should be the purview of any theory which deals with pragmatic, interactional phenomena.

Our intent in this collection is to foreground the relevance of ‘learning’ and ‘teaching’ understood as broad labels for issues of cultural transmission and acculturation in many diverse contexts. We wish to start unpacking the multiple, sometimes unsuspected, and at times disputed social trajectories in which transmission and acculturation processes occur, and the ways in which educational contexts of various kinds reflect them. We discuss the complex relations of ‘learning’ and ‘teaching’ with professional, national and cross-cultural identities and the political avenues they travel on, and also the systemic (e.g. honorifics) as well as the affective and sociocultural aspects involved. Using this broad understanding of ‘learning and teaching’ as a starting point allows us to juxtapose, under the umbrella of (im)politeness, phenomena of various kind such as L1 vs. L2 learning and socialization; pragmatic as well as metapragmatic aspects; broad policy recommendations vs. practical suggestions for classroom implementation; conceptualizations of politeness vs. impoliteness; spoken vs. signed modalities.

2 Structure of the collection

The collection opens with chapters discussing (im)politeness issues in the language classroom, which focus on teaching and learning in a conventional sense (Part 1). Chapter 2 addresses foreign language teachers, discusses the pros and cons of alternative methodological frameworks, and suggests general guidelines for the pedagogy of (im)politeness. Chapters 3 and 4 present classroom activities which target evaluative behaviour and report on intermediate and advanced learners’ performances, and chapter 5 ties up this first part with a commentary on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and an overview of (im)politeness-related issues in the fields of SLA and (im)politeness theory. In part 2, three more chapters (6, 7 and 8) discuss other contexts and user types – students doing a medical degree in the UK, children in Japanese household and preschool contexts, and interpreters of English/British Sign Language – and explores different modalities of ‘teaching’ and ‘learning,’ in

the broad sense adopted in this collection. Finally, the epilogue gives centre stage to the discussion of impoliteness in its own right.

‘Teaching’ and ‘learning’ are of course interdependent, and although some chapters focus more specifically on one or the other, all chapters in this collection make reference to both and some address the question of their interrelation directly. Each chapter in the collection – unsurprisingly when discussing a pragmatically complex phenomenon such as (im)politeness and its learning or teaching – raises a considerable number of issues which is not possible to summarize concisely. The following overview highlights only some of these, and in particular the common evaluation of “awareness” as a crucial component of competence, or an emergent feature of *linguistic* development.

Spyridoula Bella, Maria Sifianou and Angeliki Tzanne’s chapter opens with the straightforward observation that if there is no such thing as an innate mechanism for generating a fully-fledged “polite competence,” then there can be little doubt that, in the L2 classroom, (im)politeness must be taught. Nevertheless, they note that the existence of quite different perspectives on the very conceptualization of (im)politeness makes decisions on how to teach it less straightforward. They outline merits and alleged demerits of existing theoretical frameworks, propose some practical guidelines for teachers, and present an example of how these can be implemented in a Greek university project. While they identify the merit of the “traditional” framework (Brown and Levinson 1987; B&L henceforth) with its descriptive convenience, they see the recent discursive and postmodern perspectives as equally valuable for their nuanced and critical problematization of normativity. They propose to reconcile the apparent incompatibility of these approaches by recognizing that both may have a role to play in the L2 classroom, which one could possibly characterize as enabling both more encompassing and more fine-grained descriptions. B&L’s descriptive apparatus and its interest in generalizable principles seems advantageous as it can provide broad-ranging explanations and a motivation for determined linguistic forms, and the more recent, relativist approaches seem advantageous in characterizing identifiable tendencies as the preferred patterns of specific social groups, who hold beliefs and values which may or may not overlap with those of other groups. However, they unashamedly (re)claim a role in pedagogical contexts for generalizations, of which decades of critical analyses have perhaps made us too sceptical. They encourage teachers to pursue the pedagogically much needed generalizations without feeling compelled to provide accounts of potentially infinite variations observable in individual behaviour; these, they argue, are not necessarily useful to learners, especially at the early stage of the process of building new representations. Indeed their review of merits and demerits of different approaches takes the learner’s limited (or L1-biased) appre-

ciation of relevant contextual parameters as the starting point, and this allows them to re-value the aspects of B&L's approach which have been deemed excessively simplistic by their critics, such as their account of context in terms of three broad sociological variables (social distance [D], relative power [P] and degree of imposition [R]), which, instead, they consider sufficient enough for first characterizations. Their chapter does not at all minimize the significance of the criticism of B&L, but repeatedly stresses that the detailed knowledge that teachers may have or need to have about the complexity of variables affecting socially appropriate usage does not need to be conveyed unfiltered to learners. On a methodological level, they advocate (as Bou Franch and Garcés-Conejos Blitvich 2003 do) metapragmatic instruction of (im)polite meanings, tightly tied to the linguistic realizations that B&L's taxonomy can highlight. While this is in line with the recommendation of most interlanguage pragmatics studies, they maintain that this is an advantageous technique not only at advanced stages, but also at early ones, in order to prevent fossilization of misconstrued form-function mappings.

Their detailed suggestions for language instructors emphasize the role of awareness-raising techniques for the teaching of (im)politeness, and in particular that of a metapragmatic awareness of the target language's sociopragmatic norms through a "focus on grammatical/pragmalinguistic devices that attain politeness values according to specific situational and contextual factors" (Bella, Sifianou and Tzanne, this volume: p. 35). They consider such an approach necessary because, arguably, while some principles regulating (im)politeness can be transferred from one's L1 knowledge, many parameters must be set afresh. Assumptions about relational dynamics (cf. Bou Franch and Garcés-Conejos Blitvich 2003: 9) or basic notions such as power, distance, age or degree of imposition, represent principles of variation which socially mature individuals have learned to appreciate as relevant (cf. Escandell-Vidal 2004) and hence these broad socio-cognitive categories can be thought of as already available from the start. However, the L2 forms which realize particular linguistic functions and the relevant L2 sociopragmatic norms whose indexing they serve may or may not be noticed: forms may be opaque or their function misrepresented; pragmatic norms are generally implicit (and only made explicit in particular contexts, which may not emerge naturally or be easy to reproduce in a classroom). In a nutshell, Bella, Sifianou and Tzanne (following Schmidt's 1995 Noticing Hypothesis) maintain that form-focused instruction and awareness-raising techniques can enhance the salience of forms and/or sociopragmatic norms and facilitate their appreciation.

The following two chapters offer concrete examples of classroom activities which stimulate metapragmatic reflection on the multiple meanings of (im)politeness. The chapters by Gyogi and Rieger, respectively on Japanese and

German L2, are case studies reporting on instructional treatments aimed at enhancing the learner's awareness of both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic aspects of L2 usage. Both propose guided activities which can broaden the learners' appreciation of the social dimension of language use in evaluative behaviours, and both illustrate how this can be achieved through a process of self-discovery on the part of the learners. The use of the word "appreciation" here and above is not accidental: when talking about "(im)politeness" prescriptivism is clearly to be avoided, and both studies illustrate interesting ways to present and discuss variability in the classroom.

Eiko Gyogi presents an original task focusing on Japanese honorifics. These are lexico-grammatical devices stereotypically associated to the expression of deference, but in fact indexing a much wider range of meanings (see Cook 2013; Pizziconi 2011; Burdelski 2013). Stereotypical as well as non-stereotypical meanings naturally emerge from the contextual conditions of their use, but the latter are often overlooked in teaching material (of which Gyogi provides an overview) and in the economy of classroom activities. Her intermediate learners engage in the translation of a written text from a BBC report on the Japanese imperial couple, and in the preparatory phase are directed to focus on various elements of the context: the fact reported and the purpose of the text, the relationships between participants, the target audiences, etc. The comparison of various rhetorical styles in the Japanese media creates an opportunity to reflect on competing normative models in the linguistic treatment of reports about the emperor. The learners are then assigned the task of translating the English news into Japanese and simulating a report of the event to different audiences (a *Japanese host-father* and a *Korean friend*); they must therefore reflect on the appropriateness of different formulations to these different targets. Their diaries provide an insight on the factors at play in these judgments of appropriateness, and show, among other things, that the variability observed in L2 production has as much to do with the learner's very personal background and general knowledge as with their linguistic proficiency. Gyogi notes, for example, that students majoring in Japanese and Korean – who would therefore have gained a deeper knowledge of Korean history and culture than single subject students – appeared to be more sensitive than other students to the potential effects of their linguistic choices on the *Korean friend*. Although textbook descriptions of honorifics emphasize their referential properties (e.g. their indexing of speaker deference towards the referent), the interactional effects, in the utterance's here and now, of the choice of a referent honorific are treated much more casually, if not confusingly. Gyogi's data, from classroom discussions and learner diaries, show that a focused activity can promote an awareness of the many other meanings simultaneously indexed by a honorific form, such as its effects on the

audience or the construction of a specific speaker identity. Although the learners’ translations demonstrate their struggle with the systemic complexities of various types of honorifics (various inconsistencies are observable, more numerous than those which could be discussed in her chapter), they also demonstrate that this kind of awareness is possible, if trained appropriately, at a post-beginner level, just a month after learners have been introduced to referent honorifics. This would suggest that much training-induced stereotypification, often evident in honorific usage at higher levels of proficiency, could well be prevented with appropriate pedagogical techniques and activities.

Caroline Rieger’s study equally laments the neglect of (im)politeness considerations in pedagogical contexts, this time in advanced German language classes in Canada, and shows how resources easily available online can provide the pragmatically rich learning environment necessary to appreciate the nuances of (im)polite meanings. Learners are initially shown a silent video clip of an incident in 2006 during which President Bush gives Chancellor Angela Merkel a “shoulder rub” at a meeting and, subsequently, are shown several entries of a discussion of the incident in online fora. Rieger uses this input to highlight the multiple linguistic strategies utilized in evaluations of behaviour, the critical role of the socio-cultural context and speakers’ ideologies in interpreting linguistic expressions to sensitize the learners to the (cultural and intracultural) variability in interpretations and evaluations. The learners’ assessments of the incident invoke ideologies regarding gender or institutional roles, but also the specificities of the context in which the incident takes place or speculations about the posters’ intentions, showing once again the broad range of beliefs and hypotheses that learners (and generally users) draw on when assessing others’ behaviour – far from being just a matter of linguistic competence, entire frames of interpretations need to be examined. Interestingly, a comparison of the assessments reveal that what differs across individuals is not only their interpretations and evaluations of the event, but also the very aspect of the event the evaluators focus on from the start. This confirms the critical importance of interpretation “frames,” which affect our very perceptions of reality and not just how perceived (allegedly objective) “facts” are subsequently evaluated (Goffman 1974). Finally, Rieger observes a notable variance between the learners’ simplistic definitions of (im)politeness prior to the reflective task, and their more sophisticated argumentations in on-task comments, as well as in a delayed post-test carried out four weeks later. Assumptions about the universality of (im)politeness norms transform themselves into more cautious qualifications about their relativity, and some of the learners’ comments suggest the beneficial effects of reflective tasks: these stimulate not only a more nuanced appreciation of situated uses of language, but also an increased awareness of one’s own relative assumptions and beliefs, a necessary ingredient of genuine intercultural competence.

Barbara Pizziconi's chapter concludes this section with more theoretical considerations on the resources available to language instructors on the teaching of (im)politeness. She juxtaposes the conceptualizations of (im)politeness that have emerged from theoretical as well as applied studies with the one emerging from the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) in its two main components: a general description of language competence, and scaled descriptors of learners' abilities at different proficiency levels. Like Bella, Sifianou and Tzanne, she also finds that the categorization of (im)politeness in the CEFR is tied rather closely to Brown and Levinson's formulation. She, however, notes that this characterization falls somewhat short of the full possible ramifications of the sociocultural approach that the Framework nominally embraces, and which in fact informs much of applied linguistics and politeness theoretical studies. The document does not necessarily prevent a practitioner from understanding (im)politeness as a socially disputed, situationally emergent, dialogic and indexical concept, but it also does not particularly encourage practitioners to appreciate these features. Nor, in fact, does it promote an understanding of (im)politeness as a pervasive indexical phenomenon which engages not only closed systems of honorific devices or linguistic strategies, but potentially any (linguistic) behaviour conventionally associated with norms of social conduct (Agha 2007). Unlike the specific set of recommendations produced by Bella, Sifianou and Tzanne, the purpose of the CEFR, a document which aims to guide language policy, curriculum and task design, has a broader remit, and its relatively unadventurous characterization of (im)politeness is seen by Pizziconi as unprofitable and reductive when teachers are not also familiar with the relevant scholarly literature. Other documents also produced by the Council of Europe, which provide more effective guidelines for teachers and explicitly call for awareness-raising activities, are also briefly reviewed in this chapter.

Part 2 moves the focus away from the language classroom and to contexts of use in which (im)politeness realizations or norms are not the specific target of instruction, but whose understanding is rather an incidental, implicit outcome of language use and language learning.

Rachel Mapson's contribution addresses the question of the different pathways followed in first and second language acquisition to an understanding and conscious representation of (im)polite norms. British Sign Language (BSL) and English occupy the same geographical space (in the UK), and hence it could be argued that the Deaf community lives and operates in the same cultural context as those of non-Deaf users, but important socialization may take place in rather different circles. While Deaf people are acquainted with the dominant non-Deaf culture, the opposite is not necessarily true. BFL/English bilinguals have of

course the ability to identify and illustrate register differences or norms for specific sociopragmatic behaviours, but apparently struggle both to verbalize explicit notions of (im)politeness, and also, interestingly, to distinguish BSL from English norms. This curiously contrasts with folk wisdom that these can be quite different in signed and spoken languages: BSL is generally characterized as more informal and direct than the spoken language(s) used in the concomitant hearing community (Pizziconi can anecdotally report the same about Japanese Sign Language), and 'solidarity' is said to take precedence over formality in these communities *because* of their minority status. This remains an empirical question to be addressed elsewhere, but allows the author to suggest that pragmatic knowledge is not necessarily easier to articulate explicitly when two languages are involved. Mapson observes that non-native users of BSL equally struggle to articulate their understanding of politeness, having had not only a shorter history of learning and use (and hence a reduced amount of implicit pragmatic knowledge), but also no exposure to explicit instruction. The lack of a metalanguage on the part of highly experienced professional interpreters, which Mapson puts down to a dearth of research on BSL (im)politeness, is arguably mirrored in teaching material and even instructors' awareness, and would seem an area worthy of further effort on the part of (im)politeness scholars.

Miriam Locher offers further thoughts about the benefits of awareness-raising techniques. She details aspects of the learning process that medical students at an English University undergo during a compulsory course on communication skills. She uses a reflective writing task on their interactions with patients to describe how they achieve an awareness of pragmatic matters and (im)politeness. What is particularly interesting is the fact that, although the course itself focused generally on communication skills (including both transactional and interpersonal skills), the themes that the students chose to isolate in their reflective assignments frequently refer to concerns about (im)politeness, with explicit metapragmatic comments about negative communicative effects such as "rude" or "patronizing" stances. In these students' writings, these allude to the potential pitfalls of clumsy performances, but correspond quite neatly to what the theoretical literature calls mismatches between participants expectations, or between discourse systems (Scollon and Scollon 2001). The complex bundle of layers involved – e.g. the significance of verbal as well as non-verbal signalling, the potential transactional and interpersonal function of any utterance, or the possibility of variable readings of the same sign by participants following different discourse systems – adds to the difficulty of managing these rather delicate types of encounters. Acts of self-disclosure of sensitive physical or mental weaknesses and the tension between the ideologies of empathy and professional

distance prompt powerful emotional responses, which also appear among the themes highlighted by the students. The balancing act that a skilful performance requires is a particularly significant worry in view of the personal as well as professional consequences of miscommunication in such encounters, and it is not surprising that medical students are tangibly concerned about these matters. However, as the author notes, such awareness is not only the result of experiences of troubled communication, but partially the outcome of the very reflective task the students were assigned – reflecting and reporting about a memorable encounter with a patient – and may have remained under the radar otherwise. The study once again provides concrete evidence that the discourses of (im)politeness need to be noticed and focused on to be positively learned, even when not in interlanguage contexts.

It could be argued that “awareness” (at least in the sense of capacity for introspection) is not in play at all when observing children’s interactions, the object of Matthew Burdelski’s chapter. In fact, when discussing children’s (im)polite behaviour, the question arises of whether theoretical models which conceptualize (im)politeness as facework apply at all: to what extent can we attribute to children the reflexivity or metapragmatic expertise required in possessing a “face” (cf. O’Driscoll 2011; Sifianou 2011), i.e. “the positive *social* value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact” (Goffman 1967: 5, our italics)? However, children are extremely sensitive to social norms from a very early age (2–3 years of age), and research suggests that “there may be an innate cognitive bias toward identifying breaches of social norms” (Ingram and Bering 2010: 946). They are in fact, in some ways more than adults, champions of prescriptivism, more prone to criticism than positive comments and not unlikely to make their criticism within earshot of the target (Ingram and Bering 2010: 946). It is therefore very much possible to talk of awareness in children, even in the reduced scope of their more limited cognitive capacity and smaller degree of social experience. While providing some evidence that sensitivity to social normativity may be innate, Burdelski’s data shows that such metapragmatic awareness is a direct function of the child’s previous experiences. Although it may not be accessible to introspection or elaboration, metapragmatic awareness is latent nevertheless and can be mobilized, when necessary, for argumentative purposes, or, in other words, to construe ideologies of normativity. His chapter shows Japanese children between 1 and 5 years of age to be extremely sensitive to the normative function of politeness routines, and skilfully socialize kin and peers to community norms through a range of linguistic and non-linguistic behaviours. Children appear to be capable of defending their individual interactional wants and desires, but they are also observed to monitor those of other children, when these have been

breached, and intervene in conflicts among their peers. This interactional negotiation thus is not just a way to learn and instruct other children to the use of specific politeness routines, but also a very site of cultural reproduction, a training camp for socialization techniques, which sustains the community’s social and moral order.

The collection is rounded off with an epilogue written by Juliane House, who highlights the themes emerging from a number of contributions of meta-pragmatic awareness and (guided) reflection on politeness phenomena, zooming in on the importance – and the challenges – of teaching *impoliteness* in its own right.

The works presented in this collection provide food for thought and some possible answers to the questions highlighted above. With regards to the affordances of different theoretical frameworks, for example, Pizziconi argues that, when producing overarching guidelines for teaching, the full implications of embracing a sociocultural approach need to be consistently spelled out. Bella, Sifianou and Tzanne on the other hand, show how different perspectives can coexist in the design of specific classroom activities. They argue that their incompatibility can be reconciled for this specific purpose, while noting that awareness of their different characteristics, advantages and disadvantages must always be a necessary component of teacher competence. Mapson observes that the question of the metalanguage used to talk about (im)politeness (or the lack of it) can be crucial for the users’ very ability to conceptualize this dimension of language in the abstract (i.e. not in situated contexts); this also raises the question of the extent to which such metalanguage potentially biases the user’s language ideologies. The flawed assumption, on the part of language learners in Gyogi’s study, that the expression of “respect” is the only meaning regulating the use of honorific verbal forms in Japanese appears to be driven by the very metalanguage used in pedagogical grammars and broader discourses about Japanese politeness (cf. on this also Pizziconi 2011: 17), and seems to create unnecessary misgivings. Other chapters (Locher, Rieger) provide further empirical data on users’ own metalanguage, i.e. first-order conceptualizations of (im)politeness such as “patronizing” (interestingly noted in data from both chapters, and corroborating observations made in corpus studies, see Culpeper 2011), and the behaviours associated with these.

The importance of ideologies and normative beliefs in discourses of (im)politeness emerges from a number of papers in the collection. The speaker’s evaluations of someone’s stance in relation to their assumed political views (in Gyogi’s data) or their institutional or professional capacity (in Rieger’s and Locher’s data) or the evaluations of others’ linguistic conduct (in Burdelski’s data) can be alluded to or explicitly invoked in metapragmatic comments. They

may be classified as assumptions on sociopragmatic norms that constrain speaker behaviour, but at the same time, being always oriented to some social effect, they are inherently “interested” and “argumentative” (Eelen 2001: 37–40). This dual nature of linguistic behaviour, its being at once constrained and enabling, must be explored in the pedagogy of (im)politeness, as the inescapable, emergent, and elaborate indexing of social personae and social relations.

The chapters in this collection begin a dialogue between the fields of politeness studies and research on language pedagogy and language learning, which, we hope, will inspire further research on this interface.

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