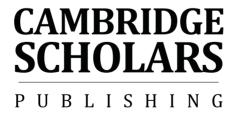# Politeness through the Prism of Requests, Apologies and Refusals

Politeness through the Prism of Requests,
Apologies and Refusals:
A Case of Advanced Serbian EFL Learners

By

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FOREWORD

This publication is the outcome of several years of work on my PhD project, which was a result of my growing interest in the field of interlanguage pragmatics (ILP). The primary motivation behind the project was to investigate pragmatic knowledge as an aspect of communicative competence that has been largely neglected both in research on Serbian learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) and in teaching.

The research study described in this publication may be of interest to anyone involved in the field of ILP, first and foremost to researchers, but also to English teachers, teacher trainers and advanced learners. Young researchers about to enter the exciting field of ILP are encouraged to explore this publication. It discusses at length the advantages and drawbacks of various data collection methods employed in the study, which could be of value to novice researchers. This book could also be of interest to researchers in the field of interlanguage phonology, since it explores learners' use of intonation in speech acts, an aspect of speech which is rarely dealt with in ILP studies. Additionally, the publication might hold considerable appeal to academics investigating aspects of L2 pragmatics in the speech of EFL learners, especially native speakers of Slavic languages, more specifically, Bosnian, Croatian, Montenegrin and Serbian, since not many ILP studies have yet been done with learners of these L1 backgrounds.

In offering an insight into the numerous challenges that advanced students face in the process of mastering speech acts in English as a foreign language, *Politeness through the Prism of Requests, Apologies and Refusals* may also be of value to university lecturers and teacher trainers.

While not primarily intended for EFL teachers, this publication might spark their interest too as it could challenge some of their views and beliefs about teaching and learning L2 pragmatics, and inspire them to find new ways of tackling pragmatic issues. It might also appeal to novice teachers still struggling to find a place for L2 pragmatics in their classrooms.

Finally, advanced EFL learners are warmly invited to browse through this book. It might help them develop heightened awareness of the complexities involved in mastering a foreign language, and understand their own L2 pragmatic learning a little better.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AM	Autosegmental-metrical approach
CCSARP	Cross-cultural speech act realization project
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
D	Social distance
DCT	Discourse completion task
EFL	English as a foreign language
ESL	English as a second language
FTA	Face-threatening act
F0	Fundamental frequency
Hz	Hertz
IFID	Illocutionary force indicating device
ILP	Interlanguage pragmatics
L1	Mother tongue
L2	Foreign/second language
NS	Native speaker
NNS	Non-native speaker
P	Social (relative) power
ST	Semitones
ToBI	Tones and Break Indices

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Becoming a proficient user of a second language (L2) involves mastering a number of skills and aspects of the L2, including L2 pragmatics, particularly relevant to successful face-to-face interaction but rarely explicitly dealt with in the language classroom. Internalizing L2 pragmatics, similarly to acquiring native-like L2 phonology, has proved to be a more complex process than mastering L2 morphology or syntax. Namely, "[n]on native speakers may opt for pragmatic distinctiveness (sometimes, always, or depending on context) as a strategy of identity assertion" (Kasper and Schmidt 1996, 157), and for many learners, attaining native-like pragmatic competence may not be a desirable goal. Along the same lines, Kasper and Rose (2002) contend that "L2 pragmatic practices may provoke affective responses in L2 learners that are unlikely to have counterparts in learners' responses to grammar" (Kasper and Rose 2002, 275) since especially "sociopragmatics (more so than pragmalingustics) is closely related to people's cultural and personal beliefs and values, making it more of a personal value decision whether learners wish to converge to target practices" (Kasper and Rose 2002, 276).

While such an attitude to L2 pragmatic practices may be characteristic of learner groups of various profiles, a group of learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) that is expected to be an exception in this respect consists of students majoring in English and studying to be language professionals, very often language teachers. For them, acquiring L2 pragmatic competence is an absolute requirement, since communicating intents effectively and appropriately, as well as interpreting them accurately, are essential components in a set of competencies every language professional is expected to demonstrate. Therefore, regardless of their personal attitudes, they need to master L2 pragmatics as a tool to employ in their future profession. As Bardovi-Harlig contends, "[t]he adoption of sociocultural rules as one's own in L2 may have to be an individual decision" but "[p]roviding the information so that a learner can

make that choice is a pedagogical decision" (Bardovi-Harlig 2001, 32). Furthermore, regardless of their professional orientation, advanced L2 learners are expected by the interlocutors to follow L2 pragmatic practices to a greater extent than less proficient L2 users. In Barron's (2002) words, advanced learners are "more at risk than lower proficiency learners since for these learners grammatical proficiency is no longer seen as an excuse for impoliteness", and their "deviations from conventional usage" tend to be attributed "to personality issues rather than to issues of language use" (Barron 2002, 2). Hence, it is of utmost importance to incorporate work both on language proficiency and on understanding L2 pragmatic practices in different social contexts into language instruction with advanced learners, and especially with future teachers.

Turning to the specific characteristics of the Serbian academic context, English language and literature students are exposed to instruction in English 25-30 hours a week, through various language, linguistics, literature and culture courses. Nevertheless, observation of their classroom behaviour and discussions about L2 pragmatics-related topics and about their experience abroad clearly indicate that many of them still need to be sensitised to various aspects of L2 pragmatics, such as the contextual variables that influence language use and the nuances of meaning conveyed by using various linguistic means. Since the vast majority of Serbian students of English do not have an opportunity to spend time in an English-speaking country during or shortly after their studies, the classroom still remains their major source of information on most aspects of English, including aspects of L2 pragmatics.

For a long time, "L2 classrooms have [had] a bad reputation" as appropriate settings for developing pragmatic competence in a foreign language, due to the fact that "L2 pragmatic input in instructional discourse is functionally and formally limited" (Kasper and Rose 2002, 208). However, research into the effects of instruction has shown that a number of aspects of L2 pragmatics are teachable (Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford 1993; Bouton, 1994 in Alcón 2005; Rose 2005), that learners seem to benefit more from explicit than implicit instruction in L2 pragmatics (House and Kasper 1981; House 1996; Rose and Ng Kwai-Fun 2001; Takahashi 2001, in Alcón 2005), and that certain classroom practices are more conducive to L2 pragmatic learning than others. Consequently, this suggests that "[d]ifferent classroom arrangements and their implementation in activities [...] have the potential to provide acquisitionally relevant pragmatic input" (Kasper and Rose 2002, 217).

However, teachers who decide to include the pragmatic component in L2 instruction face a number of difficulties, including the lack of a

coherent theory of pragmatic competence (Rose 1997), lack of suitable teaching materials (Bardovi-Harlig et al. 1991; Billmyer, Jakar and Lee 1989; Bouton 1996; Scotton and Bernsten 1988; Boxer and Pickering 1995 in Bardovi-Harlig 2001), unresolved issues concerning appropriate learner goals and assessment (Kasper and Schmidt 1996), as well as student attitudes towards adopting target language pragmatic norms (Norton 2000; Siegal 1996 in Kasper and Rose 2002). Even more importantly, a frequently raised issue related to the challenges of teaching L2 pragmatics is that of non-native speaker (NNS) teachers' limited communicative competence and consequently, their lack of ability to guide learners to L2 pragmatic competence. However, instead of insisting on language teachers being native speakers (NS) of the target language, Kasper and Rose (2002) hold that:

> [...] the critical qualification is that teachers themselves have been sufficiently socialized to L2 pragmatic practices, that they can comfortably draw on those practices as part of their communicative and cultural repertoire, and that their metapragmatic awareness enables them to support students' learning of L2 pragmatics effectively (Kasper and Rose 2002, 52).

This is precisely why the present study seeks to explore the linguistic means that (future) teachers have at their disposal to cope with different social situations and their awareness of the various contextual factors that influence language use.

Attaining a degree of pragmatic competence in the target language was set as one of the goals of language instruction in general as a result of the introduction of the notion of communicative competence to L2 learning and teaching (Canale and Swain 1980), and the recognition of the role of pragmatic competence within it (Bachman 1990; Bachman and Palmer 1996; Alcón 2000; Usó-Juan and Martínez-Flor 2006). At the same time, interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) research has gained in popularity. Most research to date has focused on L2 speech act realization strategies, which has resulted in "the unbalanced focus on the pragmalinguistic component in investigating pragmatic learning" (Alcón and Martínez-Flor 2008, 4). While "researchers are now able to produce relatively accurate descriptions of speech acts based on empirical data rather than on intuition and anecdotes" (Cohen 1996a, 256), this relatively narrow focus on speech act strategies and their realizations by L2 learners and NSs has led to a comparative neglect of two other important areas of L2 pragmatic competence: the sociopragmatic component and pragmatic comprehension.

The ILP areas which certainly deserve more attention include pragmatic comprehension, or metapragmatic assessment, and socio-pragmatic knowledge. The former is usually operationalized in research as comprehension of speech acts and conversational implicatures (Thomas 1995; Garcia 2004), and it most often involves investigating learners' ability to assess the appropriateness of a given speech act for the situation described. The latter has been defined as the knowledge of "the context factors under which particular strategies and linguistic choices are appropriate" (Kasper and Rose 2002, 96), and represents another area that has only recently begun to be researched more extensively (Alcónand Martínez-Flor 2008; Cohen 1996a; Gass and Houck 1999), as a result of "a need to better understand the rationale for the sociocultural choices that are made and for the sociolinguistic forms that are selected in order to realize the given speech act" (Cohen 1996a, 256). The development of both metapragmatic assessment and metapragmatic awareness as reflected in learners' sociopragmatic knowledge are now considered to be crucial since "awareness of the social concepts underlying linguistic choice is a key phase in the development of pragmatic competence" (Kinginger and Farrell 2004, 37).

The comparative neglect of certain aspects of L2 pragmatic competence in ILP research, and the complexity of the task that both L2 learners and teachers face while attempting to acquire/teach L2 pragmatics have influenced the choice of topic and aims of the present study.

1.2 Purpose of the study and research questions

The goal of the present study is to examine several aspects of advanced Serbian EFL learners' (future EFL teachers') pragmatic competence in order to highlight specific challenging areas that need to be addressed more adequately in university-level instruction. The study attempts to investigate the aspects of L2 pragmatic competence that have generally been neglected in research, and hence makes an effort to give equal weight to both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic components of L2 pragmatic knowledge, to both perception and production aspects. Therefore, it sets out to examine the speech act realization strategies and intonational patterns students of English employ in requests, apologies and refusals, their metapragmatic assessment of situations presented through aural stimuli, as well as their metapragmatic awareness.

The research questions the present study seeks to address fall into two groups. Questions 1 to 4 below are dealt with in the production part of the study and relate to the respondents' speech act realization strategies, their

intonational features, and the contextual factors by which they are influenced. Research question 5 is addressed through the perception study. The research questions are defined as follows:

1. Do advanced Serbian students of English opt for the same speech acts as NSs in the same communicative situations?
2. Which language strategies do Serbian students of English use in requests, apologies and refusals? How do they compare to the strategies employed by NSs of American English? What are the similarities and differences?
3. Are NSs' and learners' request, apology and refusal strategy choices influenced by the power (P) and distance (D) variables? Are there any differences?
4. Do the intonation patterns the learners use in these speech acts differ from NSs' intonation patterns? If so, what are the major differences?
    4.1. Are there any significant differences in the pitch range, pitch mean or part of the pitch range employed in learners' and NSs' requests, apologies and refusals?
    4.2. Are the pitch range, pitch mean, and part of the pitch range employed influenced by the P and D variables in learner or NS speech acts? What are the similarities and differences?
    4.3. Does the learners' placement and choice of pitch accent tones differ from that of NSs' in the Illocutionary force indicating device (IFID) in apologies? If so, what are the major differences?
    4.4. Does the learners' choice of boundary tones differ from that of NSs' in IFIDs? If so, what are the major differences?
5. Can the participants draw correct conclusions about the power (P) of the addressee and the distance (D) between the interlocutors based on the form of the speech acts they hear?

The choice of the research questions was motivated to a large extent by the desire to at least begin to fill the huge gap in the knowledge about the pragmatic competence of Serbian EFL learners. One way in which we attempt to do this is through the choice of the apology and refusal speech acts for investigation, since the few studies that have dealt with Serbian EFL learners' speech act realization strategies have focused exclusively on the request speech act (Dimitrijević-Savić, Dimitrijević and Danilović 2012; Dimitrijević-Savić and Dimitrijević 2010; Mišić-Ilić and Dimitrijević 2006). Additionally, this research introduces perception and metapragmatic

assessment components to the study of Serbian learners' interlanguage pragmatics and conceptualizes metapragmatic assessment in a way different from previous research studies (e.g. Eslami-Rasekh, Eslami-Rasekh and Fatahi 2004; Kinginger and Farrell 2004; Koike 1989; Rose and Ng 2001; Shimamura 1993). Still another way in which this research tries to contribute to the knowledge about Serbian EFL learners' pragmatic competence is through investigating the learners' use of intonation and their perception of the relevance of various prosodic cues for metapragmatic assessment. This exploratory aspect of the study is particularly significant since the role of intonation in learners' speech act production and perception has rarely been analyzed in ILP studies. Finally, since there has been no research into Serbian EFL teachers' metapragmatic awareness[1], this study attempts to make a first step in this direction.

In order to go beyond the descriptive level and try to examine the factors influencing learners' linguistic choices from several perspectives, the present study employs a "mixed method" approach (Jones, Torres and Arminio 2006, 145), and, consequently, works within both the quantitative and qualitative research traditions. For this reason, the following data collection techniques were employed: the oral discourse completion task (DCT), or closed role play, aimed at investigating language strategies in speech act production; the verbal protocol, intended to explore the learners' reasoning behind their linguistic choices; the semi-structured interview, designed to look at the learners' pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic awareness, i.e. their knowledge of the linguistic forms available for the realization of these speech acts, as well as their awareness of the contextual factors influencing their language strategy choice; and finally, the contextual assessment questionnaire accompanying a listening task to look into the learners' ability to make inferences about contextual variables based on the linguistic form of the speech acts. By employing a variety of data collection methods and by attempting to look at the topic of investigation through various lenses, we hoped to gather as many parts of the jigsaw puzzle as possible, and thus gain a more complete picture of the complex phenomenon the study had set out to explore.

In sum, the present study seeks to address several aspects of Serbian EFL learners' pragmatic competence that have not been investigated so far, through a combination of research methods, in order to gain a more thorough understanding of the challenges this specific learner group faces in the process of mastering L2 pragmatics.

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[1] The only exception we are aware of is Savić (2013), based on the results of the present research.

1.3 Delimitations of the study

The participants in the present study were advanced Serbian EFL learners majoring in English language and literature at the University of Niš, Serbia. Since they represented a highly homogenous group of learners, the findings are not generalizable to other advanced Serbian EFL learner groups. However, the results could be indicative of university-level students of English, future language professionals and EFL teachers.

Another important delimitation concerns the choice of the oral discourse completion task as a data collection method. The DCT has been shown to serve as an accurate indication of "which strategic and linguistic options are consonant with respondents' understanding of L2 pragmatic norms and what context factors influence their choices" (Kasper and Rose 2002, 96). Therefore, the study does not aspire to make any claims about the learners' ability to perform the speech acts investigated here in face-to-face interaction.

1.4 Definition of terms

This section deals with the definitions of the key terms for the present study, including *politeness, culture, communicative competence, pragmatic competence/knowledge, pragmalinguistic knowledge, sociopragmatic knowledge, interlanguage pragmatics, metapragmatic awareness* and *intonation*. For some of these terms, like *pragmalinguistic* or *sociopragmatic knowledge*, for instance, there is widespread agreement on the definitions. However, for others, such as *politeness* or *culture*, not even general agreement has yet been reached on what elements the definitions need to encompass.

Politeness. Although one of the key terms in pragmatics, *politeness* is probably among the most difficult ones to define. As Watts (2003) notes, "[t]he major problem for anyone entering the field of politeness research is the bewildering ambiguity in the use of the terms 'polite' and 'politeness' themselves" (Watts 2003, 12). Therefore, a number of other terms, such as *emotive communication* (Arndt and Janney 1985a), *tact* (Janney and Arndt 1992/2005; Leech 1983) and *politic behaviour* (Watts 1989) have been suggested in order to avoid the confusion but "'politeness' always seems to creep back in" (Watts 2003, 13).

In most early conceptualizations of politeness (Fraser 1990; Fraser and Nolen 1981; Gu 1990; Ide 1989), "communication is seen as a fundamentally dangerous and antagonistic endeavor" (Kasper 1990, 194), while politeness is viewed as a set of strategies necessary in order to

prevent conflict in society, to facilitate "smooth communication" (Ide 1989, 225 in Eelen, 2001, 89) or "to reduce friction in personal interaction" (Lakoff 1975, 64 in Watts 2003, 50). Politeness is therefore seen as a means to reduce social friction: as "strategic conflict avoidance" (Leech 1980, 19), as "rational behavior aimed at the strategic softening (or mitigation) of face-threatening acts" (Brown and Levinson 1978, 1987 in Watts, 2005, xv), as avoidance of "disruption" and maintaining "the social equilibrium and the friendly relations" (Leech 1983, 17, 82), as "a system of interpersonal relations designed to facilitate interaction by minimizing the potential for conflict and confrontation inherent in all human interchange" (Lakoff 1990, 34), or as the "oil that keeps the social machine running smoothly" (Wildner-Bassett 1994 in Stadler 2007, 30). Additionally, all these early definitions appear to regard politeness as a "socio-anthropological given" (Watts, Ide and Ehlich 1992/2005, 11).

As opposed to a static conceptualization of politeness, the postmodernist, dynamic view of politeness, which began to be shaped in the 1990s, views politeness as emerging from social interaction. For example, Watts, Ide and Ehlich (1992/2005) argue that:

> [p]oliteness is [...] a dynamic concept, always open to adaptation and change in any group, in any age, and, indeed, at any moment of time. It is not a socio-anthropological given which can simply be applied to the analysis of social interaction, but actually arises out of that interaction (Watts, Ide and Ehlich 1992, 11 in Watts 2005, xviii).

In the same vein, Janney and Arndt (1992) conclude that "politeness is not a static logical concept, but a dynamic interpersonal activity that can be observed, described, and explained in functional interactional terms" (Janney and Arndt 1992 in Watts 2005, xviii). Such views of politeness have increasingly begun to replace traditional ones since the beginning of the 21st century.

Another distinction often made in theoretical discussions on politeness is that between first- and second-order politeness or between politeness1 and politeness2 respectively. The term first-order politeness, or politeness1, refers to lay conceptualizations of politeness, i.e. it is taken to "correspond to the various ways in which polite behavior is perceived and talked about by members of socio-cultural groups," while second-order politeness, or politeness2, is viewed as "a theoretical construct, a term within a theory of social behavior and language usage" (Watts, Ide and Ehlich 1992/2005, 3), i.e. as scientific conceptualizations of politeness1.

The present study, in line with Félix-Brasdefer (2008), is primarily concerned with politeness1, encompassing "expressive politeness1 (linguistic

expressions that may be open to a polite interpretation in specific situations) and metapragmatic politeness1 (perceptions of politeness), that is, how people talk about politeness as a concept in everyday interaction" (Félix-Brasdefer 2008, 4).

The definitions provided here represent only a small part of the debate on what exactly politeness is. Further explanations and elaborations on what some of the key authors consider politeness to be are provided in the overview of politeness theories in Chapter Two.

Culture. While the notion of *culture* is present in all models of politeness as a factor that significantly contributes to the differences in the perception of what is considered polite, it has, until recently, rarely been explicitly discussed in politeness theories. Therefore, rather than attempting to provide a satisfactory definition of the term *culture*, "notoriously difficult to define" (Spencer-Oatey 2000/2008, 3), we will only attempt to draw attention to the ways in which it is used in politeness theories and research. For instance, in their universalistic framework of politeness, Brown and Levinson (1987) insist that differences in polite behaviour are to a great extent culturally determined (Brown and Levinson 1987, 242). However, similarly to other authors, they do not attempt to explain what exactly they mean by *culture.* Therefore, Watts (2003) argues that "[t]he use of the term culture without properly defining what is to be understood by the term allows us to explain everything, but ultimately to explain very little" and concludes that "[t]he term itself is probably as discursively disputable as the term politeness" (Watts 2003, 78). One of the grounds on which Eelen (2001) criticizes the use of the notion of culture in all theoretical frameworks is that it is unquestioningly assumed to be "internally homogenous–at least as far as politeness is concerned" (Eelen 2001, 165).

Aware of a number of potential problems with defining the term *culture* adequately, Spencer-Oatey proposes the following definition of culture for the purposes of her book *Culturally Speaking. Culture, Communication and Politeness Theory* (2000/2008), which has also been adopted in the present study:

> Culture is a fuzzy set of basic assumptions and values, orientations to life, beliefs, policies, procedures and behavioural conventions that are shared by a group of people, and that influence (but do not determine) each member's behaviour and his/her interpretations of the "meaning" of other people's behaviour (Spencer-Oatey 2000/2008, 3).

She then singles out four key issues from the definition: that culture is closely related to social groups, that it can be observed in certain

regularities within a group, which, however, are not fully shared by all the members of the group, and that those regularities can have an impact on the group members' behaviour and their perception of other people's behaviour.

Communicative competence. The concept of *communicative competence*, a widely accepted goal of language instruction today, has also been defined in several different ways. It was first introduced by Hymes (1972a) and, unlike Chomsky's (1965) notion of *competence*, it included not only underlying knowledge, but also the ability to use language. Communicative competence is usually defined as including two components: the knowledge component that refers to learners' knowledge of phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and the use component that comprises learners' ability to use language appropriately in a given context. According to Canale and Swain (1980), for example, communicative competence includes three subcomponents: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence and discourse competence, to which Canale (1983) later adds strategic competence.

In their framework, Bachman and Palmer (1996) use the term *language ability* instead; it is seen as consisting of language knowledge and strategic competence (referring to metacognitive strategies). Language knowledge is further subdivided into organizational knowledge, comprising grammatical and textual knowledge, and pragmatic knowledge, including functional and sociolinguistic components.

In the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (2001), the term communicative language competence is used. It is viewed as comprising linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic components.

The present study does not require a very firm definition of this concept, and for our purposes communicative competence is regarded as comprising both the knowledge and the use components; however, only the knowledge component is investigated.

Pragmatic competence/knowledge. As will be apparent from the brief discussion below, different authors have used both the term *knowledge* and the term *competence* in their definitions, sometimes without discussing their choice of terminology. For the purpose of language test design, Bachman and Palmer (1996) clearly define language knowledge "as a domain of information in memory that is available for use by the metacognitive strategies in creating and interpreting discourse in language use" (Bachman and Palmer 1996, 67). As it is precisely such knowledge that is one of the goals in teacher education, as well as the object of our research, the term *pragmatic knowledge* will be adopted in our study. The

term *pragmatic competence* will be employed as a broader term, comprising both knowledge and use components.

Although it was not included in early models of communicative competence, pragmatic competence has been considered a sub-concept of communicative competence under a different name. For instance, in Canale and Swain's (1980) framework of communicative competence, the term *pragmatic competence* does not appear, but *rules of use* are included in sociolinguistic competence. On the other hand, Thomas (1983) uses the term *pragmatic competence* and defines it as "the ability to use language effectively in order to achieve a specific purpose and to understand language in context" (Thomas 1983, 92 in Rose 1997, 127).

In a later model of language ability, proposed by Bachman (1990) and revised by Bachman and Palmer (1996), pragmatic knowledge figures for the first time as one of the two key components of language knowledge, the other being organizational knowledge. Pragmatic knowledge "enables us to create or interpret discourse by relating utterances or sentences and texts to their meaning, to the intentions of language users, and to relevant characteristics of the language use setting" (Bachman and Palmer 1996, 69) and includes functional and sociolinguistic knowledge as its subcategories. Functional knowledge (referred to as *illocutionary competence* in Bachman 1990) has to do with "how utterances or sentences and texts are related to the communicative goals of language users", while sociolinguistic knowledge enables language users to relate "utterances or sentences and texts [...] to features of the language use setting" (Bachman and Palmer 1996, 68).

Pragmatic competence is also an integral component of some more recent models, such as those of Alcón (2000) and Usó-Juan and Martínez-Flor (2006) (Alcón and Martínez-Flor 2008). For example, in the framework of communicative competence proposed by Usó-Juan and Martínez-Flor (2006), pragmatic competence incorporates both Bachman's illocutionary and sociolinguistic components, or both pragmatic and sociolinguistic competences of the CEFR (2001), and is defined as "knowledge of sociopragmatic factors such as participant and situational variables as well as politeness issues" (Usó-Juan and Martínez-Flor 2006, 17).

In the CEFR, pragmatic competences are defined as "concerned with the functional use of linguistic resources (production of language functions, speech acts)" as well as "the mastery of discourse, cohesion and coherence, the identification of text types and forms, irony, and parody" (2001,13), while sociolinguistic competences are regarded as comprising

"sociocultural conditions of language use" (2001, 13), including, for instance, the social conventions governing the use of politeness rules.

For the purposes of this study, a narrower definition of pragmatic knowledge is adopted from Barron (2002), who views it as "knowledge of the linguistic resources available in a given language for realising particular illocutions, knowledge of the sequential aspects of speech acts and, finally, knowledge of the appropriate contextual use of the particular languages' linguistic resources" (Barron 2002, 10). The focus on speech acts in the definition reflects the central focus in ILP research to date. While also focusing on speech acts, this research does not include the discourse component, so pragmatic knowledge is viewed as "knowledge of the linguistic resources available in a given language for realising particular illocutions [...] and [...] knowledge of the appropriate contextual use of the particular languages' linguistic resources" (Barron 2002, 10).

Pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge. Pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge represent components of pragmatic knowledge. The distinction originates from Leech's (1983) division of pragmatics into pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics. He defines sociopragmatics as "the sociological interface of pragmatics" (Leech 1983, 10), while pragmalinguistics refers to "the study of the more linguistic end of pragmatics–where we consider the particular resources which a given language provides for conveying particular illocutions" (Leech 1983, 11).

Along the same lines, Kasper and Rose (2002) view pragmalinguistic knowledge as the knowledge "of the strategies and linguistic forms by which communicative acts can be implemented", and sociopragmatic knowledge as the knowledge "of the context factors under which particular strategies and linguistic choices are appropriate" (Kasper and Rose 2002, 96).

Other terms have also been used to refer to the pragmalinguistics–sociopragmatic distinction. For example, Cohen (1996b) uses the terms *sociolinguistic ability* and *sociocultural ability*. Sociolinguistic ability closely parallels pragmalinguistic knowledge; it refers to "the respondents' skill at selecting appropriate linguistic forms to express the particular strategy used to realize the speech act" (Cohen 1996b, 23). In addition, it comprises "the speakers' control over the actual language form used to realize the speech act [...] as well as their control over register or formality of the utterance from most intimate to most formal language" (Cohen 1996b, 23). On the other hand, sociocultural ability, similar to sociopragmatic knowledge, is defined by Cohen as "the respondents' skill at selecting speech act strategies which are appropriate given (1) the culture involved, (2) the age and sex of the speakers, (3) their social class

and occupation, and (4) their roles and status in the interaction" (Cohen 1996b, 22-23).

In the present study, the terms pragmalinguistic and sociolinguistic knowledge, as defined by Kasper and Rose (2002), are employed.

Interlanguage pragmatics (ILP). Interlanguage pragmatics, "a second-generation hybrid" (Kasper and Blum-Kulka 1993, 3), stems from two "parent disciplines", namely, cross-cultural pragmatics and second language acquisition (Barron 2002). In a broader sense, the term can be defined as "the study of intercultural styles brought about through language contact, the conditions for their emergence and change, the relationship to their substrata, and their communicative effectiveness" (Kasper and Blum-Kulka 1993, 4). In a narrower sense, the term has been used to refer to "the study of nonnative speakers' use and acquisition of linguistic action patterns in a second language" (Kasper 1989 in Kasper and Blum-Kulka 1993, 3). In our study, the term is used in the narrower sense.

Metapragmatic awareness. Metapragmatic awareness can be defined as "knowledge of the social meaning of variable second language forms and awareness of the ways in which these forms mark different aspects of social contexts" (Kinginger and Farrell 2004). As this definition makes it obvious, this "awareness of and ability to clearly express rules of speaking" (Barron 2002, 104) includes awareness of both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic aspects of the second language.

Intonation. As was the case with several terms above, there is "no universally accepted definition of intonation" (Vaissière 2005, 238). In a narrow sense, intonation can be "strictly restricted to the perceived F0 pattern". On the other hand, when defined more broadly, it can include "the perception of other prosodic parameters fulfilling the same functions: pauses, relative loudness, voice quality, duration, and segmental phenomena related to varying strengthening of the speech organs" (Vaissière 2005, 238). A similar lack of agreement applies to terminology and units of analysis (Wennerstrom 2001, 17).

O'Connor and Arnold define the intonation of English as "the speech patterns of spoken English, the speech tunes or melodies, the musical features of English" (O'Connor and Arnold 1978, 1), while Ladd (1996), from a different theoretical standpoint, the Autosegmental-metrical (AM) approach, views intonation as "the use of *suprasegmental* phonetic features to convey 'postlexical' or *sentence-level* pragmatic meanings in a *linguistically structured* way" (Ladd 1996, 6, italics in the original).

Within his Discourse intonation approach, Brazil (1997) views intonation as "traditionally equated with variations in the perceived pitch of the speaking voice" (Brazil 1997, 1), but focuses only on those

variations in pitch that constitute "systemically significant changes" (Brazil 1997, 2), i.e. those that bring about a difference in meaning. Focusing specifically on Discourse intonation in L2, Chun (2002) adopts Crystal's (1985) definition of intonation as "the distinctive use of patterns of pitch, or melody" (Crystal 1985, 14), i.e. what Vaissière (2005) refers to as the narrow view of intonation, involving variations in pitch or the fundamental frequency (F0). The narrow definition of intonation as "restricted to the perceived F0 pattern" (Vaissière 2005, 238) is adopted for the purposes of the present research.

After presenting a variety of definitions of the key terms and indicating which ones have been adopted for the present study, in the section below, we turn to the organization of the book.

1.5 Organization of the book

The book consists of seven chapters. Chapter One, the Introduction, is followed by a chapter which provides an overview of the major Anglo-Saxon politeness theories, proposed during the last quarter of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century. The chapter opens with traditional theories, presents a critique of the traditional approaches to politeness, and ends with a description of the common characteristics of postmodern, discursive approaches.

Chapter Three opens with a section on speech acts. Speech act classification systems are discussed first, and then the focus is turned to the three speech acts investigated in the present study. Each of them is examined in terms of its place in different taxonomies and its semantic components, followed by a brief presentation of previous L2 and cross-cultural research studies. The next subsection deals with the role of intonation in speech act production and interpretation, focusing specifically on the research into EFL learners' use of intonation to express pragmatic functions.

Chapter Four provides a detailed description of the research methodology employed in the present study. First, the rationale and assumptions for mixed-method research design are given, the theoretical frameworks for the study are presented, and a general overview of the study is provided. Then the quantitative part of the study is described with regard to the research participants, the data collection method choice and design, the procedures for data collection and analysis, and statistical tests employed in the production and perception parts of the study. This leads to the design of the qualitative study, beginning with a brief description of the human instrument and the researcher, followed by the sampling