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Chapter 2. Pragmatics and (im)politeness

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1. Introduction

It is undeniable that the field of (im)politeness research was established within linguistic pragmatics. Thus, it is not surprising that Stephen Levinson, one of the authors of the classic Brown and Levinson (1978/1987), is also a luminary of linguistic pragmatics (cf. Levinson 1983, 2000), or that Geoffrey Leech published his account of politeness within a book on linguistic pragmatics (i.e. Leech 1983). Of course, (im)politeness research has always drawn strength from the fact that it is an interdisciplinary endeavour. Witness, for example, the role of the work of sociologist Erving Goffman, and especially his notion of "face", in Brown and Levinson's (1987) face-related model of politeness. Over the decades linguistic pragmatics has become less of a centre of gravity for (im)politeness studies, especially after the rise of socio-cultural approaches to politeness (e.g. Mills 2003; Watts 2003). This development perhaps motivated Leech's (2003) statement linking politeness to linguistic pragmatics:

> The starting point of pragmatics is primarily in language: explaining communicative behaviour. By studying this we keep our feet firmly on the ground, and avoid getting lost too easily in abstractions such as 'face' or 'culture'. The basic question is: *What did s mean* [*to convey*] *by saying X?*. It is useful to postulate the Politeness Principle (PP), [...] because it explains certain pragmatic phenomena [...] (p. 104-5)

If the starting point is pragmatics, one should bear in mind that pragmatics is itself highly interdisciplinary, especially the so-called European view of pragmatics, which takes a superordinate position above the fields of linguistics, sociology, psychology, and many more. Leech, though certainly not deaf to socio-cultural concerns, clearly has in mind a more limited, more linguistic vision, rather closer to the so-called Anglo-American view of pragmatics.

In this chapter, we focus on: how concepts and theories from linguistic pragmatics have shaped the early politeness theories, the problems that attended those concepts and theories, and how developments in pragmatics have suggested – indeed promoted – developments in politeness research. We will pay less attention to pragmatic phenomena covered elsewhere, notably, the notion of face (O'Driscoll, this volume), irony and banter (Culpeper, Haugh and Sinkeviciute, this volume), and impoliteness (Culpeper and Hardaker, this volume).

2. Classic pragmatic theories and concepts

Two theories in particular are central to pragmatics: speech act theory and conversational implicature. Both, as Leech (2014, p. 77) puts it, converge on the problem: "Why is what people say often at variance with what they mean, and how is it that (despite this) we humans can nevertheless more or less understand one another?". Both have had a profound effect on the development of approaches to politeness.

2.1 Speech act theory

Speech act theory was founded by the language philosopher J. L. Austin (1962/1975). He observed that some utterances "do not 'describe' or 'report'" something that is "'true or false'", that is to say, they are not truth conditional. In fact, they are not a matter of "'just' saying something" but of "doing an action" (Austin 1975, p. 5). Performative utterances (i.e. utterances which contain a performative verb, such as *I* *promise* *to cook you a meal*) are not dependent on truth conditions but on a set of contextual factors or "appropriate circumstances" (1975, p. 6). When something 'goes wrong', whether in the formulation of the utterance and/or the contextual appropriacy, the act is not "false but in general *unhappy*" (Austin 1975, p. 14) or infelicitous; it fails to count as bringing about the intended change in the world. For example, if a judge sentenced somebody in a courtroom according to established procedure, but it turned out the judge was in fact the court-cleaner, then the act of sentencing would violate a felicity condition. Later in his lecture series, Austin (1975) proposed that all utterances perform actions, even ones without performative verbs. Thus, *I'll cook you a meal tomorrow* does not contain a performative verb, yet in appropriate circumstances, could amount to an act of promising. The two utterances vary in terms of how explicit they are about what the speaker is doing: the earlier names the action with the performative verb. The relevance of all this for politeness, as we shall see, is threefold. Firstly, the notion of an utterance "doing an action" – the precursor to the notion of speech act – offered a contextually-sensitive unit of analysis. Secondly, it offered the possibility of shifting the focus from language as a tool for exchanging information about the world to a tool for building and maintaining human relationships (i.e. a shift from transactional to interactional). Thirdly, the idea that utterances could vary in terms of how explicitly they performed actions, what later scholars would refer to as (in)directness, was to become an important dimension of politeness theory.

Austin went on to suggest that there are three aspects to every performative act (for more detailed definitions, see Austin 1975, p. 94-132):

> *Locutionary act*: "the act *of* saying something" (Austin 1975: 94; our emphasis);
> *Illocutionary act*: "the performance of an act *in* saying something" (Austin 1975: 99); and
> *Perlocutionary act*: "what we bring about or achieve *by* saying something" (Austin 1975: 109).

However, in subsequent work the notion of a speech act is virtually synonymous with illocutionary act (sometimes "illocutionary force"). Austin does not make a case for connecting speech acts with speaker intention. However, later work, especially that of his pupil John Searle (e.g. 1969, p. 17, 43ff.), makes such a case, borrowing ideas from Grice (1975). Speech acts become identified with illocutionary acts which become identified with the performance of speaker intention(s). This was to have implications for early work on politeness.

Searle (1969) formalized Austin's felicity conditions, reworking them as "constitutive rules" for speech acts; that is, rules that create the activity itself, just as with a game of football or chess. Table 2.1 outlines the felicity conditions for the speech act of promising:

Table 2.1 Felicity conditions and promising (adapted from Searle 1969, p. 63; clarifications taken from Culpeper and Haugh 2014, p.162)

Felicity condition	*Clarification*	*Exemplification: Conditions for promising*
Propositional content	What the utterance is about (what the utterance predicates)	Future A (act) of S (the speaker)
Preparatory	Real-world pre-requisites (the interlocutors' beliefs about ability to	1. H (the hearer) wants S to perform A

	perform the act, the act's costs or benefits, its norms of occurrence, etc.)	2. It is not obvious that S will do A without being prompted
Sincerity	The beliefs, feelings and intentions of the speaker	S intends to do A
Essential	What is needed for the act to be performed (i.e. the mutual recognition that the speaker intends an utterance to count as a certain act)	Counts as an undertaking by S of an obligation to do A

In practice such classification attempts are of limited use, notably because speech acts do not lend themselves to neat categorization. Nevertheless, this step is a prerequisite to Searle's account of indirect speech acts, which influenced subsequent accounts of politeness.

Searle developed the notion of indirect speech acts, relating them to his felicity conditions. For example, the speech act of request often does not directly match what might be considered its canonical form, the imperative. Thus, *Carry this* can be used to elicit help in carrying something, but *Could you carry this?* is much more common. The second utterance fits Searle's classic definition of indirect speech acts: "cases in which one illocutionary act is performed indirectly by way of performing another" (1975, p. 60). Searle argues, in Gricean fashion (see below), that you first understand this as a question, then work out that it is actually a request. Importantly, the question is in fact connected with the request: it orientates to a preparatory condition of the request, namely, that the hearer has the ability to carry it out. The (in)directness speech acts has had a huge impact on politeness research. Searle's theory of indirectness assumes a "dual meaning hypothesis", namely, that both a literal (e.g., question) meaning and an idiomatic (e.g., request) meaning are constructed by the hearer. The presence of the literal meaning is taken by some theorists (e.g., Brown and Levinson 1987) as the reason why politeness comes about. However, whether recipients of indirect speech acts actually notice this literal meaning has long been debated; Gibbs (e.g. 1999) provides evidence against it, whereas Clark and Schunk (1980) provide evidence for it.

2.2 Conversational Implicature

Herbert Paul Grice (1989), another language philosopher, produced work on meaning and communication that has had a huge impact on pragmatics. His key insight was that meaning in communication is more than the literal (or conventional) meaning of the words one says, a point already made in our discussion of speech acts. Central to the Gricean account are the ideas that:

> (a) the key to communicative meaning is "non-natural meaning" (meaning$_{nn}$), communication which is intended to be recognised as having been intended by the speaker (hence, it is sometimes referred to as "speaker meaning") (cf. Grice 1957/1989, p. 217);
> (b) the key to the management of information in conversational exchanges is the Cooperative Principle (CP), a tacit principle that governs the way language is used to achieve rational efficiency and effectiveness in communication – "Make your contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged" (1975/1989, p. 26) – and is comprised of the maxims of quality (be truthful), quantity (provide the right amount of information), relation (be relevant), and manner (be perspicuous); and
> (c) the key to implicit meaning (what is meant but not openly said) is the "conversational implicature", which can be generated through observing the maxims or, as is more frequently discussed, through violating them (and there is a third

possibility: purposefully exploiting them, as with figures of speech) (cf. Grice 1975/1989, p. 32-33).

Regarding (a), note that, as with speech acts, the focus is on the speaker, something that, as we already observed, was reflected in early politeness theories. Regarding (b), the idea of meanings being governed by tacit principles was picked up by politeness theorists, not least because Grice himself suggests the possibility of a politeness maxim (1989, p. 28). Also, as briefly noted above, Searle appeals to the CP for part of his explanation as to how indirect speech acts work. An utterance such as *I can't see*, said to request an addressee to turn on a light, is not the most informative utterance (compare with *Turn on the light*) – it flouts the maxim of quantity, inviting the hearer to work out an implicature, i.e. the requestive meaning. Regarding (c), Grice (1989, p. 39) proposed that implicatures have a number of properties. Perhaps the most important is that they are defeasible (they can be cancelled), and thus are not part of the conventional meaning of "what is said" and are sensitive to context. However, their relationship with context varies. This is reflected in the distinction Grice (1989, p. 37-40) makes between "generalized" and "particularized" implicatures, the latter requiring some specific contextual knowledge in order to be worked out by the hearer, the former not. For example, the requestive meaning alluded to above depends on specific contextual knowledge (compare *I can't see* said in a dark room where the addressee is near the light switch with it said by a driver to their passenger with reference to the dazzling lights of an on-coming car).

What is the connection between politeness and implicature? Brown and Levinson (1987: 95) postulate that deviations from the maxims coupled with inferential work result in the intended message (such as a request), which can also include a politeness motive. In other words, politeness involves recovering an additional particularised implicature concerning the speaker's polite intentions (see also Brown 1995). Broadly speaking, Leech (1983) pursues the same line. More recent work, however, has made a case for the importance of generalized implicatures to im/politeness (see section 3.4).

3. Pragmatic concepts in politeness theories

3.1 Face threatening acts

The basic building block of Brown and Levinson's (1987) model is the Face Threatening Act (FTA), and that notion is clearly aligned with speech act theory. FTAs involve "what is intended to be done by a verbal or non-verbal communication, just as one or more 'speech acts' can be assigned to an utterance" (1987, p. 65). A key part of their understanding is that "certain kinds of acts intrinsically threaten face" (1987, p. 65). Intrinsic FTAs are classified according to the kind of face threatened (positive or negative) and whether the threat concerns the hearer's face or the speaker's (1987, p. 65-68). For example, requests threaten the negative face of the hearer; criticisms the positive face of the hearer; thanks the negative face of the speaker (as a debt is acknowledged); and so on. Critiques of Brown and Levinson (e.g., O'Driscoll 2007) often forget that they talk about acts that "primarily" (1987, p. 65, 67) or "mainly" (1987, p. 68) perform such face threats. Intrinsic FTAs are not an absolute category but a fuzzy one. Counterexamples, such as orders which are beneficial to the hearer (e.g. "Tuck in!", said to encourage a guest to begin a delightful feast), do not endanger the basic claim. Of course, if the counterexamples are in fact the norm – i.e., they are primary – that would be an issue. Nwoye's (1992) study of the egalitarian Igbo society of Nigeria may be a case in point:

> Requests, criticisms, thanks, and offers have been examined and have been found not to be generally considered as imposing. Rather, they are seen as a type of social insurance from which members of the group draw benefits by virtue of a reciprocal social contract according to which, for example, they can ask for (and get) a small quantity of salt when/if they run out of salt because they expect others to ask for (and obtain) it if they are in need. (p. 327)

Clearly, Brown and Levinson's generalisations about intrinsic FTAs should have been made culture-specific (they would generally hold for middle-class Anglo cultures).

The key problem with FTAs, however, concerns their dependence on speech act theory: "speech act theory forces a sentence-based, speaker-oriented mode of analysis, requiring attribution of speech act categories where our own thesis requires that utterances are often equivocal in force" (Brown and Levinson 1987, p. 10). By the 1980s, pragmatics scholars were well aware that classic speech act theory did not capture the complexities of speech acts in context. Leech (1983) observes:

> The indeterminacy of conversational utterances […] shows itself in the NEGOTIABILITY of pragmatic factors; that is, by leaving the force unclear, S may leave H the opportunity to choose between one force and another, and thus leaves part of the responsibility of the meaning to H. For instance,
>
> > 'If I were you I'd leave town straight away'
>
> can be interpreted according to the context as a piece of advice, a warning, or a threat. Here H, knowing something about S's likely intentions, may interpret it as a threat, and act on it as such; but S will always be able to claim that it was a piece of advice, given from the friendliest of motives. (p. 23-4)

Note that in Leech's example the idea that speech acts can have multiple indeterminate meanings also involves the idea that meanings are co-constructed by two or more participants (S "leaves part of the responsibility of the meaning to H"). Echoing Leech, Thomas (1995, p. 195-204) writes: "The concept of ambivalence is particularly important in taking forward the view of pragmatics as 'meaning in interaction' in which both speaker and hearer have a part to play". Such problems led some politeness theorists to abandon speech act theory, as witnessed notably in the development of the discursive approach (e.g., Locher 2006; Mills 2003; Watts 2003), which emphasizes the discursive struggle in shaping meaning.

Other problems with speech act theory we can but briefly mention here (for an early critical commentary, see Levinson 1981, and for a more recent one see Culpeper and Haugh 2014, p.155-196). Speech acts depend not only on whatever prior plan or agenda the speaker may have in mind, but crucially on (a) the responses of the other participant(s), and (b) the broader activity or event in which they occur. A consequence of (a) is that speech acts often unfold sequentially, and are thus negotiated over several conversational turns. For example, an utterance such as *Do you need those?* is a fairly frequent type of pre-request (a preparatory utterance testing the waters before a request). However, pre- or post- acts and their relations with head acts are not accommodated within classic speech act theory. Some speech act researchers (e.g., Geis 1995) have attempted to bring Speech Act Theory and aspects of Conversation Analysis together. In politeness studies, researchers such as Arundale (2006) and Haugh (2007a) have emphasized the interactional aspects of politeness. Regarding (b), Levinson himself helped introduce a broader concept, that of activity type (Levinson 1979/1992). An activity type (such as a seminar, a family dinner, or a birthday party) is a collection of particular speech acts (such as requests, questions and offers) that stand in particular relationships to each other and have become a relatively conventionalised whole, such that the activity type we are in makes some speech acts more likely than others. Culpeper (2005, 2011) deploys this notion in (im)politeness research. Other (im)politeness researchers have deployed a variety of contextual notions designed to account for trends or preferences in the way people speak in different situations. Terkourafi (2001) uses the notion of frames, which she sees, like activity types, as intermediate between macro and micro, whilst Garcés-Conejos Blitvich (2010) discusses genre, and several studies employ communities of practice (e.g., Mills 2003)..

3.2 Politeness principles and maxims

Classic approaches to politeness (Brown and Levinson 1987; Lakoff 1973; Leech 1983) deploy a Gricean account of meaning as a central component. Although Grice ([1975] 1989, p. 28) had given the lead here, briefly noting the possibility of a politeness maxim, it was Robin Lakoff (1973) who first posited a full maxim-based view of politeness. In brief, Lakoff proposes that there are two rules of pragmatic competence, "Be clear", which is formalised in terms of Grice's (1975) CP, and "Be polite", which is formalised in terms of a Politeness Principle. The latter Politeness Principle consists of the following maxims: (1) Don't impose, (2) Give options, and (3) Make your receiver feel good (her 1990 work offered slightly revised versions of these). Lakoff notes that sometimes the need for clarity may clash with the need for politeness, in which case politeness or clarity takes priority, depending on the context.

Leech (1983) also posits a Politeness Principle (PP), one which is more elaborate than that of Lakoff and is involved in "trade-offs" with the CP. A stereotypical example would be the telling of a "white lie" – sacrificing the maxim of quality in order to be tactful. It is these trade-offs that lend the PP explanatory power: the CP accounts for *how* people convey indirect meanings, the PP accounts for *why* people convey them. The PP reads: '"Minimize (other things being equal) the expression of impolite beliefs [...] (Maximize (other things being equal) the expression of polite beliefs")' (Leech 1983, p. 81). Note that the PP is not confined to dealing with impolite beliefs. Leech's maxims allow for the minimisation of impolite beliefs *and* the maximisation of polite beliefs. For example, the direct command *Have a drink* appears to be impolite by restricting the hearer's freedom of action, but in fact it maximises the polite belief that having a drink is favourable to the target; therefore it can be polite. There is no parallel for this in Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness model, which orientates to the redress of face, and thus hits a problem when it comes to phenomena such as compliments.[1] The PP consists of the following maxims:

1) TACT MAXIM (in impositives and commissives)
(a) Minimize cost to other [(b) Maximize benefit to other]
2) GENEROSITY MAXIM (in impositives and commissives)
(a) Minimize benefit to self [(b) Maximize cost to self]
3) APPROBATION MAXIM (in expressives and assertives)
(a) Minimize dispraise of other [(b) Maximize praise of other]
4) MODESTY MAXIM (in expressives and assertives)
(a) Minimize praise of self [(b) Maximize dispraise of self]
5) AGREEMENT MAXIM (in assertives)

[1] Compliments are exclusively face-threatening in Brown and Levinson's model but can be face-boosting in Leech's model (2014: 36).

> (a) Minimize disagreement between self and other [(b) Maximize agreement between self and other]
> 6) SYMPATHY MAXIM (in assertives)
> (a) Minimize antipathy between self and other [(b) Maximize sympathy between self and other]
>
> (Leech 1983, p. 132)

Some scholars have criticized Leech (1983) for postulating a universal theory of politeness (e.g., Wierzbicka (1991/2003, p. ix). However, Leech did not claim that these maxims apply universally to all cultures; rather they can be weighted differently in different cultures (1983, p. 150). A more legitimate criticism is that Leech dwells almost entirely on English data, and builds theory in the light of these data (cf. Terkourafi 2015, p. 958). Leech was aware of this issue, which is one important reason why he wrote Leech (2007), drawing examples particularly from Chinese, Korean and Japanese, demonstrating that his framework, in somewhat revised form, can be successfully applied to other languages. This is not to say, of course, that all the details have been fully tested. Another criticism, this time from Brown and Levinson (1987: 4), is that Leech's framework is unconstrained, involving a proliferation of maxims. Leech's response to this accusation is along the lines of the 'pot calling the kettle black': Brown and Levinson's framework contains a proliferation of strategies too (2014, p. 85 fn. 6).

More recently, Leech's 2014 book *The Pragmatics of Politeness* saw the restatement of his PP, along with the bolstering of the formal or pragmalinguistic side of his work, which he saw as something of a corrective to the recent concentration of studies on the "big-picture view of how politeness relates to social behaviour and society in general" (2014, p. ix). The PP is described as a "constraint observed in human communicative behaviour, influencing us to avoid communicative discord or offence, and maintain or enhance communicative concord or comity" (2014: 87). Following on from this, the PP is recast as a General Strategy of Politeness (GSP): "In order to be polite, *S* expresses or implies meanings that associate a favourable value with what pertains to *O* or associates an unfavourable value with what pertains to *S*" (*S* = self, speaker; *O* = typically the addressee, but could be a third party) (2014, p. 90). Maxims, now 10 of them, are considered more specific realisations of the GSP, and are couched in terms of giving a high or low value to the wants, qualities, obligations, opinions or feelings of *S* or *O* (Leech, 2014, p. 91-98).

3.3 Politeness strategies

The notion of "pragmatic strategy" is adopted by Leech (1983), because of its focus "on a goal-oriented speech situation, in which S uses language in order to produce a particular effect in the mind of H" (1983, p. 15). However, despite the fact that Leech's model is very much oriented to linguistic acts as the means by which certain goals are attained, much of it focuses on pragmatic principles as communicative constraints, not on elaborating pragmatic strategies, and this is also true of his account of politeness. In contrast, the notion of strategy is central to Brown and Levinson's (1987) model of politeness, just as it is with early work on impoliteness (e.g., Culpeper 1996; Lachenicht 1980). Like Leech (1983), they have in mind "rational means-ends reasoning" (1987, p. 7). Their notion of strategy involves the meaning whereby "people can be seen to be doing something before doing, or in order to do, something else" (1987, p. 8). They elaborate:

> We continue to use the word 'strategy', despite its connotations of conscious deliberation, because we can think of no other word that will imply a rational element while covering both (a) innovative plans of action, which may still be (but need not

> be) unconscious, and (b) routines – that is, previously constructed plans whose original rational origin is still preserved in their construction, despite their present automatic application as ready-made programmes. (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 85)

Their idea of mapping out logical, rational choices in order to achieve particular goals is typical of the pragmatics of that era (for plan-based approaches to speech acts, see, for example, Cohen and Perrault 1979). In their scheme, one choice is between doing the FTA and not doing the FTA. They propose five "superstrategies" (at various levels of indirectness) that are systematically related to the degree of face threat. A rational actor − a "Model Person" (Brown and Levinson 1987) − will select an appropriate superstrategy to counterbalance the expected face threat. The superstrategies are, from direct to most indirect: 1. Bald-on-record, 2. Positive politeness, 3. Negative politeness, 4. Off-record, and 5. Don't do the FTA. For the superstrategies Positive politeness, Negative politeness and Off-record, they develop charts, which display hierarchies of strategies embedded within the particular superstrategy. For example, "claiming common ground" is a lower order strategy embedded within the superstrategy of positive politeness. They use the term "output strategies" to denote "the final choice of linguistic means to realise the highest goals" (1987, p. 92). Thus, for example, claiming common ground might be achieved by the output strategy of presupposing common ground.

Part (b) of Brown and Levinson's quotation above deserves a closer look. Although the elaboration of politeness routines and formulae as output strategies constitutes a large part of their work, there is in fact very little discussion of what these are, though there is a nod towards the idea that they might involve conventions which themselves may – they cite Lewis (1969) – involve rationality (1989, p. 85-87). This stands in contrast with the approach taken by, for example, Gumperz (1982):

> I believe that understanding presupposes conversational involvement. A general theory of discourse strategies must therefore gain by specifying the linguistic and socio-cultural knowledge that needs to be shared if conversational involvement is to be maintained, and then go on to deal with what it is about the nature of conversational inference that makes for cultural, subcultural and situational specificity of interpretation. (p.3)

Instead of an emphasis on the speaker using particular means to pursue particular ends, Gumperz stresses the "shared" "linguistic and socio-cultural knowledge" that enables understandings of strategies in conversation to proceed. Indeed, Gumperz puts conversational interaction at the heart of his model. The first sentence of his book reads: "Communication is a social activity requiring the coordinated efforts of two or more individuals" (1982, p. 1). In contrast, Brown and Levinson's model is about the *speaker* as a rational agent (or Model Person) selecting strategies to achieve particular goals. The role of the hearer interacting with the speaker is barely mentioned.

Furthermore, Brown and Levinson's (1987) emphasis on strategies as rational choices presents practical problems. Some output strategies, such as "Use in-group identity markers" and "Minimize the imposition", which fall under Positive and Negative politeness, respectively, can involve the same linguistic expressions,[2] making their theory practically unfalsifiable when applied to conversational data (Terkourafi 2001, p. 91-92). Moreover, while output strategies such as "Impersonalize S and H: Avoid the pronouns 'I' and 'you'", are quite specific, others, such as "intensify interest to H" are more like "umbrella categories"

[2] Brown and Levinson discuss the Tzeltal particle *'ala* as an example of both (1987: 109, 177-8).

for the wide array of specific linguistic resources that might fall within them. All those specific linguistic resources within the umbrella categories are equally valid, as rational choices. It is impractical to list them all, yet there is no mechanism for selecting between them, hence the umbrella category.

There is, however, an alternative way of approaching (im)politeness strategies that focuses, in the spirit of Gumperz, much more on the idea that a strategy involves something that is routine, that is part of socio-cultural knowledge within a particular community. From the point of view of the theorist, the emphasis here is not on mapping out a logical means-ends framework of choices and then testing it against the data, but rather on analysing the data and letting the routine "strategies" emerge from it. Moreover, as regularity is a key part of routinization, it is perfectly possible to operationalize the identification of output strategies, and to order them in terms of which are most entrenched. More recent work in (im)politeness has dealt with these issues. Terkourafi's (2001) frame-based approach to politeness, for example, acknowledges that not all output strategies listed by Brown and Levinson are capitalized upon in every language/culture or situation. Instead, some will be more frequent than others, creating an asymmetry in terms of social markedness between them, and the output strategies that are frequently used in some situations will tend to pass unnoticed in those situations, achieving politeness by default (via generalised implicature; see the next section), while other output strategies that occur rarely will tend to be noticed and will require more effort to achieve politeness (by means of particularised implicature). This approach shifts the emphasis away from a rational calculation of implicatures on a case-by-case basis, toward the notion of a more or less automatic choice among a range of alternatives prefigured by society. Terkourafi (2005a) suggests that this proposal is compatible with Brown and Levinson's universalizing scheme: Brown and Levinson outlined the range of possible strategies for expressing politeness in different language/cultures, while the frame-based approach tries to account for those strategies out of this general scheme that are actually enlisted to the service of politeness at a particular time and place.

3.4 Politeness implicatures

In early accounts that defined politeness in relation to the CP (Brown and Levinson 1987; Lakoff 1973; Leech 1983), politeness was conceptualised as a particularised implicature, providing a face-related explanation of why the speaker chose to phrase her utterance the way that she did in the context at hand. One problem with this idea is that politeness can also be conveyed without deviations from the CP. Saying "Good morning" to one's colleague at the beginning of the working day can be "polite", but it does not involve a deviation from the CP. Kallia (2004) develops a politeness maxim as part of the CP, rather than as a separate entity involved in 'trade-offs' with the CP, as Leech (1983) would have it. She proposes that non-deviant politeness can be accounted for in terms of particularised implicatures which flow from observing the CP, including its politeness maxim. However, the suggestion of a politeness maxim runs into problems of its own; not least that, by claiming that politeness is a particularised implicature, it inextricably ties politeness to the speaker's intention – an assumption that has come under much scrutiny in (im)politeness research (e.g. Haugh 2007b). Moreover, it fails to account for the intuition that there is a qualitative difference between instances where politeness is generated without deviating from the CP (cases of observation of the politeness maxim, as it were) and those instances where a deviation is clearly involved (cases of flouting the politeness maxim), since they all equally generate particularised implicatures.

A different attempt to account for politeness as particularised implicature adopts Relevance Theory (e.g., Christie 2007; Escandell-Vidal 1996; Jary 1998). According to Jary (1998, p. 9), politeness is only communicated as an implicature (that is, it is relevant enough to be worth the addressee's while to process), if it communicates some assumptions that are incompatible with the hearer's current assumptions about his relationship with the speaker, either because it turns out that the speaker holds the hearer in higher regard than the hearer had previously thought, or because it turns out that she in fact holds him in lower regard. In both cases, an implicature[3] (of politeness, in the former; of impoliteness, in the latter case) will be drawn and a corresponding (polite or impolite) intention will be attributed to the speaker. Contrary to Brown and Levinson, for whom "politeness has to be communicated and the absence of communicated politeness may, *ceteris paribus*, be taken as absence of the polite attitude" (1987, p. 5), Jary's account predicts that politeness is communicated only part of the time. More often than not, the use of polite expressions in conversation fails to generate an implicature because it meets interlocutors' expectations in context and so passes unnoticed.

Theorists before Jary drew a distinction between 'anticipated' or 'unmarked' and 'inferred' or 'marked' politeness (e.g., Escandell-Vidal 1996; Fraser 1990; Kasper 1990; Watts 1992); however, they did not go into details about the pragmatic mechanisms by which politeness is achieved in the former case. The strength of Jary's account lies in detailing two inferential paths for the processing of polite expressions, depending on whether the assumptions they make manifest are relevant to interlocutors (and therefore noticed by them) or not. However, as Terkourafi (2001, p. 144 fn. 50) notes, Jary's account fails to address how face is brought about when politeness is *not* communicated by means of an implicature. This is problematic because it reduces face to a static notion, one that can pre-exist interaction and remain unaffected by it, whereas much recent research has argued that face is emergent in interaction and omni-relevant to it (e.g., Arundale 2007; Terkourafi 2007). As such, a 'vehicle' for politeness meanings is needed, even in those cases where politeness passes unnoticed. The notion of generalised conversational implicature, Terkourafi (2001) argues, offers such a vehicle.

According to Grice (1975), generalized conversational implicatures (henceforth GCIs) arise in normal circumstances by the simple use of a certain form of words. That is, rather than requiring contextual support to come about in the first place, GCIs accompany the use of certain expressions, *unless* they are unwarranted in the context at hand. The idea that politeness may be achieved with the help of GCIs is pursued in Terkourafi's (2001, 2005a, 2009) frame-based approach to politeness.[4] Based on transcriptions of over 100 hours of conversation in various settings in Cypriot Greek, where she observed that certain expressions were overwhelmingly used to perform particular speech acts compared to other, semantically equivalent expressions, she suggested that, as a result of their frequent use in particular situational contexts, linguistic expressions can become conventionalised (i.e. expected) in those contexts. The notion of conventionalisation relative to a context is an important one because it brings societal norms (or habits) to bear upon interlocutors' situated judgements about politeness. Encountering an expression which is conventionalised (to the hearer's mind) relative to the context at hand triggers a GCI (always in the hearer's mind) that "the speaker is being polite". This GCI, however, does not by itself amount to politeness. For that to happen, and the speaker's and addressee's faces to be mutually brought about in interaction, a further step is necessary, whereby the hearer comes to hold the belief that the speaker *is* polite. That belief may (but need not) follow as a perlocutionary effect of the

[3] Recall that in Relevance Theory, implicatures can only be particularized. RT does not acknowledge generalised conversational implicatures.
[4] Leech (2014: 71-74) also discusses default implicatures in relation to politeness but does not develop these ideas further.

speaker's use of the conventionalised expression in the relevant context.[5] Politeness, that is, in Terkourafi's account, is a belief that the hearer holds about the speaker and it may arise as a perlocutionary effect of the speaker's (linguistic) behaviour on the addressee either by recognizing the speaker's polite intention, or by attributing one to her when none was in fact present. Thus, while a GCI of politeness can give rise to politeness, it is not a necessary, or even a sufficient, condition for it. Moreover, politeness as a perlocutionary effect may follow from a particularised implicature of politeness, in the less frequent case that an expression is used in a context relative to which it is not conventionalised *and* evaluated as polite by the hearer in that context. Thus, Terkourafi's account acknowledges both particularised and generalised implicatures of politeness, although it reserves the lion's share for the latter and none of them amount to politeness (or impoliteness) by themselves.

Recently, Haugh (2007b, 2008, 2015) has used the term "politeness implicature" (as well as "impoliteness implicature", "mock politeness implicature" and so on) to refer to "instances where a polite stance or attitude appears to be indicated through implying something" (2015: 2). As Haugh explains, to claim that politeness is an interactional practice along these lines is different from claiming that it is itself the content of an implicature. Rather, politeness (or impoliteness, mock politeness and so on, as the case might be) is an evaluation that the speaker and addressee mutually reach by sequentially interpreting each other's utterances as they occur against the background of their prior experience both as members of society at large and with each other. Haugh's use of the term "implicature" to describe this interactional practice is clearly an extension of the original Gricean term (see section 2.2) and rather closer to Matsumoto's notion of "interactional implicatures," referring to "an unexpected choice [that] will invite interactional awkwardness and invoke inferences" (1989, p. 210; cf. Haugh 2008, p. 442). Matsumoto proposed this notion to describe honorification phenomena in Japanese, where it is the *in*appropriate use of expressions in context that attracts attention and can invite (usually unwanted) inferences. On the other hand, their appropriate use passes unnoticed, merely confirming the interactional *status quo*, so to speak. In this sense, Matsumoto's account is an early precursor of (and subject to the same criticism as) Jary's relevance-theoretic account, since on both accounts only an unexpected use of an expression generates inferences related to im/politeness. By contrast, in the accounts by Terkourafi and Haugh, politeness, as either a perlocutionary effect or an evaluation, can result from both unexpected and expected uses of an expression in context (i.e., uses that meet interlocutors' expectations given what they know or assume about each other in the context at hand). Consequently, these recent accounts better respond to the nowadays widely held view that face is continuously brought about through interaction, and to various degrees.

We close this section with a couple of thoughts on the Gricean account that we expect will occupy scholars of im/politeness in the future. The beauty of the Gricean account is that it delimits what a pragmatic account needs to deal with. As Levinson (2000, p. 13) notes, "meaning$_{nn}$ (or something of that sort) draws an outer boundary on the communicational effects that a theory of communication is responsible for". However, as an account of communication – to put it bluntly – it is lousy, partly because it is thus restricted. Some difficulties include:

- How do we know what the speaker might have intended? As several theorists have pointed out (e.g. Gibbs 1999; Terkourafi 2001, p. 19), intentions are not stable private acts that are easy to grasp, but rather malleable constructs that are formed in

[5] On the notion of perlocutionary effect see section 2.1 above. The idea that politeness is a perlocutionary effect was first proposed by Fraser and Nolen (1981: 96).

interaction and may even be revised in light of future events. This is not necessarily a problem: we can focus on perceived intentions. But note that we are now aligning ourselves with the position that "how an implicature is understood by hearers is just as important as what the speaker might have ''intended'' in terms of what implicature arises in an interaction" (Haugh 2007b, p. 93; see also Clark 1996, for how meaning is co-constructed between speaker and hearer).

- Are we just restricted to conversational implicature? What about other kinds of implication/inference? Haugh (2015) most clearly moves in this direction. Presaging Haugh's exploration of related notions, Mooney (2004) develops an interesting proposal that the CP can involve, in addition to implicatures, social implications. Her basic idea is that how you orientate to the CP may in itself convey social implications. For example, choosing to flout the CP to be ironic or humorous may convey intimacy. Incidentally, one characteristic of implicatures that sets them apart from implications seems to be the fact that they can be more easily cancelled by the addition of extra information; they are more easily defeasible (Haugh 2007b, p. 91).

Some of these problems do not in fact lie at Grice's door. As Arundale (2008, p. 235) remarks, Grice was offering a philosophical account of meaning, not of communication. It is subsequent scholars who extended his account to communication (and, indeed, politeness).

3.5 (In)directness

Implicatures of whatever type, involve, in the Gricean perspective, conveying extra speaker-messages indirectly. It is tempting to assume that the adoption of the Gricean account by the classical politeness models partly reflects the fact that, at least in middle-class British English culture, indirectness, inexplicitness, circumlocution, incompleteness, obliquity and so on are often associated with being polite. Grice offered the leading pragmatic theory for explaining such indirectness; it was a natural choice. By the same token, directness, explicitness, etc. are associated with being impolite. Brown and Levinson are most explicit in this regard: their hierarchy of strategies ranging from Bald on record to Don't do the FTA (see section 3.3 above) assumes a uni-directional relationship between politeness and indirectness, whereby the politeness of an utterance increases proportionately to its degree of indirectness. Theoretically then, there should be few cases of impoliteness involving implicitness of any kind. This is not borne out empirically, as shown by Culpeper (2011, p.155-194); and, in fact, Leech's (1983) framework incorporates the idea that indirectness increases impoliteness in certain circumstances.

The idea that politeness is linguistically realized as indirectness has been most forcefully challenged by cross-cultural work (e.g., Blum-Kulka 1987; Holtgraves and Yang 1990), which showed that, at least in some cultures, a premium can be placed on relatively more direct expressions (conventionalised indirectness), while the most veiled expressions (off-record indirectness) may be felt to be imposing or manipulative in their own right. Ultimately, however, this idea is problematic for the same reasons that led to the abandonment of classical speech act theory and of particularised implicatures and their replacement by more discursive and interactional models: the fact that it reduces politeness to a matter of individual rational cost-effect calculation,[6] with little or no concern for the social context in which evaluations of im/politeness are being made.

Moreover, the uni-directional association of politeness with indirectness fails because it turns out that indirectness itself is multifunctional. Contrary to theoretical prediction,

[6] This assumption also underlies recent game-theoretic accounts of indirect speech (Pinker et al. 2008; Lee and Pinker 2010).

indirectness can also arise, not out of rational calculation and interlocutors' wish to 'play it safe', but as an uncalculated reflex of their socio-cognitive affinity and shared sociocultural assumptions, as happens between intimates or in high context cultures (Hall 1977). Developing a complementary account of indirectness along these lines, Terkourafi (2014) proposed that indirect speech can arise "by accident" or "by design," the latter including not only "strategic" but also "enabling" instances of indirect speech, which in turn cover speaking indirectly as the "most economical" option (a kind of conversational shorthand for communicating multiple messages at once), or indeed as the "only" option (as in the case of metaphorical utterances about feelings, which eschew literal expression). One consequence of this account is that direct and indirect speech can be indistinguishable in terms of effort invested and effects achieved: either can be effortless and either can produce additional effects. This highlights a central problem with the notion of indirectness, that is, the extent to which, by taking for granted the priority of one meaning over another, it ignores the fact that all meanings are equally local and context-dependent (Silverstein 2010). It is indeed similar concerns about the notion of indirectness that led Haugh (2015) to shift the focus of his analysis from this over-stretched notion to im/politeness implicatures instead.

3.6 Context and contextual variables

If our discussion has made one thing clear, that should be that context is all-important to assessments of im/politeness. Even a bare imperative directive *Shut up* can be polite, if said slowly and evenly with a kind tone of voice to one's chatty sweetheart while gazing at the moon;[7] while the most indirect refusal of an invitation can be eminently impolite, as with George Bernard Shaw's infamous reply to a hostess, who stated that on a certain day she would be "At home," that "So will G. Bernard Shaw" (Rees 1999; reported in Cutting 2002:15). Context, whether understood as the context of situation, the interlocutors' relative positioning on the power-solidarity dimension, or the wider culture at large, features in theories of politeness from the start.

The first concerted attempt to theorise the effects of context on politeness assessments is due to Brown and Levinson, who proposed that three sociological variables, Distance, Power, and Ranking of the imposition, jointly regulate the degree of politeness appropriate to the performance of a face-threatening act. The first two, inspired by Brown and Gilman's (1960) earlier analysis of "The pronouns of Power and Solidarity" in several European languages, relate to the relationship between speaker and addressee and capture the distance between them on the horizontal (solidarity) and vertical (power) planes, respectively; while the third relates to the act performed and reflects the degree to which this involves an imposition in the culture at hand. Later theorists criticised Brown and Levinson's scheme for being either too rigid (for instance, by failing to acknowledge the mutual inter-dependence of these variables; e.g., Tannen and Kakkava 1992), or not comprehensive enough; Slugoski and Turnbull (1988), for instance, claimed that it fails to incorporate 'liking' or interpersonal affect. Despite these criticisms, Distance, Power, and Ranking of the imposition feature regularly in studies of (im)politeness in a variety of cultures.

One problem for empirical implementations of these variables is that the definitions that Brown and Levinson provide are very broad, and may at times lead to counter-intuitive results—as when they claim that both frequency of interaction and similarity enter into D assessments, as do "measures of social distance based on stable social attributes" (1987, p. 76-77). The relative abstractness of these definitions has led subsequent researchers to interpret them in different ways, while Brown and Levinson's extensive discussion of English, Tamil and Tzeltal examples unfortunately does not systematically relate these back

[7] Example courtesy of Bruce Fraser (pers. comm.)

to the three sociological variables they proposed. A further difficulty lies in the fact that, according to Brown and Levinson, it is interlocutors' internalised, subjective assessments of D, P and R, not some objectively verifiable measure of them, that enter into politeness calculations (1987, p. 74-76). However, objectively verifiable external measures, such as set assumptions about what values of these variables apply to particular social roles (teacher, classmate, waiter, policeman, etc.) are exactly what empirical studies have had to rely on, whether working with data from observation or eliciting their own, since interlocutors' own internalised assessments are not open to scrutiny and we know of no studies that have attempted to independently elicit participants' reports about these variables' values.

At the opposite extreme of Brown and Levinson's highly abstract generalisations about Distance, Power and Ranking, some recent work has emphasized the importance of the micro-context to attributions of (im)politeness, including participants' body language, their prior knowledge about each other, and the sequential placement of their utterances in the unfolding conversation (see the arguments for the discursive approach in Mills and van der Bom 2015). Clearly, (im)politeness is ultimately a subjective evaluation and, as the examples at the start of this section also suggest, close attention to the minutiae of the context can be paramount to understanding why a certain utterance was felt to be polite or not. Yet, a possible danger of reserving all explanation until the facts are in is that (im)politeness is reduced to an ad hoc judgment with a concomitant loss in predictive power and the ability to generalise across contexts. That seems to be wrong, especially in light of the fact that as speakers we have intuitions about what is polite in a certain context and what is not, which suggests that we have some internalised knowledge about it. It is also wrong in light of empirical findings that particular (im)politeness acts tend to involve a recurring set of expressions, which we earlier called "conventionalised" (Culpeper 2011; Terkourafi 2001).

One way around this impasse is to seek an intermediate level of context that lies halfway between the most abstract sociological variables and the unique contexts of occurrence of individual interactions. One such notion is that of schematic or "minimal" contexts (Terkourafi 2001, 2009), which retain information about the gender, age and social class of the interlocutors, the relationship between them, the setting of the exchange, and the sequential placement of an utterance (whether it is the first or a subsequent occurrence of an act), but with all other contextual specificities removed. It is in relation to such minimal contexts that linguistic expressions become conventionalised. Terkourafi (2009) calls the combination of a conventionalised expression with a minimal context a "frame."

4. A case study

An opportune example of the interplay between macro-social factors and micro-contexts, including the speaker's intentions, in shaping whether and to what extent linguistic behavior is interpreted as polite is provided by the distinction between familiar and polite/respectful address commonly referred to as the T/V distinction (Brown and Gilman 1960). T/V pronominal systems constitute an instance of honorification, the study of which led scholars to emphasize the social context of the interaction and the extent to which this, rather than speakers' intentions, may be driving linguistic behaviour. Ide (1989) used the term "discernment" to refer to such quasi-mandatory linguistic behavior, while Matsumoto (1989) coined the term "interactional implicatures," discussed earlier, to describe the extra meanings generated when speakers deviate from it. More recently, Leech (2014) suggested a distinction between "bivalent" and "trivalent" politeness in an effort precisely to account for the fact that some instances of polite behavior (T/V usage in particular) seem to be dictated by the interlocutors' relationship irrespective of the activity they are engaged in at the moment, while others are more closely geared to the goals of the ongoing interaction. Leech claims that, for this reason, bivalent politeness falls under sociolinguistics, which "tends to deal with variables which are relatively stable across time […] such as the gender, age, social networks and social relations as measured according to B[rown] and L[evinson]'s P and D factors" (2014, p. 91), while trivalent politeness, being a kind of "dynamic goal-driven communicative behaviour […which…] is likely to vary between one encounter and another" is more properly seen as the domain of pragmatics. Nevertheless, as has been claimed by, among others, Kádár and Mills (2013) – and is also acknowledged by Leech himself (ibid.) — the two types of politeness are not completely separate. Some examples from the use of the T/V system in Greek can help illustrate this.

T/V pronominal systems are found in many languages, which use variable pronominal address to index the social relationship between speaker and addressee. Typically, they involve an alternation between second singular and second plural address, where the non-literalness of the plural form is also brought to the fore by irregular patterns of verbal agreement that may be grammaticalised, as in French and Greek, though other forms (e.g., third person singular or specialized forms), as in Italian and Bengali, are also possible. Brown and Levinson discuss T/V systems under their negative politeness super-strategy, as an instance of impersonalising the addressee (1987, p. 198-203). That is, by treating the addressee as a member of a larger group and avoiding to single him/her out, V forms constitute the addressee's negative face (his/her desire to remain free from imposition) and as such engender the potential of expressing politeness. While that potential is formally present in the language, however, that does not mean that it is always consistently drawn upon by all speakers of the language and in all situations.

A closer look at T/V usage in Standard Greek, for instance, suggests that the prototypical pattern of asymmetrical T-V address between interlocutors of unequal power (with the less powerful giving V and receiving T) and of symmetric V-V address reflecting either the formality of the setting or the lack of familiarity between interlocutors (symmetric T-T address being used otherwise), identified already by Brown and Gilman (1960), is most closely adhered to in urban speech and by the middle and upper social strata.[8] Beyond social stratification, regional variation can also be important. In Terkourafi's (2001) Cypriot Greek data, V forms were regularly found only in two situations, radio and TV interviews and when addressing speakers of Standard Greek, indicating that their primary function in this non-standard Greek variety is to index code-switches into the Standard. Nevertheless, Terkourafi also identified a range of contexts, involving middle-class customers addressing an unfamiliar service provider, in which V forms were frequent, suggesting that V forms are becoming 'nativised' as an index of politeness in Cypriot Greek as well.[9] Similar regularities of occurrence between linguistic expressions and contexts of use give rise to generalised implicatures of politeness, whereby the politeness of a linguistic expression does not have to be actively inferred by the hearer but is rather taken for granted considering the "minimal context" of the exchange (see section 3.6 above). Further, such regularities can actually be constitutive of speakers' social identities – as when a middle-class speaker of Cypriot Greek uses a V form to address an unfamiliar service-provider, thereby providing tangible linguistic evidence of his class membership.

However, this does not mean that an implicature of politeness is excluded in all other situations in Cypriot Greek. Nor is every utterance of a second person plural form in Standard Greek necessarily polite either – or else, contrary to what we claimed earlier, politeness would be semanticised. Bakakou-Orfanou (1989, p. 205) cites the following example of a

[8] It is a known limitation of Brown and Gilman's work that their conclusions reflect the middle class speech of their questionnaire respondents.

[9] This shift and the pragmatic mechanisms it involves are taken up in Terkourafi (2005b).

second person plural form said by a daughter to her mother in Standard Greek:

(1)	*θa*	*mas*	*epitrépsete*	*na*	*páme*	*sinemá?*
	Will	us	allow-2pl	to	go-1pl	sinema?

‘Will you allow us to go to the cinema?’

Bakakou-Orfanou calls this an ironic use, indicating the daughter’s annoyance at some preceding remarks by her mother. In this case, features of the preceding discourse override the generalised implicature of politeness that normally accompanies V forms in Standard Greek, giving rise to a particularised implicature of impoliteness instead. A V form addressed by a niece to her older aunt similarly drew criticism in Cypriot Greek (cf. the discussion in Terkourafi, 2005b: 297-299). In this case, the V form was evaluated positively by the addressee (the aunt), but negatively by another family member who happened to be present. This illustrates how the previous experience as well as personal allegiances of interlocutors can lead to different evaluations of the same utterance, i.e. to different particularised implicatures, of politeness and of impoliteness respectively. On all these occasions, features of the unique, micro-context override the preferred interpretation of V forms in Standard Greek and in Cypriot Greek respectively, yielding particularised implicatures of politeness or impoliteness, as the case might be.

5. Summary and future directions

This chapter has described the fundamentally pragmatic nature of the classic theories of politeness. They deployed concepts articulated in theories of pragmatics, especially speech act and implicature, but also grappled with directness, strategy and context. In referring to “classic theories”, we must urge caution. As we have pointed out along the way, although these theories share some features, there are important differences amongst them. Leech (1983, 2014), for example, is not restricted to the redressive side of politeness, as are Brown and Levinson (1987). Much of our discussion has been designed to explore the limitations such pragmatic foundations have for work on politeness (e.g., the difficulty in accounting for anticipated phenomena), and, moreover, to consider the modifications and proposals that later scholars have enacted to remedy those limitations (e.g., the deployment of generalised implicatures). In doing this we may have given the impression that (a) those classic politeness theories are of little value, and (b), more generally, a pragmatic approach to politeness is at best passé, at worst doomed to problems. Neither is the case. Regarding the former, we can do no better than quote the words of Miriam Locher and Richard Watts, two scholars who have been, in fact, in the vanguard of criticisms of classic politeness approaches:

> The Brown and Levinson theory [...] provides a breadth of insights into human behaviour which no other theory has yet offered and it has served as a touchstone for researchers who felt the need to go beyond it. […] it is clearly in a class of its own in terms of its comprehensiveness, operationalizability, thoroughness and level of argumentation. (Locher and Watts, 2005, p. 9-10)

Regarding the latter, we already noted that, in its quest for greater coverage and increased flexibility, (im)politeness research has increasingly veered outside of pragmatics, most notably toward the fields of sociology and communication. Yet, at the same time as researchers in (im)politeness seem to be looking elsewhere, researchers in pragmatics have turned their gaze to (im)politeness phenomena with a renewed interest for what their analysis can contribute to experimental and formal pragmatic research. One such exciting development concerns the interpretation of scalar implicatures (utterances involving lexical items such as *some* vs. *all*), where the usual inference from the use of the informationally weaker term that the stronger term does not apply has been claimed not to arise in face-threatening contexts (Bonnefon & Villejoubert 2006; Bonnefon et al. 2009; Feeney & Bonnefon 2012). While shown to hold in a series of experimental tasks, this hypothesis allows for significant refinement in terms of the exact processes by which implicature generation proceeds in these circumstances (for an alternative relevance-theoretic analysis, see Mazzarella 2015).

Another promising line of research is the investigation of the impact of the interlocutors' momentary emotional state (as distinct from interpersonal affect or how much they 'like' each other) on their assessments of (im)politeness. Using offline experimental tasks, Vergis (2015; see also Vergis & Terkourafi 2015) found evidence of a negativity bias whereby a negative emotional state such as being indignant with the addressee consistently led raters to attribute a face-threatening intention to the speaker. This is interesting because it opens up the possibility that factors until now considered too random to systematically include under descriptions of context, may interface with processes of implicature generation in a more principled manner than previously thought.

Finally, (im)politeness has also been the topic of recent research in game-theoretic pragmatics (Van Rooi 2003; McCready & Asher 2014; Quinley 2012). Here, researchers have tried to account for im/politeness as rational behaviour in both cooperative and non-cooperative contexts by proposing increasingly complex formalizations intended to capture an array of micro- and macro-considerations. "A key insight" of this line of research, as two of its main proponents explain, "is that politeness crucially can be taken to involve reputation effects which in turn can arise only in the context of repeated games; this means that the notion of repeated interaction is a key one for understanding polite behaviour" (McCready and Asher 2014, p. 70). Though at one level of remove from the spontaneous conversational data that have typically occupied scholars of (im)politeness, this recent research attests to the richness of (im)politeness phenomena and their potential to continue fuelling pragmatic research into the future.

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