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**Author:** Anna Bełza

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# **A Questionnaire-based Comparative Study of Irish English and Polish Speech Act of Requesting**

Anna Belza

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Faculty of Philology, University of  
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requirements for the degree of  
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of linguistics

Advisor: Prof. Dr. Hab. Piotr Kakietek

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**Studium porównawcze aktu mowy  
wyrażania próśb w angielszczyźnie  
irlandzkiej i języku polskim –  
– analiza ankiet**

Anna Bełza

Praca napisana pod kierunkiem:  
Prof. dr. hab. Piotra Kakietka

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# CONTENTS

<b>Abbreviations</b> .....	5
<b>Introduction</b> .....	7
<b>1. Contrastive Linguistics</b> .....	<b>11</b>
1.1. Terminological issues .....	11
1.2. Historical background .....	13
<b>2. Speech acts</b> .....	<b>22</b>
2.1. Speech Acts – philosophical background .....	22
2.2. Classification of Speech Acts .....	24
2.2.1. The Speech Act Theory of Austin .....	24
2.2.2. Searle’s classification of Speech Acts .....	33
2.3. Direct and Indirect Speech Acts .....	39
2.4. Summary .....	42
<b>3. Conversational principles</b> .....	<b>44</b>
3.1. The Cooperative Principle of Grice .....	44
3.2. Sperber and Wilson’s Relevance Theory .....	47
3.3. Theories of politeness .....	50
3.3.1. Lakoff’s rules of politeness .....	51
3.3.2. Leech’s Politeness Principle .....	52
3.3.3. Brown and Levinson’s Theory of Politeness .....	58
3.4. Culture, language and politeness in Ireland and Poland .....	64
3.5. Summary .....	72
<b>4. A Contrastive Sketch of English and Polish Requests</b> .....	<b>74</b>
4.1. The notion of a request and its classification .....	74
4.2. Taxonomy of English and Polish request strategies .....	82
4.2.1. Direct Level .....	85
4.2.1.1. Mood Derivable .....	85
4.2.1.2. Explicit Performatives .....	91
4.2.1.3. Hedged Performatives .....	94
4.2.1.4. Obligation Statements .....	95

4.2.1.5. Want Statements .....	96
4.2.2. Conventionally Indirect Level .....	96
4.2.2.1. Suggestory Formulae .....	98
4.2.2.2. Query Preparatory .....	99
4.2.3. Non-conventionally Indirect Level .....	104
4.2.3.1. Strong Hints .....	106
4.2.3.2. Mild Hints .....	106
4.3. Politeness and indirectness in requests .....	106
4.4. Summary .....	110
<b>5. Description of the project and data analysis .....</b>	<b>113</b>
5.1. Introduction .....	113
5.2. Research aim .....	114
5.3. Methodology .....	116
5.3.1. Informants .....	116
5.3.2. Data elicitation .....	116
5.3.3. Procedure .....	120
5.4. Research findings .....	121
5.4.1. Requests in Irish English and Polish .....	122
5.5. Summary of findings and conclusions .....	150
5.5.1. Request strategies .....	150
5.5.1.1. The use of direct request strategies .....	152
5.5.1.2. The use of conventionally indirect request strategies .....	153
5.5.1.3. The use of non-conventionally indirect request strategies .....	155
5.5.2. Internal modification .....	156
5.5.2.1. Syntactic downgrading .....	156
5.5.2.2. Lexical and phrasal downgrading .....	158
5.5.2.3. Upgraders .....	161
5.5.3. External modification .....	162
<b>6. General conclusions .....</b>	<b>164</b>
<b>Appendix – Questionnaires .....</b>	<b>167</b>
<b>References .....</b>	<b>169</b>
<b>Summary in Polish .....</b>	<b>188</b>

# Abbreviations

A	- a future act of H desired by S
ACS	- Applied Contrastive Studies
CA	- Contrastive Analysis
CAH	- Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis
CCSARP	- Cross Cultural Speech Act Realization Project
CDA	- Contrastive Discourse Analysis
CG	- Contrastive Grammar
CL	- Contrastive Linguistics
cp	- Contrastive Pragmatics
CP	- Cooperative Principle
CS	- Contrastive Studies
CSL	- Contrastive Sociolinguistics
D	- social distance
DCT	- Discourse Completion Test
FCs	- Felicity Conditions
FEq.	- formal equivalence
FL	- foreign language
FSA	- face saving act
FTA	- face-threatening act
H	- hearer
Il.C	- Illocutionary Component
IrE	- Irish English
L1	- first language
L2	- second language
LC	- Locutionary Component
MD	- Mood Derivable
MP	- Model Person
P	- power
PCA	- Pragmatic Contrastive Analysis

PEq.	- pragmatic equivalence
PM	- politeness marker
PP	- Politeness Principle
QP	- Query Preparatory
R	- ranking
RT	- Relevance Theory
S	- speaker
SA	- speech act
SARq	- Request as a Speech Act
SAT	- Speech Act Theory
SD	- social distance
SLA	- Second Language Acquisition
TCS	- Theoretical Contrastive Studies
TL	- target language

# INTRODUCTION

The subject matter of the present doctoral dissertation is the verbal realization of a particular speech act, this being the *Speech Act of Requesting* with reference to the phenomenon of linguistic politeness. The author shares Lubecka's (2000: 14) view that the verbal code is still the main means of conveying messages. Therefore, a study of communication behaviour should begin with an investigation of the verbal code. The various means of non-verbal communication such as body language (e.g. posture, body movements, facial expression, etc.) and intonation will be considered in only a few cases, i.e. when their appearance indicates some significant cross-cultural differences or when they actively influence the meaning of a verbally expressed request.

As suggested by, for example, Lubecka (2000) and Awedyk (2006), there exist several reasons for studying *polite speech acts*: first and foremost, their high frequency of occurrence in everyday conversation in comparison with *negative face framers* (for instance: insults, threats, warnings). Secondly, *polite speech acts* are examples of routine and ritualistic expressions due to their lexico-syntactic characteristics and their function in interchanges. Consequently their presence is of crucial importance from the relational point of view (Lubecka, 2000: 59-60). According to Goffman (1967), the main role of *polite speech acts* is relational. In addition, contrary to e.g. statements, *polite speech acts* play an interactive role in discourse, where the application of politeness formulae is strongly required. Moreover, while their presence might not be noticeable to the interlocutors, their absence in the conversation is instantly felt (Lubecka, 2000: 60). Furthermore, the strength of *polite speech acts* lies in their repetitive and conventionalised nature. This feature enables researchers to analyse them with relative ease and to draw some general conclusions pertaining to their syntax and typical usage in given contexts.

In this study, the author concentrates on one particular type of *polite speech act* – the speech act of requesting. This choice can be justified by the fact that



requests play a leading role in human interaction – a vital part of our communication revolves around our need to get somebody to do something. It is not only the frequency of appearance which gives the request a primary position in the whole linguistic repertoire of speech acts, but also its significance in successful communication within a particular speech community (cf. Awedyk, 2006).

The chief aim of this work is to provide a pragmatic contrastive analysis of requestive formulas in Irish English and Polish, emphasizing the differences and similarities in the structural form and content of the requests occurring in particular situational contexts. This study examines the strategies employed by native speakers of Irish English and Polish in their request realization (level of directness, internal and external modification). The motivating idea behind this inquiry is that the phenomenon of politeness, in particular with regard to the communicative act of requesting, is conceptualised differently in the two societies. The hypothesis is that Irish English speakers use more indirect request strategies (e.g. Barron, 2007; forthcoming) and that they tend to favour a negative politeness strategy, whereas Poles opt for more direct request strategies, which are typically associated with positive politeness strategy (Brown and Levinson, 1987; cf. Wierzbicka, 1991, 2003; Lubecka, 2000). This study was made in order to help the author answer the following questions: To what extent does a request realization differ in Irish English and Polish? How and why do these two languages differ or show similarities?

Due to the rather limited literature and research available on Irish English with respect to polite language in (inter)action, especially in the case of requests (cf. Barron, forthcoming; 2007; Barron and Schneider, 2005a), the theoretical part of this dissertation also includes examples of requests appearing in other dialects of the English language. Although, some recent studies have shown that Irish English and English English requests seem to be remarkably similar as regards strategies chosen by natives from Ireland and England (with Irish English being more indirect when modifying requests), the author of the present work is fully aware of the fact that there exist some cross-cultural differences among native speakers of various English dialects (cf. Chapter 3 of this study; Barron, 2007; forthcoming). However, these cultural differences are not drastic since history, language and culture are

shared by inhabitants of numerous English speaking countries all over the world to a greater or lesser extent. This assumption, however, would demand a thorough research, which falls beyond the scope of this study.

The instrument employed here in order to elicit requests and investigate polite behaviour was the Discourse Completion Test (DTC), which was modified to some extent for the purpose of this study (subsection 5.4. provides a detailed description of the research method). The English and the Polish versions of the questionnaire were constructed and then distributed among two groups of subjects, namely native Irish and Polish subjects respectively. The questionnaire was made up of a short description of five everyday speech situations, each of which specified the setting and the roles of participants; the informants were asked to make requests.

Structurally, the present study consists of five chapters and conclusions. Chapter One presents a historical background of *Contrastive Linguistics*. It also provides insight into the following basic concepts: *Contrastive Studies*, *Contrastive Analysis*, and *Contrastive Linguistics*.

In Chapter Two, two distinct philosophical theories of speech acts and speech acts classification are outlined. These are based on the works of Austin (1962) and Searle (1969, 1979). In this chapter, the reader is also introduced to the phenomenon of indirect speech acts with regard to the performance of the speech act of requesting.

Chapter Three deals with conversational principles, namely the *Cooperative Principle* of Grice (1975) and Sperber and Wilson's (1986) *Theory of Relevance*; it offers a presentation of relevant theories of politeness developed by Lakoff (1973), Leech (1983), and Brown and Levinson (1987). Politeness is crucial since it is used in most encounters to ensure successful communication and is consequently of great interest to those who study language in its social context. In this chapter we also provide a brief overview of research findings on cultural and politeness differences between Irish and Polish societies.

Chapter Four presents the nature of a request and is concerned with request strategies. It constitutes an in-depth contrastive analysis of request realization strategies in English language in general and in Polish based on data obtained from

published sociolinguistic literature. It examines the structural realization of requests from two perspectives: intracultural – within one speech community (i.e. native speakers of one language, sharing the values of one culture); and intercultural – between two speech communities (comparing the realization of requests in the two languages in question). Various requesting strategy types are grouped under the three headings relating to different levels of directness - direct, conventionally indirect and non-conventionally indirect.

Chapter Five puts forth the research design and the procedures for the study. It provides the comparative study of Irish English and Polish speech act of requesting based on the empirical material collected by means of a questionnaire distributed to Irish students enrolled at the National University of Ireland and Polish students at the University of Silesia and Pedagogical University of Kraków. The data is analysed employing an adapted version of the coding schemes used by Lubecka (2000) and the CCSARP (1989). Finally, the results for the speech act realization of requests are given, followed by a section of summary of findings and discussion. This work is rounded off with the last part – General Conclusions, which presents the main findings of the research.

# CHAPTER 1

## 1. Contrastive Linguistics

### 1.1. Terminological issues

The aim of contrastive investigation is to compare “linguistic and socio-cultural data across different languages (cross-linguistic / cultural perspective) or within individual languages (intra-linguistic / cultural perspective) in order to establish language-specific, typological and / or universal patterns, categories and features” (Gómez-González and Doval-Suárez, 2003: 19; cf. Oleksy, 1989; Johansson and Hofland, 1994; Altenberg and Granger 2002b).

In the current linguistic literature the adjectives *contrastive* or *comparative* co-occur with various head nouns such as: *Applied Contrastive Language Studies*, *Contrastive Linguistics*, *Comparative Historical Linguistics*, *Comparative Typological Linguistics*, *Contrastive Generative Grammar*, *Contrastive Pragmatics*, *Contrastive Discourse Analysis*, or *Contrastive Sociolinguistics*. It seems that the usage of these terms has been more or less intuitive and authors select them on the basis of their judgement – what they feel to be the most suitable description for the issue under discussion. A selective bibliography on contrastive linguistics can be found on the CoLLaTE (Contrastive Linguistics and Language Typology in Europe) website. Relevant terminology and the main trends in the field of contrastive linguistics are discussed by for example: Di Pietro (1971), Fisiak (1980, 1981b, 1983), James (1980), Jaszczolt (1995a, 1995b), Krzeszowski (1974, 1989, 1990), Rein (1983), Rusiecki (1976), and Sridhar (1981).

There exist several reasons behind this terminological jungle. Firstly, contrastive linguistics is not a unified field of study (cf. Johansson, 2003; Johansson and Hofland, 1994). The study may be theoretical, i.e. performed for its own sake, or it may be applied, i.e. performed for some specific purpose. The adjectives *contrastive* or

*comparative* have been assigned to disciplines traditionally considered to be related to theoretical linguistics (e.g. phonology, morphology, lexicology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, sociolinguistics), and also to those fields that have been traditionally associated with applied linguistics (e.g. language learning and teaching, translation and interpreting) (cf. Gómez-González and Doval-Suárez, 2003).

Secondly, as suggested by Krzeszowski (1989), this confusion is due to insufficient attention being paid to the theoretical framework of contrastive studies. Only one of the three steps constituting classical contrastive investigation, namely description, is dealt with by theoretical linguistics, while juxtaposition and analysis proper were, to a large extent, neglected, “since theoretical linguists were not interested in and contrastivists were not aware of any theoretical problems that might ensue from these two steps.” (ibid.: 58).

Thirdly, there seems to exist some misunderstanding concerning the scope of contrastive investigation pertaining to the three main terms, namely *contrastive studies* (CS), *contrastive linguistics* (CL), and *contrastive analysis* (CA).

The acronym CS is regarded by Krzeszowski (1989) as “the least marked one which fits all contexts in which other collocations with the adjective ‘contrastive’ are also appropriate.” (ibid.: 56). It appears to be the most general term, comprising both the linguistic and the extralinguistic (e.g. cultural, ethnographic, etc.) dimensions of contrastive research. Some linguists who adopt this comprehensive perspective are Fisiak (1980, 1984), Krzeszowski (1985, 1989), Marton (1979), to mention just a few.

CL is employed when speaking about the whole field of CS, both theoretical and applied and focusing more on the theoretical part.

Lastly, CA is often used interchangeably with the two aforementioned terms; however, as Krzeszowski (1989) points out, some authors try to limit its meaning to “that aspect of CS which deals with the *comparison proper* in contrast to the preliminary steps, i.e. individual descriptions of the phenomena to be compared and the search for principles of juxtaposition or the matching of equivalents across languages.” (ibid.: 57). CA refers here to ‘comparison proper’, which is the third step in the classical CS (description, juxtaposition, comparison proper).

## 1.2. Historical background

Comparing languages in order to discover similarities and differences must have been initiated when two or more languages first came into contact. This seems to be a natural phenomenon for foreign language (FL) learners and also something which language teachers often employ when explaining the target language (TL, also referred to as L2) structures or usage. Translators constitute another group of “spontaneous practical contrastive linguists”, as Jerzy Tomaszczyk (1993: 192) puts it. Lastly, such comparisons, mostly at the lexical and semantic level, contribute to the writing of bilingual dictionaries.

It is impossible to state when foreign languages first started to be taught and learned. However, we can assess that language teaching, translation and compilation of simple two-language word lists were all present in Old Babylonia following the Akkadian invasion of Sumer over four millennia ago. Furthermore, evidence exists that translation was done in Old Egypt a millennium before that.

In *Contrasting Languages. The Scope of Contrastive Linguistics* Tomasz P. Krzeszowski (1990) points out that “ca. 1000 A.D. Ælfric [of Eynsham, also known as Ælfric Grammaticus, Ælfric of Cerne and Ælfric the Homilist] wrote his *Grammatica*, a grammar of Latin and English, based on the implicit assumption that the knowledge of one language may facilitate the learning of another language.” (ibid.: 2).

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, John Hewes (1624) in his work *A perfect survey of the English tongue taken according to the use and analogie of the Latine*, stated that the knowledge of the native grammar may not only facilitate learning of a foreign language but also interfere with it. Other grammarians who used the idea of facilitation to adjust their grammars of English or of Latin to the requirements of speakers of different native languages were Howell (1662) and Coles (1675).

The word “contrast” itself, when applied to various phenomena across languages, was first used by James Pickbourne (1789). However, systematic written records of languages comparisons for pedagogical purposes can be traced back to the

15<sup>th</sup> century, and the first contrastive theories appeared at the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century (cf.: Krzeszowski, 1985; 1990; Meech, 1935).

We can distinguish two types of *Contrastive Studies* (CS): *theoretical* and *applied*. In modern times, serious interest in CS, initially mainly *theoretical*, began in Europe at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The first published studies included works by Grandgent (1892), Viëtor (1894), Passy (1912), J. Baudouin de Courtenay (1912) and Bojorodickij (1915). *Applied Contrastive Studies* (ACS) were not totally neglected (e.g. Viëtor 1903). However, they were treated as of secondary importance. Regarding the *Theoretical Contrastive Studies* (TCS), Fisiak (1981b: 2) writes the following:

Theoretical contrastive studies give an exhaustive account of the differences and similarities between two or more languages, provide an adequate model for their comparison, and determine how and which elements are comparable, thus defining such notions as congruence, equivalence, correspondence, etc. Theoretical semantico-syntactic studies operate with universals, i.e. they specify how a given universal category is realized in the contrasted languages. In phonology, theoretical contrastive studies operate with phonological primes, i.e. features, and specify how these features function in the two or more languages being compared.

He also states that TCS are language independent: they do not explain how a particular structure existing in one language is presented in another language. Rather, they reveal universal categories present in both languages.

The theoretically oriented CS have contributed to translation theories, the description of particular languages, language typology, and the study of language universals. They frequently “provide insights into the structure of a particular language which may not be possible until the given language is approached from the perspective of another language.” (Tomaszczyk, 1993: 193). In other words, one has to study languages in order to study a language. Theoretically focused CS were continued from the late 1920s, through the inter- and postwar period into the 1960s by linguists of the Prague School, namely V. Mathesius (1928, 1936) and also his followers – Trnka (1953-1955), Vachek (1961), Isačenko (1954-1960), and Firbas (1964).

During the Second World War an enormous interest in foreign language teaching started in the United States. CS were treated as a crucial part of foreign language teaching methodology and as a consequence more relevance was assigned to them.

Applied contrastive studies are part of applied linguistics. Drawing on the findings of theoretical contrastive studies they provide a framework for the comparison of languages, selecting whatever information is necessary for a specific purpose, e.g. teaching, bilingual analysis, translation, etc.

(Fisiak 1981b: 2)

Fisiak (1981b) states, among others, that ACS are concerned with how a universal category, realized in one language, is manifested in another language, and what consequences it brings for a particular field of application. Another task of ACS is to identify the possible areas of difficulty in another language, where, for instance, a specified category is not represented in the surface structure and therefore interference might occur (ibid.: 3).

The importance of applied (pedagogical) orientation in CS was first voiced by Charles C. Fries (1945) in his *Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language*. He argued that the learning of a target language, which takes place in the mother tongue context, could be facilitated and made more effective if the teaching methods and learning aids were based on the findings of systematic analyses of the languages involved, with emphasis on defining the differences between them (Tomaszczyk, 1993: 197).

The main assumption underlying these studies was formulated by Lado (1957) in his *Linguistics across Cultures*. He described the theoretical foundations for what became known as the *Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis* (CAH). In this book, Lado (ibid.: 2) claimed that “those elements which are similar to [the learner’s] native language will be simple for him, and those elements that are different will be difficult.” While this was not a novel suggestion, Lado was the first to provide a systematic set of technical procedures for the CS of languages. This involved



describing the languages (using structuralist linguistics), comparing them and predicting learning difficulties.

During the 1960s, there was a widespread enthusiasm for this technique, manifested in the contrastive descriptions of several European languages, many of which were sponsored by the Center of Applied Linguistics in Washington, DC. It was expected that once the areas of potential difficulty had been mapped out through CA, it would be possible to design language courses more efficiently. *Contrastive Analysis*, along with *Behaviourism* and *Structuralism*, exerted a profound effect on *Second Language Acquisition* (SLA) curriculum design and language teacher education, and it provided the theoretical pillars of *Audio-Lingual Method*.

In its strongest formulation, the CAH claimed that all the errors made in learning L2 could be attributed to ‘interference’ from L1. However, this claim could not be sustained by empirical evidence that was accumulated in the mid- and late 1970s. Moreover, CAH faced a lot of criticism as both similarities and differences between L1 and L2 may be equally problematic when learning a foreign language. It was soon pointed out that many errors predicted by CA were not observed in learners’ language. Even more confusingly, some errors were made by learners irrespective of their L1. It was shown that CA could not predict learning difficulties and was only useful in the retrospective explanation of errors. These developments, along with the decline of the behaviourist and structuralist paradigms, considerably weakened the appeal of CA.

In Europe a number of individual scholars contributed to the development of *Theoretical Contrastive Studies* in the 1950s and early 1960s (e.g. Valtonen, 1953; Orr, 1953; Kielski, 1957-1960; Glinz, 1957; Krušelnickaja, 1961, and others). Many contrastive projects were undertaken between 1965 and 1975 (German-English, Serbo-Croatian-English, Polish-English, Romanian-English, Hungarian-English, Finnish-English, and French-English, to name just a few). Early CS focused on what has been termed as microlinguistic contrastive analysis (James, 1980:61), i.e.: phonology, grammar, lexis.

From its beginnings till the 1970s, CL was mainly synchronic rather than diachronic; interlingual or cross-linguistic rather than intralingual, involved two different languages rather than more than two (varieties of) languages; adopted a unidirectional approach (one of the two languages under comparison was taken as a point of reference, usually English); dealt with differences rather than similarities, and was focused on foreign language teaching / learning (Di Pietro, 1971; James, 1980; Krzeszowski, 1990; Morciniec, 2001; Altenberg and Granger, 2002b).

Nowadays, we can observe a shift in focus in CL research towards a more dynamic and practical view of language processing and interaction. There exists a greater need for multilingual / multicultural and intra-linguistic / cultural research. CL has begun to describe the differences as well as the similarities between two or more linguistic systems, both cross-linguistically and intralinguistically, and both synchronically and diachronically. Some linguists, following Lado's (1957) point of view, claim that in order to compare languages one also has to compare the cultures in which they are spoken (Liebe-Harkort, 1984; Sajavaara, 1981). Today, in the age of information technology, many areas of applied contrastive linguistics attempt to involve the use of computers, i.e. computational linguistics has been employed in, for example, machine translations, computer-assisted translations, and natural language processing.

The revival of CL has contributed to the appearance of various disciplines that can be included within the umbrella term of CL. According to Gómez-González and Doval-Suárez (2003), some of the most prolific trends (producing relevant results for teaching and other practical domains) in CL include: contrastive phonetic studies, lexical CL, *Contrastive Discourse Analysis* (CDA), *Contrastive Pragmatics* (cp), *Contrastive Sociolinguistics* (CSL), computational linguistics, and corpus analysis. For more details on the aforementioned disciplines the reader is referred to Gómez-González and Doval-Suárez's (2003) articles. We will make no attempt to systematize the ever growing mass of contrastive linguistic studies since it lies beyond the scope of the present doctoral thesis and would require a book on its own. Instead, let us focus on areas of CL which are of crucial importance to this work, namely *Contrastive*

*Discourse Analysis* (CDA) and *Contrastive Pragmatics* (cp). These two partially overlapping labels refer to contrastive research that goes beyond the clause / sentence level to explore the language in use. It is assumed that the relations between texts and contexts are mutually reflexive, i.e. texts not only reflect but also influence their contexts (cf. Fillmore, 1980; Oleksy, 1984; 1989). As regards the scope of CDA, it deals with: (a) discourse particles (e.g. Aijmer, 1997); (b) rhetorical relations and rhetorical transfer across languages / cultures (e.g. hedging and metadiscourse, generic conventions, author's and addressee's intentions, etc.) (cf. e.g. Clyne, Hoeks, and Kreutz, 1988; Moder and Martinovic-Zic, 2004); (c) genre studies and information packaging across languages and / or text-types (cf. e.g. Gómez-González, 2001; Johansson, 2001; Svensson, 2000).

It was in the early 1970s that a new communicative approach to language teaching appeared which put the pragmatic dimension of language use in the centre of language investigation. It turned out that CS without a pragmalinguistic aspect is inadequate (Riley, 1979, 1981). Yet, when it comes to defining linguistic pragmatics, we realize that “there is no characterization of linguistic pragmatics on which linguists are in agreement, nor is there, in fact, a universally convincing case that such a field exists.” (Fillmore, 1980: 119). Nonetheless, pragmatic CS started to develop gradually. In characterizing *contrastive pragmatics* (cp), many pragmalinguists derived inspiration from *Speech Act Theories* (SAT) and also from *Discourse Analysis* (e.g. Riley, 1979 and 1981; Oleksy 1980). Other linguists sought to develop contrastive sociolinguistic models, for example, Janicki (1984, 1986). However, according to Jakubowska (1999: 38), “the scholars that have contributed most to the development of *contrastive pragmatics* (cp) are Fillmore (1980), Oleksy (1980) and Riley (1981).” Following on from Jakubowska's (1999) endorsement of these scholars, I would like to present their theories which relatively extended the scope of traditional CS by stressing the importance of the communicative aspect of language.

In “Remarks on contrastive pragmatics”, Fillmore (1980: 126) states that the following constituents: knowledge of word meanings, knowledge of what the world is like, and knowledge of possible communicative intentions, “all contribute

simultaneously to the ‘picture of the world’ we get when we interpret a text.” He questions how much of that knowledge can be thought of as pragmatic knowledge, and further, questions whether there could be such a thing as contrastive pragmatics. He then argues that a notion of contrastive pragmatics makes sense if, when analysing different languages we are able to discover the message in the paring of an utterance and a context to read between the lines, or “if special and distinct pragmatic purposes have linguistic means dedicated to them in different languages.” (ibid.: 126). While attempting to define pragmatics, Fillmore (1980) distinguishes between “large facts” (general pragmatic patterns) and “small facts” (special pragmatic practices). According to him, the former “include politeness systems, patterns of indirectness, repertoires of registral differences, patterns in the rhetorical organization of discourse, the special devices languages use for constructing narrative texts, and so on.” (ibid.: 127); the latter is defined as “things that need to be learned one at a time.” (ibid.: 127). ‘Small facts’ include linguistic phenomena at various levels of analysis which can be described with reference to their use. To illustrate the concept of ‘small facts’ (which he also calls ‘small issues’ – he uses the term interchangeably), the author provides some examples, these include, among others, formulaic utterances, which he considers to be “the most striking kind of small issues” (ibid.: 128) due to the fact that various languages possess different realization patterns of such expressions with different pragmatic functions. After translating them into another language, they do not fit the corresponding situational context. The model of cp suggested by Fillmore focuses mainly on the appropriateness of particular linguistic forms in particular situations.

Oleksy (1980) in his article “Towards pragmatic contrastive analysis” proposes a model of *Pragmatic Contrastive Analysis* (PCA) “that would be capable of dealing with a communicative act in concreto rather than with discourse structure in extenso.” (ibid.: 350). Oleksy’s (1980) model of PCA is predominantly based on the concept of *Speech Act Theory* and, as he puts it, “should accommodate the concept of communicative act (...) and can be conveniently carried out if it contains the following four components:

- Locutionary Component (LC)

- Illocutionary Component (Ill.C)
- Pragmatico-Contrastive Component (PCC)
- Interactive Component (IC)". (ibid.: 350).

In order to perform a contrastive analysis of pragmatically equivalent linguistic elements, Oleksy (1980: 360) provides the following definition of *pragmatic equivalence* (PEq): "A linguistic expression  $X_1$   $L_1$  is pragmatically equivalent to a linguistic expression  $X_2$   $L_2$  if both  $X_1$  and  $X_2$  can be used to perform the same SA in  $L_1$  and  $L_2$ ." The notion of PEq has been also discussed by Janicki (1985, 1986), Kalisz (1986, 1993a), Oleksy (1983), Krzeszowski (1990). Oleksy (1980: 360) also claims that "linguistic expressions across languages which exhibit pragmatic equivalence (PEq.) do not have to exhibit formal equivalence (FEq.)." According to Oleksy (1980), a pragmatic CA of SA ought to describe how an equivalent SA functions in the cultures of  $L_1$  and  $L_2$  speakers. It should include the following criteria characterizing SAs: (1) strategies employed to perform SA, (2) sociocultural context in which SA typically occur, (3) role relationship between S and H, and (4) other pragmatic aspects like politeness, mitigation and level of directness.

According to Riley (1981), the act of communication along with one of its possible realizations – the speech act – constitutes a fundamental concept in pragmalinguistics. It is clear to him that if we desire to produce an adequate account of the meaning of some interaction, we should consider "such vital questions as who is speaking to who? When? Where? What is the nature of their [speakers'] relationship? Of the circumstances? What activity are they involved in? What is its purpose and that of the communication?" (ibid.: 123). Here, as in Oleksy's (1980) model, Riley's (1981) study of communicative acts is based on the theory of Illocution (cf. Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969). Riley (1981) argues that the illocutionary value (function) of communicative acts reflects the use which the speaker wishes to put it to, and what is more, it has no direct link with their formal realization: "Grammatical structures and functions are not in a one-to-one relationship (...)" (ibid.: 125). In his study, Riley (1981) analyses the structure of discourse, which ultimately leads to presentation of a

model of discourse. According to him, discourse structure consists of *Formal Structure* (realization – the set of message-bearing elements in a situation), *Illocutionary Structure* (sequences of illocutionary acts), and finally *Interactive Structure* (interactional tactics such as turn taking, address, relative distribution of utterances). Riley (1981) suggests that the aim of contrastive pragmalinguistics lies in characterizing the discourse structure of various languages in terms of participants' social roles, their states, formality and situation.

Since the 1980s cp has grown rapidly and currently is in the ascendant. Generally speaking, cp covers such issues as: (a) conversation from a speech act point of view (e.g. Blum-Kulka et al., (1989); Kalisz, 1986; Liebe-Harkort, 1984; (b) deixis (Celle, 2000); (c) politeness (e.g. Brown and Levinson, 1987; Hickey and Stewart, 2005; Sifianou, 1992; Jakubowska, 1999; Awedyk, 2006; Márquez Reiter, 2000); and other aspects pragmatically related to speech behaviour (cf. e.g. Kasper and Blum-Kulka, 1993; Tannen, 1984).

## CHAPTER 2

### 2. Speech Acts

#### 2.1. Speech Acts – philosophical background

Pragmatics is the science of language seen in relation to its users. Language is the chief means of human communication. Various uses of language are governed by the conditions of society, inasmuch as these conditions determine the users' access to, and control of, their communicative means. Speaking a language is performing speech acts, these include, among others, making statements, giving commands, making requests, making promises, and so on. These acts are in general made possible by, and are performed in accordance with certain rules for the use of linguistic elements. The reason for concentrating on the study of speech acts is simply this: all linguistic communication involves linguistic acts. As Searle (1969: 16) puts it, "The unit of linguistic communication is not, as has generally been supposed, the symbol, word or sentence (...) but rather the production or issuance of the symbol or word or sentence in the performance of the speech act."

In the 1950's John Langshaw Austin provided the early underpinnings for the modern theory of speech acts developed subsequently by his student – John Rogers Searle. In particular John Searle's (1969) *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of language* took up and developed Austin's (1962) account of illocutionary acts, as described in *How To Do Things with Words*. These philosophers developed their theories in part in opposition to another philosophical school, the Logical Positivists. Logical positivism was developed by a group of philosophers called the Vienna Circle in the 1920's and 1930's.

According to logical positivists, there are only two sources of real knowledge: logic and empirical observation. Anything else is meaningless conjecture.

Logic follows strict rules of proof and tests of internal consistency. For example, the statement *I will meet you yesterday* is nonsensical and meaningless. We know this without reference to anything other than the meanings of the words. It is illogical, internally inconsistent. The logical positivists would say that we are using analytical knowledge when we analyse the possible meanings of this sentence.

An example of empirically observed knowledge is: *At the surface of the earth, the acceleration due to gravity is  $9.8 \text{ ms}^{-2}$* . This claim can be verified by experiment. This category of knowledge, the logical positivists referred to as synthetic knowledge.

As one can see, the logical positivists accepted only scientific and mathematical knowledge as valid. In their view, any statement which could not be tested either via logic, or via experiment, was meaningless. They called such statements metaphysical. An example of a metaphysical statement (and therefore meaningless in their view) is *God exists*. Another example: *God does not exist*.

What the logical positivists were doing was privileging scientific language (logic, mathematics) above ordinary natural languages (English, German, etc.). Scientific statements were either true or false, and could be verified to be one or the other. For them natural language is ambiguous and often just a babble of unfounded opinions. Ordinary language was useful for ordinary life but not for serious thought.

If this philosophy sounds extreme, it is. But many people with science and engineering backgrounds often hold this philosophy although they probably will not admit it. It rears its head when the so-called ‘hard’ sciences sneer at the ‘soft’ sciences, such as sociology, or at the humanities, such as history or literature. These ‘softer’ subjects cannot meet the austere standards of the logical positivists. But are they therefore without serious meaning?

Logical positivism would appear to be too narrow, especially when we consider that there is more meaning in everyday speech than meets the logical positivist eye. There are more types of meaning than just verifiable (true / false) empirical or logical statements. Beginning with Ludwig Wittgenstein, philosophers began to study and analyse ordinary language and its meanings.



In this chapter, we will look at what happened in the branch of philosophy, with origins in the British tradition of thinking about language, which later on came to be known as *Speech Act Theory* (SAT). Its early exponents were the British philosopher John Langshaw Austin (1962), whose *How To Do Things With Words* had an enormous influence on linguistic philosophy, and thereby on linguistics – especially in the field of pragmatics – and the American philosopher John Rogers Searle, who had studied under Austin at Oxford in the 1950's and who became the chief proponent and defender of the former's ideas not only in the United States, but also world-wide.

## **2.2. Classification of Speech Acts**

### **2.2.1. The Speech Act Theory of Austin**

Speech Act Theory was developed by the Oxford philosopher John L. Austin, whose 1955 lectures at Harvard University were published posthumously as *How To Do Things With Words* in 1962. Austin's approach has been developed since, and there is now a large literature devoted to the subject.

Austin's work is, in many respects, a reaction to some traditional and influential attitudes to language. We can risk simplifying these as a starting point. The attitudes can be said to involve three related assumptions, as follows:

- a) that the basic sentence-type in language is declarative (i.e. a statement or assertion);
- b) that the principal use of language is to describe states of affairs (by using statements);
- c) that the meaning of utterances can be described in terms of their truth or falsity.

Among Austin's contemporaries these assumptions were associated with the philosophers known as logical positivists, a term originally applied to the mathematicians and philosophers of the Vienna Circle. An important issue for logical positivist approaches is how far the meaning of a sentence is reducible to its verifiability, i.e. the extent to which, and by which, it can be shown to be true or false. Austin's (1962) opposition to these views is the 'common-sense' one that language is used for far more than simply stating the facts and that, for the most part, utterances cannot be said to be either true or false. He makes two important observations. The first is that not all sentences are statements and that much of conversation is made up of questions, exclamations, commands, and expressions of wishes like the examples (ex. 1 – 6) below:

- (1) Excuse me!
- (2) Are you serving?
- (3) Hello!
- (4) Six pints of stout and a packet of peanuts, please!
- (5) Give me the dry roasted ones.
- (6) How much? Are you serious?

Such utterances (ex. 1 – 6) are not descriptions and cannot be said to be true or false.

Austin's (1962) second observation was that even in utterances using the grammatical form of declaratives, not all are used to make statements. Austin (1962) identified a subset of declaratives that are not used to make true or false statements, such as in the following examples (taken from Austin (1962)):

- (7) I promise to take a taxi home.
- (8) I bet you five pounds that he won't win.
- (9) I declare this meeting open.
- (10) I warn you that legal action will ensue.
- (11) I name this ship "The Flying Dutchman".

Austin (1962) claimed that these utterances contained in themselves a kind of action. Thus by uttering: *I promise to take a taxi home* a speaker makes a promise rather than just describing one. Austin (1962) called this kind of utterance a *performative* utterance and it can be characterized by the following features:

- the action is performed by the first verb in the sentence,
- the adverb ‘hereby’ can be inserted to stress its function, e.g. *I hereby request that you leave my property*,
- subject appears in the first person,
- the verb is used in the present indicative active.

We can contrast *performative* and *non-performative* (later to be known as *constative*) utterances by the first two features. A speaker would not, for example, expect the uttering of (12) to constitute the action of cooking a cake, or (15) the action of starting a car. These sentences describe actions independent of the linguistic act. Below we can see the use of ‘hereby’ with these sentences.

(12) I cook this cake.

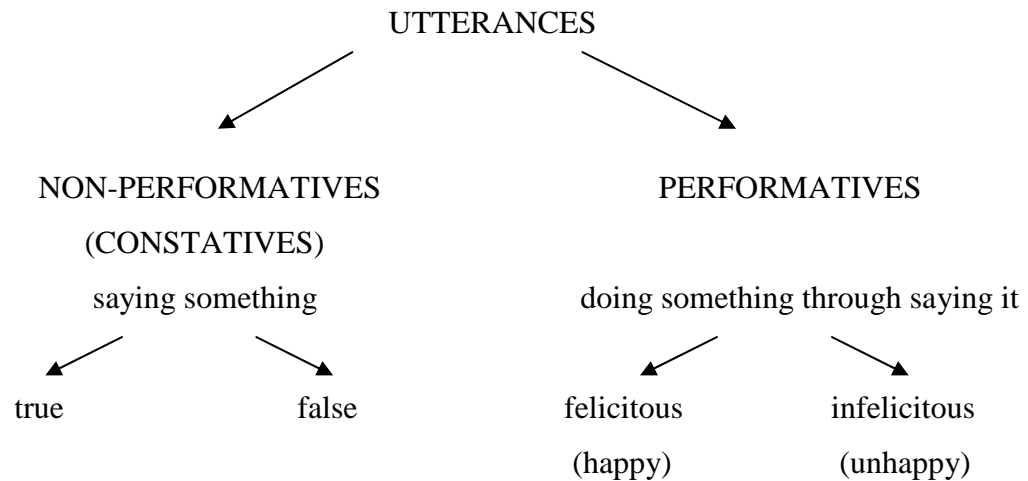
(13) I hereby cook this cake.

(14) I start this car.

(15) I hereby start this car.

In his lectures, Austin (1962) argued that it is not useful to ask whether performative utterances are true or not, rather we should ask whether they work or not: do they constitute a successful warning, bet, ship-naming etc.? In Austin’s (1962) terminology a performative that works is called *felicitous* and one that does not is *infelicitous*. For them to work, such performatives have to satisfy the social conventions, i.e. we cannot, for example, name a ship by walking up to it in dock and saying *I name this ship “The Flying Dutchman”*. Less explicitly, there are social conventions governing the giving of orders to co-workers, greeting strangers,

etc. Austin's (1962) name for the enabling conditions necessary for a performative is *felicity conditions* (FCs). In order for us to make it more comprehensible, the following chart can be presented:



Having examined the social conventions that support performatives, it is clear that performatives range from those which are highly institutionalized – or even ceremonial – requiring sophisticated and overt support, (such as the example of a judge pronouncing a sentence) to less formal acts like warning, thanking, etc. To describe the role of felicity conditions, Austin (1962: 14-15) presented a very general schema:

- A. (i) There must exist an accepted conventional procedure having a certain conventional effect, that procedure to include the uttering of certain words by certain persons in certain circumstances, and further,
  - (ii) the particular persons and circumstances in a given case must be appropriate for the invocation of the particular procedure invoked.
- B. (i) The procedure must be executed by all participants both correctly and
  - (ii) completely.
- C. (i) Where, as often, the procedure is designed for use by persons having certain thoughts or feelings, or for the inauguration of certain consequential conduct on the party of any participant, then a person participating in and so invoking

the procedure must in fact have those thoughts or feelings, and the participants must intend so to conduct themselves, and further (ii) must actually so conduct themselves subsequently.

If the speech act is unsuccessful through failing to fulfil the (A) or (B) conditions above, then Austin (1962) describes it as a *misfire*. If the act is insincerely performed (violation of condition C), then it is an *abuse* of a speech act, as for example saying *I bet ...* with no intention to pay, or *I promise ...* when we have already intended to break the promise. Linguists, as opposed to philosophers, have tended not to be so interested in this second type of infelicity, since the primary speech act has, in these cases, been successfully communicated. The following kinds of misfires can be identified:

- misinvocations – appear when there is no such procedure, or because the procedure in question cannot be made to apply in the way attempted;
- missapplications – where the procedure does exist all right but cannot be applied as purported;
- misexecutions – the purported act is vitiated by a flaw or hitch in the conduct ceremony.

(Austin, 1962: 17)

To illustrate, let us observe those violations of speech acts occurring in everyday life situations. For instance, assume that a British citizen says to his wife: *I hereby divorce you*. He will not thereby get a divorce, because no such procedure exists (as in A (i)) whereby merely by saying *I hereby divorce you* divorce can be achieved. As an example of a failure of condition A (ii), consider a priest baptizing the wrong baby, or the right baby with the wrong name. As far as condition B (i) is concerned, the words uttered have to be the conventionally correct ones. During a marriage ceremony, if the bridegroom's response to *Wilt thou have this woman to thy wedded wife ... so long as ye both shall live?* is *Yes*, it will not do in the Church of England. The bridegroom has to say *I will*. Next, the procedure must be complete

as required by B (ii): if a sentence *I bet you six pounds that Mary will come tonight*. was uttered, and then there was no satisfactory uptake (no-one would say e.g. *O.K. I'm on* or *I'll go for it*), in this case a bet simply fails to come off. Finally, violations of the C conditions are insincerities: for a juror to find a defendant guilty when he knows him to be innocent, would be to violate condition C (i); and promising to do something without the intention of doing it, would be a violation of C (ii).

Looking at the earlier examples of performative utterances, we can say that they are characterized by the following features:

- begin with a first person subject 'I',
- are indicative active utterances in the simple present,
- contain a second person – object 'you', e.g. *I promise you...*, *I warn you ...*, etc.
- contain the performative verb as the main verb, for example: promise, warn, sentence, name, bet, pronounce.

Generally, performative nature of these utterances can be emphasized by inserting the adverb 'hereby', as described earlier, thus *I hereby sentence you to... .* Utterances with these characteristics can be called *explicit performatives*. The importance of SAT lies in the way that Austin (1962) and others managed to extend their analysis from these explicit performatives to other utterances. The first step was to point out that in some cases the same speech act seems to be performed but with a relaxation of some of the special characteristics mentioned above. We regularly meet utterances like those below (ex. 16 – 19), where this is so:

- (16) You are (hereby) charged with treason.
- (17) Passengers are requested to avoid jumping out of the aircraft.
- (18) Five pounds says he doesn't make the semi-final.
- (19) Come up and see me sometime.

The aforementioned sentences (ex. 16 – 19) can be easily replaced by the corresponding explicit performatives (ex. 16a – 19a), as below:

(16a) I (hereby) charge you with treason.

(17a) We request that passengers avoid jumping out of the aircraft.

(18a) I bet you five pounds that he doesn't make the semi-final.

(19a) I invite you to come up and see me sometime.

It seems reasonable to say that the sentences (ex. 16 – 19) could be uttered in order to perform the same speech acts as those in (ex. 16a – 19a). In fact, it seems that none of the special characteristics of performative utterances is indispensable to their performance. How then do we recognize these other performatives, which we can call *implicit performatives*? Answers to this have varied somewhat in the development of the theory but Austin's (1962) original contention was that it was an utterance's ability to be expanded to an explicit performative that identified it as a performative utterance. Austin (1962) discussed at length the various linguistic means by which more implicit performatives could be marked, including the mood of the verb, auxiliary verbs, intonation, etc. For more details see Austin (1962: 53-93). Of course we soon end up with a situation where the majority of performatives are implicit, needing expansion to make their force explicit. One advantage of this translation strategy is that it focuses attention on the task of classifying the performative verbs of a language. For now, the basic claim is clear: explicit performatives are seen as merely a specialized subset of performatives.

Later on in his work, Austin (1962) came to the conclusion that all utterances not only bear a certain meaning, but also “perform specific actions through having specific *forces*.” (Levinson, 1983: 236). On any occasion, the action performed by producing an utterance will consist of three related acts:

1. **Locutionary act** – “the basic act of utterance, or producing a meaningful linguistic expression” Yule (1996: 54); in other words, the act of saying something that makes sense in a language, i.e. follows the rules of pronunciation and grammar.

2. **Illocutionary act** – the action intended by the speaker; an utterance which is formed with some kind of function in mind. The illocutionary act is performed through the communicative force of an utterance. It is the making of a statement, an offer, an explanation etc. This is also known as the illocutionary **force** of the sentence. This is what Austin and his successors have mainly been concerned with: the uses to which language can be put in society. In fact, the term ‘speech acts’ is often used with just this meaning of illocutionary acts.
3. **Perlocutionary act** – is concerned with what follows an utterance: the effect or ‘take-up’ of an illocutionary act. As Levinson (1983: 236) puts it “the bringing about of effects on the audience by means of uttering sentence, such effects being special to the circumstances of utterance”. This is also generally known as the **perlocutionary effect**.

Austin (1962) gave the example of sentences like *Shoot her!* In appropriate circumstances this sentence can have the illocutionary force of ordering, urging or advising the addressee to shoot her, but the perlocutionary force of persuading, forcing, frightening, etc. the addressee into shooting her. Perlocutionary effects are less conventionally tied to linguistic forms and so have been of less interest to linguists. We know, for example, that people can recognize orders without obeying them.

Furthermore, the locutionary act can be analysed into:

- 1a. Phonetic act – the act of uttering certain noises
- 1b. Phatic act – the act of uttering certain words
- 1c. Rhetic act – the act of using words with some sense

(Austin, 1962: 92)

To sum up, Austin’s (1962: 102) classification of linguistic acts may be presented in the following way:

Act (1.) Locution



He said to me: *You can't do that.*

Act (2.) Illocution

He protested against my doing it.

Act (3.) Perlocution

He pulled me up, checked me.

However, such a classification of speech acts was not satisfactory enough to make a clear distinction between illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. Therefore, Austin (1962: 152-161) suggests another classification system which lists five types of general function performed by speech acts, these are as follows:

- **Verdictives** – consists in “the giving of verdict by jury” or in “the delivering of a finding, official or unofficial, upon evidence or reasons as to value or fact.” (ibid.: 152). Examples are: estimating, reckoning, or appraisal.
- **Exercitives** – “are the exercising of powers, rights, or influence” and “the giving of a decision in favour or against a certain course of action, or advocacy of it (...).” (ibid.: 154). For instance, appointing, voting, ordering, urging, advising, warning, etc.
- **Commissives** – are typified by promising or otherwise undertaking; they “commit the speaker to a certain course of action.” (ibid.: 156). For example, proposing, pledging, contracting, planning, swearing, etc.
- **Behabitives** – concern attitudes and social behaviour; they “include the notion of reaction to other people’s behaviour and fortunes and of attitudes and expressions of attitudes to someone else’s past conduct or imminent conduct.” (ibid.: 159). Examples are: apologising, thanking, congratulating, condoling, complimenting, welcoming, and applauding.

- **Expositives** – “are used in acts of exposition involving the expounding of views, the conducting of arguments, and clarifying of usages and of references.” (ibid.: 160). For example, affirming, denying, emphasizing, answering, reporting, mentioning, stating, etc.

Austin (1962: 192) concludes that “the **verdictive** is an exercise of judgement, the **exercitive** is an assertion of influence or exercising of power, the **commissive** is an assuming of an obligation or declaring of an intention, the **behabitive** is the adopting of an attitude, and the **expositive** is the clarifying of reason, arguments, and communications.”

### 2.2.2. Searle’s classification of Speech Acts

Since Austin’s (1962) original explorations of SAT there have been a number of works which attempt to systematize the approach. In particular, scholars have focused on the classification of possible types of speech acts. John R. Searle, an American philosopher, linguist and student of Austin, was chiefly preoccupied with examining illocutionary acts, devoting a lot of attention to their systematization and providing his own taxonomy of illocutionary speech acts.

Searle (1969, 1977, 1979), not only presents the reader with those aspects of SAT defined by his teacher, but also draws constructive criticism of it. He points out that “(...) there is a persistent confusion between verbs and acts, not all the verbs are illocutionary verbs, there is too much overlap of the categories, too much heterogeneity within the categories, many of the verbs listed in the categories don’t satisfy the definition given for the category and, most important, there is no consistent principle of classification.” (Searle, 1979: 11-12).

In addition, he develops his own taxonomy of illocutionary acts, specifying the rules by which we are able to distinguish one illocutionary act from another. In his “A classification of illocutionary acts”, Searle (1977: 28-45) suggests twelve criteria which are crucial in differentiating illocutionary acts; they are as follows:

1. *Illocutionary point*. This is the attempt to make the addressee do something (when ordering), or in the case of a negative order, to make somebody stop doing something. The illocutionary point of a descriptive speech act would be that of representing reality. Considering two different speech acts: an ‘order’ and a ‘request’, having the same point, are distinguished by a difference in illocutionary force.
2. *Direction of ‘fit’*. This deals with the relation between the word (language) and the world (reality). The fit can have one of two directions:
  - getting the words to match the world, e.g. assertions (so called word-to-world direction of fit). In this case language is ‘fitted to’, or even ‘fit for’, the environment, as when describing a piece of scenery;
  - getting the world to match the words, e.g. promising, requests (world-to-word direction of fit). Here, the world is ‘fitted’ to words, i.e. through the use of words, we make the world fit our language.
3. *Expressed psychological state*. The speaker expresses some attitude or state of mind by means of uttering the illocutionary act. A person cannot usually express a psychological state using a speech act (e.g. believing) without being in that particular psychological state.
4. *Force*. This may be described as the speaker’s involvement in what is uttered. If we compare, for instance, these two sentences *I suggest that we go home now* and *I insist that we go home now*, obviously a difference in their illocutionary force exists.
5. *Social status*. Any utterance must be placed within the context of the speaker’s and hearer’s status in society in order to be properly understood.

6. *Interest*. In any situation, people have different interests, and worry about different things. Therefore, the speech acts used in situations ought to reflect these interests and worries, e.g. condolences and congratulations (i.e. it would be inappropriate to congratulate somebody who has just lost a close relative).
7. *Discourse-related functions*. These refer to the context in which speech acts are being uttered, so that they may be ‘taken up’ correctly in relation to their function.
8. *Content*. This criterion enables us to separate out speech acts in accordance with what they are ‘about’: for example, in the dimension of time, past events cannot be used for predictions, only for statements and narrative acts.
9. *Speech acts or speech act verbs*. These concern differences between those acts that must always be speech acts, and those that might be, but need not be speech acts. In the case of ordering, an order need not be expressed by a speech act verb of ordering; but when it comes to institutionalized speech acts, the situation is different, a particular speech act verb is usually obligatory.
10. *Social institutions and speech acts*. These refer to dissimilarities between those acts that need extra-linguistic institutions for their performance and those that do not; e.g. blessing or excommunicating require a position within an extra-linguistic institution, whereas there is no need for such extra-linguistic institutions when making a statement or promising.
11. *Speech acts and performatives*. Only certain speech acts can be said to have a performative character, i.e. the property of doing what they explicitly say. Not all illocutionary verbs are expressed by performative verbs, e.g. boasting, threatening.

12. *Style*. This criterion consists in the difference in the style of the illocutionary act. Most people claim that the way we say things is often more important than the contents of what is being said.

The twelve criteria discussed above aim at laying the groundwork for a better classification procedure.

Searle (1979: 12-20), while allowing that there is a myriad of language – particular speech acts – proposed that all acts fall into five main categories:

1. **Assertives** – which commit the Speaker to the truth of the expressed proposition (paradigm cases: asserting, concluding, etc).
2. **Directives** – which are attempts by the Speaker to get the addressee to do something (paradigm cases: ordering, requesting, questioning).
3. **Commissives** – which commit the Speaker to some future course of action (paradigm cases: promising, threatening, offering).
4. **Expressives** – which express a psychological state, the attitude or feelings of the Speaker (paradigm cases: thanking, apologizing, welcoming, congratulating).
5. **Declarations** – which effect immediate changes in the institutional state of affairs and which tend to rely on elaborate extra-linguistic institutions (paradigm cases: excommunicating, declaring war, christening, marrying, firing from employment).

In distinguishing these acts, Searle (1979) further developed Austin's (1962) notion of FCs into a classification of conditions that must hold for a successful speech act. Searle (1979: 44) distinguishes between *propositional*, *preparatory*, *sincerity* and *essential conditions* for an act. In a nutshell, we can describe them in the following way:

1. *Propositional content conditions* define the type of meaning expressed by the propositional part of an utterance.
2. *Preparatory conditions* specify prerequisites to the performance of the speech act.
3. *Sincerity conditions* are obligatory for the speech act to be performed sincerely.
4. *Essential conditions* clarify what the speech act must ‘count as’.

See the schema below where an example of Searle’s (1969: 66) conditions for the act of *request* is given.

#### *Request*

Propositional content	– Future act A of H.
Preparatory	– H is able to do A. S believes H is able to do A. It is not obvious to both S and H that H will do A in the normal course of events of his own accord.
Sincerity	– S wants H to do A.
Essential	– Counts as an attempt to get H to do A.

where: H = Hearer  
S = Speaker  
A = future action

Searle (1977, 1979) appears to be right in criticizing Austin for the deficiencies in his classification schema. To illustrate, the categories that Austin establishes are not mutually exclusive, as their criteria often overlap. There seems to be a rather general confusion between the notion of ‘speech acts’ and that of ‘speech act verbs’ in Austin’s work. As noted by Mey (1993: 151), “Searle is unhappy about the fact that Austin apparently does not see that there is a difference between speech acts and speech act verbs (...).” Leech (1983: 176) also observes

that Austin, in his classification, mistakenly thought of speech acts as being synonymous with speech act verbs.

When evaluating Searle's (1979) classification of speech acts, we notice that in many respects it resembles Austin's (1962) (Searle, like Austin distinguishes five classes of speech acts). In addition, Searle devoted a lot of attention to all the different criteria that one could employ to establish a coherent and consistent taxonomy. Searle's (1979) taxonomy "is more oriented towards the real world (...)" (Mey, 1993: 170) and centres on the illocutionary aspects of language use. Within this system, Searle (1979) addressed possible intentions of speakers and also the desired actions of the utterances applying to various situations.

Other scholars have suggested alternative classifications and different typologies, either trying to expand on or disagree with Searle's (1979) (e.g. Hancher, 1979; Bach and Harnish, 1979; Lyons, 1977). They maintain that there are different levels of Speech Acts and that the classifications are not as easy to identify as is suggested by Searle (1979). They argue that it would be almost impossible to classify each and every utterance employing only the five types of speech act mentioned above. Some linguists also wonder whether the classification of speech acts should be made from a semantic or pragmatic point of view and how to classify utterances that fall outside Searle's (1979) classification system. For instance, Wunderlich (1980) proposes different criteria for speech act classification. Firstly, speech acts should be arranged by main grammatical moods, i.e. indicative, subjunctive, declarative, etc; secondly, speech acts ought to be classified according to their propositional contents and satisfactory conditions; and finally, speech acts should be coded by function and that literal meaning ought to be language-specific. Wunderlich's (1980) approach stresses the importance of the context, which determines the appropriate meaning of the utterance (whether literal or non-literal), and thus places speech acts within the scope of pragmatics.

While classifications of speech acts differ, for this study Searle's (1979) typology shall be employed for classification of speech acts, and focusing on requests, which underlie directives. A pragmatic approach shall be taken in this study, placing utterances within contexts.

## 2.3. Direct and indirect speech acts

Earlier on in this chapter, we presented a general classification system, which lists five types of general functions performed by speech acts, namely, representatives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations (see section 2.2.2 Searle's classification of Speech Acts). Yet, a different approach to distinguishing kinds of speech acts can be made on the basis of linguistic structure.

During the early stages of speech acts studies, an observation was made (Searle, 1969; Gordon and Lakoff, 1975) that, for instance, illocutionary act of ordering can be realized not only by means of imperatives but also by interrogative sentences. Further investigations in this field, led Heringer (1972) to conceive the notion of *indirect speech acts*. In order to illustrate this idea, let us consider the following examples, as presented by Yule (2000: 54):

- (20) You wear a seat belt.           (declarative)
- (21) Do you wear a seat belt?   (interrogative)
- (22) Wear a seat belt!           (imperative)

We can easily recognize the relationship between the three structural forms mentioned above (declarative, interrogative, imperative) and the three general communicative functions they perform (statement, question, command / request). Next, Yule (2000: 54-55) divides speech acts into direct and indirect, and proceeds to explain that direct speech acts occur “whenever there is a direct relationship between a structure and a function” and “whenever there is an indirect relationship between a structure and a function, we have an indirect speech act.” Therefore, a declarative sentence used to make a statement is an example of a direct speech act, and a declarative sentence used to make a request is an indirect speech act (ibid.: 55). Various structures can be used to accomplish the same basic function, for instance, Levinson (1983: 264-265) enumerated a large number of ways in which we can utter a request and claims that “what people do with sentences seems quite unrestricted by the surface form (i.e. sentence-type) of the sentences uttered. Cohen



(1971: 588) also states that nearly each and every type of speech act can be realized by means of another act. Consequently, the number of possible interpretations of a given sentence, e.g. *Go to London tomorrow!* (it might be a command, instruction, advice, and many more), are numerous and difficult to assess, but cannot be indefinite (Wierblewski, 1995:33).

The question arises, whether such a classification (into direct and indirect speech acts) makes any sense. The answer seems to be yes. It appears so due to the fact that a considerable number of linguists, scholars and philosophers have tried to distinguish direct and indirect speech acts (Searle (1969, 1975), Davison (1975), Lyons (1977), Harnish et al. (1979) Levinson (1983), Mey (1993), just to name a few). However, there is still a lack of agreement among linguists on a common definition of indirect speech act. According to Leech (1980: 109), the notion of indirectness is gradable, and therefore, there is no need to distinguish direct and indirect as two opposed groups, since direct speech acts constitute those which are the least indirect. We should not, however, indulge in a detailed discussion of this matter because the idea of classifying speech acts into direct and indirect has been widely accepted and practised, even when these two categories are not regarded as being in opposition. Another definition is proposed by Wierblewski (1995: 34), who in *Pytania bez odpowiedzi. Pytania jako pośrednie akty mowy*, writes that speakers, while uttering indirect speech acts have something more on their minds than what is actually said; and that indirect speech acts are utterances which “break the connection” between the grammatical structure of the utterance and its illocutionary force of it. In other words, “the speaker means what the sentence means, but something else as well.” (Finch, 2000: 183). We should not forget about Searle’s (1975) tremendous contribution to this field and his understanding of indirect acts. He described indirect speech acts as cases in which “one illocutionary act can be uttered to perform, in addition, another type of illocutionary act” (ibid.: 59). He called the former *primary* and the latter *secondary* illocutionary act. For instance, after uttering a sentence *Can you reach the salt?* a speaker considers it not merely as a question, but as a request to pass the salt (ibid.: 60). In this case the direct act is a question about the hearer’s ability to pass the salt (secondary illocutionary act). It

could be answered by him /her saying *yes* and doing nothing. However, both interlocutors are aware that action is expected, and that what the speaker told the hearer was simply to pass the salt (primary illocutionary act), but the speaker did so indirectly. It seems that the meaning of utterances is in large part indirect, so it happens with the use of e.g. *requests* “(...) most usages are indirect. (...) the imperative is very rarely used to issue requests in English; instead we tend to employ sentences that only indirectly do requesting.” (Levinson, 1983: 264, cf. Yule (2000)).

If this is the case, then a question arises, namely, “How do I know that he has made a request when he only asked me a question about my abilities?” (Searle, 1975: 62). How are we to know if *I’ll meet you tomorrow* is a promise, a threat, or perhaps just an announcement? In order to solve this problem we ought to take a pragmatic approach. Searle (1975, 1979) postulates that in understanding indirect speech acts we bring together our knowledge of the following three elements, they are:

- the felicity conditions of direct speech acts,
- the context of the utterance, and
- principles of conversational cooperation, such as those provided by Grice’s Cooperative Principle (which will be presented in the next chapter of this work – section 3.1.).

As has already been pointed out in this chapter, the felicity conditions deal with the speaker being in an appropriate situation to make the utterance. One cannot promise someone his / her bike, for instance, if the speaker does not possess one. The context of the utterance is the situation in which it is made. Context mostly helps us to understand how a particular utterance should be interpreted. The conversational principles constitute the base-line assumptions which speakers and hearers conventionally have about relevance, orderliness and truthfulness (Finch, 2000: 183-184). “The process of combining these elements draws heavily on *inference* because much of what is meant is not explicitly stated. It is here that the work of speech acts theories links up with the more general approach of H. P. Grice and his interest in *conversational implicatures*.” (ibid.: 184). (The notions of Grice’s

Cooperative Principle and conversational implicatures will be dealt with in the next chapter of this work – Section 3.1.).

We might face the dilemma – Why are indirect speech acts used at all, given that they apparently create some difficulties in human communication? This issue has been dealt with by pragmalinguists. Some of them claim that by applying indirect speech acts we sound more polite (cf. Heringer, 1972; Finch, 2000). Lakoff (1973, 1977), following the ideas of Grice’s Cooperative Principle, presents his “logic of politeness” with its main requirement of being polite. Leech (1980) introduces a tact maxim aiming at preventing any conflicts. He also observes that the use of direct speech acts in the case of directives, e.g. request, may lead to hostile behaviour. Therefore, he recommends employing indirect speech acts to make requests.

## **2.4. Summary**

In this chapter we have reviewed those speech act theories, which are relevant to the present study. Obviously, the above presentation does not cover all aspects of SAT. Nonetheless, the author hopes that the most important problems have been examined, those most pertinent to the aims of the empirical part of this study. In particular, we have discussed the following:

- distinction between performative and non-performative (constative) utterances;
- distinction of illocutionary acts from other types of speech acts;
- proposed general classification system of speech acts (from their functional point of view);
- conditions concerning the appropriateness of use, i.e. felicity conditions;
- the nature of indirectness;
- classification into direct and indirect speech acts.

As may be noted, the nature of indirect speech acts is difficult to describe and analyse.

We have already indicated that in order to interpret and understand speech acts correctly (especially indirect speech acts), we have to peruse some more works concerned with the notion of politeness, since indirectness is a crucial element of it, especially in the case of directives (cf. Searle, 1979; Jakubowska, 1999). Therefore, in the next chapter we shall deal with this issue. We shall present Grice's (1975) *Cooperative Principle* and Sperber and Wilson's (1986) *Relevance Theory* and also several theories of politeness, such as Lakoff's (1973) logic of politeness, Leech's (1983) *Politeness Principle*, and Brown and Levinson's (1987) *Theory of Politeness*.

## CHAPTER 3

### 3. Conversational Principles

According to Levinson (1983: 284), “conversation may be taken to be that familiar predominant kind of talk in which two or more participants freely alternate in speaking, which generally occurs outside specific institutional settings like religious services, law courts, classrooms and the like.”

When people are engaged in conversation, “they bring to the conversational process shared assumptions and expectations about what conversation is, how conversation develops, and the sort of contribution they are each expected to make.” (J. C. Richards and R. W. Schmidt, 1993: 119-120). When people take part in conversation they “share common **principles of conversation** that lead them to interpret each other’s utterances as contributing to conversation” (ibid.).

#### 3.1. The Cooperative Principle of Grice

The invention of the ‘maxims’ or ‘principles’ of conversation dates back to the work of Herbert Paul Grice (cf. 1975, 1981), and constitutes an important theory in the study of communication. Grice (1975) noticed that conversation, like other human interaction, is governed by a general principle, according to which people cooperate in order to reduce misunderstandings. He suggested that one should “Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged.” (ibid.: 47). The principle that Grice (1975) introduced has been given the name of the *Cooperative Principle* (CP).

Bearing in mind that such a general principle exists and in order for the CP to function, Grice (1975) specified four categories, which have been characterized by

some more specific maxims and submaxims. He called these categories: *Quantity*, *Quality*, *Relation*, and *Manner*. (ibid.: 45-46).

The category of *Quantity* relates to the quantity of information to be provided, and under it fall the following maxims:

1. Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purpose of the exchange).
2. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

The category of *Quality*, under which the following supermaxim – ‘Try to make your contribution one that is true’ – and two more specific maxims falls:

1. Do not say what you believe to be false.
2. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

The category of *Relation*:

1. Be relevant.

The category of *Manner* relates not to what is said but, rather, to how what is said is to be said. Here one supermaxim – ‘Be perspicuous’ – and various maxims have been included such as:

1. Avoid obscurity of expression.
2. Avoid ambiguity.
3. Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity).
4. Be orderly.

Grice’s (1975) main idea behind the formulation of these maxims was the effective exchange of information. However, conversation is not only the exchange of information. As pointed out by Deborah Tannen (1986: 15), “people don’t wait until they have something important to say in order to talk. (...) But that doesn’t mean that the talk isn’t important. It’s crucially important, as a way of showing that we are involved with each other, and how we feel about being involved.” While discussing

CP, Grice (1975) is himself fully aware of the fact that there are other reasons for starting a conversation, and that the importance of the aforementioned maxims is relative and may vary, and that “other maxims come into operation only on the assumption that this maxim of Quality is satisfied.” (ibid.: 46). Grice (1975) also stresses that interlocutors observe not only the above-mentioned maxims, but also others concerning aesthetic, social and moral aspects, such as ‘Be polite’ (ibid.: 47). His assumption is that the other maxims are additional to what he considers to be “core requirements (...) a kind of baseline for talking” (Finch, 2000: 160).

These maxims, however, are not always fulfilled. The Speaker might violate a maxim (and mislead his audience), he or she might explicitly opt out, he or she might be faced with a clash between different maxims, or flout a maxim in such a way that the listener can be assumed to understand that this is being done. The latter case is especially interesting since it gives rise to a *Conversational Implicature*. In such a case, the Speaker is said to “exploit” a maxim. To understand this notion better, let us have a closer look at an example of *Conversational Implicature* provided and discussed by Grice (1975: 43-50). Two colleagues A and B are talking about their friend C, who has got a job in a bank. A asks B about C’s job, and B replies that C is doing quite well and he has not been to prison yet. In this situation A may conclude the following “(1) B has apparently violated the maxim ‘Be relevant’ and so may be regarded as having flouted one of the maxims conjoining perspicuity, yet I have no reason to suppose that he is opting out from the operation of the CP; (2) given the circumstances, I can regard his irrelevance as only apparent if, and only if, I suppose him to think that C is potentially dishonest; (3) B knows that I am capable of working out step (2). So B implicates that C is potentially dishonest.” (ibid.: 43-50). Conversational implicatures are, roughly speaking, things that the Hearer can work out from the way something is said rather than what was said. These are implied meanings that exist in addition to what is overtly stated. People come across conversational implicatures all the time; they process them, even while not being aware of it. For instance, if somebody asks *Could you close the window?* the Hearer does not usually answer *Yes*, but instead he or she performs the non-linguistic action of closing the

window. In this case, although the Speaker used a form of words that conventionally constitutes a question, the Hearer can reason out that the Speaker is making a request.

Grice (1975) describes another type of implicature, namely *Conventional Implicature*, which, in contrast to the *Conversational Implicature*, is not based on the CP or the maxims. *Conventional Implicature* does not have to appear in conversation, and it does not depend on context in order to be interpreted correctly. *Conventional Implicature* is associated with certain words, e.g. *but*, *even*, *yet*, which when employed convey an extra meaning (Yule, 1996: 45-46; cf. Levinson, 1983; Gazdar, 1979, Lyons, 1977).

The CP and the notion of implicature have been central concepts in the study of pragmatics, although criticized by some linguists (Sadock, 1978; Nunberg, 1981; Sperber and Wilson, 1986). It was later refined, contributed to the development of *Relevance Theory* (Sperber and Wilson, 1986; which will be presented in section 3.2. of this chapter), and the politeness principles proposed by G. Lakoff (1973), Leech (1983), and Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) (which will be dealt with in section 3.3. of this chapter). It should be noted that, although each culture might have its own norms and ways to interpret a conversation (i.e. speakers from diverse cultural backgrounds might have different interpretations of what it means to be true, relevant, brief or clear with reference to conversations; cf. Section 3.4 of this chapter), the Gricean CP along with conversational maxims seem to function as a universal conversational principle governing human interaction since all interactants when entering a verbal exchange assume that there will be some sort of co-operation between them (cf. Tabakowska, 2001: 223, Kramsch, 2001: 31-32).

## **3.2. Sperber and Wilson's Relevance Theory**

Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson (1986) suggested a refinement of the Gricean Cooperative Principle. Like the Theory of Speech Acts, *Relevance Theory* (RT), as it has been named, aims to show that interlocutors communicate for a particular purpose. With speech acts, the Speaker shows intentions through linguistic means of speech act



type, whereas with RT, the Speaker shows intentions through ostensive communication. In other words, RT seeks to explain the method of communication, in which the Speaker conveys to the Hearer information that is left implicit. It claims that the human mind will instinctively react to an encoded message by considering information that it conceives to be relevant to the message. 'Relevance' is understood to mean whatever allows the greatest amount of new information to be transmitted in a particular context on the basis of the least processing effort required to convey it (ibid.: 156-157). They note that people who are engaged in inferential communication have the notion of relevance in their minds. Therefore, each interaction participant will arrive at the *Presumption of optimal relevance*, which states that: "a) the set of assumptions  $\{I\}$  which the communicator intends to make manifest to the addressee is relevant enough to make it worth the addressee's while to process the ostensive stimulus; b) the ostensive stimulus is the most relevant one the communicator could have used to communicate  $\{I\}$ ." (ibid.: 158). We are then given the *Principle of relevance*, according to which "Every act of ostensive communication communicates the presumption of its own optimal relevance." (ibid.: 158).

RT is based on a cognitive environment of understanding rather than tiresome decoding of meaning and inference. As advocated earlier by Searle (1975) as regards indirect speech acts, both Speaker and Hearer ought to share mutual background information and equally take part in conversation. Sperber and Wilson (1986) further improve the notion of mutual background information by defining mutual cognitive environments. This allows information, perhaps including some previously shared by the interlocutors, to be present in both S and H, depending on the context of conversation. Moreover, they claim that the context includes information coming from previous utterances, encyclopedic knowledge of the world, and also extra information conveyed in conversational context.

The principle of relevance was explicitly intended to replace Grice's CP with its well-known maxims of conversation, since not telling the truth, being insufficiently informative, and presenting information in a careless manner, neglect the demands of relevance. Sperber and Wilson (1986) list a number of differences between RT and Grice's CP, such as: a) RT assumes that communication involves a lesser degree of

cooperation than the CP does; b) RT is much more explicit than Grice's CP and maxims; c) RT is an automatic principle that works, unlike the CP, without any overt knowledge of it; and d) RT aims at explaining the phenomenon of communication as a whole, both explicit and implicit, i.e. RT applies to 'what is said' as well as to 'what is implicated'. Yet RT has not managed to replace the CP and a debate continues as to whether RT sufficiently accounts for all the factors contained in the CP.

For Sperber and Wilson (1986), relevance is conceived as relative or subjective because it depends upon the state of knowledge of the Hearer at the time he or she encounters an utterance. However, the authors are quick to point out that their theory does not attempt to exhaustively define the notion of 'relevance' in everyday use, but tries to show an interesting and important part of human speech.

The reason for employing RT in this study is to account for certain linguistic behaviours that are appropriate in a given situation, yet cannot be easily explained through Speech Act Theory. Whereas some utterances may miss the desired speech act of, for instance, a request or an apology, they do communicate appropriately within the context.

RT has developed over the last twenty years and has attracted both supporters (e.g. Blakemore, 1987; Grundy, 1995) and critics. Some criticize RT, arguing that the occurrence of mutual knowledge and shared cognitive environments is simply improbable (Levinson, 1989; Garnham and Perner, 1990). A growing number of linguists and researchers are interested in investigating the relationship between RT and various concepts, such as the phenomenon of politeness and facework (Escandell-Vidal, 1996; 1998; Haugh, 2003), translation and interpreting (Pym, 2000), speech acts (Chan, 2005; Gibbs and Bryant, forthcoming), language acquisition (Breheny, 2001), and many others.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The reader is advised to consult the Relevance Theory Online Bibliographic Service for an extensive list of up-to-date RT related books and articles grouped around thematic sections presented by Department of English at the University of Alicante (<http://www.ua.es/personal/francisco.yus/rt.html#5-5>).

### 3.3. Theories of politeness

As has already been pointed out, the CP has been refined not only by Sperber and Wilson's (1986) *Relevance Theory*, but also by the introduction of the concept of politeness, by which we arrive at the formulation of principles or theories of politeness. Before concentrating on the theories of politeness, we have to have a workable definition of the word 'politeness'.

The concept of politeness has been discussed by many linguists and the term itself has been defined in a number of ways. In general, politeness aims at making our communication smooth (Awedyk, 2006). For Lakoff (1973), politeness serves to avoid conflicts which may arise during conversation between its participants. According to Hill et al. (1986: 349), the purpose of politeness is "to consider others' feelings, establish levels of mutual comfort, and promote rapport." Tannen (1986: 23) postulates that politeness is a way "of taking into account the effect on others of what we say." Another, more detailed, definition proposed by Watts et al. (1992: 3-4) is that linguistic politeness manifests through various forms of language structure and usage, which allow the members of a socio-cultural group to achieve goals such as "maximizing the benefit to self and other, minimizing the face-threatening nature of a social act, displaying adequate proficiency in the accepted standards of social etiquette, avoiding conflict, making sure that the social interaction runs smoothly, etc." (ibid.: 3). The term *face* means "the public self-image of a person. It refers to that emotional and social sense of self that everyone has and expects everyone else to recognize." (Yule, 2000: 60). The concepts of *face* and *face-threatening act* (FTA) will be presented in more detail in subsection 3.3.3.

Politeness may be described as a notion referring to social matters, and to an interpersonal relationship. It is therefore connected with notions of norm and convention (cf. Bald, 1980). To paraphrase Leech (1983: 84), norms of behaviour and convention may be those of a particular culture or language community or of a particular type of a person (of a specific age group, sex, etc).

Three theories of linguistic politeness will be presented in the subsequent subsections, namely: 3.3.1. Lakoff's (1973) rules of politeness, 3.3.2. Leech's (1983)

Politeness Principle, and 3.3.3. Brown and Levinson's (first published in 1978, reprinted version 1987) Theory of Politeness.

### **3.3.1. Lakoff's rules of politeness**

The American linguist Robin Lakoff (1973) argues that Grice's CP ought to be reformulated. In particular, she introduces two rules of pragmatic competence:

1. Be clear.
2. Be polite.

As Lakoff (1973) points out, these rules might be in conflict depending on the purpose of our conversation. If our main aim of communication is to convey information, give pure facts, etc. we tend to observe the rule of clarity in the first place (in the case of formal situations e.g. business conversations). On the other hand, if we wish to maintain friendly relationships with interlocutors, being polite supersedes clarity as it happens on most informal occasions, where the CP can be flouted or only partially observed, through the application of irony, ambiguity, metaphor etc., these being used in informal situations more frequently than in formal ones.

Lakoff observes that (1) is basically realized by the CP and its maxims. (2) functions as an additional rule to the CP and deserves more attention. Lakoff (1973) claims that her rules of politeness are superior to the CP, which should be considered to be a sub-case of the rules of politeness. The author (1973: 64) sees politeness as those forms of human behaviour which have been "developed in societies in order to reduce friction in personal interaction." And the goal of politeness is to "get people through cooperative transactions with minimal amount of wasted effort, or friction." (ibid.: 88). In order to more fully understand the second rule – *Be polite* – she analyses it and further divides it into three sub-rules, which are as follows:

- a) Formality: Don't impose / remain aloof.

- b) Hesitancy: Allow the addressee his options.
- c) Equality or camaraderie: Act as though you and the addressee were equal / make him feel good.

(Lakoff, 1973: 88)

People differ with respect to which sub-rules they are likely to apply, when (depending on the context), and how (depending on the relations between interlocutors), and thus, the application of the aforementioned ((a), (b) and (c)) sub-rules will vary.

Sub-rule (a) is employed in formal or impersonal situations, when a distance is kept between the Speaker and the Hearer; it may be realized by using passive and impersonal constructions. Neither H nor S intrudes into one's personal affairs (Kopytko, 1993:19-20).

Sub-rule (b) concerns linguistic behaviour in different contexts; forms of politeness strategies applied here are conventional (cf. Jakubowska, 1999: 29, Awedyk, 2006: 18). Watts et al. (1992: 5) refer to this kind of politeness as “non-formal politeness”. The Speaker allows the Hearer to make his or her own decisions.

Sub-rule (c) helps the Speaker to make the Hearer feel like a friend, it refers to “intimate politeness” (Watts, 1992: 5), and is predominantly observed in friendly conversations through the use of colloquial language. It will be applied, for instance, to give compliments and will work in case of languages in which addressing the Hearer *you* expresses solidarity. The usage of sub-rule (3), in Lakoff's opinion, takes precedence over the other rules.

According to Lakoff (1973), all those sub-rules are universal. However, different cultures appear to have different orders of precedence for them.

### **3.3.2. Leech's Politeness Principle**

Another scholar examining the conversational maxims of CP is Geoffrey Leech. In his book *Principles of Pragmatics*, Leech (1983) presents his own model of pragmatics based both on the speech act theories of Austin (1962) and Searle (1969)

and on Grice's (1975) theory of *Cooperative Principle*. He not only tries to improve these theories, but also discusses them with reference to the politeness phenomenon. Leech (1983) claims that the *Politeness Principle* (PP) may be viewed as a necessary complement to the CP, helping to maintain friendly relations and enabling the interlocutors to cooperate. According to Leech (1983: 81), the point of politeness, as a principle, is to:

- minimize the effects of impolite statements or expressions - *negative politeness*; (according to Leech (1983: 83), "some illocutions (e.g. orders) are inherently impolite") and
- maximize the politeness of polite illocutions - *positive politeness*; ("others [other illocutions] (e.g. offers) are inherently polite." (ibid.: 83));

all the time bearing in mind the intentions that accompany all conversations.

When comparing the CP with his principle (PP), Leech (1983: 82) discovered that PP has a higher regulative role than that of the CP, which "contributes to some assumed illocutionary or discoursal goal(s).", and namely PP "maintains the social equilibrium and the friendly relations which enable us to assume that our interlocutors are being cooperative in the first place." (ibid.: 82). To illustrate, Leech (1983: 82) gives a simple example i.e. if you are not polite to your neighbour, then you are unlikely to have a friendly conversation with him or her, even less borrow any of his or her gardening tools or equipment.

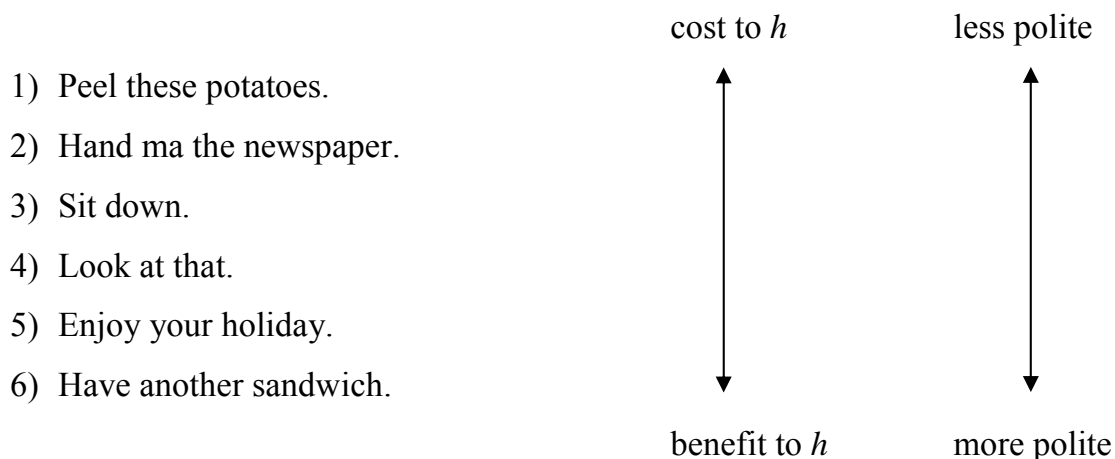
Leech also formulated six maxims of the PP which are parallel to Grice's maxims and which refer to Searle's (1969) categories of illocutionary acts. Before presenting these maxims, it is worth explaining the meanings of some terms, which are employed by Leech. He notes that "politeness concerns a relationship between two participants whom we may call *self* and *other*. In conversation, *self* will normally be identified with *s*, and *other* will typically be identified with *h*; but speakers also show politeness to third parties, who may or may not be present in the speech situation. The label *other* may therefore apply not only to addressees, but to people designated by

third-person pronouns.” (ibid.: 131). Coming back to the six maxims of the PP, they are as follows:

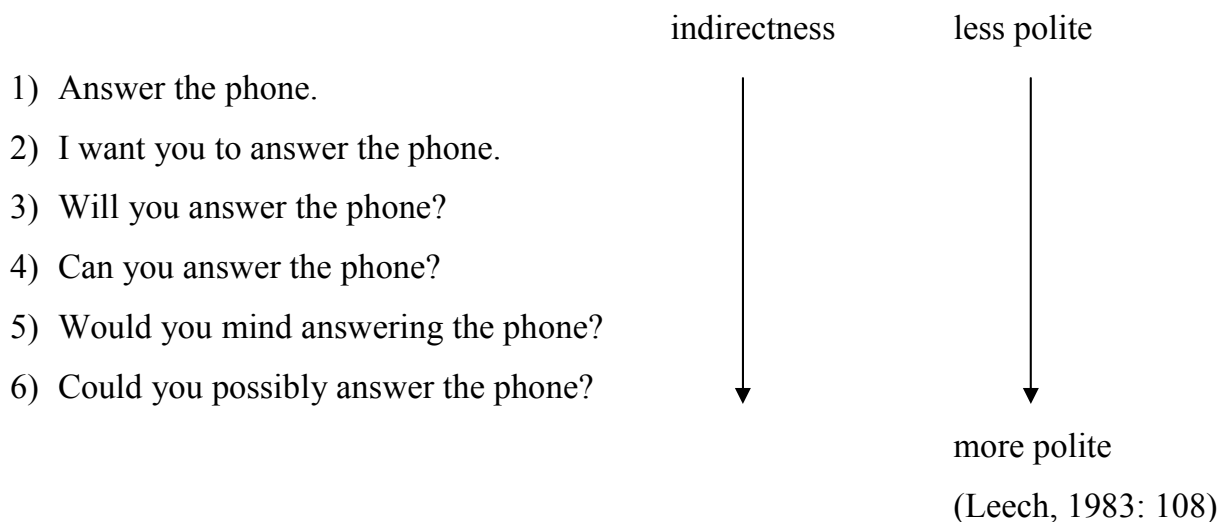
1. *Tact Maxim* (in impositives and commissives)

- a) Minimize cost to *other* [b) Maximize benefit to *other*]

Leech (1983: 107) believes that the *Tact Maxim* is “perhaps the most important kind of politeness in English-speaking society”. This maxim can be applied to Searle’s directive and commissive categories of illocutions. In order to measure the degree of tact we can use the *Cost-Benefit Scale*, which estimates the cost or benefit of the proposed action *A* to Speaker *s* or to Hearer *h*. Leech (1983: 107) provides the following example:



Leech (1983: 108) puts forward another alternative to obtain a scale of politeness which is to “keep the same propositional content *X* (e.g.: *X = You will peel these potatoes*) and to increase the degree of politeness by using a more and more indirect kind of illocution.” An indirect illocution seems to be more polite because “a) it increases the degree of optionality, and b) the more indirect an illocution is, the more diminished and tentative its force tends to be” (ibid.: 108). For instance:



In the example above, we applied a scale called by Leech (1983: 109, 123) the *Optionality Scale* “on which illocutions are ordered according to the amount of choice which *s* allows to *h*.”

The third scale listed by Leech (1983: 123) is the *Indirectness Scale* “on which, from *s*’s point of view, illocutions are ordered with respect to the length of the path (in terms of means-ends analysis) connecting the illocutionary act to its illocutionary goal.”

There are also two other scales, which are relevant to the concept of tact, namely the *Authority Scale* “on which is estimated the relative right of *s* to impose wishes on *h*” (ibid.: 124) and the *Social Distance Scale* “on which is estimated the degree of familiarity between *s* and *h*” (ibid.: 124).

## 2. *Generosity Maxim* (in impositives and commissives)

- a) Minimize benefit to *self* [b) Maximize cost to *self*]

Let us consider the following sentences: *Could I have some more X?* and *Is there some more X?* (Leech, 1983: 134). Leech observes that greater politeness is achieved in the second sentence, because reference to the Speaker as beneficiary is omitted.

## 3. *Approbation Maxim* (in expressives and assertives)





Leech (1983: 138) remarks that “there is a tendency to exaggerate agreement with other people, and mitigate disagreement by expressing regret, partial agreement, etc.” The following examples illustrate this statement:

A: *It was an interesting exhibition, wasn't it?*

B † *No, it was very **un**interesting.* [Maxim of Agreement disobeyed]

A: *English is a difficult language to learn.*

B: *True, but the grammar is quite easy.*

The latter example (partial disagreement) is assumed to be more preferable than the former (complete disagreement).

#### 6. *Sympathy Maxim* (in assertives)

- a) Minimize antipathy between *self* and *other* [b) Maximize sympathy between *self* and *other*]

This maxim “explains why congratulations and condolences are courteous speech acts, even though (...) express beliefs which are negative with regard to the hearer” (ibid.: 138). For example:

*I'm terribly sorry to hear that your dog died.*

In contrast to: † *I'm terribly pleased to hear that your dog died.*

Leech (1983: 138-139) claims that condolences are usually expressed with some reticence as they convey an impolite belief which is unfavourable to *h*. Therefore it may be more appropriate to say:

*I'm terribly sorry to hear about your dog.*

Thanks to the *Sympathy Maxim* we are able to interpret the above utterances as an expression of sympathy for misfortune.

What Leech (1983) has in mind when he talks about PP is a principle that is supposed to operate on the same level as, and to collaborate with, the CP and its associated maxims. The observations that Leech (1983) offers in his various maxims, such as tact, generosity, approbation, modesty, agreement and sympathy, have a specific value in themselves as descriptive devices. The same holds for the other principles (e.g. the *Irony Principle*) that Leech (1983) describes. While these principles are neither practically nor theoretically on the same level as the CP, one could make point of subsuming them under the latter principle in some form or other, once one has agreed on cooperation as the basis of conversation (cf. Kopytko, 1993: 23).

Leech (1983) maintains that PP and its maxims are universal in human communication, although their application and value depends on social and linguistic factors.

### **3.3.3. Brown and Levinson's Theory of Politeness**

Brown and Levinson (1987) have also analysed the problem of politeness and their theory is considered by some to be one of “the most influential in providing a paradigm for linguistic politeness which goes beyond a mere extension of the Gricean maxims” (Watts et al. 1992: 7). They created a *Model Person* (MP), who is “a wilful fluent speaker of a natural language, endowed with two special properties – *rationality* and *face*” (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 58). *Rationality*, according to them is “a specific mode of reasoning called practical reasoning which guarantees inferences from ends or goals to means that will satisfy those ends” (ibid.: 58). The concept of *face* was originally developed by Goffman (1967) and later used by Brown and Levinson (1987). Like Goffman, they posit that “face is a universal notion (...) the public self-image that every member of society wants to claim for himself.” (ibid.: 61).

*Face* is believed to be derived from a vaguely Eastern notion of politeness connected with the expression ‘to lose face’, meaning ‘to make other people lose their respect for you’ or ‘save face’- ‘to do something so that people will not lose their respect for you’. Politeness strategies are developed in order to save the Hearer’s *face*. *Face* refers to the respect that an individual has for him or herself, and maintaining that ‘self-esteem’ in public or in private situations. Usually we try to avoid embarrassing the other person, or making them feel uncomfortable. According to Brown and Levinson (1987: 61), the concept of *face* consists of two aspects:

- *positive face* – refers to our need to be accepted and liked by others and our desire to feel that our social group has similar goals. So, a *face-saving act* (FSA) which is oriented to the person’s *positive face* will tend to show solidarity with the Hearer or the group. This is also known as *Positive Politeness*, which preserves the *positive face* of other people. When using *Positive Politeness* we are more likely to use conversation strategies, such as informal pronunciation, shared dialect or slang expressions, nicknames, more frequent reference to the Speaker and the Hearer as *we*, and requests which are less indirect;
- *negative face* – refers to our need to be independent, to have freedom of action, and not be imposed on by others. (Note that *negative* does not indicate *bad*, it is just the opposite of the word *positive*). *Negative Politeness* is oriented to preserve other people’s *negative face*. It will tend to show deference, emphasize the importance of the other’s time or concerns. It may occur when there is a social distance between the Speaker and the Hearer. Here, we can use the following conversation strategies: nicknames, however, slang and informal pronunciation tend to be avoided and requests are more indirect and impersonal (e.g. *Could you...?* or *Could I ask you to...?* or even referring to the Hearer in the third person: *Students are asked not to put their essays in the staff room*). Moreover, *Negative Politeness* involves more frequent use of other *Mitigating devices*, expressions that ‘soften’ our utterances, such as *please, possibly, might, I’m sorry but... etc.*

People usually try to build up their interlocutors' *positive face*, while trying to avoid posing threats to their *negative* ones. We are all familiar with the fact that every engagement in conversation opens up the possibility of 'losing face'. *Face-threatening acts* (FTAs) are acts that infringe on the Hearers' need to maintain his or her self-esteem, and be respected. FTAs can threaten both H's *face* (e.g. requests, suggestions), and S's *face* (e.g. promises, thanks or excuses). In this case, a user of a natural language will try to avoid FTAs, or at least will use certain strategies to minimize the threat. Thus, politeness strategies are developed mainly for the purpose of dealing with these FTAs (see Fig. 3.3.3 below).

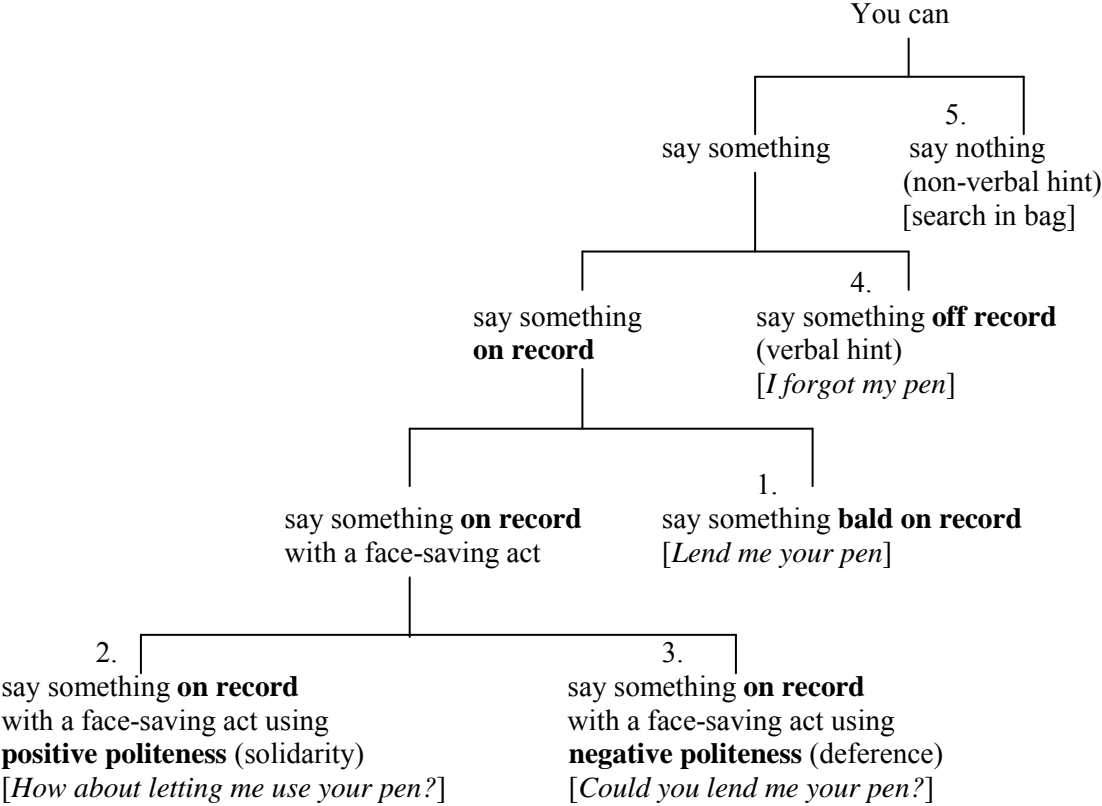


Figure 3.3.3: *How to get a pen from someone else* (following Brown and Levinson, 1990: 69, adapted from Yule, 2000: 66).

From the Figure 3.3.3, we can see that conversation participants can choose from a set of five possible strategies which enable them to either avoid or mitigate FTAs. These five linguistic strategies are ordered in terms of the degree of politeness. As we move up the scale from 1 to 5, the risk of losing *face* increases, and as the risk increases, the greater polite strategy is being employed. Brown and Levinson (1987) present a very

detailed description of these strategies along with their realizations in English, Tamil and Tzeltal. Let us have a closer look at descriptions of particular politeness strategies illustrated by examples from English provided by Brown and Levinson (1987).

The first strategy – *Bald on record* – is used when there is no risk of losing *face*. Moreover, there are no doubts as regards the communicative intention of the Speaker. According to Brown and Levinson (1987: 69), no need for redressive action arises since the interlocutors either know each other very well and are comfortable in their environment or because other demands for efficiency override their *face* concerns. Thus, the act will be performed in the most direct, concise, clear and unambiguous manner, observing Grice's maxims. To illustrate (ibid.: 96-97):

- Request: *Put your coat away.*
- An emergency: *Help!*
- Task oriented: *Give me that!*

Although some aspects of *Positive* and *Negative Politeness* have already been mentioned in this section, we will provide some more details concerning these concepts.

The second strategy – *Positive Politeness* – requires some redressive action. The Speaker tries to maintain his or her *face* and also mitigate the potential threat of the act. It is usually observed among friends or where people in the particular social situation know each other fairly well. *Positive Politeness* usually tries to minimize the distance between interlocutors by expressing friendliness and solid interest in the Hearer's need to be respected (minimize FTAs). It is also characterized by the expression of approval and appreciation of the Hearer's personality by making him or her feel part of an in-group. Some examples of *Positive Politeness* include (ibid.:103, 114, 115, 117):

- Attend to the Hearer: *You must be hungry, it's a long time since breakfast. How about some lunch?*

- Avoid disagreement: A: *What is she, small?*  
B: *Yes, yes, she's small, smallish, um not really small but certainly not big.*
- Assume agreement: *So when are you coming to see us?*
- Hedge opinion: *You really should sort of try harder.*

The third strategy – *Negative Politeness* – also involves redressive action; the Speaker tries to preserve his or her *face* and at the same time he or she tries to reduce the potential threat of the act. The difference between *Positive* and *Negative Politeness* lies in the fact that through *Negative Politeness* the Speaker shows distance. It is characterized by self-effacement and formality. We employ this strategy when we assume that the Speaker might be imposing on the Hearer, and intruding on his or her space. Therefore, we automatically assume that there might be some social distance or awkwardness in the situation. Instances of *Negative Politeness* pertain to etiquette; avoiding disturbing others; indirectness in making requests (e.g. *I'm looking for a comb* (ibid.: 134)) or in imposing obligations; showing deference; and overt emphasis placed on other's relative power.

The fourth strategy – *Off record* – also referred to as hints or non-conventional indirectness, is therefore connected with the flouting of Grice's maxims, where meaning is to some extent negotiable by means of conversational implicatures (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 211). Here, we are removing ourselves from any imposition, for example (ibid.: 215, 226):

- Give hints: *It's cold in here.*
- Be vague: *Perhaps somebody did something naughty.*

The fifth strategy is applied in situations where the risk is too great for us to perform an act, therefore nothing is said.

The importance of an FTA is analysed by means of three sociological factors (Brown and Levinson 1987: 74):

- the *social distance* (D) of S and H (a symmetric relation),
- the relative *power* (P) of S and H (an asymmetric relation),
- the absolute *ranking* (R) of impositions in the particular culture.

The first two pertain to the relationship between the Speaker and the Hearer's horizontal social distance or solidarity, and vertical social distance or power.

D seems to be a symmetric social dimension. It is based on the assessment of how much experience S and H have had in common, how many social characteristics they share (e.g. age, race, gender, religion, interest, profession, etc.), and to what extent they are ready to share intimacies, and other factors.

P appears to be an asymmetric social dimension. P(H,S) is the degree to which the Hearer can impose his own plans and his own self-evaluation (*face*) with the sacrifice of the S's plan and self-evaluation. Generally speaking, there are two sources of P, namely, material and metaphysical control. The first concerns wealth and physical strength, and the second concerns the institutionalized roles given to individuals and accepted in societies e.g. in the army, the state or within the family.

The third variable – R – is culturally-related and situationally-dependent. It influences the choice of a linguistic behaviour in order to perform a FTA, which varies depending on the degree of imposition of the act.

Brown and Levinson (1987: 74) believe that these are variables existing “in many and perhaps all cultures”, nevertheless, it should be remembered that the relative significance played by these and other situational factors may differ from culture to culture. Brown and Levinson (1987) tried to discover some universal rules of politeness, i.e. the universality of *face*, the universality of satisfying other's *face* wants, and the universality of the mutual knowledge between interlocutors of the two aforementioned universalities (Jakubowska, 1999: 32). However, some of those universals are not completely successful because the issue of universality of politeness is a very complex matter. Each language and each culture allow their users to be polite in its own unique manner and provides them with varying repertoires of both verbal and non-verbal expressions of politeness. What is polite in one culture might not be



perceived as such in another. Brown and Levinson's (1987) claim concerning politeness universals, in particular, *positive* and *negative face*, have been criticised by Wierzbicka (1985, 1991: 67, 2003: 67) as being anglocentrically biased. It is said that territorial rights and freedom are highly valued by the British, therefore they favour the *negative politeness* strategy (cf. Sifianou, 1992; Reynolds, 1995; Márquez Reiter, 2000). Poles, on the other hand, express solidarity with interlocutors and show a concern for being appreciated, thus tend to choose the *positive politeness* strategy (Wierzbicka, 1985; 1991, 2003; cf. Marcjanik, 2002, 2007). Bearing this in mind, politeness should be analysed on the cultural, social, and linguistic levels. Márquez Reiter (2000: 28) suggests that knowledge of a particular culture is important in determining the *face* constituents and in understanding the meaning of polite language in that culture. She also points out that though Brown and Levinson (1987) are aware of the existence of cultural differences, they tend to play down the significance of them in the interest of universals. Although it has been claimed (Mao, 1994; Blum-Kulka, 1987) that Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory "lacks a culturally unbiased conceptual framework for objectively and empirically evaluating their politeness universals, Brown and Levinson's framework has been the most influential politeness model to date." (Márquez Reiter, 2000: 29). There is mounting evidence that, although there might exist common underlying elements, politeness is conceptualised and thus realised in a different manner across cultures (cf. Blum-Kulka, 1987; Wierzbicka, 1985, 1991, 2003; Sifianou, 1992; Kalisz, 1993a, Janney and Arndt, 1993; Haugh, 2004).

### **3.4. Culture, language and politeness in Ireland and Poland**

Janney and Arndt (1993: 7 [in: Mao, 1994: 452]) advocate "a methodological shift away from investigating universals of politeness to studying cultural identity in its various linguistic and other manifestations, a shift that helps to account for cultural

variations in politeness from a more flexible point of view.” The author of this dissertation agrees with the aforementioned postulate. Undoubtedly, *culture* is the key concept in cross-cultural communication studies, since the study of culture helps to comprehend and explain, among others, the nature of linguistic behaviour of language users coming from various speech communities. In addition, it develops intercultural awareness, which in return may facilitate problem-solving activities, help to avoid or minimise conflicts among speakers of different nationalities, etc. Moreover, the realization of politeness depends on the culture-specific components of a given culture. Therefore, it is of crucial importance to present here the distinctive cultural characteristics of the Irish and Polish speech communities. We shall also mention the cultural characteristics for the UK since Ireland and the UK are often characterized as possessing similar cultural values. Research on the levels of language use and polite language in interaction in Irish English is only very recent, and consequently, rather limited (cf. Barron and Schneider, 2005a; 2005b; Barron, 2007; forthcoming). It should be stressed that although Ireland and the UK share a common language, history and interact with each other on business, cultural and social levels, cultural differences do exist between them (cf. Ashkanasy et al. 2002, Barron, 2007; forthcoming). Below we shall briefly present the main findings from the most famous and most frequently cited work related to cultural dimensions – the research carried out by the Dutch organisational anthropologist Hofstede (1980, 1994). Reference is also made to the findings of the Global Leadership and Organizational Behaviour Effectiveness (GLOBE) project – one of the latest world-wide cultural research projects. For a fuller account of the main concepts and theories of intercultural and cross-cultural communication, see the articles by Stephan Dahl (2004) and Eszter Pethő and Balázs Heidrich (2005). It ought to be borne in mind that, when comparing Irish and Polish cultures, the inherent differences, between the two, will be found to be smaller, less clear and therefore more difficult to detect than, for instance, the cultural differences between British and Japanese cultures (cf. Fukushima, 2003). Furthermore, Polish cultural values have recently undergone some changes due to the continual globalisation and Americanisation of Polish culture, e.g. increasingly more foreign words or phrases enter the Polish language; norms of politeness among contemporary

Poles are changing and being simplified, people start using informal forms of address (*ty*) even in official / formal situations (cf. Ożóg, 2002; 2005).

Hofstede's (1980) main research on national culture is principally described in *Culture's Consequences*. Hofstede (1980, 1994) claims to have identified the four (later five) main dimensions of national culture within which countries can be hierarchically ordered. Hofstede (1994) defines these dimensions in the following way: *Power Distance*: "the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions (like the family) expect and accept that power is distributed unequally" (Hofstede, 1994: 28; cf. Hofstede and Peterson, 2000: 401). *Uncertainty Avoidance*: "intolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity" (Hofstede, 1994: 113; cf. Hofstede and Peterson, 2000: 401). *Individualism versus Collectivism*: "the extent to which individuals are integrated into groups" (Hofstede, 1994: 51; cf. Hofstede & Peterson, 2000: 401). *Masculinity versus Femininity* "assertiveness and competitiveness versus modesty and caring" (Hofstede, 1994: 82-83; cf. Hofstede & Peterson, 2000: 401). Hofstede (1980, 1994), in his study on attitudes and behavioural patterns of IBM employees in various countries, categorises Ireland and the UK in a very similar way on all four dimensions of culture. Culture in the aforementioned English-speaking countries has been characterized by rather small power distance, individualism, low uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity; whereas Polish culture tends to be defined by relatively large power distance, collectivism, high uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity.

However, this categorisation has been shown to be rather inaccurate. McSweeney (2002) criticises Hofstede's (1980) claim to have empirically identified multiple national cultures or differences among them and challenges the methodological assumptions Hofstede makes. McSweeney (2002) argues, for instance, that the average number of questionnaires used by Hofstede (1980) per country, is too small and the data gained through them is therefore representative of a very limited segment of the overall national population. Another linguist, Lubecka (1995; 2000), on the basis of some research carried out by her on culture-specific values in Poland, suggests that Poles cherish values typical of feminine cultures, such as quality of life, leisure, family gatherings, socialising events. Although, Poles have recently been

under strong economic pressure, most of them are against replacing femininity-motivated values with workaholism, careers, a fast pace of life, etc. Poles show their warm, caring and gentle nature through the language e.g. the use of diminutives (ibid.). Scharf and Mac Mathúna (1998: 152 [in Barron, forthcoming]) note that Hofstede (1980), in his characterisation of Ireland as an individualist society, did not, for example, consider the core status of co-operation and interpersonal relationships in Ireland. Finally, as the attitude surveys were undertaken in the 1960s and 1970s – Hofstede’s findings are now rather outdated.

A more recent study on values across cultures is the Global Leadership and Organizational Behaviour Effectiveness (GLOBE) research project (cf. House et al. 2001, House et al. 2002). This is an empirically-based, interdisciplinary project intended to investigate culture and leadership in 61 nations, including Ireland (one of the seven countries examined within the Anglo Cluster (cf. Ashkanasy, N. M. et al., 2002)) and Poland (one of the eight countries examined within the eastern European Cluster (cf. Bakacsi, G. et al., 2002)), on the basis of nine dimensions of culture, which are as follows: uncertainty avoidance, power distance, collectivism I, collectivism II, gender egalitarianism, assertiveness, future orientation, performance orientation, humane orientation.<sup>2</sup> The GLOBE research was designed to reflect two culture manifestations, namely, institutional practices termed “as it is” and values reported in terms of what “it should be”.

The scores on the nine dimensions of societal culture for the UK, Ireland and Poland are shown in Table 3.4 given below. The scores for each of the aforementioned cultural dimensions were given on the scale of 1-7 points.

Contrary to Hofstede’s (1980) findings, the GLOBE results show that both Ireland and Poland scored equally high on *Power Distance*. It seems that there is a

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<sup>2</sup> The nine cultural dimensions identified within the GLOBE project had their origins in the dimensions of culture described by Hofstede (1980) (the first six culture dimensions), Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961) (future orientation – the degree to which individuals in organizations or societies engage in future-oriented behaviours, e.g. planning (House et al. 2002: 6); and humane orientation – the degree to which individuals in organizations or societies encourage and reward individuals for being fair, altruistic, kind to others (ibid.: 6)), and McClelland (1985) (performance orientation – the extent to which an organization or society encourages and rewards group members for performance improvement and excellence (ibid.: 6)). Additionally, the GLOBE researchers included a further measure of collectivism, different from Hofstede’s measure which moves from high individualism to low collectivism. This additional criterion, named family collectivism (also in-group collectivism or collectivism II), reflects the degree to which individuals express pride, loyalty and cohesiveness in their organizations or families (House et al. 2002: 5).

strong emphasis on and acceptance of authority in these countries. However, the author of the present study does not believe this is the case and is of the opinion that larger *Power Distance* is more conspicuous on the level of language in Poland than in Ireland, for example, in Poland social encounters are more formal, the interactants have a broad repertoire of forms of address, which serve to explicitly define one's position within the societal hierarchy and provide information about one's occupation, education, social position, etc. However, people in both cultures wished that levels of power distance would decrease (cf. Ashkanasy, N. M. et al., 2002: 33-35).

As it is		UK	Ireland	Poland
		1.	Uncertainty avoidance	4.65
2.	Future orientation	4.28	3.98	3.11
3.	Power distance	5.15	5.15	5.1
4.	Institutional collectivism	4.27	4.63	4.53
5.	Humane orientation	3.72	4.96	3.61
6.	Performance orientation	4.08	4.36	3.89
7.	Family collectivism	4.08	5.14	5.52
8.	Gender egalitarianism	3.67	3.21	4.02
9.	Assertiveness	4.15	3.92	3.75
As it should be		UK	Ireland	Poland
		1.	Uncertainty avoidance	4.11
2.	Future orientation	5.06	5.22	5.20
3.	Power distance	2.8	2.71	3.12
4.	Institutional collectivism	4.31	4.59	4.22
5.	Humane orientation	5.43	5.47	5.30
6.	Performance orientation	5.9	5.98	6.12
7.	Family collectivism	5.55	5.74	5.74
8.	Gender egalitarianism	5.17	5.14	4.52
9.	Assertiveness	4.15	3.7	3.74

Table 3.4.: Country (UK, Ireland and Poland) means for GLOBE societal culture dimensions (adapted from Ashkanasy, N. M. et al. (2002: 34) and Bakacsi, G. et al. (2002: 76)).

Ireland, like Poland, was shown to have a rather high level of institutional collectivism (also termed societal collectivism or collectivism I) and family collectivism (also termed in-group collectivism or collectivism II). Ireland was found to be a more collectivist country in contrast to Hofstede's (1980) categorisation (collectivism/individualism). These classifications seem to be consistent with Scharf and Mac Mathúna's (1998: 152-153 [in Barron, forthcoming]) findings regarding the importance of co-operation and collectivism in Ireland. Irish collectivism is expressed in language by a higher degree of indirectness when compared with English English (cf. Kallen, 2005a; 2005b; Barron, 2007; forthcoming). The communication patterns of collectivist cultures have been shown to be generally more indirect due to a greater wish to save *face*, while individualistic cultures are said to be more direct because of being more concerned with self expression (cf. Gelfand et al., 2004: 452). However, as noted by Barron (2005), Irish English should not be associated only with indirectness as her analysis of offers showed that Irish English speakers also employ direct offers in some contexts.

Compared to Ireland, Poland scored equally high on institutional collectivism but higher on family collectivism. A high degree of family collectivism is further evidence of the femininity of Polish culture. In Polish the term 'family' is often understood to refer to an extended family whose members enjoy many "privileges of an *ascribed status* which originated in pre-industrial social system" (Lubecka, 2000: 47-48). In addition, the concept of friendship is perceived in a different way. A Pole would not call anybody a friend ('przyjaciół' in Polish). This notion implies deep and disinterested emotional involvement, yet the Polish idea of friendship allows for critical remarks, directness, sincerity, and sometimes for lack of respect of privacy (ibid.: 48). In Poland, collectivism is strengthened by a lower level of assertiveness in comparison with Ireland, which means that the Polish people are not likely to dominate in interpersonal relationships, are less autonomous and less individualistic, maintain relatedness and promote others' needs and interests through cooperation. The GLOBE project found that individuals in both Ireland and Poland wished for a lower level of institutional collectivism and higher level of family collectivism.

There were also other cultural differences between Ireland and Poland, which were observed at the level of uncertainty avoidance, future orientation, humane and performance orientation, and gender egalitarianism.

Visible discrepancies between e.g. Hofstede's (1980) findings and the GLOBE project outcome indicate a need for further empirical studies in order to reexamine the existing data and also to obtain reliable results.

As regards the phenomenon of politeness in Ireland and Poland, as already mentioned in this chapter, it depends on culture-specific components of a given culture and reflects a specific culture's behavioural norms. Since the two countries differ cross-culturally, Irish and Polish models of politeness will reveal many important differences.

The Polish politeness model can be characterised by the following values (cf. Lubecka, 2000: 54-55; Marcjanik, 2002: 271-275; 2007: 22-26; Ożóg, 2005: 11-12):

- a) *respect*, which may derive from a large power distance (Lubecka, 2000: 54) but also constitutes the main rule of communication present in various philosophical systems, e.g. especially in Christianity (Ożóg, 2005: 11). Respect in language is realised by the "use of appropriate address forms and an appropriate verb, and the number and intensity of politeness expressions; the speakers' nearly self-effacing presence in requests and apologies to superiors (age, gender and status); age- and status-oriented politeness." (Lubecka, 2000: 54);
  
- b) *emotionality*, which is connected with femininity and is observed as: showing interest in the interlocutors' private issues; expressing solidarity with the interlocutor; especially with his or her misfortunes; spontaneity; genuine manifestation of feelings; male courtesy, i.e. special treatment of women; high importance of relationships (friendship, family); extreme hospitality (invitations, party rituals); sincerity expressed by directness (Marcjanik, 2007: 23; Lubecka, 2000: 54);

c) *modesty*, which is marked by femininity and collectivism, and is shown as: being inferior to the interlocutor (i.e. playing down the interlocutor's offence / guilt, e.g. replying to apologies; exaggerating the fault of the Speaker); lack of self-confidence (belittling compliments); lack of assertiveness (e.g. inappropriateness of stressing one's virtues and successes) (cf. Lubecka, 2000: 54; Marcjanik, 2002: 273-274).

All the aforementioned characteristics of Polish politeness seem to provide further evidence that Poles tend to favour, in Brown and Levinson's (1987) terms, positive politeness strategy.

Although Irish culture is grounded in culture-specific dimensions not very distant from the Polish ones (as revealed by the GLOBE project), there exists a different tendency in Irish politeness. It should be remembered that Ireland belongs to the Anglo Cluster, which has been characterised as a performance-oriented, male-dominated cluster that value individualism and, gender equality as well. Existing empirical studies focusing on politeness strategies in Irish English are very small in number (Kallen, 2005: 142-143; Barron, 2007; O'Reilly, 2003). It can be assumed that the central components of the Irish conception of politeness are as follows:

a) *indirectness*, which derives from both a high level of autonomy and collectivism.

On the one hand a lot of attention is paid to the *negative face* of the Hearer, on the other hand, however, indirectness and a high level of mitigation is considered to be typical of collectivist cultures, which are more concerned with self expression (Gelfand et al., 2004: 452). Indirectness in Irish English requests is expressed as the tendency towards conventional indirectness (Barron, 2007; O'Reilly, 2003). Kallen (2005: 142-143) claims that Irish English speakers favour silence (in the sense of indirectness), off-record and negative politeness strategies in Brown and Levinson's (1987) terms. The language tends to be concise, to the point, but also not-imposing and giving options to the interlocutor (Lubecka, 2000: 55);



- b) *hospitality*, which refers to sharing of goods, being cheerful and friendly, having time to chat and refraining from any hostility (cf. Kallen, 2005). But at the same time moderate emotionality realised as a friendly attitude towards anybody with a small gradation of feelings;
- c) *reciprocity* concerns acknowledging the Speaker's point of view and his or her *positive face* needs and diminishing any potential disagreement.

As we can see, Irish politeness is, according to Kallen (2005), not only conceptualised in terms of *negative politeness* (indirectness) but also *positive politeness* (hospitality and reciprocity). Other features which O'Reilly (2003: 225-231) found to be considered as specifically Irish, when compared with the German language, were: a higher level of informality (the use of first names); a different weighting of leaders, i.e. leadership style in Ireland is less hierarchical than in Germany, being "flatter, with more emphasis on team-working and consensual decision-making." (ibid.: 231).

### 3.5. Summary

In this chapter, we have dealt with the main conversational and politeness principles. First, the *Cooperative Principle* of Grice (1975) was presented whose milestone importance in the development of pragmatics has been widely acknowledged by numerous scholars. Later on the CP was used as a starting point for the formulation of the significant politeness theories put forth by Lakoff (1973), Leech (1983), Brown and Levinson (1987). There was even an unsuccessful attempt made by Sperber and Wilson (1986) to replace the CP with their *Relevance Theory*. However, during the period of twenty years since the RT was introduced, RT has been widely discussed and accepted by a great number of scholars.

We have presented different theoretical frameworks for politeness phenomena with some emphasis on Leech's (1983) and Brown and Levinson's (1987) theories of politeness, which have been debated recently (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1984; Blum-

Kulka, 1987; Blum-Kulka et al. 1989; Jakubowska, 1999; Lubecka, 2000; Sifianou, 1992; Trosborg, 1995; Márquez Reiter, 2000; Awedyk, 2006). It has been shown that Irish and Polish cultural values differ to some degree, and as a consequence the inhabitants of these countries conceptualize politeness in a different way. Briefly speaking, the most salient features of Irish politeness are indirectness (typical of negative politeness strategy), lack of imposition, hospitality but at the same time lack of intimacy directly expressed. On the other hand, however, the Irish care for the Hearer's *positive face* needs too. The Polish politeness model is characterised by respect, emotionality and directness (typical of positive politeness strategy) and modesty.

## CHAPTER 4

### 4. A contrastive sketch of English and Polish requests

#### 4.1. The notion of a request and its classification

Let us begin our discussion by defining the communicative act of requesting. A request is an illocutionary act where the Speaker (S) tells the Hearer (H) that he or she wants H to carry out an act which is for the benefit of S. S can either request for *non-verbal* goods and services (e.g. a request for an object, an action or some other type of service) or request for *verbal* goods and services (e.g. a request for information). The requested action usually takes place post-utterance, either in the immediate future (*requests-now*) or later on in the course of action (*requests-then*) (Trosborg, 1995: 187). Thus a request is characterized as *pre-event* (as opposed to *post-event* e.g. apology, complaint) (ibid.: 187; Awedyk, 2006: 38). When asking a favour of somebody S imposes some action on H. Additionally, he or she does it at the cost of H. Therefore, a request is viewed as an impositive act. As has already been mentioned (see Subsection 3.3.3) a request belongs to a group of *face-threatening* acts, since S while making a request exercises power or direct control over H's behaviour, and so H's *negative face* is being threatened. However, S may also be "in danger" of losing *face* because H can refuse to comply with S's wish.

There are a number of speech acts like orders, commands, suggestions, advice, etc. that together with requests fall into the group of *directives* (Searle, 1979: 13-14). Linguists (Fraser, 1975; Searle, 1979; Leech, 1983) who defined the illocutionary forces of these speech acts often failed to see that these speech acts should be subsumed under two different subclasses, depending on whether S expects compliance or allows non-compliance.

In *English Conversation*, Tsui (1994) argues that the speech acts mentioned above fall into two categories, namely *directives* (orders, commands, and instructs) and *requestives* (requests, inviting, asking for permission, and offer), and that these

two categories differ considerably. A similar division can be noticed in Wierzbicka's (1987) *Dictionary of Speech Act Verbs*. She places verbs such as *order, command, tell, direct, instruct* and *require* within one class called the *order group*, and verbs like *ask, request, beg, implore, plead* and *appeal* in a second class called the *ask group*.

Tsui (1994) points out the most important differences between *requestives* (commonly referred to as a 'request') and *directives* (commonly referred to as an 'order'). These are as follows: a request gives the addressee the choice of complying or not complying, whilst an order does not; a request does not assume that the addressee will cooperate, whereas an order does. Request allows for the possibility of refusal. A request can be granted or refused by H. According to Green (1989: 78), "it is advisable for the addressee to grant the speaker's request, but in the case of refusal the speaker will not be enraged." Next, Searle (1969) claims that an order differs from a request in that the former has the special preparatory condition that S has to be in a position of authority over the addressee; a request is generally thought of as polite ways of getting the addressee to do something. "The speaker does not believe the action to be beneficial to the hearer" (Ajmer, 1996: 67), contrary to advices, suggestions or offers (cf. Komorowska, 2002: 371). Requests are characterized grammatically by "a level or only slightly falling intonation, an ability to occur with *please* in final position (...)" (Ajmer, 1996: 67). In addition, "they permit *if you will* tag (...), and they are reported with *ask* rather than *tell* or *demand* (...)" (Green, 1989: 121). On the other hand, Tsui (1994: 95) claims that "according to the criterion of prospected response, we can say that *requestives* and *directives* (...) belong to the same subclass which elicits a non-verbal response, as opposed to the subclass which elicits a verbal response." However, later on in her work she argues that they belong to two different subclasses, which has been depicted in the Figure 4.1 below.

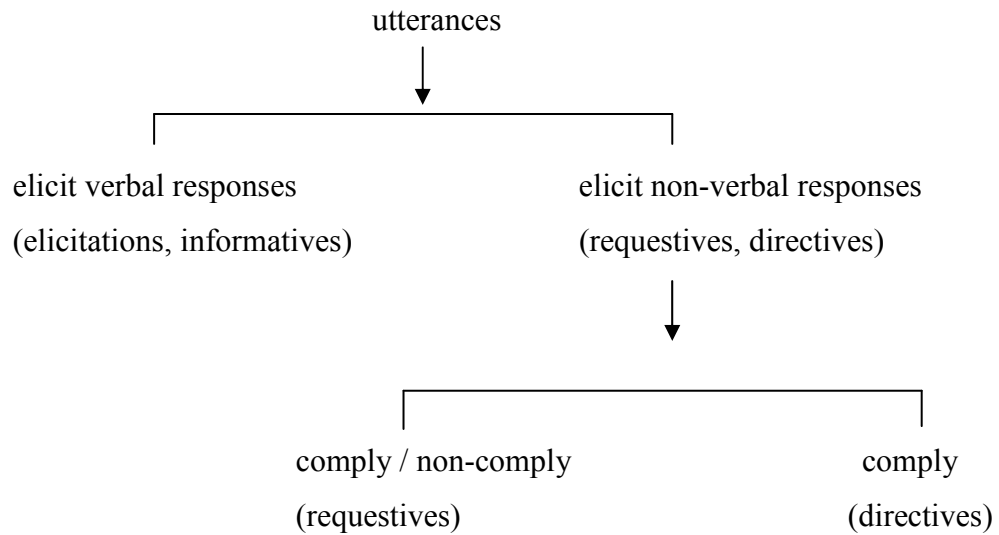


Figure 4.1: *Classification of utterances* (adapted from Tsui, 1994: 95)

As already stated in Chapter 2 of this study, Searle (1969) in *Speech Acts*, elaborated on Austin's (1962) notion of *felicity conditions* (FCs), and presented a classification of the conditions that must hold for a successful speech act. On the basis of those conditions, the Speech Act of Requesting can be defined in the following way:

Types of Rule	REQUEST
1. Propositional content	Future act A of H
2. Preparatory	1. H is able to do A. S believes H is able to do A. 2. It is not obvious to both S and H that H will do A in the normal course of events on his own accord.
3. Sincerity	S wants H to do A
4. Essential	Counts as an attempt to get H to do A.

(Searle, 1969: 66-67)

where: S = speaker  
 H = addressee  
 A = a future act of H desired by S

Another proposal accounting for Request as a Speech Act (SARq) was suggested by Oleksy (1983: 83). He claims that SARq can be defined as a communicative category via FCs and he puts forth FCs for SARq, which are deeply rooted in Searle's (1969) FCs set. However, there are differences between Searle's FCs for SARq and Oleksy's FCs, these being, the inclusion of the cultural and contextual aspects, namely, a) S believes A is acceptable in a socio-cultural context, and b) S believes a request is acceptable in the communicative context, in which S and H perform. This observation is of vital importance to the present study since the choice of the linguistic realization of a particular SA depends on a variety of situational and social factors, which originate in, are associated with, and are acceptable in a given culture (cf. Subsection 3.4 of this study). It is the broad repertoire of requests in English and Polish, their classification and the contrastive analysis which allow the establishing of similarities and differences between the English and Polish native speakers' request realization patterns.

Before proceeding to a detailed examination of the realization of requests in the two languages, the units for the analysis will be presented as defined by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984: 200-205) and Blum-Kulka et al. (1989: 273-294). The unit of analysis may occur in the form of an utterance or a sequence of utterances and it may include the following segments: (i) the **Head Act** (also referred to as core request or the request proper cf. Sifianou (1992)) and (ii) the **peripheral elements** (ibid.: 99).

(i) The **Head Act** is that part of the sequence which may serve to realize the act independently of other elements; it can occur on its own and still, without any peripheral elements, convey the request successfully. However, it frequently happens that the Head Act is either preceded and/or followed by peripheral elements (supporting moves), which can mitigate or aggravate its force, yet the Head Act's propositional content remains unchanged. Head Acts vary in terms of 1) strategy type (this aspect will be presented in detail in Section 4.2), and 2) perspective (it will be discussed further in Subsection 4.1.1).

(ii) The **peripheral elements**, it will be recalled, are employed in order to mitigate or aggravate the request. These elements include:

- *alerters*, whose functions are to alert H's attention to the upcoming speech act (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989: 277) (i.e. address forms such as title/role, surname, first name, nickname, endearment, offensive term, pronoun, and attention getters); and
- other *external modifiers* (cf. Edmondson, 1981; Edmondson and House, 1981; House and Kasper, 1981, and Faerch and Kasper, 1989; Trosborg, 1995: 209-219), for instance:
  - *preparators* – S prepares his or her request carefully in order for H to fulfil his or her wish. These devices are used in cases where it is not obvious that H will comply with the request, e.g. in non-intimate situations, among strangers, etc. To illustrate:
    - (1) *There is something I'd like to ask you.*
    - (2) *May I disturb you for a moment?*
  - *disarmers* – S is aware of potential imposition a request may cause, therefore, he or she tries to anticipate possible refusal, for example:
    - (3) *I hope I'm not disturbing you but ...*
  - *sweeteners* – S can diminish the imposition involved by flattering or expressing exaggerated appreciation of H's ability to comply with the request, for instance:
    - (4) *You have excellent taste in clothes. Can I borrow this dress?*
  - *supportive reasons* – S gives his or her specific reasons for making a request. Presenting an explanation or a justification may influence H to comply with the request more willingly. It helps H to understand S's motivation behind asking a favour. Some examples are:
    - (5) *Would you mind cleaning the kitchen today? I've got so many things to do.*

(6) *Would it be possible to move your car a bit? It's blocking the gate.*

- *cost minimizing* – in order to convince H that it is worthwhile to comply with the request, S can mention factors that will minimize any possible cost to H, for instance:

(7) *Would you mind giving me a lift to the train station? I'll pay for the petrol.*

In addition to these *external modifications* of requests, there also exist *internal modifications*, i.e. devices which operate within the Head Act. Their function is to soften or increase the impact a request strategy is likely to have on H. These devices are referred to as *modality markers* (cf. House and Kasper, 1981), and they can be divided into: those which decrease the impact of a request – *syntactic downgraders* (e.g. *conditional, interrogatives, past tense, negation, tag questions, conditional clause, embedding, ing-form*), *lexical/phrasal downgraders* (e.g. *politeness marker, consultative device, downtoner, understatement, hedge, hesitator, interpersonal marker*), and those which, on the other hand, intensify the force of a request – *upgraders* (e.g. *adverbial intensifier, commitment upgrader, lexical intensification*), (Trosborg, 1995: 209-215; cf. Faerch and Kasper, 1989). To illustrate the *internal modification* devices, examples of requests have been provided below.

- *Internal modification* includes the following:

- *Syntactic downgraders*:

- *Conditional*, e.g.:

(8) **Could** I use the telephone?

- *Interrogatives*, e.g.:

(9) Will you close the window, please?

- *Past tense*, e.g.:

(10) I **wanted** to ask you for a loan.



- *Negation, e.g.:*
    - (11) **Can't** you wait for a moment, please?
  - *Tag questions, e.g.:*
    - (12) Hand me the pen, **will you?**
  - *Conditional clause, e.g.:*
    - (13) I would be very grateful **if you** would make the arrangements for me.
  - *Embedding, e.g.:*
    - (14) I **wonder** if you could help me.
    - (15) I **hope** you can help me.
    - (16) I **thought** that maybe you wouldn't mind helping me.
  - *Ing-form, e.g.:*
    - (17) I **was wondering** if you could help me.
- *Lexical / phrasal downgraders:*
- *Politeness marker, e.g.:*
    - (18) Could you close the door, **please**.
  - *Consultative device, e.g.:*
    - (19) **Would you mind** helping me?
  - *Downtoner – e.g. just, simply, perhaps, possibly, rather;*
    - (20) **Perhaps** you could give us a hand.
  - *Understatement – e.g. a little bit, a second, not very much;*
    - (21) Can I have **a little bit** of that cake?
  - *Hedge – e.g. kind of, sort of, somehow, and so on, more or less;*
    - (22) Could you **somehow** find some time to visit me next week?
  - *Hesitator, e.g.:*
    - (23) I er, erm – I wonder if you'd er ...
  - *Interpersonal marker – e.g. you know, you see, I mean – cajolers and others – appealers e.g. right? okay?*
    - (24) Could you pass the glass, **okay?**
  - *Diminutive, e.g.: mamuś (Polish) = mummy (English)*

- *Upgraders:*
  - *Adverbial intensifier* – e.g. *such, so, very, quite, really, terribly, awfully, absolutely, etc.*  
(25) *You **really** must come and see me next week.*
  - *Commitment upgrader* – e.g. *I'm sure, I'm certain, I'm positive, surely, certainly, obviously, etc.*  
(26) *I'm **absolutely positive** that you'll lend me your car.*
  - *Lexical intensification, e.g.:*  
(27) *You'd be **such a darling** if you'd give me a hand in the kitchen.*  
(28) *Get **the hell** out of here.*
  - *Time intensifier, e.g. immediately, now, etc.*

#### 4.1.1. Request perspective

Request perspective is a dimension which specifies the emphasis S makes in carrying out a request. The choice of perspective constitutes an important source of variation in requests. A great number of request realizations include reference to the requester (i.e. the Speaker – “I”), the requestee (i.e. the Hearer – “you”) or both participants. Alternately, any explicit mentioning of the agents may be purposely avoided (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989). S may choose various ways to apply any of these elements, thus influencing the perspective he or she wishes the request to take. It is H whose *face* is being threatened while uttering a request, therefore, any method for avoiding the naming of the addressee as the main performer of the act is desirable in order to soften the impact of the imposition. The following categories of request perspective have been distinguished (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1984: 203):

(a) Hearer-oriented

(29) *Can **you** tidy up the kitchen soon?*

(b) Speaker-oriented

(30) *Do you think **I** could borrow your notes from yesterday's class?*

(c) Speaker and Hearer oriented (inclusive)

(31) *So, could we please clean up?*

(d) Impersonal (The use of people/they/one as neutral agents or passivization)

(32) *So it might not be a bad idea to **get it cleaned up**.*

## 4.2. Taxonomy of English and Polish request strategies

There is a considerable range of cross-cultural researches on the linguistic and communicative strategies of the Speech Act of Requesting (e.g. House and Kasper, 1981; Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1984; Blum-Kulka et al., 1989; Sifianou, 1992; Trosborg, 1995; Lubecka, 2000; Márquez Reiter, 2000; Belza, 2005; 2007; Awedyk, 2006; Barron, 2007; forthcoming). In the following study, we shall utilize the classification of request strategies originally developed by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) for the purpose of the Cross Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP) and later modified by Blum-Kulka et al. in 1989. In addition, some observations as regards lexico-syntactic repertoires of requests in American English and Polish as proposed by Lubecka (2000) will be incorporated in this study<sup>1</sup>. In CCSARP, a total of nine request strategies with varying lexico-syntactic structures of requesting formulas and patterns were grouped into three major categories according to their level of directness. By a request strategy we understand “the obligatory choice of the level of directness by which the Request is realized.” (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989: 278). Directness means the degree to which S’s illocutionary intent is apparent from the locution. Furthermore, while directness is considered to be related to politeness, it is not coextensive with it (ibid.: 278). According to Blum-Kulka (1984: 201), “there seem to be three major levels of directness that can be expected to be manifested universally by requesting strategies”; these are as follows (cf. Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1984: 201; Blum-Kulka et al., 1989: 47):

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<sup>1</sup> It should be mentioned that in the present study we will use data on requests employed in various dialects of English found in the existing literature. Various dialects of English show more similarities than differences as regards the requestive behaviour of Anglo-Saxons (cf. Barron, 2007; forthcoming; Márquez Reiter, 2000).

1. **Direct Level** – the most direct, explicit level, which is realized by requests syntactically marked as such, for example, imperatives, or by other verbal means that name the act as a request, for instance, performatives (Austin, 1962) and hedged performatives (Fraser, 1975).
  
2. **Conventionally Indirect Level** – the act is realized by reference to contextual preconditions necessary for its performance, as conventionalized in a given language. These strategies are commonly referred to as indirect speech acts in speech act literature since Searle (1975).
  
3. **Non-conventional Indirect Level** – the open-ended group of indirect strategies (hints) that realize the request either by partial reference to object or element needed for the implementation of the act or by reliance on contextual clues (cf. Weizman, 1989)

A combination of levels of directness and strategy types are elaborated in Table 4.2. The request strategies in Table 4.2 below are ordered in accordance with decreasing degree of directness. They are mutually exclusive, i.e. the Head Act cannot be realized through more than one specific request strategy.

Level of directness	Strategy type	Examples
<i>Direct</i>	1. <i>Mood Derivable</i> : where the grammatical mood of the verb determines its illocutionary force as a request, e.g. the imperative.	(33) <i>Close the door.</i>
	2. <i>Explicit Performatives</i> : where the illocutionary intent of the utterance is explicitly named.	(34) <i>I'm asking you to close the door.</i>
	3. <i>Hedged Performatives</i> : where the naming of the illocutionary force is modified by hedging expressions.	(35) <i>I would like to ask you to close the door.</i>  (36) <i>I must ask you to close the door.</i>

	4. <i>Obligation Statements</i> : where the illocutionary point is directly derivable from the semantic meaning of the locution.	(37) <i>You should/will have to close the door.</i>
	5. <i>Want Statements</i> : where the utterance expresses S's desire, intention that H carries out the act.	(38) <i>I want you to close the door.</i>
<i>Conventionally Indirect</i>	6. <i>Suggestory Formulae</i> : where the utterance contains a suggestion to do A.	(39) <i>Why don't you close the door?</i>
	7. <i>Query Preparatory</i> : where the utterance contains reference to a preparatory condition (e.g. ability, willingness or possibility to perform the act) as conventionalized in any specific language.	(40) <i>Could you close the door, please?</i>  (41) <i>Would you mind closing the door, please?</i>
<i>Non-conventionally Indirect</i>	8. <i>Strong Hint</i> : where the utterance contains partial reference to object or elements needed to implement the act.	(42) <i>The door is open.</i>
	9. <i>Mild Hint</i> : where no reference is made to the request proper (or any of its elements) but interpretation is possible from the context.	(43) <i>There is a draught in here.</i>

Table 4.2: *A combination of levels of directness and strategy types.*

On the basis of available linguistic literature (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1984; Blum-Kulka et al., 1989; Sifianou, 1992; Trosborg, 1995; Wierzbicka, 1985, 1991; Kalisz, 1993a; Lubecka, 2000) and the empirical cross-cultural studies carried out by the aforementioned linguists, we shall attempt to organize and compare request strategies in English and Polish. There exists a wide repertoire of requests in both languages under examination. We will not attempt to present the full range of requests available in both languages. Rather, we will focus on these examples which occur most frequently in the research literature.

## 4.2.1. Direct Level

A requester who wishes to make explicit the illocutionary point of his or her request can use an imperative or a performative statement. If the requester chooses to employ a modal verb expressing obligation or necessity, then the request is considered by linguists to be of a weaker, less imposing nature.

### 4.2.1.1. Mood Derivable

Searle (1975: 64) claims:

“(...) ordinary conversational requirements of politeness normally make it awkward to issue flat imperative sentences (e.g. *Leave my room*) or explicit performatives (e.g. *I order you to leave the room*), and we therefore seek to find indirect means to our illocutionary ends (e.g. *I wonder if you would mind leaving the room*).”

Similarly, according to Trosborg (1995: 204), “the imperative is the grammatical form directly signalling that the utterance is an order.” In addition, when unmodified it is authoritative and must be obeyed. Sifianou (1992: 125) also notices that imperatives are constructions considered by some linguists, such as Lakoff (1977) or Leech (1983) to be reserved for commands and instructions, and therefore inappropriate for making requests. This view, however, has been questioned by some scholars (e.g. Sifianou, 1992; Wierzbicka, 1985). While Lakoff’s (1977) and Leech’s (1983) view might apply to the English norms of politeness, it does not constitute a universal principle of polite linguistic realizations (cf. Sifianou, 1992: 126). Imperatives (for instance: *Leave me alone* or *Clean up this mess, please*) do perform the function of requests (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1984). According to Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1984, this form of expressing a request is called *Mood Derivable* (MD), as the grammatical mood of the verb in the utterance indicates its illocutionary force as a request. Additionally, the use of tags (cf. De Devitiis et al., 1989) and/or the politeness marker *please* makes the request more polite, for example:

(44) *Close the door, please.*

(44) *Close the door, will you*

Another linguist, Olga Kunst-Gnamuš (1990: 59) points out that “(...) the evaluation of the politeness of a request expressed in the imperative form depends on the evaluation on the cost and benefit scale stemming from the required act (...)” Briefly speaking, we can use a ‘bald’ imperative if what we utter is beneficial to the addressee (e.g. *Have some more tea*), contrary to e.g. *Wash the dishes*, which imposes a hardship on H. She draws the conclusion that “requests to the hearer may be expressed directly in the imperative form without being considered impolite.” (ibid.: 60).

There are some factors that may have a strong influence on our use of requests in the form of imperatives, namely the relationship and the social distance between S and H. Yet the circumstances may force us to use a ‘bald’ imperative, i.e. in situations involving an emergency, for instance, if we discover that there is a bomb in the car, we might yell at the passengers: *Get out of here, quick!* Direct requests are typically employed when compliance is anticipated, either due to the requester being superior in rank to the requestee, or because the favour asked carries a low degree of imposition. In a family situation, for instance, ‘bald’ imperatives seem to be frequent (e.g. *Pass the salt*). As previously stated when the request is to the addressee’s benefit, we are more likely to say, for example, *Help yourself to some more cake*. According to Sifianou (1992: 132), imperatives also appear in cases of physical distance and power difference, in the former case because efficiency seems to be more important and in the latter because face redress is not necessary.

As far as the Polish language is concerned, Marcjanik (2002) states that imperatives perform various functions: they may not only express orders or commands, but also requests. The phonetic form of requests is generally characterized by a soft tone of the utterance and a prolonged vowel or syllable. To illustrate, let us consider these two sentences (ibid.: 159):

(46) *Zamknij okno.*

(47) *Zamknij okno.* (*a* pronounced as /a:/)

While it may be questionable whether the former is actually a request or an order, the latter one is undoubtedly a request.

Polish imperatives can be made more polite by the use of the address forms and personal pronouns; for instance, *Daj mi, **mamo**, chusteczke* tends to be more polite than *Daj chusteczke* (ibid: 160). What is more, some *lexical/phrasal downgraders*, such as *dobrze* or *dobra* (*appealers*) or *jeśli możesz* may modulate the force of imperatives, in particular they decrease the impact of a request, (ibid.: 160), for example:

(48) *Daj mi jeszcze jedną poduszkę, **dobrze?***

(49) *Zabierz te dokumenty ze stołu, **jeśli możesz.***

When discussing the degree of politeness, we should remember the importance of the modification used in these constructions in both the languages under examination. From the theoretical point of view, the request proper may be separated from other elements, which mitigate the illocutionary force of a request, yet in actual encounters they usually occur and function together.

A very interesting and detailed cross-cultural analysis of the lexico-syntactic structures of formulae and patterns of American English and Polish requests and invitations (we shall deal only with requests here) has been presented and discussed by Lubecka (2000). She groups requests into three categories, namely: (1) *Direct Orders*, (2) “*Embedded*” *Orders*, and (3) *Conventionally Indirect Requests and Invitations*. The first category corresponds to our MD, since she claims that *Direct Orders* “ask in the most direct way for a performance of an action.” (ibid.: 85). On the basis of the research carried out by her, it is stated that there are many differences between American English and Polish as regards the lexico-syntactic structure, frequency of occurrence (i.e. this type of request prevails in Polish) and the use of *Direct Orders*. Within *Direct Orders*, Lubecka (2000: 85-91) distinguishes several patterns of typical request in both languages in question, they are as follows:



- **American English data** (ibid.: 85-91):

1. **Basic Verb Form Imperative** – is almost always followed or preceded by the *politeness marker* (PM) – *please* which softens the imposition (ex. 50). In the case of absence of PM, the strength of the *illocutionary force* increases (ex. 51). Ex. 50 and ex. 51 correspond to Polish Explicit Imperatives Proper and Polish Infinitives, respectively.

(50) *Open the door, please.*

(51) *Don't open the door!*

2. **Passive Imperatives** – in these formal but polite requests, addressed to an anonymous H the PM *kindly* and/or the verb *request* (in the passive voice) may be used. This formula partly corresponds to Polish Passive Imperative with the PM. An example is given below:

(52) *Passengers are kindly requested not to smoke during the flight.*

In addition, Lubecka (2000: 86) notices that expressions such as *be requested* and PM *kindly* enhance the effect of formality here, but do not reduce the strength of the *illocutionary force* of a request.

3. **Let-Imperatives** – in English the lexico-syntactic structure determines the *illocutionary force* of this type of a request. Thus, there are *Let-Imperatives* with varying degree of *illocutionary force* ranging from the very strong, such as:

(53) *Let the cat out!*

(54) *Don't let her go!*

to those with weaker *illocutionary force*, this being achieved by employing different types of the form of address, for instance (ibid: 86-87):

(55) *Let's do your homework now!*

(56) *Let Mary stay with us for this weekend, please.*

According to Lubecka (2000), the Polish *Niech*-Imperatives, despite some lexico-syntactic similarities, are not exact equivalents of the English *Let*-Imperatives. As far as these constructions are concerned, she claims that the two major differences between English and Polish are: 1) the strength of the *illocutionary force*, i.e. in Polish the *Niech*-Imperatives constitute a stronger imposition of S's will than the *Let*-Imperatives in English; 2) the perspective, i.e. in English both the H-oriented, and the inclusive (S and H oriented perspective) can be realized, whereas in Polish only the S-oriented perspective is present.

4. **Elliptical Imperatives** – they are characterised by the same strength of the situation-bound *illocutionary force* and occur in the same kinds of social situations (i.e. in service encounters) in both English and Polish (ibid.: 87). Some English examples include:

(57) *A glass of water, please!*

(58) *At the Hilton!*

- **Polish data:**

1. **Infinitives** – have the strongest *illocutionary force* among all kinds of *Direct Orders*, contain infinitive forms of verbs as their core. They occur in situations where power distance is great and in addition, the request is to show disrespect or rudeness. They can also indicate the S's negative attitude towards his or her interlocutor, for example (59) (ibid.: 87):

(59) *Nie gadać tylko pracować!*

By adding PM Infinitives can be made more polite, for instance:

(60) *Proszę nie rozmawiać tylko pracować.*

(61) *Proszę wypełnić tylko ten formularz.*

Such requests (ex. 60 and 61) sound neutral and polite; they are used in formal situations, when talking to subordinates, anonymous interlocutors or strangers in offices e.g. asking to provide some particular service.

Another variation of an Infinitive with PM is Passive Imperative with *są proszeni*. Such a request may be used in formal oral announcements addressed to a wide audience, to illustrate:

(62) *Pasażerowie podróżujący do Londynu są proszeni o przejście do odprawy paszportowej.*

2. **Explicit Imperatives Proper** – have an imperative verb as their core, often negated, which is applied to specify the request. The verb may be used in either the second person singular or plural. They may be modified by PM *proszę* or its more personalised form with a pronoun *proszę cię*. Explicit Imperatives Proper are likely to be used “when the Hearer is a junior, a close friend of a rather similar age and status or an inferior, and the situation is informal, half-formal or even formal with an asymmetrical relationship.” (ibid.: 89), for example:

(63) *Wróć do domu przed kolacją* (mother to son)

(64) *Marysiu, proszę zadzwoń do mnie zaraz po przyjeździe.*

3. **Niech-Imperatives** – appear in rather formal requests, have a strong *illocutionary force* because of an implied power distance. The verb is used in the third person singular (plural forms are not that frequent) and future tense. When the address form *pan / pani / państwo* is employed, S achieves the effect of polite formality. The use of a first name indicates that there is some familiarity between the interactors, yet

it still functions as a distance- and power-building device. In most cases these requests are addressed to petitioners in offices (ibid.: 89-90), e.g.:

(65) *Niech pan przyjdzie po 12, to zastanie pan kierownika.*

or subordinates, e.g.:

(66) *Niech pani Jola umyje okna rano w poniedziałek.*

4. **Elliptical Imperatives** – are employed to request H to carry out an act, not by means of an explicitly present verb but with a noun or adverbial. Thanks to the situational context and shared knowledge it is possible to understand what is to be performed. In general, Elliptical Imperatives imply a large power distance between S and H, although in some situations the *illocutionary force* may be weakened. Lubecka (2000: 90) enumerates four types of social encounter which allow for the non-power marked use of such structures, namely: 1) transactional or service relations in restaurants, shops (presence of the PM *please* or the term of address); 2) high solidarity networks among e.g. friends or a team at work; 3) work under time pressure; 4) informal encounters where the S gives adverbials to define the place or time of the meeting. To illustrate:

(67) *Wody!*

(68) *No to w Wierzyńku. Jutro o 19tej!*

(69) *Dwie kawy i sernik!*

(70) *Rafał, młotek!*

#### 4.2.1.2. **Explicit Performatives**

Blum-Kulka et al. (1989: 279) point out that in requests of this sort the illocutionary intent is explicitly named by S by means of a relevant illocutionary verb.

According to Trosborg (1995: 203), “the inclusion of a performative verb conveying requestive intent, e.g. *ask, request, order, command*, etc. explicitly marks the utterance as an order.” She also claims that such utterances are very direct and usually authoritative. For Lubecka (2000) *Explicit Performative* constitutes the second group of requests which she calls *Embedded Orders*. She is of the opinion that *Direct Orders* differ from *Embedded Orders* in the way that the latter is able to “modify the *illocutionary force* of the request by the choice of the embedding device.” (ibid.: 91). Embedding, as explained by Lubecka (2000: 91), “consists in preceding an order proper by a modifying segment whose role is to modulate the *illocutionary force* of a given request by means of either a lexico-syntactic device (e.g. a main clause with a performative or *tentative verb*) or a lexical device (e.g. a politeness marker).” As regards the structure of such a request, it is composed of a main and a sub-clause. The verb in the main clause is used in the first person singular or plural. S employs the personal pronouns *I/we* (E), *ja/my* (P), and the personal pronouns *you* (E), *cię/was* (P), or a proper term of address to address H. The sub-clause denotes the kind of act which is to be performed by H. Although explicit performatives, as originally defined by Austin (1962) (see Subsection 2.2.1 of this work), ought to be used in indicative active in the Simple Present, they can also appear in the Simple Past or Continuous Tenses in English, and the Present or the Past Tense in Polish. Furthermore, in order to diminish the *illocutionary force* conditional forms may also occur in both English and Polish (cf. Lubecka, 2000: 91).

According to Lubecka (2000: 92), three kinds of *Embedded Orders* can be distinguished with regard to the nature of the performative verb applied in a request, namely:

1) *Embedded Orders with a Performative Verb*

- carrying a strong *illocutionary force*, e.g. *order* (E), *ządać* (P));
- carrying a weak *illocutionary force*, e.g. *beg, ask* (E), *prosić, zaklinać, błagać* (P). Some examples are (ibid.: 92):

(71) *I'm ordering you that you should not leave me now!*

(72) *I beg you to forgive me!*

- (73) *Żądam, natychmiast zwróć mi pieniądze!*  
 (74) *Nalegam, abyście zostali do przyszłego tygodnia.*  
 (75) *Prosiłam pana, niech pan się nie wtrąca w moje sprawy.*  
 (76) *Prosiłabym, żeby pilnie skontaktował się pan z kwestorem.*

The difference between the English and Polish language lies in the fact that Polish speakers have a wider choice of possible lexico-syntactic realizations of request than English speakers.

2) *Embedded Orders with a Tentative Verb* (e.g. *hope, believe, think, wonder, wonder* (E), and *wierzyć, zastanawiać się, myśleć, spodziewać się, przypuszczać, mieć nadzieję* (P), for instance (ibid.: 92):

- (77) *I hope that you will come to our party.*  
 (78) *I wonder if I could use your car tonight.*  
 (79) *Zastanawiam się, czy nie pożyczyłbyś mi tej książki.*  
 (80) *Myślę, że wpadniesz chociaż na chwilkę.*

Lubecka (2000: 93) observes that negated verbal forms are used more frequently in Polish than in English, and that the *illocutionary force* of such an utterance is relatively weaker (ex. 79 vs. 80).

### 3) *Embedded Orders with a PM or with an honorific marker (HM)*

The use of PM decreases the *illocutionary force* of a request, (e.g. *Be so nice, I would be happy, I would appreciate it* (E), *Bądź tak miły/dobry, Było mi (bardzo) miło/przyjemnie* (P) (used in informal situations), *Niech pan będzie (tak) miły/uprzejmy, Czy nie sprawiłoby panu kłopotu / byłoby nam niezmiernie miło, gdyby pan* (used in formal situations). The PM can also be realized by a noun in English, whereas it is not usual in Polish (ibid.: 93-94), to illustrate:

- (81) *Be a darling and lend me your car.*

(82) *Bądź łaskaw i daj mi numer do Piotra.*

vs.

(83) *Byłoby nam niezmiernie miło, gdybyś nas odwiedził.*

As mentioned previously, this variant of *Embedded Orders* might also contain a HM (in formal occasions), such as *be honoured* (E), *czuć się uhonorowanym / zobowiązanym / zaszczyconym* (P) (ibid.: 94), for instance:

(84) *We should be honoured if you could come to the party.*

(85) *Bylibyśmy niezwykle zaszczycony, gdyby zechciał pan przewodniczyć sesji.*

### 4.2.1.3. Hedged Performatives

According to Fraser (1975), *Hedged Performatives* have the general form of requests realized by means of explicit performatives. However, they (see ex. 86-91) differ from the corresponding performative sentences in that they contain some modal verbs (e.g. *must, will, would* (E), *musieć* (P)), quasi-modals (*have to* (E)) or verbs expressing intention (e.g. *want to, wish to, would like to, be going to* (E), *chcieć, zamierzać* (P)), which modify the illocutionary verb denoting the requestive intent (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989: 279). S may employ the *Hedged Performative* in order to soften the *illocutionary force* of a given request, as in the following examples:

(86) *I would like to ask you to move your car.*

(87) *I want to ask you a few questions.*

(88) *I must / have to ask you to leave the room now.*

(89) *Chciałbym zadać pani kilka pytań.*

(90) *Chciałam prosić, żeby mi pani podała tamtą książkę.*

(91) *Muszę poprosić pana o opuszczenie gabinetu.*

For a detailed account of *Hedged Performatives*, the reader is advised to consult Fraser (1975: 187-210). Brown and Levinson (1987: 146-164) gave a comprehensive presentation of the effect of hedges on the *illocutionary force*.

#### 4.2.1.4. Obligation Statements

When employing *Obligation Statements*, S either exerts his or her own authority, or refers to some external authority (e.g. institution, law, etc.) in order to persuade H to perform a desired action. Modal verbs used in this type of request are: *must*, *have to*, *should*, *ought to* (E), and the modal predicate with the verbs *musieć*, *powinno się* (P) (cf. Lubecka: 2000: 106). The examples are:

- (92) *You should / ought to move your car.*
- (93) *You'll have to move your car (or you'll pay a fine).*
- (94) *You must move your car (because I want you to).*
- (94) *Musisz mi pomóc, Włodek*
- (95) *Powinieneś uprzedzić mnie o swojej wizycie.*

The degree of the *illocutionary force* of such requests depends on the verb of obligation. The modal verb *must / have to* (E) and the modal predicate with the verb *musieć* (P) make the request very similar to an authoritarian order with its *illocutionary force* close to *Direct Orders* (Lubecka, 2000: 106). The *illocutionary force* of the verbs *should / ought to* (E), and *powinno się* (P) is, according to Lubecka (2000: 107), weaker than the previously enumerated verbs of obligation. The strength of the *illocutionary force* of these requests lies in the usage of obligation verbs, stating explicitly who the performer of the required action is to be and the type of request.



### 4.2.1.5. Want Statements

According to Blum-Kulka et al. (1989: 279), a *Want Statement* “expresses the speaker’s desire that the event denoted in the proposition come about.” As Lubecka (2000: 109) points out, *Want Statements* “assist the speaker in asserting those desires whose fulfilment depends on the hearer’s decision.” The core of this type of request involves the use of the verbs *need*, *want* (E), for instance (ibid.: 109):

(96) *I’ll need this book very badly.*

(97) *I want you to meet me tomorrow at five.*

and *potrzebować*, *chcieć* in the Polish language, for example (ibid.: 109):

(98) *Potrzebuję pilnie skontaktować się z Marią.*

(99) *Chcę, żeby umówiła mnie pani z szefem na jutro.*

In such requestive forms *illocutionary force* is relatively strong and *Want Statements* are normally impolite when used in their unmodified form (cf. Trosborg, 1995: 202). Here the *illocutionary force* may be further modified by the type of verb used (*want* (E) and *chcieć* (P) – both possess a stronger *illocutionary force*, while *need* (E) and *potrzebować* (P) – have a weaker one), its grammatical form (conditional forms reduce the *illocutionary force* of all these verbs, while the Future or Present Tense forms intensify it), or the presence of an agent expressed in a formal term of address which increases the degree of imposition and its lack reduces the *illocutionary force* (Lubecka, 2000: 109).

### 4.2.2. Conventionally Indirect Level

Conventionally indirect requests, in Lubecka’s (2000) classification constitute the third major group of requesting strategies, and are realized by means of *indirect*

*speech acts* (for an account of *indirect speech acts*, see Section 2.3 of this study). It will be recalled that Searle (1975) noticed that an indirect speech act possesses two types of illocutionary acts, primary and secondary, respectively. When uttering *Can you close the window?* S assumes that the addressee will interpret it not as a *Yes/No* question but as a request for action to close the window. In this case the direct act is a question pertaining to H's ability to close the window (secondary illocutionary act). For successful communication's sake it will not be answered by H saying *Yes* and not doing the action, since both interlocutors are aware of the fact that it constitutes a request for action (primary illocutionary act) expressed in an indirect way. H must infer that a question concerning his or her ability to carry out the desired act counts as an attempt on the part of S to make H do so. The inference process involves a transition from a question regarding ability to a requestive *illocutionary force*. In order to make this transition, interlocutors use: the *Felicity Conditions* (FCs) of direct speech acts (Austin, 1962; discussed in Section 2.2.1 of this study); both the linguistic and non-linguistic context (i.e. the type of relation between H and S, their role in the encounter, aim of the meeting) of the utterance; their shared background knowledge of socio-cultural conventions; and the principles of conversational cooperation (CP of Grice, 1975; see Section 3.1 of this study). It should be mentioned here that the occurrence of particular conventionally indirect requests is related to culture-specific values of a given speech community and also reflects the type of politeness, which is preferred and prevails in a given culture (cf. Section 3.4 of this study; Lubecka, 2000: 96).

It often happens that a conventionally indirect request consists of two parts: the first part Lubecka (2000: 96) calls a "*probing pre-request*" (a full utterance or an introductory expression) and the second part, "the request proper". It is said that such requests, in particular those which do not have the request proper overtly stated, have a weaker *illocutionary force* than other kinds of request. Various types of request perspective can modulate a request's *illocutionary force*; the Speaker-oriented perspective usually weakens the *illocutionary force* whereas the Hearer-oriented perspective is likely to strengthen it (ibid.: 97).

### 4.2.2.1. Suggestory Formulae

*Suggestory Formulae* “enable the Speaker to suggest very cautiously some action but s/he either cannot or does not want to press the hearer to have it performed.” (Lubecka, 2000: 103). When applying these formulae, S checks H’s cooperativeness by asking whether any conditions exist that may stop H from performing a requested action (cf. Trosborg, 1995: 201).

*Suggestory Formulae* in English often begin with *why not.../ why don’t...* expressions, for instance (Lubecka, 2000: 104):

- (100) *What about/ How about going to the cinema tonight?*
- (101) *Why don’t you phone her?*
- (102) *Why not play bridge tonight?*

And the Polish examples are (ibid.: 104):

- (103) *Co byś powiedziała na wspólne wakacje?*
- (104) *Może by tak otworzyć jeszcze jedno okno?*
- (105) *A może byśmy przedyskutowali ten punkt poniżej?*

As can be observed, *Suggestory Formulae* can be realized by means of either referring to the interlocutors or remaining impersonal; the latter leads to the *illocutionary force* being very weak. The Hearer-oriented perspective of these requests (ex. 101, 103) indicates the absence of authority (they seem to be merely suggestions), and thus in the case of non-compliance, S does not lose his or her *face*.

According to Lubecka (2000: 104), *Suggestory Formulae* are likely to be used in informal situations, mainly among friends, which explains a rather low frequency of occurrence of the formal address terms such as *pan / pani / państwo* in Polish. She also points out that in Polish we can also ask (ibid.: 105):

- (106) *Dlaczego by nie pójść do kina wieczorem?*

(107) *Dlaczego nie miałbyś wyjechać na wakacje nad morze?*

These forms (ex. 106, 107), though being close lexico-syntactic equivalents of the English requestive forms (ex. 101, 102), differ from English in that they might “express resentment, prompting an immediate reparatory action.” (ibid.: 104).

#### 4.2.2.2. Query Preparatory

According to Blum-Kulka et al. (1989: 280), requests expressed by means of the *Query Preparatory* contain “reference to a preparatory condition for the feasibility of the Request, typically one of ability, willingness, or possibility, as conventionalized in the given language.” In many cases, S questions, rather than states, the presence of the chosen preparatory condition (ibid.: 280). Following Lubecka’s (2000), and Blum-Kulka’s (1982: 39) classifications, we shall present *Query Preparatory* strategy with reference to willingness, availability, ability and possibility conditions and also courtesy, general, intention, and permission questions.

a) **Willingness Questions** – concern H’s good will to carry out the desired act. They are Hearer-oriented, where S conveys to H that compliance is not taken for granted (Trosborg, 1995: 199). The verbs of willingness can appear in the Future Simple, Simple Present Tense or Present Conditional in English and in corresponding tenses and forms in Polish (Lubecka: 2000: 97). The most polite *Willingness Questions* with the lowest *illocutionary force* are thought to be realized in the conditional form (ibid.). Consider the following examples (ibid.: 97):

(108) *Will you do the washing today?*

(109) *Won’t you give me a hand after dinner?*

(110) *Would you show me the way to the station, please?*

(111) *Czy pojedziesz z nami odwiedzić babcię?*

(112) *Czy nie zechciałbyś pożyczyć mi samochodu?*

b) **Ability Questions** – serve S to find out whether H has the capacity to perform the desired act. H's 'capacity' can relate to the inherent capacities of the requestee (e.g. skills, competence, etc) or/and the external circumstances (e.g. time, place, etc of the action) (cf. Trosborg, 1995: 198). The verbs which appear in such requests are: the modal verb *can / could* (E) and the modal predicate with the verb *móc*, and also the verb of ability *umieć* (P). According to Lubecka (2000: 98-99), conditional forms occur most frequently, since they are the most polite. However, the Present and Future Tenses are also used. The Hearer-oriented perspective tends to be characteristic of *Ability Questions*, for example:

(113) *Can / Could you / Will you be able to lend me some money?*

(114) *Czy będziesz mogła oddać te książki do biblioteki?*

However, as noted by Lubecka (2000: 99), two variants of request perspective are possible as well, namely the Speaker-oriented, e.g. (ibid.:99):

(115) *May I ask you a favour?*

(116) *Czy mogę cię prosić o przysługę?*

and the Hearer-oriented, e.g. (ibid.:99):

(117) *Will you do me a favour?*

(118) *Czy mógłbyś wyświadczyć mi przysługę?*

The difference between the Speaker- and the Hearer-oriented perspectives is achieved by changing the modal verb *may* (S-oriented, ex. 115) into *will* (H-oriented, ex. 117) in English; in Polish the verb *móc* is used in the modal predicate (i.e. first person singular – S-oriented, ex. 116 and second person singular – H-oriented, ex. 118). Lubecka (ibid.: 99) remarks that the modal verbs *will* and *may* (E) and *móc* (P) are functionally equivalent in this case.

*Ability Questions* are sometimes used as *probing* pre-requests followed by a request proper.

As far as statements of ability and willingness are concerned, they differ in directness level from questions referring to these conditions. Once the ability pre-condition has been asserted, it leaves no room for non-compliance, i.e. S considers this condition fulfilled and awaits compliance. Such request sound very authoritative (Trosborg, 1995: 200), for instance:

(119) *Jane, you can Hoover the room now.*

(120) *You will proceed alone from now on.*

c) **Courtesy Questions** – are employed by S, who by flattering the addressee's kindness, courtesy, good manners, etc, while at the same time stressing his or her own inferior position, tries to get H to comply with the request (Lubecka, 2000: 100). All *Courtesy Questions* are Hearer-oriented. As Lubecka (ibid.) points out, there exist three situational variants, which are realized by means of the following set expressions:

(121) *Would you be so nice / kind ....* (E) = *Czy byłby pan tak dobry / łaskawy / uprzejmy...*(P)

(122) *Do you mind, if ...* (E) = *Czy nie przeszkadzałoby panu... / Czy nie będzie pan miał nic przeciwko temu ...*

(123) *I may ask you / I would like to ask* (E) = *Jeżeli można chciałbym (zapytać)* (P)

As regards the usage of *Courtesy Questions*, in English they are highly polite and are employed by any speakers (including the young), whereas in Polish such extremely polite requests tend to be used by speakers of the older generation in situations when the power distance is great (ibid.); consider the following examples:

(124) *Would you be so nice as to give me your phone number, please?*

- (125) *Czy byłby pan tak uprzejmy wyznaczyć nowy termin wizyty?*
- (126) *If you don't mind I would like to ask you to make a contribution to our charity?*
- (127) *Czy nie przeszkadzałoby, jeżeli przyszedłbym później?*

The expression *Would you mind* (E) (see ex. 126) often appears in the negative form, which decreases the *illocutionary force*. In Polish we come across negations such as *Czy nie masz nic przeciwko temu + / Czy nie sprawiłoby to kłopotu + że .... /* conditional clause (cf. ex. 127).

d) **Availability Questions** – enable S to enquire whether H is presently available and ready to comply with his or her request. They are Hearer-oriented. To illustrate, let us consider the following examples:

- (128) *Are you ready to go now?*
- (129) *Will / Would you be ready in 10 minutes?*
- (130) *Will / Would you find some time?*
- (131) *Czy jesteś już gotowa do wyjścia?*
- (132) *Czy (nie) miałabyś trochę czasu, żeby pojechać teraz do centrum?*

e) **General Questions** – help S to find out if H's habits, interests, knowledge, experience, etc. may facilitate the fulfilment of a given request, and consequently whether making the request proper will be successful. Therefore, they are often employed as *probing* pre-requests (ibid.: 102). All *General Questions* are Hearer-oriented. Some examples are:

- (133) *Do you like going to the theatre?*
- (134) *Have you ever seen Ingmar Bergman's films?*
- (135) *Are you interested in photography?*
- (136) *Czy lubisz / lubi pan Quentin Tarantino?*
- (137) *Czy byłeś w już w Muzeum Powstania Warszawskiego?*

(138) *Czy interesujesz się malarstwem?*

f) **Intention Questions** – enable S to find out about H's future plans or intentions which may help S in persuading H to fulfil his or her wish. All *Intention Questions* are worded from the H-oriented perspective. As regards their construction, in English the *be going to* expression, the Present Continuous Tense or structures with verbs such as *intend, plan* can be employed. In Polish, *Intention Questions* are expressed by means of the perfective or imperfective aspects of the verbs *zamierzać, planować* in the Past Tense or the forms of the Present Tense (ibid.: 103), for instance:

(139) *Are you going to make some tea?*

(140) *Are you planning to go to the market today?*

(141) *Czy zamierzasz używać dzisiaj komputera?*

(142) *Czy będzie pan jechał przez Olkusz? Jeżeli tak to bardzo proszę o zatrzymanie się na przystanku w mieście.*

*Intention Questions* may appear as either a request proper or as a *probing* pre-request (ex. 142) (ibid.).

g) **Possibility Questions** – enable S to determine the possibility of having an action carried out. The English language users can use expressions of possibility or a modal verb *may*, while Poles can employ the modal predicate with the verb *móc*. As noted by Lubecka (2000: 105), the strength of the *illocutionary force* of this type of requests may vary depending on perspective. She claims that the impersonal perspective (ex. 143, 146) indicates the lowest degree of the *illocutionary force*, the Speaker-oriented perspective (ex. 144) intensifies S's imposition, in particular when the power distance is large, while the Hearer-oriented perspective (ex. 145, 147) implies a greater *illocutionary force* (ibid.).

(143) *Is it possible to get a loan of £5000?*

(144) *May I use your phone, please?*



- (145) *Would it be possible for you to send us some more details?*  
 (146) *Czy możnaby dostać zniżkę?*  
 (147) *Czy nie byłoby możliwe, żebyś zajął się tą sprawą teraz?* (ibid.)

h) **Permission Questions** – allow S to ask for permission to act in accordance with his or her own plans, these requiring some indirect involvement on the part of H (Lubecka, 2000: 105). Therefore, in many requests of this kind the focus is shifted from *you do X* (the Speaker-oriented) to *I do X* (the Hearer-oriented). As a consequence, *Permission Questions* are considered to be very polite since the cost to the addressee is suppressed and the benefit to S is emphasized. Expressions such as *if you don't mind* (E), *jeżeli pozwolisz / jeżeli nie masz nic przeciwko temu* (P) appear to serve as softeners, which increase the degree of politeness in the case of Speaker-oriented requests. The Hearer-oriented perspective is expressed by the usage of *let/allow* (E), and *pozwolić* (P). The verbs of permission occur in the Future tense or conditional form. Some examples of such request are as follows:

- (148) *Will / Would you let me drive your car tonight, please?*  
 (149) *(Czy) pozwoli pan, że zadzwonię jeszcze później?*  
 (150) *Czy pozwolisz mi pooglądać twoją kolekcję monet?*

### 4.2.3. Non-conventionally Indirect Level

The last level of directness presented in this study, the non-conventionally indirect level, comprises the most indirect and, as its name suggests, non-conventional request strategy: the strategy of *Hints* (CCSARP coding scheme, Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1984; Blum-Kulka et al., 1989; cf. Weizman, 1989, 1993). To put it in a nutshell, “the interpretation of *Hints* is secured neither by directness nor by conventionality.” (Weizman, 1989: 74). When uttering a *Hint*, S hardly voices his or her need to change the present situation by mentioning events, commenting upon them, referring to the knowledge shared with H, etc. (Lubecka, 2000: 110-111). In most requests of this type, neither the desired action nor the role of agent is specified

in the proposition. In this way both interlocutors have the opportunity to legitimately opt out at some stage of their conversation, i.e. S may either deny having made a request or deny its propositional content; on the other hand, H may either ignore the request or make S believe he or she misunderstood its content (Weizman, 1993: 125). *Hints* require from H a skilful ability to perceive implicational relationships, a fair knowledge of the present situation, and an understanding of the relationship between the interlocutors. If H either ignores the request on purpose or fails to identify it, then a further conversation may be taken up.

According to Lubecka (2000), *Hints* account for the most productive and the least predictable of all kinds of requests. Furthermore, being “inherently opaque” (Weizman, 1989: 71) they offer a vast choice of different possible interpretations of any given *Hint* (cf. Weizman, 1993: 125), and yet it is possible to divide them into two sub-strategies: *Strong Hints* and *Mild Hints* (cf. Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1984, a distinction made for the purpose of the CCSARP coding scheme). The difference between these two types of *Hints* lies in the fact that they vary on two dimensions, namely: the type of and the degree of opacity (Weizman, 1993: 124). As regards type, the *illocutionary force* or/and the propositional content of *Hints* are dimensions which may be obscure. As regards degree “a *Hint* is considered opaque when its utterance meaning does not provide sufficient identification of its *illocutionary force*” (Weizman, 1993: 124). As a result the same lexico-syntactic structure can be used to perform different illocutionary acts (ibid.). For a detailed discussion of the illocutionary and propositional opacity, see Weizman (1989: 76-81).

Despite the common belief that a *Hint*, having the most indirect illocution, should be considered as the most polite among all request strategies (cf. Leech, 1983: 108-109), researchers have proved, that users coming from different speech communities do not perceive *Hints* to constitute the most polite strategy (Blum-Kulka, 1987).

### 4.2.3.1. Strong Hints

*Strong Hints*, as Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984: 202) put it, contain “partial reference to objects or elements needed for the implementation of the act (directly pragmatically implying the act)”. The examples are:

(153) *You've left the kitchen in a right mess.*

(154) *Mam ważne spotkanie, a jak wiesz mój samochód jest w naprawie*  
(Lubecka, 2000: 112)

Lubecka (ibid.) stresses that *Strong Hints* require less interpretational effort than *Mild Hints*.

### 4.2.3.2. Mild Hints

As far as *Mild Hints* are concerned, these are “utterances that make no reference to the request proper (or any elements) but are interpretable through the context as requests (indirectly pragmatically implying the act)” (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1984: 202). Consider these examples (ibid.):

(155) *I'm a nun.* (in response to the persistent boy)

(156) *We don't want any crowding here* (a request to move the car). (Blum-Kulka, 1987: 133)

(157) *Tyle tu dymu, że nic nie widać.* (Lubecka, 2000: 112)

## 4.3. Politeness and indirectness in requests

As Yule (1996) points out, one of the most common kinds of indirect speech acts in English has the form of an interrogative, but is, in fact, understood as a request and not used to ask a question, e.g.:

(158) *Could you pass the salt?*

(159) *Would you open the window?*

There is a typical pattern in English which seemingly concerns H's assumed ability (*Can you...? Could you...?*) or future likelihood with regard to doing something (*Will you...? Would you...?*), but normally counts as a request to do that thing.

The occurrence of the imperative in requests is not preferred in many languages, including English and Polish (to a lesser extent), despite its status as the 'genuine' expression of the speech act 'request'. Levinson (1983: 264) argues that "most usages [of requests] are indirect" whilst "imperatives are rarely used to command or request." (ibid.). This is connected with the fact that indirect speech acts are usually associated with greater politeness in both English and Polish (to a lesser degree) than direct speech acts.

However, Blum-Kulka (1987: 140) remarks that there is "no linear relationship between indirectness and politeness", which means that indirectness does not necessarily imply politeness. On the other hand, however, Leech (1983: 108) says that "indirect illocutions tend to be more polite (a) because they increase the degree of optionality, and (b) because the more indirect an illocution is, the more diminished and tentative its force tends to be". Blum-Kulka (1987) has carried out some research that puts Leech's claim in doubt. Blum-Kulka's (1987) research was designed to examine the English native speakers' perception of politeness and (in)directness.

Making use of previous request patterns, Blum-Kulka (1987: 133) arranged them into the following nine categories:

DESCRIPTION OF THE CATEGORY	EXAMPLES
1. <b>Mood Derivable</b>	<i>Clean up the kitchen.</i> <i>Leave me alone.</i>
2. <b>Performative</b>	<i>I'm asking you to move your car.</i>
3. <b>Hedged Performative</b>	<i>I would like you to give a lecture a week earlier.</i>
4. <b>Obligation Statement</b>	<i>You'll have to move your car.</i>
5. <b>Want Statement</b>	<i>I want you to move your car.</i>
6. <b>Suggestory Formulae</b>	<i>How about cleaning up?</i> <i>Why don't you come and clean up the mess you made last night?</i>
7. <b>Query Preparatory</b>	<i>Could you clean up the mess in the kitchen?</i>
8. <b>Strong Hints</b>	<i>You've left the kitchen in a right mess.</i>
9. <b>Mild Hints</b>	<i>We don't want any crowding (as a request to move the car).</i>

The requests types which are regarded as the most direct are *Mood Derivables* (imperatives) and *Performatives*, that is to say, “the ones in which requestive force is either marked syntactically, or indicated explicitly” (Blum-Kulka, 1987: 134). On the other hand, Blum-Kulka says that the least direct types are those “in which requestive force is not indicated by any conversational verbal means and hence has to be inferred, as in Hints (...)” (ibid.). Other strategies, like *Obligation* and *Want Statement* and *Suggestory Formulae*, count as requests by social convention.

Blum-Kulka’s (1987) research aimed at eliciting request strategies in five different situations of diverse context. The subjects – native speakers of English – were to assess each utterance on a nine-point scale for either *directness*, or *politeness*. The results are presented below:

DIRECTNESS SCALE	
Mood Derivable	<p style="text-align: center;">DIRECT</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↑</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">INDIRECT</p>
Obligation Statements	
Performatives	
Want Statements	
Hedged Performatives	
Query Preparatory	
Suggestory Formulae	
Hints (strong)	
Hints (mild)	

POLITENESS SCALE	
Query Preparatory	<p style="text-align: center;">MOST POLITE</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↑</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">LEAST POLITE</p>
Hints (mild)	
Hints (strong)	
Hedged Performatives	
Suggestory Formulae	
Performatives	
Want Statements	
Obligation Statements	
Mood Derivable	

As we can see, the most direct strategy type (MD) is thought to be the least polite. However, *Hints*, judged as the most indirect, are not considered to be the most polite. Blum-Kulka (ibid.) suggests that *Query Preparatory* questions, which are achieved by the use of *conventional indirectness*, seem to be the most polite.

According to Blum-Kulka (ibid.: 143-144), the highest level of politeness in relation to requests may be reached “by appearing to be indirect without burdening the hearer with the actual cost of true indirectness.”

Next, Blum-Kulka (ibid.: 141) makes the distinction between two types of indirectness: *conventional* and *non-conventional*. The former is realized through reference to some preconditions (felicity conditions), the latter is “by definition open-ended both in terms of propositional content and linguistic form, as well as pragmatic force”(ibid.). Blum-Kulka (1987) remarks “there are no formal limitations neither on the kinds of *Hints* one might use to make a request, nor on the range of pragmatic forces that might be carried by any non-conventionally indirect utterance” (ibid.). The only limitations on *Hints* used to request are those set forth by Gricean conversational maxims.

#### **4.4. Summary**

The repertoire of requests realized by means of *Mood Derivables*, *Explicit Performatives*, *Hedged Performatives*, *Obligation Statements*, *Want Statements*, *Suggestory Formulae*, *Query Preparatory*, and *Hints* in English and in Polish show many important lexico-syntactic differences. Let us summarise briefly some crucial dissimilarities which occur in the two languages examined. As for MD, its use does not depend on politeness as such, but it concerns the problem of being socially acceptable in the particular culture (Lubecka, 2000; Wierzbicka, 1985; 1991; 2003). It is worth noticing that a ‘bald’ imperative, considered by most English natives to be a rude or even unacceptable way of requesting, is perfectly appropriate for the native Polish speakers and sounds much more natural when used to ask somebody to do something (Wierzbicka, 1985; 1991; 1999; 2003). The English language has developed a great number of requests in the form of interrogatives which, unlike imperatives, invite H to make a verbal or a non-verbal response. S perceives H as an autonomous person who, at any time, can decide not to carry out the solicited action. Wierzbicka (1999) believes that imperatives remain neutral here: they do not exclude,

and yet do not need a verbal response. Thus imperatives appear to be more privileged in Polish than in English.

The next difference concerns *Query Preparatory*. In English requests can be modified by means of numerous modal verbs, each of which possesses different grammatical properties and varying meanings. *Can* and *may* convey the idea of ability, possibility or permission; *should* and *ought to* express duty and obligation, and *have to* and *must* are used to mark an action performed under pressure. There also exist two synonymous verbs of permission *let / allow to*. Polish speakers employ verbs of ability and possibility *móc*, obligation *powinno się* and coercion *musieć*. It is worth mentioning that this type of speech act of requesting (which uses modal constructions) is likely to be found (but not solely) in situations where interlocutors address each other *pan / pani*. When it comes to the phenomenon of titles, Poles differ in their behaviour from the native speakers of English. This form of address indicates that there is a social distance between interlocutors. In the English speaking cultures there exists a stronger tendency than in the Polish culture to break distance. It must be emphasized that there is no institution of 'Bruderschaft' in English, i.e. ceremonial transition from formal address forms to informal first name forms in contacts between two persons. The Polish and English forms of address can be contrasted on the basis of *power* and *solidarity*: in Polish, S may address H either by "ty (solidarity or power exercising) or *pan / pani* - power / prestige-acknowledging with an intermediate dialectal prestige form *wy*." (Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk, 1993: 264). These forms do not have equivalents in English because of the fact that English cannot distinguish solidarity and power by means of pronouns, thus personal names and titles are the only markers of power and solidarity (Wierzbicka, 1985, 1997, 1991; Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk, 1993).

Another important difference can be observed when using *Suggestory Formulae*. According to Lubecka (2000), in the English language these questions serve as the most natural way to form a polite request bearing rather weak *illocutionary force*, while in Polish the application of *dlaczego* indicates that S might be astonished at the stubbornness of H who refuses to comply with the request. What is more, such a strategy "expresses the Speaker's assumption that there must exist



some obstacles which prevent the fulfilment of his / her demand. (...) As a consequence, the functional equivalent of the English why not questions is not the group of *dlaczego by nie* questions but *(A) może by tak* questions.” (ibid.: 2000: 113).

## CHAPTER 5

### 5. Description of the project and data analysis

#### 5.1. Introduction

There have been numerous empirical studies comparing the request strategies expressed by language users coming from different speech communities with reference to the kind of linguistic behaviour they perceive as polite<sup>1</sup> (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain 1984; Blum-Kulka 1982, 1987, Blum-Kulka et al. 1989; Dorodnych, 1995; Jakubowska, 1999; Lubecka, 2000, Sifianou, 1992; Trosborg, 1995; Reynolds, 1995; Ronowicz, 1995; Awedyk, 2006; Kunst-Gnamuš, 1990; Hill et al., 1986; Félix-Brasdefer, 2005; García, 1993; Tsui, 1994; Marcjanik, 2002; Barron, 2007; forthcoming).

This chapter expands on the research in the field of contrastive analysis by examining the strategies used by Irish English and Polish speakers when requesting a service or asking permission to carry out some action. The analysis focuses on the head act strategies employed and on the quantity and kinds of internal and external modification found in Irish English and Polish. The empirical material for this study comes from the analysis of responses to questionnaires, which were circulated by the author of this thesis among native speakers of both Irish English and Polish.

The findings of the present study will provide useful data for describing Irish English and Polish language use in different contexts. The results may also be used to show cross-cultural differences in requests realization strategies. The findings may not only contribute to research on speech act realization but also on politeness. In addition, the importance of such studies for foreign language learning is obvious. Without doubt, speakers of a particular foreign language face a difficult task while learning the

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<sup>1</sup> The reader is also referred to the Centre for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA), University of Minnesota at <http://www.carla.umn.edu/speechacts/requests/index.html> for a description of cross-cultural research on requests.

appropriate ways of expressing language functions. Speech acts differ cross-culturally in their distribution, function and frequency of occurrence in a particular context. Thus, it is necessary for the foreign language users to be conscious of similarities and differences between their native language and a foreign language.

## 5.2. Research aim

It is said that Poles often sound abrupt and impolite when requesting service, permission or assistance in English (Leech, 1983; Ronowicz, 1995; Wierzbicka, 1985). The questions which arise are:

- What are the possible causes leading to such a claim?
- What are the differences and similarities between requests in English and Polish?
- Why do requests in English and Polish differ or show similarities?
- Why does a particular speech community choose certain request and politeness strategies over others?

The theoretical background provided in the previous chapters partly answers the questions above. However, to reach a more thorough and complete understanding of the matter, a principal objective of this study, the author obtained quantitative evidence, to be used for comparing Irish English and Polish linguistic behaviour, and also the systems of politeness employed in making requests by users coming from the Irish English and Polish speech communities. The author was aided in her effort by previously published research papers on the subject (presented in the previous chapters), which enabled her not only to carry out a thorough investigation, but also served as a tool for cross-checking.

These studies suggest that Polish tends to reflect a solidarity-politeness oriented society, whereas Irish English displays politeness strategies typical of a negative-oriented societies (cf. Barron, 2007; forthcoming; Kallen, 2005b; Huszcza, 2005; cf. Lubecka, 2000; Wierzbicka, 1985; 1991, 2003; Larina, 2005). It is clear that the Polish

language employs different means than the English, not only to form requests, but also to render them polite. Moreover, certain request and politeness strategies are preferable, and thus used more frequently than others in given contexts. The choice of appropriate polite expressions in a particular situation depends on various factors such as the social distance of S and H, power and dominance or solidarity between them, the absolute ranking of imposition in a particular culture (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 74), and also age and gender. Age and gender are not taken into consideration in this study. This is so due to the following reasons: firstly, it is not the author's intention to observe how differences in age and gender influence the choice of request strategies, therefore the selected informants were of similar age, and the proportion of male to female subjects almost equal (university students, a detailed description of subjects is offered in Section 5.3); it has also been shown in previous research that male and female respondents preferred similar types of politeness strategies when making a request (cf. García, 1993: 130).

It will be recalled that the main aim of this study is to obtain quantitative data, which can be further used for comparison of the polite speech act of requesting in the two languages examined. Furthermore, the goal of this analysis is to show the variety of ways in which the application of request strategies in both languages show similarities and differences. We will compare the semantic content of requests, their pragmatic functions, and the set of rules and conventions governing the situations in which such requests can be used in both languages. Detecting the similarities and differences (sometimes very subtle, yet crucial) might help foreign language speakers to avoid misunderstandings, pitfalls and the forming of false impressions about other nations, thus improving their language competence and performance, and developing a better understanding of foreign cultures. In other words, the study aims at investigating how the situational and cultural factors affect the choice of request strategies in Irish English and Polish.

The author of this study cannot claim that this small scale research of requests in Irish English and Polish is an exhaustive study of each and every possible pattern occurring in the two languages in question, yet this analysis may help to explain the

usage and the frequency of occurrence of the most typical request strategies appearing in given contexts.

## **5.3. Methodology**

### **5.3.1. Informants**

Data for this study was collected during the academic years 2001/2002 and 2006/2007. A total of 66 respondents took part in the research investigating request realization strategies. The research was conducted among 30 adult native speakers of Irish English, students of the National University of Ireland in Galway; among 20 adult native speakers of Polish, students at the University of Silesia in Sosnowiec and an additional group of 16 Polish informants from the Pedagogical University of Kraków. The subjects constituted a broadly homogeneous group of similar age and general level of education. The number of respondents was chosen in accordance with Kasper and Dahl's (1991: 226) finding, which suggests that when using production questionnaire (this research tool was employed in this study) with homogeneous groups, larger groups of respondents are unnecessary since responses provided by them tend to concentrate around a limited number of issues.

### **5.3.2. Data elicitation**

As far as the methodology of cross-cultural pragmatics is concerned, the questionnaire employed here was designed to elicit written responses via a discourse completion test (DCT), which was originally developed for comparing the speech act realization strategies applied by native and non-native Hebrew speakers (Blum-Kulka, 1982), and later employed by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) as an instrument for data collection in the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP). A

DCT consists of scripted dialogues that represent socially differentiated situations. The descriptions of the situations characterize the setting, the social distance and power between the interlocutors. The descriptions are then followed by an incomplete dialogue where the respondents are to complete the turn of S by providing the speech act in question. Whereas Blum-Kulka's DCT provided the respondent with both the situation and H's response to the respondent's request strategy, the DCT employed here includes only the descriptions of situations to which H has to react by providing a request. It was believed that such a questionnaire construction enables more freedom of choice for the respondent when making requests. To illustrate these two types of DCTs let us consider the following examples of two request situations, (a) taken from Blum-Kulka et al. (1989: 14), and (b) employed in the present research questionnaire (Appendix 1, Situation 5):

(a) At the University

Ann missed a lecture yesterday and would like to borrow Judith's notes.

Ann: .....

Judith: Sure, but let me have them back before the lecture next week.

(b) You are in your boss's office (with whom you don't interact often). Ask his / her permission to use the telephone.

*Verbal response:* .....

This research tool, undoubtedly, has its strengths and weaknesses. It would be ideal to "observe the way people use language when they are not being observed" (Labov, 1972: 209, in Blum-Kulka et al., 1989: 13). However, this leads to the *Observer's Paradox* (ibid.). On the one hand, "written role plays bias the response toward less negotiation, less hedging, less elaboration, less variety and ultimately less talk." (Beebe, 1985: 184). On the other hand, DCTs provide sufficient data for reliable quantitative analysis, provided the situations are based on prior ethnographic fieldwork, i.e. "the situations reflect occurrences of the type expected to be familiar to speakers across Western cultures, especially to the student population tested." (Blum-

Kulka et al, 1989: 14). As pointed out by Hill et al., (1986: 353), the application of written elicitation techniques helps us to obtain more highly stereotyped responses, and these are needed in order to determine cross-cultural comparability (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989: 13). Additionally, in the case of some limitations which researchers might be faced with i.e. time or / and resources limitations, this tool proves to be of crucial importance as it might be the only possible way of collecting research material. Furthermore, this type of research tool has been successfully used by other linguists (e.g. Blum-Kulka, 1982; Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1984; Dorodnych, 1995; Lubecka, 2000 and many others), and has provided relevant empirical material for analysis. The DCTs consist of structured written discourses that provide the context for the speech act being examined. Therefore, the researchers are able to control variables related to a given context (i.e. the relative status and familiarity of the respondent and the interlocutor) in a DCT. As a consequence, it is possible to investigate the effect these variables might have over a particular speech behaviour.

The questionnaire was prepared in two language versions: English (Appendix 1) and Polish (Appendix 2) and distributed among the Irish and Polish respondents. The questionnaire consisted of two major parts. The first aimed at presenting background information about respondents, such as gender, age, education / occupation. The other part of the questionnaire, entitled “Specific Information”, was designed to elicit requests in Irish English and Polish.

The “Specific Information” comprised five everyday request situations with varying degree of formality and different dimensions pertaining to dominance (D) (social power) and social distance (SD) (familiarity) (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989: 15). As regards dominance, the role relationship between the two conversation participants was characterized either by the presence of authority of one interactant over the other or by the lack of it. S and H either knew each other or had never met before (social distance). For the full account of relationship constellations, see the Table 5.3.2 *Relationship constellations – making requests* presented below. The subjects were asked to write what they would say, if anything, in each situation as if they were interacting conversationally over the matter in real-life encounters. The Polish situations were translation equivalents of the English ones presented below.

The situations were as follows:

- S1 Asking a friend to close the window.
- S2 Asking a passenger to close the door in a train compartment.
- S3 Asking a waiter in a restaurant for a glass of water.
- S4 Asking your parents for some money.
- S5 You are in your boss's office (with whom you don't interact often).  
Ask him/her for permission to use his/her telephone.

Table 5.3.2 below presents the characteristics of different relationship constellations for each of the situations:

REQUEST SITUATION	SOCIAL DISTANCE	DOMINANCE
S1 Window	- SD	S = H
S2 Door	+ SD	S = H
S3 Glass of water	+ SD	S = H
S4 Money	- SD	S < H
S5 Telephone	+ SD	S < H

Table 5.3.2: *Relationship constellations – making requests*

Four relationship constellations were presented: a) {+SD}, {S<H}; b) {+SD}, {S=H}; c) {-SD}, {S<H}; d) {-SD}, {S=H}.

As already stated, the present study focuses on five request situations: a window, a door, a glass of water, money, and a telephone (cf. Appendix 1 and 2). It is the author's belief (based on observation) that the chosen request situations occur frequently in the day-to-day lives of respondents. Thus, the respondents should find it relatively easy to imagine themselves interacting in such situations without being forced to play the part of a person other than himself or herself. Therefore, the data gathered may constitute a reliable source for investigation. None of these situations were included on the CCSARP questionnaire, yet comparison with the findings of the CCSARP and other researches is possible. This is due to the nature of requests as



specified by House (1989: 106), who differentiates between standard and non-standard request situations; the former possessing a relatively high obligation to comply with a request, a relatively low degree of difficulty in carrying out the act and a high right to pose the particular request, while the latter possessing the opposite features. The glass of water scenario used in the present study is a standard situation; the telephone scenario, on the other hand, represents a non-standard situation. The window, the door, and the money scenarios can be perceived as being neither clear-cut standard nor non-standard situations (though being closer to standard situations) since they are low in difficulty, not very high in obligation, and possess a slightly high right to pose a request. However, as noted by Barron (forthcoming), the descriptions of standard and non-standard situations are relative and not absolute; they represent a continuum.

For more detailed information concerning the questionnaire in English and Polish (its content and layout), please consult the Appendix 1 and 2.

### **5.3.3. Procedure**

The research was carried out among two groups of respondents: native Irish English speakers and native Polish speakers.

The questionnaire for the native Irish English was administered at the National University of Ireland in Galway. The questionnaires were distributed among a group of 30 students. It took them approximately 20 minutes to fill in the questionnaires.

The Polish version of the questionnaire, was conducted at the University of Silesia in Sosnowiec. The survey questionnaires were given to a group of 20 native Polish students. Filling in the questionnaires took them about 30 minutes.

An additional group of 16 Polish informants from the Pedagogical University of Kraków contributed to this project.

It should be noted that whilst analysing the data, it was discovered that some subjects provided more than one example of a request, while others refrained from providing requests for certain situations. Thus, the number of produced requests does not always correspond to the number of informants.

## 5.4. Research findings

In order to capture the interactive nature of speech acts, Edmondson (1981: 55) proposed that speech acts should be studied as speech act sequences. In examining the structure of speech acts, requests have been frequently analyzed in terms of discourse sequence, i.e. the Head Act and peripheral elements (supportive moves) (cf. Chapter 4, esp. Sections 4.1 and 4.2 of this study). By presenting different dimensions of a request (see Chapter 4, esp. Sections 4.1 and 4.2), such as the *request strategy*, *request perspective*, *internal* and *external modification*, we have effectively produced a *coding manual*, such as was originally conceived by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984), later developed by Blum-Kulka et al., (1989), therefore we can now proceed to analyse the data obtained through our questionnaires. In order to illustrate the procedure of analysis of a request, let us consider the following utterance (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1984: 205):

(178) *Pardon me, but could you give me a lift if you're going my way, as I've just missed the bus and there isn't another one for an hour.*

This request sequence will be coded as follows:

Dimension	Category	Element
1. Request perspective	H-oriented	<i>Could you</i>
2. Request strategy	Query preparatory	<i>Could you give</i>
3. Downgraders	-----	none
4. Upgraders	-----	none
5. Peripheral elements / supporting moves	1. Cost minimizer	<i>if you're going my way</i>
	2. Supportive reason	<i>as I've just missed</i>
- Alerter	Attention getter	<i>Pardon me</i>

Table 5.4: *Coding manual for a request sequence.*

## 5.4.1. Requests in Irish English and Polish

### 5.4.1.1. Request 1

The speech event in Request 1 can be perceived as a common verbal exchange which is likely to happen in any public place e.g. in a lecture hall or on any means of public transportation, where we are accompanied by our friends. Since it is an informal situation, and the interactants have been characterized as friends (a relatively high degree of familiarity), it has been assumed that there are neither differences in the degree of dominance nor of social distance between them, therefore the relationship constellation is: S=H and (-) SD. Although the favour asked does not carry a high degree of imposition, it might require some face work on the part of S as H might, for example, be forced to stand up and move to some other place in order to fulfil S's desire.

#### The Irish respondents

DIMENSION	CATEGORY	ELEMENT	No.	%
Request perspective	H-oriented		29	96.7
	S-oriented	Would you mind if I close...	1	3.3
Request strategy	Mood Derivable (MD)	Close the window +please (7)	7	23.3
	Query Preparatory (QP)	Would you mind closing...+please (1)	3	10
		Would you mind if I close	1	3.3
		Would you close...	1	3.3
		Will ya/you close...+ please (4)	7	23.3
		Could you close...+please (3)	3	10
		Can you close...+please (7)	8	26.7
		<b>Total (QP)</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>76.7</b>
Downgraders	Politeness marker	please	22	73.3
	Consultative device	Would you mind...	1	3.3
	Interrogative		23	76.7
	Conditional	Would / could you close...	4	17.4
Upgraders		none	0	0
Peripheral elements (external modification)	Alerter - attention getter, name	Hey John	1	3.3
<b>Total (# of responses)</b>			<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

Table: S1-IrE – *Asking a friend to close the window.*

In the realization of Request 1 in Irish English, the informants opted for only two kinds of request strategy, namely *Mood Derivable* and *Query Preparatory*, which belong to *Direct* and *Conventionally Indirect Levels*, respectively.

The respondents demonstrated a marked preference for the *Query Preparatory* strategy in the form of interrogatives, which amounted to 76.7 % of the total number of request strategies. The interrogative utterances constitute a type of syntactic downgrader whose function is to modify internally the request by softening its *illocutionary force*. Additionally, *Query Preparatory* interrogatives were made even more polite by the use of conditional (17.4%). This type of syntactic downgrader serves to distance S from the reality of the situation and thus decreases the face-threat to the requester if a request is refused. The preferred type of strategy within the main QP strategy was the *Ability Question* realized by means of the pattern: *Can/Could you* + infinitive clause + *please* chosen by almost 37% out of 76.7% of the interactants. Other QP strategies included *Willingness Questions* (26.6%), and *Courtesy Questions* (13.3%). This preference for the conventionally indirect request, which is considered to be more polite than the direct request, resulted from the context-internal factors governing the speech event in Request 1. S was aware of the fact that by making the request he or she threatened H's negative face, hence S referred to H's ability condition in order to find out whether he or she was able to perform the desired action, indicating, at the same time, a protective orientation towards his or her own face in that he or she did not take compliance for granted. Thus the requester allowed the requestee the option of politely refusing by referring to the condition in question. On the other hand, however, by using the H-oriented perspective (96.7%), which is typical of *Ability Questions* (Lubecka, 2000: 99), the Speaker wished to have his or her request fulfilled by naming H as the intended agent.

The other request strategy, *Mood Derivable*, employed by 23.3% of the respondents, belongs to the most direct, explicit level, and was in this case realized by means of the *Basic Verb Form Imperative* with the pattern: V(imperative) + NP + *please*. Its use possibly resulted from the fact that this group of interactants viewed asking a friend to close the window as a favour carrying a low degree of imposition, and expected compliance, therefore there was no need for them to apply an indirect

speech act to make it sound more polite. In order to mitigate the degree of the *illocutionary force* of the direct request, this group of subjects used the politeness marker (PM) *please* in all imperative utterances. The PM either preceded or followed V(imperative) + NP. Moreover, it was observed that PM *please* appeared frequently not only in *Mood Derivable* strategy, but also in *Query Preparatory*, receiving altogether a high score of 73.3%.

Instances of *Non-conventional Indirect Level – Hints* did not occur in the realization of Request 1. This is possibly due to the fact that in order to achieve the interactional balance, preserving pragmatic clarity (still being polite) was given more importance than the maintenance of face, which could have been expressed by employing the most indirect requesting strategy (*Hints*) in this situation (cf. Blum-Kulka and House, 1989: 139).

As far as the external modification strategies are concerned, only 3.3% of the Irish subjects indicated the use of the attention getter: *Hey* followed by the H's name.

### The Polish respondents

DIMENSION	CATEGORY	ELEMENT	No.	%
Request perspective	H-oriented		36	100
	S-oriented		0	0
Request strategy	Mood Derivable (MD)	Zamknij okno +proszę (5)	13	36.1
	Query Preparatory (QP)	(Czy) mógłbyś ...; Dziękuję(1)	18	50
		(Czy) możesz ...	5	13.9
<b>Total (QP)</b>			<b>23</b>	<b>63.9</b>
Downgraders	Politeness marker	proszę	5	13.9
	Interrogative		23	63.9
	Conditional clause	jak możesz	1	2.8
	Conditional	(Czy) mógłbyś ...	18	50
Upgraders		none	0	0
Peripheral elements (external modification)	Thanking	dziękuję	1	2.8
Alerter	Attention getter, name	stary, imię	2	5.6
<b>Total (# of responses)</b>			<b>36</b>	<b>100</b>

Table: S1-P: Asking a friend to close the window.

The data presented in the Table S1-P was provided by the Polish respondents for the realization of the request goal in Request 1.

As in the case of the Irish English-language data, the Polish respondents used only two types of request strategies: *Query Preparatory* (63.9%) and *Mood Derivable* (36.1%); the non-conventional indirect requests were not employed. QP was also the dominating strategy here, however, there seems to be a slight difference in the proportion of distribution of these strategies, i.e. in the Polish-language data QP was chosen by fewer interactants, while a larger group opted for MD in contrast to the Irish English-language data. QP strategy was represented by only one type of question, namely *Ability Questions*, where the head expression contained the modal predicate with the verb *móc* in the Present Tense (13.9%) or in conditional form (50%). *Móc* appeared in the following pattern: *(Czy) mógłbyś / możesz + infinitive clause*. As shown, conditional forms are the most frequently employed among the *Ability Questions* patterns as they are the most polite, which is in line with Lubecka's (2000: 98) finding on the frequency of appearance of conditional forms in request realizations in the *Ability Questions*.

MD (36.1%) was realized by means of the *Explicit Imperative Proper* (cf. Subsection 4.2.1.1 of this study) having as its core an imperative verb. Since there was one addressee of the request, the verb took the form of the second person singular. Less than half of the Polish respondents modified its strong *illocutionary force* with an optional PM *proszę* (cf. Lubecka, 2000: 88), and in one case its more personalised variant was used with a form of address *proszę cię*.

A striking contrast was observed in the frequency of occurrence of the PM *please*, i.e. it amounted to 73.3% of the total number of the Irish responses, and only 13.9% in the Polish-language data. The politeness marker *please* tends to be an obligatory element of almost all kinds of requests in Irish English, whereas it is an optional choice in Polish, especially in informal interactions, where it "is often redundant as a carrier of an extra dimension of politeness" (cf. Lubecka, 2000: 114-115).

The selection of external modification strategies in the realization of requests in Polish was similar to external modifiers used by the informants in requests in Irish

English. As in the Irish English-language data, a marginal number (5.6%) of alerters and the name of H appeared. Moreover, only one Polish informant made a request which was followed by thanks, aiming at lowering the imposition of the request and thus its compliance.

As regards the request perspective in Request 1, the results for both languages were nearly identical. Almost all informants used the Hearer-oriented perspective (96.7 (Irish English-language data) and 100% (Polish-language data)). It will be recalled that in this situation when conversing with a friend, there was no necessity for *Agent avoidance* strategy typical of e.g. “off-record” strategy (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 63).

#### **5.4.1.2. Request 2**

Request 2 concerns asking a passenger to close the door in a train compartment. It is a formal request. It takes place in a public place – on a train. The difference between Request 1 and 2 lies in the fact that here we have changed the relationship constellation so that there exists a greater social distance between interlocutors (+ SD). Our aim was to observe how the modification of this context-internal factor will influence the choice of request strategy. It has been assumed that the degree of indirectness might increase, since addressing a request to a stranger and making him or her perform the desired action requires the implementation of a very polite strategy. S is likely to choose a request strategy which will tone down the requestive *illocutionary force*, and thus diminish the threat to H’s negative face. Through acting in this way, S also avoids losing his or her positive face in case H refuses to comply with the request.

### The Irish respondents

DIMENSION	CATEGORY	ELEMENT	No.	%
Request perspective	H-oriented		30	100
	S-oriented		0	0
Request strategy	Mood Derivable (MD)	Close the window + please(4)	4	13,3
	Query Preparatory (QP)	Would you close...+please(3)	3	10
		Will you close ...+please(1)	1	3.3
		Could you close...+please(6)	7	23.3
		Can you close...+please(4)	4	13.3
		Can you be so nice... +please(1)	9	30
		Would you mind closing...+please(7)		
		Is it possible for you to ....+please(1) Is there any chance you would...+please(1)	2	6.7
		<b>Total (QP)</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>86.7</b>
Downgraders	Politeness marker	please	28	93.3
	Consultative device	Would you mind....	8	26.7
	Interrogative		26	86.7
	Conditional	Would / Could you...	10	33.3
Upgraders		none	0	0
Peripheral elements (external modification) Alerter	Thanking	thanks	3	10
	Attention getter	excuse me (2); sorry (1)	3	10
<b>Total (# of responses)</b>			<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

Table S2-IrE: Asking a passenger to close the door in a train compartment.

The figures in Table S2-IrE above confirmed the assumptions related to the increase in the frequency of occurrence of the conventionally indirect requests. In the realization of Request 2 in Irish English, 86.7% of the total number of respondents opted for various *Query Preparatory* strategies (comprising: *Ability Questions* (36.6%), *Courtesy Questions* (30%), *Willingness Questions* (13.3%), and *Possibility Questions* (6.7%)) compared to only 13.3% achieved by *Mood Derivable*. This finding seems to confirm Brown and Levinson's (1987) claim that in situations where the social distance between interlocutors is greater, the redressive action is required, therefore, S tries to preserve both his or her face and also the H's negative face, by reducing the potential threat of the act. This also accords with Leech's (1983: 108) description of polite behaviour: "indirect illocutions tend to be more polite (...) because the more indirect an illocution is, the more diminished and tentative its force



tend to be.” It ought to be noted, however, that *Hints (Non-conventional Indirect Level)* were again absent in the Irish English-language data, though judged the highest on the scale of indirectness in the previous classifications (Searle, 1975; Brown and Levinson, 1987; Leech, 1983). This might be accounted for by the fact that “minimization of the inferential path (to avoid imposing by cognitive burdening) is essential for achieving interactional balance. Hence the need to preserve pragmatic clarity is inherent in politeness.” (Blum-Kulka, 1987: 145).

The selection of internal modification strategies was limited to the application of the syntactic downgraders – interrogatives (86.7%) and conditionals (38.5%), and the lexical downgraders: PM *please* (93.3%) and consultative device *Would you mind ...?* In the case of external modification strategies, they were: alerters – attention getters (10%) (e.g. *excuse me, sorry*) and thanking (10%). It is worth mentioning that although *sorry* does not carry the same pragmatic meaning as *excuse me*, since the former is “[interjection] used for expressing polite refusal, disagreement, excusing oneself, etc.” (*Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture*, 1992: 1266), while the latter is viewed as “a polite expression used when starting to speak to a stranger, when one wants to get past a person” (*ibid.*: 444), *sorry* was employed by the Irish respondents as an alerter attempting to minimize H’s face loss by asking for his or her forgiveness for carrying out an FTA.

The whole group of subjects indicated that H was the agent who should perform the requested action. The choice of Hearer-oriented perspective might be accounted for by the fact that S’s compliance was not taken for granted, and the fulfilment of S’s wish was voluntary.

### The Polish respondents

DIMENSION	CATEGORY	ELEMENT	No.	%
Request perspective	H-oriented		32	86.5
	S-oriented		0	0
	Impersonal		5	13.5
Request strategy	Mood Derivable (MD)	Proszę (5) zamknąć drzwi	5	13.5
		Zamknij drzwi +proszę (1)	1	2.7
	Hedged Performative (HP)	Prosiłabym Pana aby...	1	2.7
		<b>Total (MD+EP)</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>18.9</b>
	Query Preparatory (QP)	(Czy) mógłby pan ... Dziękuję <sup>2</sup>	25	67.6
		(Czy) może pan ...	3	8.1
		Czy byłaby pani na tyle łaskawa i mogła...	1	2.7
		Czy można ...	1	2.7
		<b>Total (QP)</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>81.1</b>
	Downgraders	Politeness marker	proszę	6
Interrogative			31	83.8
Conditional clause		jak możesz	1	2.7
Conditional		(Czy) mógłby...	25	67.6
Upgraders	Time intensifier	natychmiast	1	2.7
Peripheral elements (external modification)	Thanking	dziękuję	2	5.4
Alerter	Attention getter, name	przepraszam (bardzo) 1	6	16.2
<b>Total (# of responses)</b>			<b>37</b>	<b>100</b>

Table: S2-P: Asking a passenger to close the door in a train compartment.

It can be inferred from the figures in Table S2-P above that the choice of request strategy and the selection of internal modification for its verbal realization did not deviate much from those observed in the Irish English-language data. Yet, some differences were observed. The Polish respondents employed two types of direct request realization strategy (as opposed to one direct strategy chosen by the Irish respondents) and one type of conventionally indirect request realization strategy, which, similarly to the Irish English-language data, was dominated among Poles, though to a lesser extent.

The subjects used the following direct strategies: *Mood Derivable* (16.2%), comprising: *Infinitives* (13.5%) realized by means of the pattern: *Proszę* + infinitive clause, and *Explicit Imperatives proper* (2.7%): V(imperative) + *proszę*. *Hedged*

*Performatives* (2.7%) were realized by means of the pattern: (*ja*) + PV + *aby*-clause. In this case, the PV *prosić* appeared in the conditional form. Altogether direct strategies accounted for 18.9% of the total number of request strategies. For the English-speaking natives, it would seem rude or inappropriate to ask a stranger to carry out an action using, for example, the *Infinitive*, which carries the strongest *illocutionary force* among all types of direct requests, while for Poles this variant softened by the PM *proszę* tends to be applied quite frequently to mark formality in situations where strangers interact with each other in a formal but neutral and polite way (cf. Lubecka, 2000: 88). Wierzbicka (1991: 37) also suggests:

the infinitive directive functions as a distance-building device in Polish, just as an interrogative directive does in English. But in Anglo-Saxon culture, distance is a positive cultural value, associated with respect for the autonomy of the individual. By contrast, in Polish culture it is associated with hostility and alienation.

Although *Query Preparatory* strategies (81.1%) also dominated in the Polish-language data, the repertoire of lexico-syntactic structures of questions was not that broad when compared with the Irish English-language data. It consisted of three types, namely: *Ability Questions* (75.7%) with the pattern *Czy* + *móc* + infinitive clause (the verb *móc* was used the most frequently in the conditional form as it is more polite than in the Present Tense), *Courtesy Questions* (2.7%) realized by means of the pattern *Czy byłaby pani* + *na tyle łaskawa* + infinitive clause, and *Possibility Questions* (2.7%) with the pattern *Czy można* + infinitive clause.

Another difference between the two languages can be seen in the forms of address employed in the formal request. According to Jakubowska (1999: 52), “the Polish and English forms of address may be compared in terms of ‘power’ and ‘solidarity’”. Tannen (1986: 95) claims that “forms of address are among the most common ways of showing status and affection.” In Polish, if S wishes to address H, he or she can choose between *ty* (‘you’) (solidarity and power exercising) and *pan / pani* (‘Sir’ / ‘Madam’) (prestige-acknowledging) (cf. Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk, 1993: 264). These forms (*pan / pani*) do not possess their equivalents in English, because the English language cannot distinguish solidarity and power by means of pronouns. Personal names and titles are the only markers of power and solidarity in English (cf.

Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk, 1993; Wierzbicka, 1991, 2003). This explains the use of the address forms *pan / pani* in this formal situation. These forms may be regarded as mitigating the *illocutionary force* of the request, since they express courtesy and safeguard against threatening the negative face of H, whereas *you* does not express such values (cf. Wierzbicka, 1991, 2003). Moreover, in English *you* is considered neither intimate nor courteous, since it is used indiscriminately to address almost everyone (ibid.). In order to balance the conversation the natives of English must employ other mitigating devices. In this connection, Marcjanik (2007: 36) maintains that choosing different address forms in Polish indicates either the possibility to enter the H's 'private sphere' (solidarity) or the line which should not be overstepped by the interactants (power).

Another significant difference between Irish English and Polish was the frequency of occurrence of the PM *please* (E) vs. *proszę* (P). In Irish English *please* was employed in almost all requests (93.3%), while in Polish *proszę* was used only by 16.2% of the respondents. As stated earlier it seems that this politeness marker is obligatory only in English. However, as has been demonstrated in some previous linguistic investigations (House, 1989; Wichmann, 2004), the PM *please* co-occurs only with certain kinds of requests, i.e. the most direct request strategy (the imperative) and the conventionally indirect strategy (e.g. *Could / Can you do X?*) (House, 1989: 102). In the data obtained by House (1989), *please* did not occur with *Hints* at all. The frequency of occurrence of *please* in the Request 2 (and especially in the next Request 3, discussed below) seems to support the observations made by Wichmann (2004) and House (1989) that the insertion of *please* is viewed to be a further way of softening the *illocutionary force* of requests, especially those realized by means of imperatives, and in such cases the *illocutionary force* of a command is diminished to that of a request. Additionally, House's (1989) study has proven that the more indirect or opaque the request, the less probable it is for *please* to co-occur. A similar trend can be observed in both the Irish English- and Polish-language data. For a detailed account of *please* used in requests, see Wichmann (2004), House (1989), and Kominek (1992) regarding functions of *proszę* in modern Polish.

Some attention needs to be paid to another lexical downgrader employed by 27% of the Irish respondents, namely the consultative device realized by the pattern *Would you mind ...?* It will be recalled that in English *Courtesy Questions* are applied quite often by all age groups in order to form a very polite request (Lubecka, 2000: 100). The Polish equivalent might be *Czy nie przeszkadzałoby panu... / Czy nie miałby pan nic przeciwko ...* (cf. Lubecka, 2000: 101). However, such extremely polite wording is very rare among the young nowadays in Poland due to political, economic and cultural changes that happened after 1989, which influenced the language and politeness behaviour (etiquette) (cf. Grybosiowa, 1994; Ożóg, 2002, 2005; Marcjanik, 2002a, 2007). Wierzbicka (1991: 34, 2003: 34) takes an extreme view of this, claiming that the expression *Would you mind...* has no equivalent in Polish. We believe there does exist a Polish equivalent, but that, its usage is heavily restricted in comparison with the parallel usage in the English language. The Polish-language data seems to confirm this observation, since *Would you mind...* appeared quite often in the Irish English-language data, but none of the Polish respondents employed a similar consultative device in this situation.

As far as the request perspective in Request 2 is concerned, the results for both languages were very similar. All Irish respondents opted for the Hearer-oriented perspective and nearly all Poles (86.5%) used this type of request perspective. The Hearer-oriented perspective is typical of *Query Preparatory* strategy (especially of *Ability Questions*), which dominated in both languages in question. The remaining 13.5% of the Polish interactants employed impersonal perspective due to its occurrence in *Mood Derivable*, in particular in the *Infinitive* pattern where neither S nor H are mentioned as the performers of the requested action.

### **5.4.1.3. Request 3**

The Request situation 3 was chosen for inclusion in the request set of this study due to its distinctive nature, i.e. it is characterized by “high obligation to comply with the request, low degree of difficulty in performing it, and a strong right to pose the

request” (House, 1989: 106). In such “standard situations” (ibid.), in which the rights and obligations of participants are clear, the requester tends to produce distinctive behaviour patterns. They are typical of service encounters e.g. in restaurants, pubs, shops, etc, where the right to ask for something and the obligation to provide it is inherent in the event (Wichmann, 2004: 1523). Some studies have shown that *Elliptical Imperatives* occur frequently in standard situations. However, their frequency of occurrence varies across languages and cultures (Ervin-Tripp, 1976; House, 1989; Sifianou, 1992; Lubecka, 2000). Therefore, an attempt has been made to check to what extent the Irish and Polish respondents follow the rule mentioned above when asking a waiter for a glass of water.

### The Irish respondents

DIMENSION	CATEGORY	ELEMENT	No.	%	
Request perspective	H-oriented		4	13.3	
	S-oriented		26	86.7	
Request strategy	Mood Derivable (MD)	(elliptical) Glass of water, please	2	6.7	
	Hedged Performative (HP)	I'd like a glass of ... +please	1	3.3	
		<b>Total (MD+HP)</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>10</b>	
	Query Preparatory (QP)		May I have ...+please (6)	10	33.3
			Could I have ...+please(7)	7	23.3
			Can I get/have (9)...+please(8)	9	30
			Can you bring me... +please	1	3.3
	<b>Total (QP)</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>90</b>		
Downgraders	Politeness marker	please	25	83.3	
	Interrogative		27	90	
	Conditional	Could I have...	7	25.9	
Upgraders		none	0	0	
Peripheral elements (external modification)					
	Alerter	Attention getter	Waiter (2), excuse me(6), sorry(2)	10	33.3
		<b>Total (# of responses)</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>	

Table S3-IrE: Asking a waiter in a restaurant for a glass of water.

It can be inferred from the Table S3-IrE that the overwhelming majority of the Irish interactants opted for conventionally indirect request strategies (90%). The

remaining 10% of the total number of request strategies were realized by means of direct strategies, out of which *Elliptical Imperatives* amounted to 6.7 %. This may be indicative of the fact that although, direct strategies (especially elliptical constructions) did appear in standard situations they were not preferred by the Irish. A possible explanation for the low frequency of appearance of *Elliptical Imperatives* might be that the English (and hence Irish English) language has a tendency toward more elaborate requests, such as those in the form of interrogative utterances, as has been shown, and such short forms might sound too abrupt to be considered acceptable or polite. Furthermore, according to Brown and Levinson (1987: 111), ellipsis is a type of positive politeness strategy, since the understanding of an elliptical phrase requires some mutually shared knowledge. The Irish English-language data from the Table S3-IrE might constitute some further evidence confirming the preference for the negative politeness strategy and greater indirectness among the native speakers of Irish English.

As regards the most frequent strategies used by the Irish respondents (90%), the *Query Preparatory* strategy was realized by means of *Ability Questions*, in particular by that variant which employs the Speaker-oriented perspective. The switch from the Hearer- to the Speaker-oriented perspective served as a mitigating device, softening the *illocutionary force* of the request and making it even more polite. The pattern *Can/Could/May + I + VP* lowers the degree of coerciveness (Blum-Kulka, 1989: 58), resulting in a reduction of the face-threatening effect it has on H's negative face. The three modal verbs (*can, could, may*) were chosen by an almost equal number of informants. However, the pattern *May I have ...?* received the highest score. It should be noted that *may* is the most polite of these three modals, and usually occurs when asking for permission in very formal situations (cf. Thomson and Martinet, 1996: 130, 246-247).

As far as the internal modification is concerned, three types of downgraders occurred in the Irish English-language data, namely the PM *please* (83.3), interrogatives, and conditionals which were employed to further reduce the *illocutionary force* of all conventionally indirect requests. Attention getters appeared to be the only external modification devices used by the informants in the Request 3.

### The Polish respondents

DIMENSION	CATEGORY	ELEMENT	No.	%
Request perspective	H-oriented		20	54.1
	S-oriented		17	45.9
Request strategy	Mood Derivable (MD)	(Elliptical) Woda(1) Szklanę wody(1)	2	5.4
		(Elliptical) Proszę szklanę wody (10) (Po)proszę o ...(7)	17	45.9
		Proszę mi podać...	3	8.1
		<b>Total (MD+HP)</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>62.2</b>
	Hedged Performative (HP)	Chciałbym prosić o...	1	2.7
	Query Preparatory (QP)	Czy mógłby pan przynieść mi...	1	2.7
		Czy mógłbym dostać ...	3	8.1
		(Czy) mógłbym prosić o... Dziękuję (1)	3	8.1
		(Czy) mogę prosić o...	7	18.9
<b>Total (QP)</b>		<b>14</b>	<b>37.8</b>	
Downgraders	Politeness marker	proszę	16	43.2
	Interrogative		14	37.8
	Conditional	(Czy) mógłby... / mógłbym...	7	18.9
Upgraders		none	0	0
Peripheral elements (external modification)	Thanking	dziękuję	1	2.7
Alerter	Attention getter	kelner(3), przepraszam(5)	8	21.6
<b>Total (# of responses)</b>			<b>37</b>	<b>100</b>

Table S3-P: Asking a waiter in a restaurant for a glass of water.

In the realization of Request 3 in Polish, the respondents opted for three types of request strategies, namely *Mood Derivable*, *Hedged Performative* and *Query Preparatory*. The first two categories belong to *Direct Level* and the last one to *Conventionally Indirect Level*.

A striking difference between the Irish English and Polish was observed in the frequency of occurrence of the direct strategies. In contrast to the Irish, the majority of the Polish informants (62.2%) preferred direct strategies here, this being in line with the findings of previous studies mentioned earlier in this subsection, i.e. that imperatives, in particular elliptical utterances, are likely to be employed in standard situations (Ervin-Tripp, 1976; House, 1989; Sifianou, 1992; Lubecka, 2000). 51.3% of



the direct requests were realized by means of *Elliptical Imperative* whose very strong *illocutionary force* was weakened by the presence of the PM *proszę* in most cases. In Polish, in this context (transactional / service encounter) elliptical utterances seem to be the most natural communication strategies used routinely by interactors (cf. Lubecka, 2000: 90). Moreover, such patterns as *(Po)proszę* + NP or *(Po)proszę* + o + NP are very common when the requester wants to obtain some object from the requestee in order to see it, buy it or use it. These patterns usually occur in formal situations i.e. where interactants address each other *pan / pani* (this indicating that there is a distance between them) and where the rights or roles of S and H are clearly defined. Thus requests can take the form of short and concise utterances or even phrases (cf. Marcjanik, 2002). By contrast, as has also been shown in this study, in English such constructions are viewed to be rude and inappropriate, therefore they were the least preferred by the Irish. This can be accounted for by the fact that in Polish, politeness is not related to the avoidance of imperative, and with the application of interrogative devices, as happens to be in the case in English (Wierzbicka, 1991: 34, 2003: 34).

As regards the *Query preparatory* strategy chosen by 37.8% of the Polish informants, this was realized by means of *Ability Questions*. Almost all *Ability Questions* embodied the Speaker-oriented perspective; a similar tendency was observed in the Irish English-language data. In the case of the Speaker-oriented perspective (35.1% out of 37.8% of QP), the verb *móc* was employed in the modal predicate in the form of the first person singular in the Present Tense or conditional form, and was followed by the verb *prosić*, e.g. *Czy mógłbym / mogę prosić o ....?* Such examples of conventionally indirect request are considered to be very polite in Polish. By making such a request S seems to have doubts whether H will comply with his or her request, therefore he or she is asking a polite question referring to ability conditions. We can assume that the English request *May I have ...?* would carry a similar *illocutionary force* as the Polish *Czy mógłbym prosić o ...?* In Polish, as we have seen, the modal verb *may* has no literal translation, so the Polish *móc* (can) and English *may* function here as equivalent verbs. However, in English the difference is

that in contrast to *can*, *may* cannot be employed for requests with *you* (Green, 1975: 134).

It is also worth mentioning another difference between *please* and *proszę*. In Subsection 5.4.1.2, we have already discussed the difference between *please* and *proszę* when used as the politeness marker. However, in Polish *proszę* can be employed not only as a politeness marker, as is the case in English. In Polish, apart from being a PM, *proszę* also functions as a performative verb. The performative verb *prosić* (its English equivalents are *to ask*, *to request*) and the PM *proszę* (*please* (E)) are derived from the same root; thus the use of the performative already marks the pattern for politeness. Even when reduced to a conventional politeness formula, *proszę* is still closely connected with the requesting verb, while in English *please* functions as a politeness marker, “a semantically empty phrase which merely shows the speaker’s good manners.” (Lubecka, 2000: 115). This can be indicative of the fact that in Polish *proszę* (PM) (especially in informal situations) “is often found redundant as a carrier of an extra dimension of politeness.” (ibid.), while in English *please* seems to be nearly obligatory in all sorts of requests.

The non-conventionally indirect strategies were employed neither in the Irish English-language nor in the Polish-language data. The explanation might be that, as observed by House (1989), *Hints* do not occur in standard situations.

#### **5.4.1.4. Request 4**

The next request situation that will be discussed is an informal request which takes place between family members, namely asking one’s parents for some money. Request 4 occurs in an intimate environment, therefore there is no social distance between interlocutors (-SD). However, a parent holds some authority over his or her child, thus  $S < H$ . This request may be characterized by: a relatively high obligation to comply with, a relatively high right to pose the request, and a not very high degree of difficulty in performing the request. However, this all depends on the individual’s relationship with his or her parents and, more particularly on the culture one has been

brought up in, since in collectivist societies (e.g. in Poland) it is the parents' duty to provide for their children (sometimes even when they are grown-ups), contrary to methods of upbringing employed in individualistic societies (e.g. in UK, Ireland) where children are expected to start independent lives as early as possible (cf. Hofstede, 1994). Students from individualistic countries might find it hard to ask their parents for money as they are expected to become financially independent earlier than their peers from collectivist societies (cf. Hofstede, 1994). This is why we can expect a greater degree of softening of the *illocutionary force* of this request from the Irish respondents' side.

### The Irish respondents

DIMENSION	CATEGORY	ELEMENT	No.	%	
Request perspective	H-oriented		3	10.3	
	S-oriented		26	89.7	
	Impersonal		1	3.4	
Request strategy	Mood Derivable (MD)	Give a few bob!	1	3.4	
	Want Statement (WS)	I need some money.	2	6.9	
		<b>Total (MD+WS)</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>10.3</b>	
	Query Preparatory (QP)	May I have ...?		1	3.4
		Could I borrow/have some money please(3)?		7	24.1
		Can I have/get some cash/money/a loan please(7)?		14	48.3
		Would I be able to have some money		1	3.4
		Please Dad would you lend/give me...		2	6.9
		I was wondering if it was possible to get		1	3.4
	<b>Total (QP)</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>89.7</b>		
Downgraders	Politeness marker	please	10	34.5	
	Interrogative		26	89.7	
	Ing-form+Past Tense	I was wondering if it was...	1	3.4	
	Conditional	Could I.../Would I ... / Would you...	10	34.5	
Upgraders	Adverbial intensifier	really	1	3.4	
Peripheral elements (external modification) Alerter	Supportive reason	for...	2	6.9	
	Attention getter	Mum(4), Dad(4)	5	17.2	
		<b>Total (# of responses)</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100</b>	

Table S4-IrE: Asking your parents for some money.

As shown in Table S4-IrE, the Request 4 elicited three different requesting strategies, namely *Mood Derivable* (3.4%), *Want Statement* (6.9%) and *Query Preparatory* (89.7%). As regards the level of directness, *Mood Derivable* and *Want Statement* (altogether 10.3%) belong to the *Direct Level* and *Query Preparatory* (89.7%) to *Conventionally Indirect Level*.

The Irish English data confirmed our assumption that direct requesting strategies will not prevail among the Irish in this situation, and also that additional mitigation might be required to save both H's and S's face. In the realization of Request 4 in Irish English, the overwhelming majority (89.7%) opted for *Query Preparatory* strategies. The favoured strategy was *Ability Question* (75.8%) represented by means of the pattern *Could /Can / Would I be able to + infinitive clause + please* (e.g. *Could I borrow some money please?*). Other QP strategies included *Possibility Questions* (6.8%) and *Willingness Questions* (6.9%). In addition, QP strategies were modified by some syntactic mitigation devices, such as conditionals, interrogatives, and a combination of *ing*-form + Past Tense; and also by a lexical downgrader – PM marker *please*. The overt preference for the conventionally indirect requests, which are thought of as being more polite than direct requests, might be accounted for by the fact that the Irish cherish autonomy and seems to be brought up in an individualistic society, where children are supposed to take care of themselves as soon as possible, and be financially independent (cf. Hofstede, 1994). This is shown by the choice of requesting strategies they made and indicates that the Irish did not assume compliance; therefore they referred to H's ability condition to discover whether they would be successful in persuading H to perform the desired action. In the case of possible refusal S's positive face would not be threatened.

The other two request realization strategies belonged to the *Direct Level* and they were chosen by 10.3% of the Irish informants. *Want Statement* strategy was favoured by almost 7% of the total number of respondents, was realized by the pattern *I need + NP*. Only the verb *need* was applied here, which carries a weaker *illocutionary force* than the verb *want*. *Mood Derivable*, whose *illocutionary force* is the strongest of all the requesting strategies, occurred only once.

As far as intensification of the request is concerned, the present Irish English data included *Adverbial Intensifier: really*. This example was, however, the only one of this kind used by the Irish.

External mitigation devices were also employed in the realization of requests in Request 4 situation. They included: supportive reasons (6.9%), where the Irish informants indicated that while asking a parent for some money, they would state the purpose of it, i.e. *Would I be able to have some money **for**...?* and attention getters like *mum* or *dad*. It should be noted that the references to mother and father were of equal number.

The great majority of Irish informants opted for the Speaker-oriented requests (86.2%), which by not referring to H directly serves as another softening device (cf. Blum-Kulka, 1989: 58).

*Non-conventional Indirect Level* did not appear in the realization of Request 4 in the Irish English dataset.

### The Polish respondents

DIMENSION	CATEGORY	ELEMENT	No.	%
Request perspective	H-oriented		30	81.1
	S-oriented		7	18.9
Request strategy	Mood Derivable (MD)	Pożycz mi...	6	16.2
		Daj mi ...	11	29.7
	Want Statement (WS)	Potrzebuję...	7	18.9
		<b>Total (MD+WS)</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>64.9</b>
	Query Preparatory (QP)	Mogłabyś/mógłbyś/moglibyście mi pożyczyć/dać...?	6	16.2
		(Czy) Możesz mi dać ...?	4	10.8
		Dałabyś mi...?	1	2.7
		Dasz mi ...?	1	2.7
	<b>Total (QP)</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>32.4</b>	
Mild Hint	Gdzie jest portmonetka?	1	2.7	
Downgraders	Politeness marker	proszę	3	8.1
	Interrogative		13	35.1
	Tag questions	dobra	1	2.7
	Understatement	trochę/trochę	6	16.2
	Diminutive	rodzice, mamuś, mamusiu	6	16.2
	Conditional	Mogłabyś/mógłbyś/moglibyście ... / Dałbyś mi...	7	18.9
Upgraders	Adverbial intensifier	bardzo	2	5.4
	Lexical intensification	kochani (rodzice)	1	2.7
Peripheral elements (external modification)	Supportive reason	na...	3	8.1
	Address form	rodzice, mamuś(3), mamusiu(2), tato(7), mamo(13)	26	70.3
<b>Total (# of responses)</b>			<b>37</b>	<b>100</b>

Table S4-P: Asking your parents for some money.

In the realization of Request 4 in the Polish language, the informants differed considerably from the Irish respondents. Firstly, the Polish data indicated that all three levels of directness were represented by various request strategies contrary to the Irish English-language data, where *Non-conventional Indirect Level* strategies were absent. However, the occurrence of *Mild Hint* was not very significant here because only one informant opted for it, this constituting 2.7% of the total number of request strategies. Secondly, more than half of the Polish informants preferred the most direct and explicit requesting strategies (64.9%) contrary to the Irish, who chose the

conventionally indirect strategies predominantly. This is in line with previous studies, which suggest that Poles tend to favour directness over indirectness when making a request (Wierzbicka, 1985; 1991, 2003; Lubecka, 2000), and also supports Barron's (2007; forthcoming) claim that the Irish language is characterized by a high level of indirectness and thus imperatives are avoided.

As mentioned, the Polish-language data demonstrated that the informants preferred the direct request strategies, which were represented by *Mood Derivable* (45.9%) and *Want Statements* (18.9%). The preference for imperative requesting constructions may be justified by the claim made earlier in this study, that Poles are likely to resort to positive politeness devices while the Irish English speakers tend to resort more to negative politeness devices. The data also indicates that the Polish culture is characterized by a higher family collectivism than is found in the Irish culture, since children when asking parents for money used bald on record strategies (Brown and Levinson, 1987), expected compliance and saw no need for redressive action on the part of S, as happens in communities which scored low on individualism (cf. House et al. 2001, House et al. 2002). In collectivist countries, such as Poland, the family ties are strong and members of the family contact each other frequently. The family provides protection, i.e. in this situation protection is understood as financing their offspring. The strong *illocutionary force* of direct strategies was weakened by the inclusion of some lexical downgraders, such as PM *proszę*, tag questions *dobrze*, but most of all by the usage of diminutive like *mamus / mamusi*. As stressed earlier in this chapter, the Polish language has developed a wide repertoire of address forms, which belong to positive politeness strategies and indicate that both S and H are a part of a group of people who share specific wants, values and have common goals. The function of claiming in-group solidarity was realized by diminutives in this situation. Their pragmatic function is to express respect towards parents. In addition, they have an expressive function; they express S's positive emotional attitude towards H.

This assumption is further supported by the appearance of a *Mild Hint* strategy in the Polish-language data. On the one hand, by using a *Hint* for the realization of a request, S wished to get H to carry out a requested act in such a way that the recognition of his or her intention is not grounded in the utterance meaning of the *Hint*,

which allows H to opt out at some stage of interaction (Weizman, 1989: 71). On the other hand, however, the interpretation of this indirect and non-conventional strategy requires some shared knowledge, which emphasizes in-group membership, and assumes reciprocity. These are the characteristics of positive politeness, which is likely to be employed more often in collectivist societies than in individualistic ones.

The *Conventionally Indirect Level* was represented by *Query Preparatory* strategy (32.4%). The Polish informants realized the QP strategy by means of *Ability Questions* (27%) and *Willingness Questions* (5.4%). Almost 60% of these requests were mitigated by the use of syntactic downgrader, namely the conditional, which even further reduced the impact of the request on the addressee. By increasing the level of indirectness, H had a greater freedom to comply with the request or not, and thus the threat to his or her negative face was diminished.

Similarly as observed in the Irish English data, the Polish respondents employed upgraders, which were *Adverbial Intensifiers*, as in the Polish request *Bardzo potrzebuję pieniędzy* (“I need money **very much**”), and *Lexical Intensifiers*, such as *Kochani rodzice, moglibyście mi pożyczyć pieniędzy?* (“**Dear** parents, could you lend me money”). These examples were, however, only a few which occurred in the Polish data.

External mitigators were used not only by the Irish but also by the Polish informants. They were represented by supportive reasons (8.1%) and attention getters (70.3%). Contrary to the Irish, the majority of Poles opted for attention getters, moreover, predominantly indicating their mothers to be the agents of the future action.

Another difference between the Irish English- and Polish-language data was noted in the domain of request perspective. 81.1% of the Polish subjects made a reference to the requestee, as opposed to the Irish – only 10.3% chose the Hearer-oriented perspective in this request situation. This may indicate that Poles did not perceive this request as being imposing and additional softening of the *illocutionary force* was redundant. This might be due to the fact that in collectivist societies family ties are strong, help is taken for granted, communication between in-group members is direct, therefore explicit mentioning of the agent is not likely to be avoided; moreover it does not threaten his or her negative face to a greater extent in such social encounters.



### **5.4.1.5. Request 5**

The speech event in Request 5, where the Speaker is in his or her boss's office (with whom he or she does not interact often) and asks his or her permission to use the boss's phone, represents a non-standard situation (cf. House, 1989: 109). This request is characterized by a relatively low obligation to comply with, a relatively high degree of difficulty, and a low right to pose the request. It is a formal situation and although the interactants are not complete strangers, there exists some social distance between them. Furthermore, the participants' role relationship is unequal due to their boss-subordinate workplace relationship. It also needs to be pointed out that special care should be taken so as not to violate conversational routines typical of verbal encounters between a boss and a subordinate. The performance of Request 5 is therefore likely to provide some evidence that in such a context the Speakers (both the Irish and Poles) will employ conventionally indirect requests rather than direct ones. Moreover, contrary to Requests 1, 2, 3, and 4, in this situation S is not asking H to perform some action but is asking for H's permission to use his or her phone, therefore we can expect that the Speaker-oriented perspective will prevail here.

### The Irish respondents

DIMENSION	CATEGORY	ELEMENT	No.	%
Request perspective	H-oriented		0	0
	S-oriented		28	93.3
	Impersonal		2	6.7
Request strategy	Query Preparatory (QP)	May I use ...please(1)?	14	46.7
		Could I use your phone please(1)?	3	10
		Can I use/make a phone call please(2) ...?	4	13.3
		Would it be possible...please(1)?	2	6.7
		Do you mind if I use ...? / Would you mind if I used...	6	20
		Is it ok if I used...?	1	3.3
		<b>Total (QP)</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>
Downgraders	Interrogative		30	100
	Past Tense	if I used	2	6.7
	Understatement	for a second	1	3.3
	Downtoner	possibly	1	3.3
	Consultative device+conditional clause	Do you mind if / Would you mind if / is it ok if	7	23.3
	Conditional		5	16.7
Upgraders	Requestive marker	please	5	16.7
Peripheral elements (external modification)	Supportive reason	I have to make an urgent phone call.	2	6.7
Alerter	Attention getter	Excuse me	2	6.7
<b>Total (# of responses)</b>			<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

Table S5-IrE: *You are in your boss's office (with whom you don't interact often). Ask his/her permission to use his/her phone.*

The data in Table S5-IrE presents the Irish respondents' preference in their selection of verbal strategies typical of a non-standard request situation. Our earlier assumptions connected with the fact that in this situation S is subordinate to H and thus S would require the employment of request strategies which would unambiguously mark this relation were right. All Irish informants opted for the conventionally indirect request strategy indicating that *Query Preparatory* strategy is the preferred one. The favoured type of strategy within the main QP strategy was the *Possibility Question* realized by means of the patterns: *May I* + infinitive clause + (*please*), *Would it be possible* + infinitive clause + (*please*), and *Is it OK* + conditional clause. Other QP strategies comprised: *Ability Questions*, for example: *Could / Can I*

*use you phone / make a phone call + (please)?*, and *Courtesy Questions* such as *Do you mind / Would you mind + conditional clause*. This respondents' choice for the conventionally indirect request realization can be accounted for by the fact that context external as well as context internal factors influence the preference of a request strategy. In other words, not only the degree of imposition (context internal factor) modifies the choice of strategy realization, but also unfamiliarity (+ social distance) and greater authority (+ dominance) of H make the requester employ indirect forms of asking. As far as the level of directness is concerned, the dominating strategy follows a similar trend revealed in previous comparable studies (House, 1989: 102; Barron, forthcoming) where *Query Preparatory* request strategy was the predominating type of a request strategy appearing in non-standard situations.

Internal modification included syntactic, lexical and phrasal downgraders, which served to mitigate the *illocutionary force* of requests. Examples of such downgraders are listed in the table above. In the previous situations in the Irish English-language data, interrogatives and conditionals were the most commonly employed syntactic downgrading devices, which bear a rather limited mitigating power. It was in this non-standard situation that almost one fourth of the Irish respondents also applied combinations of syntactic downgraders; a combination of consultative device and conditional clause resulted in a more highly mitigating effect. This indicates that in non-standard situations face is at greater risk than in standard situations, therefore, we observed the employment of indirect and very polite request head act strategies and also the application of stronger softening devices. In addition, the point of using QP strategy in non-standard situations is to give H some more scope for negotiations.

It should be mentioned here that *please* functions as a downgrader of the *illocutionary force* in standard situations, while it upgrades the *illocutionary force* in non-standard situations (cf. House, 1989: 106-119). Moreover, House (1989: 108) points out that the adverb *please* tends to occur more frequently in standard situations, where both direct (Imperatives) and conventionally indirect (QP) strategies are used, because in such situational environment, in which the participants' roles are clearly defined, *please* acts as a lexical and phrasal downgrader. On the other hand, however, when *please*

occurs in non-standard situations, such as in the telephone situation in the present data, “it makes explicit the fact that the (potentially) negotiable force of the utterance is in fact requestive” (House, 1989: 114). Such a request becomes more direct in its nature, thus it seems to be inappropriate since direct request strategies do not usually appear in non-standard situations in Irish English and in English English (cf. House, 1989: 114; Barron, forthcoming). House (ibid.) argues that it is rare for the native speakers of English to use *please* in non-standard situations and common for them to use *please* in standard situations. Therefore, *please* is coded as lexical and phrasal downgrader in the standard situations (the window, the door, the glass of water, the money (however, the money situation is somehow between the standard and non-standard poles)) and as an upgrader or requestive marker in the telephone situation. House’s (1989) claims and findings also support the findings of the present study, since only 16.7% of the Irish employed *please* with QP strategy in the non-standard situation. By contrast the percentage of occurrence of *please* in other clear-cut standard situations in the Irish English-language data amounted to 73.3% (the window situation), 93.3% (the door situation), and 83.3% (the glass of water situation). It seems right to repeat after House (1989: 114) that “the more “politeness” is called for, the less appropriate is the use of *please*.”

As regards the external mitigation, 6.7% of the Irish respondents opted for supportive reason, e.g. *I have to make an urgent phone call*, and also 6.7% used attention getter *Excuse me*.

Another softening device employed by the Irish respondents in this situation was the request perspective, namely 93.3% of the subjects used the Speaker-oriented perspective, which weakened the *illocutionary force* of the request.

### The Polish respondents

DIMENSION	CATEGORY	ELEMENT	No.	%
Request perspective	H-oriented		0	0
	S-oriented		36	100
Request strategy	Query Preparatory (QP)	(Czy) mogłabym/mógłbym skorzystać z pańskiego telefonu...?	26	72.2
		(Czy) mogę skorzystać...?	10	27.8
		<b>Total (QP)</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>100</b>
Downgraders	Interrogative		36	100
	Understatement	na momencik	1	2.8
	Conditional		26	72.2
Upgraders		none	0	0
Peripheral elements (external modification)	Preparator	Mam do pana prośbę.	2	5.6
	Supportive reason	mój telefon jest nieczynny / w ważnej/pilnej sprawie	5	13.9
Alerter	Attention getter, Address form	Przepraszam, Panie Dyrektorze/Szefie	20	55.6
<b>Total (# of responses)</b>			<b>36</b>	<b>100</b>

Table S5-P: You are in your boss's office (with whom you don't interact often). Ask his/her permission to use his/her phone.

An identical tendency can be observed in the Polish-language data (cf. Table S5-P) as regards the request strategies used by the informants for the realization of the request goal in Request 5. Bearing in mind the specificity of this situation, it does not come as a surprise that conventionally indirect request strategy also received the highest score among the Polish respondents (100%). The employment of *Query Preparatory* strategy to such a great extent may be explained by the fact that our boss is not only superior to us but also represents some authority, therefore, the social relations of power and distance call for a formal realization of the request. QP strategy was represented by *Ability Questions* where the head expression contained the modal predicate with the verb *móc* either in the Present Tense (27.8%) or in conditional form (72.2%). Some examples of such requests are the following: *Czy mogę skorzystać z telefonu? Czy mógłbym / mogłabym skorzystać z pańskiego telefonu?* As shown conditional forms, which are more polite, were used more frequently than other *Ability Questions* with the verb *móc* in the Present Tense.

As regards internal modification devices applied to mitigate the *illocutionary force* of the request in Request 5, the Polish-language data did not differ much from the Irish English-language data. It should be noted that none of the Polish respondents used *proszę* in this situation. This seems to indicate that in neither culture is the use of *please* (E), *proszę* (P) very high in non-standard situations, which is in line with House's (1989) and Barron's (forthcoming) findings. While none of the Polish informants employed *proszę* with a *Query Preparatory* strategy, as many as 16.7% of the Irish informants employed *please* with this request strategy. This may be accounted for by the fact that Poles by not uttering *proszę* wanted to sound even more indirect and less imposing.

The Polish respondents also used some external mitigators. Like their Irish counterparts, they opted for supportive reasons (e.g. *mój telefon jest nieczynny / w ważnej sprawie*), attention getters and address forms (e.g. *Przepraszam Panie Dyrektorze...*). In addition the Polish subjects employed preparators, for instance, *Mam do pana prośbę*.

Let us stop and discuss briefly the phenomenon of "Titlemania" in Polish (cf. Huszcza, 2005: 218). By using the professional title with the titular honorific *pan* added before the noun, i.e. *Przepraszam, Panie Dyrektorze* ("Excuse me, Mr. Director"), S rightly conferred on H a higher rank, stressing his or her boss's social dominance. In Polish such a form of address with title denoting professional status often occurs in formal situations (e.g. in the office, at university, etc.). It stresses the distance between interlocutors, shows respect, and also helps to specify the addressee (cf. Jakubowska, 1999: 45). It is indicative of the fact that Poles, contrary to the English-language speakers are extremely status-conscious. Wierzbicka (1991, 2003) notes that everyday conversations, which take place among Poles sound much more formal and courteous than those in English. Moreover, Poles like employing titles and use them very often (cf. Pisarkowa, 1979; Zaręba, 1981; Jakubowska, 1999). This has also been evidenced by the data provided by the Polish-language subjects in the present study, where 55.6% of the total number of respondents employed forms of address comprising *pan* and the professional title *dyrektor / szef*, which would indicate greater distance,

respect, and higher social status of the boss, while none of the Irish respondents used any form of address other than *you*.

## **5.5. Summary of findings and conclusions**

After having analysed and discussed the requests yielded in the five situations of DCT, we will round this chapter off with the summary of findings. The request strategy types will be summarized in Section 5.5.1. The internal and external modifications of the speech act will be summarized in Sections 5.5.2 and 5.5.3 respectively.

### **5.5.1. Request strategies**

We will start this section by presenting a percentage distribution of the request strategy types (which were grouped into three major categories according to their level of directness) in Irish English and Polish across five situations. As can be seen in Chart 5.5.1 below, the distribution of the request strategies reveals some cross-cultural similarities and differences. Higher levels of conventionally indirect request strategies are attributed in some situations to both languages (Situations: 1, 2 and 5). On the other hand, there is a marked preference for conventional indirectness across all situations only in Irish English. Direct request strategies are preferred by the majority of the Polish respondents in Situations 3 and 4. An apparent low incidence of non-conventionally indirect request strategies is observed across almost all situations in both languages under examination.

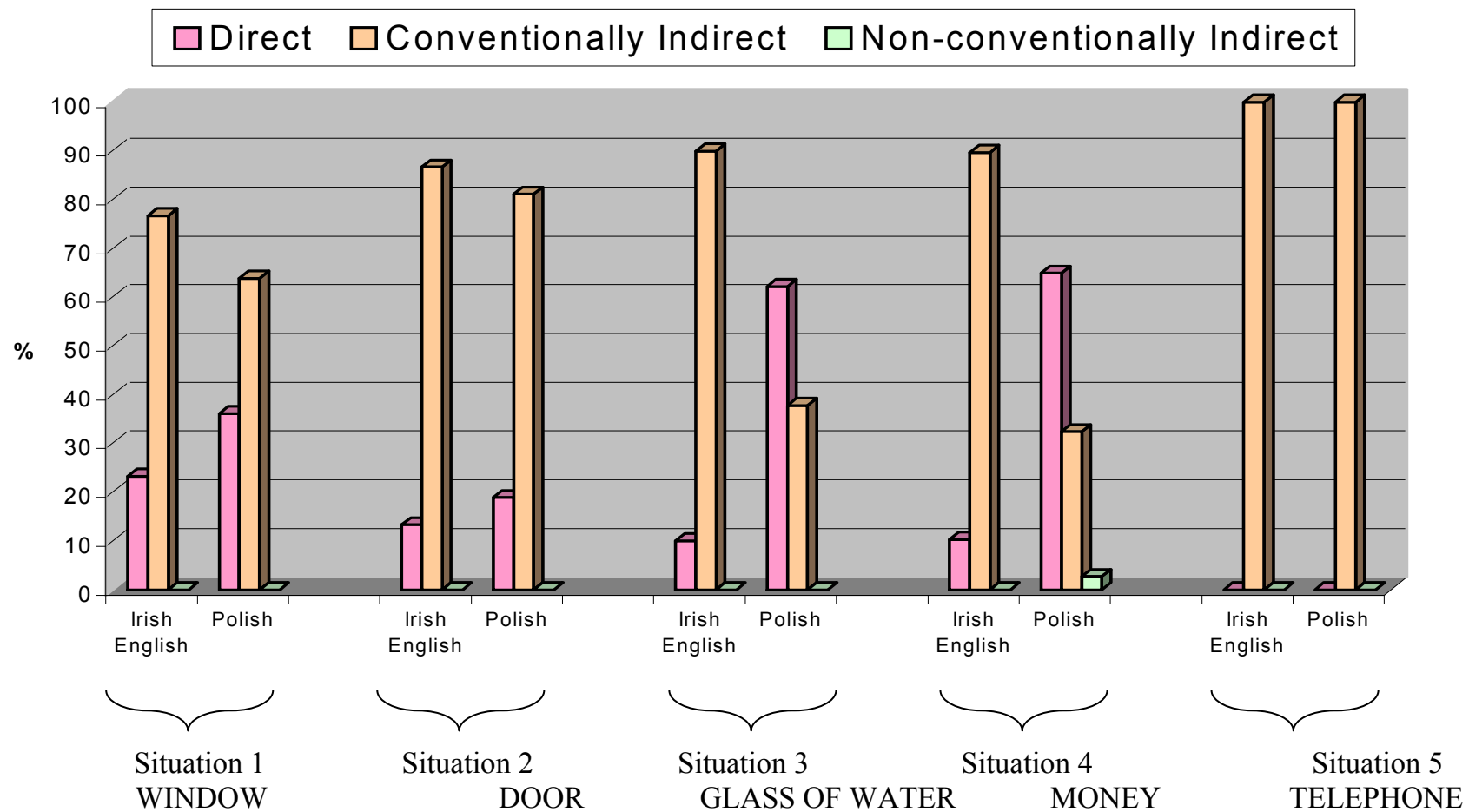


Chart 5.5.1: *Percentage distribution of request strategy types grouped into three major categories according to their level of directness in five situations.*



### 5.5.1.1. The use of direct request strategies

The most striking difference between Irish English and Polish is revealed in the use of direct request strategies, especially *Mood Derivable* (i.e. the imperative). While both the Irish and Polish respondents employed MD in four out of the five request situations, and the use of this strategy follows a similar trend across Situations 1 and 2 in both cultures (see Chart 5.5.1), with Polish showing higher levels of its usage; the proportion of MD employed across situations varies. In Situation 1 more informants coming from the two speech communities under examination opted for a direct strategy than the number of informants in Situation 2. This can be accounted for by the fact that in Situation 1 the interlocutors are familiar with each other – friends, have equal status, and the imposition is deemed as low. Whereas Situation 2 concerns interaction between complete strangers, and therefore the level of application of MD is lower than in the previous request situation. It should be noted that Poles used a significantly higher number of imperatives than the Irish in all situations where this strategy was employed. An interesting trend can be observed in Situations 3 and 4, namely, contrary to the Irish, the majority of the Polish respondents preferred the direct strategy types over the conventionally indirect ones. High incidence of direct strategy types employed by Poles (64.9%, as opposed to the Irish 10.3%) in Situation 4 can be explained by the fact that requests between family members tend to be more direct than those between strangers among Poles. It appears that Polish culture allows for a greater degree of solidarity and reciprocity amongst family members, thus enabling speakers to employ a higher degree of positive politeness strategies, which are not only appropriate but perhaps expected in such circumstances. On the other hand, the Irish (coming from an individualistic society) appear to perceive relationships with family members as more distant than their Polish counterparts. There seems to exist, still amongst family members and friends, an inclination for negative politeness, an inclination to observe H's freedom of action by not imposing upon him or her. The relatively low level of direct strategies in the Irish English-language data in Situation 4 may also indicate that the degree of imposition was perceived differently by members of the two cultures. It appears that for the Irish asking one's parents for some money (Situation 4) required more redressive action and

a greater degree of mitigating the *illocutionary force* of that request on the part of S. It seems that the use of direct request strategies in both cultures is motivated by an interplay among social distance, social status and the degree of imposition. The more familiar the participants the more direct the strategy, and the lower the degree of imposition the more direct the strategy. However, it should be pointed out that the perception of those variables (i.e. social distance, social status and the degree of imposition) varies from culture to culture.

Results also showed a significant difference in the use of direct strategy types by the two groups of subjects in Situation 3, with the Polish group (62.2%) showing a marked preference for direct strategy types contrary to the Irish (10%). The Polish-language data results seem to be in line with some other research findings (e.g. Ervin-Tripp, 1976; House, 1989; Sifianou, 1992; Lubecka, 2000) and showed that direct strategies, especially *Elliptical Imperatives* occur very frequently in such “standard situations” (House, 1989: 106) among Poles. However, the Irish English-language data results do not follow that trend – only very few *Elliptical Imperatives* were employed by the Irish in this service encounter situation.

### **5.5.1.2. The use of conventionally indirect request strategies**

As can be seen in Chart 5.1.1, cross-cultural agreement on the application of conventionally indirect request strategies is achieved in three situations: in the request to close the window (Situation 1), in the request to close the compartment door (Situation 2), and in the request to use one’s boss’s telephone (Situation 5). However, the proportion of conventionally indirect request strategies employed across situations varies in both languages in question. Conventional indirectness is dominant in all five request situations in the Irish English-language data, while it prevails only in three situations in the Polish-language data. Results of this study revealed that only one type of conventionally indirect request strategy was employed by both the Irish English and Polish respondents, namely – the *Query Preparatory* strategy.

As regards Situations 1 and 2, the difference between them lies in the fact that in the latter social distance between interlocutors is greater. So far, it seems that both cultures show that the less socially familiar the interlocutors are the more indirect and thus polite S will be. However, the results indicate that social distance is not just one variable which affects the choice of request strategy. In Situation 5, although participants know each other and are not complete strangers (as it is in the case of Situation 2) the highest incidence of QP can be observed with both languages reaching their peak – 100%. This can be accounted for by the fact that there exists an unequal status between interactants (boss-employee relationship), and also the weightiness of the request appears to be higher than in Situations 1 and 2. Therefore, it can be claimed that in such a formal situation and under such circumstances both the Irish and Poles are likely to employ higher levels of indirectness. Yet, both groups of informants opted for conventional indirectness instead of non-conventional indirectness, which according to Brown and Levinson (1987) is placed the highest on the indirectness scale. This linguistic behaviour is due to the fact that there is a relative social distance between S and H. Under such circumstances a non-conventional indirect request might not secure a successful uptake, whereas a conventionally indirect one will not only refrain from imposing S's will directly on H but also secure H's interpretation of the additional meaning which S conveys.

A significant cross-cultural variation is seen in Situations 3 and 4. The majority of Irish respondents (90% and 89.7% in Situations 3 and 4, respectively) chose *Query Preparatory* strategy. While in the Polish-language data this strategy received the lowest score among all five request situations (37.8% in Situation 3 and 32.4% in Situations 4). In the two aforementioned situations there is over a 50% difference in the use of this strategy between Irish English and Polish. As already mentioned, the results of this study yielded some evidence that there exist cross-linguistic differences between the two languages under examination. A possible interpretation for this variation is the already discussed fact that Irish English seems to favour negative politeness strategies, i.e. more elaborate requests with modals in the form of interrogative utterances, contrary to Polish where positive politeness strategies (e.g. ellipsis) are preferred in such situations. In addition, we can claim that the frequency with which conventionally indirect requests are employed in Irish English and Polish

in such contexts reflects the different conceptions of what politeness is. This in turn depends on differing social norms, rights, and duties. It seems what matters is not politeness as such, but the perception of what is considered to be socially appropriate in a given culture.

### **5.5.1.3. The use of non-conventionally indirect request strategies**

As can be seen in Chart 5.5.1, non-conventionally indirect request strategies constitute the least frequently used strategy types in the Polish-language data. The Polish subjects employed *Mild Hint* strategy in only one situation out of five and with a very low incidence. The results of Irish English-language data were even more drastic – the non-conventionally indirect strategies did not occur at all.

*Mild Hint* was employed by Poles in Situation 4 (asking one's parents for some money) with a very low incidence amounting to 2.7%. In Polish this situation was characterized by a high use of direct request strategies, a low use of conventionally indirect strategies, and as mentioned a very low use of non-conventionally indirect request strategies. In Irish English we are faced with a completely different case – a very high incidence of conventional indirectness, a very low incidence of direct requests, and the absence of non-conventional requests. This linguistic behaviour may indicate that the degree of imposition was perceived by the two groups in a different way. It appears that for Poles the weight of the request was lower than for the Irish. This in turn, seems to be conditioned by different cultural values the two groups of respondents possess, with Poles showing a collective approach and the Irish an individualistic one. Thus the use of *Mild Hint* by Poles can be interpreted as a solidarity seeking technique, which is an example of positive politeness. While the majority of the Irish respondents opted for non-imposition (i.e. conventionally indirect request strategy), which constitutes an example of negative politeness. The main claim made earlier in this study concerning the politeness orientation of the two societies seems to be further reinforced.

## **5.5.2. Internal modification**

As mentioned before requests can be internally modified in order to soften / downgrade or intensify / upgrade the impact of a request. This can be achieved by means of syntactic downgraders, lexical and phrasal downgraders, and upgraders (see Chapter 4). Syntactic downgraders are concerned with the choice between different grammatical structures such as: conditional constructions, tenses, tag questions, negation, and interrogative versus imperative constructions. Lexical and phrasal downgraders, on the other hand, comprise a large number of mitigating devices; these are: politeness markers, consultative devices, downtoners, understatements, and diminutives, to name a few. In the following sections we will summarize the use of the aforementioned internal modifications in the Irish English and Polish requests.

### **5.5.2.1. Syntactic downgrading**

The use of syntactic mitigation decreases the impact of the request on the addressee. When employed, the level of indirectness increases. This, in turn, provides H with some freedom and consequently diminishes the threat to H's face, should he or she decide not to comply with S's wish. The syntactic downgraders used in the data are shown in Table 5.5.2.1 below.

TYPE	FREQUENCY OF OCCURRENCE (%)									
	Irish English					Polish				
	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5
Interrogative	76.7	86.7	90	89.7	100	63.9	83.8	37.8	35.1	100
Conditional	17.4	33.3	25.9	34.5	16.7	50	67.6	18.9	18.9	72.2
Conditional clause	0	0	0	0	0	2.8	2.7	0	0	0
Past Tense	0	0	0	0	6.7	0	0	0	0	0
Tag questions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2.7	0
Combination of the above (Ing-form+Past Tense+conditional clause+conditional)	0	0	0	3.4	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 5.5.2.1: Total number of syntactic downgraders employed by the Irish and Polish respondents across five situations.

As can be seen in Table 5.5.2.1 interrogatives and conditionals were the two dominant types of syntactic downgraders employed in all the five situations in both speech communities. The use of other syntactic internal modifiers was very low and thus statistically insignificant. The results of the present study revealed that requests are not associated with interrogative constructions in Polish to the extent that they are in Irish English. In both datasets, interrogatives ranged from simple to elaborate interrogative forms. The main difference between Irish English and Polish is that in Irish English there is a stronger preference for more elaborate constructions with modals, whereas in Polish requests are frequently formulated with imperatives (see Situations 1, 3, and 4) or with the modal verb *móc* (“can”) used either in the present indicative or, to sound more polite, in conditional forms (see Situations 2 and 5). Irish English offers a rich repertoire of modal verbs (especially the modal verb *may* which has no equivalent in Polish), and other internal modification strategies employed very frequently (especially a consultative device – a lexical and phrasal downgrader, cf. Subsection 5.5.2.2), which accounts for the fact that in formal and non-standard situations the Irish possess a greater choice of internal mitigating devices than their Polish counterparts. Since the Polish subjects had a more limited choice of internal mitigating devices employed in order to make their requests more tentative, i.e. lessen

its impact on H, they resorted to conditional constructions. This may be a possible interpretation of the difference between Irish English and Polish as regards the use of conditionals (see Situations 1, 2, and 5). It should be noted that the use of conditionals represents a rather simple form of downgrading with limited mitigating power. Combinations of syntactic downgraders, such as *I was wondering if it was...* (Situation 4, Irish English), a combination of tense, ing-form, conditional clause and conditional, are more highly mitigating (cf. Barron, forthcoming). Although in some situations Poles employed more conditional constructions than the Irish, it seems that the Irish respondents invest more in indirectness in standard and close to standard situations (Situations 3, 4, 1, and 2). In Situation 5, a non-standard one, downgrading in the form of conditionals was used more extensively in the Polish-language data; however, as mentioned earlier, this might be due to some syntactic mitigation limitations found in the Polish language.

### **5.5.2.2. Lexical and phrasal downgrading**

Similarly to syntactic downgraders, lexical and phrasal downgraders are employed to mitigate the *illocutionary force* of requests. The lexical and phrasal downgrading devices used by both speech communities in the situations analysed are listed in the Table 5.5.2.2 below.

TYPE	FREQUENCY OF OCCURRENCE (%)									
	Irish English					Polish				
	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5
Consultative devices	3.3	26.7	0	0	23.3	0	0	0	0	0
Politeness marker please	73.3	93.3	83.3	34.5	0	13.9	16.2	43.2	8.1	0
Downtoner	0	0	0	0	3.3	0	0	0	0	0
Understatement	0	0	0	0	3.3	0	0	0	16.2	2.8
Diminutive	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16.2	0

Table 5.5.2.2: Total number of lexical and phrasal downgraders employed by the Irish and Polish respondents across five situations.

As can be inferred from the data in Table 5.5.2.2, PM *please*<sup>2</sup> was the only type of lexical and phrasal downgrader employed by both groups of respondents in four request situations. However, there was a significant cross-cultural difference as regards its frequency of occurrence. The findings revealed that PM *please* was chosen by the overwhelming majority of Irish subjects (its usage ranged from a minimum of 34.5% in Situation 4 to maximum of 93.3% in Situation 2). Contrary to the Polish subjects who did not opt for this mitigation device to such an extent (its usage ranged from a minimum 8.1% in Situation 4 to a maximum of 43.2% in Situation 3). It is apparent that only Irish culture showed a preference for an extensive use of *please* in those standard (and close to standard) situations in the present empirical material. This is indicative of the fact that the Irish English requests tend to be more indirect than the Polish ones.

Another conspicuous difference between Irish English and Polish can be observed with regard to the use of consultative device. Requests, such as *Would you mind closing the door?* (Situation 2, Irish English), *Would you mind if I use your*

<sup>2</sup> It will be recalled that *please* functions as a downgrader of the *illocutionary force* of a request in standard situations, because in such circumstances PM *please* acts in harmony with the clearly defined context, and does not “drown” the downtoning qualities of the adverb whether it is used with a QP strategy or with an imperative” (Barron, forthcoming). On the other hand, in non-standard situations, it upgrades the *illocutionary force* of a request, since when employed in such situations; it increases the directness of QP strategies. Here *please* reduces any scope for negotiation previously granted by QP strategy. Thus, it is coded as a lexical and phrasal downgrader in Situations 1, 2, 3, and 4, and as an upgrader in non-standard situations (Situation 5 in the present study) (see Chapter 5, Subsection 5.4.1.2; House, 1989; Wichmann, 2004; Aijmer, 1996; Barron, forthcoming).



*phone?* (Situation 5, Irish English) or *Would you mind closing the window?* (Situation 1, Irish English) occurred quite frequently in the Irish English-language data. On the contrary, no equivalents of such requests appeared in the Polish-language data. This seems to confirm our assumptions we made earlier (see Chapter 4, Subsection 4.2.2.2) – such polite requests are very common in English, but occur very rarely in Polish. A high incidence of this lexical and phrasal downgrader in Situations 2 and 5 in Irish English indicates that this device is more likely to be used in formal and / or non-standard situations, and where the power distance is great. Here, again, the Irish informants are found to be more indirect using statistically more lexical and phrasal downgraders than their Polish counterparts.

As regards downtoners, examples of the use of this device were very few and appeared only in the Irish English-language data. The lack of this internal modifier in the Polish-language data seems to show that Poles appear to be less bothered by considerations of negative politeness when compared with the Irish.

An interesting cross-cultural difference was seen in Situation 4, this concerned the application of diminutives. Whereas in Polish diminutives are largely used, in English there are very few diminutive suffixes (e.g. –let as in piglet, -ie as in doggie) and they are not so frequently used. In fact, no diminutives were employed by any of the Irish informants. 16.2% of the Polish respondents opted for this mitigation device in order to soften the *illocutionary force* of the utterance. Diminutives are usually associated with in-group language where co-operation is expected from H, therefore, it came as no surprise that such mitigation devices were found in Situation 4 in the Polish-language data, where family members interacted with each other. In Polish this lexical and phrasal downgrader is considered to be a sign of solidarity – a marker of positive politeness. Wierzbicka (1985: 168) points out that “Rich systems of diminutives seem to play a crucial role in cultures in which emotions in general and affection in particular is expected to be shown overtly”. By contrast, “Anglo-Saxon culture does not encourage unrestrained display of emotions. In adult English speech diminutives feel out of place (...)” (ibid.). This could perhaps explain why expressive derivation has not developed to that extent in English.

### **5.5.2.3. Upgraders**

Upgraders employed in the present data include: time intensifiers, as in the Polish request *Proszę natychmiast zamknąć drzwi* (Situation 2), adverbial intensifiers, such as in the Irish English request *I really need some money* (Situation 4), lexical intensifier, as in the Polish request *Kochani rodzice, moglibyście mi pożyczyć pieniędzy?* (Situation 4), and a requestive marker *please*. The frequency of occurrence of upgraders is presented in Table 5.5.2.3 below.

TYPE	FREQUENCY OF OCCURRENCE (%)									
	Irish English					Polish				
	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5
Time intensifier	0	0	0	0	0	0	2.7	0	0	0
Adverbial intensifier	0	0	0	3.4	0	0	0	0	5.4	0
Lexical intensifier	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2.7	0
Requestive marker <i>please</i>	0	0	0	0	16.7	0	0	0	0	0

Table 5.5.2.3: Total number of upgraders employed by the Irish and Polish respondents across five situations.

In neither culture was the use of intensifiers very high across all five situations. The frequency of their use suggests that the Irish and Poles tend to find them socially inappropriate with requests.

The results of the present study showed that the use of *please* in an upgrading function is far more common than the use of any other type of intensification device. However, as mentioned before, it is only in Situation 5 that *please* had an upgrading function. While none of the Polish informants employed *please* with a QP strategy, as many as 16.7% of the Irish informants employed *please* with this strategy. The Irish subjects were found to be more direct here. Stronger preferences of the Polish than of the Irish subordinates for more indirect and thus less imposing strategies stem from the dimension of power distance. In large-power-distance cultures such as the Polish, language directly embodies power distance between the interlocutors. On the other hand, in small-power-distance cultures such as the Irish, the need to stress status

differences openly appears to be inappropriate. In Polish voicing status differences is also connected with the use of titular honorific, like *Pan* or *Pani* (“Sir / Mr. or Ms.”) or professional title, e.g. *Pan Dyrektor* (“Mr. Director”), this phenomenon will be also discussed in Subsection 5.5.3 below (cf. Subsection 5.4.1.5).

### 5.5.3. External modification

External mitigation devices were employed by both the Irish and Polish informants. This type of modification is achieved through the use of optional clauses which soften or aggravate the *illocutionary force* of the whole request. External modifiers employed in the present research aimed at getting the addressee to support the actual request. Table 5.5.3 shows those mitigators found in the data. Alerters (i.e. attention getters, first names, address forms such as titular honorific and professional titles) were the most common type of external mitigators employed in all five request situations in both datasets. However, the present data revealed that the Polish respondents employed alerters more frequently than their Irish counterparts.

TYPE	FREQUENCY OF OCCURRENCE (%)									
	Irish English					Polish				
	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5
<b>Alerters</b>	3.3	10	33.3	17.2	6.7	5.6	16.2	21.6	70.3	55.6
<b>Thanking</b>	0	10	0	0	0	2.8	5.4	2.7	0	0
<b>Supportive reason</b>	0	0	0	6.9	6.7	0	0	0	8.1	13.9
<b>Preparator</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5.6

Table 5.5.3: Total number of external modifications employed by the Irish and Polish respondents across five situations.

It should be pointed out that the application of external modifications was of a rather limited nature and frequency of occurrence. The low incidence of external mitigators and the absence of others – more complex with highly downgrading nature

(such as disarmers, cost minimizers, apologies for imposition, etc.) – would suggest that they may be used only in particular situations. Additionally, this might be due to the fact that DCTs do not elicit the amount of external modifications and supportive moves which usually accompany head acts in natural speech (Johnston et al., 1998). There is, thus a need for more research on requests with the use of other elicitation techniques in order to measure what the respondents would actually say in natural conversation. Therefore, on the basis of the present data, it is difficult to assess which group of respondents would opt for higher level of investment in external mitigation, since such claims can only lead to an inaccurate image of communication in Ireland and Poland.

## 6. GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The aim of the present study was to provide a pragmatic contrastive analysis of the realization of Speech Act of Requesting in Irish English and Polish. The aforementioned comparative study was carried out with respect to the level of directness of a request, and request modification strategies (both internal and external). The model proposed by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) has been very helpful in coding the data and spotting the differences between the two language groups. The question that remains the most difficult to answer is the nature of such differences. It seems that politeness theory, in its present form, is not enough to explain such differences, since they stem less from universal norms of politeness but more from culture-specific values and attitudes. Understanding these values and attitudes is essential to understand the use of a particular language.

In the light of the present findings on requests in the two compared languages, Leech's (1983) claim that indirectness always motivates politeness does not hold true for language users coming from different speech communities, and thus should be treated with some reservation. It holds for Irish English requests, where conventionally indirect request strategies appear very frequently, but not for their Polish equivalents, where direct request strategies (i.e. imperatives) function as the preferred, socially and culturally acceptable request strategies in some situations. The choice of direct strategies by Poles is motivated by cultural values, i.e. power distance. The large power distance of the Polish culture results in using imperatives in situations characterized by lack of familiarity (e.g. service encounters). On the other hand, imperatives can be also employed in situations where there is no power distance (e.g. among friends and family members), especially if associated with easiness of the task and a pre-agreement to comply with the request. This is so because Polish allows combining directness with warmth- and friendliness-devices (e.g. diminutives). Contrary to Polish, Irish English does not allow request in the form of imperatives to such a great extent. This might be due to the fact that imperative and infinitive forms are identical in English, which enhances the *illocutionary force* of imperatives making

them sound like orders rather than requests. The results of the present study confirmed that requests regarding everyday tasks (e.g. Situations: 3 and 4) can be realized more easily by direct constructions in Polish because they are not experienced as impositions, whereas in Irish English the conventionally indirect strategies, especially *Query Preparatory* strategies are the conventionalized means used to request somebody to perform a desired action. The preference for conventional indirectness and elaboration in negative strategies, which is characteristic not only for formal occasions (e.g. Situations: 2, 3, and 5), but prevails in everyday encounters (Situations: 1 and 4), reflects the importance of individual autonomy in Irish culture. To that end Irish respondents used negative politeness strategies more often than their Polish counterparts, for whom treating their interlocutors in a direct way is conventionally acceptable. The findings of the present research showed that Polish speakers may use direct strategies, which will neither change the relational status between the two interlocutors nor make the request sound rude. Imperative utterances which are broadly used in Polish communication do not indicate the impoliteness of speakers. Polite usage in Polish permits many more direct imperatives than English does. Restriction on the use of the imperative form in English has been noticed by many linguists (Leech, 1983; Sifianou, 1992; Wierzbicka, 1985; 1991; 2003; Márquez Reiter, 2000; Lubecka, 2000; Barron, 2007; forthcoming, and others). Wierzbicka (1991: 30; 2003) claims that in English the imperative is mostly used in commands and orders. English people avoid imperative forms in all SAs with pragmatic meaning “I want you to do it”, trying to diminish and soften their imposition and demonstrate their respect to other people’s autonomy (privacy).

It should be pointed out that non-conventionally indirect request strategies had a very limited distribution in the data in both languages. In fact, *Hints* did not occur in the Irish English-language data at all. The findings of the present study might provide some evidence for the argument put forth by Weizman’s (1989: 92) – “conventional politeness correlates with politeness, non-conventional indirectness (as in *Hints*) does not”. The very low incidence (in the Polish data) and the absence (in the Irish English data) of *Hints* in the present empirical material might also indicate that they are only used in particular situations, which were not included in the research.

Cultural differences in the use of linguistic forms also revealed that the level of family collectivism seems to be lower in Ireland than in Poland. In the empirical material we observed a higher level of directness in in-group situations (Situation 1 and 4) in Polish relative to Irish English. These differences were apparent on the level of the request strategy as well as internal mitigation. Irish English requests are characterized by a higher level of both syntactic as well as lexical and phrasal downgrading when compared to Polish requests.

However, the analysis of the non-standard situation (Situation 5) clearly shows that it cannot be simply stated that Irish English is more indirect than Polish. Rather, an assessment of the relative directness / indirectness of the internally and externally modified requests elicited would be necessary before such a statement could be made. The analysis of the non-standard situation appears to indicate that the Irish informants prefer to invest in internal rather than external modification, while the Polish informants show a preference for external modification.

The present analysis focuses on the request realizations of five situations in Irish English and Polish. It should be remembered that it does not cover all the aspects of request realization in the two languages in question. As has been mentioned before, more research is needed before generalisations can be made about the nature of Irish English and Polish. Such research ought to employ varying data elicitation tools, ideally those by means of which naturally-occurring material can be obtained. In addition, analyses of data from different parts of Ireland and Poland are required since the present study concentrates only on data from the southern part of Poland and the western part of Ireland. Notwithstanding the aforementioned limitations, the findings of the current study of the language use in Irish English and Polish adds to the research on contrastive analysis of speech act realization and politeness formulas in the two language communities.

# Appendix 1

## Expressing requests in Irish English (the English version)

### Specific Information:

- 1. Asking a friend to close the window.  
*Verbal request*.....  
.....
  
- 2. Asking a passenger to close the door in a compartment of a train.  
*Verbal request*.....  
.....
  
- 3. Asking a waiter in a restaurant for a glass of water.  
*Verbal request*.....  
.....
  
- 4. Asking your parents for some money.  
*Verbal request*.....  
.....
  
- 5. You are in your boss's office (with whom you don't interact often). Ask his / her permission to use the telephone.  
*Verbal request*.....  
.....



## Appendix 2

### Expressing requests in Polish (the Polish version)

#### Specific Information:

1. Poproś kolegę o zamknięcie okna.

*Prośba słowna* .....

.....

2. Poproś pasażera, żeby zamknął drzwi w przedziale (w pociągu).

*Prośba słowna* .....

.....

3. Poproś kelnera w restauracji o szklankę wody.

*Prośba słowna* .....

.....

4. Poproś swojego rodzica o pieniądze.

*Prośba słowna* .....

.....

5. Jesteś w gabinecie swojego szefa, z którym nie kontaktujesz się często. Zapytaj czy możesz skorzystać z jego / jej telefonu.

*Prośba słowna* .....

.....

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## Summary in Polish

Przedmiotem niniejszej rozprawy doktorskiej jest analiza porównawcza jednego z grzecznościowych aktów mowy, a konkretnie, aktu mowy wyrażania próśb w komunikacji interpersonalnej pomiędzy przedstawicielami dwóch różnych społeczności językowo-kulturowych: irlandzkiej i polskiej.

Autorka przeprowadziła pragmatyczną analizę kontrastywną próśb używanych w różnych kontekstach w angielszczyźnie irlandzkiej oraz w języku polskim, ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem różnic i podobieństw na płaszczyźnie leksykalno-syntaktycznej. Badanie miało również charakter ilościowy – dla lepszego zilustrowania diskutowanych zagadnień uzyskany materiał empiryczny został przeanalizowany procentowo, a następnie przedstawiony w postaci tabel oraz wykresów.

Praca składa się ze wstępu, pięciu rozdziałów, konkluzji, bibliografii oraz dodatku zawierającego kwestionariusz, który stanowi podstawę analizy.

Rozdział pierwszy przedstawia zarys historyczny rozwoju *Językoznawstwa kontastywnego*, przybliży również definicje podstawowych pojęć związanych z wyżej wymienioną dziedziną nauki o języku.

W rozdziale drugim opisane zostały językoznawcze teorie aktów mowy Austina (1962) i Searla (1969), ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem próśb. Wprowadzone zostało tutaj także pojęcie pośrednich aktów mowy używanych w celu nakłonienia rozmówcy do wykonania danej czynności.

Rozdział trzeci omawia teorie komunikacyjne – zasadę kooperacji Grice'a (1975), podkreśla jej istotną rolę w rozwoju późniejszych badań, które doprowadziły do powstania wielu nowych studiów mających na celu poszerzenie dotychczasowych maksym i reguł konwersacyjnych. Po przedstawieniu Teorii Relewancji Sperbara i Wilsona (1986), opisane zostały teorie grzeczności (zasady grzeczności sformułowane przez Lakoff (1973), teorie grzeczności Leecha (1980, 1983), Brona i Levinsona (1987)). W rozdziale tym nawiązano również do kulturowych systemów wartości charakterystycznych dla kultury irlandzkiej i polskiej.

Rozdział czwarty zawiera pragmatyczną analizę kontrastywną próśb w języku angielskim i polskim. Omawia poszczególne strategie wyrażania wyżej wymienionego aktu mowy w obu językach. W celu usystematyzowania poszczególnych typów strategii, posłużono się schematem kodowania próśb, który stworzono na potrzeby międzynarodowego projektu CCSARP (1989). W związku ze stosunkowo małą ilością dostępnej literatury zajmującej się badaniem próśb w angielszczyźnie irlandzkiej, autorka wykorzystuje tutaj materiał językowy uzyskany przez językoznawców na drodze badań różnych dialektów języka angielskiego.

W rozdziale piątym niniejszej rozprawy doktorskiej przedstawiono opis przeprowadzonego projektu. Na wstępie podane są: cele podjętego badania, charakterystyka uczestników oraz metodologia badania, która stanowiła podstawę badań i nakreśliła tok analizy. Przeanalizowano wszystkie sytuacje zawarte w kwestionariuszu, scharakteryzowano nie tylko poszczególne strategie realizacji aktu próśby użytego przez respondentów w podanych kontekstach, lecz także typy modyfikacji owych próśb pojawiających się w uzyskanym materiale językowym.

Całość rozważań podsumowana jest w konkluzjach końcowych. Jak wykazała analiza zebranego materiału empirycznego, odmienna realizacja próśb w badanych językach może wynikać z odmiennych wartości kulturowych postrzeganych przez przedstawicieli danej grupy językowo-kulturowej. Dla przykładu przeważający indywidualizm w kulturze anglosaskiej, a kolektywizm w kulturze polskiej ma wpływ na sposób formułowania próśb – irlandzkie próśby są pośrednimi aktami mowy, formułowanymi za pomocą konstrukcji zdań pytających, chroniącymi „twarz” mówców oraz słuchaczy, natomiast polskie próśby występują często w postaci trybu rozkazującego, który nie narusza reguł uprzejmości i jest akceptowany w kulturze polskiej. Dystans do władzy – stosunkowo wysoki w kulturze polskiej, a niski w kulturze irlandzkiej znajduje również swoje odzwierciedlenie w sposobie formułowania aktu próśby. Ponadto analiza leksykalno-syntaktyczna oraz pragmatyczna próśb dowiodła, iż teza Leecha (1980) mówiąca, że bezpośredniość wypowiedzi jest odwrotnie proporcjonalna do jej grzeczności została podważona. Stwierdzenie to może być prawdziwe dla kultury anglosaskiej, ale niekoniecznie dla polskiej.

Pomimo, iż przedmiotem badań był tylko jeden akt mowy, autorka ma nadzieję, iż analiza materiału empirycznego może zostać wykorzystana w dalszych badaniach z zakresu językoznawstwa kontastywnego, pragmatyki oraz komunikacji międzykulturowej. Z wyników przeprowadzonych badań będą mogli skorzystać zarówno nauczyciele języków obcych, tłumacze, osoby uczące się języków obcych, jak i przeciętni użytkownicy języka, którym zależy na poprawnym komunikowaniu się z uwzględnieniem form grzecznościowych stosowanych w określonej kulturze.