

CHAPTER 2

Pragmatics in Discourse Analysis

“Pragmatics is the study of how language is used in communication.”

(Ellis, 1995:719)

“The pragmatics of language is concerned with audience-directed intention – how the speaker or writer intends the utterance to be taken.”

(Olson, 1994:119)

INTRODUCTION

Traditional language analysis contrasts pragmatics with syntax and semantics (see Widdowson, 1996, for a general introduction to linguistics). **Syntax** is the area of language analysis that describes relationships between linguistic forms, how they are arranged in sequence, and which sequences are well formed and therefore grammatically acceptable. Chapter 4 focuses on this type of linguistic knowledge and its relation to discourse.

Semantics is the area of language analysis that describes how meaning is encoded in the language and is therefore concerned mainly with the meaning of lexical items. Semantics is also concerned with the study of relationships between language forms and entities in real or imaginary worlds (Yule, 1996). Chapter 5 focuses on vocabulary and thus deals with some areas of semantics in relation to discourse.

Whereas formal analyses of syntax and semantics do not consider the users of the linguistic forms that they describe and analyze, **pragmatics** deals very explicitly with the study of relationships holding between linguistic forms and the human beings who use these forms. As such, pragmatics is concerned with people’s intentions, assumptions, beliefs, goals, and the kinds of actions they perform while using language. Pragmatics is also concerned with contexts, situations, and settings within which such language uses occur.

A language user’s **lexicogrammatical competence** is his/her knowledge of syntax and lexical semantics in the target language. In describing such competence we need to present the rules that account for the learner’s **implicit formal knowledge** of grammar and vocabulary. **Pragmatic competence**, on the other hand, is a set of internalized rules of

how to use language in socioculturally appropriate ways, taking into account the participants in a communicative interaction and features of the context within which the interaction takes place.

While lexicogrammatical competence can be described in formal terms, pragmatic competence is at present a much less formalized and structured area of inquiry. Since pragmatics deals with human elements, it is less objective and more difficult to describe; thus formal language analysis tends to exclude pragmatics. In recent years, however, more attention has been directed toward pragmatic competence and even interlanguage pragmatics for L2 learners (Blum-Kulka, et al., 1989; Kasper and Blum-Kulka, 1993), which is the learner's developing pragmatic competence in the target language.

WHAT DOES PRAGMATICS ENTAIL?

According to Yule (1996), the area of pragmatics deals with **speaker meaning** and **contextual meaning**. Speaker meaning is concerned with the analysis of what people mean by their utterances rather than what the words and phrases in those utterances might mean in and of themselves. Thus when a speaker says "I am hungry," the semantic meaning of this utterance is that the speaker feels pangs of hunger. Pragmatically viewed, if the sentence is produced by a youngster who has come back from school at noon speaking to his mother in the kitchen, it probably functions as a request for lunch. Alternatively, if it is produced by the same youngster after having completed lunch, it could function as a complaint expressing the opinion that there hasn't been enough food to eat for lunch, or perhaps the child intends it as a request for a dessert. Speaker meaning, rather than sentence meaning, can only begin to be understood when context is taken into consideration. Any utterance, therefore, can take on various meanings depending on who produced it and under what circumstances.

Pragmatics studies the context within which an interaction occurs as well as the intention of the language user. Who are the addressees, what is the relation between speakers/writers and hearers/readers, when and where does the speech event occur? and so on. Thus, the same utterance "I am hungry" when produced by a street beggar and addressed to a passerby would be generally perceived as a request for money rather than for food since shared knowledge – in this case – leads to this interpretation.

Pragmatics also explores how listeners and readers can make inferences about what is said or written in order to arrive at an interpretation of the user's intended meaning. Obviously, the emphasis in this kind of exploration must be placed not only on what is actually said but also on what is not being said explicitly but recognized implicitly as part of the communicative exchange, such as presupposition, implication, shared knowledge, and circumstantial evidence.

From the above description of pragmatics, it may seem to the reader that this is an impossible area of communicative interaction to analyze since it seems so difficult to predict what different people might be intending. What makes human communication possible, however, is the fact that pragmatic competence relies very heavily on conventional, culturally appropriate, and socially acceptable ways of interacting. These rules of appropriacy result in regular and expected behaviors in language use. It is generally understood that within a given social and cultural group, people usually know what is expected and what is considered appropriate behavior, and this knowledge enables them to interpret the language uses they encounter.

Furthermore, language forms are selected or preferred by interactants so as to accommodate and strengthen some of the shared and mutually perceived situational phenomena. Two areas of language analysis that have looked at what allows the listener or reader to make inferences based on what is said or written are **presupposition** and **implication**.

When a proposition is presupposed, it cannot be denied or called into question. For example:

A: Isn't it odd that John didn't come?

B: No, it's not odd at all.

In this brief exchange both speaker A and speaker B share the presupposition "John didn't come." The interlocutors in this exchange chose linguistic forms that enable them to share the presupposition. Notice that not all verbs or predicate adjectives have this property. If we change "odd" to "true," there would be no constant presupposition since the truth value of "John didn't come" changes from one syntactic environment to the next when the proposition is denied or questioned:

1. It is true that John didn't come.
2. It isn't true that John didn't come.
3. Isn't it true that John didn't come?

It is a combined knowledge of pragmatics and linguistics that enables interlocutors to be effective users of presupposition.

In the case of implication, the hearer/listener is able to make certain inferences based on what is said or written. These inferences go beyond the words themselves, yet are generally predictable from the linguistic forms chosen. For example, if someone says "Jane will support Bob. After all, she is his sister," we know that the speaker is not only giving a reason in the second clause for Jane's behavior, which is described in the first clause; through his use of the connector "after all," the speaker is also indicating that he believes both he and the listener share some obvious prior knowledge (i.e., Jane is Bob's sister). Here again we see how the choice of linguistic forms reflects the knowledge shared by the interlocutors.

From the examples given above, it seems obvious that a very important factor facilitating both spoken and written communication is shared knowledge. As we have seen, language users make linguistic decisions and choices based on certain presuppositions with respect to the situation and the participants in the communicative interaction. Such decisions are based primarily on what is perceived as shared knowledge.

Obviously, when we misjudge shared knowledge or the perceptions of the other participants in the interaction we might create an instance of miscommunication. This can happen among speakers of the same language and within the same sociocultural setting, as will become obvious from the following exchange between a university student and a clerk in a departmental office at a university in the United States; both were native speakers of English:

Woman (student): Excuse me, where can I make some Xerox copies?

Clerk: For?

Woman: (silence)

Clerk: Are you an instructor?

Woman: No, a student.

Clerk: We can only make Xerox copies for instructors.

Woman: Well, I . . . OK. But where can I find a [pay] Xerox machine?
(the original intention)

Clerk: Oh, I see. Up the stairs, past the bookstore.

In the above exchange¹ there was obviously a breakdown in communication since the first utterance, which was an information question, was misunderstood by the clerk as a request; the clerk then applied to this situation nonrelevant prior knowledge that was unshared by the student.

In exchanges that take place between language users from different social or cultural groups or different linguistic groups, miscommunication can result from lack of shared knowledge of the world and of the appropriate target behavior. In our attempt to lead the L2 learner to communicative competence, which goes far beyond linguistic competence, pragmatics must be taken into account. While developing knowledge and understanding of how the new language works, the learner must also develop awareness and sensitivity to sociocultural patterns of behavior. It is only skillfully combined linguistic and pragmatic knowledge that can lead to communicative competence in the second language.

COOPERATION AND IMPLICATURE

Human communication is based on the fact that, as a rule, human beings want to communicate with one another successfully and want to maintain social harmony while doing so. It stands to reason, therefore, that during routine communication the participants involved in the interaction are willing and perhaps even eager to cooperate so as to ensure successful communication. It seems that most exchanges are characteristically, to some extent, cooperative efforts, and each participant tends to recognize some common purpose. On this premise, Grice (1975) developed the **cooperative principle** for conversation. This rather general principle maintains the following: "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." It seems that interactants base their expectations on the cooperative principle and on other relevant contextual features. Grice's cooperative principle consists of four maxims:

1. THE MAXIM OF QUANTITY

Make your contribution as informative as required.

Do not make your contribution more informative than required.

The mutual expectation of the interactants is that quantitatively the speaker's contribution is just right for the interaction at hand. More would be too much and less would be too little for successful communication to take place.

2. THE MAXIM OF QUALITY

Try to make your contribution one that is true.

a. Do not say what you believe to be false.

b. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

The mutual expectation of the interactants is that the speaker makes propositions or provides information that s/he believes to be true.

3. THE MAXIM OF RELOCATION

Be relevant.

The mutual expectation of the interactants is that the speaker makes a contribution to the communicative exchange that is relevant to the topic and the situation of this exchange.

4. THE MAXIM OF MANNER

a. avoid obscurity

b. avoid ambiguity

c. be brief

d. be orderly

The mutual expectation of the interactants is that the speaker makes his/her contribution as clear and as comprehensible as possible, and that while doing so, s/he takes all precautions to ensure such clarity in terms of performance and delivery.

These maxims can be considered basic assumptions that people follow in their communicative interactions; however, it must be acknowledged that they assume Anglo-American culture. We believe the maxims get reinterpreted when applied to other cultures. In most cultures, it is generally the case that people provide just the appropriate amount of information for the other party to be able to interpret the intention. We can usually assume that people tell the truth (or the truth as best known to them), that their contributions are relevant to the discussion at hand, and that they try to be as clear as they can. Whenever a speaker is aware of having unintentionally violated a maxim, s/he will immediately try to adjust and make corrections in order to restore adherence to the maxims. It is often the apologetic additions that make it obvious that a speaker is self-correcting violations of this kind. Thus, for instance, if a speaker told us a story with too many details (perhaps making the wrong assumptions about what the hearer already knows), s/he might apologize by saying: "You probably know all this, so let me get to the main point." Or in the opposite situation, where someone (at an information counter perhaps) may not have given us enough information about something, s/he may simply add supplementary information upon realizing the confused look on the hearer's face. It is quite clear that communicators are very aware of the need to cooperate in terms of quantity of information in order to allow the other party to make the proper inferences and to get to the intention of the language user.

Similarly, when one is not completely sure that one has proper evidence for the statements one makes, it is possible to use various hedges in order not to take full responsibility for the quality of an utterance. As speakers in this case, we may add qualifying openers such as: *As far as I know; I am not quite sure but I believe that . . . ; I think that . . .*. The addition of such openings to an utterance releases speakers from the need to adhere fully to the maxim of quality and allows them to state beliefs or opinions rather than facts.

The maxim of relation (or relevance) plays a very important role in maintaining the topic of a conversation. As soon as we want to change the topic, we can do so by using some introductory or opening phrase such as "On another matter altogether . . .," but we can also do so by producing an utterance that is no longer relevant and thus move the conversation toward a new topic. The added information being conveyed here is that I would rather speak about something else. This can also be done explicitly, as it often is, by people like diplomats or politicians when they answer a problematic question with the phrase "No comment."

It is, therefore, generally assumed that communication is successful because interactants adhere to the cooperative maxims. When they don't, the assumption may be that they deliberately violate a maxim in order to convey additional (implicit) information or add some special meaning, i.e., implicature, beyond what is actually said. Thus, the politician who answers a reporter's question with "No comment" leaves deliberate room for implicature and interpretation on the part of the hearer. In some cases, the reporter might simply say later, "so and so was unwilling to comment," which is a way for the reporter to ignore the implicature. Alternatively, the reporter may present some speculation related to the fact that at this point the speaker did not disclose all the details.

Within each culture there are acceptable ways to "deliberately" violate maxims. For instance, when complimenting a person, one is not expected to adhere fully to the maxim of quality. Similarly, when thanking someone for an unusually nice gift, the receiver might deliberately violate the maxim of quantity and say more than necessary in order to express

a deeper sense of gratitude. Since such a “violation” is usually recognized by both interactants, it has added communicative value.

When communication takes place between two interactants who do not share the same language or the same culture, unintended violations of the maxims can easily occur. Here we assume that the four maxims apply to all cultures but that their interpretation may be quite different. Being informative or relevant in some cultures may sound crude and inappropriate in others, but there would still be some mutual expectation with respect to the maxims that would make communication more or less successful. Furthermore, the value related to each maxim might be quite different in different cultures. Thus, *quantity* may be differently perceived by speakers of different cultures. One example of such differences is the amount of information perceived as appropriate when giving someone directions in response to a request. In some cultures the appropriate answer would be brief and informative. In others it would be lengthy and contain some digressions from the main point. If a speaker from the first culture directly translates the directions s/he gives into the language of the other culture, the speaker may sound somewhat disinterested or rudely terse. If, however, a speaker from the latter culture does the same thing when functioning in the former one, s/he may sound overly verbose and perhaps even annoying. In other words, such *pragmatic transfer* might result in the violation of a maxim in the new language and culture. When such cross-cultural violations take place, the speakers may not be aware of the need to carry out a correction and may therefore leave the impression of being impolite or even aggressive, when this was not at all the speaker’s intention.

SPEECH ACTS SERVE SOCIAL FUNCTIONS

As we have seen, successful communication takes place when speakers share knowledge, beliefs, and assumptions and when they adhere to similar rules of cooperative interaction. Language, however, is not only a vehicle to exchange thoughts and ideas; we often use utterances in order to perform social actions or functions. If a teacher in a traditional classroom tells a student, “I will have to inform your parents about your behavior,” it usually is not only a statement that imparts information since it may also have the power of a threat with dire consequences. By making this statement, the teacher may also have performed a threatening act.

Similarly, when one friend tells another, “You look great today,” this utterance serves not only as a description but functions mainly as a “compliment” and as such fulfills a social function. Social actions performed via utterances are generally called *speech acts*. All cultures use speech acts in order to perform social functions and in most languages there are some **performative verbs** that directly represent the speech acts (Austin, 1975) such as: *apologize, complain, compliment, request, promise*, and so forth. Although these performative verbs carry the lexical meaning of the speech act they convey, they are not always the most common realization of the speech act in normal conversation. Thus, when apologizing in a spoken situation, English speakers tend to use the expression “I’m sorry” much more often than the more formal “I apologize.”

A speech act is usually performed within a situation that provides contextual elements that help interpret the speaker’s intention. Thus if a person says “It’s really cold in here” in a room where there is an open window and the addressee is near the window, this utterance can easily be interpreted as a request for the interlocutor to close the window. Contextual and social information make it possible for interactants to interpret each other’s intentions even when these intentions are not explicitly stated.

When a speech act is uttered, the utterance carries **locutionary meaning** based on the meaning of the linguistic expressions. Thus, our earlier example “I am hungry” is a basic description of the speaker’s state. However, it takes on **illocutionary force** when it acts as

a request and the illocutionary force has the intended meaning of “please give me some food.” Furthermore, since a speech act is directed toward an addressee who “suffers the consequences” of the act, it also has **perlocutionary force**, which is the effect the act has on the addressee. Every realization of a speech act has therefore three dimensions: locutionary meaning, illocutionary force, and perlocutionary effect.

Speech acts can be classified according to how they affect the social interaction between speakers and hearers. The most basic categorization (Searle, 1969) consists of five different types of speech acts: declaratives, representatives, expressives, directives, and commissives.

Declaratives (also called **performatives**) are speech acts that “change the world” as a result of having been performed. Some good examples of such declarative speech acts are when the jury foreman announces, “We find the defendant not guilty!” and when the justice of the peace says, “I now pronounce you man and wife.”

Representatives are speech acts that enable the speaker to express feelings, beliefs, assertions, illustrations, and the like. An example of such a representative speech act would be a statement made by a speaker at an agricultural convention such as “Today, tomatoes can be grown in the desert.”

Expressives are among the most important speech acts for learners of a second or a foreign language. These speech acts express psychological states of the speaker or the hearer. Apologizing, complaining, complimenting, and congratulating are examples of expressives.

Directives are speech acts that enable speakers to impose some action on the hearer. Through directives the speaker can express what s/he wants and then expect the hearer to comply. Inherently, these are face-threatening acts toward the hearer since they usually impose on the hearer. Commands, orders, and requests are examples of directives.

Commissives are speech acts that enable speakers to commit themselves to future actions. Promises and refusals are commissives. By definition these are speech acts whereby the speaker takes on or refuses some responsibility or task and are, therefore, face-threatening to the speaker, or imposing on the speaker. The use of performative verbs makes such speech acts more explicit. In the case of a promise, the choice of the verb “promise” makes the statement a stronger commitment, which is more costly to the speaker but advantageous to the hearer. In the case of refusals, on the other hand, the use of the verb “refuse” strengthens the denial of compliance and can lead to conflict or to a clash between the interlocutors.

Although it seems that all languages share a similar inventory of speech acts, the realizations and the circumstances that are appropriate for each speech act may be quite different in different cultures, and a learner needs to acquire speech act knowledge as part of language acquisition. This is what Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei, and Thurrell (1995) refer to as *actional competence* in their model of communication competence, which – among other things – extends the model of Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983) to include speech acts. Chapter 9, which deals with the speaking skill, makes suggestions for the teaching of speech acts.

POLITENESS

Since communication can be viewed as the primary and most inclusive social framework for language use, it is logical to expect all speech communities to develop rules and ways in which to improve and accommodate communicative acts in order to ensure and promote social harmony. The area of **politeness** deals with perceptions, expectations, and conventional realizations of communicative strategies which enhance social harmony. In acquiring one’s first language, a person also acquires these rules of politeness as part of

one's sociocultural and pragmatic competence. When learning a second language, one needs to acquire the new culture's politeness framework, which often is very different from that of one's own culture. Perhaps a good example of opposing cross-cultural perceptions of politeness is the following incident, which took place in the United States, where a Japanese-born daughter-in-law came by unexpectedly to visit her American-Jewish mother-in-law during lunchtime. The daughter-in-law had stopped earlier at a snack shop to buy a sandwich to eat while visiting her mother-in-law. The Japanese rules of politeness dictated both that she not impose on her mother-in-law in any way and that she should demonstrate that she stopped by only to enjoy her company. On the other hand, the Jewish mother-in-law was shocked and quite offended that her daughter-in-law did not feel that she could come over at any time and expect to get a sandwich or some simple lunch from her mother-in-law. In both cases, there are important cultural expectations of "what is polite," but these perceptions clash in terms of cultural presuppositions: in the Japanese case, it is most important to maintain respect for the freedom of choice of the other person and to avoid imposition at all costs. In the Jewish tradition, feelings of solidarity and hospitality override any question of imposition, and so it is expected that someone who is close to you will "impose" from time to time as a normal part of the social relationship.

This example is also a good illustration of **negative** versus **positive politeness** in Brown and Levinson's (1978) terms. Negative politeness avoids imposition whereas positive politeness expects imposition. The Japanese culture is more negative politeness oriented in that maintaining social distance is highly valued, whereas the American-Jewish culture places higher value on lack of social distance and focuses on group solidarity and positive politeness as more appropriate values for family interactions. In the example described here, positive politeness ranks group solidarity as having very high value in the one culture, whereas in the other culture negative politeness is primarily concerned with maintaining the other party's "freedom of action" and avoiding imposition at all costs. When one moves from one culture to another, it may take a long time to become fully sensitive to the subtleties of a new set of politeness rules.

Leech (1983) adds the **politeness principle (PP)** to Grice's (1975) more general cooperative principle (CP) in order to "minimize the expression of impolite beliefs . . . and [maximize the expression of polite beliefs]" (81). The essence of Leech's PP is to minimize unfavorable behavior towards the hearer or a third party while attempting to increase favorable consequences. Leech suggests a *cost-benefit scale* where the claim is that when the speaker is impolite, there is a higher cost for the hearer. Conversely, when the speaker is polite, there is greater benefit for the hearer. To be polite, therefore, means to minimize cost to the hearer and to be impolite is to maximize it. The following definitions and example may help clarify this:

Cost to Hearer = speaker is impolite, inconsiderate, and does not value hearer's well-being

Benefit to Hearer = speaker is polite and considerate of the hearer even at his/her own expense

Example: a situation where an insurance agent is asked to help the customer with an unusual claim, which turns out not to be covered by the policy, and the customer complains bitterly. If the agent chooses to be impolite, s/he might say something like, "If you don't like our policy, take your business elsewhere." But if s/he chooses to be polite, the agent might say, "We are very sorry that our policy doesn't cover your claim, but I am sure another agency might be more accommodating in future. Would you like me to recommend some other agencies?"

In the first case, the agent who responds impolitely does not consider the customer's (hearer's) benefit, while in the second case, although the agent cannot offer direct assistance, s/he is still very considerate of the customer's needs (lowering the hearer's costs).

Each culture may have rather different norms with respect to the expected politeness considerations of "cost-benefit." As we have seen from the earlier example about the Japanese daughter-in-law and the Jewish-American mother-in-law, the Japanese perception of politeness and "benefit to the hearer" entailed the notion of "minimizing imposition," whereas the Jewish expectation was "to accept and appreciate family hospitality." Consequently, we see that rules of politeness cannot be translated directly from one culture to another.

Leech (1983) suggests that these politeness principles are inherent in the categorization of speech acts as well as in the realization of each speech act. Therefore, he classifies illocutionary functions in terms of how they interact with the goal of achieving social harmony:

- competitive:** the illocutionary goal competes with the social goal
(e.g., ordering, requesting, demanding, begging)
- convivial:** the illocutionary goal coincides with the social goal
(e.g., offering, inviting, greeting, thanking, congratulating)
- neutral:²** the illocutionary goal is indifferent to the social goal
(e.g., asserting, reporting, announcing, instructing)
- conflictive:** the illocutionary goal conflicts with the social goal
(e.g., threatening, accusing, cursing, reprimanding)

(Leech, 1983:104)

Considerations of politeness often relate to the degree of **directness** expressed in speech acts. When talking about Leech's **competitive** speech acts or Brown and Levinson's **face-threatening** speech acts, there is implied imposition on the hearer in the actual performance of the speech act. In order to lessen the force of the imposition, all languages seem to have conventionalized less direct (or **indirect**) realizations of such speech acts. Instead of saying to the hearer, "Close the door," we might prefer an indirect version, e.g., "It's cold in here." However, it should also be recognized that an indirect speech act is often harder to interpret and so speakers of languages often develop **conventionally indirect** realization patterns which enable us to make indirect requests that are nonetheless unambiguous such as "Could you close the door?" or "Do you want to open the door?" – the former is more polite and formal; the latter is more casual and familiar. Being conventionally recognized request forms, such questions should not be answered literally but according to their illocutionary force. However, this fact is not always obvious to second language learners, who have acquired different ways of expressing conventionalized indirect speech acts in their first language.

All cultures are concerned with maintaining social harmony, and therefore we find rules of politeness incorporated in the rules of speech that one has to acquire as part of language learning. Each language, accordingly, has developed a repertoire of speech act realizations that enable the language user to be a "polite" interactant and an accurate interpreter of discourse. In most cultures these rules of linguistic behavior are also accompanied by appropriate eye gaze, body language, and gestures. When learning a new language, the learner cannot possibly expect to acquire complete pragmatic competence, yet it is possible to incorporate the study of a manageable amount of pragmatic information into a language program and to include activities which make the learner aware of and sensitive to the major features of politeness and common variations on expressing politeness in the new language.

However, as Beebe (1996) has pointed out on several occasions, we do not recommend teaching second language learners always and only to be polite since there are occasions and circumstances in which users of the target language will behave rudely or offensively

in their interactions with nonnative speakers. On such occasions, language learners should be able to recognize the rude or offensive behavior and to know that they may respond in ways that are less than polite. They should also be aware of expressions and resources they can use to convey their displeasure with interlocutors who are being rude to them.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has surveyed some of the most important factors affecting language users' choices of linguistic form. With reference to sociocultural appropriacy and presupposition, we have examined the context-embedded nature of speaker meaning and intention and how the hearer is able to determine these by relying on shared knowledge, context, and conventional expressions. Grice's Cooperative Principle, Leech's Politeness Principle, and Austin and Searle's Speech Act Theory have been examined cross-culturally to show that each speech community is pragmatically as well as grammatically unique. In terms of comprehending and producing discourse competently in the target language, it is as important to understand the pragmatics of the target culture as it is to understand the grammar and vocabulary of the target language.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What kind of context is needed to understand an utterance like (a) "Yes, he did," and one like (b) "Why don't you put the flowers over there?"
2. Comment on the following speech exchange with reference to Grice's maxims (it occurred between two native English speakers):
A: Can you pass the salt?
B: I can, but I won't.
3. Which of the three following requests is most polite, and why?
a. Open the window.
b. Could you open the window?
c. I'd like you to open the window.
4. Come up with an example from your own experience that illustrates either negative face (emphasis on social distance) or positive face (emphasis on in-group solidarity) with reference to politeness.
5. When answering the telephone, it is customary for Italian speakers to pick up the receiver and say, "Pronto" (literally, "I'm ready"). What do you think might happen interactionally if an Italian – newly arrived in the United States and speaking fluent English – were to answer the phone in his/her hotel room and say, "I'm ready."?

Suggestions for Further Reading

- Blakemore, D. (1992). *Understanding utterances: An introduction to pragmatics*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Leech, G. N. (1983). *Principles of pragmatics*. London: Longman.
- Levinson, S. C. (1983). *Pragmatics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Yule, G. (1996). *Pragmatics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Endnotes

- ¹ Example presented by a student in a course on cross-cultural interaction, TESOL Summer Institute 1990, Michigan State University.
- ² Leech (1983) uses the term **collaborative** where we have substituted the term **neutral** since our students found Leech's term confusing and misleading, given his description of this category.