

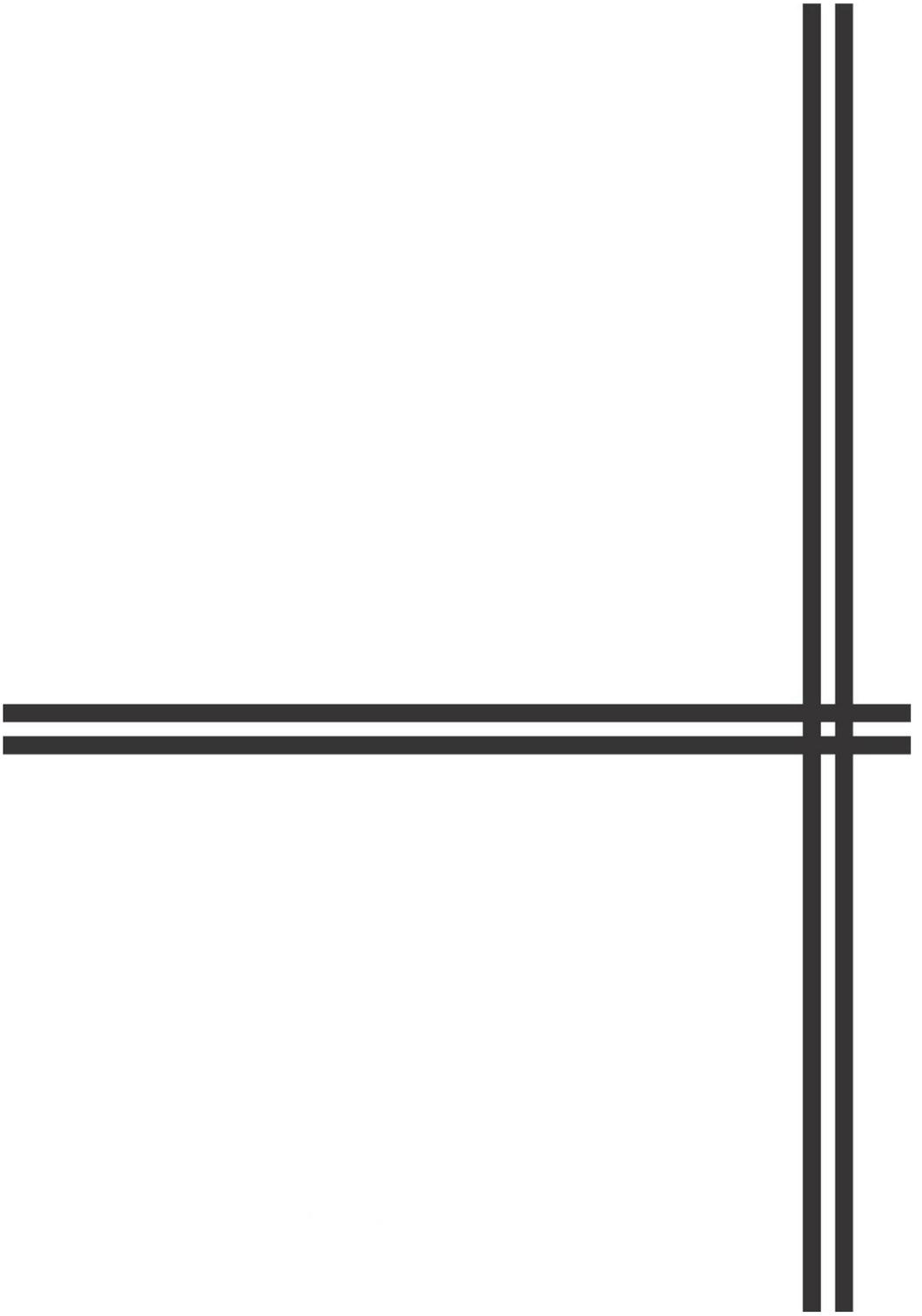
COLEÇÃO  
TESES

(In)directness as an  
(im)politeness strategy in  
the contact between German  
and Brazilian Portuguese as  
additional languages

Bernd Renner



*Tanto Mar Editores*





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# INTRODUCTION

Human interaction and the manifold forms it can take have raised the interest of scholars from different fields of research for many centuries. In fact, language and the countless ways it manifests itself play an essential role in communication, since it is used to transmit information or to express ideas, experiences, wishes or feelings, to name but a few. In fact, it is through the use of language that the meaning-making processes are mutually created and negotiated by the participants who are involved in social interaction, which turns them into active interactants in the process.

However, the fact that we constantly (need to) choose, monitor and adapt our (non)verbal linguistic actions (be it consciously or unconsciously) reflects the complexity of the processes that are in play. Moreover, socially adequate interaction will only be considered as such if the language users adhere to the social norms and rules that apply in a particular situation. Therefore, intentional or unintentional non-observance of the expected norms can cause negative effects such as impoliteness or misunderstandings.

Studies on the topic of (im)politeness are relatively recent, having emerged in the 1980s. It was Lakoff (1973) who first presented his pioneering study titled *The logic of Politeness*. However, since Brown and Levinson published their work *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage* (1987), which had great repercussion at the time, various scholars have contributed with their works, which have been conducted in different cul-

tures and languages, to the subsequent development of this area, such as Leech (1983), Spencer-Oatey (2000), Eelen (2001), Kerbrat-Orecchioni (2004), Kádár and Haugh (2013) and Seara (2014), just to name a few.

Studies dealing with (im)politeness in interaction stem from the field of interactional sociolinguistics, and they take the view that face-to-face communication is co-constructed by the mutual contributions of the participants and in the course of the continuous negotiations that are involved in the meaning-making processes. Thus, politeness and impoliteness as integral elements of interaction are subject to its dynamic principles. Moreover, the adequate selection of certain (im)politeness strategies requires the knowledge from the interactants about the social norms as well as the meaning of (non)verbal language and the contextual factors that are in play in a particular situation.

The complexity of influences that are involved in the referenced processes calls for a combination of different areas of knowledge in our investigation, with the objective of allowing for a best possible analysis and understanding of the generated data. Therefore, we establish a dialogue between the interdisciplinary fields of interactional sociolinguistics, intercultural pragmatics, cultural studies, sociocognition and conversation analysis.

The integration of the above-mentioned fields of research seems even more important when we consider the intercultural context of this work. A number of authors point to the necessity of investigating (im)politeness in intercultural interaction. Kerbrat-Orecchioni (2004), for example, states that politeness must be discussed in order to avoid intercultural misunderstandings. In a similar way, Schröder (2008) highlights that differing interpretations of the interactants in situations of

intercultural communication can cause negative effects such as distance and incomprehension. These findings stress the necessity of conducting further research that focuses on (im)politeness in intercultural interaction, with the objective of facilitating a more harmonious intercultural contact and coexistence.

In recent years, different studies have investigated the use of language in interactions between Germans and Brazilians (MEIRELES, 2001; SCHRÖDER; LAGE, 2014; *et al.*). Carvalho and Trevisan (2003), for example, analysed interviews that were conducted with Brazilian and German coworkers from a multinational company. The referenced authors (*ibid*) discovered that the more direct and objective conversational style of the Germans was interpreted as serious and even tense by their Brazilian colleagues, whilst the rather indirect style of the Brazilians was characterised as playful and more affectionate by their German workmates.

However, not only did the still low number of academic studies dealing with the distinct language use in intercultural interaction between Germans and Brazilians and the resulting necessity to further investigate the referenced topic call my attention, but also the fact that I, as a German who has been living in Brazil for eight years, have experienced many times that my (natural) approach to communicate in a rather direct way has not always been appreciated by Brazilians.

Working as a teacher of German, I soon discovered that – unlike in Germany – directly criticising a student in front of the class for not doing homework, for example, is deemed impolite or even unacceptable in Brazil. Thus, it was my own intercultural experiences on the one hand combined with the described lack of existing academic works on the other that

eventually motivated me to develop this investigation, aiming to reduce negative effects such as misunderstandings that emerge in intercultural contexts of teaching German to Brazilians and Brazilian Portuguese to Germans and, thus, to allow for more harmonious interactions.

The general objective of the present research is to investigate the intersubjective negotiation of meaning related to direct and (in)direct (im)politeness strategies in the contexts of teaching German at the *Programa Permanente de Extensão UnB Idiomas*, which was the previous language school of the University of Brasília, Brazil, and of teaching Brazilian Portuguese at the *Institut für Romanistik* at the *Friedrich-Schiller-Universität* in Jena, Germany, in real-life situations of interaction. In order to achieve the general objective, the following specific objectives were formulated:

1. To reveal the direct and indirect (im)politeness strategies used by the interactants in the classroom contexts of teaching German to Brazilians and Brazilian Portuguese to Germans;
2. To analyse the effects caused by the referenced strategies, as well as to reveal the reactions to them from an intercultural perspective, based on the participants' practices of visioning and reflexivity.

The following research questions were proposed to guide the above-mentioned objectives:

1. What direct and indirect (im)politeness strategies are used by the interactants in the classroom contexts of teaching German to Brazilians and Brazilian Portuguese to Germans?
2. What are the effects of the referenced strategies and the reactions of the participants from an intercultural perspective, based on the practices of visioning and reflexivity?

In order to answer these questions in the best possible way, an ethnographic study was developed and based on the triangulation of the perspectives of the researcher and the participants, existing (im)politeness theories and different methods of data generation. By adopting this qualitative approach, we hope to create synergies and to achieve a profound understanding of the meaning-making processes that are involved in the investigated interactions. Aiming to articulate the theoretical contributions that substantiate this work with the empirical data that were generated in the course of this research, the present study is divided into four chapters.

The first discusses the notions of politeness and impoliteness and consists of four different sections, of which the first presents the previous studies of Goffman (1967) and Grice (2006 [1975]). This is then followed by a discussion of the early politeness studies of Lakoff (1973, 1979) and Leech (1983), the famous work of Brown and Levinson titled *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage* (1987) as well as the contributions of Culpeper (1996, 2011) and Bousfield (2008), who both focused on the notion of impoliteness. The last section

of this first chapter establishes a dialogue between the existing (im)politeness theories and includes various subtopics that are relevant to the theoretical discussion, such as (im)politeness as a universal phenomenon; convergences and divergences in (im)politeness theories; (im)politeness in intercultural interaction; (im)politeness in the context of additional language teaching and new impulses in (im)politeness research.

The second chapter is divided into two sections and addresses the notions of directness and indirectness. Whereas the first part deals with different contexts in which direct forms of communication tend to be perceived as rather positive or negative, the second approaches indirectness from different perspectives, which involves a discussion of indirect forms as they are reflected in conventional routine expressions; indirect forms along a continuum; on record, off record and indirectness; indirect forms and socio-cognitive effort; correlations between (in)directness and (im)politeness and finally (in)directness in interaction.

Next, the third chapter is broken down into three different sections and explains the methodological approach that guides the continuous process of data generation and analysis of this work, with the objective of providing a profound understanding of the investigated interactions. Whereas the first part focuses on the qualitative paradigm in research and on (micro) ethnography, the second describes and discusses the instruments and techniques of data generation that were used, which is eventually followed by a presentation of the principles of conversation analysis.

The fourth chapter first describes the access and entry into the research field in the Brazilian context and then pres-

ents the participants of both groups of collaborators, which is followed by a description of the organization of the research environments and routines as well as the conduction of the preliminary observations. It subsequently analyses the (in)direct (im)politeness strategies that were identified in the course of the data analysis and finally describes the approach adopted with the third and last group of participants, this time in the German context, which follows the same steps used in the Brazilian context.

Based on the data that were gathered and analysed in the course of the present investigation, the work eventually addresses the research questions in the final considerations. Last of all, it points to possible further investigations which can serve to broaden the knowledge about (im)politeness in human interaction.

At this point, it should be mentioned that the book titled *Directness and Indirectness Across Cultures* by Grainger and Mills (2016) turned out to become of particular importance to this work. The authors (*ibid*) explored directness and indirectness in Zimbabwean English used in real-life interactions and thereby drew upon the so-called “discursive interactional approach”. Their investigation of direct and indirect forms offers a framework that constitutes the starting point for the discussion of these notions established in the present work. In addition, the referenced discursive interactional approach used by the authors was partially adapted for the data analysis of this research.



# 1.

## ON POLITENESS AND IMPOLITENESS

### 1.1 PREVIOUS STUDIES

#### 1.1.1 The perspective of Goffman (1967)

The first author to describe the notion of “face” was the sociologist Goffman (1967), based on the assumption that all people seek to preserve a public self-image. According to the referenced author (*ibid*), face can be interpreted as the social image that people claim for themselves, represented by means of social attributes. All people, at the sight of social interactions, seek to act within certain norms that are socially acceptable, projecting their own faces whilst respecting the faces of others, which in turn represents an important condition in human interaction (*ibid*).

As per Goffman (*ibid*), the construction of the face of a person is subject to social norms, which means that it follows the rules that are established by the community and the respective situation. Thus, a person necessarily needs to “take into consideration his place in the social world beyond it” in order to maintain his own face in a particular situation (*ibid*, p. 7). The affirmation of the author reflects his belief that all humans are in a certain way limited with regards to their socially acceptable actions, due to the expectations set by others. Nevertheless, it seems that it is precisely this limitation

of a person as well as his consideration with regards to the faces of the others that constitute the rules for harmonic coexistence (*ibid*).

Furthermore, Goffman (*ibid*) claims that the faces of the people are intrinsically and constantly subject to certain risks that can make the participants of an interaction feel humiliated or embarrassed, to cite a few possible effects. Thus, it becomes a necessity to take appropriate measures in order to avoid or compensate for the negative impacts described. All practices that serve to establish and maintain harmony in social interaction are part of the concept of politeness and are described by the author (*ibid*) as “face-work”. Moreover, Goffman (*ibid*) believes that all humans aim at saving their own faces and therefore assume a defensive role, whereas they simultaneously adopt a more active role that serves to save the faces of others.

For the author (*ibid*), there are three different possibilities of how face threats can possibly occur during interaction: 1) unintentionally, when the face threat is perceived by others as something that the speaker would have avoided had he been aware of; 2) intentionally, when the speaker aims at offending someone; 3) incidentally, when the face threat occurs without any intention but could have been foreseen during interaction.

Moreover, Goffman (*ibid*) distinguishes between two different kinds of face-work: the first one consists in avoiding situations that could possibly provoke a face threat. In other words, once an interaction is going on, a person will act in a way so as to shield potential threats to himself, which in turn can be achieved by avoiding or changing certain topics, for example. The author (*ibid*, p. 18) gives another example in order to illustrate how a potential face threat can be avoided:

(...), when a person is caught out of face because he had not expected to be thrust into interaction, or because strong feelings have disrupted his expressive mask, the others may protectively turn away from him or his activity from the moment, to give him time to assemble.

Interestingly, Goffman seems to equate the notion of face with a “mask” that he describes as an image or a role that a person adopts in a particular interaction. As the various forms that face can assume, a person can draw on different masks, depending on the situation in question. Similar to the face, masks are exposed to certain threats and, thus, can fall (*ibid*). In addition, the author (*ibid*) emphasises that people will also try not to expose themselves and instead to appear modest, at the same time treating others in a respectful and polite way in order to actively prevent from threatening their faces. This can be achieved by using ambiguous forms of expression, circumlocutions or making compliments, just to name a few examples (*ibid*).

The second type of face-work, which Goffman (*ibid*, p. 19) calls “corrective process”, comes into play when a face threat has already occurred. In this case, a certain effort is necessary to restore the imbalance that was caused, whereby “the length and intensity of the corrective effort is nicely adapted to the persistence and intensity of the threat” (*ibid*, p. 19).

In summary, it can be said that Goffman considers politeness as the preoccupation of the members of a community to maintain social harmony, which is in turn based on the mutual willingness to avoid and compensate for face threats that occur during interaction. His notion of face was later adopted and developed further by different scholars such as

Brown and Levinson (1987) or Spencer-Oatey (2002), amongst others. Bravo (2003), for example, distinguishes between an individual and a collective face that each person has, the latter thereby referring to the belonging to a certain social group or community.

Thus, after its initial publication in 1967, Goffman's work and the notion of face can be considered the starting point for many subsequent studies on (im)politeness and, thus, having assumed considerable importance.

### 1.1.2 The perspective of Grice (2006 [1975])

In 1975, Grice presented his Cooperative Principle, a set of rules that he describes as the main conventions of human interaction. The author (*ibid*, p. 67) defines interaction as the “cooperative efforts” of the participants that follow “a common purpose or set of purposes, or at least a mutually accepted direction”, whereby this purpose may be obvious to the interactants from the beginning of an interaction or emerge from it.

The Cooperative Principle consists of four Conversational Maxims that, if respected by the interactants, allow for efficient communication (*ibid*, p. 68-69):

- 1) Quantity: Provide only information that is necessary for the purpose of interaction;
- 2) Quality: Only say what you believe to be true;
- 3) Relation: State only what is pertinent to the interaction;
- 4) Manner: Avoid ambiguous and obscure statements, be brief and clear.

As to the Maxim of Quantity, Grice (*ibid*) argues that giving more information than required does not necessarily cause a negative effect on the conversation, however, it might confuse the hearer and thus impede the ongoing interaction. About the Maxim of Quality, the interactants should not be dishonest and only communicate facts for which they have evidence, which excludes the use of lies and assumptions, regardless of how these might be justified (*ibid*). However, as we will see in the ongoing discussion, saying the truth does not always cause effects that are considered positive or socially acceptable.

Grice (*ibid*) argues that the Maxim of Relation refers to the fact that the contributions of the participants should be pertinent with regards to the purpose of the conversation in question. The author does not go into more details and instead points to the complexity of this topic, referring to future studies about this issue. As for the Maxim of Manner, the participants should always communicate in a clear and perspicuous way, which also includes the adherence to various secondary maxims that are involved, such as the avoidance of obscurity, prolixity and ambiguity as well as the necessity to talk orderly (*ibid*).

Moreover, the author (*ibid*) emphasises that the violation<sup>1</sup> of any of these rules results in certain conversational implicatures, which are non-explicit messages that the speaker

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<sup>1</sup> The term violation is used by Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) to describe any form of non-compliance to the Conversational Maxims. By presenting specific examples of interaction, Thomas (1995, p. 64 *et seq.*) illustrates and distinguishes between five different ways of how this non-compliance can manifest itself: 1) flouting; 2) violating; 3) infringing; 4) opting out of and 5) suspending a maxim. In the further course of this work, however, we will refer to the terms non-compliance (not comply with) respectively non-observance (not/fail to observe) in order to facilitate the ongoing discussion.

uses in order to signal certain intentions and that must be inferred by the interlocutor. In a similar way, Horn (2006, p. 3) defines implicature as a “component of speaker meaning that constitutes an aspect of what is meant in a speaker’s utterance without being part of what is said”. In other words, whenever the Conversational Maxims are not observed during an interaction, the interlocutor will need to infer the non-literal meaning of a message.

Levinson (1985, p. 102), however, gives an example that illustrates non-compliance to Grice’s Maxims (2006 [1975]):

Person A: Where’s Bill?

Person B: There’s a yellow VW outside Sue’s house.

According to Levinson (*ibid*), B does not answer A’s question and thus apparently fails to observe both the Maxims of Relation and Quantity. However, the author (*ibid*) points out that, based on Grice’s (*ibid*) assumption that conversation is subject to the mutual will of the interactants to cooperate, we can assume that B’s contribution is connected to A’s question and thus we can infer that Bill possesses a yellow VW and he is in Sue’s house.

Still with respect to the Conversational Maxims, Grice (*ibid*) explains that there is a whole set of sub-maxims that embrace moral, aesthetic or social aspects, such as being polite, for example, which constitute rules that underlie human interaction. However, he does not describe in more detail if or how these rules interact with the four main maxims to which he seems to attribute greater importance, in the sense that they “are specially connected (..) with the particular purposes that

talk (and so, talk exchange) is adapted to serve and is primarily employed to serve” (*ibid*, p. 69).

In other words, the author (*ibid*) attaches greater weight to the four principal maxims, which allow for a clear and effective exchange of information, than to the sub-maxims that are concerned with the interpersonal relations between the interactants. However, in typical everyday social interaction, people show concern for their fellow human beings and thus seem to assign a higher priority to the maintenance of polite and harmonic social interaction than to the mere exchange of information.

Furthermore, Grice’s (*ibid*) Conversational Maxims seem to be consistent with what is commonly defined as directness, which are clear and explicit utterances, whereas they combat with what is frequently labelled as indirectness as their counterparts, which are forms that carry an implicit message (see forthcoming discussion). For example, the (indirect) hint “it’s cold in here” can serve to replace the (direct) request “close the window”, thereby not complying with the Maxim of Relation. Another example would be the (indirect) ironic comment “good job!” voiced towards someone who has just broken a glass, which in turn constitutes an utterance that does not observe the Maxim of Quality. In that way, all Conversational Maxims in one way or another correlate with what are commonly described as direct forms, while they do not comply with those that are generally considered indirect.

However, Grice’s work (2006 [1975]) has been subject to the criticism of various scholars. Marriott (1997), for example, puts the Maxim of Quantity into question, arguing that the perception of the amount of information that is considered to

be sufficient during an interaction varies from one culture to another. In order to substantiate his claim, the author (*ibid*) describes the different expectations of business people from Australia and Japan during sales negotiations: the Japanese expect to be given more detailed product information by the Australians during sales pitches, whereas the Australians wait for specific questions made by the Japanese.

Clyne (1994) criticises the significance that Grice (*ibid*) attributes to the Maxim of Quality. Clyne (*ibid*, p. 193) argues that telling the truth is considered to be a core value in European cultures, which is contrary to certain Asian cultures such as the Vietnamese, where “in any competition with harmony, charity or respect, ‘truth’ not only need not, but should not, be a criterion”. Thus, many critiques that were voiced with regards to Grice’s model (*ibid*) claim that it is based on an Anglo-centric perception of communication which does not take into account the values that underlie communication in other cultures.

Summing up, Grice’s view that communication is principally guided by the four Conversational Maxims seems to represent human interaction as a rather neutral and somehow robotic exchange of information that pushes social aspects such as politeness to the background. Besides that, it can be seen that the Cooperative Principle does not consider the fact that cultures and communities other than the Anglo-American value the referenced maxims differently, which in turn influences the way in which interaction is guided.

In summary, it can be concluded that the early studies of both Goffman (1967) and Grice (2006 [1975]) have considerable importance, in the way that they served as a

starting point for many subsequent approaches and theories dealing with the notions of (im)politeness, as we will see in the further discussion.

## 1.2 POLITENESS

### 1.2.1 The perspective of Lakoff (1973, 1979)

In 1973, Lakoff presented his landmark study on politeness with his work titled *The logic of politeness*, in which the author defends the view that there should be certain pragmatic rules which determine if an utterance is formulated correctly or not, in the same way that syntactic rules serve to define whether an utterance can be regarded as correct or wrong (*ibid*, p. 296):

Just as we invoke syntactic rules to determine whether a sentence is to be considered syntactically well- or ill-formed (...) so we should like to have some kind of pragmatic rules, dictating whether an utterance is pragmatically well-formed or not, and the extent to which it deviates if it does.

According to Lakoff (*ibid*), this is due to the fact that pragmatics, which refer to the assumptions and intentions of the speaker about the relationship with the interlocutor, among other aspects, interact with syntax and semantics. Thus, the author (*ibid*) stresses the need to consider all three aspects (pragmatics, syntax and semantics) simultaneously in order to account for more adequate interpretations of linguistic interactions. Based on this assumption, Lakoff (*ibid*, p. 296) establishes two basic “Rules of Pragmatic Competence”, which are 1) to be clear and 2) to be polite.

From this perspective, the author (*ibid*) elaborates her own model of politeness, based on Grice's (2006 [1975]) concept of the Conversational Maxims. Lakoff (1973) argues that Grice's Maxims serve to ensure maximum efficiency and clarity in information transfer; however, she acknowledges that these rules are not strictly followed by the interactants, especially in informal conversations. According to Lakoff (1973, p. 296), this is due to the fact that, despite the mere communication of information, there are other considerations that refer to certain social aspects of interaction:

If one seeks to communicate a message directly, if one's principal aim in speaking is communication, one will attempt to be clear, so that there is no mistaking one's interpretation. If the speaker's principal aim is to navigate somehow or other among the respective statuses of the participants in the discourse indicating where each stands in the speaker's estimate, his aim will be less the achievement of clarity than an expression of politeness, as its opposite.

In other words, Lakoff (*ibid*) acknowledges that human interaction generally consists not only of the exchange of information, but is also guided by the mutual interest of the interactants to avoid effects of impoliteness. It is not difficult to think of an example which illustrates the common dilemma between being clear and sincere while also being polite: let us imagine a wife returning from the hairdresser and proudly showing her new haircut to her husband, who dislikes the new style. In this specific situation, it is more than likely that the husband, instead of being sincere, would opt to be polite (violation of Grice's Maxime of Quality) and not (or at least not clearly) articulate his true opinion in order to avoid social disharmony.

Thus, as Lakoff (1979, p. 297-98) argues, “politeness usually supercedes: it is considered more important in a conversation to avoid offense than to achieve clarity. This makes sense, since in most informal conversations the communication of important ideas is secondary to merely reaffirming and strengthening relationships”. Thus, compared to Grice (2006 [1975]) who emphasises that the four Conversational Maxims have greater importance (as they serve the purpose of efficient communication), Lakoff (*ibid*) defends the view that the mutual interest of the interactants to maintain social harmony outweighs honesty.

In order to compliment the basic rules of Pragmatic Competence, Lakoff (1973) establishes three additional Rules of Politeness:

Rule 1: Do not impose on the interlocutor;

Rule 2: Offer options to him;

Rule 3: Make him feel good.

The first rule refers to the non-imposition of others. In case this invasion of private space can not be avoided, it is necessary to ask for permission to do so, which Lakoff (1973, p. 298) illustrates by giving the following example: “Mr. Hoving, may I ask how much you paid for this vase of flowers?”. For the author (*ibid*), this is a common conventional question and thus does not constitute an imposition to the interlocutor, which is due to the polite phrasing that is used.

Lakoff (*ibid*) claims that there are other linguistic examples such as passive or impersonal constructions which, by creating a certain distance and formality between the interactants, serve to pursue the same objective of non-imposition

on the interlocutor. Thus, these forms can principally be found in academic works and other professional contexts<sup>2</sup> that involve legal and medical terminology, amongst others (*ibid*). In order to exemplify the second politeness rule that serves to leave options to the interlocutor, the author (1973, p. 298) quotes the following phrase: “It is time to leave, is it not?”. This request, in the form of a question rather than a request, can be used by a speaker to create the impression that the decision on the time to leave is up to the interlocutor and therefore also serves for politeness purposes (*ibid*).

The third rule proposes to make the interlocutor feel good and to create a feeling of camaraderie among the participants of an interaction (*ibid*). Other examples could be to use language expressions that make him feel wanted or as a member of the group (*ibid*). As a practical example, we might think of the occasion of a company anniversary where the CEO expresses his gratitude towards the employees with the words “Every single one of you has contributed to our success” and, thus, makes the employees feel appreciated and at the same time part of the same group.

However, making a compliment or praising someone might not always cause the desired positive effect. Whereas a student might appreciate receiving praise from a teacher during a personal conversation, the same compliment might cause embarrassment or even the fear of being bullied by his classmates when done in front of the class. This example illustrates that the interpretation of a certain act can differ greatly from its purpose.

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<sup>2</sup>The notions of “situational context” and “framing” will be discussed in more detail further on in this work.

At this point, Lakoff (*ibid*) mentions that the rules of politeness apply both to verbal and non-verbal acts. To leave the path free for someone who tries to pass through a door, for example, would be considered a polite act, as this allows for freedom of movement (politeness rule 1) (*ibid*). Thus, since the rules of both verbal and non-verbal communication are subject to the same principal, they must be practiced simultaneously (*ibid*).

Furthermore, the author (*ibid*) points to the fact that politeness rules are universal, while the interpretation of what is considered polite or impolite may differ from one culture to another. Lakoff (*ibid*) exemplifies her claim with the following example: burping after a meal is considered polite in Chinese culture, as this shows a certain appreciation for what was served. In other words, it constitutes a compliment to the person who prepared the dish, which in turn corresponds to the third rule of politeness. However, this act would not be considered polite in American culture, due to the fact that politeness rule 1 (non-imposition on the interlocutor) would prevail (*ibid*).

From my own experience as a German visiting Brazil for the first time, I can tell that the “intense” physical contact between people during informal encounters initially left me kind of bewildered: patting others on the back, embracing and kissing each other on the cheek is untypical of German culture. However, some of my Brazilian friends seem to have had a kind of reverse intercultural experience when they visited Germany for the first time, in the way that they interpreted a mere handshake that is typically exchanged during encounters as a sign of distant and rather “cold” conduct.

Thus, this example indicates that politeness rule 1 (non-imposition) seems to prevail in German culture, whereas Brazilians appear to attach greater importance to politeness rule 3 (make the other feel good), at least with regards to the context of greeting others in informal social encounters. Analysing Lakoff's politeness model (*ibid*), the question rises about the relationship between the rules of being clear and being polite, in the event that they enter in conflict with each other. In this case, as we have seen before, politeness rules normally outweigh those of conversation (i.e. the Conversational Maxims) (*ibid*).

However, Lakoff (*ibid*) does not consider these rules to be opposed to each other, rather regarding the rules of conversation as an integral part of the politeness rules, more specifically of the first rule of non-imposition: according to the author (*ibid*), a message should be communicated as clearly and quickly as possible, in order to not confuse the interlocutor or to unnecessarily waste their time. By integrating Grice's rules of conversation into her rules of politeness, Lakoff (1973, p. 303) claims "to have achieved an interesting generalization about how politeness rules prevail over others, and the circumstances in which each of them applies".

Finally, she (*ibid*) does not forget to mention that there are speech acts that are intrinsically offensive, since they leave no option for the interlocutor (politeness rule 2) nor treat him as a friend (politeness rule 3). However, this specific type of speech act, according to Lakoff (*ibid*), is normally used in situations of despair or when other circumstances neglect politeness. In these particular cases, the conflict between clarity

and politeness is resolved in favor of clarity, which corresponds to the first rule of politeness (*ibid*).

In sum, it can be said that Lakoff's major contribution to the existing studies of politeness was to recognise that in everyday interaction politeness and thus the maintenance of social harmony prevail over the mere communication of information. Apart from describing certain rules of Pragmatic Competence, Lakoff was the first to establish determined rules of politeness, thereby considering the Conversational Maxims of Grice (*ibid*) to be an integral part of these politeness rules.

### 1.2.2 The perspective of Leech (1983)

Contrary to Grice's belief that interaction principally allows for rational and effective communication, Leech's work (1983) is based on the assumption that politeness constitutes the underlying principle of interaction. Based on a critical evaluation of the four Conversational Maxims of Grice (2006 [1975]), Leech (*ibid*) establishes six Pragmatic Principles which guide verbal communication and thus maintain polite interactions.

a) The Tact Maxim, which aims at reducing costs and imposing acts to the interlocutor, and instead maximising their benefits. This can be achieved by using mitigating elements and other linguistic resources which attenuate the tone of a message (*ibid*). In other words, it is recommended to always communicate in the most indirect way possible (*ibid*). An example would be the question "Excuse me, may I please ask you a question?"

b) The Generosity Maxim, which aims at minimising one's own benefit and at the same time maximising the interlocutor's benefit. By praising certain abilities or qualities of the interlocutor, for example, a speaker will express a certain ap-

preciation and, thus, give benefit to them. According to Leech (*ibid*), a praise can also point to the fact that the speaker does not possess the same positive characteristics as the interlocutor, which would maximise the costs to the speaker. However, this interpretation clashes with that of Brown and Levinson (1987, forthcoming) who consider praises to be a face threat.

c) The Approbation Maxim, which has the objective of reducing disapproval to the interlocutor and instead enhancing approval towards them; this implies that it is generally preferable to express approval (in the form of praise, for example) or, in case this is not possible, to avoid disapproval by not bringing up a certain topic at all or, once it has been brought up already, to remain silent and not comment on it.

As an example in the educational context, we could think of a conversation during which a teacher discusses with a student poor results achieved in an examination. In accordance with Leech's (*ibid*) assumption, the teacher could first make the student feel good by showing solidarity and offering further support so as to avoid future failures, while at the same time pointing to better results that had been achieved in the past. This way, the teacher could express appreciation, which would very likely be regarded as positive and motivating feedback by the student.

However, there are indications that the Maxim of Approbation is not as universal as Leech (*ibid*) assumes it to be. Honna and Hoffer (1989, p. 74), for example, illustrate that in Japanese culture praising others is considered to be arrogant, which is reflected in expressions like "I know it is too presumptuous to praise" or "I don't really mean to praise". Therefore, a speaker who might want or need to express a

certain approbation to an interlocutor uses these or similar expressions in order to make it clear that it is not their intention to appear arrogant when doing so (*ibid*).

d) The Modesty Maxim, which aims at minimising self-praise and maximising self-dispraise. Kerbrat-Orecchioni (2004) argues that self-praise is considered to be a negative act, in the same way that the acceptance of a compliment expressed by another person is perceived negatively by society. In both cases, one should try to minimise the compliment in order to maintain one's own face<sup>3</sup>.

However, I remember an example that I brought up when this issue was discussed during one of our weekly encounters in the course of pragmatics, which I attended as part of my doctoral studies at the University of Brasília. I explained that my mother back in Germany is known for her delicious Black-Forest cake that she prepares on special occasions and for dear guests. Naturally, she would receive compliments by everyone who tasted it. During these occasions, I never perceived that she tried to reject or minimise the compliments she had received. Instead, she would repeatedly express her sincere gratitude to everyone, with a big smile on her face.

This attitude was never perceived negatively by anyone. Rather, the fact that someone who is otherwise known as a humble person shows awareness that she deservedly received a compliment and, thus, gladly accepts it, does not seem to be considered as arrogant or impolite. In fact, expressing and

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<sup>3</sup> This principle is called the "law of modesty" and can be considered as a part of the concept of politeness, according to Kerbrat-Orecchioni (2004).

accepting a compliment appears to constitute a genuine sign of mutual respect and appreciation in the described context.

e) The Agreement Maxim, which aims to prevent disagreement and maximise agreement with the interlocutor. This maxim seems to reflect some of the techniques of negotiation that are used in the process of mediation, where a so-called mediator tries to resolve cases of dispute between different parties, be it in commercial or educational contexts, just to name an example. For negotiation purposes, the mediator will try to emphasise common interests and objectives and, thus, the similarities of the parties that are involved in the conflict in order to reach a mutually accepted agreement.

f) The Sympathy Maxim, which consists in making positive statements even in situations of dispute. One might think of lively discussions in the political context between representatives of different political parties which too often result in passionate verbal confrontation. However, once a dispute has emerged it can be softened if the interactants demonstrate the willingness to cooperate with each other. This way, they can minimise expressions of disagreement, give respect to each other and thus show solidarity.

During an interactional situation, according to Leech (*ibid*), the interlocutors constantly need to explore and evaluate different scales that are inherent in all maxims in order to determine the appropriate level of politeness. The author (*ibid*) determines five different scales:

- 1) Cost-benefit: it represents the costs and benefits of an act between the speaker and listener or, in other words, between the interactants<sup>4</sup>;
- 2) Indirectness: it is related to the necessary effort from the interlocutor to infer the speaker's intentions;
- 3) Option: this aspect refers to the degree of choice that the speaker's illocutions allow the interlocutor;
- 4) Social distance: it describes the level of familiarity between the interactants;
- 5) Authority: it refers to the (relative) right by which a speaker can impose their wants on the interlocutor.

Leech (*ibid*) exemplifies how these scales influence each other by means of the example of the Maximum of Tact: the greater the costs of an act for the interlocutor, his relative authority to the speaker and the social distance between the interactants, the bigger the need to provide the listener with indirect options to transmit a certain message.

In addition, he (*ibid*) differentiates between two types of politeness: 1) Relative Politeness which is applied in specific interactions; 2) Absolute Politeness which relates to politeness that is inherent to specific actions recurring during human interaction. Referring to the latter, the author (*ibid*) considers certain utterances such as orders inherently rude, while others are intrinsically polite.

According to Leech (*ibid*), it is important to consider another aspect to better understand the relations between the

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<sup>4</sup> Ribeiro and Garcez (2002) emphasise the impropriety of the terms "speaker" and "listener" for interactional studies, despite the original choice of the cited author. According to the authors, "speaker" and "listener" prioritise only the vocal aspect contained in interaction, disregarding the non-verbal aspects.

factors that influence interaction. He refers to the different illocutionary functions that can be attributed to specific statements. The author (*ibid*) divides these functions into four different groups, based on how they correspond to the social commitment to establish and preserve politeness, thereby considering the underlying interactional situation:

- 1) The competitive function: it is inherent in communicative acts such as orders and requests; it always requires a certain negative politeness strategy (avoiding disagreement or offense, for example) to reduce the divergence caused by the objectives of the speaker and the wish to show good conduct.
- 2) The convivial function: it is linked to certain communicative acts such as offers, greetings or congratulations, which require a certain positive politeness strategy.
- 3) The collaborative function: it relates to communicative acts like assertions and instructions. As the illocutionary goal is equal to the social commitment, politeness may be considered unnecessary.
- 4) The conflictive function: it involves acts such as threats or accusations, among others, that are implicitly conflictive and thus do not require any face work.

Thus, in the latter described cases (collaborative and conflictive situations), politeness may not be required, whilst in the first-mentioned (competitive and convivial situations) it plays a significant role.

However, assigning certain illocutionary functions to certain types of utterances, as done by Leech (*ibid*), is an assumption that seems to be difficult to sustain. We can easily think again of a situation from the educational context where a student is standing in front of the class, ready to present his essay that won the prize as best class work. In order to prompt the student to present the work to his classmates, the teacher might possibly say something like “Go ahead now!”. It can be assumed that this request would very likely not cause any negative effect on the part of the student and therefore not ask for negative politeness strategies. Thus, as Fraser (1990, p. 227) points out, “while the performance of an illocutionary act can be so evaluated, the same cannot be said of the act itself”.

In summary, it can be said that for Leech (1983), just like for Goffman (1967) and Lakoff (1973, 1979), communication is principally guided by the objective of avoiding conflict and the mutual interest of the participants to maintain polite conduct. This understanding, however, is contrary to Grice’s (2006 [1975]) view, who considers the rational and effective exchange of information to be the principal aim of interaction.

Although Leech (*ibid*) acknowledges that the Conversational Maxims might manifest themselves differently from one culture to another, in the way that they exhibit quantitative variations, he nevertheless believes that the maxims are universally applicable. However, as we have seen in the previous discussion, this is an assumption that can be refuted. Although the discussed authors attribute universal validity to the principles of (im)politeness, their contributions reflect an increasing awareness of the necessity to take into account the existing sociocultural aspects and differences in order to allow for a more profound understanding of the referenced notions.

### 1.2.3 The perspective of Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987)

Based on the contributions of the aforementioned authors, Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) further developed studies on (im)politeness. Their work titled *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage* (1987) found great repercussion at the time, and various researchers contributed with their observations in different cultures and languages to the subsequent development of politeness studies. The authors (*ibid*) assume the universal existence of face and the need for the mutual preservation of face by the interactants. However, the definition and the components of the referenced notion can vary in different cultures (*ibid*).

In Brown and Levinson's (1978) perception, which is based on Goffman's (1967) perspective, face consists of two distinct aspects:

- A) The negative face, which is related to aspects such as self-determination, freedom from imposition and freedom of action, as well as the preservation of personal territory.
- B) The positive face, which relates to a person's self-image and personality and the desire that their individual values are appreciated by others.

At this point it seems to be possible to draw a parallel between the two referenced aspects of face and the three Pragmatic Rules presented by Lakoff (1973): whereas rule 1 (do not impose on the interlocutor) and rule 2 (offer options) are apparently related to what Brown and Levinson (*ibid*)

describe as the negative face of a person, the third rule (make the interlocutor feel good) seems to relate to the needs of the positive face, in the way that the interlocutor's personality and values he identifies himself with should be acknowledged. In a similar way, the Tact Maxim described by Leech (1983) seems to be related to the negative face and the Approbation Maxim to the positive face of a person.

Coming back to Brown and Levinson's model (*ibid*), the authors point out that the faces of the interactants can be lost, maintained or reinforced during interaction, which in turn makes it necessary for the involved parties to constantly monitor the faces. Thus, politeness is defined as the preoccupation of the interactants to preserve the faces of the others and to act carefully in order to achieve their own interests whilst respecting those of the others (*ibid*).

Furthermore, Brown and Levinson's theory (*ibid*) is based on the assumption that almost all speech acts in some way cause a certain threat to the face of the other. Therefore, the interactants develop certain politeness strategies that allow them to communicate their messages while at the same time expressing politeness. By doing that, they can mutually reduce the effects of face threats to each other (*ibid*).

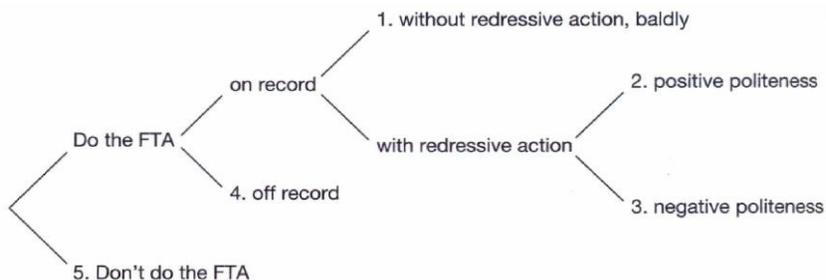
According to the authors (*ibid*), certain speech acts intrinsically hold particular characteristics that threaten the faces of the interactants. These acts can be divided into four different groups, depending on whether a threat is directed against the negative or positive face of the speaker or the interlocutor, which are presented as follows (*ibid*):

- 1) Acts that threaten the negative face of the interlocutor.  
Ex.: orders, advice, threats or alerts;

- 2) Acts that threaten the positive face of the interlocutor.  
Ex.: criticism, complaints, disagreement, taboo subjects;
- 3) Acts that threaten the negative face of the speaker.  
Ex.: offers, apologies or expressions of gratitude;
- 4) Acts that threaten the positive face of the speaker.  
Ex.: compliments, confessions or apologies.

The authors (*ibid*) do not forget to mention that certain speech acts such as expressions that involve strong emotions or complaints, for example, constitute a threat to both the positive and negative faces. Due to the mutual interest of the interactants to maintain their own faces as well as those of the others, certain politeness strategies are used to mitigate possible threats, which in turn allows for more harmonious interactions. These strategies are systematically elaborated by Brown and Levinson (*ibid*):

Figure 1 – Politeness strategies



(BROWN; LEVINSON, 1987, p. 65)

The authors (1987) explain that a speaker performs a “face-threatening act” (henceforth FTA) when the underlying intention of the utterance is clear to the interlocutor (“on record”). Speakers can also express themselves indirectly, when what was said allows for more than one interpretation (“off record”). Moreover, the authors (*ibid*) point out that indirect utterances are those that violate one or more Conversational Maxims of Grice (2006 [1975]) and illustrate this by providing several examples:

1) Violation of the Maxim of Quality.

Ex.: to mitigate, exaggerate, use tautologies,  
metaphors, rhetorical questions or irony;

2) Violation of the Maxim of Relation.

Ex.: to give clues or tips, to presuppose;

3) Violation of the Maxim of Manner.

Ex.: to be ambiguous or vague, to generalise.

An example for an off record strategy is the sentence “Damn, I’m out of cash – I forgot to go to the bank!” (BROWN; LEVINSON, 1987, p. 316). In this case, it is not clear to the interlocutor if the speaker simply wants to emphasise the fact that he has no money or possibly intends to ask for money. Thus, by using an off-record strategy, speakers can not be held accountable to pursue a certain objective with what they say (*ibid*).

Considering the utterances that are conducted directly and unequivocally, it is possible to distinguish between acts

that are realised with or without redressive action: the latter constitutes the clearest and most concise form of communication and is used, for example, when politeness can be neglected, as in situations of emergency or when the speaker has a superior power over the interlocutor (“come in!”, “do sit down”) (*ibid.*, p. 316). Then again, an action with redressive action involves certain strategies that aim to minimise the impact of the threat, and thus communicates a certain appreciation towards the face of the interlocutor (*ibid.*). These redressive actions, in turn, can be divided into two groups, depending on whether it is the positive or negative face that is at stake (*ibid.*).

The so-called positive politeness thereby relates to the positive face of the interlocutor and to the self-image that they claim for themselves. Positive politeness has the purpose of satisfying the interlocutor by indicating that the speaker considers them a friend or a member of the same group (*ibid.*). In other words, by using positive politeness, the speaker intends to express a certain appreciation and sympathy to the interlocutor.

Brown and Levinson (*ibid.*) mention several positive politeness strategies, amongst them are offers, promises, the inclusion of the interactant in a joint activity, the offering of (non)material gifts (goods, sympathy, etc.) or assuming and affirming reciprocity, just to name a few. A simple example might be the question “Do you want to join us for beers tonight?” uttered by an employee to a new workmate who has just finished his first day at the new office.

Considering the referenced example, it appears likely that the new employee appreciates the utterance as a sincere gesture of welcome into the group of workmates (positive politeness). However, the well-meant invitation carries the

potential to cause an undesired effect, in the way that the employee might perceive it as a threat to his negative face, feeling obliged to either unwillingly accept the offer or to make up an excuse in order to avoid taking part in the event. In the latter case, the invitation would constitute a social obligation, infringing the liberty of the employee (negative face).

Negative politeness in turn refers to the negative face of the interlocutor (*ibid*). These include aspects that concern personal territory and self-determination. Through an act of negative politeness the speaker signals to the interlocutor that he recognises and respects their freedom of non-impediment (*ibid*). Brown and Levinson (*ibid*) claim that the referenced acts, which involve aspects such as formality, retention and respect, are articulated through apologies, questions or expressions of respect, amongst others.

We might think of an example from the context of additional language teaching in which a student asks the teacher “Excuse me, would it be possible to explain that new grammar point one more time?”. In this case, the use of the polite form “excuse me” and of the impersonal form “would it be possible” (instead of addressing the teacher with the words “can you”) both constitute mitigating elements that serve to soften the impact of the request.

It should be noted at this point that we opted for the term “additional language” instead of “second/third/.. language”, “foreign language” or similar expressions. First, the term “second/third/.. language” seems to attribute a different weighting to the languages that a person can speak. Another point is mentioned by Judd *et al.* (2001, p. 6), who state that the term “foreign language” can have a negative connotation and

point to something that is “strange, exotic or, perhaps, alien”. In comparison, Schlatter and Garcez (2009) highlight that the term “additional language” reflects a positive aspect, in the way that it points to the benefit that a learner has in addition to the language(s) that he or she speaks. Thus, we adopt the term “additional language” in order to refer to any language(s) that learners can acquire in addition to those they already speak.

Returning to the politeness model presented by Brown and Levinson, the authors (*ibid*) argue that the impact a FTA can cause depends on certain sociological variables which are based on the subjective perceptions of the interactants. The weight of a specific act is calculated as the sum of the social distance between the interactants, the value of power relations between them and the absolute classification of the imposition that both attribute to this specific FTA (PDF: power, distance and rate of imposition) (*ibid*).

The model of Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) has been subject to criticism from many researchers principally from Asian countries, who argue that it is centered on Western culture and thus can not be applied to other cultures, contrary to Brown and Levinson’s own claim. Matsumoto (1988), for example, emphasises that in Asian cultures it is factors such as the desire to belong to social groups (family, friends, etc.) as well as the demonstration of respectful behavior towards hierarchical structures that are of high importance. Furthermore, the referenced author (*ibid*) affirms that compared to Western cultures, the territorial aspect of non-imposition (negative face) is considered of less importance in certain parts of Asia.

However, Kerbrat-Orecchioni (2017) argues that this critique is not opposed to the model of Brown and Levinson.

In order to support her claim, the author (*ibid*, p. 35) cites an excerpt from a newspaper in Kyoto, Japan:

This is how a Kyoto newspaper describes these young couples in love that we can observe every night on the banks of the Kamo River: between eighty to one hundred couples meet at that place, all separated by a very regular distance of two meters, a distance which allows them to preserve a relative intimacy and enjoy the reassuring presence of the ‘herd’ at the same time – for young Japanese, this distance seems to be the ideal compromise between the opposing desires of isolation and sociability, a distance which may seem a little short for members of less gregarious societies, in which lovers value more the feeling of being ‘alone in the world’<sup>5</sup>.

According to Kerbrat-Orecchioni (*ibid*, p. 35), the aspect of territory in the example given refers to the couple and is interpreted in this case as a “single unit”, whereas it might also be understood as the personal space of an individual person or a larger group, depending on the situational context in question. In the same way, the positive face can be considered as the face of one person or of the group to which this person belongs (*ibid*). Consequently, certain acts that threaten the face of a person might also be interpreted as a threat to another person from the group or even to the group as a

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<sup>5</sup> As stated in the reference consulted: É assim que um jornal de Kyoto descreve esses jovens casais apaixonados que todas as noites podemos observar alinhados nas margens do rio Kamo: de oitenta a cem casais encontram-se neste lugar, separados por uma distância muito regular de dois metros, uma distância que lhes permite ao mesmo tempo preservar uma intimidade relativa e desfrutar da presença tranquilizadora do ‘rebanho’ – Para um jovem japonês é aparentemente essa distância que constitui, nesse caso, o compromisso ideal entre os desejos contrários de isolamento e de sociabilidade, distância que pode parecer um pouco curta para membros de sociedades menos gregárias, nas quais os amantes valorizam mais a sensação de estar ‘sozinho no mundo’.

whole, as the referenced author points out (*ibid*). Kerbrat-Orecchioni's explanation seems prudent, since it takes into account that all humans are social beings who in one way or another belong to certain groups whose values they associate with. However, the affiliation and the importance that are assigned to these groups might vary from one culture or community to another (*ibid*).

Another aspect that needs to be examined critically is that Brown and Levinson (*ibid*) attribute intrinsic effects to certain speech acts. Brandão (2016) argues that the referenced authors neglect that interaction is constructed and negotiated by means of the mutual contributions of the participants involved in an interaction, thereby taking into account verbal *and* non-verbal elements, which is of essential importance when it comes to the evaluation of (im)politeness.

Another criticism that must be addressed to the model of Brown and Levinson (*ibid*) refers to their view that almost all speech acts used in human communication somehow constitute face threats which have to be mitigated through positive or negative politeness strategies. In fact, this seems to reflect a rather pessimistic perspective, since it is difficult to imagine an everyday social interaction during which the main focus of the involved participants is to mitigate the negative effects caused.

In addition, similar to Leech (1983), the authors (*ibid*) attribute determined inherent effects to certain speech acts. In their view (1987, p. 314), for example, criticism represents a face threat, in the sense that it implies a negative evaluation of the hearer's positive face. However, we can imagine a situation where a doctoral supervisor discusses an ongoing thesis with a

student: if the criticism is expressed in a respectful and constructive way by the supervisor, there is a good chance that the effect caused will be positive, since the criticism will eventually help the student to improve the work and, thus, serves his own interests. It is obvious that the evaluation of criticism also depends on the individual person and the circumstantial factors that influence how it is perceived.

Although the example given merely illustrates an alternative effect that criticism might cause, it clearly shows that Brown and Levinson's central assumption that certain speech acts cause determined effects needs to be disproved. Fraser and Nolan (1981, p. 96) emphasise that "no sentence is inherently polite or impolite. We often take certain expressions to be impolite, but it is not the expressions themselves but the conditions under which they are used that determines the judgement of politeness". The few exceptions that are excluded from that rule are described by Culpeper (1996, p. 351) as "inherent impoliteness", which constitute acts that are innately impolite, irrespective of the underlying context.

Still on the politeness model of Brown and Levinson (*ibid*), Kerbrat-Orecchioni (2017, p. 23) sees the need to establish a kind of positive counterbalance to the FTAs in order to account for speech acts that aim to cause a positive effect: "it is therefore indispensable to predict in the theoretical model a place for those acts that are in some way the positive counterpart to the FTAs, in the way that they value the face of the other, which we propose to call FFAs (Face Flattering Acts)"<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> As stated in the reference consulted: É, portanto, indispensável prever no modelo teórico um lugar para esses atos que são de alguma forma o pêndulo

The author (*ibid*, p. 24) goes even further and proposes a kind of reorganization in order to turn Brown and Levinson's model "more powerful and more coherent, since in the standard model, the notions 'negative' versus 'positive' politeness are quite confusing, and the overall classification of politeness strategies is extremely questionable"<sup>7</sup>.

Thus, while Brown and Levinson (*ibid*) determine that negative politeness refers to the negative face and positive politeness to the positive face of the interlocutor, Kerbrat-Orecchioni (2017, p. 24) proposes to interpret negative politeness as the avoidance and mitigation of FTAs, while the term positive politeness should be used to describe the realisation of so-called FFAs which serve to value a person. The author (*ibid*, p. 24) claims that by considering the combination of these two different types of acts, it is possible to better describe everyday interaction which she characterises as "an incessant and subtle seesaw game between FTAs and FFAs"<sup>8</sup>.

Kerbrat-Orecchioni's (*ibid*) adaptation of Brown and Levinson's model seems prudent, since the confusing nomenclature "negative" and "positive" as well as the rigid division of speech acts into negative and positive politeness are confusing and thus questionable, as described previously. Another important aspect is the inclusion of the FFAs in the revised model: without considering those speech acts that serve to

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positivo dos FTAs, atos valorizadores para a face de outrem, que propomos chamar de FFAs (Face Flattering Acts).

<sup>7</sup> As stated in the reference consulted: mais poderoso e mais coerente pois, no modelo standard, as noções de 'polidez negativa' versus 'positiva' estão bastante confusas, e a classificação geral das estratégias de polidez, extremamente contestável.

<sup>8</sup> As stated in the reference consulted: um incessante e sutil jogo gangorra entre FTAs e FFAs.

show a certain appreciation to the other and thus (and for the most part) constitute key elements of daily social interaction, it seems difficult to imagine a coherent model that takes into account both polite and impolite aspects.

### **1.2.4 The perspective of Fraser and Nolan (1981) and Fraser (1990)**

Compared with the theories discussed so far, Fraser and Nolan (1981) and Fraser (1990) present an approach that conceptualises politeness from a rather different perspective. The referenced authors argue that the participants initially bring with them a certain knowledge about the rights and obligations that determine what they can expect from an interaction, which they describe as “Conversational Contract”. This contract can constantly be renegotiated by the interactants, depending on how these rights and obligations are readjusted by them throughout the interaction (*ibid*).

Another factor that gives space for renegotiation is when the situational context changes (*ibid*). We might think of a situation in a language class that starts with an interactional group exercise which serves to review the previously introduced vocabulary. Shortly afterwards, the teacher finishes the activity in order to present new grammar to the students. According to Fraser and Nolan’s assumption (*ibid*), it would be in this moment that the students lose their right to speak and are instead obligated to stay silent and pay attention, whereas the teacher “wins” the right to speak and is now obligated to do his part.

The referenced authors (*ibid*) describe different influences that determine the rights and obligations of each participant: there are, for example, certain basic conventions that are applied

to any conversation, such as the necessity to speak clearly and loud enough as well as to use appropriate language, which all constitute fundamental requirements that serve to make communication possible in the first place.

Another important factor that needs to be considered are the social institutions where the interactions are carried out (*ibid*). Certain locations determine specific terms and conditions that need to be followed to allow for appropriate interaction. Thus, in churches, people should not speak in a loud voice, for example, and a witness in court should only speak when called upon (*ibid*). Again, we could think of an example from the educational context where only one student should speak when called by the teacher, whereas the others ideally stay in silence and wait until it is their turn.

Furthermore, the authors (*ibid*) describe another factor that influences the Conversational Contract, which refers to the experiences the interactants had made on previous occasions: during these former encounters, the terms and conditions were repeatedly negotiated between the participants and consequently constitute the starting point for subsequent interactions. Moreover, the situational dimension has a significant influence, in the sense that certain factors like status, power or role and the way these parameters are evaluated by the participants influence each interaction (*ibid*). A student, for example, could hardly give orders to a teacher, as it is the role of the latter to give instructions in the classroom.

The described factors determine the rights and obligations of the participants in every interaction and, thus, constitute the terms of the Conversational Contract. It is important to mention that this approach, in comparison with the contri-

butions of other authors, defines politeness as a dynamic condition that constitutes the norm of any interaction, which is also reflected in a later review of Fraser (1990, p. 233):

Politeness, on this view, is not a sometime thing. Rational participants are aware that they are to act within the negotiated constraints and generally do so. When they do not, however, they are then perceived as being impolite or rude. Politeness is a state that one expects to exist in every conversation; participants note not that someone is being polite – this is the norm – but rather that the speaker is violating the CC.

In other words, fulfilling the Conversational Contract means maintaining the norms of politeness that the participants expect from an interaction. However, similar to any conventional contract made between two or more people, the Conversational Contract is only valid until one of the involved parties fails to fulfil an obligation, which consequently would cause effects of impoliteness. In addition, Fraser (*ibid*, p. 233) differentiates his approach from the politeness framework of Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) by emphasising that

the intention to be polite is not signaled, it is not implicated by some deviation(s) from the most ‘efficient’ bald-on record way of using the language (...) Sentences are not ipso facto polite nor are languages more or less polite. It is only speakers who are polite, and then only if their utterances reflect an adherence to the obligations they carry in that particular conversation.

In this perspective, politeness is not only associated with certain speech acts, but it is, above all, a principle that consists in respecting and strengthening the Conversational

Contract. Although describing interaction and thus (im)politeness by means of a few generally valid dimensions that include contextual and interpersonal aspects, the authors nevertheless developed a model which can be considered more flexible and dynamic and, thus, more comprehensive when compared to earlier models.

## 1.3 IMPOLITENESS

### 1.3.1 The perspective of Culpeper (1996, 2011)

While most politeness studies are primarily concerned with the question: “in which way do communicative strategies serve to establish or maintain social harmony”, Culpeper (1996, 2011) focuses on the question of how and under what circumstances do effects of impoliteness occur during interaction. Following the contributions of other authors like Craig *et al.* (1986) and Tracy (1990), amongst others, who recognise the importance of including impoliteness in existing theories, Culpeper (1996) describes different notions of impoliteness and establishes certain strategies that serve, simultaneously, as counterparts and a complement to the model of Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987).

The referenced author (*ibid*) bases his theory on Goffman’s notion of face (1967) and emphasises that there are only few speech acts that are intrinsically polite or impolite and, thus, contradicts the claims previously made in this regard by Leech (1983) and Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987). Culpeper (*ibid*) argues that the abstraction and distinction between polite and impolite acts made by these authors does not consider the importance of the interactional context. In order to support his

argument, he gives the example of the command “Go on, eat up” (*ibid*, p. 351) that is voiced as a request to a guest, which evidently serves to express that the act of eating every delicacy served is advantageous to him. The described context clearly indicates that this order can be considered polite (*ibid*).

The importance of taking into account the situational context when it comes to the analysis of (im)politeness in interaction is reinforced by the author (2011, p. 22) elsewhere when he emphasises that

defining impoliteness is a real challenge. An important reason for this is that although some verbal behaviours are typically impolite, they will not always be impolite – it depends on the situation. To take an extreme example, shouting and using potentially offensive language to an older person living in a quiet cul-de-sac might be taken as extremely impolite, but the same behaviour in the midst of a football crowd might not be taken as impolite at all. Impoliteness is very much in the eye of the beholder, that is, the mind’s eye. It depends on how you perceive what is said and done and how that relates to the situation.

However, Culpeper (1996) acknowledges the fact that there are certain acts that are intrinsically impolite and therefore can not be mitigated, regardless of the respective context and the strategies that possibly might be used to reduce the face threat. An example for such an “anti-social” act would be picking one’s nose: in this case, any polite request to give up the described activity would constitute a threat to the face of the interlocutor and thus be considered impolite (*ibid*, p. 351).

According to the author (*ibid*), this is due to the fact that the act of nose picking itself constitutes an antisocial act. Culpeper (*ibid*) calls this kind of actions “inherent impoliteness”,

as any polite request towards the interlocutor to not continue performing the act would change the desired effect: the mere fact of calling attention to antisocial behavior would already pose a threat to the face of the interlocutor and thus not leave any room for face work.

Furthermore, the author (*ibid*, p. 252) describes another form of impoliteness that he calls “banter” or “mock politeness”. Culpeper (*ibid*) claims that the more intimate and friendly the relationship between the interactants, the less important politeness becomes. Thus, mock politeness does not serve to threaten the face of the interlocutor, it rather has a contrary function, in the way that it promotes social intimacy amongst those involved in the interaction (*ibid*).

To illustrate that, he (*ibid*) gives an example of his own particular life, describing a situation in which he arrived late to a party at a friend’s house. As an excuse, he claimed to have confused the schedule, to which the host of the event responded with the comment “You silly bugger!” (*ibid*, p. 352). It seems obvious that the same utterance used in a different context in which the involved participants have a less close relationship might very likely cause negative effects such as confusion or even dispute.

Similar to Culpeper’s observations with regards to mock politeness, Kerbrat-Orecchioni (2017, p. 48) states that seemingly impolite actions can serve to generate inclusion: “it is possible to admit that in some groups of adolescents some forms of verbal or non-verbal brutality (demeaning appellations, insults, pranks, etc.) should in fact be considered as a kind of FFA, in that they serve to integrate the ‘victim’ into the peer

group”<sup>9</sup>. However, it is difficult to imagine that the actions described by the author are restricted to certain “groups of adolescents”: many informal get-togethers of close friends or family, for example, are accompanied by practical jokes or some kind of insults that are not meant to be taken seriously and instead serve to create a positive atmosphere and, thus, to strengthen the bonds between the group members.

Similar to Leech (1983), Culpeper (*ibid*) confirms that a speech act which is obviously false and impolite provokes a contrary interpretation and serves to show solidarity with the interlocutor. In addition, he (*ibid*) points out that banter also manifests itself in a more ritualised way, as a kind of language game. The described ritualised impoliteness serves as a “safety-valve”, because “in ritual we are free from personal responsibility for the acts we are engaged in” (*ibid*, p. 353). The investigations of several authors (MONTAGU; 1973, amongst others) that were conducted in different cultures around the world, also illustrate that acts of impoliteness carried out by means of insults or curses are used to reinforce solidarity within a specific group.

It is interesting to note that mock impoliteness is not only used in contexts where the interactants have a close relationship. Banter paradoxically seems to have a positive or even playful effect when there is a great social distance between the interactants, as is the case in advertising slogans (CULPEPER, 1996). The example “Eat meat – you bastards” (SIMPSON,

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<sup>9</sup> As stated in the reference consulted: parece possível admitir que, em alguns grupos de adolescentes, algumas formas de brutalidade verbal ou não verbal (apelativos, depreciativos, insultos, trote etc.) devam ser consideradas, na realidade, como uma espécie de FFA, na medida em que servem para integrar a ‘vítima’ no grupo de pares.

1994, *apud* CULPEPER, 1996) used by a meat retailer in Australia turned out to have a positive effect on the “interlocutor” customer. According to Culpeper (*ibid*), in this specific context clients have a greater power in the sense that they decide on the success or failure of the company.

Apart from dealing with the notions of inherent and false impoliteness, Culpeper also addresses the question of what circumstances provoke truly impolite effects. The author (*ibid*) emphasises that true impoliteness will more likely occur in situations where the interactants possess an unequal relationship of power, as it is the case in court, for example, where the context defines that a lawyer has more power to threaten the face of a witness than vice versa.

However, Culpeper’s assumption is contrasted by a study of Bircher *et al.* (1975) who observe that even happily married spouses can treat each other in a more hostile way than they would treat others. This example indicates that even in closer relationships, in which one would expect a rather equalised power balance between the interactants and thus less strong confrontations, the possibly occurring acts of impoliteness can show high intensity.

A plausible explanation might be that spouses, due to the fact that they know each other particularly well, are more aware of the weak or more sensitive points of the other. Thus, it seems to be precisely the strong intimacy which can provide a greater scope for impolite acts in situations of disagreement, which in turn causes a rather strong impact. The same might apply for other close relationships, such as between family members or close friends, just to name a few examples.

According to Culpeper (*ibid*), one must take into account that the factor “intimacy” can also refer to the strong negative affect that may exist between certain interactants. In this case, impoliteness is linked to the fact that the interactants do not like one another and consequently do not care about each other’s faces (*ibid*). In fact, it is easy to think of contexts in which people that are not particularly well-disposed towards each other deliberately commit acts of impoliteness: all too often, we can see politicians involved in lively discussions on TV who seem to forget their good education, and we only need to remember football games which are, in many cases, accompanied by verbal or even physical altercation inside and outside the stadium.

Based on these considerations, Culpeper (*ibid*, p. 356-357) presents his own (im)politeness theory, with his model geared to the politeness strategies of Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987):

- 1) Bald on record impoliteness;
- 2) Positive impoliteness;
- 3) Negative impoliteness;
- 4) Sarcasm or mock politeness;
- 5) To withhold politeness.

Compared to Brown and Levinson (*ibid*) who claim that the first strategy in their model is in play when face may be

neglected (such as in emergency situations or when the speaker has greater power over the interlocutor), Culpeper (*ibid*) points out that impoliteness in his model indicates the clear intention of the speaker to threaten the face of the other. In the case of the second strategy of impoliteness, these are acts that aim to threaten the positive face of the interlocutor, which can be realised by ignoring or offending a person, provoking conflicts through the choice of sensitive topics or by making the interlocutor feel uncomfortable, amongst other acts (*ibid*).

With respect to the third strategy presented, Culpeper (*ibid*) states that these are acts that aim at damaging the face of the other and can consist, for example, in invading their space (be it physically or metaphorically) or ridiculing them. The fourth strategy comprises acts that are characterised by the author (*ibid*, p. 356) as devious, such as the use of sarcasm by which a person might try to destroy social harmony.

Finally, the fifth strategy refers to situations in which the mere absence of politeness can be considered impolite. An example would be the act of not showing gratitude for receiving a gift which in itself constitutes an impolite act (*ibid*). In this regard, we could also think of not responding to the greeting of another person, for example.

According to Culpeper (*ibid*), there are certain impoliteness strategies that should be mentioned separately, due to the fact that they refer to non-linguistic aspects and, thus, are not considered in the politeness model of Brown and Levinson (1987), which is his reason for not adopting them in his model of impoliteness either. An example of such an act would be the avoidance of eye contact which can possibly be interpreted as impolite by the interlocutor (*ibid*). Further examples would be

to refuse a handshake or the act of facing-away without saying a word when being approached by another person.

Moreover, Culpeper (*ibid*, p. 13) makes an important observation when he relates the concept of face to a person's self and, thus, to the notion of identity, a fact which "can account for some important aspects of impoliteness". Bauman (2005, p. 74-75) defines identity by describing it as the answer to the question "Who am I?", which can only be responded by taking into account "the links that connect the self to others and to the assumption that such links are reliable and enjoy stability over time"<sup>10</sup>.

For Corazini (2003, p. 13), identity refers to questions that involve the individual, social and ethical issues of a person, amongst others, and is subject to constant reflection: "we ask ourselves at every moment who we are, what the purpose of life is, why we act this way and not in that way, why we choose this or that profession"<sup>11</sup>. Similar to Bauman (2005), Corazini (*ibid*, p. 243) characterises identity building as a continued and complex process that emerges during social interaction:

Identity always remains incomplete, constantly ongoing and developing. Thus, instead of speaking of identity as something finished, we should see it as an ongoing process and prefer the term identification, since it is only possible to

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<sup>10</sup> As stated in the reference consulted: quem sou eu? (...) os vínculos que conectam o eu a outras pessoas e ao pressuposto de que tais vínculos são fidedignos e gozam de estabilidade com o passar do tempo.

<sup>11</sup> As stated in the reference consulted: perguntamo-nos a todo momento quem somos, qual a razão de nossas vidas, pro que agimos desta e não daquela maneira, por que escolhemos esta ou aquela profissão.

capture moments of identification of a person with other persons, facts and objects<sup>12</sup>.

Thus, based on the reflections of the authors above, we attribute a dynamic, continuous character to the formation of identity, since social interaction itself is constructed collaboratively in discourse, which involves the mutual, ongoing influence between people. However, this continuous process is exposed to risks that emerge during interaction, in the way that “impoliteness often involves seeking to damage and/or damaging a person’s identity or identities” (CULPEPER, 2011, p. 1).

In summary, Culpeper’s contributions (1996, 2011) to the studies of politeness can be considered of particular importance. Based on the awareness that impolite acts constitute an integral part of human interaction, the author was the first to elaborate a model which takes into account both politeness and impoliteness in interaction. Furthermore, his considerations make clear that he recognises the importance of taking a greater account of contextual factors, the interpersonal relations between the interactants as well as non-verbal communication for the investigation and evaluation of (im)politeness in human interaction.

However, the nomenclature of Culpeper’s impoliteness strategies, which is based on Brown and Levinson’s classification of politeness strategies (1978, 1987), partly appears to be unfortunate: for example, the term “positive impoliteness”

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<sup>12</sup> As stated in the reference consulted: a identidade permanece sempre incompleta, sempre em processo, sempre em formação. Assim, em vez de falar de identidade como algo acabado, deveríamos vê-la como um processo em andamento e preferir o termo identificação, pois só é possível capturar momentos de identificação do sujeito com outros sujeitos, fatos e objetos.

which, according to Culpeper (*ibid*), represents strategies that aim at threatening the positive face of the interlocutor, seems to constitute a misleading dichotomy, as it leads the reader to believe that it might be a kind of impolite conduct that causes a positive effect.

### 1.3.2 The perspective of Bousfield (2008)

According to Eelen (2001), impoliteness has been widely neglected in studies of social interactions in the first place. The author (*ibid*) claims that early works in this field (BROWN; LEVINSON, 1978, 1987; LEECH, 1983; amongst others) focused primarily on collaborative, polite behavior. Moreover, the considerations made with regards to aspects of impolite conduct in these early studies are inappropriate, in the way that the concepts used to delineate impoliteness are the same that serve to describe politeness, which constitutes a simplistic assumption that needs to be called into question (EELLEN, 2001).

Contrary to Leech's (1983, p. 105) belief that "conflictive illocutions tend, thankfully, to be rather marginal to human linguistic behaviour in normal circumstances", other authors such as Culpeper (1996) show with their contributions that conflictive situations as a significant component of interaction can not only be found in a number of very specific contexts such as army training, for example, but also in more common everyday interactions like family discourse (VUCHINICH, 1990) or discourse that involves doctors and patients (MEHAN, 1990), amongst others.

Bousfield (2008) recognises the importance to study real-life interactions in order to reveal under what conditions impoliteness occurs and how it is dealt with by the involved

participants. For this purpose, the author (*ibid*) investigated data taken from TV serial documentaries in different contexts, such as communication between employer and employee, civil police training or interaction that takes place in a restaurant kitchen, just to name a few examples.

Based on the evaluation of, until then, different existing models and inspired mainly by those approaches which draw upon the notion of face (SPENCER-OATEY, 2002; amongst others), Bousfield (2008, p. 95) elaborates his own model of impoliteness which basically consists of a reshaped, simplified version of the model of Culpeper (1996) and serves for his own analysis of interaction in the aforementioned contexts:

### **1. On record impoliteness**

The use of strategies designed to explicitly (a) attack face of an interactant, (b) construct the face of an interactant in a non-harmonious or outright conflictive way, (c) deny the expected face wants, needs, or rights of the interactant, or some combination thereof. The attack is made in an unambiguous way given the context in which it occurs.

### **2. Off record impoliteness**

The use of strategies where the threat or damage to an interactant's face is conveyed indirectly by way of an implicature (cf. Grice [1975] 1989) and can be cancelled (e.g., denied, or an account / post-modification / elaboration offered, etc.) but where '...one attributable intention clearly outweighs any others' (Culpeper 2005:44), given the context in which it occurs.

According to Bousfield (2008), withholding politeness in situations where it can be expected and sarcasm as impoliteness strategies also come under the heading "off-record". Based on his investigations of real-life interactions, the refer-

enced author (*ibid*, p. 261) presents his own conception of impoliteness, which he defines as

being the opposite of politeness, in that, rather than seeking to mitigate face-threatening acts (FTAs), impoliteness constitutes the issuing of intentionally gratuitous and conflictive verbal face-threatening acts (FTAs) which are purposefully performed unmitigated, in contexts where mitigation is required, and/or, with deliberate aggression, that is, with the face threat exacerbated, 'boosted', or maximised in some way to heighten the face damage inflicted.

Bousfield's definition (*ibid*) seems to represent a rather strong perception of impoliteness, in the way that it equals impolite actions with the performing of deliberately conflictive acts that serve to increase harm to the interlocutor and, thus, intensify the negative impact. These findings, however, might be traced back to the contexts in which the investigations were undertaken: in military training, civilian police training or vehicle parking disputes one can typically expect the occurrence of significantly strong offensive actions, at least as far as Western cultures are concerned.

Critically assessing his own model, Bousfield (*ibid*) argues that by merging utterances that threaten either positive or negative face (cf. BROWN; LEVINSON, 1987) into one, and placing them under the heading of on-record impoliteness, as done in his own model, he intends to avoid the sometimes difficult distinction between which of these aspects of face is being at stake in a particular situation. Furthermore, Bousfield himself (*ibid*) points to the fact that he does not consider his model a comprehensive framework that is capable of capturing and giving an account of all facets of impolite behavior. Rather, the author (*ibid*, p. 96) highlights that

this model is (...) robust, in that it is applicable alongside traditional (e.g. Goffman 1967), culture-specific (e.g. Brown and Levinson 1987), or more contextually and culturally sensitive (e.g. Spencer-Oatey 2002, 2005) models of face. The point to be made here is that this modified model of impoliteness is an adaptable adjunct to existing and foreseeable models of face.

In conclusion, we can state that Bousfield's (2008) investigations within the field of (im)politeness assumed significant importance in the way that he created a simplified and thus more comprehensive model, which serves as a complement to previous studies, as the author himself confirms. In his work (*ibid*) which, according to Culpeper (2011), constitutes the first monograph in the field of impoliteness research, Bousfield (*ibid*) analyses the use of impoliteness within different contexts of real-life interactions, emphasising the necessity of taking into account contextual factors in order to understand how impolite actions emerge and are dealt with by participants during the interaction.

In the following section of this work, we will summarise and discuss existing (im)politeness theories in order to illustrate the convergences and divergences they exhibit. By including the contributions of other scholars that deal with the notions of (im)politeness, this discussion will serve to illustrate the underlying concepts of the respective theories and thus serve to further evaluate their validity.

## 1.4 (IM)POLITENESS THEORIES IN DIALOGUE

### 1.4.1 (Im)politeness as a universal phenomenon

The preceding discussion of (im)politeness leads us to question the extent to which (im)politeness is a universal phenomenon that exists in all societies around the world, which is an issue that has been addressed by various scholars.

Goffman (1967) refers to the universality of (im)politeness by pointing out that all people seek to preserve a public self image which is constantly exposed to certain threats such as humiliation or embarrassment, amongst others. Thus, in order to avoid these risks and to maintain social harmony by means of polite conduct, certain norms and expectations have to be respected by the participants that are involved in a particular interaction. In a similar way, Lakoff (1973) claims that the politeness rules established in her model are universally valid and clarifies that the interpretation of what actions are considered polite or impolite differs from culture to culture.

Similar to Goffman and Lakoff, Leech (1983) considers politeness as the avoidance of dispute. However, the latter author (*ibid*) describes politeness in general terms as universally valid without taking into consideration how sociocultural aspects can influence different manifestations of polite conduct. Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 311) take the position that “all competent adult members of a society have (and know each other to have): ‘face’, the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself”. Thus, it is the core notion of face with its two distinct properties of positive face (appreciation of self-image) and negative face (territory, etc.) that constitute the universal principles of politeness (*ibid*).

Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 61) point out that, despite their universal validity, these principal notions are defined and interpreted differently by distinct cultures: “the core concept is subject to cultural specifications of many sorts – what kinds of acts threaten face, what sorts of persons have special rights to face-protection, and what kinds of personal style [...] are specially appreciated”. However, the authors (*ibid*) fail to exemplify the way in which the above cultural specifications can manifest themselves differently in cultures other than the North American one, which constitutes the basis for the elaboration of their model.

Reflecting upon the approaches dealing with (im)politeness discussed so far in this work, it is possible to perceive that the implicit universal validity attributed to it in the early works of Lakoff (1973, 1979), Leech (1983) and Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) has gradually weakened. Instead, there has been a growing awareness of the necessity to include socio-cognitive and sociocultural aspects that take into account contextual factors and the negotiable character of (im)polite interactions, a perspective which gained strength in the contributions of Fraser and Nolan (1981), Fraser (1990), Culpeper (1996, 2011) and Bousfield (2008).

According to Kerbrat-Orecchioni (2004), politeness is a universal phenomenon that serves the purpose of establishing and maintaining social harmony, which becomes necessary due to the fact that human interaction is constantly at risk of facing misunderstandings or disputes. However, politeness can manifest itself in different ways, as the conditions and rules under which these principles are applied vary from one society or community to another (*ibid*).

Contemplating politeness as a universal phenomenon which is subject to cultural and local conditions seems prudent. Brandão (2016) emphasises that the studies of politeness encompass sociocultural aspects and concurrently embrace psychological, (non)linguistic and discursive aspects, amongst others, that are involved in interpersonal relations. In that respect, pragmatic aspects are of no less importance, as they refer to the expectations, beliefs and desires of the interactants; consequently, contextual factors need to be considered when (im)politeness is interpreted (*ibid*).

Kerbrat-Orecchioni (2006) argues that the participants' expectations with regards to an interaction constitute an important factor, in the sense that any action that is not realised as expected by the members of a particular culture will be interpreted as impolite or even rude. This in turn indicates that the conventions and norms as to what actions are considered polite or not are culturally- and locally-bound.

In sum, it can be assumed that different cultures and societies possess specific rules and conventions that determine socially adequate and polite interaction, thereby taking into account pragmatic and contextual factors. Taking into consideration the contributions from the previous discussion, we can agree with Kerbrat-Orecchioni (2017, p. 52) who summarises the question of the universality of politeness as: “although politeness everywhere obeys the major common principles, the ways in which it may reveal itself are infinitely diverse”<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup> As stated in the reference consulted: Mesmo que a polidez obedeça em todos os lugares a grandes princípios comuns, as vias pelas quais ela está suscetível de realizar-se são infinitamente diversas.

## 1.4.2 Convergences and divergences in

### (im)politeness theories

The politeness theories of Lakoff (1973), Leech (1983) and Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987), which are all based on Goffman's notion of face (1967), agree in the way that they define politeness as the avoidance of conflict and the maintenance of social harmony between the participants of an interaction.

The referenced theories focus on the speaker who seeks to mitigate FTAs, which is achieved either by performing certain speech acts, as in the case of Brown and Levinson (*ibid*), or by following certain rules that strive at preventing negative reactions on the part of the interlocutor (cf. LAKOFF and LEECH, *ibid*). Another common feature is that they are all based on the view that politeness and impoliteness manifest themselves by means of utterances that possess certain intrinsic characteristics, constituting an assumption that is difficult to maintain, as we have seen in the preceding discussion.

In contrast, Fraser and Nolan (1981) and Fraser (1990) claim that politeness is based on the perceptions of the involved participants who constantly monitor and interpret an ongoing interaction, which confers a dynamic character to their model. The referenced authors (*ibid*) describe a Conversational Contract which consists of both the rights and the obligations of the interactants, who are, in turn, influenced by different factors such as the previous experiences or the situational dimension, amongst others.

Thus, for Fraser and Nolan (1981) and Fraser (1990), in comparison to the aforementioned authors, it is by means of the contributions of both speaker and interlocutor that interaction is constructed. For the authors (*ibid*), politeness is

an underlying principle that consists in respecting and strengthening the Conversational Contract which serves to maintain harmonious coexistence. Consequently, impoliteness occurs if one or more of the interactants do not fulfil their obligations, which consequently results in the breach of the contract (*ibid*).

Grice (2006 [1975]) describes the Cooperative Principle, which consists of a set of Conversational Maxims that serve the principal objective of purposeful and effective communication. The author (*ibid*) assigns subordinate importance to the social aspects of interaction, which also include polite actions. However, it seems difficult to imagine that human interaction, be it with family members, spouse, friends or strangers, generally serves the mere purpose of exchanging information and following a common purpose, as claimed by Grice (*ibid*). Social interaction, above all, entails respecting and caring about others, thus establishing and strengthening social harmony, which consequently places the sub-maxims established by the author above all other maxims.

Culpeper (1996), for his part, recognises the necessity of establishing impoliteness strategies in order to complement Brown and Levinson's (*ibid*) politeness model and thus contests Leech (1983, p. 105), who claims that linguistic impoliteness is "rather marginal to human linguistic behaviour in normal circumstances". Furthermore, Culpeper (*ibid*) claims that only few speech acts are intrinsically (im)polite and sees the importance of taking other factors into account. According to the author (*ibid*), it is by considering non-linguistic strategies, the context of an interaction as well as the relationship between the involved participants that interaction and, thus, (im)politeness can be interpreted. This way, it is also possible to differen-

tiate between real impoliteness and banter/mock impoliteness which, as we have seen, serve distinct purposes.

Similar to Culpeper (*ibid*), Fraser and Nolan (*ibid*) assign particular importance to the factor context, in the way that it can open space for the renegotiation of the Conversational Contract. Moreover, the latter authors (*ibid*) also take up the aspect of intimacy, in the way that factors such as power, status and role of the interactants directly influence their rights and obligations during an interaction.

In a similar way, Leech (*ibid*) and Brown and Levinson (*ibid*) both emphasise the importance of considering the social distance that exists between the interactants when it comes to the interpretation of (im)politeness: for Leech (*ibid*), the referenced factor constitutes one of the scales that influence the Pragmatic Principles that guide verbal communication, whereas for Brown and Levinson (*ibid*) the same factor represents one of the variables that measure the impact of a FTA. According to the latter authors (*ibid*), it is the power relations between the interactants that influences the weightiness of an FTA, whereas Leech (*ibid*) refers to the same factor as authority, which represents the right of the speakers to impose their wants on the interlocutors.

Summing up, we can see that independently of what approaches to (im)politeness are represented in the respective models and what factors are involved when it comes to polite respectively impolite actions, all theories are based on the assumption that politeness works on an interpersonal level and contributes to establish and maintain harmony in human interaction.

### 1.4.3 (Im)politeness in intercultural interaction

The following section aims to illustrate the ways in which politeness and impoliteness can manifest themselves in intercultural interaction. By instancing and discussing examples from existing works in this field, we attempt to get a better understanding of what factors play a role in that respect and the way that these aspects can provoke the occurrence of negative effects, such as incomprehension or (im)politeness, amongst others.

However, the first questions that arise are, respectively: “what do exactly the terms ‘culture’ and ‘intercultural’ refer to and what aspects do they involve?”. Spencer-Oatey (2000, p. 4) defines culture as a “fuzzy set of attitudes, beliefs, behavioural conventions, and basic assumptions and values that are shared by a group of people, and that influence each member’s behaviour and each member’s interpretations of the ‘meaning’ and of other people’s behaviour”.

In comparison, Mendes (2012, p. 369) attributes a more flexible and dynamic character to the notion of culture by describing it as

the broader dimension of human experience, which means it is the outcome of everything that we feel, do and create as we live in society, which in turn includes our beliefs, traditions, practices and artifacts. But more than that, it also refers to the whole symbolic network of how we interpret the world around us and ourselves. For this very reason, it is heterogeneous, mutable and flexible, transforming itself and being transformed by internal forces and also by the influence of the contact with the symbolic networks of other cultures<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> As stated in the reference consulted: (..) a dimensão mais ampla da experiência humana, ou seja, ela é o produto de tudo o que sentimos, fazemos e produzimos ao vivermos em sociedade, o que inclui as nossas crenças, tradições, práticas, artefatos, mas não só isso. Isto é, ela é também toda a rede simbólica de interpretação

Based on this understanding of culture, Mendes (*ibid.*, p. 359-360) further explains that the term intercultural refers to “the awareness that, in the tangle of cultural differences and shocks that are at stake in the contemporary world, it is possible to build bridges and dialogues between individual and collective cultures, so that we can live more respectfully and more democratically”<sup>15</sup>. In the context of additional language teaching and learning, intercultural denotes the effort to develop respectful conduct and attitudes towards others with regards to cultural differences and diversity, thereby encouraging the sharing of ideas and experiences and the mutual cooperation between the interactants in the classroom (MENDES, 2010, *apud* MENDES, 2012).

Furthermore, the expression “intercultural competence”, for Mendes (2004, p. 178), relates to “the learner’s knowledge and his ability to interact through language-culture, by establishing a dialogue between cultures through the recognition, respect and acceptance of differences and through the collaboration for the construction of shared meanings”<sup>16</sup>. In a similar way, Savignon (2002) explains that learners of additional languages acquire intercultural competence when they demonstrate the willingness to actively take part in the construction and

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do mundo que nos cerca e de nós mesmos. Por isso mesmo, ela é heterogênea, mutável e flexível, transformando-se e sendo transformada pelas forças internas de mudança e também pela influência do contato com outras redes simbólicas, com outras culturas.

<sup>15</sup> As stated in the reference consulted: (...) a compreensão de que é possível, no emaranhado das diferenças e choques culturais que estão em jogo no mundo contemporâneo, estabelecer pontes, diálogos inter/entre culturas, individuais e coletivas, de modo que possamos conviver mais respeitosamente, mais democraticamente.

<sup>16</sup> As stated in the reference consulted: denota o conhecimento e habilidade do aprendiz em interagir através da língua-cultura, em estabelecer um diálogo entre culturas, pelo reconhecimento, respeito e aceitação das diferenças e pela colaboração na construção de significados partilhados.

negotiation of meaning, at the same time striving not to judge others on their culture.

Thus, in concordance with Mendes (2004) and Savignon (2002), we understand that intercultural competence can be achieved when the interactants actively engage in cooperation and dialogue through the mutual sharing of knowledge and experiences, constantly striving for the negotiation of meaning and thereby demonstrating sensibility for cultural diversity and differences of the other, which will consequently combat and reduce prejudice and stereotypes.

At this point, it should also be noted that in the context of intercultural communication, the terms “culture” and “cultural group(s)” have traditionally been associated with the first language and the nationality of the involved participants, as Kádár and Haugh (2017) point out. However, the authors (*ibid*, p. 604) emphasise that in a more contemporary view “culture is commonly used to refer to any set of persons who can be classed or categorised as having some kind of association through shared beliefs, values and practices, that is, shared ways of doing things as well as shared ways of interpreting or thinking about things in the world”.

The definition of the referenced term by the authors seems prudent, since it attributes a more flexible and dynamic character to it that also takes into account present-day phenomena of the modern globalised world such as increasing travels or migration, which in turn involve the growing mutual influence between different cultural groups. Resuming the subject of our discussion in this section, it is possible to say that anyone who has ever travelled to another country or dealt with people from a different cultural background, has perceived

the differences in the way that people from other cultures behave and communicate with each other. As Wierzbicka (2003, p. 40) describes in a very generic way:

If you and I are Japanese our interaction will be different than it would be if we were both Americans or Russians. And if we were both Americans, the prevailing modes of our interaction would probably depend on whether we were white or black, Jewish or non-Jewish, and so on.

Many times, questions related to these cultural differences might remain unanswered and only understood after a certain period of contact or co-existence with people from another culture. Thus, we will now have a closer look at how (in)appropriate or (im)polite actions can possibly be explained and understood, thereby considering findings and perspectives from different fields of research.

An interesting contribution is made by Sharifian (2006, p. 11) who describes so-called “schemas” as certain entities of knowledge that “result from the cognitive processes of deriving patterns either from our perception or from our construal of the world”. Thus, cultural schemas refer to knowledge that can be related to certain cultural aspects of human life which are shared and negotiated during interactions by members of certain social groups cross-generationally (*ibid.*).

The referenced author (2004) explains how a cultural schema called *sharmandegi* is reflected in the Persian language *Farsi*, in the way that it can be found in several speech acts. Some examples and their corresponding translations are presented in the following:

*Chakeretam* – I am your slave.

*Nokaretam* – I am your servant.

*Feeleh kafeh path hastam* – I am the elephant under your foot.

All examples are typically used when greeting another person or to express gratitude, whereas the latter utterance refers to the elephant symbol on a certain brand of shoes that many children have<sup>17</sup>. Thus, these expressions, like many other similar examples, refer to the fact that speakers want to indicate that they are lower in status than the people they are talking to (SHARIFIAN, 2004). Moreover, the *sharmandegi* can also be characterised as the constant awareness of Iranians that they might have made a mistake or done something that failed to comply with the dignity of the others, which is reflected in a number of other expressions that are typically used in everyday language (*ibid*).

Sharifian (2004, p. 125) furthermore explains that the *sharmandegi* is governed by a superordinate cultural schema which “encourages Iranians to constantly place the presence of others at the centre of their conceptualizations and monitor their own ways of thinking and talking to make them harmonious with the esteem they hold for others”. In other words, it seems that it is respect and politeness that constitute the central values of this superior schema, factors which in turn influence communication and, thus, guide social interaction in Iranian culture.

In a similar way, Wierzbicka (1997, *apud* WIERZBICKA, 2003, p. x) portrays what she calls “cultural scripts” and the

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<sup>17</sup> Examples and explanations were obtained by a *Farsi* speaker from London, UK, and were taken from everyday interaction in *Farsi* as it is spoken in the Kerman Province, Iran.

way these scripts influenced her life after emigrating from Poland to Australia, in 1972:

I had to start learning new ‘cultural scripts’ to live by, and in the process I became aware of the old ‘cultural scripts’ which had governed my life hitherto [...] For example, when I was talking on the phone, from Australia, to my mother in Poland (15,000 km away), with my voice loud and excited, carrying much further than is customary in an Anglo conversation, my husband would signal to me: ‘Don't shout!’. For a long time, this perplexed and confused me: to me, this ‘shouting’ and this ‘excitement’ was an inherent part of my personality. Gradually, I came to realise that this very personality was in part culturally constituted (WIERZBICKA 1997, p. 119).

[...]

I had to learn to ‘calm down’, to become less ‘sharp’ and less ‘blunt’, less ‘excitable’, less ‘extreme’ in my judgements, more ‘tactful’ in their expression. I had to learn the use of Anglo understatement (instead of more hyperbolic and more emphatic Polish ways of speaking. I had to avoid sounding ‘dogmatic’, ‘argumentative’, ‘emotional’. Thus, I was learning new ways of speaking, new patterns of communication, new modes of social interaction. I was learning the Anglo rules of turntaking (‘let me finish!’, ‘I haven't finished yet!’). I was learning not to use the imperative (‘Do X!’) in my daily interaction with people and to replace it with a broad range of interrogative devices (‘Would you do X?’, ‘Could you do X?’, ‘Would you mind doing X?’, ‘How about doing X?’, ‘Why don't you do X?’, ‘Why not do X?’, and so on) (*ibid.*, p. 119-120).

Thus, compared to Sharifian (2004, 2006) who argues from a cognitive perspective and claims that cultural schemas relate to and are guided by higher-ranking cultural values, Wierzbicka (2003) describes cultural scripts as the multiple ways in which culturally inherent principles and norms can manifest themselves. In order to illustrate how non-compliance of cultural scripts can harm intercultural communication, Wierzbicka (*ibid.*,

p. 27) describes a situation in a Polish organisation in Australia, in which an Australian guest called Vanessa Smith is welcomed by the Polish host and offered a seat with the words “Mrs. Vanessa! Please! Sit! Sit!”.

The author (*ibid*) argues that in English language informal offers are typically formulated as questions, whereas Poles would use a simple imperative for the same purpose. Thus, the wording in the imperative “sit” used by the Polish host makes the offer sound like a command for the Australian guest, and “in fact like a command addressed to a dog” (*ibid*, p. 27). In addition, the host uses the word “Mrs.” to substitute the word *pani* which can be used in Polish language in combination with a first name. However, this does not constitute an appropriate combination in the English language (*ibid*). Thus, this example illustrates how the non-observance of cultural norms in intercultural contexts can cause misunderstandings or impoliteness.

Another contribution to the present discussion refers to the fact that certain para-verbal aspects of language, which also include speech rate, differ from one society to another (KERBRAT-ORECCHIONI, 2006). The referenced author (*ibid*) reports that, although speaking rate is subject to individual and contextual factors and also varies according to the gender of the speaker, the Italians on average tend to speak faster than Frenchmen who in turn speak faster than the Swiss.

Overlapping talk is another aspect which seems to be particularly pronounced in the interactions of French people, as pointed out by Kerbrat-Orecchioni (*ibid*). Thus, the French are known to speak all at once and to permanently interrupt each other, which in turn entails a higher speech rate (*ibid*).

Moreover, the aforementioned interruptions influence the conversation, in the way that

they give it a lively and animated character and produce an effect of warmth, spontaneity and active participation, which is generally appreciated in our society (...) however, our German neighbours have a quite different view, perceiving these permanent interruptions as aggressive and unbearably anarchic<sup>18</sup> (*ibid*, p. 111).

Moreover, there are various examples of non-verbal linguistic actions that give an idea of how differently people from distinct cultures communicate with each other. These cultural variations do not only refer to gestures that involve physical contact between the interactants (such as hugging or kissing), but also include facial expressions, as Kerbrat-Orecchioni (*ibid*, p. 108) explains: “a smile, for example, which for us expresses contentment, can also indicate discomfort, nervousness or even restrained anger, in Japan”<sup>19</sup>. One can imagine the difficulties that the incorrect interpretation of the described act can evoke during intercultural interaction.

On this occasion, we can anticipate that the majority of the participants of the present research from both Brazil and Germany, when asked if they see any differences in the use of (non)verbal German and Brazilian Portuguese, responded that

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<sup>18</sup> As stated in the reference consulted: elas lhe dão um caráter vivo e animado e produzem um efeito de calor, de espontaneidade, de participação ativa, geralmente apreciado na nossa sociedade (...). Mas nossos vizinhos alemães têm uma visão bastante diferente, concebendo essas permanentes interrupções como agressivas e insuportavelmente anárquicas.

<sup>19</sup> As stated in the reference consulted: o sorriso, por exemplo, que, para nós, exprime contentamento, pode também, no Japão, indicar mal-estar, nervosismo ou mesmo cólera contida.

Brazilians tend to gesticulate frequently during interactions, whereas the Germans use less gestures whilst speaking.

Still with regards to culturally distinct aspects of non-verbal communication, Kerbrat-Orecchioni (2006, p. 109) draws attention to a study that investigated the duration of eye contact during commercial negotiations conducted in different cultural contexts. The study revealed that the average duration of eye contact during these encounters amounted to 13% between Japanese interactants, 33% between Koreans and 52% between Brazilians. Given the fact that intense eye contact is considered to be impolite in many societies, as described by the referenced author (*ibid*), it seems obvious that this behaviour can easily cause misunderstandings in intercultural interaction.

According to Bowe *et al.* (2014), most languages exhibit distinct communication styles which vary according to the levels of familiarity between the participants (e.g. friends or strangers), the level of formality required (informal respectively formal context), the kind of situation (e.g. professional or private) as well as the age and the gender of the persons involved in an interaction. In comparison, for Kerbrat-Orecchioni (2006, p. 119) communication styles are equivalent to what she calls *ethos*, which is the “communicative profile”<sup>20</sup> of a society or, in other words, “its way of behaving and presenting itself in interaction – more or less warm or cold, close or distant, modest or immodest, ‘at ease’ or respectful towards the territory of others, susceptible or indifferent to offense, etc.”<sup>21</sup>.

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<sup>20</sup> As stated in the reference consulted: perfil comunicativo.

<sup>21</sup> As stated in the reference consulted: sua maneira de se comportar e de se apresentar na interação – mais ou menos calorosa ou fria, próxima ou distante, modesta ou imodesta, ‘à vontade’ ou respeitosa para com o território alheio, suscetível ou indiferente à ofensa etc.

Concerning the more quantitative aspect of language use, the author (*ibid*) emphasises that there are societies which can generally be considered less communicative, such as the Finns, and those that are more talkative, such as the Africans or French. Regarding more qualitative aspects, she (*ibid*) attributes a rather direct speech style to societies such as the Hebrew, as opposed to the more indirect communication style which can be found in cultures such as the Japanese. However, special care needs to be taken with regards to how (in)direct forms can be characterised or defined, as we will see in the forthcoming discussion.

Another point is brought up by Wierzbicka (2003), who claims that different languages exhibit distinct conversational routines, which are expressions that are typically used in specific situations during interaction and the way these situations are dealt with. The author describes her difficulties adapting to her new home country and the “acute discomfort” these conversational routines caused: “[...] there was the ‘How are you’ game: ‘How are you?’ – ‘I’m fine, how are you?’; there were weather-related conversational openings (‘Lovely day isn’t it?’ – ‘Isn’t it beautiful?’). There were also ‘white lies’ and ‘small talk’” (*ibid*, p. 12).

Béal (1992, p. 25), who investigated workplace interactions between French and Australian co-workers in a French company operating in Australia, reports the distinct reactions that the routine question “Did you have a good weekend?” triggered on parts of the interactants: whereas the Australian workers considered it a routine question that merely served the purpose of expressing a certain kindness, the French workers, for the most part, interpreted it as a sincere question and there-

fore replied to it in a more detailed way, thereby expressing true feelings and opinions.

The author (*ibid*, p. 25) traces the misunderstanding to the different expectations that the French and the Australian co-workers had with regards to this specific utterance, whose non-fulfillment resulted in negative evaluations by both parties: “the Australians mentioned it as proof of the French tendency to be self-centered, forceful and insensitive to other people. The French in turn mentioned it as an example of what they perceived as the indifference and lack of sincerity of Australians”.

A similar misunderstanding in intercultural contact might be caused by the utterances “Where are you going?” or “Have you eaten?”, expressions that are typically used by Indonesian or Indian speakers as greeting formulas, as Grainger and Mills (2016, p. 48) explain. According to the referenced authors (*ibid*), these utterances constitute mere conventional forms and thus the appropriate way of communication, whereas a more literal interpretation of these questions and a sincere response (e.g. by a non-native speaker) would constitute an inappropriate reaction.

Another example that can be instanced as a potential source of misunderstanding due to missing sociocultural knowledge in intercultural contact are seemingly equivalent utterances in different languages. Crystal (2010) reports that in the specific context of offering food, an Englishman would say “thank you” to indicate the acceptance of the offer, whereas a Frenchman would use the seemingly equivalent *merci* in order to refuse it. By comparison, the answer *obrigado(a)* in Brazilian Portuguese could serve both as acceptance or rejection, which

is why a speaker would simultaneously use non-verbal language in order to make their intention clear.

In a similar way, Wierzbicka (1997, *apud* WIERZBICKA, 2003, p. xi) illustrates her own experience with the appropriate use of the expression “of course” in Australia:

Early in our life together, my husband objected to my too frequent – in his view – use of the expression of course. At first, this puzzled me, but eventually it dawned on me that using of course as broadly as its Polish counterpart *oczywiście* is normally used would imply that the interlocutor has overlooked something obvious. In the Polish ‘confrontational’ style of interaction such an implication is perfectly acceptable, and it is fully consistent with the use of such conversational particles such as, for example, *przecież* (‘but obviously – can’t you see?’). In mainstream Anglo culture, however, there is much more emphasis on ‘tact’, on avoiding direct clashes, and there are hardly any confrontational particles comparable with those mentioned above. ‘Of course’ does exist, but even ‘of course’ tends to be used more in agreement than in disagreement (e.g. ‘Could you do X for me?’ – ‘Of course’).

Based on my own experiences as a German living in Brazil and also on my professional activity as a language teacher, I can confirm that the (natural) attempt to literally translate words and expressions from one’s mother tongue into the target language can cause misunderstandings or incomprehension. For example, some of my Brazilian students of English use the expression “can be” in the same way as they would use the Portuguese *pode ser*<sup>22</sup>, i.e. to accept a suggestion or to positively answer a question. However, “can be” is not an appropriate answer in this context; instead, “yes” or “sure” would constitute

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<sup>22</sup> “Can be” is the literal English translation of the Brazilian Portuguese *pode ser*.

adequate responses in the English language, in these specific situations.

The importance of sociocultural knowledge becomes even more clear when we look at an example given by Brandão (2016, p. 652) who describes a very short interaction which involves two university teachers from Brazil and Portugal (the situational context is the refectory of a university, the interactants did not know each other until then): the Portuguese teacher, who is carrying her tray, suddenly stumbles upon the Brazilian teacher and then apologises for her mistake, which the Brazilian teacher responds to by saying *imagine*<sup>23</sup>. However, astonished and unaware of the meaning of this utterance, the Portuguese teacher finally asks the Brazilian colleague for an explanation of the meaning of this answer.

Brandão (*ibid*) explains that it is the missing sociocultural knowledge of the Portuguese teacher that led to this misunderstanding, as she simply did not know that *imagine* in fact constitutes the short form of *imagine se eu vou me incomodar por isso*<sup>24</sup>, which is an expression typically used in Brazil to accept an apology, in this kind of situation. This example illustrates how the missing knowledge of the meaning of a single word used in a specific context can cause misunderstanding even between speakers which share the same language but not the same cultural background<sup>25</sup>. Thus, as Bowe *et al.* (2014, p. 16) confirm, we can see that “speakers and hearers do not always

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<sup>23</sup> The literal English translation of this Portuguese expression is “imagine”.

<sup>24</sup> This could be translated with “Don’t worry, I am not bothered about that”. However, a more appropriate translation in English language would be a simple “No problem!”.

<sup>25</sup> It should be noted that nowadays European Portuguese and Brazilian Portuguese constitute distinct linguistic modalities.

share the same understanding of linguistic signs and variation even when they share the same language”.

Another example is described by Niederauer (2011, p. 92) and refers to a specific context where food is offered to others, in Brazil. The situation in question, which was related to the author (*ibid*) by a university employee, had occurred during lunch time at an academic department of the referenced institution: one day, a staff member, as a polite gesture, offered his lunch to his Brazilian colleagues who thanked her and declined the offer. In the same way, this person then offered his meal to a foreign teacher, with the words *a senhora aceita, professora?*<sup>26</sup>. This time, however, the offer was happily accepted and the hungry teacher ate the entire portion, much to the astonishment of all present.

According to Niederauer (*ibid*, p. 92), there are various expressions in Brazil that are typically used to offer food to others, such as *aceita?* or *está servido(a)*<sup>27</sup>, amongst others. However, the referenced expressions merely serve as a polite gesture in this specific context, and the alleged offer is expected to be refused by others. Thus, it becomes obvious that the foreign teacher, who had been living in Brazil for a relatively short period of time, was not aware of the implicit meaning of the act of being offered food and, consequently, did not react in the way that was expected by the other interactants.

Another factor that influences how the involved participants behave during interaction is the situational context.

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<sup>26</sup> This expression from Brazilian Portuguese could be literally translated with “Do you accept, teacher?”.

<sup>27</sup> The literal translation of these expressions are “Do you accept” and “It is served”. Both expressions, however, correspond with the English “Would you like some?”.

Kong (1998) reports that the Chinese generally show quite rude conduct during commercial encounters or in situations that include the provision of services, which contrasts with the friendliness they exhibit in other situations. However, whereas the described actions would very likely be perceived as impolite by people from many other cultures, it meets the expectations of the majority of Chinese people and thus constitutes the norm.

In a similar way, Kerbrat-Orecchioni (2017, p. 30) reports that the act of expressing gratitude during interactions between customer and vendor in smaller shops in Vietnam is unthinkable, which is due to the fact that in this specific context the verbal exchange is perceived as a “small war in which each one must be as astute as possible”<sup>28</sup> in order to make the best possible deal. Therefore, expressing gratitude is simply not appropriate in the described context. Quite the opposite, it would rather be interpreted as “ironic” by the interactants (*ibid*, p. 48). This is contrary to similar contexts in France, where frequent expressions of gratitude constitute an integral element in communicative situations between vendor and customer (*ibid*). Thus, this example once again reflects that the interpretation of what is considered (im)polite and (in)appropriate is based on cultural conventions.

At this point, it should be emphasised that the term “context” does not only refer to a physical location where an interaction takes place. In fact, the notion of context has been the subject of discussion by scholars for a long time. Bateson ([1954], 1972) was the first to describe the concept of “framing”, explaining that every communicative act can only be compre-

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<sup>28</sup> As stated in the consulted reference: uma pequena guerra em que cada um deve ser o mais astuto possível.

hended by the interactants by means of messages that work on the metacommunicative level. In other words, the participants activate frames in order to guide each other with regards to what is in fact happening during an interaction (for example, if a situation is supposed to be understood as funny or serious).

Later on, the concept of frame was adopted and further developed by Tannen and Wallat (1987, p. 206), for whom the “interactive notion of frame refers to a definition of what is going on in interaction”. Moreover, frames are identified by the interactants (*ibid*, p. 207) “by association with linguistic and paralinguistic cues – the way words are uttered – in addition to what they say”. In other words, the interactive and thus dynamic character that the authors (*ibid*) assign to the notion of frame refers to how the interactants indeed mean what they say (cf. BATESON, *ibid*). The referenced authors (*ibid*, p. 207) also describe certain “knowledge schemas” which, compared to the interactive frames, relate to the “expectations about people, objects, events and settings in the world”. More specifically, knowledge schemas are related to the expectations with regards to an interaction which, in turn, are based on previously made experiences by the participants (*ibid*, p. 207).

Furthermore, the authors (*ibid*, p. 213) point out that “conflicts can arise when participants are oriented toward different interactive frames, or have different expectations associated with frames”. Relating to the aforementioned example of offering food in Brazil, we can note that the foreign teacher was unaware of what was going on in this specific situation (different frame) and thus, based on her previously made experiences, behaved in a way that she considered to be adequate. However, this behavior was perceived as inappropriate by the other interactants who expected her to politely decline the offer.

Still on the topic of context, Gumperz (1992) states that the participants of an interaction infer the meaning of an enunciation by means of (non-)verbal contextualisation cues. Some examples would be the use of a certain linguistic style, the intonation of a word or the use of a specific gesture that can point towards relevant aspects by which the interactants can infer contextually adequate meaning. Thus, every interaction involves the process of framing, which refers to the previously made expectations of the participants that, in turn, are based on the socio-cultural knowledge they bring to the interaction (*ibid*).

Compared to Gumperz (*ibid*), van Dijk (2012) considers situational contexts to be subjective constructs and, thus, unique experiences of the interactants. Having social foundations, they constitute schematic mental models that guide comprehension and the production of discourse. Thus, mental models are strategically planned, dynamic in nature and compose certain contextual models which are continually shaped, activated and adapted by the interactants.

Hanks (2008, p. 176 *et seq.*) describes two different dimensions of context, which he denominates “emergence” and “embedding”<sup>29</sup>. According to the author (*ibid*), “emergence” relates to the verbally communicated aspects in communication and, thus, to the interaction itself which creates the context (such as the mutual cooperation or the principle of reciprocity), whereas “embedding” refers to the continuous processes of framing in discourse and embraces social formations as well as contextualisation. Thus, in accordance with Albuquerque (2015, p. 26), we can note that Hank’s (*ibid*) notion of emergence “is articu-

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<sup>29</sup> As stated in the reference consulted: “emergência” e “incorporação”.

lated to the social dimension of language in use, while embedding relates to the cognitive dimension of the intentionalities and the expectations of the people”<sup>30</sup>.

Based on the preceding discussion, we hold the view that the concept of context embraces elements from different fields of research, such as social interaction, social cognition and intercultural studies. We see context first and foremost as a dynamic process which is mediated by language and constantly negotiated during interaction, hereby taking into account aspects that are socioculturally relevant. That way, as Gumperz (1992) emphasises, the use of language continuously reflects and produces new contexts. Given the fact that the present research involves participants of different cultural backgrounds, we need to devote particular attention to contextual factors and the relevance they assume during interaction.

Resuming our discussion with regards to how (im)politeness can possibly manifest itself in intercultural communication, another factor that becomes relevant is whether an interaction takes place within a certain group or whether strangers or people that are not part of this group are involved. Park (1979, p. 81-82), for example, points to the fact that Koreans tend to display a different conduct, depending on who is involved in the respective interaction:

Koreans tend to be indifferent towards outgroups or strangers. [...] When they interact within ingroups, they are friendly and courteous, but you get a completely different impression of those you meet in the street. [...] The old-age cliché, ‘Koreans

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<sup>30</sup> As stated in the reference consulted: *esteja articulada à dimensão social da língua em uso e a incorporação, à dimensão cognitiva das intencionalidades e das expectativas dos sujeitos.*

are the most courteous people in the East', is rather rightly applied only to interpersonal interaction among ingroups or hierarchical groups. Koreans tend to be impolite or even rude when they interact with outgroups like outsiders or strangers.

Still with regards to the notion of in-group and out-group, Tajfel (1982) claims that people generally show the tendency to consider themselves and their groups and communities as positive, with the objective of creating feelings of pride and self-esteem, whereas the simultaneous negative classification of strangers or people who are not part of their own group(s) serves the purpose of differentiation from them. In fact, forming groups seems to be an inherent human characteristic, be it in the context of friends, sports or politics, amongst others. However, this demarcation of "the others" can lead to the development of certain stereotypes which can influence intercultural communication in a negative way.

As Bove *et al.* (2014, p. 8) argue, "while linking certain characteristics to different cultures serves as a useful guide in understanding relations and linguistic communication, such categorizations may lead to some level of stereotyping and overgeneralization". Referring to the intercultural context of the present research, this means that it can be useful to take into account certain general characteristics of the German and Brazilian cultures. However, we need to ensure not to oversimplify these particularities to avoid creating negative or positive stereotypes which would distort our interpretation of classroom interaction.

In conclusion, this section illustrated examples of how differently language works and how cultural differences can lead to misunderstandings or (im)politeness in intercultural interactions. By exemplifying the findings of existing studies, we

also showed that the use of language is subject to the underlying negative or positive evaluations that are attributed to it by the involved interactants. In fact, this outline merely gives us an idea of how diverse these differences can possibly manifest themselves in intercultural communication and what challenges the participants might be confronted with during interaction. As Bove *et al.* (2014, p. 47) point out, “the likelihood of miscommunication increases greatly when the speaker and the hearer come from different cultures and may have different expected norms”.

This in turn illustrates the importance of familiarising the learners of additional languages with the cultural conventions and the appropriate use of the target language in order to avoid misunderstandings in future interactions. As Wierzbicka (2003, p. ix) confirms, “the tremendous practical importance of identifying, and describing, the culture-specific norms of ‘politeness’ and, more generally, norms of interpersonal interaction, has been increasingly recognised by the field of language teaching”.

#### **1.4.4 (Im)politeness in the context of additional language teaching**

In light of the previous discussion, the question arises as to how politeness and impoliteness should and might be approached in additional language teaching, which constitutes the context of the present research. Bella *et al.* (2015, p. 23) highlight that

the need to teach politeness holds particularly true in the context of teaching foreign languages since, unlike native speakers who may be socialised into politeness in their native language, learners of foreign languages need to learn how to

express themselves in a polite way. In such contexts, the danger of becoming unwittingly impolite or interpreting others' behaviour as impolite increases.

Another reason to actively address (im)politeness in the additional language classroom is the fact that “pragmatic functions and relevant contextual factors are often not salient to learners and so not likely to be noticed despite prolonged exposure”, as stressed by Kasper and Rose (2002, p. 237). Furthermore, Brandão (2016) recognises the importance of including issues related to the subject of politeness into teaching material for students of Portuguese as an additional language in order to improve their interactional competence<sup>31</sup>. This need emerges from the risk of encountering misunderstandings or even conflictive situations which occur during intercultural interactions (*ibid*).

Thus, according to Brandão (*ibid*), students need to be sensitised to pragmatic aspects when using the target language, which also includes the adequate use of politeness strategies and the knowledge of the effects they cause amongst the interlocutors. In order to do that, teachers should give their students a clear understanding of what can be considered polite interaction by introducing situations that realistically reflect typical daily interactions in Brazil, as this would enable them to become familiar with the appropriate and, thus, polite use of

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<sup>31</sup> We adopt the perspective of Young (2008, 2011) who explains that interactional competence can be achieved through the co-construction of meaning, which is in turn based on the mutual contributions of and the constant negotiations between the participants that are involved in discursive practices. According to the author, the acquisition of such competence in the additional language classroom can be promoted through the use of practice-specific activities.

language in specific situations and consequently prepare them for future interactions (*ibid*).

This position is in agreement with various researchers working in the field of additional language acquisition, who hold the view that the teaching of politeness comes under a “broader sociopragmatic competence, that is, the ability to use language to achieve sociopragmatic purposes and to understand language in context” and therefore recommend making use of data taken from real-life interactions in classroom (BELLA *et al*, 2015, p. 45, referring to works of IFANTIDOU and TZANNE, 2012, amongst others).

It can be assumed that addressing subjects which deal with (im)polite behavior does not necessarily require an existing advanced proficiency level. Starting already at lower levels and thereby taking into consideration the current performance, learners can be introduced gradually to topics related to adequate, polite forms in the target language. Bella *et al.* (2015, p. 36) point out that the “teaching of pragmatics, in general, and of politeness, in particular, should be introduced at the earlier stages of language learning and go hand-in-hand with the learners’ grammatical development”.

Referring to the context of teaching Portuguese as an additional language in Brazil and thinking of an example of a classroom activity that could serve to reinforce a theoretical introduction about polite conduct, one option might be to carry out a role play in which the students, acting in the roles of host and guest, simulate an interaction during a private dinner in Brazil. This example could not only address specific questions as to the adequate linguistic forms that are typically used during this specific occasion, but also involve other relevant

aspects, such as whether it is recommended for the guest to arrive late or what kind of present would be considered appropriate by the host, amongst others.

Another interesting example is provided by Rieger (2015) who worked on the topic of (im)politeness in the context of teaching German as an additional language at a Canadian university. In her research (*ibid*), the author presented a short video-clip to a group of advanced learners which was about an interaction during the G8-Summit in St. Petersburg, Russia in 2006, between the former US President George W. Bush and German Chancellor Angela Merkel<sup>32</sup>.

Based on this video-clip, a number of tasks were elaborated to approach the subject of (im)politeness. A first activity which served to introduce the topic consisted of a short discussion of questions such as “Do you consider texting in the presence of others (im)polite?” (*ibid*, p. 87). After, the students were shown the aforementioned video-clip and were prompted to write anonymous comments about it. Finally, they were asked

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<sup>32</sup> Data taken from the video-clip called “Bush Creeps Out German Chancellor, Controversial Footage”, available on [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com). Rieger (2015, p. 89) summarises the video-clip as follows: “At the G8 Summit in St. Peterburg, Russia in 2006, the then U.S. President George W. Bush gave German Chancellor Angela Merkel a quick and unexpected shoulder rub. The incident happened during a closed-door meeting, or rather what appears to have been a break, and lasted less than five seconds (..) The clip (..) shows a small round table at which some of the chairs are empty. The camera captured three individuals sitting at this table: Chancellor Merkel, with the Italian Prime Minister Prodi to her right, and to his right the President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso. President Bush appears to be returning to his seat located somewhere to the left of Merkel, who now seems to be talking to Prodi. She then catches sight of Bush, who is approaching her from behind. In passing, Bush pauses, puts both hands on Merkel’s shoulders and kneads them briefly. She hunches her shoulders instantly and, in a quick motion, raises her arms with her hands forming loose fists. At that point, Bush lets go of her shoulders and moves on. It looks if Chancellor Merkel’s face is displaying a tight grimace during the brief incident”.

to write down their reflections with regards to a list of comments on the same video-clip that had been posted online by users of different internet forums.

These activities were eventually completed with a written test that was applied some weeks after the lesson. Reflecting on the latter activity, Rieger (*ibid*, p. 100-101) describes a variety of aspects that proved to be relevant for the students' descriptions of the interaction:

Their evaluations of Bush and Merkel's behaviour point to a number of factors that influence their judgement, such as the gender, relationship, cultural background, position or function of the interactants, the context of the interaction, the degree of (in)formality, the intentions of the actors, etc.

As can be seen from the excerpt, the students apparently became aware of a variety of factors that are involved when it comes to the question of what can be considered (im)polite actions, which is also reflected in another comment of the author (*ibid*, p. 79) that describes the outcome of the applied activities:

By learning to pay attention to the pivotal role socio-cultural and socio-pragmatic aspects play in the perception and interaction of interactional behaviour, the learners in this study appear to achieve an enhanced awareness of the complexity and the omnipresent nature of (im)politeness in (intercultural) encounters. Most importantly, they grasped that it is the interpretation of the use of verbal and non-verbal behaviour in a specific socio-cultural context that is (im)polite, not the (non)verbal behaviour itself.

To conclude, we can once more emphasise the importance of raising issues in additional language learning with

regards to adequate and, thus, polite conduct in the interaction with people from other cultures. In accordance with Brandão (*ibid*, p. 656), these efforts are all aimed at empowering students to understand and realise appropriate strategies that allow them “to adapt their discourse to the practices of using language according to the context”<sup>33</sup>.

### 1.4.5 New impulses in (im)politeness research

Based on the multifaceted critiques to the politeness theories that existed up to that point, principally with regards to the model of Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987), various researchers began to contribute to the further development of the field, either by trying to adapt existing models or by elaborating new approaches.

A major criticism was that the existing models were too abstract and rigid, which allowed little or no flexibility to the interpretation of (im)politeness. A number of researchers claim that politeness does not follow imposed patterns and instead surges during interaction, which in turn demands the need to include contextual factors. Contrary to Brown and Levinson’s speaker-centered model, Gumperz (1982, p. 1) emphasises that “communication is a social activity requiring the coordinated efforts of two or more individuals”, thereby putting the mutual contributions of the interactants into the center of his interactional approach. The author (*ibid*, p. 3) furthermore argues that

a general theory of discourse strategies must (...) gain by specifying the linguistic and socio-cultural knowledge that needs

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<sup>33</sup> As stated in the consulted reference: para adequar seu discurso às práticas de uso da língua de acordo com o contexto.

to be shared if conversational involvement is to be maintained, and then go on to deal with what it is about the nature of conversational inference that makes for cultural, sub-cultural and situational specificity of interpretation.

One can well imagine the consequences that the missing “linguistic and socio-cultural knowledge” mentioned by Gumperz (*ibid*) entails during intercultural interaction, considering the “cultural differences” and “shocks” that exist in today’s world which were mentioned earlier in this work (MENDES, 2012, p. 359-360). In this respect, Haugh (2013) points to the unfamiliarity of the interactants and their difficulties to understand the moral foundations of other cultures, which in turn constitute the basis upon which people evaluate the behavior of others. As Kádár and Haugh (2017, p. 605) highlight,

the complication in the case of intercultural encounters is that the moral grounds for such evaluations cannot be readily presumed by participants, but must inevitably be negotiated across multiple perspectives. To negotiate such understandings does not mean, however, that participants invariably reach the same understanding.

Thus, it is by constantly renegotiating the referenced values that participants manage their way through intercultural interaction. However, different understandings and evaluations can result in what is then perceived as inappropriate or impolite. This once again underlines the necessity of including the interpretations of the involved interactants in order to better understand why certain situations were perceived as (im)polite or out of place during an interaction. Another aspect that has gained importance in more recent (im)politeness studies refers

to the emotional aspects that come into play during interaction. Culpeper (2011, p. 60) argues that

displaying emotions such as contempt or anger has nothing in itself to do with impoliteness. However, somebody displaying great contempt for and anger at someone and doing so publicly may be judged (...) to have acted in an inappropriately and unfairly hurtful way (...) causing an emotional reaction such as embarrassment or anger.

In other words, it is the act of showing strong emotions and the emotional effects that are triggered on parts of the interlocutor(s) that are relevant when it comes to the evaluation of (im)politeness (*ibid*). In a similar way, Langlotz and Locher (2017, p. 294) point out that the latter aspect, i.e. the emotional reactions of the interlocutors, is “more fundamentally concerned with theorising how emotions cognitively contribute to relational understandings”. In this regard, Spencer-Oatey (2005), in her work on rapport management, illustrates how certain emotional reactions such as joy or anger, amongst others, play an important part on the ongoing renegotiation of the faces of the interactants.

Another important point in relation to human cognition and the role it assumes in interaction is described by Damasio (1994, 2003). The author (*ibid*) showed that previously made experiences have a considerable impact on how humans evaluate similar situations and, thus, also influence the cognitive processes that are involved in taking decisions. To illustrate that, we merely need to recall particular events or experiences in our lives which evoke certain positive or negative emotions. The prior experiences are connected to these emotions and, thus, will have an impact on our actions in similar situations (*ibid*).

Moreover, Langlotz and Locher (2017, p. 302) argue that “cognition is also important for memorising and activating pre-established knowledge about appropriate context-specific behaviours, including situationally appropriate emotional behaviours”.

Summing up, it can be said that emotional aspects as intrinsic components of interaction assume an important role with regards to the understanding of (im)politeness, in the way that they affect the constant negotiation of the faces of the interactants. In addition, they also influence the way that we process and memorise experiences and activate existing knowledge upon which we create certain expectations and interpretations and take decisions, be it consciously or unconsciously.

Referring back to the initially mentioned criticism with regards to Brown and Levinson’s model (1987), Bowe *et al.* (2014) claim that this critique was the reason for several scholars including Eelen (2001) and Watts *et al.* (1992), amongst others, to distinguish between what they call “first-order politeness”, which refers to the notion of politeness as it is commonly used in everyday language and perceived by members of certain communities, and “second-order politeness”, which relates to a more scientific concept of politeness as it is represented in the existing models.

Watts *et al.* (1992) and Watts (2003) highlight the importance of first-order politeness in order to move away from the idea of a cultural homogeneity and instead take into account the cultural varieties and their implications that need to be considered when it comes to the interpretation of (im)politeness. At the same time, the authors (*ibid*) judge second-order politeness to be of significance, in the way that it gives theoretical support to

interpret the observed interactions. In a similar way, Eelen (2001) points out that most existing theories on politeness lack this distinction: although all models somehow or another present this differentiation, even implicitly, very little attention is paid to the consequences this entails.

The referenced author (*ibid*, p. 80) provides evidence in support of his claim by referring to Brown and Levinson's framework (1987), in which "politeness consists of specific ways of handling FTAs in specific social contexts". Eelen (*ibid*) argues that the FTAs in the referenced model constitute scientific notions which are unconditionally converted into common-sense notions which supposedly reflect politeness and impoliteness as they are perceived by humans in real interaction. Thus, due to the missing distinction, both first- and second-order politeness become the same thing (*ibid*).

Furthermore, Eelen (*ibid*, p. 76) illustrates the importance of first- and second-order politeness and yet again points to the necessity to distinguish between both notions:

The presence of both sides of the distinction in each and every account further suggests that both are intrinsic and thus inevitable aspects of scientific accounts. They are inseparably interconnected, so that any theory necessarily incorporates aspects of both, and an unequivocally one-sided position is in practice impossible [...] At each point in the analysis one must remain thoroughly aware of the position of one's concepts in relation to the distinction, and the possible conclusions or next steps this position warrants. [...] In practice, such an awareness thus takes on the form of making explicit what in most current approaches is left implicit.

Thus, the author (*ibid*, p. 81) reiterates that it is only by making a clear distinction between both notions that "the two

are effectively separated and their relationship problematized. A line is drawn between them which can no longer be crossed unquestioningly”. The call of the aforementioned authors seems prudent, since the existing models did not take into account – or only to a limited extent – cultural differences and the implications these entail when it comes to the understanding and interpretation of (im)politeness. Instead, they constitute artificial scientific notions in which real human interaction is interpreted as (im)polite.

Grainger and Mills (2016, p. 8) also argue that it was the dissatisfaction of various authors with the model of Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) that ultimately led to the development of an alternative way of analysing politeness, i.e., the “discursive approach”. The authors (*ibid*) claim that there is no single discursive approach, as the term rather refers to what can be considered a wider discursive framework in which a number of scholars conduct their investigations.

Grainger and Mills (2016, p. 8-9), who investigated the relationship between (in)directness and (im)politeness in different contexts, draw upon the discursive approach which they describe as follows:

Instead of making universal statements about politeness use, and developing a global model for the analysis of politeness, the discursive approach focuses on the way that context, resources and social forces/ideologies determine the possible meanings and interpretations of politeness. These are the elements which, in fact, determine whether an utterance is considered by interactants to be polite or impolite. Politeness and impoliteness are only those that are judged by interactants to be so, but interactants do not make these judgements in a vacuum. [...] The discursive approach focuses on the analysis of language use as such, just as traditional approaches have, but

interpretation, judgement and context are considered crucial, and it is not assumed that politeness resides within individual language items or speech acts.

Various researchers that apply the discursive approach supply evidence that speech acts *per se* are not (im)polite and instead merely comprise the potential to be interpreted as such. Mills (2003), for example, who investigated family interactions, reports that supposedly impolite utterances are not necessarily interpreted in this way, which the referenced author explains by the fact that the family members might prefer to wilfully desist from interpreting a certain interaction as impolite in order to maintain peace in the family.

In a similar way, Bousfield (2008) reports that traffic wardens, although being confronted with frequent and explicitly impolite actions voiced by the transport users, usually do not respond to these offences. The author (*ibid*) attributes this to the fact that they interpret these aggressions to be directed against the institution they work for rather than against themselves. As both examples clearly illustrate, an interaction can only be evaluated “impolite” if it is perceived as such by the participants, which in turn underlines the necessity to include the involved interactants and their interpretations.

Aside from first-order politeness, it is second-order politeness that constitutes an integral component of the discursive approach to (im)politeness, as mentioned previously. However, the latter does not refer to any of the politeness models that are represented in traditional (im)politeness studies, it rather relates to the technical process of dismantling the sequences of the utterances of an interaction (GRAINGER; MILLS, 2016). This type of analysis is based on the assumption that interac-

tion and thus meaning are mutually and gradually constructed by the interactants, which in turn allows for the analytical process of deconstructing a conversation in order to unfold the meaning of the utterances (*ibid*).

Grainger and Mills (*ibid*) state that various researchers have made use of this distinctive methodology in the last decade, amongst them Arundale (2010), Culpeper (2011) and Grainger (2011). It seems logical that by taking into consideration both the participants' interpretations and the sequential analysis of the interaction, the discursive approach can help to provide a more comprehensive understanding of interactions.

Furthermore, the referenced authors (2016, p. 11) explain that the discursive approach can provide insight into linguistic ideologies, which they define as "beliefs about language that entail evaluations, both positive and negative, about particular language styles or use". In that respect, the perception of what is (im)polite is influenced by these ideologies, which can vary significantly from one group or community to another (*ibid*). Moreover, it is important to keep in mind that specific groups identify certain values with particular linguistic styles: in British English, for example, politeness is mainly identified with deference, respect and the use of indirectness, which are typically attributed to the English middle-class (*ibid*). However, people from the working-class may give preference to social manners that could rather be described as direct forms of communication (*ibid*).

As to the evaluation of (in)directness in interaction, the authors (*ibid*) highlight the importance of considering the identities and roles that the interactants may assume in a particular context. Moreover, they draw attention to the fact that linguis-

tic actions are subject to the power relations between the interactants and the status they have in relation to each other (*ibid*).

In that respect, Scott (1990) showed that more powerful interactants tend to use more direct language to those that are subordinate to them, whereas the former are more likely to use indirect forms to those they regard as of equal. However, the fact that status and power relations as well as social distance are already considered to be of relevance for interaction in early politeness theories such as of Leech (1983), Brown and Levinson (1987) and Fraser and Nolan (1981), amongst others, once again indicates their importance for the evaluation of interaction.

In addition, it seems obvious that any evaluation of (in)directness needs to take into consideration contextual factors in order to avoid drawing wrong conclusions and instead allowing for a best possible analysis. Grainger and Mills (2016, p. 13) point out that “it depends on which particular context individuals are in, and which particular type of identity and role they are foregrounding at that particular moment”.

Therefore, based on the assumption that interaction and thus meaning are mutually constructed and negotiated by the participants during interaction, we adopt for the data analysis of the present study the discursive interactional approach (GRAINGER; MILLS, 2016) in order to account for the consideration of both first- and second-order politeness.

Thus, by merging the interpretations of the interactants (first-order politeness) on the one hand and the scientific assessment of the analyst with regards to the linguistic construction (second-order politeness) on the other, we aim at achieving the best possible interpretation and understanding of (im)polite interaction.



## 2. ON DIRECTNESS AND INDIRECTNESS<sup>34</sup>

### 2.1 DIRECTNESS AND ITS INTERFACES WITH (IM)POLITENESS

According to Bowe *et al.* (2014), preferences with regards to the use of direct and indirect messages are guided by cultural conventions and the situational context of an interaction. In fact, “cultures and contexts provide varying expectations as to how speakers use and interpret linguistic signs” (*ibid.*, p. 25), which leads us to believe that in intercultural communication the differences in the use of direct and indirect forms are likely to provoke misunderstandings or impoliteness that affect interaction.

This chapter aims at discussing the notions of directness and indirectness against the background of distinct cultural contexts, thereby taking into account different definitions and conceptualisations of these terms that can be found in existing works. In doing so, we also strive to achieve a better understanding of what factors motivate the use of the referenced forms and what effects these divergences can entail in the interpretation of intercultural interaction.

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<sup>34</sup> As already mentioned, the investigation of directness and indirectness established in this chapter is based on the framework of Grainger and Mills (2016), which served as a starting point for the discussion of the referenced notions.

### 2.1.1 Defining directness

According to Grainger and Mills (2016), the term “directness”, which is frequently considered to be the mere counterpart of “indirectness”, lacks a clear definition by researchers, for they believe it to consist of utterances which require no inferential effort by the interlocutor to understand their propositional content. However, this generalisation implies a number of problems such as the risk of a far too simplistic attribution of linguistic patterns or linguistic styles to different languages (*ibid*). In fact, the delimitation of the notion of directness does not seem to be as straightforward as it might appear.

According to the Cambridge Dictionary<sup>35</sup>, “directness” is defined as “a very honest way of saying what you mean” and described as “the quality of saying what you think in a very honest way, without worrying about other people’s opinions”. Whereas both definitions characterise directness as the act of communicating in a truthful and honest way, the latter points to possible impolite effects this might imply. In contrast, the definition<sup>36</sup> of its German equivalent *Direktheit* denotes a “blunt, very clear utterance” and points to the “unambiguous clarity” in which things are communicated. It should be mentioned that the German dictionary illustrates the use of the referenced term with the example “her directness is often offensive”<sup>37</sup> and, thus, similar to its definition in English, indicates the negative effects that directness might imply. In comparison, the adjective “direct” in Brazilian Portuguese refers to something “that

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<sup>35</sup> Source: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/directness>.

<sup>36</sup>From the original: unverblümte, sehr deutliche Äußerung; unmissverständliche Deutlichkeit. Source: <https://www.duden.de/rechtschreibung/Direktheit>.

<sup>37</sup>From the original: ihre Direktheiten sind oft beleidigend. Taken from: <https://www.duden.de/rechtschreibung/Direktheit>.

goes in one direction without deviating” or that is “said frankly”<sup>38</sup>.

Various authors strive to narrow down the referenced term from a linguistic perspective. In an attempt to define directness, Yule (2006) uses a simple tripartite classification of utterances and assigns clear functions to these. According to the author (*ibid*), interrogative structures function as questions, imperative structures serve as commands (as well as requests) and declarative structures as statements. In the event that one of these structures carries out a function other than the one assigned to it, it would consequently cause the utterance to assume an indirect form (*ibid*).

As an example, we could think of the question “Who knows?” asked by a teacher to reinforce a question to the students in the classroom. However, “Who knows?” can also be used in a rhetorical way to emphasise that a certain issue can not (yet) be answered, for example. Thus, in the latter case, this question would take on a different function than the one originally allocated to it and thus constitute an indirect form, according to Yule’s (*ibid*) definition. In this respect, we can assume that the referenced rhetorical effect is created through the use of a different pitch of the voice and/or by means of a certain body language, such as the shrugging of the shoulders or a facial expression, amongst others.

This example indicates that it is through the interplay of verbal, para-verbal language and non-verbal elements that meaning is constructed. Thus, it is the interaction of the referenced factors that not only influences if an utterance can be

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<sup>38</sup>From the original: que vai numa direção sem desviar o rumo; dito com franqueza. Source: <http://michaelis.uol.com.br/busca?r=0&f=0&t=0&palavra=direto>.

considered as direct or indirect, it also indicates if what is said is meant in a polite or impolite way.

Moreover, it needs to be mentioned that there seems to be an obvious discrepancy between the linguistic definitions presented by the aforementioned authors and the rather common understanding of (in)directness as it is reflected in the referenced dictionaries. In fact, the described complexity becomes more evident when we take a closer look at the relation between directness and (im)politeness. Thus, in the following, we will discuss the factors that come into play with regards to the use and the evaluation of direct forms in intercultural communication.

### **2.1.2 Manifestations of direct forms that tend to be assessed favourably**

In this section, we will investigate the reason why for certain cultural groups and communities more direct forms of expression constitute the preferred way to communicate, whereas the opposite seems to hold true for the use of indirect forms. In this respect, we will put particular emphasis on how directness manifests itself and how it is interpreted by others in the respective contexts.

According to Wierzbicka (1985), Polish people are often perceived as rather direct and impolite by other cultural groups, given that they preferably use imperative and performative verbs to express advice or to give directives. The author (*ibid*) mentions another interesting point, which is that the referenced characteristic in Polish language use does not seem to comply with what Brown and Levinson (1978) describe as the “freedom from imposition”, a principle that is applied universally in human interaction, according to the authors.

Van Dijk (1997) claims that in Polish culture direct forms of expression serve to show social closeness towards the interlocutors and are often used to express certain feelings or to agree or disagree with others. Thus, it is by means of bald on record utterances, expressed through a large variety of linguistic means such as exclamatory phrases, for example, that affection and social proximity are expressed (*ibid*).

As described by the authors in the above examples, directness in Polish is reflected in certain linguistic forms such as directives or imperatives, amongst others, which seem to be an inherent characteristic of the language. We can imagine that the use of these direct forms, which serve to create positive effects on parts of the interlocutors, can cause adverse impacts in intercultural interaction with people from cultures that give preference to rather indirect forms, in the way that the latter can perceive the directness of their interlocutors as an imposition (cf. BROWN; LEVINSON, 1978).

Similar to Polish culture, particular groups of English people, such as the working class, apparently prefer to communicate using direct forms (HILL, 2008). The referenced author (*ibid*) attributes this to the fact that those people assign positive attributes like solidarity to a direct linguistic style: using direct forms means being part of the same social group; at the same time, it can indicate that the interactants belong to the same social class and, thus, they draw the line between them and other classes within the same culture (*ibid*). In other words, belonging to a certain group, which simultaneously involves the demarcation to other groups and social classes, as described by Hill (*ibid*), refers to what Tajfel (1982) characterises as differen-

tiation between in-group and out-group, as mentioned earlier in this work.

Moreover, the contribution of Hill (2008) illustrates that the link between (in)direct and (im)polite forms in the English language is evidently not as clear-cut as it was suggested in earlier politeness studies such as those of Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987), for example. Rather, the assumption of the latter authors (*ibid*) that the more direct an utterance, the more impolite it can be considered can once more be refuted and must instead give way to an understanding and interpretation of interaction that involves the cultural peculiarities of certain groups and communities.

A number of studies were conducted on the Hebrew language, more specifically on a certain language style in Israeli Sabra culture called *dugri*<sup>39</sup>, which was created at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and represents a very direct way of speaking (KATRIEL, 1986). According to the referenced author (*ibid*), Jewish settlers in Israel developed the referenced style to contrast European norms which they considered to be deteriorated, and to distance themselves from European societies whose hierarchical structures they rejected. To call someone *dugri* signifies in Hebrew “that the speaker tends to be direct and straightforward in expressing his non-complimentary thoughts or opinions” (*ibid*, p. 15).

Furthermore, Katriel (1986) claims that while Hebrew language itself can be characterised as very direct, the *dugri* style constitutes a style shift to an even more direct way of speaking that is often used spontaneously in order to indicate values like

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<sup>39</sup> The Hebrew term *dugri* corresponds with the English “straight”.

candour and sincerity to an interlocutor within the community. At the same time, it serves to outweigh those inequalities which could be based on role, class, status, sex or other factors and, thus, establishes an equal connection between the interactants, free of any kind of presumptuousness (*ibid*).

As the same author continues to argue (*ibid*, p. 11), “*dugri* speech in Hebrew involves a conscious suspension of face concerns so as to allow free expression of the speaker’s thoughts, opinions or preferences that might pose a threat to the addressee”. This means that by consciously omitting any effort of face work towards their interlocutors, the interactants find themselves in a temporary state of strong intimacy where none can be offended, irrespective of what is being said, which consequently makes it impossible to use the *dugri* speech style with strangers who would very likely be insulted (*ibid*).

The referenced author (*ibid*) draws attention to an interesting aspect that the described linguistic style involves, which is the possibility to freely express oneself without having to consider the face wants and needs of the interlocutor. Thus, it is through the suspension of all concerns that are related to the face of another person that the interlocutors can eliminate possible inequalities and put themselves in a temporary state of equality that enables them to interact without any restrictions and at the same time express their mutual respect and appreciation.

Similar to Katriel (*ibid*), Schiffrin (1984) points to the fact that, in general, Jewish culture values vivid disagreement and argument as a form of showing interest in an involvement with others during interaction. This, however, contradicts Leech’s (1983) assumption that sympathy is a universally valid

principle which describes that even in situations of dispute or disagreement the interactants show efforts to make positive statements and try to be cooperative towards others.

Focussing on specific types of utterances, Wierzbicka (2003) discovered that in Hebrew, just as in various other languages such as Russian or Italian, the use of interrogative structures in directives was much less frequent when compared to other languages such as Japanese or English. In the specific context of asking for directions, for example, a question in the English language would typically be formulated with the words “Can/could you tell me...”, which is preceded by the typical “Excuse me...”, whereas in Hebrew the standard request would usually be a direct request such as “Where is the railway station?” (BLUM-KULKA, 1982, p. 46).

A number of studies have been conducted on German language. One of them is presented by Carvalho and Trevisan (2003) who analysed interviews with Brazilian and German co-workers of a multinational company: their investigation revealed that the more direct and objective conversational style of the Germans was interpreted as serious and even tense by the Brazilian co-workers, while the more indirect conversational style of the Brazilians was characterised as facetious and more affectionate by their German colleagues. Another interesting contribution is made by House (2000) who reports that Germans in general have a lower tendency to use conversational routines and are instead rather focused on content- and task-related issues in conversations.

However, from my own experience I can tell that the rather “frank” way to communicate that I was exposed to as a German was not always met with approval in Brazil: I had to

learn that refusing an invitation with the simple words “Thanks, but I won’t have time” or expressing criticism in a more direct way (even towards close friends) are not appreciated at all in Brazilian culture. Moreover, I remember asking myself many times why Brazilians often express themselves in a rather vague manner instead of saying things clearly. In this respect, I was once told that most Brazilians would usually prefer to “beat about the bush” instead of giving a clear “no”, which could very likely be interpreted as rude by the interlocutor.

In summary, it is possible to say that directness manifests itself in a number of different ways and that its use is culture-dependent. As it is reflected in the aforementioned examples, directness can express positive values such as proximity and affection, solidarity, honesty, interest and involvement, sincerity and respect, and also serve to outweigh inequities between the participants that might be involved in an interaction, amongst other aspects.

However, as it will become more evident in the following section of this work, direct forms are not always perceived positively by others. Based on the findings of various studies, we will investigate under which circumstances and in which contexts the use of direct forms can be evaluated in a negative way.

### **2.1.3 Manifestations of direct forms that tend to be assessed unfavourably**

In their model of politeness, Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) equate directness with what they categorise as “bald on-record” strategies, which are utterances that are voiced without any mitigating elements. In other words, utterances that are in

compliance with the Maxims of Grice (2006 [1975]) described earlier in this work are considered direct by the authors (*ibid*).

Brown and Levinson (*ibid*) claim that any interaction which is based on Grice's principles represents a rational way of communicating and is factually impolite; in other words, direct speech acts that are expressed without any mitigating elements represent FTAs and, thus, are intrinsically impolite. In comparison, politeness is considered by the authors (*ibid*, p. 100) as "a major source of deviation from (...) rational efficiency". This deviation is frequently realised by the use of indirect forms which mitigate the FTAs and, thus, create effects of politeness (*ibid*).

A number of scholars have contributed to the notion of directness and describe contexts in which direct forms are apparently perceived in a rather negative way. In his book *How Rude! The Teenager's Guide to Good Manners, Proper Behavior and Not Grossing People Out*, Packer (1997) points out that in North American culture, direct forms of expressions that are considered as true and sincere by teenagers are perceived as selfish and egoistic by elderly people. The referenced example indicates that age differences can also constitute a factor that influences how differently people assign certain values to direct forms.

The distinct use and evaluation of direct forms described in the above example might merely constitute one aspect of a long-time existing ideology which holds that "different generations talk and behave differently as far as (im)politeness is concerned" (KIENPOINTNER; STOPFNER, 2017, p. 73). This ideology which the authors (*ibid*, p. 73) call "ageism", describes "that young people become ever more rude, or, vice versa, that old people are distrustful, grumpy, morose and lack a sense of

humour”. The referenced stereotypes are reflected in the literature from antiquity to modern times (*ibid*).

Another parameter that comes into question of how directness is perceived and which values are attributed to it is the gender factor. In this respect, it is generally considered that men show the tendency to use direct forms of speech, as opposed to women who preferably use more indirect forms. However, this stereotypical paradigm of gendered masculine and feminine speech and the attribution of direct or indirect conversational styles to either men or women has to be considered carefully.

Ladegaard (2012) discovered in his research that women managers working in the city of Hong Kong use a rather masculine conversational style to assert themselves when interacting with subordinates, by means of a facetious and strong humour, for example. Saito (2011), for his part, reports that female and male managers in Japan rely on both feminine and masculine styles in interactions with employees in order to resolve conflicting situations in the workplace. Thus, interactional styles should or rather can not be considered an intrinsic characteristic of the language use of men or women, given that they can be adopted by the other sex in order to serve a certain purpose such as to wield power, as indicated in the above examples<sup>40</sup>.

Moving forward in our discussion with regards to the different contexts in which the use of direct forms can be seen in a rather negative way, Coren (2012) illustrates in an amusing way how the use of indirectness can be associated with the

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<sup>40</sup> It should be pointed out that in our view the term “gender” transcends the mere binary perspective of masculine/feminine and instead incorporates the diversity of different genders.

British middle-class, whereas direct forms are related to the lower classes. In his narrative, the author (*ibid*, p. 137) shows an excerpt of a short talk between himself and his mother which refers to the context of asking for food:

Don't reach, ask. Or better still, wait to be offered. My mother said that in nice houses nobody ever asks for anything, such as salt or pepper or more squash. You just sit there and wait till it's offered. 'But what if nobody offers?' I would ask. 'Then they are very rude' she would reply... 'But you may be desperate for a drink' I would reply. 'In which case apparently, you were to say to the person next to you 'May I pass you anything?' to which they would reply 'No thank you. May I pass YOU anything?' And then you would ask if it wasn't too much trouble to beg a little water.

According to Coren (*ibid*), the excerpt exhibits certain indirect forms that are considered as appropriate in English middle-class society for requesting food at the table. The indirectness thereby consists in the offer to pass something to the person sitting by one's side at the table; triggered by this request, this person would then return the initial offer by asking the same question (*ibid*). However, this example from the context of table manners in English middle-class society stands in opposition to the more direct forms used by lower class groups and communities in similar situations (*ibid*).

Whereas the above excerpt represents a rather entertaining example that illustrates the appropriate indirectness that is expected in middle and higher classes, Mills (2003, p. 149) points to a serious aspect that this representation of supposedly correct and adequate conduct entails:

Because politeness is often associated with ‘civility’, ‘courtesy’, ‘good manners’, ‘good breeding’, and ‘a good upbringing’, all qualities associated stereotypically with the white, upper and middle classes, it is not surprising therefore that working-class people and Black people are characterised as impolite.

Kienpointner and Stopfner (2017, p. 69) claim that this so-called “classicism” leads to a simplification and “(over)generalises a view of the alleged (im)politeness of social groups on the basis of social norms, where the norms of dominant groups usually prevail”.

The preceding discussion has shown that more direct forms of communication can be evaluated as selfish, inappropriate and impolite, amongst others, as it is reflected in the examples and investigations provided. In sum, the discussion illustrates once again that the positive or negative evaluations of directness and indirectness are based on the distinct values that are attributed to these forms by the people that are involved in the interaction.

## **2.2 INDIRECTNESS AND ITS INTERFACES WITH (IM)POLITENESS**

As Grainger and Mills (2016, p. 45) point out, “to be polite is often taken to involve indirectness, and indirectness is frequently assumed to be motivated by ‘politeness’”. In the following section, we will explore distinct approaches with regards to indirect forms and investigate their theoretical fundamentals in order to reveal the differences between the existing concepts. By involving traditional as well as more contempo-

rary definitions and conceptualisations to indirectness, we aim to establish a comprehensive discussion and, thus, to achieve a profound understanding of the referenced notion.

### 2.2.1 Defining indirectness

According to the Cambridge Dictionary<sup>41</sup>, the term “indirect” can assume different meanings, such as “avoiding clearly mentioning or saying something”, “not following a straight line, or not directly or simply connected” or “not done or communicated in a direct way”. The definition<sup>42</sup> of its German equivalent *indirekt* can be translated as “not through direct expression, influence, interference or the like; via a detour”. Both definitions narrow down the referenced term by relating it to the term “direct” and attribute a rather neutral, non-judgemental character to it. In a similar way, “indirect” in Brazilian Portuguese refers to something “that is not direct” or “ambiguous”<sup>43</sup>.

The frequent use of “direct” and “indirect” and their different linguistic manifestations evidence that they are in fact omnipresent in various contexts of daily life, which is reflected in expressions such as “(in)direct speech”, “(in)direct advantage”, “direct flight”, “direct correlation”, “(in)direct free kick”, “indirect lighting”, “to report directly to somebody”, “to say something (in)directly” or “to be (in)directly involved in something”, amongst many others. The referenced expressions there-

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<sup>41</sup> Source: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/indirect>.

<sup>42</sup> From the original: nicht durch eine unmittelbare Äußerung, Einflussnahme, Einwirkung o. Ä.; über einen Umweg. Source: <https://www.duden.de/rechtschreibung/indirekt>.

<sup>43</sup> From the original: que não é franco; de sentido ambíguo. Source: <http://michaelis.uol.com.br/busca?r=0&f=0&t=0&palavra=indireto>.

by assume different meanings according to the contexts or situations they refer to.

In the following, we will present the contributions and approaches of various scholars and discuss the notion of indirectness from different perspectives. We thereby aim to understand in what contexts and under which circumstances indirect forms appear, thereby paying particular attention to the question of how indirectness can possibly manifest itself in interaction.

## 2.2.2 Indirectness in conventional routine expressions

For a number of scholars, indirect formulations seem to correspond to conventional indirectness, which refers to commonly used “routine” indirect expressions in everyday interaction (GRAINGER; MILLS, 2016). According to the authors (*ibid*), this goes back to the fact that a considerable part of the existing works investigate indirectness solely in relation to requests uttered in the English language, as it is reflected in the works of Leech (1983) and Levinson (1983), amongst others.

In their model of politeness, Brown and Levinson (1987) identify a close link between indirectness and politeness on the one hand, while they see a strong connection between directness and impoliteness on the other. This correlation is reflected through a scale which ranges from what the authors call “bald on-record” utterances that they consider the most direct and, thus, most impolite forms, to the act of going “off-record” which in turn constitutes the most polite form (*ibid*).

However, they identify indirectness as a kind of specific case of negative politeness, which they describe as follows (1987, p. 317):

There is a natural tension in negative politeness, however, between (a) the desire to go on record as a prerequisite to being seen to pay face, and (b) the desire to go off record to avoid imposing. A compromise is reached in conventionalized indirectness, for whatever the indirect mechanism used to do a FTA, once fully conventionalized as a way of doing that FTA it is no longer off record.

Thus, the authors (*ibid*) define indirectness as conventionalised utterances which result from the necessity of both going on and off record at the same time. Furthermore, for Brown and Levinson (*ibid*), off-record strategies are those that violate the conversational maxims established by Grice (2006 [1975]), such as giving hints and being ironic or ambiguous, just to name a few examples. According to this interpretation, we could consider the example “That looks delicious” to indicate a hidden request for food as an off-record strategy rather than a conventionalised (indirect) request.

However, Brown and Levinson’s (*ibid*) interpretation of indirectness has been subject to criticism from other scholars engaging in the subject of (im)politeness. Whereas the referenced authors (*ibid*) regard what they characterise (in)direct as a universal principal, Wierzbicka (2003) takes the point that the conventionalised indirectness represented in Brown and Levinson’s model (*ibid*) refers to linguistic forms that are typically used in English elite circles and therefore can not be applied to other languages. For Wierzbicka (2003, p. 30), indirect forms are an inherent characteristic of the English language:

The heavy restrictions on the use of the imperative in English and the wide range of use of interrogative forms in performing acts other than questions, constitute striking linguistic reflexes of this socio-cultural attitude. In English, the

imperative is mostly used in commands and in orders. Other kinds of directives (i.e., of speech acts through which the speaker attempts to cause the addressee to do something), tend to avoid the imperative or to combine it with an interrogative and/or conditional form.

Moreover, the referenced author (2003, p. 26) argues that “the cultural norms reflected in speech acts differ not only from one language to another, but also from one regional and social variety to another”. This is confirmed by Mills (2012) who states that English people belonging to the so-called working-class might well be aware that indirectness is the preferred form of the middle- and upper-class in the context of making requests. However, they do not use the same indirectness among each other (*ibid*), given that they associate rather negative characteristics such as over-politeness or even a distancing effect with indirect forms (*ibid*). This observation exemplifies once again that the actual use of language is not homogeneous within the same culture and can vary from one community to another, as we have seen earlier in this work.

Furthermore, Grainger and Mills (2016) argue that Brown and Levinson’s interpretation of indirectness seems to be difficult to sustain given that fully conventionalised forms in English make it difficult to describe the intention of the interactants and, thus, the impact their utterances cause in specific situations of interaction. This point bespeaks once again a general problematic of the referenced model: Brown and Levinson (*ibid*) assign specific effects to certain types of utterances and thereby neglect the intentions and interpretations of the interactants as well as the contextual factors that constantly influence interaction.

In concordance with the criticism expressed by the aforementioned authors, we can note that Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987) general assumption that the level of politeness of an utterance gradually increases with the level of indirectness has to be disproved, due to the fact that conventionalised indirect forms are a substantial component of linguistic norms as they are used in the middle- and upper-classes of English society. Thus, their characterisation of indirectness does not consider the linguistic norms of other groups of English speakers, not to mention those of other cultures, so that their model does not constitute a suitable basis for the evaluation of interaction which includes people from backgrounds other than the one considered in their model.

A number of researchers conducted studies with regards to indirect forms, in different languages. Blum-Kulka *et al.* (1989) researched certain indirect utterances in different languages and contrasted them with each other: in their so-called CCSARP<sup>44</sup> research, the authors compared conventional requests in Russian, English, German, Danish and Hebrew languages and then divided these into three different groups of direct, conventionally indirect and non-conventionally indirect utterances.

However, it seems that equating indirectness with conventionally used indirect utterances, as has been done by the aforementioned authors, is an approach that has to be reviewed critically. First, language manifests itself in many different forms; thus, there is no reason to assume that indirectness should only be referred to as conventionally indirect requests. As Wierzbicka

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<sup>44</sup> The abbreviation CCSARP stands for "Cross-Cultural Study of Speech Act Realisation Patterns".

(2003) argues, an order uttered through a conventionally indirect form, in a particular language, can possibly be used for the same purpose and interpreted in a similar manner as if it was uttered by means of an imperative in another language, depending on the corresponding linguistic norms.

Thus, the mere form of an utterance in a particular language does not determine whether it can be generally considered direct or indirect (*ibid*). This observation is further described by the referenced author (2003, p. 10) who argues that

every language is a self-contained system and, in a sense, no words or constructions of one language can have absolute equivalents in another. The idea that there might be some linguistic elements which are universal in the sense of having absolute equivalents in all the languages of the world is of course all the more fanciful.

In this respect, Béal (1990) provides an interesting example which illustrates how the attempt to carry conventionalised formulations from one language to another can cause misinterpretations in intercultural communication: a French employee, who had been working in a company in Australia for a relatively short time, translated the conventional French form *il faut le faire toute suite* literally into English in order to make a request to a secretary. However, his utterance “this has to be done immediately” did not meet the expectations of the addressed person at all, which consequently resulted in a serious misunderstanding (*ibid*). A typical English expression for such request would be “could you possibly do (such and such)?”, as pointed out by Béal (*ibid*).

However, the latter conventional formulation in the English language to make a request would be met with incom-

prehension by Russians: “in English one polite way of getting someone to do something is by asking a yes/no question using either some form of ‘will’ or some form of ‘can’. In other languages, that’s not conventionalised. If you tried it in Russian, the reaction would be ‘What’s this guy trying to do?’” (COMRIE; 1984, p. 282).

As Grainger and Mills (2016, p. 41) argue, “the notion of conventionality in meaning should be abandoned but it should be recognised that the conventional meanings of utterances are restricted to the community in which they are used and should be studied in that context”. In that respect, Terkourafi and Kádár (2017) emphasise another important aspect, which is the fact that conventionalisation needs to be considered a process that is subject to experience. Therefore, “the degree to which an expression is conventionalised relative to a context will depend on who the speaker is and can vary for different speakers, as well as for the same speaker over time” (*ibid*, p. 182).

In summary, we can conclude that the findings of this section call for an investigation of (in)directness which takes into account the linguistic norms of the groups or communities in question to provide us with insight into what the interactants consider (in)appropriate and (in)direct.

### 2.2.3 Indirect forms along a continuum

As we have seen in the preceding discussion, it is difficult to equal indirectness with conventionally used indirect forms. However, there have been attempts from various scholars to determine more precisely what constitutes indirectness by describing indirect forms along a continuum.

One of them is Leech (1983, p. 108) who argues 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”. Thus, the utterance “answer the phone” at one end constitutes a very direct and thus less polite form, while the question “could you possibly answer the phone?” at the other end is very indirect and thus more polite (*ibid*, p. 108).

However, the author (*ibid*, p. 109) also points to the fact that the described correlation does not always apply: the very direct utterance “you *must* have another sandwich!”, for example, can be considered more polite, as it eventually benefits the interlocutor. The more indirect form “would you mind having another sandwich?” might suggest that the interlocutor, by accepting the offer, would do a favour to the speaker (*ibid*). Thus, the referenced example illustrates once again that it is not only the (supposedly more direct or indirect) linguistic form of an utterance that needs to be taken into account when it comes to its evaluation, but also the intentions and the perceptions of the involved interactants as well as contextual factors.

In another research, Blum-Kulka (1987) describes a scale of (in)directness that is based on how different kinds of speech acts were evaluated by native Hebrew and English speakers. The rating of these acts shows that those utterances which express strong sentiments such as, for example, imperatives, were perceived as most direct forms, whereas hints were evaluated as most indirect (*ibid*). However, studies such as Blum-Kulka’s (*ibid*) or the previously quoted CCSARP study by Blum-Kulka *et al.* (1989), who compared how certain requests and apologies were realised by the participants in eight different languages, need to be viewed critically.

The latter study (*ibid*), for example, focused on single utterances in artificially created situations that did not take into account contextual factors. Moreover, the answers were provided by the participants of the study in written form. The applied method, however, neither considers the factors that come into play when we talk about how situations unfold in interaction nor can it reflect how the participants would have reacted spontaneously or how they would have expressed themselves verbally.

In this respect, Spencer-Oatey (2008, p. 31) points to the relevance of the situational context of an interaction, which “can have a very major influence on people’s use of directness-indirectness and this can interact with cultural differences”. In other words, people from different cultural groups might use different direct and/or indirect strategies depending on the type of interaction in question. Therefore, a comparison of different languages that is based on the realisation of utterances in few pre-defined situations reveals little about how and under what circumstances (in)directness manifests itself in interactions that involve different cultures and communities.

In summary, we can say that the referenced contributions and examples that were discussed in this section need to be critically examined with regards to their universal applicability. As Wierzbicka (2003) emphasises, the values that are attributed to certain utterances vary from culture to culture, in the way that language is expressed by means of norms which are culturally defined. Thus, these cultural norms determine how utterances are formulated and interpreted, be it in a more direct or indirect way which, in turn, do not support the idea of a universally valid categorization of (in)directness (*ibid*).

## 2.2.4 On record, off record and indirectness

Besides making efforts to narrow down indirectness on a scale, there have been attempts from a number of authors to describe the referenced notion by relating it to the terms “on-record” and “off-record”, in different ways. Brown and Levinson (1987), for example, consider those utterances to be off-record for which no clear communicative meaning can be attributed, such as hints or ambiguous expressions, just to name a few. By using off-record expressions, the speaker can avoid being held responsible for any possible face threat (*ibid*). However, off-record seems to be distinct from indirect forms of expressions, which Brown and Levinson (*ibid*) equate with negative politeness, more specifically with conventional polite forms.

Grainger and Mills (2016, p. 43) propose an alternative definition in order to differentiate the notions of indirectness and conventional indirectness and suggest to use the term “indirect” in order to describe “utterances that allow for alternative, ‘off record’ interpretations”, whereas conventional indirectness should be referred to as “culturally bound, predictable interpretations of routine expressions”. For the present work, we will adopt the referenced definition of Grainger and Mills (*ibid*), aiming to allow for a more arguable and explicit differentiation of both terms.

The distinction made by the aforementioned authors (*ibid*) apparently assigns certain intrinsic peculiarities to these notions: the term “off record” assumes an open character, in the way that it leaves space for the negotiation of the meaning between the interactants, whereas “conventional indirectness” adopts the character of a kind of interpretive agreement between the involved people, in the sense that the shared knowledge

about a conventionally used indirect form allows for only one unequivocal interpretation.

Still with regards to the different notions of indirectness presented by Grainger and Mills (*ibid*), it needs to be mentioned at this point that it does not always seem to be possible to clearly specify if an utterance can be considered off record or conventionally indirect. An example would be the following short conversation between a vendor (V) of a house and a potential buyer (B) that I observed in the city of Brasília, Brazil, in 2016 (the referenced interaction took place during the first visit of the interested buyer to the property).

B: How much does the house cost?

V: Five hundred thousand reais. Are you interested?

B: Your house is nice. I am also seeing other houses<sup>45</sup>.

Given the ambiguous (off record) character of his answer, it seems that the true intention of the potential buyer can not be inferred with certainty: he may not have liked the house and therefore decided not to buy it. However, for reasons of politeness, he did not show his disapproval and instead gave a positive feedback; it is also conceivable that he liked the property but was not happy with the overcharged price or its poor condition, for example. Again, for reasons of politeness, he might have preferred not to reveal his true opinion. His ambiguous statement may also have been motivated by other reasons that seem less likely than the possible interpretations stated.

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<sup>45</sup> From the original Brazilian Portuguese: B) Qual o valor da casa? V) Quinhentos mil reais. O senhor está interessado? B) A sua casa é ótima. Estou vendo outras casas também.

However, the answer could also constitute a (conventionally indirect) opening statement and, thus, a strategy that is typically used in this specific context to initiate the negotiation process with the vendor. Thus, the example illustrates that it does not always seem to be possible to draw a clear distinction between off record and conventional indirectness. This once again points out the necessity of taking into account the evaluations of the participants in order to allow for a more profound understanding of interaction.

### **2.2.5 Indirect forms and socio-cognitive effort**

Another approach used to determine (in)directness is related to the cognitive effort that is necessary to understand the meaning of an utterance. Sperber and Wilson (1986), for example, express the view that the more cognitive work the interlocutor needs to access the meaning of an utterance, the more indirect it can be regarded. This implies that there are utterances that are understood with little cognitive work, which constitute more direct forms of expressions.

The view of the authors (*ibid*) is based on their so-called relevance theory, which took up the Relation Maxim of Grice (2006 [1975]) and developed it further. A main point of this theory is that human cognition automatically picks up potentially relevant *stimuli* and draws pertinent conclusions from them. As to our discussion of (im)politeness, Sperber and Wilson's work (*ibid*) is relevant not only in the way that it emphasises the importance of considering contextual factors when it comes to the evaluation of interaction, it also draws attention to the necessity of considering different cultural backgrounds and the implications these bring to intercultural interaction, amongst other aspects.

However, the view that the decision-making processes with regards to what is relevant for interaction solely occur in human cognition puts the hearer into the center of attention. The relevance theory of Sperber and Wilson (1986) is contrary to the view of human interaction as defended by interactional sociolinguistics, which is based on the assumption that meaning is constructed and negotiated collaboratively by the interactants and thus emerges from the interaction, which also includes the question of what is relevant.

As illustrated earlier, it is by means of the omnipresent (non)verbal contextualisation cues that the interlocutors mutually send out signals to each other in order to indicate the meaning of what is said. In the same way, the continuous activation of frames and the ongoing creation of the interactional context are based on the effort of the interactants to dynamically negotiate meaning and guide each other through interaction. Moreover, it is also by pursuing certain strategies that the participants actively construct and direct communication, which once again shows that the construction of meaning is the result of the mutual contributions of the interactants.

This, in turn, is in line with Grice's view (2006 [1975], p. 67) who describes interaction as "cooperative efforts" of the involved persons that follow "a common purpose or set of purposes, or at least a mutually accepted direction". In other words, interaction does not consist of disconnected sequences of speech, it is constructed mutually by the participants. As concerns the investigation of (im)politeness, Bousfield (2008, p. 32) observes that

relevance theory does not take the perspectives of both the speakers and the hearers into account in the way required, as negotiation of ‘what-was-meant’ does not enter a relevance theory account of meaning in general, or a relevance theory account of im/politeness in particular.

In a similar way, Watts (2003, p. 32) argues that “a theory of (im)polite behaviour needs to take the perspectives of the speakers and the hearers adequately into consideration, firstly, because speakers are also hearers, and vice-versa, and secondly, because social interaction is negotiated”. Another aspect with regards to a possible connection between (in)directness and cognitive work is observed by Grainger and Mills (2016). The authors (*ibid*) state that using the amount of cognitive work required by the interlocutor as a criterion to identify if an utterance is direct or indirect presupposes that an *a priori*, intrinsic meaning underlies each utterance which, as we have seen in the preceding discussions of the present research, can be disproved.

Moreover, retracing the amount of cognitive work based on the hearer’s perceptions can not be undertaken without simultaneously evaluating the speaker’s intentions, which is due to the fact that both the intentions as well as the interpretations of the interactants underlie norms that vary from culture to culture (*ibid*). Bearing this in mind, we can once again emphasise that any analysis of interaction needs to take into account the cultural peculiarities that are in play in order to access what is interpreted as direct or indirect.

## 2.2.6 Correlations between (in)directness and (im)politeness

After presenting various approaches which served to foster the discussion with regards to how directness and indirectness can be characterised, we will now deal more specifically with the question of how these notions are connected to (im)politeness.

According to Grainger and Mills (2016), there exist two different ways to approach politeness: there are scholars who describe as it is understood in a conventional, folk way, such as Leech (1983) for whom indirectness is perceived as and motivated by politeness. Others refer to politeness in a more technical, strategic way, as it is reflected in Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987), amongst others, who consider politeness to consist of strategies that aim at avoiding possible face threats, indirectness thereby constituting one of these strategies (GRAINGER; MILLS, 2016).

According to the latter authors (*ibid*), it was the different conceptualisations of politeness and the ways they are related to indirectness which motivated various researchers (EELLEN, 2001; WATTS, 2003; amongst others) to further discuss this issue and to eventually distinguish between the conventional, folk understanding of politeness (“politeness 1”) and the more technical perception which refers to strategies that serve to avoid or mitigate face threats (“politeness 2”).

Grainger and Mills (2016) argue that, similar to the differentiation between the referenced types of politeness mentioned, a distinction should be made between two types of indirectness, given that this notion can be interpreted from a lay, folk understanding and also be treated from a more technical, academic perspective. In other words, it is possible to investigate

indirectness based on how it is commonly perceived by the interlocutors during interaction (“indirectness 1”), as well as on a more technical view, which refers to approaches used by analysts (“indirectness 2”) (*ibid*).

Similar to the distinction between the two different types of politeness aforementioned, the second form of indirectness, then, would refer to “politeness 2” and consist solely of indirect, off-record strategies which serve to mitigate face-threats during interaction, whereas “indirectness 1”, which is related to first-order politeness, would refer to indirectness as it is commonly interpreted by the members of certain groups or communities (*ibid*).

The authors (*ibid*) stress the need to consider both types of indirectness for the analysis of interaction, which they justify with the difficulty to identify the meaning of off-record strategies without considering the interpretations of the participants that are involved in a particular interaction. Thus, also relating to the studies of Haugh (2007) and Arundale (2006, 2008), Grainger and Mills (*ibid*, p. 47) suggest to take into account both types of indirectness in order to account for an “interactional approach to analysis” which includes and considers both the ideological convictions and the linguistic actions of the participants.

The observation made by Grainger and Mills (*ibid*) seems prudent, since interaction is a dynamic process during which meaning is mutually constructed and constantly negotiated by the participants. Consequently, (im)politeness and (in)directness as integral aspects of human interaction are equally subject to these principles. Therefore, it is by means of the evaluations of the interactants that we aim to achieve further insights into the intentions, expectations, underlying attitudes, strategies and the

idiosyncratic characteristics, amongst many other aspects, which will eventually help us to better understand the investigated interactions. This is all the more important for the present work, since it involves collaborators from different cultural backgrounds that bring along different cultural norms and values.

As the present work intends to investigate how both direct and indirect forms are connected to the notions of politeness and impoliteness, we will adopt the distinction made by the referenced authors (*ibid*). We will explore the concepts of (in)directness and (im)politeness based on the interpretations of the involved interactants and investigate in which way they are connected to each other in a more theoretical perspective, which takes into account the linguistic forms.

However, Grainger and Mills (*ibid*) restrict their differentiation merely to the notion of indirectness and the way it is connected to politeness. It is therefore important to note at this point that, compared to the referenced authors, the notion of indirectness in our view does not only refer to off record strategies that serve to avoid or mitigate face threats or, in other words, to cause effects of politeness. This, in turn, is due to the fact that both direct *and* indirect forms can evoke polite *and* impolite effects, as we have seen in the previous discussion.

### 2.2.7 (In)directness in interaction

According to Grainger and Mills (2016), the interactional approach goes back to the so-called discursive theoretical approach to (im)politeness, which in its analysis of contextualised, naturally occurring discourse, includes the subjective evaluations of the interlocutors with regards to what they consider to be polite or impolite.

However, Grainger (2013) argues that there is a risk that the discursive approach eventually attaches greater importance to the evaluation of the interlocutors and thus neglects the accuracy and the rigour of the necessary analytic contribution. As Grainger and Mills (2016, p. 47-48) observe, the interactional approach, compared to the discursive theoretical one,

maintains the focus on contextualised sequences of talk (or writing) that is important in the discursive approach but insists that the evidence for speaker intention and hearer evaluation is found in the interaction itself. The interactional discursive view of indirectness, then, does not accept that meaning resides, a priori, with the speaker or the hearer. Instead, it is something that is negotiated and achieved collaboratively between participants in an interaction. In this view, speaker intentions and hearer interpretations are, though relevant, not taken as the primary determinant of meaning. What counts is how meaning unfolds, as co-constructed and negotiated by the participants turn by turn.

In this respect, Marcuschi (2005, p. 126) provides an interesting contribution to the question as to how we humans understand and construct the world that we live in. The author (*ibid*) claims that there exists a discrepancy between what is real and how this reality is perceived, classified and communicated by humans:

Things in the world are not the way we tell that they are to others. The way we tell things to others is a consequence of our intersubjective acting on the world and of the socio-cognitive insight into the world we live in. The communicated world is always the result of an intersubjective (non-voluntarist) action vis-a-vis external reality and not an identification of discrete realities<sup>46</sup>.

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<sup>46</sup> As stated in the reference consulted: as coisas não estão no mundo de maneira como as dizemos aos outros. A maneira como nos dizemos aos outros as coisas

In other words, what we communicate to others is based on socio-cognitive processes about how we capture and interpret things, which in turn surges from the interaction with others and the way we relate to the world. This means that we do not process and communicate information in an abstract, objective way, we rather connect things to our lived reality which includes the experiences we have made previously, amongst other factors.

Thus, language can not be considered as something that serves as a mere means to communicate facts and, thus, to mirror reality (MARCUSCHI, 2005). With regards to the present research, this consequently implies that instead of merely relying on the interpretations of the participants involved, we need to focus primarily on the analysis of the interaction itself in order to discover evidence of the intents and the perceptions of the interactants, as is described by Grainger and Mills (2016).

The authors (*ibid*) state that the interactional approach goes back to the influences of the interactional sociolinguistic model of Gumperz (1999, 2003) and the contributions of Arundale (2006, 2008), in which the latter describes face-work as an interactional achievement. As Terkourafi (2005) points out, the essential aspect within this approach to politeness is the notion of participant “uptake”<sup>47</sup> which can be monitored by analysing the collected data. The analyst will thereby search the data in order to discover the meaning that was co-constructed

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é decorrência de nossa atuação intersubjetiva sobre o mundo e da inserção sócio-cognitiva no mundo em que vivemos. O mundo comunicado é sempre fruto de um agir intersubjetivo (não voluntarista) diante da realidade externa de realidades discretas.

<sup>47</sup> The notion of “uptake” is drawn from Austin (1962) and refers to the understanding of meaning and force of what is being said during a conversation.

and negotiated by the participants during the interaction (*ibid*). Grainger and Mills (2016, p. 49), who made use of this approach for their research on Zimbabwean English, report that

by examining participants' orientations to each other's turn, we have been able to show how off record indirectness is negotiated without relying on notions of speaker intent or hearer evaluation. The discursive interactional approach shows how the participants' communicative goals are managed 'sociologically' – out there in the interactional space, rather than in the heads of the speakers or analysts.

However, this does not necessarily mean that the participants' evaluations of the interactions are completely neglected; instead, their considerations can serve as a valuable contribution which can give support to the actual analysis (*ibid*). As it will be illustrated in the further course of this work, the interpretations of the collaborators did not always seem to constitute truthful reflections, since the issue at hand also refers to situations of impoliteness that directly result from the interaction and, thus, reflect the actions of the participants.

Thus, for the present research, we will make use of the discursive interactional approach (GRAINGER; MILLS, 2016) in order to conduct the data analysis, thereby also taking into consideration the evaluations of the participants in order to see if they can eventually give support to the analysis. We will differentiate between the notions of (in)directness and (im)politeness as they are perceived in a folk, lay understanding by the participants on the one hand and as they are referred to in a linguistic, theoretical way on the other.

However, the terms “politeness 1” / “politeness 2” and “indirectness 1” / “indirectness 2” coined by the aforementioned

authors (*ibid*) seem confusing and not very meaningful, as they are not helpful in distinguishing the common sense from the linguistic, theoretical understanding of these notions. In addition, numbering these two notions evokes the impression that they possess different weightings. Thus, we define the terms “perceived (im)politeness/(in)directness” in order to refer to how these notions are understood by the interactants in a common, folk way, and “linguistic/theoretical (im)politeness/(in)directness” to relate to the linguistic interpretation.

By means of the adapted nomenclature, we hope to establish a more meaningful terminology that facilitates a better understanding and differentiation of the referenced notions in the further course of this work. It should be mentioned once again that from a linguistic perspective, the term “directness” (or “direct”) applies if the meaning of a certain (non)verbal act becomes clear to the interactants, and “indirectness” (respectively “indirect”) if it remains ambiguous (off-record) (GRAINGER; MILLS, *ibid*).

In addition, “linguistic/theoretical (im)politeness” does not refer to a specific model of (im)politeness, but it relates to the (technical) process of dismantling the sequences of the utterances of an interaction, as was stated previously (*ibid*). Thus, in the light of the preceding discussion on the existing concepts and investigations of (im)politeness and (in)directness and adopting the discursive interactional approach described by Grainger and Mills (2016), we will now delineate the methodological framework that supports the research of this research.

### 3.

# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The following chapter aims at describing the methodological procedures that were applied to generate and analyse the data that compose the *corpus* of the present research. Seeking to establish an interface between both the theoretical and methodological frameworks, we will first describe and discuss the qualitative research approach and ethnography research, which is then followed by the presentation of the instruments and techniques of data generation and by a discussion of the principles of conversation analysis.

## 3.1 THE QUALITATIVE PARADIGM AND ETHNOGRAPHY RESEARCH

In order to answer the questions that guide the research of this thesis, we developed a micro-ethnographic study which constitutes a research approach of qualitative and interpretative nature. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) state that qualitative research emerged in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, principally in the areas of social sciences such as Sociology and Anthropology, soon followed by other disciplines like Education and Social Service, amongst others fields of study.

Gibbs (2009) describes the difficulties to formulate a single common definition for the notion of qualitative research, given the fact that scholars use different approaches to conduct qualitative studies. However, the author (*ibid*) attributes some common general characteristics to this scientific method: 1) to analyse the experiences of individuals or groups, whereby these experiences can relate to either biographical stories or to professional or every-day practice; 2) to examine ongoing interactions; the process of examination is based on the observation and the documentation of interactional practices; 3) to investigate records such as texts, images, films or similar sources that document the interactions of the involved participants.

However, although there are different theoretical, methodological and epistemological approaches that make use of the qualitative paradigm, it is possible to identify certain characteristics that these approaches have in common (*ibid*, p. 9), of which we will present the most relevant ones:

- 1) the researchers are interested in gaining access to the interactions and experiences in their natural context;
- 2) the research questions are developed and refined during the research process, instead of working with predefined questions;
- 3) in case the existing methods are proved to be inappropriate for a certain research question or field, they are either adapted or new methods or approaches will need to be developed;

- 4) the researcher occupies an important role during the research process, due to the experiences they bring to the field and their capacity for critical reflexion;
- 5) particular significance is attached to the context, given the fact that the history and the complexity of a particular case are essential for an understanding of what will be studied.

Furthermore, Denzin and Lincoln (2006, p. 17) explain that qualitative researchers study things in their natural environment, trying to understand and interpret certain phenomena with regards to the meanings that people assign to them:

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural setting, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.

According to Chizzotti (2006), qualitative research is based on the belief that the world derives from the understanding that it is constructed in the contact between people and reality, in other words, in the course of social interaction. According to the author (*ibid*), this methodological approach therefore needs to be based on the analysis and the interpretation of facts that reveal the meanings that are attributed to these facts by

the people who share them. In addition, qualitative research draws on different methods of investigation which enable the study of interaction in the place where it occurs in order to reveal its true significance (*ibid*).

Human interaction in general can be considered complex, given the fact that it is guided by a vast amount of factors that are connected to historical, social, cultural and contextual issues, amongst many other aspects. As regards the topic of the present work, Culpeper (2011, p. 3) describes impoliteness as a “multidisciplinary field of study” which implies that it is subject to a variety of influences and, thus, can be approached from different areas of research. In other words, (non)verbal (im)polite interaction involves various dimensions, which calls for an investigation that combines different perspectives in order to better understand how meaning is constructed in the course of interaction.

This necessity becomes even more obvious when we take into consideration that this research involves collaborators from different cultural backgrounds, which in turn points to divergences with regards to the meaning-making processes that are involved during intercultural interaction. Thus, we chose a qualitative research approach which combines different fields of study such as pragmatics, interactional sociolinguistics and conversation analysis to allow for a profound understanding of the investigated interactions.

Aiming at answering the research questions in the best possible way, we have adopted for the present study an ethnographic approach. Uniting both *etno* which means “people” and *grafia* which signifies “to write”, the notion of ethnography refers to written scientific works about certain people (SILVER-

MAN, 2009, p. 71). The author (*ibid*, p. 71) states that the origins of this research approach emerged in the works of anthropologists in the 19<sup>th</sup> century “who travelled to observe different pre-industrial cultures”<sup>48</sup>. In fact, more recent ethnographic works embrace a wide range of group studies and also work with texts or records of interaction, amongst other data sources, which do not or not directly involve observation (*ibid*).

Ethnography constitutes a qualitative research methodology which has been used from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century principally by British and American anthropologists and sociologists to investigate social interaction of certain groups and communities; however, it was only from the 1960s that it was adopted and further developed by other areas of research such as education and linguistics, amongst others. Atkinson and Hammersley (1994, p. 248) state that ethnographic research commonly involves four general characteristics which the authors describe as follows:

- 1) a strong emphasis on the investigation of the nature of specific social phenomena;
- 2) a detailed investigation of a single case or a small number of cases only;
- 3) a tendency to work principally with “non-structured” data, i.e. data that were not coded at the time of collection in terms of a closed set of analytical categories;

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<sup>48</sup> From the original: que viajaram a fim de observar diferentes culturas pré-industriais.

- 4) data analysis entails explicit interpretations of the meanings and functions of human interaction.

Similar to what Atkinson and Hammersley (*ibid*) describe in the last of the aforementioned points, Angrosino (2009, p. 20) states that the “ethnographic field work in the interactionist tradition seeks to unveil the meanings that the social actors attribute to their actions”<sup>49</sup>. In the present research, I aim to investigate the use of (in)direct (im)politeness strategies which arise during classroom interaction. As described by Grainger and Mills (2016), the interpretation of (in)directness and (im)politeness cannot be solely based on a scientific evaluation, it is also essential to take into consideration how the collaborators perceive and interpret the inter-actions.

Thus, it is not only through the reflection of the researcher, but also by means of the evaluations of the collaborators as well as the involvement of existing concepts and theories that the meaning-making processes can be investigated and understood. As Creswell (2008) argues, by using the technique of data triangulation, which is the process of substantiating evidence based on multiple points of view – be it from different participants, types of data and data generating methods –, the accuracy and, thus, the credibility of a research can be enhanced. By combining different perspectives, we hope to create synergies and to respond to the research questions in the best possible way.

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<sup>49</sup> As stated in the reference consulted: a pesquisa de campo etnográfica, na tradição interacionista, busca desvelar os significados que os atores sociais atribuem às suas ações.

As discussed previously in this work, human interaction is based on and guided by a vast amount of influences that differ from one cultural group to another. These influences also affect the researchers, whose understanding of interaction is equally based on their own previous experiences. By discussing and exchanging views with the collaborators the researchers likewise reflect on their own perceptions and interpretations of (in)directness and (im)politeness, which will consequently sensitise them with regards to the ongoing research process and the data analysis.

Angrosino (2009, p. 41), for his part, points out that ethnography differs from other research approaches in social sciences in the following points:

- 1) it is based on fieldwork which inserts the researcher into the context where the interaction in fact happens;
- 2) it is personalised, which means that the researcher is dealing personally with the participants in face-to-face interaction;
- 3) it is multifactorial, using two or more data collection techniques which allow for a subsequent triangulation of the obtained data;
- 4) it requires a long-term commitment of interaction with the collaborators which can vary from several months up to one year or more;

- 5) it is of inductive nature, which means that it uses the descriptive data accumulated along the research to develop general models or explanatory theories;
- 6) it is dialogic in the way that the perceptions of the researcher can be discussed with those of the collaborators during the course of the study;
- 7) it is holistic, given the fact that it seeks to portray the investigated group in the most complete manner possible.

Similar to Angrosino (*ibid*), Saville-Troike (2003) emphasises that by means of the insertion into the natural research context ethnographers obtain access to the interactions and experiences of the involved participants. This access enables the researcher to capture and understand the processes and dynamics that guide how the people within a group or community interact with each other (*ibid*). Thus, experiencing interaction in the context where it actually happens not only enables the researcher to access information which they might not be able to gain if they were not personally present, it also allows them to constantly monitor if the data collection methods in use are appropriate and, should this not be the case, make the necessary adaptations.

With regards to the aforementioned point made by Angrosino (2009, p. 41) that the minimum duration of interaction with the collaborators in ethnographic studies “can vary from several months up to one year or more”, I would like to point out that I was able to work with all research groups from

two to three months each. The main reason behind this limited period of time is the overall duration of language classes at both Brazilian and German universities which extend to a maximum of around four months per semester. However, there were other reasons that were responsible for this short period of field work, which will be described in the further course of this work.

Another important aspect that should be mentioned at this point refers to the different roles that a researcher can assume in an ethnographic study. In this respect, Gold (1958, p. 217-223) describes and classifies four distinct forms which differ according to the degree of involvement that the researchers can have with the participants to be studied. In the roles of “complete observer” and “complete participant”, they either act as mere observers who stay completely distant from the interactants or, as in the latter case, as if they were one of the participants (*ibid*). However, they can also be involved as so-called “participants – observers”, that is, they appear as participants but at the same time initiate their research activities (*ibid*). According to Gold (*ibid*), they can as well assume the role of an “observer as participant”, which means that they act as researchers which can also participate in joint activities with the collaborators.

Given the interactionist perspective of the present work and the research questions involved, I opted for the latter role, given that it allowed me to develop a friendly relationship with the collaborators and to gain their trust, which turned out to be essential with regards to the ongoing data generation. At the same time, I was able to keep the necessary distance, given the fact that I was not actively involved in the classroom activities

for the most part, which reduced my interference into the occurring interaction to a minimum.

Moreover, it was also the research environment that put me into the described role: for practical reasons, I constantly had to record or stay close to the video camera, so I had to sit at a certain distance from the students and the teachers. Every once in a while the teachers actively included me in the classroom interactions, be it by asking questions about intercultural experiences that I had as a German living in Brazil or in order to help clarify certain words or expressions, amongst other reasons.

### **3.2 INSTRUMENTS AND TECHNIQUES OF DATA GENERATION**

Denzin e Lincoln (2006) emphasise that qualitative research uses a great variety of interpretative methods in order to develop the best possible comprehension of the research topic. In the following section, we will present the instruments and techniques that were used to generate the data which constitute the *corpus* of the present research. Thus, in dialogue with the theoretical and methodological frameworks, we will, respectively, describe the methods that were chosen and how they were adapted and put into practice in the course of this research.

Koshy (2005) argues that using a questionnaire at the beginning of a research project can be advantageous, as it helps to collect different data with relative ease which can then be followed up if needed. In addition, this initial information can help to elaborate questions that the researcher may want to ask

in subsequent interviews (*ibid*). Thus, all collaborators from the present research were asked to answer an initial questionnaire (see appendix A) that served to obtain some basic information about their academic and professional background.

One of the advantages of applying this initial questionnaire was that the participants could be given some days to calmly complete and then return the forms. Also, its implementation helped to save time, as these data did not have to be retrieved during the subsequent one-to-one interviews. In addition, answering the questions in written form also permitted the collaborators to disclose only the information they were willing to give.

Another instrument used in the present research were field notes, which are defined by Bogdan and Biklen (1998, p. 107-8) as “the written account of what the researcher hears, sees, experiences, and thinks in the course of collecting and reflecting on the data in a qualitative study”. According to the authors (*ibid*), field notes can comprise descriptions of objects, places, events, people, activities and conversations as well as reflections, personal ideas and strategies that emerge during the research process. This way, these data can also help to maintain constant control over the ongoing research project (*ibid*).

Bearing in mind the guidelines of the aforementioned authors, I used this research instrument during the entire period of field work, taking notes principally after conducting the interviews and during the language classes. However, in some cases I also made field notes in the course of the constantly ongoing data analysis or after informal conversations with the collaborators. Thus, this particular instrument proved to be a useful option of data generation.

Another method that was applied for this study were semi-structured interviews. For Byrne (2004), qualitative interviews constitute a very useful research method, as they allow the researcher to obtain information with regards to the value concepts and attitudes of the collaborators, which in turn can be achieved through flexible questions. Compared to other methods, these specific interviews offer the possibility to gain deeper insights, in the way that they provide a better access to the opinions, experiences, visions and interpretations of the collaborators (*ibid*). As we have seen in the previous discussion, these aspects prove to be fundamental when it comes to the evaluations of (in)directness and (im)politeness, particularly in view of the intercultural background of the present research.

Thus, I decided to apply two semi-structured interviews<sup>50</sup> which I conducted individually with the collaborators. Another reason for choosing this specific type of interview is that it offers the possibility to better compare the answers of the participants. At the same time, it allows sufficient space for the collaborators to express their experiences, views and interpretations, aspects which are essential when it comes to the evaluation and interpretation of (in)directness respectively (im)politeness (cf. GRAINGER; MILLS, 2016).

It should be mentioned that I experienced several times during fieldwork that applying semi-structured interviews requires the researcher to find a balance between allowing the interviewee enough room to speak on the one hand and to

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<sup>50</sup> With the first group of participants, I applied an initial semi-structured interview and a (collective) focus group interview at the end of the research period. For the remaining two groups, however, I replaced the final focus group interview with semi-structured interviews that were also conducted individually with the participants (see further explanations in this section).

interfere in case they deviate too far from the subject on the other. This balance is necessary to maintain the focus of the discussion on aspects that are relevant to the research questions.

The first interview (see appendices B and C) was conducted during the initial phase of the fieldwork and consisted of general questions referring to the motivation of the participants for learning or teaching German and Brazilian Portuguese and also to general differences as to the use of both languages, amongst other aspects. Apart from acquiring basic information, this short initial interview also served to establish a first personal contact with the collaborators.

The second interview took place during the final stages of the field research periods. The questions were elaborated individually for each collaborator and were based on my previous analysis of the video recordings, thereby taking into account the involvement of the participants in the interactional situations. During this last interview, I first presented specific video clips of classroom interaction to the collaborators and then asked them to evaluate and comment on aspects related to (in)directness and (im)politeness.

In this regard, Silverman (2009, p. 108-10, partly referring to RAPPLEY, 2004) provides some general orientations to the conduction of qualitative interviews which we can summarise as follows:

- 1) to build rapport with the collaborators by asking some general questions to “break the ice” before the start of the interview by showing genuine interest in the interviewee as a person (and not as a mere “in-formant”) and in what they have to say, amongst other points;

- 2) the interview is held in a collaborative manner, that is, the researcher should actively listen to the interviewee and signal that they understand what is being said, which will facilitate the flow of speech and consequently bring to light new aspects that might be relevant for the research;
- 3) the researcher can assume either a more active or passive role during the interview, due to the fact that neither of the two options can be considered “better” in the sense that it provides “better” data. Rather, how the researcher communicates will influence what information the interviewee will finally disclose.

As to the last of the aforementioned points described by Silverman (*ibid*), I would like to mention that I assumed both “active” and “passive” roles, adapting my approach according to the dynamics of each particular interview. I perceived that actively sharing certain intercultural experiences that I had made as a German living in Brazil aroused the curiosity of the collaborators about the topic of intercultural interaction in general and also seemed to make them feel more comfortable to share their own experiences and opinions about the investigated classroom interactions.

All interviews were arranged individually with the collaborators and were conducted either inside the universities or in nearby places that offer a quiet and pleasant atmosphere, such as cafés. After giving a short introduction and reiterating the confidentiality of the research, I conducted the interviews in a relaxed, conversational style, always aiming to keep the

duration of the sessions to the minimum possible. Also, an audio recording device was used to record all interviews, which made it possible to access the collected information at any time during the course of the subsequent analysis<sup>51</sup>.

Apart from the aforementioned research methods, I also made use of video recordings which, according to Silverman (2009), enable the researcher to understand the organisation of speech as well as the gaze and the corporal movements of the people. That way, the transcriptions of these recordings “provide an excellent record of the ‘naturally occurring’ interaction”<sup>52</sup> (*ibid*, p. 32)<sup>53</sup>. Furthermore, the author (*ibid*) emphasises that video recordings should be used to simultaneously analyse both verbal and non-verbal languages in order to “examine the interweaving of talk, gesture and expression” (*ibid*, p. 46). The observation of the author seems prudent, since both verbal and non-verbal languages influence and guide each other and, thus, constitute important components for the meaning-making processes in social interaction.

In a similar way, Ramey *et al.* (2016, p. 1035) state that “video offers an open invitation to the researcher to look beyond the spoken word and find meaning from other dimensions of participant activity”. Thus, the authors emphasise that

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<sup>51</sup> All interviews were translated and transcribed by myself. For the audio recordings, I used a Zoom H1 Handy Recorder.

<sup>52</sup> From the reference consulted: proporcionam um registro excelente da interação que ‘ocorre naturalmente’.

<sup>53</sup> However, we have to recognise at this point that no transcription can be considered as complete, as it can not reproduce the original situation accurately in every detail. This is due to the fact that the process of transcribing is selective and, thus, focusses on those aspect that are relevant with regards to the research objectives; in addition, every process of transcribing also involves theoretical, political or ethical aspects (DURANTI, 1997), amongst others.

“gesture and pointing, gaze and attention, body position and movement, touch, tone and inflection, facial expression, and engagement with material objects” constitute non-verbal modalities that contribute to the generation of meaning in interaction (*ibid*, p. 1035).

Silverman (2000) highlights that, in comparison to audio data, working with video data requires more effort, since the processes of transcription and the subsequent data analysis are more complex. In fact, one can imagine the sheer abundance of information resulting from the detailed transcription of all verbal, non-verbal and para-verbal aspects of language occurring during classroom interactions which involve a number of people, as is the case in the present research. Thus, following the suggestion of Silverman (*ibid*, p. 48) who states that researchers should “never attempt to reconstruct all aspects of interaction from the videotape”, I transcribed all those aspects that I considered relevant for the analysis of the interactions.

Taking the aforementioned points into consideration, the analysis of the video material as well as the transcriptions<sup>54</sup> of the investigated situations were carried out in parallel with the ongoing data generation during the research periods. Throughout the analysis of the video footage, interactional situations which involved (in)directness and (im)politeness were identified and transcribed. In this respect, it proved to be an important aspect that videos, just like audio tapes, offer the advantage that they can be accessed at any time after the recording. In addition, the possibility of rewinding the video clips any number of times was essential for a thorough and detailed transcription.

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<sup>54</sup> The translation of the transcriptions was done by myself, along with the continuous data generation.

Furthermore, watching the recorded scenes repeatedly brought to light many details that proved to be relevant and which might have remained unseen otherwise. Thus, in the present research, the use of video recordings turned out to be crucial for the generation of data. However, before I was actually able to use the camera for the first time in a classroom, it was necessary to dispel some initial concerns of the collaborators as to the data security guidelines that would become effective. Therefore, I reaffirmed to all participants that the data generated in the course of the research would be kept confidential and shared only with the members of the same group during the subsequent interviews. This clarification eventually removed the doubts of the collaborators and helped to make them feel comfortable with the presence of the video recording equipment<sup>55</sup>.

At this point, I would like to mention that I had planned to use focus groups as an additional method of data generation. My intention was to organise one meeting with each research group in order to present to the collaborators video recordings of situations that had occurred during the classroom interactions. That way, based on the perceptions and evaluations of the participants, I aimed to trigger discussions between them about these specific interactions as well as about the notions of (in)directness and (im)politeness in general. However, it was only possible to bring all participants of the first group together during the very last lesson of the semester.

This class was arranged as an informal get-together in the classroom which was accompanied by snacks and bever-

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<sup>55</sup> For the video recordings that I made in Brasil, I used a Nikon Coolpix L330 photo camera with video function, for those made in Germany a Sony nex vg-20 with sony 18-200 zoom video camera.

ages provided by the students and the teacher. A field note written on the same day of this last lesson describes the outcome of this focus group:

The focus group today didn't really go as planned. Some of the students were already in a kind of festive mood and didn't seem to take the interview really serious. Also, I unfortunately didn't get the amount of time at the end of the lesson that I had asked for, so I couldn't finish asking all the questions. In addition, I had the impression that principally the participants that were directly involved in the interactions that I presented did not always seem to feel comfortable to talk about their impressions and interpretations of these situations. Instead, it seemed that they rather preferred to relativise things, in the sense of 'It wasn't meant that way' or 'I didn't understand it that way'.

However, it is entirely understandable that the participants, for "reasons of politeness", did not reveal their true opinions in the presence of the other collaborators and failed to admit that they had indeed intended to commit impolite acts or that they had interpreted such acts as impolite. Due to this experience, I decided to replace the planned focus groups with the collaborators of the remaining groups with final individual interviews. As described earlier, these interviews were conducted in a similar manner: I presented to the participants videos of situations that had occurred during classroom interactions which involved aspects of (in)directness respectively (im)politeness.

### 3.3 CONVERSATION ANALYSIS

Although one might generally consider conversation as merely “trivial”, it nevertheless constitutes “the primary means by which social interaction occurs”<sup>56</sup>, be it during encounters with family and friends or on other occasions of daily life (SILVERMAN, 2009, p. 187-88). In a similar way, Heritage (1984, p. 239) states that “the social world is essentially a world of conversation, in which one way of focusing the world’s business is conducted through spoken interaction”<sup>57</sup>.

Kerbrat-Orecchioni (2006) describes conversation as the communicative interactions of the members of a society which occur in diverse forms such as family conversations, debates as well as academic or work meetings, just to name a few examples. These interactions, which include both verbal and non-verbal language, are all subject to certain rules and negotiations between the interactants which are in turn exposed to possible violations (*ibid*). According to the author (*ibid*, p. 14-15), there are certain conversational rules that possess certain properties, of which we will present the most relevant aspects:

- 1) they are of diverse nature, given the fact that conversations are complex and work on different levels;
- 2) they vary wildly across societies and cultures and are flexible at the same time;

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<sup>56</sup> As stated in the reference consulted: o meio primário pelo qual a interação social ocorre.

<sup>57</sup> As stated in the reference consulted: o mundo social é fundamentalmente um mundo da conversa, em que uma proporção esmagadora dos negócios do mundo é conduzida por meio da interação falada.

- 3) some rules are applicable for all kinds of interaction, whereas others differ depending on the specific type of discourse.

Thus, as Kerbrat-Orecchioni (2006, p. 15) vividly illustrates, conversational analysis seeks to explain these rules by trying to “decipher the ‘invisible score’ that guides the behavior of those who are engaged in this complex polyphonic activity that the conduction of a conversation is”<sup>58</sup>. Silverman (2009), for his part, states that conversational analysis aims to describe how people construct common social interaction, hereby emphasising the importance of taking into consideration the respective context of an interaction.

Enlarging upon her generic definition, Kerbrat-Orecchioni (2006) illustrates three different notions of conversation, of which the first refers to the diversity of communicative interactions, which the author compares to the flow of vehicles that follows specific rules. Thus, similar to motorists who need to observe and negotiate traffic regulations, interlocutors have to negotiate their turn to speak during interaction (*ibid*). However, these negotiations can either be conducted in a rather pacific or conflictive manner and, thus, negatively affect or even completely interrupt talk.

Secondly, the author (*ibid*) points to the fact that there are interactions that are principally conducted on a verbal level, such as conversations, whereas others are realised mainly by

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<sup>58</sup> As stated in the reference consulted: decifrar a ‘partitura invisível’ que orienta (...) o comportamento daqueles que se encontram engajados nessa atividade polifônica complexa que é a condução de uma conversação.

means of non-verbal communication, like team sports or dancing. In many cases, interaction occurs on both levels or can only be developed successfully when both are involved (*ibid*). And third, since there are different kinds of verbal interaction, it is necessary for the data analysis to classify each type, taking into account its nature and the place where it happens, the number of participants and their respective status and roles in the interaction, the aim of the interaction as well as the degree of formality and the actual style of interaction (*ibid*).

According to Kerbrat-Orecchioni (2006, p. 36 *et seq.*), conversations generally consist of three different kinds of “material”, which she defines as follows:

- 1) verbal material (phonological, lexical and morphosyntactic units);
- 2) paraverbal material (prosodic and vocal);
- 3) non-verbal material (static signs, slow and fast kinetics).

As to the verbal material and its three listed components, she (*ibid*) emphasises the importance of considering spontaneous talk as it is practiced in everyday conversation and the “failures” that it involves such as stuttering, incomplete sentences or the use of hesitation markers, amongst many other aspects. Secondly, the para-verbal material refers to linguistic aspects such as intonation, pauses, speech volume or certain particularities of pronunciation of a person that accompany verbal language and serve to establish coherence in dialogue (*ibid*). Lastly, the non-verbal aspects like static signs

(appearance of a person), slow kinetics (such as body posture or the distance between the interactors) and fast kinetics (facial expressions and gestures, exchanging glances, etc.) serve for the same purpose (*ibid*).

Based on the contributions of the aforementioned authors, we understand conversation analysis as a means to unveil the mechanisms of the meaning-making processes or, in other words, as a tool that serves to provide evidence to how meaning is constructed and negotiated collaboratively by the participants during social interaction. Thus, for the present research, conversation analysis served as a technique for the transcription of the generated data, seeking to unveil (in)direct (im)politeness strategies during intercultural interaction in the context of additional language learning.

Furthermore, it needs to be mentioned that the analysis of the interactions investigated in this work was conducted in chronological order, i.e. in the same order as the situations occurred in the course of the respective semesters. According to Agha (2007), for the most part, human interaction does not take place in individual events, it rather occurs over time, whereby single events are connected to each other. In a similar way, Wortham and Reyes (2015, p. 10) argue that “many crucial human processes take place across chains of linked events”.

As stated before, aspects such as the previously made experiences and the power relations between the collaborators not only influence how certain interactions are evaluated in the moment they are happening, but also have an impact on how future situations will be perceived by the participants. Thus, given the dynamic character described, those influences change

along time and consequently affect the way that interaction is interpreted by the involved participants.

Finally, as to the transcription conventions, Silverman (2009) highlights that a detailed data transcription is essential for the subsequent analysis. According to the author (*ibid*), transcribing data makes it possible to perceive important details such as juxtapositions or pauses which can assume significant importance in the meaning-making process. Sacks (1992) points to the fact that repeatedly and carefully listening to the recordings will consequently help to obtain the best possible transcription. In this sense, I followed the orientations of Gumperz (1982) and Marcuschi (2007) (see appendix F), with adaptations, and I believe that these served as an appropriate guideline for a thorough and complete data transcription considering the purpose of my research.

Based on the view that human interaction and, thus, also (im)politeness as an essential part of it, are collectively constructed and negotiated by the involved participants, we will now investigate situations that include (in)directness and (im)politeness in different contexts of additional language teaching in Brazil and Germany. We will thereby draw upon the discursive interactional approach (GRAINGER; MILLS, 2016) and differentiate between the notions of (in)directness and (im)politeness as they are perceived in a folk, lay understanding by the interactants (“perceived (im)politeness/ (in)directness”) on the one hand and as they can be referred to from a linguistic perspective (“linguistic/theoretical (im) politeness/(in)directness”) on the other.

By merging both the evaluations and the linguistic actions of the participants, we aim to achieve a profound under-

standing of the investigated interactions and, thus, to answer the research questions in the best possible way. Not least due to the intercultural background of the present research we will thereby attach particular importance to aspects such as the interpersonal relations between the participants and their identities and ideologies, the verbal and non-verbal elements of language as well as the social forces and the contextual factors that influence and guide interaction, amongst other aspects.

Thus, after elucidating the methodological framework of this work by presenting and discussing the principles of qualitative research and ethnography, the instruments and techniques of data generation as well as the principles of conversation analysis, we will now proceed to the analysis of the data that were generated in the course of the present research.

## 4.

# (IN)DIRECTNESS AS AN (IM)POLITENESS STRATEGY

### 4.1 BRAZIL – ACCESS AND ENTRY INTO THE RESEARCH FIELD – UnB Idiomas

The first part of data generation of the present research was carried out at the *Programa Permanente de Extensão UnB Idiomas* (hereinafter referred to as UnB Idiomas) in Brasília, Brazil, the previous language school of the university. At present, the institution offers courses for 14 different languages, allowing a wide range of possibilities for the continuing education for the students of the University of Brasília (UnB) and for those from the Federal District (DF). In total, approximately 15,000 students currently attend language courses at the referenced institution per year.

I had already been given the opportunity to do an internship as an English teacher at this school and had conducted the data generation for my Master studies a few years prior. The person that should later become the collaborating teacher for this first part of my field research was introduced to me by a former colleague of the institution.

Of the two teachers giving German classes at an advanced level<sup>59</sup> during the intended research period at the UnB Idiomias, I chose the teacher collaborator based on the fact that she was the only native speaker of German, having an Austrian family background. After an initial conversation, during which I introduced myself and explained my project, the teacher signalled interest in taking part in the research. Subsequently, I met with the educational supervisor for German language at the institution who then referred me to the general coordinator as the right person to approve my request.

During the encounter with the latter I presented my project and answered some doubts with regards to the planned data generation. However, despite receiving immediate approval, the start of my research was conditioned to the final approval of my project by the Ethics Committee of the University of Brazil. Unfortunately, this turned out to be a tedious process that ultimately led to a delay and, consequently, to a shortened period of time that was left for the actual generation of data. After receiving final approval, I could finally go ahead and join the class.

During this first lesson, the teacher briefly introduced me to the students. It was only in the second class that I would give some information about my research and the methods of data generation that I intended to apply. As I planned to make video recordings of classroom interactions, I carefully explained the regulations with regards to the data security and

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<sup>59</sup> Classification according to the standard determined by the UnB Idiomias: Basic 1-3; Intermediate 1-3; Advanced 1-3. Both groups of collaborators at the UnB Idiomias were on Advanced 2 level, which corresponds to the level B1 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

also read with the students the Informed Consent Form as well as the Consent to the Recording and Use of Voice and Image (see appendices D and E).

Starting from the 3<sup>rd</sup> lesson, I initiated the preliminary test recordings with the video camera. The same approach with regards to the entry into the classroom was then adopted with the students that would become the second group of collaborators at this language school in the subsequent semester, with the same teacher. In the following section, I will introduce the teacher and the students of the first group of collaborators.

#### **4.1.1 GROUP I**

The first group of collaborators consisted of four female and three male students and the teacher. All information to be presented in this section was obtained in the initial interview that was conducted individually<sup>60</sup> with all participants and the questionnaire that they completed prior to that interview. As mentioned beforehand, the application of the latter not only served to elicit some basic information, but also to establish a first personal contact with the collaborators.

##### **4.1.1.1 The participants**

###### **4.1.1.1a Andreia<sup>61</sup> – the teacher**

Andreia, 56 years old, female, was born in the city of São Paulo, Brazil, and has Austrian immigrant parents. She

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<sup>60</sup> With the exception of Alison and Gabriela, who preferred to do the interview together. All interviews were conducted in the mother tongues of the collaborators.

<sup>61</sup> During the first interview, the participants were asked to choose a pseudonym for the present research, which served the purpose of protecting their true identities and, thus, of guaranteeing anonymity.

graduated in Architecture and Urbanism and has since been living in different cities in Brazil, working as an architect, translator and language teacher for different companies and institutions. Apart from teaching German at UnB Idiomas and other institutions in Brasília, she also operates, together with her family, a small restaurant in which she offers Austrian and German specialities. In addition to Portuguese and German, she speaks English, Spanish and French at intermediate levels. She has been teaching German at all levels of proficiency at UnB Idiomas for several years.

Andreia considers language teaching to be her true passion: *I have always looked at teaching German language as a bridge to understand German and Brazilian cultures. I do this with pleasure, I have almost 40 years of professional experience.* Another interesting point mentioned by the teacher when talking about her motivation to teach German is her intention to show that *German is not the harshness that people talk about and that is shown in the movies*, something that she has always found *annoying*. Apart from using the didactic material provided by the school, Andreia frequently takes her own teaching material such as newspaper articles or texts taken from the internet to the classes and tries to establish connections between the teaching subjects and current events, whenever possible.

#### **4.1.1.1b Roshani**

Roshani, 31 years old, female, Brazilian, concluded her post-graduate studies in Music Therapy and works with people with disabilities of all ages and in different mental health clinics and special schools located in the city of Brasília. Roshani is the great-grandchild of German immigrants, holds German citizen-

ship and started to learn the German language at the age of ten whilst attending a German school in her home city of São Paulo. Given her interest in German culture in general, Roshani later resumed her studies of the language in different language schools in Brasília and also did a language course in Germany. She speaks English and Spanish at intermediate levels.

The student is pleased with her learning progress at UnB Idiomas and enjoys studying in the group. However, she regrets not being able to devote more time and effort to the learning of the language, due to her professional activities. When asked if she had perceived any differences in the (non) verbal use of the German language and Brazilian Portuguese during her stay in Germany, Roshani stated the following: *it seems that there is a distance between people, but actually it is not, it is the proper culture. Sometimes you feel a bit rejected there. The Germans express themselves in a more objective way, which is sometimes understood as rudeness, this is quite different from here. We Brazilians try to say something and instead circumvent, and there people are very direct.*

#### **4.1.1.1c Alison and Gabriela**

Alison and Gabriela, both of Brazilian nationality, got to know each other during the German course for beginners they attended at UnB Idiomas in 2015 and soon after got married. Together they continued their German studies there, both driven by the motivation to study languages and to travel to other countries. Gabriela, who is 31 years old, concluded her post-graduate studies in Pharmacy and has been working in the banking industry for ten years. Alison, who graduated in Computer Science, is also 31 years old and has been working in IT security for several years and in different governmental

institutions. Both collaborators also speak English and Spanish at intermediate levels.

Alison and Gabriela evaluate their learning progress in the course as positive and show awareness that they would need to study more in their spare time to achieve better results. Gabriela, who has already travelled to Austria and Germany for leisure, states that she perceives differences with regards to how Brazilians and Germans communicate, in the way that *Brazilians gesticulate more, their non-verbal language is more expressive*. As regards to the main difficulties they experienced during the learning process, both collaborators unanimously report that they consider the declinations and the compound words as the most challenging aspects of the German language.

#### 4.1.1.1d Nick

Nick, 23 years old, male, Brazilian, is a graduate student in International Relations and English Letters and has not acquired any work experience so far. He has been studying German for 3,5 years, and his motivation is mainly based on his interest in German music. Whenever possible, he tries to speak German with friends and regularly attends informal meetings taking place in Brasilia in which the language is spoken by German natives as well as by learners of the language.

Nick, who speaks English and French at intermediate levels, states that he is satisfied with his learning progress, although he is not able to dedicate much of his time to his studies. As he has not had a chance to travel outside of Brazil yet, he is eager to visit German cities and experience German culture, especially music concerts. Nick considers the declinations, the articles as well as the memorisation of the vocabulary as the most difficult aspects in the process of learning the language.

#### 4.1.1.1e Sonja

Sonja, 41 years old, female, Brazilian, has graduated in Architecture and Urbanism, holds a Master degree in the same field and concluded a post-graduate course in Public Law. She has acquired comprehensive work experience acting as a lawyer and consultant in different areas of Civil and Public Law and working as an analyst for the Federal Government of Brazil, amongst other professional activities in Brazil, Europe and Africa. Sonja speaks fluent English and has advanced levels of Spanish and French.

Being a descendant of Germans who emigrated to Brazil before World War II, Sonja started German classes with a private teacher at the age of 16. When speaking about her family history in Brazil, she points out that communicating freely in their native language could not always be taken for granted<sup>62</sup>: *there was persecution in Rio Grande do Sul for those who somehow expressed German language. My father was afraid because of the threats, he was living in a region close to Porto Alegre. He blocked out German. When I started to study – my mother insisted that my father studied with me – he began to remember German in less than two months, but only with the vocabulary of a child. But he never felt really comfortable. My aunts were still talking German between themselves at home, but never with us.*

As to the differences between German and Brazilian cultures, Sonja mentions different aspects: *there are many differences. The approximation, Brazilians feel a little bit more comfortable to*

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<sup>62</sup> The student referred to the time of the leadership of Getúlio Vargas in Brazil (1937–1954), during which the German language was forbidden (1942) and its use was made subject to sanctions. However, although this ban was revoked five years later, it had a significant impact on the German community in the country, in the way that many German immigrants – still intimidated by the prohibition – continued to speak German only within the family or with close friends.

*get closer to each other. The touch, Europeans generally don't touch. The body movement, we are very Latin, we communicate using many facial expressions, sometimes with a movement of the shoulder. There is a lot of information in the gestures of Brazilians. The Northern Europeans, like the Germans, they almost don't move. There you have to pay much more attention to the language and wait until the person finishes speaking. If you get anxious and don't let the person finish the sentence, you will destroy all conversation.*

#### 4.1.1.1f Joaquim

Joaquim is 69 years old, male, of Brazilian nationality and has been acting as a lecturer in the field of Education at a Brazilian university for many years. He concluded several post-graduate studies abroad: he has a Master's degree from Switzerland, a Ph.D. from Canada, and a post-doctoral degree from Germany. Joaquim, who is proficient in English and speaks French and Spanish at intermediate levels, has been studying German for many years and at irregular intervals.

His principal motivation to learn German is grounded on his strong interest to read the original works of German authors: *I like German as a language. Much of the intellectual production comes from Germany, I feel like reading original works in German. I think German is a language full of possibilities.* Joaquim, who is very pleased with his learning progress at UnB Idiomas, considers the cases, the vocabulary and the compound words in German language the most difficult aspects of the language. Regarding the differences in the use of non-verbal German and Brazilian Portuguese, he comments the following: *Brazilians better complement verbal with non-verbal language. We are full of movements and body movement, the Germans don't move so much.*

#### 4.1.1.1g Ute

Ute, 58 years old, female, Brazilian, graduated in Social Sciences at a Brazilian university and has been performing as an actress and working as a researcher with a theatre group in Brasília for several years. During the nineties, Ute has lived and studied in Berlin for five years and recently started to take classes at UnB Idiomas in order to refresh her knowledge of the German language. Apart from German, Ute also speaks English, French and Spanish, all at intermediate levels.

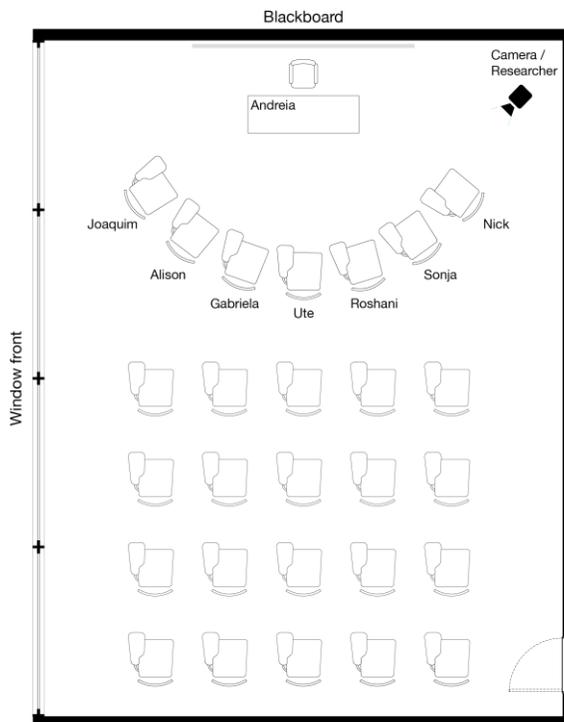
When talking about the time she spent in Europe, Ute answers whether she perceived any differences in the way Brazilians and Europeans communicate: *when I went to Europe, I went to Spain first, then to France, and since Spain I began to gesticulate more. The Germans don't do that so much. But I always felt good gesticulating there, too. I find it interesting that you can stay in another country and communicate speaking the local language, but in your own way. The Germans don't gesticulate so much. And whenever I arrived somewhere in Germany, I hugged my friends, just not the strangers. And they respected me.*

#### 4.1.1.2 Organization of the research environment and routine: preliminary observations

The classroom where the lessons of the first group were conducted is located on the first floor of the main university building, close to one of the main entrances. The room is large in relation to the small number of students and bright due to its broad window front. It is painted in plain white, has a bright illumination and is equipped with a blackboard, a desk for the teacher and chairs for the students which are arranged in a semi-circle. It should be mentioned that the students maintained

the same seating arrangement during the entire semester (see figure 2 below). Given the hot climatic conditions during the time of the data generation, all windows as well as the door were permanently kept open, which involved an increased outside noise level at certain times during the lessons.

Figure 2 – Room layout Group I (elaborated by myself)



The actual data generation was supposed to start in August 2017, which marks the beginning of the semester at the UnB Idiomas. However, due to the aforementioned delay with regards to the approval of the research project by the Ethics Committee, the entry into the field could only be initiated at

the beginning of October. Thus, the preliminary observations, the test videos and the first interviews with the collaborators as well as the application of the initial questionnaire took place until mid-October. The video recordings were conducted from the end of October until the end of November, with the classes taking place on Mondays and Wednesdays from 6:20pm - 8 pm, with a short break of 15min in between. Thus, a total of approximately 11 hours of classroom interaction was recorded.

Apart from using the didactic books selected by the UnB Idiomas, the teacher many times worked with her own material and also used her own laptop for the exercises that required audio function. A field note from the day of the first preliminary observation reflects my initial impression of the dynamics in the classroom:

At first glance, the classroom could be described as an informal, relaxed and fun environment in which all interactants are motivated to study and teach the German language. The teacher is friendly, energetic, speaks in a loud, clear voice, shows a distinct body language and constantly moves around the classroom, always trying to actively include the students into the interaction, most often with success. Also, she almost exclusively speaks German and uses Portuguese only in case it's really necessary. Most of the students seem to understand the teacher well and are willing to actively participate in the interaction. After the class, Andreia told me that she already knew Gabriela, Alison and Nick from another German course that she had taught at UnB Idiomas in 2016.

After presenting the collaborators of the first group and describing the procedures with regards to the organisation of the research environment and routine as well as the preliminary observations, we will now analyse and discuss situations of interaction that involve (in)directness and (im)politeness, thereby refer-

ring to the data that were generated in the context of German as an additional language at the UnB Idiomas in Brasília, Brazil.

As mentioned earlier in this work, the focus group that was conducted with the collaborators during the last encounter of the semester did not go as planned and therefore contributed to the analysis of the interactions only to a limited extent. Unfortunately, Roshani could not be present during the last class in which the focus group interview was conducted.

### **4.1.1.3 Classroom interaction<sup>63</sup>**

#### **4.1.1.3a Ambiguity as a face-threatening act**

All students were present and enjoyed the lesson about the topic of “professional work life”. The atmosphere was relaxed and the students were actively involved in the activities. Together with her students, Andreia worked on a text from the course book which dealt with the motivation and expectations of young Germans with regards to their desired future professions. After having worked through the text and explained the unknown vocabulary, the teacher asked the students to describe their motivation for having chosen their own professions and to portray their professional activities in more detail.

After having elicited this information from some of the students, Andreia turned towards Roshani and asked her why she had decided to become a music therapist. In her answer, the student stated that she had originally considered becoming a veterinarian or a professional footballer. However, having

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<sup>63</sup> All transcriptions were translated into English by myself. Given the fact that the participants partially mixed up German and Portuguese and, in some cases, used English words or expressions that proved to be relevant for the analysis, it is recommended to read the transcriptions in original language that are annexed to this work (appendix G).

played in a music band for several years, she finally chose to be a professional music therapist and to do a Master’s degree in this subject, not least due to the fact that she played various music instruments. However, Andreia then asked Roshani to list the referenced instruments. In that moment, the teacher was standing behind her desk facing the students.

1	<b>Andreia</b>	Which instruments do you play↓
2	<b>Roshani</b>	Eh: (.) so-some (.) eh guitar eh::
3	<b>Andreia</b>	Piano↑
4	<b>Roshani</b>	Piano no
5	<b>Andreia</b>	No
6	<b>Roshani</b>	Flute
7	<b>Andreia</b>	Flu:te
8	<b>Roshani</b>	Flu:te yes and eh:: ((with concentrated expression on her face, hands folded in front of her
9		mouth)) (whi.) <u>ah:: I forgot (.) dr (.) dru</u>
10	<b>Andreia</b>	[DRUMS
11	<b>Roshani</b>	Drums ((+) yes a::nd
12	<b>Andreia</b>	[(acc.) <u>I was going to say that you LOOK LIKE a drummer ((smiling))</u>
13	<b>Roshani</b>	((abruptly sitting up in her chair, with astonished glance, her upper body moving forward,
14		widened eyes and lifted eyebrows, mouth wide open))
15	<b>Students</b>	[[((Sonja starting to laugh, other students observing the scene and smiling, some of them
16		cautiously looking back and forth between Roshani and Andreia))
17	<b>Roshani</b>	Really↑ why↑ ((leaning back and laughing out loud))
18	<b>Andreia</b>	((smiling)) Yes ↑↑ <u>SERIOUSLY</u> (acc.) <u>I was going to say-guess drums (.) drums</u>
19		((Andreia and Roshani looking at each other, smiling)) (.)
20	<b>Roshani</b>	And also eh: (.) percussion
21	<b>Andreia</b>	Percussion (.) interesting ve:ry interesting
22		((both Roshani and Andreia smiling, interaction continuing))

After having been prompted by Andreia to name the music instruments she can play, Roshani listed these one after the other. At the same time, the teacher was assisting her student, either by guessing a certain instrument (turn 3: *piano*), pointing to the correct intonation of the word *flute* (turn 7) or by completing the word *drums* (turn 10) that the student was apparently looking for (turn 9).

The ongoing situation suddenly changed when Andreia commented on the fact that Roshani played the drums (turn 11), with the words *I was going to say that you look like a drummer* (turn 12), thereby emphasising the words *look like*. Although this utterance was obviously mitigated by a smile, it nevertheless seemed to cause a rather strong impact on the student: Roshani as the person addressed was apparently surprised, which becomes evident by the strong body language she showed (turns 13/14) and which indicates that she had perceived the comparison made by the teacher in a negative way.

According to Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 314), a speaker can threaten the face wants of the interlocutor by insulting or ridiculing him. This might hold true in the present case, taking into account that the teacher compared her female student with a drummer: playing the drums typifies an activity that is predominantly exercised by men and also involves certain stereotypes such as an alternative physical appearance and/or a more relaxed attitude towards life.

Compared to Roshani, the reactions from the other students varied: whilst Sonja started to laugh, the other students seemed to be unsure about how to interpret the teacher's utterance, carefully observing the scene and seemingly waiting for what was to come next (turns 15/16). In the very next

moment, Roshani then asked Andreia what she meant (turn 17), which shows that she was obviously unsure about how to interpret her teacher's remark. At the same time, it becomes apparent that she had eventually evaluated what was said in a positive way, as evidenced by her loud laughter (turn 17).

However, despite Roshani's clear question, Andreia merely smiled again and subsequently answered *I was going to say guess drums* (turn 18), which in fact constitutes a rewording of the previously made comment. In addition, the referenced statement was preceded by the word *seriously* that was uttered in a loud, high-pitched voice and by which she indicated that she really meant what she had said (turn 18). Both teacher and student then smiled at each other for a moment (turn 19). After, the referenced scene eventually ended, once again being accompanied by a mutual smile of both interactants (turn 22).

Summarising we can say that the meaning of the intention behind the teacher's utterances (turns 12/18) was not revealed during the actual interaction, since Andreia did not offer any further explanation with regards to the remark she had made. Thus, according to the definition of Grainger and Mills (2016), the referenced comparison can be considered as indirect from a linguistic perspective, given the ambiguous character it assumed during the interaction. In other words, it represents an ambiguous, off-record utterance which opened space for interpretation on the part of the interactants.

It becomes evident that Roshani, despite an initial moment of apparent confusion, interpreted the comparison of her teacher as positive, given the laughter and smile that she showed in the further course of the interaction. This positive interpretation can very likely be traced back to the fact that Andreia,

from the moment that she actually made the comparison, was continuously smiling.

As per Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 317), a smile can be considered a redressive act that serves to “counteract the potential face damage of the FTA by doing it in such a way, or with such modifications or additions, that indicate clearly that no such face threat is intended or desired”. In the present case, Andreia’s smile evidently served to minimise the potential face threat emanating from her ambiguous utterance, in the way that it indicated that the comparison was meant in a positive way and did not aim to harm Roshani.

When asked about her utterances during the focus group interview that was conducted during the last encounter of the semester, the teacher smilingly stated the following: *I said that spontaneously. Roshani is a very laid-back person, she is super easy-going. You can see that she is kind of relaxed or in the alternative scene. I mean the way she speaks and the music, the way she looks. And I thought music and the drums, that just suits her.* According to Andreia, her remarks were not meant in a negative way at all. Instead, it seems that she wanted to comment positively on the fact that Roshani played drums, which matched how she perceived her student, namely as a relaxed and laid-back person.

However, as Roshani was not present during the focus group interview and also given the fact that the other students did not want to comment on the referenced scene, no further feedback could be obtained as to the question if the referenced situation was perceived as (in)direct and/or (im)polite by the interactants.

#### 4.1.1.3b Reprimand as a face-threatening act

All students apart from Joaquim and Roshani were present on the day that the following interaction was observed, and the topic of the lesson was “business life”. The class was working on a text from the textbook about a competition that is organised annually by the German government and addresses young German professionals who can develop their own innovative ideas for business start-ups. The text first described the different stages of the contest and afterwards presented the ideas of those groups who occupied the top three places in the ranking of the previous year.

The students first read out one paragraph each, which was then followed by Andreia raising questions about the projects presented in the text. This served to solicit the opinions of the students and to stimulate the debate inside the classroom. At the same time, the teacher provided explanations about the unknown vocabulary. In the moment of interaction, Andreia was standing behind her desk and asking the students about the meaning of a particular verb in the text<sup>64</sup>.

1	<b>Andreia</b>	((looking at the textbook)) What is the meaning of the verb <i>BELEGEN</i> ↓
2		((looking at the students)) (...)
3	<b>Students</b>	[(((looking at their books))
4	<b>Andreia</b>	“Places two and three were <i>belegt</i> ” by such-and-such (..) <i>BE-LE-GEN</i> ((beating
5		rhythmically with the palm of the right hand on the table to stress the syllables of the word
6		<i>belegen</i> )) (...)

<sup>64</sup> The referenced verb is the German *belegen* (in English: to occupy). Given its relevance in the investigated interaction, I did not translate it into English and instead kept it in the original German (in *italics*), aiming to facilitate a better understanding of the transcription.

7	<b>Students</b>	[[((Sonja, Alison and Gabriela looking at their books, Ute looking at the ceiling, slightly shaking her head, Nick looking at Andreia and then at his
8		book, questioning glance, repeatedly shaking his head))
9		
10	<b>Andreia</b>	((looking at Nick)) (acc.) ↑↑ <u>What do you think it means Nick</u> ((abruptly stretching both arms out in the direction of Nick, palms upwards, then putting her left hand on her hip, reproachful look))
11		
12		
13	<b>Nick</b>	(acc.) ↑↑ <u>I DON'T KNOW</u> ((quickly raising his forearms aloft, palms upwards, then leaning backwards with a forced smile, both arms stretched out on the table, holding his textbook tight))
14		
15		
16	<b>Andreia</b>	(acc.) <u>So you are not understanding</u> ↑↑ <u>anything</u> ((quickly stretching out her arms and then putting her left hand on her hip, palm of her right hand supported on the table))
17		
18	<b>Nick</b>	↑↑ <u>NO</u> I sai-I said (acc.) <u>I already got ma:ny other words right</u> ((grinning, looking into his book, counting with his fingers))
19		( )
20	<b>Students</b>	[[((Sonja and Ute starting to laugh out loud, Alison and Gabriela smiling))
21	<b>Nick</b>	((looking at Andreia)) I A:LMOST got this one too ((right arm stretched out in the direction of the teacher, palm upwards, laughing))
22		
23	<b>Andreia</b>	((looking at Nick)) O::H↑ dear↓ ((smiling and rolling her eyes))
24	<b>Students</b>	[[((all smiling))
25		((interaction continuing, Andreia giving further explanations))

The scene started with Andreia asking her students about the meaning of the word *belegen* (turn 1), which is part of the text passage the class was reading. Whilst waiting for an answer (turn 2), the students were all looking at their books, evidently trying to figure out the meaning of the referenced word (turn 3). After a short moment, the teacher then cited a part of the sentence which contained the searched word (*places*

*two and three were belegt*), which was followed by a short pause and the loud repetition of the word *belegen* (turn 4), the teacher thereby emphasising the individual syllables by rhythmically beating with her hand on the table (turns 4-6).

Whereas the other students were evidently trying to grasp the meaning of the searched word (turns 7/8), Nick was looking at his teacher, indicating that he did not know the answer to the question by repeatedly shaking his head (turns 8/9). Suddenly, Andreia looked straight at Nick and said with a fast and high-pitched voice *what do you think it means Nick* (turn 10), which was accompanied by a quick movement of her arms and a reproachful look (turns 10-12).

Nick's reaction, telling Andreia that he indeed did not know the meaning of the searched word (turn 13), suggests that he somehow felt uncomfortable or even embarrassed, which is evidenced by his loud, high-pitched and sped-up voice, his forced smile and by the fact that he seemed tense (turns 13-15). Andreia then responded *so you are not understanding anything* (turn 16), thereby speaking fast and emphasising the word *anything* in a high-pitched voice and showing a vivid body language (turns 16/17).

With his reaction *no I sai I said I already got many other words right* (turn 18), the student evidently tried to explain himself, his loud, shrill *no*, the self-interruption *I sai-said* and the accelerated speech rate of his utterance indicating that he was feeling tense in that moment. The fact that he grinned after his answer (turn 19) implies that he had made a joke. In a similar way, the reactions of his classmates, who started laughing or smiling given his explanation attempts (turn 20), show that they interpreted the described interaction as a joke.

Next, Nick said that he had *almost* managed to figure out the searched word (turn 21), thereby laughing and gesticulating with his arm (turns 21/22). This, in turn, was eventually followed by Andreia looking at Nick and commenting *oh dear* (turn 23), her intonation, gaze and smile seemingly attributing a rather facetious character to her utterance and to the scene as a whole. This assumption seems to be confirmed by the positive reaction of the students (turn 24).

It can be said that the described interaction exhibits different potential face threats that were directed towards Nick. Andreia's question *what do you think it means Nick* (line 10) can be considered as such, in the way that the student was possibly unable to answer the question and, thus, might have been exposed or ridiculed in front of the class. This seems even more likely given the fact that he had signalled to his teacher that he did not know the answer to the question (turn 8/9). Also, Andreia's utterance was accompanied by a strong paraverbal and non-verbal language which seemingly attributed a reproachful character to it (turns 10-12).

As mentioned previously, acts of disapproval or those that aim at criticising or ridiculing the interlocutor can constitute face threats (BROWN; LEVINSON, 1987). In fact, Nick's reaction (turns 13-15) points to a rather negative effect that the teacher's question had on him, which is underlined by the non-verbal language he showed. It can be assumed that Andreia's subsequent utterance *so you are not understanding anything* (line 16) had the potential to cause an even stronger impact, due to the fact that this time the teacher apparently put Nick's knowledge of German language or even his intellectual capacities into question.

Those acts that aim to construct the face of a person in a non-harmonious or conflictive way, as might be the case with the referenced utterance, are characterised by Bousfield (2008) as on-record impoliteness. In addition, the teacher spoke fast and with a high-pitched voice, thereby emphasising the word *anything* (turn 16/17) which, together with the non-verbal language she was using, once more seemed to have created a reproachful character.

Then, the student apparently tried to contradict the teacher's statement (turns 18/21). He did this in an evidently joking way, which in turn is not only indicated by the non-verbal language he used (turns 19, 21/22), but also reflected in the reactions of his classmates (turn 20). The subsequent response of Andreia *oh dear* (turn 23) could be considered as what Brown and Levinson (1987) describe to be the negative evaluation of a person's face, in the way that it once more questioned Nick's performance. This impression is reinforced by the fact that this utterance was accompanied by Andreia rolling her eyes, which apparently served to intensify its reproachful character (turn 23). However, her smile had once again a mitigating effect on her utterance and attributed a rather jocular character to it, which is evidenced by the fact that all interactants eventually smiled.

When asked during the focus group interview how he was feeling after Andreia had asked him about the meaning of the word *occupy*, Nick stated the following: *Well, I always try to avoid questions like that, like 'lower your head, that one's not for you!'. Many times I do not understand the vocabulary, and then I normally ask. Specific vocabulary is very difficult for me, sometimes I have to read a word 8 or 10 times in order to memorise it.* Thus, the student's answer,

although followed by a smile, indicates that he generally did not feel comfortable when faced with questions that he could not answer, as was the case in the referenced scene. As to the question of whether she had pursued a certain objective with what she had said to her student in that situation, Andreia gave the following answer:

No! I am very spontaneous. I even apologise if I was too spontaneous. But in that moment I felt that he wouldn't ask, so I asked him directly! Sometimes I look around, then I look at Nick and I think that I won't ask him, I will ask another student. Because sometimes I realise that he is not prepared. For example, I could have asked Gabriela. I always ask those students that are calm, those who are very quiet, or when I feel that they have doubts, or when it's obvious that they have doubts. I always tell that, I want the students who have doubts to tell me that they don't know! Why? The fact that they manifest themselves will also encourage the others to do so. That's how I encourage everyone! When I realise that a student doesn't know, I will ask! Because the student thinks he knows the word, and then I ask and the answer is wrong!

Andreia's answer, in a certain way, bespeaks her awareness that her actions in this situation might not have been perceived positively by Nick, which is indicated by her offering apologies for possibly being *too spontaneous*. She justified her behavior by stating that she always deliberately asks those students who seem to have doubts. According to the teacher, this practice is supposed to encourage the students to actively ask and also to motivate their classmates to do the same, which would benefit their learning progress.

Summing up, it can be said that several potential face threats could be identified in the present situation. Andreia as the person who had voiced the referenced utterances showed

awareness that her actions had also provoked negative effects on her student, whilst Nick indicated that he had in fact not always been feeling comfortable in this situation. However, given the overall course of the interaction and its evidently face-threatening character, we can conclude that the alleged face threats did not seem to have caused a considerably negative impact nor were they interpreted in that way.

As to the question whether the referenced remarks of the teacher can be evaluated as direct or indirect when seen from a linguistic point of view, we can say that their meaning apparently became clear to all participants, which in turn means that they can be considered as direct according to the definition of Grainger and Mills (2016).

Andreia stated in the interview that, despite being aware that Nick did not know the answer to her question, her approach to ask him *directly* was based on good intentions, which she justified with the benefit it would bring to him and to the other students. Neither Nick nor any of the other students wanted to comment if they had perceived the referenced utterances of their teacher in that situation as direct or indirect.

#### **4.1.1.3c Teasing someone as a face-threatening act**

Only Nick, Ute and Roshani were present on the day that the following interaction was recorded. Going ahead with the principal topic of the current semester, that is, “professional life”, the lesson was about the subject of “job application” and the different steps that an applicant usually has to go through during this process. The homework assigned by the teacher during the previous lesson was to identify these steps by means of a text from the textbook dealing with this subject.

Roshani has just presented the notes she had taken with regards to the homework and further explained the steps about the application process that she had identified. At the same time, Andreia has noted down these points on the blackboard, clarified the unknown vocabulary and provided some further information about the individual items. Continuing the discussion about this particular subject, the teacher then tried to elicit more information from the students about their own experiences with job applications. In the moment of interaction, Birgit was standing behind her desk, facing the students<sup>65</sup>.

1	<b>Andreia</b>	So (.) we can now say something about each of these points (.) yes discuss (.) for
2		example (.) eh:: (.) Nick ((moving around the table towards Nick)) have you already read
3		an interesting <i>Stellenangebot</i> (.) read or searched ((gesticulating with her left arm))
4	<b>Nick</b>	A book↑
5	<b>Andreia</b>	No (.) a <i>Stellenangebot</i>
6	<b>Nick</b>	((Frowning)) a <i>Stellenangebot</i> ((looking at his book and then at Andreia, then
7		speaking in a low voice)) wha-what I don't know wha-what is a <i>Stellenangebot</i>
8	<b>Andreia</b>	[[((placing her left arm on her hip, reproachful look))
9		And how ((shaking her head)) (acc.) <u>and WHY HAVEN'T YOU ASKED</u> ↑
10	<b>Nick</b>	((lowering his head, then looking up at Birgit again, forced smile)) (..)
11	<b>Students</b>	[[((Ute and Roshani carefully observing the scene))
12	<b>Andreia</b>	Have you done the exercise↓
13	<b>Nick</b>	No
14	<b>Andreia</b>	So ((short smile)) a <i>Stellenangebot</i> is an advertisement
15	<b>Nick</b>	Hm yes ok
16	<b>Andreia</b>	Have you already read one↓

<sup>65</sup> In the transcription, I kept the word *Stellenangebot* (in English: job posting) in the German original (in *italics*), in order to allow for a better understanding of the interaction.

17	<b>Nick</b>	Yes
18	<b>Andreia</b>	And what was this <i>Stellenangebot</i> about↓
19	<b>Nick</b>	Eh:: ((scratching his chin)) it was about the: (.) eh:: (.) employment reform
20	<b>Andreia</b>	About the employment reform (.) a job posting about the ↑ <u>employment reform</u>
21	<b>Nick</b>	Yes (.) there is eh:: at the end of o:f eh: Central Boulevard a huge billboard
22		((drawing a big square with both hands in the air))
23	<b>Andreia</b>	[[((questioning glance, slightly shaking her head in disbelief))
24	<b>Students</b>	[[((Ute and Roshani with questioning glances))
25	<b>Nick</b>	There i::s (acc.) <u>how do you call that</u> ((gesticulating with his outstretched arms))
26		(whi.) <u>I forgot the name fo:r</u> (.) that is set up alo:ng (.) set up along the roads
27	<b>Andreia</b>	An outdoor
28	<b>Nick</b>	Yes ((+)) outdoor outdoor
29	<b>Students</b>	[[((Ute and Roshani looking at Nick and Andreia with questioning glances))
30	<b>Andreia</b>	About the employment REFORM↑ (.) is it a JOB offer ((gesticulating with her hands))
31	<b>Nick</b>	NO::↓ (acc.) <u>it is a notice talking about the employment reforms</u> ((gesticulating as if he was writing something into the air))
32		
33	<b>Andreia</b>	No: we are talking about advertisement JO:B advertisement
34	<b>Nick</b>	AH::: no no no ((shaking his head))
35	<b>Andreia</b>	A JO:B-he is doing WELL he has NEVER read a <i>Stellenangebot</i> ((looking at Ute and Roshani, the three starting to smile))
36		
37	<b>Nick</b>	[[((forced smile, nervously plucking the hairs of his beard))
38	<b>Andreia</b>	How old are you Nick↓
39	<b>Nick</b>	Twenty-three
40	<b>Andreia</b>	((shaking her head)) I was already ↑ <u>working</u> at that age ((smiling))
41	<b>Nick</b>	NO: I have already looked o-on the internet but ((shaking his head))
42	<b>Andreia</b>	Im Internet (.) Ok ((smiling))
43	<b>Students</b>	[[((Roshani and Ute smiling, Nick with a forced smile))
44		((interaction continuing))

After stating her intention to further discuss with the class the steps of the job application process that she had noted down on the blackboard (turn 1), Andreia asked Nick if he had already read or searched for an interesting job posting (in German: *Stellenangebot*, turns 2/3). His answer *a book* (turn 4) shows that he had not understood the question. After the teacher had then repeated the word *Stellenangebot* (turn 5), Nick admitted that he in fact did not know its meaning, his lowered voice and the repeatedly interrupted flow in his answer (*wha-what*, turn 7) indicating a certain insecurity and/or tension.

However, it was already during Nick's response that Andreia's dissatisfaction became evident, which manifested itself in her non-verbal language (turn 8) and then in her subsequent response *and why haven't you asked* (turn 9), her loud voice and the accelerated speech rate thereby evidently intensifying her reaction. The impact of Andreia's utterance on her student becomes discernible in the non-verbal reaction that Nick subsequently showed (turn 10).

The scene then continued with Andreia asking him if he had done the exercise (turn 12), to which the student said *no* (turn 13). After giving a short smile, the teacher explained the searched expression by stating the word *advertisement* (turn 14). However, although Nick then signalled that he had understood the explanation (turn 15), it became apparent in the further course of the interaction that he had misinterpreted the meaning of the referenced word. Instead, it turns out that he assumed that *Stellenangebot* designated an outdoor advertisement. To illustrate, he then started to describe a billboard set up along the Central Boulevard of the city of Brasília about the Brazilian employment reform.

Given this misinterpretation, his explanations caused a certain astonishment amongst the other students and Andreia (turns 19-32), which was then clarified by the teacher who eventually mentioned the Portuguese translation of the searched word (*anúncio de emprego*, turn 33). Andreia evidently took the confusion as an occasion to make a joke, saying that the reason for Nick's ignorance was the fact that he was *doing well* and that he had *never read a Stellenangebot* (turn 35), emphasising the words *well* and *never*. She was thereby looking at Roshani and Ute and then started to smile together with the two students (turns 35/36). In contrast, Nick showed a forced smile and started to pluck his beard nervously (turn 37), which indicates that he was once more feeling uneasy and/or possibly exposed.

This negative impact was apparently even intensified: Andreia's subsequent question *how old are you* (turn 38), which was first responded to by Nick saying *twenty-three* (turn 39), was then followed by the teacher shaking her head and stating *I was already working at that age* (turn 40), thereby uttering the word *working* in a high-pitched voice. Comparing herself to Nick by saying that she had already been working when she was the same age as he is now, Andreia in a certain way belittled her student. This seems to hold true considering that Nick then tried to explain himself by telling her that he had already looked for work on the internet (turn 41).

It is possible to identify a number of potential face threats in the referenced interaction. The first refers to the fact that Nick had to confess that he did not know the meaning of the word *Stellenangebot* which the class had been dealing with during the ongoing lesson (turn 7). According to Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 315), confessing ignorance, for example,

constitute acts by which a person can possibly threaten his own negative face. This assumption seems to be confirmed by the fact that Nick uttered his statement in a lowered voice and repeatedly interrupted his speech.

Moreover, the question *and why haven't you asked* (line 9) that the teacher voiced subsequently can also be considered a possible threat: the referenced authors (1987, p. 314) argue that expressions of criticism or reprimands have the potential to threaten the positive face of the interlocutor, in the way that they signal that the speaker does not care about the other person's face wants or feelings. The referenced utterance of the teacher (turn 9) was apparently intensified by the non-verbal language that preceded it: Andreia had placed *her left arm on her hip*, had shown a *reproachful look* and had shaken her head (turns 8/9), which are all obvious signs of her dissatisfaction. Moreover, the question *and why haven't you asked* (turn 9) was uttered in a loud voice and with an accelerated speech rate.

The referenced act might also be evaluated as what Bousfield (2008, p. 95) characterises on-record impoliteness, in the way that the teacher denied her student the right of non-imposition by pointing to his obligation to tell her that he had not understood the referenced word. The negative impact caused on the student became immediately visible: the lowering of his head, which was accompanied by a forced smile, and the mere fact that he remained in silence (turn 10) indicate that Nick was feeling uncomfortable or possibly embarrassed at that moment.

Although the student then confirmed that he had comprehended the subsequent clarification of his teacher, the misunderstanding had not been clarified (turns 12-32). However, Andreia eventually provided clarification by stating the Portu-

guese translation of the word in question (turn 33). She then claimed that her student had never been in need to read a job advertisement, given the fact that he was *doing well* (turn 35). Culpeper (1996) argues that not treating someone seriously, for example by ridiculing or belittling him, can constitute a strategy that threatens the face of this person.

In the present scene, this impression is reinforced by the fact that Andreia, in the moment of speaking, was looking at Roshani and Ute and talking *about* Nick in the third person (*he is.. he has..*, turn 35), as if he was not present himself. In a certain way, the referenced act could be interpreted as the opposite of what Lakoff (1973, p. 298) describes in his third rule of politeness (“to make the other feel good”, for example, by making someone feel as a member of the same group), in the way that the teacher excluded him from the group and from the interaction. Once again, the student’s reaction (turn 37) indicates that he did not feel comfortable at all in this situation.

The fact that the teacher then commented on Nick’s age with the words *I was already working at that age* (turn 40) creates once more the impression that she tried to ridicule or belittle him, which is also indicated by the high-pitched word *working* which seems to produce a taunting undertone. Although her utterance was accompanied by a smile, Nick apparently started another attempt to explain himself (turn 41), with the high-pitched *no* as well as the partly interrupted speech flow *o-on* bespeaking a certain nervousness. Whereas Andreia, Ute and Roshani smiled at the end of the described scene, Nick merely showed a forced smile, which once again seems to confirm the impression that he was feeling uncomfortable or possibly embarrassed (turn 43).

The focal group interview did not prove further insight into the interaction. As to the question of how he had perceived the referenced situation, Nick merely stated that he could not remember any more. Andreia explained once again that she considered it an obligation of her students to manifest themselves in case they have doubts, also given the fact that all other classmates would benefit from these questions. When asked about the motivation for her remark *I was already working at that age* (line 40), Birgit laughingly responded *it was an attack!* and stated that she was *already attending university and at the same time working as a teacher of Portuguese at that age*.

Her answer indicates that the comparison she established between herself and Nick in fact aimed to make fun of her student. However, as to the question of whether the supposed FTAs can be considered direct or indirect when seen from a linguistic point of view (cf. GRAINGER; MILLS, 2016), we can state that their meanings evidently were unambiguous and, thus, understood by the interactants, which allows us to specify them as direct.

#### 4.1.1.3d The use of stereotypes as a potential face threat

A few minutes after the previously described interaction Joaquim joined the class. Continuing with the subject of “working life”, Andreia introduced a new exercise from the textbook with the title “*Mehr als ein Beruf*” (in English: more than a job) which dealt with different German sayings referring to the context of work and leisure, such as *Erst die Arbeit, dann das Vergnügen* (first work, then play), *Arbeitswut tut selten gut* (work rage does seldom good) or *Wir leben um zu arbeiten/wir arbeiten um zu leben* (we live to work/we work to live), amongst others.

The teacher and the students first read the sayings and clarified the unknown vocabulary before discussing their meanings. After finishing this first part of the exercise, the class continued to work on some follow-up tasks from the textbook. During the scene that we will analyse, Andreia was sitting behind her desk. In the moment of the interaction, she was reading the subsequent task from the book which was opened as a file on her laptop.

1	<b>Andreia</b>	So (.) "Write down sayings with regards to work and leisure in your language and present them to the class" (.) do we have any↑ ((looking at the students)) (..)
2		
3	<b>Joaquim</b>	I don't remember any at the moment ((turning towards his classmates)) if we think
4		more eh:: (..)
5	<b>Roshani</b>	Eh::
6	<b>Ute</b>	[Eh: work brings
7	<b>Roshani</b>	[Work dignifies man
8	<b>Ute</b>	[Dignifies man
9	<b>Joaquim</b>	AH: that's it ((pointing with his right arm at Roshani))
10	<b>Roshani</b>	Or harms ((smiling))
11	<b>Andreia</b>	Harms too (.) eh: (acc.) <u>dignifies or harms</u> eh: how can we say that in German↓
12		(.) work HONORS man (.) work honors man or HARMS (..) ok what else↓
13	<b>Students</b>	((all thinking hard)) (...)
14	<b>Ute</b>	I don't remember (...)
15	<b>Andreia</b>	((brief laughter)) Something just came to my mind ((pointing with her left hand at the screen of her laptop)) do you see how many-how many sayings for the sake of work
16		there are in the German language (.) to make work attractive (.) and NONE in Portuguese
17		((laughing out loud))
18		
19	<b>Students</b>	[[((all laughing))
20	<b>Nick</b>	What do you mean by that ((laughing))
21	<b>Andreia</b>	((laughing)) What do I mean by that (acc.) ↑↑ <u>because the Brazilians</u> (.) well ((laughing))

22	<b>Ute</b>	[Brazilians don't
23		want to work ((laughing))
24	<b>Andreia</b>	They do things their OWN way ((laughing))
25	<b>Students</b>	[[((all laughing again))
26	<b>Ute</b>	[Brazilians are la:zy↓
27	<b>Andreia</b>	↑↑NO but Brazilians do things their own way they don't need sayings about work
28	<b>All</b>	((laughing))
29		((interaction continuing))

The scene started with Andreia reading out the follow-up task from the didactic book and asking if the students could think of any examples (turns 1/2). Joaquim was the first to respond, stating that he could not recollect any at that moment (turn 3). After a brief moment of consideration, Roshani and Ute then almost simultaneously remembered the Brazilian saying *o trabalho dignifica o homem* (in English: work dignifies man, turns 5-8), which was then followed by Joaquim saying that he remembered the same adage (turn 9) and Roshani stating the verb *harms* (turn 10), which turns the meaning of the referenced expression into the opposite.

Afterwards, Andreia repeated the saying in Portuguese, then translated it into German and asked her students to give further examples in Portuguese (turns 11/12). For a few moments they were reflecting on the question (turn 13), then Ute eventually stated that she could not remember other examples (turn 14). After a brief moment of silence, Andreia suddenly started to laugh out loud and said that she had just had an idea (turn 15), stating *do you see how many how many sayings for the sake of work there are in the German language to make work attractive and none in Portuguese* (turns 16-18).

Her subsequent loud laughter (turn 18) was immediately followed by the laughing of all students (turn 19), which shows that they had apparently interpreted the utterance of their teacher as a joke. Nick then laughingly asked Andreia what she had meant with her remark (turn 20). Again, the teacher started to laugh, telling him that *Brazilians well they do things their own way* (turns 21/24), whilst Ute was at the same time laughingly commenting that *Brazilians don't want to work* (turns 22/23). There is the impression that Andreia avoided saying exactly what Ute expressed explicitly in the same moment.

The fact that the teacher had obviously avoided a more sincere answer is indicated by her partly accelerated, high-pitched voice, the pauses in her speech, the use of the filler *well* and the emphasis on the word *own* (turns 21/24). The assumption that she simply tried to talk her way out in that moment seems to be confirmed by the fact that all interactants once more started to laugh after her utterance (turn 25). This was then followed by Ute stating *Brazilians are lazy* (turn 26), which the teacher did not agree with, explaining instead that *Brazilians do things their own way* and therefore *don't need sayings about work* (turn 27). All interactants eventually laughed again at the end of the described scene.

It is possible to recognise that the teacher's utterance (turns 16/17) had in fact the potential to cause an impolite effect: comparing the German language and its sayings about work with those of Brazilian Portuguese, which supposedly does not have any sayings referring to this topic, implies that work is less important in Brazil and/or that Brazilians do not (like to) work. As we have seen previously in this work, to ridicule or insult a person or, as in the present case, a group of

people, can constitute a threat to the positive face of the interlocutor(s) (BROWN; LEVINSON, 1987).

However, Andreia's laughter before (turn 15) and after (turn 18) her utterance apparently had an attenuating effect, in the way that it indicated that her statement was not meant to be taken seriously. Moreover, she apparently exaggerated by emphasising that there were no sayings at all (*none*, turn 17) in the Portuguese language, which can be refuted by the mere fact that the students had just stated one (turns 7-10). Furthermore, Andreia herself was born and has been living in Brazil her whole life, which consequently means that she would also have to consider herself to be a lazy person if her utterance was in fact meant to be taken seriously, which once more indicates that she had made a joke.

The fact that everyone in the classroom laughed at the end of the described scene (turn 28) shows that nobody had interpreted the teacher's statement as offensive. Rather, it seems that Andreia's utterance(s) can be classified as what Culpeper (1996) and Kerbrat-Orecchioni (2017) describe as mock politeness which, as we have seen the preceding discussion of this work, does not serve to threaten the face of the interlocutor(s) and instead aims to promote social intimacy amongst them. This, in turn, points to a friendly and relatively close relationship between the teacher and her students.

The referenced scene aroused great interest during the focal group. When asked why everyone in the classroom had started to laugh after Andreia's remark about the non-existence of sayings referring to the topic of work in Brazil, Ute was the first to comment by saying *yes, unfortunately, we are said to be lazy. But Brazilians work a lot*. This was then followed by a comment from Andreia:

Brazilians consider themselves not to be workaholic as Germans. And this remark that I gave that day, like, there are so many German expressions and sayings about work, that's because it's already a cultural trait of the German people. Like 'back to work, let's get things done'. We Brazilians are more relaxed about it. It doesn't mean that we work less, but we see that in a different way. The Brazilians work hard, really hard. But it's actually a cultural question.

Thus, Andreia confirmed that Brazilians in fact work a lot. She argued that the stereotype that Brazilians are lazy is based on the fact that, compared to Germans, Brazilians see work from a different, more *relaxed* perspective. As to the question of whether the interactants saw any connection between this negative stereotype and the famous cartoon character of "Zé Carioca"<sup>66</sup>, Joaquim commented that it was in fact Disney that had contributed considerably to the creation of the stereotype of the "lazy Brazilian". Andreia, for her part, provided another comment:

I remember that this already caught my attention when I was a child, because it really doesn't make sense. Zé Carioca doesn't represent Brazilians. Also, at that time there was Carmen Miranda<sup>67</sup>. She always had pineapples in her hair and bananas

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<sup>66</sup> Created in the early 1940s by the Disney Studios in the US, the cartoon character of José Carioca ("Zé Carioca") is a parrot that represents for many people a Brazil of negative stereotypes: a rogue, unscrupulous, selfish, dishonest, indolent and womanising Brazilian.

Source: <https://sonhosdespertos.wordpress.com/2012/12/08/ze-carioca-e-o-estereotipo-do-brasil/>.

<sup>67</sup> Carmen Miranda was a Brazilian singer, actress and dancer known worldwide as "Brazilian Bombshell" who started her career in the 1930s in Brazil and soon became famous in many other countries. The image widely linked to Carmen Miranda is her Bahian costume and extravagant headwear that is inspired by Afro-American fruit vendors.

Source: <https://brasilescola.uol.com.br/biografia/carmem-miranda.htm>.

and so on, and she was wearing very high heels, because she was so small. And she had an orchestra and musicians, and she took many Brazilian carnival songs to the US. And in those days of radio she was very famous, at the same time as Zé Carióca. So because of Carmen Miranda, there was also this stereotype that all Brazilian women are like that.

Alison pointed to the fact that many foreign tourists come to the city of Rio de Janeiro for carnival, seeing Brazilian life that, to a large extent, takes place on the streets and on the beach at that time of the year. According to the student, this also contributed to the creation of the image that Brazilians are easy-going people that seem to enjoy life rather than to worry about it. In addition, Joaquim enriched the discussion with another interesting contribution:

I was in a discussion with some friends the other day. And one of them said 'I am from Ceará, and the people there are lazy, they don't want to work'. And I said to him: 'How can you say that about your own people. The streets that you use, the house you live in, everything was made by workers, so how can you say that Brazilian workers are lazy'. Also, it is the prejudice of the elite that actually devalues the worker.

In other words, the student argued that the image of "Brazilian laziness" did not solely originate from the previously mentioned factors. Instead, it was also created by the prejudice that Brazilians have against compatriots in their own country. According to Joaquim, the referenced cliché also constitutes a preconception of the Brazilian elite class which is used to depreciate the working class.

In summary, we can say that the investigated interaction in the classroom showed the awareness of the interactants as

to the existence of the described stereotype. It also became evident what role it played in the referenced scene, in the way that the teacher obviously used it to make a joke by establishing a connection between the stereotype of the “lazy Brazilian” and the (alleged) non-existence of sayings about work in Brazilian Portuguese. The fact that all students were able to understand this connection and, thus, capture the meaning of Andreia’s remark, allows us to characterise this utterance as direct when seen from a linguistic point of view.

In addition, the contributions obtained from the interactants during the focus group interview offered an interesting glance at how multiple influences can contribute to the creation and persistence of stereotypes as widely held beliefs and images, which in turn can assume an important role in intercultural interaction. Given the limited time available for the conduction of the interview and the fact that some of the students had to leave before I could finish asking the remaining questions, no further evaluations with regards to this nor to the now following interaction could be obtained from the collaborators of this group.

#### **4.1.1.3e Invasion of physical space as a face-threatening act**

All students were present while the following interaction was recorded. The lesson was once again about the overarching topic of the semester “professional life”. After having worked with the students on some exercises from the textbook, the teacher initiated a conversation by posing the hypothetical question “What would you do if you lost your job and urgently had to make money?”. The question apparently aimed at making the students spontaneously elaborate ideas and discussing them with their classmates and Andreia.

Some of the students have already presented their ideas, which included suggestions such as giving private music lessons, selling home-made cakes or offering a 24h-computer-repair-service. The students were having fun discussing the ideas with their colleagues and the teacher. During the interaction, Andreia was moving around the classroom and writing down and explaining expressions and unknown vocabulary on the blackboard. In the moment the interaction below occurred, the teacher was standing next to her desk<sup>68</sup>.

1	<b>Andreia</b>	And what would you do Joaquim↓
2	<b>Joaquim</b>	Eh:: I would maybe open a little book store
3	<b>Andreia</b>	You would open a book store↑ (.) ↑↑ <u>nice</u> (.) I would sit there in the book store A:LL
4		day long and just read and not sell a single book ((laughing))
5	<b>Students</b>	[[((smiling))
6	<b>Andreia</b>	Nice (.) there are always options (.) and you Mister Nick↓ ((walking slowly behind her desk towards the other end of the semicircle where Nick is sitting, smiling, arms crossed))
7		
8	<b>Nick</b>	A seller <i>on</i> bus ((smiling))
9	<b>Andreia</b>	No (.) a seller (.) you have to think about something specifically for you ((standing right next to Nick now, looking down on him, moving her arms up and down, hands in vertical position, fingers of both hands stretched out, almost touching him))
10		
11		
12	<b>Nick</b>	((looking up to the teacher, forced smile)) A seller <i>ON</i> bus
13	<b>Andreia</b>	<i>ON</i> ↑
14	<b>Nick</b>	bus
15	<b>Andreia</b>	bus↑ ((looking confused))
16	<b>Students</b>	[[((all laughing))
17	<b>Andreia</b>	[AH:: <i>on the bus</i> (.) AH::↓ ((crossing her arms))

<sup>68</sup> During the interaction, Nick was mixing up German and English. In order to highlight this in the transcription, I kept the English words used by Nick and Andreia in *italics*.

18	<b>Nick</b>	AT bus
19	<b>Andreia</b>	IN THE bus
20	<b>Nick</b>	[In the bus ((low voice, questioning glance))
21	<b>Andreia</b>	Oh↑ my god↓ you are in Advanced Two ((looking reproachfully at Nick, speaking in a reproachful tone and with a low voice))
22		
23	<b>Nick</b>	((forced smile, lowering his eyes))
24	<b>Andreia</b>	WHERE do you sell↓ (.) IN THE bus
25	<b>Nick</b>	((looking up again, speaking with a low voice)) In the
26	<b>Andreia</b>	IN THE (.) obviously it's dative (.) Ni::ck↑
27		((reproachful tone, smiling, turning around and walking away))
28	<b>Nick</b>	[(((forced smile))
29	<b>Students</b>	[(((smiling))
30		((scene continuing))

The interaction started with Andreia asking Joaquim what he would do for a living if he lost his job (turn 1). The student answered that he would possibly open a book store (turn 2), which was subsequently commented by the teacher who stated that she liked the idea and then joked that she as the owner of the store would spend all day there just reading and not selling anything (turns 3/4), which in turn made her students smile (turn 5).

Next, Andreia addressed Nick with the words *and you Mister Nick*, thereby slowly approaching her student, smiling and holding her arms crossed in front of her (turns 6/7). The student's initial answer *a seller on bus* (German expression: *ein Verkäufer on Bus*, including the English preposition *on*, turn 8), was first responded to by the teacher telling Nick that he needed to think of something that would apply specifically to him (turn 9).

Nick's identical answer (turn 12) apparently confused the teacher and caused a laughter from his classmates (turns 13-16). Her student's mistake evidently became clear to Andreia in the moment she recognised that Nick had mixed up German and English (*ab on the bus ab*, turn 17). However, the student's attempt to fix his error by using the incorrect German preposition *an*<sup>69</sup> (turn 18) was then followed by Andreia stating the correct German *im* (in English: *in the*, turn 19) which she uttered in a strong, loud voice.

After Nick had then uttered in disbelief *in the bus* (in German: *im Bus*, turn 20), Andreia obviously rebuked her student with the words *oh my god you are in Advanced Two* (turn 21), which was followed by her stating in a loud voice *where do you sell in the bus* (turn 24). The interaction eventually finished with Andreia once more stressing the correct preposition *in the* and pointing to the grammatical rule (*obviously it's dative*, turn 26).

The investigated interaction exhibits various potential face threats. The first refers to the fact that Andreia addressed her student with the words *Mister Nick* (in German: *Herr Nick*, turn 6). According to Culpeper (1996, p. 357), the inappropriate use of identity markers can serve as a strategy to threaten the face of a person. However, the referenced appellation did not seem to cause a negative effect in the present situation. Rather, the smile of the teacher (turn 7) served as a mitigating element, indicating that she was joking with her student. This in turn seems to be confirmed by Nick's reaction, who answered the question with a smile on his face (turn 8).

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<sup>69</sup> I translated the German *an* into the English *at*.

The situation then started to change when Andreia responded to Nick's incorrect answer with the words *no a seller you have to think about something specifically for you* (turn 9). Her utterance was accompanied by an expressive body language (turns 9-11): she moved very close to Nick and gesticulated vividly in order to reinforce her utterance. According to Culpeper (1996, p. 358), invading someone's space by positioning oneself "closer to the other than the relationship permits" can threaten the face of that person and thus cause an impolite effect. The threatening character of the referenced act was apparently intensified by the fact that Andreia was then standing right next to Nick and looking down on him. Indeed, the fact that Nick showed a forced smile (turn 12) indicates that he was not feeling as comfortable as shortly before.

After the student had then given the same answer as before (*a seller on bus*, turn 12), there was a short moment of confusion that was apparently caused by the English preposition *on* that Nick had erroneously used (turns 13-15), which in turn provoked the laughter of the other students (turn 16). The reason for the mistake became eventually clear to the teacher, who commented on the error with the English expression *ah on the bus* (line 17). The descending tone in her voice in the subsequently uttered *ah* as well as the fact that she crossed her arms seem to indicate a certain disapproval (turn 17).

In an attempt to correct his mistake, Nick provided the expression *at bus* (in German: *an Bus*, turn 18), which again did not constitute the right form. This time, Andreia corrected her student by loudly stating the correct preposition *in the* (in German: *im*, turn 19). After Nick had then incredulously repeated the same expression again (turn 20), the teacher showed a rather strong reaction, saying *you are in Advanced Two* (turn 21).

It is possible to state that this utterance had the potential to threaten Nick's face, in the way that it evidently questioned his German language skills. As illustrated previously in this work, criticising or exposing someone can constitute a threat to the positive face of another person (BROWN; LEVINSON, 1987).

In addition, Andreia's utterance was apparently intensified by the preceding expression *oh my god* (in Portuguese: *meu deus do céu*, turn 21) which, pronounced with both ascending and descending intonations, seemingly conveyed her disappointment or frustration as to Nick's performance. In addition, her remark was accompanied by a reproachful look and tone and uttered in a noticeably low voice (turns 21/22), which this time apparently made her student feel uncomfortable or exposed. This can be observed by the fact that he lowered his eyes and showed a forced smile (line 23).

Andreia then once again explicitly pointed to the grammatical rule *where do you sell* (which constitutes the question that determines the correct case of the article, in German language) and the correct form *in the bus* (turn 24), thereby emphasising the words *where* and *in the* with a loud voice. As a reaction, Nick merely repeated the correct preposition *in the* in a low voice (turn 25), whereas Andreia once again emphasised the correct version with the utterance *in the obviously it's dative* (turn 26). The latter utterance implies that she once more questioned Nick's skills in German and can therefore be considered a threat to her student's face.

This impression is intensified by the fact that Andreia uttered her student's name in a reproachful tone and with an ascending voice (turn 26) before eventually turning around and walking away. Although showing a smile, which apparently aimed to create a mitigating effect and, thus, indicates that her criticism

was not meant in a serious way, it appears that the repeated face threats – compared to the previously described interactions in which Nick was involved – this time in fact caused a negative impact on the student, which is indicated by another forced smile that the student eventually showed (turn 28).

To conclude, it can be said that all referenced threats in this interaction can be considered direct from a linguistic point of view, given that their meanings evidently became clear to the interactants.

#### 4.1.1.4 Summarising Group I

In summary, it can be said that the analysis of the data that were generated with the first group of participants in the context of teaching German to Brazilians at the UnB Idiomas in Brasília, Brazil, revealed a number of potential FTAs. All of the referenced acts were carried out by the teacher and directed towards one student at a time, with the exception of scene 4.1.1.3d (“The use of stereotypes as a potential face threat”), in which the supposed FTA addressed all interactants. It is noticeable that in three of the five analysed interactions alone, it was the same student (Nick) who was exposed to the alleged face threats of his teacher.

The distinct non-verbal and para-verbal languages used by Andreia assumed an important role in the investigated interactions: they evidently intensified the potential verbal face threats on the one hand, whereas principally the smile and the laughter of the teacher served as mitigating elements on the other. Thus, the referenced elements assigned a facetious character to what was said on the whole and point to what Culpeper (1996) and Kerbrat-Orecchioni (2017), amongst others, describe

as banter or mock politeness rather than to face threats that were meant to harm the interactant(s).

Andreia's comments reflect that she always aimed to create a relaxed and fun atmosphere in the classroom. In addition, she emphasised that she expected her students to tell in case they had doubts as to the unknown vocabulary or other lesson contents, as this would give her the chance to answer their questions and, thus, be for the benefit of all students in the class. However, she also showed awareness that her behavior might not always have provoked only positive effects on parts of all students, which principally relates to Nick who was repeatedly exposed to the referenced FTAs.

In this respect, it was mainly the student's body language which indicated that he was apparently not feeling comfortable in certain moments. Regrettably, the feedback that was obtained from the participants could not provide much further insight as to the question of how the analysed interactions were perceived by them, which is partially due to the suboptimal course of the focus group interview and the missing time that was available to gain the desired information.

#### **4.1.2 GROUP II**

The second group of collaborators consisted of four female and two male students and the teacher Andreia. Just like the first group, the information that will be presented in the following section was obtained from the initial interview that was conducted individually with the participants and the questionnaire that was applied prior to these interviews. As mentioned previously, I adopted the same approach to the actual entry into the classroom as I did with the first group of collaborators.

### 4.1.2.1 The participants

#### 4.1.2.1a Lara

Lara is 23 years old, female, Brazilian, graduated in Energy Engineering and does not have any work experience yet. The student is interested in German history and particularly enjoys reading about the period of World War II. Apart from studying German at UnB Idiomas for four years, she has already done two language courses in Berlin and also considers initiating her Master studies there. Lara, who also speaks English at an advanced level, is partially satisfied with her current learning progress, stating that she is not able to dedicate more time to study phonetics, vocabulary and declinations, which are aspects that she considers to be the most difficult in the German language.

Asked about her time in Germany and the differences she might have perceived in the use of both German and Brazilian Portuguese, Lara gives the following statement: *when I tried to speak German with a Portuguese mind, I tried to translate literally, but I could not, so I tried to create a shortcut, to be very direct, and then I realised that's what they prefer: to be more direct, to the point.*

*But when I returned home after one month it was very difficult, my head was more direct! In one month, the way I spoke, the way I solved my problems, I was shocked! Also, the sound of German is completely different. The grammar is very logical. The Brazilians use a lot of gestures, the Germans don't, they are very quiet. Artists prefer to do shows in Latin America because people are emotional and cry during the shows. And there, they don't show any emotions!*

#### 4.1.2.1b Otto

Otto, 22 years old, male, Brazilian, is a graduate student in Chemistry and does not possess any professional work experience. He has been studying German for 2,5 years at UnB Idiomias, motivated mainly by his interest in German music and his intention to carry out future studies in Germany. The student, who has an advanced proficiency level in English, is saying that his main difficulties in German are the vocabulary and the compound words. However, he is very pleased with his learning progress in the last years.

Otto has not had a chance to visit German speaking countries so far and neither has had contact with German speakers outside the classroom. When asked about differences regarding the language use between Brazilian Portuguese and German, he makes the following comment: *I think German language sounds more serious. It seems to me that people actually fight. The sound is strong, very hard.*

#### 4.1.2.1c Carol

Carol is 24 years old, female, Brazilian and holds a bachelor degree in Political Science. The student is currently doing an internship in a social organization that is focused on research and technology and also works in a café that is run by her parents. She has been studying German for 2,5 years and does not have any contact with German speakers outside the classroom. She also speaks English, Spanish, French and Polish, at different levels of proficiency. Her progress in the course is evaluated by herself as mediocre.

As regards to the main difficulties she experiences in German language, the student states that the declinations and

the correct word order are most challenging for her. Asked if she can think of any differences in the use of German and Brazilian Portuguese, she merely says that, during her travel to Germany, she *had the impression that people did not gesticulate so much there*.

#### 4.1.2.1d Mariana

Mariana, 52 years old, female, Brazilian, graduated in English Letters and holds a Master's degree in Applied Linguistics. She has been working as a proof-reader and teacher of English and Human Resources in different schools and governmental institutions. Mariana, who has been studying German for 2,5 years at UnB Idiomas, also speaks fluent English and has a basic knowledge of Spanish and French. She has visited family relatives in Germany twice and is planning further trips to Germany. Another motivation to study the language is described by the student as follows: *I like the sound of German. I believe that through German I can access another logic and culture, and also the discipline*.

Mariana is saying that she is partially satisfied with her learning progress. However, she is considering the use of the prepositions as well as the verbs, declinations and the perfect tenses in German language to be most difficult for her. In addition, she is claiming to always make an extra effort and expressing the need to prepare for the lessons, doing the homework and repeating the exercises. Her objective is to be able to communicate with her relatives exclusively in German language.

#### 4.1.2.1e Felipe

Felipe, 41 years old, male, Brazilian, graduated in Informatics, holds a Master's degree in Applied Informatics and is doing doctoral studies in Computer Sciences. He has various years of work experience as a systems analyst in different companies and governmental institutions. Felipe has been studying German for 5,5 years, with interruptions and in different institutions in Brazilian cities. The student also speaks both English and French at advanced levels. His main difficulties with the German language are the conjugations and the verbs.

His motivation to learn German goes back to a long time wish of doing his doctoral studies there. Felipe has not travelled to Germany yet, but once received a group of Germans at his workplace and gives the following comment as to the differences in language use that he perceived during this encounter: *one thing was very surprising to me, the Germans are very direct, they speak bluntly. The people here beat about the bush, the Germans don't, they come straight to the point. I also believe that Brazilians gesticulate more, maybe this is cultural in Latin America.*

#### 4.1.2.1f Alice

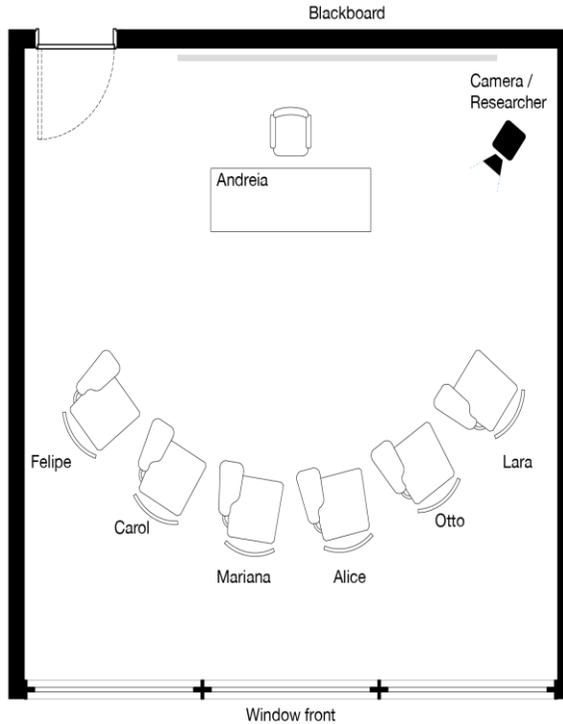
Alice, 27 years old, female, Brazilian, graduated in Biology and is doing a Master's degree in Zoology. She has been studying German for two years at UnB Idiomas. Asked about her motivation, she says: *I always liked German, I always found it very beautiful.* Apart from German, the student also speaks English and Spanish, both at intermediary levels. She considers her main difficulties in German to be the articles, the declinations and the vocabulary.

Alice has already travelled to Germany and provides an interesting impression with regards to how she perceived the language use in Brazil and Germany: *In German, things are more direct. Brazilians like to beat about the bush. Nobody will go to the bank and ask for information, nobody says 'I want to know that'. 'Oh no, it's because this and that happened, that's why I need to know that', just beating about the bush. In Germany no, it's direct. And there is one thing I learned in the beginners course, which is when someone invites you and you don't want to go, you can just say 'I don't feel like going', this is socially accepted. And here, saying something like that, people would say 'what a gross person, what a horrible thing'. I think it's a kind of cultural issue. Saying 'no' here is difficult.*

#### **4.1.2.2 Organization of the research environment and routine: preliminary observations**

The classroom of the second group that participated in the present research is situated in the basement of the main building of the University of Brasília. The room is small, painted in plain white and has bright illumination. It is equipped with a blackboard, a desk for the teacher in front of it and chairs for the students which are arranged in a semi-circle. Similar to the first group, the students had a preferred seating order that they maintained during the semester (see figure 3 below). It should also be noted that at times there was noise interference during the classes which were caused by other language classes occurring in the neighbouring rooms at the same time.

Figure 3 – Room layout Group II (elaborated by myself)



The data generation was initiated during the first semester of 2018 and started in the beginning of April with the preliminary observations which, together with the recording of the test videos, the initial interview and the application of the questionnaire, lasted until mid-month. The actual video recordings were conducted from the end of April until the beginning of July, the lessons occurring on Fridays from 8:30am - 12pm, with a short break of around 15min each. Thus, a total of approximately 25 hours of video footage were recorded.

Similar to the first group, the teacher brought her own didactic material for the classes and used her laptop for the exercises that required audio function. A field note made during

the first preliminary observation reflects how I initially perceived the classroom dynamic of this second group of collaborators:

Andrea is again very active and present in her classes and makes every effort to involve her students into the activities. Similar to the first class, she also addresses the students of this group with the informal German *du*. However, although actively taking part in the interaction and showing sympathy for her teacher, this group in general seems to be a bit more reserved. But this is just a first impression. All in all, the atmosphere in the classroom could be described as positive and relaxed. Before the lesson, Andrea told me that she already knew all students of the class, most of them from the Advanced 1 course that she had taught a year prior to the present course.

In the following section, we will analyse interactions which involve (in)directness and (im)politeness, thereby relating to the data that were generated with the 2<sup>nd</sup> research group in the context of German as additional language at the UnB Idiomas in Brasília, Brazil. As described previously, the focus group interview that had been planned for the end of the field work period of the semester was replaced by individual interviews. Due to unfortunate circumstances<sup>70</sup>, these interviews could only be conducted with Andreia, Lara and Otto.

### 4.1.2.3 Classroom interaction

#### 4.1.2.3a Silence as a face-threatening act

All students were present during the lesson in which the first interaction was observed. The teacher initially worked on

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<sup>70</sup> Carol and Alice prematurely dropped out of the course due to other commitments related to work and studies, Mariana unexpectedly had to bring a planned trip forward and Felipe was not available, for unknown reasons.

an exercise from the didactic book that dealt with the topic of “tongue twisters” in the German language. Andreia read out loud the referenced expressions and explained their meanings, which was then followed by the students trying to repeat the phrases. Despite the evident difficult pronunciation, they seemed to enjoy the exercise, and the atmosphere was animated.

After the break, Andreia took up the subject of the previous class that was about movies and literature. The students then one by one presented their homework, which was to write a short text describing their favourite movie or book. After each presentation, the teacher corrected the mistakes and tried to elicit further information from the students. In the scene that will be investigated in the following paragraph, Lara was next to present her text, saying that she wrote about her favourite science fiction movie called “The Arrival”. In the moment that Lara started to read out the movie description from her notebook, Birgit was standing behind her desk<sup>71</sup>.

1	<b>Lara</b>	“Extraterrestrial people had came inside the earth (.) they would like give a weapon for the earthlings (.) the language (.) then comes a popular linguistics Louise for the help the people (.) at the end she has learned many about these people and win superpowers” ((looking expectantly at Andreia)) (...)
2		
3		
4		
5	<b>Andreia</b>	[[((looking at Lara with big questioning eyes, scratching her head which is inclined slightly to the side)) (..) ((closing one eye and starting to smile))
6		
7	<b>Lara</b>	[[((wide, forced smile, eyes wide open))

<sup>71</sup> Lara’s original text in German contained a number of errors. The English translation of her text in the transcription (turns 1-3) does not aim at accurately reproducing these mistakes; rather, it is supposed to give the idea of a faulty text, which turns out to be relevant for the interaction.

8	<b>Andreia</b>	Lara ((smiling, stretching out her arm, signalling Lara to hand over the text to her))
9	<b>Lara</b>	((handing over her notebook to Andreia, then bending slightly forward, her elbows resting on the table, both hands placed over her mouth, looking anxiously at the teacher))
10		
11	<b>Students</b>	[((looking back and forth between Lara and Andreia, smiling or chuckling))
12	<b>Andreia</b>	((reading Lara's text aloud and correcting the mistakes)) "Some extraterrestrial people have come TO earth (.) they: would like give a weapon for the EARTHLINGS↓" (.) they
13		WANTED to give a weapon to the PEOPLE on earth
14		
15	<b>Lara</b>	Yes ((+))
16	<b>Andreia</b>	"Earthlings" doesn't exist
17	<b>Lara</b>	Ah::↓ ((looking confused))
18	<b>Andreia</b>	Right (.) they are the PEOPLE of the earth
19	<b>Lara</b>	Ok
20	<b>Andreia</b>	No (.) that word doesn't exist eh:: the language (.) eh:: then (.) for that a popular
21		LINGUIST could
22	<b>Lara</b>	Ah:: linguist
23	<b>Andreia</b>	Louise right↑ Louise could eh: help these people (.) a::nd at the end she has learned a lot
24		about these people and WON superpowers
25	<b>Lara</b>	Sim
26	<b>Andreia</b>	((speaking in a low voice in direction of Lara, pointing with one hand to her text))
27		I will correct that ok↑
28	<b>Lara</b>	Alright ((smiling))
29		((scene continuing))

Lara first presented her homework which contained a number of different errors (turns 1-3). This was then followed by a moment of silence during which the teacher initially seemed to express certain doubts and/or possibly her dissatisfaction, indicated by the non-verbal language she was showing (*looking at Lara with big questioning eyes, scratching her head which is inclined slightly to the side*, turns 5/6). However, the act of *closing*

*one eye and starting to smile* (turn 6) indicates that Andreia's previous silence and body language were not meant to be taken seriously and that she was in fact joking. Lara's facial expression (*wide, forced smile, eyes wide open*, turn 7), however, implies that she was feeling surprised or somehow uneasy at that moment.

This impression also seems to be reflected in the subsequent tense posture the student showed after handing over her homework to the teacher (turns 9/10). The other students seemed to enjoy themselves observing the scene, which becomes evident by the smiles and chuckles they gave (turn 11). Next, Andreia read out aloud Lara's text, thereby raising her voice significantly in order to emphasise the words and expressions that she was simultaneously correcting (turns 12-14).

The teacher then pointed to the allegedly incorrect word *earthlings*<sup>72</sup> (in German: *Erdlinge*, turn 16) in the text of her student, emphasising the non-existence of the term in the German language (turn 16), which in turn triggered astonishment on the part of Lara (turn 17). After that, Andreia continued to correct the text (turns 18, 20/21, 23/24) and eventually offered the student to review her written homework (turns 26/27), which was accepted by her with a smile (turn 28).

However, it can be said that the described scene exhibits potential face threats that were directed against Lara. After presenting her homework (turns 1-3), the student was evidently waiting for feedback from her teacher (turn 4). The non-verbal reaction that Andreia showed initially (*looking at Lara with big questioning eyes, scratching her head which is inclined slightly to the side*, turns 5/6) raises the impression that she was surprised and/or

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<sup>72</sup> The word *Erdlinge* factually exists in German language.

dissatisfied with her student's performance. According to Culpeper (1996), silence can make another person feel uncomfortable and, thus, constitute a threat to the positive face.

However, the fact that the teacher, after a short moment, closed one eye and then started to smile (turn 6) suggests that she was rather joking with her student. Lara's initial reaction (turn 7) implies that she was in a state of anxious expectation or surprise, which evidently lasted even after the teacher had once again smiled and, thus, shown that she had not meant what she said in a serious way (turns 8-10). Compared to Lara, her classmates seemed to have interpreted the situation in a funny way (turn 11). The scene then continued with the teacher reading out Lara's homework in a loud voice and correcting the text by highlighting the right forms (turns 12-14).

The fact that Andreia thereby drew attention to Lara's mistakes can be interpreted as a criticism which possibly made her student feel exposed in front of her classmates. As mentioned previously in this work, criticising or exposing someone can constitute a threat to the positive face of this person (BROWN; LEVINSON, 1987). After, the teacher claimed that the word *Erdlinge* did not exist in the German language (turns 16/20), which evidently triggered astonishment from Lara (turn 17). Andreia continued to read out Lara's text, then corrected the mistakes (turns 20/21, 23/24) and eventually voiced that she would do a written correction (turns 26/27), to which the student ultimately reacted with a smile (turn 28).

When asked during the final individual interview about her initial reaction to Lara's presentation (turns 5/6), Andreia gave the following feedback: *Her text was very creative, but it had many mistakes. I let her read, but then I reached a certain limit, and I*

*just thought 'no, stop'.* The teacher's answer shows that she was in fact dissatisfied with the faulty text of her student. Lara, when asked about the forced smile (turn 7) and the subsequent tense posture (turns 9/10) that she had showed after this reaction to her teacher, answered the following: *I was waiting for feedback! I hadn't done the homework, so I quickly wrote the text before the class started. So, I guess I was like 'So, was it wrong or right? Did you understand what I said?'. I was waiting for Andreia to say something.*

The student's answer reflects that she was expecting verbal feedback from her teacher and therefore seemed to be rather surprised by Andreia's non-verbal answer. Lara's feedback reveals that the meaning of her teacher's reaction remained in fact unclear to her. As to the question of how she perceived her teacher's non-verbal reaction and if she considered it as direct or indirect, Lara gave the following answer:

I liked it! I wasn't scared, I wanted to know what was wrong. She was direct with regards to what she said. I would say she was very direct, she said 'earthling doesn't exist'. But I had looked this word up, I had searched it. So I didn't want to interrupt her by saying 'no'. So she was direct, but not in a negative way at all. I have no problem with that, I even prefer it that way. My last teacher was very methodical, I like that, it is very direct. For example, if there is a new grammar subject, she would write everything on the board. Birgit is different. She would put a lot of words on the board, and for her and for you [the researcher] it is good, because you are from Germany, for you it is direct, for us it is indirect, we don't get it.

The student's answer makes it evident that she perceived Andreia's utterances as direct with regards to what the teacher had said. Thus, Lara equated directness in the referenced situation with clear, unambiguous forms which she evaluated

as very positive. In a similar way, she described the clear methodological approach of her former teacher as direct, in the way that it was comprehensible.

At the same time, she evaluated Andreia's strategy of *putting a lot of words on the board* as indirect, given the fact that it was incomprehensible for herself and her classmates, whereas she considered it to be comprehensible and, thus, direct for German native speakers. In the referenced scene, Lara thus related directness with positive characteristics such as comprehensibility and unambiguity, whereas she apparently assigned negative attributes like ambiguity and incomprehensibility to indirectness.

Andreia's initial non-verbal reaction (*looking at Lara with big questioning eyes, scratching her head which is inclined slightly to the side, closing one eye and starting to smile*, turns 5/6) can be evaluated as indirect according to the linguistic definition of Grainger and Mills (2016), given the fact that its meaning evidently did not become clear to Lara. This is in turn confirmed by the comment she gave during the final interview: *So, I guess I was like 'So, was it wrong or right? Did you understand what I said?'. I was waiting for Andreia to say something.*

To sum up, it can be said that Lara's subjective evaluation of (in)directness in the investigated situation seems to correspond with its linguistic understanding, in the way that she equated directness with clear, unambiguous language on the one hand and indirectness with ambiguity on the other (*ibid*). The student evaluated directness as positive, whereas she understood indirectness to be negative. As to the second (potential) face threat from the teacher during the referenced scene, which refers to the correction of Lara's homework and the

described (supposed) criticism and face threat this might have involved, it is possible to characterise it as direct (*ibid*) when seen from a linguistic perspective, given the fact that it evidently became clear to Lara and the other interactants.

#### 4.1.2.3b Embarrassment through repeated face threats

Only Otto, Mariana, Carol and Felipe were present during the interaction that will be analysed in the following section. The teacher once again worked with the textbook and an exercise about different learning styles which dealt in a humorous way with the question of how differently students organise their learning routines and their study environment at home. Some sketches in the book showed examples of private study facilities representing different learning types: the practical type, the creative type, the perfectionist type and so on.

Underneath the illustrations were short texts describing the referenced types. As the sketches did not match the descriptions, the students had to match the texts with the corresponding illustrations. After they had completed the exercise, Andreia asked them to describe what type of learner they considered themselves to be and how their own study areas at home looked like. At the moment of the following interaction, Birgit was standing behind her desk, with her open text book lying in front of her.

1	<b>Andreia</b>	And which type are you Carol↓
2	<b>Carol</b>	Eh: the practical type
3	<b>Andreia</b>	The practical type (.) and do you have a study area (.) do you have a study area=a desk
4		in your home where you study
5	<b>Carol</b>	((+)) Yes
6	<b>Andreia</b>	NOBODY sits on this desk only you

7	<b>Carol</b>	Yes always
8	<b>Andreia</b>	Always (.) only you right↑ NOBODY is allowed to sit there ((smiling)) “why are you
9		sitting on my desk GET OUT” ((smiling, gesticulating vividly with her hands))
10	<b>Students</b>	((all smiling))
11	<b>Andreia</b>	((turning towards Otto)) YOU (.) do you have a study area↓
12	<b>Otto</b>	((leaning backwards, running one hand through his hair, forced smile)) eh:: no
13	<b>Andreia</b>	I KNEW it ((smiling))
14	<b>Students</b>	[[((smiling
15	<b>Otto</b>	[[((forced smile
16	<b>Otto</b>	I learn o::n
17	<b>Andreia</b>	[EVERYWHERE and NOWHERE ((smiling)) (.)
18	<b>Otto</b>	No no I study (.) when I study I:: study on my bed
19	<b>Andreia</b>	(acc.) ↑↑ <u>On your BED</u> (.) but you CAN’T WRI:TE on your bed ((laughing))
20	<b>Students</b>	[[((laughing))
21	<b>Otto</b>	[[((forced smile))
22		Not write ((shaking his head, looking down on his desk, bashfully scratching his head))
23		I have no desk
24	<b>Andreia</b>	You have no desk↑
25	<b>Otto</b>	No ((-)) no desk ((slightly bending and scratching his head, forced smile))
26	<b>Andreia</b>	((turning towards the other students))
27		((scene continuing))

At the beginning of the described interaction, Andreia asked Carol which kind of learner type she considered herself to be and if she had a personal study area in her home, which was confirmed by the student (turns 1-7). After making a joke, which triggered the smile of her students (turns 8-10), the teacher turned towards Otto and asked him if he had his own study area in his home, thereby addressing the student with the word *you* (in German: *du*, turn 11). This question was then answered by him with the words *eh no* (turn 12). Andreia’s spontaneous reaction *I knew it*, which she uttered smilingly and

in a loud voice (turn 13), once again made her students smile (turn 14), whereas it provoked a forced smile on the part of Otto (turn 15).

The explanation of the student (*I learn on*, turn 16) was then suddenly interrupted by the teacher with the words *everywhere and nowhere* that she uttered in a loud voice and with a smile, which was followed by a short moment of silence (turn 17). Andreia, who was seemingly surprised by Otto's subsequent explanation in which he told her that he studied on his bed (turn 18), laughingly answered that it is not possible to write on the bed (turn 19). Whereas this comment once again provoked the laughter of the other students (turn 20), it apparently flustered Otto. He first repeated his teacher's words *not write* (turn 22) with a forced smile on his face and then told that he did not possess a desk (turn 23).

The body language that the student thereby showed indicates that he was feeling uncomfortable or even embarrassed in that moment (*shaking his head, looking down on his desk, bashfully scratching his head*, turn 22). Andreia seemed surprised by her student's answer and asked *you have no desk* (turn 24), which Otto eventually confirmed again with the words *no no desk* (turn 25). The fact that he slightly bent and scratched his head, thereby showing a *forced smile* (turn 25), once again gives the impression that he was feeling uneasy or exposed at that moment.

The described scene exhibits a number of potential face threats that might have caused negative effects during the interaction. First, the personal pronoun *you* (in German: *du*, turn 11) used by the teacher does not constitute an adequate

form in the German language to address another person<sup>73</sup> and can therefore be considered an inappropriate identity marker that can threaten the face of the interlocutor (CULPEPER, 1996). This might all the more have been the case in the present situation, considering that Andreia pronounced the referenced word in a loud voice which seemingly intensified the negative impact. The body language (turn 12) the student showed in his rather hesitant reaction gives the impression that he was somehow feeling uncomfortable.

Nevertheless, the next potential face threat followed right after, in the moment that the teacher commented the fact that her student did not possess his own study area (*I knew it*, turn 13). Although mitigating her comment with a smile, which once again implied that she was not really serious about what she said, Andreia's utterance in a certain way insinuated the existence of (a) reason(s) that made her draw the conclusion that her student did not have his own space to study at home. Whereas the other students evidently interpreted the said in a humorous way, which becomes evident by their smiles (turn 14), Otto again showed a forced smile (turn 15) which indicates that he was rather feeling uncomfortable.

His subsequent attempt to explain himself was suddenly interrupted by the teacher with the words *everywhere and nowhere* (turn 17), which she once more uttered in a loud voice and with a smile on her face. According to Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 233) "turn-taking violations (interruptions, ignoring selection of other speakers, not responding to prior turn) are all FTAs in themselves". However, apart from

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<sup>73</sup> In the German language, the correct way to address someone informally is to call the person by the first name.

constituting an interruption, it was also the utterance itself (turn 17) that can be considered a threat to the student's face, as it suggested that Otto did not study appropriately.

Otto's subsequent statement, in which he said that he studied in his bed (turn 18), was then laughingly commented by the teacher with the words *on your bed but you can't write on your bed* (turn 19). Whilst evoking the laughter of the other students (turn 20), her utterance evidently had a different effect on Otto, whose body language indicates that he was feeling embarrassed or even ridiculed (turn 22). As we have seen in the previous discussion, ridiculing someone is one of many ways to threaten the face wants of a person (BROWN; LEVINSON, 1987).

Moreover, it seems likely that the laughter of Andreia and the classmates (turns 19/20), which accompanied the latter threat, even intensified its negative impact on the student. The scene eventually came to end after the teacher had asked Otto in disbelief if he had indeed no desk to study (turn 24), which was confirmed by the student who once more gave the impression that he was feeling uncomfortable or even embarrassed in that moment (turn 25).

The contributions that were made by Otto and Andreia during the final individual interviews provided further insight into the investigated interaction. As to the question of how he interpreted the situation and his teacher's comments about the fact that he did not have a study area or a desk at his home, Otto stated the following:

I think that's just me. Arriving a bit late, tired, sloppy. I didn't do all the activities. But I already did the other Advanced Course with her, so she already knew me a bit. When I had

class with her in Advanced 1, I didn't really do the things. I arrived late, I didn't understand very well, I was always a bit behind. But I don't understand that as criticism, it was a joke, nothing serious. And about the desk, it's true! I don't have one at home, so I sometimes study lying on my bed. I normally study here at the university, because at home it's not really possible.

The student's answer reflects that he perceived Andreia's behavior as a joke. He thereby pointed to the reasons and the background for her comments, which refer to the fact that he considered himself indeed not a model student that always did things conscientiously. When asked to describe if he regarded Andreia's utterances in this situation to be direct or indirect, the student gave the following feedback:

I don't think it was negative. I would consider it as direct. Direct in the sense of saying as it is. And I don't think Andreia was trying to criticise, it was just normal. Also, our group is small, and we have known each other for quite some time now. So this is not a way to criticise or to hurt someone, it's a joke, and you learn to live with it!

Otto evaluated Andreia's behavior in the referenced situation as positive and direct, in the sense that she had told things as they were. However, he also pointed to the friendly relationship between the students and their teacher, which he traced back to the fact that they were a small group of students and that they had known each other for a longer period of time. In his feedback, the student brought up an aspect that Fraser and Nolan (1981) describe in their *Conversational Contract*: the authors (*ibid*) emphasise that it is through the experiences made during former encounters that the terms and conditions are

repeatedly negotiated by the interactants and, thus, constitute the starting point for each following interaction.

Thus, Otto had evidently learned during the previous interactions with Andreia that her actions and the (alleged) face threats these involved were not serious and instead were meant in a joking way. Andreia, for her part, stated the following when asked about the comments that she had given during the interaction:

When I said I knew it, I meant that he is very messy. Like, he gets his things together and then throws them into his bag. I think when he was a young boy, if someone hadn't tied his shoelaces, he would have stumbled or walked out of the house just like that [laughing]. And about the desk, he has really bad handwriting, as if he doesn't write on a solid surface, on a proper table. And that's why I've always imagined it like this, that he somehow doesn't study properly.

The answer of the teacher shows that she indeed referred to the fact that her student was sloppy and had bad handwriting, which she evidently traced to the fact that he did not have a desk to study. As to the question of whether she considered her way of teaching and her conduct in the classroom as rather direct or indirect, Andreia responded as follows:

I have to admit, I always try to be very serious in the beginning, but I can't. I just can't because I take it easy, the teaching I mean. When I teach [laughing], I don't know what happens, I tell jokes, I always talk about my life, about other Germans or Austrians that I know. Basically, I want to teach without stress. But I have to admit that I insist on the homework. So, my teaching is direct in the sense that I directly reach out to the people. And with my students I am very direct. I'm always like that, no matter how long I have known them for, no matter if it's in the beginning level or where we are now. And we laugh a lot in the classroom.

Thus, Andreia characterised her teaching approach as direct, in the way that she directly reached out to her students, independently of how long she had known them for. According to the teacher, this practice created a positive and entertaining atmosphere in the classroom.

In sum, we can say that Otto's feedback reflected his awareness to what was concealed behind Andreia's comments. This allows us to classify the face threats of his teacher as direct when seen from a linguistic perspective (cf. GRAINGER; MILLS, 2016), given that their meanings were clear to him and evidently also to the other students. Otto obviously appreciated Andreia's direct way to communicate and evaluated the supposed threats as positive. Nevertheless, his remark *and you learn to live with it* also indicates that the acceptance of Andreia's direct approach had been subject to a certain familiarisation process on his part.

#### 4.1.2.3c Face threats through expressive acting

The now following interaction was recorded on the same day and only a few minutes after the preceding scene. The class was still dealing with the topic "learning styles", Andreia had just answered some questions from her students. On this occasion, she also gave a short revision with regards to the dative case and the respective declination in German language. At the beginning of the interaction that will be analysed, Andreia wrote a sentence on the blackboard<sup>74</sup>.

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<sup>74</sup> In the following excerpt, the student used certain Portuguese and English words which turned out to be relevant for the analysis. These words are marked in *italics* in the transcription to facilitate a better understanding of the interaction.

1	<b>Andreia</b>	((writing and simultaneously reading the words out)) I (.) have (.) an (.) own (.) room (.)
2		WI:TH (.) MA-NY (.) BOOKS (..) WITH always has the dative ALWAYS (.) the dative
3		also declines the plural right↑ (.) the plural of the nouns
4	<b>Otto</b>	Eh: ((looking at Andreia, his right arm outstretched, gesticulating and pointing with his
5		index finger to the blackboard)) eh: if (.) <i>se fosse</i> <sup>75</sup>
6	<b>Andreia</b>	[IN GERMAN
7	<b>Otto</b>	((sighing, short smile)) i:f i:n ((pointing to the blackboard again)) singular eh:: it would be
8		book or books↑
9	<b>Andreia</b>	You have your own room with a SINGLE BOOK
10	<b>Otto</b>	Book (.) eh:: no “RN” at the end↑
11	<b>Andreia</b>	↑↑ <u>NO</u> (.) THE book (.) THE book ok↑
12	<b>Otto</b>	Yes ah: ((pointing with his pen at his mobile)) I see here in <i>dictionary</i> ((closing his eyes,
13		starting to smile, obviously realising that he used an English word))
14	<b>All</b>	((starting to smile or laugh)) ( )
15	<b>Andreia</b>	In the DICTIONARY (..) OTTO OTTO ((gesticulating with her left arm)) when you get
16		up on Friday morning (.) get up an hour earlier and do a mantra ((turning towards the
17		other students, starting to speak very slowly, smiling)) I go to the German class ((slightly
18		raising her head up, eyes closed, both hands in front of her chest, palms inwards and tips
19		of thumbs and forefingers of each hand touching, making a slow outward rotating
20		movement with her hands, imitating a gesture of meditation)) I GO TO THE GERMAN
21		CLASS (.) I GO TO THE GERMAN CLASS ((imitating the gesture several times))
22	<b>Students</b>	((laughing, Otto with a forced smile))
23	<b>Andreia</b>	With closed eyes (.) I SPEAK GERMAN (..) I THINK IN GERMAN
24	<b>Otto</b>	((speaking in low voice, forced smile)) I will do that
25	<b>Andreia</b>	ADVANCED TWO right↑ ((looking at Otto, left hand in front of her chest, fingers
26		spread, smiling))
27	<b>Otto</b>	((forced smile))
28		((scene continuing))

<sup>75</sup> In English: if it was

First, Andreia wrote an example sentence on the blackboard in order to illustrate the formation of the dative in German, thereby emphasising certain words from her explanation in a loud voice (turn 1-3). Otto then signalled that he had a doubt and started to formulate his question by saying *if* (turns 4/5). However, he then switched to Portuguese (*se fosse*; in English: *if it was*, turn 5), which was immediately interrupted by the teacher with the words *in German* (in German language: *auf deutsch*, turn 6), which she uttered with a loud voice.

After giving an audible sigh which was followed by a smile, Otto framed his question in the German language (turns 7/8). The teacher then answered and provided further information (turns 9/11). It was precisely when Otto was drawing attention to something that he had apparently discovered in an online dictionary on his mobile phone (turn 12) that he realised that he had used the English word *dictionary* instead of the German *Wörterbuch* (turns 12/13). This in turn evoked the smiles and the laughter of the students and the teacher, the latter first pointing to the correct German word and then calling out Otto's name twice and in a loud voice (turn 15).

Andreia then suggested her student do a meditation exercise before the weekly classes, thereby repeating particular expressions in German and imitating certain body movements, which should eventually help him to speak only German in the classroom. The teacher repeatedly recited the referenced expressions in a loud voice and demonstrated the same meditation movement several times (turns 15-21, 23), which once again provoked the laughter of the other students. In comparison, Otto showed a forced smile (turn 22) and then answered in a low voice that was again accompanied by a forced smile (turn

24), which indicates that he was feeling rather uncomfortable in that moment. Andreia then loudly pointed to the fact that the proficiency level of the class was Advanced 2, reinforcing her remark with a significant gesture of her hand (turns 25/26).

It is possible to observe certain potential face threats in the referenced scene. The first one refers to the moment Otto formulated a question and thereby switched to Portuguese (turn 5), which was immediately interrupted by his teacher with the words *in German* (turn 6). As mentioned earlier in this work, an interruption can possibly threaten the face of the interlocutor (BROWN; LEVINSON, 1987). This possible effect seems all the more likely in the present case, given that Andreia reminded her student in a loud voice to speak in German. Otto then gave a sigh that was followed by a short smile, which shows that he had interpreted the supposed threat in a rather positive way.

After a further question of the student that was subsequently answered by the teacher (turns 7-11), Otto started to make another statement. He suddenly used the English word *dictionary* instead of the German term *Wörterbuch* (turn 12), which made all of his classmates and the teacher smile and laugh (turn 14). Andreia evidently took this opportunity to make a joke, recommending Otto to do a meditation exercise before coming to the lessons in order to remind himself to speak German (turns 15-21, 23). She thereby demonstrated the suggested movements several times and repeated certain expressions.

Although all other students laughed at the referenced joke (turn 22), it seemed to have had a different effect on Otto (turns 22/24): his low voice and the forced smiles he gave

suggest that he was rather feeling exposed or even ridiculed, which can both be considered possible face threats (CULPEPER, 1996). This negative impact might then have been intensified by Andreia mentioning that the proficiency level of the course was Advanced 2, which she uttered again in a raised voice, thereby reinforcing her remark with a gesture of her hand (turns 25/26). Her smile, however, which apparently served as a mitigating element, indicates that she was not serious about what she had said.

The final individual interviews once more provided further insight into the investigated interaction. When asked about her motivation for suggesting a meditation exercise to her student, Andreia gave the following statement:

It was a bit in the sense of 'get yourself together!'. I believe that he thinks a lot in English, because of his studies, he needs to read a lot in English. Generally, I would say that the students are more reserved with regards to the German language and learning German, and that's why I always try to create a funny and relaxed atmosphere in the classroom.

Andreia's answer reveals that she wanted in a certain way to reprehend her student for speaking English. However, she apparently had not meant what she said seriously. Quite the contrary, she said that she always aimed to create a positive atmosphere in the classroom, which is supposed to help the students overcome their inhibitions with regards to the learning of the German language. As to the question of how Otto had perceived this situation, in her opinion, Andreia stated *I know that he knows very well that it's meant to be funny. He is a very sympathetic and open-minded student.* Her statement bespeaks her belief that the student had interpreted her behavior in a positive way.

Otto gave the following statement when asked if he would evaluate the referenced interaction as rather negative or positive respectively direct or indirect:

It was negative for me, right? [smiling]. I have this difficulty to say the right words and I mix up German and English all the time. And Andreia said 'Advanced 2', it's true, a student on this level should know that. It's me who's wrong, how can I forget *Wörterbuch*? We have already learned this word at the Beginner 1 level, and then in Advanced 2 I say 'dictionary'. And I think her way, like making this joke with the mantra, was really funny. And I found it quite direct! She said in German, because that's what we're supposed to speak. For me, it was not negative, however, I don't know if another student would feel the same about it, maybe not. I don't know if someone else would take it so easy. And it's even better that she speaks loudly, I prefer that considering that the classes start at 8am in the morning.

Thus, similar to the previously analysed scene, Otto once again expressed his awareness of his own difficulties and stated that he had perceived Andreia's rather direct approach in this situation as positive. As an example of his teacher's directness, he mentioned the expression *in German* uttered by Andreia (turn 6) which, as we have seen previously, had the potential to cause a threat to his face (CULPEPER, 1996). However, Otto evidently seemed to consider its use in the referenced situation appropriate, given that all students in the Advanced 2 course were expected to speak German in the classroom.

The feedback of both Andreia and Otto reflect that the described face threats were neither meant to be taken too seriously nor perceived in that way. Instead, the responses rather point to what Culpeper (1996) and Kerbrat-Orecchioni

(2017) describe as banter or mock politeness. As Culpeper (*ibid*) argues, mock politeness does not serve to threaten the face of the interlocutor and instead aims to promote social intimacy amongst those involved in an interaction. However, a field note that I had made on the same day that the final interview was conducted with Otto expresses certain doubts with regards to his evaluations:

I was a bit surprised about what Otto had said during the interview today. He evaluated both situations in which he was allegedly exposed to certain face threats by his teacher as entirely positive. It is certainly possible that the impact was not as negative as I thought it would be. However, it is principally his body language that was registered by means of the video recordings which indicates that he did not perceive these situations as entirely positive. Also, his comment ‘It was negative for me, right?’ that he laughingly gave today with regards to the scene 4.1.2.3c gives the impression that he in a certain way was not always feeling perfectly comfortable. I believe there is a fine line between what someone can perceive as ‘funny’, ‘embarrassing’ or possibly ‘exposed’, even in a supposedly funny interaction. And there might still be a discrepancy between what someone says and in fact thinks about a certain interaction.

The above field note reflects my impression that it might not always be possible to obtain sincere feedback principally from those participants that were allegedly exposed to certain face threats. This might simply be based on the fact that those participants – for reasons of politeness – prefer to give positive feedback rather than to express that they had in fact perceived an interaction as impolite. Finally, it is also possible to say from a linguistic point of view that all potential face threats described in the present scene can be classified as direct, given the fact that their meanings evidently became clear to the interactants.

#### 4.1.2.3d Repeatedly reiterated arguments as face threats

The following interaction was recorded during the first lesson after the midterm exam. Given the low number of students present<sup>76</sup> (Lara, Mariana and Felipe), the teacher decided to do a conversation class on the topic of “books”. The lesson had almost come to an end when Mariana signalled to her teacher that she wanted to make an observation, thereby asking the permission to speak in Portuguese. In the moment of interaction that will be described in the following, Andreia was sitting at her desk and waiting for Mariana to put her comment forward. The latter eventually started to speak slowly and in a low voice.

1	<b>Mariana</b>	This moment now is very rich (.) I just wanted to make a brief consideration about last
2		week’s test (.) I see that the course is very enjoyable for everyone (.) I particularly
3		((pointing to herself with both hands)) was shocked by the content you sent on whatsapp
4		the day before the test (.) when you said ‘units 4 and 5’ /.../ when I saw your message (.)
5		for example Conjunctive 2 and Indirect Speech (.) we had NOT dealt with that
6		((shaking her head, raising her voice)) and also the declination of the personal pronouns
7		/.../ all that was NOT focus of our lessons (.) I had difficulties I ((looking upwards,
8		gesticulating vividly)) I stopped (.) I STOPPED /.../ and when on Thursday I received
9		your message (.) these exercises (.) this TOTALLY DISorganized me
10	<b>Andreia</b>	No tho-those exercises
11	<b>Mariana</b>	[This DISORGANISED me ((gesticulating vividly))

<sup>76</sup> The occasionally low number of students during this semester was also due to unforeseen circumstances, such as a strike in the public service sector or a shortage of fuel caused by a strike of the truck drivers in the country.

12	<b>Andreia</b>	No I will I will speak (.) the exercises I sent (.) I wouldn't give all (.) I wouldn't give all
13	<b>Mariana</b>	Exactly you just said 'Print it out and we will correct it' (.) ↑↑ I had no time to do all that
14	<b>Andreia</b>	[No no ((shaking her head, making a defensive gesture with her hands)) (..) When I sent the exercises I had a technical problem (.) I could not access my computer ((pointing to her laptop in front of her)) I could not send the selected pages (.) I apologise (.) also because we lost a lot (.) on that Friday I could not come (.) my fault and then the strike (.) It's just that I also had to stick to the schedule (.) I also believe that we we should have had another week's time before doing the test
15		
16		
17		
18		
19		
20	<b>Mariana</b>	I understand (.) you already made that clear (.) I am bringing this up with A LOT OF respect with the utmost care (.) because I particularly ((looking upwards, searching for words)) couldn't believe it I slept late I tried to study at night (.) it took a LOT of time to do the exercises I did not have all Thursday I had other things to do /.../ then we did the review and lavishly it WASN'T a review (.) it was a correction of some of the exercises /.../ and when you announced that there were 10 minutes left and I still had 3 questions to do (.) I didn't read it I just GUESSED /.../ I did not read it I DIDN'T read it I didn't feel WELL with what I wrote (.) the LISTENING took a LOT of time (.) I think I did a BAD test (.) what we dealt with in the class was NOT covered (.) the vocabulary we had was SO rich ((shaking her head)) I was feeling like 'Now what' ↓ /.../
21		
22		
23		
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After indicating the reason for her request to speak, which was the midterm exam of the preceding week, Mariana briefly expressed her general satisfaction about the German course (turns 1/2). In the following (turns 2-9), the student then voiced her dissatisfaction with the fact that Andreia had

provided the preparatory training material only on the day before the exam, claiming that its content had not – or only partially – been dealt with during the lessons. According to the student, this had caused a major confusion and uncertainty on her part.

However, Andreia's subsequent attempt to give her view on her student's statement (turn 10) was suddenly interrupted by Mariana who once again pointed to the negative impact this had caused on her (turn 11). The teacher then provided an explanation (turn 12), which was in turn answered by Mariana who first cited the instructions that had been given by Andreia before eventually pointing to the short preparation time that had been left (turn 13).

However, the teacher then offered her apologies and gave further explanations, describing technical problems and other unforeseen circumstances that had impeded a more thorough preparation for the exam (turns 14-19). The student then showed understanding and voiced her respect towards the teacher in the face of the criticism expressed (turns 20/21). Next, Mariana then once again depicted the unrest and the despair she had felt before and during the actual exam and also expressed her conviction to have done badly in the test (turns 22-29).

It is possible to identify several potential face threats in the referenced interaction. The first one refers to the criticism that Mariana voiced against Andreia, which relates to the fact that the teacher had sent the additional training material to the students only on the day before the test, which had apparently caused a certain confusion. The wording of the student's statement, her expressive body language and the fact that she raised her voice and emphasised certain words, all point to the negative

emotions that she had experienced and at the same time evidence that she expressed a clear criticism by assigning the responsibility to her teacher (turns 2-9). As we have seen in the present work, criticism can potentially threaten the face of the interlocutor (BROWN; LEVINSON, 1987).

The impression that the student was agitated in this moment also seems to be confirmed by the fact that she interrupted Andreia's first attempt to comment on her previous statement (turn 10) with the words *this disorganised me* (turn 11), her utterance being intensified through her raised voice and her lively gestures (turn 11). According to the aforementioned authors (*ibid*), a turn-taking violation can cause an impolite effect. In fact, it seems that Mariana's criticism and/or the interruption had a negative impact on Andreia, who in her subsequent statement apparently showed signs of tension, as indicated by the fact that she falteringly repeated certain expressions (*I will I will, I wouldn't give all I wouldn't give all*, turn 12).

Mariana then cited the task that the students had been given by the teacher and claimed in a high-pitched voice that there had not been enough time for her to do all the activities (turn 13). Andreia thereafter apologised and explained herself, stating different unfavourable circumstances that had impeded a better preparation for the test (turns 14-19). The student then showed her respect and expressed a certain understanding (turns 20/21), which can be considered elements that served to mitigate her criticism.

Mariana then one more time vividly described the desperation she had been going through in the course of the midterm exam, emphasising that the preparation time as well as the time available during the test had not been sufficient. In addition,

the student also criticised that no thorough review had been made. Her non-verbal language once again indicates the negative emotions that she had perceived in the described situation (turns 20-29).

After having listened to Mariana’s feedback, Andreia made several suggestions which were supposed to help avoiding similar problems in the future: she proposed to do a comprehensive review before the upcoming final exam, to allow more time for the students to write the test and to apply exercises that include only those contents that had been dealt with during the lessons. After thanking her student for her feedback and once again offering her apologies, the teacher then asked Lara to give her opinion on this matter.

1	<b>Lara</b>	Eh: as to the lessons (.) I think it’s fantastic I think the dynamic we have is really great (.)
2		and the vocabulary ((starting to speak slowly, in a very low voice)) just when I saw the
3		Conjunctive 2 (.) the pdf you sent (.) I was like ‘Oh my god’
4	<b>Andreia</b>	I’m sorry I’m really sorry (.) because I couldn’t specify better
5	<b>Lara</b>	ExACTly so I was reading the grammar (.) I didn’t understand anything (.) there were
6		FIVE different types of Conjunctive 2 (.) so I asked Mariana for help (.) she referred me
7		to unit 8 that was ve:ry difficult (.) so I had to be really autodidactic (.) to understand
8		and see on the internet and see how it works (.) and the Indirect Speech (.) I was I think I
9		learned that on the same day (.) because I was like ‘How do I put that together oh my
10		God’ (.) and the test I think it was really good just very long and I think that (.) if we saw
11		just that grammar and stopped a bit (.) just a little bit and if we were a bit systematic
12		↑↑ <u>just in that grammar part</u> (.) it was like this and this and that ((snapping her
13		fingers)) it would have been easier (.) so it’s just that (.) I got a fright as to the grammar

14		(.) just a bit more systematic
15	<b>Andreia</b>	Ok understood (.) so I will first read the test again and next week I will tell you the grades
16		((scene continuing))

Similar to Mariana, Lara first praised the German lessons (turns 1-2). At this point, it should be mentioned that both students gave positive comments during the interaction (Mariana: *I see that the course is very enjoyable*, turn 2; *I am bringing this up with a lot of respect with the utmost care*, turns 20/21; Lara: *as to the lessons I think it's fantastic I think the dynamic we have is really great and the vocabulary*, turns 1/2; *and the test it was really good*, turn 10). The referenced utterances apparently relate to what Leech (1983) describes in his Maxim of Sympathy discussed earlier in this work: by giving positive statements even in situations of disagreement, the participants of an interaction can show solidarity and respect towards each other and, thus, demonstrate their readiness to cooperate (*ibid*).

After her positive initial statement, Lara expressed the negative sentiments she had experienced after receiving the training material from her teacher (*I was like 'oh my god'*, turn 3). However, compared to her classmate, she uttered her feedback slowly and in a very low voice, which can both be interpreted as mitigating elements that she used to reduce the impact of her utterance. The scene then continued by Andreia once again offering her apologies (turn 4). Lara then reported the difficulties she had encountered with regards to the material provided and the way she had tried to resolve them (turns 5-10), thereby again expressing the emotions she had felt in that moment (*'how do I put that together oh my god'*, turns 9/10).

Then, the student mentioned the size of the exam, which surprised her, and the lack of a more structured grammar preparation (turns 10-14). She once again introduced her critique with a praise (*and the test I think it was really good*, turn 10) and also repetitively used the words *a bit* (in Portuguese *um pouco/um pouquinho*, turns 11/14) and *just* (in Portuguese: *só*, turns 11-14), which apparently all served as elements that aimed to attenuate the impact of the criticism. Andreia then took note of her student's feedback and told her that she would review the test before announcing the grades in the following week (turns 15).

However, as to the questions of how she would interpret the referenced interaction and why both she and Mariana first commented positively on the lessons, Lara gave the following statement during the final interview:

It was a clear criticism. But to say something positive is typical for Brazilians, in order to not be very direct, which would be disrespectful. We were ensuring not to be so direct, like 'It was shit, don't do that anymore!'. Same thing with the family. When I talk to my mother, I first have to beat about the bush before I actually say what I want. When I came back from Germany, I was more direct. I've lived there with a German family for one month. I felt they were more direct there and that I had to be that way. Once I wanted to do my laundry, and I asked 'Can I please get a bucket?'. And the host father said 'No, we don't wash clothes like that'. And I was like 'Ok!' and went to my room. He was much more straightforward than his wife, she was more like a Brazilian. And in other situations there, I saw that I had to be more direct, because I felt that if I wasn't, it would mean a lack of respect. I found it awesome to be direct. It's just that I also saw very ugly situations. I mean, I saw really nice people, direct, polite, respectful, but I also saw, for example, that if you bumped into someone, the person would look at you angrily, this seems to be a crime there. While it is such an evolved country,

how can one treat someone else like that? I think we are better at that. But in general I think it's nice to be more direct. And when I arrived in Brazil, while being more direct, my mum said 'Why are you like that? You are being rebellious!'

According to Lara, Brazilians use indirect forms to treat each other in a more respectful way and to avoid offending others. This indirectness also consists in not getting straight to the point and instead serves to introduce sensitive issues with a positive statement. The student also provided an example from her own family context, in which she evidently used indirectness as a strategy to approach the actual subject of a conversation.

Moreover, she also reported that she had gotten familiar with German directness during a short stay in the country and, despite initial difficulties, she had learned to appreciate direct forms and started to become more direct herself. The student also evaluated certain interactional situations that she had experienced as impolite during her stay in Germany as direct and stated her belief that similar to indirectness in Brazil, directness in Germany in general stands for respectful interaction.

As to the question of whether it is typical for Brazilians to introduce critique with a positive statement, Andreia commented with the words *yes, that's the Brazilian way of speaking, always very positive first*. When asked about how she perceived the criticism that had been voiced with regards to the exam and the preparation for it, the teacher commented as follows:

First of all, the criticism was totally valid, it was in fact my mistake. I believed that the topics were part of our lessons and that the students would study by themselves. In the case of Mariana, I realised that the content has to be extremely 'chewed', which in a way is very tiresome. Mariana herself

works in the field of education where she applies this approach of preparing and structuring classes, so she needs that as a student, too. Without doing all the exercises and knowing all the words she doesn't exist, she feels naked and lost if I don't explain all the words. Honestly, I need to say 'no', this is within the context of the lessons, and I assume that the students study by themselves. But I understand Mariana, and I also understand why she feels that way, because she's a student who has to be taken by the hand. I think she exaggerated a bit, and it hurt me. She said that very directly, a direct criticism expressed by means of an indirect wording, if I may say so. She did not beat about the bush, she used other words that say the same, just wrapped up. I believe that Lara wanted to defend me a bit. Mariana was more upset, Lara stayed really cool. That's not usually Mariana's way, it seems she was hurt, she might not have done as well in the test as she had expected.

As becomes evident from the above excerpt, Andreia accepted the criticism of her students, partly assuming responsibility for the confusion caused. However, she also pointed to a certain self-responsibility and personal initiative that she expects from her students. Despite showing a certain understanding for the emotional statement from Mariana, Andreia admitted that she had been hurt by her comments. According to the teacher, Mariana had conveyed a clear and direct criticism by expressing herself in an indirect way. In comparison, Lara's critique, who had apparently been expressed in a calmer way, was perceived by the teacher as less strong.

When asked about an opinion with regards to the general differences between the use of direct or indirect forms between Brazilians and Germans, Andreia gave an interesting statement:

Actually it's like that: Brazilians are not direct, just like Arabs or Turkish. Latin Americans, in a certain way, they do not speak directly, they first beat about the bush. You can't just say something directly to someone's face. I think I'm so direct because my parents talked that way, my parents never beat about the bush. And it's my way. I've had some difficulties with Brazilians myself, I'm more direct, even though I was born here. This still happens to me when I speak with Brazilians. I'm German, Austrian, I mean European, and that's just how I was raised. I've realised that even with my Brazilian partners I was too direct. But there's only one option, either you're direct or not! But sometimes I realise that I exaggerate. I grew up in a Swiss school. There you had to obey as a child, as a teenager. 'Andreia, deal with it!'. I still remember today that I once had to do a presentation, and I had forgotten the papers at home. I was known as a very good student. I explained to the teacher in front of the whole class 'I am very sorry, but I forgot my work. Can I please present it tomorrow?'. The teacher just answered 'Deal with it!'. So I just had some minutes to prepare my presentation, and I stuttered and got a bad grade. But I also raised my own children that way. And this mentality is missing here, not even the adult students have it. For example, 'I couldn't do the homework, yesterday was my grandmother's birthday'. This attitude can also be found here at the university, and I really can't accept that, these are all adult people. 'Deal with it!'.

The excerpt reveals that Andreia assigned the use of indirectness to certain nationalities in which, according to her, direct forms of expressions are not appreciated. In addition, she also stated that her own direct way of communicating went back to her Austrian roots and the evidently rigorous education she had received in her family and in the Swiss school she had attended. It is interesting to note that, although having had rather negative experiences with directness during that time and then later in the interaction with other Brazilians, she had decided to raise her children under the same motto: *deal with it!*

This in turn was due to the fact that Andreia apparently considered discipline and a proactive attitude to be positive values that resulted from this strict education. According to the teacher, many of her Brazilian students missed these characteristics. To conclude, it can also be said that all face-threatening acts in the referenced situation can be considered direct from a linguistic perspective (GRAINGER; MILLS, 2016), given the fact that they were unambiguous and, thus, understood by the interactants.

#### 4.1.2.4 Summarising Group II

Summarising the investigated interactions with the second group of collaborators in the context of teaching German to Brazilians at the UnB Idiomas in Brasília, Brazil, we can state that the analysis of the data exposed a number of potentially face-threatening acts. In three of the four investigated scenes, the referenced acts were performed by the teacher and directed towards one of the students at a time, whereas in one situation they were carried out by two students and directed towards the teacher. While the last interaction 4.1.2.3d (“Repeatedly reiterated arguments as face threats”) assumes a rather serious character, all other investigated situations can generally be described as jocular or be ascribed to what Culpeper (1996) and Kerbrat-Orecchioni (2017) term banter or mock politeness.

Similar to the first group, the distinct para-verbal and non-verbal languages of Andreia proved to be of particular importance, as they accompanied and intensified the alleged verbal face threats on the one hand, whereas mainly her smile and laughter served as mitigating elements on the other and, thus, lent a joking character to the investigated situations. The

face threats that were revealed in the interactions can be defined as direct when seen from a linguistic standpoint (GRAINGER; MILLS, 2016), in the way that their meanings became clear to the interactants. However, an exception constitutes scene 4.1.2.3a (“Silence as a face-threatening act”), in which the non-verbal reaction that Andreia showed after Lara had presented her homework remained unclear to the student.

The question as to the interactants’ perceptions and interpretations of the investigated face threats and their relation to the notions of directness and indirectness seems to be complex. Lara used the terms direct and indirect to describe and evaluate different aspects of language and interaction, such as how a message is communicated (labelling Andreia’s utterance *earthling doesn’t exist* in scene 4.1.2.3a as direct) or to describe the indirect approach she uses to address certain subjects when talking to her mother. In addition, the student characterised the comprehensible methodology of a former teacher as direct and at the same time described Andreia’s approach as incomprehensible and indirect for learners of the language.

The feedback provided by Lara and some of the other participants so far in this research point to a heterogeneous understanding and use of the terms direct and indirect. Nevertheless, hoping to gain further insights into the referenced notions, I decided to maintain the existing approach and to also ask the collaborators of the third and last group of participants about perceived (in)directness.

After presenting and discussing situations that were based on the data generated with two different groups of collaborators in the context of German as an additional language at the UnB Idiomas in Brasília, Brazil, we will in the following

section refer to data that were obtained in the context of Brazilian Portuguese as additional language at the *Institut für Romanistik* of the *Friedrich-Schiller-Universität* in the city of Jena, Germany.

## 4.2 GERMANY – ACCESS AND ENTRY INTO THE RESEARCH FIELD – FSU Jena

Compared to the Brazilian context, the access and the entry into the research field in Germany could be described as more complex. The idea to conduct the second part of my data generation at the *Friedrich-Schiller-Universität* in Jena, Germany, first came up during a conversation with a fellow doctoral student who knew the Brazilian teacher in charge of the application of the CELPE-BRAS<sup>77</sup> exam at this institution. This teacher was simultaneously working as a lecturer of Portuguese at the *Institut für Romanistik* of this university.

The history of the Romance languages at the University of Jena, capital of the federal state of Thuringia, goes back to the 19th century. The former *Romanisches Seminar* was closed down in the course of a higher education reform in the 1960s and newly founded in 1993. It offers the entire spectrum of the major Romance languages: Portuguese, Spanish, French, Italian and Romanian. Students can choose between the degrees of

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<sup>77</sup> The CELPE-BRAS is the exam for the “Certificate of Proficiency in Portuguese Language for Foreigners”. Granted by Brazil’s Ministry of Education, the CELPE-BRAS is the only Brazilian certificate of proficiency in Portuguese as a foreign language officially recognised by the Brazilian government. The exam is applied in Brazil and in many other countries. Information obtained from <http://redebrasilcultural.itamaraty.gov.br/en/celpe-bras>.

Bachelor of Arts (B.A.), Master of Arts (M.A.) or the state examination on teaching.

During a first email exchange with the above mentioned contact of the *Institut*, I was referred to another Brazilian teacher who was giving Portuguese classes at the *Sprachenzentrum* (language center) of the university. Thus, I established my first email contact with this person, explaining my research project and expressing my intention to generate data in the context of Brazilian Portuguese as an additional language. After answering some doubts from this potential collaborating teacher about the planned research and receiving positive feedback, we agreed to meet in person after my arrival in Jena.

The decisive aspect that eventually paved the way for my study visit in Jena was the fact that another university professor from the *Institut für Romanistik* had agreed to act as a second supervisor in the course of a doctoral exchange program that should last for one semester and which I could eventually realise with the help of a scholarship from the Brazilian government. After going through the application process and receiving the final approval from CAPES<sup>78</sup>, I could eventually start to plan my travel and prepare everything for the second part of my data generation, this time in my home country, that is, Germany.

After my arrival in Jena and an initial meeting with my second supervisor, I arranged an encounter with the aforementioned teacher from the language center. During an extensive conversation, I once more explained in detail my research, the

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<sup>78</sup> CAPES is a Foundation within the Ministry of Education in Brazil whose central function is to improve the quality of Brazil's faculty and staff in higher education through grant programs. Information obtained from <https://www.iie.org/programs/capes>.

intended data generation as well as the standards of data security. However, the teacher ultimately did not give her consent to the planned video recordings in the classroom and refused to participate in the study. Faced with these unexpected news, I decided to speak with my first contact person, the Portuguese teacher at the *Institut für Romanistik*, in order to see if there was a chance to conduct the data generation with her and/or one of her colleagues.

Taking into account the unforeseeable circumstances, the latter teacher, who was lecturing a Portuguese course at B1 level at the time, eventually agreed to personally take part in the research and also put me in contact with another colleague of hers. This colleague, who was lecturing a Portuguese course that served as a complementary training to the principal B1 course<sup>79</sup>, likewise demonstrated his willingness to join in. Thus, thanks to the cooperation from both teachers, I was fortunately able to work with two groups, with the majority of the student collaborators thereby attending both courses.

The subsequent entry into the research field was then fairly similar to the Brazilian context: during the first lesson, I was shortly introduced to the students. In the second class, I introduced myself again, provided some general information about my research and the planned data generation, thereby answering the doubts of the collaborators and also reading the Informed Consent Form with them. Starting at the third lesson, I initiated the test recordings.

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<sup>79</sup> Level B1, according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, CEFR.

## 4.2.1 GROUP III

### 4.2.1.1 The participants

The third group that participated in the present research consisted of six female students, one male student and the teacher. Just like the first two groups from the Brazilian context, the information from the collaborators of this last group that will be presented in the following section was obtained by means of the initial individual interview and the questionnaire that had been applied before the conduction of the interviews.

#### 4.2.1.1a Iara – teacher of the principal course

Iara is 64 years old, female, Brazilian, has graduated in Letters Portuguese and French at a Brazilian university and holds both a Master's degree concluded in France as well as a Doctorate's degree that she earned in Germany. Iara can draw from many years of teaching experience that she gained in the aforementioned countries. Married to a German, she has been living and teaching Brazilian Portuguese as an additional language in different German cities and institutions since 1979. Since 1999, she has been working as a lecturer at the *Institut für Romanistik* of the *Friedrich-Schiller-Universität* in Jena.

As to her classroom practice, the teacher states that she uses didactic books and also her own material, thereby attaching importance to the teaching of peculiar cultural aspects related to topics such as body contact or music (*music in Brazil reflects life*), amongst others. As regards to the differences in language use between Brazilians and Germans, Iara comments that *Brazilians talk a lot with their hands, Germans only talk with their mouth. There is hardly any physical contact here. I used to touch my*

*students and they got frightened. The Germans are more serious.* Apart from the subjunctive, she considers the nasal sounds in Brazilian Portuguese as particularly difficult for German learners.

#### **4.2.1.1b Stefan – teacher of the complementary training course**

Stefan, 36 years old, male, Brazilian, is graduated in Letters Portuguese and English in Brazil, holds a Master's and Doctorate's degrees in Linguistics that he concluded at a Brazilian university and concluded a post-doctorate research in Romance studies at a German university. Stefan's family, on his father's side, are descendants of German immigrants. He holds double citizenship and has been studying German for several years, with interruptions and in different language schools in Brazil. According to Stefan, he speaks German, English and Italian at intermediary level and has studied French during a one-year stay in Switzerland, reaching an advanced level of proficiency. He states that he associates almost exclusively with Brazilians and, thus, has very little contact with Germans in general.

Stefan has been teaching Portuguese in Brazil for several years and in different institutions. It was his own experience of learning French in a foreign country that raised his interest to start teaching Brazilian Portuguese as an additional language. At the beginning of the data research period with the German group, he had been living in Berlin for eight months and had just started teaching his first semester at the University of Jena, travelling there once a week in order to lecture a double lesson. Regarding his own teaching activities, Stefan points out that, depending on the respective teaching institution and the profi-

ciency level of the students, he also uses his own teaching materials such as texts, videos or music.

Moreover, he highlights the importance of integrating historic and cultural aspects into the lesson plan, with the objective of fostering discussions with the students, not least to dismantle possible preconceptions against other cultures. Based on his experience, he considers grammar, prepositions, conjunctions, subjunctive and pronunciation in Brazilian Portuguese as most difficult for learners of the language. As to the question of whether he sees any differences in the language use between German and Brazilian Portuguese, he states that Brazilians in general use more non-verbal language and gesticulate more, compared to Germans.

#### **4.2.1.1c Sophie**

Sophie, 21 years old, female, German, is graduating in Romance studies and Intercultural Business Communication. Learning Spanish as a main subject, she has opted for Portuguese as a minor subject and has been taking classes for one year. Sophie is very interested in Latin American culture in general and has already spent a year in Colombia studying Spanish. Apart from Spanish and Portuguese, she speaks English and French, both at an advanced level. She is satisfied with her learning progress in Portuguese, mainly due to the fact that the classes have only a small number of students (between 8 and 10), compared to the Spanish classes (up to 40).

Outside the classroom, Sophie has little contact with speakers of Portuguese. She considers grammar as well as intonation as her major difficulties. When asked about the main differences between the language use of German and Brazilian

Portuguese, she states that Brazilians definitely use more facial expressions and also gesticulate more. In addition, according to the student, people from South America in general tend to speak with a louder voice.

#### **4.2.1.1d Michael**

Michael, 28 years old, male, German, has completed apprenticeships in the retail sector and as a foreign language correspondent before starting a graduate degree in Romance studies and Economics. Doing Spanish as a main subject, he states to have opted for Portuguese as a minor not only because of the similarity between both languages, but also because of future travels that he plans to South America. Speaking English at an advanced level, Michael is pleased with his learning progress in Portuguese. However, he reports having difficulties with the pronunciation, especially with the nasal sounds.

As to the differences in language use between Brazilian Portuguese and German, the student states that the Brazilian teachers generally move a lot during the classes, be it with gestures or by walking around when monitoring the students, for example. Apart from that, he has also noticed that the Brazilian teachers constantly establish direct eye contact with the students, which is something that German teachers would hardly do.

#### **4.2.1.1e Ramona**

Ramona, 21 years old, female and of German nationality, is graduating in Economics and Romance studies. Having chosen Spanish as a main subject first, she soon decided to switch to Portuguese, due to the smaller classes and the more

familiar atmosphere. In addition, she believes that Portuguese can make a difference in her future professional life, saying that *many people speak good Spanish, only few speak good Portuguese*. She has been studying the language for 1,5 years and is in regular contact via social networks with Brazilian friends that she got to know whilst travelling in Australia. Evaluating her learning progress, she states that she is partially satisfied, considering that she has not enough time to prepare for the classes, due to her busy job in a restaurant.

As to the Portuguese language, Ramona considers the verbal tenses and the irregular verbs as most difficult. She speaks English at an advanced level, has an intermediary level in French and basic levels in both Spanish and Chinese. Asked about differences in language use that she might have perceived between German and Brazilian Portuguese, Ramona says that *Brazilians in general use much more non-verbal language, they gesticulate more. My Portuguese teachers even start singing sometimes during the classes, a German teacher would never do that*. However, she also describes the physical contact that she experienced whilst travelling with her Brazilian friends as affectionate.

#### **4.2.1.1f Hanna**

Hanna, 27 years old, female, is graduating in Political and Romance studies. Born in Albania, the student moved to Germany with her family when she was twelve years old. She holds Albanian and German nationalities and speaks both languages on a native-speaker level, English at an advanced and Spanish at an intermediary level. Hanna has been married to a Brazilian for three years. Having first communicated exclusively in the English language, she decided to start learning

Brazilian Portuguese because *it's nice to speak my husband's mother tongue, also because of his family. In Portuguese, we can also better communicate our feelings and also cultural and other things. We also speak German sometimes, but I feel a certain distance when doing so, it sounds kind of artificial, like an official language.*

The couple has many friends inside the Brazilian community in Jena and often takes part in the weekly get-togethers. Hanna is very satisfied with her learning progress in Portuguese, considering the verbal tenses, verbs and conjugations as most challenging. She states that Brazilians, compared to Germans, generally use more facial expressions and gestures when speaking. However, she describes the language use of Brazilian Portuguese as similar to Albanian, in the sense that *all speak very loud and all at once.*

#### 4.2.1.1g Selma

Selma is 20 years old, female and of German nationality. Before starting her studies in Economics and Romance languages, she did a one-year voluntary service at a Waldorfschool in the state of São Paulo, Brazil, teaching piano lessons to children. Planning to return to Brazil after completing her studies, she opted for the Portuguese language and has been doing classes for one year. Selma has regular contact with Brazilian friends via instant messenger. She also speaks English at an advanced level, having spent an exchange year at a Canadian high school.

Selma is pleased with her learning progress in the Portuguese course, however, she recognises the need to invest more time to improve faster. When asked about what aspects she considers most difficult in the Portuguese language, she says that

grammar and verbal tenses are most challenging for her. As to the question whether or not she sees any differences between the language use of Brazilian Portuguese and German, Selma makes the following comment: *Germans are more reserved, more neutral. Brazilians seem to be more extreme, either very happy or very sad*<sup>80</sup>.

#### 4.2.1.1h Maia

Maia is 20 years old, female and of Romanian nationality. Having moved to Germany during the preceding year, she is now graduating in Economics and Romance studies. Maia, whose grandmother originally comes from Germany, has studied German at a bilingual high school in Romania for eight years and acquired a high advanced level. Apart from Romanian, she also speaks English at an advanced level and has basic knowledge of Spanish. Similar to some of the other students, she opted for Portuguese instead of Spanish due to the lower number of students per class, the better learning conditions and the more familiar atmosphere.

Being satisfied with her learning progress in general, she considers grammar, subjunctive, vocabulary and certain aspects of pronunciation in Brazilian Portuguese as most difficult. Referring to the experiences she had made during the language classes, Maia states that her Brazilian teachers show stronger body language and generally speak faster than Germans. As regards to cultural differences, she reports that she perceives Germans as generally more serious people, compared to Romanians and Brazilians.

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<sup>80</sup> At this point, it should be mentioned that Selma has strikingly coloured so-called dreadwraps (dreadlocks that are wrapped with colourful yarn), which will turn out to be relevant in one of the interactions that will be analysed in the following.

#### 4.2.1.1i Teresa

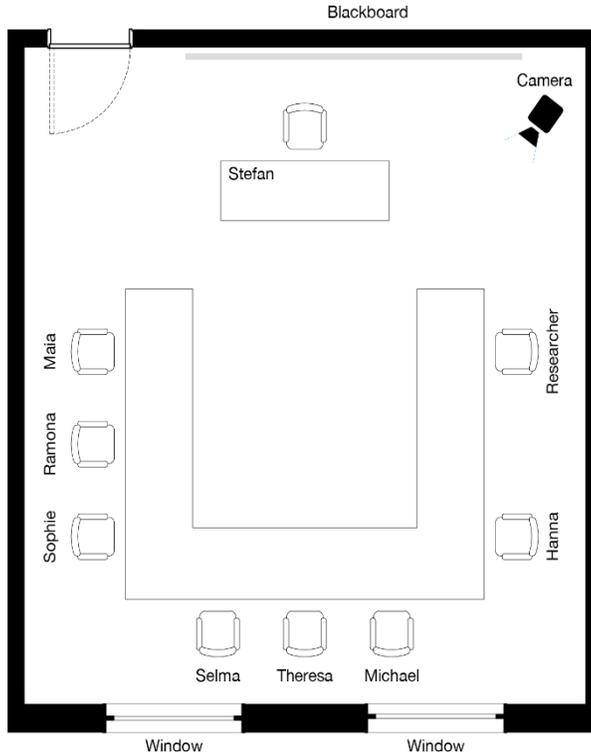
Teresa is 23 years old, female and of German nationality. After concluding an apprenticeship in the logistics sector, she is now graduating in Psychology. Speaking both English and Spanish at advanced levels and having an intermediate knowledge of French, Teresa wanted to study another language and opted for Portuguese, due to its similarity with Spanish. She is very pleased with her learning progress in the course and considers grammar and past tenses as most challenging for her.

According to the student, she does not have any contact with speakers of Portuguese outside the classroom. When asked if she perceives any difference in the language use between German and Brazilian Portuguese, she comments that Brazilians generally use more body language, especially more gestures and facial expressions.

#### 4.2.1.2 Organization of the research environment and routine: preliminary observations

The classroom in which the Portuguese lessons were conducted is located on the first floor of the main building of the *Friedrich-Schiller-Universität* in Jena. The room is small, painted in plain white and has bright illumination. It is equipped with a blackboard, a data show that is mounted on the ceiling, a chair and a desk for the teacher as well as chairs and desks for the students which are arranged in u-shape. As with the Brazilian context, the German students also opted to maintain the preferred seating order throughout the entire semester (see figure 4 below).

Figure 4 – Room layout Group III (elaborated by myself)



The data generation started at the end of October 2018, with the preliminary observations, the initial interviews, the test videos and the application of the initial questionnaire being conducted until the beginning of November. The actual video recordings were realised from mid-November 2018 until the end of January 2019 (including a two-week Christmas holiday), which constitutes the end of the lecture period of the semester. As mentioned previously, the data generation was conducted with both the principal B1 language course (Iara) and the accompanying training course (Stefan). However, given the fact that the video recordings from the principal course did not reveal

useful data as to the aspects investigated in the present work, I decided to consider only those data that were generated in the training course with Stefan.

The lessons of the latter course occurred on Tuesdays from 4pm-6pm. Thus, a total of around 18 hours of classroom interaction could be recorded. As mentioned earlier, the focus of the complementary course was on the practice of the lesson content of the simultaneously occurring principal course. Stefan did not draw on any specified didactic material and instead solely used his own materials, such as pictures, articles and audio files or music videos which he presented to the class on his own laptop. A field note made during one of the first lessons gives insight into how I initially perceived the classroom dynamics:

The teacher seems to be very motivated, he speaks in a loud voice and constantly moves around the classroom, thereby showing a distinct body language. However, I'm not sure if all students understand Stefan very well. The lessons so far are mostly related to Brazilian culture, which seems to make it more difficult for them to understand. I believe that not understanding very well the contents of the material and the teacher, who at times speaks really fast, are the reasons why the students show a rather low participation in the classroom activities, which causes moments of strange silence in certain situations.

In the following section, we will now analyse and discuss situations of interaction that involve (in)directness and (im)politeness, referring to the data that were generated in the context of teaching and learning Brazilian Portuguese as an additional language at the *Institut für Romanistik* of the *Friedrich-Schiller-Universität* in Jena, Germany. It should be mentioned at this point that all participants apart from Sophie were available to do the final individual interviews.

### 4.2.1.3 Classroom interaction

#### 4.2.1.3a Breaking the silence as a face-threatening act

All students apart from Hanna attended the lesson during which the now following interaction was recorded. The class worked on a text that dealt with the history of Brazilian carnival and some of the typical songs that are played during the carnival period. The students alternately read out the sections of the text before the teacher then answered their questions with regards to the unknown vocabulary, thereby giving further clarifications.

In the course of the activity, Stefan also provided detailed explanations as to certain grammatical aspects in Portuguese such as the formation of the subjunctive verb form, amongst others. In the moment of the interaction, Teresa had just finished reading a text passage talking about the famous samba singer Carmen Miranda. Stefan was standing in front of the class facing the students, holding a copy of the aforementioned text in his hands<sup>81</sup>.

1	<b>Stefan</b>	Any questions about this vocabulary↑ ((looking at the students)) here it says <i>TA-Í</i> (.)
2		((looking at Teresa)) it's not " <i>tal</i> " it's <i>TA-Í</i> ((walking forward)) remember that I said
3		((suddenly starting to sing in a loud, high-pitched voice)) <i>TAÍ</i>
4		<i>EU FIZ TU:DO↑ PRA VOCÊ</i> <i>GOSTAR DE MIM</i>
5	<b>Selma</b>	((looking at Stefan, starting to giggle))
6	<b>Students</b>	((looking down on their texts))
7	<b>Stefan</b>	It's the NAME of the song ((looking at the students)) <i>para</i> <i>você gostar de mim</i>
8		((looking at the students)) (..)
9	<b>Students</b>	[[((looking down on their texts))

<sup>81</sup> Some of the words respectively sentences in the following excerpt were not translated into English and instead kept in (original) Portuguese (*italics*), in order to facilitate a better understanding.

10	<b>Stefan</b>	Right↑ have you already seen the expression <i>PRA</i> ↑ ((walking towards the blackboard,
11		writing down the word <i>pra</i> , then turning around and looking at the students)) (..) yes↑
12	<b>Students</b>	((looking either at Stefan or the blackboard))
13	<b>Stefan</b>	((turning around and pointing at the blackboard)) it's an abbreviation of <i>PARA</i> (.) right
14		<i>PARA você gostar de mim</i> (.) this <i>para</i> is purpose ((looking at the students)) alright↑
15	<b>Students</b>	((looking at Stefan, questioning glances))
16	<b>Stefan</b>	<i>Pra você gostar de mim</i> (..) the song is also called <i>taí</i> ((writing the word <i>taí</i> on the
17		blackboard)) <i>taí</i> is a contraction of <i>estar aí</i> ((looking at the students)) (.) alright↑ (...)
18	<b>Students</b>	((Looking either at the blackboard or at Stefan, some nodding hesitantly))
19	<b>Stefan</b>	For god's sake ((suddenly walking forward, moving his raised arms vigorously forward
20		and back, smiling)) MAKE EXPRESSIONS YE:::S ((nodding)) NO::: I DIDN'T
21		UNDERSTAND ((shaking his head))
22	<b>Students</b>	((starting to smile, Ramona looking seriously))
23	<b>Stefan</b>	Say that please ((walking back towards the blackboard, smiling)) who's next to read
24		((scene continuing))

After Teresa had finished reading the aforementioned excerpt about a famous carnival song from Carmen Miranda, the teacher first corrected an error made by the student and then started to sing the song title in a loud, high-pitched voice (turns 1-4). Whilst this evoked a giggle from Selma (turn 5), the other students did not show any reaction and instead kept focussing on the texts in front of them. Stefan then once more mentioned the song track and was thereby looking at the students (turns 7/8), which again did not trigger any reaction from them (turn 9).

In the further course of the interaction, the teacher explained the meaning of the preposition *pra* (in English: *for*, turns 10/11, 13/14). However, his explanations did once again

not provoke any responses from the students (turns 12/15). It was only after another clarification provided by him to the word *taí*, which is part of the referenced song title (turns 16/17), that some of the students showed positive, albeit silent feedback (turn 18). This was then followed by a rather strong reaction from Stefan: after using the expression *for god's sake* (in Brazilian Portuguese: *pelo amor de deus*, turn 19), the teacher suddenly started to walk towards the students, thereby gesticulating vividly and uttering in a loud voice *make expressions yes and no I didn't understand* (turns 19-21).

According to Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 314), strong expressions of emotion can constitute a threat to the face of another person. The described effect might have been intensified in the referenced scene, given that the utterance *for god's sake* was followed by strikingly intense body language of the teacher and the fact that he started to walk towards his students (turns 19-21). Stefan's smile (turn 20) apparently indicated that he had not meant what he said seriously. The act of smiling apparently not only had a mitigating effect on the (non)verbal language that preceded it, but also attenuated the subsequent utterance *make expressions yes no I didn't understand*, which was enunciated in a loud voice and again reinforced by significant body language (turns 20/21).

From a linguistic perspective (cf. GRAINGER; MILLS, 2016), we can consider both the teacher's utterances and the accompanying non-verbal language he used (turns 19-21) as direct, given that their meaning became accessible to the students, which was in turn evidenced by their reactions (turn 22). The individual interviews that were conducted with the collaborators at the end of the semester revealed further insights

to the referenced scene. When asked if he had lost his temper in this situation, Stefan answered the following: *I didn't lose my temper. It was my way of breaking the ice and the silence and the common inertia of the students. I think silence is an inertia. If you do not encourage the students to speak, they just won't do it.*

In comparison, the evaluations of the students showed great differences. Michael, Maia and Hanna (the latter was not present during the interaction) considered the actions of Stefan positive, stating their belief that the teacher had tried to bring the students out of their shell and to encourage them to participate in the activity. Selma, who had already spent one year in Brazil, stated that she had interpreted the scene as amusing: *he started to sing, that was funny. And I like 'pelo amor de deus'. It made me smile, it reminded me of many funny moments in Brazil.*

Although having reacted in a positive way during the actual interaction, some other students interpreted the scene and the background circumstances as more negative and/or expressed certain criticism during the final interviews. Teresa, who stated that Stefan had in fact intended to express a certain critique, explained that the passivity of the students was due to the lack of dialogue situations and other opportunities to interact during the lessons. The student also claimed that, in Stefan's place, she would have expressed herself in a clearer, more serious way, using the words *'I have the impression that...'* instead of trying to make a joke.

Ramona said that she had not interpreted the situation as funny at all and also expressed a certain antipathy towards her teacher: *I didn't think that was funny. I don't know, I'm just not such a big fan of Stefan. Not in the sense that I wouldn't answer when he asked me something, but I didn't think in that situation that I had to*

*appreciate what he said or that I had to respond to that.* Hanna put the responsibility for the silence of the students on the teacher, saying that he generally spoke too fast and used demanding vocabulary, which had made it difficult to understand him.

Thus, we can assume that the teacher's attempt to break the silence and to motivate the students to participate was not evaluated positively by all of them. Despite having shown a positive reaction during the referenced interaction (with the exception of Ramona), some of the students interpreted Stefan's actions as inappropriate, thereby pointing to the underlying circumstances that had eventually provoked the situation and assigning the responsibility to the teacher.

When asked if she would evaluate the teacher's utterance (turns 19-21) as rather direct or indirect, Selma seemed truly surprised by the question and gave the following answer:

I found it amusing! But I wouldn't call it direct or indirect, that's arbitrary. There are quite some expressions that include these words, like 'directly involved', 'direct and indirect speech', 'to look someone directly in the eye', 'to say something indirectly', there are so many [laughing]! And, depending on which expression it is, these terms mean totally different things! And when it comes to interaction, I personally would use the term direct only if someone said something directly into my face.

In fact, the feedback of the student raised further doubts on my part as to the terms "direct" and "indirect" in the way they had been used by the participants of the present research in order to evaluate situations of interaction. A field note made on the same day reflects my thoughts:

Selma's comment earlier today made me think a lot. I ask myself if it is a valid approach to ask the collaborators to evaluate certain utterances or interactions as 'direct' or 'indirect', or if this has possibly taken my research to a wrong direction? Would they use these particular terms by themselves in order to comment on the investigated situations, or would they rather use other words?

Thus, based on the feedback of Selma, my own reflections and the previously made observation that both "direct" and "indirect" had been used by the interactants in a heterogeneous way to describe and evaluate specific acts, situations or approaches, amongst others aspects, I eventually decided to refrain from using the referenced dichotomy and instead drew on more open questions to prompt their opinions. However, I continued using the linguistic distinction between directness (unambiguous) and indirectness (off-record, ambiguous) in my analysis, as suggested by Grainger and Mills (2016).

#### **4.2.1.3b Invasion of physical space as a face-threatening act**

On the same day and only a few minutes after the previously analysed interaction, the class continued working on the same text about the Brazilian carnival and the songs that are typically played during this event. Ramona was about to read the subsequent passage about another famous samba title that is frequently played during carnival<sup>82</sup>. In the moment of the interaction, Stefan was standing within close proximity to his students, waiting for Ramona to start reading<sup>83</sup>.

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<sup>82</sup> Music title: *O teu cabelo não nega* (Lamartine Babo).

<sup>83</sup> Again, some of the words/sentences in the following excerpt were kept in Portuguese (*italics*) in order to facilitate a better understanding.

1	<b>Ramona</b>	“ <i>Em uma das estrofes diz tens um sabor bem do Brasil tens a alma cor de anil mulata</i> ”
2		<i>mulatinha meu amor fui nomeado teu tenente interventor</i> ” /.../
3	<b>Stefan</b>	Thank you (.) any doubts about the vocabulary of this excerpt↑
4		((looking at the students)) (...)
5	<b>Teresa</b>	What is <i>cor de anil</i> ↑
6	<b>Stefan</b>	<i>Cor de anil=ANIL</i> is a colour (.) <i>azul anil</i> (..)
7	<b>Students</b>	((looking questioningly at Stefan))
8	<b>Teresa</b>	((turning towards Christoph, speaking in low voice)) <i>Anil</i> ↑
9	<b>Stefan</b>	<i>Anil</i> (.) right↑ for example ((abruptly taking a step forward towards Selma and
10		touching one of her blue-coloured dreadwraps with his pen, then stepping back))
11	<b>Teresa</b>	[(((abruptly moving back))
12	<b>Students</b>	[(((observing the scene, some smiling hesitantly, others looking with astonishment))
13	<b>Stefan</b>	I can say that your hair is <i>anil</i> (.) <i>cor de anil</i>
14	<b>Selma</b>	((smiling, pointing with one hand at her hair)) which↑ I have many colours
15	<b>Stefan</b>	This one here ((stepping forward again and touching Selma’s blue-coloured dreadwrap
16		with his pen)) is <i>anil</i> (.) you can say the sky is <i>azul cor de anil</i> ((pointing with his
17		outstretched left arm towards the sky))
18	<b>Teresa</b>	Ah <i>azul</i>
19	<b>Stefan</b>	<i>Azul</i> (.) <i>anil</i> is a type of <i>azul</i> yes
20	<b>Teresa</b>	Ah <i>anil</i> is a type of <i>azul</i> ((+))
21		((Scene continuing))

Ramona first read out aloud an excerpt of the text which contained a passage from the aforementioned song (turns 1-2), which was then followed by Stefan asking if the students had any questions about the vocabulary (turn 3). After a short moment, Teresa asked about the expression *cor de anil*<sup>84</sup> (turn 5), which was answered by Stefan stating that it was a colour (turn 6). This explanation merely evoked the questioning glances on

<sup>84</sup> In English: indigo blue.

part of the students (turn 7), which in turn triggered another attempt from the teacher to provide clarification: after once again stating the word *amíl*, Stefan suddenly made a step forward towards Selma and touched one of her blue-coloured dreadwraps with his pen (turns 9/10).

According to Culpeper (1996, p. 358), invading someone's space – both in the metaphorical and in the literal sense – can threaten the face of this person and cause an impolite effect. Whereas Teresa, who was sitting right next to Selma, was evidently surprised by the unexpected action of the teacher (turn 11), the reactions of the other students varied: whilst some of them started to smile, others seemed surprised (turn 12). Selma, who was subject to the potential face threat, did not seem to consider the situation as negative at all and instead appeared to be rather amused by the scene, jokingly asking Stefan to specify once more to which of the colours in her hair he was referring to (turn 14).

The teacher then once again touched one of the blue-coloured dreadwraps of Selma and explained that the sky had the same colour, thereby pointing upward with his arm, which eventually helped to clarify the word (turns 15-17). We can state from a linguistic point of view that the supposed non-verbal face threat committed by Stefan can be regarded as direct, given the fact that its meaning became clear to the students (cf. GRAINGER; MILLS, 2016). When asked during the final interview to comment on the referenced situation and on the fact that he had touched his student's hair with a pen, Stefan stated the following:

Sometimes I do that here. Sometimes I touch and say ‘sorry, sorry’, when the person doesn’t see or hear me, for example. But I don’t have this habit. Actually, I think it’s invasive to touch another person. I was not aware that I had touched her. But it was a way of pointing to something, it was not an intervention.

Selma made an interesting remark when asked if she had felt uncomfortable in the moment that Stefan touched her hair with a pen:

I didn’t feel uncomfortable, but I think before my stay in Brazil I would have felt that way. Physical contact in Brazil is normal, and with Brazilian children it’s even stronger. I got used to it there. However, it was strange for me in the beginning. I arrived there, really tired from the trip, and the first thing everyone was doing was to hug and kiss me on the cheek. It was a lot of physical contact, I was shocked. But then I got used to it. It was just strange when I returned to Germany, I didn’t know any more how I should greet people.

However, the evaluations of the other students with regards to the referenced situation differed. Teresa stated that she wouldn’t have been surprised or felt uncomfortable in Selma’s place, given the fact that she had already studied in Chile and Colombia, where *physical contact is quite normal*. In comparison, Michael and Maia told that they would have perceived this kind of physical contact as unpleasant. In a similar way, Ramona made it evident that she would not have appreciated the act of Stefan, thereby once again voicing clear criticism towards her teacher and pointing to his responsibility to adapt to the local conventions:

If he had touched me, I would have thought it’s weird. You wouldn’t expect that from a teacher, you would think ‘this is my private space and you are entering without my permission’.

I found his behavior not appropriate. You somehow have to adapt. You can't assume that the others think 'wow, what he is doing is really cool'. When you come to another country and start teaching, you have to take into consideration the norms, like 'ok, there is a certain distance between teacher and students', or generally between people who are different in hierarchy.

In other words, the student emphasised that she would have interpreted the action of her teacher as an invasion of her personal territory. In addition, Ramona described the relationship between teacher and students in Germany as more distant, which also applied to other contexts that involve people with different hierarchical positions. The aspect of hierarchy relates to what Brown and Levinson (*ibid*) identify as the variable of "power relation", which influences the impact that a certain face threat can have on another person. In a similar way, Fraser and Nolan (1981) state that the "situational dimension" and its integral elements such as power and role have a significant influence on each interaction.

Maia gave an interesting insight as to the relationship between teacher and students and to the way that lessons are generally conducted in her home country of Romania:

The relationship between teacher and students in Romania is much more serious. There we are supposed to stay seated and not to move. Everything is very strict, the teacher in front, no direct contact. No funny situations, no jokes, that's normal there. If you make too many jokes as a teacher, it's even a bit rude. Of course, it all depends on the teacher, but most don't allow it. You have to be very serious.

We can resume that the Brazilian teacher himself generally considers touching others as invasive, stating that it had not been his intention to establish this kind of contact with the

student in the referenced situation. His action was evaluated as non-invasive only by those students who had already experienced the apparently more intense physical contact in South American countries themselves, being aware of the local customs with regards to this aspect of human interaction.

Furthermore, the feedback also indicates that the relationship between teacher and students in Germany can obviously be characterised as more distant. Moreover, the analysis suggested that the personal territory that people claim for themselves is apparently more pronounced in German culture. Consequently, its non-observance is considered more serious than it might be the case in cultures that attach less importance to this aspect.

#### **4.2.1.3c Irony as a face-threatening act**

In one of the following classes, Stefan worked with Hanna, Selma, Teresa, Michael, Ramona and Sophie on an article about the social problems and the discrimination that black people and those of mixed heritage face in Brazil. The referenced text included many figures and statistics that substantiated the subjects covered. The main focus of the lesson was placed on grammatical aspects of Brazilian Portuguese such as the subordinating conjunctions and (in)direct speech, amongst others.

Stefan had been giving extensive explanations with regards to different grammatical questions for around 15 minutes, thereby referring to words and expressions from the text and also using his own examples. At the beginning of the following interaction, the teacher was sitting at his desk and continuing to provide explanations, speaking in a loud voice and gesticulating vividly with his hands.

1	<b>Stefan</b>	/.../ (acc.) <u>When I have a <i>verbum dicendi</i></u> (.) have you already heard of that↓
2		((looking at the students)) (..) <i>verbum DICENDI</i> ↓
3	<b>Students</b>	((looking down on their texts and/or silently shaking their heads))
4	<b>Stefan</b>	These are verbs/ I will bring this in a more systematic way for you (acc.) <u>I hope we still</u>
5		<u>have time for that</u> (.) the <i>verbum dicendi</i> is a verb that expresses what we say (.) to affirm
6		(.) to speak (.) right↑ (..) these are verbs that are used/ (acc.) <u>when we see the direct and</u>
7		<u>indirect speech we will</u> ((looking around)) ((+)) right↑
8	<b>Students</b>	((questioning glances, looking either at Stefan or down at their texts))
9	<b>Stefan</b>	((speaking up and gesticulating even more now)) So note I am going from the text to the
10		sentence (.) (acc.) <u>how did I go from the text to the sentence</u> ↓
11		(..) I took (.) the elements
12		that build the contradiction and we went to the form ((turning around and pointing to the blackboard)) right↑ (.) APART FROM (...) right↑ we have done the tests (standing up,
13		pointing to and walking towards the blackboard)) with the expressions (acc.) <u>with the</u>
14		<u>other expressions</u> to construct also a contraposition (..) right↑ ((knocking loudly on the blackboard)) a:nd FINALLY we dealt with the conformities
15		((knocking three times
16		on the blackboard, walking back towards the students)) ACCORDING TO the data
17		(.) IN ACCORDANCE WITH the data (.) AS INDICATED by the data ((gesticulating
18		vividly)) (..) so we saw THREE more or less THREE FORMS of eh:: to work with the
19		text ((looking at the students)) (...)
20	<b>Students</b>	[((puzzled looks, looking down on their texts))
21	<b>Stefan</b>	Do you want to run away screaming↓ is that what your silence means ((smiling)) do you
22		want to hit me too↑ WHAT IS THIS CRAZY GUY TALKING ABOUT ((smiling))
23	<b>Students</b>	((smiling))
24	<b>Stefan</b>	((sitting down on his desk))
25		((scene continues))

At the beginning of the interaction, the teacher asked the students if they knew the meaning of the term *verbum dicendi* (turns 1/2). Since some of them silently signalled that they did not know the referenced expression (turn 3), Stefan gave a short explanation and told the students that he would provide further information when dealing with direct and indirect speech (turns 4-7). His statement was once again met with silence from the students (turn 8). Next, Stefan provided a further comment, resuming the activities that the class had been engaged in during the lesson and thereby gesticulating vividly, moving around the classroom and varying his speech rate and volume (turns 9-19).

His clarification was then followed by a longer moment of silence which was once again accompanied by the questioning gazes of the students (turn 20). The prolonged silence apparently triggered the subsequent utterances of the teacher, who seemingly tried to figure out the reason for the passivity of the students (*is that what your silence means*, turn 21). The wording of his utterances *do you want to run away screaming, do you want to hit me too*, the exclamation *what is this crazy guy talking about* as well as the repeated smile of the teacher indicate that he did not mean what was said to be taken seriously and was instead being ironic (turns 21/22).

For Brown and Levinson (1987), the use of irony constitutes an indirect, off-record strategy that does not comply with Grice's (2006 [1975]) Maxim of Quality. Thus, being ironic represents a strategy that can threaten the face of another person, according to the referenced authors (*ibid*). The irony used by the teacher in the present case evidently served to create a humorous effect, which is in turn indicated by the reaction of the students who all started to smile (turn 23).

The evaluations of the interactants given during the final interviews revealed some further insights. When asked about his intention behind these utterances (turns 21/22), Stefan stated the following:

It was a joke, but also a strategy to break the silence. Because the teacher sometimes needs to experiment and go beyond the teaching-by-knowledge strategy. Sometimes you have to speak louder, you need to cheer up and get attention. I do this automatically, I mean to draw attention, it's not a direct or foreseen criticism. It may be an indirect criticism, but it is above all a call: 'Look, pay attention!'.

In other words, the teacher claimed that his joke had served in the first place to animate his students and to call their attention. At the same time, it constituted an indirect criticism. In a similar way, all students stated during the final interview that they had interpreted the utterances of the teacher as irony which was supposed to lighten the mood and also to express indirect criticism given their lack of participation. Some of the students mentioned possible reasons for the silence in the classroom. Ramona, for example, once again voiced clear criticism towards her teacher:

I believe that he generally felt a bit helpless, there was a lot of uncertainty on his part. As a teacher, you also learn about education, pedagogy, but he completely lacks that, like 'How can I connect to my students, what does their behavior tell me, how can I try to motivate them in a professional manner?'. Or maybe he is just too proud and convinced that what he's doing is right. Also, we were frustrated that we had received the classroom material only on the same day, so it's quite clear that we didn't understand much, because we had no time to prepare.

Thus, Ramona not only criticised the fact that there was no time to prepare for the lesson, she also put the teacher's professional capacity in regards to the social interaction with the students into question, thereby questioning his willingness to reflect critically on his own teaching. Similar to Ramona, Teresa assigned the responsibility for the lack of participation of the students to Stefan: *well, I'd say it's probably the teacher's fault if we don't speak. I actually talked about that with Iara, I asked her to talk to Stefan, but I don't know if she did. Soon after I quit the course, I was not satisfied at all.*

In sum, we can say that Stefan's use of irony, which was supposed to serve as a humorous element to motivate the students, also aimed to express an indirect criticism, in the way that it served to point to their responsibility to actively participate in the classroom interaction. The students showed awareness of the meaning of the referred statement and the intention behind it. From a linguistic point of view (cf. GRAINGER; MILLS, 2016), thus, the teacher's statement can be characterised as direct, given that its meaning became clear to the interactants.

#### **4.2.1.3d A misinterpretation as a trigger for a face threat**

During the interaction that will be analysed in the following section, Selma, Michael, Teresa, Sophie and Maia were present. Before starting the lesson, Stefan reminded his students of an open task, which was the rewriting of a text about the 2018 Brazilian general election. The referenced homework had previously been handed in by them and returned to the teacher with suggestions for improvement. In addition, Stefan also pointed to the fact that the students were supposed to prepare another text about a topic that the class had been working

on, that is, the Black Awareness Day that is celebrated annually in Brazil.

After having answered some questions from the students about the production of these texts, Stefan mentioned that both works might already be part of the final exam of the semester. This triggered doubts about the actual conduction and the components of the referenced upcoming final evaluation. In the moment of interaction, the teacher was walking around right in front of the students, giving explanations in a loud voice and gesticulating vividly.

1	<b>Stefan</b>	So you will probably give me both texts as an evaluation (.) also this first one AND I will
2		do an oral evaluation (.) a COMPREHENSION (acc.) <u>an evaluation of an ORAL</u>
3		<u>COMPREHENSION</u> (..) on the topic (.) that we:: focussed on
4		during the entire semester (.) right↑ but this will be in February (.) probably
5	<b>Students</b>	((questioning glances, taking notes))
6	<b>Michael</b>	And this is eh: our exam↑
7	<b>Stefan</b>	EXA::CTLY it will be the evaluation (.) of my module
8	<b>Teresa</b>	Is it an oral test↑
9	<b>Stefan</b>	It is (acc.) <u>it is an evaluation of a listening comprehension</u> (.) right↑
10	<b>Teresa</b>	Listening comprehension
11	<b>Stefan</b>	Listening comprehension exa:ctly listening comprehension slash production
12	<b>Teresa</b>	So we will watch a movie and then we have to::
13	<b>Stefan</b>	I would say a video (.) I won't work with movies (.) probably a video
14	<b>Teresa</b>	A video (.) with questions about the video
15	<b>Stefan</b>	EXA::CTLY ((gesticulating vividly with his hands)) questions about the video (.)
16		elaboration rewriting about the video right↑
17	<b>Teresa</b>	So it is with (.) with an elaboration and oral comprehension
18	<b>Stefan</b>	Slash production
19	<b>Teresa</b>	Production

20	<b>Stefan</b>	Exa:ctly (.) so both and (acc.) <u>also an evaluation of oral production</u> (.) so teacher Iara
21		focuses on the grammatical content and writing right↑ and I focus on
22		listening comprehension a:nd oral production (...)
23	<b>Students</b>	glances)) [((questioning
24	<b>Teresa</b>	But the test won't have an oral production part↓
25	<b>Stefan</b>	(..) Oral comprehension and production (acc.) <u>that doesn't mean that you will not</u> (.) that
26		you wi:ll (.) present something here
27	<b>Teresa</b>	Yes
28	<b>Stefan</b>	Right↑ I will work with both things (.) (acc.) <u>I still haven't thought about how I will do it</u>
29		(.) if I do it individually right↑ (.) but maybe some eh:: combination of transcription (.)
30		right↑ between oral comprehension and oral slash writing production (.) (acc.) <u>I won't call it writing production because it actually wouldn't be</u>
31		something that you have to
32		write (acc.) <u>as this will already be evaluated in the text</u> (.) in the:: the:: written text (.) right↑
33		<b>Students</b>
34	<b>Stefan</b>	But (.) based on the oral comprehension you will produce something ((+))
35		(acc.) <u>that's why I said oral comprehension slash production</u>
36		((looking at the students one by one)) GOT IT↑ ((looking at Sophie)) NO↑ ((-))
37	<b>Sophie</b>	((lowering her head, looking down and briefly shrugging her shoulders))
38	<b>Stefan</b>	What does that mean↓ ((imitating Sophie by shrugging his shoulders, looking reproachfully at her))
39		
40	<b>Sophie</b>	((speaking with a very low voice)) I don't know /.../
41	<b>Stefan</b>	[I don't know this code ((-)) ((shrugging his shoulders again)) you didn't understand↑
42		
43	<b>Sophie</b>	((whi.)) <u>I didn't understand</u>
44	<b>Stefan</b>	So you can SAY that you didn't understand right↑ ((turning around and walking towards the blackboard))
45		
46	<b>Sophie</b>	((looking down on the table))
47		((scene continuing))

The major part of the transcription includes the explanations that the teacher provided with regards to the upcoming final exam (turns 1-35). The extensive clarifications of Stefan were accompanied by interposed questions and comments from Michael and Teresa (turns 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 17, 19, 24, 27). The reactions of the students, who either showed the need for further clarifications or silently expressed their incomprehension (turns 5, 23, 33), indicate the confusion that the explanations of the teacher caused.

After giving his final comment about the referenced test (turns 34/35), Stefan looked at his students one-by-one and then asked loudly if all uncertainties had been eliminated (*got it*, turn 36). He suddenly looked straight at Sophie and asked in a loud voice *no*, which was followed by a shake of his head (turn 36). The student merely lowered her head, looked down and briefly shrugged her shoulders (turn 37). This reaction was then answered by Stefan asking *what does that mean*, thereby imitating Sophie's shrug and looking at her reproachfully (turns 38/39).

The rather strong reaction of the teacher can be considered a reprimand. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), expressions of disapproval or reprimands constitute threats to the face of another person, in the way that they disrespect or negatively evaluate the feelings or wants of the other. The student's response, which started with the words *I don't know* that were uttered in a very low voice (turn 40), was interrupted by the teacher with the words *I don't know this code*, Stefan thereby shaking his head and once again shrugging his shoulders (turns 41/42). As we have seen several times in this work, interrupting another person constitutes a violation of turn-taking

and therefore can be considered an impolite act (BROWN; LEVINSON, 1987).

The impact of the face threats that were realised without any mitigating elements became once again evident with the teacher's subsequent question *you didn't understand* was answered by the student with an almost whispering voice (turn 43). This was then followed by another rebuke of Stefan who eventually told Sophie that she could have expressed herself clearly by telling him that she had not understood his explanations (turn 44). The fact that Stefan then turned around and walked away (turns 44/45) without mitigating his utterance or giving his student a chance to explain herself apparently reinforced the face threat and intensified its evidently negative impact on Sophie, who in turn merely looked down on the table (turn 46).

The final interviews with the participants once more unveiled valuable information with regards to the referenced interaction. As to the question of whether he had possibly misinterpreted Sophie's shrug (turn 37), Stefan gave the following comment:

I don't think I misunderstood that. In Brazil, there is the expression *dar de ombros*. There are two possible interpretations: it can mean that you turn around and leave, or it means 'I don't care about that', like a child who doesn't want to hear what his parents are saying. This is actually how I interpreted this situation, as if Sophie didn't care at all about what I had said. That's why my reaction was, let's say, a bit harder.

The teacher evaluated the reaction of Sophie as clearly impolite, explaining that he had perceived it as an ostensible indifference and as a lack of respect. He thereby based his inter-

pretation on the meaning that the referenced non-verbal act has in his home country, that is, Brazil. Stefan's reaction can be categorised as what Bousfield (2008) equates with "on-record impoliteness", which are strategies that aim at attacking the face of another person, the attack thereby being realised in an unambiguous way and without mitigation.

Ramona, who was not present during the respective lesson and therefore saw the interaction for the first time on video during the final interview, provided the following comment:

It's obvious to me that Sophie wanted to say that she hadn't understood his explanations. But is it really necessary to say 'what's that supposed to mean?' and to attack her? One can't assume that Stefan has already grasped all cultural habits, such as the gestures and facial expressions. But he should at least respond a bit more politely and ask like 'what did you want to say, you didn't understand?' instead of reacting in such a provocative way. I think he should ask himself 'maybe I'm the one who can't explain things well?'

Thus, Ramona interpreted the referenced scene as a clear provocation of the teacher against her classmate. She pointed to Stefan's responsibility to reflect on his own teaching practice and to act more carefully, considering the relatively short time he had been living in Germany and the resulting lack of knowledge about the cultural practices in the country. Michael explained how he had perceived this situation and the reason that had finally provoked its unpleasant outcome:

In this moment, his voice had a latently aggressive undertone, it is clear that he lost his temper. I think the general problem is that his explanations are often too complicated, and then he gets louder and faster, we understand less and less, and eventually both sides are frustrated.

Maia, who stated during the final interview that she could still vividly recall the referenced scene, once more offered an interesting insight into the culture of her home country, that is, Romania:

I guess Sophie wanted to express that she hadn't understood. Shrugging one's shoulders in Romanian culture is rude, it means that you don't care about something, so it's definitely negative. You cannot possibly do that to the teacher. Considering Stefan's reaction in this scene, I believe this is interpreted in the same way in Brazil.

Another noteworthy contribution with regards to this interaction was made by Selma: when faced with Stefan's statement about the meaning of shrugging one's shoulders in Brazil, the student stated that she had never experienced a situation involving the referenced non-verbal act and, thus, was not aware of its possible meaning, despite having worked with Brazilian children for a whole year. In comparison, Teresa evaluated the teacher's reaction as inappropriate:

He tried to explain the final exam, although he had not even thought about it yet. I had the impression that he got tired of me and Michael and then suddenly turned towards Sophie. So, I would have been confused in her place, too. Like, I'm watching three other people talking and then suddenly I'm the focal point. The way he got his message across was pretty harsh, it's possible to say that in a different way. It was obvious that she hadn't understood.

To sum up, we can state that the teacher's actions and the face threats they involved can be considered direct when seen from a linguistic perspective, given that their meaning became clear to the interactants (cf. GRAINGER; MILLS, 2016).

It must be mentioned that the preceding act from Sophie (shrugging her shoulders in reaction to Stefan's question) had been interpreted as impolite by the teacher, which is due to the fact that the described non-verbal act – unlike the German context – possesses a negative meaning in Brazil. However, this implies that it needs to be considered an (unintentional) face threat towards the teacher: according to Culpeper (1996), to be disinterested or unconcerned can constitute acts of impoliteness.

Consequently, from a linguistic standpoint (cf. GRAINGER; MILLS, 2016), the referenced act must be classified as direct as far as the other students were concerned, given that its meaning was clear to them, whereas it can only be regarded as indirect for the teacher, due to the fact that he misinterpreted it. This, however, once again illustrates that the same act can be interpreted differently by the participants in an intercultural interaction and, thus, result in a misunderstanding which can provoke a negative effect.

#### **4.2.1.3e Out-of-control emotion as a face-threatening act**

The interaction that will be analysed in the following paragraph occurred during one of the last classes of the semester. Selma, Michael, Ramona, Sophie and Maia were present. One of the topics of the lesson was about the question of how to use university libraries in both Germany and Brazil. In order to introduce the topic, the teacher first showed some short videos on his laptop in which various students explained how to use the library of a particular Brazilian university.

After, Stefan elicited some information from his students about how to access and use the library at the University of Jena. In the further course of the interaction, the teacher

then read a task from a document<sup>85</sup> which was related to the same topic. In the moment of the interaction which will be analysed in the following section, Stefan was sitting on a chair right in front of his students. He had just finished reading out aloud the task and then started to explain it in his own words.

1	<b>Stefan</b>	So you are going to simulate a situation in which you are going to EXPRESS this doubt
2		(..) right↑ which is the interest (.) or a doubt (.) HOW it would be (...) HOW will it be
3		when I use the library in Brazil↓ (..) ok↑ (..) can you do that↓
4	<b>Students</b>	((looking at Stefan))
5	<b>Michael</b>	((+))
6	<b>Stefan</b>	Try to take into account these doubts like (.) if I can use a backpack (.) if I can bring
7		food to the library (..) if I can bring beverages (..) OK↑
8		((looking alternately at the students))
9	<b>Students</b>	[[((Maia starting to take notes, Selma and Michael reading the task again on their mobile
10		phones, Sophie turning towards Ramona and whispering something to her))
11	<b>Stefan</b>	((looking at Sophie and Ramona)) alright↑ do you have any questions↑
12	<b>Sophie</b>	No (.) but eh: will we do the activity orally↑
13	<b>Stefan</b>	Yes exactly you do a script (.) with this simulation and after that we present
14	<b>Sophie</b>	((raising her eyebrows, sighing and looking on the table, then turning towards Ramona
15		and saying something to her in a low voice, at the same time picking up her note pad in

<sup>85</sup> Stefan had sent the same document via email to the students earlier on that day. I translated the complete wording of the task as follows: “After watching and discussing the three videos, imagine the following situation: how will it be when you are in Brazil? How will it be in other libraries? You are interested in doing or will do an exchange or internship at a university or another educational institution in Brazil and have doubts about its use as to the following aspects: ways to search, consultation, lending and returning of books, magazines, journals, media, special archives, the use of backpacks, bags, cases or pens, consumption of food or beverages, safety issues. Express your doubts, uncertainties or hypotheses verbally”.

16		front of her with an audible noise and starting to hectically turn the pages, Ramona then
17		whispering something to her))
18	<b>Michael</b>	((raising his hand)) Eh: one question (.) what does <i>estojos</i> mean
19	<b>Sophie</b>	[[((starting again to talk to Ramona, speaking louder now and
20		gesticulating nervously))
21	<b>Stefan</b>	<i>Estojo</i> ((bending forward and touching Michael's pencil case)) this is an <i>estojo</i> ok↑ (...)
22		Let me just make a comment ok↑ ((looking at the students one after another)) this course
23		is a PRACTICE course (.) you have to practice directed activities (.) this here is a
24		directed activity (..) ok↑ (..) alright↑
25	<b>Students</b>	((starting to take notes)) (.....)
26	<b>Stefan</b>	Just to remind you of something else ((looking at the students one by one)) this is not to
27		my satisfaction or dissatisfaction but it is for your learning progress (.) for your practice
28	<b>Students</b>	[[((Selma, Michael and Maia looking up at the teacher, Ramona and Sophie looking down
29		and continuing to take notes))
30	<b>Stefan</b>	((getting up from his chair, pointing to the blackboard)) try to use these forms
31		((lesson continuing))

After Stefan had summarised the task (turns 1-3), the students were all silently looking at their teacher, whereby only Michael indicated that he had understood the explanation (turns 4/5). This was then followed by Stefan once more providing further information (turns 6-8). Whilst the other students were then taking notes or reading the task again, Sophie whispered something to Ramona (turns 9/10), which the teacher evidently took as a reason to ask both students if they had any further doubts (turn 11). Sophie then asked if the students were supposed to do the activity in verbal form (turn 12), which was confirmed by Stefan telling her that the task was based on a script and would be presented orally by the students (turn 13).

Sophie's subsequent reaction reflects a certain dissatisfaction, which is indicated through her body language and the fact that she picked up her note pad with an audible noise and frantically started turning the pages (turns 14-17). Whilst Michael was then addressing his teacher with a question about an unknown word (turn 18), Sophie started to talk again to Ramona, this time in a raised voice and with vivid gestures (turns 19/20).

After clarifying Michael's doubt (turn 21), which was followed by a short moment of silence, the teacher then commented that the objective of the course was to practice by means of directed activities (turns 22-24). He was thereby looking at his students one by one, making several short pauses and emphasising the word *practice* in order to reinforce his statement. Considering the preceding scene during which Sophie had obviously expressed a certain dissatisfaction, the teacher's utterance can be considered an admonition or reprimand which, as we have seen previously in this work, can cause an effect of impoliteness (BROWN; LEVINSON, 1987).

After another, longer moment of silence during which the students were silently working on the task (turn 25), Stefan once again made it clear to the students that the activities of the course were for their own benefit and not for his satisfaction, thereby once more looking at the students one by one (turns 26/27). However, whereas Selma, Michael and Maia were looking at Stefan in that moment, Sophie and Ramona continued to work on the task without looking up from their desks (turns 28/29).

It must be noted at this point that it was apparently the preceding interaction between Ramona and Sophie and the action of the latter that had triggered Stefan's evident critique:

the fact that the student had given her displeasure free rein (turns 14-17) can apparently be regarded as an out-of-control emotion which constitutes a threat to the face of another person (BROWN; LEVINSON, 1987) or as an act of on-record impoliteness, in the way that the student denied the necessary respect to her teacher (BOUSFIELD, 2008).

Shortly after, Sophie started to speak in a raised voice whilst Stefan was talking with another student (turns 19/20), which can again be considered an act of disrespect towards Stefan. Moreover, the student apparently failed to comply with certain basic conventions that are applied to any conversation (cf. FRASER; NOLAN, 1981), which include not interrupting another person and taking into consideration that harmonious coexistence in the classroom requires respectful behaviour. When asked during the final interview about the reason for his apparently clear message that had followed the described behavior of Sophie, the teacher commented as follows:

Well, my attitude in this moment was direct, because in many years of experience as a teacher I have never had a student who complained about doing things. Sophie complained because I was asking her to do the task, understand? But I think there was a problem of misunderstanding, about how to do the activity. And also because she considers activities to be exams. In my teaching approach, an activity is practice, a task, a routine in the classroom. So I think she thought that this activity would be evaluated like an exam, in the sense that I would give a surprise test. And this created that tension, all the time. No doubt, there was tension. My remark was to show that the tasks that I give are not to my satisfaction, I won't be happy or sad. If you want to do it, do it, if not, leave it.

Stefan's comment reveals that he was indeed unhappy about his student's actions. He claimed that Sophie had not understood his instructions correctly and generally considered tasks surprise tests that were applied arbitrarily by him. Therefore, Stefan found it necessary to express himself in a direct way in order to provide clarification. Ramona revealed the true motive for Sophie's behavior:

We were supposed to get speaking practice in Stefan's course. And yet we always wrote things down. And in that scene, Sophie said to me that she didn't understand why we should write that down again and how this should help us for our final oral exam. She appeared to be annoyed and resigned, she hit on her notepad with her hand. Actually, everyone was thinking the same, but only she showed it, and Stefan felt attacked and thought he had to make his point clear.

Ramona's explanation unveils that, in contrast to Stefan's assumption, it was apparently the fact that the students, as many times before, had to prepare a task in written form. This, however, stood in opposition to the objective of the course, whose main focus was speaking practice.

Selma regarded the teacher's general frustration as the underlying reason for his statement. Moreover, the student expressed her belief that Stefan's criticism was presumably directed towards all students: *I think he said that because we were always silent and disinterested. I think that, for a teacher, it will at some point affect your mind if you always look into the same faces of incomprehension.* In a similar way, Michael claimed that the teacher's criticism had been addressed to all students. However, the student also believed that it was Sophie's provocative behavior that had eventually triggered Stefan's reaction:

I believe that he perceived Sophie's reaction as pejorative, also because she hit on her notebook, that means like 'I don't want, but I'll do it'. It seemed she was annoyed. And his comment meant something like 'you are not here for your pleasure, you are here to learn something'.

Thus, the student evaluated Sophie's actions as disrespectful and at the same time considered it to be the reason for the rather strong reaction of the teacher. In a similar way, Maia assessed her classmate's conduct to be defying:

I think he saw that we did not feel like doing this exercise, and Sophie was a bit expressive, she slammed her notebook on the table. I think she provoked him a bit. That would be unthinkable in Romania. The teacher might not immediately expel you from the classroom, but at least give you a bad grade. I think he just wasn't able to create a good atmosphere in the course, very often we didn't understand him, everyone was frustrated. And he didn't like that energy, so he got a bit angry.

As it becomes evident from the above excerpt, Maia claimed that the overall problem with the classes was related to the difficulties that the students had in understanding the teacher. This had created a negative atmosphere in the classroom, which consequently resulted in the frustration of both the students and the teacher.

Seen from a linguistic, theoretical point of view, we can state that Sophie's actions (turns 14-17, 19/20) can be regarded as direct insofar as all other interactants understood that she had clearly expressed her discontent. The evaluations from her classmates and the teacher differ with regards to the underlying reasons: Stefan believed that it was Sophie's general unwillingness to perform tasks which, combined with a misunderstanding about

how to do the exercise in the referenced situation, eventually made her express her resentment.

In contrast, the student's classmates claimed other reasons: whereas Maia traced her provocative conduct to the fact that the students often had not understood her teacher, which had resulted in a tense atmosphere in the classroom and the frustration of all students, Michael assumed that Sophie had simply not felt like doing the exercise.

Ramona, who was directly involved in the referenced scene, eventually revealed the real cause for Sophie's dissatisfaction, which was the fact that the students, as many times before, had to make written notes, this time to prepare for the oral part of the exercise. In Sophie's opinion, this was pointless given the fact that the course was not only supposed to provide speaking practice, but also to prepare the students for the final oral exam. Thus, it was the non-adherence to these points that had left the student annoyed and resigned, which eventually manifested itself in the referenced situation.

As concerns Stefan's subsequent reaction, it can also be considered direct according to the definition of Grainger and Mills (2016), in the way that its meaning became evident to the students. However, it appears that they saw Stefan's clarification motivated not only by the preceding provocation of Sophie, but also by the frustration that had built up on his part throughout the entire course.

#### **4.2.1.3f Affront as a face-threatening act**

Selma, Michael, Ramona, Sophie and Maia were present during the penultimate class before the final exam of the semester. After Stefan had announced the agenda for the lesson,

the students presented their homework, which was to form sentences using the grammatical form of the future subjunctive tense. Michael was the first to present the examples he had prepared, followed by Ramona who had just read out her first sentence.

After writing this first example from the student on the blackboard, the teacher gave some further comments and explanations. In the moment of the interaction that will be analysed in the following paragraph, Stefan was standing in front of the blackboard, facing the students and prompting Ramona to read out the next sentence of her homework<sup>86</sup>.

1	<b>Stefan</b>	((looking at Ramona)) Next example ((+))
2	<b>Ramona</b>	((reading from her notepad)) Eh “When I go in the library I always take my computer”
3	<b>Stefan</b>	((correcting Ramona’s sentence)) “When I go TO the library I always BRING my computer” (..) right↑ (.) the verb <i>LEVAR</i> ((turning towards the blackboard and writing down the sentence))
4		
5		
6	<b>Ramona</b>	[[((turning towards Sophie and whispering something to her, Sophie then responding and both students continue talking to each other in a low voice))
7		
8	<b>Stefan</b>	((walking towards the students, looking at Ramona, raising his voice)) You only use the verb <i>TRAZER</i> when you ARE in the place (.) so (acc.) <u>to give the idea</u>
9		

<sup>86</sup> In the following excerpt, some words were kept in original Portuguese (*italics*) in order to facilitate a better understanding. Also, it needs to be mentioned that the faulty English translation of the sentence in turn 2 of the transcription merely serves to point to the grammatical mistakes made by Ramona in the original Portuguese. The problem of comprehension on part of the student that is relevant for this interaction is the difference between the Portuguese verbs *trazer* and *levar*: whereas *levar* describes the act of taking something to another place, *trazer* means to bring something to where the speaker of the utterance is. This distinction, however, often causes difficulties for the learners of the language.

10		that it is the <u>library</u> of THIS university ((pointing with both hands to the floor)) that you
11		are going to (.) you have to say (.) right that it is this university they have to bring (.) if not
12	<b>Ramona</b>	((look of incomprehension))
13	<b>Sophie</b>	((Sophie turning towards Ramona and starting to speak in a low voice, gesticulating with both arms forwards and backwards, evidently explaining to her the difference between the Portuguese words <i>levar</i> and <i>trazer</i> ))
14		
15		
16	<b>Stefan</b>	[[((observing the scene, then suddenly looking straight at Ramona and speaking in a loud voice)) (acc.) <u>YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND A:NYTHING OF WHAT I SAY</u>
17		
18		RAMONA (.) NOTHING ((-)) NOTHING NOTHING↑ (.) UNDERSTAND
19	<b>Ramona</b>	((staring at Stefan in disbelief, eyes wide open, motionless))
20	<b>Stefan</b>	((looking at Sophie)) So I: ((tapping on his chest with his right hand)) explain to her (.)
21		Sophie (.) ok↑ ((smiling))
22	<b>Sophie</b>	((+)) ((forced smile))
23	<b>Stefan</b>	((turning around and walking towards the blackboard))
24	<b>Students</b>	[[((Ramona and Sophie staring at each other in disbelief for a moment, eyes wide open, Selma and Michael at the same time looking at Ramona and then quickly looking away when perceiving that Ramona noticed their looks))
25		
26		
27	<b>Stefan</b>	The idea of <i>levar</i> is go to another place
28		((scene continuing))

After having been prompted by Stefan to present her next example (turn 1), Ramona read out the second sentence of her homework which contained two grammatical errors (turn 2). The teacher then corrected the example of the student and thereby emphasised the correct forms in a loud voice (turns 3/4). Whilst he was writing the sentence down on the blackboard, Ramona and Sophie started whispering to each other (turns 6/7). Stefan then provided clarification, thereby getting closer to Ramona, stressing certain words and using a

gesture to emphasise his explanation (turns 8-11). The student's questioning glance (turn 12), however, indicated that she had not understood the teacher's clarification.

In the next moment, Sophie then turned towards Ramona with the obvious attempt to give an explanation to her classmate (turns 13-15), which was observed by the teacher (turn 16). Stefan then suddenly started to speak in a loud voice and in the direction of Ramona, saying *you don't understand anything of what I say Ramona nothing nothing nothing understand* (turns 17/18). This utterance can be interpreted as an impolite act, given the fact that the teacher abruptly interrupted Sophie who was apparently clarifying Ramona's doubt. Also, as we have previously seen in this work, expressions of out-of-control emotions by which someone clearly shows that he does not care about his interlocutor's face may lead the latter to feel embarrassed or ridiculed (BROWN; LEVINSON, 1987, p. 314).

More than that, the mere fact that Stefan asked Ramona if she had not understood anything at all of what he had said, thereby loudly and repeatedly using the word *nothing* in both Portuguese (*nada*) and German (*nichts*) (turns 17/18), creates the impression that he even questioned his student's intellectual capacities. This seems to be related to what Bousfield (2008, p. 95) calls the construction of the face of another person "in a non-harmonious or outright conflictive way", the attack thereby being realised "in an unambiguous way given the context in which it occurs". In the present case, the negative impact it caused seems to be evidenced by the reaction of the student, who was apparently bewildered or even shocked (turn 19).

Right after, Stefan turned towards Sophie with the words *I explain to her Sophie ok*. He thereby emphasised the word

*I*, tapped on his chest with his hand and repeatedly paused in order to reinforce his utterance (turns 20/21). Although followed by a smile which was apparently supposed to mitigate the impact of his statement, it becomes evident that Stefan's utterance served as a critique towards Sophie that aimed to demonstrate that her help was not appreciated. Quite the contrary, the teacher made it very clear that he considered himself the only person responsible to answer Ramona's questions. To treat someone in a condescending manner, for example by emphasising one's relative power, constitutes an act of impoliteness (CULPEPER, 1996).

Whereas Sophie apparently concealed her emotions behind a forced smile (turn 22), her true feelings seemed to become evident in the moment Stefan turned away and walked towards the blackboard: both her and Ramona stared at each other in disbelief and with wide open eyes (turn 24), which shows the negative impact that the teacher's actions had obviously caused on them. In addition, the fact that Selma and Michael, who were both observing the scene, quickly looked away in the moment that Ramona perceived their gazes (turns 24-26), seems to indicate the awareness from the students that the referenced situation was at least unpleasant for her classmate.

However, as to the question of how he would interpret the interaction between Ramona and Sophie that had preceded his rather strong reaction, Stefan gave the following statement:

The teacher has to take certain disciplinary measures. Sophie is not Ramona's interpreter, right? In this situation, I had to intervene directly because *I* am the encourager, *I* am the moderator, *I* am the facilitator of knowledge. (...) Ramona constantly asks Sophie, Sophie answers Ramona. There is a progress in

the classroom which needs to be respected. In a way, their talking disturbs the others, they do not contribute to the discussion. We are here to create knowledge collaboratively. We have to respect each other, there is a limit.

The excerpt shows that Stefan indeed understood his reaction as a necessary disciplinary measure which had served to inhibit the constant talking between Sophie and Ramona that, in his opinion, had permanently disturbed the lessons. In addition, he wanted to send out a clear signal showing that he as the teacher was the only one who was responsible in the classroom to answer the questions of the students. Ramona gave a comprehensive comment when prompted to explain the referenced situation from her point of view:

I think he was annoyed that Sophie explained that to me. And I was confused because it was so sudden, I was still trying to understand what Sophie had told me, and I just felt directly affronted by him. I know that I am not the best student in our group, but I don't have any previous knowledge of Spanish like most of the others (...) with him, I've always had the feeling as if he wanted to tell me right into my face 'you are stupid!' (...) I gave up asking him questions, because I only ever got complicated explanations that I didn't understand. If Stefan spoke German, he could sometimes just say or explain in German. He talks and talks and talks and we don't understand. I have a feeling that Stefan thinks there are Brazilians sitting in front of him, he speaks very fast and simply does his thing (...) we already talked to Iara about it, and we also told her that he is incredibly loud and also unstructured, and he always shows us videos on his laptop instead of eventually getting a cable so he could connect to the big video system we have in our the classroom.

In her feedback, the student expressed her belief that Stefan's reaction was triggered by Sophie trying to help her

with an explanation. Moreover, Ramona also pointed out that she had stopped asking questions to her teacher, given the difficulties she had experienced with his explanations. In the referenced scene, she had evidently been taken by surprise and felt truly offended by Stefan's behavior. Also, she once more expressed her dissatisfaction and criticised different aspects of Stefan's teaching practice. Similar to Ramona, Michael stated that the teacher had not appreciated Sophie's help and therefore reacted in a rather harsh way. In addition, he mentioned the fact that both had whispered and talked in German to each other:

Ramona didn't understand what Stefan had explained, and Sophie tried to help with a German translation. It seems that Stefan didn't like that, and I think he didn't understand what they were whispering in that moment. I guess both were surprised because he raised his voice and became latently aggressive again.

Similar to Michael, Selma expressed her belief that Stefan's reaction had been harsh and exaggerated, considering the fact that Sophie and Ramona had merely wanted to clarify a doubt, thereby speaking in German:

I think that was too harsh, too aggressive. It's possible to say the same with other words. Stefan had already interrupted them during the previous sentence, and then he kind of freaked out. Sometimes you need an explanation in German, it's not always possible to explain things in Portuguese. I think they didn't want to bother him, they just wanted to clarify a doubt. Stefan doesn't speak German, ok, but he should at least give the students the chance to explain things to each other.

Maia also evaluated her teacher's action in the referenced scene as aggressive and too strong. In comparison to her

classmates, she tried to put herself into Stefan's shoes, stating that *the situation is surely difficult for him, because he can't speak German. I think that it must be really frustrating for him that he can only explain in Portuguese, and then the students try to explain things to each other in German.*

To conclude, it is possible to say from a linguistic perspective that Stefan's actions can be assessed as direct (cf. GRAINGER; MILLS, 2016), in the way that their meanings became clear to the students. However, their interpretations with regards to the reason that eventually provoked their teacher's harsh reaction differ from Stefan's justification: whereas the students believed that he simply did not like the fact that Sophie had tried to explain something to Ramona in German, Stefan claimed that he had to interfere in the referenced situation in order to prevent both students from disturbing the lesson.

#### 4.2.1.4 Summarising Group III

To summarise, it can be said that the analysis of the data that were generated in the context of teaching Brazilian Portuguese to Germans at the *Institut für Romanistik* of the *Friedrich-Schiller-Universität* in Jena, Germany, revealed a number of potentially face-threatening acts, of which the majority were performed by the teacher and directed towards one or more students. However, it is remarkable that although the referenced threats were consistently evaluated as either polite or impolite by the interactants, their interpretations as to the possible motivations for committing these acts differed substantially in some cases.

Furthermore, it should be mentioned that, similar to the groups investigated previously, the non-verbal and para-verbal

languages used by the teacher and by the students again played an essential role: they accompanied the alleged verbal face threats and thereby served as either attenuating or enhancing elements on the one hand, whereas they also provided evidence as to how the referenced threats were perceived by the interactants on the other. Moreover, Sophie's shoulder shrug that was misinterpreted by the teacher (scene 4.2.1.3d, "A misinterpretation as a trigger for a face threat") did not accompany a verbal threat and instead constituted a non-verbal face threat on its own.

Whereas the data generated during the first half of the semester bespeak a respectful conduct in the classroom, in which the teacher repeatedly tried to encourage the students to participate in the proposed activities, the interactions that were investigated in the second half of the semester point to a growing frustration from both the teacher and the students and increasingly exhibit signs of evidently true impoliteness, which could be confirmed with the feedback obtained from the interactants.

From a linguistic point of view (cf. GRAINGER; MILLS, 2016), we can state that almost all observed face threats can be characterised as direct, given that they became clear to the interactants. One exception, however, constitutes scene 4.2.1.3d, in which the student's shoulder shrug was evidently misinterpreted by the teacher. This means that the referenced act can be considered indirect as far as Stefan is concerned, given that he apparently did not grasp its correct meaning, whereas it must be characterised as direct for the students, due to the fact that they interpreted it correctly.

After presenting and analysing interactions that were based on the data that were generated with the group of collaborators in the context of teaching Brazilian Portuguese as an additional language to Germans at the *Institut für Romanistik* of the *Friedrich-Schiller-Universität* in Jena, Germany, we will now proceed to the conclusions of the present work.

# FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Based on the objective of this research, which is to analyse the use and the effects of (in)direct (im)politeness strategies in the contexts of teaching German at the *Programa Permanente de Extensão UnB Idiomas* in Brasília, Brazil, and of teaching Brazilian Portuguese at the *Institut für Romanistik* of the *Friedrich-Schiller-Universität* in Jena, Germany, and in accordance with the theoretical and methodological frameworks established in this work, we will now answer the research questions that guided the present study.

## **1. What direct and indirect (im)politeness strategies are used by the interactants in the classroom contexts of teaching German to Brazilians and Brazilian Portuguese to Germans?**

The analysis of the data that were generated with the collaborators of this research revealed a great variety of potential face-threatening acts that are reflected principally in the contributions of Brown and Levinson (1987), Culpeper (1996) and Bousfield (2008).

In the context of teaching German to Brazilians at the *UnB Idiomas* in Brasília, Brazil, the strategies that were detected with the first group of collaborators include acts such as insulting, ridiculing or exposing someone, criticising or belittling the interlocutor and negatively evaluating the face of another person,

accusing someone of something, questioning one's knowledge or intellectual capacities, using inappropriate identity markers, and invading the physical space of the interlocutor. From a linguistic perspective, the face threats in the investigated interactions can be characterised as direct (cf. GRAINGER; MILLS, 2016), as their meanings became clear to the participants. The utterance *you look like a drummer* (scene 4.1.1.3a, p. 120), however, represents an exception, given that it assumed an ambiguous character, therefore it needs to be considered indirect.

The data analysis that was conducted with the second group of collaborators, this time at the *Institut für Romanistik* of the *Friedrich-Schiller Universität* in Jena, Germany, uncovered strategies such as using silence, interrupting another person (violation of turn-taking), criticising, exposing or ridiculing someone, using inappropriate identity markers and insinuating, amongst others. From a linguistic point of view, the referenced threats can be defined as direct given that their meanings became clear to the interactants in the referenced interactions. However, an exception is scene 4.1.2.3a (p. 146), in which the non-verbal act of the teacher (*looking at Lara with big questioning eyes, scratching her head which is inclined slightly to the side*) remained unclear to the student.

Finally, the data that were generated with the last group of collaborators, this time in the German context, once more brought to light a variety of different acts that had the potential to threaten face. Amongst these were the invasion of physical space, the use of strong expressions of emotions and disapproval, the violation of turn-taking, the display of disrespect, the use of irony and the act of treating someone in a condescending manner. Again, the majority of the observed face

threats can be characterised as direct when contemplated from a theoretical, linguistic point of view, given that their meanings became clear to the interactants. However, scene 4.2.1.3d (p. 185), in which Sophie's shoulder shrug was misinterpreted by the teacher, has to be characterised as indirect, as far as Stefan is concerned, given that he did not comprehend its meaning, whereas it needs to be considered direct for the students, due to the fact that they interpreted it correctly.

## **2. What are the effects of the referenced strategies and the reactions of the participants from an intercultural perspective, based on the practices of visioning and reflexivity?**

Although initially being in doubt about the meaning of the utterance *you look like a drummer* voiced by the teacher (scene 4.1.1.3a, p. 120), Roshani evidently interpreted the supposed face threat as a joke, which is indicated by the positive reaction she eventually showed. In contrast, the generated data evidenced that Nick perceived the alleged face threats directed towards him in the scenes 4.1.1.3b (p. 123), 4.1.1.3c (p. 127) and 4.1.1.3e (p. 136) not always as entirely positive, which is principally reflected in the body language that he was showing during the referenced scenes.

In comparison to the aforementioned interactions, the stereotype “the Brazilians are lazy” that the teacher used in scene 4.1.1.3d (p. 132) and which clearly had the potential to threaten the face of all students, was perceived by them as a joke, which is not only evidenced by the positive reactions that

they showed during the described scene, but also by the comments they provided during the focus group interview.

To sum up, the face threats in the referenced interactions were not meant to be serious by the teacher nor interpreted as such by the students for the most part. Instead, the analysis of the referenced acts rather points to what Culpeper (1996) and Kerbrat-Orecchioni (2017) describe as banter or mock politeness which, as we have seen previously, serves the purpose of promoting social intimacy amongst the interactants.

As regards the second group of collaborators in the Brazilian context and the question of how the investigated interactions were perceived and evaluated by the participants, it can be said that Lara interpreted the first situation (4.1.2.3a, p. 146), in which she was exposed to certain potential face threats, as thoroughly positive. However, the student's body language suggests that she was feeling exposed or uncomfortable given the criticism from her teacher.

In a similar way, Otto evaluated his teacher's actions in scene 4.1.2.3b (p. 150) as not negative and rather considered them to be a joke, thereby pointing to the familiar relationship between the students and the teacher and the longer period of time they had known each other. In the same way, he interpreted scene 4.1.2.3c (p. 155) and the supposed face threats towards him as a joke from the teacher. Similar to Lara, it was principally Otto's body language which indicated that he was not always feeling fully comfortable in the referenced situations.

As to the last interaction investigated with this group (4.1.2.3d, p. 159), Andreia explained that she had perceived the comments and the involved face threats of Lara and Mariana as clear criticism. The teacher expressed her opinion that Mari-

ana had overreacted and hurt her feelings. In comparison, she described Lara and the way she had voiced her critique as appropriate and even assumed that her student had intended to defend her.

Similar to the first group of participants, the interactions that were investigated with the second group in the Brazilian context can generally be described as jocular and be attributed to what Culpeper (1996) and Kerbrat-Orecchioni (2017) characterise as banter or mock politeness, with the exception of the last scene (4.1.2.3d, p. 159) which assumes a rather serious character.

Finally, as to the interactions that were investigated with the last group of collaborators, this time in the German context, we will once again look more closely at the individual scenes in order to see how the supposed face threats were interpreted by the participants.

In scene 4.2.1.3a (p. 175), the students rated Stefan's attempt to break the silence in the classroom differently. Whereas the referenced actions of the teacher were interpreted by some of the students as funny or understood as an attempt to motivate them to participate in the classroom activities, they were regarded as inappropriate by others.

In a similar way, the physical contact that Stefan established by touching Selma's hair (scene 4.2.1.3b, p. 179) was not evaluated positively by all students. Those who had already had their own experiences with more intense physical contact with people in South American countries interpreted the referenced action as not negative, while others stated that they would not have felt comfortable being touched by their teacher.

Although the students showed a positive reaction to their teacher's use of irony in scene 4.2.1.3c (p. 182), some of them expressed criticism in the final interviews and thereby deemed Stefan responsible for the constant silence in the classroom. In comparison, scene 4.2.1.3d (p. 185) was obviously based on an intercultural misunderstanding: the teacher misinterpreted Ramona's shoulder shrug, which was the reason why her classmates evaluated his subsequent reaction as inappropriate and exaggerated.

As to the penultimate scene (4.2.1.3e, p. 189), the students interpreted Stefan's statement, in which he had made it clear that the activities applied in the classroom served for their own benefit, as a reprimand and clear criticism. Just like the teacher himself, they considered Ramona's preceding behavior an act of disrespect and a provocation that had eventually triggered the teacher's reaction.

Finally, as concerns the last interaction that was investigated with the group of collaborators in the German context (4.2.1.3f, p. 194), all students described the actions of the teacher as exaggerated and absolutely inappropriate. Ramona, who was directly affected by Stefan's *disciplinary measure* (as described by the teacher himself), left no doubt during the final interview that she had felt shocked and offended.

Compared with the first two groups of collaborators, the interactions that were investigated with the third group exhibit a growing tendency for truly impolite actions that emerged in the course of the semester, which was eventually confirmed by means of the feedback that was obtained from the participants during the final interviews.

In conclusion, it can be said that the notions of “(in)directness” and the use of the terms “direct” and “indirect” in the present research turned out to be a complex issue, for a number of reasons. According to the linguistic, theoretical perspective that we adopted (GRAINGER; MILLS, 2016), the term direct applies if the meaning of a certain (non)verbal act becomes clear to the interactants, whereas an act that remains ambiguous (off record) to the interlocutors has to be considered indirect. However, the analysis has shown that it does not always seem to be possible to characterise with certainty an act as either direct or indirect without taking into account the evaluations of the participants that are involved in the interaction.

Moreover, the meaning of a certain (non)verbal act can become clear to one person, whereas it might remain hidden to another. This implies that, based on the distinction between direct (clear) and indirect (ambiguous) established by the referenced authors (*ibid*), an act might assume a direct *and* indirect character at the same time if the interaction includes more than two participants. It also means that an act *per se* does not possess an intrinsic direct or indirect character, it rather surges from the interaction which involves the mutual contributions of the participants as well as contextual factors.

As to perceived (in)directness, which refers to how the participants experienced and interpreted the investigated interactions, further particularities emerged from the analysis. First, the collaborators used the terms “direct” and “indirect” in their feedback not only to refer to (non)verbal acts, but also to describe and evaluate certain situations, contexts, approaches, behaviors, teaching methodologies or also culturally bound ways of speaking, amongst others.

Furthermore, the analysed data point to a heterogeneous understanding and use of the referenced terms, in the way that they were referred to by the participants to describe particular situations or contexts (amongst other aspects) and used to evaluate them as (in)adequate respectively (im)polite. The evaluations also evidenced that neither directness nor indirectness were exclusively linked to politeness or impoliteness by the participants. Instead, the use of the referenced terms and their positive or negative evaluations rather seem to be connected to particular situations or contexts and the way these were perceived by the interactants. This, in turn, once again disproves the assumption of various authors described in this work who claim that directness is intrinsically linked to impoliteness and indirectness to politeness.

In view of the above observations, it can be concluded that the notions of (in)directness do not constitute a valid framework for the interpretation of (im)politeness in social interaction. The investigation showed that the theoretical, linguistic distinction applied in this work (GRAINGER; MILLS, 2016) can be useful to determine if the meaning of a certain act became clear (direct) or remained unclear (ambiguous) to the interactants. However, the findings of this work point to a heterogeneous understanding and inconsistent use of the referenced terms by the participants, which means that they do not offer a solid basis for the interpretation of interaction.

Furthermore, the data analysis has pointed to a number of cultural differences that emerged during the investigation. One refers to the observation that the aspect of territory, which is related to the negative face of a person (BROWN; LEVINSON, 1987), is obviously more pronounced in German

culture when compared to its Brazilian counterpart. Moreover, according to data that were generated, social interactions in Germany exhibit less physical contact between people, which stands in contrast to Brazil, where more intense body contact constitutes a characteristic of everyday life.

As concerns possible differences in language use between both cultures, most participants stated that Brazilians tend to use more non-verbal language such as gestures or facial expressions, amongst others, which is different from Germans, who principally interact through verbal language. In addition, various students commented that Germans are generally more objective and get straight to the point, whereas Brazilians rather circumvent and/or prefer to address certain topics or situations more carefully.

The findings of this investigation are relevant for the teaching and learning of German and Brazilian Portuguese as additional languages. For example, familiarising students with typical everyday interactions – which involve aspects such as the more or less pronounced physical contact between people – can enable them to acquire socially adequate actions. Moreover, actively addressing cultural peculiarities such as the differences in the use of non-verbal language, for example, will help to prepare the learners of additional languages to better deal with possibly occurring unpleasant situations or misunderstandings in future intercultural interactions and consequently allow for more harmonious communication.

In addition, the cultural differences that were revealed in this research are of great importance for the (continuous) training of teachers of German and Brazilian Portuguese as well as of all other languages. By constantly reflecting on their

own teaching practices and taking into account the findings of existing research language teachers can continuously enhance their skills, which will eventually contribute to the improvement of additional language teaching and learning.

At this point, I also would like to outline suggestions for possible further studies that started to emerge during the present research and that can enhance the development of the research field of (im)politeness:

- 1) The investigation of paraverbal and non-verbal language in intercultural contexts of additional language teaching;
- 2) The incorporation of the subject of (im)politeness in existing programs of (continuous) teacher training;
- 3) The investigation of (im)politeness in educational contexts that involve children *vs* adults;

th (im)po-

Finally, I would like to express my hope that the findings of this work can contribute to reducing negative effects such as impoliteness or misunderstandings that emerge from intercultural communication and, thus, help to facilitate more harmonious interactions in intercultural contexts of additional language learning as well as outside the classroom. Moreover, I hope that this work will encourage the interest of other researchers in the subject of (im)politeness and motivate them to develop their own projects and, thus, stimulate the debate and the further development of this area.

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# Appendix

## Appendix A

### Questionnaire for study participants

---

Name of city/date

Dear participant,

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect some general information regarding your previous educational path/professional career.

This information will complement the data that will be obtained during the research process and is relevant for the subsequent data evaluation.

Your data and identity will be kept strictly confidential.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Best regards,

Bernd Renner, researcher  
(Doctoral candidate of the Universidade de Brasília - Brazil)

## Personal Information

First name: \_\_\_\_\_

Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_

## Education and Studies

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## Professional Training/Experience

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## Remarks (optional)

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## APPENDIX B

**SCRIPT – semi-structured interview –**  
student name: \_\_\_\_\_

**1) What name would you like to choose to be cited in this research?**

---

**2) How long have you been studying German and what motivated you to enroll in a German/Portuguese course as an additional language in this institution?**

---

**3) Do you speak other languages?**

---

**4) Do you interact with German/Portuguese speakers outside the classroom?**

---

**5) How would you evaluate your learning progress in this course? What grade would you give from zero to ten?**

---

6) How would you evaluate the classes, how does the teacher conduct the lessons? Is he/she clear in what he/she says and in the gestures he/she performs?

---

7) Do you think there are any differences in the (non)verbal language use of German and Brazilian Portuguese?

---

8) What (non-)verbal aspects in learning German/Portuguese do you consider most difficult?

---

## APPENDIX C

**SCRIPT – semi-structured interview –**  
teacher name: \_\_\_\_\_

**1) What name would you like to choose to be cited in this research?**

---

**2) How long have you been living in Brazil/Germany?**

---

**3) How long have you been teaching German/ Portuguese as an additional language and what motivated you to work as a German/Portuguese teacher?**

---

**4) Do you work exclusively with the didactic material provided by the institution or do you use other/own teaching materials?**

---

**5) Apart from the predefined content, do you attach importance to other (non)linguistic aspects?**

---

**6) Do you think there are there any differences in the (non)verbal language use of German and Brazilian Portuguese?**

---

**7) What (non-)verbal aspects in teaching German/Portuguese do you consider most difficult?**

---

## APPENDIX D

### Informed Consent Form

You are invited to participate in the research called “(IN)DIRECTNESS AS AN (IM)POLITENESS STRATEGY IN THE CONTACT BETWEEN GERMAN AND BRAZILIAN PORTUGUESE AS ADDITIONAL LANGUAGES” conducted by Bernd Renner, doctoral student of the Universidade de Brasília, Brazil.

The objective of this research is to analyse the use of direct and indirect (im)politeness strategies in the teaching of German and Brazilian Portuguese as additional languages, in real-life situations of interaction. Therefore, I would like to provide you with further information with regards to the referenced research.

You will receive all necessary information before, during and after completion of the study. I hereby assure you that the study will be carried out under strict confidentiality. All data from your participation, such as questionnaires, interviews and audio or video recordings shall remain under the custody of myself as the person in charge of the study.

Your participation in the study is voluntary and non-remunerated. You are free to refuse your participation, to withdraw your consent or to terminate your participation at any time. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (mobile researcher) or (email researcher).

This project was reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee for Research of the Institute of Human Sciences

of the University of Brasília - CEP/IH. The document was issued in two versions (1 copy for the participant, 1 copy for the researcher).

---

Signature of participant

---

Signature of researcher

## APPENDIX E

### Consent to the Recording and Use of Voice and Image

I, \_\_\_\_\_, authorise the use of my image and voice as a participant/interviewee in the research project titled “(IN)DIRECTNESS AS AN (IM)POLITENESS STRATEGY IN THE CONTACT BETWEEN GERMAN AND BRAZILIAN PORTUGUESE AS ADDITIONAL LANGUAGES”, under the responsibility of Bernd Renner, doctorate student of the Post-Graduate Program in Linguistics of the University of Brasília, Brazil.

My image and voice can only be used for analysis by the researcher. I am aware that there will be no disclosure of my image or voice by any means of communication, be it by television, radio or internet, except for the activities explained above that are related to teaching and research. I am also aware that the custody and other security procedures in relation to image and voice are the responsibility of the researcher.

In this way, I declare that I authorise freely and spontaneously the use of my image and voice for research purposes in the terms described above.

This document was issued in two versions (1 copy for the participant, 1 copy for the researcher).

---

Signature of participant

---

Signature of researcher

## APPENDIX F - TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

Occurrence	Signs	Example
Name of participant	<b>bold font</b>	<b>Ute</b>
Reading of a text/exercise title or citing another person; thought	“ ” (quotation marks)	“Write down sayings with regards...”
Rising intonation	↑ (upward arrow)	Really↑
Falling intonation	↓ (down arrow)	Which instruments do you play↓
High-pitched voice	↑↑ (double upward arrow and underlined)	↑↑ <u>working</u>
Filled pause	eh, ah, hm	eh
Short pause	(.)	(.) azul anil (..)
medium pause	(..)	
longer pause	(...)	
Simultaneous speech and/or action	[[ (double square brackets)	((laughing)) [[((all laughing again))
Overlapping speech and/or action	[ (single square bracket)	those exercises [This DISORGANIZED me
Discourse without interruption	=	Cor de anil=ANIL is a colour
Auto-interruption	-	eu ia falar-chutar
Extension of short sound,	:	eh:
medium sound and	::	fo::r
long sound	:::	ah:::
Syllabication	- (dash)	BE-LE-GEN
Doubt of transcriber or discourse is incomprehensible	( ) (brackets)	( )

Emphasis/Volume increase	CAPITAL LETTER	APART FROM
Accelerated phrase/word	(acc.) and underlined	(acc.) <u>I was going to say-guess drums</u>
Whispered phrase/word	(whi.) and underlined	(whi.) <u>ah::: I forgot the word</u>
Partial transcription or elimination of passage	/.../	/.../
Truncation	/	/
Non-verbal communication	(( )) (double brackets)	((smiling))
Nod of the head	((+))	((+))
Shake of the head	((-))	((-))

Source: Gumperz (1982); Marcuschi (2007), with adaptations.

## APPENDIX G

## TRANSCRIPTIONS IN ORIGINAL LANGUAGE

## 4.1.1.3a Ambiguity as a face-threatening act

1	<b>Andreia</b>	welche Instrumente spielst du
2	<b>Roshani</b>	eh ei einige eh Gitarre eh
3	<b>Andreia</b>	Klavier
4	<b>Roshani</b>	Klavier nein
5	<b>Andreia</b>	nein
6	<b>Roshani</b>	Flöte
7	<b>Andreia</b>	Flöte
8	<b>Roshani</b>	Flöte ja und eh
9		ah ich habe es vergessen Schl Schla
10	<b>Andreia</b>	Schlagzeug
11	<b>Roshani</b>	Schlagzeug ja und
12	<b>Andreia</b>	eu ia falar isso você tem cara de baterista
13	<b>Roshani</b>	
14		
15	<b>Students</b>	
16		
17	<b>Roshani</b>	echt warum
18	<b>Andreia</b>	ja ehrlich eu ia falar chutar bateria Schlagzeug
19		
20	<b>Roshani</b>	und auch eh percussão
21	<b>Andreia</b>	percussion interessant sehr interessant
22		

## 4.1.1.3b Reprimand as a face-threatening act

1	<b>Andreia</b>	was bedeutet das Verb belegen
2		
3	<b>Students</b>	
4	<b>Andreia</b>	Platz zwei und drei wurden von soundso belegt belegen
5		
6		
7	<b>Students</b>	
8		
9		
10	<b>Andreia</b>	o que cê imagina Nick
11		
12		
13	<b>Nick</b>	não sei
14		
15		
16	<b>Andreia</b>	então cê tá entendendo nada
17		
18	<b>Nick</b>	não fa falei já acertei um monte
19		
20	<b>Students</b>	
21	<b>Nick</b>	foi meio certo de acertar esse também
22		
23	<b>Andreia</b>	ai meu deus do céu
24	<b>Students</b>	
25		

### 4.1.1.3c Teasing someone as a face-threatening act

1	<b>Andreia</b>	also wir können jetzt zu jedem dieser Punkte etwas sagen ja diskutieren zum
2		Beispiel eh Nick hast du schon
3		ein interessantes Stellenangebot gelesen gelesen oder gesucht
4	<b>Nick</b>	ein Buch
5	<b>Andreia</b>	nein ein Stellenangebot
6	<b>Nick</b>	ein Stellenangebot
7		wa-was ich weiss nicht wa was ist ein Stellenangebot
8	<b>Andreia</b>	
9		und wie und warum hast du nicht gefragt
10	<b>Nick</b>	
11	<b>Students</b>	
12	<b>Andreia</b>	hast du die Übung gemacht
13	<b>Nick</b>	nein
14	<b>Andreia</b>	also ein Stellenangebot ist eine Annonce
15	<b>Nick</b>	hm ja ok
16	<b>Andreia</b>	hast du mal eine gelesen
17	<b>Nick</b>	ja
18	<b>Andreia</b>	und über was handelte dieses Stellenangebot
19	<b>Nick</b>	eh es war über die eh reforma trabalhista
20	<b>Andreia</b>	über die Arbeitsreform ein Stellenangebot zur Arbeitsreform
21	<b>Nick</b>	ja es gibt eh am Ende von von eh Eixão um cartaz enorme
22		
23	<b>Andreia</b>	
24	<b>Students</b>	
25	<b>Nick</b>	tem como que fala
26		esqueci o nome da que fica na que ficam nas pistas
27	<b>Andreia</b>	ein outdoor
28	<b>Nick</b>	ja outdoor outdoor
29	<b>Students</b>	
30	<b>Andreia</b>	zur Arbeitsreform é um anúncio de emprego
31	<b>Nick</b>	não é um anúncio reclamando das reformas trabalhista
32		
33	<b>Andreia</b>	não estamos falando sobre anúncio anúncio de emprego
34	<b>Nick</b>	ah nein nein nein

35	<b>Andreia</b>	eine Stelle ihm gehts gut er hat noch nie ein Stellenangebot gelesen
36		
37	<b>Nick</b>	
38	<b>Andreia</b>	wie alt bist du Nick
39	<b>Nick</b>	vinte e três
40	<b>Andreia</b>	da habe ich schon gearbeitet
41	<b>Nick</b>	nein ich habe schon gesehen i-im Internet aber
42	<b>Andreia</b>	im Internet ok
43	<b>Students</b>	
44		

### 4.1.1.3d The use of stereotypes as a potential face threat

1	<b>Andreia</b>	so (.) notieren Sie Sprüche zum Thema Arbeit und Freizeit in Ihrer Sprache und stellen
2		Sie sie im Kurs vor haben wir welche
3	<b>Joaquim</b>	não me lembro de nenhum no momento se a gente pensar
4		mais eh
5	<b>Roshani</b>	eh
6	<b>Ute</b>	eh o trabalho traz
7	<b>Roshani</b>	o trabalho dignifica o homen
8	<b>Ute</b>	dignifica o homem
9	<b>Joaquim</b>	ah é isso
10	<b>Roshani</b>	ou danifica
11	<b>Andreia</b>	danifica também eh dignifica ou danifica eh wie kann man das auf Deutsch sagen
12		die Arbeit ehrt den Menschen die Arbeit ehrt den Menschen oder schadet ok was noch
13	<b>Students</b>	
14	<b>Ute</b>	ich erinnere mich nicht
15	<b>Andreia</b>	jetzt ist mir etwas eingefallen
16		seht ihr wie viele wie viele Redewendungen um der Arbeit willen
17		es gibt im Deutschen um die Arbeit schmackhaft zu machen und keine in portugiesisch
18		
19	<b>Students</b>	
20	<b>Nick</b>	was willst du damit sagen
21	<b>Andreia</b>	was ich damit sagen will weil die Brasilianer né
22	<b>Ute</b>	die Brasilianer wollen
23		nicht arbeiten
24	<b>Andreia</b>	sie arbeiten auf ihre Weise
25	<b>Students</b>	
26	<b>Ute</b>	die Brasilianer sind faul
27	<b>Andreia</b>	nein aber die Brazilianer arbeiten auf ihre Weise die brauchen keine Sprichwörter über Arbeit
28	<b>All</b>	
29		

### 4.1.1.3e Invasion of physical space as a face-threatening act

1	<b>Andreia</b>	und was würdest du machen Joaquim
2	<b>Joaquim</b>	eh:: ich würde vielleicht einen kleinen Buchladen eröffnen
3	<b>Andreia</b>	du würdest einen Buchladen eröffnen schön ich würde den ganzen
4		Tag im Buchladen sitzen und nur lesen und kein einziges Buch verkaufen
5	<b>Students</b>	
6	<b>Andreia</b>	schön es gibt immer Möglichkeiten und du Herr Nick
7		
8	<b>Nick</b>	ein Verkäufer on Bus
9	<b>Andreia</b>	nein ein Verkäufer du musst etwas für dich denken was auf dich speziell zutrifft
10		
11		
12	<b>Nick</b>	ein Verkäufer on Bus
13	<b>Andreia</b>	on
14	<b>Nick</b>	Bus
15	<b>Andreia</b>	Bus
16	<b>Students</b>	
17	<b>Andreia</b>	ah on the bus ah
18	<b>Nick</b>	an Bus
19	<b>Andreia</b>	im Bus
20	<b>Nick</b>	im Bus
21	<b>Andreia</b>	meu deus do céu você está no avançado dois
22		
23	<b>Nick</b>	
24	<b>Andreia</b>	wo verkaufst du im Bus
25	<b>Nick</b>	im
26	<b>Andreia</b>	im lógico é dativo Nick
27		
28	<b>Nick</b>	
29	<b>Students</b>	
30		

#### 4.1.2.3a Silence as a face-threatening act

1	<b>Lara</b>	außerirdische Leute hatten in die Erde gekommt sie möchten eine Waffe für
2		die Erdlinge geben die Sprache dann kommt eine beliebte Linguistik Louise für die
3		Leute helfen am Ende hat sie viele über diese Leute gelernt und Superkräft gewinnen
4		
5	<b>Andreia</b>	
6		
7	<b>Lara</b>	
8	<b>Andreia</b>	Laura deixe-me ver aqui por favor
9	<b>Lara</b>	
10		
11	<b>Students</b>	
12	<b>Andreia</b>	ein paar außerirdische Leute
13		sind auf die Erde gekommen sie möchten eine Waffe für die Erdlinge geben sie
14		wollten den Menschen auf der Erde eine Waffe geben
15	<b>Lara</b>	ja
16	<b>Andreia</b>	Erdlinge não existe
17	<b>Lara</b>	ah
18	<b>Andreia</b>	né são as pessoas da terra
19	<b>Lara</b>	ok
20	<b>Andreia</b>	não essa palavra não existe eh die Sprache eh dann dafür konnte eine
21		berühmte Linguistikerin
22	<b>Lara</b>	ah Linguistikerin
23	<b>Andreia</b>	Louise né Louise konnte diesen Leuten helfen und am Ende hat sie viel gelernt
24		über diese Leute und Superkräfte gewonnen
25	<b>Lara</b>	ja
26	<b>Andreia</b>	
27		vou corrigir isso aí tá
28	<b>Lara</b>	tá bom
29		

## 4.1.2.3b Embarrassment through repeated face threats

1	<b>Andreia</b>	und welcher Typ bist du Carol
2	<b>Carol</b>	eh der praktische Typ
3	<b>Andreia</b>	der praktische Typ und hast du eine Lernecke hast du eine Lernecke einen Tisch
4		bei dir zu Hause wo du lernst
5	<b>Carol</b>	ja
6	<b>Andreia</b>	niemand setzt sich an den Tisch nur du
7	<b>Carol</b>	ja immer
8	<b>Andreia</b>	immer nur du né keiner darf sich da hinsetzen warum
9		sitzt du an meinem Tisch geh weg
10	<b>Students</b>	
11	<b>Andreia</b>	du hast du eine Lernecke
12	<b>Otto</b>	eh nein
13	<b>Andreia</b>	ich habe es gewusst
14	<b>Students</b>	
15	<b>Otto</b>	
16	<b>Otto</b>	ich lerne auf
17	<b>Andreia</b>	überall und nirgendwo
18	<b>Otto</b>	não nein ich lerne wenn ich lerne ich lerne auf meinem Bett
19	<b>Andreia</b>	auf deinem Bett da kannst du aber nicht schreiben
20	<b>Students</b>	
21	<b>Otto</b>	
22		nicht schreiben
23		ich habe keinen Schreibtisch
24	<b>Andreia</b>	du hast keinen Schreibtisch
25	<b>Otto</b>	nein keinen Schreibtisch
26	<b>Andreia</b>	
27		

### 4.1.2.3c Face threats through expressive acting

1	<b>Andreia</b>	ich habe ein eigenes Zimmer
2		mit vielen Büchern mit hat immer den Dativ immer der Dativ
3		dekliniert auch den Plural né den Plural der Nomen
4	<b>Otto</b>	eh
5		eh wenn se fosse
6	<b>Andreia</b>	auf Deutsch
7	<b>Otto</b>	wenn in Singular eh es wäre
8		Buch oder Bücher
9	<b>Andreia</b>	du hast ein eigenes Zimmer mit einem einzigen Buch
10	<b>Otto</b>	Buch eh kein rn am Ende
11	<b>Andreia</b>	nein das Buch das Buch ok
12	<b>Otto</b>	ja ah ich sehe hier in dictionary
13		
14	<b>All</b>	
15	<b>Andreia</b>	im Wörterbuch Otto Otto wenn du aufstehst
16		am Freitagmorgen steh eine Stunde früher auf und mache ein Mantra
17		ich gehe zur Deutschstunde
18		
19		
20		ich gehe zur Deutschstunde
21		ich gehe zum Deutschunterricht
22	<b>Students</b>	
23	<b>Andreia</b>	mit geschlossenen Augen ich spreche deutsch ich denke in deutsch
24	<b>Otto</b>	ich werde das machen
25	<b>Andreia</b>	avançado dois né
26		
27	<b>Otto</b>	
28		

## 4.1.2.3d Repeatedly reiterated arguments as face threats

1	<b>Mariana</b>	está sendo muito rico este momento hoje só queria fazer um breve comentário em relação a
2		prova da semana passada vejo que o curso esta sendo muito prazeroso para todos eu particularmente
3		fiquei muito impactada com o conteudo que você mandou no whatsapp
4		no dia antes da prova quando você falou lições 4 e 5 quando vi sua mensagem
5		por exemplo o Konjuntiv 2 e a Indirekte Rede a gente não viu isso
6		e também o Personalpronomen Deklination
7		tudo isso não foi foco dessas lições eu tive dificuldades
8		eu parei eu parei e quando recebi sua mensagem na quinta
9		os exercícios isso me desorganizou totalmente
10	<b>Andreia</b>	não aque-aqueles exercícios
11	<b>Mariana</b>	isso me desorganizou
12	<b>Andreia</b>	não vou eu vou falar aqueles exercícios que mandei não ia dar todos não ia dar todos
13	<b>Mariana</b>	pois é você só falou imprime e a gente vai corrigir eu não tive tempo de fazer todo isso
14	<b>Andreia</b>	não não
15		quando mandei os exercícios eu tive um problema técnico não pude acessar o meu computador
16		não pude mandar as paginas selecionadas
17		eu peço desculpas também porque nós perdemos muito nesta sexta-feira que não pude vir minha falta
18		e depois a greve só que tive que me manter dentro do calendário também acredito que
19		deveríamos ter tido outra semana antes de fazer a prova
20	<b>Mariana</b>	eu entendo você já deixou claro isso trago isso com muito
21		respeito com o maior cuidado porque eu particularmente
22		fiquei passada dormi tarde tentei estudar à noite me demorou muito
23		fazer esses exercícios eu nao tive toda quinta-feira disponível tive outras questões aí aconteceuu
24		a revisão e laventavelmente ela não pude ser uma revisão foi uma correção de alguns

25		dos exercícios e quando você anunciou que tinha os 10 minutos e eu ainda tinha 3
26		questões para fazer não li simplesmente chutei eu não li não li
27		eu não me senti bem com a minha produção o listening tomou muito tempo acho
28		que fiz uma prova mal feita o que a gente viu em sala não tinha sido cobrado o vocabulário
29		que a gente teve foi tão rico fiquei com uma sensação e aí
30		

1	<b>Lara</b>	eh em relação as aulas eu acho fantástico acho muito legal a dinâmica que a gente está tendo
2		e o vocabulário só que quando vi o
3		Konjunktiv 2 esse pdf que você mandou eu fiquei aí meu deus
4	<b>Andreia</b>	eu lamento eu lamento realmente porque eu não pude especificar melhor
5	<b>Lara</b>	isso então estava lendo a gramática não estava entendendo nada tinha
6		5 tipos diferentes de Konjunktiv 2 aí eu pedi ajuda da Mariana ela me apontou
7		para a lição 8 que estava bem difícil então eu tive de ficar bem autodidata entender
8		e ver na internet e ver como funcionava e o Indirekte Rede eu fui acho que eu fui
9		aprendendo no mesmo dia por que tipo como é que eu junto aí meu
10		deus e a prova acho que a prova foi muito boa só que muito extensa eu acho e se a gente vesse
11		so essa parte de gramática se parasse um pouco so um pouco e fosse um pouquinho sistemático
12		só nessa parte da gramática foi assim assim assim
13		teria sido mais fácil então é só isso levei um susto em relação a parte gramatical
14		só um pouco mais sistemático
15	<b>Andreia</b>	certo entendi então eu vou primeiro reler a prova novamente e semana que vem eu vou dizer as notas
16		

## 4.2.1.3a Breaking the silence as a face-threatening act

1	<b>Stefan</b>	alguma dúvida sobre esse vocabulário aqui ele diz taí
2		não é tal é taí lembrem-se que eu disse
3		taí eu fiz tudo pra você
4		gostar de mim
5	<b>Selma</b>	
6	<b>Students</b>	
7	<b>Stefan</b>	é o nome da música para você gostar de mim
8		
9	<b>Students</b>	
10	<b>Stefan</b>	né já viram essa expressão pra
11		sim
12	<b>Students</b>	
13	<b>Stefan</b>	é uma abreviação de para né
14		para você gostar de mim esse para é finalidade tudo bem
15	<b>Students</b>	
16	<b>Stefan</b>	pra você gostar de mim a música também se chama taí
17		taí é uma contração de estar aí tudo bem
18	<b>Students</b>	
19	<b>Stefan</b>	pelo amor de deus
20		façam expressões sim não não
21		entendi
22	<b>Students</b>	
23	<b>Stefan</b>	falam isso por favor o próximo que ler
24		

#### 4.2.1.3b Invasion of physical space as a face-threatening act

1	<b>Ramona</b>	em uma das estrofes diz tens um sabor bem do Brasil tens a alma cor de anil mulata
2		mulatinha meu amor fui nomeado teu tenente interventor
3	<b>Stefan</b>	obrigado alguma dúvida sobre o vocabulário desse trecho
4		
5	<b>Teresa</b>	o que é cor de anil
6	<b>Stefan</b>	cor de anil anil é uma cor azul anil
7	<b>Students</b>	
8	<b>Teresa</b>	anil
9	<b>Stefan</b>	anil tá por exemplo
10		
11	<b>Teresa</b>	
12	<b>Students</b>	
13	<b>Stefan</b>	posso dizer que o seu cabelo é anil cor de anil
14	<b>Selma</b>	qual tenho muitas cores
15	<b>Stefan</b>	esse aqui
16		é anil você pode dizer o céu é azul cor de anil
17		
18	<b>Teresa</b>	ah azul
19	<b>Stefan</b>	azul o anil é um tipo de azul sim
20	<b>Teresa</b>	ah anil é um tipo de azul
21		

## 4.2.1.3c Irony as a face-threatening act

1	<b>Stefan</b>	quando tenho um verbum dicendi vocês já ouviram falar disso
2		verbum dicendi
3	<b>Students</b>	
4	<b>Stefan</b>	são os verbos eu vou trazer isso mais sistemadamente para vocês espero que ainda
5		tem tempo o verbum dicendi é um verbo que expressa o dizer afirmar
6		falar tá são os verbos que são usados quando a gente vê o discurso direto e
7		indireto a gente vai tá
8	<b>Students</b>	
9	<b>Stefan</b>	então notem estou indo do texto para a
10		frase como fui do texto para frase eu peguei os elementos
11		que constroem a contradição e fomos para forma
12		tá apesar de tá fizemos os testes
13		com as expressões com as
14		outras expressões para construir também uma contraposição tá
15		e por último fomos para as conformidades
16		segundo os dados
17		de acordo com os dados como apontam os dados
18		então nós vimos três mais ou menos três formas de eh de operar o
19		texto
20	<b>Students</b>	
21	<b>Stefan</b>	querem sair correndo e gritando é isso o que significa o silêncio de vocês
22		querem me bater também o que esse louco está falando aqui
23	<b>Students</b>	
24	<b>Stefan</b>	
25		

## 4.2.1.3d A misinterpretation as a trigger for a face threat

1	<b>Stefan</b>	então provavelmente vocês vão me entregar os dois textos como uma avaliação esse primeiro texto também eu vou
2		fazer uma avaliação oral uma compreensão uma avaliação de uma compreensão
3		oral em cima do tema que a gente enfocou em todo o
4		semestre tá mas isso vai ser em fevereiro provavelmente
5	<b>Students</b>	
6	<b>Michael</b>	é este é eh nossa prova
7	<b>Stefan</b>	isso vai ser a avaliação do meu modulo
8	<b>Teresa</b>	é uma prova oral
9	<b>Stefan</b>	é é uma avaliação de compreensão oral tá
10	<b>Teresa</b>	compreensão oral
11	<b>Stefan</b>	compreensão oral isso compreensão oral barra produção
12	<b>Teresa</b>	então vamos ver um filme e depois temos que
13	<b>Stefan</b>	eu diria um vídeo não vou trabalhar com filmes um vídeo provavelmente
14	<b>Teresa</b>	um vídeo com perguntas sobre o vídeo
15	<b>Stefan</b>	isso perguntas sobre o vídeo
16		elaboração reescrita sobre o vídeo tá
17	<b>Teresa</b>	entao é com com uma elaboração e compreensão oral
18	<b>Stefan</b>	barra produção
19	<b>Teresa</b>	produção
20	<b>Stefan</b>	isso então são os dois mais a avaliação de produção oral aí a professora Lara
21		foca nos conteúdos gramaticais e escrita né e eu foco
22		na compreensão oral e produção oral
23	<b>Students</b>	
24	<b>Teresa</b>	mas a prova não tem uma parte de produção oral
25	<b>Stefan</b>	compreensão e produção oral isso não significa que vocês não vão
26		que voces vão apresentar algo aqui
27	<b>Teresa</b>	sim
28	<b>Stefan</b>	tá vou trabalhar as duas coisas eu ainda não pensei em como vou fazer
29		se vou fazer individualmente tá mas talvez alguma eh mistura de transcrição
30		tá entre a compreensão oral e a produção oral barra escrita eu não vou

31		chamar de produção escrita por que não seria de fato algo para vocês
32		escreverem que isso já vai ser avaliado no texto na no texto escrito tá
33	<b>Students</b>	
34	<b>Stefan</b>	mas as a partir da compreensão oral vocês produzirem algo
35		é por isso que eu falei compreensão oral barra produção
36		claro não
37	<b>Sophie</b>	
38	<b>Stefan</b>	o que significa isso
39		
40	<b>Sophie</b>	não sei
41	<b>Stefan</b>	não conheço esse código
42		you não entendeu
43	<b>Sophie</b>	não entendi
44	<b>Stefan</b>	então pode dizer não entendeu né
45		
46	<b>Sophie</b>	
47		

## 4.2.1.3e Out-of-control emotion as a face-threatening act

1	<b>Stefan</b>	então vocês vão simular uma situação em que vocês vão manifestar essa dúvida
2		tá que é o interesse ou uma dúvida como seria como será
3		quando eu for utilizar a biblioteca no Brasil ok conseguem fazer isso
4	<b>Students</b>	
5	<b>Michael</b>	
6	<b>Stefan</b>	procurem levar em conta essas dúvidas do tipo se eu posso usar mochila se eu posso levar
7		alimentos para dentro da biblioteca se eu posso levar bebidas ok
8		
9	<b>Students</b>	
10		
11	<b>Stefan</b>	tudo bem vocês tem alguma dúvida
12	<b>Sophie</b>	não mas eh vamos fazer a atividade oralmente
13	<b>Stefan</b>	sim isso você faz um roteiro com essa simulação e depois a gente apresenta
14	<b>Sophie</b>	
15		
16		
17		
18	<b>Michael</b>	eh uma pergunta o que significa estojos
19	<b>Sophie</b>	
20		
21	<b>Stefan</b>	estojo isso aqui é um estojo ok
22		deixam só fazer uma ressalva tá esse curso
23		é um curso de prática vocês tem que praticar atividades dirigidas essa é uma
24		atividade dirigida ok tudo bem
25	<b>Students</b>	
26	<b>Stefan</b>	só para lembrar uma outra coisa isso não é para
27		meu contento ou descontentamento mas é para a aprendizagem de vocês para prática de vocês
28	<b>Students</b>	

29		
30	<b>Stefan</b>	procurem usar essas formas
31		

## 4.2.1.3f Affront as a face-threatening act

1	<b>Stefan</b>	próximo exemplo
2	<b>Ramona</b>	eh quando eu for na bibliotéca sempre trago meu computador
3	<b>Stefan</b>	quando eu for para a bibliotéca sempre levarei o meu
4		computador tá o verbo levar
5		
6	<b>Ramona</b>	
7		
8	<b>Stefan</b>	
9		you só usa o verbo trazer quando you esta no local então para dar a ideia
10		de que a biblioteca que you tá indo é desta universidade
11		you precisa dizer tá que é esta universidade que eles tem que trazer se não
12	<b>Ramona</b>	
13	<b>Sophie</b>	
14		
15		
16	<b>Stefan</b>	
17		cê entende nada que eu falo
18		Ramona nada nada nichts entende
19	<b>Ramona</b>	
20	<b>Stefan</b>	então eu explico para ela
21		Sophie ok
22	<b>Sophie</b>	
23	<b>Stefan</b>	
24	<b>Students</b>	
25		
26		
27	<b>Stefan</b>	a ideia de levar é ir a algum lugar
28		

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This thesis analyses the use and the effects of (in)direct (im)politeness strategies in the contexts of teaching German and Brazilian Portuguese as additional languages in real-life classroom interaction. The analysis showed that directness and indirectness are only classified as such in the course of interaction and depend on the negotiations between the interactants. Thus, the (im)politeness strategies that are related to (in)directness and their positive or negative evaluations are conditioned to particular interactional contexts and to the way that the interactants interpret a particular situation. It is hoped that the findings of this work can help to facilitate more harmonious interactions in intercultural contact and contribute to the development of further studies in order to promote a better understanding of the phenomenon of (im)politeness.



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