



The use of modality markers and directness levels in cross-cultural and learner-centred perspectives (German Edition)

Tim Wamer

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Studienarbeit aus dem Jahr 2005 im Fachbereich Englisch - Pädagogik, Didaktik, Sprachwissenschaft, Note: 1,0, Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster, 12 Quellen im Literaturverzeichnis, Sprache: Deutsch, Abstract: Linguistic politeness is an important subcategory of pragmatics, as it is essential for the success of communication, which in turn is a central aspect of pragmatics. It is not a fixed and defined category because it differs from one speech community to another and can be realised by different means, such as lexical or phrasal ones. This term paper considers both by analysing the directness and the modality markers used in three situations eliciting complaints. A questionnaire was handed out to members of the following four groups: native speakers of English, young German learners of English, advanced German learners of English, all writing in English, and native speakers of German writing in German.

We analyse the hypothesis of House and Kasper (1981, p. 162) stating that native speakers of German are more direct than native speakers of English. However, it has to be mentioned that their survey was based on spoken language.

A second aspect of our study is the analysis of learner language. We want to examine if L2-learners are more direct and thus less polite than native speakers of the target language. The influence of their competence in the second language and the impact of their mother tongue on second language acquisition are taken into account here.

Wolfson (1989, pp. 129-139) showed that social distance between the interlocutors has influence on politeness regarding invitations and compliments. This term paper examines if this Bulge Theory is also valid for other speech acts such as complaints and requests.

After an overview on linguistic approaches on politeness, the questionnaire and the criteria of our analysis are presented. The next chapter deals with the evaluation and interpretation of the data and focuses on the aspects mentioned above. A short conclusion sums up the main results.

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