

## Im/politeness and interpreting

This chapter explores a facet of pragmatics that has become an increasing focus of research, im/politeness. The umbrella term *im/politeness*, or *(im)politeness*, encompasses all points on a continuum between what might be considered polite or rude (Culpeper et al 2010), and has been used within academia for over 20 years (Culpeper 2015). Im/politeness forms an intrinsic element of the way people develop and maintain relationships with each other, but the way this is evaluated differently in every language makes it a particularly important focus for interpreting scholars and practitioners.

The chapter aims to situate the work around interpretation of im/politeness within the wider landscape of im/politeness literature. However, given the extent of relevant literature, this chapter is necessarily selective. The first section concerns research on im/politeness, starting by defining some of the main concepts involved. The second section reviews the literature on im/politeness in cross-cultural and intercultural contexts. Section three then introduces the literature on im/politeness within translation and interpreting studies (TIS). The remainder of the chapter then highlights some of the recurring and interrelated themes that emerge from these studies, firstly the challenge of interpreting cross-cultural contrasts in in/directness, and secondly the relational and rapport management activity that occurs in interpreted interaction. The chapter therefore offers a critical appraisal of key perspectives and common themes, and signposts readers to further literature.

## 1. Key concepts in im/politeness

This section introduces some of the key theoretical concepts and approaches within im/politeness research, with a particular focus on those that had been incorporated within interpreting studies research on the subject. The section starts by outlining ways in which politeness has been defined, before focusing on the relationship between politeness and face (Goffman 1967), Brown and Levinson's politeness theory (1987), discursive approaches to im/politeness and rapport management theory.

### 1.1 Defining politeness

Research on politeness, as a sub-discipline of pragmatics (Thomas 1995), has been a key focus for pragmatic research since the 1970s. However, defining linguistic politeness is not as straightforward as one might imagine. For example, Lakoff (1975: 64) suggests that it is language "developed by societies in order to reduce friction in personal interaction." Others have a similarly broad perspective on politeness. Sato (2008: 1267) relates it to "social protocol" while Ide (1989:22) describes it as "language to do with smooth communication." In contrast, Watts (2003: 19) sees politeness as marked or non-conventional language, and describes much of what other authors consider to be polite as "politic" or expected behaviour.

Within pragmatics, a further distinction relevant to im/politeness can be made between *pragmalinguistics* and *sociopragmatics* (Thomas 1983, Leech 1983). Pragmalinguistics relates to the linguistic forms available in a language, whereas sociopragmatics refers to the cultural norms relating to when and where particular forms of language are used. This terminology can be helpful when discussing different facets of im/politeness, although the

boundaries between the two concepts are frequently blurred. Many studies of im/politeness frequently have a pragmalinguistic or sociopragmatic focus and, as a result, there is relatively little literature around paralinguistic expression of im/politeness. Notable exceptions include work on prosody in im/politeness by Wichmann (2004), Culpeper (2005, 2012) and Félix-Brasdefer (2009). Additionally, until recently there has been strong focus on what might be considered as politeness. However, starting with Culpeper's impoliteness theory (1996) there is now a developing literature around impoliteness and rudeness (Culpeper et al 2003, Culpeper 2011, Bousfield 2008, Bousfield and Locher 2008, House 2018, Christie 2013).

There are many theoretical approaches within pragmatics and sociolinguistics that supplement those outlined in this chapter but which have relevance for translation and interpreting studies scholars. Lakoff (1975) was one of the earliest researchers to focus on politeness theory, with a particular focus on gender. Leech (1983) based his *politeness principles* on the earlier cooperative principle of Grice (1975). Fraser and Nolan (1981) approach politeness from the *conversational contract* perspective; a dynamic construct in which each participant has expectations of the other/s based on their rights and obligations. Arndt and Janney (1985) focus on *interpersonal supportiveness*, rather than politeness, in their framework for multimodal behaviours in American English, while Arundale (1999, 2010) considers politeness in the form of *face constituting theory*. Theoretical perspectives developed outside of Western culture include the work of Gu (1990) on the Chinese concept of politeness, who relates it to societal norms around morality. Leech's politeness principles (1983) form the basis of Ide's work on the Japanese concept of politeness (1982, 1989). Her theoretical approach incorporates the understanding that politeness is inherent within

Japanese, rather than being a strategic device for achieving personal goals. A detailed account, and critique, of several theoretical approaches to politeness is provided by Eelen (2001).

### *1.2 Politeness and Face*

Many of the studies on linguistic politeness are grounded in Goffman's conceptualisation of *face* as "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact" (Goffman 1967: 5). Goffman's concept highlights the contextual and interactional characteristics of face, the way these behaviours frequently become habitual, and how people may respond to face, either consciously or sub-consciously. It should be recognised that Goffman's work was primarily intended to illuminate intra-cultural communication within North America, and was therefore predicated on Western ideas and behaviours, although he refers to influence from Chinese and American Indian cultures (Bargiela-Chiappini 2003).

However, face is not exclusively a Goffmanian concept (Haugh 2013), nor is it the only motivator for politeness (Mills 2003, Spencer-Oatey 2008, Haugh 2013). Although face and im/politeness are related, and frequently co-exist, they can also occur independently of one another (Haugh 2013). This is more apparent in *first order*, or lay, perceptions and understandings of im/politeness than it is in the literature. Haugh (2013: 20) therefore distinguishes between *face*, which concerns "relationships in interaction", and *im/politeness*, which concerns people's evaluations that compare what is happening with their expectations.

An alternative perspective on face uses the relational dialectic theory (RDT) framework that was devised for the analysis of interpersonal relations (Montgomery and Baxter 1998). Arundale (2006, 2010) and Spencer-Oatey (2013) note how face sensitivities relate to the *connectedness-separateness* dialectic (Montgomery and Baxter 1998), which involves relational tensions in the physical and emotional distance between people. A dialectic, in contrast with a continuum, involves the constant presence and dynamic interplay between the two opposing elements. For example, the connectedness-separateness dialectic can be particularly problematic when managing rapport in workplace interactions (Spencer-Oatey 2013). One advantage of the dialectic approach is that it can helpfully account both for cross-cultural contrasts and the heterogeneity of intra-cultural behaviours (Arundale 2006).

The connection between face and im/politeness is evident within the literature, and it is therefore unsurprising that much im/politeness research stems from Goffman's work.

However, Goffman's notion of face has sometimes been adapted within im/politeness and intercultural studies, resulting in a dilution, and change of focus, of his original concept.

### *1.3 Brown and Levinson's politeness theory*

One of the significant adaptations to Goffman's concept of face occurs in the seminal politeness theory of Brown and Levinson (1978/1987). In their reinterpretation, face concerns public self-image and is framed in relation to the individual, rather than the social construct envisaged by Goffman (Bargiela-Chiappini 2003, Arundale 2006).

Brown and Levinson's politeness theory (1987) has influenced a wealth of subsequent research on politeness, and work on impoliteness, notably Culpeper's *impoliteness theory* (1996), which was developed from the taxonomy of Brown and Levinson's model. Brown

and Levinson's work has also underpinned many of the interpreting studies on the subject (eg Berk-Seligson 1990, Hatim and Mason 1997, Hoza 2007a, Mason and Stewart 2001, Savvalidou 2011). Their model outlines three sociological factors that determine the level of politeness required in social interaction, namely: power, social distance, and imposition. The first of these is social distance, which Brown and Levinson maintain is always symmetric between both parties. Social distance may incorporate several factors such as duration of knowing one another, frequency of contact and like-mindedness. Brown and Levinson maintain that social distance is always symmetric between both parties, but this underlines the model's lack of consideration for individual differences in evaluation and perception of relationships. The second factor is power, with the model indicating that this is where asymmetry is created through relative power differential. The final factor is degree of imposition, or the likely burden of expectation on the recipient. The model suggests that greater use of indirectness occurs when the recipient has greater power, is socially more distant, and when the degree of imposition is higher. These three variables have come under scrutiny within the wider literature (for example Mills 2003, Spencer-Oatey 2008, Economidou-Kogetsidis 2010) with recognition that cultural factors and others such as a sense of urgency, rights, and obligations may all play a part. Mills (2003) also challenges the assumption that individuals' perception of social distance and imposition are shared, arguing that they are negotiated within each interaction.

Brown and Levinson's (1987) work nevertheless provides a useful taxonomy and a very detailed classification of politeness strategies through which *face* can be maintained. These include *positive* strategies that indicate appreciation or admiration, and *negative* forms of politeness that recognise the independence of the other person and are designed to

minimise imposition. However, a significant criticism of Brown and Levinson's framework is its lack of suitability for cross-cultural study, and its strong roots within Western culture. Scollon and Scollon (2001) identify highly contrasting styles of cultural politeness systems depending on whether societal cultures prioritise group solidarity or individual independence. The universality of the Brown and Levinson model is therefore strongly contested (for example Gu 1990, Ide 1982, Mills 2003, Spencer-Oatey 2008, Economidou-Koetsidis 2010). Further concern surrounds the theory's preoccupation with politeness as something that is produced by the speaker, rather than being rooted within interaction and evaluated by others.

#### *1.4 Discursive approaches*

Viewed from a discursive perspective, the term *im/politeness* does more than signify a linguistic continuum. It also embodies how research has shifted from considering politeness in the particular linguistic forms produced by a speaker, as illustrated in the Brown and Levinson model, to an appreciation that im/politeness lies in the way language is perceived and evaluated (Mills 2003, Watts 2003, Locher and Watts 2005). This discursive approach recognises that particular linguistic constructs are not inherently polite or impolite, as the same utterance may be evaluated differently by different people or in different situations (Kasper 1990, Haugh 2013). For example, an apology may not be considered genuine if it is evaluated as lacking sincerity. Im/politeness therefore results from an evaluation of behaviour rather than the behaviour itself. *Interpersonal pragmatics* advances the discursive approach further, by asserting that im/politeness evaluations influence, and are influenced by, participation in interaction (Haugh et al 2013).

Discursive approaches facilitate exploration of contextual influences at both micro and macro levels. From a micro perspective, each utterance within an interaction can be analysed to examine dialogue shifts on the basis of participants' responses. On a macro level, the influence of the environment and the roles of the participants within it are often foregrounded. In some situations, im/politeness follows prescribed expectations and conventions (Kádár and Haugh 2013), which may become formalised or adopted informally within specific communities of practice (Mills 2003). These conventions can be observed within studies of workplace environments, where the use of small talk and humour are recognised as strategies for addressing the face needs of colleagues (Holmes and Stubbe 2003, Spencer-Oatey 2013, Mullany 2004, 2006, House 2010), with other studies acknowledging how rudeness and impoliteness can be used with humorous intent (Culpeper et al 2003, Culpeper 2011, Bousfield 2008, Bousfield and Locher 2008, House 2010, Christie 2013).

### *1.5 Rapport Management*

One of the developments within the discursive approach has been that of Rapport Management Theory (Spencer-Oatey 2008), described by Culpeper et al (2010) as the most detailed framework for analysing relationship negotiation. Rapport management is defined as "the management or mismanagement of relations between people" (Spencer-Oatey 2005: 96). The theory includes Goffman's (1967) notion of *face*, as one of three inter-relating bases of evaluations made when managing rapport. The second is interactional goals, which can be task and/or relationship oriented (Spencer-Oatey 2005), with rapport management either a means to an end or the ultimate goal. The third concerns societal

rights and obligations, exemplified in expectations around speaking rights and turn-taking, which can be context specific or relate to speaker role.

The focus within rapport management theory is on the dynamics of interaction and the process of relating. Rapport can be achieved through a variety of interrelating elements, including verbal and non-verbal behaviours, stylistics, non/participation, speech acts, and discourse content and structure (Spencer-Oatey 2005, 2008). Spencer-Oatey (2008) acknowledges the multiple contextual variables that influence interaction, by expanding on the three variables considered by Brown and Levinson (1987). These include the number of participants present, their social interactional roles and the type of activity occurring. Even the straightforward variable of power as conceptualised by Brown and Levinson (1987), becomes a complex concept. Power can be subdivided into the different types that are exercised by people in different roles, and can manifest in an interaction between message content and the rights and obligations relevant to a particular social role. Evaluation of power can be highly culture specific and related to particular relationship pairings, such as service provider/customer. The complexity of social distance is also acknowledged, potentially including frequency of contact and length of acquaintance (Spencer-Oatey 2008).

Prior knowledge and familiarity between interlocutors can enhance some of the key competencies involved in effective rapport management (Spencer-Oatey and Franklin 2009). Contextual awareness, interpersonal attentiveness and social information gathering can all take place prior to an interaction. The remaining competencies of social attuning, regulation of emotion and stylistic flexibility are predominantly developed during

interaction. This notion of previous experience influencing current interaction is similarly reflected in the *latent* and *emergent networks*<sup>1</sup> discussed by Watts (2003).

A further concept that emerges from Spencer-Oatey's work is that of *rappport orientations*. These are attitudes towards interactional involvement, which individuals convey through their behaviour and language use. People can exhibit attitudes that seek to enhance, maintain, neglect or challenge rapport (Spencer-Oatey 2008: 32).

Rapport management theory was designed to account for cultural variation (Spencer-Oatey 2008: 13), making it a useful framework for both cross-cultural and intercultural studies. Although initial uptake of this approach has been slow within the im/politeness literature (Culpeper et al 2010), the framework has since been applied to studies on various languages in relation to written communication (Ho 2010) and face-to-face conversation (Garcia 2010). Culpeper et al (2010) adopted it in their comparison of cross-cultural variation in impoliteness, and it has also been applied to analysis of intercultural interaction (Spencer-Oatey 2002, Spencer-Oatey and Xing 2003). Its suitability for intercultural research is further evidenced within recent interpreting studies that have adopted a rapport management perspective (eg Major 2013, Schofield and Mapson 2014, Mapson 2015b, forthcoming, Radanovic Felberg 2016).

## **2. Cross-cultural and intercultural im/politeness**

Im/politeness research has frequently focused on particular languages, with some studies taking a cross-cultural, comparative, approach and others examining the im/politeness that

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<sup>1</sup> Latent networks are relationships created through previous interactions, while emergent networks represent the ongoing development of relationships within a current interaction.

occurs in intercultural interaction. The section begins with a brief overview of the literature on im/politeness in signed languages before highlighting issues within cross-cultural and intercultural studies that have particular resonance for interpreters and interpreting.

### *2.1 Politeness in signed language*

Although the im/politeness literature has traditionally focussed on spoken languages, research has also addressed signed language. This includes work on several unrelated signed languages, with studies indicating a degree of commonality in the non-manual expression of im/politeness between Brazilian Sign Language (Ferreira Brito 1995), American Sign Language (Hoza 2001, 2007b, Roush 2007), Japanese Sign Language (George 2011), and British Sign Language (Mapson 2013, 2014a). Non-manual markers for im/politeness involve facial expression and movements of the head and upper body, which can convey both positive and negative politeness strategies (Hoza 2007b, 2008). Further description of the paralinguistic expression of politeness indicates that smaller and slower signing is deemed more polite (George 2001, Ferreira Brito 1995), with faster signing and greater space used when expressing impoliteness (Ferreira Brito 1995, Mirus et al 2012).

### *2.2 Cross-cultural contrasts*

Im/politeness research has frequently been conducted from a cross-cultural perspective that examines the contrast in im/politeness between two or more languages or cultures. Following the work of Brown and Levinson (1987) the motivation to understand more about the potential universality of im/politeness led to the development of a theoretical and methodological framework from the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Patterns (CCSARP) research of Blum-Kulka et al (1989). This work involved comparison of requests and apologies across eight languages or language varieties using a taxonomy comprised of

the categorisation of internal and external linguistic modifications. *Internal modification* relates to the main body of the speech act, while *external modifications* either precede or follow it. This framework has been adopted in many subsequent cross-cultural studies, and is a potentially valuable resource for TIS scholars. However, one of the limitations with the methodology is the reliance on written discourse completion tests (DCT), as the analysis of written responses to written prompts may differ from the use of spoken language. Nor are the categorisations developed in the CCSARP unproblematic, with Mapson (2014a) identifying problems with their suitability for capturing the im/politeness function of non-manual features in signed language.

One form of internal modification is the use of politeness markers such as *please* and *thank you*. Cross-cultural research evidences how these pragmalinguistic constructs do not necessarily have equivalencies in other languages and, even when they do, their pragmatic force and positioning in sentence structure may differ. These differences are nicely illustrated in relation to the use of *please* across British English, German, Polish and Russian (Ogiermann 2009), in telephone service encounters by English and Greek speakers (Economidou-Kogetsidis 2005), and between American and NZ varieties of English (Sato 2008).

Studies reveal that formulaic, or routine, expressions for im/politeness are more common in some languages than others, with English being a language rich in these conventionalised phrases (House 1986). Kasper (1990) notes that these routine expressions are language specific; cross-linguistic equivalencies, in form or function, may not exist. For example, Pablos-Ortega (2010) suggests that formulaic politeness markers are expected in

expressions of gratitude in British English, but not by Spanish speakers for whom omission of thanks is the norm in some contexts. In some languages these conventionalised forms can often be observed in the use of small talk. In English, small talk is employed as a positive politeness strategy (Brown and Levinson 1987) that helps oil the wheels of interaction, particularly in workplaces (Coupland 2003, Holmes and Stubbe 2003, Mullany 2004, 2006, House 2010). This politeness strategy is not shared by all languages; in German it is used so infrequently that there is no equivalent term (House 2010).

In British English, routine phrases are used in conventionalised expressions of indirectness (Thomas 1983, Blum-Kulka 1987, Ogiermann 2009). House (1986, 2005), when comparing British English and German, comments that routine phrases for im/politeness often reflect the level of indirectness in English. Indirectness is another frequent focus in cross-cultural research, because it may be used for different purposes (Ruetenik 2013) and be evaluated in contrasting ways (Kasper 1990, Thomas 1995). These evaluations are the focus of a study by Culpeper et al (2010), who adopt a rapport management approach to explore the students' perceptions of impoliteness in England, China, Finland, Germany and Turkey.

Sociopragmatic contrast can be observed in studies that evidence how face is evaluated very differently in collectively-oriented cultures in which *group face* is valued more than individual need (Vilkki 2006). Research on non-Western cultures identifies a prioritisation over belonging, reciprocity and collective identity (for example, Ide 1989, Hill et al 1986, Matsumoto 1989, Gu 1990, Nwoye 1992). These solidarity politeness systems are also more prevalent within signed language communities (Mindess 2006, Hoza 2007b). These contrasts are evidenced in studies of apologies, which illustrate how pragmalinguistic and

sociopragmatic norms combine to dictate when and how to apologise (Scollon and Scollon 2001). For example, in American English it is usual to offer an explanation with an apology, whereas Japanese speakers do not (Tanaka et al 2008).

Cultural contrast can be also observed in what Kasper (1990) describes as politeness used in social indexing, for example in expectations of address based on characteristics such as age, gender and status. The degree to which this is one varies considerably between languages, with Japanese exemplifying a highly-marked language (Matsumoto 1989), although this is not solely motivated by deference (Pizziconi 2011).

However, cross-cultural studies and categorisation can potentially reinforce cultural stereotypes. Such stereotypes are often inaccurate (Tanaka et al 2008), and risk overlooking the subtle differences that may exist between cultures broadly considered to be similar. For example, Aoki (2010) identifies distinct differences between rapport management in Thailand and Japan, although both cultures have been identified as collective (Hofstede 1986). Similarly, Hernandez-Flores (1999) highlights intra-lingual heterogeneity by exploring intra-cultural differences. Eelen (1999) challenges the notion of cultural groups more fundamentally, suggesting that a shared language is not an indicator of shared minds or ideas. He suggests that similarities may be very superficial. Tendencies to stereotype are also evident when discussing the language use of Deaf signed language users. For example, the lack of indirectness associated with Deaf culture in the USA (Mindess 2006) is challenged by research that evidence how Deaf people use both directness and indirectness (Roush 2007, Hoza 2007b, 2008, Mapson 2014a). Roush (2007) and Mapson (2014a) indicate that the stereotype of Deaf people as being direct may partly derive from the multiple

articulators used simultaneously in signed language, which enable indirectness to be produced more succinctly than in spoken language.

### *2.3 Intercultural communication*

While cross-cultural research involves comparative studies, Intercultural research explores what happens when people from different linguistic backgrounds interact with each other. Many of the contrasts highlighted in cross-cultural research can become problematic in intercultural communication.

The norms associated with eye contact and tactile communication by Deaf signed language users (Smith and Sutton-Spence 2005) may contrast sharply with the im/politeness evaluations of non-Deaf interlocutors. This can create problems in intercultural interaction (Grosjean 2014). Studies indicate that im/politeness in signed language may be altered by language contact with spoken language. This can result in lexical signs replacing or displacing non-manual politeness markers, and a change to a more spoken-language influenced syntax (Mapson 2013). Accommodating to perceived expectations of another culture can be problematic. In Venezuela, Deaf people were observed to borrow gestures used by the non-Deaf population in a desire to promote rapport with their non-Deaf interlocutors. However, the gestures were used in contexts deemed inappropriate by the non-Deaf people and the rapport-enhancing intent was subverted (Pietrosemoli 2001). Studies involving Deaf and non-Deaf interactions are not the only ones to explore indigenous intercultural interaction. Other examples include the work of Holmes et al (2012) and their exploration of intercultural workplace interactions involving Pakeha and Maori cultures in New Zealand.

Being polite in any second (L2), or additional language, can be influenced by the process of pragmatic transfer. This can occur at either the pragmalinguistic or sociopragmatic levels (Kasper 1992, Béal 1994), although these two levels may be indistinct (Žegarac and Pennington 2008). Negative pragmatic transfer occurs when people assume their L1 sociopragmatic norms are universal (Thomas 1983, Kasper 1992), thus creating problems when their use of language fails to meet the expectations of their interlocutors.

Pragmatic transfer occurs more frequently in unfamiliar situations (Takahashi 2000), because bilinguals' competence may be context specific (Grosjean 2014). So politeness as *smooth communication* (Ide 1989: 22) can therefore be problematic in intercultural interaction. This is particularly the case when rapport is managed very differently in L1 and L2, for example taking into account the contrasting norms associated with small talk (House 2010), or the considerable adjustments needed in use of indirectness for effective rapport management (Spencer-Oatey and Franklin 2009). The problems created by these differences can be increased when speakers adopt a tacit resistance to the sociopragmatic norms of their L2 (Bardovi-Harlig 2001, Taguchi 2011) or are unaware of pragmatic issues (Blum-Kulka 1997). Roush (2007) and Mapson (2014a) note particular challenges for L2 users of signed language who are likely to lack a detailed understanding of the way those languages convey indirectness.

In addition to the linguistic forms used, the gaps between utterances can also be culturally specific and relevant to im/politeness. A study of the silences in intercultural communication between Australian English and Japanese students in university seminars (Nakane 2006) indicates how Japanese students' use of silence as a face-saving strategy

contrasted with the verbal strategies employed by Australian students, and was perceived negatively by lecturers. Nakane represents a small group of authors whose work spans both the generic im/politeness literature and translation and interpreting studies, which are the focus of the following section.

The proliferation of im/politeness research since the 1970s has shifted from the predominantly face-oriented approach of Brown and Levinson (1978/87) to a range of perspectives adopting a more nuanced appreciation of contextual influences. The literature illustrates significant cross-cultural variation in the way im/politeness is expressed and perceived, and the potential difficulties this can generate within intercultural interaction. Although these issues are highly pertinent to interpreters and translators working at the interface between languages, relatively few studies within TIS have been underpinned by the developments within the theoretical frameworks and perspectives of im/politeness.

### **3. Interpreting im/politeness: an overview**

The translation and interpreting studies literature has frequently touched on issues of im/politeness, with some studies adopting this as their primary focus. This section introduces this literature, the methodologies used and the focus of those studies before subsequent sections consider the interconnecting themes arising from this research.

#### *3.1 Areas of research*

Research on interpreting in the legal domain has dominated (Berk-Seligson 1990, Hale 2004, Mason and Stewart 2001, Angermeyer 2005, Nakane 2008), with less attention given to

interpreting in political contexts (Savvalidou 2011, Mankauskienė 2015, Magnifico and Defrancq 2016), workplaces and employment related scenarios (Hoza 2001, Spencer-Oatey and Xing 2003, Banna 2007, Bristoll 2009, Dickinson 2014), and healthcare contexts (Major 2013, Schofield and Mapson 2014, Albl-Mikasa et al 2015). Other studies have explored interpreters' personal use and understanding of im/politeness (Hoza 1999, 2007a, Hlavac et al 2015, Mapson 2015a, Mapson 2015b).

Within these contexts the studies have examined various im/politeness topics in both signed and spoken language interpreting: illustrating the power and influence interpreters may exert in interpreted interaction (Berk-Seligson 1990, Hale 1999, Mason and Stewart 2001, Angermeyer 2005), the affordance of familiarity with the primary participants (Major 2013, Schofield and Mapson 2014), the interpretation of rudeness (Murphy 2012, Gallez 2015, Manauskiene 2015, Magnifico and Defrancq 2016, Radanovic Felberg 2016), and the value of explicit knowledge about im/politeness to assist conscious consideration of these issues (Hoza 2001, Roush 2007, Nakane 2008, Mapson 2015a, Mapson 2015b, Hlavac et al 2015).

### *3.2 Research methodologies*

These studies on im/politeness have drawn on a number of different methodological approaches incorporating both quantitative and qualitative techniques. The most common is observation and analysis of transcripts or recordings of interpreted interaction. These have focussed on interpreting between spoken languages (Berk-Seligson 1990, Hale 2001, Mason and Stewart 2001, Angermeyer 2005, Nakane 2008, Albl-Mikasa et al 2015, Gallez 2015), between spoken and signed languages (Banna 2007, Savvalidou 2011), and

translation in sub-titling (Hatim and Mason 1997, Yuan 2012). Although studies focus on specific interactions, more recent research has used corpus data (Magnifico and Defrancq 2016). Other methodologies adopted include theoretical discussion based on real-life scenarios (Hoza 1999), ethnographic study (Berk-Seligson 1990, Dickinson 2014), and qualitative interviews (Bristoll 2009, Schofield and Mapson 2014, Mapson 2015a, 2015b, forthcoming).

Other studies have also incorporated multiple methods to investigate interpretation of im/politeness. Schofield and Mapson (2014) used questionnaires as a precursor to qualitative interviews. Banna (2007) used questionnaires as part of a case study approach that included video recording of an interpreted meeting, with analysis that incorporated elements of grounded theory. Hoza (2001, 2007a) combined analysis of interpreted interaction with interviews and discourse completion tests (DCT), creating a video format of the method used widely following the CCSARP work of Blum-Kulka et al (1989). Major's study of healthcare interpreting (2013) used questionnaires, interviews and role-play in addition to recording naturally-occurring GP/patient interactions. In Mapson's study (2015, forthcoming) the interviews were conducted with eight experienced interpreters divided into two groups, one whose first language was English and the other whose first language was BSL. Their discussion around the interpretation of im/politeness was stimulated by viewing some short videos of Deaf people making requests and apologies in BSL to ascertain how these utterances might be interpreted. This methodology generated data relating to the full breadth of contexts in which signed language interpreters typically work. These studies show how adopting multiple ways of interrogating the interpretation of im/politeness within a single study facilitates greater revelation of the interpretation

process and the relational work undertaken by interpreters, and the capture of the multiple perspectives involved.

### *3.1 Theoretical foundations*

Some of these studies are rooted firmly in the im/politeness literature. Earlier studies (Berk-Seligson 1990, Hatim and Mason 1997, Hoza 2001, 2007a, Mason and Stewart 2001, Savvalidou 2011) were influenced by the work of Brown and Levinson (1987). However, reliance on this theoretical framework could be considered problematic, as the Brown and Levinson model has been heavily criticised for its lack of universality (Ide 1989, Gu 1990, Nwoye 1992) and its Anglo-centric perspective (Mills 2012). More recent research has been framed by the discursive and rapport management approaches to im/politeness (Spencer-Oatey and Xing 2003, Major 2013, Schofield and Mapson 2014, Mapson 2015b, forthcoming, Radanovic Felberg 2016), and the literature on impoliteness and rudeness (Gallez 2015, Mankauskienė 2015, Magnifico and Defrancq 2016, Radanovic Felberg 2016). Studies on gender issues (Banna 2007, Mason 2008, Magnifico and Defrancq 2016) make reference to the work of Holmes (1990, 1995) and Mills (2003), and studies on workplace interpreting (Banna 2007, Dickinson 2014) have strong connections with the literature around small talk (Mullany 2004, 2006). The particular issues of honorifics and im/politeness in Japanese (Ide 1982, 1990, Okamoto 2004) are the basis of Nakane's work (2008). However, many other studies are rooted predominantly within the TIS literature, making little reference to the general field of im/politeness, resulting in research that is either under-theorised, or lacking any theoretical perspective on the subject.

#### 4. Interpretation of im/politeness

Interpreters encounter cross-cultural challenges with im/politeness due to potentially contrasting cultural norms (Hale 2007). These contrasts can exist at the fundamental level of cultural identity and the extent to which a culture is predominantly individualistic or collective (Scollon and Scollon 2001). One of the manifestations of these cultural contrasts is the use of in/directness.

Several studies within TIS concern the interpretation of in/directness. The in/directness contrasts between English and German are outlined by House (1998), who emphasises the need for translation of im/politeness to have both cultural and functional equivalence. House's work derives from her involvement in the CCSARP project (Blum-Kulka et al 1989) and she asserts the need for understanding of cultural differences in politeness at the level of specific language pairs. Roush (2007) and Hoza (2007a) discuss similar issues in relation to interpreting between US English and American Sign Language (ASL), and Mapson (2015b) illustrates how interpreters can be challenged by the way indirectness is expressed succinctly through facial expression in British Sign Language, but needs to be reflected in a lengthier lexical form in British English. Various manifestations of in/directness have been explored within TIS, with an emphasis on dialogue interpreting in formal contexts. The remainder of this section describes some of the themes picked up within these studies, including interpreters use of hedges, interpretation of phatic tokens, prosody, the interpretation of face-threatening acts (FTAs) and the use of third person. The final topics within this section explore the influence of interpreter identity on the way im/politeness is interpreted, and the interconnected issue of terms of address.

#### 4.1 Hedges

Hedging, an indirectness strategy described as a negative politeness device for minimising imposition on others (Brown and Levinson 1987), is the focus of Mason and Stewart's (2001) analysis of court and immigration interviews. They note how hedges may need to be modified to convey politeness appropriately into the target language, as failure to do so can markedly impact on the force of an utterance.

The impact of the addition or omission of hedging was one pragmalinguistic focus of Hale's (2004) research on court proceedings whose work underpins Albl-Mikasa et al (2015) study of hedges and phatic tokens in interpreted healthcare interactions. Findings from the latter study illustrate how expressions used deliberately by German-speaking clinicians to develop trust and rapport with patients were omitted in the interpretations of Albanian and Turkish interpreters. The communicative strategies the clinicians were employing to reduce power asymmetry, were therefore being thwarted by the interpreters. This may be because interpreters' home cultures value, or use, these expressions differently. The study highlights how cultural differences can exist between populations that share the same language (Scollon and Scollon 2001), and the potential tensions that may arise when interpreters do not share the same cultural background as either client. Both Hale (2004) and Albl-Mikasa et al (2015) identify the need for interpreters to understand the communicative intent behind use of hedges and phatic tokens within the different contexts in which they work, so that these can be reflected appropriately in interpretation.

In a study less explicitly related to im/politeness, Banna (2007) adopts a mixed-methods approach to examine interpreters' use of hedging in a meeting involving a mixture of Deaf

and hearing participants. Her discussion exemplifies the discursive approach to im/politeness (Locher and Watts 2003) by highlighting the potential discrepancy between interpreters' motivations for using hedges and the perceptions of the primary participants. She questions whether interpreters' hedges are motivated by cultural appropriateness, or their own uncertainty about the accuracy of their interpretation. The study illustrates the connection between hedges and prosody; the way interpreters' use of prosody may contrast with the prosody used by primary participants, resulting in different communicative intent being perceived.

#### *4.2 Prosody*

One means of expressing hedges is through prosody, typically with the use of final rising intonation (Brown and Levinson 1987). However, studies reveal that interpreters may not always recognise the significance of paralinguistic features of discourse. Hale (2004) discusses tone and prosody in relation to court questioning. She notes how interpreters may concentrate predominantly on maintaining propositional content, and overlook or omit other pragmatically significant discourse markers as a result. Her work highlights the discrepancy between interpreters' evaluation of the significance of these paralinguistic features and the impact on witnesses of their communicative style and register becoming invisible through interpretation.

Mapson (2015a, 2015b) suggests that signed language interpreters' recognition of the politeness function of non-manual politeness markers, some of which may be equated with prosodic expression, can be problematic if they have not been explicitly taught to recognise

their importance. This study reveals that interpreters' tacit knowledge may result in them thinking they are strategically adding or softening the source message when these softeners are already present within the source message. Some of these difficulties may stem from the contrasting ways in which prosody is realised in signed and spoken languages (Nicodemus 2009, Roush 2007), but may additionally arise from the way interpreters acquire or learn their working languages (Mapson 2015a). Similarly to Hale (2004), these studies reinforce the need for further training and awareness of these issues amongst interpreters.

#### *4.3 Face Threatening Acts (FTA) and rudeness*

Several studies pick up on the use of in/directness in court interpreting, an environment where particular forms of language and questioning style occur, and where issues of interpreter power become evident (Berk-Seligson 1990, Hale 1999, 2001, 2004, Mason and Stewart 2001, Angermeyer 2005).

The work of Mason and Stewart (2001) compares Spanish/English interpreting at the OJ Simpson trial in the USA with English/Polish immigration interviews, and analyses how FTAs were altered in interpretation. In a study of Spanish/English interpreting in Australia, Hale (2001, 2004) notes that the pragmatic force of questions in the source message is weakened, even when the propositional content is transferred. She identifies interpreters' omission of tag questions and discourse markers such as "well" that are used strategically in this context. Her supposition is that these omissions are caused by the difficulty in finding pragmatic equivalence or because interpreters fail to realise the significance of these

discourse features. A shift in pragmatic force and interactional dynamics is also noted in Mason's (2008) analysis of the addition and omission of politeness markers.

The complex dynamics of court interpreting in Denmark is explored by Jacobsen (2008). This complexity is a common theme in several studies, with authors highlighting how interpreters sometimes act to save their own face and the face of their clients (Monacelli 2009, Mapson 2015b, forthcoming). Power differential can add to the complex dynamics, which may result in a directionality influence on the toning down of FTAs. For example, Gallez (2015) observes how responses from a defendant were down-toned, in contrast to the reflected FTAs of the judiciary.

A similar tendency to down-tone the pragmatic force of FTAs is observed in political contexts. These include the interpretation of televised political speeches from Greek into Greek Sign Language (Savvalidou 2011), and the mitigation of FTAs in a corpus of French to English/Dutch interpreted speeches at the European Parliament (Magnifico and Defrancq 2016). Mankauskienė (2015) also analyses a corpus of EU parliamentary speeches, with a focus on the interpretation of Nigel Farage's speeches into Lithuanian. The study draws directly on the im/politeness literature, providing clear evidence of interpreters down-toning FTAs.

A few studies have looked at the interpretation of impoliteness or rudeness more generally. These include a study of the strategies used to convey profanity in ASL/English interpreting (Murphy 2012), and a study encompassing the breadth of public sector interpreting in Norway (Radanovic Felberg 2016). The latter illustrates the context dependency of

interpretation of im/politeness. Radanovic Felberg describes managing impoliteness as vital for quality interpreting because of the impact interpreters' strategy choices have on the interaction. The identified strategies for interpreting impoliteness, which include reflection, omission and switching to third person or summary interpretations, resonate with similar findings by Murphy (2012) and Mapson (2015b).

#### *4.4 Third person*

Use of third person when interpreting FTAs and impoliteness has been a focus in several studies. BSL/English interpreters working across a range of public and private sector settings describe how using third person enables them to distance themselves from the FTA, and consider it a strategy unlikely to be adopted when clients are perceived as polite (Mapson 2015b, forthcoming).

Cheung's (2012) study of court interpreting in Hong Kong reveals an interesting directionality influence on use of third person, with interpreters using it only when reflecting the English used by the judiciary into Cantonese, rather than vice versa. Interpreters considered that this use gave more pragmatic force to the questions and made witnesses pay more attention. However, a study on asylum-seeking interviews reveals that a tendency for interpreters to switch to reported speech when interpreting FTAs is associated with their alignment with the asylum seeker (Pöllabauer 2004). Pöllabauer observes that this strategy helps ensure that the interpreter's personal rapport with the recipient remains undamaged by the interpreted comment, a disposition reported in other studies (Moody 2007, Nakane 2008, Cheung 2012, Van de Mieroop 2012, Mapson 2015b, forthcoming). Van de Mieroop (2012) notes interpreters' use of third person to distance

themselves from potentially face-threatening language in clinician/patient interactions during Dutch/Russian hospital consultations. However, although interpreters use of third person may be influenced by the desire for self-preservation (Mapson 2015b, forthcoming) another motivation emerges within some studies. Interpreters' use of third person ensures that clients are clear about from whom the remark originates (Angermeyer 2009, Murphy 2012, Mapson 2015b, forthcoming). Mapson indicates that interpreters sometimes use third person deliberately for this purpose, and that the clarity this generates for the clients may help to maintain rapport between them, and with the interpreter (Mapson 2015b, forthcoming).

#### *4.5 The influence of interpreter identity*

Within TIS it has been noted how the identity of an interpreter can impact on interactional dynamics (eg Alexieva 1997, Hoza 2001, Mason and Stewart 2001, Janzen and Shaffer 2008), especially when there is greater status differential or educational achievement between the interpreter and their clients (Alexieva 1997). The influence of interpreter identity is evidenced in several studies, with differences observed in the interpretation of in/directness.

Participants in Mapson's (2015b) study of im/politeness and signed language interpreting, discussed how their personal identity might impact on their interpretation of im/politeness. Class, sexual identity and accent were all noted as potential factors, with differences in the way men and women convey im/politeness emerging as an influence both on what interpreters do, and the way clients perceive their actions, particularly when client and interpreter genders differ. Although gender is just one of a constellation of intersecting

identity characteristics (Mills 2003, 2012) it is particularly pertinent to the interpreting profession which is predominantly female (Pöchhacker 2016, Mapson 2014b).

Some studies of gender in interpreting concern factors other than in/directness, including Nakane's study of the interpretation of Japanese honorifics in Japanese/English police interviews. However, other studies have related gendered influences to in/directness, and the use of hedges and mitigation of FTAs in particular. Banna (2007) observed that interpretation of female Deaf clients introduced a degree of uncertainty that was not reflective of the source message. This contrasted with interpretation of male clients, where interpreters' hedges coincided with strategies to promote agreement.

Other gender contrasts have been observed in courtroom interpreting (Mason 2008), where male interpreters were found to omit more politeness markers when their cognitive capacity was challenged, or when interpreting for male witnesses. Mason surmises that politeness may be a more conscious consideration when male interpreters are interpreting for female witnesses, although her sample size precludes generalisation.

Magnifico and Defrancq's (2016) analysis of corpus data from the European Parliament identified some surprising differences in the mitigation of FTAs by male and female simultaneous interpreters. In line with other studies, all interpreters mitigated FTAs more than the source speaker, but their results showed that where the source speaker produced an unmitigated FTA, male interpreters were more likely to mitigate this in their interpretations than female interpreters. They suggest that the social norms associated

with gendered influence on im/politeness may be altered because interpreting is a professional activity and expectations around this may differ.

#### *5.4 Terms of address*

One way of meeting clients' expectations is through use of appropriate terms of address. These pragmalinguistic features typically occur in opening and closing comments. House (1986) examines the contrasts that occur within the German/English language pair, and Nakane (2008) examines im/politeness around the terms of address used in Japanese/English interpreted police interviews in Australia. Nakane's work highlights the importance of honorifics within Japanese, a pragmalinguistic feature that does not occur in Australian English. She found that interpretation of these features was influenced by the gender of the interpreter, rather than the gender of the speaker, as would be expected. Her study suggests that this may relate to the under-developed professional identity of the female interpreters involved. These studies reinforce the importance of tailoring im/politeness interpreting strategies for specific language pairs, and House (1986) embeds discussion about politeness and translation within her very comprehensive review of the literature of the time.

Berk-Seligson's (1990) influential study on Spanish/English courtroom interpretation takes an experimental approach, informed by genuine court transcripts. Although discussed broadly as politeness, her work has a rather narrow focus on the use of specific terms of address, exploring potential discrepancies in the way interpreters reflect the deference associated with the term 'sir'. The non/rendition of these 'polite' forms of address had a significant impact on jurors' evaluations of witness testimony, with inclusion of polite forms

leading to more positive evaluations of the witness in terms of their competency and trustworthiness. Berk-Seligson's detailed study has been a major influence on later interpreting research in this field. A subsequent study to focus on terms of address in courtroom discourse is Angermeyer's (2005) examination of the use of second person pronouns in Polish. His work is rooted in Goffman's participation framework (1967) and notes that interpreters use T/V as a device to clarify ambiguity about who is addressing whom, but that sometimes the informal term is used unconsciously.

Although the familiar/formal second person pronoun does not exist in signed languages, there is an interesting parallel with the use of person referents and the use of naming strategies. For example, in signed language it is common to point to an individual rather than refer to them by name, which may contrast with a spoken language norm of using the person's name or an alternative form of identification such as 'the witness' in court.

Another example is the interpretation of an ASL sign commonly used to attract the attention of an interlocutor (Hoza 2011). Hoza equates this to the use of the naming strategy in American-English, which may therefore require appropriate adjustments in interpretation.

## **5. Interpreting and rapport**

The concept of rapport management (Spencer-Oatey (2005, 2008) and the relational approaches to im/politeness (Locher and Watts 2005) have been both explicitly and implicitly incorporated within TIS. Where made explicit, these theoretical foundations allow for a more holistic perspective of interpreting and im/politeness. This enables exploration of the rationale behind interpreters' decision-making and enhances understanding of how interpreters' subjective evaluations of the context manifest in their linguistic choices. The

work of Mapson (2015, forthcoming) asserts that liaison interpreting is the epitome of rapport management, and that this is a key remit of interpreters' work. This section begins with a focus on interpreters' impact on the rapport of their clients, and their work to promote relational activity and small talk, before highlighting the value of familiarity in promoting rapport.

### *5.1 Interpreters' impact on rapport*

Some studies focus on problematic issues of rapport in interpreted interaction, and highlight the negative impact that interpreters can have on relational dynamics and rapport.

Monacelli (2009) describes interpreting as inherently face-threatening, and others discuss how interpreters' physical presence and the process of interpreting impact on interactional dynamics (Hoza 2001, Spencer-Oatey and Xing 2003, Mason and Ren 2012). These changes in dynamics have been specifically related to issues of im/politeness and rapport (Hoza 2001, Spencer-Oatey and Xing 2003, Spencer-Oatey and Franklin 2009, Schofield and Mapson 2014). One manifestation of this impact can occur in the more controlled turn-taking likely in interpreted interaction, which may result in a more negative dynamic than would otherwise be the case (Hoza 2001). Controlled turn-taking can occur either when instigated by the interpreter as they coordinate the exchange of information (Hoza 2001), or by a chair of a meeting or another primary participant who takes on the responsibility of ensuring only one person speaks at a time (van Herreweghe 2002). The semi-structured interview approach used by Schofield and Mapson (2014), although untypical of studies in rapport management, facilitated the capture of clinicians' perceptions of working with both signed and spoken language interpreters. Their data reveal how the impact of the interpreter can be even more fundamental, potentially altering the behaviours of the other

interlocutors. Clinicians described how their self-consciousness, particularly when working with an unfamiliar interpreter, might impact on their own professional practice and language use.

### *5.2 Relational dialogue and small talk*

Studies have highlighted the value of relational dialogue and rapport development for interpreted interactions in healthcare (Rudvin and Tomassini 2011, Major 2013), with the need for interpreters to appreciate the value clinicians ascribe to this aspect of the interaction (Schofield and Mapson 2014). There are additional challenges of interpreting in these settings for patients who are unaware of sociopragmatic conventions, and these are discussed in relation to immigrants (Cambridge 1999) and signed language users (Mapson 2015b, forthcoming). Waddell's forthcoming study of nurses working with interpreters in mental health contexts extends the theoretical foundations further by examining rapport through the lens of the relational dialectic framework (personal communication).

Discursive approaches to im/politeness concern themselves with perceptions of the way language is being used, issues that can be related to studies of audience perceptions in TIS. For example, the importance of relational dialogue is exemplified in two studies of film subtitling. Yuan (2012) observes how the omission of relational dialogue, which may involve indirectness, affects viewers' impressions of film characters. Similarly, using Brown and Levinson's taxonomy for politeness, Hatim and Mason (1997) suggest that although these omissions may be necessitated by temporal constraints, they nevertheless impact on audience perceptions. A similar focus on audience perceptions is found in studies of film dubbing (Bucaria and Chiaro 2007), signed language interpretation of televised political

speeches (Savvalidou 2011), and face sensitivities in professional football press conferences (Sandrelli 2015).

Several studies concern difficulties encountered with navigating sociopragmatic contrast when interpreting small talk. Spencer-Oatey and Xing (2003) explore rapport in interpreted interactions between British and Chinese business delegates, while studies of signed language interpreting in the workplace discuss the power that interpreters exercise when small talk and other relational language is not interpreted (Bristoll 2009, Dickinson 2014).

Small talk can be especially problematic for interpreters who lack familiarity with the clients and context (Bristoll 2009, Dickinson 2014, Mapson 2015b), and is an element of discourse interpreters sometimes overlook when prioritising informational content (Dickinson 2014). Similarly, Hoza (2001) indicates a tendency for interpreters to focus predominantly on message content and overlook the affective use of language that plays a crucial role in the dynamics of workplace interactions. His study analyses interpreted requests and rejections in the transcripts of video recorded workplace meetings. He notes how interpretation of non-manual politeness markers in ASL may be omitted, or unrecognised, by interpreters. One reason for this may be the temporal pressure on interpreters, particularly when working simultaneously, leading to a tendency for interpreters to focus on information exchange (Hatim and Mason 1997, Angermeyer 2005, Hale 2007, Dickinson 2014, Albl-Mikasa et al 2015). However, Mapson (2015b) suggests that greater level of discomfort experienced by an interpreter in some working environments may also reduce awareness and focus on affect. Environments such as prison, with which interpreters are usually less familiar, were given as locations where this discomfort was felt.

### 5.3 Familiarity

Research highlights the influence of familiarity, with both place and people, on the development of rapport in interpreted interaction, and the way im/polite language is interpreted. The positive influence of familiarity between interpreter and clients in medical settings is explored in depth by Major (2013) and Schofield and Mapson (2014). These studies illustrate the benefits of continuity of interpreter provision on the rapport and relationship clinicians can develop with their Deaf patients. A common theme within these studies is that the time over which relationships between all parties are developed is intrinsic to the relationships between those individuals. Clinicians perceive this familiarity as adding value to the interaction, reducing tension and anxiety, and facilitating patient compliance with treatment regimens (Schofield and Mapson 2014). Where interpreters work with Deaf clients in their workplaces, familiarity becomes a resource for facilitating the small talk and humour that forms a crucial element of generating and maintaining rapport between staff (Bristoll 2009, Dickinson 2014). Mapson (2015b) suggests that familiarity, with the environment and the clients, is the underpinning influence on the way im/politeness is interpreted in all contexts, as it provides interpreters with information about the environment, clients' communicative styles and aims, which help create an interpretation that will blend with participants' expectations. This affordance of familiarity resonates with the effective interpretation that can be produced when an interpreter shares contextualization (Janzen and Schaffer 2008) with their clients.

## 6. Conclusion

Several recurring themes emerge from the research on interpreting and im/politeness. Firstly, the observation that interpreters frequently tone-down FTAs, with some studies

perceiving this more negatively than others. Secondly, that unfamiliarity and temporal constraints can negatively impact interpreters' capacity to focus on rapport. Thirdly, that enhanced awareness and understanding of im/politeness can benefit the way interpreters reflect this integral element of human communication.

Many of the studies reviewed within this chapter indicate interpreters' need for enhanced awareness and training around im/politeness. These recommendations start with Berk-Seligson's (1990) comments about the importance of court interpreters recognising the power that they can exert when changing register in the target message, and the need for greater understanding of pragmatics to fully appreciate how their linguistic choices impact interaction. Other authors reinforce the importance of including intercultural competence within interpreter training (Hoza 2001, Roush 2007, Nakane 2008, Hlavac et al 2015, Mapson 2015a, 2015b), with a focus on promoting the development of rapport between clients (Major 2013, Mapson 2015b, forthcoming), and reducing the potential impact of the reduced repertoire of im/politeness noted for L2 speakers (Hoza 2007a, Mapson 2015b).

One limitation of many TIS studies on im/politeness is their inward focus on the TIS literature, a tendency noted more generally by Angelelli and Baer (2016). Many make little, or no, reference to the extensive field of linguistic im/politeness, and until recently most studies have limited themselves to Brown and Levinson's rather restrictive theoretical framework with a focus on the pragmalinguistic form of utterances, rather than keeping pace with the development of the discursive approaches. This might be a product of a focus on translation issues rather than a more holistic consideration of interpreted interaction potentially further influenced by the predominant focus on courtroom discourse. The lack

of connection between the TIS literature and the field of im/politeness could be considered mutually detrimental, as both fields have much to benefit from each other. Discursive perspectives on im/politeness have much to offer TIS, as more recent studies illustrate. Not only can this extensive knowledge base be usefully applied to illuminate the dynamics of interpreted interaction, but there is great potential for interpreting studies to contribute to the wider im/politeness field. Interpreted interaction can provide excellent examples of the discursive qualities of im/politeness in action, and the subjectivity that influences individuals' perceptions and evaluations within interaction.

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