INTERCULTURAL PRAGMATICS: AN INVESTIGATION OF EXPRESSING OPINIONS IN IRISH ENGLISH AMONGST IRISH AND POLISH STUDENTS.

by

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Abstract

Research in cross-cultural pragmatics has been limited to a handful of speech acts, and opinions remain rather poorly documented. The aim of this research was to explore the speech act of opinions from the dual perspective of pragmalinguistics-sociopragmatics, focusing additionally on the Irish variety of the English language and the Irish-Polish intercultural context. An empirical study of the expression of opinions among Polish and Irish students was conducted, using a mixed-method approach. The corpus of opinions was gathered through open role-plays among Irish and Polish university students, and it was complemented with focus group interviews which explored issues of sociopragmatic attitudes and awareness in expressing opinions.

The findings suggest that opinions should be treated as a speech act set, quite complex in its execution and an example of a rich environment for investigation of co-occurrence of many speech acts. Consequently, opinions are not achieved by simple ‘I think (that) x...’ sentences, but rather involve a negotiation of meaning represented in the use of concessive (dis)agreements, the most prominent being the use of ‘yes, but’ expressions. Additionally, opinions present not only face-saving strategies, such as those for polite disagreements, but they also promote face-enhancing moves and foster relationship-building communication.

The findings suggest further that in the Irish culture opinions are based on beliefs, while from the Polish participants’ perspective they are also based on facts and expected to be supported in conversation by good arguments. These different perspectives may have repercussions on how both cultures approach exchanges of opinions. While a direct cultural clash between them is not a direct conclusion to be drawn from the data, a possible misinterpretation of each other’s intentions should be pointed out. Consequently, some pedagogical and interculturally-oriented recommendations with reference to opinions are put forward.
Declaration

The substance of this thesis is the original work of the author and due reference and acknowledgement to the work of others has been made where necessary. No part of this thesis has been submitted in candidature for other academic awards.

This thesis uses extracts from the Limerick Corpus of Irish English (LCIE). All of these are marked (©LCIE) and the author acknowledges the permission to use these data and quantitative results draw LCIE in this thesis. The LCIE corpus was developed at the University of Limerick and Mary Immaculate College, Limerick, Ireland with whom sole copyright resides (Farr and O’Keeffe 2004). The conversations in the corpus were recorded in a wide variety of settings in Ireland, then transcribed and stored in computer-readable form. Details of the corpus and its design may be found in Farr, Murphy and O’Keeffe (2002) and at http://www.ul.ie/~lcie/.

Signed: Weronika Zofia Gąsior
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I know this brief thanks will never be enough for what they have sacrificed for me, but an earnest dziękuję is in order for my parents. Also, to my brothers and sisters, thank you for always believing in me... and for that nickname – finally fit for me.

My last words of thanks go to my husband. Gracias cariño. Por todo.

Not forgetting to thank The Lord for all His blessings, I would like to dedicate this work to my late brother Benedykt.
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List of Abbreviations

C1 – First Culture (a person’s first culture)
C2 – Second/Foreign Language Culture
CA – Conversational Analysis
CC – Communicative Competence
CCSARP - Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realisation Patterns
DA – Discourse Analysis
DCT – Discourse Completion Test (or Task)
DIM – Diminutive
FTA – Face Threatening Act
HA – Head Act
IE – Irish (as adjective)
IFID – Illocutionary Force Indicating Device
ILP – Interlanguage Pragmatics
IrE – Irish English
L1 – First Language
L2 – Second Language
LCIE – Limerick Corpus of Irish English
NS – Native Speaker
NNS – Non-native Speaker
NSM – Natural Semantic Metalanguage
P, D, I – Power, Distance, Imposition
PL – Polish (as adjective)
SA- Speech Act
Transcription Conventions

The main principle behind the conventions adapted for this study was easy readability. This is particularly important for in-text quoting of the transcriptions. Therefore, capitalization of the pronoun I and proper names has been used throughout text. Also, punctuation typical to normal texts has been used. The specific characteristics are as follows:

<1> Speaker IDs are arranged according to the badges participants were given during the recording.

[1] Square brackets are used to ensure anonymity when participants call their interlocutors by their real name.

. Period signals falling intonation and suggests finality of a clause.

? Question mark is used with rising intonation.

Oh no! Exclamation mark is used to signal high volume utterances expressing strong feelings.

, Comma is used for very short pauses during a continuing clause, thus making long utterances readable, and corresponds to silent beats in the rhythm.

… An ellipsis is used to indicate short pauses within turns (not longer than 1 second), typical to hesitant speech.

(2.0) Numbers in parentheses indicate timed pauses.

CRAZY Capital letters indicate heavy stress and louder speech used for emphasis.

“Oh” Double quotes mark speech set off by a shift in the speaker’s voice typical to directly quoting or repeating another person’s speech.

// yes // Double slash brackets are used for overlapped speech. It marks the point at which the current utterance overlaps with the one below.

and= Equal signs on successive lines show latching between turns of different speakers.

=then
mo::re The colon signals prolonging of the sound or syllable.

bu- but A single dash indicates a cut-off or hesitation.

@ Laughter is signalled with the at sign, approximating the syllable number. Therefore, ‘ha ha ha’ is transcribed as @@@.

Utterances spoken laughingly are put between <@> </@> tags.

<fast></fast> Angle bracket tags are used to indicate different speaker modes. It is an open category.

<soft></soft> The closing tag uses a slash. It is only used if the part of utterance spoken in a particular mode falls before the end of the speaker’s turn.

{coughs} Non-verbal and contextual information are indicated with braces.

(took it) Uncertain transcriptions are indicated by parentheses.

xxx Unintelligible speech is represented by x’s approximating the number of syllables and placed between <un> </un> tags.
Spelling Conventions:

Irish English spelling conventions are used throughout. Contractions are used as they appear throughout the recordings. Lexicalised phonological reductions are transcribed as pronounced by the participants, for instance:

gonna, wanna, kinda, d’you know, how are ya?, ‘cos, ‘tis, hiya,

Discourse markers:

Yes, yeah – acknowledgement token

Mhm, mm – closed mouth acknowledgement token

Uhu – open mouth acknowledgement token

Hm – wondering

No, nah, uh-uh – Negative minimal feedback

Ehm – hesitation filler

Huh – tag question in doubt or disbelief

Ts, Pf – disregard, dismissal, contempt

Oh – surprise, astonishment, etc. as in “Oh no!” or “Oh, really?”

Ah, eh – can signal a variety of meanings. It is usually used when approximating the phonological sound.

Other particles are represented phonemically.
Foreword

If I had not undertaken studies in linguistics, I probably would have been a cartographer. This may explain the need to venture into the hazy region of an undescibed speech act in order to provide a map for future reference. An exploratory study provides a balance between an excitement which accompanies discovering something new and the frustration of not knowing what one might encounter. The intercultural aspect of this study could be compared to travelling to a different land and drawing a map across national borders. With some general preconceived notions of how the speech act of exchanging opinions is structured, this research journey has allowed me to draw a clearer projection for a map to be built upon. The unknown has revealed that it is not only the general notion of East-West divide between agreement and disagreement or even the North-South difference between a fact and an opinion, but the smaller details, such as hedges or concessive agreement tokens, which make the map complete.
Chapter 1 – Introduction

1.0. Introduction

The aim of this introductory chapter is to outline the motivation for conducting this study and present the background against which the research was carried out. The chapter firstly presents the sociological makeup of Ireland and the position of the Polish in Ireland (Section 1.1). After that, the aims and objectives of the research are stated (1.2) and the consecutive section reinforces the motivation for this study (1.3). Finally, in the last section, the structural outline of the thesis is explained (1.4) in order to guide the reader through the argument.

1.1. Prelude

The social and linguistic landscape of Ireland has changed dramatically in the last two decades. Ireland was a country of emigration for centuries, but that pattern of migration changed quickly, and somehow unexpectedly, in the late 1990s, starting a period of rapid growth in the numbers of refugees and asylum seekers arriving in Ireland. More recently, Ireland saw a boom of inward migration after the 2004 European Union expansion, attracting workers from the new member states as a result of economic prosperity known as the Celtic Tiger. In 2007, Ireland had the fifth highest level of foreign nationals in the EU, with just over ten per cent of non-nationals living in the country at the time (Eurostat 2008). This trend was maintained despite the economic downturn which began in 2008, and currently 12 per cent of immigrants form the population of Ireland (Central Statistics Office 2012a, p. 7). One of the largest immigrant groups that speak a language other than English is the Polish community, accounting for up to 63,000 of the 400,000 non-Irish population reported in the 2006 census (Central Statistics Office 2008). By 2011, the total number of Polish immigrants in Ireland increased to 122,585 (Central Statistics Office 2012a, p. 7). This

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1 The 1846 Famine “triggered a population collapse, mass emigration, massive changes in social mores and several generations of population decline” (Fanning 2007, p. 7).
2 In 2004 ten states gained accession to the European Union; these were: Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, and two Mediterranean states: Malta and Cyprus.
cultural and linguistic contact between Irish and Polish communities also inspired the research described here.

When discussing cultures in contact, one good environment to study are casual conversations. In such situations, people usually tell stories and jokes, gossip or exchange opinions (cf. Eggins and Slade 1997). Interestingly, opinions are also the type of talk in which different linguistic and cultural preferences can be identified, particularly in reference to the Irish and Polish cultures in contact. *Pity him who makes his opinions a certainty* says an old Irish proverb, guiding us in knowing the difference between an opinion and a fact (Special Dictionary 2011). However, no such proverb exists in Polish. What is more, previous research suggests that Polish often overemphasise while speakers of English tend to understate their opinions (Wierzbicka 1985, p. 163). An important question to ask is what happens when the two cultures and languages meet, specifically in reference to the high number of Polish people living in Ireland (but not necessarily living with Irish people, as three out of four households among Poles in Ireland were reported as ‘Polish only’ in the last census) (Central Statistics Office 2012a, p. 17). Furthermore, speakers of Irish English are said to be indirect and avoid disagreement even more than those of other English-speaking nations (Kallen 2005b, p. 53). These differences could result in a sociocultural clash between Polish and Irish speakers exchanging opinions. While in Ireland, indirectness is an omnipresent phenomenon, hesitant opinions and declarations, such as *I think I love you* sound comical in Polish (Kabaret Hrabi 2008). This fear of sounding ridiculous may encourage transfer of ‘Polish forwardness’ into English or reluctance to accommodate indirectness in conversations with English speakers. Comparing how Irish and Polish speakers of English express opinions can shed light indeed on the linguistic and cultural differences between them.

Cross-cultural studies are not a new phenomenon; the tradition of comparing how people ‘do things with words’ in different languages dates back to the seminal Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realisation Patterns (CCSARP henceforth) project (Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper 1989). Around the same time, learning a language had started to be seen not only as a process of acquisition of vocabulary and grammar, but also the sociocultural know-how in order to use that language appropriately in various social contexts (cf. Canale and Swain 1980; Hymes 1972; Savignon 1983). However, research suggests that grammatical skills do not develop on a par with pragmatic skills
(Bardovi-Harlig, Hartford, Mahan-Taylor, Morgan and Reynolds 1991) and non-native speakers (NNSs) often transfer pragmatic conventions from their mother tongue to a second language (L2). While an extended residence in the L2 community has been considered one of the best ways to develop pragmatic competence (Celce-Murcia 2007), it does not guarantee success (Bardovi-Harlig et al. 1991). In order to aid the process of acquisition of appropriate pragmatic skills, more studies need to be done to highlight the potential areas for improvements and propose approaches to overcoming obstacles in pragmatics. One of the most influential contributions to building bridges between L1 and L2 pragmatics has been the work of studying speech acts cross-culturally. However, apart from presuming that speech act behaviour differs across languages and cultures, it is imperative to study cultures in contact (Hermans 2001, p. 272). For this reason, this study looks at Polish speakers of English living in Ireland (temporarily or long-term) and at how they express opinions when exchanging opinions with Irish speakers of English. Is transfer from Polish an issue? What do the Irish and Polish think about the social acceptability of expressing opinions in Ireland? These are just some of the pertinent questions which gave life to the study described here.

In order to answer the questions outlined above, an empirical study of the expression of opinions among Polish and Irish students was conducted. The current study adds to the body of contrastive research in pragmatics. It draws inspiration from previous speech act studies while the scope within the tradition is expanded to new language combinations and a new speech act, using a mixed-method approach. Therefore, this study departed from the traditionally used methods in favour of collecting more interactive data by using open role-plays. Additionally, the production data gathered through role-plays was supplemented with focus group interviews, which explored issues of sociopragmatic attitudes and awareness in expressing opinions. The interactional role-play data was gathered in two linguistic groups, communicating in English; one consisting of Polish-Irish pairings and the other recording interactions of Irish-Irish dialogues. The role-play results were interpreted following major theories in pragmatics, more specifically Politeness Theory (Brown and Levinson 1987) and Speech Act Theory (Austin 1962; Searle 1969). Additionally, the concept of cultural scripts (Wierzbicka 1994) enlightened the discussion of data gathered through focus

3 Following recent trends (e.g. Goddard and Wierzbicka 2004), henceforth the terms ‘speech acts’ and ‘politeness theory’ will be written in lower case, as common nouns.
groups. Finally, taking advantage of the corpus of data gathered, this thesis puts forward suggestions regarding relevant areas of raising pragmatic awareness, specifically in relation to Polish learners of English and the speech act of opinions.

The research presented in this thesis can be characterised as an intercultural speech act study, even though the term cross-cultural, as well as other alternative expressions, has been used in reference to research similar to the one undertaken here. Some researchers have already signalled ambiguity in the use of the terms cross-cultural and intercultural communication. Scollon and Scollon (2001, p. 538, emphasis original) understand intercultural communication as “the study of distinct cultural or other groups in interaction with each other”, whereas they take cross-cultural communication as “the independent study of the communicative characteristics of distinct cultural or other groups”. Similarly, as Gudykunst (2003, p. vii) put it, “understanding cross-cultural communication is a prerequisite to understanding intercultural communication”. The study of cross-cultural communication grew out of cross-cultural anthropology and it is usually comparative in nature. Intercultural studies seem to take the study of different cultures a step further and look beyond comparison to discover what happens in interactions between those cultures. Correspondingly, the contrastive aspect of comparing Irish and Polish opinions was limited to interactions in English, without a third set of Polish-only interactions (as we shall see in Section 8.3, this approach is revealed to have some shortcomings which a more extensive study in future might address). The term ‘intercultural pragmatics’ is, consequently, used here to signal the departure from more traditional contrastive cross-cultural studies in pragmatics, as well as distancing from interlanguage pragmatics (ILP)\(^4\), which approaches language use from an acquisitional perspective. Further examination of the research aims and the rationale behind our approach will demonstrate that the intercultural perspective in this research is not only a matter of appropriate labelling, but that it also entails a broader, cultural and linguistic study of opinions.

---

\(^4\) Interlanguage Pragmatics (ILP) is used to refer to the sub-discipline of pragmatics which investigates the acquisition and use of pragmatically appropriate language among language learners (cf. Kasper and Rose 2002).
1.2. Aims and objectives

This thesis presents a study of opinions from a multidisciplinary perspective, carried out within a mixed-method approach. The overarching aim of the study was to explore opinions from a speech act and politeness perspective. Additionally, in order to provide a comprehensive study of opinions, other relevant theoretical perspectives guided, above all, the data interpretation process. The theoretical perspectives included speech act theory, politeness theory and the concept of ‘face’, as well as natural semantic metalanguage (SNM), cultural scripts, and discourse analysis. Furthermore, the local context of the research included a focus on Irish English, as well as a contrastive approach to describing certain differences in how the Polish and Irish may tend to express opinions.

The research questions are presented in Table 1.1 in two-fold categories relating to the different tools of data collection reflect the research aims. This classification also mirrors the concepts of the pragmalinguistics – sociopragmatics division (Leech 1983; Thomas 1983). It has been suggested that pragmatic knowledge entails two types of skills, linguistic and social, which have been given different labels accordingly (Leech 1983, p. 10-11). On the one hand, pragmalinguistics relates to the grammatical side of appropriate language use, where speakers can draw on particular linguistic items (words, phrases) in response to situational needs. Sociopragmatic knowledge, on the other hand, refers to the social rules which govern one’s linguistic choices (cf. Culpeper 2011). Factors such as social status, power relations, distance, and degree of imposition influence speakers’ linguistic performances. Put simply, pragmalinguistic skill means that speakers are able to use the correct form for a particular situation, while sociopragmatic knowledge refers to the awareness of the sociocultural rules which influence our decisions in using that particular form. In communication, interlocutors assess the contextual situation regarding the status of the interlocutor, place, time and purpose of the event in order to communicate according to the established rules in that community or language. We could say that the sociocultural knowledge governs over the pragmalinguistic choices, and that errors in the use of the latter are more easily forgivable than incorrect interpretation of variables such as social distance, which belong to the sociocultural aspect. This dual perspective on pragmatics also influenced the use of two types of data in the current study to ensure both aspects were addressed. Consequently, the corpus of opinions collected through role-plays is
related to the pragmalinguistic dimension of this study, focusing on the linguistic structure of opinions. The set of data gathered in post-interaction focus groups was collected in order to address the sociopragmatic aspects by exploring the emic, sociocultural side of opinions.

Table 1.1 Research questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RQ.1.</th>
<th>What are the pragmalinguistic characteristics of opinions in Irish English and with reference to the Irish-Polish intercultural context?</th>
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<tr>
<td>RQ.2.</td>
<td>What are the sociopragmatic characteristics of opinions in Irish English and with reference to the Irish-Polish intercultural context?</td>
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<td>RQ.3.</td>
<td>What are the strategies employed by native Irish English speakers and by Polish speakers of English for expressing opinions?</td>
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<td>RQ.4.</td>
<td>What sociopragmatic rules do the speakers of Irish English and Polish speakers of English follow when expressing opinions?</td>
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<tr>
<td>RQ.5.</td>
<td>Do these strategies differ?</td>
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<tr>
<td>RQ.6.</td>
<td>If so, in what ways?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ.7.</td>
<td>What are the intercultural implications of these differences?</td>
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</table>

According to Wierzbicka (1985, 2003), the main difference between expressing opinions in Polish and in English is that while the latter favours understatement, the former shows preference for overstating to signal a stronger emphasis. It is therefore probable that transfer issues from Polish to English will take the form of strong, overstated opinions being expressed by Polish users of English. While this may not necessarily be the case, it is expected that the strategies used in expressing opinions differ to a certain extent between the two linguistic groups. By different strategies one may understand the use of preparatory moves before the actual exchange of opinions or a tendency to agree with interlocutors of a higher status, as well as the use of specific linguistic strategies (e.g. conventional indirectness, hedging). The extent of these differences will be described in the analysis of the results.

Furthermore, while frameworks for analysis of speech acts realisation patterns already exist for acts such as requests, apologies, invitations and refusals, compliments or
suggestions, no such framework exists for opinions (cf. CARLA 2009). It is therefore part of the study to describe the realisation pattern of expressing opinions in English, constructing it on the data collected from the Irish English speakers. This process is mostly based on qualitative pattern identification and it is also supported by existing literature in discourse analysis and pragmatics. Additionally, the use of corresponding Irish-Polish data is an opportunity for a comparison, and for that reason a clearer identification of trends in each data set. Finally, the corpus of opinions gathered can also be contrasted later with larger corpora of Irish English speech to further analyse this speech act (see Section 4.4.1.2).

Finally, let us turn our attention to the term ‘opinion’ in the context of the thesis (cf. also Section 2.5.1). Taking the discipline of pragmatics as our departure point, opinions are treated here as a speech act, which allows for a stimulating discussion regarding their classification within the theory (cf. Sections 2.2.1 & 2.5). The working definition of opinions created for the needs of the study is as follows:

\[ \text{an opinion is an expression of a subjective attitude, belief or judgement based on actual or possible state of affairs, which is to be distinguished from statements of fact which are known to be true and have their source in empirical evidence and/or knowledge.} \]

Furthermore, because the role-plays elicit an interactive type of discourse, we are dealing not only with people expressing opinions (which could arguably occur even without immediate feedback from an audience), but rather exchanging them, where two sides of the dialogue can voice their viewpoints and react to the interlocutor’s ideas. The spectrum of reactions and features framing the exchange of opinions should paint a fuller picture of the speech act under study. Ultimately, the context of casual conversations, facilitated by the role-plays, enables this research to complement the existing knowledge about opinions in settings such as political debates or professional opinions in courts, as well as other aspects quite closely related to this speech act, but investigated under different labels, such as disagreements, stance and hedging, or the general topic of politeness.
1.3. Rationale

Research in cross-cultural pragmatics has been limited to a handful of speech acts, and clearly there is a need for new speech acts to be investigated. Exchanges of opinions are not only one of the most common types of informal conversations, but they may also be important in the Irish educational contexts. For instance, in the official guidelines for the teaching of English as an Additional Language in Ireland (IILT 2003), the ability to express opinions was, in fact, a skill that was given prominence amongst the linguistic abilities described in the benchmarks. Furthermore, the importance of opinions was tied not only to a classroom discussion or an interpretation of a poem, but also in joining a discussion regarding team performance in physical education class for instance (cf. IILT 2003, p. 19). Moreover, the interpersonal skills of expressing opinions and persuading, partaking in discussions in class or with peers, also echoed in the revised proficiency benchmarks (Trinity Immigration Initiative 2008, p.8). This stress on expressing opinions in the Irish educational context also provided motivation to investigate this speech act and not another.

Furthermore, while expressing opinions by NNSs has been explored to some extent (for example Iwasaki 2009; Taguchi 2008), the largest contribution relevant to the topic of this study actually comes from research into issues such as agreements and disagreements (including refusals) (for example Beebe and Takahashi 1989; Salazar Campillo 2009; Salsbury and Bardovi-Harlig 2000, 2001; Walkinshaw 2007). The existing literature regarding disagreement is of value to the present study as disputes are common in exchanging opinions. Similarly, many aspects relating closely to opinions have been investigated, most importantly, research into stance and hedging, politeness in the respective cultures/languages, or those focusing on public opinion, market research or opinion polls. This is not surprising, since opinions usually occur within larger chunks of discourse, i.e. ‘speech events’ such as political debates, arguments or institutional decisions (i.e. by a judge or a jury) (Atelsek 1981). Nevertheless, opinions have been minimally explored from the speech act theory perspective, with only two main references to date (Atelsek 1981; Szuchewycz 1983). This has been the case despite the fact that opinion texts are considered to be one of the fundamental texts of casual conversations, along with storytelling and informing texts (Horvath and Eggins 1995, p. 45). Exchanging viewpoints is something people engage in on an everyday basis in their interactions, suggesting they may also be an important
aspect to study from an intercultural perspective. Consequently, this study can supplement the current knowledge about opinions by focusing on the environment of informal exchanges of viewpoints. Therefore, opinions are treated here as the target of the investigation, complementing studies which may have focused on disagreements or persuasion in the first place, with opinions playing a secondary role. Finally, approaching opinions from the perspective of speech act theory is also rather innovative, since they are typically viewed from a discourse analysis or an argumentative discourse perspective (Horvath and Eggins 1995; Mullan 2010; Van Eemeren and Houtlosser 1999). This should allow us to present an initial speech act realisation pattern for opinions.

Apart from describing less common speech acts, it is also important that new language combinations are investigated, as argued by Rose (2005). The English-Japanese and English-Spanish pairings still dominate speech act studies. Focusing on the Irish variety of English (IrE) adds to a rather limited literature, especially the very few studies contrasting Polish speech acts to Irish English patterns (e.g. Belza 2008; Nestor, Ni Chasaide and Regan 2012). Contrasting Polish and English pragmatics and speech act behaviour has already been investigated (Herbert 1997; Jaworski 1994; Lubecka 2000; Rakowicz 2009; Suszczyńska 1999), with an impressive body of work by a Polish linguist Anna Wierzbicka (e.g. 1985, 2001, 2003, 2007). Wierzbicka’s work on Polish and English pragmatics has an additional value as her analytical approach – using the concept of semantic primes and scripts (Wierzbicka 1994, 1996) – penetrates deep into the cultural traits of each linguistic group. However, intercultural speech act studies still remain a rarity among more general cross-cultural and speech acts oriented comparisons of Polish and Anglo\textsuperscript{5} cultures. This study therefore addresses this gap.

From a methodological perspective, a major strength of this research is the departure from using a ‘pen and paper’ approach to data collection in favour of interactive methods, i.e. role-plays (see Section 4.2.1). While naturally occurring data is often labelled as the optimal type of discourse in research into pragmatics and politeness, experimental data also has a long-standing tradition in speech act studies. This is

\textsuperscript{5} Following Wierzbicka (2006), the term ‘Anglo’ is used here to denote the linguistic and cultural heritage of the inner-circle of Englishes (synonymously to the use of term ‘Anglo-American’). However, even though English-speaking cultures may show considerable uniformity in terms of pragmatics, many aspects of IrE do not fall under the category ‘Anglo’. Thus they not traceable to the Anglo-Saxon culture, but rather unique to the Irish context.
especially true of exploratory studies, which provide an initial classification of linguistic formulae, in particular speech acts. Despite possible drawbacks brought on by the imagined character of interacting in role-plays, the language used in such interactions has been confirmed to reflect quite closely the one used in naturally occurring situations and produce the most consistent variance (Brown 2008, p. 243). Additionally, considering the contrastive aspect of the research aims, the need to compile comparable sets of Irish and Polish data acted as another incentive to forsake the option of collecting naturally occurring corpus in favour of elicited conversations. Consequently, the type of data elicited through role-plays permits answering the research questions posed herein with regards to the pragmalinguistics characteristics of opinions in Irish English. Furthermore, supporting linguistic data from the role-plays with focus group data means that not only the linguistic, but also the sociocultural aspects of expressing opinions are addressed in the research. Despite the limited use of group interviews in ILP, they can provide an important insight into issues such as sociocultural awareness and attitudes towards L2 pragmatic conventions (for example LoCastro 2001; Matsumura 2007). Also, supplementing role-plays with focus groups in a single-moment study is an uncommon combination since role-plays are typically combined with verbal reports (e.g. Hassall 2008) and focus groups, in general, are used in longitudinal studies. The mixed-method design of our study of opinions is, therefore, unique. Also, the fact that it is a small-scale study allows the researcher to conduct a fine-grain qualitative analysis of the data gathered.

The investigation of opinions presented here can also contribute to the body of social research in Ireland. It has been suggested that the “Polish and other migrants will remain an integral part of Ireland’s population and labour force for the foreseeable future” (Wickham and Krings 2010, p. 4) and the linguistic landscape of Ireland will also be influenced by this presence. It is imperative that the different groups try to understand each other more deeply. This study can aid this process by providing an insight into expressing opinions in Irish English, as well as focusing on the intercultural aspect of studying Irish and Polish cultures in contact. As a consequence, pedagogical implications for pragmatic instruction into opinions can be put forward thanks to this study. Additionally, focusing on Irish English can also provide a balance between the trends of investigating English not only in global contexts, but also local varieties of this language.
1.4. Outline of the thesis

After briefly introducing the various reasons for researching intercultural pragmatics with reference to Polish and Irish English and outlining the rationale for investigating opinions in particular, our attention now turns to the structure of this thesis. The thesis is divided into eight chapters.

Chapter 1 has served to situate the present research within the current trends of intercultural research in pragmatics. It has also outlined the aims and the rationale for the current study, and provided a background in relation to the Polish immigration to Ireland.

The relevant literature is reviewed in Chapters 2 and 3, highlighting the relationship of pragmatics to politeness, and later to culture; while the first literature review chapter addresses the linguistic, the second focuses more closely on the sociopragmatic aspects. Chapter 2 therefore comprises the first part of an overview of the theoretical underpinnings of this research. Beginning with an introduction to the field of pragmatics, the discussion then turns to the paramount concept of speech act theory (Austin 1962, Searle 1968). In close relation to indirect speech acts, the following section discusses stance and hedging. Later, apart from main concepts within Brown and Levinson’s (1987) politeness theory, such as face (Goffman 1967) and ‘Face Threatening Acts’ being discussed, various critiques and alternative theories (Watts 2003) are reviewed. This is followed by an introduction to the concept of cultural scripts and natural semantic metalanguage (Goddard and Wierzbicka 2004). Finally, this chapter also includes a description of a ‘state of the art’ type of classification of the speech act of opinions. Bearing in mind the importance of the relationship between language and culture, Chapter 3 highlights this analogy discussing the relationship between culture and pragmatics, as well as their place in second language acquisition. Thus, the concept of pragmatically competent speakers is discussed in this chapter (Hymes 1972; Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei and Thurrell 1995). The second part of this chapter is devoted to presenting Polish and Irish cultural traits, with reference to studies from various fields, namely politeness (Kallen 2005a; Kallen 2005b), cross-cultural studies (Wierzbicka 1985, 2003) as well as sociology (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov 2010).
The methodological design of the research is outlined in Chapter 4. After offering a motivation for the choice of methods used in the current study, the chapter focuses on presenting the practical side of the research undertaken. At that stage, we discuss the profiles of the participants, the ethical considerations, and the data collection process. Finally, this chapter describes the analytical frameworks and procedures, before moving on to the chapters presenting the results; this includes a qualitative (speech act and politeness) approach to analysing the role-plays, also resorting to corpus-analytical software, as well as thematic analysis implemented in the examination of the focus groups.

The reporting of the results has been divided into three separate chapters, according to the relevant theory and data type. Apart from an interpretation and discussion of the results, an examination of differences between Polish and Irish data is an integral part of each chapter. Therefore, Chapter 5 conducts a critical analysis of the role-play data in relation to speech act theory, following a classification similar to previous speech act studies. It includes a description of the main strategies divided into head acts and supportive moves. The sequential organisation of the exchanges of opinions also allows for an analysis from a discourse organisation perspective. In Chapter 6, the role-plays are examined through the prism of politeness theory. This analysis offers the additional understanding of the face-negotiation dimension of exchanging opinions. Among the most prominent strategies, indirectness, as well as the use of stance and hedging, form a large section of the chapter. Finally, the discussion part accounts for some interesting Irish English strategies, as well as examples of typically Polish constructions. Lastly, the presentation of results in relation to the focus groups is done in Chapter 7. This chapter conducts a thematic analysis of the group interviews in which the participants talked about the sociopragmatic constraints in expressing opinions in Ireland. The discussion section in this chapter offers an extensive examination of the suggested differences between Irish and Polish opinions, above all with the help of the concept of cultural scripts (Goddard and Wierzbicka 2004; Mullan 2010; Wierzbicka 1994, 1999). Since this is also the final results chapter, the last section constitutes a conclusion gathering the results presented in the three chapters.

The closing argument is presented in Chapter 8, summarising the findings and proposing directions for future research. This chapter also offers an extended reference to the pedagogical implications deriving from the results.
1.5. Conclusion

This chapter has served to place the present study within the field of pragmatics and the Irish intercultural context, with reference to Polish immigration to Ireland. It has been argued that opinions are worth investigating not only because of their apparent importance in the Irish educational context, but also because they have been suggested as a possible pragmatic point of friction between the Polish and English language. However, the research questions presented here are designed to go beyond this local context of Polish-Irish interactions in order to discover more general characteristics of opinions from the perspective of pragmalinguistic-sociopragmatic dichotomy and with reference to Irish English. The literature reviewed in the following two chapters will present the many aspects which can influence how people express opinions, including broad-spectrum facets as well as more specific references to Polish and Irish cultures.
Chapter 2 – Pragmatics and Politeness

2.0. Introduction

In this chapter, the theoretical foundations of the current research project are presented. The central theories within pragmatics, i.e. speech act and politeness theory, will be discussed in detail in order to provide a sound foundation for the study of opinions from those perspectives. After briefly presenting the origins of pragmatics, or the study of ‘meaning in context’ (2.1), our attention turns to speech act theory (2.2). Built upon speech acts, politeness theory is presented afterwards (2.3). After that, we look at the concepts of semantic primes and cultural scripts (2.4), helpful in describing language behaviour across cultures. This is followed by a detailed introduction to the speech act of opinions (2.5). While this chapter focuses on a more linguistics-bound theoretical side of the literature review, the consecutive chapter offers a stronger focus on the observable aspects of politeness and culture in Poland and Ireland.

2.1. Introducing pragmatics

Attempts to define pragmatics are always problematic given the wide scope of the field (Levinson 1983, p. 25) and the fact that many of the definitions overlap with definitions of sociolinguistics or other sibling disciplines. According to Mey “pragmatics is the science of language in relation to its users” (1993, p. 5). Following Crystal (1997, p. 301) pragmatics is “the study of language from the point of view of users, especially of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction and the effects their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication”. LoCastro (2003, p. 15) synthesized earlier attempts by Crystal (1997), Clark (1996) and Duranti (1994), and defined pragmatics as “the study of speakers and hearer meaning created in their joint actions that include both linguistic and non-linguistic signals in the context of socioculturally organized activities”. The term ‘pragmatics’ was proposed by philosopher Morris (1938, p. 6-7) as part of a theory of signs originating in the field of semiotics. It consisted of three components which became important branches of linguistics: syntax, semantics and pragmatics. Syntactics (renamed later as syntax) refers to signs and their relationship to
other signs. Semantics analyses the relationship between signs and their representations (or their designata). Finally, pragmatics studies the relationship between signs and their interpreters. The last component connected linguistics to language users, making the discipline perhaps less abstract. Put simply, while the meaning of words can be explained by semantics, pragmatics is the discipline which describes the relationship of meaning and human interaction, or what Kasher (2005, p. 38) called the marriage of “Princess Meaning and the Earl of Use”.

Further developments in the shaping of pragmatics as an individual discipline emanated from the contributions of other philosophers of language such as Austin (1962), Searle (1969) and Grice (1975). Considering the fact that the concepts advanced by scholars such as Saussure or Chomsky were not principally concerned with the ‘real use of language’, growing “unease with Chomskyan linguistics” (Cummings 2005, p. 6) modern linguists followed the philosophies where users could ‘do things with words’ rather than studying language as an abstract. Chomsky’s (1965) rationalistic distinction between concepts of competence and performance, gave the basis for future research which focused on bridging the gap between those two aspects and turning towards sociolinguistic, anthropological and ethnographic sources for inspiration. This new focus on performance led to a development of a new approach in linguistics where the user and the context were the central subjects. However, pragmatics cannot be defined as a study concerned solely with performance or language use and having nothing to do with the description of linguistic structure. In fact, pragmatists are interested in the inter-relation of language structure and principles of language use (Levinson 1983, p. 9). Additionally, context can refer not only to the local, temporary situation of the interaction, but it can mean broad, cultural context which encompasses shared values, beliefs and attitudes (Wong 2010, p. 2933). This perspective also connects the study of pragmatics to the research of cultures.

One of the most important ideas in pragmatics has been the concept of conversational implicature (Levinson 1983, p. 97) which helps us to understand how often what is ‘said’ is not always what is ‘meant’. The theory of implicature is essentially connected to the theory of language use put forward by Grice (1975) in which he argued that communicative behaviours are shaped by a number of universal rules. Under the superordinate cooperative principle, he determined main maxims of conversation, namely those of quality, quantity, relevance and manner. Therefore, “the maxims
specify what participants need to do in order to converse in a maximally efficient, rational and cooperative way: they should speak sincerely, relevantly and clearly, while providing sufficient information” (Levinson 1983, p. 102). The cooperative principle means that, in interactions, speakers and listeners assume that their interlocutor is being cooperative. This shared understanding allows them to identify what is communicated beyond what is said, which Grice called implicatures, distinguishing them from meanings which derive from formal logical implications. This way, we can leave things ‘unsaid’ or speak indirectly by flouting some of the maxims. However, the maxims are not prescriptive, but rather an attempt to explain the logic of conversation. Finally, Grice’s interest in implicature, or the mismatch between ‘speaker meaning’ and ‘sentence meaning’, has also been helpful in explaining the phenomenon of politeness, forming the basis of Brown and Levinson’s (1987) politeness theory.

In close relation to Grice’s ideas, Leech (1983) argued that apart from the cooperative principle, and working in conjunction with it, there is also a politeness principle, with six identified maxims: tact, generosity, approbation, modesty, agreement, and sympathy. Therefore, while Grice’s principles help to explain how people create implicatures, Leech’s (1983) principles were aimed at explaining why people deviate from communicating with maximum efficiency (Bousfield 2008, p. 47). Thus, flouting the quality maxim could be caused by the need to adhere to a politeness maxim of modesty. However, Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 5-6) did not agree entirely with the principles proposed by Leech (1983), arguing instead that the cooperative principle and face sensitivity (discussed later in Section 2.3.1) provide sufficient inferences of implicature of politeness. Consequently, politeness maxims will not be referred to when discussing the politeness dimension of opinions.

While the cooperative principle is an integral part of the politeness theory proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987), Grice’s ideas have also met with critique. For example, contrary to Grice’s claims, some communication is, in its very nature, uncooperative, such as political interview or debate (Trosborg 1995, p. 25). It has also been argued that the maxims of conversation and politeness could be reduced to one, that of relevance (Ellis 1994; Sperber and Wilson 1995). Additionally, the preferred-dispreferred nature of the maxims was suggested as not sufficiently context-sensitive, i.e. in some situations agreement may not be the preferred behaviour (Spencer-Oatey
and Jiang 2003). Moreover, the maxim of quantity, i.e. make your contribution as informative as required (but not more), has been claimed to be connected to the Anglo value of preference for brevity and the typical ‘English understatement’ (Wierzbicka 2006, p. 26; Wong 2010, p. 2936). Furthermore, many of Grice’s ideas have been reinterpreted by other scholars and the original formulations have been skewed as a result of different interests of those who adopted Grice’s views (Davies 2000). For instance, a shift in interest from philosophy to linguistics means that the ‘folklinguistic’ idea of cooperation has taken over the Gricean concept of cooperation as rationality (Davies 2000, p. 17-22). Overall, Grice’s ideas have had an important influence on the field of pragmatics in general, where labels such as ‘Gricean’ or ‘neo-Gricean’ have come to form the metalanguage of the field dealing with language use.

In conclusion, implicature, maxims of conversation and politeness principle were pioneering ideas in pragmatics which shaped the study of language in context. Closely following those, theories of speech acts and politeness phenomenon came to the fore. Since then, naturally, alternative frameworks pointing out shortcomings of the original contributions have been emerging. However, the politeness framework proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987) has been successfully used in pragmatics research and it remains the seminal work in pragmatics and politeness research. Taking into account previous criticism and cautiously applying these in the analysis allows the scaffolding provided by Brown and Levinson’s politeness theory to be used in the present research. Since their politeness theory was built on the concept of speech acts, this is also the point of departure in the literature review that follows.

2.2. Speech Act Theory

Philosophical analysis of human communication led John Austin to the development of the theory of speech acts, understood not as another phenomenon of language use, but as an alternative theoretical approach to the study of meaning in context (Marmaridou 2000, p. 167). Austin (1962) observed that many declarative sentences are used not to confirm or deny the state of affairs, but to actively do things with the help of utterances he called performatives. Key examples of ‘doing things with words’ were actions such as naming ships or giving a prison sentence. Austin suggested further that nearly any utterance can be classified as a speech act (i.e. that by uttering words, we perform three actions at once) and developed a three-fold categorization of
locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. Locution refers to what is actually said. Illocution refers to what the speaker intends to do by uttering those particular words, i.e. the speakers’ intentions. Perlocution relates to the effect of the illocution on the hearer, i.e. how the hearer interprets our words or what is done by saying something. In this sense, a sentence can be uttered as a conventional suggestion, yet the speaker can mean it as a piece of advice, while the hearer may interpret it as a warning. Illocution is principally a concept dealing with intentions, while perlocution is a matter of consequentiality. Thus,

for a successful performance of any perlocutionary act it will be necessary that some consequential change occur in the attitudes, beliefs or actions of one’s audience; whereas for the successful performance of an illocutionary act all that need occur beyond the utterance itself is that the audience understand it (Graham 1977, p. 91).

Strictly speaking, speech act theory can be seen as a branch of the theory of communication, rather than a part of the theory of language because language and communication are based on different systems of knowledge. For instance, language can be used outside communication, in the same way that communication can take place when language is not used, and “the linguistic and the communicative aspects are determined by different and largely independent principles and rules” (Bierwisch 1980, p. 3). Speech acts then have their special role in interconnecting the two domains – they explain how language becomes a communicative action.

Exploring further the concepts of ‘doing things with words’, Austin focused on the illocutionary acts developing their classification into a number of categories. However, the established categories of speech acts stem from the work of Austin’s student, John Searle, who followed his footsteps and further developed the frameworks of speech acts. According to Searle (1975b, p. 350-351) illocutionary acts include the following:

- **Assertives (or Representatives)** – used to say how things are (concluding, asserting, hypothesizing, etc.)

- **Directives** – trying to get someone to do something (requesting, advising, pleading, etc.)

- **Commissives** – express commitment, obligation on behalf of the speaker to do something in the future (promising, undertaking, etc.)
• Expressives – used to express feelings and attitudes (apologising, thanking, welcoming, etc.)

• Declarations – which give words the validity of being actions by themselves and uttering of which has immediate institutional effect (declaring, nominating, firing from employment, etc.).

Austin’s initial classification of illocutionary acts used (mostly performative) verbs to describe the different categories of speech acts. This was later pointed out as a weakness and a reason for possible confusion (Searle 1975b, p. 345). Concerning opinions, the tendency to treat performative verbs as corresponding to a particular speech act can also be confusing when considering verbs such as ‘love’ or ‘hate’. While their first function is to express emotions, and they could be classified as pointing towards expressives, they can also be used in expressing opinions. If we consider opinions to be representatives, then the verb ‘to love’ cannot be limited to association only with expressives. Additionally, while Searle also recognised categories of classification of acts such as the illocutionary strength, status relation between the interlocutors and surrounding discourse, some argued (Szuchewycz 1983, p. 133) that he failed to use these sufficiently in his classification. Nevertheless, speech act theory has provided a popular framework for categorising and analysing how speech, in fact, is action.

Finally, one of the most explored characteristics of speech acts is their classification into direct and indirect acts:

> in indirect speech acts (ISAs) the speaker communicates to the hearer more than he actually says by way of relying on their mutually shared background information, both linguistic and non-linguistic, together with the general powers of rationality and inference on the part of the hearer” (Searle 1979, p. 31).

Indirectness in speech acts can be encoded as a commonly accepted conventional formula (conventionally indirect SA), or speakers can choose to construct a unique way of communicating indirectness (unconventionally indirect SA). As stressed by Searle, “what is added in indirect cases is not any additional or different sentence meaning, but additional speaker meaning” (1975a, p. 70, emphasis original). Indirectness can be signalled by using one illocutionary act instead of another, such as a statement instead of request or it can involve changes in intonation, for instance. An indirect utterance (or a speech act) does not correspond directly to its communicative
purpose (Watts 2003, p. 275). The use of indirect speech acts has been believed to be influenced by speakers’ sociolinguistic choices, which are guided by the phenomenon of politeness (Searle 1975a, p. 64), hence the inherent co-occurrence of speech acts alongside politeness theory.

Before moving on to discuss politeness theory, the next section will aim to place opinions within the speech act categorization. While opinions will be presented in more detail in Section 2.5 of this chapter, the following short introduction will focus on some dilemmas regarding the classification of opinions within the theory. After that, a discussion of stance and hedging (Section 2.2.2) will be presented as an example of some illocutionary and perlocutionary expressions connected to opinions, as well as a lead into discussion of politeness theory.

### 2.2.1. Opinions within Speech Act Theory

Following Searle’s framework, Atelsek (1981) maintained that both representatives and expressives have the characteristics that can be used to describe opinions. Representatives are those speech acts which represent the words-to-world direction of fit, and the psychological state of ‘belief’. Therefore, a speaker’s utterance is an expression of belief that what he or she states is true (i.e. words fit the world). Examples of verbs which may denote these representatives are state, swear, insist, hypothesise, and deduce. Expressives are characterised by no specific direction of fit between the words and the world, and their propositional content ascribes some property to either the speaker (e.g. to be sorry) or the hearer (e.g. to be thanked for something). Examples of expressives include verbs apologise, congratulate, and thank, and syntactically they would not take that clauses (Atelsek 1981, p. 218).

Further, Atelsek (1981, p. 218) identified two types of opinions:

1. opinions in which the proposition addresses a possible state of affairs, e.g. (I think [that]) this room should be painted blue, and
2. opinions that address actual state of affairs, e.g. (I think [that]) this art exhibit is lousy.

Later, she argued that neither of the opinions above could be identified as fitting the truth-falsity dimension in terms of direction of ‘fit of words’. The imperative aspect of opinions then is that they are subjective claims made by a speaker. That is why Atelsek
(1981, p. 220) further argued that opinions “are not characterisable in English by single
direction of fit”. This characteristic makes opinions more like expressives rather than
representatives. Thus Atelsek (1981) claimed that Searle’s taxonomy did not account
for a special group of speech acts where the essence of meaning is not in the
performative verb but in the nature of the proposition itself. This particular category
could include “speech acts which address a possible state of affairs that are beyond the
control of the speaker and the hearer” (Atelsek 1981, p. 225). The speech acts of
hoping, wishing and opinions could be included in a category where acts would
express evaluations of possible state of affairs.

Szuchewycz (1983) also believed that opinions should receive special attention in the
speech acts theory – that opinions could be characterised as a “phenomenon occurring
at a fundamentally different level of abstraction than other illocutionary acts”
(Szuchewycz 1983, p. 124). He did not, however, agree with the argument put forward
by Atelsek on a number of counts. For instance, he placed opinions firmly as a subset
of representatives, saying that speakers can, in fact, commit to the truth value of a
proposition. However, since opinions are subjective “all opinions can be
conceptualized as an attempt to characterize the world in the words of the speaker” and
not the real world (Szuchewycz 1983, p. 130). Additionally, the subjective fitting of
the world of the speaker’s words is what Szuchewycz considered the crucial distinction
between other representatives and opinions, which he saw as polar extremes of a single
linear continuum. Finally, placing an utterance along this continuum as a fact or an
opinion must be the result of either shared mutual belief or negotiation of meaning
between interlocutors (Szuchewycz 1983, p. 130).

As Szuchewycz further explored opinions within speech acts taxonomy, he claimed
that they operate on a different level of abstraction than those organised by Searle and
felt that they are different from other illocutionary acts on the following arguments
(Szuchewycz 1983, p. 131):

1. The scarce use of the verb ‘opine’ in the expression of an opinion,
2. The fact that opinions are usually marked with other verbs such as ‘believe’
   associated with other speech acts, and
3. Those verbs can in all cases be deleted in the expression of an opinion, e.g. (I
   think) the party was boring.
Moreover, opinions seem to be the only illocutionary act (apart from representative directives recognised by Searle) which can overlap with other illocutionary acts, such as directives (*I believe you should come*), expressives (*I think congratulations are in order*), declarations (*I think your services are no longer required*, i.e. You’re fired!) or commissives (*I think that I shall stop working now*) (Szuchewycz 1983, p. 132). The last argument presented by Szuchewycz pointed out that it is often difficult to distinguish an opinion from other illocutionary acts, which is not the case for other illocutionary acts in general. This would again confirm that opinions operate on a different level to other illocutionary acts. Therefore, he proposed the following:

[...] opinions are composit [sic] speech acts, more complex than illocutionary acts and operating at some different level of philosophical/linguistic abstraction. Opinions are not illocutionary acts in Searle’s sense, but are composed of illocutionary acts and additional ‘framing’ features, often not evident within the immediate linguistic realization of the act, whose consequences upon the force or strength with which the illocutionary point is delivered are constrained by pragmatic, stylistic and discourse considerations rather than solely by sentential phenomena (Szuchewycz 1983, p. 133).

In terms of the role of opinions in interactive discourse, the verification of a speech act being an opinion on the basis of its correspondence or not with the state of affairs is an inadequate approach, according to Szuchewycz. Rather, the linguistic and social features associated with the expression of opinion are needed to identify, distinguish and characterise those roles, thus allowing for a sociolinguistic analysis of opinions. In terms of discourse, it is not important if a given proposition can be verified as true or false, but what the interlocutors interpret as a fact or an opinion. Pointing out the weaknesses of Searle’s taxonomy, Szuchewycz indicated that Searle’s criteria pays insufficient attention to aspects such as illocutionary strength, status relationship between interlocutors, discourse context and stylistic performance. These aspects, he argued, can act as a ‘frame’ that indeed allows for the interpretation of an illocutionary act as an opinion (Szuchewycz 1983, p. 133). The illocutionary strength of an utterance is responsible for it being interpreted as a fact or an opinion and it is influenced by the speaker’s status (knowledge and institutional position) or the persuasiveness of the discourse (additional opinions). Importantly, the strength of the illocutionary value is always determined by comparison to other acts within the same discourse. As an alternative, Szuchewycz recommended a departure from Searle’s “static taxonomic model” (1983, p. 135) to other approaches such as ethnography of speaking. In fact, conversational analysis studies have shed more light on opinions
than speech act theory, as further discussion will illustrate. Finally, because opinions
deal with possible state of affairs, together with hoping and wishing, they belong to a
group of speech acts that are more difficult to define according to the original
categorisation proposed by Austin and expanded by Searle. This may explain the need
among some scholars for a ‘super category’ which would include opinions (e.g.
Atelsek 1981; Szuchewycz 1983).

Regarding some possible reservations apropos the two main references to opinions as
speech acts, two issues should be pointed out. Firstly, differentiating opinions from
other illocutionary acts because of the scarce use of the verb ‘opine’ (Szuchewycz
1983, p. 131) should be approached with caution. Searle recognised that Austin’s
classification of acts based on performative verbs resulted in some inconsistencies and
that illocutionary acts are not the same as illocutionary verbs (Searle 1975b, p. 350-
351). Secondly, it should be stressed that other languages, such as Spanish, use the
verb ‘opinar’ more often than English. Therefore, an English-speaker’s perspective in
claims put forward by Szuchewycz (1983, p. 131) must be noted.

Summing up, there seem to be at least two conclusions following the discussion
presented in this section. Firstly, many speech acts may be interpreted as opinions.
Secondly, expressing one’s opinion is not the same as an opinion ‘disguised’ as
another speech act that may be interpreted as a commissive (*I better leave now*) or a
directive (i.e. *I think you should leave now*). Therefore, we can differentiate between
two situations: (1) expression of opinions with the illocutionary intent of expressing an
opinion, belonging to the group of assertives (representatives); and (2) other groups of
speech acts expressed with different illocutionary intent which belong to speech acts
operating within a *subjectivity frame*. The “opinion frame” suggested by Szuchewycz
(1983, p. 133) could be called ‘subjectivity frame’ to ensure clarity. The key aspect is
that, in the subjectivity frame, the fit between the words and the world should be
interpreted in terms of the speakers’ world rather than the real world. Naturally, the
speech act of expressing opinions should also be interpreted within the subjectivity
frame. Therefore, one’s opinion is not expected to be validated on truth/falsity terms
with reference to the real world. Nevertheless, within an argumentative discourse,
utterances used as evidence to support one’s opinion may be interpreted as facts and
therefore do not belong to the subjectivity frame speech acts. Additionally, expressing
an opinion does not give a speaker the right to be untruthful. Grice’s maxim of quality,
i.e. ‘Do not say what you believe to be false’ most certainly applies to the speech act of expressing an opinion. That is why opinions are often supported by what the speakers believe validates their opinion, i.e. facts. Opinions are also an interpersonal speech act (along with directives, commissives and expressives), and in order to take effect, they require a hearer’s reaction to the speaker’s illocution – mere understanding of the illocutionary point is insufficient (Allan 2010). Moreover, the speech act of expressing opinions often appears within an argumentative discourse. However, the illocutionary intent of opinions is not always persuasion (which in turn would make it a perlocution). What it does have in common with persuasive discourse is the use of rhetoric devices to appeal to the audience: logos (appeal to reason), ethos (the influence of the character and credibility of the speaker), and pathos (appeal to emotions). However, the use of supportive moves that appeal to either one’s emotions, reason, or to the believability of the speaker, helps to validate one’s opinion, without necessarily trying to change the other person’s point of view. Perhaps for this reason ‘agreeing to disagree’ is so often a result of an exchange of opinions. While persuasion may be common in public debates, different rules may apply to opinions exchanged in private settings. Similarly, political debates are believed to be uncooperative by their very nature, but face-to-face exchanges of opinions are not. The concept of politeness may be helpful in describing the choices interlocutors make when exchanging opinions. We will return to opinions later in this chapter, but first other relevant aspects need to be presented, turning to stance and hedging.

2.2.2. Stance and hedging

One of many important issues in investigating speech acts, and opinions in particular, is the matter of stance, or the speaker’s use of linguistic resources to display moral or epistemological positions (Jaffe 2007, p. 56). Stance functions as a guide of interpretation for the interlocutor; it is “an overt expression of an author’s or speaker’s attitudes, feelings, judgement or commitment concerning the message” (Biber and Finegan 1988, p. 2). Other labels have also been used to describe stance, such as “evaluation” (Hunston and Thompson 2000), “intensity” (Labov 1984), “affect” (Ochs 1989) or “hedging” (Lakoff 1972). In terms of the function of stance, following Biber (2004), stance markers are used to signal (1) the reliability of the knowledge (maybe, surely), (2) the process by which the knowledge was gained (obviously vs.
presumably), (3) the kind of evidence (I hear, it seems), and (4) the quality of the information (hedges like sort of). While the primary lexical markers of stance in English are adverbials (Biber and Finegan 1988, p. 1), the importance of stance in spoken discourse can also be seen in the fact that the most common collocations for the I+verb constructions, in both American and British English corpora, are the stance markers I think and I don’t know (Baumgarten and House 2010, p. 1186). The concept of stance is also imperative in discussing opinions because it is a key tool to signal subjectivity, which happens to be also the main criterion for differentiating between opinions and facts.

While the classification of linguistic categories of stance is quite extensive, the most important functions of stance are either epistemic or attitudinal. The first of these expresses how certain one is about one’s assertion, while the second refers to the speaker’s emotional state. Another way to look at attitudinal stance is as an interpersonal stance, i.e. a person’s expression of their relationship to the interlocutor (e.g. friendly or dominating) (Kiesling 2005, p. 21). Interpersonal stances in conversations are temporary and they can be used to mark the relationship between the interlocutors by means of linguistic resources. Because all stance is culturally grounded, and it is often used to foster social relationships, it can be used, for instance, in shifting stance to a societal level by using generalisations (Jaffe 2009, p. 7). Similarly, Brown and Levinson (1987) distinguished between quality hedging (I think, I believe), relating to the responsibility for the message (but perhaps also signalling subjectivity), and quantity hedges (roughly, approximately), which signal that the message is not very precise. Overall, it appears that the general term stance can penetrate the many layers of communication as a reflection of the interlocutors’ attitudes towards each other or the content of their messages.

With reference to opinions, we could distinguish between (1) stance as an indication of what kind of speech act is being performed, used to signal subjectivity (e.g. ‘It’s an opinion, not a fact’) or (2) stance used to signal an attitude towards the content of the message (e.g. ‘To the best of my knowledge’). Thus, signalling a degree to which one can confirm one’s knowledge as a fact (epistemic stance) is quite different to signalling that (despite proof) the propositional content of one’s utterance is an opinion and not a fact (attitudinal stance). In turn, the relationship between the interlocutors can also influence not only how the interpersonal or epistemic stance, but also how the
attitudinal stance is signalled. For example, in some instances a boss does not have to
signal when something is an opinion or how that opinion was formed when speaking to
a subordinate. This again would vary between cultures or sub-cultures (organisational,
regional), that is, where power distance and the rights and obligations that go with it
differ. Consequently, stance may be yet another point of possible intercultural
misunderstandings.

Much of the work on stance and opinions in English has focused on the expression *I
think* (Aijmer 1997; Mullan 2010). Some languages seem to differentiate between
one’s opinion, belief and intention by using different verbs, thus stance expressions
(for instance Swedish or French). However, in English the expression *I think* can have
a variety of (sometimes opposite) functions, depending especially on the intonation
contour and its syntactic position within an utterance (Holmes 1990, p. 187; Mullan
2010). When used as a ‘deliberative’ boosting device, it expresses the speaker’s
reassurance in the proposition and, if often followed by *that*, it is used in the initial
position within the utterance, and it gets the sentence stress. However, it can also
function as a hedge, expressing the speaker’s uncertainty about the propositional
content of the utterance (Holmes 1990; Aijmer 1997). The latter use is characterised by
falling intonation and often utterance-final position. While discussion of intonation in
relation to stance is to a large extent relevant in expressing opinions, it is beyond the
scope of the research undertaken here. Nevertheless, the expression *I think* will play a
key part of the examination of opinions from other perspectives, such as the concept of
cultural scripts (Section 7.8).

To summarise, stance can take many forms in communication. In relation to opinions,
it appears that one should follow certain rules and signal whenever expressing a
subjective statement. This could refer to ensuring the interlocutor knows it is an
opinion and not a fact, as well as the level of commitment on behalf of the speaker, i.e.
if they are certain or only suppose something. This is precisely where the difference in
Polish and English opinions has been pointed out by Wierzbicka (1985). An opinion
containing subjectivity stance markers could be seen as the opposite of a dogmatic
opinion, suggested to be a typically Polish construction. Discussing the results with
reference to stance and hedging in Section 6.3, of the results chapter, will allow us to
explore the different stance markers used in Irish English, as well as determining how
dogmatic the opinions expressed by the Polish participants really are. Further,
regarding the question *why* people feel the need to use stance markers and hedges in opinions is a matter politeness theory may help to answer. Below, we take a closer look at politeness.

### 2.3. Politeness Theory

Politeness, in the lay understanding, is seen as a matter of courtesy and good manners. While this notion is also the point of departure for politeness theory, the concept has undergone some important re-examination since the seminal work published in 1978 (republished in 1987) by Brown and Levinson. The authors talked about the role of politeness saying that “politeness, like formal diplomatic protocol (for which it must surely be the model), presupposes that potential for aggression as it seeks to disarm it, and makes possible communication between potentially aggressive parties” (Brown and Levinson 1987, p. 1). They viewed linguistic politeness as a universal phenomenon and strived to examine language to describe politeness at work.

As it will be demonstrated in the section dealing with critique of Brown and Levinson’s theory (Section 2.3.3), newer theories of politeness were developed as a response to weaknesses identified in the original formulations, at the same time revealing some general trends in linguistics, moving from a more structuralistic to postmodern interpretation of the phenomenon. Authors approaching politeness from a postmodern perspective (e.g. Eelen 2001, Watts 2003), ensured a clear distinction between a ‘lay’ and ‘linguistic’ view of politeness. Other interesting avenues of dealing with politeness could be classified as those having a non-linguistics point of departure, for instance ‘rapport management framework’ (Spencer-Oatey and Jiang 2003). Similarly, ‘face negotiation theory’, proposed by Ting-Toomey (2005), offers a perspective on the West-East divide in politeness, focusing, specifically, on the dichotomy of collectivist and individualistic cultures.

Given the numerous theories which attempt to capture the essence or intend to explain politeness, it is clear that it is a very complex phenomenon and the discussion presented here will be only a glimpse of the explorations available on this topic. However, since the original Brown and Levinson’s formulations form a base for this research, this will be a focal point of the discussion that follows. Weaknesses, shortcomings, as well as solutions proposed by other authors will be offered
throughout the argument. Firstly, the paramount concept of *face* is introduced and discussed (2.3.1). This is followed by the core classification of Face Threatening Acts (FTAs) and strategies used in performing such acts (2.3.2). Finally, a discussion of the critique of Brown and Levinson’s theory is presented (2.3.3).

### 2.3.1. Face

To understand the theory of politeness and the framework built on the claims that politeness is a universal phenomenon, one must start by introducing the concept of *face*, which refers to a person’s public-self image (Brown and Levinson 1987). Brown and Levinson (1987) based their theory of politeness on the notion of face deriving from the concept proposed by Goffman (1967) as well as a general folk idea of face as understood through the expression ‘to lose face’. It is important to keep in mind that face is not the same as one’s identity, in the sense that it has a stronger social element; it is about one’s image being held by others, i.e. “face is not what one thinks of oneself, but what one thinks others should think about one’s worth” (Lim 1994, p. 210). Brown and Levinson (1987) further divided the concept of face into positive and negative, which refer to our desire to be accepted or appreciated (positive face wants) and our right to autonomy or not being imposed on by others (negative face wants). Participating in a conversation, we constantly evaluate the potential level of threat to the interlocutor (or hearer ‘H’) and choose between different strategies to maintain or lose face. The mitigation of potential threats to face then forms the basis of politeness theory put forward by Brown and Levinson (1987).

Paradoxically, while Brown and Levinson’s interpretation of Goffman’s idea of face has been one of the key references of the explorations of this concept, it has also been criticised for ‘diluting’ the original ideas proposed by the philosopher (Bargiela-Chiappini 2003, p. 1454). According to Bargiela-Chiappini (2003), the main conflict in their interpretation of Goffman’s face is that while Goffman was principally influenced by the Chinese concept of face, Brown and Levinson elaborated more on the individualistic view, based on Western assumptions. The Chinese construct of face “stems from a society traditionally dependent on a highly complex network of social obligations, where hierarchy, status and prestige require acknowledgement through normative, as well as strategic ‘facework’” (Bargiela-Chiappini 2003, p. 1455). Thus, the most important divergence from Goffman’s original proposal is the focus on
individual face, whereas to Goffman a person’s face was “on loan from his society” (Goffman 1967, p. 7). Moreover, face maintenance to Goffman was not the objective of the interaction but a condition of it (Bargiela-Chiappini 2003, p. 1458). Also, Goffman’s theory was not intended for inter-cultural communication but to cast light on (intra-cultural) interpersonal behaviour (Bargiela-Chiappini 2003, p. 1462). However, most importantly, facework should not be equalled with linguistic politeness since, for Goffman, facework “has to do with self-presentation in social encounters, and although individual psychology matters, it is the interpersonal order that is the focus of Goffman’s study” (Bargiela-Chiappini 2003, p. 1463). This ‘new’ or ‘rediscovered’ notion of face as negotiated and present not within a person but within an interaction has influenced the post-Brown-and-Levinsonian discourse about the notion of face. The consensus in the current views is that individual as well as collective face values are negotiated in communicative encounters within permeable and overlapped domains (Ting-Toomey 2005). Accordingly,

we must accept that we are attributed face socially in accordance with the line or lines we have adopted for the purpose of some communicative interaction. This means that we can be assigned different faces on different occasions of verbal interaction and that all social interaction is predicated on individual’s face needs, i.e. that we can never get away from negotiating facework (Watts 2003 quoted in Vilkki 2006, p. 328).

Moreover, face can also be seen not as something one has, but rather something that is created or achieved in interaction, a relationship between interlocutors which is built (Arundale 2010, p. 2078). Following this conceptualisation of facework as an interactional achievement, it is possible to ask questions such as ‘How do participants achieve face in everyday talk?’ Additionally, Watts (2003) also stressed the importance of accounting for communication which displays intentional attack on hearer’s face, not addressed sufficiently by Brown and Levinson (1987). Watts (2003, p. 4) therefore uses the term (im)politeness, where the ‘im’ prefix guarantees theoretical clarity, thus studying all extremes of the politeness communication continuum.

Apart from the concept of face, politeness theory was built upon the foundations of speech acts theory (Austin 1962; Searle 1969). The key concept in the classification of utterances according to the level of politeness was based on the potential ‘threat’ to the face of the hearer (and sometimes the speaker). Politeness work was then believed to
be induced by the need to mitigate those threats. The next section will demonstrate this framework.

2.3.2. Face Threatening Acts

Elaborating further the theory of speech acts, Brown and Levinson (1987) claimed that some speech acts intrinsically threaten face of the hearer, i.e. they are ‘Face Threatening Acts’ (FTAs). Among those which threaten primarily the hearer’s negative face, they identified those that put pressure on the hearer to do or refrain from doing something, for example: orders and requests; suggestions and advice; reminding; threats, warning and dares. Another type included acts which presume some obligation on the hearer to accept or decline an offer or a promise. The third kind included compliments, expressions of envy or admiration, and expressions of strong negative emotions such as hatred, anger or lust. FTAs, which threaten hearer’s positive face, generally fail to show care about the hearer’s feelings. These may include the expressions of disapproval, criticism, accusation or any other situations that put the hearer in an uncomfortable and embarrassing position. Some FTAs can threaten both positive and negative face, such as complaints, interruptions or requests for personal information. As to the FTAs which also threaten the speaker’s face, we can identify expressions of thanks, where the speaker humbles his or her own face and accepts debt, excuses and acceptance of offers. Speech acts which directly damage the speaker’s face, include apologies, acceptance of compliments, self-humiliation and confessions, among others.

Considering the fact that some speech acts are intrinsically face threatening, a number of strategies exist which allow us to control the possible level of threat. Accordingly, Brown and Levinson (1987) proposed a decision tree (Figure 2.1). On the one side, speakers can opt out and not perform the FTA, and on the other, they can use an ‘on-record’ strategy, which leaves the hearer with an unambiguous idea of what the speaker’s intentions were. However, an in-between option, referred to as an ‘off-record’ strategy, allows speakers to convey their message indirectly so “that the meaning is somehow negotiable” (Brown and Levinson 1987, p. 69). For instance, in the sentence *Where’s the salt?*, the request does not involve a speaker asking a hearer directly to pass the salt. Unambiguous, on-record FTAs can be further modified by the use of redressive actions, which are intended at minimising the possible damage of
negative or positive face of hearer. An on-record FTA, which does not use such strategies, is referred to as bald-on-record, e.g. *Pass me the salt!* (Brown and Levinson 1987, p. 69).

**Figure 2.1 Possible strategies for doing FTAs. Adapted from Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 69)**

Bald-on-record strategies have been defined as those where speakers express their message with maximum efficiency and which pay minimal attention to the hearer’s face wants (Brown and Levinson 1987, p. 95). Explicit strategies (or on-record strategies without redress) are used when other demands override face concerns. Therefore, the speaker recognises the hearer’s needs, but does not orient to those needs (Stadler 2011, p. 37). Implicit, i.e. conventionally indirect, strategies are those where the speaker’s message is clear but it expresses the concern for the hearer’s face at the same time. The “contextually unambiguous meanings (by virtue of conventionalisation) which are different from literal meanings” (Brown and Levinson 1987, p. 132) are typical of conventionally indirect speech acts.

There are many strategies in the English language which have acquired the status of being conventionally indirect. Therefore they are considered on record. That way, *Can you pass the salt?* would be interpreted as a request and no ambiguity usually exists about its possible interpretation as questioning one’s ability to pass a saltshaker to the person rather than a request to do it. While indirectness or conventional indirectness in the English-speaking world is associated with politeness, Blum-Kulka (1987) argued that indirectness is not necessarily synonymous of politeness. Similarly, many languages use grammaticalised means of expressing degrees of respect such as the T/V forms. English, though, has developed its own way of marking degrees of politeness, above all in indirectness. Therefore *I wondered if I could possibly see you for a*
moment would be a more polite request than saying *I want to see you for a moment* (Levinson 1983, p. 43).

Finally, the most off-record strategies, known as hints or unconventionally indirect speech acts, are those where the speaker protects his or her face by uttering an act which can have more than one interpretation. In case of an undesired response to the act, the speaker can still amend the planned outcome. Off-record strategies include irony, rhetorical questions or hints “so that the meaning is somehow negotiable” (Brown and Levinson 1987, p. 69). This strategy also presents the highest mismatch between what is said and what is meant, making it one of the most difficult strategies to understand and master among language learners (Kasper and Schmidt 1996).

Brown and Levinson’s theory could be summarised as a theory of face threat mitigation, which describes principles for avoiding face threats. If treated as a self-help book, the framework suggests many strategies for adhering to positive and negative face needs in communication. For instance, by using in-group language or a dialect one adheres to a hearer’s positive face needs, who wants to feel like they ‘belong’. A typical negative face strategy would be minimising the imposition in requests, e.g. ‘I’d only take a minute’. However, one of many disputed claims is a suggestion that the preference for indirect speech acts is ‘probably universal’ (Brown and Levinson 1987, p. 132). These will be demonstrated further in the next section.

2.3.3. Critique and alternative approaches to politeness

Brown and Levinson’s (1987) theory of politeness has certainly been one of the most influential, but it also received quite a lot of criticism. The majority of it was directed towards the universality claims of the theory (Wierzbicka 1991) and its predominantly Western perspective (Gu 1990). Another criticism is the assumption that only one type of face can be threatened at any given time, and that by following the decision tree it is impossible to use more than one strategy at the same time (e.g. Watts 2003, p. 88). Moreover, the number of categories in the decision tree can seem quite limited when analysing discourse and classifying speech acts according to their degree of explicitness (Stadler 2011). Further criticism points to the assumption that all FTAs can be analysed by looking at decontextualized speech acts (Wilson *et al.* 1991-1992, p. 218 quoted in Bargiela-Chiappini 2003, p. 1461). O’Driscoll (2007) also pointed out
the fact that any act can have a face threatening effect, not only those believed to be intrinsically FTAs. Overall, the criticisms seem to point out not only ethical reservations about the theory’s Western bias, but also more technical problems with the model, such as the rigidity of the decision tree.

Apart from the more methodological limitations, Brown and Levinson are often criticised for their rather pessimistic and “gloomy” (O’Driscoll 2007, p. 469) view of interaction as a continuous mutual monitoring of potential threat (Nwoye 1992, p. 311), or what some call an “obsession with FTAs” (Bargiela-Chiappini 2003, p. 1454). Schmidt criticised the authors of the politeness theory for “having an overly pessimistic, rather paranoid view of human social interaction” (Schmidt 1980, p. 104 in Watts 2003, p. 46). Their somewhat negative outlook on communication as a constant ‘threat’, ‘aggression’ and ‘imposition’ has influenced the discourse within politeness studies. Evidence from empirical studies also shows that Brown and Levinson’s pessimistic perspective on communication may have overshadowed the theory. For instance, offers are believed to be potentially damaging to the hearer’s negative face, because they indicate a speaker’s wish to make the hearer commit to either accepting or declining the offer (Brown and Levinson 1987, p. 66). Similarly, expressions of thanks are seen as damaging speaker’s negative face, since in such an act a person acknowledges a debt with the hearer (i.e. there is something to be thanked for) (ibid, p. 67). However, it has been argued that in languages such as Persian those acts have a face-enhancing dimension (Koutlaki 2002). Furthermore, in Persian, such strategies are believed to adhere to the ‘public’ rather than individual face needs of interlocutors (ibid, p. 1755). Koutlaki’s (2002) explanation of adhering to the public face also seems to be understood as fulfilling the minimum, expected level of politeness, which Watts (2003) calls ‘politic behaviour’. It appears then that many of the shortcomings, described by different authors point out similar weaknesses, thus suggesting a reoccurring evidence for flaws in the politeness theory proposed by Brown and Levinson.

The most influential alternative to Brown and Levinson’s (1987) theory was a model proposed by Watts et al. (1992), addressing politeness as a social practice. The model is based on three concepts: (im)politeness, (im)politeness and politic behaviour. On the one hand, first-order politeness (politeness) corresponds to the various ways in which polite behaviour is perceived and talked about by members of socio-cultural
groups, encompassing thus, a commonsense notion of politeness. Second-order politeness (politeness\textsubscript{2}), on the other hand, is a theoretical construct, a term within a theory of social behaviour and language use (Watts \textit{et al.} 1992, p. 3). The most important notion, in relation to this dichotomy, is that politeness\textsubscript{1} is inherently evaluative and thus disputable, meaning that no linguistic structures can be taken to be inherently polite or impolite. For instance, hints are believed to be the most polite to Brown and Levinson, whereas to Watts it is a question of a possible interpretation of hints as polite. Watts (2003) uses the term \textit{politic behaviour} to define a “behaviour, linguistic or non-linguistics, which the participants construct as being appropriate to the on-going social interaction” (Watts 2003, p. 2); it has been institutionalised and accepted in the society as appropriate to the particular context (Watts 1992, 2003). Furthermore, what Watts calls \textit{polite behaviour} is when the linguistic structures exceed what is expected in a particular situation. The definition of \textit{politic} behaviour could be understood as the ‘default’ polite behaviour which the society usually expects us to adhere to (in that particular context). If a speaker does not use the language which is considered appropriate for that context (i.e. politic), we deal with \textit{impoliteness}, whereas \textit{polite} behaviour could be seen as ‘going the extra mile’ by exceeding the expected politic behaviour. Additionally, Watts (2003) stressed that linguists should not forget that politeness\textsubscript{2} has its roots in politeness\textsubscript{1}; therefore, linguistic explorations of politeness should not lose the sight of the lay underpinnings of this phenomenon.

Another important critique of Brown and Levinson’s theory is that it failed to discuss impoliteness. This gap has been addressed by Culpeper (1996), who investigated the use of strategies that have the effect of social disruption and are oriented towards attacking face. Within politeness theory, bald-on-record strategies appear to be those which could be interpreted as impolite. However, indirectness can, in fact, be associated with impoliteness too (Culpeper, Bousfield and Wichmann 2003, p. 1549). Therefore, impoliteness should not be seen as a simple opposite of politeness, but rather, “impoliteness comes about when: (1) the speaker communicates face-attack intentionally, or (2) the hearer perceives and/or constructs behavior as intentionally face-attacking, or a combination of (1) and (2)” (Culpeper 2005, p. 38).

According to Culpeper (1996) there are two types of impoliteness, inherent and mock impoliteness. An example of inherent impoliteness is asking someone to stop picking their nose. Here, no matter how politely one tries to ask someone to stop picking their
nose, the hearer’s face will be offended anyhow. This act is “in its very performance offensive and thus not amenable to politeness work” (Culpeper 1996, p. 351). The second type of impoliteness is mock impoliteness or banter which is not intended to cause offence. This type of impoliteness reflects and fosters social intimacy (Leech 1983 in Culpeper 1996, p. 352). Also, banter, such as insults that are routinized and formulaic in nature, is easier to recognize as mock politeness, rather than personal insult. In banter, both sides of the exchange must interpret the impoliteness as non-offensive. Finally, impoliteness or rudeness should not be understood as a ‘failed politeness’ or unintentional impoliteness since the speakers intentions are indeed to cause social conflict (Beebe 1995 in Culpeper et al. 2003). Vis-à-vis Brown and Levinson’s strategies for dealing with FTAs, Culpeper (1996) developed five strategies for impoliteness: bald-on-record impoliteness, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, off-record politeness (including sarcasm) and withholding politeness. Finally, impoliteness strategies can cause damage to the interlocutor’s positive face or one’s negative face (Culpeper 1996, p. 357-58).

In relation to exchanges of opinions, the majority of possible impoliteness strategies are those threatening the positive face, following Culpeper (1996, p. 357-58). For instance: being disinterested or unsympathetic, using jargon to exclude a person or seeking disagreement by selecting a sensitive topic. Other more common threats aimed at positive face include the use of swear words or calling others names. In reference to negative impoliteness strategies, those relating to opinions include: condescending or aiming to ridicule a person, invading someone’s space (literally and metaphorically), as well as explicitly associating the other with a negative aspect. However, while impoliteness theory is important in providing a balance in politeness research, it will not play a prominent role in the present study.

All told, for the needs of the present research, the most important side of politeness theory (or theories) is the concept of face and the view of communication as a string of face-managing strategies. To Watts (2003), politeness theory explains “how all the interactants engaged in an ongoing verbal interaction negotiate the development of emergent networks and evaluate their own position and the positions of others within those networks” (p. 255). Therefore, politeness is a part of a social practice, which emerges in interactions. To some extent, this social practice could be seen as a matter of face management. While it may be difficult or even risky to intend to present a
compatibility of Brown and Levinson’s politeness theory and the discursive approach to politeness (e.g. Locher 2004, Watts 2003), they both try to tackle the same phenomenon – even though they do so differently. Moreover, politeness itself and the scope of politeness research are difficult to define, and both approaches are based on different theoretical underpinnings. However, it may be worth trying to reconcile both perspectives and use a sort of ‘best of both’ approach. For example, Brown and Levinson’s theory can be helpful in analysing opinions because of its close connection to speech act theory and opinions are treated as a speech act in this research. Furthermore, discursive politeness theory stresses the importance of hearers in analysing politeness – and hearers are also taken into account in analysing the role-plays. This is possible because role-plays elicit interactive discourse, thus speakers become hearers and vice-versa. Additionally, while some researchers advocate separation of face and politeness theory (Bargiela-Chiappini 2013, Sifianou 2013), we could argue it is still a core concept in studying politeness. As Watts (2003) argued, the error lies in equating facework with politeness theory. However, denying the importance of face in course of understanding politeness would be equally erroneous. As Scollon, Wong Scollon and Jones (2012, p. 49) argued, “there is no faceless communication”. With this in mind, the concept of face will play a key role in discussing the politeness dimension of opinions, presented in Chapter 6.

As a final word with reference to politeness theory, it is important to mention the over twenty-year gap between the works of Brown and Levinson, and Watts. While to Watts (2003) politeness is a ‘possible interpretation’, Brown and Levinson strived to discover a systematic relation of a language to context (1987, p. 280-281), hence their need for rules, strategies and categories. However, the authors also admitted in the second edition of the book that such a strong emphasis on speech acts may not be fully compatible with the politeness framework, saying that “speech act theory forces a sentence-based, speaker-oriented mode of analysis, requiring attribution of speech act categories where our own thesis requires that utterances are often equivocal in force” (Brown and Levinson 1987, p. 10). It is, therefore, important to focus on the reasoning behind speech acts, the illocutionary character of ‘doing things with words’ and connect it to Brown and Levinson’s important contribution of politeness consisting of facework and mitigation. Only then clarifications put forward by Watts (2003), Locher (2004) and Culpeper (1996), among others, can paint a fuller picture of the politeness and communication as actions. Additionally, more recent theories also appear to be
tied more closely to the field of pragmatics because of their stress on context as a category for interpreting utterances as polite or impolite. This may be a more appropriate approach for real studies in pragmatics. However, apart from the theories reviewed hitherto, there is another perspective which not only offers clarity in studying languages and cultures, but also points out a key weakness within the field of pragmatics, politeness and speech act studies, i.e. its ‘not quite politically correct’ metalanguage. We look at the theory of semantic primes and cultural scripts in the next section.

2.4. Semantic primes and cultural scripts

The previous section examined the critique of Brown and Levinson’s politeness theory (1987), which has had a significant influence on the field of pragmatics. In fact, it has been pointed out that pragmatics has also inherited its emotional and culturally-biased metalanguage, especially influenced by the Anglo perspective. Essentially, in the field of pragmatics, discussions of universal phenomena have been using non-universal metalanguage. In order to address this shortcoming, Goddard and Wierzbicka proposed an approach which permits studying different cultures using an alternative concept of cultural scripts, but also provides an objective, universal language to do so, the natural semantic metalanguage. The advantages and relevance of these concepts to this research are reviewed in this section.

To avoid the bias of an Anglo-centric perspective within pragmatics, Wierzbicka (1996) proposed a taxonomy of semantic primes and universals or the natural semantic metalanguage (NSM). The NSM can then be used to formulate cultural scripts, which are “a powerful new technique for articulating cultural norms, values and practices in terms which are clear, precise and accessible to cultural insiders and to cultural outsiders alike” (Goddard and Wierzbicka 2004, p. 153). The metalanguage of semantic primes or NSM consists of about 60 words and grammatical patterns, which appear to have their equivalents in all languages (Goddard 2008, p. 1). The lexical primes in the NMS include a minimal number of words in a series of categories, which together form a language sufficient to label different sociolinguistic phenomena and compare them between various languages and cultures in a systematic and objective way. In the NSM language, the substantives include, for instance, I, YOU, SOMEONE, SOMETHING and PEOPLE; mental predicates are limited to THINK, KNOW, WANT and FEEL; while various other evaluators and descriptors are based
on dichotomies of GOOD-BAD, BIG-SMALL, etc. (cf. Goddard 2002, p. 14). The language can be used to represent different phenomena, especially abstract ideas, using the simplest words in the form of cultural scripts. Wierzbicka (2006, p. 23) described the theory of cultural scripts as a step forward from ethnography of speaking to ‘ethnography of thinking’. The cognitive-semantic focus of cultural scripts opens a path to study social practices, such as speaking, in order to gain a deeper understanding of particular society’s attitudes and values. The cultural scripts theory has also its place in pragmatics, which Goddard and Wierzbicka (2004, p. 153) place as a technique within ethnopragmatics.

The theory of cultural scripts stems from a universalist perspective and a belief that

we need to understand people (both individuals and social groups) in their particularity, but that we can understand them best in terms of what is shared, and that one thing that is shared is a set of universal human concepts with their universal grammar (Wierzbicka 2006, p. 24).

However, despite the universality outlook, cultural scripts aim to discover emic understandings of cultures. Therefore, the universality of the cultural scripts theory is represented in the language used to describe cultures, presuming a common language with lexical universals and a universal grammar. The individual explorations of cultural traits in different societies, however, are not aimed at formulating universal theories.

There are four aspects which, according to the author (Wierzbicka 2006, p. 24-25), distinguish this approach from other perspectives within the trend of studying linguistic behaviour, such as politeness theory (Brown and Levinson 1987) or the study of speech acts across cultures (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989). Firstly, there is its emic approach to describe “cultural norms from within rather than from outside” (Wierzbicka 2006, p. 24). The identification of unique norms and values in distinct cultural groups and further comparisons are possible thanks to the NSM, which can be done in that culture’s language and which is easily translatable. Secondly, the generalisations proposed in cultural scripts are based on universal concepts, but not on universal labels, ensuring a non-biased comparison. In this sense, this approach differs from cross-cultural speech act studies, which describe language-specific realisations of speech acts, but use Anglo perspective metalanguage to explain that behaviour. The NSM tackles this shortcoming. For instance, explaining imposition in requests in different languages fails to acknowledge that imposition is a (dispreferred) cultural
value, which stems from the English perspective on communication (Goddard and Wierzbicka 2004, p. 159). The third advantage of cultural scripts is their practicality, i.e. they can be used in language teaching or intercultural communication thanks to their clarity and simplicity. The fourth distinctive feature of cultural scripts is that they rely on linguistic evidence in order to describe deeper, more abstract phenomena, cultures, values and emotions. The theory of cultural scripts does not operate on ideas such as masculinity-femininity dichotomy, but rather uses examples of linguistic (semantic and syntactic) patterns which denote cultural values.

The empirical focus on studying language as a reflection of culture is one of the biggest strengths of the cultural scripts theory. For instance, an examination of the semantic shift of the English word *rather* across time can also reveal a shift in the value of hedging in the English culture. Whereas in pre-Shakespearean English *rather* meant ‘earlier’, its meaning then shifted to being an ‘anti-exaggeration device’, reflecting a change in the need *not* to exaggerate in the English society (Wierzbicka 2006, p. 31). Consequently, a cultural script which reflects this need to avoid exaggeration could be formulated as the following:

```
[people think like this:]  
sometimes when people want to know that something is big  
they say words like “very big”  
sometimes when people want to know that something is bad  
they say words like “very bad”  
it is not good if a person speaks [says things] in this way
```

(Wierzbicka 2006, p. 31)

In comparison, semantic scripts can operate on a different level of generality and also be used to explain less abstract and cultural features, focusing more closely on language. This application could also be later used in language teaching. For instance, Wierzbicka (2006, p. 53) provided a script to represent the difference between using imperatives and whimperatives⁶ (can you, could you, would you do x?) in formulating requests, which explain the psychological state of the speaker at the time of speaking:

```
do X! =
```

⁶ “A whimperative is an expression that has the form of an interrogative sentence, but the meaning of an imperative one” (Mel’čuk 2012, p. 394).
I say: I want you to do X
I think that you will do it

can you / could you / would you do X? =
I say: I want you to do X
I think that maybe you will do it
I don’t know

(Wierzbicka 2006, p. 53)

In the latter formulation, the respect for the hearer’s autonomy is reflected, also allowing the cultural script to explain a more abstract value which underlines the choice of such strategies in interactions. The above example shows that the cultural scripts framework can be an easier, more accessible way to explain linguistic phenomena than the facework framework for instance. Furthermore, the classification of cultural scripts often seems to correspond to labels used to refer to different speech acts (Wierzbicka 1994, p. 178). Therefore, concepts such as requests, apologies, suggestions or invitations can be explained using the semantic primes to convey the meaning of what an execution of those acts involves (Goddard and Wierzbicka 2004). This allows the researcher to avoid presuming that the label used to refer to a particular social act, suggestions for example, is something that has an equivalent in all languages. Conversely, the cultural scripts could also be used to explain speech acts which do not exist in some languages/cultures or which are unique to a particular context. Research suggests that some tribal groups do not have speech acts of thanking (Harris 1984, p. 134-135 quoted in Huang 2007, p. 120) or promising (Rosaldo 1982 quoted in Huang 2007, p. 120), but also points to existence of unique speech acts, such as kinship-based requests, in others (Wierzbicka 1991, p. 159-60 quoted in Huang 2007, p. 120-121).

The initial research within the NSM and cultural scripts frameworks focused on analysing different cultures by their ‘key words’, thus identifying sociocultural changes overtime through chronological lexical analyses (Wierzbicka 1997). However, this approach has been criticised for trivializing national cultures (Ramson 2001) and presenting rather inconclusive results (Aitchison 1999). A methodological flaw often quoted was Wierzbicka’s choice of sources for analysis, for instance, not consulting the Oxford English Dictionary in analysing English language/culture (Ramson 2001, p.182). However, another decade of research into NSM and semantic primitives has
evolved in the direction of more systematic tests, responding to earlier criticisms of “superficial analyses” and “hard to pin down frameworks” (Aitchison 1999, p. 88). One of such objections was also the application of NSM as an ‘explication through paraphrase’ to already quite basic terms, which are believed to be resistant to such attempts (Kripke 1980 cited in Riemer 2006). Therefore, the NSM may be more apt for explaining more complex phenomena and abstract ideas. Moreover, the use of corpus analysis and established approaches in lexicography can help to complement and strengthen the NSM and cultural scripts framework (such as Mullan 2010). Further application of the framework to other cultures, languages and speech acts should also be seen as an attempt to validate and test the value of this approach (cf. Murray and Button 1988).

In conclusion, the NSM and cultural scripts can be quite helpful in supplementing politeness research and speech act studies. The focus on drawing a link between language use and the underlying cultural values behind the use could be seen as also drawing a link between pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics. However, its biggest advantage is that it allows us to explain complex cultural concepts with great clarity. Thanks to this transparency, the theory of cultural scripts will become a paramount element of the discussion of the focus group results in Chapter 7, especially with reference to the scripts for knowing and thinking (Section 7.8).

### 2.5. Investigated speech act: opinions

The body of literature surrounding opinions as a speech act is minimal in comparison to other illocutionary acts such as requests, apologies or refusals (cf. CARLA 2009). This results in a lack of comprehensive realisation pattern taxonomy in relation to opinions. The theoretical debate to date focuses mostly on the idea of fact/opinion dichotomy, where a statement is either a fact or an opinion (Szuchewycz 1983), while research in argumentative discourse looked at the perlocutionary effect of opinions, i.e. when an opinion has the effect of convincing the interlocutor (Cohen 1987; Kurzon 1998; Van Eemeren and Houtlosser 1999). More recently, Mullan (2010) investigated opinions in Australian English and French, focusing on the expression *I think* in English and their equivalents in French. Nevertheless, opinions remain one of the least transparently documented speech acts and the research undertaken here will attempt to fill in this gap. The following sections present the discussion relating to the
classification of opinions as a speech act (2.5.1), opinions viewed from a discourse analysis perspective (2.5.2), relevant ILP literature (2.5.3), and finally how opinions are expressed in Polish and English (2.5.4).

2.5.1. Classifying the speech act set of exchanging opinions

In the first place, a clarification is due with reference to the use of the term *set* in the above heading. It has been used here to reflect the fact that *expressing* opinions forms a part of a larger set of *exchanging* opinions. This understanding is different to Cohen (1996), for instance, who sees a set as corresponding to a ‘realisation pattern’. Therefore, a realisation pattern of apologies is to this author a ‘speech act set of apologies’. A typical apology involves the following moves: an expression of apology, acknowledgement of responsibility, an explanation or account (an excuse), an offer of repair, and a promise of forbearance (Bodman and Eisenstein 1988). A similar classification is unavailable for opinions and this study will explore, to some extent, a possible realisation pattern for opinions. It is important, however, that opinions are a speech act which requires a reaction from the interlocutor. Therefore, opinions will usually appear in a longer stretch of discourse, which can include agreements, disagreements, and other moves. For this reason, treating a ‘set of exchanging opinions’ not synonymously to a ‘speech act realisation pattern’ has been adopted in the current study. Here, it signals that opinions will be studied alongside other surrounding acts within a logical discourse stretch of a *set of exchanging* opinions. The interactive character of role-plays, and the very speech act under investigation, permits a classification of the set which includes two sides of the dialogue.

Speech acts form a large portion of our everyday verbal interactions. During a casual encounter with an acquaintance, we could be involved in a formulaic greeting, followed by a compliment, some small talk, perhaps a request or an invitation. Because many speech acts are executed using conventionalised forms, speakers recognise them quite easily in the flow of the conversation. From a theoretical point of view, there are a number of ways to identify what sort of speech act is being performed during an interaction (i.e. a request, apology, complaint, etc.). These are known as illocutionary force indicating devices (IFIDs) and may include word order, stress, intonation contour, punctuation, the mood of the verb, and the use of performative verbs (Searle 1969, p. 30). However, the essential conditions for an illocutionary act can be satisfied
without the use of indicating devices, e.g. saying ‘I’ll do it’ counts as a promise without the verb ‘to promise’ being used (Searle 1969, p. 30). In terms of IFIDs in the speech act of expressing opinions, the verb *think* is often used not as a performative verb for the action of thinking, but to signal subjectivity in general (Atelsek 1981, p. 221). While *think, believe* and *feel* may serve as identifying devices, differentiating opinions from other speech acts, also less obvious verbs, such as *to reckon*, may serve this purpose. Parenthetical verbs, which purpose is “to modify or weaken the claim of truth which would be implied by a certain assertion” (Urmson 1952, p. 484), can also serve as those differentiating opinions from statements of fact. Among those, we find *reckon, believe, assume, suppose, imagine, suspect or feel* (Mullan 2010, p. 59). However, the economic tendency to express opinions without using a performative verb may complicate IFID classification of opinions. As previously exemplified by Atelsek (1981, p. 218), expressions of opinions often avoid using ‘I think that’ clauses: e.g. *(I think [that]) this art exhibit is lousy*. Additionally, some opinions, considered to be held by the society at large, are modulated by expressions of obligation, necessity or probability and not by parenthetical verbs, e.g. *You’re not supposed to put your elbows on the table* (Horvath and Eggins 1995, p. 32). In this example, opinion IFID is difficult to signal and in some contexts it could be interpreted as an indirect request. Overall, it appears that verbs such as *think, believe or opine* are not necessarily strong indicators of the speech act of opinions, making their classification more complicated than that of other speech acts. This fact also reinforces the suggestion that opinions are a ‘composit’ speech act which functions within a subjectivity frame, and that subjectivity can be communicated outside the main opinion clause and without any performative or parenthetical verb.

The most relevant dichotomy with reference to the speech act investigated here is the differentiation between an opinion and a fact. That is, an opinion (in English) is defined as “a personal view not necessarily based on a fact or knowledge” (Soanes, Spooner and Hawker 2001, p. 621), which could be connected to the importance of adhering to the maxim of quality (Grice 1975) (dealing with the truthfulness of information provided by the speaker) in the English-speaking world. If a speaker cannot commit to the reliability or sureness of their assertions, their doubt must be flagged in the conversation. A reflection of this maxim could be seen in the high number of epistemic qualifiers in opinions, including verbs, adverbs, and phrases such as *I think, I assume, I expect, I gather, I presume, I suppose, I suspect, apparently,*
clearly, evidently, obviously, presumably, in my view/opinion, as far as I can tell, to the best of my knowledge, etc. (Wong 2010, p. 2938). However, apart from the believability of one’s opinion, the question of respect for another person’s views is also often signalled in opinions. Mullan (2010, p. 59) pointed out a number of strategies from (Australian) English used by speakers to hedge, so that they are seen as not imposing their opinion on others; these include the use of modal auxiliary verbs (might, may, must, etc.); non-modal auxiliary verbs: (doubt, suppose, reckon, think, etc.); adverbs (apparently, probably, perhaps, etc.); nouns (claim, estimate, opinion, etc.); adjectives (possible, perhaps, etc.); and tag questions (isn’t it?, don’t you?, etc.). All of those devices serve to mitigate (or augment) the strength of the proposition, fulfilling the two maxims of presenting the quality of one’s opinion and showing respect for other’s views.

However, as all pragmatic principles, the importance of expressing the level of certainty in one’s opinions may differ across cultures. For instance, Aijmer (2009) compared the use of I don’t know (or I dunno) between Swedish learners of English and native English speakers. The study revealed that NNS use I don’t know as a speech management signal, while NS use it mainly to avoid asking questions in a direct way. While I don’t know has a politeness marking function, similar to I think, it also serves as floor-yielding or topic-changing pointer, it is used when stalling, and to signal disagreement (Aijmer 2009, p. 156-159). The principal use of I don’t know as a face-saving strategy among NS of English, however, stresses the importance of hedging in English. In fact, in the corpus gathered by Aijmer, I don’t know typically co-occurred with other epistemic markers such as maybe, just or really (2009, p. 160), which in combination allowed for minimisation of a possible face threat. Furthermore, among the numerous functions of I don’t know described by Tsui (1991), only one relates to the ‘inability to provide information’. The others can be summarised as face-saving strategies, for both the speaker and the hearer’s face, such as avoidance of disagreement, minimisation of impolite beliefs or avoidance of making an assessment. Consequently, the acquisition of stance markers (in English as a L2) may be impeded not only by their sheer volume, but also by the nuances in different meanings and use, as well as the lack of sociocultural awareness of their importance (see also Section 2.5.4).
As it was pointed out at the start of this section, opinions are a part of a larger communicative event - a speech act set of exchanging opinions. Therefore, facts used to support opinions, agreements and disagreements, as well as other additional acts can form the set of exchanging opinions. We have also argued that, in English, the distinction between a fact and an opinion is important since the quality of the assertion must be communicated in exchanges of opinions. Thus, opinions are often supported by evidence, i.e. facts on which the viewpoint is based. Opinions which deal with possible state of affairs, e.g. *This room should be painted blue* (Atelsek 1981, p. 219), may also include qualifiers to denote the conditions under which the expressed proposition is desirable to the speaker, e.g. *This room should be painted blue if the baby’s a boy* (Atelsek 1981, p. 222). A more detailed classification of the supportive moves in opinions is presented in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 Supportive moves in opinions following Atelsek (1981, p. 222-224)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MOVE</th>
<th>EXAMPLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Further opinions</strong></td>
<td>Blue would look great with this furniture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>which may reinforce the personal, reflexive nature of the original opinion.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Selective presentation of facts</strong></td>
<td>I saw blue paint on sale in Sears.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>used commonly in debates and propaganda speeches steering the interlocutor towards those supporting speaker’s opinion, opinions of others used as support also enter into this category, e.g. <em>x person said so.</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Appeal to or rejection of norms and normative opinions</strong></td>
<td>People always paint boys’ rooms blue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by referencing to topic about which cultural and social norms have a say.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reliance on special qualifications of the speaker</strong></td>
<td>This room should be painted blue. (an interiors decorator’s opinion).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>where one’s opinion may be deemed more valid given their expertise of the person on the topic the opinion concerns.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dogmatism</strong></td>
<td>Communism is a bad system.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Dogmatic beliefs are those that an
individual deems to be an objective fact, often relating to personal ethics.

The perlocutionary effects of an expression of opinion may include (apart from agreement or disagreement) a request for more information or a request to support the opinion. In terms of disagreement responses to opinions, Atelsek (1981, p. 221) identified three possible options and two options for agreements, summarised in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 Strategies for agreeing and disagreeing following Atelsek (1981, p. 221-222)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MOVE</th>
<th>EXAMPLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>DISAGREEMENT</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negate the judgement expressed in the opinion.</td>
<td><em>I don’t think this art exhibit is so bad.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Express a different judgement on the same dimensions.</td>
<td><em>I think this art exhibit is great.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using a performative verb.</td>
<td><em>I disagree.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AGREEMENT</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressing a similar or the same judgement</td>
<td><em>I think this exhibit is fantastic.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using a performative verb</td>
<td><em>I agree.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bald-on-record strategies for disagreement are not a common occurrence in English. In fact, a long list of hedges has been identified in discourse analysing disagreement (Locher 2004, p. 115): *actually, anyway, as it were, basically, a bit, certainly, honestly, I mean, I think, in a way, in fact, just, kind of, let me, little, maybe, more or less, of course, perhaps, probably, say, see, so-called, somehow, sort of, stuff, suppose, type of, uh, uhm, well, whatever, what you call,* etc. Among various strategies for minimising disagreement, the most common strategies in English seem to be “weak agreement preceding disagreement” or “hesitation followed by weak or partial disagreement” (Malamed 2010, p. 211). Perhaps being concerned with the *anatomy of opinions*, as opposed to the discourse surrounding opinions, Atelsek (1981) did not account for ‘weak agreement’ strategies, which is one of the major drawbacks of this classification of opinions. However, one of the best ways to minimise the threats posed by disagreements is by expressing opinions vaguely. As Brown and Levinson (1987, p.
116) suggested: the speaker “may choose to be vague about his own opinions, so as to not to be seen to disagree”. Additionally, in early modern publications such as Carnegie’s 1936 book *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, the power of agreement, rather than disagreement, was also recognised. Carnegie argued that disagreeing agreeably is in fact an art of expressing divergent opinions in a way which shows respect for others’ views and keeps the lines of communication open (Malamed 2010, p. 200). More importantly, by writing a self-improvement book, Carnegie suggested that disagreeing agreeably is a skill worth learning. Finally, the discussion of role-play results shall demonstrate that it is also an indispensable part of opinions.

The review presented this far has demonstrated that the various acts, which form the speech act set of exchanging opinions, show a considerable complexity. For instance, synthesising previous research by other researchers, Malamed (2010, p. 204-205) suggested thirteen disagreement strategies. Similarly, Walkinshaw (2007) presented a five-point scale of disagreements, which he based roughly on Brown and Levinson’s (1987) discussion of oppositional strategies with level one being on-record strategies, and level five off-record disagreement. However, no such classification is available as a framework for analysis of how people actually express opinions. This study, therefore, helps to fill in this gap and describe the range of politeness strategies used in expressing opinions, as well as the larger unit of the speech act set of exchanging opinions. Accordingly, given the limited literature which deals with opinions as a speech act, the discussion now turns to discourse and conversational analysis view of opinions.

### 2.5.2. Discursive perspectives on opinions

Departing from pragmatic approaches to those focusing on discourse and conversational analysis, Horvath and Eggins (1995, p. 31) identified opinion texts as those “whose purpose is the proposing, elaborating, defending and exchanging opinions about people, things or events”. They therefore suggested a schematic structure of opinion texts as:

\[
\text{Opinion} \land \text{Reaction} \land (\text{Evidence}) \land (\text{Resolution})
\]

(Horvath and Eggins 1995, p. 32)
As a comparison, a “generic structure potential” of a service encounter consists of sale request, a sale compliance, a sale, a purchase, and a purchase closure (Hasan 1989). An opinion text, therefore, constitutes firstly an expression of attitude or judgement on a certain topic, followed by the reaction of the interlocutor (agree, defer agree, concessive agree and disagree, and disagreement). Degrees of agreement are expressed by Yes/No, modulated by interpersonal adjuncts expressing degrees of tentativity or conviction (e.g. Yes, I suppose/maybe, perhaps); modal auxiliaries (You could be right), or conjunctions expressing concession (Yes, but what about…). It is important to note that this perspective recognises that reactions to opinions are more diverse than a simple agreement-disagreement dichotomy. The speech act approach to opinions (Atelsek 1981), despite briefly discussing hearer’s responses to opinions, did not account for the in-between options of concessive (dis)agreements.

The Opinion ^ Reaction (Agreement) adjacency pair is considered to be the minimum of what constitutes a text of opinion, e.g.:

Initiating Opinion: These biscuits are great.

Response: Yes, they are.

(Horvath and Eggins 1995, p. 33)

Immediate agreement usually does not require further elaboration, however in some instances evidence supporting one’s opinion are given. In case of disagreement on behalf of the second speaker, Evidence and Resolution become obligatory moves. Elaboration is one of the types of evidence that are used to support one’s opinion (via exemplification or definition),

e.g., These biscuits are great- I mean they taste terrific.

(Horvath and Eggins 1995, p. 33)

or through an enhancing the opinion by implicit or explicit ‘because’ clause

e.g., You’re not supposed to put your elbows on the table – (because) it’s considered very rude.

(Horvath and Eggins 1995, p. 33)
Horvath and Eggins (1995, p. 36) argued that any disagreement can be understood as an expression of a counter-opinion. The counter-opinion is realised by a simple denial of the initiating opinion or as an assertion of a contradictory attitude and gives rise to the obligatory Evidence and Resolution moves. Also, the onus is on the person who provides the initiating opinion to provide evidence before those with counter-opinions are obliged to offer any. Additionally, speakers may use an ‘Orientation’ move before the initiating opinion is stated, which allows the speaker to establish the background on which they base their opinion (Horvath and Eggins 1995, p. 38). Resolutions of an exchange of opinions then may conclude with ‘agree to disagree’ situations or even change of opinions on behalf of the speaker who uttered the initiating opinion (ibid, p. 39-41). Finally, Horvath and Eggins (1995, p. 44) compared the event of exchanging viewpoints to stepping out onto a battlefield where challenge and attack are far more common than agreement and reinforcement.

An important contribution from the view of opinions discussed above is that, to a certain extent, it fills the gaps present in the speech acts perspective. Most importantly, Horvath and Eggins (1995) pointed out the structural importance of Orientation and Resolution moves in exchanges of opinions. These may be just one of the most prominent aspects in adhering to each other’s face needs in conversation. Therefore, cautiously introducing a topic of conversation and ensuring a resolution is reached, parting on good terms even when disagreeing, seem to point to strategies which within politeness theory would be considered face saving. Moreover, the concept of a ‘concessive’ disagreement or agreement is a quite important aspect of exchanging opinions in the English-speaking world. It enables interlocutors to disagree agreeably, which adheres to the common-sense idea of politeness.

In conclusion to this section, the literature dealing with opinions may leave one with a sense of dissatisfaction. Opinions seem to be the poor cousin among other speech acts. This is, despite the fact that in casual conversations, such as gatherings of groups of friends where a conversation is the main activity, opinion texts are one of the most common ones (Horvath and Eggins 1995, p. 30). Other types of common talk in casual conversations are informing texts (descriptions, directions, locations) and storytelling (narratives, anecdotes, etc.). From a sociolinguistic point of view, however, exchanges of opinions (or even gossiping) must be noted for their function as a tool for fostering relationships. We could go as far as arguing that any subjective evaluation is an
opinion, thus small talk about the weather or gossiping about a new neighbour could be seen as belonging to this important social activity, speaking one’s mind. These types of everyday, taken-for-granted situations can, however, cause problems in intercultural communication. Accordingly, since this study deals with Polish speakers of English and how they express opinions in English, we will now review the existing literature dealing with opinions in Polish and English.

2.5.3. Opinions in Polish and English

Studies in pragmatics have identified opinions as a possible point of friction between Polish and English-speaking cultures. Opinions in Polish are thought to be expressed “fairly forcefully” and they are usually not distinguished formally from statements of fact (Wierzbicka 1985, p. 160). Because they are issued as statements of ‘truth’, they are seldom prefaced by *I think*, *I believe* or *in my view*. The equivalent expressions in Polish may have a more restricted use as they sound quite philosophical, intellectual and none of the translations of *I think* in Polish can be used as a hedge. In comparison, in English “the difference between fact and opinions is usually expressed lexically, with opinions containing either expressions of modality, or appraisal lexis” (Eggins and Slade 1997, p. 193-194). The preference for differentiating between opinions and facts in English may also reflect overall (Anglo) politeness tendencies in speech act behaviour, which Wierzbicka summarised by saying that

in English, hedged opinions go hand in hand with hedged, indirect questions, suggestions or requests. People avoid making ‘direct, forceful comments as they avoid asking ‘direct’, forceful questions or making ‘direct’, forceful requests (Wierzbicka 2003, p. 44).

Conversely, the confrontational style in Polish may seem overly direct or even rude to outsiders. However, as Rakowicz (2009, p. 9) concluded, “the prevailing wisdom is […] that if we all agreed, we would have nothing to talk about. If there is disagreement, discussion is possible”.

The Anglo preference for indirectness and respect for one’s autonomy is reflected in a very elaborate framework of hedges in English. Everyday conversations are full of expressions such as *kind of*, *I think*, *well*, *perhaps*, *rather*, *I mean*, *somehow*, *I guess*. “Polish [on the other hand] tends to overstate (for emphasis) rather than understate. In Polish, opinions are expressed directly, forcefully and, one might say, dogmatically; in
English, they tend to be expressed tentatively and to be clearly distinguished from statements of fact” (Wierzbicka 1985, p. 163). Mirroring these cultural differences have been pointed out by Mullan (2010, p. 59), claiming that “expressing opinion is highly valued among French speakers, whereas Australian English speakers may remain noncommittal for the sake of social harmony or at least do not impose their opinion on their interlocutor”. A similar point was put forward by Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 116), who assigned the hedging of opinions in English to the positive strategies, “so as to make one’s opinion safely vague” and minimise disagreement. As the authors further explained, hedges, such as sort of, like or in a way, “may be used to soften FTAs of suggesting or criticizing or complaining, by blurring the speaker’s intent” (Brown and Levinson 1987, p. 117). This may also be applied to expressing opinions.

It might be argued that many people from English-speaking cultures often appear to conceal their true feelings to maintain a more pleasant interaction on the surface, since sharp opinions are believed to disrupt “social conviviality” (Stewart and Bennett 1991, p. 150). Wierzbicka summarised the cultural assumption reflected in English speech as this:

Everyone has the right to their own feelings, their own wishes, their own opinions. If I want to show my own feelings, my own wishes, my own opinions, it is all right, but if I want to influence somebody’s else’s actions, I must acknowledge the fact that s/he, too, may have his/her feelings, wishes or opinions, and that these do not have to coincide with mine (Wierzbicka 1985, p. 154).

Another aspect of English, which could be tied to the respect for other’s views, is the common use of question tags. Question tags, in English, appear to have a much wider variety and more frequent use than in Polish. They also represent a symbolic principle of cooperation and harmony which presumes agreement. When we say It’s lovely, isn’t it? we are not only expressing our own opinion, but also looking for that of the interlocutor. However, “Polish cultural tradition does not foster constant attention to other people’s ‘voices’, other people’s point of view, and tolerates forceful expression of personal views and personal feelings without any consideration for other people’s views and feelings” (Wierzbicka 1985, p. 158). Consequently, Polish speakers may lack an important skill in exchanging opinions, i.e. the use of question tags which, thanks to their inquisitive character, could promote an environment of cooperation and real interest in each other’s viewpoints.
When it comes to disagreement or ‘agreeing to disagree’ and compromising, Polish appears to dislike ‘compromising’ [iść na kompromis]. The word kompromis has a pejorative meaning in Polish, suggesting a “moral weakness, a deplorable lack of firmness, a sell-out of values” (Wierzbicka 2003, p. 49). Similarly, being inflexible [nieugięty] has a positive connotation in Polish, but it is negatively evaluated in English. Holding on to one’s beliefs is widely considered a desirable attitude in Poland, while compromising is something undesired one ‘gives into’ (Wierzbicka 1985, p. 164-165). In contrast, in English, reaching a compromise can often sound like a goal, an objective that can be reached, even though it can also have some negative connotations (Kalisz 1993, p. 114). A book by Paul Super (1939), an American immigrant in pre-Second World War Poland, also described his perception of the Polish attitude to compromising by saying that “the Pole is a poor compromiser; in no aspect of life is he a more confirmed idealist than in his dislike to compromise” (p. 75).

In a similar account of experiences of an American in Poland, Klos Sokol talked about her perception of the cultural and linguistic difference between the two nations. For instance, she argued that Americans tend to exaggerate positive aspects and minimise negative by hedging. Therefore, “when Americans say it was great, I know it was good. When they say it was good, I know it was okay. When they say it was okay, I know it was bad” (Klos Sokol 1997, p. 176). However, in Poland, these qualifiers are more moderate and the need to minimise speaking in negative terms does not appear to be as pronounced.

Hoffman’s (1989) memoires of learning English in America, after emigrating from Poland as a teenager, also point toward the issue of indirect, hedged opinions:

I learn also that certain kinds of truth are impolite. One shouldn’t criticize the person one is with, at least not directly. You shouldn’t say, “You are wrong about that” – though you may say, “On the other hand, there is that to consider.” You shouldn’t say, “This doesn’t look good on you,” though you may say, “I like you better in that other outfit.” I learn to tone down my sharpness, to do more careful conversational minuet (Hoffman 1989, p. 146).

This conversational minuet is what every learner of English will have to go through at some stage during their acquisition process. Studies that have looked at the issue of expressing opinions by language learners are discussed next.
2.5.4. Expressing opinions in a second language

Literature surrounding opinions is also quite limited in the field of interlanguage pragmatics (ILP). However, apart from studies of opinions, research into disagreements or indirect speech in general can be helpful in shedding light on opinions with reference to SLA and language use, as it is demonstrated in this section.

In terms of specific studies of opinions among language learners, Iwasaki (2009), for example, studied the realisation patterns of opinions among L1 and L2 American speakers of Japanese, using an oral proficiency interview. The results revealed that L2 speakers translated the strategies from their first language into Japanese, which was evident because whereas Japanese tend to prepare their interlocutor for the coming opinion and look for a common ground, speakers of American English prefer to firstly state their opinion, followed by supportive moves – a strategy they transferred into Japanese. Also, NNSs were found to lack strategies for seeking common ground, such as the use of modal verbs, hedges and confirmation seeking sentence particles (what could be roughly translated as questions tags). Interestingly, Iwasaki’s (2009) findings also suggest that the order of presenting opinions and facts in an argumentative discussion may be worth investigating as much as politeness and directness issues.

Similarly, differences in the organisation of argumentative discourse have also been found by Dafouz-Milne (2008, p. 105-106), suggesting that arguments in the English tradition normally follow a dialectic approach (i.e. presenting pros and cons using the adversative marker ‘but’). However, Spaniards and Finns, for example, build their argument by adding positive warrants to the thesis statement (using additive markers ‘moreover’ and ‘also’). Additionally, the analysis of opinion columns in Spanish and English newspapers revealed that readers find those with a ‘balanced’ number of interpersonal and textual discourse markers the most persuasive (Dafouz-Milne 2008, p. 110). This signals that using the right amount of hedging and persuasion is what gives the best results in opinions. But this balance can be difficult to strike, considering the fact that some expressions (such as I think) can have a number of differing meanings. For instance, Baumgarten and House (2010) found that L1, L2 and English ‘as a lingua franca’ environments showed different patterns in the use of expressions I think and I don’t know, with only partial overlapping. Both expressions can be used either as hedges or ‘prototypically’ to signal subjectivity (I think) or lack of knowledge
(I don’t know). Not surprisingly, L2 speakers used the pragmati- 
alised functions less often than native speakers (ibid, p. 1197-1198). However, divergences between NS and NNS strategies employed in opinions and disagreement could be a sign of a sociocultural rather than a linguistic transfer from L1. For example, directness and emphasis on strong opinions has been reported among Vietnamese learners of English (Nguyen 2008). The low level of mitigation in an expression of criticism (in comparison to Australian NSs) could be linked to the fact that Vietnamese prefer to defend their opinions and use strong words to do so. Moreover, Nguyen (2008) also argued that apart from L1 influences, lower proficiency learners may have problems with mitigating their opinions when performing oral tasks, but not so much in written tasks. This finding is also a significant argument for the use, as in the present research, of oral elicitation techniques which reflect real-life interactions better than written instruments.

In close relation to opinions, aspects such as agreement and disagreement (including refusals) have also been investigated from an ILP perspective (Beebe and Takahashi 1989; Salsbury and Bardovi-Harlig 2000, 2001; Iwasaki 2009; Salazar Campillo 2009). Beebe and Takahashi’s (1989) study, for instance, revealed that, despite their L1’s reliance on indirectness, Japanese speakers of English expressed disagreements to their boss in a DCT using direct strategies which were harsh-sounding in comparison to the expected American English NSs’ formulations; (this mismatch was possibly due to their limited proficiency). Moreover, Salsbury and Bardovi-Harlig (2000, 2001) found that the appropriate use of disagreements strategies by L2 speakers can be constrained by issues with the development of modal expressions. NNSs in their study tended to rely heavily on lexical markers of modality, think and maybe, despite being familiar with modal verbs such as could and might. Similarly, Walkinshaw (2007) tested the skills of Japanese learners of English in disagreeing with interlocutors of various power relationships, revealing that the Japanese speakers used more complex and mitigated strategies with power-equal interlocutors, but opted for simpler, shorter and rather formulaic strategies in power-unequal exchanges. This may be the opposite of what NSs would do, use more elaborate disagreements when talking to superiors rather than power-equals. Such cross-linguistic differences with reference disagreements can have a significant influence on how speakers are perceived by their interlocutors also when exchanging opinions.
Apart from the already mentioned importance of the order of presenting opinions and facts, and using stance markers, comprehension and production of indirect opinions could be another vital, but also difficult, skill to master in L2. For example, Taguchi (2008) looked at the development of comprehension of indirect refusals and opinions in a longitudinal study of Japanese study-abroad learners. In a pragmatic listening task, participants were exposed to indirect opinions. For instance, where after being asked ‘How was the wedding?’, the reply was ‘The cake was okay’ (Taguchi 2008, p. 53).

The study revealed that accurate comprehension of indirect opinions barely increased during the four months of the study abroad, while that of indirect refusals increased significantly. According to Taguchi (2008), this could have been the result of a more complex and less conventionalised character of indirect opinions, saying that “compared with refusal items, the comprehension of indirect opinions requires greater processing efforts because of the greater degree of mismatch between the literal and the implied meaning” (Taguchi 2008, p. 53). Additionally, the author suggested that the low increase in comprehension may have been due to the quality of study abroad programme in terms of its duration, the actual time spent communicating with the host family and wider community, and the difficulty observing patterns in indirect opinions which do not operate according to frames of conventionality. This suggestion is in line with claims of other authors, who pointed out that it is erroneous to think that learners acquire pragmatics through simple exposure to L2 (Cohen 2008). Instead, pragmatics should be taught explicitly in order for learners to start noticing the discrepancies between L1/L2 and C1/C2 pragmatic conventions, as a first step to also gain an operational knowledge of aspects such as indirectness, hedging and polite disagreements.

In conclusion, opinions appear to be a complex speech act to acquire in L2. Firstly, with reference to their structure, the difficulty lies in the fact that every Opinion ^ Evidence sequence is different according to their context. Secondly, mastering expressing opinions means mastering the use of modal verbs, conditionals, question tags and many types of hedges. Additionally, indirect opinions are difficult to understand because of the considerable mismatch between what is said and what is meant. Finally, disagreeing politely is another substantial skill to master with reference to opinions. Literature dealing with issues of developing pragmatic skills in L2 will be discussed in the next chapter (Section 3.1.4). It will provide an important base for understanding the Polish participants’ position as NNSs in the present research.
2.6. Conclusion

This chapter provided the first part of the theoretical underpinnings of this research study. After a brief introduction to the field of pragmatics, the discussion centred round two main theories, dealing with speech acts and politeness. It was suggested that opinions present an interesting, complex speech act, which has not been explored to any great extent within the speech act realisation pattern tradition. Additionally, the various approaches to the concept of face and politeness theory showed that studying meaning in context is a difficult task, which can be approached from many directions. However, apart from dealing with theories of language use in context, many of the linguistic characteristics of pragmatic behaviour of certain groups of people or languages derive from more deeply ingrained values and rules, that is, from that particular culture. The concept of cultural scripts, presented in Section 2.4 helps to bridge the study of language and culture. Furthermore, the next chapter continues with this connection between language and culture and it deals with opinions from the perspectives of cross-cultural and sociology studies. This enables the drawing of a fuller picture of the many facets of opinions.
Chapter 3 – Pragmatics and Culture

3.0. Introduction

This chapter approaches pragmatics from a stronger cultural standpoint, in addition to the linguistic one presented in the previous chapter. Advocating a union of pragmalinguistics and a sociocultural approach to studying human communication, LoCastro (2012) argued that “a sociolinguistic perspective on pragmatics adds the recognition, often unexamined, that the participants make linguistic choices on the basis of such variables as their identities, gender, sociocultural background, previous experiences, and world knowledge” (p. 306-607). Taking into account those additional factors under the umbrella term of culture, this chapter examines the sociocultural characteristics of the two cultures studied here, as well as presenting relevant theories of communicating across cultures. Consequently, in the first place, this chapter presents relevant intercultural communication theories (3.1.2) and discusses the relationship between language and culture (3.1.1). Adopting an intercultural perspective means that the two groups under discussion were in contact and the Polish taking part in the study were all non-native speakers of English. In order to understand their NNS position, this chapter will also discuss the process of acquisition of pragmatic skills in a second language (3.1.3), addressing relevant acquisition theories and models of pragmatic competence (3.1.4). This review will turn to literature deriving from interlanguage pragmatics (Canale 1983; Celce-Murcia 2007), as well as alternative theories of intercultural competence (e.g. Byram 1997). In the second part of this chapter (3.2), Irish and Polish cultural and politeness traits are discussed.

3.1. Culture and pragmatics

The issues discussed in this chapter will reflect the fact that pragmatics penetrates many spheres of human communication. Because it is difficult to discuss isolated theories or phenomena, we shall present issues which go beyond the cross-cultural pragmatic studies, especially with reference to Polish-English studies. Apart from a linguistic focus, the understanding of Polish and Irish cultures, and all its relevant issues, will be aided by a sociology and communication perspective, most importantly
the work done by Hofstede (1980, *inter alia*). All these different perspectives complement each other and, therefore, help to paint a clearer picture of the skills and variables at play in intercultural communication.

### 3.1.1. Relationship between pragmatics and culture

The meaning of ‘culture’ has evolved over the last few decades. Using Halverson’s terms (1985), we have moved from the concept of “Big C” – culture associated with art, literature and classical music, to that of “little c” – culture seen as representing a worldview, “a common system of standards for perceiving, believing, evaluating, and acting” (Kramsch 1998, p. 10). Conversely, Spencer-Oatey’s (2000, p. 4) definition captured the complexity of culture to whom it is “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 behaviours and each member’s interpretation of the ‘meaning’ of other people’s behaviour”. From the aspects mentioned in this definition of culture, with reference to intercultural communication, the ‘basic assumptions’ would probably play the most important part. While communicating in one’s own culture, much of the linguistic decision-making is subconscious, in intercultural communication thinking about culture is more conscious and less based on assumptions. Additionally, following Spencer-Oatey’s definition, it is important to remember that speakers influence each other in communication. In intercultural communication, these influences are even stronger since they are more dissimilar than in communication between people from the same culture.

One of the defining characteristics of a certain culture is the language a particular group of people share. The strong relationship between language and culture is also reflected in linguistic discourse, where “the view of culture and language as integral, one to the other, has become so dominant that the term *sociocultural* has come to be substituted for the term *sociolinguistic* in representing the components of communicative competence” (Savignon 2007, p. 212). Similarly, studying linguistic politeness would often involve taking into account also some non-linguistic behavioural aspects, in the general sense of *savoir-vivre*. Furthermore, because communication and the cultivation of culture, often done through language, cannot be context-free, studying the relationship between language and context gives pragmatics a great advantage among other sub-disciplines of linguistics. The wealth of knowledge
in studying pragmatics comes additionally from its many approaches, from historical, variational or interlanguage to intra-cultural, cross-cultural and intercultural perspectives. Consequently, the many interconnected components of culture can be studied with the help of disciplines such as pragmatics.

Considering further the interplay between culture, politeness and pragmatics, the relationship between these elements could be described as reflecting the ‘chicken or the egg’ dilemma. Following a classic definition of culture provided by Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952), one's culture is a product as well as the condition of certain types of behaviours:

Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other as conditioning elements of further action (p. 181).

Correspondingly, just as Watts (2003) stressed that the nature of politeness is disputable because of the difficulty of defining what politeness is, similar predicament appears to emerge in the search for a definition of culture. Baker and Galasiński (1996) also discussed ethnicity as a discursive construction of a relational nature. Perhaps the best metaphor to use here is that culture should be treated as a verb, given its performative and fluid rather than a constant and absolute character (cf. Street 1993).

While we return briefly to the definition of culture in Section 3.2, there are at least three key aspects to keep in mind with reference to the discussion presented to this point. Firstly, culture is context-sensitive, thus reflects both situational as well as temporary variability, as it can change across time and space. Secondly, culture’s definition entails a holistic view of a person’s or a group’s customs, attitudes and beliefs. This, in turn, means that in order to grasp the idea of culture, it is often divided into manageable units, with somewhat fuzzy rather than rigidly-defined boundaries. Thirdly, as a construct, one’s belonging to a given culture is based on both conscious and unconscious choices, which may have more implicit and deep, or explicit and surface-level character. As a consequence, in this study, the context-sensitivity of the definition of culture is reflected in the focus on one specific cultural activity, i.e. exchanging opinions in informal context in a momentary study (as opposed to studying change over time). The units of analysis are divided for ease, yet in acknowledgement of their openness to essentialist interpretation, into Irish and Polish ‘national cultures’
(cf. Section 3.2). And lastly, the focus on pragmalinguistic-sociopragmatic aspect of opinions reflects the implicit-explicit dichotomy with relation to the manifestations of culture (see further discussion of ‘culture’ in Section 3.2).

### 3.1.2. Pragmatics and intercultural communication

Despite the increased interest in intercultural communication, thanks to globalisation, there are few theories which address this phenomenon from a strictly linguistic point of view. The largest body of literature comes from the field of communication and business studies, given the fact that global business has been both the one in need of such theory, but also the space where a large portion of intercultural communication takes place (e.g. Wiseman 1995; Gibson 2002). Having argued that this research is in fact an *intercultural* study of opinions (cf. Section 1.1), in this section, reference is made to two theories which complement our focus on opinions within politeness and speech acts approach.

The first model most closely linked to the theoretical concepts presented in this thesis is that of ‘face negotiation theory’ and the concept of facework competence (Ting-Toomey and Kurogi 1998) (see also Section 2.3.1). Similarly to Brown and Levinson’s (1987) politeness theory, this theory presumes the key aspect that needs negotiation in communication is maintaining each other’s face. Consequently, the main reason for conflicts in communication across cultures is misinterpretation of the different face needs between interlocutors (especially in communication involving Asian and Western cultures in contact). Another theory of intercultural communication, which also builds on the concept of face, was proposed by Spencer-Oatey (2000, 2002) under the label of ‘rapport management theory’. In effect, the theory argues that mismanaged rapport is caused by differences in communicative preferences in different cultures. Additionally, this theory proposes an expanded, alternative concept of face (Spencer-Oatey 2002) (see Section 2.3.1), a model later adopted by Culpeper (2005) in discussing impoliteness. Nevertheless, ‘rapport management theory’ and ‘face management theory’ both seem to echo the general facework and politeness theory, showing that understanding the concepts of face and politeness is a prerequisite to understanding intercultural communication.
It has been argued thus far that speech acts and politeness theory are the point of departure for the analysis in this research. While both speech acts and politeness theory were developed with reference to intracultural variation, the present study also entails an intercultural Irish-Polish dimension. We could argue, however, that the ‘general’ face and politeness theories can be applied to studying communication in intercultural contexts. By acknowledging the fact that speech act realisation patterns and politeness preferences vary across cultures, the analysis of the role-plays and focus groups can be seen as a reflection of these cross-cultural discrepancies. Consequently, discussing the differences between opinions in the Polish (PL) and Irish (IE) data will also attempt to refer to the existing literature dealing with cultural and politeness characteristics of each nation. Helpful concepts in such analysis include Hofstede’s (1980 *inter alia*) classification of cultures according to a number of universal dimensions (Section 3.2). In reference to Polish culture, the field of contrastive, cross-cultural pragmatics will be helpful. Moreover, the explanatory value of cultural scripts will be useful in describing the variation between the two cultures studied here (see Sections 2.4 & 7.8). Finally, since the Polish participants of this research learned English as a second language, theories explaining pragmatic development of interlanguage will also allow for a fuller understanding of the phenomena at play in intercultural exchanges of opinions. Theories of pragmatic development in a second language are, therefore, discussed in the coming section.

### 3.1.3. Pragmatics and culture in a second language

There are no languages which are culture free, except for artificial ones, such as Esperanto. This means that when acquiring a second language one also is exposed to the culture of the L2. The main theories shedding light on the acquisition of the cultural aspects of learning a language are the concepts of ‘third culture’ (Kramsch 1993, 1998), the ‘intercultural speaker’ (House 2007) and the ‘acculturation model’ (Schumann 1978, 1986, 1990), which are discussed in this section.

The notion of third culture was developed as a response to the more traditional native and non-native speakers’ (NS-NNS) dichotomies, proposing a third dimension. Kramsch (1993) suggested language learning takes place in a ‘third place’ that a language learner must make for him/herself between their first culture (C1) and the foreign language culture (C2). Third place involves the language learner in a process...
of an objective and subjective reflection of C1 and C2, from which they must choose their own meaning that best reflects their personal perspectives (Baker 2003). Creating third places involves (1) relating C1 to C2 and reflecting on perceptions of C1 and C2; (2) in teaching culture – moving beyond presentation of cultural facts to the process of understanding foreignness; (3) understanding that culture has many ‘hidden’ aspects such as age, race, gender, social class which influence national traits; and (4) ensuring that teachers cross disciplinary boundaries by relating language teaching to sociology, ethnography, or sociolinguistics (Kramsch 1993, p. 205-206; Baker 2003). Within an ecological approach to language education, the relationship of language and culture is “heterogeneous, fluid, conflictual; it is seen as a mode, not a place of belonging” (Kramsch 2009, p. 247). Third culture should not be understood as “romanticized hybridity”, but a concept subject to change and constant re-interpretation and re-evaluation (ibid). Thus, language learners are expected to be able to communicate effectively with NS in a way that also reflects their own cultural and personal beliefs. The keyword in the process of creating a ‘third place’ is mediation – mediation between C1 and C2, and L1 and L2. That process of mediation and negotiation of identity and meaning is echoed in the concept of “intercultural speakers” proposed by House (2007).

The concept of a third place in L2 acquisition could be linked to what House (2007, p. 14) calls “intercultural actants”. Intercultural actants “need to be conceived as independent of both their native culture (and language) and the new culture (and language), which they are trying to link, mediate, reconcile. They are creating something new and autonomous in-between, hybrid, third way” (House 2007, p. 15). An intercultural speaker then “is a person who has managed to settle for the in-between, who knows and can perform in both his and her native culture and in another one acquired at some later date” (House 2007, p. 19). The key skill intercultural speakers possess is strategic competence, which allows them to engage from the start in meaningful negotiation. House is against the negative attitude towards transferring linguistic and cultural aspects of L1 or C1 into another language, saying that not all transfer is failure to adapt to the L2 norms, stipulating that there is a need to shift focus onto studies of “successful intercultural communication” (2007, p. 16).

Apart from the prefix ‘inter’ and the idea of a ‘third place’ (Bhabha 1994), recent research with relation to cultures in contact suggests the concept of transculturality
(Hoerder and Macklin 2006; Hoerder 2013). The discussion of transnationality would not be new in research within politics or sociology, where it refers to migrants leading ‘dual lives’ by maintaining close cultural and economic ties with their native countries (cf. Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt 1999; Vertovec 2009). However, it has been argued that migrants may live between two particular regions or communities (i.e. cultures) and not necessarily national cultures, hence the stress on the term ‘transcultural’ lives, in addition to trans-country/state practices (Hoerder and Macklin 2006, p. 796). This concept seems to reflect also Kramsch’s (1993) idea of a fluid and unstable ‘place’ a person living in two languages and/or cultures creates. Additionally, transculture “emphasizes the overlapping, interactive, processual character of such scapes” (Hoerder 2013, p. 2968). Finally, research of the transcultural nature has also been suggested to aim for inter- or trans-disciplinary approaches to “human lives and societal developments” (ibid). However, although the new perspective provides an interesting avenue for interdisciplinary research, its value to pragmatics and linguistics is still to be explored.

While the theories of cultural development in a second language mentioned until now capture well the negotiation process learners go through in their acquisition, they also seem to idealise it and presume a balanced relationship between L1/L2 and C1/C2. However, in many situations, one language or culture takes a more prominent role in this process of negotiation. Therefore, the third culture can lean towards one or the other, also depending on different contexts. Moreover, in C1 usually a person develops and learns not only about the politeness rules of that culture, but where he or she learns to feel, believe and not necessarily understand why it is so. The acquisition of L2 and C2 (especially if done at a later stage in life) is more objective, rational and observant, and less emotional. Additionally, C1 is always the first point of reference for the negotiation of placing the ‘third culture’ within one’s sociocultural and linguistic repertoire. An example of such difficult choices between the correct language and one’s cultural identity is reflected in a short anecdote in an autobiographic book about experiences of a Polish teenage immigrant in Canada:

Every day I learn new words, new expressions. I pick them up from school exercises, from conversations, from books […]. There are some turns of phrase to which I develop strange allergies. “You’re welcome,” for example, strikes me as a gaucherie, and I can hardly bring myself to say it – I suppose because it implies that there’s something to be thanked for, which in Polish would be impolite (Hoffman 1989, p. 106).
The model of L2 cultural development discussed next, on the contrary, seems to present the L2 and C2 as the more important one. Proposed by Schumann under the label of “Acculturation Model”, it predicts that “learners will acquire the target language to the degree they acculturate to the target language group” (Schumann 1986, p. 379). Schumann’s model was designed with reference to immigrant communities acquiring the target language without instruction, but has been since applied in research in other contexts too.

Schumann argued that SLA depends on a number of social and psychological (affective) conditions. On the one hand, the social variables include patterns of social dominance between the immigrant and host community, the integration strategy of the immigrant group (either assimilate and ‘lose’ their own identity, preserve it or a more balanced ‘adaptation’ which allows intra- and inter-group identities), the sharing of public places and activities, the cohesiveness of the immigrant group, the similarity between the two social groups (congruence), and, finally, the attitude toward each other, as well as the intended length of stay of the immigrant. The affective variables, on the other hand, include ‘language shock’ or the fear of sounding ridiculous when speaking the foreign language; ‘cultural shock’, defined as “anxiety resulting from the disorientation encountered upon entering new culture” (Schumann 1978, p. 88); and, lastly, motivation. Schumann further divided motivation into integrative motivation, which relates to social, inter-personal motives for learning the language, and instrumental motivation, which relates to ‘utilitarian’ reasons, such as getting a job. Moreover, integrative motivation is believed to be the most powerful of the two because it implies a desire to integrate with speakers of the target language (Schumann 1986, p. 383). The last affective variable Schumann believed to influence SLA is knowing one’s limits as a language learner and lowering the learner’s level of inhibition (ego-permeability). Schumann suggested that the acculturation process is not simply an additional, parallel process that accompanies language learning, but that the acquisition of a language depends on how and to what level the learner acculturates (1986, p. 379).

The first study that tested the acculturation model was Schmidt’s Wes study (Schmidt 1983), where the author studied interlanguage pragmatic development of a Japanese adult learner of English over a three-year period. The author also adopted Canale’s (1983) framework of communicative competence in describing how Wes developed
various aspects of language skills in English. Schmidt concluded that despite Wes having an extensive contact with English speakers and high levels of motivation, his grammatical knowledge in terms of syntactic structures and non-target-like speech act realisations persisted. His communicative strategies (pragmatic and sociolinguistic), however, improved greatly. Schumann (1986) later concluded that the Wes study provided counter-evidence for the acculturation model. This conclusion could mean that the process of acquiring L2 pragmatics is much more complex than the model could account for. For instance, Schumann (1978, p. 368) assigned literally no importance to the value of instruction in L2 in the process of acculturation. Additionally, one could argue that individual attitudes, personality traits, and innate language abilities would, to a large extent, determine to what level one acculturates. Given the underestimated importance of instruction in L2 acquisition and very little empirical evidence to support Schumann’s theory (Ellis 1994, p. 233), it has rather limited value in enlightening the process of developing pragmatic skills in L2. Perhaps the most important contribution of this theory is stressing the importance of motivation, which I am inclined to agree plays a vital part in the acquisition of L2 pragmatic skills.

It has been suggested that pragmatic skills correlate more strongly with motivation than proficiency (e.g. Takahashi 2005). For instance, in a study entitled When in Rome... Hinkel (1996) examined NNSs perceptions and attitudes of English as a key factor influencing their willingness to acquire and adhere to the L2 pragmatic conventions. She used self-report questionnaires in which participants graded the appropriateness of different forms, and later compared to those of NSs. The author discovered that despite high levels of awareness, many learners would choose not to obey the pragmatic norms of the target language because they viewed them critically in comparison to their L1 norms. However, when immigrants have to live and function in another country, they often may not have the choice to disregard the L2 pragmatic norms, but they may also be more motivated to fit in and see the positive results of adhering to L2 pragmatic conventions in their everyday lives. In an attempt to discover why the pragmatic and grammatical development are independent of each other, Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei (1998) tested the relationship between the two variables in two different contexts, ESL and EFL. They found that EFL learners, as well as their teachers, identified and ranked grammatical errors (which occurred along pragmatic infelicities) as more serious whereas answers from learners and teachers in the ESL
context showed the opposite pattern. The authors concluded that this situation occurs because in an ESL context, where learners reside in the L2 community, their pragmatic skills influence their relationships with the members of the host society. Students’ experiences depend on being pragmatically competent and infelicities would have stronger repercussions, hence the grading of pragmatic errors as more serious. On the other side, the washback effect of EFL teaching, focusing on grammar and more academically-oriented goals, may influence both teachers’ and students’ perceptions of seriousness of grammatical errors over pragmatic issues. In addition, Schumann’s (1978) argument that acculturation is a necessary process in becoming a pragmatically competent speaker raises another important issue. The strong influence of motivation (for assimilation) in developing pragmatic skills may suggest that those learning languages in an EFL context must ‘work harder’ (and their teachers must do so too) in order to overcome this apparent disadvantage. Consequently, the issue of motivation for assimilation will echo in Section 4.3.3, when discussing the profiles of the research participants, as well as in Section 8.5, which reviews the topic of pragmatic instruction.

To conclude this section, the complexity of the acquisition of a second language and the culture of that language has been demonstrated in the number of different variables that are believed to influence such development. Moreover, since it is a ‘mode’ and not a place of belonging, any research into ‘third places’ is a momentary study, a snapshot of the whole process. This multifacetedness is also reflected in the model of pragmatic competence. This section talked about the theories which deal with the acquisition of pragmatic skills in a second language, also referred to as acquisition of a second culture. The discussion now turns to describing what that process ultimately leads to, the development of pragmatic competence.

### 3.1.4. Pragmatic competence

Modern language teaching and learning has a base in the belief that language is a form of communication and the ultimate goal of teaching and learning is the developing communicative competence (CC). With time, the concept of CC has also been investigated more extensively, revealing the complexity of being a competent speaker of a language. One of such sub-skills is the knowledge of appropriate cultural scripts and behaviours of the language being learned. However, while pragmatic competence
is considered a vital part of communicative competence, it is also a rather multifaceted set of skills, as will be demonstrated in this review of the concept.

The model of CC draws on the works of various linguists from different branches. Hymes’ (1972) definition of CC was coined as an ethnographic response to the theories of formal linguist Noam Chomsky. The principle of the notion of CC is the fact that “there are rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless” (Hymes 1972, p. 278). Hymes (1972) argued that in order to learn and use a language, two types of skills are necessary, not only linguistic knowledge of syntax, phonology, etc., but also the sociolinguistic competence for using that language appropriately in communication with others. The earliest applications of this model were further developed (see Figure 3.1) by Canale and Swain (1980), who added strategic competence (the ability to compensate for problems of deficits in communication and do various types of planning) to the two elements proposed by Hymes and renamed ‘linguistic competence’ as ‘grammatical competence’. Later, Canale (1983) added discourse competence (the ability to produce and interpret language beyond the sentence level) to the model. In the mid-nineties, Celce-Murcia et al. (1995) proposed another component, namely actional competence (the ability to comprehend and produce all significant speech acts and speech act sets) and re-labelled some of the terminology proposed by Canale and Swain. The model developed by Celce-Murcia et al. (1995) was also the first attempt to describe the relationship between all the components of CC.
Defining pragmatic competence may prove to be somewhat problematic. Different authors use different labels to refer to, more or less, the same types of skills or focus on particular sub-skills (Schneider, Sickinger and Hampel 2013). Therefore, pragmatic competence can be referred to as pragmatic, sociocultural or sociolinguistic competence. Additionally, one could argue that some other competences, such as strategic competence, also describe skills that overlap with pragmatic skills. Pragmatic competence is what Celce-Murcia (2007) identifies as sociocultural competence and refers to the speakers’ knowledge of how to use language appropriately according to social and cultural contexts of communication. This component also corresponds to Canale and Swain’s (1980), Savignon’s (1983) and Bachman’s (1990) concepts of sociolinguistic competence. According to Canale (1987, p. 90) pragmatic competence includes “illocutionary competence, or the knowledge of the pragmatic conventions for performing acceptable language functions, and sociolinguistic competence, or knowledge of the sociolinguistic conventions for performing language functions appropriately in a given context”. According to Barron (2003, p. 10), pragmatic competence is the “knowledge of linguistic resources available in a given language for realizing particular illocutions, knowledge of the sequential aspects of speech acts and finally, knowledge of the appropriate contextual use of the particular languages’ linguistic resources”.

Figure 3.1 Chronological development of the Communicative Competence Model (adapted from Celce-Murcia et al. 1995, p. 11)
Celce-Murcia *et al.* (1995, p. 23-24) described a number of skills within the sociocultural competence, with the most crucial being:

- Sensitivity to social contextual factors, such as the participants’ age, gender, status, social distance, and the relationship between interlocutors: power and affect.
- Stylistic appropriateness, including politeness strategies and awareness regarding genres and registers.
- Knowledge of cultural factors which refer to background knowledge of the L2 language group, dialectic variations and cross-cultural awareness.

As explained by Yule (1996, p. 3-4), a pragmatically skilled speaker should be able to interpret a number of meanings in interactions. These include the people’s intended meaning, their assumptions, their purposes and goals, and identify the sort of action that is being performed (i.e. a suggestion or a warning). Fluency then, refers to automatic control in using pragmatic knowledge in real time (Kasper 2001b). Some of the factors contributing to development of sociocultural competence include knowledge of the life and traditions of the target community, their history and literature. According to Celce-Murcia (2007, p. 46), extended living among the target community is one of the best ways to improve one’s sociolinguistic competence, along with improving linguistic skills. Bardovi-Harlig and colleagues share a similar opinion and recognise the risks of the lack of them:

> Speakers who do not use pragmatically appropriate language run the risk of appearing uncooperative at the least, or, more seriously, rude or insulting. This is particularly true to advanced learners whose high linguistic proficiency leads other speakers to expect concomitantly high pragmatic competence (Bardovi-Harlig *et al.* 1991, p. 4).

In recent literature, the concept of communicative competence has been ‘extended’ into that of intercultural communicative competence. According to Byram (1997, 2000) intercultural communicative competence requires certain skills, attitudes and knowledge in addition to linguistic, sociolinguistic and discourse competence. The *attitudes* include curiosity and openness to interpreting person’s own and others’ cultures without being judgemental. The required *knowledge* is “of social groups and their products and practices in one’s own and in one’s interlocutor’s country, and of the general processes of societal and individual reactions” (Byram 1997, p. 49-54). The
skills refer to those of interpreting and relating different cultural aspects between cultures; discovery (ability to acquire new knowledge) and interaction (dealing with real-life constrains of interactions); and finally critical cultural awareness and political education (Byram 1997, p. 49-54). Therefore, an interculturally competent speaker is one who “has knowledge of one, or, preferably, more cultures and social identities and has the capacity to discover and relate to new people from other contexts for which they have not been prepared directly” (Byram and Fleming 1998, p. 9). Intercultural competence may be interpreted as a frame of mind where language speakers must be able to approach interlocutors from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds drawing on their previous knowledge and coping with what the interaction may bring. Bennett et al. (2003, p. 237) refer to intercultural competence as “the general ability to transcend ethnocentrism, appreciate other cultures and generate appropriate behaviour in one or more different cultures”. Overall, it seems that this model is centred around ethical issues rather than linguistic and it is of rather limited value to the current research because of its low linguistic focus.

What is clear from the literature presented in this section is that pragmatic competence is a complex concept. It entails a wide array of linguistic skills, other capabilities, such as knowledge of the L2 culture, and a certain set of attitudes. Additionally, the quality of the L2/C2 experience can also influence the progress in improving speakers’ skills in a new language, or what is referred to as an interlanguage. Interlanguage is an individual, transitory language that learners develop along an evolution continuum, and, as learners progress, it resembles more closely the target language. Interlanguage develops in a systematic way through incomplete, working hypotheses about the L2, through aspects such as overgeneralisations or transfer of linguistic knowledge from L1 (cf. Selinker 1972). Just as errors in conjugation (e.g. when applying L2 rules to newly acquired irregular verbs) are a normal part of language acquisition, so are errors which derive from cultural differences. These errors have been described under the cover term ‘transfer’, referring to different kinds of cross-lingual influences “resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously [...] acquired” (Odlin 1989, p. 27). The study of transfer involves, therefore, the study of errors (negative transfer), facilitation (positive transfer), avoidance of target language forms, and their overuse (Ellis 1994, p. 341). With reference to pragmatics, Kasper (1992, p. 207) defined interlanguage pragmatic transfer as “the influence exerted by learners’ pragmatic knowledge of languages and
cultures other than L2 on their comprehension, production and learning of L2 pragmatic information.” Up close, transfer is often looked at from the perspective of pragmalinguistic-sociopragmatic dichotomy (Leech 1983; Thomas 1983). Thus, pragmalinguistic transfer relates to the L1’s influence on the learners’ form-function mappings in L2 whereas the sociopragmatic transfer is “operative when the social perceptions underlying language users’ interpretation and performance of linguistic action in L2 are influenced by their assessment of subjectivity equivalent of L1 contexts” (Kasper 1992, p. 209). Investigating the conditions that promote or inhibit transfer, researchers have identified that level of proficiency, cultural information, and the length of stay in L2 community influence transfer. However, personal factors such as age, personality and learning context can also play a role in pragmatic transfer (Bou Franch 1998). In reference to transfer ‘problem areas’ identified among Polish speakers/learners of English one can turn to studies conducted from a contrastive pragmatics perspective (Wierzbicka 1985; Herbert 1997) as well as ILP studies (Jaworski 1994). We will review them in turns.

Herbert (1997) studied the speech act of complimenting as the example where differences between English and Polish could be seen quite clearly. While Polish speakers used more second-person, impersonally-focused compliments (i.e. ‘You have nice...’), the English speakers depended highly on the first person singular (i.e. I like, love...). Also, Polish compliments7 (almost half of the participants in the study) focused on the addressee’s possessions, and less on physical appearance. Herbert (1997) assigned this characteristic of Polish culture to the idea of a ‘consumer troubled society’ (referring to the half-century long communist rule in Poland), where complimenting someone on their possessions could be seen almost as congratulating them on being able to attain the object of compliment in the first place. This conclusion highlights the importance of taking a historical view of the socio-political and cultural developments of the groups under question when investigating pragmatic aspects such as speech act realisations. However, there are some difficulties with historical studies in pragmatics, such as the lack of data from past times similar to those which can be obtained currently, thus the reliance on written accounts of how people spoke in the past (e.g. theatre plays). Consequently, historical pragmatics often relies on qualitative analyses drawing on historical social research, leaning more

7 For further research on complimenting in Polish and Poland see Antas (2002), Drabik (2004), Jędrzejko (2002), and Marcjanik (2000).
closely to the sociopragmatic rather than pragmaphilological aspects (cf. Culpeper 2010). Nevertheless, even the general insight into the history of a nation can provide an important assistance in interpreting linguistic data in pragmatics.

Jaworski (1994) assessed the skills of Polish learners of English in terms of knowledge of appropriate responses to conventional greetings. The results revealed that even advanced learners interpreted the greeting *How are you (doing) (today)?* as a ‘question for information’, therefore failing to recognise its formulaic character. The NNSs’ responses to greetings were also influenced by this misinterpretation and rather more ‘sincere’, uncustomary accounts of one’s actual wellbeing. Similarly, focusing on conversational routines, McConachy (2008) studied the question *How was your weekend?* among Japanese EFL learners. By collecting field notes as well as studying students’ reflective journal entries, the author was able to unveil the difficulties the learners had with interpreting and responding to this simple conversation opener. However, it is important to note that pragmatic skills are also those where teachers can help with appropriate instruction. Therefore, following the study, using discussion of small talk, analysing *How was your weekend?* dialogues, and keeping a journal, were methods by which learners’ intercultural meta-awareness was raised in McConachy’s study (2008). It, therefore, provided evidence that pragmatics is, in fact, teachable (Kasper and Rose 2002) and that “students do not just get it through osmosis” (Cohen 2008, p. 213).

Wierzbicka also identified a number of concepts within pragmatics where Polish and English differ, such as advice, requests, tag questions, exclamations and opinions (1985). Moreover, in terms of formulating the above listed acts “English, compared with Polish, places heavy restrictions on the use of the imperative and make extensive use of interrogative and conditional forms” (Wierzbicka 1985, p. 145). These are just some examples of possible transfer of strategies from Polish to English. However, postulating the need for pragmatic instruction, Wierzbicka (1985, p. 174) stressed that these cultural and linguistic differences can be overcome and taught, just as Polish learners of English can learn the polysemy of the word ‘bank’. Nevertheless, debate relating to classroom instruction in terms of pragmatic development has rightly identified some moral dilemmas teachers may face. Whereas it may seem acceptable to correct students to use appropriate forms, it is more difficult to assign a teacher the
position to change the learners’ systems of beliefs and values about the world that
guide their sociopragmatic choices (Riley 1989, p. 234).

In conclusion, the discussion of development of pragmatic skills in a second language
has demonstrated that it is a complex skill which can interfere or be helped by other
aptitudes within the model of communicative competence. Shortcomings in one area
can be helped with appropriate coping skills (i.e. strategic competence). Moreover,
communication in a second language is, by definition, also intercultural
communication, and interlocutors representing different cultures can have different
expectations with regards to politeness and face needs. Therefore, it is important to
take into account the politeness characteristics of the ‘national’ cultures of the
interlocutors when analysing intercultural communication. This enables making the
necessary link between instances of mismanaged rapport (Spencer-Oatey 2000, 2005)
and the politeness preferences of the interlocutors. Moreover, it is not only L2
proficiency or the knowledge of the L2/C2 pragmatic conventions, but also the
attitudes towards the L2 community and one’s own position within this society that
influence pragmatic development and appropriate language use. The present study will
focus on the link between linguistic formulae in opinions and the attitudes in both
linguistic groups by discussing the role-play data with reference to the focus groups.
This said, deepening one’s knowledge of the alien culture is one of the first steps to
becoming a pragmatically competent speaker of a language. Consequently, the cultural
traits of the two nations investigated are presented next.

3.2. Irish and Polish culture

Following Hofstede (1983, p. 75), “nations are political units, rooted in history, with
their own institutions: forms of government, legal systems, educational systems, labour
and employer’s association systems”. A good point of departure in comparing two
nations, countries or ‘national cultures’ is a search for things in common. Poland and
Ireland’s commonalities are, for instance, the influence of religion in both cultures
(e.g. abortion is still illegal in Poland and in Ireland), as well as their political history,
because of the independence struggles in the past. Whereas Ireland was occupied by
the British Empire for many years, Poland disappeared off the map of Europe for over
a century after an invasion from Russia, Prussia and Austria in the late eighteenth
century. Many Poles would also consider the communist regime after the Second
World War, which lasted until 1989, as lacking freedom as well. Moreover, Roman Catholicism formed part of national identity in both countries in the fight against their enemies (Hofstede 1980, p. 109). A more recent bond between Polish and Irish nations has been the growth in immigration of Poles to Ireland. In the last decade, the language contact between Irish English and Polish has reached a level never seen before. In fact, at the peak of immigration, Poles outnumbered the native Irish speakers. The latest census reported 122,811 speakers of Polish in 2011 in Ireland (Central Statistics Office 2012a, p. 27), whereas 55,554 people reported using Irish ‘daily’ outside educational context (in daily life) (Central Statistics Office 2012b, p. 99). It has even been suggested that thanks to the Polish presence in Ireland there may be a Polish variety of Irish English in the future (Hickey 2007, p. 29).

Up to this point, we have seen many definitions of culture. Among its many fuzzy explanations, it has also been compared to an iceberg (Peterson 2004; Brett 2007, see Figure 3.2 below), where its visible part refers to cultural artefacts and more observable customs, such as traditional food, music or gestures, as well as language (Peterson 2004, p. 20). The invisible part of the iceberg then refers to the more deeply engrained systems of values, which are said to be more difficult to be challenged than a change in one’s customs of behaviour (Peterson 2004, p. 103). Moreover, because the submerged part is less easily accessible, the study of cultures is a complex process. Regarding the study of pragmatics, the connection between the linguistic manifestations visible on the tip of the iceberg and the sociopragmatic ‘rules’ of communication, for instance politeness conduct, is an important issue. That is why linguistics, pragmatics and politeness studies can be assisted with studies from other disciplines, such as international business, behavioural, and cultural studies (e.g. Hall 1989, 1990). Among those, the framework proposed and extended by Hofstede (1980) and other scholars, has been one of the most influential and it serves quite well to illustrate the differences between Polish and Irish cultures.
Hofstede (1983) suggested that differences between countries and national cultures have three dimensions: political, sociological and psychological. When it comes to studies of ‘cultures’ or ‘nations’ and emigration, the sociological and psychological dimensions become more prominent within the discussion. The symbolic value of belonging to a nation, and the psychological constraints of dealing with the vision of life in a new culture, play an important part in the process of negotiating new, hybrid identities. In the original studies conducted under the guidance of Hofstede (1980, 1983), workers in a multinational corporation were studied alongside these dimensions. However, since those variables “transcend the borders of the [...] corporation” (Hofstede 1983, p. 59), an opportunity opened up to extend the results to characterise national cultures, which has been done in numerous studies since then. This also allows for a comparison of Irish and Polish cultures for the needs of this study.

Hofstede’s (1980, 1984) original classification of national cultures was based on the following four categories:

1. Power Distance Index (PDI)
2. Individualism versus Collectivism (IDV)
3. Masculinity versus Femininity (MAS)
4. Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI)
At a later stage, two additional categories were added (5) Long-Term Orientation (Hofstede 1991) and (6) Indulgence versus Restraint (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov 2010). However, the newer variables are not relevant to the discussion of Irish and Polish cultural traits as there is still limited research in this regard.

Hofstede’s research departs from a definition of culture as a ‘collective programming of human mind which distinguishes one group of people from others’, and further argues that a score (according to the abovementioned categories) is meaningless without a country for comparison. In a contrast between Polish and Irish cultures across Hofstede’s cultural dimensions, the biggest difference can be seen in the ‘uncertainty avoidance index’ variable (UAI), which refers to society’s tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity. On a scale of a hundred points, Ireland scored 35 (Hofstede 1983, p. 52), whereas Poland a very high 92 (Hofstede and Hofstede 2007, p. 182).

Uncertainty avoiding cultures (the higher the score the biggest the avoidance of uncertainty) aim to minimise the occurrence of situations that are surprising or unknown by providing behavioural codes, laws and rules. Cultures scoring high in this dimension are thought to disapprove of deviant opinions and strive for an absolute truth (Hofstede 2011, p. 10). In contrast, “the opposite type, uncertainty accepting cultures, [such as Ireland], are more tolerant of opinions different from what they are used to; they try to have as few rules as possible […] People within these cultures are more contemplative, and not expected by their environment to express emotions” (Hofstede 2011, p. 11). These characteristics are relevant to the study of expressing opinions as uncertainty accepting cultures are more likely to obscure their emotions and avoid expressing strong opinions. Metaphorically speaking, opinions and statements in Ireland can be any shade of grey, whereas in Poland they would tend to be expressed within ‘black or white’ dimensions as to avoid uncertainty. On a more practical level, a high UAI score is associated with a legal obligation to carry identity cards and with Roman Catholicism (Hofstede 1999, p. 387). Identity cards are a well-known practice in Poland and it puzzles Polish citizens when they discover Ireland does not issue those to their citizens. In explaining this difference we could again turn to Wierzbicka, who described the Anglo-Saxon cultural tradition as

\[\text{a tradition which places special emphasis on the rights and on the autonomy of every individual, which abhors interference in other people’s affairs (according to the principle- It’s none of my business, which is tolerant of individual idiosyncrasies and peculiarities, which respects everyone’s privacy, which}\]
approves of compromises and disapproves of dogmatism of any kind (Wierzbicka 1985, p. 150, emphasis original).

What Wierzbicka (1985) calls the right to idiosyncrasies appears to correspond to the label assigned by Hofstede known as ‘uncertainty avoidance’.

Another cultural difference relevant to our discussion is the Power Distance variable, with Poland again scoring higher at 68 (Hofstede and Hofstede 2007, p. 57) than Ireland’s 28 mark (Hofstede 1983, p. 52). The higher the score, the higher acceptance of unequal power distribution in the society. Therefore, Polish society is thought to be more hierarchically organised, whereas the lower score for Ireland suggests that it is a society that strives to minimise power distancing between people. This also means that in Ireland superiors are usually more approachable and communication is quite informal. Conversely, in Poland, due to the hierarchy, subordinates may be expected to be told what to do and more formal communication would be preferred. In studies dealing with politeness and speech acts, one of the most important variables is also the ‘Power’ dimension. In Brown and Levinson’s (1987) terms, ‘power distance’ refers to the speaker’s power over the hearer, which influences the choices of appropriate politeness strategies. Applying Hofstede’s findings to the present research, means that Poles, who are communicating in Ireland, may have different expectations with regards to their rights and obligations according to their position in the Irish society. A friendlier, more casual conversation with a superior may be simply unnatural to them.

Despite being a leading platform for national culture research, Hofstede’s classification has also received some criticism. However, pointing out that the original research is outdated may seem rather trivial. While it may be seen as a shortcoming, the body of more recent research suggests that the pattern set out by this platform has been maintained and a chronological comparison of cultures, even over a span of three decades, is possible (Wu 2006). This is also where some scholars disagree with Hofstede, suggesting that the changes cultures undergo with the passing of time are faster than the author may have claimed. Hofstede suggested that cultural changes do not happen overnight, because the visible changes in cultures affect simply the level of practice, but the deeper cultural values may remain the same as they have “centuries-old roots” (Hofstede 1998, p. 481). Furthermore, perhaps the strongest critique comes from overgeneralisations and overinterpretation of Hofstede’s studies of work-related values into a wider view of whole nations. Firstly, one simple explanation for the use of national (thus presuming certain homogeneity within them) characteristics in
comparative research is that it may be the only manageable ‘unit’ available for contrastive analysis (Hofstede 1998, p. 481). It must be kept in mind, however, that the original framework was based on ‘organizational cultures’ across different nationalities within one multinational company. Therefore, the preferences for uncertainty avoidance were, in fact, based on questions regarding, for instance, how likely someone was to leave their current employer (Hofstede 1983, p. 53). Nevertheless, the values discovered in such studies are those which are referred to as ‘deep culture’ and are arguably, therefore, generalizable to other spheres of life. In addition, they may provide another perspective in interdisciplinary research. While Hofstede’s research may have a stronger base in the field of business studies, in the current study it complements the prominent sociolinguistic focus, allowing phenomena not easily explainable through politeness theory to be described with the help of Hofstede’s variables. All in all, despite a strong comparative character and a minimal linguistic focus, Hofstede’s classification of nations can be quite enlightening in explaining potential variation across cultures. However, further research is needed in order to determine to what extent the organisational culture variation corresponds to national-level trends, and it should afford a clearer distinction between individual and societal internalisations of norms of behaviour (e.g. Todeva 1999). Finally, the cultural diversity Ireland has experienced in the recent years will inevitably have an effect on Irish society. Future studies within the framework suggested by Hofstede could determine if and how this cultural and linguistic multiplicity has influenced the Irish scores.

This section has served to present research beyond the scope of pragmatics with reference to Polish and Irish cultures. Hofstede’s classification suggests that in Poland and Ireland there are differences in terms of the acceptability of inequalities in power distribution in society; with Poland being accepting of such differences and Ireland preferring minimal disparity in power. Another relevant difference revealed in Hofstede’s research is the uncertainty avoidance index. The UAI score may be an important concept in relation to studying opinions as it points to a difference in an endeavour to discover ‘the truth’ in Poland, and a right to remain indifferent in Ireland. These are just some of the differences. The continuation of the discussion in relation to Polish and Irish cultures in the remainder of this chapter will extend this view to pragmatics and politeness features.
3.2.1. Irish English

The variety of English spoken in Ireland is referred to as Hiberno-English\(^8\) or Irish English (henceforth IrE). The influence of the English language on the Island of Ireland can be traced back to the twelfth century, to the time of the Norman invasion (Bliss 1979 in Filppula 1999). While English spread quickly into Irish cities, the native tongue of the Irish nation, i.e. Irish Gaelic (or simply ‘Irish’), remained in the rural areas, resulting in the two languages influencing each other. The shift towards common use of English, the coloniser’s language, over a period of eight hundred years, makes the Irish variety of English the oldest variety of English spoken outside Britain (Hickey 2007, p. i). The Irish variety of English is believed to be “a product of a unique linguistic situation involving long-standing contact between two languages” (Filppula 1999, p. 1-2). IrE differs from Standard English in terms of pronunciation, lexis and features of grammar, as well as politeness. Many features of IrE are believed to have emerged as a result of a transfer from Irish in what was an unguided adult language acquisition process which took place over many years (Odlin 1991 in Hickey 2007, p. 125). As a consequence, the ways in which IrE differed from Standard English were often considered as ‘incorrect’ and less prestigious. However, since the twentieth century, scholars have turned from prescriptive to more descriptive explorations of the English spoken in Ireland (e.g. Bliss 1979, Duggan 1969 [1937], Joyce 1979 [1910], Henry 1959, Hogan 1927). This has allowed researchers to gain a deeper knowledge about the different features of Irish English, embracing the uniqueness of this variety, understanding the origins of those aspects, and providing a comprehensive review of what is and what is not ‘typical’ in IrE.

One of the first aspects one may notice about IrE is how the speakers of this variety sound different in comparison to other speakers of English. Across the Island of Ireland, regional accents present a wide variety, as well as some uniformity in certain aspects. While it is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss in depth the phonological characteristics of IrE, some of the most common features will be introduced below (cf. Amador-Moreno 2010; Dolan 1999, 2001; Hickey 2004 for more detailed reviews). For instance, pronunciation features considered typically Irish, although not unique to this variety, are the preference for rhotic \(r\) in words such as \(s\text{ir, h}\text{ere o}\text{r th}e\).

\(^8\) The term stems from the Latin name ‘\textit{Hibernia}’ for the Island of Ireland and is less commonly used nowadays. For a discussion of terminology with reference to English spoken in Ireland see Amador-Moreno (2010, p.7-10).
Similarly, the pronunciation of \( h \) in IrE is rather peculiar as it is almost never mute. It is also reflected in fricative \( w \) (also observed in other English varieties). This means that in IrE a slight difference can be heard between wear and where (\( h \)-were) or witch and which (\( h \)-wich). Another feature, often stereotypically associated with IrE, is the pronunciation of \( t \) or \( d \) instead of \( th \), which takes a dental plosive form. Therefore, in IrE, it is common to hear tree for three or det for death. The \( t \) sound also becomes fricative when it appears in final position in a word, therefore but becomes bush and hit becomes hiss/hish. In terms of vowels, IrE is also known for epenthesis, where weak syllables in words such as film become fillum (almost stretching into two syllables). Finally, the pronunciation of \( u \) (or oo) in words such as cup, bus or room, is characterised by rounding to [ɔ] of the standard [ʌ] sound (Amador-Moreno 2010, p. 78), resulting in sounds closer to cop, boss or rom. As an additional curiosity, IrE has been voted as one of the ‘sexiest’ accents in recent polls (Irish Mirror 2013, Logue 2007 quoted in Amador-Moreno 2010, p. 6-7), The Telegraph 2009), overturning the stigmatisation that was once attached to the Irish brogue\(^9\).

Moving on to aspects of grammar and vocabulary, one of the features of IrE that is “almost certainly of Irish origin” is the use of ye or youse, yez (the latter more specific to Dublin) as the plural form of ‘you’ (Hickey 2007, p. 126). With relation to pronouns, IrE also features overuse of reflexive pronouns as a replacement for personal pronouns, “I’m about the oldest man myself around now” (Filppula 1999, p. 163). An example of a transfer from Irish to IrE is the after-perfective, which consists of a compound verb phrase comprising ‘be + after + continuous verb form’, e.g. ‘They’re only after turning on the Christmas lights in town last week’. Another construction, that of ‘have + object + -ed’, is an IrE deviation of a perfect form in Standard English, which places the object before the participle and focuses more on the final state of the affairs, e.g. ‘I have my dinner eaten’ (Amador-Moreno 2010, p. 40). IrE is also characterised by the avoidance of shall in favour of will, in situations such as polite offers, e.g. ‘Will I get you something? ’; although, this feature can be observed in other varieties too (e.g. Scottish English). The vocabulary of IrE has been influenced both by transfer of words from Irish, as well as those deriving from archaic English forms that have somehow survived in Ireland. Present in everyday IrE are words such as the Dáil (the Irish parliament), the Taoiseach (the Prime Minister) or the Gardaí (the police),

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\(^9\) Cf. Amador-Moreno (2010, p. 6-10) on discussion regarding the change in attitude towards IrE and the term ‘brogue’.
which are all direct borrowings from Irish (cf. Dolan 2004 for further examples). There are also influences from (Old) Scots, for instance the use of *wee* to refer to something small (more common in Ulster\(^{10}\)). Finally, IrE is also known for words such as *craic* (often confused with crack) which means ‘fun’, and specific blasphemies, such as the euphemistic *feck* or the pronunciation of *Jaysus!* for Jesus! or *eejit* for an idiot (see Murphy 2009, and Farr and Murphy 2009 on swearing in IrE). These occur along other semantic curiosities, such as *press* for cupboard, *giving out* for complaining about something or *being bold* for someone being naughty. Apart from phonological and grammatical features, some characteristics of IrE and Irish culture have influenced its unique pragmatic and politeness features which are discussed next.

### 3.2.1.1. Key politeness features: hospitality, reciprocity and silence

Politeness in Ireland has been suggested to be characterised by three traits, namely, “hospitality”, “reciprocity” and “silence” (Kallen 2005a). The hospitality aspect refers to the fact that talking is treasured in Ireland not simply for its instrumental value, but it is cherished when it brings pleasure to others – when it adheres to the values of hospitality. Small talk, for instance, is part of the cultural hospitality. Talking about the weather is perhaps “not very beneficial, informative or entertaining but it certainly has an important social function in Irish culture” (Glassie, 1982, p. 36, quoted in Kallen, 2005a, p. 132). However, small talk is a culture-specific concept as it does not have its equivalent in Polish language or culture (Szerszunowicz 2007; Wierzbicka 2003). Small talk also reflects the Irish (and Anglo cluster’s) preference for avoiding direct conflict, as this quote from Lord Chesterfield suggests:

> By small-talk, I mean a good deal to say on unimportant matters; for example, foods, the flavour and growth of wines, and the chit-chat of the day. Such conversation will serve to keep off serious subjects, which might sometimes create disputes (Lord Chesterfield 1775, p. 35).

The second value in Irish politeness, reciprocity, aims for speakers to establish a certain relationship with one another and to be accepted by others. “In the realm of talk, reciprocity requires that a ready means be found by which the listener’s point of view […] can be acknowledged, and by which any potential disagreement can at least be transferred to neutral footing” (Kallen, 2005a). This characteristic is also relevant to

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\(^{10}\) This is due to the language contact in the province, following colonisation of this area by Scottish settlers in the late sixteenth century, known as the ‘Plantation of Ulster’ (cf. McCafferty 2007).
the discussion of opinions as it stresses the common Irish preference for avoiding disagreements and acceptance among interlocutors. It could also be connected to the importance of small talk in the Irish culture. Formulaic small talk was found to be much longer in IrE in comparison to American or British English exchanges (Schneider 2008). Furthermore, Schneider (2008, p. 111) suggested that the IrE small talk interactions follow a principle of ‘being friendly’ rather than ‘not imposing’. The friendliness of Irish small talk could be tied to what Kallen (2005a) calls reciprocity as it allows speakers to build solidarity among them, even in the short time these types of exchanges usually last.

Finally, silence in Ireland is seen as “not simply absence of talk or noise but an interactive mode in which, roughly speaking, ‘not saying’ becomes a mode of saying in its own right” (Kallen, 2005a, p. 133). While silence may include complete restraint from speaking, it usually allows indirect strategies for achieving communicative goals. Silence in IrE can also refer to occasions where certain topics are “silenced” or not talked about, common for instance in the realm of politics (Kallen 2005b, p. 50). Also, a specialised case of mitigation can be seen in discourse markers which are indicative of the value of silence in IrE (Kallen, 2005b, p. 50). For example, IrE favours minimisers such as I’d say over I say (the latter emphasises the commitment to the truth value of the utterance, serving as an upgrader), as well as the downgrader you know used more frequently in Irish English than I mean (Kallen, 2005b, p. 59).

Overall, one of the most characteristic features of Irish politeness is indirectness (Barron and Schneider 2005, p. 4-8; Martin 2005; Schneider 2012b, p. 466). This is visible in the wide use of hedging and minimisations, as well as the choices of what topics are silenced in conversation (Farr and O'Keefe 2002). The impersonal topic of small talk may also be seen as a strategy to talk indirectly; silencing more personal matters in favour of topics such as the weather. Also, the reciprocity aspect means that Irish culture may show a tendency to avoid disagreements to maintain social harmony. In the face of the cultural changes that the Irish society is encountering in recent years, these patterns can be disturbed and cause miscommunication, especially in terms of interpreting indirect messages. The issue of indirectness in Ireland and IrE is presented next in more detail.
3.2.1.2. Indirectness in Ireland

An example of the influence of Irish indirectness on IrE is the grammaticalisation of answers to Yes/No questions. Answers to closed questions in IrE are often formulated with full clauses that repeat the original verb, as opposed to a simple ‘Yes’ or ‘No’, which on their own would be considered rude (Todd 1989, p. 27). This is believed to be a transfer from the Irish language, which has no word for *yes* or *no*, but relies on the repetition of the verb (Kallen 2005a, p. 139). This cultural/linguistic feature also reflects the ‘chicken or the egg’ dilemma with reference to pragmatics of IrE. It is difficult to determine if it is the cultural preference for indirectness in Ireland which has influenced the Irish (and later IrE) grammaticalisation of avoidance of blunt Yes or No answers to questions or whether Irish culture has influenced the language through the use of indirect answers to questions. It is, however, a common feature in IrE, as Filppula’s (1999) research of a corpus of IrE showed that repetition of the auxiliary verb is the most frequently used strategy in responding to Yes/No questions, e.g.

He is the teacher?
- He is.

Don’t you like that chair?
- I don’t.

He doesn’t own this book?
- He doesn’t. (Filppula 1999, p. 163)

This sort of repetition is also more frequently employed in western counties (Clare and Kerry), and the most plausible explanation for these discrepancies is the continuing influence of Irish in the west of Ireland (Filppula 1999, p. 166). Among other more complex strategies identified in Filppula’s research, there were also examples of more ambiguous, indirect responses to Yes/No questions:

e.g. [How about old people here, do they still speak Irish together?] There are no = there are no old people at all there now. I’m about the oldest man myself around now. (Kerry: M.C.) (Filppula 1999, p. 163)
In the example above, the response to the question must be decoded from the indirect reply. The respondent “effectively evades providing the expected affirmation or negation” (Filppula 1999, p. 164). While indirect responses are not the most common structure in replying to Yes/No questions, in Irish English, the eschewing of a simple ‘yes’ or ‘no’ is evident in research. Kallen (2005a, p. 135) also pointed to everyday offers such as *Would you like a cup of tea?* which may be met with *I wouldn’t say no* or *I don’t mind*, forcing the hearer to interpret the answer. One can even sense perhaps a certain amount of pride in those who speak indirectly. A poem by Vincent Caprani talks about the opaque language Irish English uses:

When the English robbed our language  
And they gave us theirs instead  
They gave us leave to cheat them  
In things we left unsaid;  
When they robbed us of our claymores  
And thought our pikes absurd  
We fashioned brand-new weapons  
With each odd, new-fangled word

(Caprani 1987)

Interestingly, the indirectness of the Celts was already recorded in the works from times of Julius Cesar. A Greek historian, Diodorus Siculus (90-21BC) wrote in his 40-volume history of the world, *Bibliotheca Historica* (The Library of History):

In conversation they use few words and speak in riddles, for the most part hinting at things and leaving a great deal to be understood. (Diodorus Siculus in Todd 1999, p. 17)

However, despite the common perception of Irish indirectness, research involving comparisons of IrE with other varieties of English has shown that such patterns are perhaps not as strong as anecdotal evidence may suggest. Barron (2008), for instance, contrasted the realisation strategies for requests in IrE and English from England in general terms of indirectness. She concluded that IrE employs syntactic internal modification more frequently (e.g. *I was wondering If I could*...), while English speakers of English opt for external modifiers, for instance grounders (e.g. *I know this is very rude to ask, but*...). Overall, however, no particular higher level of indirectness in the realisation of requests could be assigned to IrE in Barron’s (2008) study as both varieties seem to be quite indirect.
The evidence of indirectness in IrE also comes from research into aspects such as discourse markers. It might entail not only indirectness in the semantic sense, but also, quite often, blurring of the illocutionary force in speech. For example, Kallen (2005b) studied the differences between Irish and British English in terms of mitigation discourse markers. The analysis of the International Corpus of English revealed that IrE favours downgraders, while the British uses upgraders more frequently (Kallen 2005b). Also, the use of the modal verb *would* is more frequent in IrE than in other varieties of English (American or British). Because its primary role is to downtone the force of an utterance, it again illustrates a sociocultural norm that “*forwardness*, which ranges from being direct to being self-promoting, is not valued within Irish society” (Farr and O'Keefe 2002, p. 42). Within speech acts and politeness theory, directness has been described as “the degree to which the speaker’s illocutionary intent is apparent from the locution” (Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper 1989, p. 278). What is interesting, however, is that IrE is highly indirect while also allowing for a frequent use of some surprisingly forceful and on-record strategies (Barron 2005; Connington 2005). In her study, Connington (2005, p. 60) analysed requests, offers and giving instructions and noted that “Irish English not only tolerates forcefulness, it expects it, particularly if offers are perceived to be sincere”. However, this insistence may be limited to offers only, since the benefit to the hearer is what allows for a stronger emphasis with minimal face threat.

Other discourse/pragmatic markers already studied in the context of IrE include *arrah*, *now*, *so*, *sure*, and *like*. While the majority of them can also be found in other varieties of English, *arrah*, meaning ‘now, but, really’, is believed to be a transfer from an Irish form *arú* and therefore specific to the Irish context. It is used at a beginning of a sentence “to indicate that something should not be taken seriously” (Dolan 2004, p. 10). Kallen (2006, p. 8) described its meaning as a token that “precedes new information but refers back to shared knowledge; an indirect request for agreement”. In this sense, it is quite similar to the IrE use of *sure*, a vernacular form of the adverbial *surely*. It is implemented as a ‘functional opener’ in sentence-initial position and a

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11 Literature dealing with both pragmatic and discourse markers points to both terms being used interchangeably. Following Schiffrin (1987, p. 31) discourse markers are “sequentially dependent elements that bracket units of talk”, which could therefore include expressions fulfilling a cohesion/coherence functions, apart from more interpersonal functions. Pragmatic markers, on the contrary, are defined as expressions (such as *you know*, *I mean*, *you see*, *well*, *yeah*) “that are present in speech to support interaction but do not generally add any specific meaning to the message” (Romero-Trillo 2013, n.p.). We could therefore treat pragmatic markers are a type of discourse markers which fulfil a stronger pragmatic function (i.e. they refer to context-sensitive interpretation of meaning).
symbol of cooperation as it also indirectly requests agreement from the interlocutor (Kallen 2004, p. 142), but it can also be used as a reference to a prior utterance, therefore fulfilling an indexical function (Amador-Moreno 2005). *Sure* will play an important part in discussing the cooperation in exchanges of opinions in the results chapters, where a more thorough analysis of its meaning and functions will be offered (Section 6.3.1/2).

Continuing with the discussion of typically IrE tokens listed above, their discourse, pragmatic and politeness functions seem to be emphasised by the preference for occurring in either initial or final position in utterances (i.e. marginal, cf. Nestor and Regan 2014). For instance, *now* can be used either as an intensifying negative emotions (‘It’s lunacy *now*.’ cf. Clancy and Vaughan 2012) or as a hedge in challenges or orders. Binchy (2005) discovered that *now* is used in service encounters as a politeness-marking softener, where it accompanies requests for payment, e.g. ‘*Now* three O nine’ (p. 321). Similarly, formulations such as ‘*X* *so* please’ were described as the most common realisation of the ‘demand for money’ sequence in transactions, softened by the token *so* 12. Furthermore Binchy (2005) argued that *so* has a stronger mitigating force than the actual word ‘please’. This conclusion demonstrates, yet again, that mastering the art of politeness entails much more than the acquisition of ‘please’ and ‘thank you’. Indeed, recent research into IrE discourse markers has turned attention to immigrants (both NSs and NNSs speakers of English) living in Ireland and their acquisition of tokens such as *now* or *like*. Native-like use of discourse markers is often seen not only as a symbol of high proficiency and pragmatic competence, but also as a sign of assimilation (Migge 2014). Furthermore, simple awareness of the unique ways in which *now* is used in Ireland does not guarantee that the immigrants will use it to the extent that NSs do, as research by Migge (2014) suggests. In a study amongst NSs of IrE, Clancy and Vaughan (2012) found that the most common uses of *now* in this variety of English are pragmatic and discourse (as opposed to its temporal meaning), when compared to British English. In contrast, Migge’s (2014) analysis of immigrants’ speech showed that their use of discourse/pragmatic *now* constituted only a minimal portion (nine per cent) of all the occurrences. The author suggests two possible reasons for these discrepancies: lack of sufficient contact with speakers of IrE or conscious resistance to adopting the IrE way of speaking. Conversely, another study into the acquisition of pragmatic markers amongst Polish immigrants in Ireland points

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12 Cf. Murphy (2010) on the amplifying use of *so* (as a synonym of ‘very’ or ‘really’) in IrE.
out even more complexity in this regard by turning attention to age and place of residence as a factor influencing the acquisition of discourse markers in IrE (Nestor and Regan 2014). Traditionally, the Irish use of discourse marker *like* has been associated with sentence or utterance-final position, e.g. It’s a bit boring, *like* (RP-IE-25/4), where it acts as a hedge downgrading the force of a proceeding assertion (cf. Kallen 2006). However, more recent research (Amador-Moreno 2012) suggests preference for a clause-medial position of *like* in Dublin English, approximating its use to global trends (stereotypically associated with adolescents’ American English). Consequently, Nestor and Regan (2014) investigated the distribution of *like* amongst Polish immigrants of various ages, focusing on Dublin and one rural location. The results revealed that clause-marginal *like* prevailed amongst participants from the rural location (Co. Mayo), in contrast to Dubliner’s clause-medial use, and that younger immigrants also preferred clause-medial *like*. Such distribution of *like* amongst the Polish participants may also reflect trends amongst the native population, as, through language contact, Poles in Ireland acquire the types of *like* they are more likely to hear in everyday interactions. Naturally, however, differences in distribution of pragmatic markers in IrE are even more complex amongst the native population. They can also be found to differ in distribution across genders and age groups, as identified by Murphy (2010). Overall, while more in-depth look at IrE seems to unveil more and more variation, features such as discourse markers seem to reflect a general air of indirectness as a politeness characteristic of the English spoken in Ireland.

Another type of indirect speech is minimisation, which in Irish politeness is seen particularly in the choices of attenuating verbs (Kallen 2005a). Kallen provided some excellent examples of these mitigations:

‘Now, if you could just *pop* up here’ is a nurse’s instruction to a patient to sit or lie on an examination bed, while ‘Now, if you could just *slip* this on’ is a nurse’s instruction for the listener to go into a private cubicle, undress and put on a disposable hospital gown” (Kallen 2005a, p. 137, emphasis original).

These types of minimising expressions are vital for satisfactory communication in the Irish society and are a perfect tool for speakers to fulfil the maxims of Irish politeness.

Understatement is yet another way of speaking indirectly and looking after interlocutor’s negative face needs. The best example would be the ever-present *Not too bad* used as a response to *How are you?* in Ireland. What the hearer decodes from the expression *Not too bad* is that the speaker is ‘good’, but also that the speaker wants to
communicate this message to their hearer respecting the maxim of modesty (reduce praise of self). Moreover, in asking about one’s state ‘not telling people about one’s problems’ is another example of negative politeness. Responding to the common *How are you?* with a positive *Fine* or the like, regardless of one’s actual situation, is led by one’s need to give the other person an answer they are looking for and that will possibly not lead to a deeper conversation. Leech (Leech 1983, p. 198 quoted in Wierzbicka 2003, p. 132) commented on the meaning of *How are you?* by citing a couplet: “Don’t tell your friends about your indigestion: ‘How are you!’ is a greeting, not a question”. If one’s honest reply would be *I am not feeling great today*, it would oblige the other person to ask more details, i.e. why they are not feeling well. Replying *I’m fine* keeps a healthy balance in exchange of information about one’s current wellbeing in the English-speaking world. However, this principle of ‘keeping one’s problems to oneself” is not common to all languages and cultures. The example of ‘small talk’ and greetings in Poland is discussed again later, illustrating the contrast between Polish and English.

As yet little is known as to how speakers of Irish English express opinions. A small study investigating speech act realisation strategies in a number of countries (Regan 2008) looked at ‘making an argument’ in IrE as part of an investigation into politeness patterns in Ireland. However, this author did not use methods common in pragmatics research, the sample was very small and it was not clear how the survey categories were established; consequently, her findings could not be of assistance to the current research. It appears, therefore, that only previous politeness, discourse or cultural studies can shed some light on preferences for expressing opinions in Ireland. For instance, following studies in relation to UAI variable, a suggestion can be made that in Ireland opinions can be vague since uncertainty may be more acceptable there. Moreover, the evidence pointing to Irish preference for indirectness may echo in preference for indirect opinions. Additionally, the overall orientation towards negative politeness and respect for one’s autonomy means that exchanges of opinions in Ireland would probably reflect this respect by not imposing one’s opinions on others and acknowledging each other’s points of view in such conversations (e.g. the use of ‘*I see what you mean, but...*’). The exploratory character of the current study will help to describe to what extent these presumptions are true (see results Section 7.6).
3.2.2. Politeness in Poland

Having discussed some aspects of Irish culture, the main concepts relating to Polish culture and politeness are presented in the following two sections. Some key terms in reference to politeness in Poland are “cordiality” (Wierzbicka 2003, p. 50-56), ‘courtesy’, and ‘warmth’, among others. The relevant literature referring to those concepts is reviewed in the first section. The second part focuses on some examples of the preference for directness in Polish culture, as a contrast to indirectness discussed in relation to Ireland.

3.2.2.1. Key features: cordiality and courtesy

A key concept in reference to politeness in Poland is cordiality (Wierzbicka 2003), as politeness in Poland “comes from the heart” (Ogiermann and Suszczyńska 2011, p. 211). This aspect will be visible in the number of examples discussed in this section, firstly, Polish honorifics. Among Slavonic languages, Polish has arguably the most complex grammaticalised system of honorific forms and it is not possible to address someone without encoding an honorific value (Huszcza 2005, p. 218). We could see it also as a reflection of the hierarchical organisation of the Polish society (high Hofstede’s PDI score). There are two main forms that are used in Polish, namely the familiar (T) and the formal (V), which are also found in other European languages such as French, Spanish, German or Russian. In pragmatics and cross-cultural studies, Japanese culture is often referenced to when discussing honorifics. However, in Polish, the use of honorific titles is a matter of courtesy and can often signal closeness, not distance or humility, as in Japanese. In fact, Polish encourages the use of titles even between equals, for example workmates who have known each other for many years (Wierzbicka 2003, p. 56-57).

From a chronological perspective, a shift towards a more relaxed attitude in the use of honorifics was first observed in Poland after the Second World War (Grybosiowa 1994), and in a more recent wave after 1989. It was the year the first non-communist government in Poland was elected and the year that marked the fall of the Iron Curtain. The recent changes are believed to be influenced by the democratisation of the society and more cultural contact with Western societies (Marcjanik 2007). Additionally, the communist era also influenced Polish politeness, since building a worker’s society
meant that use of titles and polite speech (symbol of non-communist Poland) were unpopular (Dąbrowska 1991, p. 117). During the communism forms of address such as ‘comrade’ and the Russian ‘wy’ (you in plural) to refer to citizens was propagated, but was resisted. Another interesting example of the changes in the use of Polish honorifics is the use of address forms in the family spectrum, which in the past could have been assigned two characteristics: that of ‘intimacy’ and ‘institution’. The latter seems to be changing in terms of how language is used. Before it was common to address elders in the family (parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles) by using the polite 3rd person singular form, e.g. Czy nalać tatusiowi mleka? [Would daddy like some milk?]. It could be compared to calling one’s father ‘sir’. Nowadays, the more informal 2nd person singular is more common, e.g. Nalać ci mleka (tatusiu)? [Would you like some milk (daddy)?] (Pisarkowa 1979, p. 5).

Honorific forms are also strictly obeyed in Polish third-level education. Students are almost always addressed as Pan/Pani [Mr/Ms], not ty, i.e. you, and even after years of encounters between a lecturer and a student, these forms are maintained. What may change is the diminutive form of a first name being used when addressing the student. However, the student would always address the lecturer by their academic title, referring to their level of academic formation; for example: Panie Magistrze (Mr. MA-holder) or Panie Doktorze (Mr. PhD-holder) (Wierzbicka 2003, p. 57). Again, a tendency for a more relaxed way of communicating in academic circles in Poland was recorded in more recent research. This is more visible in electronic communication between lecturers and students (Skudrzyk 2007, p. 113).

Paradoxically, while it has been argued that Poles dislike informality (Wierzbicka 2003, p. 57), the principle of cordiality also encourages establishing intimacy among speakers. The perfect example of these instances is when honorific forms Pan/Pani [Mr/Ms] are used along with personal names in the diminutive form. Compounds like Pani Gosiu [Ms Maggie- Margaret- DIM] are commonly used in Polish, but would sound odd in other languages. The use of diminutives in Polish is a common tool for creating intimacy, reciprocity or simply hedging. However, diminutives can be considered not merely one of many examples, but “the central place of warmth, of affection, in Slavic as well as in Mediterranean cultures” (Wierzbicka 2003, p. 50-56). The evidence of the importance of diminutives, as markers of cordiality, is the expressive derivation of personal names, where Polish names can have as many as ten
diminutive forms. For example: *Maria* - *Marysia, Marysieńka, Maryśka, Marysiuchna, Marychna, Maryś, Marysiulka, Marycha, Marysiątko, (Mynia, Marynka)* (Wierzbicka 2003, p. 51)

Another situational usage of diminutives are requests, usually formulated with imperative, which would often be softened by means of diminutive: *Jareczku, daj mi papierosa!* ['George-DIM-DIM, give me a cigarette!'] (Wierzbicka 2003, p. 52). Polish diminutives have a very wide variety and usage which extends as far as formulating orders using multiple diminutives, not only the name of the addressee but also including nouns, adjective, adverbs, and sometimes other parts of speech (Wierzbicka 2003, p. 53). Since diminutives carry a strong emotional weight, they are used by native speakers instinctively and diminutive affixes can be applied to nearly any part of speech. The use of diminutives in Polish could be compared to hedging in English. However, while hedges in English are used mainly as markers of indirectness and distance, diminutives in Polish carry additional emotional value of endearment and warmth. Polish speakers of English may feel deprived of these special types of expressions when communicating in English.

The contrast between IrE and Polish can also be seen in how people greet each other. In Ireland, and many other English-speaking cultures, people greet each other briefly and engage in rather formulaic talk. Speakers of IrE may prefer uncontroversial topics and expect similarly non-commital responses from others since small talk fulfils the phatic function of everyday communication (cf. McCarthy 2000, Schneider 2008). However, Polish speakers often greet each other and ask how one really is, which may give way to a rant of complaints rather than a safely-vague and neutral small talk. Engaging in ‘narzekanie’ [grumbling] has been recognised as a characteristic of Polish politeness (Antas 2002). However, a rapport-building griping can also be found in languages other than Polish. Boxer (1991) investigated indirect complaints and commiseration in American English and discovered that the majority (over 75 per cent) of the instances of indirect complaints could be classified as positive in terms of their social functions, as they were used to show solidarity among speakers (Boxer 1991). Hypothetically, grumbling could also help speakers of English and Polish to find a point of overlap in exchanges of opinions.

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13 The additional examples are mine. Used to refer to my paternal aunt, Maria Gąsior.
3.2.2.2. Directness

Returning to the discussion surrounding universality of politeness and speech act realisation strategies, Wierzbicka (1985, p. 145) noted that linguistic choices of speakers are rooted deeper in cultural values than politeness theory can account for, such as spontaneity, intimacy, and affection vs. indirectness, distance and anti-dogmatism. Furthermore, speech acts are culture-specific communicative routines (Wierzbicka 1985, 1991). Such culture-specific routines were sought in a study of Polish, English and Hungarian apologies (Suszczyńska 1999). While the most common strategy in English was *I'm sorry*, Hungarians asked the hearer to withhold the anger (*Ne haragudjon* – Don’t be angry), while the Polish pleaded for forgiveness (*Wybacz mi* – Forgive me). These preferred strategies in Polish and Hungarian are believed to be more face threatening than expressions of regret used in English. The preference for regret in English can be explained by the need to maintain distance between speakers. Wierzbicka noted that “in Anglo-Saxon culture, distance is a positive cultural value, associated with respect and autonomy of the individual. By contrast, in Polish culture it is associated with hostility and alienation” (Wierzbicka 1985, p. 156). Another cultural value discovered in Suszczyńska’s study was the use of self-deprecating strategies as a form of indirect expression of responsibility, very common in Hungarian and Polish, but not in English. Expressions such as *I’m such a klutz* or *I am terribly clumsy* in apologising for bumping into someone were uncommon among English participants, which points towards the tendency to dislike public self-exposure of an individual (Wierzbicka 1985, p. 168). Expressing one’s emotions appears to be still a controlled action in English. Another anecdote from Hoffman’s book about a life in a new language illustrates this quite well:

Once, when my mother was very miserable, I told her, full of my newly acquired American wisdom, that she should try to control her feelings. “What do you mean” she asked, as if it was an idea proffered by a member of a computer species. “How can I do that? They are my feelings” (Hoffman 1989, p. 269).

This lack of control over one’s feelings may be an explanation to the fact that in Suszczyńska’s (1999) study of apologies, which used a scenario where a collision in a supermarket happens because a lady was blocking the way, Polish participants chose to reprimand the lady directly and commented on the difficulty of passing. Again, Wierzbicka’s observation explains the cultural values behind such linguistic behaviour: in Anglo-American culture “direct confrontation is avoided in the interest of social
“harmony between independent individuals” (1991, p. 92), which is not the case in Poland where opinions and emotions, even negative ones, are not discouraged. Marcjanik (2007, p. 25) calls this characteristic of Polish politeness ‘warmth’ [ciepło], which refers to the sincerity of conversation and encourages ‘confiding’ in one’s interlocutors. Warmth refers to honesty and encourages showing true feelings, thus the exposure of negative emotions as well. At the same time, it is an economic emotion because Polish speakers give as much information, emotions, etc. as they expect to receive. Hence, negative comments and talking about one’s problems are a common occurrence in Polish. In comparison, a tailored, artificial ‘small talk’ conversation would not meet the conditions of warmth and sincerity, thus the lack of such social activity in Poland. Moreover, a speaker who withholds their true feelings could be perceived as disingenuous and even impolite. ‘Fake politeness’ (‘politeness’ which exceeds politic behaviour, see. Watts 2003) has been suggested as undesirable in the realm of service encounters for instance. In fact, Poles may see constant smiles and asking if the customer needs help as insincere and artificial (Ogiermann and Suszczyńska 2011, p. 203). It appears then that in Polish culture feelings match what one shows in their behaviour, which is different to the English-speaking cultures, where often negative emotions may hide behind ‘polite’ smiles (Wierzbicka 1999, p. 241).

Another feature which distinguishes Polish from English is the widespread use of the imperative mood, employed not only to direct orders and requests, but also for offers and giving advice. English places restrictions on the use of the imperative in these cases, opting for interrogative and conditional forms (Barron 2007; Leech 1983; Lubecka 2000; Wierzbicka 1985, p. 145). Moreover, in Polish, advice is often given without being sought from the other party. Being helpful and passing on one’s knowledge and experience to others is another characteristic of Polish politeness, thus giving way to unsolicited advice (Antas 2002). Polish offers and invitations are also rather insistent, leaving very few options for refusal (Skudrzyk 2007) and they are often formulated in the imperative mood. In fact, an analysis of four recent textbooks for teaching Polish as a second language, in terms of transmitting pragmatic as well as general linguistic skills to learners, revealed examples of grumbling, unsolicited advice and importunity in offers and invitations (Gaszyńska-Majger 2005). These skills were considered to be characteristic of Polish politeness and therefore worth
including in the textbooks. Additionally, they have also been recognised as possible areas of friction between Polish and English language:

When contrasted with English preferences, Polish may appear to “reflect dogmatism, lack of consideration for other people, inflexibility, a tendency to be bossy, a tendency to interfere and so on. On the other hand, from a Polish speaker’s point of view, English ways of speaking may be seen as reflecting lack of warmth, a lack of spontaneity, a lack of sincerity” (Wierzbicka 2003, p. 50).

With reference to opinions in Polish, we could speculate that, in general terms, they will be more sincere than in English because of the emphasis on warmth and directness. Furthermore, the pragmatics preferences for honest, direct opinions may be transferred to L2 and become a point of pragmatic misunderstandings. Keeping in mind the general characteristics of Polish politeness presented in this section will allow us to identify such instances of pragmatic transfer in the role-plays.

3.3. Conclusion

The current chapter focused on presenting the cultural side of this research. Therefore, advocating a noteworthy relationship between culture and pragmatics, relevant aspects of intercultural communication were discussed. Subsequently, the chapter outlined the skills involved in being a pragmatically competent speaker and the processes involved in acquiring such skills. This review of literature demonstrated that studying intercultural pragmatics entails exploring ‘the visible side of an iceberg’, which can provide pointers as to what is hiding in ‘the submerged side of the iceberg’. It was also argued that while developing pragmatic skills along with other linguistic aptitudes should be an integral part of language acquisition, it is a complex process, and high proficiency does not guarantee concomitant pragmatic abilities.

The second part of this chapter contextualised the present research within the cultural characteristics of the Polish and the Irish nations. It was suggested that the main differences between Poland and Ireland, within Hofstede’s classification, were power distance index and uncertainty avoidance. The elevated power distance in Poland is reflected in the highly developed system of honorifics, while the Irish low distance is reflected in a preference for informal communication. On the one hand, the uncertainty avoidance, showing high tolerance for vagueness in Ireland could be connected to indirectness as a politeness characteristic. On the other hand, Polish dislike of uncertainty is reflected in the tendency to be direct, thus avoiding ambiguities. These
oppositions provide an interesting avenue for research into opinions, since the cultural preferences point towards possible politeness clashes. Consequently, the underlying differences pointed out throughout the literature review will form a base for interpreting the data gathered in the empirical study. Having considered previous research relevant to the present study, the discussion now turns to the empirical part of this research, presenting the methodological and analytical frameworks.
Chapter 4 – Method

4.0. Introduction

In earlier chapters, a case was raised for an investigation of opinions as a speech act, and for doing so with reference to the Irish-Polish intercultural context. Moreover, the theoretical perspectives on politeness, culture, and the characteristics of the two nations in question provided a base for the empirical research reported in this thesis. In this chapter, the methodological underpinnings of the current study are discussed, demonstrating a mixed-method approach, aimed at addressing both sides of the pragmalinguistic-sociopragmatic dichotomy. In order to reflect the various stages of carrying out the research, this chapter is organised in four sections. Firstly, the relevant research traditions are presented (4.1). The research design is discussed in the subsequent section (4.2) where the advantages and disadvantages, as well as the motivations for using particular research instruments, are discussed. This is followed by a description of the empirical phase (4.3), explaining the procedures undertaken in collecting the data. The issues covered in this section include ethical considerations, piloting and sampling, as well as a more detailed description of the research participants’ profiles. Finally, analytical frameworks and a detailed description of the analyses procedures are stated in Section 4.4.

4.1. Research traditions

The design of the current study was influenced by a number of research traditions which are presented in this section in more detail. Firstly, the canonical Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realisation Patterns project (CCSARP) (Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper 1989), conducted in the 1980s, is described in terms of the theoretical and methodological influence it had in its discipline, and on the current project (4.1.1.). Later, the influence of discourse analysis and other related disciplines on this study is discussed (4.1.2). The last subsection (4.1.3) explains the individual design of the present research.
4.1.1. CCSARP tradition

Comparing how people ‘do things with words’ in different languages, or across languages, derives from the culture of cross-cultural speech act realisation studies. Among the different areas of pragmatics, studies focusing on speech acts seem to be the most common. The advantages of focusing on speech acts are many (Cohen 2010, p. 6); they have an important role to play in L2 communication, they are teachable and learnable, and finally they are one of the most rigorously researched aspects of pragmatics. Furthermore, speech acts provide manageable units of study for cross-cultural comparison or intercultural study of fusion of cultures in communication.

Requests and Apologies: The Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realisation Patterns (CCSARP) project was a groundbreaking, large-scale research project in cross-cultural pragmatics. Undertaken by researchers in various countries in the 1980s, it aimed at analysing requests and apologies across different languages and cultures (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989). The languages investigated were: British, American and Australian English, Hebrew, Canadian French, Danish and German, with four hundred informants in each linguistic group (half NSs and half NNSs). The main instrument of data collection was a Discourse Completion Task (or Test) - DCT, where participants were requested to fill in incomplete discourse sequences providing the given speech act in a variety of contexts (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain 1984, p. 198). Each task description included relative status and relationship of the interlocutors, therefore testing variability across social constraints.

The reporting volume of CCSARP (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989) presented the results from various researchers, pointed to methodological constraints of the project and discussed issues of universality in speech act behaviour across cultures. For instance, hints usually entail the highest level of indirectness, and they were encountered throughout the languages investigated in the project. However, they were not considered universally polite because Hebrew speakers usually value clarity over indirectness in formulation of requests (Blum-Kulka and House 1989). Additionally, when comparing DCT and ethnographic data of requests in Hebrew, hints were almost twice as frequent in the naturally occurring requests (Blum-Kulka and House 1989). Lack of contextual factors, such as intonation or facial expressions, could make hints an unfavourable strategy in requests elicited through written instruments (Holmes 1991, p. 124). With
reference to hints and indirectness, Holmes (1991, p. 123) later pointed out that CCSARP also failed to address the humour or sarcasm value of hints. Another of its weaknesses was that the topic of gender variation in CCSARP was somewhat overlooked (Holmes 1991, p. 124-125). Nevertheless, the project provided an invaluable insight into speech act variation across cultures and established a new research tradition in pragmatics.

Given its aim was to discover variability across different social constraints, CCSARP elicited a broad range of requests and apologies which were then classified according to their degree of explicitness (from hints to on-record strategies). In this way, it was possible to describe a ‘typical’ realisation pattern for both speech acts according to different languages. Following a qualitative classification of requests and apologies into categories, CCSARP focused on a large-scale quantitative study to discover tendencies across cultures. This quantitative focus has had the most influence on the field of pragmatics. The original categories of ‘strategies’ used in requests and apologies described in CCSARP have been recycled and also used as a method of assessment in language classrooms (cf. Roever 2006; Yamashita 2008, on testing pragmatic competence). Therefore, a high occurrence of hints (the most indirect strategy) among NS, compared to a lower use among NNS, has often been interpreted as a sign of low pragmatic competence and a possible area for improvement.

Because of its focus on comparison and its clear analytical framework, CCSARP has had a strong influence on research studies in cross-cultural and interlanguage pragmatics, especially in the use of DCTs as a tool for data collection and implementation of their analytical frameworks. Most studies of speech acts, as examined by Brown (2008), are determined by four variables: the type of speech act at hand, relative power (P), social distance (D) and degree of imposition (I) or (R) as used by Brown and Levinson (1987). The P, D, I variables are the most commonly used in cross-cultural and ILP studies “because within research on cross-cultural pragmatics, they are identified as the three independent and culturally sensitive variables that subsume all other variables and play a principled role in speech act behaviour” (Hudson, Demeter and Brown 1995, p. 4). In more detail, P, D, I entail:

**Power** is the relative difference between the listener and speaker due to rank, professional status, where “one person is able to control the behaviour of the other” (Walkinshaw 2007, p. 279). Furthermore, Power can have a number of
sources, such as reward power (rewards-based) or coercive power (the power to punish).

**Distance** is the social distance between the listener and the speaker due to familiarity or shared solidarity due to group membership.

**Imposition** is the “degree of imposition imposed by the speech within the cultural context based on expenditure or obligation” (Brown 2008, p. 226).

These variables can be classified further as high (+) or low (-), and can be combined in a variety of ways to portray a broad spectrum of relationships (for instance P-, D+, I-situations, etc.). This classification of variability across social constraints in speech act behaviour, influenced the current study, above all, in terms of the design of the role-plays (Section 4.4.4). In order to test how opinions are expressed in a variety of contexts, the variables were used to determine the relationship between the interlocutors and the topic of the conversation. Additionally, the P, D, I variables can also help to understand variation in politeness when interpreting the results of the role-plays, as is done in Section 6.1.6, for example.

In sum, research in pragmatics, and especially speech act studies, have been greatly influenced by the CCSARP tradition. This is especially evident in the popularity of DCTs as a data collection method (Félix-Brasdefer 2010), the undying interest in requests and apologies, and, finally, in the strategy-based analytical frameworks applied in speech act studies. Given the fact that the current research departs partially from traditional speech act studies, other influential frameworks are presented next. discourse analysis is discussed in relation to the methodological and, more importantly, the analytical framework.

### 4.1.2. Politeness and discourse analysis

It is not an easy task to identify what the classic approach to studying politeness is. The previous section presented the tradition of cross-cultural speech act studies, which to some extent is, *de facto*, how many politeness studies have been carried out. This situation is not surprising, considering the fact that politeness theory (Brown and Levinson 1987) was built on the concept of speech acts. Moreover, as it was already argued in Section 1.3, speech acts provide researchers with convenient units of study
and an opportunity for cross-cultural comparison. With these advantages in mind, focusing on opinions as one unit of describing the wider phenomenon of politeness seems an apt approach. However, there are some other methodological and analytical issues in studying politeness to consider. They are addressed, in this section, with reference to the current research.

Our first dilemma is that, according to traditional politeness theory (Brown and Levinson 1987), the measuring criterion for politeness was the intention of the speakers, while the postmodern, discursive tradition (Locher 2004, Watts 2003) claims that politeness should focus on how hearers interpret politeness. However, while theorising and speculating about interlocutors’ intentions or interpretations may lead to some sorts of conclusions about the nature of politeness, it appears that there is no unanimous framework for carrying out politeness research. Additionally, in the discursive politeness research tradition, there is the question of who speculates about the hearer’s interpretations of politeness – should it be the hearers themselves or the analysts (Haugh 2007). From a common-sense perspective, the best way to actually get to the core of the matter is by asking both interlocutors (i.e. speakers and hearers) about their intentions and interpretations of polite behaviour in order to address both ‘new’ and ‘old’ politeness. But again, a researcher may be faced with a number of problems. The interlocutors may say what they think the researcher wants to hear or they can simply not know why they said what they said. A second dilemma researchers face is that the more recent politeness research encourages the use of naturally occurring language samples. However, this type of data usually does not allow researchers to approach speakers to ask additional questions about that interaction such as Why did you say x? One way a researcher can overcome this obstacle is by indirectly asking questions to interlocutors, focusing on the bigger picture, as is explained next.

An alternative, comprehensive approach to study speech acts and politeness can be the research methodology presented in this thesis – supplementing elicited interactions (e.g. in role-plays) (Sections 4.2.1-2) with focus group interviews (4.2.3-4). When studying politeness with reference to a particular speech act, the discussion in the focus group can centre round that speech act, apart from the participants’ reflections on the role-plays. The broader focus on ‘talking about opinions’ would provide a type of data, which analysed qualitatively, would allow describing opinions as a small unit within
the view of politeness as social practice. Moreover, in an intercultural (or a contrastive) context, the analysis of focus group discourse could also attempt to identify culture-specific characteristics. Using elicitation technique of role-plays to gather the linguistic data means that participants are available for additional questions about their interactions, which would not be the case if naturally occurring data were to be used. From an analytical point of view, the connection between particular forms in the role-plays and figuring out why the participants may have chosen some strategies over others lies in the hands of the analyst. As will be discussed later (Section 4.4.2), the analyst’s active involvement in this process is pivotal in thematic analysis of the focus groups.

While the core concept of interest here is politeness, the analysis of the focus groups would belong to the tradition of discourse analysis (DA). There are at least two ways to look at DA. The first is a broad, constructionist perspective based on the belief that social identities do not just exist but are constructed in interactions (and discourse). Furthermore, discourse is not a mere reflection of social identities but it serves as the tool for constructing different social identities (cf. De Fina, Schiffrin and Bamberg 2006). In this sense, we could talk about discourse being connected to the concept of ‘communities of practice’ (Wenger 1998), social psychology (Potter and Wetherell 1987) or ethnography. Another way to look at DA is as a discipline which studies the micro elements of discourse by taking it apart and analysing its different layers – from whole ‘texts’ to the miniscule aspects, such as discourse markers (cf. Jucker and Ziv 1998, Schiffrin 1987). The choice of the scope and detail in research depends on individual needs in each study and thanks to this flexibility DA appears to have a lot to offer to linguists. LoCastro (2012) stressed that “it is a basic requirement for conducting pragmatic studies that the researcher be able to analyze the discourse in the data set first [...]. The researcher in pragmatics has to first of all be a linguist” (p. 285).

Although the link between discourse, pragmatics and politeness is quite strong, thanks to the mother discipline of linguistics, the actual boundaries of each discipline are quite difficult to define. Moreover, when discussing relevant research traditions, apart from DA, one could mention sociolinguistics, corpus linguistics or cultural studies. Because of their common concern with communication, meaning and context, definitions of pragmatics, sociolinguistics and discourse analysis seem to be the most variable (Schiffrin et al. 2001, p. 2). Brown and Yule (1983, p. 26) also emphasised the close
relationship between DA and pragmatics saying that “in discourse analysis, as in pragmatics, we are concerned with what people using language are doing, and accounting for the linguistic features in the discourse as the means employed in what they are doing”.

Continuing the discussion of the different links between pragmatics and its sibling disciplines, LoCastro (2012) advocated a sociolinguistic approach to pragmatics. Such approach should acknowledge the role of social variables such as identity, gender or sociocultural background in analysing aspects such as speech act behaviour across cultures. Furthermore, the author argued that it is important to focus on the ‘big picture’ and the miniscule aspects when studying communication, by saying that:

there are layers of meaning from the micro, linguistic level to the macro, sociocultural level that can only be separated for heuristics purposes. In the real world, in the real time, it is difficult to isolate one feature from others in the miniseconds of interactions (LoCastro 2012, p. 305).

To add to LoCastro’s point, it is difficult to separate linguistic features from sociocultural features because they do not function as parallels, but rather one affects the other. In other words, pragmalinguistic realisations of language use have their origin in language user’s sociopragmatic mappings. Therefore, it seems reasonable to investigate both aspects to provide a true account of the pragmatic feature being examined, hence the mixed-method approach adopted in this study.

### 4.1.3. Tailoring a mixed approach

Thanks to the review of the research traditions offered in the previous sections, it is now clearer that taking inspiration from a number of paradigms could contribute to a stronger, more comprehensive study of opinions. The influence of the various research traditions on the design of this research is summarised in this section.

The cross-cultural speech act tradition has influenced the present study in terms of the research methods, as well as the analytical approach. Firstly, the fact that the speech act of opinions is investigated in isolation stems from CCSARP practice. Moreover, speech acts studies have traditionally depended on elicited data, and role-plays were selected as a data collection technique which allows the researcher to study speech act behaviour in a range of controlled contexts, using the established P, D, I variables. The CCSARP tradition can also be seen in the analytical approach to the role-play data.
The units of meaning investigated in the role-plays were designed similarly to the analytical framework for other speech act studies, i.e. focusing on head acts and supportive moves, with their derivatives. Similarly to CCSARP analysis, the key criterion of differentiation between the strategies is their level of explicitness. However, while frameworks for many speech acts already exist, expressing opinions has not been approached from a speech act perspective in a similar study. Therefore, while quantitative analyses were the basis of most cross-cultural speech act studies, this research was approached qualitatively because of its exploratory nature. Consequently, the focus of the analysis was on describing the range or types of strategies used in opinions. The details of the approach to analysis of the role-plays are presented later in this chapter, in Section 4.4.1.

The influence of the discipline of DA on the present study is two-fold. Firstly, the analysis of the discourse allows discovering more covert aspects of social practices, such as exchanges of opinions. The key contribution of DA to supplementing speech act studies is that it permits a focus on the sociopragmatic dimension of talk. In our case, it is the identification of latent sociopragmatic aspects in relation to opinions, carried out within a framework of thematic (discourse) analysis (see Section 4.4.2). Consequently, the DA perspective is primarily a matter of analytical nature in the present research. However, within the tradition of DA and sociolinguistics, apart from naturally occurring speech, interviews and focus groups are also a common method of data collection. Because focus groups have not been explored as much in the field of pragmatics (cf. Section 4.2.2), the help of DA perspective in analysing data gathered through this technique also seems appropriate. The second contribution of DA tradition in this study is the focus on micro analysis of the role-play data with reference to stance and discourse markers, given their importance in expressing opinions. To recall LoCastro’s (2012) point that research in pragmatics is above all a linguistic study of discourse, the influence of DA on the role-play analytical frameworks in the present study is also noteworthy.

Apart from the traditions mentioned hitherto, it is important to acknowledge the value of the concept of cultural scripts (Goddard and Wierzbicka 2004), which will play a significant supplementary function in the present research (discussed in Section 2.4). While the author (Wierzbicka 2006) of cultural scripts refers to it as a theory and a research technique, it will be applied to the analysis of opinions as an additional
analytical and explanatory perspective. Moreover, even though it was argued in Section 1.2 that this study should be seen as an intercultural rather than a cross-cultural research, the cultural scripts allow a clear cross-cultural comparison between Polish and Irish attitudes towards opinions. This contrastive approach, again, bridges the tradition of CCSARP and the application of cultural scripts in analysing the focus group data as well.

Lastly, as argued in Section 1.3, one of the strengths of this study is the focus on studying the sociopragmatic dimension of opinions as well as the pragmalinguistic realisation pattern. In fact, the use of focus group data should be seen not only as supplementary, but an essential part of the study of opinions which also enlightens the interpretation of the role-play data. In this research, we are dealing with two types of data, collected using two different techniques, which are analysed using different analytical frameworks. However, this approach enables the presentation of an exhaustive account of opinions. A continuation of the exploration of the research design presented in the coming sections will demonstrate this further.

4.2. Research design

While the previous section focused on presenting the review of research traditions which influenced the design of the empirical part of this research, our attention now turns to a more practical side of the design. In order to answer the research questions (see Table 1.1.), this research focused on using elicited data of two kinds. The corpus of opinions was gathered through open role-plays, a common method of elicitation in pragmatics. The role-play data was later analysed to address research questions relating to the pragmalinguistic dimension of opinions. In order to answer the research questions relating to the sociopragmatic aspects of opinions, focus group interviews were chosen as the preferred data collection technique. In the following sections, the advantages and disadvantages of the two data collection techniques are discussed; firstly, role-plays (4.2.1), then the focus groups (4.2.2). In doing so, other alternative methods used in data elicitation in pragmatics are also presented throughout the argument. After presenting the motivations for the use of the chosen methods, the design of the methods is presented in more detail. This includes a closer inspection of the role-play scenarios (4.2.3), the themes explored in the focus groups (4.2.4) and the transcription conventions (4.2.5).
4.2.1. Role-plays

There are many aspects a researcher must consider when choosing appropriate data collection methodology and techniques. Turnbull (2001, p. 33) stressed that the ideal linguistic data should be ethical and efficient, representative of structures of natural talk, and they should allow the researcher some control in manipulating variables. In terms of choosing data collection methodology in ILP research, following Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (2005), the following issues should be considered:

1. Interactivity: Are the data interactive or limited in turn-taking?

2. Consequentiality: Is there a real-world outcome for the speakers? (Is the situation imagined?)

3. Comparability: Are these language samples comparable? (Are these samples useful for teaching the contextual variability of language form?)

4. Accuracy: How linguistically accurate are the data collected?

5. Ease/convenience: How easy or convenient is it to collect data this way?

With reference to the criteria above, role-plays score high on the interactivity, comparability and convenience scales, while the issue of consequentiality is compromised to a certain extent. However, despite a lack of ‘purpose’ in performing a communicative act in a role-play, participants can interact ‘as if’ the role-plays had a real-life consequence. Therefore, we could say that the language elicited in role-plays is ‘real’ as participants choose at that moment what to say. Had they learned a script to act out, their contribution would not be ‘real’. Moreover, Cook (2000) also pointed out that ‘play’, in general, and especially language play is a normal part of life; it is therefore part of ‘real life’. This characteristic makes role-plays a method which reflects quite closely naturally occurring speech.

Overall, the biggest advantage of role-plays is that they allow the researcher to investigate how a particular speech act set evolves across the interaction, over various turns, and with the presence of prosodic features such as intonation and stress (Félix-Brasdefer 2010). Moreover, role-plays allow for examining what elements are employed in an interaction to express tentativeness, politeness, or degrees of directness.
and indirectness (e.g. intonation, stress, duration) (e.g. Wichmann 2004). Role-plays are also a better tool to elicit ‘ability for use’ rather than ‘knowledge of’ pragmatically appropriate language, “because participants have to produce language under the pressures and constraints of a communicative situation” (Roever 2010, p. 246). In role-plays “it is possible to simulate conversational turns and to have the interlocutor apply conversational pressures that are not present in discourse completion tasks” (Cohen and Olshtain 1994, p. 148). Additionally, role-plays can elicit data which allow the researcher to almost feel like ‘it is the real thing’ because they foster quite a lot of spontaneity in the interactions. This tool also enables comparison of different linguistic groups in an identical spectrum of situations created in the scenarios. Finally, role-plays help to create linguistic interactions that might have been very difficult to gain access to in their natural setting.

Role-plays can be divided into several categories. Closed role-plays refer to situations where participants react to a single stimulus, i.e. they only require one simple reply on behalf of the participant; they do not elicit turns and interaction as such. Closed role-plays seem to have very little advantage over DCTs apart from the fact that they involve oral response. In contrast, in open role-plays only the participants’ role and situational context are explained and the interaction evolves naturally until it reaches its logical end. Open role-plays can be spontaneous, where participants keep their identity, or mimetic, where participants assume the role of someone else (as described by the researcher). Another type of a role-play is idiographic role-play in which interactants replicate real-life situations which happened to them in the past (Geluykens 2007). The current study used open role-plays, given the advantages they pose and the limited disadvantages.

While role-plays present many advantages over their biggest ‘competitor’ DCTs, one must also take into account the possible disadvantages. Cohen and Olshtain (1993), for example, discussed the trouble with using role-play prompts where the situation described is not salient to the participants. In such situations, the “instrument is forcing unnatural behaviour and if the respondent is not a good actor, the results might be problematic” (Cohen and Olshtain 1993, p. 152). However, most studies use situations tailored to the needs of the specific sample. The problem of introducing alien contexts in role-plays is that they may also be more likely to happen with less common speech acts or those which tend to be less formulaic. Exchanging opinions is something
people do every day and the role-play scenarios used in this study were tailored to ensure they were culturally salient and age appropriate to both linguistic groups. For instance, after the pilot study (Section 4.3.2) the topics were adjusted according to the age group and a role-play discussing going to university was changed to talking about getting a driver’s licence. Nevertheless, some difficulties were still encountered in the final study as role-plays do not always generate the type of data a researcher may be expecting. Here, one could mention a role-play in which the participant was not familiar with the topic of the conversation, i.e. scenario ‘Tiger’ in RP-12-PL. Nevertheless, that participant was able to deal with this shortcoming by asking the interlocutor open questions, thus demonstrating his strategic competence. Similarly, in RP-29-PL (‘Film’), the interlocutors appear to have taken quite literally the ‘playing’ aspect of the role-plays by ‘pretending to be getting into a fight’. However, when considering the qualities of good data mentioned at the start of this section, role-plays can produce linguistically accurate data, despite the participants’ recognition of their ‘acting’.

Another problem reported in relation to the use of role-plays is the fact that the data may be somehow untrue because NNSs sometimes take advantage of phrases used in the prompts in the role-plays (Cohen and Olshtain 1993). Language students, who took part in Cohen and Olshtain’s (1993) study, later reported that they would not have used certain expressions in real life, but they did so in the role-plays as they were available to them. However, the authors concluded that the expressions the NNSs took advantage of “were only partially in or absent from their productive knowledge” (ibid, p. 48). This issue is more important to studies which intend to test language learners’ pragmatic skills by using role-plays as the tool of assessment. In the case of the study undertaken here, the use of expressions from the role-play prompts was not interpreted as a drawback.

Another issue related to the use of role-plays is “response set effect” (Cohen and Olshtain 1981). It refers to a possible influence of one answer on the other if participants are asked to act out a number of role-plays to the same type of speech act in a row, causing the answer to one speech act having an effect on another (Cohen and Olshtain 1981, p. 129). However, it may refer to situations where informants interact with the same person while either of them has to take on different roles. The use of different participants to act as anchor interlocutors in this study ensured that this risk
was diminished. Additionally, limiting the number of participants in each recording session meant that the ‘response effect’ and fatigue was also minimised among the anchor participants, who, unlike the one-off participants, had to repeat the same two scenarios throughout their participation.

A further disadvantage of role-plays over DCTs is the fact that they need to be transcribed, where one hour of recording can take as much as ten hours to transcribe (Kasper and Dahl 1991, p. 30). A simplified transcription was used in this study to allow for general analysis, including overlapping, hesitations and false starts, but no prosody or measured pauses (see Section 3.5.1 for transcription conventions).

In conclusion, this section has served to demonstrate that role-plays present many advantages over other elicitation methods in speech act research. Carefully considering their limitations, the role-plays were successfully employed in the current study to gather pragmalinguistic data of expressing opinions. A closer look at the role-play scenarios is offered in the next subsection.

4.2.2. Role-play scenarios

Following feedback from the pilot study (see Section 4.3.2), the scenarios were subject to a continuous process of modification. The biggest difficulty was in combining the participants’ need for short, precise descriptions of the situations and the need for elaborate, concrete contextual information. The researcher’s aim was to produce short prompts which would contain sufficient amount of information to enable the participants to start interacting immediately. Previous research has shed light on the positive effects of more elaborate prompts (Billmyer and Varghese 2000; Félix-Brasdefer 2010). However, participants in the pilot study complained about some of the prompts being long and ‘wordy’, which led the researcher to opt for shorter, concise prompts (see full prompts in Appendix 1). Therefore, the six situations each participant acted out, varied according to the P, D, I dimensions, are presented in Table 4.1 below, which also provides the general topic of each scenario. The names of scenarios offered in brackets are used throughout the thesis to refer to the specific scenarios. The differences in politeness behaviour according to each scenario are discussed in the results Chapter 6, Section 6.1.6.
Table 4.1 Summary of role-play scenarios according to P, D, I variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>P, D, I</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Talking to a boss about taking holidays from work.</td>
<td>(Holidays)</td>
<td>P+ D+ I+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Talking to a boss about Tiger Woods’ sex scandals.</td>
<td>(Tiger)</td>
<td>P+ D+ I-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Talking to a stranger at a boring party.</td>
<td>(Party)</td>
<td>P- D+ I+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Talking to a stranger about a popular film.</td>
<td>(Film)</td>
<td>P- D+ I-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Talking to a friend about getting a driver’s licence.</td>
<td>(Licence)</td>
<td>P- D- I+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Talking to a friend about the Christmas hype.</td>
<td>(Christmas)</td>
<td>P- D- I-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In terms of the P, D, I dimensions, the individual variables were interpreted as explained in Table 4.2, below.

Table 4.2 Explanation of Power, Distance, Imposition variables

(P+) In P+ situations, the speaker has a higher rank, title or social position, or is in control of the assets in the situation, e.g. a supervisor, manager, president or customer.

(P-) Speaker has a lower/lesser rank, title or social position, or is not in control of the assets in the situation, e.g. a worker of lesser status, member of an organization with lesser status, or a salesperson serving a customer (Hudson et al. 1995, p. 4).

(D+) Speaker and hearer do not know or identify with each other. They are strangers interacting due to social/life circumstances, e.g. customer to service person or law enforcement officer to citizen.

(D-) Speaker and hearer know or identify with each other. There is an affiliation between them; they share solidarity in the sense that they could be described as working for a common goal or interest, e.g. coworkers (Hudson et al. 1995, p. 5).

(I+) Topic of the exchange entails greater emotional involvement on behalf of the speaker and hearer and may deal with sensitive issues and cultural taboos.
When entering the recording room for the first time, each participant was given the option of acting out a mock role-play to get accustomed to the data collection procedure. The scenario was an apology where one had to apologise to a friend for forgetting to bring back a book they had borrowed. This also acted as a distraction so that they were not told explicitly that they were going to be ‘exchanging opinions’.

On a final note, regarding the design of the role-play tasks, according to speech act and politeness theory, speakers can always opt out and not perform a given speech act (see Figure 2.1). In research dealing with interlanguage pragmatics two types of opting out have been classified: “intentional non-performance of an act after having taken into consideration contextual factors, and inability to perform owing to limited proficiency or limited familiarity with a particular scenario” (Rose 2000, p. 39). In the semi-experimental environment of data collection, speakers may feel pressured to perform the speech act, even though they may have opted out in real life. While it might be more ethically and theoretically correct to allow for opting out, it could greatly limit the amount of data. Therefore, the participants in this study were not given the option to ‘say nothing’ if they wished to.

4.2.3. Focus groups

The key concept, in relation to focus group interviews, is that they supplement other data, in this case, the interactional data gathered in the role-plays. A focus group is “a group of people selected and assembled by researchers to discuss and comment on, from personal experience, the topic that is the subject of the research” (Powell and Single 1996, p. 499). While, in the field of market research, focus groups initially served as a preliminary tool for gathering data to be followed by a quantitative study, they have been gaining important place in qualitative research too. As a follow-up method, focus groups allow for discovering the how and why in experimental research (Yin 2009). According to Berg (2001), focus groups are well suited to discussion on topics which deal with personal attitudes because their relaxed atmosphere helps people to open up. Finally, because in focus groups “it is the researcher’s interest that
provides the focus, [and] the data themselves come from the group interaction” (Morgan 1997, p. 6), researchers must be open to new topics emerging in the focus groups, which can take the research in “new and often unexpected directions” (Kitzinger 1995, p. 299). This potential to take research into ‘new directions’ inspired the use of focus groups, in the present research, in order to discover the perception of sociopragmatic rules governing expressing opinions, not only supplementing, but complementing the role-play data.

In pragmatics, individual interviews are characteristic of longitudinal case studies, usually following language acquisition of particular learners in an L2 environment. Examples of such studies are the study of Jim’s linguistic development (Duff 2008) or the study of Ge’s skills in English (Huebner 1983). The qualitative focus of such studies allows for an emic, thorough analysis of the processes language learners go through in their acquisition of language and culture of the new speech community. Research can also focus on the development of awareness in terms of noticing pragmatic rules of the new language, which can supplement production data. This sort of information can help to determine the sociopragmatic awareness, as well as the attitudes towards the target culture and its pragmatic conventions. Individual interviews can be used to gather pseudo-ethnographic data from participants who also take part in oral and written DCTs, as done by Yuan (2001). Apart from recalling instances of complimenting and being complimented by others, the interview explored the sociopragmatic conventions of complimenting (Yuan 2001). Similarly, a group interview could be used to recall sociopragmatic conventions of other speech acts.

Another type of interviews, often used in conjunction with role-plays and other elicitation methods, are verbal protocols. Verbal reporting is a “special type of introspection and consists of gathering protocols, or reports, by asking individuals what is going through their minds as they are solving or completing a task” (Mackey and Gass 2005, p. 65). Think-aloud protocols usually accompany written DCTs, where participants are asked to voice their thoughts as they are filling in the DCTs. This sort of information, available in the human short-term memory, can also be recalled immediately after completing a DCT or a role-play in a retrospective verbal report. By using verbal reports “one may learn what the respondents actually perceived about each situation (e.g. what they perceived about the relative role status of the interlocutors) and how their perceptions influenced their responses” (Cohen 2004, p.
Research suggests that concurrent reports seem to elicit information about the planning of the speech act, while retrospective reporting sheds light on generating and investigating hypotheses (Robinson 1992). Both concurrent and retrospective reports can also be helpful in piloting of data collection methods and in tests of validity of data collection methods, as participants’ reports can point to deficiencies in the instruments. In Woodfield’s (2008) study, for example, participants reported on the unnaturalness of having to perform a request task in a written mode (DCT), as well as lack of contextual detail in the situations described. However, verbal reporting has a rather short-term focus, i.e. reflecting on the task just completed and the researcher here focused on the more general perception language users have about expressing opinions. This wider spectrum guided the choice of focus groups as the favoured method of collecting such data.

The use of focus groups in pragmatics research has not been as common as other methods mentioned in this review. LoCastro (2001) used a focus group interview in investigating the individual differences accounting for ILP development, such as learner identity and motivation for learning English, and adopting L2 pragmatic norms. Matsumura (2007) used a retrospective group interview in a qualitative analysis, to accompany data on the speech act of advice among Japanese learners of English, after a study abroad program. The study investigated ILP development over time and used a multiple choice test to establish the level or pragmatic competence among the participants. The group interview was conducted after the final questionnaire and was designed to establish the metapragmatic assessment the participants had made of the speech act realisations in the test. The researcher chose to use a group interview believing that comments from one student could elicit comments from others. Thanks to this interview, Matsumura (2007) established that the frequent selection of ‘opting out’ after study abroad program was not a sign of poor pragmatic skills but rather a demonstration of higher awareness of context-sensitivity in offering advice. This evidence of advantages of using an interview to support production data has also influenced the current research in selecting a group interview as one of the data collection methods.

Morgan (1997) summarised the advantages of focus groups by saying that “because the researcher defines the discussion topics, focus groups are more controlled than participant observation, and because of the participant-defined nature of group
interaction the focus group setting is less controlled than individual interview” (p. 16). This tool can also be used for purposes different to an individual interview. For instance, the focus could be on the emergence of topics in a group interaction, i.e. why some groups brought up a topic and others did not. Focus groups are also a better tool when the topic of the interview is not deep enough to produce sufficient amount of data in an individual interview. One of the main strengths of focus groups is that they produce data on the topic that may not be observable. Therefore, there is an advantage of this method over participant observation. The control of the ‘focus’ by the researcher ensures that the participants can be led into the topic the researcher is interested in.

The number of participants in a focus group should also influence the choice of this method. Small groups allow longer contributions by each participant, and, respectively, in larger groups, participants may not get a chance to express their points of view because of time constraints in recordings. In the current study, the number of participants in each of the focus group recordings varied (from four to eight), therefore influencing the contributions of each participant in the different session. It is also important to conduct focus groups with a homogenous group of participants, as strong differences between participants can “stifle” the discussion (Fern 2001, p. 17). The participants here were selected among university students to ensure homogeneity. Moreover, the focus group interviews were conducted in English with the Irish participants and in Polish with the Polish participants.

Given the importance of the position of the interview facilitator of the focus group, the use of Polish in interviewing the Polish group was carefully considered. The function of the facilitator has also received some attention in the relevant literature. The advantages and disadvantages are often discussed within the binary oppositions of ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’s’ viewpoints. On the one hand, a facilitator who is an insider can use their knowledge to gain deeper insights into participants’ opinions and feelings. On the other hand, researchers who position themselves as outsiders can gain information which would not be given to an insider, perhaps more objective. However, this dichotomy may not be as clear-cut as expected and one’s race, gender, age and social position can be interpreted differently by different research participants in the interview, making the relationship between the interview and interviewee transitory (Mullings 1999). Thus, Mullings (1999) argued for the creation of ‘positional spaces’
where “the situation knowledges of both parties in the interview encounter, engendered a level of trust and co-operation” (p. 340). It was this cooperation that influenced not only the choice of conducting the focus groups with Polish participants in Polish, but also the use of Polish language to advertise the research and gain access to participants.

In terms of drawbacks of focus groups, there is the possible influence of the moderator on the group’s interactions. However, there is no evidence that the moderator’s impact on the data is any greater than the researcher’s impact on participant observation or individual interviewing (Morgan 1997, p. 14). Becoming involved in the focus group as the moderator gives the researcher an advantage in analysing the data since “the data are themselves a result of a unique interaction of moderator and the group. Only an understanding of this interaction and factors that contribute to it provides a sound basis for the interpretation of focus group data” (Stewart, Shamdasani and Rook 2007, p. ix). Another weakness derives from the focus groups’ reliance on interaction in the group to produce the data, as the group itself may influence the nature of the data it produces. Among such group influences is the tendency to conformity, where participants withhold opinions they might say in private or “polarisation” where some participants express more extreme opinions when speaking in a group (Sussman, Burton, Dent, Stacy and Flay 1991).

As a final possible weakness, referring not only to focus groups but also to role-plays, researchers must take into account the phenomenon described by Labov (1972) known as ‘the observer’s paradox’. It refers to the dilemma of researchers wanting to know how people behave when they are not being observed, but his/her presence means that the participants know they are being observed (recorded, etc.). Therefore, this is not ‘how they behave when not being observed’. While the role-plays were not expected to replace naturally occurring talk, reducing the possible unnaturalness had to be ensured. Kasper (2000, p. 319) suggested that such issues could be overcome by getting the participants used to being recorded (or the presence of recording equipment). Therefore, the participants interacted in a mock role-play before the actual interactions. Moreover, the digital camera used for recording was very small and therefore less intimidating. Also, in all the interactions the participants were sat down to reduce the stress associated with standing in front of a video camera. Additionally, during the focus groups, the chairs were organised in a semi-circle to ensure eye-contact between the researcher and the participants, as well as between the participants.
In sum, despite the potential drawbacks, focus groups present many advantages in eliciting the type of data required to answer the research questions posed herein. In a focus group interview, people can express their views quite freely and feed off each other’s opinions. Focus groups are also easier to organise than individual interviews. This tool has perhaps not been used to its full advantage in cross-cultural and interlanguage pragmatics. The analysis of focus groups results, in Chapter 7, should serve as a good example of the rich data focus groups can provide, while now we look at the details of the implementation of this technique in the present study.

4.2.4. Focus group interview questions

Each recording session of role-plays was followed by a focus group, designed to explore the sociopragmatic aspect of expressing opinions. The focus groups were led by the researcher, had a semi-structured design and were conducted in Polish or English, according to the linguistic group. The main issues discussed in the focus groups are summarised in the table below. These core themes were also the pre-established labels for the thematic analysis of the focus group data. This will be reflected in the sections of Chapter 7, which presents the results of the focus groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.3 Focus groups interview themes with prompting questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The thought process, i.e. “What were you thinking about while interacting?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The general rules of expressing opinions, i.e. “What opinions are better to keep to yourself and why?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The emotional involvement in expressing opinions, i.e. “How do you feel when someone expresses an opinion contrary to yours?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The strategies used in exchanging opinions, i.e. “How do you react when someone expresses an opinion contrary to yours?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Disagreeing agreeably, i.e. “What do you do when you know that one is going to change their point of view?”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The focus groups had a semi-structured character, therefore, apart from the questions presented above, the participants were free to discuss any other issues with relation to
opinions. Additionally, because the focus groups in the PL sessions were conducted in Polish, it was believed that it would help the participants to open up. As it will be stressed later in this chapter (Section 4.4.2), the position of the analyst, when interpreting focus group themes, is pivotal in thematic analysis. Similarly, the analysis of divergences from native-like strategies among Polish speakers was based on a subjective qualitative analysis. The researcher’s position, as a native speaker of Polish, was an advantage in interpreting those divergences, as it permitted an emic examination of opinions and an involvement during all stages of the empirical research as well as the transcription phase, presented next.

4.2.5. Transcription conventions

Different transcription conventions were established for the sub-sets of data, according to the two data collection techniques. The role-play recordings were transcribed excluding long pauses (while reading cue cards) and irrelevant, instructional conversations between the researcher and the participants (i.e. asking to take a seat, calling in the participants, etc.). Because the role-play data were to be analysed in terms of linguistic content, the transcriptions were more detailed and included pauses, hesitations, and non-verbal communication information. The focus groups were analysed thematically, therefore, detailed transcriptions were unnecessary. The transcriptions were based on LCIE corpus conventions (Farr, Murphy and O'Keefe 2004), VOICE corpus conventions (2007) and Jefferson (2004). To ensure easy readability, especially for in-text quoting of the transcriptions, a number of strategies have been used, such as the capitalization of the pronoun I and proper nouns. Also, punctuation typical to literary texts has been used. Commas were used to signal short pauses and ellipses to signal pauses typical in hesitant speech (see transcription conventions, p. xii). The relatively small amount of data allowed for a detailed qualitative analysis of the role-plays, which can be seen as an advantage in discourse studies (O'Keefe, Clancy and Adolphs 2011, p. 28). Additionally, small corpora can be used in investigating not only lexical, but also cultural aspects of language in cross-cultural comparison (Thompson 2001).

The corpus of interactions collected amounted to (approximately):
Because the results chapters contain many examples from the role-play data, a code system was put in place. In the role-plays transcriptions appendices (Appendices 2 and 3), each role-play was assigned a number, separately in PL and IE data, providing an opportunity to refer from short excerpts in the results chapters to the full role-play in the appendix. The codes go as follows: RP signals it is an excerpt from a role-play, FG from a focus group; RP-17, signals the excerpt comes from role-play number 17; the code which follows the number, RP-17-IE/PL signals if the excerpt came from the Polish (PL) or Irish (IE) subset. Focus group transcriptions (Appendices 4 and 5) were divided into rounds (for instance FG-1-PL). Additionally, matching line numbering (used in both types of data) enables an easy identification of the excerpt within the transcription appendices. In referring to particular scenarios, line numbers are offered after a forward slash, e.g. RP-5-IE/5-13.

4.3. Data collection procedure

After presenting the motivations regarding the theoretical and methodological underpinnings of the study, the discussion now turns to the details of the project. Firstly, the ethical considerations are outlined (4.3.1) and the piloting stage described (4.3.2). Later, Section 4.3.3 describes in detail how data collection took place on location and presents the approach to sampling and a closer look at participants’ profiles.

4.3.1. Ethical considerations

The data collection was conducted in accordance with the ethical requirements of the researcher’s faculty’s ethics committee, after a successful application for approval (see
Appendix 7). The participants in the study were all volunteers and all care was taken to ensure that their participation was based on an informed consent. To guarantee confidentiality, they all wore identification tags (number or letters) during the recordings, which also helped the organisation of the data collection to go smoothly. Pseudonyms have been used throughout publications arising from this research. Even though taking part in the research was not advertised as particularly beneficial to the volunteers, discussions with reference to politeness and pragmatics can be just one of many ‘awareness raising’ tasks. While the purpose of the role-plays and focus groups was not to raise awareness, the respondents may have considered them to be beneficial in their intercultural encounters following their participation.

4.3.2. Pilot study

A pilot study was conducted in December 2009, after ethical approval from the researcher’s institutions’ ethical committee (applied for separately to the final study). The aim of the pilot study was to establish the strengths and weaknesses of the data collection procedure before the final study.

The pilot study was advertised through an internal email network and two separate emails, in Polish and in English, were sent. Thirteen volunteers took part in the study, six Polish and seven Irish. Before the recording started, the participants were asked to fill out a short form with general personal information. This form was used as a coding scheme for the duration of the study. As the students worked in pairs of one Irish student (NS) and one Polish student (NNS), they were given ID tags with numbers (NNS) and letters of the alphabet (NS) to ensure confidentiality and efficient organisation of the study. After the researcher announced that the recording equipment was to be turned on and read out the participants’ right to withdraw from the project at any time, the students were then lined up in pairs on the corridor and they came in, a pair at a time, to act out the role-plays.

There were six role-plays in total: two apologies, two requests and two exchanges of opinions. The participants were given the prompts (on a small piece of paper) by a facilitator for the first role-play before they entered the room, so they could read them
while they were waiting

Each prompt included a Polish version on the other side of the paper. The prompts for some of the other role-plays were given after entering the room, eliciting more spontaneous dialogues. Before the final two role-plays, the participants were re-arranged in terms of pairing so that the pattern was reversed.

The focus group interview was conducted after a short break (recording was paused for that time) with the aim of exploring some of the organisational, technical and conceptual issues. The layout of the chairs in the recording room was arranged in a semi-circle so that nobody had their backs facing the camera.

During the focus group, some participants admitted they had been ‘meaner’ than they would be in normal life when acting out the role-plays. They gave the lack of real-life consequences to their actions as the reason for allowing themselves to be less pleasant in the role-plays. Therefore, being ‘mean’ to someone is not considered a serious offence because the person being unkind will not have to deal with the consequences of their actions in real life. This issue was also raised in one of the Irish focus groups in the final study. Consequently, when using elicitation methods such as role-plays, possible instances of impoliteness should be interpreted with caution as they may be a side effect of the actual elicitation tool and accounted for in the analysis/conclusions (see shortcomings in Section 8.3).

Overall, the pilot proved to be greatly informative and useful, allowing for changes to the instruments to be made accordingly. For example, the pilot provided suggestions regarding extending the scope of situations described in the role-plays to include non-school environments. Consequently, the scenarios for the final study were extended to include contexts where participants imagined themselves being at a party or in a shop. Because the presence of recording equipment proved to cause some uneasiness, all interactions, in the final study, took place with the participants sitting down and with the camera placed on a ‘mini’ tripod. Moreover, even though the Polish participants reportedly did not resort to using the Polish version of the prompt, they believed it was preferable to include such. Therefore, all prompts in the final study also included a Polish version of the scenario. Furthermore, the participants preferred to interact

14 Having the prompts in advance of the interactions would have given the participants an opportunity to discuss them with others. Therefore, for the final study, all participants were given their prompts just before the interaction, after entering the recording room. Even though they may still have talked about the role-plays with each other while waiting for their turn to interact, the data did not show evidence of such prior discussion.
immediately after receiving prompts, as they thought it was more ‘natural’ and spontaneous – this sequence was adopted for the main study. On the whole, the pilot study was a valuable step in preparing the final data collection phase.

4.3.3. The study: data collection and participants

The collection of data took place on five different occasions with two different groups: (1) Irish speakers of English, (2) Polish speakers interacting in English with native speakers of Irish English. The study was advertised through an internal university email network (in Polish and English). Following initial responses, the recordings were scheduled to suit the participants. Data collection took place between November 2010 and March 2011. For each of the recording sessions, three Irish participants acted as interlocutors, fulfilling the role of a Boss (B), a Friend (F) or a Stranger (S). They are referred to throughout the thesis as ‘anchor participants’\(^{15}\), given the fixed roles they were assigned for the duration of the study. The remaining participants are referred to as ‘one-off participants’ as they interacted in each role-play only once. In the IE recording sessions, the positions of anchors were assigned on the day among all those who volunteered to take part in the study. In the case of the PL groups, three Irish participants were sought to be anchors, interacting with Polish one-off participants in English. In total, data was gathered from 32 informants, that is, 8 Polish and 9 Irish one-off participants, and 15 Irish anchor participants who took part in the 5 recording sessions, which were recorded with a digital camcorder. Additionally, a voice recorder was used as backup equipment. The recording sessions and numbers of participants are presented in Table 4.5.

\(^{15}\) The term ‘anchor participant’ is used here similarly to Schauer’s (2009) implementation of the term ‘actor’ to refer to participants who were assigned fixed, imaginary roles for the role-play interactions. However, for reasons of equality between both types of participants, the descriptors ‘anchor’ and ‘one-off’ were chosen to reflect more clearly the character of their interactions.
## Table 4.5 Number of participants per recording session

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Round</th>
<th>Participants Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1<sup>st</sup> round: | 2 one-off participants and 3 anchor participants in the IE group  
5 Polish one-off participants and 3 Irish anchor participants in the PL group |
| 2<sup>nd</sup> round: | 1 participant and 3 anchor participants in the IE group  
3 Polish one-off participants, 1 Irish one-off participant and 3 Irish anchor participants in the PL group |
| 3<sup>rd</sup> round: | 5 one-off participants and 3 anchor participants in the IE group |

The sample, in this study, was selected using a mixture of purposeful and snowball sampling (Patton 1990, p. 243). The purposeful sampling method allows for selection of participants according to the judgement made by the researcher. Since representative sample was not the aim of this qualitative research, the purposeful sampling suited the goals of the study. The selection criteria for participation were quite general, i.e. native speakers of Polish as well as Irish English were sought to take part. In order to control sociolinguistic variables, and ensure comparability between the linguistic groups, the sample was limited to students of a university in the West of Ireland, both undergraduate and postgraduate. The Polish participants were also students at the same university, either residing in Ireland or exchange students temporarily living in Ireland.

After expressing initial interest in the study, participants were encouraged to bring along a friend or a colleague, resulting in a snowball effect. Snowball sampling has been suggested as a good method for descriptive, qualitative, exploratory studies (Hendricks, Blanken and Adriaans 1992). Also known as chain-referral sampling, it has been used widely in groups which are difficult to reach or enumerate, such as criminal gangs and drug addicts, or those where confidentiality is a priority, such as AIDS patients. Snowball sampling can also be the object of investigating the actual link-tracing phenomenon. In the current study it was chosen for its practical
advantages and because there were no anonymity constraints. Since the informants were going to interact with each other, in any case their participation fundamentally would not be anonymous.

In terms of the sociolinguistic makeup of the participant group, the limitation to university students does not reflect the general characteristics of the Polish or Irish societies, which naturally present a wider diversity. According to the latest census, Poles living in Ireland had one of the highest levels of technical and vocational training out of the ten most represented immigrant groups, and the highest level of education among the immigrants from the ‘EU10’ member states (CSO 2012a, p.2). Around 20 per cent of them had a third-level education. Similarly, in relation to Polish nationals’ language skills, they reported their ability to speak English as the second weakest among the nationalities represented in the census, where a quarter could not speak it well, or at all (CSO 2012a, p.28). Recruiting a representative sample of Polish participants, with varied educational and linguistic skills, could also have provided a wider diversity of opinions. Variables such as language proficiency, age or educational background can influence how opinions are expressed. Here, one could mention the use of slang, acquired skills of polite language in expressing opinions or the relation of age to conformity\(^\text{16}\). However, conducting an exploratory study into opinions, and contrasting Irish and Polish formulae, could have proven to be too difficult if the Polish data were to be gathered among such a varied sample. Therefore, preference for uniformity of the samples (both Polish and Irish), as well as comparability between the national groups, was chosen, which allowed the research questions posed in this study to be addressed in a set of consistent and well-defined boundaries.

The one-off participants from Ireland were all native speakers of Irish English, and they came from different parts of Ireland and were of various ages, as presented in Table 4.6 (names used are pseudonyms).

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\(^{16}\) In general, conformity increases during adolescence and decreases later in life (Constazo and Shaw 1966, see also Cialdini and Goldstein 2004). Cultures classified as collectivist have also been linked to higher levels of conformity (cf. Bond and Smith 1996).
Table 4.6 Irish one-off participants by age, gender and origin

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTICIPANT (TAG)</th>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>GENDER</th>
<th>ORIGIN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peter (6)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Galway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andy (12)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Limerick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martina (11)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noelle (1)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Kerry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jimmy (2)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Galway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul (3)</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Dublin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dave (4)</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Ireland(^{17})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne (5)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Kilkenny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah (7)</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Kerry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average: 24.75</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>44.5% Female (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>55.5% Male (5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Irish one-off participants’ average age was about 24 years old, which is very similar to the Polish one-off participants’ population (average age 24). The gender variation was quite balanced and they came from a wide variety of locations in Ireland including: Kerry in the South-West, Galway and Limerick in the West, Dublin in the East, as well as Kilkenny and Tipperary.

The majority of the Polish students who took part in the study were enrolled on undergraduate courses in Ireland, one was a postgraduate student enrolled at the same university, and one was an Erasmus exchange student. On average they had spent 3.6 years in college at the time of the research.

\(^{17}\) Informant’s entry (probably misunderstood the question).  
- Information missing.
Table 4.7 Polish one-off participants by age, gender and origin

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTICIPANT</th>
<th>YEAR OF BIRTH</th>
<th>GENDER</th>
<th>ORIGIN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kasia (1)</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magda (2)</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>South East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacek (3)</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>South East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wojtek (4)</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>South West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janek Erasmus (5)</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>North East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jurek (8)</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Central</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radek (9)</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia (10)</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average: 24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>37.5% Female (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>62.5% Male (5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regarding their language skills, the Polish participants self-evaluated their abilities as a pretty high average 7.99 out of 10 (excluding the exchange student who scored himself a low 4.3). In terms of established measurements, the university policy for admission of international students requires English language skills of 6.0 or 6.5 on IELTS\(^\text{18}\) scale (www.ul.ie/international). However, excluding the exchange student who was in Ireland only for a period of a few months, the remaining participants had spent on average 4.2 years in Ireland at the time of the study. Therefore, their language skills were probably much higher than the required university admission score. None of them had lived in another English-speaking country apart from Ireland. Interestingly, half of the participants classified their residence in Ireland as temporary, which could be a sign of having a low motivation for assimilation into the Irish society and using the pragmatic conventions of the new culture. Nevertheless, a great majority also reported using English to a wide extent in their everyday interactions, when browsing the Internet and when enjoying a book or a film. They also reported that a

\(^{18}\) Band 6 IELTS corresponds to a Competent User, who “has generally effective command of the language despite some inaccuracies, inappropriacies and misunderstandings. Can use and understand generally complex language, particularly in familiar situations” (source: www.ielts.org). Furthermore, an IELTS score of 6.5 would correspond to a speaker just about reaching level C1 in the CEFR (British Council 2010), i.e. somewhere between an upper intermediate and an advanced speaker.
large majority of their friends were Irish. This language contact can have a very good positive effect on their pragmatic skills and the limited use of Polish can signify a move away from Polish ways of interacting. However, research in pragmatics has suggested that extended residence and everyday contact with L2 community does not guarantee high pragmatic skills (Bardovi-Harlig et al. 1991). Explicit instruction with reference to pragmatics is needed to notice and understand how L2 pragmatic conventions may differ from one’s L1 conceptualisations (Cohen 2008). Let us examine one such example in detail.

One of the Polish participants (Jacek) took part not only in the final study, but also in the pilot. In the focus group, in the final study, he recalled that during the focus group session in the pilot study we discussed issues of politeness in Ireland and common NNSs’ errors. The topic centred round responding to closed questions by repeating the auxiliary verb, e.g. ‘No, I haven’t’ instead of just a bare ‘No’. For example, in responding to a shop clerk’s ‘Would you have five cents, perhaps?’ a simple ‘No’ may be perceived impolite in Ireland (see Section 3.2.1.2). As Jacek said in the final study, he learned, during the pilot, that using the bare form may be perceived impolite, saying to the researcher it was ‘because you said it, otherwise I wouldn’t have noticed’ (FG-2-PL/303-309). His reflection suggests that steering his attention towards that aspect of polite behaviour in English made him aware of its existence. Even after long-term residence in Ireland, as he said, he probably would not have noticed it. It is, therefore, difficult to speculate that the extended residence of the Polish participants in this study influenced positively their pragmatic behaviour in English. Nevertheless, examples from the focus groups, such as the one just discussed, can shed some light not only on the PL participants’ pragmatic awareness, but also on how that awareness came about.

Another aspect believed to affect speech act behaviour is gender (Rose and Ng 2001; Kasper and Rose 2002), which also suggests it as a possible variable to control in experimental research. However, in the current study, only the position of the Boss was assigned specifically to males. Firstly, controlling gender in all of the anchor and one-off participants could have limited the participation because some volunteers would have been declined to fit the study. The response to the study was not strong enough to permit such practice. Secondly, gender was not believed to play an important role in the other anchor participants’ scenarios, given the rather neutral topics the conversations explored. Finally, because the scenarios with Boss were meant
to represent the highest level of threat, it was believed that interacting with a male would fit this purpose better. Table 4.8 presents the breakdown of anchor participants by age, gender and origin. The participant’s code comprises information regarding their roles: a Boss, a Stranger or a Friend (B, S, F); the recording session (1, 2, 3); and their gender (W-woman, M-man), with the exception of Boss, who was always assigned to a male. Anchor participants who took part in the sessions with Polish participants are coded with double letters (BB, SS, FF), while the number and gender codes are the same as for the IE recordings.

### Table 4.8 Anchor participants by age, gender and origin

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RECORDING</th>
<th>CODE</th>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>GENDER</th>
<th>ORIGIN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IE 1</td>
<td>B1</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Kilkenny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S1W</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Clare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F1W</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IE 2</td>
<td>B2</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Limerick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S2M</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Ireland&lt;sup&gt;19&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F2W</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>*Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IE 3</td>
<td>B3</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Cork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S3M</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Cork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F3W</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Offaly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL 1</td>
<td>BB1</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Limerick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SS1M</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Limerick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FF1W</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Limerick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL 2</td>
<td>BB2</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Limerick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SS2M</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Limerick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FF2M</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>*Ireland</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average: B=26.8, S=29.75, F=29.4  
67% Male (10)  
33% Female (5)

<sup>19</sup> Informant’s entry (probably misunderstood the question).  
- Information missing.
All participants were wearing identification tags with numbers, and anchor participants wore ID tags according to their roles (B, S, F). This ensured confidentiality and allowed for smooth organisation of the data collection. The participants were assigned pseudonyms after the data collection, during the transcription stage. Before data collection began, all participants were requested to read the information sheet carefully and sign a consent form. Polish participants were also requested to fill in a profiling questionnaire, dealing with issues such as their linguistic skills and time spent in Ireland.

During the role-plays, the one-off participants were waiting in the corridor for their turn to enter the recording room and act out their role-plays. The anchor participants were with the researcher in the recording room (session 1 IE) or also waiting outside, depending on the size of the recording room in each session. After entering the room and taking a seat, the participants were given a prompt on a small piece of paper with a description of a situation in which they were meant to imagine themselves. They acted out two role-plays with one anchor participant and then left the room. The next one-off participant acted out two role-plays with the next anchor participant. Therefore, each time a one-off participant entered the room (three times in total) they were interacting with a different anchor interlocutor in two role-plays (six role-plays in total). The anchor participants interacted with each participant twice, and then the next anchor participant took their place and interacted with the next participant coming to the recording room. Therefore, the pattern of interaction among the anchor participants was meant to be the same until every anchor interacted with each one-off participant.

In order to limit fatigue among the anchor interlocutors, to whom the interactions were quite repetitive, the number of one-off participants was never greater than five per session. After all one-off participants interacted with three different anchor participants, there was a short break before everyone returned for the focus group interview. During the break, drinks and snacks were offered. Making research participants feel comfortable has been suggested as quite important in similar contexts, such as ethnographic interviewing (Berg 2001). In the PL sessions, only the Polish one-off participants took part in the focus groups, since they were conducted in Polish. In the IE sessions, the anchor participants also took part in the focus groups. Each recording session lasted about two hours in total, including the breaks. Researchers
agree that the two hour mark is the desired maximum time for methods such as focus
groups (Flores and Alonso 1995, p. 93).

4.4. Analytical frameworks

In order to answer the research questions herein, the data collected were analysed
according to frameworks presented in this section. The analysis framework for role-
plays is presented first (4.4.1). We begin with an overview of the qualitative analysis,
which stems from the tradition of speech act studies (4.4.1.1), turning later to
supplementary analysis carried out with the use of quantitative methods, i.e. corpus
analytical software (4.1.1.2). After that, the process of conducting thematic analysis is
outlined (4.4.2), which was implemented in analysing the focus group data.

4.4.1. Role-play analytical framework

Analytical frameworks in speech act studies have been mostly influenced by the data
collection method of DCTs and the original coding framework developed in the
CCSARP project (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989). The data collected in DCTs are usually
coded into units of head acts and supportive acts, and their modification derivatives.
The unit of coding is referred to as a ‘strategy’. In the analysis, the frequency of
strategies is counted and compared between groups of interest, for example, native
speakers and L2 learners, using frequency counts or other statistical procedures. Such
analyses indicate relationship between group members and the frequency of use of a
certain strategy (Roever 2010, p. 248). However, because the focus in the present study
has been a qualitative analysis, the types of strategies, rather than the frequency counts
will be discussed in the results. The strategies will be analysed in relation to politeness
theory and speech act realisation perspective, thus their semantic meaning and
politeness ranking, as well as discourse function, will be examined. The framework for
analysis of role-plays is presented in the first subsection, while later the minor focus on
quantitative support of the analysis is offered.
4.4.1.1. Qualitative analysis – speech acts and politeness

The nature of exploratory studies is that they intend to describe new, undocumented phenomena. However, while opinions are rather poorly documented speech act per se (as was argued in Section 1.3), this research does not need to start from scratch. Therefore, the analytical process of classifying opinions as a speech act set can be helped with previous knowledge about the structure of opinions. In terms of taxonomy of opinions, a typical opinion would normally involve the following moves (adapted from Horvath and Eggins 1995):

- Orientation (SUPPORTIVE MOVE) *I want to talk about x*…
- Opinion (HEAD ACT) *I think that x*…
- Response (Agree-Concessive A/D- Disagree)
- Evidence (SUPPORTIVE MOVE) *(I think that x) because*…
- (and Counter-evidence) *(I think that y) because*…
- Resolution

In the list above, an attempt was made to apply the speech act tradition coding system (head acts and supportive moves) to the existing schema provided by Horvath and Eggins (1995). However, for role-play data “it can be difficult to identify the actual head act as many types of supportive moves already have some degree of the target illocutionary force” (Roever 2010, p. 248). Additionally, in some speech acts this spreading of illocutionary force over a number of utterances may be necessary to accomplish the desired act, giving life to speech act sets (Cohen 1996, p. 214). For these reasons, role-plays provide better data for qualitative analysis because a strict strategy-coding, quantitatively-oriented tradition can be quite limiting. Over the course of the analysis, it was discovered that a looser approach to the classification of moves in the speech act set was more appropriate.

On a more practical side, the analysis of the role-play data involved the following steps:

1. Coding of the role-plays into loose categories of key ACTS within the set: Opinion, Evidence, Agree, Disagree, Agree-to-disagree, Resolution.
2. Identification of further variations within ACTS, such as Weak Agree, Strong Disagree, etc.

3. Description of additional moves/ACTS within the stretch of discourse: deferring disagreements (move), opening statements (move), indirect apologies (ACTS), etc.

4. Fine-grain analysis of the structure of the main ACTS: e.g. how are opinions expressed? e.g. *I think* statements, indirect questions; how are disagreements expressed? e.g. performative verbs, weak disagreements (e.g. using *I don’t know*), etc.

5. Further identification of internal and external modification with reference to stance (boosters and minimising tokens).

6. Identification of politeness strategies aimed at positive and negative face.

While the steps described above focused on classification of particular speech act realisation patterns, the advantage of qualitative research is that it also allows the researcher to unveil other relevant aspects during the process. For this reason, from the early stages of the analysis, it became clear that also the general structure of floor-management and acknowledgement tokens in disagreements would be an aspect worth discussing, especially the ‘yes, but’ types of expressions. This also allowed connecting speech acts and discourse analysis traditions.

The analysis of politeness strategies employed in expressing opinions was carried out in line with existing politeness theories. The older schools of politeness theory (Brown and Levinson 1987) (see Section 2.3.3) stressed that linguistic politeness is a phenomenon which can be identified in speech, coded and quantified in order to reveal the most and least polite structures. The newer approach stresses the fact that there are no linguistic forms which are inherently polite or impolite, and that it is the context of the communication which allows the interlocutors to interpret certain utterances as polite or impolite (Watts 2003). However, what guided the analysis here was the common (to both schools) idea of politeness being closely connected to facework and adhering to each other’s needs (Haugh 2007, p. 300). Consequently, the analysis focused on describing strategies in categories of face threatening, saving and enhancing moves. Additionally, the analysis of speech act strategies, discourse organisation and the use of stance tokens can speak loudly about the facework that the
interactants are involved in. For instance, the presence of the ‘resolution’ move in the role-plays, requesting clarification and rephrasing one’s words to ensure mutual understanding can be analysed, not only from a speech act realisation perspective, but also characterised as a politeness strategy. Similarly, a variety of stance markers to show how one feels about a certain topic can be seen as evidence for fostering each other’s face needs. Thus, the overlapping of different categories of the analysis is likely to happen.

4.4.1.2. Using quantitative methods

The qualitative analysis was also helped by using analytical tools connected to the research tradition of corpus linguistics. The role-plays were transcribed in a manner that allowed analysis in corpus analytical software (see p. xi). Wordsmith Tools (Scott 2006, 2012) analytical software was used in the initial stages of the role-play data analysis to identify overall tendencies among Polish and Irish groups of speakers. The analysis consisted, firstly, of computing word-lists separately for IE and PL role-plays and contrasting them to discover frequency variation. Once some differences were identified, further analyses consisted of identifying collocations in relation to the differing items. Additionally, cluster collocations were computed for lexical items typically associated with opinions, such as verbs think or know. The results of the analyses are represented, for instance, in Tables 6.8 and 6.9. Other relevant statistical differences are reported throughout the results chapters.

While software such as Wordsmith Tools offers a quantitative corpus analysis, the qualitative interpretation of the results is equally important. Leech (1991, p. 15) stressed this point by saying that “a successful analysis depend on a division of labour between the corpus and the human mind”. For this reason, it was also possible to work with the data in a reversed order by using the statistical software after the researcher noticed a pattern in the data during the qualitative analysis. Moreover, the identification of certain themes in the focus groups also suggested that some role-play aspects could also be analysed statistically. For instance, an indication towards the co-occurrence of yes and no, encouraged a search for collocations of yes and no in the role-play data. This type of analyses was used equally to confirm, as well as refute, a correspondence between role-play data and the focus groups’ themes.
In addition to the qualitative analysis, the use of statistical tools was also quite helpful in discovering some differences between the PL and IE data. For example, contrasting the two corpora allowed discovering distinct patterns of collocation with reference to some stance verbs (see Section 6.3). Another advantage of corpus analysis is a possibility to compare one’s data to larger corpora. In the context of this research, using the Limerick Corpus of Irish English (LCIE) as a reference corpus to contrast some of the results was of great value. LCIE is a local corpus of Irish English (excluding Northern Ireland), comprising one million words of naturally occurring contemporary speech in a variety of social contexts varying from intimate to professional (www.ivacs.mic.ul.ie). Some of the aspects already examined in the corpus include the use of reflexive pronouns in questions (O’Keeffe 2005), the use of please in service encounters (Binchy 2005) or the use of now as a pragmatic marker (Clancy and Vaughan 2012). The access to LCIE added greatly to the analysis of stance markers with reference to Irish English, as it is evident in the discussion presented in Section 6.3. The use of statistical tools and a larger corpus as a reference also added to the reliability of this research, thus avoiding overreliance on anecdotal evidence from the focus groups.

4.4.2. Focus groups analytical framework: thematic analysis

One of the most common methods for analysis of focus groups is content or thematic analysis. The latter was implemented in the analysis of the focus group recordings, using interpretive rather than numeric means of analysing the data (Schwandt 2007). In content analysis, occurrences of a certain concept are codified and analysed quantitatively to later be correlated and compared with other measures (Kvale 2007, p. 105). This sort of coding is also associated with grounded theory, which allows for the creation of bottom-up theories through content analysis (Glaser and Strauss 1967). In contrast, thematic analysis requires more interpretative involvement of the researcher, since it can implicate identifying themes expressed implicitly (Guest, MacQueen and Namey 2012, p. 10). After the initial identification of themes, later analysis can also involve comparing code frequencies or “identifying code co-occurrence, and graphically displaying the codes within the data set” (Guest et al. 2012, p. 10). However, the position of the researcher and the underlining theories, which guide the interpretation of themes with reference to research questions, play the key part in thematic analysis. In fact, as Braun and Clarke (2006) argued, the subjectivity of the
analysis carried out by the researcher is the strength of thematic analysis, not a drawback.

There are three key aspects to be considered regarding thematic analysis, as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006). Firstly, thematic analysis can be carried out inductively or deductively. The former type of analysis shares similarities with grounded theory, thus a formulation of a theory is data-driven. However, because the central research questions in the current study were not aiming to lead to a formation of a hypothesis or a theory, deductive approach was used in the present research. This form of analysis is believed to be more analyst-driven and influenced by the researcher’s theoretical interests. The themes identified in the focus groups, therefore, relate directly to theories presented in the literature review. Secondly, the coding of themes can be done on a semantic or latent level. Because the focus groups focused on the sociopragmatic ‘principles’ for expressing opinions, it was expected that they would not be expressed explicitly, suggesting that analysis on the latent level was more appropriate. However, in describing some examples of how sociopragmatic principles (i.e. latent themes) can be achieved in conversations, semantic themes were necessary. It was, therefore, possible to describe that within the theme of a ‘strategic’ approach to opinions (a latent theme), the use of the expression ‘I don’t know’ (a semantic theme) was suggested as a way of fulfilling this principle. The third aspect of thematic analysis which needs consideration refers to the epistemological foundations. Because the focus groups were designed to discover overall tendencies in the two linguistic groups, and the focus was not on individual experiences, the epistemological approach falls within a constructive perspective. Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 85) pointed out that a constructive approach “seeks to theorize the sociocultural contexts, and structural conditions, that enable the individual accounts that are provided”. Therefore, the analysis focused on identifying some broadly common national trends amongst the individual reflections of the research participants. This sort of approach is also associated with the use of latent themes and ‘reading between the lines’ analysis.

Discussing the application of thematic analysis, some possible shortcomings must be acknowledged. One of the dangers of using thematic analysis is that it may become too ‘common-sense’ and researchers must be careful in using codes that are analytic and theoretical, as opposed to simply descriptive of the data (Strauss and Corbin 1990 in Gibbs 2007, p. 50). However, the focus groups were planned to explore
sociopragmatic issues of expressing opinions, which are, in their very nature, quite subjective and implied. Consequently, interpreting the focus groups and looking for an unspoken meaning of the participants’ words or some hidden politeness ‘principles’ ensured the data was not analysed only descriptively.

With reference to the practical side of thematic analysis, Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 87) identified six main phases of the analysis process, summarised as:

1. Familiarisation with the data (transcription, reading and re-reading)
2. Generating initial codes
3. Collating codes into themes
4. Reviewing themes, generating a structural map
5. Defining and naming themes
6. Producing a report.

Carrying out the data collection and transcription phases ensured the researcher’s high familiarity with the content of the focus groups and, consequently, a thorough involvement in the various stages of analysis. During stages two and three, suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006), colour coding was used when identifying general trends within the data. Similarly, the following stage involved collating the coloured codes into broader themes which were identified in both the PL and the IE sets. It was imperative to treat both sub-sets of data as a whole, in order to categorise common and differing themes using one type of coding. Despite the fact that PL focus groups were conducted and transcribed in Polish, the coding and labels of themes in English were used to ensure consistency. Additionally, a contrast between the two linguistic groups was an important element of the analysis, which influenced the analysis at all stages, but had its prominent role in the final phase of comparing the established themes. Finally, the thematic analysis of the focus groups was carried out simultaneously with the analysis of the role-plays. Because both types of data were analysed qualitatively, the process of making sense of both sets of data, in contrast and with reference to each other, ensured a thorough and a comprehensive analysis. References made to concepts such as face in discussing focus groups as well as role-play results are an example of this back-and-forth approach to analysis.
4.5. Conclusion

Careful consideration of appropriate data collection procedures and analytical frameworks are one of the key steps in ensuring quality in research. While there is no such thing as ‘the perfect method’, all care has been given to consider the most appropriate way to study opinions. By examining the variety of tools and approaches in reference to this study, this chapter aimed, firstly, to present the details of this study’s design, in the light of the relevant research traditions of speech act and politeness studies. Secondly, it sought to provide a vindication of the choices made during the various stages of the empirical study. Therefore, it was argued that role-plays are a valuable and an effective speech act elicitation tool, in the light of disadvantages of alternative techniques such as DCTs. Moreover, this chapter presented several advantages of using focus groups in researching sociopragmatic aspect of speech act behaviour, showing that their potential has not been fully explored in pragmatics. Finally, it was argued that a mixed-method study would provide a more comprehensive account of the speech act under study. The results of the data analyses reported in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 should serve as another advocate of this study’s design – a speech act study which addresses the pragmalinguistic-sociopragmatic dichotomy. Consequently, our attention now turns to presenting the results of the data analysis.
Chapter 5 – Speech Act of Opinions

5.0. Introduction

This chapter is the first of three chapters presenting results and providing a discussion of the empirical research. The current and next chapter (i.e. 5 & 6) present results of the role-play tasks, while Chapter 7 offers the findings and discussion of the focus groups data. Additionally, Chapter 5 interprets the role-play data from a speech act theory perspective (cf. Section 2.2), while Chapter 6 conducts a critical analysis from the politeness theory point of view (cf. Section 2.3). Each chapter offers brief interpretations of the results throughout the argument and a longer discussion section at the end.

5.1. The speech act set

The description of the range of strategies used in exchanges of opinions was approached in the current chapter from the speech acts standpoint. Therefore, in terms of a speech acts realisation pattern, it was believed that the exchanges would be organised in the form of moves which would roughly follow the Opinion ^ Reaction ^ Evidence ^ Resolution pattern (Horvath and Eggins 1995). Previous speech act realisation studies were helpful in providing a rough framework for the analysis of the sequential organisation of the exchanges, such as those in CCSARP tradition (Hudson et al. 1995). Since speech acts are typically divided into head acts, supportive moves, and their derivatives, a similar categorisation was done here (cf. Section 4.4.1.1). This chapter presents results in relation to the first part of the research questions from the speech acts perspective, before moving on to discussing politeness strategies in the next chapter. The research questions are:

RQ.1. What are the pragmalinguistic characteristics of opinions in Irish English and with reference to the Irish-Polish intercultural context?

RQ.3. What are the strategies employed by native Irish English speakers and by Polish speakers of English for expressing opinions?
RQ.5. Do these strategies differ?

RQ.6. If so, in what ways?

RQ.7. What are the intercultural implications of these differences?

While answering these questions, some strategies typical to opinions, as well as those appearing in other speech acts, have been observed. They will be reviewed in accordance to how the exchange of opinions develops and with reference to specific scenarios. The differences between the two linguistic groups are offered throughout the chapter and are examined in more detail in the discussion section (5.9). While the majority of results presented here are the product of qualitative analysis, it is at times also supported by results of quantitative nature, which comes from the tradition of discourse/corpus analysis (see Section 4.4.1.2) and was conducted with the help of corpus analysis software (i.e. Wordsmith Tools 4.0 & 5.0) (Scott 2006, 2012).

The results are presented vis-à-vis the sequence of the speech act set of exchanging opinions: beginning with pre-posed supportive moves (5.2), followed by the main acts of stating opinions and presenting evidence (5.3), before progressing to agreement and disagreement strategies (5.4-6). Other interesting supportive moves (5.7), such as stalling and hesitation, are discussed before presenting the strategies used in the final resolution move (5.8). A discussion (5.9) of the results with reference to Polish and Irish cultural and linguistic characteristics concludes the chapter. Now the attention turns to the opening moves in exchanging opinions.

5.2. Pre-posed supportive moves: orientation

Overall, the participants did not use many supportive moves before expressing their opinions, which may be a side effect of the role-plays (see Section 4.2.1). The one-off participants were all instructed that they could start interacting immediately after reading the cue card, which may have influenced this lack of opening moves (see Appendix 1 for role-play scenarios).

The expected pattern in terms of pre-posed supportive moves was that the higher ranking of imposition (P, D, I) scenarios would elicit more verbose responses when preparing the hearer for their opinion. The Power, Distance and Imposition (topic of conversation) variables accounted for the overall ranking of the imposition or possible
threat of each scenario. For instance, the Party scenario was high D and I, but low relative P index, since the conversation was taking place between power ‘equals’, i.e. strangers. The expectation of a higher number of pre-posed moves for high P, D, I role-plays was, in some sense, true to the Holidays scenario. In this role-play, the higher face threat elicited more indirect and longer introductions to the topic. However, this was because many one-off participants interpreted the exchange of opinion as a request for holidays. Given the rigorous testing of the data collection tools, this ambiguity in the interpretation of the role-play cue card is puzzling. However, the Boss’s cue card was quite short and did not reveal the employee’s intentions. Consequently, the person acting as the Boss could not orient the conversation towards an exchange of opinions, but rather continue with what the employee initiated. If the employee focused on a request, then the exchange was, in effect, a request where the opinion was often reduced to an indirect expression or a hint. Nevertheless, it is interesting to include this data in the discussion of the results, given the rich examples of hints elicited by this scenario. Moreover, the spectrum of the type of exchange the Holidays scenario elicited is quite broad; from on-record conventionally polite opinions, to very indirect hints of opinions hidden in requests for holidays or requests reduced to backchannels on behalf of the employee.

Example 5.1 presents what could be considered a ‘conventionally polite exchange of opinions’. Both, the structure of feedback (Mhm), polite disagreements (‘yes, but’), and the use of mitigation (just, I don’t know) fit within the lay understanding of a polite conversation.

Example 5.1 – Conventionally polite opinion, scenario: Holidays (RP-8-IE)

1 <BB2> Okay.
2 <Sarah> Okay. (2.0) I just wanted to talk to you about ehm... holidays?
3 <BB2> Mhm.
4 <Sarah> I just think it would be a bit fairer if people who have been working here for longer got to pick the holidays because obviously there's competition. I just think it would be fairer? I don't know. What do you think?
5 <BB2> Alright. Okay. Some people kind of have extenuated circumstances and they kind of need to be able to take holidays at a certain time of the year so I'm-I'm kind of just trying to give them a little bit of a leeway=
6 <Sarah> = Oh I understand that but if it comes to people prioritising two weeks in Spain shouldn't it- shouldn't it be those who've been here longer that get the first choice? I can understand if they've a family member that's ill but...
Mhm, mhm. Yeah, I suppose. We could take that under consideration but every case is individual and I can't really say with any degree of certainty that certain people can be given the preferential treatment over others, you know.

Okay. Alright. I just thought I'd run it by you anyway.

Focusing on the beginning of the interaction in the role-plays, the limited number of preparatory moves was reduced to rather conventional salutations. The list of strategies used before the actual opinion was expressed is presented in Table 5.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-posed strategies</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Greetings</td>
<td>‘Hi’, ‘How are you?’ and small talk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Asking an opinion</td>
<td>‘What do you think about x?’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Exclamations (often followed by strategy 4)</td>
<td>‘Oh my God’ or ‘Jeez’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Presenting the background of the opinion (talking about plans/events – e.g. wondering about getting a driving licence, attention getters)</td>
<td>You know I think that x...; ‘Have you seen/heard about x...?’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Omission of the orientation move, simply expressing one’s opinion</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Requests for time (used in the Holidays scenario – permission to talk)</td>
<td>‘I was hoping / wondering’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Summons to listen</td>
<td>‘So listen’ or ‘Now listen’, which only occurred in the PL role-plays.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
'what the heck', does not fit the idea of a polite exchange of opinions in English, as shown in Example 5.2.

Example 5.2 – Demand for an explanation, scenario: Christmas (RP-45-PL)

```
<Janek> Tell me, what the heck with all this Christmas ehm in this month. It's not even December and you got a lot of Christmas promotions in the shops. Wha::?
{shrugging shoulders}>
(<FF1W>) <shaking head in amazement> It's quite amazing, isn't it?
<Janek> Yeah, why so fast? Why so early?
<FF1W> I- to be honest, I think is not early enough? I- I just Like, what? September? October? It's- it's too late! It should be maybe going on from about May? June?
```

The example above illustrates a repeated attitude among the Polish participants who approached the Christmas scenario from an outsider’s point of view, hence the request for an explanation from their Irish interlocutor. While the use of ‘tell me’ in IrE can be used as a way to shorten distance between interlocutors in informal contexts (especially if followed by a vocative), it is difficult to identify this exact function in Example 5.2. In fact, the repetitive use of the interrogative form by Janek suggests a stress on getting an answer from the interlocutor, rather than an indirect sharing of his own opinion. Additionally, because Janek’s proficiency was the lowest amongst the PL participants, it is unlikely that he was deliberately using ‘tell me’ to build rapport with the speaker. In contrast, none of the IE Christmas scenario role-plays used a similar ‘tell me’ pragmatic marker, as most of the other opinions were introduced rather more neutrally. Irish respondents did, however, use some emotional exclamations, such as Jeez! or God!. Nevertheless, this may have been a sign that the speaker was expecting the interlocutor to agree with him or her. Thus, the response came as a surprise, like in the next example.

Example 5.3 – Unexpected disagreement, scenario: Christmas (RP-47-IE)

```
<Noelle> Jeez. I was in the city... at the weekend... and Brown Thomas already have like Christmas- Christmas tree up and the whole floor all designated.
<F3W> I know, sure it's October, like, you know it's=
<Noelle> =But Halloween is barely just over @@
```
There are some issues that must be considered regarding these findings. Firstly, the experimental environment may have influenced the lack of pre-posed supportive moves. In naturally occurring exchanges of opinions, the topics emerge and flow in conversation differently. The participants in this study (especially the anchor participants) had little power over how the topics were introduced. The fact that the instructions said they could start interacting immediately meant they did just that, perhaps without taking their time to consider how to better begin the conversation. The one-off participants were always supposed to start the exchange, regardless of who they were interacting with. It is therefore impossible to determine if asking for an opinion as opposed to offering one would be the preferred strategy in either of the linguistic groups investigated. Secondly, the aim of using supportive moves in FTAs is for the speaker to have an opportunity to opt out, but it was not given to the participants (instructions did not allow them to ‘say nothing’ if they wished so). Perhaps this resulted in the reluctance to use pre-posed supportive moves. However, from the politeness point of view, the orientation move in opinions may be unimportant. What is important, on the contrary, is who the person asking the initiating opinion question is, because it gives the person power to respond to an opinion, as opposed to being the first one to offer it. This issue was raised by the Irish participants in the focus groups too (see Section 7.2). The request for an opinion may be seen as a pre-sequence from the speaker’s point of view. For instance, in requests, one may ask ‘Do you sell Reader’s Digest magazine?’ before asking for one. Similarly, asking ‘What do you think about Tiger Woods?’ may be a pre-sequence to expressing one’s opinion. The association between questions and opinions will be a recurring theme in the results chapters.

5.3. Head acts

From a common-sense perspective, the crucial or head part of an act of opinion is the actual utterance in which the particular viewpoint is expressed. This section will demonstrate that it may be achieved in a variety of ways, beyond the ‘I think (that) x...’ category of expressions. Just as opinions are a combination of belief and experience, the way one communicates those is a conversation, a combination of strategies can be used to ensure one is understood. The key discussion in the coming sections will centre

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20 Brown Thomas is an Irish department store.
round the findings regarding what forms are used to express opinions and how interlocutors present evidence to support them (summarised in Table 5.2).

5.3.1. Opinion and/or evidence?

In relation to head acts, the key finding is that the Opinion and Evidence moves in the exchanges seem impossible to separate. While both strategies take on each other’s functions and they can exist by themselves, they are not always the same. The opinion move often contains some reference to the fact that it is an opinion, but the evidence often does not. Moreover, by presenting evidence, an opinion is implied at the same time or for the second time (thus evidence functions as both at the same time). As a result, the Opinion>Evidence sequence, in fact, could be changed to Opinion>Expanded Opinion. Expanded opinion can include a rephrased opinion, an evidence for it (using a ‘because... ’ clause), expanding on the opinion or asking the interlocutor for their point of view, etc. Furthermore, the classification of moves can be additionally complicated in instances such as ‘I think you’re right’, which arguably represent both an opinion and an agreement at the same time. This also works the other way round – agreement and disagreement in exchanges of opinions can be realised by an expression of an opposing opinion or a similar opinion. This means that some moves in the exchanges can fulfil a number of functions at once, as demonstrated in the example below.

Example 5.4 – Opinion and evidence in one move, scenario: Christmas (RP-50-IE)

1 <Anne> Oh my God! I was in Penneys\(^{21}\) the other day and there was Christmas decorations. That's absolutely scandalous!
2 <F3W> What? Sure it's October
The anchor participant’s response to the initiating opinion can be considered a Disagreement and Evidence/Opinion move at the same time. This multiple-meaning effect is achieved by the use of the discourse marker *sure* (see discussion of *sure* in Section 6.3.1/2). It is not a conventional opinion, thus the interpretation of it depends on the hearer. The fact stated by the Friend (Evidence move) is interpreted as a disagreement with Anne’s Opinion (in reference to the initiating Opinion). Additionally, in this particular example, stating the fact that it is October implies the speaker believes it is *already* the time to begin the Christmas rush, contrary to similar formulations in the Christmas scenario (compare to RP-45-IE/6). The above example also highlights the importance of the surrounding discourse in interpreting the isolated moves such as Opinion or Evidence.

### 5.3.2. Opinions

The semantic formulae for expressing opinions discovered in this research provided a wide variety of expressions. The types of strategies used in the main act of expressing opinions are presented in Table 5.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HEAD ACT STRATEGY</th>
<th>EXAMPLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Expressions of belief</td>
<td>‘I think’, ‘I believe’, ‘It seems to me (that)...’, ‘in my opinion...’, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Evaluative, subjective statements</td>
<td>‘it’s great’, ‘it’s ridiculous’, ‘not much happening’, ‘it’s annoying’, ‘I’ve seen better’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Expressive verbs</td>
<td>hate, love, appreciate, ‘I wish the music was a bit better’, ‘I was hoping for more fun’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Verbs/adjectives/adverbs/expressions which are evaluative in nature</td>
<td>‘I’m delighted’, ‘I’m sick of this crap’, ‘I’m a fan/not a fan’, ‘I’m impressed/not impressed’, ‘I was bored’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Expressions of rights/obligations</td>
<td>‘They should leave him alone’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Often used in opinions held by the society at large (Horvath and Eggins

---

21 Penneys is an Irish department store, known in the UK under the name ‘Primark’.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Head Act Strategy</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Utterances which can be interpreted as opinions thanks to surrounding discourse</td>
<td>‘I have no interest’ (when talking about a driving licence)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesising</td>
<td>‘If it was bigger, it’d be great’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presenting a fact – implied opinion</td>
<td>‘He’s a role model so...’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jokes, i.e. indirect opinions</td>
<td>‘You’d get more life out of a funeral’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Following Brown and Levinson’s (1987) classification of on-record and off-record strategies, only a couple of opinions, presented in the table above, fit the off-record type: jokes and presenting a fact where an opinion is implied. However, examples of evaluative statements such as ‘I’ve seen better’ minimise the face threat and are off-record as they present a redressive action. Some expressive verbs can also fulfil the redressive function, for instance, ‘I was hoping for more fun’ is a more polite way of saying that the party is boring. An internally-modified opinion can, for instance, contain hedges or minimising verbs in the evaluative utterance. We could consider an opinion to be externally modified if the modification occurs after the initial opinion was uttered, such as the use of ‘because...’ clauses. Preparatory moves can also modify the illocutionary or perlocutionary force of the opinion, making the whole act less imposing, more indirect or hesitant.

The blurry distinction between opinions and evidence complicates the process of the data analysis from the perspective of CCSARP tradition (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989). Additional difficulties include the fact that opinions are sometimes expressed over a number of turns, they are hesitant and ill-formed, or even left to drift off. This strategy could be connected to the issue of the vigilant approach to opinions and what the participants called ‘feeding off each other’. By allowing an opinion to stretch over a number of turns, the speaker is able to adapt it to whatever their interlocutor is saying. Letting the opinion drift can also have the function of mitigating and saving face. This concern with politeness influences the structure of an interaction since it guides how the conversation develops, as shown in the four examples below.
1. Opinion expressed over number of turns

Example 5.5 – Opinion expressed over number of turns, scenario: Tiger (RP-14-PL)

<Asia> It's enough, it's enough, I think so.

<BB2> Yeah, exactly. And at the end of the day as well, fair enough, you know these kind of things happen, whatever, but, like, he's a brilliant golfer.

<Asia> Exactly, yeah.

<BB2> People don't need to be constantly harping on about his personal life.

<Asia> Yeah.

<BB2> Cos at the end of the day, he's really good at what he does?

<Asia> Yeah.

<BB2> And he made a mistake. He's a normal person. Everyone makes mistakes. Why the hell should you be tortured in the media because of it.

2. Ill-formed opinion

Example 5.6 – Ill-formed opinion, scenario: Christmas (RP-46-IE)

<Martina> Oh yeah... oh no! No. <{shaking head}> I think there is just TIME... it's together, like... I just- I don't understand WHY it has to be so soon. All the- all the shops... it's just Christmas... it's just uh.

3. Opinion allowed to drift

Example 5.7 – Letting the opinion drift, scenario: Tiger (RP-16-IE)

<B3> Yeah, I think he's getting too much press at the moment for that, but... he's a role-model and all so...

<Anne> <{nodding}>

4. Opinion as a hint

Example 5.8 – Opinion as a hint, scenario: Holidays (RP-1-PL)

<BB1> Okay. Well, <{inhales}> when- when exactly would you want the holidays?

<Kasia> Ehmm... D'you know... <{exhales loudly}> I dunno, something maybe like two, two days in the whole week that I'm working, you know. Like, free two days or something
The examples given here demonstrate the complexity of opinions and just how much interpreting of the speaker’s meaning must be done by the hearers. For instance, in the last example (5.8), the opinion that ‘people who have been working in the shop for longer should have priority in choosing holidays’ is reduced to a very indirect hint of ‘because I work here for so long’. What is also important to notice about the above listed strategies for expressing opinions is that many of them also overlap with strategies for disagreement, agreement or what could be classified as evidence (or extending of the original opinion). From a modern politeness point of view (e.g. Watts 2003), this shows that classification of strategies from a politeness perspective should in fact be based on the ‘possible interpretations’ and rather flexible categories. The issue of overlapping categories of main strategies (e.g. an utterance being a disagreement and evidence at the same time) is discussed again in the final section of this chapter.

5.3.3. Evidence

An evidence move in the exchange of opinions is believed to support the opinion expressed by the speaker by referencing to a fact that confirms the speaker’s point. However, the issue of separating evidence from an opinion is complicated, since opinions can be supported by further opinions too (Atelsek 1981, p. 222). This results in a chain-reaction, where one opinion is followed by another subjective statement, and not necessarily an objective fact. Furthermore, the ‘subordinate opinion’ can be seen as the evidence move that takes a form of expanding the original opinion, but not necessarily providing a ‘fact’ or ‘evidence’. This may suggest a need to adapt the structure of an opinion text (Opinion ^ Evidence ^ Resolution). The structure should also reflect the function of ‘expanding of the original opinion’ as opposed to presenting evidence.

Strategies for evidence include those presented in Table 5.3 (following Atelsek 1981, examples mine).
### Table 5.3 Evidence strategies (following Atelsek 1981)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGY</th>
<th>EXAMPLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Further opinions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Selective presentation of facts</td>
<td>‘It’s only October’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 General norms and normative opinions</td>
<td>‘nobody’s perfect’, ‘everyone gets caught once in a while’, ‘we haven’t had Halloween yet’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Special qualifications of the speaker</td>
<td>e.g. if a movie critic happened to take part in the Film scenario</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Dogmatism</td>
<td>the speaker takes their opinion to be a known fact</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The use of one strategy over another in the role-plays was not influenced by a personal or national preference, but rather the topic of the opinion. For instance, none of the speakers supported their opinions with strategies referring to their ‘special qualifications’. There was a tendency to support them with further opinions and facts. Also, some evidence, which could be treated as ‘facts’ referred to some future event (e.g. ‘He’s gonna live in the limelight’ used to talk about Tiger Woods), which made it more subjective than objective, thus approximating it towards a ‘further opinion’ strategy. Polish opinions are believed to be quite ‘dogmatic’ (Wierzbicka 2003, p. 49) and this was also detected in the PL data. The presentation of dogmatic opinions was visible in the tendency to formulate opinions using assumptions, discussed in Section 6.2/5. Another difference discovered when it comes to supporting opinions with facts showed that Polish participants approach similar exchanges from a more rational than emotional perspective. However, this conclusion was based on the focus groups interviews (discussed in Chapter 7), but could not be clearly identified in the role-play data. The most relevant issue of the perlocutionary force of opinions, especially prominent in PL data, is discussed in Section 5.6.2.

### 5.3.4. Affective character of exchanging opinions

Exchanges of differing opinions are believed to be wordier and longer than agreeing ones (i.e. text-generating, see Horvath and Eggins 1995, p. 44). However, evidence in
the current data suggests that agreeing opinions can result in quite long exchanges too, pointing towards the importance of the affective rather than the effective side of this speech act. From the perspective of Jakobson’s (1960) functions of language, opinions fulfil the referential as well as the phatic function (Hébert 2011). This also relates to the issue of presenting evidence within the speech act set. Evidence is used not only to prove the believability of the assertions made by the interlocutor, but they are a kind of repetition of the original opinion. The question is what sort of function does evidence play in a conversation where the speakers have similar views? Opinion dialogues do not finish after simple ‘Opinion: Initiation ^ Agreement’ sequence. Also, interlocutors often expand on the previous speaker’s point, thus strengthening the understanding between them, as shown in the example below.

Example 5. 9 – Agreeing opinions, scenario: Tiger (RP-15-IE)

1 <Jimmy> What you think of this Tiger Woods fella?
2 <B3> Well... are you asking about his personal life or his golfing life ‘cos I think he's a fantastic golfer.
3 <Jimmy> //Yeah, he is.//
4 <B3> //He's my favourite golfer.//
5 <Jimmy> He is. Yes, but I mean that's the thing he should be on the newspapers about his golf but you see all his private life now. In the tabloids especially.
6 <B3> I couldn't agree with you more, yeah.
7 <Jimmy> I- I don't know. The thing is... where do the media draw the line between... you know, the (right to intrude) on your personal life. I think it's disgraceful, personally.
8 <B3> Normally, yeah. But I suppose he did go overboard as well with what he did. But... I- I think it's getting blown out in the three weeks on almost we've been hearing things about that.
9 <Jimmy> The thing is, alright, he's a celebrity and everything, but ehm... you know, the normal feller on the street, he may have had, you know, a few affairs as well, but it won't be brought up all over the paper. Or I mean, so what right has the newspaper to kind of report on him? Just ‘cos he's ehm... a very good sports-person.
10 <B3> Hm I suppose it sells papers, doesn't it? The average feller on the street won't sell any papers with his... ehm... misdoings in bedroom.
11 <Jimmy> Ehm... that's...
Tiger Woods is different. And he IS in the public eye as well. He's a... he's supposed to be a role model for kids as well and they say this, but... maybe he's a part- a part to blame. But, yeah, the media is going overboard as usual.

Ah, no... you made a valid point. I didn't think of it from that side either. But ehm... again I- I like to seek... newspaper articles extolling the positive virtues of person, knowing that he's a good golfer... alright. I know his form has kind of now dropped down since his a...

It's probably because of the newspapers, isn't it? It's all cyclical, isn't it?

Yeah, it's true... cyclical indeed.

This sort of exchange of opinions is what fits quite closely the description of gossip, i.e. “an evaluative talk about a person who is not present” (Eder and Enke 1991, p. 494). Some of the functions of gossip are reinforcement of group bonds and projecting a positive self-image by criticising others (ibid). However, gossip can also include a positive evaluation of a person, which was the case in the Tiger scenario. What the link between opinions and gossip demonstrate is the social importance of this type of talk. While expressing one’s opinion can be seen from a more serious point of view, such as political debates, it is also interesting to investigate opinions in different settings, like those offered in the role-plays. In fact, it is believed that political debates in the media serve a different purpose than casual exchanges of opinions. They focus above all on projecting a favourable ‘self-image’ of the politicians and they “do not lead to building a positive relationship, they do not lead to a deeper contact, solving a problem or finding a way out of a conflict situation” (Kloch 2010, p. 128; translated from Polish). The current study provided examples of an aspect of exchanging opinions perhaps ignored, the enjoyment and reinforcement of relationships which this speech act set fosters. It is promoted for instance through the use of tag questions, as shown in Example 5.9. Other examples of this dimension of opinions are the presence of discourse features such as overlapping or finishing each other’s sentences, discussed later in this chapter (Section 5.6.5).

Another issue which represents the interactive style of exchanges of opinions is the fact that interlocutors often finish each other’s sentences and expand interlocutor’s evidence or opinion. Even when speakers have differing opinions, they also acknowledge or expand upon the interlocutor’s point before stating their own, demonstrated in the example below.
Example 5. 10 – Expanding interlocutor’s evidence/opinion (even when disagreeing), scenario: Film (RP-33-IE)

<Noelle> Well I thought it was=
<S3M> =Do you not=
<Noelle> =fairly predictable though. The ending.
<S3M> Okay, yeah. Okay, it was based on a true- but d’you like the way it was told?

The use of the ‘finishing other person’s idea’ is elaborated further in Section 5.7.4.

5.4. Agreement

This section is the first of three (5.4, 5.5, & 5.6) discussing agreements and disagreements, which are an indispensable part of the speech act investigated here. According to Horvath and Eggins (1995), the minimum adjacency pair in the text of opinions consists of Opinion ^ Reaction, and the Reaction sequence will inevitably be some sort of agreement or disagreement. The discussion of the variety of reactions to opinions will demonstrate that they function not precisely as polar opposites, but that there is a wide variety of in-between options.

Following Schneider, an agreement is “a positive reaction to a statement, usually statement of an opinion” (Schneider 1988, p. 60). Furthermore, we can distinguish three types of agreement tokens: (1) weak, e.g. mhm, hm, mm, (2) neutral, e.g. yes, no and their derivatives such as yeah, and (3) strong agreement tokens, e.g. exactly, absolutely, etc. Agreement tokens can appear in conversation as turn-final or turn-initial tokens, and also in isolation from the speech (turnsize) (Schneider 1988, p. 160). However, research elsewhere also suggests that a turn-medial category should be included in the classification (Kordon 2006, p. 72). Additionally, strong agreement tokens, such as of course, can also have a negative connotation (when the interlocutor stated something that is obvious and thus unnecessary to mention), as shown in Example 5.11.

Example 5. 11 – ‘Of course’ with a negative connotation, scenario: Film (RP-31-PL)

<Asia> I’m not sure ’cos like it was already- the story was already presented over the media, like everywhere so I- I was kinda expecting- expecting it. I knew that was gonna happen, like. That was like=

<SS2M> =Well, yeah, of course. I mean it's a true story.
Both IE and PL data had similarly distributed strong agreement tokens, such as definitely, absolutely and exactly. Also, the use of yeah and yes, with the former prevailing in the data, did not show any discrepancies. The preference for the more informal yeah was probably influenced by the oral mode of communication. Interestingly, the one-off participants did not attempt to use the more formal yes when interacting with the Boss. In terms of differences between the two linguistic groups in the use of agreement tokens, there were two examples which stood out. Firstly, alright was used three times as much in the IE data as in the PL (48 vs. 8). Similarly, a typically Irish grand was used only once by one Polish participant (it had 11 occurrences in IE data). Expressions such as ‘That’s grand’ and ‘It’s grand’ have been reported as distinctively Irish English responses to ‘thanks’ (in a ‘Favour ^ Thanks ^ Response’ sequence) (Schneider 2005, p. 119). Another function of ‘That’s/you’re grand’ is as an ‘encouragement’ token, used when an interlocutor is struggling for words when explaining something (Hickey 2004, p. 19). One of the more conventional uses of grand as a synonym of fine in IrE is in response to greetings, as shown in the example below.

Example 5. 12 - ‘Grand’ used in response to greetings, scenario: Party (RP-27-IE)

1 <Sarah> Hi, how are you?
2 <SS2M> Hey, how are you doing?
3 <Sarah> Grand. Are you enjoying the party? Do you know someone here or...

However, it is also a token of agreement, which can be used in conjunction with other tokens, such as yeah, or it can stand on its own.

Example 5. 13 - ‘Grand’ as an agreement token, scenario: Party (RP-19-IE)

25 <SIW> Yeah, why not. It's only a few minutes down the road sure. I'll just say it to the
26     rest of my crew sure and we can=
27 <Andy> =Yeah, make our way there.
28 <SIW> I know everybody thinks the same thing. <@> It's NOT happening.
29 <Andy> @@ Alright so, that's grand so.
30 <SIW> Cool. I'll be right back.
In opinions, agreement is believed to commonly assume two forms, either expressing same or similar judgement to the interlocutor or using a performative verb, i.e. to agree (Atelsek 1981, p. 221). However, this research has provided evidence for strategy that may be typical to exchanges of opinions, namely a conditional agreement to a specific point. This could also be classified as a ‘Concessive Agreement’ (Horvath and Eggins 1995, p. 32-33).

Example 5. 14 – Agreement to a specific point, scenario: Licence (RP-37-IE)

6  
7  
8  
9  

(while later during the role-play they present opposing views)

English disagreement is a curious and a complex case when compared for instance to Japanese agreement-seeking culture or Jewish disagreement-seeking culture (Wierzbicka 1994, p. 78). The need for cooperation has given life to the sort of agreement shown in the example above, namely the ‘yes, but’ pattern. This has also been assigned a cultural value using the cultural scripts, where disagreement requires a message which tells the interlocutor that despite someone having different views, they do not think completely the opposite (Wierzbicka 1994, p. 78). The Anglo need for social harmony may be stronger than an individual need to ‘be right’ or prove other’s wrong.

In naturally occurring data, agreement occurs far more often than disagreement (Pearson 1986 quoted in Kreutel 2007, p. 2). However, role-play data is very interactive and participants rely on backchannels as the argument develops and a token that often fulfils this function is yeah. It is near impossible to classify some moves as ‘just’ backchannels or an actual token of agreement. An example below demonstrates this ambiguous use.

Example 5. 15 – Ambiguous agreement/backchannel, scenario: Party (RP-24-PL)

1  
2  
3  

155
It's nice to meet you.

...this party. I mean it's pure awkward.

Other types of concessive agreements (‘yes, but’ patterns) are discussed later in this chapter (Section 5.6).

5.5. Disagreement

Disagreement, or at least direct disagreement, is a dispreferred feature in English (Brown and Levinson 1987, p. 113). Due to this dispreference, disagreement is often prefaced by agreement tokens, giving life to a ‘yes, but’ pattern. This is particularly relevant to exchanges of opinions, where disputes are quite frequent. The most common strategies for minimising disagreement in English are ‘weak agreements proceeding disagreements’ and ‘hesitation followed by weak or partial disagreement’ (Malamed 2010, p. 211). Disagreement in opinions may take three forms: (1) by negating the judgement expressed in the original opinion, (2) by expressing a different judgement on the same dimension (for instance good-bad), and (3) by using the performative verb, i.e. saying ‘I disagree’ (Atelsek 1981, p. 221). The examples below demonstrate the three main strategies for disagreeing.

Example 5.16 – Disagreement by negation of opinion, scenario: Christmas (RP-50-IE)

Anne (shrugging shoulders) I don't know... I don't think that way.
Example 5. 17 – Disagreement by expression of different opinion, scenario: Licence (RP-39-PL)

<FF2M> I know but I mean the cost of a car is- it's like astronomical and ehm you can always get the bus. Like, the guys do it, I- I do it myself.

Example 5. 18 – Disagreement using performative verb, scenario: Christmas (RP-45-PL)

<FF1W> You need at least six months to kind of <excited> build up, get all excited...
<Janek> <@> Yeah?
<FF1W> Save every penny you've got just to spend it all.
<Janek> And you can spend it in one week.
<FF1W> <{Looking puzzled}>
<Janek> It's enough time, I think.
<FF1W> No, no... I don't agree.

Another interesting non-conventional strategy for disagreeing is negating the judgement of the previous speaker by putting that person’s opinion in doubt. If it stood by itself, it could be interpreted as a request for evidence. However, in the example below, the Friend does not wait for an answer from Peter and offers an evidence for disagreement. It also appears to have a slight perlocutionary intent on behalf of the Friend.

Example 5. 19 – Disagreement by negation of interlocutor’s point, scenario: Christmas (RP-44-IE)

<Peter> It's- it's- it's only been November now, like. Sure, they've been in the shops about three weeks. It's ridiculous=
<FIW> =so?! It gets everybody in good spirits. You go into the shops and you hear the music, and...

Also, instead of saying ‘I disagree’, other alternatives can be used.

Example 5. 20 – Indirect disagreement, scenario: Christmas (RP-45-IE)

<Andy> I can't see it, now. November maybe, but October is just miles too soon.

Such expressions are conventionally indirect disagreements, which are less face threatening than direct strategies. However, the largest category of agreement-disagreement acts was the partial (dis)agreements, which are presented next.
5.6. Partial (dis)agreement

In discussing exchanges of opinions, an important section of the discourse is not only agreements or disagreements, but also the additional category of the in-between function. These tokens have been identified in speech acts dealing with agreements and disagreements and include a wide range of options, summarised in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4 Summary of agreement tokens (López-Sako 2008, p. 144)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Agreement tokens followed by <strong>contrastive conjuncts and conjunctions</strong> (<em>but, however, except</em>).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>Qualified agreements</strong>, i.e. agreements downgraded by means of hedges, understaters, downtoners or other attenuating devices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>Pseudo-agreement</strong> (use of <em>then</em> and <em>so</em> in a final position when there was no agreement previously)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>Conditional agreement</strong> – similar to qualified agreement but in the conditional form.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td><strong>Disclaimers</strong>, which are “speech actions to prevent the interlocutor from arriving at an interpretation of the message which is unfavourable or face threatening” (Hayashi 1996, p. 29 quoted in Lopez-Sako 2008, p. 144), such as showing understanding, e.g. ‘<em>I see what you’re saying, but...</em>’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Weak (dis)agreement is an important strategy from the politeness point of view and also referred to in the next chapter (Section 6.2/2). Additionally, agreeing to disagree is often the result of an exchange of opinions, and it will play an important part in the discussion of differences between PL and IE groups. The difference lies in how the two groups *approach* compromising, and not so much in the language used to ‘agree to disagree’ (see Section 7.5).

One of the key elements of exchanging opinions is managing the discourse by acknowledging the previous speaker’s turn before introducing one’s point of view. Both linguistic groups used this in many role-plays. While *but* had more occurrences in the IE data than in PL (11th and 16th most common word, respectively), the pattern of use was quite similar, i.e. ‘*Yeah but*’. The ‘yes, but’ pattern is important from a
politeness point of view because it is a form of disagreement which protects both interlocutors’ faces. While the ‘yes/yeah, but’ pattern is the most obvious vocalisation of the strategy of presenting two sides of the same coin, there are also indirect ways of doing so. In some examples participants can say ‘But what about x, y, z?’, which implies that they acknowledge the previous speaker’s point, but want to add another argument. This sort of strategy could be classified as a concessive (dis)agreement. Another interesting use of but is as a conjunction in introducing yet another point by a speaker (in exchanges of agreeing opinions). The examples presented below explore the different uses of the token but.

Example 5. 21 – ‘Yes, but’ pattern, scenario: Christmas (RP-45-IE)

Example 5. 22 – ‘But’ with implied ‘yes’, scenario: Christmas (RP-44-PL)

Example 5. 23 – ‘But’ as a conjunction, scenario: Tiger (RP-15-PL)
The ‘yes, but’ pattern according to Tannen (1984, p. 325, quoted in Mullan 2010, p. 205) is a ritualised minimal token of agreement in which “the speaker displays mere awareness of the need for a display of co-operation”. However, the equivalent expression in French (‘oui mais’), for instance, carries a different function as it is the most common way of prefacing a disagreement where the ‘yes’ (‘oui’) acts as a minimal softener (Mullan 2010, p. 205). It seems then that despite the similarity of such expressions, their functions vary across cultures. In relation to Polish, an expression that forms a pattern similar to ‘yes, but’ uses particle ‘ależ’. ‘Ależ’, which has no exact equivalent in English, is a common prelude to strong agreement or disagreement. For instance, in strong agreements it could be roughly translated as ‘but of course’ [‘ależ oczywiście’]. When used in disagreements, it takes form of ‘ależ skąd’, which in English literally means ‘but where from?’, i.e. where do/did you get that idea? (Wierzbicka 1994, p. 80; 1997, p. 16; 2003, p. xii). The cultural motivations between those ‘yes, but’ patterns seem to be quite different in English and Polish. While in Polish it appears to be emphasis of either agreement or disagreement (extremes of a continuum), in English it is the necessity to appear cooperative. Since negative emotions are more openly expressed in Polish, but not in English, particles which express messages of the kind ‘you are obviously wrong’ (i.e. Where did you get that idea?) may be common in Polish, but would probably not be appreciated when communicating in English (Wierzbicka 1999, p. 272). Comparably, there are no equivalents of the diplomatic ‘well’ in Polish to preface disagreements. All these issues point to the fact that in Polish it may be more acceptable to say what one thinks, therefore giving life to more open opinions and disagreements. However, in English, it may be better to hedge opinions and disagreements, placing them in a safe ‘middle ground’. Moreover, in English there are some conditions to be considered before one ‘says what one thinks’, a set of rules for expressing opinions, discussed in detail in Chapter 7 (‘cultural scripts’ in Section 7.9).
5.7. Other supportive moves

In terms of discourse organisation and speech act realisation strategies, many moves discovered here could not be classified as the main moves identified in previous research (i.e. Opinion, Evidence, Agreement, Disagreement or Resolution). Among other supportive moves, we find requests for clarification, apologies, congratulations, requests for approbation, permission or advice, and suggestions. Some of the most prominent examples are discussed in this section; for instance, question tags, where a clear difference between the two linguistic groups emerged and the issue of pragmatic transfer is discussed in reference to question tag no? (5.7.1). Another interesting example are strategies characterised as ‘Persuasion’, since they also showed a difference in attitude towards persuasion between PL and IE participants (5.7.2). Later, features characteristic of spoken interaction are given attention since they help to frame the whole conversation within such interactive discourse. The discussion centres round backchannels (5.7.3), stalling and deferring reaction (5.7.4), as well as overlapping and finishing each other’s sentences (5.7.5). While they could be considered simply from a discourse organisation point of view, their politeness and propositional value within the speech act set is also considered in the discussion (5.9).

5.7.1. Question tags

Question tags can change how an exchange of opinions develops, as some pressure may be put on the interlocutor to agree with the speaker. In terms of differences between the PL and IE participants’ usage of question tags, there was evidence of transfer of the question tag no? from Polish in the PL data. Moreover, the tag ‘Don’t you think (so)?’ was used almost exclusively by Polish participants. The question tag no? is not used very often in English and thus there is no formulaic response to it. The interlocutor is obliged to present their response to the other person’s opinion. In fact, it could be compared to ‘Don’t you think so?’. This could also explain the use of this expression by Polish participants, as an echo of the transfer of the question tag no?. Polish language uses a limited amount of question tags, as few as six (Oleksy 1977; Wierzbicka 2003, p. 38). However, data suggests that it can fulfil many functions. In fact, the question tag no? was used as an epistemic, facilitative and a softening device.
(acc. to classification by Holmes 1995, p. 80), as is demonstrated in the three examples presented below.

In the first place, the use of question tags is often limited to confirming some sort of information. Its use could be compared to other common question tags, such as isn’t it? and it reflects native-like production, where it would not be identified as a negative transfer from Polish. The following example illustrates this function. It could also be compared to its implementation by a NS in RP-50-IE (lines 13 & 24).

Example 5. 24 – Epistemic use of question tag ‘no?’, scenario: Licence (RP-33-PL)

9  <FF1W> Okay, I mean the whole concept of driving I'm not=
10  <Jacek> D'you not drive, no?

However, question tags have a stronger affective function. Facilitative tags are an invitation for the hearer to become involved in the conversation and to contribute to the exchange of opinions. This strategy caters for positive face needs of the hearer, as shown in Example 5.25.

Example 5. 25 – Facilitative use of question tag ‘no?’, scenario: Party (RP-23-PL)

22  <Asia> @@ Are you friends, like, from school or what's the story, like. How do you=
23  <SS2M> =Ah, well yeah- yeah, like, friends from school. I mean, his mother basically paid me
to be friends with him, you know.
25  <Asia> </jaw-dropped expression> Oh::
26  <SS2M> I mean, you know... he just hung around with me=
27  <Asia> =Good for you! No?= 

Finally, in the last example below, no? is used to soften the face threat of a disagreement.

Example 5. 26– Softening use of question tag ‘no?’ (after a disagreement), scenario: Tiger (RP-11-PL)

12  <BB1> [...] but the thing he did wasn't so bad, I mean...
13  <Magda> Oh no... I think it was a bit bad, no? Because like he cheated on her [...]
Overall, given the interactive type of discourse analysed here, the highest occurring type of question tags in terms of their function were those referred to as affective (Holmes 1995), which encourage a reaction from the interlocutor. This ensured a conversational flow, and both linguistic groups employed a wide variety of facilitative question tags in the role-plays. The high use of the question tag no? (one third of all tags, i.e. 18 out of 49) in the PL data could be contrasted with the Irish preference for more conventional tags isn’t it/wasn’t it? (over 50 per cent of IE tags). This difference in the use of question tags may be an influence of Polish conversational preferences being transferred into interactions in English, without necessarily meaning that the Polish participants were not aware of the array of question tags available in English. What is most relevant to the study of intercultural pragmatics is the cultural differences being reflected in the language. The use of question tag no? and ‘Don’t you think?’ is an example of Polish conversational style influencing NNSs’ communication in English. While the inferences of L1 on communication in L2, such as the transfer of question tag no? are an interesting topic, their discussion is beyond the scope of this thesis. Nevertheless, some of the examples discovered in this research will be an avenue for discussion of future research directions and possible pedagogical interventions, presented in the final chapter of the thesis (Sections 8.4 & 8.5).

### 5.7.2. Persuasion

It has been argued throughout this thesis that exchanges of opinions, from an English-speakers’ perspective, do not have a strong perlocutionary focus. However, some evidence of attempts at convincing the interlocutor was found in the role-play data. It appears that the Licence scenario elicited the most persuasive opinions, followed by the Christmas scenario. In the role-play example below, the use of the pronoun ‘you’ increased the perlocutionary force of the opinion, making it nearly a suggestion.

**Example 5.27 – Perlocutionary opinion, scenario: Christmas (RP-46-IE)**

24 <F2W> =But you don't have to go mad, like. You don't have to spend a MAD amount of money.

25

26 <Martina> I know but it's it's- ANNOYING, like. Just to go, you know, into town. Going getting the shopping now for back to college Monday and... like, it's just the=
Furthermore, the perlocutionary force of opinions could be expressed more explicitly, as is done in Example 5.28.

**Example 5.28 – Explicit perlocutionary opinion, scenario: Licence (RP-41-IE)**

30 <F3W> But sure, I don’t know. *(Am I able) to change your mind a little bit? I’d say your happy now about (not) getting a car? Or a licence?*

31 <Jimmy> Well... it’d be... it’d be nice, but I mean... you’ve told me many good reasons there why I shou- you know, why I=

Another expression which carries an air of persuasion in English is the tag ‘Don’t you think?’ In the English-speaking world, this sort of formulation communicates to the hearer that the speaker has the ‘right answer’ and that they need the hearer to see that it is the correct opinion, to persuade them. Due to the politeness repercussions of this expression, this is discussed more closely in Section 6.2/4.

5.7.3. Backchannels

Backchannels, which are typical in oral communication and which encourage the conversational flow, were one of the most prominent discourse features in the role-plays. The interactive character of role-plays placed *yeah* as the 4<sup>th</sup> (PL) and the 6<sup>th</sup> (IE) most common word in the data. An interesting aspect was the use of *yeah* as a backchannel as opposed to an agreement token. This caused one misunderstanding, shown in Example 5.30.

**Example 5.29 – ‘Yeah’ as a backchannel, scenario: Film (RP-33-IE)**

1 <Noelle> So what did you think of the film?

2 <S3M> I thought it was very good.

3 <Noelle> Yeah.

4 <S3M> What did you think of it?

5 <Noelle> Yeah, I thought it was okay. Ehm...

6 <S3M> Just okay?

7 <Noelle> Well I thought it was=

In Example 5.29, the use of ‘yeah’ is clearly a backchannel since Noelle disagrees with the Stranger further into the conversation. In the example below (5.30), the ambiguous
use of ‘yeah’ either as a discourse marker or a backchannel results in the Polish participant’s interpretation of it as an agreement.

Example 5.30 – ‘Yeah’ mistaken as agreement, scenario: Film (RP-32-PL)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Transcript</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>&lt;SS2M&gt; Well, I don’t know. I- I- I kind of thought that this film was interesting. I mean it’s not the BEST films I’ve ever seen, but you know it’s interesting, alright.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>&lt;Radek&gt; Yeah, it is actually. It is. The whole thing- the whole idea... maybe, but I think I- I would choose a different ending... in the end.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>&lt;SS2M&gt; Yeah, more than likely.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>&lt;Radek&gt; Yeah.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>&lt;SS2M&gt; Probably could have done with...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>&lt;Radek&gt; So you agree with me, yeah?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>&lt;SS2M&gt; &lt;hesitantly&gt; Yeah. &lt;hesitantly&gt; Yeah, I do. I mean, I wouldn’t throw the baby out with the bath water but...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>&lt;Radek&gt; Yeah maybe. Yeah.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>&lt;SS2M&gt; It’s- it’s still=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>&lt;Radek&gt; =Maybe I’m too harsh, yeah?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Backchannels in a conversation are tokens which, one could argue, are not very necessary to convey meaning, for instance, to express one’s opinion. However, the confusion between an agreement and a backchannel in Example 5.30 demonstrates that a conversation is not only a matter of communicating meaning. The issue of speakers being perceived as polite or impolite emerges throughout the discussion in this and the coming results chapters. While many times it is difficult to ‘put a finger on it’, such minimal tokens as backchannels can influence how a person is perceived by their interlocutor. Conversations in Irish English do show quite a lot of backchannelling, following an Irish principle of “pragmatics of reassurance” (Hickey 2007, p. 372). It is also a very relevant topic in intercultural communication and pragmatic competence as ‘active listening’ (i.e. using backchannels) should be an integral part of conversational skills (Gardner 1998), contributing to overall fluency (Amador-Moreno, McCarthy and O’Keeffe 2013). However, as some of the examples have demonstrated, the ambiguity in use of tokens such as yeah makes them quite difficult to interpret from a pragmatic perspective.
5.7.4. Latching, overlapping and finishing each other’s sentences

Given the stress on agreement and ‘feeding of each other’, the wide use of latching and even finishing each other’s sentences shows that an exchange of opinions is, in fact, a type of interactive discourse where meaning is negotiated. This sort of attitude also fosters positive facework. In the first example presented below, the latched backchannels (by Kasia) function as an encouragement for the Boss to continue talking. That way, he introduces not one but three points in the opinion.

Example 5.31 – Latching, scenario: Tiger (RP-9-PL)

19 <BB1> Well professional golfers, they, they're going to be in the public eye so=
20 <Kasia> =Yeah=
21 <BB1> =I mean being a professional golfer, being a professional sports person you're always going to be in the media and I suppose you should try to keep a clean image=
22 <Kasia> =yeah=
23 <BB1>=BUT, having said that, he is a fantastic golfer, so I suppose, you can sort of let him off a little.

Examples of latched speech in spoken discourse are perhaps not very surprising. However, the occurrence of merging and finishing each other’s sentences when disagreeing is quite curious. Example 5.32 demonstrates this interesting use of language. Even though the interlocutors have different opinions, the potential threat posed by the disagreement is minimised thanks to the presence of the ‘helping out with words’ strategy.

Example 5.32 – Latching, finishing each other’s sentences, scenario: Film (RP-32-IE)

39 <Paul> Well I - I would have liked it to see a bit- you know, they could have brought it into a bit more ehm...
40 <S3M> Satisfactory=
41 <Paul> Yeah, =END, I thought. But… no, the background to the premise... really good. I mean, apart from hearing about Facebook and the odd name being dropped in we don't know the full background of these things but that was… that's a good ehm… story. I mean, it could be something that people write up, like.
The issue of overlapping and finishing each other’s sentences in exchanges of opinions is something that can be assigned to a particular culture or a linguistic group. For instance, Mullan (2010, p. 32) discussed this as a typically French strategy which signals solidarity and engagement. This engagement can also be understood as a ‘commitment’, thus a higher level of responsibility for one’s opinions and even an obligation to defend them (Béal 1993 quoted in Mullan 2010, p. 33). In contrast, from an English speaker’s perspective, the key cultural aspect in relation to opinions is respect for another person’s right to a differing opinion, stressing the negative face needs for autonomy (cf. Wierzbicka 1985, p. 154). However, the data from role-plays show examples of participants finishing each other’s sentences in both linguistic groups (see for example RP-30-PL/19-24). The need for fostering a conversation may be, therefore, a strategy which functions on a more interpersonal level that overcomes national or language-specific preferences for standing one’s ground in exchanging opinions. Moreover, the examples of ‘finishing each other’s sentences’ given above come from role-plays of differing opinions, where one would expect less ‘fostering’ strategies. This is an interesting example of the different facets of exchanges of opinions, where some strategies can function on different levels and independently of each other. Therefore, Polish participants’ preference for supporting opinions with facts and the Irish respondents’ tendency to hedge are characteristics which do not collide with the interpersonal aspect of finishing each other’s sentences in a conversation.

5.7.5. Stalling, deferring reaction and hesitation

Another strategy in opinions worth mentioning is the use of stalling and hesitation as a discourse organisation and a politeness strategy. The use of hesitation in expressing opinions may be simply understood as a sign of planning and getting one’s thoughts together, but also as a sign of a deliberate planning of what to say in terms of politeness (for instance hedging). The example below shows that hesitation increases the overall politeness ranking of the opinion if we compare it to Example 5.31, where the Boss also uses hedges such as I suppose, sort of and a little to express a polite opinion. However, arguably, the opinion expressed in Example 5.33 is more polite thanks to the many ellipses which mark the hesitant, more tactful speech.
Example 5.33 – Hesitation, scenario: Film (RP-28-IE)

<Andy> Yeah, I suppose ehm... I suppose, like... maybe if I watched it again it might be... I might see more in it... but... hmm... I don’t know, I thought I saw a fair bit from what I saw.

Another function of stalling is to defer giving one’s own opinion. While hesitation may create an air of uncertainty and politeness, the use of expressions to defer reaction, as shown in Example 5.34, appears more strategic.

Example 5.34 – Stalling, deferring reaction, scenario: Film (RP-29-PL)

<SS1M> Well man. What did you think of THAT movie?
<Wojtek> {Exhales loudly} It was really predictable.
<SS1M> D’you reckon?
<Wojtek> Yeah!
<SS1M> No way!

Stalling also echoed in the IE focus groups, where a theme of a ‘strategic approach’ to opinions emerged (discussed throughout Chapter 7). The examples above reflect this strategic approach to opinions, where disagreements can be delayed or altogether avoided. Thanks to the brief lapses in time interlocutors have time to consider their responses and adapt their opinion, placing it closer to a safe middle ground. Another important function of such strategies is to avoid long, uncomfortable silences.

In conclusion, the discourse features and supportive moves discussed throughout Section 5.7 may be seen as a ‘scaffolding’ for the speech act set of exchanging opinions. The use of backchannels, latching of speech or facilitative question tags ensured a conversations flow in the role-plays. While tokens such as these may seem unimportant, lack of such ‘traffic guidance’ skills in communication can be considered a deficiency in pragmatic competence. However, perhaps the most important role they fulfil is creating a spirit of cooperation and a conventionally polite conversation (i.e. politic behaviour).
5.8. Resolution and perlocution

The preferred resolution of an exchange of opinions is at least agreeing to disagree, if an agreement is not viable. Given the experimental character of the role-plays, the supposed outcome of the conversations was directly influenced by the scenarios. Christmas, Licence and Film scenarios were disagreeing exchanges, Tiger and Party were those of agreement and the Holidays scenario was a neutral role-play.

In the Holidays scenario, many of the one-off participants thanked the Boss for his time, while in the Party scenario the resolution move centred round the plans of getting out of the boring party. Because humour was so widely used in the role-plays, it is difficult to take this example as representative, but in the Christmas and Licence role-plays, some exchanges ended with a sort of ‘I can’t be your friend anymore’ conclusion. This kind of a friendly banter is also an example of the general preference for ‘agreeing to disagree’ resolution.

In the structure of opinions, it may be the beginning rather than the end of the conversation that bears more importance. It is the initial agreement or disagreement that determines how the exchange develops. This phenomenon was discovered, for instance, in adolescent gossip conversations. If the initial gossip (negative evaluation of a person not present in the group) was not challenged immediately after the first speaker expressed it, it was never challenged by anyone in the group later in the conversation (Eder and Enke 1991, p. 505). However, in opinions, deferring one’s reaction or hedging the opinion leaves more space for a change of opinion or negotiation further into the conversation. Also, exchanging of opinions often takes place between two people, thus the group pressure of agreeing to whatever someone said does not exist in this case.

In summing up the Resolution move, it is important to mention the different attitudes in PL and IE groups in relation to ‘agreeing to disagree’. While no major discrepancies could be described from a pragmalinguistic point of view, the difference could lie in the interlocutors’ psychological state of winning or losing (see Section 7.5).
5.9. Discussion

In relation to preparing the hearer for an opinion, it was expected that the role-play with the highest level of imposition would elicit the most elaborate preparatory supportive moves. This finding was confirmed, as both the Irish and Polish one-off participants acknowledged the imposition by firstly requesting the Boss’s time to talk to him, and finally thanking him for his time after the role-play. It is interesting, however, that the Polish participants mentioned in the focus groups that the relationship with superiors in Ireland is much more relaxed than in Poland. Nevertheless, they still managed to fulfil the requirements of formality while talking according to the Irish rules of interaction (i.e. not too formal).

The other role-play which was expected to elicit longer elaboration, before the actual opinion, was the Party scenario. Since the speakers did not know each other, it was expected that they would firstly try to find out the background of the other person, before sharing their opinion that the party was boring. This was true to some level. While there are instances of bald-on-record opinions (such as ‘It’s fair bad.’), they are contrasted with the interlocutor’s deferring reaction or a minimising response (such as ‘Really?’ or ‘Yeah, I didn’t want to say it but…’). There are also examples of role-plays where the participants cautiously circled the topic by asking who the interlocutor knows in the party, etc. (e.g. RP-21-IE, RP-25-IE, RP-27-IE). However, the largest chunk of opinions in this scenario was composed of indirect (conventionally or externally modified) opinions. Thus, the party was ‘a bit’ boring, ‘not bad but could be better’ and people were ‘not really enjoying it’. Finally, after establishing that the party was boring, the role-plays focused on planning to get out of the party. Interestingly, the three instances where the speaker acknowledged that they were happy to be able to talk to the interlocutor were expressed by Polish participants. This may point again towards the preference for adhering to the positive face needs of the interlocutor. However, research into openings in a small talk between strangers at a party has revealed that speakers can differ in this aspect even across one language (Schneider 2012a, p. 1032). For instance, Schneider (2012a) studied the opening moves in a ‘meeting at a party’ scenario. The author found that speakers of American English focused on establishing identities (i.e. asking names, etc.), English openings used more formulaic greetings, while Irish English speakers usually commented on the occasion (i.e. a great party). Interestingly, the evaluation of the party by the Irish speakers was “overwhelmingly
positive” (Schneider 2012a, p. 1032). It is therefore difficult to speculate if it was the inherent face threat of the Party scenario (criticism), the general linguistic (the English language) or even varietal preferences which influenced the limited use of pre-posed supportive moves in the IE data.

In relation to the differences between PL and IE data and the use of preparatory supportive moves, the variation lies in how the Christmas role-plays begin. On the one hand, in the IE subset, the one-off participants started by reporting on what they had seen (e.g. Christmas lights in the city centre) and followed with an opinion that they disliked it. On the other hand, the Polish participants constructed their opinions by asking ‘Have you seen/noticed that...’ and then ask ‘Don’t you think it’s too early/ridiculous/etc.?’. There are also examples of the Polish participants positioning themselves as outsiders by saying ‘What annoys me here in Ireland’ (RPZ47-PL) or asking ‘Why so fast?’ (RP-44-PL), requesting an explanation why they – the Irish – have Christmas products on sale so early.

In terms of head acts, the main finding was that the Opinion and Evidence cannot be easily separated into two different moves. While an opinion can stand by itself and it does not need to be supported by evidence, the evidence move has more significance than just supporting the opinion. Evidence, in fact, acts as not only supporting the opinion, but as an implied repetition of it. Thus, the illocutionary strength of saying ‘I think Christmas products are on sale too early’ can be the same as saying ‘It’s only October’ or ‘We haven’t had Halloween yet’. Conceptually, the first utterance would count as an opinion, and the other two as evidence (since they are facts). However, the shared common knowledge between the interlocutors allows both to interpret the presentation of facts as grounding as well as the implied opinion in one move. By saying ‘It’s only October’, the speaker implies ‘thus, it is too early to have Christmas products in the shops’. Moreover, many opinions and evidence are expressed implicitly, stretched over a number of turns or even allowed to drift off. This is not only a strategy for avoiding a face threat, but also the difficulty of translating feelings and beliefs (which opinions are meant to express) into words. The utterances acting as facts that support the opinion do not always clearly justify the point of view, which makes it more difficult for the speaker to ensure they are understood. Therefore, an ambiguity in opinions or evidence leaves space for negotiation by placing them in a conceptual middle ground. Furthermore, talking about one's feelings is different from
presenting facts from a politeness point of view. The emotional investment in opinions may explain the presence of unfinished evaluations, left for the interlocutor to do the work of interpreting what the speaker meant.

Before discussing one of the key parts of the speech act set of exchanging opinions – the negotiation of agreement and disagreement – it is important to mention the affective character of opinions. It is true to some extent that disagreements can be more complex and longer than exchanges where speakers agree. However, this study has discovered that exchanges of agreeing opinions can, in fact, be text-generating, long-winded and quite complex. The speech act set is not a simple exchange of fire, a fight, or a conflict-resolving negotiation. Sometimes, the function of opinions is more affective, cherished for the enjoyment of speakers who bring their points to a table, for all to be enjoyed, to ‘feed off each other’ and add to an opinion, instead of firing back. Exchanging opinions can be an enriching and a relationship-building or maintaining experience.

In terms of agreement and disagreement preferences, what seems to be the favoured strategy in the speech act set investigated here is the in-between option of partial (dis)agreement. Here, the speakers can leave their opinion to drift off as to avoid disagreeing directly, use hesitation, stall, or defer their reaction. However, in situations of disagreement, the most common strategy is to acknowledge the interlocutor’s point before stating one’s own. The pattern can be described as ‘yes, but’ and it can take many forms, several of them conventionalised. The need to acknowledge the interlocutor’s point before stating their own was also more pronounced in the IE data. Lower use of the ‘yes, but’ expressions among the PL participants could be the result of limited pragmatic proficiency as well as evidence that the need for acknowledging the interlocutor’s point may not be as important to them. This lack of ‘fostering other’s feelings’ has also been linked to the limited use of question tags in Polish (Wierzbicka 1985, p. 158).

Separating speech act sets into structured categories of head acts and supportive moves is helpful in understanding their overall structure. However, what makes the speech act set of exchanging opinions interesting, is the wide use of other supportive moves. Studying just the main four moves in the set would be an error, which could lead to the omitting of such important aspects as question tags or backchannels. Also, some differences between the IE and PL groups became visible in relation to those aspects.
One of such interesting strategies used in exchanging opinions is the presence of latching, overlapping and finishing each other’s sentences. This may be a communication strategy that has little to do with the actual speech act under investigation. However, the confrontational character of the role-plays makes the presence of such strategies quite interesting.

Finally, the group of devices which could only be called ‘strategic’, in the sense of crafty moves, are stalling, deferring reaction and using hesitation. The implementation of this move was evenly distributed in both linguistic groups, placing the hesitation mark *ehm* on the 16th and 17th positions in the data. The time taken to consider a response to an interlocutor’s opinion resulted in stalling, deferring and hesitation. Because such moves are mainly guided by the phenomenon of politeness and consideration for the interlocutor’s face, they are also discussed in the next chapter which deals with politeness.

The last research question refers to the intercultural implications of the differences discovered between Polish and Irish strategies for expressing opinions. As suggested in the literature review, the Polish style of expressing opinions may appear confrontational when compared to the Irish formulae. The data analysis of the role-plays revealed, for instance, that Poles positioned themselves as outsiders and demanded an explanation, rather than enquiring about an opinion from the Irish interlocutor (as in the Christmas scenario). In addition, the use of ‘summoning to listen’ or ‘summons to talk’ can contribute to a perception of confrontation from the Irish side. Moreover, the preferred Irish strategy is to pose an open question about an opinion, *What do you think about x?*, while the Polish participants phrased the question with their point of view implied in the introduction, e.g. *Don’t you think x?*. This form puts more pressure on the interlocutor to agree and makes disagreement more difficult, thus requiring more complex facework (and perhaps also syntax). A disagreement to *Don’t you think x?* nearly begs for a hedged response, such as *Well, actually, I don’t think x*. This is because rhetorical questions in exchanges of opinions are arguably one of the strongest stance markers on behalf of the speaker, i.e. they are ‘the truth’, which is not expected to be ‘negotiated’. Additionally, rhetorical questions are believed to be the ultimate weapon in arguments, and failing to convince the interlocutor is a sign of inopportune use of this weapon (Danielewiczowa 1991, p. 161). However, it is encouraging to see that the strategies presented in the PL and IE
data do not show any strong evidence of a serious conflict. The differences may become apparent in interactions and result in different perceptions of each other. The Polish side may think that the Irish way of speaking is a simple ‘beating around the bush’, while from the Irish perspective the strategies used by the Polish participants may appear confrontational and direct (see also Section 7.6). However, the risk of a serious breakdown in communication is not a threat to be concluded from the data.

Having discussed how the research questions can be answered from a speech act point of view, it seems that another valuable question still needs to be answered: what can be learned about the speech act of opinions from the current research? I believe that many of the findings reported here apply to the speech act of expressing opinions in general and a great deal has been discovered about its structure and characteristics.

Firstly, opinions should be treated as a speech act set since they involve a discussion and an exchange of opinions (cf. Section 2.5.1). The complexity of the speech act set has been demonstrated in the role-plays. The set includes moves of introducing a topic, posing an opinion, agreements and disagreements, agreeing to disagree, and finally, a resolution. However, other moves, such as apologies, requests for time to talk, mocking, joking, and grumbling also emerged in the exchanges. The role-play data reflects real-life conversations which are not limited by any superficial rules of ‘one speech act at a time’ (used in DCTs for instance).

Secondly, the dynamics of an exchange of opinions are different to those present in a group discussion. Participants do not have the right to remain indifferent or silent – a reaction is obligatory when only two people are present in the conversation. It is through this pressure to expose one’s point of view, and the lack of opting out, that a number of strategies could be identified. In the first place, a speaker who gets to ask their interlocutor about their opinion seems to be at an advantage since they do not expose their beliefs first. It is, in a sense, exposing one’s face to a possible disagreement, ridicule, etc. In relation to responding to such question, from a politeness point of view, a meaningful reaction is required, thus ‘opting out’ is not a strategy available in the English language. To deal with the lack of this face-saving strategy, other ‘substitutes’ can be employed such as deferring one’s reaction, hesitation, or hedging.
Thirdly, an exchange of opinions could be in some cases characterised as gossip and such examples of agreeing opinions can develop into long conversations. Disagreements can be text-generating because they require interlocutors to provide evidence in order to ‘solve’ the issue. However, agreeing opinions can also be long-winded since their function shifts from the ‘negotiation of meaning’, dispute-solving function to that of promoting affect and building a stronger relationship between the speakers.

5.10. Conclusion

In this chapter, we have approached the results of the role-play data following the tradition of classifying a speech act realisation pattern. Within the opinions’ classification, it appears that the difference between an opinion and evidence moves is not very clear cut. Moreover, the results suggest that complexity of opinions stretches also to the wide variety of (dis)agreement strategies and other framing features. We have also seen that this speech act can be appreciated for its phatic function in communication. Many of the issues presented and discussed here will echo in the next chapter which deals with politeness. The politeness function of the in-between strategy of concessive agreements and disagreement will be a paramount part of that discussion. The natural progression to discussing politeness strategies in exchanges of opinions will offer a fuller picture of this speech act set under examination.
Chapter 6 – Politeness and Opinions

6.0. Introduction

Speech acts and politeness theory go hand-in-hand since the early days of their formulation. Correspondingly, the discussion now turns to the politeness aspects of exchanging opinions. In terms of answering the research questions in relation to politeness theory, many issues overlap with those presented in reference to speech acts; these are:

RQ.1. What are the pragmalinguistic characteristics of opinions in Irish English and with reference to the Irish-Polish intercultural context?

RQ.3. What are the (politeness) strategies employed by native Irish English speakers and by Polish speakers of English for expressing opinions?

RQ.5. Do these strategies differ?

RQ.6. If so, in what ways?

RQ.7. What are the intercultural implications of these differences?

The politeness aspects of opinions discussed in this chapter could be divided into three main components: facework, indirectness and stance. In the first section (6.1), the results are presented in relation to face strategies since face management is one of the key aspects in politeness theory. This section also examines politeness features employed in the specific role-play scenarios. In the second section (6.2), we look at indirectness as one of the most prominent politeness strategies in exchanging opinions. Finally, in Section 6.3, the discussion turns to stance and hedging, and focuses more closely on emphasising and minimising tokens. The chapter finishes with an extended discussion section (6.4). The differences between Polish and Irish strategies are offered throughout the chapter and those more significant are examined in more detail in the discussion section before a final conclusion is offered (Section 6.5).
6.1. Facework

In relation to politeness theory, the analysis focused on seeking evidence of strategies used to adhere to each other’s face needs in conversation. Here, the biggest actor was the use of indirectness as a face-saving strategy; hence a full subsection dedicated to this particular aspect (6.2). First, however, features of facework are discussed more closely: threats (6.1.1), face-saving (6.1.2), and enhancing (6.1.3) strategies. To highlight the focus of this study, Section 6.1.4 presents face strategies believed to be unique to the speech act of opinions. Finally, a summary of the main differences between IE and PL data sets are offered in Section 6.1.5.

6.1.1. Face threats

Before discussing the range of facework discovered in the exchanges of opinions, it is important to establish the risks this speech act set poses and examine the potential face threats. While some face threats are specific to certain scenarios (e.g. Holidays), others were also present throughout the data. The five main face threats identified in the data are discussed individually in turns.

1. Disagreements

Perhaps the most obvious example of a face threat, disagreement threatens the positive face of the interlocutor suggesting that the other is “wrong, misguided, or unreasonable about some issue, such wrongness being associated with disapproval” (Brown and Levinson 1987, p. 66). However, the possible threat disagreements pose may vary in different contexts. For instance, in conversations among young acquaintances conversing in Spanish, direct disagreements were discovered to be a common occurrence, without being considered a face threat (López-Sako 2008, p. 330). A review of politeness strategies variation according to each scenario is therefore offered later in this chapter (Section 6.1.6) to account for some of the contextual differences.

2. Expressing unhedged opinions as a statement of fact and/or without acknowledging the interlocutor’s point

As will be examined later, the preferred behaviour in expressing opinions is to do so using hedging. Expressing opinions without hedges is face threatening because it limits
the possibilities of negotiation and finding a middle ground. Speakers of English may also dislike opinions which are stated as a fact because English clearly recognises the differences between facts and opinions (see Section 7.9). Finally, not acknowledging the interlocutor’s point before stating a disagreeing opinion is dispreferred since it threatens the positive face of the interlocutor.

3. Using Impoliteness

As was argued in Section 2.3.3, impoliteness refers to the linguistic behaviour which aims to cause offence. With reference to opinions, the intentional face threats identified in the role-plays included questioning or doubting someone's opinion, interrupting, using sarcasm or mocking and aiming to ridicule the person. These strategies threaten the face of the hearer and would be considered as conventional impoliteness, as is shown in Example 6.1. However, in some instances, the use of sarcasm and ridicule can be a simple example of banter. In such cases, it is both the context and the reaction of the interlocutor that determines if these strategies are perceived as face threatening or not (see also Section 6.4 of this chapter). Overall, the role-plays presented more examples of banter than other types of impoliteness.

Example 6.1 – Putting someone’s opinion in doubt, scenario: Christmas (RP-50-IE)

1. <Anne> Oh my God! I was in Penney's the other day and there was Christmas decorations. That's absolutely scandalous!
3. <Anne> Eee, no! At this stage it was probably the start of September.
4. <F3W> Ah, sure it's grand, like, you know. You have to start getting organised early.
5. <Anne> @@ <@> Are you actually serious?

4. Asking or demanding an opinion and reasons for it

Any activity which requires the hearer to fulfil an action as a result of what the speaker is saying could be considered a face threat to the negative face, the right to autonomy. While enquiring about someone’s opinion is not inherently threatening, some formulations can be perceived as such by the hearer, such as the use of challenging question tags. Moreover, the act of requesting or demanding evidence is also an act that can threaten the face of the hearer who may feel that their autonomy is infringed.
upon. The discussion of role-play results in Section 6.2.4 will further demonstrate the face threats posed by the use of challenging question tags.

5. Asking for help or advice

Interestingly, a number of instances of requests for help or advice appeared in the role-play data, especially in the Licence scenario, as is demonstrated in Example 6.2. While being asked for advice can be a symbol of trust and a face-enhancing experience, it might also be a threat to one’s autonomy. The person giving the advice may feel they will be held responsible for the outcome should anything go wrong after the interlocutor followed their advice. This presumption could make one feel threatened when asked for advice.

**Example 6.2 – Asking for advice, scenario: Licence (RP-38-PL)**

9  &lt;Radek&gt; = *D*you think it's hard? *D*you think I'll manage?
10 &lt;FF2M&gt; Ehm... 
11 &lt;Radek&gt; ‘Cos I’m not really good with cars. 
12 &lt;FF2M&gt; You may want to do some lessons first ’cos it's pretty difficult.

The strategies reviewed in this section have pointed out some of the most common face threats in opinions, even though this list may not be exhaustive. Just as it was argued in the previous chapter that opinions provide a rich context for co-occurrence of other speech acts, they can also provide equally rich opportunities for face threats, either intended or not. However, the role-play analysis also provided examples of how to mitigate threats in opinions, which are presented in the next section.

6.1.2. Face-saving strategies

Strategies identified as those aimed at preserving face needs were used not only in the head act of expressing opinions, but also in the surrounding acts of disagreeing, as well as moves at the start and end of the conversation. The five main strategies are discussed below.
1. Using off-record, indirect, and hedged opinions

The first category of face-saving strategies refers to more traditional polite lexical tools, such as hedges and discourse markers, as softening devices in expressing opinions. Hesitation and indirectness also played an important face-saving role in the exchanges. Talking about someone else (avoiding talking about self) can be another example of a speaker’s face-saving strategy. The use of hints and rhetorical questions to express opinions would also belong to this group of strategies. The example below demonstrates a conventionally polite opinion (acting also as a disagreement), which contains many hedges.

Example 6. 3 – Hedged opinion, scenario: Christmas (RP-49-IE)

<Jimmy> Yeah, I can appreciate that as well, but- well... It's just from my own point of view... just looking back and... you know, the- it's about spending the time with the family and not kind of, you know, the presents- and it's about constantly being put in our face! You know, you need to buy this present, ah, go on! And, you know, it's not about that. It's about being around kind of your family, dinner... and you know... that's=

2. Deferring giving own opinions and/or dis(agreeing)

As mentioned already in Section 5.7.5, deferring one’s reaction is an important skill to master from a politeness point of view. This strategy protects both speaker’s and hearer’s face by delaying the disagreement. It is therefore not only the actual wording of the disagreement or counter-opinion that can mitigate threats, but also the timing or the sequence of turns within the interaction. When response tokens such as ‘You reckon?’ (see example below) are used to defer giving an opinion, the speaker’s face is saved as it allows more time to consider their response, especially in exchanges of disagreeing opinions.

Example 6. 4 – Deferring opinion, scenario: Film (RP-28-PL)

<Kasia> Yeah. Yeah. The ending was easy to like you know to predict and stuff like that.

<SSIM> You reckon?

<Kasia> Yeah.

<SSIM> <>{shaking head}> I didn't see that coming at all!
3. Using weak disagreement strategies

As the discussion in Sections 5.4, 5.5, and 5.6. suggested, weak (dis)agreement strategies are one of the key aspects of exchanging opinions, and they also have an important face-saving function because direct disagreements are dispreferred behaviour in the English-speaking world. In order to address this preference for indirect disagreements, interlocutors can use strategies such as: agreeing before stating their own point, using disclaimers before disagreeing, disagreeing using hedging and/or uncertainty, or using softening question tags. All of these strategies mitigate the face threat a disagreement inherently poses for both parts of the dialogue. Using disclaimers before disagreeing warns the hearer about an approaching counter-opinion. Hedges and uncertainty soften the disagreement since they bring the discrepant opinions closer to the middle ground rather than the opposite ends of a continuum.

Example 6.5 – Hedged disagreement, scenario: Christmas (RP-46-IE)

<-Martina> No, it's. I don't think it's. I love Christmas, like, but I just think d'you know... enjoy it while we HAVE Christmas? Instead of dragging it out and then finally when Christmas is there it's like... it's not that much of a big deal. It's like I've had Christmas already pretty much. D'you know... <{shrugging shoulders}> I don't know.

4. Starting the conversation neutrally, using small talk, etc.

The use of introductory moves in exchanging opinions allows the participants to set the background for the conversation and prepare for possible disagreements. Thanks to this process, both participants’ faces are saved from threats later in the conversation. While it may be difficult to pin down the exact politeness ranking of this strategy, it may be easier to describe how its lack can cause speakers to be perceived as impolite. The discussion of the blunt, on-record introductions to opinions presented in Section 5.2 examined the possible threat in unmitigated introductory moves in opinions. Additionally, by starting the conversation neutrally interlocutors can warn off any impoliteness or hostility, which is the preferred option if compared to a bold introduction that would have to be remedied later with repair work.
5. Joking or mocking

Joking and mocking is an example of a face-saving strategy where a discrepancy in opinions is expressed indirectly or as a way of avoiding or deferring a disagreement. The faces of both participants are protected in this strategy. Joking can also be used to express an opinion indirectly to minimise its imposition. In the example below, the disagreement is expressed ironically, minimising the general threat posed by the contrasting opinions.

Example 6.6 – Joking in disagreements, scenario: Film (RP-34-IE)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>&lt;S3M&gt; So you didn't like it, obviously. But didn't you not like the way the fact that- You've</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>gone through ten years of some guy’s life and it’s condensed down to an</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>hour and a half, and hour and three quarters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>&lt;Dave&gt; @@ &lt;@&gt; &lt;sarcastic&gt; Yeah, that’s fantastic! Yeah @@</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>&lt;S3M&gt; But=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>&lt;Dave&gt; =&lt;@&gt; It's a zip file @@@@@@</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 124) listed joking as a positive face strategy, which puts the hearer “at ease”, allowing to diminish the face threat caused by a faux pas or as a minimising strategy in requests. In the example above the humorous word-play is aimed at preserving the positive faces of the interlocutors by disguising the disagreement in the form of a joke.

6.1.3. Face-enhancing strategies

Face enhancement is a term introduced by Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1997) in order to account for a group of speech acts which the author believed were not intrinsically face threatening but face enhancing, such as wishes, thanks, and compliments. Within the exchanges of opinions, there are also acts or strategies which fulfil this necessity to praise and enhance the face of the hearer. The five examples discussed in this section demonstrate that they are different to face-saving strategies. In Watts’ (2003) terms, face saving could be seen as the type of work required to reach the expected politic behaviour. However, face-enhancing strategies are those which go beyond the established needs of the communication, it is therefore polite behaviour (Watts 2003). Once the threat is diminished, the speaker wishes to enhance the face of the hearer. In a way, such strategies go beyond a dry, but polite (in the common-sense
understanding) interactions to those where interlocutors can feel ‘real’ kindness at play. The five groups of face-enhancing strategies are reviewed in this section.

1. *Emphasising agreement*

In order to emphasise agreement, speakers can use strong agreement tokens (e.g. *absolutely!*), resort to summing up or rephrasing what the interlocutor said to highlight their understanding, as well as using facilitative question tags. All those strategies have a strong face-enhancing function. Interlocutor A feels they, and their opinion, are being accepted by Interlocutor B.

**Example 6.7 – Emphasising agreement, scenario: Tiger (RP-18-IE)**

1. <Sarah> So, what do you think about the whole Tiger Woods thing?
2. <BB2> Yeah, well ehm... It's bit of a shock but at the end of the day I don't think it has anything to do with the fact that he's a fantastic golfer and people kind of have to butt out of his personal life.
3. <Sarah> Oh, absolutely! Yeah, I think that it's a bit... you know, it crosses the line between sport=
4. <BB2> = Yeah=
5. <Sarah> and Heat magazine or something like that.
6. <BB2> Definitely. It's absolutely ridiculous the way the media has kind of JUMPED on the story and=
7. <Sarah> Mhm. **Big time.** I don't really care what he does. He's a good- he's a good golfer so=
8. <BB2> =Exactly. Exactly. I suppose you can maybe understand a little bit the way advertisers are kind of reacting to it because=
9. <Sarah> = Oh, absolutely. Yeah=

2. *Seeking agreement*

The reaching-out character of actively looking for an agreement determines the face-enhancing character of strategies grouped here. The ‘seeking’ of an agreement can be achieved by looking for reasons to understand the interlocutor, appealing to common qualities, offering evidence when not requested or presenting one’s own point as a request for agreement. The interlocutor feels the speaker is making an effort to accept and understand their point. Offering evidence when not requested shows that the
interlocutor is worth the effort the speaker puts into explaining the opinion; the speaker
einvests their time into presenting evidence, which he or she finds worth the trouble.
This group of strategies is different from a simple agreement thanks to the active
involvement of the interlocutors.

**Example 6. 8 – Seeking agreement, scenario: Licence (RP-37-IE)**

| 26  | <F1W> Oh, so you're gonna go in your DAD's car. |
| 27  | <Andy> It would get me kinda started, d'ya know. |
| 28  | <F1W> Yeah <{nodding}> |
| 29  | <Andy> If I get the provisional, then... hopefully to get the full licence it'll be- that would |
| 30  | be the right job THEN. |
| 31  | <F1W> Yeah. No... I've- I have no interest in learning to drive... it's just too expensive |
| 32  | @@@@@ |
| 33  | <Andy> You might change your mind about it in the future then. |
| 34  | <F1W> But, sure, the busses they're grand, like. I use the busses at the moment, like. To |
| 35  | get to college and stuff and it's grand. |
| 36  | <Andy> **But what if** you wanted to like... if you wanted to go somewhere the busses didn't |
| 37  | go. |
| 38  | <F1W> **Like where?** @@@ |
| 39  | <Andy> **Like ehm...** if you're heading out now to... <{thinking}> |
| 40  | <F1W> I just get one of the lads to drive. |
| 41  | <Andy> <{Smiling}> **But, sure...** |
| 42  | <F1W> ‘**Cos then, as well, if**' you're driving, like, you can't have a drink, you're like... you |
| 43  | know... |
| 44  | <Andy> **Yeah, but...** |
| 45  | <F1W> You should be all SENSIBLE @@@ |
| 46  | <Andy> **But ehm... but sure like if you’re...** you'd need to be driving, like, or else you need |
| 47  | other people to drive you. It'd actually be fair handy for you if I was driving, ‘cos |
| 48  | then I'd be able to drive you places. |

3. **Interpersonal strategies**

Another interesting type of face-enhancing moves present in the role-plays could be
grouped under the label ‘interpersonal’. The strategies in this cluster were somehow
disconnected from the actual opinion and included, for instance, proposing a solution
in the ‘boring Party’ situation, such as getting out of the party or saying one is happy to
meet the person (see also Section 6.1.5). Similarly, presenting an opinion as an encouragement, providing positive feedback and praise also contributed to the face-enhancing character of the exchanges. Finally, mocking and showing solidarity could also be seen as enhancing the face of the interlocutors. Overall, the interpersonal strategies contributed to the exchanges being more polite and friendly rather than politic and civilised. For instance, in the example below, the interlocutors who were involved in the role-play made an explicit reference to a previous scenario in which they interacted, namely the Party situation. Thanks to referencing to an experience they had in common, they were able to build an understanding between them in the local context of the Film scenario.

Example 6.9 – Showing solidarity, scenario: Film (RP-30-IE)

```
<S3M> How bad, how bad. Well, it could have been worse. You could have went to a party where where nothing was happening.

<J Jimmy> Exactly! And where music was no good @@

<S3M> @@ Yeah.

<J Jimmy> That's true
```

4. Helping out with words (reading someone’s mind)

Finishing someone else’s thought is another way to show acceptance among speakers. Even in exchanges of differing opinions, people can finish each other’s sentences showing deference and consideration for each other, such as in the Example 6.10, where the speakers exchange differing opinions in the Christmas scenario.

Example 6.10 – Helping out with words, scenario: Christmas (RP-46-IE)

```
<Martina> I know but it's it's- ANNOYING, like. Just to go, you know, into town. Going getting the shopping now for back to college Monday and... like, it's just the=

<F2W> =(Everything in your face)=<{gesticulating by putting a hand in front of her face}>

<Martina> =lights... the light's up, like. It's just a bit too much, like=
```
5. **Stressing that it is only an opinion.**

One of the key aspects in exchanging opinions is respect for each other’s views. Stressing that it is only a personal opinion signals respect for the interlocutor and sends a message that, despite differences in opinions, the speaker accepts them. This is a curious case of a face strategy because, while it is connected to the opinion expressed by the speaker, its meaning is more interpersonal than propositional.

**Example 6.11 – Stressing it is only an opinion, scenario: Film (RP-28-PL)**

```
30 <Kasia> It's something happened, you know, but, like, the whole movie was little crap for me.
31 <SSIM> <smiling/> No!
32 <Kasia> </smiling/> Yeah, it was crap. **Maybe you have a different opinion but you know it's just what I think.**
33 <SSIM> Cool. Yeah, that's fair enough.
```

There are two issues which are worth discussing with reference to this strategy. Firstly, the need to stress that ‘it is only an opinion’ may be linked to the fact that the speaker cannot confirm the credibility of their sources. However, (secondly) this need may also be more interpersonal, where speakers say ‘it is only an opinion’ by a way of saying ‘let’s keep our relationship cooperative, despite this difference in opinions’. We will keep this in mind when discussing the possible explanation for the need to include such strategies in opinions in Section 7.8.

### 6.1.4. Face strategies in opinions

While the types of facework strategies discussed to this point could also be assigned to other speech acts, the role-plays also revealed some strategies which are, arguably, more typical of opinions. The first two strategies, presented below, refer to a stress on agreeing rather than disagreeing in exchanges of opinions, while the third strategy refers to a re-negotiation of one’s position and face.

1. **Preference for agreeing to disagree (presenting two sides of a coin)**

A key politeness aspect discovered in the analysis of the role-plays is the need to acknowledge each other’s opinions. Even when disagreements cannot be avoided, the politeness preferences in English require the use of such acknowledgment tokens.
Presenting two sides of a coin allows both parties to have their voices heard and accepted, thus leading to agreeing to disagree. It could never be stressed enough that the most important expressions one must learn to participate in exchanging opinions in English are of the ‘yes, but’ kind.

Example 6. 12 – Presenting two sides of a coin, scenario: Film (RP-30-PL)

1. "<Jurek> Oh the ending was so Hollywood man. It's just- you could totally=
2. <SS2M> = Really?= 
4. <SS2M> I don't know. I thought it was kind of interesting.
5. <Jurek> Yeah I mean, kind of throughout the movie you're kind of on the edge of your seat but the way it kind of pans out in the end is really=
6. <SS2M> =Well, I- I can kind of see that=
7. <Jurek> = I could see that coming totally you know. 
8. <SS2M> Well, yeah but I mean at the same time the lead up to it was so good you could always //</un>xx//
9. <Jurek> //Yeah/, the lead up was perfect but ehm you're kind of expecting something more from this guy? But then like take the shortcut and just create you know a sort of ehm... you know maybe throughout the movie he was, you know, really doing well you know building up the tension and trying to...

2. Active agreeing facework

The role-play data presented examples of a special kind of facework which focused on actively looking for a point of overlap in disagreeing opinions. The use of ‘yes, but’ statements, among others, allowed the speakers to present many points and reach the happy middle ground. In this category, it is not only the respect for the interlocutor’s views that is expressed, but also expressions such as ‘what about x...?’, as shown in the example below. While similar questions can have a challenging dimension, they can also be a signal of such active searching of a point of overlap between speakers. Therefore, we are not dealing simply with mitigation of face threats, but rather going beyond the point where threats have been diminished to further enhance the faces of the interlocutors.
Example 6. 13 – Active agreeing facework, scenario: Christmas (RP-46-IE)

<Martina> =It's a bit annoying though, d'you know like. I just find it <making a face>. It's just annoying, like.

<F2W> Why? Is it just the- the marketing thing or is it- do you not like Christmas?

3. Changing one’s opinion

It may be difficult to explain how changing one’s opinion is a politeness strategy unique to opinions. However, if compared to other speech acts, for instance, one does not back out of a compliment after a couple of turns. Yet, a request speech act can begin with the speaker having one idea in mind, but finally requesting something else over the course of the conversation with the interlocutor. How is changing one’s opinion different? Here, we could talk about the function of opinions, which are not only an arena for presenting one’s ideas, but where the interlocutors have a chance to form their opinions by discussing them with others. For this reason, in some cases participants changed their opinions, completely or along the weak-strong dimensions, after extensive facework, as shown in the example below. Once again we could mention the affective character of opinions, which present face-enhancing, agreement-searching types of interactions. This is perhaps the less commonly explored side of opinions, but it should be acknowledged.

Example 6. 14 – Changing one’s opinion, scenario: Christmas (RP-46-PL)

<FF2M> Ah:, you're just being too cynical=
10 <Radek> Maybe, I am.
11 <FF2M> You need to get into the spirit of things.
12 <Radek> I mean, you're right to some extent it's nice, you know.
13 <FF2M> I know, yeah @@.
14 <Radek> All the Christmas atmosphere, yeah? I like it too, actually.
15 <FF2M> See? See? @@
16 <Radek> <smiling> Yeah.
6.1.5. Irish and Polish strategies: the differences

Apart from the general speech-act-bound strategies, the analysis of the role-plays also unveiled ‘national’ politeness strategies, which could be the possible point of friction in Irish-Polish intercultural communication. Furthermore, while some are specific to opinions, others have a more general character. There are five main characteristics, which are summarised here and cross-referenced to their further examination in other sections.

1. Saying one is happy to meet the stranger (Polish strategy)

This is a positive-face strategy which occurred only in the PL data. In the Party scenario, some Polish participants acknowledged the fact they were happy to be talking to someone nice at such a boring party, as shown in the example below.

Example 6. 15 – PL strategy, happy to meet stranger, scenario: Party (RP-23-PL)

15 <SS2M> So, ehm do you know any of the people who lives here or...  
16 <Asia> Yeah, just the- the fella who organised it and like nobody else like so yeah, good to  
17 meet you finally like some- some friendly person.  
18 <SS2M> @@ Ah well.

In comparison to the strategy used by Asia, expressions such as ‘Nice to meet you’ have a formulaic character in English and they could be regarded as politic behaviour. However, PL participants used less formulaic, explicit strategies, which from an English speaker’s point of view could be compared to a compliment; a compliment which they would rather brush off as unimportant by a way of fulfilling the maxim of modesty. In fact, the interlocutor does exactly that in line 18. Arguably, it is the sincerity of this Polish strategy that would be quite surprising in the English-speaking world. Moreover, in the Irish context, direct compliments and explicit praise comments are not a common occurrence as “in Ireland it’s done without being said” (Kallen 2005a). We could, therefore, consider this strategy a transfer from Polish.
2. **Bald-on-record opinion without pre-posed moves (Polish)**

Used mostly in the Film scenario, Irish participants usually asked the interlocutor about their opinion. In the PL data, though, participants often skipped this move and simply expressed their dislike of the movie.

**Example 6. 16 – PL strategy, bald-on-record opinion, scenario: Party (RP-25-PL)**

1. <Magda> Hey, I knew that it was going to finish like that. Don't you think so.
2. <SS1M> D'you think so.
3. <Magda> Yeah, //like//
4. <SS1M> //Why?//
5. <Magda> From the beginning he knew that the movie was going to finish like that, no?

3. **Discourse marker ‘sure’ and booster ‘fair’ (Irish)**

Discussed later in this chapter (Sections 6.3.1 & 6.3.2), these two tokens were distinctively Irish strategies. The example below presents the discourse marking use of *sure* in a leave-taking sequence.


37. <Dave> =Well, I better go and look for the girlfriend anyway **sure**.
38. <S3M> Ah **sure** how bad.
39. <Dave> Take care of yourself anyway.
40. <S3M> At least you're sorted. Take care man!

4. **Opinion as a question, i.e. ‘Don’t you think x?’ (almost exclusively Polish)**

This strategy poses quite a challenging facework as it is a rather threatening way to express an opinion. It is also a good example for showing that indirectness should not be equated with politeness. It is discussed in Section 6.2.4.

**Example 6. 18 – The use of ‘Don’t you think x?’, scenario: Party (RP-17-PL)**

1. <SS1M> Well, how are you doing?
2. <Magda> Hi, how are you?
5. **Irish preference for minimising token ‘bit’**

In line with previous studies of preference for minimisation and hedging among some of the English-speaking cultures, the token ‘bit’ is an example that further supports this tendency. It is discussed in Section 6.3.1.


<Jimmy> Not a great party, is it?

<S3M> `{looking around}` Hm... no, not much happening, like. Cou- Couldn't be arsed. Should've went to the pub.

<Jimmy> Yeah. I wish the music was a bit better. I don't like this type of music really.

<S3M> Yeah, yeah... it's a bit... bit- ehm... a bit too pop-y. Ehm... what was I gonna say... would there be- ehm... I don't know... we should- we probably should- Where is the nearest pub? @@

<Jimmy> I think it's actually... it's quite a bit away actually, yeah... I mean that's the problem. What sort of music would you be into yourself?

6.1.6. **Scenario-specific strategies**

The design of the role-plays to create a full spectrum of P, D, I contexts allowed to collect a wide range of strategies, extending the possible classification of politeness strategies in opinions. The variation in politeness behaviour according to different scenarios discussed here highlights how the P, D, I variables influenced the linguistic behaviour of the participants. For instance, the power variable influenced how the ‘employee’ participants approached the exchanges, such as the requests for time to talk to the Boss. Other differences between the scenarios in terms of politeness behaviour are discussed further in this section.
1. Holidays

Since this scenario implied the highest level of threat, it elicited the highest amount of hints in terms of how the opinions were expressed. Other strategies that occurred only with this scenario were asking for permission to talk to the Boss, and thanking him for his time at the end. Also, in terms of the Boss’s position, the participants playing this role exhibited their power in the interactions by interrupting the interlocutor or, to some degree, dismissing the employee’s opinions. Some of the anchor participants even mentioned in the focus groups that they were trying not to be nice on purpose, which was their understanding of exhibiting power. This confession points to one of the weaknesses of the elicited data. As the imagined situations were alien to some participants, it resulted in unnatural behaviour when being put in a new position, such as that of playing someone’s boss.

2. Tiger

This scenario, in principle, was meant to elicit an agreement of opinions. However, some participants playing the Boss were quite confrontational, without really giving the employee a chance to explain that they had a similar opinion (e.g. RPZ10-IE). It could be the influence of some of them feeling unnatural in playing the role of the Boss and portraying this by demonstrating a superior attitude towards the employee. Also, this scenario provided many interesting examples of exchanges of agreeing opinions as being somewhat long-winded and fulfilling the affective function of interaction. This scenario is an example that agreeing on a certain point does not mean that the conversation should stop, but carry on. Those types of exchanges continue beyond the point where a sufficient amount of information has been exchanged. It is probably the affective side of communication in general which makes speakers continue talking for the pure enjoyment of the conversation. This also contradicts the idea of a ‘maximally efficient’ communication (according to the Gricean maxims).

3. Party

This scenario presented a relatively high face threat. However, not all participants attended to those qualities of the situation. It was expected that all participants would approach the conversation with the Stranger quite cautiously, but there are examples of
role-plays where the face threat was not mitigated in any way (e.g. RP-19-IE). Also, a large chunk of the conversations focused on finding a solution to the situation, after agreeing on the opinion that the party was boring. In terms of the differences between PL and IE data, the preference for minimisation in Irish English and overstatement in Polish became apparent. In the IE data, the opinion was mitigated by the use of ‘bit’, thus the party being ‘a bit boring’ or sometimes ‘a bit of a...’ without the actual evaluative attributor. The Polish participants chose expressions very, so and really to emphasise their opinion about the boring party.

4. Film

Interestingly, in this scenario, some participants playing the role of Stranger did not follow the opinion they were given in the prompt, but talked about the film from their own point of view instead. Another curious aspect of this scenario was that on a number of occasions one-off participants (who disliked the movie) convinced the anchor participants (who liked the movie) to their opinion. This is rather odd because it is easier to convince someone to the positive aspects of something they disliked rather than convince someone that whatever they liked was not so good. With reference to evaluating films, a change of opinion following some reflection or a longer discussion with others would (in the direction from liking to disliking) perhaps not be very surprising. Moreover, a person may change their opinion to coincide with the viewpoint of someone whose opinion they value (e.g. someone who may be an expert or is a gifted/convincing speaker). However, given the short interaction participants were involved in, the change in the case of this study was probably brought upon by a stronger necessity to mitigate potential disagreement rather than an actual change of opinion. This role-play is also an example of interesting facework since the result of most of the interactions was agreeing to disagree.

5. Licence

The Licence scenario elicited exchanges with the highest level of a perlocutionary intent. Both the one-off and anchor participants took on the aim of convincing the interlocutor to their point of view. In this sense, the opinions nearly disguised themselves as advice (see Section 2.2.1 for discussion on opinions overlapping with other speech acts). Nevertheless, it was an interesting scenario in terms of presenting
evidence, which may suggest that evidence is linked to the perlocutionary force of opinions. In other words, when the intent to convince the interlocutor is strong, the facts presented as supporting one’s opinion become more important.

6. Christmas

This scenario presented the highest level of negotiation and reasoning. Traditionally, in Ireland, Christmas products would start arriving on shop-shelves after Halloween. Agreeing or disagreeing with the new trend of having Christmas products on sale earlier in the year is simply a matter of taste. This is why this scenario elicited quite long and emotionally loaded exchanges. In terms of the differences between PL and IE groups, Poles approached this exchange from an outsider’s point of view, nearly looking for an explanation from the Irish interlocutor for such an early Christmas rush.

Regarding the length of the exchanges in each scenario, nearly all role-plays had a greater number of turns in the IE role-plays than in the PL, with the exception of the scenarios with the Boss. In fact, role-plays with the Boss were the shortest in comparison with the other scenarios in the IE data. This preference for short, tailored communication with superiors was also mentioned in one of the focus groups:

Excerpt 6.1 from IE focus group about short conversation with Boss (FG-2-IE)

20 <B2> [...] I suppose our conversations could have gone on longer but I think that's the kind of relationship you have with a manager, you know. Unless you... unless you, like, know them well enough to like- that you'd meet them outside or you're only going to have two or three minute conversation with them 'cos you wanna get away from them.

Overall, contrasting the politeness strategies in each scenario has revealed that opinions to some extent reflect the general trends of variation in speech act behaviour according to the P, D, I variables. Therefore, Holidays scenario elicited conventionally indirect requests for time to talk to the Boss, while the Christmas scenario presented examples of an informal talk, such as the use of banter. However, apart from the more conventional, expected behaviour, such as thanking the Boss for his time, there were also some unexpected patterns identified in the analysis, for example, the phatic character of the role-plays in the Tiger scenario. On the whole, eliciting opinions in a
range of P, D, I scenarios has allowed to confirm the general variation of politeness in English, but also to reveal some unique politeness aspects of opinions.

6.2. Indirectness

Since the early explorations of politeness (Brown and Levinson 1987), indirectness has been equated with politeness and considered a key example of avoiding face threats. What indirectness really means is the amount of work required by the hearer to interpret the speech act produced by the speaker (Watts 2003, p. 68). From the speech act theory perspective, directness refers to instances of language use where there is a direct relationship between a structure and a function of an utterance, while indirectness signals an indirect relationship between the function and the structure. Therefore, a declarative used to make a statement is a direct speech act, and if it is used to make a request than it is considered an indirect speech act (Yule 1996, p. 55-56). However, apologies, for example, are a speech act that does not become more polite thanks to indirectness (Ogiermann 2009, p. 21) and a similar claim could be made about opinions. The examples discussed below demonstrate a positive correlation between indirectness and politeness (e.g. negative assertion), as well as providing evidence that this association may be misleading. We will look at four main examples of indirectness in opinions: expressing opinions as a question, expressing disagreements as a question, using negative assertion, and assumptions.

1. Opinion as a question

This type of opinion corresponds to a conventionally indirect speech act. While the form-function is indirect, the meaning is clearly not only a question, but, above all, an indirect opinion. However, opinion as a question is not more polite than opinion expressed as a statement, as is shown in the example below.

Example 6.20 – Opinion as a question, scenario: Christmas (RP-43-PL)

1. <Wojtek> Did you notice that they started selling Christmas products in October?
2. <FFIW> <{nodding enthusiastically while Wojtek spoke}> Isn’t it brilliant?
3. <Wojtek> Ts::: it's horrible!
4. <FFIW> Oh my-
5. <Wojtek> Really? How can you say that!
From a politeness perspective, it would be difficult to assign a higher level of
politeness to the indirect opinion, if compared to an assertion such as ‘I think it’s
brilliant’. Similarly, strategy discussed later under the label of ‘Assumptions’ will
demonstrate that indirectness can be more face threatening than directness.

2. Disagreement as a question

The use of this indirect strategy in a face-threatening situation is yet another example
of the importance of context, not necessarily form (e.g. syntax, lexis) in politeness. In
the example below, the implied opinion is that the friend does not believe Anne would
be a good driver. The structure of the utterance is not a typical opinion; thus, it is
indirect. It could be classified as a conventionally indirect strategy, but not as a more
polite opinion. It also serves as a disagreement to the previous speaker’s point. This
strategy can be interpreted as impoliteness since the apparent attack towards the
hearer’s face is intended, not accidental.

Example 6. 21 – Disagreement as a question, scenario: Licence (RP-42-IE)

1. <Anne> Well. I’m thinking of getting a few lessons. I want to go and apply for my driving licence.
2. <F3W> You on the road? Are you actually serious?
3. <Anne> What are you on about? I’ll be a WAY better driver than you.
4. <F3W> You would not.
5. <Anne> <{demonstrating holding a steering wheel and turning rapidly left and right}> This is you on the road, like.
6. <F3W> Eee, no! That’d be you on the road.
7. <Anne> Seriously. I’m petrified in the car with you.
8. <F3W> Are you actually serious?
9. <Anne> I’m really serious.
10. <F3W> I passed mine first time.
11. <Anne> Well. I don’t know @@

While the first lines of this exchange could be seen as an example of a simple banter,
in line 9, Friend’s face is threatened when Anne tells her (indirectly) she is a bad
driver. The Friend then ‘fires back’ saying that she passed her exam in first attempt,
which acts as an indirect disagreement and an implied opinion that she is a good
driver. Anne then tries to mitigate the threat by using ‘I don’t know’ and a giggle as a way to avoid further disagreement. This strategy appears to repair the threat posed by their disagreement and the exchange finishes later with a friendly banter (see full transcription in Appendix 2). However, what is most interesting in the above exchange is the fact that the three indirect opinions/disagreements (highlighted in bold) are not more polite than direct opinions would have been.

3. Negative assertion

This strategy appears to be more polite than the strategy of stating an opinion as a question. Negative assertions, pessimism, and understatements are all politeness strategies in English that communicate an attitude on behalf of the speaker which shows consideration for the face needs of the both parties of the interaction. In those strategies speakers communicate the exact meaning of what they are saying ‘and something more’. Negative assertions also serve as face-saving strategies in exchanges of opinions since they protect the speaker’s face by minimising the commitment to the statement expressed in the proposition. As in the first example below, they also function as a softening device in disagreement.

Example 6. 22 – Negative assertion, scenario: Film (RP-28-IE)

<Andy> ... so, yeah, I don't know... I wouldn't be a huge fan of it.

Example 6. 23 – Negative assertion, scenario: Tiger (RP-11-PL)

<BB1> = Yeah, he is very famous, he's got a very high profile, so... yeah, I suppose he'd be in the media a little bit more, but yeah, I don't think- I don't think it should be that big deal. I think people should concentrate more on his golf and how great golfer he is rather than what he gets up to in his personal life. I don't think that's important.

4. Assumptions

Assuming what the interlocutor thinks allows the speaker to express their opinion indirectly, disguising it as an enquiry about the interlocutor’s opinion. The real meaning of Noelle’s utterance, in Example 6.24, is that she thinks that the Christmas rush is a marketing ploy. Similarly, in Example 6.26, it is Magda who thinks that
having a driving licence is useful nowadays. This strategy was almost wholly restricted to the Polish speakers (the two occurrences in the IE data are given below).

Example 6. 24 – Assumptions (IE), scenario: Christmas (RP-47-IE)

13 <Noelle> I know, I suppose... but, like, I mean... do you not think it's a bit of a marketing ploy that... it's just, you know, to get people to buy earlier.

AND

Example 6. 25 – Assumptions (IE), scenario: Christmas (RP-48-IE)

7 <Dave> =And they- and they have the Christmas add on the TV and stuff. Do you not think that's just mad.

OR (in total, 13 instances in PL data)

Example 6. 26 – Assumptions (PL), scenario: Licence (RP-36-PL)

1 <Magda> Hi. I was thinking of getting driving licence. What do you think? <{FF1W starts shaking head}> Don't you think it's like very useful nowadays? No?

The fact that the ‘assumptions’ strategy showed such discrepancy in use between IE and PL data, encouraged further contrastive analysis with a larger corpus. This was done with reference to clusters for the verb think in the Limerick Corpus of Irish English (LCIE). In the LCIE, the cluster ‘I don’t think’ is the most common occurrence of the word think, which suggests a preference for formulating opinions using a negative assertion. This preference was also suggested in one of the Irish focus groups, i.e. that ‘people say what they are not thinking’ to find out what the other person thinks. However, in the role-plays, the negative cluster was not the most common strategy in the IE data, as shown in Table 6.1.
Table 6.1 'Think' clusters in IE, PL data and LCIE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IRISH ‘THINK’ CLUSTER</th>
<th>POLISH ‘THINK’ CLUSTER</th>
<th>LCIE ‘THINK’ CLUSTER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WordSmith Tools 4.0</td>
<td>WordSmith Tools 4.0</td>
<td>WordSmith Tools 4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cluster</td>
<td>Cluster</td>
<td>Cluster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freq.</td>
<td>Freq.</td>
<td>Freq.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. I THINK IT'S</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1. I DON'T THINK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. DO YOU THINK</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2. DON'T YOU THINK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I JUST THINK</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3. I THINK THAT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. YEAH I THINK</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4. THINK IT WAS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I DON'T THINK</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5. YEAH I THINK</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What is the most intriguing finding in this cluster is the almost uniquely Polish way of expressing an indirect opinion by posing a question ('Do you not think x...?') or as a question tag (13 in PL versus 2 instances in IE). It is important to note that, from the politeness point of view, the facework behind 'I don’t think x...' and ‘Do you not think x...?’ is quite different. While the former protects the speaker’s face by allowing an indirect expression of an opinion (it is not a statement of ‘I think that x...’), the latter appears to be more face-threatening than a face-saving strategy, despite its indirectness. ‘Don’t you think x?’ may be seen as another way of saying ‘Can’t you see (that x)?’, suggesting that the speaker is right and that the hearer should come around to their way of thinking. Comparing the above examples to the indirect opinion in the example below, the force of ‘Don’t you think x?’ becomes even clearer.

Example 6.27 – Use of expression 'You don't think...', scenario: Christmas (RP-46-IE)

< F2W > = You don't think it's all nice and nice atmosphere and happy=

The difference in the syntax in the above example results in a stronger perlocutionary effect, i.e. the Friend is trying to convince the interlocutor that it is ‘all nice and nice atmosphere...’ The presumption that the speaker is correct, like in Example 6.26, is absent in this case. This form is therefore more polite since it does not threaten the face of the hearer, but rather signals positive facework. In contrast, the formula ‘Don’t you think x?’, used by the Polish participants, points towards more dogmatic opinions because of the perception that the speaker is right. Since Wierzbicka (1985) characterised Polish opinions as dogmatic, the high use of assumptions by the Polish
participants could be interpreted both as an evidence of the Polish dogmatic attitude in opinions and an example of pragmatic transfer. This issue is elaborated further in the discussion section of this chapter (6.4).

6.3. Stance and hedging

The origins of the study of hedges and hedging used in the linguistic sense date back to the 1970s and George Lakoff (1972, p. 195), who defined hedges as words used to “make things fuzzier or less fuzzy” and which may “interact with the felicity conditions for utterances and with rules of conversation” (p. 213). Similarly to Lakoff’s ideas, Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 145) considered hedges as both intensifiers and minimisers in their definition of hedges. Moreover, hedges are used not only as modifying predicates or noun phrases, but also with verbs thus modifying the force of a speech act (‘hedged performatives’). The concepts of hedging and epistemic stance overlap to a certain extent, with an example being modal verbs with epistemic meanings. When hedges are taken to be modifications of the commitment to the truth-value of propositions, the verb ‘may’ is often given as an example. Thus, ‘It may be true’ is a hedge but also an expression of epistemic modality (Markkanen and Schroder 1997, p. 7).

Verbs used with reference to mental activities, such as think or believe, are characterised as mitigators in some speech acts (for instance lexical, internal modification of requests) (Félix-Brasdefeur 2005, p. 67). However, the classification of those verbs, in relation to exchanges of opinions, can be more complicated. Firstly, they could be classified as verbs which could identify an illocutionary act being performed as opinions (IFIDs), since they are the main verbs used to express opinions (cf. Section 2.4.1). Secondly, they can also be used to modify opinions by stressing the subjectivity of the speaker, for instance, as an afterthought, where I think follows a subjective statement. Finally, throughout the data, there are instances of I think also used as a discourse marker and not necessarily a stance marker or as the main verb in expressing an opinion. The distribution of the verbs think and know across the IE and PL data did not show any important differences from a politeness point of view, apart from some PL participant’s overreliance on the discourse marker you know. Similarly, the use of modal verbs (often used to signal weakening stance) was also distributed...
evenly in both linguistic groups (verbs *can/could, would, should* and *may/might*). They are summarised in the table below.

Table 6.2 Frequency of stance verbs in IE and PL data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STANCE VERB</th>
<th>IE DATA</th>
<th>PL DATA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Know</td>
<td>274 hits (Freq. 1.90%)</td>
<td>246 hits (Freq. 2.05%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think</td>
<td>120 hits (Freq. 0.79%)</td>
<td>139 hits (Freq. 1.16%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can</td>
<td>46 hits (Freq 0.30%)</td>
<td>42 hits (Freq 0.35%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could</td>
<td>35 hits (Freq. 0.23%)</td>
<td>37 hits (Freq. 0.31%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Might</td>
<td>26 hits (Freq. 0.17%)</td>
<td>12 hits (Freq. 0.10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Should</strong></td>
<td><strong>32 hits (Freq. 0.21%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>45 hits (Freq. 0.47%)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would</td>
<td>40 hits (Freq. 0.26%)</td>
<td>35 hits (Freq. 0.29%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suppose</td>
<td>44 hits (Freq. 0.29%)</td>
<td>10 hits (Freq. 0.08%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are two verbs which show a slight discrepancy in use of modal and lexical stance verbs (text in bold in the table above). IE data showed a wider variety and slightly higher number of stance markers, such as *I suppose*, which had 44 hits in the IE data, but only 10 in PL role-plays. This could be connected to an overall reliance on simpler stance markers such as *I think* by NNSs. Moreover, the slightly higher frequency of *should* in the PL data could be simply a result of longer exchanges in the Tiger scenario, where many of the opinions were expressed using this verb, e.g. ‘*The media should leave the man alone*’.

In the remainder of this section, some of the most prominent examples of stance and hedging will be discussed, both minimising and emphasising. The differences between the PL and IE implementation of such tokens are discussed throughout.
6.3.1. Minimisation

The list of strategies used to minimise the force of the acts within the set of exchanging opinions is considerably long. A full discussion of all of minimising tokens is beyond the scope of this research, thus some more prominent and those showing divergences between the PL and IE groups are discussed more closely. Tokens, such as just, like and kind of/kinda had a similar number of occurrences in both data sets. The majority of stance tokens were of the propositional type and include: really, just, I don’t know, actually, like, sure, kind of, and ‘a bit’. While the interpersonal stance tokens were limited to you know, we could argue that some of the propositional tokens also have an interpersonal dimension. For instance, the use of sure [ʃɪɻ] and I don’t know could be seen as a facework strategy, thus interpersonal. These politeness characteristics of minimising strategies are discussed in relation to the stance tokens below.

1. Negative assertion

Mentioned earlier in this chapter as an indirectness strategy (6.2.1/3), the negative form can be used to modify the level of commitment to the assertion made by the speaker. It can modify not only the verb, but also the adjective or adverb which can be attributed to the object or concept the opinion is about.

Example 6.28 – Negative assertion as minimisation, scenario: Party (RP-27-IE)

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>&lt;Sarah&gt; Grand. Are you enjoying the party? Do you know someone here or...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>&lt;SS2M&gt; Ehm, yea::h I know the guy who's organising it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>&lt;Sarah&gt; Okay.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>&lt;SS2M&gt; To tell you the truth I’m not really enjoying it, though.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>&lt;Sarah&gt; No. It's not ehm... @&gt; not (up to) much really.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>&lt;SS2M&gt; Not ideal, no. How about yourself?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Negative assertion is an example of a minimisation present in both IE and PL groups, but without any visible differences in use. However, the fact that negative assertion appears in this chapter on three occasions is worth noticing. Firstly, it is an example of indirectness (6.2.1) as well as being used as a minimising token. While both of these functions are a symbol of a face-saving strategy, the use of this strategy in the PL data to form ‘opinion as a question’ may bring about the opposite effect. ‘Don’t you think
"x?" poses a face threat, while other negative assertion strategies have a mitigating power. The preference for that strategy in the PL groups makes the overall ranking of Polish strategies more face threatening.

2. Sure

The pragmatic marker of *sure* is typically associated with Irish English (Amador-Moreno 2005, Kallen 2006). Known as one of the most common sentence openers (Joyce 1979, p. 338), it presents a wider variety of use than other varieties of English (Walshe 2009, p. 121). Its Irish use is typically associated with a discourse marker rather than as a synonym of ‘certainly’. *Sure* often collocates with *but* (i.e. *but sure...*), where its function corresponds roughly to ‘however’ (O’Keeffe, Clancy and Adolphs 2011, p. 40). The different uses of *sure* are also reflected in discrepancies in pronunciation. *Sure* used as an agreement token or an adjective is pronounced as *sure* [ʃʊəɾ] or [ʃɜɾ], and as a discourse marker the pronunciation is closer to ‘shur’ [ʃɪɻ] or [ʃʌɾ] (Walshe 2009, p. 122). Even though *sure* can also be used as a marker of certainty in colloquial English, Walshe (2009, p. 122) pointed out an important difference in IrE and American English use. Whereas in American English *sure* takes a position between the subject and the verb (e.g. ‘He *sure* likes to drink’) and its use can be compared to ‘certainly’, in IrE it takes a position at the beginning or end of a clause, e.g. ‘But, *sure*, I can’t act’ or ‘But, I can’t act, *sure*’. Finally, as a very versatile discourse marker, *sure* can appear in affirmative, negative and interrogative utterances (Amador-Moreno 2005, p. 85).

The number of occurrences of *sure* was much higher in the IE data (84 vs. 26) and only a couple of instances in PL role-plays were the ‘shur’ kind. The IE pattern for use was ‘*but sure it’s...*’. The main politeness functions of this pragmatic marker are to emphasise agreement and minimise possible disagreement by “presenting new information as old” as well as “indirectly requesting agreement” (Kallen 2006, p. 10). When *sure* is used to introduce an evidence token, it stresses that it is a fact that everyone knows to be true (e.g. ‘*Sure it’s October*’) (RP-50-IE). However, when used in opinions it takes on a stronger facework function of minimising disagreement. Its use has been assigned to a minimising token in response to a rebuke, where it is always unstressed, i.e. ‘*Tidy up that kitchen!*’ with response ‘*Sure, I was about to do it!*’
(Hickey 2005, p. 145). The versatility of the Irish use of *sure* is quite evident in the example below.

**Example 6.29 – Use of ‘sure’ as discourse marker, scenario: Licence (RP-36-IE)**

| 3 | <Peter> I think I'm gonna get one now, *'cos, sure*, it’d help you with a few things, like. |
| 4 | <FIW> Like what? Just get your DAD to drive ya @@@ |
| 5 | <Peter> It's cool if your dad's around the place, but, *sure* like my dad lives over in Galway, *sure* I'll be down here. I mean, I'm looking for work now. *Sure*, I'll have to drive somewhere to get to work, like. |

3. **Bit**

Wierzbicka (1985, p. 16) argued that in Polish there is a tendency to overstate rather than understate, and the use of *bit* in the role-plays confirms this preference with only 22 uses in the PL data (out of which 9 were used by PL participants and 13 by anchor participants), and 69 occurrences in the IE role-plays. Correspondingly, the party was often ‘very/so/really boring’ in the PL scenarios but ‘a bit boring’ in the IE role-plays.

In the example below, one of the Polish participants chooses to overstate (self-correcting), even though overstating puts him in a disadvantaged position. When asking a superior for help, the preferred strategy is to minimise the imposition (by trivialising the problem). This speaker failed to do so.

**Example 6.30 – Overstatement, scenario: Holidays (RP-4-PL)**

| 20 | <BB1> =Maybe in the future if you gave me a little bit more advanced notice I might be able to accommodate you a little better. |
| 21 | <Janek> Mhm. Yeah that's the point, but ehm I already booked the flight so I'll *get a little-* BIG PROBLEM. |
| 23 | <BB1> <{inhaling heavily}> Right, I'll= |

This sort of transfer of emotionally loaded and exaggerating expressions has been assigned to a difference in cultural scripts between Anglo and Polish cultures (e.g. Wierzbicka 1997b). Following Wierzbicka (1997a, p.119-120), Poles learning English must learn to ‘calm down’, to become ‘less sharp’, ‘less blunt’, ‘excitable’ and ‘extreme’ in judgements and show more ‘tact’ in their expressions. Communicating within English-speaking cultures also means learning to use understatements rather
than Polish hyperbolic emphases and avoid sounding dogmatic and argumentative (Wierzbicka 1997b, p. 16-17). Therefore, the limited use of the token *bit* in the PL data, as well as the examples of a transfer of emotionally loaded language from Polish, indicates a certain level of pragmatic failure among the PL participants.

### 6.3.2. Emphasis

In terms of emphasis tokens in the data, both IE and PL role-plays had a similar distribution of adverbs such as *absolutely, definitely* or *exactly*. However, an interesting result with reference to stance boosters is the use of *fair* in the IE data as a modifying adverb, which will be the focus of this section.

#### 1. Fair

While the use of *fair* as a modifier is limited to one participant, it is a good example of a less common booster. In the examples below, its use could be compared to ‘real’, as in something being ‘real good’ (not ‘really good’). The politeness value of *fair* to emphasise one’s commitment to a particular statement makes it an interesting, local, Irish strategy.


1. *<Andy> Jesus, it's *fair* bad...*

**OR**


5. *<Andy> Oh, he's unreal, but ehm... Jesus, it's *fair lousy* what the papers are doing to him.*

Unfortunately, there is only a limited amount of literature that deals with this use of the stance marker. The main chunk of literature deals mostly with the grammaticalisation and the chronological changes in the use of the suffix –ly (i.e. fair/fairly) (Nevalainen and Rissanen 2002, Nevalainen 2004). From a cross-cultural point of view, the concept of ‘fairness’ as a cultural value has also been discussed (Wierzbicka 2006, p. 141-167). However, the use of *fair* as a booster appears to be almost undocumented. The Oxford English Dictionary lists this possible use of *fair* as a ‘submodifier’ with the following example: ‘She’ll be fair delighted to see you’. The only other relevant references to *fair* were entries of the use of *fair* as a synonym of ‘very’ on websites dealing with
Irish slang. The website users placed the use of *fair* as a booster within the Mid-West region (Tipperary, Offaly, Limerick, and Kilkenny) as well as Donegal in the north (Slang.ie 2012). In the LCIE corpus (Farr and O’Keeffe 2004), there are about a dozen examples of a similar use of *fair*. It is used to modify in expressions of quantity (e.g. ‘a fair number of separated people’, ‘a fair few theses’ or ‘(to have) a fair bit of education’) as well as in conjunction with evaluative and other adjectives (e.g. ‘fair handy’, ‘fair sore’ or ‘fair shitty’). Similarly, Hickey (2002, p. 27 & 203) uses *fair* to modify quantity expressions, e.g. ‘fair portion (of national pride)’ and ‘fair number (of letters)’. However, what makes some of the examples perhaps even more interesting is the collocation of *fair* with adjectives of a pejorative character.

The difference between the meanings of *fairly* and *fair* is also worth discussing. *Fairly*, on a scale of emphasis, scores below *fair*; it could be compared to ‘pretty’ or ‘quite’. However, *fair*, in the examples from the role-plays, corresponds to ‘really’ or ‘very’. The upgrading function of *fair* also entails a different type of facework when compared to *fairly*. While minimisers and hedges, such as ‘pretty’ or ‘quite’, protect the speaker’s face by minimising the commitment to the statements (opinions), the use of *fair* discovered here is to do quite the opposite – to emphasise the opinion and exaggerate the attributive adjective. From a politeness point of view, this can pose a threat to the speakers’ face, since their strong, unmitigated feelings are being exposed. Also, the emphasised opinion can be seen as an imposition from the interlocutor’s point of view. Comparably, the use of *fairly*, as presented in the example below, occurs in a more mitigated discourse.


```
<Jacek> I don’t know. I just think it was fairly predictable. I didn’t like the movie that much. Everyone is so hyped up about it, it’s just blah <{shrugging shoulders}> movie.
```

There is another important issue worth mentioning regarding the use of *fair* in the context of the present research – the words fair, unfair and fairness do not have their translatable equivalents in the Polish language (cf. Wierzbicka 2006). Therefore, for instance, the terms ‘fair’ and ‘fair play’ are used as direct borrowings from English, maintaining their original spelling and approximate pronunciation. The use of *fair* as a booster discussed here is quite distant to the more common use of *fair* as a synonym of ‘just’ or ‘reasonable’ – the one borrowed into Polish. Consequently, the lack of an
exact semantic equivalent of the notion of ‘fairness’ in Polish culture could make the use of *fair* as a booster in English even more distant to many Polish people communicating in English in Ireland. Therefore, the conceptual distance between the different meanings of *fair* and an added linguistic distance between Polish and English could mean that the likelihood that the Polish speakers will acquire the IrE boosting use of *fair* is rather limited.

### 6.4. Discussion

Exchanges of opinions have been compared to a battlefield, where people engaging in such activity are under constant fire of arguments, counter-opinions, and evidence (Horvath and Eggins 1995, p. 44). It appears, however, that it is often not a bloody battle, but rather a staged performance of a battle, where real feelings hide behind the faces of actors on the stage. It could also be compared to a modern-day political battle, where one chooses words cautiously, avoiding expressing any strong commitments. Moreover, what speakers do when they see an approaching disagreement is defer their reaction, and when a disagreement is unavoidable, they seek some point to agree on, even if the interlocutors disagree on more general terms. The battle of opinions has lost its bloody character; it is important to acknowledge one’s point before stating our own, present two sides of a coin. It is, in a sense, the postmodern heritage of the lack of absolute truth reflected in this speech act, where nobody and everybody can be right at the same time.

What kind of facework does this sort of politeness entail? Essentially, two-types: on the one hand, it means protecting one’s own and respecting another’s autonomy, and on the other hand, trying to reach out and understand the interlocutor. Strategies such as the use of hedging, deferring disagreement, and acknowledging one’s view before stating their own all point toward the respect for the interlocutor’s right to their own opinion. Furthermore, hedging seems to be the paramount element of this activity. While hedges protect a speaker’s face by allowing the negotiation of meaning further into the conversations, they are also a symbol of respect for the interlocutor’s views and not forcing a strong opinion on the other person. In terms of positive facework, the negotiation involved in searching for a point to agree on highlights the need to part on good terms after the conversation. Presenting two sides of an argument,
acknowledging each other’s points, and seeking evidence are some of the positive face strategies used in such speech events.

Apart from the facework present in exchanges of opinions, an important phenomenon in relation to this speech act is their affective function, especially visible in exchanges where speakers agree (see also Section 5.2.4). Previous analyses of opinions focused on the sort of ping-pong match of evidence and counter-evidence being put forward, accepted, and/or rejected in the discourse (cf. Horvath and Eggins 1995). However, what fails to be addressed is the ping-pong of exchanges where evidence is brought forward, accepted, expanded and the conversation develops into a deeper dialogue. The exchange of agreeing opinions does not finish after the initiating one has been accepted. In fact, such exchanges can generate texts longer than those where speakers disagree. Moreover, what is of more importance is the facework in such conversations; the positive-face enhancing, text-generating facework demonstrates the social functions of language. Logically, after interlocutors agreed on a certain point, there is no need to discuss the issue further. However, data in this study suggests that agreeing opinions allow speakers to bring a number of points to the fore to illustrate their idea fully, to support the other’s views and expand them. In terms of Irish politeness, the characteristics of hospitality and generosity are demonstrated in such exchanges of agreeing opinions (Kallen 2005). Additionally, it is important to remember that exchanges of opinions are acts in which speakers form their viewpoints by discussing them with others. Thus, when talking to someone who thinks along the same lines as us, we can deepen our understanding of the issue or change our opinion, be it completely or just a little.

On the whole, the politeness strategies employed in expressing opinions in the role-plays could be summarised as:

1. Use of hedging, hints and rhetorical questions to express opinions.
2. ‘Yes, but’ formulas presenting two sides of an argument and searching for a point to agree on.
3. Minimising disagreement: deferring reaction, use of hesitation and hedged disagreements.
4. Use of mocking to minimise disagreement.
The differences between PL and IE strategies were identified as the following:

1. The use of discourse marker *sure* and booster *fair* are typically Irish (in line with previous studies, e.g. Todd 1989, Amador-Moreno 2005).

2. Opinion as a question, e.g. *‘Don’t you think it’s quite important?’*, is an almost exclusively Polish strategy.

3. Irish understatement signalled in the higher use of token *bit* in the IE data.

The implications of these differences are manifold. Starting with the beginning of the exchange, the Polish participants’ way of presenting opinions can be interpreted as upfront and face threatening, almost like putting a gun to the interlocutor’s head. In English, a response to *‘Don’t you think it’s quite important?’* would probably begin with a softening device such as *well* or *actually*, if someone’s opinion differed to the one stated. Without the softening devices, the disagreement could be compared to a counter-attack to the original ‘opinion as a question’ by firing back at the speaker. Less frequent use of this strategy in the IE data suggests that it is a dispreferred way of expressing opinions in Irish English. Moreover, Polish opinions are believed to be expressed more dogmatically, without a strong emphasis on the subjectivity of the claims of the speaker or concern for the hearer. The use of *‘Don’t you think x?’* is an example of this preference among the Polish participants. The speaker’s position is quite strong in uttering those words, suggesting they are right and that the hearer should see that he or she is wrong. This contrasts with the Irish respondents’ preference for enquiring about someone else’s opinion by giving the interlocutor a chance to formulate their opinion and, at the same time, protect one’s own face by not offering their opinion first. The different face needs that are behind those preferences can potentially lead to the misinterpretation of each other’s intentions in exchanges of opinions in Irish-Polish intercultural contexts.

One of the most important face-saving strategies present throughout the PL and IE data was the use of hedging and hesitation. The presence of hedging is even more important in exchanges of opinions than other speech acts, since the message of the opinion should be clearer than that of off-record suggestions for instance. The use of pre-posed supportive moves was rather limited (see Section 5.1), hence the dependence on hedging to minimise the potential face threat. While the Polish participants used hedges and hesitation similarly to their Irish counterparts, some differences emerged in
the data. The higher use of the token *bit* in the IE data also seems to reflect the preference for understatement among English-speaking cultures. Preference for overstatement rather than minimisation in the PL data may suggest a transfer from the Polish language since Polish have been told to favour emphasis over minimisation (Wierzbicka 1985). The use of emphasis in expressing opinions is a dispreferred strategy, signalling an overall tendency to minimise one’s commitment to assertions as a face-saving strategy in English. Polish culture is believed to dislike ‘beating round the bush’, thus, the preference for a full involvement in the opinions, using emphasis more often than minimisation. These conflicting preferences in the two cultures investigated can result in Poles being perceived as boasters and their counterparts as too detached.

In describing the politeness behaviour in exchanges of opinions in Ireland, the use of a typically Irish discourse marker became a paramount part of the discussion. From a politeness point of view, *sure* signals the need for agreement which is the favoured resolution move in this speech act. The scarcity of the discourse marker *sure* in the PL data shows that it has not entered in the PL participants’ English repertoire. Without the opportunities for minimising disagreement which *sure* offers, Polish speakers communicating with Irish interlocutors may be at a disadvantage. In communication, minimal aspects, such as the use of face-enhancing discourse markers, can influence how a speaker is perceived by the interlocutor. Lack of tokens which minimise disagreement may result in Polish speakers being perceived as uncooperative and confrontational.

The use of ‘yes, but’ pattern, in terms of face-saving strategies in opinions, might be as important as hedging. By acknowledging the interlocutor’s point before stating a differing viewpoint, the threat posed by a disagreement is diminished. This politeness strategy has a stronger power of minimising disagreement than the use of hedges and hesitation. That is because two actions are performed in using a ‘yes, but’ expression: (1) acceptance of the interlocutor’s opinion/evidence, (2) expression of own opinion/evidence or request for more facts, etc. The complexity of the speech act set investigated here is again visible in this strategy. The ‘yes, but’ structure could be seen as the performance of two acts in one utterance, placed within the speech act set of exchanging opinions. Since it is the preferred strategy for the juxtaposition of opinions, speakers failing to employ such strategies in such conversations risk being perceived
as impolite. The politeness value of acknowledging each other’s points in the exchanges of opinions is very high. Moreover, the position of ‘yes, but’ pattern is paramount to a successful communication of not only the propositional content of opinions, but how the speakers want to be perceived by others.

At this point it is important to point out that, syntactically, the Polish language does not foster this sort of juxtaposition of opinions. Most importantly, Polish disagreements or weak disagreements do not include the ‘yes’ part of the ‘yes, but’ pattern. In considering disagreements in opinions Dąbrowska (1991) described a wide array of strategies for disagreeing politely with an interlocutor’s point of view in Polish, but none of them corresponds to the English concessive (dis)agreement. In fact, an example of ‘disagreeing partially’ ‘Maybe you’re (you-HON) not totally right’ [Pan/i/ chyba nie do końca ma rację] (Dąbrowska 1991, p. 118) also happens to stress the interlocutor is partially ‘disagreeing’ rather than ‘agreeing’. In English, a more conventional polite partial disagreement would be rather ‘Maybe you’re right’, stressing the partial agreement between interlocutors, thus the common use of expressions such as ‘I see your point...’ before disagreeing. From an outsider’s point of view, Polish is therefore somewhat pessimistic, focusing on the negative rather than the positive side of partial (dis)agreements. This cultural value may be a fundamental difference in how Poles and Irish approach exchanges of opinions and disagreements.

Another way of dealing with upfront and disagreeing opinions from a facework point of view is the use of banter. In this strategy, the face needs of the speaker and hearer are protected since banter aims to poke fun, but at the same time it has an indirect message. The best example from the data would be the Christmas scenarios where the participants playing a Friend on a number of occasions used banter do defer disagreement. By saying to their interlocutor that they ‘are a Christmas scrooge’, the speaker can avoid disagreement and end the conversation on a friendly, funny note. There are at least two issues to consider regarding the use of mocking in the role-plays. Since banter, in general, is a tool associated with building and strengthening bonds (cf. Haugh and Culpeper 2012), it could be seen as a way for the participants to actively build a relationship with their interlocutor, in the momentary context of the role-play. Secondly, it could be seen as a reflection of their average age, where the participants felt they were interacting with ‘equals’ (four out of six role-plays were low power distance situations), thus more prone to resorting to banter to recreate the character of
naturally occurring interactions. Therefore, investigating exchanges of opinions with a wider power distance disparities could be one of future directions for research, in order to determine if banter could be linked more closely to interactions among ‘equals’ and to provide a more comprehensive classification of its use in opinions.

In relation to possible implications of the differences between Polish and Irish strategies described here, the use of humour should be noted. Banter is one of the most difficult types of humour to decode because of the direct mismatch between what is said and what is meant. Nuances such as the intonation are acquired in a second language at a later stage; thus, with speakers of lower proficiency, banter may be misunderstood as a real insult. In fact, studies in Irish secondary schools showed that many immigrant children interpreted mocking as bullying (Gilligan et al. 2010). While it is not certain that misunderstandings may arise from the use of banter, the risk of it should be acknowledged.

Other face-saving tools employed in the role-plays are those that let speakers defer their reaction. Apart from hesitation, speakers often repeat the original opinion or express doubt by saying, for instance, ‘Do you think so?’. That short lapse in time enables the person using such deferring strategies to consider the response and avoid a possible face threat.

Aside from the research questions in relation to the politeness dimension of opinions, another issue worth discussing is what can be learned about opinions in general from this research. Firstly, exchanges of opinions create an environment which allows speakers to build stronger relationships. This is evident in the role-plays where conversations extend beyond the initial agreement on the topic. Interlocutors, in fact, continue the exchange to bring more points to the fore and thus are able to continue conversing for the simple enjoyment of this interpersonal activity. In terms of politeness and facework, it is, perhaps, the negotiation of face needs by searching for a point to agree on. The search for ‘things in common’ has also been pointed out as a typical activity of a conversation-opener about acquaintances in common (Hickey 2007, p. 372). It appears then that exchanges of opinions are not a battlefield after all. Evidence in this study has shown that even when people differ in their beliefs, their viewpoints may overlap in some aspect; the speech act set studied here serves the purpose of discovering that point of overlap.
The affective side of exchanges of opinions is a crucial finding in comparison to previous studies of opinions from the perspective rhetoric or studies of political debates. The context, i.e. opinions exchanged in informal setting, preferably in dialogues, seem to have a different politeness function and characteristics. In political debates, participants focus on presenting a desirable image of themselves and provide better arguments than their opponent. Any ‘polite’ behaviour in such conversations could be classified as ‘politic’ behaviour, in Watts’ (2003) terms. Politicians usually adhere to the politic requirements of the conversation, but they are not polite in the sense of ‘going the extra mile’ to adhere to positive face needs of their interlocutor. The negative face needs are usually at play, in order to keep the conversation ‘civilised’, given the fact they are usually broadcast. However, opinions investigated in the current research have shown that the context of informal settings gives life to an entirely different politeness spectrum. While negative politeness aspects are also present in informal contexts, such exchanges have a stronger positive politeness function. Their function is to foster understanding, acceptance and ‘polite’ behaviour which are more sincere than the ‘politic behaviour’ requirements. At this point, we could mention the Irish politeness characteristics of hospitality and reciprocity. While in Ireland, exchanges of opinions may be cherished for the affective side, alongside high level of indirectness and hedges, this affective function of exchanges of opinions may be the same in Poland since it is determined by the context where this speech act takes place. However, some aspects of Polish politeness shine through opinions in features such as the use of the somewhat dogmatic Don’t you think? by the PL participants.

6.5. Conclusion

The current chapter ends the discussion of the role-play results. The findings suggest that opinions provide not only rich examples of face-saving strategies, but also face-enhancing moves. Moreover, the analysis of politeness in opinions revealed some interesting features of Irish English, such as the use of fair as a booster, and provided some evidence of Polish orientation towards positive face and Irish preference for negative face. In the next chapter, some of the most important findings, such as the Irish participants’ preference for indirectness and the Polish respondents’ forwardness in the use of ‘Don’t you think x?’, will also be explored from another avenue and using
different data. Chapter 7 will present the results of the focus groups, connecting them to the role-play results and making a strong reference to cultural values which underline the linguistic choices Polish and Irish speakers make when engaging in exchanging opinions.
Chapter 7 – Focus Groups Results

7.0. Introduction

Presenting two sides of an argument seems to be the preferred behaviour in expressing opinions, as is analysing data in pragmatics research. This has been the motivation for supplementing data from the role-plays with focus group interviews. Role-play data can be seen as one side of a coin, with the focus group data representing the other face. Some issues identified in the role-plays reappeared in the focus groups, demonstrating continuity from the sociopragmatic grounding of linguistic politeness to their pragmalinguistic realisations in the role-plays. However, the focus groups also allowed for more issues to be raised in relation to expressing opinions, extending the scope of the data gathered by role-plays, where the participants referred to their previous experiences and discussed hypothetical situations. There were three focus groups recorded in English among the Irish speakers and two focus groups conducted in Polish with the Polish speakers. The interviews had a semi-structured character and the total data gathered amounted to approximately 16,500 words.

The focus groups intended to answer the research questions dealing with the sociopragmatic aspect of expressing opinions:

RQ.2. What are the sociopragmatic characteristics of opinions in Irish English and with reference to the Irish-Polish intercultural context?

RQ.4. What sociopragmatic rules do the speakers of Irish English and Polish speakers of English follow when expressing opinions?

RQ.5. Do these strategies differ?

RQ.6. If so, in what ways?

RQ.7. What are the intercultural implications of these differences?

Therefore, the issues explored in the focus groups related to: the general rules of expressing opinions, the emotional involvement in expressing opinions, strategies used in exchanging opinions, as well as disagreeing politely. Additionally, in keeping with the tradition of verbal reporting, the thought process during the role-play task was also
investigated. This range of themes formed the base for a thematic analysis in relation to the underlining theories of speech acts and politeness, and the concept of cultural scripts (see Section 7.9), among others presented in the literature review.

The focus groups results are presented in this chapter, following the order of themes probing particular issues, comparing the IE and PL data along the argument. Firstly, the issue of cognitive processing during the role-play activity was examined (7.1). This was followed by questions relating to the ‘rules’ for expressing opinions (7.2), focusing more closely on the Irish context (7.6), and the emotional side of such exchanges – what one *feels* when disagreement in opinions occurs (7.3). After that we focus on reactions to disagreements and polite ways to disagree (7.4 & 7.5). Final discussion and conclusions are offered afterwards (7.7 & 7.8). Additionally, since this is the last chapter discussing research results, a conclusion to all three analysis Chapters (5, 6, and 7) is presented in the very last section of this chapter (7.9).

### 7.1. Cognitive processes during role-play task

The first issue explored in the focus groups was aimed at determining to what level the participants were making conscious choices in terms of adhering to politeness needs of the communication in the role-plays. Therefore, a key question asked was ‘What did you think about during the role-plays?’. As discussed in the review of research methods (Section 4.2), this sort of verbal report of the mental process involved in politeness decision-making is quite common in cross-cultural and ILP research (Cohen and Olshtain 1993; Olk 2002; Robinson 1992; Woodfield 2008). The aim of concurrent verbal protocols is to discover the processes one is engaged in, while being involved in interaction. However, the participants in the current study talked about their role-play experiences retrospectively, after a 20 minute break. This means the data gathered differs from that which can be collected *while* interacting. Moreover, the focus groups explored, for the most part, general issues of exchanging opinions instead of focusing only on the actual role-play tasks. Nevertheless, the verbal reports provided an insight into the politeness decision-making of acting out the role-plays.

The main difference between the PL and IE groups was that the Polish participants recalled focusing mostly on the language they were using. In this category they mentioned attention to grammar and tenses, avoiding mistakes, as well as ensuring the
use of formal language in situations which required it. This attention to grammatical accuracy did not present itself among the IE groups since they were interacting in their native language. The positive side of this language monitoring in the PL groups is that it was, to some extent, brought up by adhering to the politeness needs of the situations, demonstrating pragmatic awareness among the Polish participants.

The most common theme, in both groups, with reference to the thought process was focusing on the task at hand. This relates directly to the data elicitation tool chosen for the study. Role-plays present an environment where the balance between natural and ‘unnatural’ behaviour is difficult to define and to execute. This issue was raised in the focus groups, as Excerpt 7.1 demonstrates (in answering the question ‘What were you thinking about during the role-plays?’).

**Excerpt 7.1 (FG-3-IE)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Transcript</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td><strong>&lt;Paul&gt;</strong> No. How to react to the other person. It was just...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td><strong>&lt;F3W&gt;</strong> Kind of what turns are next...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td><strong>&lt;Paul&gt;</strong> You’re over-thinking it yourself...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td><strong>{various nodding}&gt;</strong> Yeah.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td><strong>&lt;Jimmy&gt;</strong> Which is not natural @@</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td><strong>&lt;Paul&gt;</strong> Exactly!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Within the theme of ‘focusing on task at hand’ three more specific aspects showed predominance. The participants focused on (1) portraying the relationship one was supposed to have with the interlocutor, and (2) appearing natural, but they were also (3) concerned with the experimental environment, for instance the presence of the camera. What is most interesting is the consideration for the interlocutor and trying to fit into the role, where participants recalled some pre-existing notions of what a boss-employee or ‘strangers meeting at a party’ relationships should be like.

In terms of politeness, participants in the IE groups mentioned, on the one hand, trying not to offend the interlocutor (in that sense, politic and polite behaviour) and being sheepish when talking to the person playing a boss. The participants playing the part of the Boss, on the other hand, mentioned consideration for the gender of the interlocutor, pointing out that the Tiger scenario was what could be considered a ‘boy’s talk’. Because exchanges of opinions can sometimes be treated as gossip, it can bear
influence how one approaches such type of talk. Gossip is a gendered discourse, stereotypically associated with women (e.g. Holmes and Mara 2004, p. 371 & 391). While there is some empirical research that suggests that women engage in gossiping and small talk more often than men (e.g. Levin and Arluke 1985), the discrepancies reported in gender difference are usually rather small (Foster 2004, p. 79). However, male and female gossip behaviour has been reported to differ in terms of its functions (e.g. individual and competitive or social and cooperative) (cf. Watson 2012, Holmes 2008, pp. 310-315) and the preferences for topics discussed. For instance, it has been argued that women’s gossiping often centres round topics of physical appearance, experiences and feelings (Holmes 2008, p. 311), while men’s talk is usually connected to discussing achievements and establishing statuses (Watson 2012, p. 7). This could also explain the reluctance to chat about golf with a female interlocutor, as mentioned by one of the anchor participants.

Finally, one of the uniquely PL features was that politeness was connected to the preservation of one’s face. Polish participants were not only concerned with being nice to the interlocutor and considering the use of formal language, but they also stressed the need to stand one’s ground defending opinions and recalled they wanted to ‘make a good impression’ in the role-plays. This seems to confirm, again, the claim that Polish culture is oriented towards positive face (Ogiermann 2009, p. 55). As evidence for this preference, we could quote Polish participants’ concern for approval from others (to make a good impression) and adhering to the positive face of others by the use of formal language, showing respect and intimacy (as opposed to respect and distance) (cf. Wierzbicka 2003, p. 105-121).

7.2. ‘Rules’ of expressing opinions

The second theme in the focus groups centred round perception of socially acceptable opinions, for example, what opinions one should keep to oneself. The data showed that some of the Polish participants approached the exchanges of opinions from an outsiders’ point of view. Thus, when it comes to politic behaviour (the minimum expected level of politeness, following Watts 2003), they said that one should not criticise other cultures. Here, they recalled talking about Christmas traditions in Ireland in one of the role-plays, saying that one should not criticise the culture of the host country because ‘we are guests’ of the culture. This attitude shows that the participants
perhaps do not identify themselves with these traditions or with Irish culture in that aspect, which, in turn, can affect their interactions with Irish people. In fact, over half of the PL participants classified their residence in Ireland as temporary, despite the fact they had spent on average four years in Ireland. Another interesting detail, with reference to the outsider-insider dichotomy, is the fact that Poles tend to live in ‘Polish only’ households (Central Statistics Office 2012a), which could greatly restrict the everyday contact with Irish people. Reduced communication in English with the host community could lead to a fragmented and limited development of pragmatic skills. However, a pragmatically competent speaker of a second language does not need to agree with the L2 culture on all aspects and adopt the L2 politeness customs. Pragmatic competence entails awareness of cultural differences and use of appropriate linguistic tools in communication, not assimilation or blending in. Nevertheless, the outsiders’ attitude among the Polish participants may be a potential hindrance in their intercultural encounters in Ireland.

Another difference between Poland and Ireland, raised in the focus groups, relates to the preferences for positive and negative face in each culture. On the one hand, PL participants considered exchanging opinions among friends and family as those where one must be careful not to hurt the interlocutor. In the IE groups, on the other hand, talking to strangers was seen as a situation requiring more tact. The Irish (and Anglo) respect for one’s autonomy is, once again, reflected in the consideration given to exchanges of opinions with strangers, while the Polish perspective focuses on positive face needs which are at play when talking to friends and family. In terms of politeness characteristics, the Irish attitude could arguably be classified as focusing on distance and autonomy and the Polish on warmth and cordiality.

With respect to topics acceptable in exchanges of opinions, the Irish data pointed to the preservation of the ‘self’, in the sense of not talking about things outside one’s area of expertise so as not to look like a fool. Also, the social functions of exchanging opinions was mentioned, where politics and religion do not make a good small talk topic because they are emotionally loaded, thus a longer, deeper exploration of the issues is necessary for the interlocutor to understand the other’s point. That is why it is important to choose topics that do not lead to further conversation when engaging in small talk. This sort of strategic approach to exchanging opinions was a recurrent theme in the IE focus groups. Some of the strategies include:
1. The preferred strategy is to enquire about an opinion before offering one (reacting to an opinion is easier as it allows to gauge the opinion).

2. Work environment is an artificial context where exchanging opinions is a form of small talk, as a result ‘easy’ topics are preferred.

3. Politics and religion should be avoided in situations where one does not have previous knowledge of the interlocutor (the surprise element is dispreferred).

The move of asking the interlocutor for their opinion, as opposed to offering one’s own opinion, as an initiation to the conversation, could be compared to a pre-request sequence in the speech act of requests. A pre-posed supportive move is meant to give the interlocutor an opportunity to ‘opt out’; for instance asking if one has plans for the evening before asking someone out. The interlocutor’s response to the request for an opinion serves this purpose of ‘going either way’.

In terms of the theme of ambiguous or two-faced opinions, yet again, the consideration given to face needs appears to be different in IE and PL groups. In the IE focus groups the participants mentioned people ‘putting their shells on’ and preferring to react to an opinion rather than to be the first one to throw the stone, thus to be exposed to disagreement. In the PL groups the consideration for not criticising others was mentioned as more prominent.

None of the groups believed there were any topics that should be off limits in exchanging opinions. Here, the context of the exchange plays the main role. Thus the overall ranking of the imposition of an opinion (the overall face threat involved) depends on the other two variables – power and distance – even if they are approached differently in each linguistic group. While, for the Irish group, speaking to a stranger can be more problematic because in the first meeting negative face needs are more prominent than the positive ones, to Polish participants responding to positive face needs of one’s friends and family are more important. In the Irish groups, if one has to have an ongoing relationship with the interlocutor, that is also a reason to approach the exchange strategically and, perhaps, avoid expressing an honest opinion for the sake of maintaining a good relationship.
7.3. Emotional involvement in disagreements

The recurrent theme of strategic approach to expressing opinions can also mean that people should not get too involved emotionally in the exchanges. In the IE groups, previous knowledge of the interlocutor (and expectations of how the conversation might develop) determined, to some extent, how one felt about disagreement of opinions. Thus, arguments that ‘lead to nowhere’ are a ‘waste of energy’, and negative feelings such as annoyance or frustration can be suppressed thanks to this strategic approach. Early assessment of the type of person, topic and context, where the exchange of opinions takes place, can allow us to not get involved emotionally in the conversation and stay neutral by withholding one’s real opinion.

The theme of curiosity, openness and learning from one another was also present in both linguistic groups. Interestingly, however, to the Polish participants, the feelings of curiosity and wanting to find out more about the opinion from the interlocutor was apparently driven by the need to protect one’s own opinion. In the PL group, in general, the theme of comparing arguments between the interlocutors was very present. There seemed to be a more rational, rather than an emotional, approach to an opinion in the PL groups. The importance of knowledge was stressed more than that of the belief on which opinions are based. In the IE groups, the importance of empathising with the interlocutor was mentioned. Moreover, the Irish participants believed different opinions are acceptable as long as one does not offend anyone. Also, the feelings a disagreement might provoke depend on the emotional involvement in the topic under discussion; when someone questions one’s area of expertise it may give rise to negative feelings. In the PL groups, in comparison, the use of ‘stupid arguments’ was pointed out as a reason for ‘getting angry’, showing again the apparent importance of facts over beliefs and emotions among the Polish participants.

7.4. Reactions to disagreement

Approaching exchanges of opinions from a strategic point of view was one of the most recurrent themes in the IE focus groups. When no consensus is possible, it is better not to engage in a conversation.
In terms of differences between themes raised while talking about reactions to disagreement, yet again, the IE groups mentioned emotional involvement in the topic, while the PL groups focused on knowledge instead. The Irish participants mentioned, for instance, the importance of beliefs and folklore in shaping one’s opinions (as opposed to facts). In contrast, among Polish participants, reactions to disagreement were discussed in relation to determining the believability of the arguments presented by the interlocutor. The key words in the PL groups were ‘argumenty’ [points], ‘zargumentować’ [to reason] and ‘wiedza’ [knowledge].

Another common theme to both groups was the focus on the interlocutor and putting oneself in their position. However, in the IE groups, again, it had a stronger emotional dimension, stressing a conciliatory approach to the interaction. The relationship between the interlocutors was stressed as more important than being right or wrong. However, in the PL group, putting oneself in the interlocutors’ place had the aim of understanding their opinion to prepare a better counter-attack rather than empathising with them.

The most obvious difference, emerging from the above summary, is between understanding one’s emotions and understanding one’s opinion by analysing their arguments. This difference appears to reflect the discrepancies described in previous studies of cultures according to uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede 1980, 1984). Thus, to the Polish participants who come from a culture believed to have a lower acceptance for uncertainty, facts are of a high importance in an exchange of opinions. On the contrary, Irish culture has been regarded as one that accepts uncertainty and the attitude expressed by IE groups suggests that how one came to form a certain view appears to be less important than the opinion itself. Furthermore, the emotional value of the opinion is what validates it, not the facts. As one IE participant said, <B2>“[It’s not like you can] just develop a fact box and be able to bring it out every time. [...] You have to take every person’s true position into account” (FG-2-IE/317).

7.5. Agreeing to disagree

In terms of solving disputes, the PL groups did not have much to say apart from saying that everyone has a right to their own opinion. However, throughout the data, it emerged that compromising is linked to different attitudes in the two nations
investigated. Agreeing to disagree among the IE groups was seen as ‘reaching’ some sort of a middle ground, a positive result of a strategic milieu. However, among the Polish participants, it meant that nobody surrendered, that everyone stood by their opinion and that the other person did not convince the interlocutor to their viewpoint, e.g. <Janek> “... no dobrze to jest twój punkt myślenia, to jest mój i zostajemy przy swoim, no nie przekonłeś mnie i tyle” [“... okay, that’s your point of view, this is mine and we agree to differ, you just didn’t convince me and that’s it”] (FG-1-PL/210-217).

The use of arguments and a perlocutionary force of convincing the interlocutor is what seems to differentiate PL groups’ attitude towards compromising from the Irish participants’ view of it. Moreover, the reason why Polish respondents pay significant amount of attention to presenting arguments plays an important part in the discussion section of this chapter (7.9).

Agreeing to disagree is another example of the strategic approach of exchanging opinions. Additionally, agreeing to disagree can also be seen as a strategy used to preserve a relationship, i.e. being right is not as important as maintaining the ongoing relationship. This principle does not seem to always apply in the Polish context, as one anecdote recalled during the interviews suggests, where family members sulk for days after an exchange of differing political ideas. Also, an interesting theme which emerged in the Irish groups was that mocking is sometimes used in situations where no compromise seems viable and even as a recurrent joke about a stubborn and opinionated person.

Another disagreement-minimising strategy mentioned in the IE groups is the use of ‘I don’t know’ as a way of not saying exactly what one thinks, but also mildly suggesting that the interlocutor does not know the topic well either (see excerpt below). Conversely, research suggests that the most commonly used pragmatic marker in the cluster of the verb know is in IrE is you know (cf. Kallen and Kirk 2012, p.113). In fact, the speaker expressing his opinion about the use of ‘I don’t know’ in opinions uses you know twice during his turn. Consequently, while the conscious choice to employ the expression ‘I don’t know’ in opinions may minimise the possible face threat (and maximise cooperation), the less conscious use of pragmatic marker you know also seems to reinforce the mitigation. However, both forms of the verb to know function as pragmatic markers, relating to the illocutionary core of the argument as opposed to the conventional meaning of one’s actual knowledge.
Excerpt 7.2 (FG-2-IE)

<BR2> I think my general response is, if something goes on for a while, like, and I can hear myself saying it. I kind of look at them and I smile and I go {<spreading arms giving up>} I don’t know man, you know. That’s- that’s.. it’s I DON’T KNOW. You know, I'm not trying to say that I know the answer. But I’m trying to plant the seed that you mightn’t know either.

7.6. Expressing opinions in Ireland

The two main themes that emerged in both the IE and PL groups as a typically Irish way of expressing opinions were the use of strategic approach and, in a sense, being ‘politically correct’, which allows speakers to be ambiguous when expressing their point of view. This means that a person can assess the situation (especially if they are not the first person to offer the opinion) and ‘go either way’. This strategic approach is also seen in ‘active listening’ and acknowledging the other person’s input with the use of formulaic expressions such as ‘I see what you mean’; a strategy acknowledged and commended in one of the PL focus groups:

Excerpt 7.3 (FG-2-PL)

<Jurek> Ale Irlandczycy... no ale oni tak fajnie bo coś im powiesz i oni na przykład się z tobą nie zgadzają to... Oh I see where you’re coming from, BUT! I wprowadzają swój argument. I później ja mówię no zgadzam się z tym punktem ale nie z tym i tak... no nie zgodziśmy się, no mówi się trudno. Może zgadzimy się następnym razem. Nie sądzę żeby to było coś wielkiego.

[But the Irish... it’s nice because if you tell them something and they for example do not agree with you then.... ‘Oh I see where you’re coming from, BUT!’ and they introduce their argument. And then I say that I agree with this point, but not with that one and so... well, we won’t agree, then tough. Maybe we’ll agree next time. I don’t think it’s a big deal.]

The IE groups also mentioned, explicitly, that in Ireland people expect hedging and indirectness to maintain the ambiguity and neutrality of opinions. Some participants assigned this attitude to the idea of a colonial master22 where “you do your work for them and it’s yes sir, yes sir, and then talking behind their back... what a...” (FG-2-IE/391-397). Others mentioned political correctness where there is a “strong move

towards being completely above board on everything” (FG-2-IE/383-388). This results in people being almost afraid of expressing their opinions and thus the need for vagueness. As one participant observed, “the amount of times yes and no would be put in the same sentence to correlate the same point by an Irish person would be massive” (FG-2-IE/423-426). The reluctance to express real opinions is also reflected in IrE in examples such as the use of the verb ‘doubt’, which, due to semantic shift, actually means to ‘strongly believe’ in Irish English (Todd 1989, p. 34-35 & 40; McArthur 2005). These types of semantic discrepancies between varieties of English can be a source of trouble for those who are unaware of them. However, the example of the verb ‘doubt’ may also be just the tip of the iceberg when one considers the Irish fondness of indirectness. In fact, a short quote from one of the IE focus groups summarises quite well the opaque and ‘twisted’ ways of speaking in Ireland.

**Excerpt 7.4 (FG-2-IE)**

445  
446  
447

In fact, one of the Polish participants reflected that having asked his Irish friends what they thought about Polish people, he never got a clear-cut answer; “they were beating round the bush” (FG-2-PL/215-217) and not really saying what they thought. As a reflection, another Polish participant also concluded “that’s why maybe it’s better to be careful with the opinions” (FG-2-PL/202) because in Ireland people may prefer to speak indirectly and they would not appreciate very honest opinions. This brief conclusion is also an example of raising awareness about expressing opinions among the Polish participants because of the reflective character of the focus groups.

The themes emerging in the PL focus groups were a result of the participants comparing Polish and Irish polite behaviour. The PL groups mentioned that talking to superiors is based on different expectations and, what goes with it, different language is used. They mentioned focusing on the language they used in the role-plays with the Boss, which in Ireland requires less formal language than in Poland. Another common theme in the PL groups was the avoidance of conflicts in Ireland, where, in their opinion, people do not get too involved in discussions. It may be an echo of the tendency mentioned in the IE groups of being ‘completely overboard on everything’. Just some words used by PL participants to describe the perceived differences were
that in Ireland exchanges of opinions are more ‘civilised’ or that in Poland there is no such thing as ‘constructive criticism’. In fact, the participant used those words in English, illustrating perhaps a lack of an exact equivalent concept in Polish language and culture. Wierzbicka discussed on many occasions the errors of presuming that concepts such as ‘fairness’ or ‘intimacy’ are universal (Wierzbicka 2003, 2006). In fact, cultures within Europe differ greatly in their interpretation of such terms, even if lexical equivalents exist in the languages under study. Constructive criticism may be regarded then as one of such ‘new’, borrowed concepts in Polish culture.

While the IE focus groups failed to mention any specific topics that should be avoided in exchanges of opinions, one theme emerged in the PL data. The participants believed that talking about religion and the Catholic Church in Ireland is usually met with less hostility than in Poland, where it still seems to be a sensitive topic. However, showing a level of pragmatic awareness, the PL participants also concluded that perhaps Irish people do have opinions on such delicate topics, but that they simply choose not to talk about them. Additionally, in Ireland, exchanges of opinions seem to have a structure which allows speakers to explore even delicate topics. Strategies such as ‘not getting involved’ and acknowledging the interlocutor’s points before stating their own provide a positive environment for exchanging opinions.

7.7. Summary and conclusion

Summarising the results of the focus groups, firstly, the effect of the data collection tool, namely role-plays, cannot be ignored. Participants in both national groups focused on ‘appearing natural’, suggesting an effort on their behalf, brought about by the experimental environment. However, the consideration to behave naturally and according to the role-play description also meant that they focused on the relationship with the interlocutor they were portraying, thus the corresponding level of politeness one should employ in such situations.
One of the most recurring themes throughout the focus groups were the concerns for positive face needs in the PL focus groups and negative in the IE data. This finding confirms previous claims of tendencies for each culture to be oriented (to a greater or lesser extent) towards different face needs (cf. Ogiermann 2009, Ogiermann and Suszczyńska 2011). On the one hand, the Polish respondents were pulled towards positive face needs, as they were concerned with ‘making a good impression’ and not hurting friends or family members with controversial opinions. The Irish group, on the other hand, found talking to strangers more difficult as in Ireland people usually do not want to be imposed on. This could be linked to the use of acknowledgment tokens such as ‘I see what you mean’ to minimise the imposition of one’s disagreement or an opposing opinion; a behaviour associated with common-sense politeness in the English-speaking world.

Another significant difference between the PL and IE groups was the strategic approach to exchanges of opinions. The Polish participants said that they put themselves in the interlocutors’ place in order to better understand their opinion, and then defend their own point of view by using good arguments and reasoning. Moreover, the focus groups data suggest that Polish opinions may be more rational and therefore expected to be based on facts. Additionally, the Irish participants suggested approaching exchanges strategically, in the sense of protecting their own and other’s emotions from being crushed. That is because Irish opinions seen to have their source in beliefs rather than facts. Furthermore, emotions can be suppressed by not engaging in a conversation which will clearly lead to a disagreement.

The focus group data also appear to support the belief that compromising is seen differently in Polish and Anglo cultures (Wierzbicka 1985). Polish exchanges of opinions seem to have a stronger perlocutionary focus, thus compromising is a result of failing to convince the opponent to one’s opinion. In the Irish focus groups, this sort of attitude was absent.

Lastly, it is quite encouraging to see that the Polish participants are competent in noticing the Irish patterns of exchanging opinions. They mentioned explicitly the use of expressions acknowledging interlocutor’s contribution to the discussion (‘I see where you’re coming from...’) or the different levels of formality in Polish and Irish ways of talking to superiors.
7.8. Discussion

One of the key discrepancies between Polish and Irish opinions discovered in the focus groups was tied to the issue of differing face needs in each culture. While it was already suggested that Polish culture is oriented towards positive face needs and Irish culture towards negative, the issue may be more complicated than this simple dichotomy suggests, as further elaboration will demonstrate.

Among the many discussions regarding the concept of *face*, there is a particular vision of it, where it is divided into autonomy-face, fellowship-face and competence-face (Lim and Bowers 1991 quoted in Lim 1994, p. 211). While the autonomy-face corresponds closely to Brown and Levinson’s description of negative face, and the ‘fellowship-face’ to positive face, what is interesting is the position of ‘competence-face’. It is described as one’s need to feel their abilities are being acknowledged, also in the sense of past achievements and possible future success. ‘Competence-face’ entails qualities such as ‘wise’, ‘experienced’, ‘knowledgeable’ and ‘distinguished’ (Lim 1994, p. 211). Interestingly, in the PL focus groups, the need to feel included, feeling a part of a group, as defined in positive face needs, appears to be overshadowed by the need to have one’s opinion valued. Yet, Polish culture and language are usually categorised as favouring positive face needs, even if such statements do not reflect the complexity of politeness phenomena in a given culture or language. We could speculate then that within the general spectrum of favouring positive face strategies, Poles actually lean more closely towards favouring the ‘competence-face’. This can be seen in the need to present and have one’s knowledge (i.e. facts) recognised in an exchange of opinions. The competence face allows speakers to present their face as experienced and wise, hence the need to use facts to support opinions.

The difference in attention to facts and opinions, as well as the attitude towards entitlement to opinions between the cultures investigated here, could also be explained with the help of the concept of cultural scripts (cf. Section 2.4). The cultural scripts model, developed by Wierzbicka and Goddard (Goddard 2002; Goddard and Wierzbicka 2004) enables examining how concepts such as ‘truth’, ‘fact’, ‘argument’ or ‘opinion’ are perceived differently across cultures. Even when labelled as correspondent, some concepts and phenomena can have different emotional and psychological nuances which can be reflected in how these are approached in
communication. Cultural scripts have been developed in order to study those nuances without any presumptions about universality. Since the current study investigates exchanges of opinions, one of the most relevant scripts available in reference to English are those explaining the differences between the expressions *I think* and *I know* (in Australian English), as presented below.

“*I think*” vs. “*I know*”
when I want to say something about something
it is good to think like this:
   if I don’t know something I can’t say that I know it
   if I think something about something,
   I can say that I think like this, I can’t say that I know it
(Goddard 2003, p. 131 quoted in Mullan 2010, p. 70)

This means that in Australian culture (and probably within the Anglo cluster), the difference between a fact and an opinion is quite clear. An opinion is subjective, thus one should not express it as something certain, something they *know* but rather more subjectively, that they *think* or ‘*it seems to them that x...*’.

A study of the expression *I think* in Australian English further suggested a cultural script in relation to Australian culture and expressing opinions, which entails a whole set or ‘rules’:

   it is not good for people always to say what they think
because of this, I do not always say what I think
there are things that I do not want to say
when I say what I think about something
   I cannot say it like a thing that I know
   I cannot say it like a thing that is true
if I do, people will think something bad about me
when I say what I think about something
it is good to say something like this:
   “*I think this*
   I know that other people don’t have to think the same”
(Mullan 2010, p. 263)
Therefore, the script above explains how one should behave and what one can expect in Australian society with reference to exchanging opinions. For instance, ‘it is not good for people to always say what they think’, expressed as advice could help a person to whom Australian culture is alien. Moreover, expressing an opinion as a fact can lead to someone being perceived impolite, i.e. ‘people will think something bad about me’. The final part of the script also offers advice as to respecting others’ opinions by simply stating that ‘other people don’t have to think the same’.

The use of cultural scripts allows us to make a connection between a language and its culture. Here, the expression *I think* can be linked to existing values in Australian culture. The question is whether principles such as ‘it is not good for people to say what they think’ can be applied to all English-speaking cultures, and, most importantly, to the Irish culture. Evidence from the focus groups points to these principles, suggesting that indeed the principles also apply to the Irish context. These are presented in Table 7.1, below.

**Table 7.1 Cultural script for opinions with IE focus group data examples**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>CULTURAL SCRIPT PRINCIPLE</strong></th>
<th><strong>AUSTRALIAN ENGLISH CULTURAL SCRIPT</strong></th>
<th><strong>IE FOCUS GROUP EXAMPLE</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>it is not good for people always to say what they think</td>
<td>(FG-3-IE/100) &lt;Dave&gt; <em>But... ehm... to give an opinion at the party about other individuals you should</em> you'd probably choose to keep it to yourself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>because of this, I do not always say what I think</td>
<td>(RP-1-IE/83) &lt;SIW&gt; <em>Yeah, but like when we first went into that situation, I knew immediately that I was going to start hedging... Like, I wouldn't walk right up to a stranger and I wouldn't expect them to walk right up to me and be like 'God! This is crap', you know that kind of a way. [...]</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 3 | there are things that I do not want to say | (RP-1-IE/77)
So what sort of opinions is it better to keep to yourself?
Peter With the party you couldn't really say why the fuck did she pick this place...
R Mhm...
Peter Like, you could I suppose, but you'd appear extremely rude... especially to a stranger. |
| 4 | when I say what I think about something
I cannot say it like a thing that I know
if I do, people will think something bad about me | (RP-3-IE/115)
So what opinions do you think it's better to keep to yourself?
...
B3 Things that you don't know anything ABOUT. I know it didn't come up but I wouldn't start talking about anything I didn't know anything about 'cos then I'd seem like a fool. |
| 5 | when I say what I think about something
I cannot say it like a thing that is true
if I do, people will think something bad about me | (FG-1-IE/217)
I think if someone is always my way, my way, my way then you (would) just kind of make it a running joke about them, you know. |
| 6 | when I say what I think about something
it is good to say something like this:
“I think this
I know that other people don’t have to think the same” | (FG-2-IE/240&361)
... I mean if somebody has a genuine difference of opinion ehm... fair enough. You know, we try and ehm... empathise where they're coming from sometimes but, you know, it DEPENDS again on the- on the issue. [...] 
S2M And there's a point when in some arguments everyone is actually right but they're coming at it from a different angle. [...]
In contrast, the above scripts may not fully correspond to the Polish script for thinking, and thus expressing opinions. The cultural preference for saying ‘exactly’ what one thinks is reflected in the Polish script for expressing opinions. The fundamental difference between a fact and an opinion echoes once again in how expressing one’s point of view is approached by native speakers of English. Because opinions and facts are so epistemologically different, it is not expected that opinions should be based on facts. However, this sort of understanding may not be so clear in Polish. In fact, the importance of presenting good arguments and facts discussed by the Polish participants in the focus groups leads to the conclusion that opinions are actually meant to be based on facts. One possible interpretation of such preference is a unique script for ‘opinions based on facts’ with reference to Polish culture I propose below.

When I say I think something

I say it because I know something that is true and that I know

OR

When a person says they think something

they say it because they know something that is true and that they know

(based on Mullan 2010)

Following this scheme, Poles would approach an exchange of opinions from the principle that when ‘a person says they think something’, i.e. when they express an opinion, it is because they base their conviction on a fact. Thus, the base on which an opinion and a fact is constructed appears to be quite similar, i.e. reality, an event, a phenomenon that can be proven to have happened or to exist. This is in direct contrast with the English script for a categorical difference between a fact and an opinion, which are linear opposites of each other. However, in Polish culture, one seems to be the result of the other (opinion result of facts). In the English-speaking world, the base for an opinion is a belief, whereas ‘facts are facts’ and can be verified on grounds that opinions cannot (Wierzbicka 2006, p. 41-6). As discussed in the literature review, Szuchewycz (1983, p. 130) proposed a continuum line with a fact and an opinion placed on opposite ends and argued that the process of placing an utterance along this continuum is a result of a shared mutual belief or a negotiation of meaning. Speakers who come from different cultures and languages may not share the same belief about
what constitutes one or the other. Moreover, they may assign different value to
opinions and facts, which is an issue emerging in the discussion with reference to IE
and PL focus group data.

While some semantic scripts about opinions in Polish culture and language have been
explored, they deal mostly with the issue of expressing them honestly, for instance:

Polish – it is good to say what I think
Anglo – it is not always good to say to another person what I think
about this person
if I say it this person can feel something bad because of it

(Wierzbicka 1999, p. 272)

However, the focus group data suggest that there is a link between opinion and fact
that has a causative dimension, or even a reversed causative dimension. That is, to the
Polish participants, opinions are somehow expected to be based on facts, thus
supported by evidence.

The scripts in relation to expressing one’s opinion, with reference to Polish (and often
in comparison with Anglo cultures), have pointed out a difference in the preference for
frankness or directness. In Polish, therefore, honest opinions are expressed despite the
fact that the addressee may not like what they hear.

1. I want people to know what I think
   If I think that someone thinks something bad,
   I want to say it to this person
2. if someone says something to me
   I want to say to this person what I think about it
   if I think something bad about it,
   I want to say it to this person
3. If I think that you think something bad
   I want to say it to you
   I don’t want you to think something bad

(Wierzbicka 1994, p. 81)
Focusing on the last three lines of the script proposed by Wierzbicka, the need to ‘correct’ others (‘I don’t want you to think something bad’, i.e. wrong), points to an important difference between opinions in Polish and English-speaking cultures. This characteristic, suggested in the scripts, also reflects the Polish participants’ attitude towards perlocution and convincing the interlocutor, or correcting their point of view. The most common way to change someone’s mind is to provide evidence, which in turn will change their belief about something. This could explain the focus on presenting good arguments and trying to convince the interlocutor which emerged in the PL focus groups.

Alongside the lines of the differences between ‘knowing’ and ‘thinking’, or ‘reason’ and ‘emotion’, another disparity between Polish and Irish groups’ attitudes became apparent, namely compromising. Compromising is believed by the participants to be tied to a negative emotion in Polish culture, signalling a weakness of character, giving up and essentially losing an argument. However, it is said that in English it has more positive connotations, being seen as a result of negotiation, an objective to be reached when one’s opinions differ (Wierzbicka 1991, 2003, p. 48-9). While it is less common, compromise can have pejorative undertones in English too (Kalisz 1993, p. 114). But what is of most importance is the cultural values which guide language users in communicating, and, sometimes, compromising. What the focus groups revealed about compromising is a more rational approach to exchanges of opinions among the Polish respondents, thus often talking about presenting credible arguments in a discussion. Consequently, when they do not convince their interlocutor with the arguments presented and, subsequently, they are forced to compromise, it feels like they have failed. This attitude has also been suggested in persuasive written discourse, where Poles writing in English have been found to rely heavily on “definition, comparison and contrast, circumstance, relationship, and historical testimony” when (Carter 1986, p. 11).

In comparison, the Irish participants talked in the focus groups about taking the interlocutor’s true position into account to empathise with them and try to understand them, stressing the emotional side of expressing opinions. Therefore, when an Irish person fails to understand someone’s point of view, it is less of a lost battle because they tried their best to understand their interlocutor and not to make that person see their point. This attitude points to a sort of a paradox of cultural values, considering
previous research on Polish and Irish cultures. On the one hand, there is the Irish (and Anglo cluster’s) reluctance to express strong emotions, which is reflected in the Irish participants’ suggestion that in Ireland people ‘do not say what they really mean’, but they try to emotionally empathise with their interlocutor. It appears that feeling and believing is what makes an opinion valid. On the other hand, Polish culture allows for exposure of strong feelings, even if they are negative feelings, such as reprimanding someone in public spheres (Hoffman 1989, p. 438; Wierzbicka 1985, p. 16). However, it also pushes emotions to second plan in exchanging opinions, giving more value to rational evidence which validates opinions, as the PL focus group data suggest. It is as if the Polish mindset needed to see or hear facts in order to believe. The underlying principles also tie with the discussion regarding cultural scripts of thinking and knowing in Poland and Ireland.

On a final note regarding the Anglo script for expressing opinions, it would be impossible not to mention its connection to the suggestion to treat exchanges of opinions as a speech act set. Speech acts occur in sets when a number of acts are necessary to achieve the desired illocutionary force (Murphy and Neu 1996). In exchanges of opinions, it is, not only the expression of one’s opinion, but the additional moves within the set which ensure that the message (the intended illocutionary force) is communicated fully. Similarly, when looking at the various messages which are contained in the Anglo script for opinions, it would be impossible to achieve those communicative goals by just expressing opinions. For instance, the last line of the script reads ‘I know other people don’t have to think the same’ (Mullan 2010, p. 10). In order to communicate this message, as well as expressing one’s opinion, a number of strategies (or even speech acts) will have to be used, thus giving life to speech act sets. Therefore, it appears that the jigsaw pieces of cultural scripts and evidence from speech act sets fit together, allowing us to present a complete picture of opinions.

The last finding connects the issues discussed earlier in relation to the last research question, the implications of the differences found between PL and IE sociopragmatic strategies in expressing opinions. It is true that PL participants approached some of the role-plays from an outsider’s point of view. However, they also presented some pragmatic awareness about the differences in the use of formal language in Ireland. Moreover, they acknowledged the need to structure dialogue by acknowledging the
interlocutor’s turn before stating their own opinion. This sort of attitude points to the concept of ‘third culture’ (Kramsch 1998), which argues that speakers of a second language do not simply swap one culture for another, but negotiate an ‘in-between’ place (cf. Section 3.1.3). Similarly, the Polish participants were able to point out negative and positive aspects of expressing opinions in both countries. Additionally, they demonstrated that they can manage differences by acknowledging other people’s contributions before stating their own, or simply knowing the differences in register in the two countries (e.g. talking to a superior). They were also able to criticise some of their perceptions of the Polish ways of exchanging opinions, which shows that broadening one’s linguistic and cultural horizons also allows us to re-evaluate our own and our nation’s character.

Returning to the last research question, it is difficult to determine if the differences discussed here could suggest a risk of having a negative effect on some Polish-Irish interactions. It appears that a happy medium can be achieved. The Polish participants tended to pay more attention to the epistemological aspect of opinions, perhaps conflicting with the Irish group’s expression of entitlement to opinions based on a belief and not facts. However, they also said that one can enjoy more freedom when touching on certain topics in Ireland (e.g. the Catholic Church) and knowing their point of view will usually be acknowledged, even if it does not coincide with that of the interlocutor.

7. 9. Conclusion to results Chapters 5, 6 & 7

Having presented all of the results, a clearer picture of the speech act of expressing opinion has emerged. Many of the issues firstly discussed in reference to the structure of the speech act set echoed in the politeness discussion, and were finally confirmed in the current chapter, dealing with the results of the focus groups. The recurring phenomena will form a base for the discussion of future directions for research presented in Chapter 8. Firstly, the main findings, discussed in the three results chapters are reviewed in the order of occurrence.

Chapter 5 discovered, for instance, that the rigid categorisation of some utterances as opinions and others as evidence is not as straightforward as previous frameworks may have suggested. In fact, opinions are often supported with further opinions and not
necessarily facts. This finding suggests that a re-evaluation of the Opinion ^ Evidence sequence may be necessary. Another important issue in exchanging opinions is the necessity to use the ‘yes, but’ pattern, which ensures an orderly organisation of a conversation and is a symbol of a mutual respect between the interlocutors. Finally, looking at the structure of the speech act, the affective side of this type of talk cannot be ignored. Even exchanges of agreeing opinions, which could finish after a quick agreement, can be long-winded and garnished with overlapping and finishing each other’s sentences, thus reinforcing a bond between the speakers. In relation to differences between Polish and Irish participants’ formulae, the analysis revealed a transfer of some PL strategies in the interlanguage of the Polish participants. Here, in addition to an ‘outsiders’ attitude, Polish participants overused the question tag no? and used a rather challenging Do you not think x...? form to express their opinions.

In Chapter 6, the affective side of opinions became apparent too, demonstrating the face-enhancing character of exchanging opinions. Another recurrent theme was the politeness value of presenting two sides of a coin, therefore using the ‘yes, but’ pattern. The tendency to form opinions with the use of ‘Don’t you think x?’ in the PL data was discussed in this chapter as a potentially face-threatening strategy. So was the Polish respondents’ tendency to overstate, given the Irish participants’ face-saving preference for minimisation, exemplified by the higher use of token bit. Other important politeness strategies discussed in Chapter 6 included hedging, deferring reaction and a friendly banter. Finally, some interesting examples of Irish use of fair and sure provided a point for discussion of almost undocumented aspects of this variety of English.

The current chapter discussed the main themes which emerged in both linguistic groups with reference to the sociopragmatic dimension of exchanging opinions in the Irish context. Data gathered in the focus groups showed that Polish and Irish cultures may have different face needs and thus use different strategies in exchanging opinions. Looking back at the role-play data, it became clear that the use of ‘yes, but’ pattern and hedging was guided by the negative face needs of protecting one’s autonomy, more pronounced in the Irish data. The focus groups also confirmed previous studies which assigned different attitudes in different cultures to the act of compromising; positive in the English-speaking world, but not so much among Polish respondents. This chapter also allowed us to discover a link between the Polish participants feeling as ‘outsiders’ in Ireland and their actual demands for explanation of the Christmas rush in some of
the role-plays. Moreover, the fact that in Ireland one approaches exchanges of opinions strategically, preferring to ask for opinion and not offering one, may suggest that the use of ‘Don’t you think x?’ by the Polish participants is in fact a pragmatic failure. Finally, some important questions about the origins of the differences in attitudes towards exchanges of opinions were discussed with the help of cultural scripts. The suggestion was made that not only the ‘opinion vs. fact’ but also ‘opinion based on fact’ relationship is relevant when discussing Polish and Irish cultural scripts for opinions.

The data gathered in this research has been described and discussed in relation to the relevant theories of speech act and politeness, as well as some other discussion-stimulating theories, such as the cultural scripts. The next step is, therefore, to consider directions for future research, pointing out the limitations and strengths of the current study. This is done in the next, and final, chapter.
Chapter 8 – Conclusion

8.0. Introduction

Research in cross-cultural pragmatics has been dominated by a small number of speech acts and opinions remain rather poorly documented. This is despite the fact that opinions are one of the most common types of discourse in casual conversation (Horvath and Eggins 1995). This study aimed to address this gap by investigating exchanges of opinions in informal contexts and, therefore, to allow for their characterisation as a speech act. Additionally, the study also aimed to describe a more specific national linguistic and cultural features of Irish and Polish opinions. The dual focus on pragmatics and on intercultural communication is reflected in the research questions presented again in Table 8.1.

Table 8.1 Research questions revisited

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RQ.1.</th>
<th>What are the pragmalinguistic characteristics of opinions in Irish English and with reference to the Polish-Irish intercultural context?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RQ.2.</td>
<td>What are the sociopragmatic characteristics of opinions in Irish English and with reference to the Polish-Irish intercultural context?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ.3.</td>
<td>What sociopragmatic rules do the speakers of Irish English and Polish speakers of English follow when expressing opinions?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ.4.</td>
<td>What are the strategies employed by Polish speakers of English and by native Irish English speakers for expressing opinions?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ.5.</td>
<td>Do these strategies differ?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ.6.</td>
<td>If so, in what ways?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ.7.</td>
<td>What are the intercultural implications of these differences?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The research questions were already addressed throughout the discussions offered in the three results chapters. Consequently, the aim of the current chapter is to recapitulate the main findings and discuss their implications, as well as provide a
conclusion to the thesis. It is done so by presenting a concise summary of the main findings with reference to the three key perspectives, beginning with a viewpoint of speech act theory (8.1.1) and following with a politeness theory outlook (8.1.2). Then the sociopragmatic dimension, most relevant to the analysis carried out on the focus group data is offered (8.1.3). Later, after the summary and review of the key findings, the specific contribution to the field of pragmatics is considered (8.2). Additionally, any aspects of this research study that could have been strengthened are identified (8.3) and directions for future research are offered (8.4). Finally, the chapter presents an extended discussion of the possible pedagogical recommendations (8.5), before final remarks are made (8.6).

8.1. Summary of the findings

The summary of the research results offered in this section is organised under headings which correspond to the theoretical perspective which guided the interpretation of the data. As a reflection of the organisation of the results chapters, the findings are summarised in the light of the speech act theory (8.1.1), politeness theory (8.1.2) and the sociopragmatic perspective (8.1.3). Within each section, an attempt is made to present both macro and micro aspects. Therefore, references are made to the overall structure of opinions (over a stretch of discourse) as well as providing examples of particular lexical items.

8.1.1. Speech act perspective

Starting at the structural level, the literature review (Section 2.4.6.) suggested a schematic organisation of an opinion text as consisting of four main moves, namely Opinion ^ Reaction ^ Evidence ^ Resolution (Horvath and Eggins 1995). The analysis of the role-play data presented in Section 5.3 revealed, however, that dividing an exchange of opinions following this schema may be quite problematic since the difference between some of the moves is not as clear-cut. The data demonstrated that Opinion ^ Evidence sequence is in fact often executed as Opinion ^ Extended Opinion. This shows that the illocutionary point of opinions can be achieved by dividing it between a number of moves (or opinions, in fact) speakers employ in the speech act set. This finding also suggests that opinions should not be studied in isolation from
surrounding discourse, therefore providing a reason for moving away from data collection methods, such as DCTs, in favour of more interactive types of discourse.

Furthermore, the structure of opinions was found to be highly interactive and cooperative. For instance, the literature review with reference to opinions as a speech act did not account for the interactive group of weak, concessive (dis)agreements (e.g. Atelsek 1981). Consequently, agreements could often be overlooked in exchanges of opinions, possibly because of the general trend to focus on threat in politeness and speech act studies. However, as discussed in Section 5.3.4, agreements in exchanges of opinions can be even more text-generating than dialogues where interlocutors disagree. This fact may suggest another avenue for research, i.e. to the affective value of agreeing opinions. Bridging the gap between agreement and disagreement, the analysis of role-plays also highlighted the importance of the ‘middle ground’ expressions of acknowledging each other’s points. Such expression are even more significant when preceding disagreements, given the face-saving function of the ‘yes, but’ pattern. Another example of the interactivity of opinions was the presence of backchannels, overlapping and finishing each other’s sentences, which occurred even in role-plays where speakers were disagreeing. The use of acknowledgment tokens to (dis)agree politely could be considered as typical of exchanges of opinions in English signalling a strong attitude of cooperation.

With reference to the complexity of opinions, a suggestion has been put forward that exchanging opinions should be treated as a speech acts set, providing a rich environment for research into co-occurrence of speech acts alongside opinions within the set, such as apologies, requests (for time to talk) or mocking. Moreover, expressions such as ‘I think that...’ would stereotypically be associated with opinions. However, the constructions listed out in Table 5.2 demonstrated that opinions are often expressed using other forms, which can be interpreted as such only thanks to the surrounding discourse, hence, opinions function as a set. The presence of many additional acts such as suggestions, indirect apologies or asking for advice was also found to be an important factor to be considered when discussing politeness characteristics of the speech act under study. This is because from a politeness perspective, it helps to build an ambience, a general notion of cooperation and enhancing facework. In order to build that ambience, a variety of moves are employed, thus giving life to a speech act set.
At the utterance level, and with reference to syntactic structure of opinions, some differences between PL and IE strategies were identified. For instance, the data revealed transfer of the question tag no? by the Polish participants, which in turn, could be connected to another, typically Polish construction, namely the tendency to formulate opinions using ‘Don’t you think x?’’. Despite being indirect, this form of expressing one’s point of view was identified as the main point of possible friction, as it may be too confrontational in the Irish context. This is because ‘Don’t you think x?’ is a structure which presumes that the speaker is right and it could be compared to ‘Can’t you see (that) x...?’. The lack of such constructions in the IE data suggests that it is a transfer from Polish which may lead to speakers being perceived as impolite. Additionally, the face-threatening character of ‘Don’t you think x?’ is another example that indirectness should not be equated with politeness.

Finally, at the lexical level, the analysis of opinions identified some interesting use of pragmatic markers, specifically with reference to Irish English. The discussion offered in Section 6.3.1 examined the use of sure [ʃɪɻ] as a discourse marker and a minimising token with reference to face threats posed by disagreements. Another example of a local Irish strategy was the use of fair as an emphasis token, which can be used in expressing opinions to strengthen one’s point.

Overall, the findings regarding the speech act perspective provided evidence that opinions are a complex speech act which works as a set with other surrounding acts, and that that they are highly cooperative, evident in the presence of ‘yes, but’ expressions. Both of these findings also have their repercussions in relation to the politeness value of opinions, as is demonstrated next.

8.1.2. Politeness perspective

In relation to politeness dimension of opinions, the analysis intended to identify strategies which could be classified as face threatening, as well as those aimed at preserving and enhancing face. While face threats and their respective face-saving strategies show correspondence to the traditional approach to studying speech acts, the issue of face enhancement enabled an important contribution to pragmatics, advocating a view of communication from a more positive perspective.
The analysis offered in Section 6.1.1 identified strategies within opinions believed to be face threatening, such as: disagreements, unhedged opinions, not acknowledging interlocutor’s point, doubting someone’s point, using sarcasm to ridicule a person, ‘demanding’ an opinion and reasons for it and using challenging question tags. The threats identified in the role-plays could damage interlocutor’s positive as well as negative face. Therefore, not using acknowledgement tokens could be considered a threat towards positive face, as the person may feel they are not being accepted. Moreover, demanding an explanation rather than enquiring openly about one’s opinion, is a threat to a person’s negative face if the imposition of requesting one’s opinion is not acknowledged (e.g. by using disarmers). The list of possible threats in opinions is quite diverse, demonstrating that not only the head acts, but also the possible supportive acts can have such an effect.

Vis-à-vis the face-threatening strategies, the analysis of role-plays, presented in Section 6.1.2, allowed the identification of a number of face-saving moves. The first group of such acts included indirect, off-record opinions, which could be achieved by certain lexical devices such as hedges or hesitation, as well as more general semantic tools, such as shifting the focus to someone else (avoid talking about self). However, the majority of the face-saving moves were identified in relation to disagreements, such as deferring disagreements, using disclaimers before disagreeing, or opting for concessive disagreements using hedging and/or uncertainty. Another interesting strategy, used widely in the role-plays, was mocking and joking to minimise disagreement and the imposition of differing opinions. Finally, approaching the conversation strategically and neutrally by using, for instance, small talk was another example of the framing, supportive moves which speakers could resort to in terms of face-saving strategies. Overall, it appears that while face-saving moves were present throughout the conversations, their key function was to minimise disagreements.

Apart from face threats and their respective face-saving strategies, the role-play data presented a number of face-enhancing moves, which were discussed in Section 6.1.3. Face enhancement (Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1997) could be achieved through the use of strong agreement tokens and facilitative question tags or helping the interlocutor to find words. Additionally, strategies which have a relational character could be used such as, for example, appealing to common qualities, offering evidence when none was requested and presenting one’s own point as a request for agreement. However,
perhaps the most face-enhancing strategies identified in the role-plays were somehow removed from the actual opinion, but quite important on the interpersonal level. These included presenting positive feedback and praise or proposing a solution to the situation (getting out of the boring party, for instance). Once again, the framing moves in opinions seem to play also an important *facework* role in opinions.

The role-plays also provided more evidence for already documented orientation towards negative face needs in the Irish culture, and positive face needs among the Polish participants. These were visible in the use of directness over indirectness by the Polish speakers, in the sense of lack of preparatory moves and upfront requests for interlocutor’s opinion. In addition, Polish participants adhered to their interlocutors’ positive face. For example, in the Party scenario they often commented they were happy to be talking to someone nice at a boring party. Concerning the Irish participants, the preference for understatement was visible for example in the high use of the token *bit* (e.g. the party was a *bit* boring), which minimises the imposition of an opinion. Similarly, further evidence for the different face preferences was identified in the focus groups, discussed in the next section.

Lastly, one of the key strategies which permeated all face strategies was the use of ‘yes, but’ expressions. The acknowledgement tokens under this label can take several forms in the English language, many of which are conventionalised, thus suggesting their continuous, established and expected use in communication. From the perspective of the speech act realisation pattern, the use of ‘yes, but’ tokens is the key aspect of building an orderly, polite conversation, where each interlocutor’s voice is heard. The politeness value of such constructions is also quite clear as it allows speakers to preserve each other’s face in conversation by signalling acceptance of each other (on the relational level), despite possible difference in opinions (on the semantic level). Finally, the use of concessive (dis)agreement tokens is an aspect which is expected in the English-speaking world as it has its roots in the sociopragmatic mappings of what is acceptable and polite in opinions, as it was discovered in the focus groups, summarised next.

### 8.1.3. Sociopragmatic perspective

Exploring the sociopragmatic characteristics of opinions allowed supplementing the pragmalinguistic data of *how* people express opinions searching for reasons *why* they
use particular strategies. Therefore, it was possible to interpret some of the strategies used in role-plays by linking them to the focus groups where participants talked about their motivations for using specific forms. In discussing the focus group data in Chapter 7, the concept of cultural scripts (Goddard and Wierzbicka 2004), presented in Section 2.4 of the literature review, proved helpful in pointing towards a difference between Polish and Irish (or Anglo) scripts for expressing opinions.

Firstly, the focus groups showed some evidence regarding previous claims that there is a fundamental difference between a fact and an opinion in the English-speaking world, which may not be so clear in a Polish cultural context (cf. Wierzbicka 2006). The focus group data revealed, additionally, that the Polish participants saw opinions as quite rational, thus expecting speakers to present good arguments to support opinions in a discussion. Moreover, it was suggested that there may be a causative relationship between fact and opinion in Polish culture, where opinions are expected to be, to some extent, based on fact and, therefore, supported by evidence. Additionally, the analysis also confirmed an earlier claim that compromising can often be seen among Poles as a weakness, not a positive outcome of a discussion (Wierzbicka 1985). The Polish participants assigned a higher value to presenting good arguments in exchanging opinions, suggesting a stronger perlocutionary focus and thus reluctance to compromise.

In line with the rational attitude towards opinions, the Polish script for expressing opinions, discussed in Section 7.8, pointed towards a feeling of obligation to correct the interlocutor’s opinion, summarised as:

> If I think that you think something bad
> I want to say it to you
> I don’t want you to think something bad

(Wierzbicka 1994, p. 81)

Interpreting this principle as feeling the need to correct interlocutor’s point of view reflects the Polish orientation towards positive face. In contrast, the Anglo preference for negative face needs and respect for autonomy would probably not respond positively to having one’s point of view ‘corrected’. This difference between Polish and Irish respondents’ approaches to opinions was, therefore, identified as a possible point of friction between the two cultures.
Secondly, and as a continuation of the differences in cultural scripts, especially with reference to opinions and facts (discussed in Section 7.8), the analysis of data revealed a preference for positive face in Poland and negative face in Ireland. This preference was also supported by examples of strategies discovered in the role-plays. For instance, the Irish participants’ preference for hedging, minimisation and asking for an opinion, as opposed to presenting one first, could be tied to a notion of approaching exchanges of opinions strategically, placing one’s opinion closer to a safe middle ground. This way, Irish English speakers are able to detect possible clashes and avoid disagreements by using strategies discovered in the role-plays, such as ‘deferring reaction’ or using the ‘yes, but’ pattern. The prevailing principle in the Irish culture is that having a conversation and enjoying the relationship-building function of exchanging opinions takes over the need to be right or to convince someone to our opinion. This attitude is also addressed in the following part of the Anglo script for opinions:

I think this
I know that other people don’t have to think the same

(Mullan 2010, p. 263)

While, at first, the attitude of cooperation may appear to focus on positive face needs, it is in fact the negative face needs that guides speakers of English in opinions. The respect for the other’s autonomy would explain the use of hedges, ‘yes, but’ tokens and other strategies mentioned earlier. Conversely, the preference for positive face among the Polish participants entails an environment of sincerity and warmth, which in opinions is demonstrated as an involvement and frankness.

Thirdly, the discussion with reference to cultural scripts and the sociopragmatic side of opinions was a valuable tool in explaining the structure of the speech act set. The Anglo script for expressing opinions (cf. Table 7.1) could be interpreted as a list of tips to follow when taking part in an exchange of opinions in the English-speaking world. The structure of the script also suggests that, apart from the opinion itself, an array of points must be communicated in the set. For instance, the principle of signalling when something is a fact or an opinion would explain the use of stance markers in such conversations. Moreover, signalling that “other people don’t have to think the same” (Mullan 2010, p. 263) means that an additional clause or expression would be expected in the exchange to communicate this message to the interlocutor. Consequently,
fulfilling the principles of a culturally appropriate opinion following the Anglo script gives life to the speech act set and suggests that opinions do not function as a one-sentence speech act.

### 8.2. Implications and contribution

As indicated in the research questions, this study explored the speech act of opinions attending to their sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic aspects. This section aims to discuss the implications of the research findings in relation to the intercultural context of Irish-Polish communication, and to present the broader contribution of this research to the field of pragmatics.

The literature review revealed that the current knowledge into opinions as a speech act was minimal in comparison to other speech acts. Attempting to fill in the apparent gap, this research explored the pragmalinguistic structure of opinions in face-to-face dialogues and has found that opinions should in fact be treated as a speech act set. The complexity of opinions has already been noted by Szuchewycz (1983), who claimed that they are a composit [sic] speech act, which consists of many illocutionary acts and additional framing features. Similarly, the findings discussed in Chapter 5 suggest that the illocutionary point of opinions is usually transmitted over a stretch of discourse. For instance, the difficulty in classifying utterances as either Opinion or Evidence within the set also suggests that both moves are equally important in carrying the illocutionary point of the act and that they function in tandem. The negotiation of meaning between interlocutors was achieved by using ‘yes, but’ expressions, hesitation, deferring reaction and hedging. These features allowed the speakers to negotiate and place their opinions near a conceptual middle ground, thus avoiding strong disagreements. Additionally, since the need to avoid disagreements is believed to be guided by the phenomenon of politeness, the analysis presented in Chapter 6 examined opinions also from that perspective. Consequently, it was suggested that opinions are a speech act which entails not only face-saving strategies in order to minimise threats posed by potential disagreements, but that it also encourages face-enhancing moves. This finding, in turn, suggests that opinions are a speech act present in everyday communication, which apart from its functional value of speaking one’s mind, also acts as a tool for fostering relationships.
With reference to the sociopragmatic side of opinions, it was the contrastive analysis of Polish and Irish focus groups which shed most light on this aspect. The discussion of cultural scripts, with reference to Polish and Irish cultures and opinions offered in Section 7.8, confirmed that Irish English opinions are in line with previous classifications in the Anglo cluster offered by Goddard (2003), Wierzbicka (1994, 1999) and Mullan (2010) with reference to English language. The original contribution of this study was the addition of another dimension to the Polish script for opinions, namely, that in Polish culture opinions may be (to some extent) expected to be based on facts, as proposed below:

When I say I think something
I say it because I know something that is true and that I know

OR

When a person says they think something
they say it because they know something that is true and that they know

(based on Mullan 2010)

This suggestion was based on the recurrent theme in the PL focus groups, which stressed the importance of presenting good arguments in an exchange of opinions, indicating a stronger perlocutionary, fact-searching approach and, consequently, a negative attitude towards compromising.

Despite this study’s departure from an acquisitional perspective, the pedagogical implications of the results discussed here should not be omitted and they are presented in more detail in Section 8.5 of this chapter. In reference to the cultures studied, some important pointers as regards improving the Irish-Polish relations could be suggested. Since Polish pragmatics and politeness have been signalled to favour emphasis and overstatements, special attention to hedges and minimisation should be given in teaching English to Poles (in Ireland). Moreover, this research showed that even in exchanges of differing opinions, tokens of acknowledging each other’s points are present. Therefore, explicit instruction into expressions of the ‘yes, but’ kind would benefit Polish learners of English. On courses of a more advanced level, some interesting local Irish strategies could be explored, for instance the use of *fair* as a booster or the wide use of the stance marker *sure*. From a more sociopragmatic perspective, discussions of the difference in the emphasis that is given to arguments
used to support opinions in Ireland and Poland would help learners of English understand where their Irish counterparts ‘are coming from’. Finally, pointing out the difference between ‘I don’t think x...’ and ‘Don’t you think x?’ would help Polish speakers of English avoid being perceived as impolite.

In relation to the Irish-Polish dialogue, some pointers can also be made regarding raising awareness amongst the Irish population in the light of the current findings. Firstly, getting to know oneself is the first step to the better understanding of others. Therefore, it would be beneficial to include instruction about some pragmatic and politeness aspects of IrE across English language classrooms in Ireland (at various educational levels) or as part of extracurricular activities. One example of such awareness-raising tasks would be analysing structures of concessive disagreements in dialogues and identifying indirectness and hedging in opinions in IrE. These could be further contrasted with examples of exchanges of opinions from other cultures and languages to promote better understanding of other people’s ways of expressing different points of view and taking a critical look at one’s own language and culture. The proposed activities could be implemented under nationwide schemes such as the ‘Intercultural Education Strategy’ promoted by the Department of Education (2010), as well as other social inclusion and immigrant integration initiatives.

The last contribution to this study would draw attention to are the findings with reference to Irish English. In line with previous studies, as discussed in Section 3.2.1.2, hedging and indirectness were found to be common strategies in attending to face needs of the interlocutor in opinions. Moreover, specific discourse features such as the discourse marker sure, associated with IrE, was found to be a recurring feature in IE data, but not in the PL data. Furthermore, Section 6.3.2. provided a discussion of the use of fair as a modifying adverb – an interesting but virtually undocumented feature of IrE. On a more abstract level, the application of the cultural scripts to the IE focus groups data, (cf. Table 7.1) suggested that the script described with reference to Australian English also applies to Irish English. While some features discovered in this research may be very specific to the Irish setting, other preferences may be similar in other varieties of English. Further comparative studies could determine the level of uniformity within world Englishes with reference to both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic issues. Additional suggestions of further research are discussed in Sections 8.4. and 8.5, after considering any limitations in this study in the next section.
8.3. Limitations

Having presented the contributions of the current study to the field of pragmatics, it is important to acknowledge that this research could have been strengthened in a number of aspects. The observations discussed in this section refer to its scale, the methods of data collections, and the issue of Polish participants’ proficiency.

Firstly, we should acknowledge that using a larger number or participants would have allowed to make stronger generalisations. Investigating politeness is quite complicated because any broad claims to national characteristics, even in large-scale studies are met with a warning that such conclusions are conditioned by the context they derive from. The conviction of the researcher is not enough to make strong claims, making the job of investigating politeness also quite restraining. However, in compromising scale for focus, research gains integrity and data of similar size to the corpus gathered in the current study (43,500 words) has been reported in the field of discourse analysis in Ireland. For instance, a corpus of 40,000 words of English Language Teacher’s meetings in different settings was used to discover important characteristics of a particularly specialised type of talk (Vaughan 2009). Similarly, Palma Fahey (2005) used a 47,000 words corpus comparing the use of apologies in Irish and Chilean soap operas. The small size of the corpus is, therefore, a justifiable drawback when compared to the specialised data that can be obtained from small corpora. Furthermore, when comparing participant numbers, samples of about 30 participants in each linguistic group was used in contrasting ambiguous invitations between Polish learners of English and NS of American variety of English (Rakowicz 2009). Ultimately, the number of participants in the present study made the data collection and processing manageable, and it yielded sufficient amount of data for analysis. Nevertheless, future explorations in similar studies should aim for larger samples, in accordance with research aims and if the conditions allow it. In addition, it is important to acknowledge that gathering a corresponding corpus of Polish-Polish interactions would have added further value to the contrastive aspect of comparing speech act behaviour between different cultures. Therefore, it is recommended that future studies should aim to triangulate data to address both cross-cultural as well as intercultural paradigms in speech act research.
Secondly, using role-plays to collect data has its advantages and disadvantages. Among the latter, there is the lack of consequentiality and the fact that the situational contexts in the current study were fictitious. As a consequence, some of the participants commented explicitly on the fact that they were ‘acting’. Also, the role of the Boss proved to be challenging to some anchor participants who intended to be ‘not so nice’, which was their understanding of exhibiting power over an employee. This effect could be addressed by limiting the context of interactions to one particular P, D, I setting, for instance, exchanges among strangers or friends of equal status (where no alien role is assigned). Another way to ‘authenticate’ the power-distance relations could be by recruiting participants from a more diverse age group. Additionally, some role-plays were eliminated from the analysis because the participants misunderstood or paid insufficient attention to the prompts. Addressing those shortcomings by focusing on one, salient setting could provide less controlled if not naturally occurring data.

Finally, because the focus of this research was not acquisitional, the issue of proficiency of the Polish participants was not exploited as a decisive variable in analysing the data. It would be erroneous, however, not to acknowledge the influence of proficiency on pragmatic performance in a second language. In contrast, focusing on the politeness dimension of opinions, the data suggested that appropriate sociopragmatic knowledge can work despite proficiency or accuracy issues, when considering Example 8.1, for instance.

**Example 8.1 - NNSs’ use of language, scenario: Film (RP-31-PL)**

```
<SS2M> They weren't trying to make them appeal or anything like that. I thought it was interesting the way they're trying to make an ENTIRE film around characters that are completely unsympathetic.

<Asia> I- actually it's a good point that you made it. I- I haven't seen that like. I was just like looking at the- from the perspective of the- d'you know the audience that already have some previous knowledge about the creators of Facebook. But then I- I wasn't really analysing the movie itself. I was like d'you know... okay that's following the story I already know so it's not that interesting as it could have been.
```

Even though the above example shows that the Polish participant had issues with the actual wording of the acknowledgment token, from a politeness point of view, she fulfilled the facework requirement of preceding a disagreement with acknowledging the interlocutor’s point. This is not to say that in some situations the accuracy
problems could also result in pragmatic failure. However, because the Polish participants were mostly advanced speakers of English and had spent on average four years in Ireland, their proficiency was not found to play a significant part in the analysis of the data. Nevertheless, the relationship between use of particular strategies in opinions and L2 proficiency (with participants of various levels) could be an avenue for future research, as well as other suggestions for further research which are offered in the next section.

8.4. Suggestions for future research

The conclusions and boundaries of this study open a number of avenues for future research. Suggestions can be made regarding extending or tightening the scope, using alternative analytical frameworks, as well as focusing on investigating opinions in the Polish language. Additionally, pedagogical suggestions with reference to teaching pragmatics are discussed in Section 8.5.

In the first place, it is important to mention the value of using spoken data in researching politeness. Role-plays provided rich material for analysis in the present study. However, while the interactions recorded in the role-plays allowed for a balanced comparison between the two linguistic groups, future studies should aim to use naturally occurring data and aiming for a larger sample. The everyday contact between Polish and Irish communities in Ireland should provide an ample area for investigation. Taking this into account, a consideration should be given to the best contexts to be investigated, since the attempt to create a role-play with power inequality (i.e. Holidays scenario) proved to be somewhat problematic. Additionally, naturally occurring spoken data would provide units of analysis such as intonation, used as the main element of analysis investigating differences in opinions between French and Australian English, for instance (Mullan 2010). Collecting naturally occurring data would also provide a richer data for corpus analysis. In terms of investigating opinions in the Irish English context, the use of existing corpora is recommendable, especially in contrasting Irish strategies with large, international corpora. As stressed by Schneider (2012b), research within variational linguistics, sociolinguistic and dialectology has paid insufficient attention to pragmatics, suggesting further research into pragmatics of IrE is still needed. In relation to the use of role-plays and focus groups, while the latter complemented well the data gathered in
the former, further triangulation in terms of metapragmatic evaluation could have provided another interesting perspective to the study. Future investigations could involve testing informants’ reactions to opinions presented in video or a script format. Additionally, explorations of differences between opinions in written and oral communications would also be a good avenue for research.

Another suggestion for future research refers to the application of alternative analytical frameworks. The fields of Interactional Sociolinguistics or Conversational Analysis could provide an opportunity to analyse opinions from a structural-sequential perspective. Moreover, using naturally occurring passages of exchanges of opinions would enable analysing, for example, the relationship between turns and describing rules of preference organisation. With reference to theoretical perspective on speech acts, attention should be given to the concept of ‘subjectivity frame’ and speech acts which operate on a different level of abstraction within their categories. Therefore, overlapping categories of assertives and expressives, such as opinions, hoping and wishing, could be further examined in reference to psychological states of speakers, as well as the perception of such acts by hearers. Furthermore, the natural semantic metalanguage and concept of cultural scripts could enrich the study of opinions by providing an unbiased, intercultural clarity in describing and analysing opinions across languages and cultures. Further explications of the speech act set, and perhaps extending description to a variety of contexts and modes, could provide an extensive classification of opinions. The value of non-verbal cues in communication, available in visually-recorded data, could also provide a rich area for analysis of opinions.

Departing from the tradition of contrastive analysis, research into opinions in Polish would be another important area of investigation. This study focused on opinions expressed in English, given the Irish sociolinguistic context and the Polish presence in Ireland. While in this research the Polish participants’ attitude towards expressing opinions was explored, it did not describe how opinions are expressed in the Polish language. An investigation of opinions in Polish would fulfil the other part of the pragmalinguistic-sociopragmatic dichotomy, started in this study. Another way to explore further the socio-political landscape of Polish migration to Ireland would be longitudinal studies of migrants’ pragmatic skills, answering questions whether or not pragmatic competence is something that deteriorates once the contact with the host community is lost or whether it reactivates automatically once it is regained. For
instance, recent research suggests that returning Poles may have problems readjusting back to Polish reality (cf. White 2011) and many (over one third) consider re-emigration (Frelak and Bogulska 2008, p. 15). This, in turn, would open another line of enquiry regarding the negotiation of pragmatic skills and preferences of individual migrants. Finally, just as any coin has two sides, the exploration of host community’s perception of the influence of immigration on the pragmatic landscape in Ireland should provide the necessary voice to complement some of the issues already discussed in this thesis.

8.5. Pedagogical recommendations

Apart from the few areas for improving Polish speakers’ pragmatic skills mentioned in the implications section (8.2), future studies could extend this scope greatly. To name but a few, future research into opinions within ILP could focus on developing teaching materials, testing instructional methods in longitudinal studies, investigating comprehension and production of opinions at various proficiency levels, or contrasting how opinions are executed in FL and SL contexts. Furthermore, in terms of teaching pragmatic skills with reference to opinions, just as this research suggested a wide array of strategies are used in the speech act set, each individual aspect could be seen as an important unit of pragmatic instruction. Therefore, language learners could focus on analysing the back-and-forth sequencing of opinions, learn how to disagree politely or how to react to controversial opinions (e.g. No way! Really?). Additionally, it would be beneficial for learners to know how to use the different kinds of ‘yes, but’ expressions and hedges, as well as discovering what some cultures may consider taboo topics and thus avoid talking about them. In order to place these recommendations within the broader research area of interlanguage pragmatics, the most relevant approaches and conclusions regarding pragmatic instruction are offered in the remainder of this section.

Within language teaching, the importance of teaching pragmatics is still sometimes underestimated and sometimes simply misunderstood. Discovering more areas of possible pragmatic transfer and devising approaches to deal with them not only could be but should be one of the avenues for future research into opinions, since speech acts provide a “fruitful area for material development” in teaching pragmatics (Cohen and Ishihara 2012, p. 114). The growing interest in pragmatic instruction has already
devised good approaches to teaching some pragmatic aspects, also those connected to opinions. For instance, Malamed (2010) suggested strategies for teaching how to “disagree agreeably”, with exercises focusing on discovering hedges in English by finding examples of strong and weak ways of saying things, e.g. “the best/pretty good, great/not bad, delicious/not terrible, crazy/a bit odd, a genius/ pretty intelligent” (Malamed 2010, p. 212). However, pragmatically-oriented materials and approaches to teaching pragmatics have also been limited to a small number of speech acts (Cohen and Ishihara 2012) and expanding the scope of pragmatic instruction is an open arena for future research.

Among many researchers who have studied the effects of pragmatic instruction, most have found explicit instruction “in the form of metapragmatic information regarding target features” renders the best effects (Rose 2005, p. 394), while teacher-fronted Initiation-Response-Follow-up routines are unproductive for the learning of pragmatics and discourse (Kasper 2001a). Explicit instruction includes all types of tasks in which rules are explained to learners, implicit instruction, however, makes no overt reference to rules or forms (Doughty 2003, p. 265). Teaching techniques such as structured input and problem-solving tasks function effectively in developing students’ pragmatic competence, as confirmed by Takimoto’s (2007) study on the effects of instruction on the production of polite requests in a Japanese EFL context. In this, and another study, he stressed the importance of instruction including both sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic information, i.e. form and meaning (Takimoto 2006, p. 414), advocating the statement that “pragmatics is never only form” (Kasper and Rose 2002, p. 259). This ‘dual foci’ approach has also been suggested Bardovi-Harlig and Griffin (2005), who found that learners that were given a chance to repair their speech act, knew what to change (speech act, formula, content or form), but had difficulties in terms of how to change it (ibid, p. 411, emphasis original). This finding would suggest that instruction, in terms of sociocultural rules of use, and, secondly, focusing on the linguistic development would address both areas of pragmatic competence. Input-based tasks which involve pragmalinguistic-sociopragmatic connection complement each other and result in deeper processing on behalf of the learners, thus greater retention (Takimoto 2007). A similar suggestion was put forward by Usó-Juan and Martínez-Flor (2008) with reference to teaching how to mitigate requests.
Apart from the dual focus on teaching both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic aspects, it has been suggested that teaching pragmatics should offer an opportunity to explore, discuss, practise (e.g. in role-plays) and revise new forms (Usó-Juan and Martínez-Flor 2008). Another common approach to teaching pragmatics involves deep explorations of the context in which the particular forms occur, for instance the SPEAKING model, suggested by McConachy (2009). In this model each letter corresponds to a contextual cue (S- the setting of interaction, P- who the participants are, etc.) and learners can be taught how to assess a variety of settings and use correct forms by making them aware of the importance of context-appropriateness. Another acronym suggested as an approach for teaching pragmatics is the S.U.R.E. model (Brock and Nagasaka 2005) which encourages students to learn pragmatics by seeing, using, reviewing and experiencing it in the classroom. Teaching pragmatics can also be done through the use of information technology, as suggested by Ishihara (2007), and Cohen and Sykes (2013)\(^{23}\). Furthermore, the use of corpora (Sinclair 2001, Thompson 2001), films (Alcón 2005, Martínez-Flor 2007) and sitcoms (Rose 2001, Washburn 2001) could also be mentioned as good approaches to teaching pragmatics.

Overall, the key conclusion which the last three decades of studies in interlanguage pragmatics have made is that pragmatic competence is teachable (Kasper and Rose 2002). As Cohen concluded, “pragmatic performance benefits from instruction, learners do not just get it through osmosis” (2008, p. 213). Kasper and Schmidt made a similarly strong claim, saying that “pragmatic knowledge should be teachable” (Kasper and Schmidt 1996, p. 160). Rose (2005) also supported this claim saying that exposure to native speakers’ use of language is simply not enough. However, Kasper (1997) also gave a clear ‘no’ answer to the question whether pragmatics can be taught, arguing that instruction can only “arrange learning opportunities” for pragmatic competence development. This echoes the claim put forward by von Humboldt that “we cannot really teach language, we can only provide the thread along which it will develop of its own accord” (von Humboldt cited in Chomsky 2006, p. 67). Developing pragmatic skills does require effort, however. Kasper and Rose (2002) asserted that “unless learners consciously attend to the complex interaction between language use and social context they will hardly ever learn the pragmatics of a new language” (p. ix). This again stresses the importance of developing approaches to teaching pragmatics since analyses of materials have revealed that (mostly ELT) textbooks are rather poor in

\(^{23}\) Cf. also Chambers, Conacher and Littlemore (2004) on ICT and language learning/teaching.
terms of supporting pragmatic development (Bardovi-Harlig, Hartford, Mahan-Taylor, Morgan and Reynolds 1991; Boxer and Pickering 1995; Crandall and Basturkmen 2004; Safont and Campoy 2002). Perhaps for these reasons, teachers, not books, are believed to be the key to supporting pragmatic development:

Even with the poorest, more unnatural sounding textbook or supplementary materials in the world, a skilful teacher can find a way to create authenticity through social interactions. But even the best, most brilliantly crafted textbook or infinite supplementary resources are useless in the hands of an unskilled teacher (Tatsuki 2006, p. 11).

This conclusion brings us to the issue of teacher education and the focus on local contexts, believed to be the key to success in teaching pragmatics. Savignon (2007, p. 211) stressed that “curricular innovation is best advanced by the development of local materials which, in turn, depends on the involvement of local classroom teachers”. Pointing out that teaching pragmatics is a relatively new area, Cohen (2008, p. 217) urged that “the door is open for the development of materials aimed at complementing what learners already know about L2 pragmatics”. The best place to start these developments is in teacher education. McKnight (1995, p. 4) suggested that understanding pragmatics, and its implications for the language classroom, is the key to understanding the task language teachers face in general. While it is difficult to argue that understanding pragmatics is the answer to all problems language teachers face, it is encouraging to see that pragmatics is pushing closer to the central stage rather than being just a ‘wastebasket of linguistics’ (Bar-Hillel 1971).

On a final note, while the review presented here leads to the conclusion that explicit instruction works best in teaching pragmatics of a second language, the final decision of adopting the new cultural and linguistic ways of communicating belongs to individual language users. As Wierzbicka (1997a, p. 123) nicely put it “just as two mirrors provide endless opportunities for reflections so too do two languages and cultures refracted in one psyche”.

### 8.6. Concluding remarks

The aim of this research was to explore the speech act of opinions from the dual perspective of pragmalinguistics-soci pragmatics, focusing additionally on Irish English and the Irish-Polish intercultural context. By conducting an empirical study, it
was possible to identify additional characteristics of opinions, thus filling in the gaps identified in the literature review which established them as a rather poorly documented speech act. The findings suggest that opinions should be treated as a speech act set, quite complex in its execution and an example of a rich environment for investigation of co-occurrence of many speech acts. Consequently, opinions are not achieved by simple ‘I think (that) x...’ sentences, but rather involve a negotiation of meaning represented in the use of concessive (dis)agreements, the most prominent being the use of ‘yes, but’ expressions. Additionally, opinions present not only face-saving strategies, such as those for polite disagreements, but they also promote face-enhancing moves and foster relationship-building communication.

The intercultural aspect of the empirical study also demonstrated different sociocultural mappings for opinions in the two cultures investigated. While to the Irish respondents opinions are based on beliefs, from the Polish participants’ perspective they are also based on facts and expected to be supported in conversation by good arguments. These different perspectives may have repercussions on how both cultures approach exchanges of opinions. While a direct cultural clash between them is not a direct conclusion to be drawn from the study, a certain level of possible misinterpretation of each other’s intentions should be pointed out. On a positive note, the indication of the existence of the differences in attitudes, provided by this research, should also be seen as the first step in the process of the two cultures understanding each other better.
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Appendix 1 – Role-Play Scenarios

1. One-off Participants’ Prompts

**Holidays**
You have a weekend job at a local newsagent’s. You are talking to your boss about taking holidays from work. (You are not asking for time off work; but exchanging opinions). You think that people who have been working longer in the shop should have priority in choosing the dates. You say...

**Tiger**
You have a weekend job at a local newsagent’s. After work, you are chatting with your boss about Tiger Woods’ scandals. You think the media should leave him alone. You say...

**Party**
You are at your friend’s birthday party. You start chatting to someone you have just met there. You think the party is boring. You say...

**Film**
You go to the cinema to see the film about Facebook. You go there with a close friend and one of their friends you haven’t met before. After the film you are chatting about it to the person you just met. You think the story’s ending was predictable. You say...

**Licence**
You are talking to your friend about your plans to get a driver’s licence. You think it’s necessary to have one nowadays. You say...

**Christmas**
You are talking to your friend about the fact that all shops start selling Christmas products in October. You know that they are only marketing traps. You say...
2. Anchor Participants’ Prompts

Holidays
You are a manager at a local newsagent’s store. You are talking to one of your part-time employees about the summer and the holidays that people are planning to take.

______________________________________________________________________________

Tiger
You are a manager at a local newsagent’s. After work, you are chatting with one of your part-time employees about Tiger Woods’ scandals. You think he is a great golfer.

______________________________________________________________________________

Party
You are at your friend’s birthday party. The party is boring. You are chatting with someone you have just met there.

______________________________________________________________________________

Film
You go to the cinema to see the film about Facebook. You go there with a friend and one of their friends you haven’t met before. After the film you are chatting about it to the person you just met. You were intrigued by the film.

______________________________________________________________________________

Licence
You are talking to your friend about their plans to get a driving licence. You don’t plan to have a driver’s licence or a car.

______________________________________________________________________________

Christmas
You are talking to your friend about the fact that shops start selling Christmas products in October. You love Christmas, so you wouldn’t mind if it lasted all year.
Appendix 2 – IE Role-Play Transcriptions

Scenario: Holidays

RP-1-IE

1. <Peter> <{finishing reading the cue card}> How are you boss?
2. <B1> Hi employee, how are you?
3. <Peter> Ehm... I'm looking to get days in work- time of work and ehm (talking to you)
   before and you said you couldn't give it to me, but I've been working here a lot
   longer than a lot of the other guys that have been around here so... is it possible,
   you know I...
4. <B1> Time off work? Oh I don't know... these... recession times are upon us...
5. ehm...like, I'll have to get someone to cover for you and everything, like. Could
6. you... do you HAVE to go... like. Ehm...
7. <Peter> <{quiet}>(Well ehm) but sure you've let the=
8. <B1> =What sort of holidays are you going on anyway. How can ya have money to go
9. for a holiday=
10. <Peter> =I'm going to Venezuela.
12. <Peter> For a week.
13. <B1> That's grand isn't it? Off to be- great to be heading off on your holidays to the
14. other side of the world.
15. <Peter> I've been working for quite some time and I've put away a bit of money and I
16. thought <{clears throat}> I'd head off for a week or two, and I was hoping
17. you'd be able to give me the time off (and) come back again...
18. <B1> ehm... We might just have to talk about it at a later date... because ehm... right
19. now we need to get through Christmas and the busy times ahead=
20. <Peter> =but you've given the- the new guy that's been here only a month. He's off for
21. a week.
22. <B1> Yeah... yeah... he's- he's a... he's related to me <{smiling}> <{@}> I had to do his
23. eh... I had to do his mother a bit of a favour, you know <{inhales loudly}>>
24. <Peter> I don't know...
25. <B1> She's a cousin of mine. But ehm... I understand, I understand and I'll have a look
26. at it. I'd like, I'd like to ehm... I'd like to give you some time off and sure I'll
27. have a look at the books and we'll see what we can do... after Christmas and
28. new year.
29. <Peter> <{quiet}> After Christmas. Okay <{/quiet}> <{nodding}> yeah. Well, I'll talk to
30. you again then.
<B1> Cool. We'll talk about it another time.

RP-2-IE

<Martina> Hi. Ehm... Hi, I was hoping to take ehm... some ehm... to change my dates for- for time off?

<B2> What were your original dates?

<Martina> Ehm... July ehm... the first?

<B2> To?

<Martina> To August the first?

<B2> A full month. I can't believe <@> I actually allowed that. </@> Yeah, ehm... I- I mean, have you talked to anybody about altering the dates ehm... 'cos there's a few people out at that time.

<Martina> Well I- I did ask ehm... the others but I- they- they also said that they wouldn't be able for=

<B2>= available. Okay. Ehm... How long have you been here?

<Martina> I have been here three years.

<B2> Okay. That's okay. I- I- I- I mean I can't see it being a problem, but what I'd say is you'll have to leave it with me for a few days.

<Martina> Okay.

<B2> Ehm... simply because... ehm... I'm on time. I- I- I mean I have no problem with the actual timing of it. But it being July- if it was a month later, it would be worse, but July I think should be manageable. Coming into August we'd be looking at schools, etcetera coming back. Ehm...

<Martina> Yeah.

<B2> But... yeah, no I mean it shouldn't be a problem but you'll have to leave it with me for a few days just to make sure, but I- I can't see it being too much of a hindrance.

<Martina> Okay, great. Thank you.

<B2> Okay?

RP-3-IE

<Noelle> <{after a number of hesitations}>So... so... you know ehm... Karen.... who's been working- she only started working here... two weeks ago?

<B3> Karen started... yeah, Tuesday two weeks ago, yeah.

<Noelle> And is she going on holidays in June... isn't she?

<B3> Karen... yeah she was talking to me the other day. Now, I had it in my diary. Ehm... She was looking for the second week in June off. She was looking for a
week... `<{thinking}>` yeah, a week. I think she had something to do with her family or something, she (was).

<Noelle> Okay.

<B3> Why do you ask?

<Noelle> Ehm... No, it's just that... I know she has it booked off now already? But I was just wondering because you know, I've been working here now for nearly... TWO years... on and off... and it's just that... ehm... my BROTHER? he has a big anniversary weekend planned? So... I know she already has it off, has ask-

<Noelle> Just- just the two nights

<B3> `<{to himself}>` Two nights...

<Noelle> `<{expression of doubt on her face}>` or the two days... sorry.

<B3> Ehm... yeah... I'll have to check- I'll have to check the schedule, you know. I know that Karen HAS booked off that week.

<Noelle> What if I get someone to cover for me.

<B3> Ehm... we don't normally do that, the nature of the job, but... Look, leave it-

<Noelle> Yeah, okay. Sorry now. I know... I don't wanna leave you... on the lurch.

<B3> I know, I know but it's an important thing so... it's early enough... Look, can you leave it with me and I'll get back to ya?

<Noelle> Okay, yeah. That would be great.

<B3> Alright.

<Noelle> Sorry now @@

<B3> Come back to me later on in the day okay and I'll talk to you (then).

<Noelle> Great. Thanks a million. @@

**RP-4-IE**

<Dave> Sorry. Can I have one moment?

<B3> Yeah. Yes, sure. What's up?

<Dave> Yeah... I was just ehm... I was thinking about ehm... my holidays this year.

<B3> Yeah...
Dave: I'm thinking I might take them maybe around June or July... that time. Ehmm... I'm not exactly sure what date I'm gonna take them on now but ehm just a general idea of ehm... if it's possible to take a holiday in that period.

B3: Right. You wanna book it for... sometime within June, but then most of people would be taking it during THEN. I'll keep it in mind but you have to be more specific. Maybe get back to me when you've an exact date because I know that's the busy period and there's a lot of people looking for time off THEN.

Dave: Ehmm... well that's okay but I was ehm... I mean I- my girlfriend is- is set on June or July and I told her that since I was... I've been here for the last ten years that there'd be no problem to ehm... toZ toZ to get the time off work that I need.

B3: Yeah. Well... I can give you the time off work, but you have to be more specific because I'm working on a tight schedule at the moment so if you could... maybe come back to me when you have the dates and I'll book you in? because there's other people looking. Like, I will give you preference over other people because you have been here the longest with me, but you have to give me the exact dates so that I can manage everybody else.

Dave: Okay. So I'm not competing with anybody right now for- for time.

B3: No, but if you could give me the dates because they are looking for holidays as well and I want to tell them as soon as I can if they can have it or not. So I can give you kinda first refusal and all that but you have to get back to me with specific dates 'cos otherwise=

Dave: =Are there only a couple of people looking for time off?

B3: Well, all sixteen employees are looking for time off.

Dave: I suppose they are... it is the summertime alright... Ehmm... that's...

B3: If you could be more specific and get back to me by next week we'd say... or even this week.

Dave: I'll go- I'll go talk to my girlfriend=

B3: =Do, do.

Dave: And I'll see if she can book some flights and get something more specific so.

B3: Yeah, if you can get the dates so from your missus and get back to me.

Dave: Okay. Thanks very much for your time.

B3: No problem.

RP-5-IE

Jimmy: How long have I been working here now?

B3: Ehmm... I suppose you've been here about five years Jimmy.

Jimmy: Yeah, I think so. I was just- just thinking there=

B3: =Are you enjoying it?=
<Jimmy> =Yeah, I was just thinking back there, you know, ehm... <{staring in the space}> reminiscing and you know... all the new staff that have come and gone during the time I've been here so ehm... all the changes that have happened in the shop <{looks up at B}>. You know, like, some of our patrons who've passed away... God rest them. And... all the new people that have come.

<B3> Hm... we're still going strong, though. That's the main thing, isn't it?

<JImmy> Yeah, well, exactly, sure... we're still making money <@> otherwise I wouldn't have a job, would I? </@>

<B3> That's it, yeah.

<JImmy> Yeah... sure... that's it... just... ehm...

<B3> Something else that you want to ask me Jimmy?

<JImmy> Ehm... Ehm... @@@ <@> Trying to pile up to it now. </@> But, ehm...

<B3> Go on sure... you know me.

<JImmy> Ehm... ehm... no, I just ehm... the family are thinking about ehm... you know... going to ehm... Madrid for a couple of weeks.

<B3> <quiet> Oh lovely. </quiet>

<JImmy> And ehm... you know... just ehm... They were saying why don't you come, but I said ah, sure I- I have the job here and... you know, I'd only miss the place if I was gone and ehm... you know, so I'd-

<B3> When are they planning on going?

<JImmy> Ehm... I think they have it set for... three weeks tomorrow... they'd be- they'd be heading off.

<B3> And how long are they going for?

<JImmy> I think they're staying for about ehm... about a week, I think.

<B3> Alright.

<JImmy> Ehm... so.

<B3> Ehm... Sure look. Let me- let me check the timetable ‘cos I know Mary's got time off at that time as well, but three weeks from tomorrow... so tomorrow... three weeks and you wanna go for a week. Ehm... I'll see. It is our busy time, you know.

<JImmy> Yeah:: I know that, I know that alright. Yeah.

<B3> Ehm... No, it's just as well that you asked me now, I suppose (it's as early as you could ask me at all). Ehm... let me check. Let me check the diary Jimmy and I'll get back to you.

<JImmy> Alright.

<B3> Come back- come back to me at the end of the day ‘cos I don't have it in my head now. Yeah, I'll see. We will work something for you anyway, alright?
<Jimmy> Sure, I'll leave it with you.

<B3> Do, yeah. Okay?

**RP-6-IE**

1. <Anne> Ehm... Hi [B] I just wanted to <{starts giggling}> 
2. <B3> Hi. How is it going? 
3. <Anne> I'm just wondering ehm... I have a holiday booked now in July. I'm just wondering ehm... would it be possible to- to get a few holidays- a few weeks holidays? 
4. <B3> In July? Ehm... You see Mary is just after asking me about July, you know. 
5. <Anne> I understand that. 
6. <B3> Can you be more specific about it or... 
7. <Anne> Ehm, it would be toward the end of July. 
8. <B3> It's a busy period. Of course everybody wants to= 
9. <Anne> =I actually have the holiday booked now and everything, but... 
10. <B3> You have it booked already? 
11. <Anne> I do. 
12. <B3> I'd just say you shouldn't have. I have to see. I have to check the- the roster now because I know somebody else was asking me for time off there as well. 
13. <Anne> I understand that, but I HAVE been working here for years. I have been here six years now. 
14. <B3> I know. 
15. <Anne> Mary's only been here a few months. 
16. <B3> I know you've been a faithful servant and all but the way we do it is first come, first served. Listen, I haven't told Mary she can have it off yet, but she was asking me about it. But since you have been here the longest, you kind of put weight over her so... Look. If you give me an exact date, I'll check the diary and the roster because ehm... I did say it to Mary. I- I'll put you ahead of her, alright. But you can't- you can't book your holiday before you ask for time off Anne. 
17. <Anne> Okay. 
18. <B3> I know you're here long and I know you probably booked it in a spur of the moment, but... Sure look. Get back to me with the exact date and I'll come back to you by the end of the day. Okay? 

**RP-7-IE**

1. <Paul> So! Holidays. I'd like to ehm... book some.
Holidays. Ehm... When were you thinking about Paul?

Ehm... no, not thinking about holidays in general but ehm... just the whole booking procedure. I mean you've got... there was a bit of... up in the air last year. There should be little bit more ehm- not taking what you do, you know, as being bad or anything else, like, but people that have been here longer should have ehm... PRIORITY, I think.

Yeah... I... well, d'you know the way we had it set now was first-come, first-served so I think that's kind of fair as well. Rather than saying people have priority 'cos you'd get people really cutting it down to saying "well I'm here two months and two days and he's only two months and one day". I think it's fair if we do it first-come, first-served. So if you can get to me as soon as possible with it.

But there could be a little bit of flexibility with it?

Well there might be a small bit. I- I take that into account, that you have been longer than everybody else, but, you know, it has to be first-come, first-served 'cos if someone comes to me and asks me and I check <{demonstrating checking a sheet of paper}> my rota and I've got nobody booked (in) that week, then I'm gonna say yeah, you can have that week. So then if you come to me an hour later and say look I'm looking for this week, I just can't do it 'cos we need someone here. If they've already got it it's not fair if I say, "listen, you're new here". Sure if I say that to them, they might not stay here.

Yeah. Yeah, that's true.

So you have to stick to first-come, first-served. The thing is that you have to get your... exact times. And get in there.

Fair enough.

If it does go to a tie situation, I'd probably give you the- the benefit of the doubt, but, you know... it still has to be- You have to follow the system.

Grand.

...in the workplace.

That's fine. No problem. Can't ask for more than that.

Okay.

Okay. (2.0) I just wanted to talk to you about ehm... holidays?

Mhm.

I just think it would be a bit fairer if people who have been working here for longer got to pick the holidays because obviously there's competition. I just think it would be fairer? I don't know. What do you think?
Alright. Okay. Some people kind of have extenuated circumstances and they kind of need to be able to take holidays at a certain time of the year so I'm kind of just trying to give them a little bit of a leeway=

Oh I understand that but if it comes to people prioritising two weeks in Spain shouldn't it be those who've been here longer that get the first choice? I can understand if they've a family member that's ill but...

Mhm, mhm. Yeah, I suppose. We could take that under consideration but every case is individual and I can't really say with any degree of certainty that certain people can be given the preferential treatment over others, you know.

Okay. Alright. I just thought I'd run it by you anyway.

Okay.

How are ya? I was just wondering... I have a holiday booked... and I was hoping that maybe I could take a bit of time off because I ehm... I've a bit you know I'm fairly good for working, like. I've been here for fair while working and I was just wondering if I could get the weekend off.

Yeah... now we're gonna be very busy until Christmas. So after Christmas I'll definitely give you some time off but for the next while we've got to get all this new stock in and... busy time of the year for us so there'll be no holidays until the new year I'm afraid.

But I've a= Is that alright, is it?

But I've a- you see I have it booked already and I- I can't get the tickets refunded.

Ah:::// Yeah... I don't know... We'll have to- we'll have to sit down and have a look at the roster and see if we can get someone else to cover your shift or maybe you KNOW someone who you could send into me to...//~// work the hours... If you cover your hours, that would be great.

//Yeah...// If I get a friend or maybe my brother //to do it//.

//Yeah!//

Would that be alright?

Yeah! 'cos it's very busy time of the year, you know, very busy.

Alright, that's grand so. I might- I'll go and try and get somebody if I can.

Yeah, perfect. Great stuff.<{nodding}>
RP-10-IE

1. <Peter> Hey boss. Ehm... This whole thing about Tiger Woods. Do you think he=
2. <B1> =What a player! What a lad!
3. <Peter> Do you like him? Do you?
4. <B1> Oh he's great! He's brilliant! @@@
5. <Peter> D'you think they'd leave him alone, the press like, I mean. Jesus! Everybody
   gets caught once in a while <{making a face}>.
6. <B1> Yeah, that's true, but sure he's gonna live in the, he's gonna live in the limelight
   and he's getting paid MILLIONS of dollars to... to go and play his sport and
   he's having a laugh, sure. He's going to have to have ehm... his up days and his
   down days as well... He's a great golfer anyway.
7. <Peter> I know, but they're crucifying him in the media. Is he...
8. <B1> Ah... they are, but these things will blow over, ehm... I... ehm... I'd be happy to
   watch him, watch him hit the ball around... the green any day, like. He's great, a
   great man.
9. <Peter> But what about all his sponsorships and everything, he's actually losing (that.
   His livelihood). People cancelling on him.
10. <B1> <hesitant> Ye:ah... </hesitant> that's true for now, but these things always blow
    over and, I don't know, in the media there's no real- there's no such a thing as
    bad news, it's all good news. It'll all, it'll all stick with him to the end, like.
11. <Peter> It'll blow over.
12. <B1> NO ONE's perfect.
13. <Peter> Yeah.
14. <B1>But ehm... He still plays a mean round of golf @@@
15. <Peter> <{nodding and smiling}>
16. <B1> He's a great golf player @@@ (2.0) I think.
17. <Peter> <{nodding}> Yeah...

RP-11-IE

1. <Andy> Jeez... Did you see that about Tiger Woods in the paper?
2. <B1> I did, I did <{smiling}>
3. <Andy> did=
4. <B1> =He's a great golfer that man.
<Andy> Oh, he's unreal, but ehm... Jesus, it's fair lousy what the papers are doing to him.

<B1> Yeah, yeah <{shaking his head like still wondering}> he's gonna get a lotta stick now, alright, but, sure, that's what you get for living in the public eye, I suppose.

<Andy> Yeah... it's still kinda... it's a bit over the top, you know.

<B1> Yeah.

<Andy> Looking into his life. It's his private life. They should leave (him)=

<B1> =Yeah, but at the same time, you know, he's getting paid lots of money for that... and he can't just, ehm... expect to get lotsa cash and live in the public eye and then not have a... not have ehm... everyonelooking in on his personal life and when it suits him... I mean he has to be aware of these things so if he wants to go drunk driving after a big fight with his wife and romancing all over the place <{shaking head}> lots of- lots of people were going to find out about it. It'll go out. He wasn't very DISCRETE, now.

<Andy> I suppose if we nearly did it, it'd probably be in the papers but not on such a large scale.

<B1> Yeah, yeah.

<Andy> But yeah, it's kinda, it's a bit, you know... too close to the bone. Imagine how him and his family must feel now, like.

<B1> Yeah, ah, sure. He's a great golfer anyway //-/// and that's- that's what I'll be tuning into. Watch him hit the ball around the green. Ehm... exciting stuff.

<Andy> //Yeah.// He's (piling up) the money and //-/// <@> probably forget about it.

<B1> //Yeah.// Exactly! It'll all be gone in another few weeks' time.

Martina> The Tiger Woods scandals now.

<B2> Oh sure what scandal I mean he's still a great golfer. I- I suppose if you look at it- in the view of separating personal from...

Martina> Professional <{nodding}>

<B2> From his professional. I mean he's still a number one golfer. His- his sponsors all stood by him but... I mean arguably you could say he never wanted to get married in the first place but he was kind of forced into it by the American society. But that's <@> for another day I suppose </@> But ehm... yeah...

-Martina> I don't know now. I think he's just- we should leave him alone, like. It's- you know he is a number one golfer now and=

<B2> = Well he's not anymore, but that's... you know...

-Martina> Okay. Well...
<B2> But he's worth the money. He definitely is.

Martina: Okay, whichever tournaments there're on there's twice as many people watching the tournaments.

<B2> Yeah. Hm.

Martina: Okay. I think people should just leave it.

<B2> I'm going to watch him today.

Martina: Yeah.

<B2> But I think it's unusual the amount of media attention is taking place but ehm... Really, when it comes down to it, it is a personal thing and it should have been between himself and his wife rather than being viewed and constantly scrutinised by others.

Martina: Yeah. I agree.

<RP-13-IE>

Noelle: You know I think the whole media thing around Tiger Woods I think it's a bit unfair? I mean, at the end of the day he's a professional golfer so his personal life really isn't our business.

<B3> I'd agree totally, yeah he's one of my favourite golfers... I'd watch him quite a lot. I think he should be judged more on his actions of the field than off the field. He does set a bad example but... he's still a great golfer so some of the stuff we hear about isn't fair either.

Noelle: Yeah... everything's coming out.

<B3> Sure we all like to blow some steam off sometimes.

Noelle: @@@

<B3> But I suppose he did go a bit overboard but still. And his golfing is suffering now as well because of it so he's getting punishment enough without all the negative press around, you know.

Noelle: Yeah. I think he should be allowed to have a private life.

<B3> He is, I suppose but what he did wasn't private, now was it? @

Noelle: @ Yeah, but if he wasn't- if he didn't have a STATUS that he does, then maybe it wouldn't be such a big deal.

<B3> Yeah... Don't get caught. Exactly.

Noelle: If it was a lesser known golfer.

<B3> Yeah, I suppose you're right, yeah.

<RP-14-IE>
<Dave> Man! The shop was busy today, wasn't it?

<B3> It was, yeah. There, the lunchtime rush hour is always the same, isn't it?

<Dave> As soon as one person came in, you know, a queue formed behind them. It looked like they were all waiting around the corner just to come into the shop at the same time. I thought we would never get out of there.

<B3> That's the way it goes alright. But we did well, we did well today, you know... we (put it up).

<Dave> That was mad the way on the front of every single newspaper... Tiger Woods' face. Huh? That's ridiculous.

<B3> It's stupid the amount of attention he's getting sure.

<Dave> I mean, it's ridiculous. The guy he's- he's a child superstar of- well, a teenage superstar of... ehm... his father pushing him all the way to play golf and he goes- he's probably- he probably gets pushed into getting married and goes off and meets a few girls on the side and suddenly he's the antichrist and all the girls hate him and people think he should never play golf again, he'd probably- that he's lost his- his aura, his- his reputation and... I mean, he's like <{shrugging shoulders}> the golfing version of Michael Jackson, d'you know. He's... he's not fully rounded... and he should be able to go off and experience life.

<B3> I- I- my own view of him is that he's a very good golfer alright. I don't know about all the other stuff, maybe he went a bit mad alright, but I only judge him on his golfing. I think the amount of attention he's getting is... is not fair.

<Dave> But it's mad! Like... what do you say to all these people? I mean most of the customers coming in are saying oh Tiger Woods... Tiger Woods, he's a... he's this and he's that and d'you know, he's a... male... floozy or whatever d'you know going off with all these women, he's not showing respect to his wife and he's degrading women and all this. I mean... marriages break up all the time, but ehm... you can't blame a guy for- for having an affair. D'you know what I mean... it happens. That doesn't mean that he's a ehm... he should be... trashed in the media on the front page of every newspaper.

<B3> Maybe... maybe just try not to say that to the customers, you can't blame a guy for having an affair 'cos that might upset a few of them alright but.

<Dave> That's true, I suppose.

<B3> Yeah. Just... ehm... I think it's unfair the amount of media attention... and sure, everybody has got an opinion on these things so they all wanna talk about it.

<Dave> Okay.

<B3> (What) do you say to them... yeah...

<Dave> Thanks for that.

<B3> No problem. Sure we'll shut up the shop now.
<Dave> Yeah.

<B3> Get out of here soon <{smiling}>.

**RP-15-IE**

1. <Jimmy> What'you think of this Tiger Woods fella?
2. <B3> Well... are you asking about his personal life or his golfing life ‘cos I think he's a fantastic golfer.
3. <Jimmy> //Yeah, he is.//
4. <B3> //He's my favourite golfer//.
5. <Jimmy> He is. Yes, but I mean that's the thing he should be on the newspapers about his golf but you see all his private life now. In the tabloids especially.
6. <B3> I couldn't agree with you more, yeah.
7. <Jimmy> 1- I don't know. The thing is... where do the media draw the line between... you know, the (right to intrude) on your personal life. I think it's disgraceful, personally.
8. <B3> Normally, yeah. But I suppose he did go overboard as well with what he did. But... 1- I think it's getting blown out in the three weeks on almost we've been hearing things about that.
9. <Jimmy> The thing is, alright, he's a celebrity and everything, but ehm... you know, the normal feller on the street, he may have had, you know, a few affairs as well, but it won't be brought up all over the paper. Or I mean, so what right has the newspaper to kind of report on him? Just ‘cos he's ehm... a very good sports-person.
10. <B3> Hm I suppose it sells papers, doesn't it? The average feller on the street won't sell any papers with his... ehm... misdoings in bedroom.
11. <Jimmy> Ehm... that's...
12. <B3> Tiger Woods is different. And he IS in the public eye as well. He's a... he's supposed to be a role model for kids as well and they say this, but... maybe he's a part- a part to blame. But, yeah, the media is going overboard as usual.
13. <Jimmy> Ah, no... you made a valid point. I didn't think of it from that side either. But ehm... again I- I like to seek... newspaper articles extolling the positive virtues of person, knowing that he's a good golfer... alright. I know his form has kind of now dropped down since his a...
14. <B3> It's probably because of the newspapers, isn't it? It's all cyclical, isn't it?
15. <Jimmy> Yeah, it's true... cyclical indeed.

**RP-16-IE**

1. <Anne> Oh my God! Have you read the newspaper about Tiger Woods?
2. <B3> Sure who hasn't, it's all over the place, isn't it?
<Anne> Oh my God! How many women has he been with?

<B3> Yeah (there's a few) alright, but I- my opinion is they should- newspapers have
given him enough press for that. I think they should focus on his golf. He's one
of my- he's one of the best golfers I've ever seen.

<Anne> I know but in fairness, like, it's hard to <@> not think of that when you see
him now.

<B3> It is yeah to separate him alright, but they should- <{shaking head}> Like even
printing that stuff about sports players, they shouldn't be doing it to sports
players. They should be focusing on his sporting life, not his private life but...

<Anne> Ah, that's the newspapers for you, I suppose.

<B3> It is, isn't it? Anything that'll sell the newspapers.

<Anne> Yeah, exactly.

<B3> Yeah, I think he's getting too much press at the moment for that, but... he's a
role-model and all so...

<Anne> <{nodding}>

RP-17-IE

<Paul> Just finished up signing up these mastheads back to the auld ehm...
newsagents.

<B3> Excellent.

<Paul> This whole thing with Tiger Woods is just a bit much. I mean for God's sake!
He's only a sports star.

<B3> It is. It's everywhere, isn't it? It's out of proportion as well. If I was judging, I'd
be judging his abilities. I think he's a great golfer, but... sure the papers have
been going three weeks about this.

<Paul> <{looking up to heavens}> <whisper> It's ridiculous! <to himself> It's
ridiculous. <{to himself}> <{whisper}>

<B3> If they judge him on his sports and then on his- his private life separately. Of
course he was stupid when he did that, but he was asking=

<Paul> =Oh no, God! No doubt about that. CompLEtely stupid. CompLEtely stupid!

<B3> And he got caught. And he's paying for it enough, I think.

<Paul> Yep.

<B3> So they don't really need to keep brining it out. Maybe they'll let him get back to
what he does best now. We'll see.

<Paul> Let him do his talking on the greens. Leave it at that.

<B3> Exactly. I agree fully with ya.

RP-18-IE
Sarah: So. What do you think about the whole Tiger Woods thing?

BB2: Yeah, well ehm... It's- it's bit of a shock but at the end of the day I don't think it has anything to do with the fact that he's a fantastic golfer and people kind of have to butt out of his personal life.

Sarah: Oh, absolutely! Yeah, I think that it's a bit... you know, it crosses the line between sport=

BB2: = Yeah=

Sarah: and Heat magazine or something like that.

BB2: Definitely. It's absolutely ridiculous the way the media has kind of JUMPED on the story and=

Sarah: Mhm. Big time. I don't really care what he does. He's a good- he's a good golfer so=

BB2: =Exactly. Exactly. I suppose you can maybe understand a little bit the way advertisers are kind of reacting to it because=

Sarah: = Oh, absolutely. Yeah=

BB2: =they're not getting the value for their money but <{shrugging shoulders}> to be honest=

Sarah: Mhm. He's supposed to be a role model but I think day in and day out it gets a bit (weary) between him and his wife

BB2: Exactly.

Sarah: And the other hundred or so women @@

BB2: And at the end of the day it's between the two of them what happened and it has nothing to do with anybody else <{Sarah nodding}>. I think it's all kind of been blown out of proportion.

Sarah: Yeah, I agree.

BB2: <over pronounced> Sensationalised @@

Sarah: Yeah, as always. @@@

Scenario: Party

RP-19-IE

Andy: Jesus, it's fair bad...

S1W: Really?

Andy: Yeah, sure there's nobody here.

S1W: Yeah... I was kinda thinking that myself, but ehm... I just didn't... want to make sure...
<Andy> Yeah...
<S1W> It was your birthday...
<Andy> D'you think we should ehm head into town or what, like?
<S1W> It's kinda tempting. There's, like, nobody here and it's already eleven o'clock. And I mean, the nightclub closes at two so it's already really late.
<Andy> Yeah... price of a taxi, though. I don't have it... And the off-licence would be closed now.
<S1W> Yeah. Oh my God, it's such a balls.
<Andy> Jesus... Ehm. Here, I might be able to ring one of the lads. They might be able to give us a lift in altogether.
<S1W> Yeah, that'd be cool actually.
<Andy> They might have a few drinks at home as well, so...
<S1W> Yeah... it's DEFINITELY not happening here.
<Andy> Actually, I heard there was a house party on there, below in ehm... Brookfield.
<S1W> Alright! <{nodding}>
<Andy> Yeah, it's meant to be massive altogether. Should we go and see=
<S1W> =maybe that's where everybody is @@
<Andy> <@> yeah, maybe </@> @@ We can go and see if there's anyone below there, sure.
<S1W> Yeah, why not. It's only a few minutes down the road sure. I'll just say it to the rest of my crew sure and we can=
<Andy> =Yeah, make our way there.
<S1W> I know everybody thinks the same thing. <@> It's NOT happening.
<Andy> @@ Alright so, that's grand so.
<S1W> Cool. I'll be right back.

RP-20-IE

<Peter> (Lads) we should move it somewhere else. This party. I mean, here. it's just <{shaking his head}> pfff...
<S1W> Yeah. I didn't want to say it but it's SHOCKING Oh my God. I know it is my friend and everything, but...
<Peter> Eh!... well... we'll talk to her and see if she wants to head out somewhere ‘cos like, look at the place. People are leaving already, like.
Yeah, that's true. It's not- she's not gonna have a good night if people just end up leaving and stuff. It's better just to... kinda tell her now and...

Have I met you before somewhere?

No, I don't think so.

Alright, yeah... I thought I did but ehm... no, I'm gonna get a pint. I mean, if we're not gonna leave here, I'm gonna get lashed.

@ Any thoughts about where we could go. I'm not from around here so... I just came down for the party.

We might encourage her to go somewhere she can decide where she wants to go.

Yeah, true. Birthday girl's preference.

Yeah. Either that or we drag her by the hair.

Yeah @@@ Always good.

Hi. How are you? Ehm... what's your name, sorry?

Danny.

Danny. How do you know Maria?

Maria? Ehm... I used to go to college with her.

Oh, really?

Yeah.

Yeah. We're next door neighbours.

Yeah?

Yeah.

What's your name?

Martina.

Martina. How is it going? <offering to shake hands>?

Nice to meet you. <shaking hands>.

So what did you... ehm... What do you do? Are you going to college as well?

Yeah. I'm in college now.

Doing what.

Psychology.

Psychology?
Oh. Better be careful with what I say.

@ How are you finding the party, anyway?

It's boring, isn't it?

A little bit

Do you find it? Yeah?

Oh yeah... sure...

It's okay, you know. She's a nice person, but doesn't know how to organise parties.

Ah, sure there's nice people around and...

Oh yeah.

Everybody is having a good time, I think.

So what is the plan after the party? Are you all going to some nightclub or something?

I think there's like a bar down the road.

Yeah?

Yeah. I think we're gonna head down.

Okay. That sounds good. There might be more life down there.

Yeah, maybe. Hopefully!

So are you in college tomorrow?

No. Well, I DO, but it's in the afternoon so I don't need to go in the morning.

Good.

How about yourself? Are you...

No, I have to go in. I'm in college as well but I'm- I'm serving my own time so I can=

=Ah, alright.

No one's gonna miss me if I won't be in, like, you know.

Yeah. Good.
<S2M> But I have a lot to do so yeah, I might.

<Martina> Okay. @@

<S2M> So... yeah.

**RP-22-IE**

1 <Jimmy> Not a great party, is it?
2 <S3M> <{looking around}> Hm... no, not much happening, like. Cou- Couldn't be arsed. Should've went to the pub.
3 <Jimmy> Yeah. I wish the music was a bit better. I don't like this type of music really.
4 <S3M> Yeah, yeah... it's a bit... bit- ehm... a bit too pop-y. Ehm... what was I gonna say... would there be- ehm... I don't know... we should- we probably should-
5 Where is the nearest pub? @@
6 <Jimmy> I think it's actually... it's quite a bit away actually, yeah... I mean that's the problem. What sort of music would you be into yourself?
7 <S3M> Mostly metal.
8 <Jimmy> Mostly metal... so what types of bands would that be? Metallica, is it? Or=
9 <S3M> =No. Ehm... progressive, Obet and ehm... Mastodon.
10 <Jimmy> Ah... alright... I wouldn't... know...
11 <S3M> What about yourself?
12 <Jimmy> I'd be more into... just the guitar music like Pink Floyd and Led Zeppelin.
13 <S3M> Alright... alright... Have you... have you a guitar yourself?
14 <Jimmy> With my first pay-packet I actually bought- 'cos I really wanted to buy a guitar so I bought a guitar. <@> I still haven't learned how to play it though
15 @@
16 <S3M> What ehm... acoustic?
17 <Jimmy> Ehm... no, electric.
18 <S3M> Oh, nice one. Fender or a starter or...
19 <Jimmy> Yeah, it's a fender.
20 <S3M> Oh, nice one.
21 <Jimmy> I- I (don't know why...)
22 <S3M> First pay-packet?
23 <Jimmy> Yeah... so I was- I was working in Switzerland for two years so that's what I REALLY wanted to do ehm... I can I suppose I should have got lessons to learn how to play it but just getting- just getting the time is always the thing, isn't it?
24 <S3M> Yeah... yeah... but getting- what was I going to say... just sitting down- sitting down with it and just even learning a few cords.
<Jimmy> Yeah, exactly because I think that's the reason I got a guitar to kind of be able to do it as a party pieces just like now... if it needed to be- ehm... atmosphere needed to be relaxed a little. I could engendered the atmosphere myself.

<S3M> You can always- you know what I mean- what was I going to say... go- go back for it?

<Jimmy> Yeah.

<S3M> And go (via the pub)?

<Jimmy> Yeah. I might do that.

<S3M> <{nodding}> How bad.

**RP-23-IE**

<Anne> Hi! You're friends with Sarah, you are.

<S3M> Yeah... yeah... I am... Although looking around... rather not be. It's a bit of a boring party.

<Anne> She kind of guilted me into going, you know, <{fading out}> So how bad

<S3M> I am just here with a few- a few of the other lads, like, you know. We were actually meant to be going to the- to the pub but we just called out here first for a- to have a cheap one=

<Anne> To show your face <{nodding}>=

<S3M> =Yeah, exactly, exactly. But... nothing much happening.

<Anne> I'm thinking about heading off myself.

<S3M> Yeah, yeah. Ah no... and Same here, but we- I suppose we can't exactly walk out=

<Anne> =No=

<S3M> =and give it a- give it a few - give it a few minutes anyway. But how do you how do you know Sarah?

<Anne> Ehm... I used to go to college with her.

<S3M> Ah alright. Yeah... yeah.

<Anne> Yeah so that's... <{fading out}> How do you know her yourself?

<S3M> <{pointing behind himself}> Just down the road.

<Anne> Alright.

<S3M> And what was I gonna say... We were just passing we just said hey so we just said give it a shout in.

<Anne> Yeah.
RP-24-IE

1 <Paul> So... what you think? Not the: ehm... all greatest of...
2 <S3M> No... no...
3 <Paul> No celebration HERE tonight... huh? <{making a face}>
4 <S3M> Stop! Jesus! Music is bad... crowd's even <@> worse @@
5 <Paul> Lord almighty! <@> You'd get more life out of a funeral.
6 <S3M> @@@@@ Actually, speaking of which... the: funeral down the road, actually, there might be a bit- a bit of a party going on down there, you know.
7 <Paul> <excited> <quietly> Oh yeah!
8 <S3M> Better than here anyway.
9 <Paul> A bit of a wake? Nice...
10 <S3M> Wha:: ehm... WHO do you know here?
11 <Paul> I know the ehm... birthday boy.
12 <S3M> Alright. <{looking around}> <almost inaudible> Poor fucker.
13 <Paul> I know... yeah @@@
14 <S3M> But ehm... what was I gonna say, that ehm... no, we- we are just next door neighbours and he kinda just said come on in- come on over and he said "yeah, there'll be plenty of people there... grand... drinking and everything".
15 <Paul> <uncomfortable + sarcastic> Ye::ah... mhm.
16 <S3M> Kinda lying.
17 <Paul> Yeah, mhm... bit of a load of=
18 <S3M> =We're- we're half-thinking of just going down to the pub afterwards, like, you know. Well, not afterwards, in the next few minutes but we just want to wait until kind of there's a bit of a=
19 <Paul> =Yeah... exactly. Yeah.
20 <S3M> But... what was I gonna- ehm... probably heading off into town afterwards. Are you heading in yourselves?
21 <Paul> Yeah. We're- we've planned to meet up with a few more in town, like.
22 <S3M> Alright. Nice one. But again too... it was kind of... picking- //picking the moment.//
23 <Paul> //Picking the moment.// Exactly.
24 <S3M> Picking the moment.
25 <Paul> Yeah. yeah.
26 <S3M> Sure- sure listen, sure if we spot you down in the pub, we'll talk to you later.
<Paul> Absolutely! yeah, yeah.
<S3M> Take care man. Have a good one!
<Paul> Definitely, yeah.

**RP-25-IE**
1 <Noelle> Hi, how are you? I'm Noelle.
2 <S3M> How are you? Who do you know here?
3 <Noelle> Ehm... nobody really. I just=
4 <S3M> =Well, is there anybody here (about) anyway? It's a bit boring, like.
5 <Noelle> I know yeah. I know Sandra <{pointing to a spot in the distance}> over there. She told me to come along.
6 <S3M> Oh, yeah yeah. No, we're just- we're just neighbours and I was thinking kind of- I think, looking at the crowd, it's more of a rented crowd that basically <{showing come on gesture}> dragged us in. I think we're just waiting for the opportune time to just head off to the pub.
7 <Noelle> Yeah. I'm waiting for it to kick off really @@
8 <S3M> @@ Ah no what we might do is just head off down to the pub and we might call back, you know what I mean, in about four five hours time see what's- what's the story then.
9 <Noelle> Yeah, maybe it'll get livelier.
10 <S3M> Well, it can't get duller @@
11 <Noelle> @@ That's true.
12 <S3M> But ehm... ah, sure we'll see you later. Have a good one anyway. Take care.
13 <Noelle> Yeah, you too.

**RP-26-IE**
1 <Dave> Hi man. How are you getting on?
2 <S3M> How could you be getting on? It is a bit- a bit more(tacular), isn't it?
3 <Dave> Oh man... it's- it's awful. Who's the DJ over there?
4 <S3M> <quietly> @@@@@
5 <Dave> The state of him! Do you know any of the music he's playing?
6 <S3M> Huh?
7 <Dave> Do you know any of the music he's playing?
8 <S3M> Ah jeez, I don't know. You know what I mean... When you come to somebody's arty-farty places and they're throwing on jazz and you know what I mean this kind of stuff... Jesus! Obviously- the birthday it's obviously the birthday boy's or whoever birthday it is- actually whose birthday is it anyway?
<Dave> Yeah.

<S3M> Do you know ANYone here?

<Dave> No, I- I- my girlfriend is a friend of- of his so...

<S3M> Ah, alright.

<Dave> I assume it's some boy anyway. I think it was some guy she was talking about.

<S3M> Ah Jesus. It looks a bit of a rented crowd place, like.

<Dave> Yeah, well I don't know. The lads over there seem to be having a bit of a

laugh, but I suppose it's a few (lads to be looking at it anyway).

<S3M> Yeah, yeah. But, like,

<Dave> Not always (important).

<S3M> When the ratio is about ten to one, like?

<Dave> Yeah, yeah. Ah well. Hopefully they'll all jump into the swimming pool out

the back.

<S3M> @@@

<Dave> Before the night's out. It'd be sweet.

<S3M> @@ Ah, nothing like a wet t-shirt competition to get things going, you know

what I mean.

<Dave> Exactly.

<S3M> Ah sure I'll start it off.

<Dave> Yeah... Ah no man!

<S3M> @@@@@

<Dave> @@ That's not really what I was talking about @@

<S3M> @@@@ No. No, we're gonna- we're gonna just- we've got a few tins we might

just finish them and head to the pub and see- Give it another- give it another

hour and we'll=

<Dave> =Well, I better go and look for the girlfriend anyway sure.

<S3M> Ah sure how bad.

<Dave> Take care of yourself anyway.

<S3M> At least you're sorted. Take care man!

**RP-27-IE**

<Sarah> Hi, how are you?

<SS2M> Hey, how are you doing?

<Sarah> Grand. Are you enjoying the party? Do you know someone here or...

<SS2M> Eh, yea::h I know the guy who's organising it.
<Sarah> Okay.
<SS2M> To tell you the truth I'm not really enjoying it, though.
<Sarah> No. It's not ehm... <@> not (up to) much really.
<SS2M> Not ideal, no. How about yourself?
<Sarah> Yeah, I know ehm... one of the girls living here but... I thought I'd show my face for an hour but I'm not sure how to best to=
<SS2M> =Yea::h, it's pretty much it, you know. Have to <{looking at the watch}> go- come in, show the head and then get out of here as quickly as possible.
<Sarah> Yeah, exactly. It's just a bit=
<SS2M> =I was expecting a lot more.
<Sarah> I know, I know. I think we were though, that hundreds of Facebook emails I've been getting for the last three weeks.
<SS2M> Oh Jesus, you know. Stop.
<Sarah> Well, yeah. Better off.
<SS2M> Yeah.
<Sarah> Block the status and all that.

**Scenario: Film**

**RP-28-JE**

<Andy> Well, what you make of that film?
<S1W> Oh my God, I thought it was BRILLIANT. I thought it was FASCINATING altogether.
<Andy> Did you think so? IZ I thought it was kinda... it was a bit too predictable, like.
<S1W> Really?
<Andy> Yeah, I thought- I thought, like, you could see everything coming nearly.
<S1W> Well, you can kinda see the bit, you know, where... he got a girl, but... it wasn't your usual Hollywood type storyline so I actually really enjoyed it for once 'cos I'm SO cynical. I hate predictable storylines. I hate, like... ehm... ehm... rom-coms, you know, that kinda thing.
<Andy> Yeah, I suppose... Yeah, at least the... some of the rom-coms are even more predict- predictable but I thought it was nearly much the same as most of them, like but...
<S1W> You know what, I really have to say I thought it was really interesting. It was really interesting because, like, we all use Facebook ourselves every day and it was really interesting to see how... like, it was started and formed and stuff.
<Andy> Yeah...
I think everybody came out of it going I want to start that BIG idea that makes me a million dollars @@@

Yeah, I suppose ehm... I suppose, like... maybe if I watched it again it might be... I might see more in it... but... hmm... I don't know, I thought I saw a fair bit from what I saw.

@@

... so, yeah, I don't know... I wouldn't be a huge fan of it.

That's it I suppose everybody... finds it different. I REALLY liked it, but you can see some people got up and left in the middle of it. They didn't like it either, so... @{shrugging shoulders}.

Yeah... I'd be more of a comedy person myself.

Yeah. I see what you mean.

That was a little bit pointless, wasn't it?

Really? I thought it was brilliant.

Have you not heard the story before, like? I mean... all these American films they're all the same. They all have their @{demonstrating 'parts' with hands}> tu-du-tu-du and in the end it's the same.

Oh, come on! The story was COMPLETELY different. I so wouldn't agree with that at all. It's not like it was a rom-com or anything.

I mean no, but it's some fella who... Ah jeez, Facebook. I've had enough of Facebook to be honest. I mean, sure we have the Facebook up, then Facebook's down and everybody's happy. And sure, jeez, I mean @{shrugging shoulders}.

Everybody comes away with money.

That's true, alright. (2.0) But don't you use Facebook every day?

Yeah.

That's true, alright. (2.0) But don't you use Facebook every day?

Nah, I don't know. I did a survey there, recently. I have to get the results yet.

I know I use if every day, oh my God I'm, like, NEVER off so it was really interesting to find out how it actually started. AND I'd quite like to get an idea like that myself... and... come up with the amount of money that... the lead guy is worth now.

Sure it's you that's feeding them so I suppose everyone wants to know all about it so... @{shrugging shoulders} yeah.

That film was a bit predictable at the end there, wasn't it?
Tiny bit. You'd nearly say it was a true story @@

You could say that alright. I don't know this... Zack Zuckerberg. Isn't that his name?

Yeah, yeah.

I don't know... sure... it's Facebook, it's all pervasive now, isn't it?

True, true, true.

It's like everyone is on it and...

Surprised ehm... surprised there wasn't a few ehm... widgets or something up on the screen, like, you know... but ehm... what was I going to say... ehm... that ehm... it was a bit SLOW in places.

Yeah... I just... to be honest it was only my friend that dragged me here to it really.

Same here, yeah. It was just we were doing nothing at the house so we just decided we just decided to- popped out to see what was on. There was-probably should have went to something else but.

Yeah... but sure, listen, at least now with everyone saying oh it's a great film, at least now we can- we've kinda- we've kinda seen it and we can form our own opinion on it.

Yeah.

We don't have to be listening to everyone else's opinion, I suppose.

How bad, how bad. Well, it could have been worse. You could have went to a party where- where nothing was happening.

Exactly! And where music was no good @@

That's true.

RP-31-JE

So what do you think of the film?

Jeez! ehm... a bit boring, like... I know I should- ehm... half way through the film what was I gonna say we were half thinking of going (up) but just one of the lads fell asleep so we had to wait until he woke up.

<silently> @@ </silently>

...before we came out.

Yeah, it was very predictable.

Yeah, yeah obviously like what was I gonna say but ehm... again too- what was I- obviously, like, you know, with Justin Timberlake and all you had to wait until- until the end.
<Anne> Yeah. That's the only reason I saw it @@

<S3M> <loud> @@@ </loud> But ehm... what was I gonna say... No, they should have (took it back a nock). Especially considering that those are the films about, you know, they should have probably went to that. But, sure, again, what can you do?

<Anne> Yeah, yeah...

<S3M> But ehm... what was I gonna say, ehm... Are you here... are you here with the lads or?

<Anne> Yeah, yeah I'm here with the lads. I go to college there.

<S3M> Ah... yeah, yeah. Ah, sure I think we might as well- might as well head down to the pub for one or two anyway. <{nodding}> Nice talking to you. Take care @@

<Anne> Nice talking to you. See you again. Bye.

RP-32-IE

<Paul> <quietly> Sure that's (kinda mad going). I mean he hasn't really sorted out that dispute with the twins yet. </quietly>

<S3M> Hm?

<Paul> He hasn't sorted out that thing with the twins yet.

<S3M> Ehm... the- you were on at the Facebook film, yeah?

<Paul> Yeah yeah yeah.

<S3M> Wh- what was I gonna say, didn't you- didn't you like it?

<Paul> Yeah, but I mean... it's... I- <{mumble}> I mean... it's <{waved hand in disapproval}> ... it's a story that's still got a bit more to run, like.

<S3M> I=

<Paul> =I mean the American twins that are over in fricking Oxford or Cambridge and they're still taking on action against Mark.

<S3M> Yeah=

<Paul> =And he's got another feller that's with the twins and HE's taking action against him as well.

<S3M> But the film itself, like, you know, didn't you think it was interesting?

<Paul> Oh very good premise.

<S3M> Yeah.

<Paul> Very good premise... A guy... in college... an entrepreneur=

<S3M> =Yeah.=

<Paul> =you know. And he turns out to- ends up making million- well, not millions but billions, like.
Yeah. Well- Do you like it? Do I... I- I really liked the way they kind of took the way what- what was I going to say... the story that most people know but yet made it kind of interesting over- over two hours.


They're obviously, as you say, they're cutting out a lot of detail, but if they had to leave in the detail, obviously you'd have something like the Godfather, where you'd have showing a big stretch with his arms>

Yeah yeah, you'd have three hours 'n people getting bored and tired of it.

Yeah, xxxxxx Yeah.

I think, like... ehm... I like the film and probably, if it was- ehm if it went on a bit longer, probably would have got a bit boring alright. But! What was I going to say, I think it was just spot on. The right time, and it kept the interest. Well MY interest anyway. pointing at Paul who looked doubtful> You obviously...

Well I- I would have liked it to see a bit- you know, they could have brought it into a bit more ehm...

Satisfactory=

Yeah, =END, I thought. But... no, the background to the premise... really good. I mean, apart from hearing about Facebook and the odd name being dropped in we don't know the full background of these things but that was... that's a good ehm... story. I mean, it could be something that people write up, like.

Yeah.

You know, the guy in college starting it up. But no... It was pretty good. I just would have liked to see an end, like, you know.

More car chases?

Yeah!

@@

Totally! @@ If you could work that into Facebook.

Yeah @@@

So what did you think of the film?

I thought it was very good.

Yeah.

What did you think of it?
<Noelle> Yeah, I thought it was okay. Ehms...
<S3M> Just okay?
<Noelle> Well I thought it was=
<S3M> =Do you not=
<Noelle> =fairly predictable though. The ending.
<S3M> Okay, yeah. Okay, it was based on a true- but d'you like the way it was told?
<Noelle> <hesitant & doubtful> Yeah... I mean... </hesitant & doubtful> At least you
got the background of Facebook.
<S3M> Yeah. Well yeah, yeah... I thought it was kind of okay if they told it like it
was.
<Noelle> Yeah.
<S3M> But they put a bit of a suspense into it alright.
<Noelle> Yeah.
<S3M> And I thought that- what was I going to say, that ehm... While they left out a
lot of it, they just put just the right amount at the right time. And I thought it
was a ve- I thought it- I thought it was a VERY good film.
<Noelle> Yeah.
<S3M> So you'd rather went to something else?
<Noelle> Well yeah, as I said, like... It was- you could- you knew what was going to
happen right from the start. I thought.
<S3M> Oh yeah, yeah. Well... yeah, I suppose that's the same with every true film. I
suppose it might have been better if they left it a few years and THEN came
back and told the tale because it's right in everybody's heads at the MOMENT.
<Noelle> Right.
<S3M> But ehm... no, I thought, I thought they- well, the acting was supreme and
what was I going to say, that it's a pity it just missed out on a few Oscars and so
forth, but I- I thought it was genuinely quite good.
<Noelle> Yeah. Yeah... No, I don't know. I would prefer- not so much that... at least
we got the background story=
<S3M> =Yeah <{nodding}> 
<Noelle> But it could have been less- I thought it would have been better directed.
<S3M> Ah, yeah. Well, again, like... as I say, you know what I mean, it's a true story
and it was okay just basically copying legal stuff and so forth like that. You
can't exactly make a good basis for exciting films, but...
<Noelle> Yeah.
<S3M> So it be @@ Have a good one. Take care.
<Noelle> You too @@

**RP-34-IE**

1. <Dave> Well. What you think of that?
2. <S3M> I thought it was very good.
3. <Dave> Ah man, it was- it was pure- it was pure predictable!
4. <S3M> But what were you- <{exhales loudly}>
5. <Dave> The same movie you could have made about Google or Microsoft. Some weird guy with no friends=
6. <S3M> =Ah how could you- how could you like=
7. <Dave> =Listen! Listen to what I'm saying. Some weird guy, with no friends=
8. <S3M> =Yeah.
9. <Dave> ...sitting in front of a computer, ehm... no social skills, zoned out.
10. <S3M> Yeah.
11. <Dave> Writing his programs or whatever. Builds up a company- well, gets lucky!
12. <S3M> Yeah.
13. <Dave> Because people notice his product. And ehm... then he goes out into the world, because he has no social skills he gets burned by people, he burns other people, gets a bad reputation, makes a load of money on the way, gets DRIVEN by money, gets CORRUPTED by money itself and money becomes his only goal. And this story has been played over and over again across- across the last ten years of the dot com (movement). I'm sick of listening to people talking about these guys as if they're gods or something. At the end of the day all they are social recluses who ehm... I frankly I- I wouldn't even want to have a drink with. D'you know?
14. <S3M> So you didn't like it, obviously. But didn't you not like the way the fact that You've gone through ten years of some guy's life and it's condensed down to an hour and a half, and hour and three quarters.
15. <Dave> @@ @@ <{sarcastic}> Yeah, that's fantastic! Yeah @@
16. <S3M> But=
17. <Dave> =<@> It's a zip file @@@@@
18. <S3M> But I thought the whole thing of like you know what I mean he gets shafted, he shafts people back.
19. <Dave> Ah, but...
20. <S3M> I know, yeah. You could say that there's better films that have done better.
21. <Dave> Yeah I mean this- this is what I- this is gonna get Oscars and stuff. People are saying that it's gonna be the Golden Globes, it's gonna be the Oscars and... I
mean, yeah, it looked- it looked okay and again there were some pieces with women in it.

<S3M> Yeah.

<Dave> But the story, I mean.

<S3M> Let's put it this way. The King's Speech is two- is- is a few cinemas down. Would you go to that rather than this?

<Dave> Well, like... that's an unusual story again, d'you know.

<S3M> It's the same thing. It's a true story.

<Dave> Yeah. But it's different. Because that only happens once, whereas this story...

<S3M> Okay. Okay. Yeah. I suppose- well, I thought- I thought it was good, but obviously <{pointing at Dave}> it didn't impress you.

<Dave> Will we go and grab a burger, will we?

<S3M> I think so.

<Dave> Sweet.

<S3M> Not a bother. Take care @@@

**RP-35-IE**

1. <Sarah> <enthusiastically> So. What did you think?
2. <SS2M> I thought it was brilliant!
3. <Sarah> Really?
4. <SS2M> Yeah! I thought it was fascinating.
5. <Sarah> Oh I don't know. D'you not? I thought it was very predictable to be honest.
6. <SS2M> Ah! Well, yeah but I mean you have to remember. I mean, it's- it's a film about, you know, the guys who made Facebook. I mean, how do you make that subject interesting, you know so you have to- you have to kind of Hollywood it up a bit.
7. <Sarah> I don't know.
8. <SS2M> I thought that beyond THAT there's a lot of interesting things in it.
9. <Sarah> Ehm... I mean the acting, the acting was good, definitely but I just thought it was just left instead of- I got a feeling of "so what?" at the end, you know. I thought it was very predictable to be honest.
10. <SS2M> Uh! <{as in 'whatever...'}>
11. <Sarah> I just think with the amount of money, the amount of hype it was just...
12. <SS2M> Well, I don't know. I mean, I think that, you know, social networking is gonna be getting more and more important in the way we live our lives and that
kinda thing and I think this film actually does- at least- at least TRIES to kind of touch on some of the issues.

Sarah> Look, I don't disagree with you. I-I absolutely agree that social networking is really- it's everywhere but=

SS2M> =Yeah=

Sarah> =I just think as a film it was pretty disappointing, particularly the ending. I just thought it was...

SS2M> Okay well.

Sarah> They could have made it more of it. We'll have to agree to disagree on this one I think @@.

SS2M> Well, yeah. Fair enough. @@

**Scenario: Licence**

**RP-36-IE**

Peter> Do you have a driver's licence. Have you?

F1W> No! <{facial expression says – no way!}> I have no interest.

Peter> I think I'm gonna get one now, 'cos, sure, it'd help you with a few things, like.

F1W> Like what? Just get your DAD to drive ya @@

Peter> It's cool if your dad's around the place, but, sure like my dad lives over in Galway, sure I'll be down here. I mean, I'm looking for work now. Sure, I'll have to drive somewhere to get to work, like.

F1W> I suppose, but I just have no interest really.

Peter> CAN you drive?

F1W> No. I've never learned. I'd just get my dad to drive me or WALK @

Peter> <@>You're some lazy yoke...

F1W> Ha! @@ It's too expensive. Think about petrol, insurance, tax.

Peter> But, if you have one, you might get a job and you can then pay for things like, I mean, I don't know, I mean, sure I can't rely on people for lift.

F1W> Yeah, but sure, when are we ever gonna have enough money to do stuff like that.

Peter> I don't know...

F1W> I'd have to get a REAL job @@

Peter> @@ I don't know. I can live off mum and dad for another while, but they're gonna kick me out soon... cut me out.

F1W> @@ yeah... No... I don't know... I never had any interest, really. <{shrugging shoulders}>
<Peter> Fair enough. <{shrugging shoulders}>

<FIW> It's too much money. @@

**RP-37-IE**

1. <Andy> Hi there. I went to see about getting my driver's licence, there, the other day.
2. <FIW> Why?
3. <Andy> You kinda- you kinda need one, like, you know.
4. <FIW> Yeah... I have no interest=
5. <Andy> =yeah=
6. <FIW> =it's too expensive.
7. <Andy> 'tis alright=
8. <FIW> =you have to get the lessons, like.
9. <Andy> 'Tis alright, but like, I suppose in the long run, you know, it'd be kinda great, probably gonna save me money. 'Cos, like, I'll need it now. I'll be doing my co-op next year so I would need to be driving to work and... and I'd need to be driving around... like, you couldn't be getting busses or taxis (they'll) cost you a fortune.
10. <FIW> Oh, no. I just get my dad to drive me. It's WAY too expensive @@@
11. <Andy> @@ Oh yeah... my- my father... he'd... I don't know if he'd... give up all his time to be driving me around the place now.
12. <FIW> I know but sure even think about nowadays how many lessons would you have to pay for before you can even get your licence...
13. <Andy> Yeah... it's a bit of a (dose) alright, but=
14. <FIW> =it's gonna be SO expensive.
15. <Andy> hm=
16. <FIW> =and then petrol, insurance, tax...
17. <Andy> Yeah.
18. <FIW> Not to mind actually BUYING the car.
19. <Andy> My father, he'd insure me on the car like for what, three months or that, but...
20. <FIW> Oh, so you're gonna go in your DAD's car.
21. <Andy> It would get me kinda started, d'ya know.
22. <FIW> Yeah <{nodding}>
23. <Andy> If I get the provisional, then... hopefully to get the full licence it'll be- that would be the right job THEN.
24. <FIW> Yeah. No... I've- I have no interest in learning to drive... it's just too expensive @@@
<Andy> You might change your mind about it in the future then.

<F1W> But, sure, the buses they're grand, like. I use the buses at the moment, like. To get to college and stuff and it's grand.

<Andy> But what if you wanted to like... if you wanted to go somewhere the buses didn't go.

<F1W> Like where? @@

<Andy> Like ehm... if you're heading out now to... <{thinking}>  

<F1W> I just get one of the lads to drive.

<Andy> <{Smiling}> But, sure...

<F1W> ‘Cos then, as well, if you're driving, like, you can't have a drink, you're like... you know...

<Andy> Yeah, but...

<F1W> You should be all SENSIBLE @@

<Andy> But ehm... but sure like if you're... you'd need to be driving, like, or else you need other people to drive you. It'd actually be fair handy for you if I was driving, ‘cos then I'd be able to drive you places.

<F1W> Exactly. You learn so @@@

<Andy> @@@

<F1W> And I'll bob a lift @@@

<Andy> @@

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RP-38-IE

1 <Martina> Hiya.
2 <F2W> Hiya.
3 <Martina> Ehm... I was getting like ehm... I got my driver's theory just there?
4 <F2W> That's brilliant.
5 <Martina> Yeah, I'm delighted @@
6 <F2W> Nice one.
7 <Martina> ‘Cos I failed in the first one. Did I tell you that? Ehm... but yeah... no, I'm delighted now and hopefully I'll be able to get the licence.
8 <F2W> Why would you want a licence? Why do you actually want to drive?
9 <Martina> Why do I want to drive?
10 <F2W> Mhm.
11 <Martina> Because, like=
12 <F2W> =It's a hassle.
<Martina> Ah no, it's not.
<F2W> (Do you think?)
<Martina> You get the whole... you're responsible for yourself. You can- I don't need
to depend on my mom like bringing me along.
<F2W> Can you afford it? How are you gonna afford the insurance and tax and stuff?
<Martina> Well, like... I suppose I've been saving up like, d'you know. I have a job.
I've been- all the jobs that I've been kee- I've been having in the last few years
like, d'you know. <@> Babysitting @ </@> and summer jobs.
<F2W> Ehm... yeah. Are you planning on buying a car?
<Martina> Yeah. Well I'm going buy one and like my brother as well we can //share
the car.//
<F2W> //Share it//. Yeah.
<Martina> Yeah. Well, like, hopefully, I'll be able to use mom's car first. D'you know,
like... when I have my licence and then d'you know...
<F2W> And would she pay for your insurance because then we're looking at
THOUSANDS!
<Martina> I know. I HOPE. No... yeah, I hope she'll (you know).
<F2W> But you live, like, really near to college and really near to town so like I- you
know, we're neighbours and there's no way I could possibly incur that expense.
<Martina> Ah but still, like. D'you know just trips down to Lahinch, like. It's so much
handier d'you know put all the bags in the back of the car instead of like you
know going through all the buses and d'you know.
<F2W> If you're sharing it with your brother, are you not going to have big arguments
about who gets the car?
<Martina> Yeah, that's a point there yeah...
<F2W> ‘Cos he (doesn't go to Lahinch).
<Martina> Ehm... yeah, well, he's- he's only in secondary school yet, like, so d'you
know he is- my mum (would put my word first) anyway ‘cos I'm the oldest
@@ Ehm... but, yeah. Hopefully, I'll get the car.
<F2W> Yeah... Well, no, I couldn't be dealing with the hassle and the expenses.
Really, like, the running is really expensive. The cost of petrol is going up and,
you know, we live near college. It's so easy to get into town. I- I can't
POSSIBLY think of a... more hassle. Getting parking in the college? You'd
have to be in at like half eight to get a parking space.
<Martina> I suppose you're right @@ I- I'll hopefully get my mum's car for the while.
Until I have enough money to get me a new one.
<F2W> Mmm. That's great. You've <un> xxx </un>.
<Martina> <{nodding}>

RP-39-IE
1 <Noelle> So I'm studying at the moment for my theory test. Yeah. It's like... it's tough.  
2 I mean, it's... the questions aren't too bad, but, like, two of them are... you  
3 know, they're multiple choice four and then two are, like, tricky.  
4 <F3W> I know. They say that below thirty-five you fail so it's really hard (when you  
5 think about it).  
6 <Noelle> Yeah. It's only five questions.  
7 <F3W> But, sure, you'd like to get the licence anyway, like. ‘Cos then you'd need it,  
8 like.  
9 <Noelle> I know. I mean, you have to. Yeah, because, sure, the transport system here?  
10 <F3W> Oh, I know.  
11 <Noelle> You couldn't rely on it. I mean the transport- the public system.  
12 <F3W> Yeah.  
13 <Noelle> There is no timetable.  
14 <F3W> Yeah. And sure you have a long distance to travel to college every day.  
15 <Noelle> Yeah, that's it. Yeah. Even though I know it's expensive. I mean between all  
16 the cost, but I mean=  
17 <F3W> =Mhm.  
18 <Noelle> It's independence at the end of the day.  
19 <F3W> Exactly. You won't know yourself without it. I would be lost without a car.  
20 <Noelle> Yeah.  
21 <F3W> I would, yeah.  
22 <Noelle> It's like how did I ever do without it @@@  
23 <F3W> Yeah, it's exactly the way I feel. Yeah.  
24 <Noelle> @@@

RP-40-IE
1 <Dave> How are we doing?  
2 <F3W> Not too bad. Long time no see.  
3 <Dave> Yeah, it's been a while, yeah. I'm just... I'm considering all <un> xxx </un> of  
4 getting a driving licence. And everybody seems to have them now. But ehm... I  
5 don't ehm... I... I don't know what to do.  
6 <F3W> I think you're mad. I think you should stick to the bus.  
7 <Dave> Yeah? <@>@Why?
<F3W> Yeah. Greenhouse... all that. Jesus! I think you're mad now. And the expenditures as well.

<Dave> It will give me, like, independence or whatever d'you know. I won't be constrained at home... and=

<F3W> =Probably... Everyone says you would be lost without it BUT these days=

<Dave> It's also useful for getting girls and stuff, like.

<F3W> Do you think so?

<Dave> I don't know. Look at all the guys that have cars. You see them outside the garages and stuff, they're all meeting girls and stuff, you know.

<F3W> Ah:... if you're (looking for that type of a) girl, I suppose. But sure like... you might take her on the bus to the cinema... or on the train.

<Dave> <@> Are you joking me?

<F3W> No, deadly serious.

<Dave> On the bus? To the cinema?

<F3W> I- I never want a car.

<Dave> <@> A train to the cinema!

<F3W> I don't plan to have a car or a licence ever.

<Dave> Really?

<F3W> I don't see a need for it. If you live in the city, you have the bus, sure. Why would you need a car?

<Dave> That's mad. Well like, I- I DO. I- I'm a bit of a country guy myself. I would be moving out into the country in the future.

<F3W> Okay. For you- okay, that's understandable, yeah.

<Dave> But do you think like- I'd- I could buy a convertible could I? First of all, d'you know... For my image.

<F3W> It wouldn't be bad if you had a nice car sure and that, but=

<Dave> =And do you think I'd be okay as a driver? You know me fairly well at this stage d'you know... I've been hanging=

<F3W> Ehm... =I think you're a bit nervous now.

<Dave> Yeah?

<F3W> Yeah. I don't know what you'll be like on the road. @@@

<Dave> Oh... <@> I thought you'd have more confidence in me </@> You're supposed to help to inspire me!

<F3W> I know. I know, but I don't see the reason why you need to get a car.

<Dave> So you=
<F3W> =But //you're getting the bus at the moment aren't ya?//
<Dave> //You're definitely not going to get one.//
<F3W> DEfinite no. No... I don't... think...
<Dave> Okay. Well, thanks, thanks for your- your help anyway. Not that it was much
good anyway, you know.
<F3W> Okay... sure. You asked my opinion.
<Dave> Yeah well... I know. There you go @@@

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RP-41-IE

<Jimmy> So do you think it's necessary to have a driving licence nowadays?
<F3W> For you, like?
<Jimmy> Yeah.
<F3W> Hmm... You live in Limerick city, like. You have access to bus and things. I
don't- I don't think you'd- I don't know.
<Jimmy> Yeah, I know, it's just when I'm going back home then to Galway and: ehm...
I- d'you know what? I hate travelling on the bus.
<F3W> I see, but I suppose you're doing it for so long now. Would you not just get
used to it?
<Jimmy> Hmm... I know, but I- I suffer from that- did I not tell you before, I suffer
from that travel sickness.
<Jimmy> Oh really?
<Jimmy> Yeah, I just- the motion sickness.
<F3W> But you can get tablets for that, like, you know.
<Jimmy> Yeah, that's true. That- I didn't think about that=
<F3W> =And the Galway service is very good, isn't it? The bus goes every hour from
the station.
<Jimmy> Yeah, that's true.
<F3W> I don't think you really need one. And the expense of cars these days, tax and
insurance. Especially for men your age, like, you know.
<Jimmy> Yeah... exactly. I mean I was just talking to mam as well about- about
insurance and she said sure it'd cost=
<F3W> =It would cost a bomb.
<Jimmy> Yeah, exactly.
<F3W> And you have petrol it's now nearly two euro for a litre when you think of it.
<Jimmy> Exactly. I need to get on to the government and say <@> take down the tax
on petrol!
<F3W> <@> I know yeah... everything @@

<Jimmy> Yeah.

<F3W> But sure, I don't know. (Am I able) to change your mind a little bit? I'd say
your happy now about (not) getting a car? Or a licence?

<Jimmy> Well... it'd be... it'd be nice, but I mean... you've told me many good reasons
there why I shouZ you know, why I=

<F3W> =And then there are the green house emissions. Don't even get me started on
them.

<Jimmy> Exactly. To help the environment as well.

<F3W> Yeah.

<Jimmy> That's true. It's just, you know, when I- when I was abroad for a few years
and saw how the other countries=

<F3W> =Yeah=

<Jimmy> =do with the trains. I wish we had better trains here.

<F3W> I know... I know...

<Jimmy> I love the trains.

<F3W> Trains are brilliant. Sure I lived in Chicago for three months and it's like the
size of Ireland and a train from A to B. The whole (length) of the state.

<Jimmy> Yeah, that must have been cool. I think I remember you telling me about
that=

<F3W> =Yeah=

<Jimmy> =before alright.

<F3W> Living in Ireland then, I don't think you need a car @@@ You'd nearly cycle to
Galway sure from Limerick on the motorway @@@

<Jimmy> @@ You could, I suppose... if they allowed you <(TAPE 1 ENDS at
58:53)> to have the bike on the motorway.

<F3W> Yeah, I know.

<Jimmy> That's true. I wouldn't mind. I like cycling. Ehm... so... that's it.

<F3W> Yeah... I think I've changed your opinion on it. <{pleased with herself}>

<Jimmy> Alright. Thanks very much.

**RP-42-IE**

<Anne> Well. I'm thinking of getting a few lessons. I want to go and apply for my
driving licence.

<F3W> You on the road? Are you actually serious?

<Anne> What are you on about? I'll be a WAY better driver than you.
<F3W> You would not.
<Anne> <{demonstrating holding a steering wheel and turning rapidly left and right}> This is you on the road, like.
<F3W> Eee, no! That'd be you on the road.
<Anne> Seriously. I'm petrified in the car with you.
<F3W> Are you actually serious?
<Anne> I'm really serious.
<F3W> I passed mine first time.
<Anne> Well. I don't know @@
<F3W> But I don't want a car though. I really don't want a car.
<Anne> You don't want a car?
<F3W> I have the licence there, but I really don't want a car.
<Anne> It'd be handy for going out.
<F3W> But sure you're grand, like. You live in Waterford city- or Kilkenny city, whatever, you have bus service there, same in Limerick. I- I can't see why you'd need it. Like, I live in the middle of nowhere. //I need to have my licence there in case.//
<Anne> //Just like having my own independence, really.// Just being able to drive anywhere I want.
<F3W> I suppose... yeah.
<Anne> And whenever I want.
<F3W> I suppose my opinion will change when I get the car, but for now I really don't want one.
<Anne> <{smiling}> <very quietly> Yeah.
<F3W> But no. You on the road? Look out!
<Anne> <offended> Hey! @@@
<F3W> Yeah.

**RP-43-IE**

<Sarah> So I was thinking of doing my- of getting some driving lessons and doing my test lately. I think it's about time I got the (full version).
<FF2M> Yeah, yeah. Well, ehm. I don't have a licence or a car. I don't really need one because I live so close to college and that.
<Sarah> Oh, okay.
<FF2M> Ehm... so, I mean it's up to you really like but I'd advise you I wouldn't get one because as I said I'm- I think it's just too much cost but, like=
<Sarah> Mhm.

<FF2M> But, like, I kind of know people who really like their independence like, so=

<Sarah> =That's the thing, yeah. I just feel like I'm tired getting on the bus and I don't
know, we'll finish up in college eventually and I don't know what kind of a job
I'll get and...

<FF2M> Yeah.

<Sarah> I don't know, I just think it's- I think it's about time.

<FF2M> Yeah.

<Sarah> Really.

<FF2M> I suppose the best thing to do is maybe... why don't you, like, call one of
those driving test centres and like get a few lessons. Once you're in the car
you'll see if you're comfortable in it and stuff, like. You'll be surprised, like.
You mightn't even LIKE driving, like, you know.

<Sarah> I suppose. I don't know, I just think it's just- you have to have a driver's
licence. You'd go nowhere.

<FF2M> Yeah. Yeah.

<Sarah> I just always imagine. God, if there was an emergency and there was a car
sitting outside and I couldn't go anywhere I think it'd be pretty...

<FF2M> Yeah, it would be I suppose, yeah.

<Sarah> Pretty scary. But it's a big cost. It's definitely a big cost.

<FF2M> You can drive me home from the pub then as well.

<Sarah> Ah no. <@> ItZ it doesn't work that way @@

<FF2M> @@@

**Scenario: Christmas**

**RP-44-IE**

<Peter> I'm actually sick of this crap. I mean, Halloween is barely finished and you've
Christmas offers in the shops already

<F1W> I love it! <{grinning}> Love it ! All the lights, all the trees, all the decorations.
I just wanna buy it. I wouldn't mind if it was all year.

<Peter> It's- it's- it's only been November now, like. Sure, they've been in the shops
about three weeks. It's ridiculous=

<F1W> =so?! It gets everybody in good spirits. You go into the shops and you hear the
music, and...

<Peter> I'm really looking forward to Christmas but it should be at LEAST December
by the time we start putting them things up.
<F1W> No! there's too much DEPRESSION in this world anyway and it's nice to actually see something happy=

<Peter> =But you need the wait before you get to, you know, the nice bit at the end

<{demonstrating a distance with his hands}> November is just this dark bit of a month between Halloween and December. It shouldn't be Christmas time as well. Christmas time can't be two months long.

<F1W> But, sure, it's a happy time, like. It's nice. Look at the WEATHER and stuff. It's so DREARY. It's so nice to see everything lit up and all the decorations and a bit of excitement around.

<Peter> I haven't been anywhere inside where I'd see decorations. You must have plenty of spare time on your hands obviously, but...

<F1W> @@@ I love it so I go in and buy stuff.

<Peter> <{shaking his head}> No, it's all just marketing. They're just trying to sell more stuff, more (often). I mean, it's always Halloween, <{counting on fingers}> they sell stuff for Halloween, and then they have this big dip in November so they're just trying to find something to sell. So they go CHRISTMAS, it's Christmas already.

<F1W> Yeah, fair enough. I know that they just want to, like, sell stuff, but at least like with all the doom and gloom, there's something a bit... kind of happy and nice about it, like. You get to get presents @@

<Peter> If you can AFFORD them... fair enough.

<F1W> @@ CHEAP presents @@

<Peter> <quietly> @@@@@

<F1W> I LOVE it!

RP-45-IE

<Andy> Jeez. I was below inside on Cruises street there... and they already have their Christmas stuff up...<{shaking his head}>

<F1W> I know, it's brilliant, isn't it?

<Andy> It's SO STUPID.

<F1W> Why?

<Andy> Sure they're like... it's October.

<F1W> So?

<Andy> Like=

<F1W> =You need something to look forward to.

<Andy> It's not even Halloween yet. We have to look forward to Halloween yet.

<F1W> I know but Christmas is nice, like. All the lights and all the decorations and presents and stuff.
<Andy> Ah, it gets me kinda worried about exams (nearly).
<F1W> Why?
<Andy> Sure it's Christmas exams
<F1W> Yeah, but then you think after them you're free to just enjoy Christmas and get loads of stuff.
<Andy> Hmm... but October I think it's a bit soon, like. Late November I think it'd be early enough.
<F1W> I don't mind at all, there's too much doom and gloom around. I love it.
<Andy> I know that but=
<F1W> =it kinda brightens up the place.
<Andy> I know one person. She had a: Christmas tree up since... <{thinking}>
August.
<F1W> Okay, August might be a bit too soon, now @@
<Andy> Yeah.
<F1W> But, like, October, November it's fine.
<Andy> Ah::::... <{shaking his head}>
<F1W> It wouldn't bother me.
<Andy> I can't see it, now. November maybe, but October is just miles too soon.
<F1W> I don't know. I don't mind it.
<Andy> I think you'd look like a bit of a looper if you had your Christmas decorations around the house like.
<F1W> Sure we always put ours up... @@@
<Andy> @@@
<F1W> @@ You never slagged me before.
<Andy> <@@ Not to your face @@
<F1W> <loud> @@ </loud> Thanks a lot @@
<Andy> <{smiling}>

**RP-46-IE**
1 <Martina> Hiya.
2 <F2W> Hey. How is it going?
3 <Martina> So Halloween is finished now.
4 <F2W> I kno::w. Christmas!
5 <Martina> Did you go out?
6 <F2W> We went trick-or-treating.
<Martina> Oh really?
<F2W> We did. We went out and we thought it was fabulous. I just can't wait now to get all the Halloween decorations down and get the Christmas decorations up.
<Martina> Oh yeah... oh no! No. <{shaking head}> I think there is just TIME... it's together, like... I just- I don't understand WHY it has to be so soon. All the the shops... it's just Christmas... it's just uh.
<F2W> <quietly> But it's nice... </quietly>
<Martina> It's such a marketing hype though. Isn't it?
<F2W> I don't know, it's when the clocks go back and it's dark and it's miserable and you know that when the clock's go back you can look forward to Christmas. It's the whole big holiday of the winter. Sure you need SOMETHING to look forward to... (when you've) the exams.
<Martina> Yeah but then it should be like... d'you know. It's just the whole reminder more to buy for Christmas and more presents to get for friends and everything d'you know like.
<F2W> Aww... I think it's magical. I love it. I'd put my tree up now if I could.
<Martina> Ah God. I don't know. <{shaking head}> I just- I don't=
<F2W> =But you don't have to go mad, like. You don't have to spend a MAD amount of money.
<Martina> I know but it's it's- ANNOYING, like. Just to go, you know, into town. Going getting the shopping now for back to college Monday and... like, it's just the=
<F2W> =(Everything in your face)= <{gesticulating by putting a hand in front of her face}>
<Martina> =lights... the light's up, like. It's just a bit too much, like=
<F2W> =You don't think it's all nice and nice atmosphere and happy=
<Martina> =It's a bit annoying though, d'you know like. I just find it <{making a face}>. It's just annoying, like.
<F2W> Why? Is it just the- the marketing thing or is it- do you not like Christmas?
<Martina> No, it's. I don't think- it's- I love Christmas, like, but I just think d'you know... enjoy it while we HAVE Christmas? Instead of dragging it out and then finally when Christmas is there it's like... it's not that much of a big deal. It's like I've had Christmas already pretty much. D'you know... <{shrugging shoulders}> I don't know.
<F2W> No:: I love the anticipation of it. I love going through the winter knowing that it's going to be- 'cos you're finished your exams, you've got a couple of weeks off... it's just- it's the highlight.
<Martina> <hesitantly> It's the highlight but... </hesitantly>
<F2W> It's pretty.

<Martina> Yeah, it's pretty but... it's just the money aspect < > I think it's the one thing it's the reminder that I need to spend, spend, spend. That's just it, I think. It's a reminder more than anything else, I think... just to spend.

<F2W> <Mhm> Yeah. Fair enough. Mhm.

**RP-47-IE**

<Noelle> Jeez. I was in the city... at the weekend... and Brown Thomas already have like Christmas- Christmas tree up and the whole floor all designated.

<F3W> I know, sure it's October, like, you know it's=

<Noelle>=But Halloween is barely just over @@@

<F3W> I know, but I love Christmas. I love all that. I wish (it was) in the shops all year.

<Noelle> Really?

<F3W> Yeah.

<Noelle> Oh God no! You'd get sick of it.

<F3W> I absolutely love it, now.

<Noelle> Then the novelty will be gone. @@@

<F3W> I know but it's the excitement of it. Presents and wrap paper and tinsel! @@

<Noelle> I know, I suppose... but, like, I mean... d'you not think it's a bit of a marketing ploy that... it's just, you know, to get people to buy earlier.

<F3W> Ah, it is in a way, but, sure, kids love it, you know.

<Noelle> Yeah.

<F3W> I'd love if it snowed as well all year.

<Noelle> <@> Really @@@

<F3W> Yeah, I wouldn't mind @@@

<Noelle> I don't know, but then it wouldn't be special!

<F3W> I know...<un> xxx </un> something @@

<Noelle> If (you saw it) ALL the time.

<F3W> I suppose. <un> some =thing @@

<Noelle> Yeah @@ I don't know. I think it's too early.

<F3W> <{smiling and nodding}>
<Dave> Oh it was mad! I was in the shop. I was in the shop, there, yesterday... inside
the newsagents and they have these- these Christmas wrap and Christmas teddy
bears and the snow globes and everything=

<F3W> =I know! They're so cute!

<Dave> <loud> It's not even Halloween yet!

<F3W> I know, but sure like=

<Dave> =And they- and they have the Christmas add on the TV and stuff. Do you not
think that's just mad.

<F3W> Yeah but sure it's- it's good for the parents, like, ‘cos they need to start saving
earlier on, like=

<Dave> =No!=

<F3W> =If they have three of four kids and they all want the same thing...

<Dave> It has nothing to do with saving, that's just impulse buying=

<F3W> =No=

<Dave> =People walk into the shop and it's right in their face and they think they have
to have it and they don't really need it. It's not even Christmas.

<F3W> Exactly. Say you have to get your granny a present. Snowball! Happy days.

<Dave> We're living in a recession and people shouldn't be going into shops spending
money on useless products like Christmas presents=

<F3W> =No=

<Dave> =in October. But if you gave them some actual proper thought, they'd buy
some decent presents come December.

<F3W> Yeah, but it's just on SHOW. Like, you don't have to buy them, you know.

<Dave> No, it's all- that's just all marketing and it's gimmicking. It's like Valentine's
Day and all those other days where you have all these cards and stuff... and it's
absolutely...

<F3W> No, no. Christmas's different.

<Dave> But not in October, though! There's a big difference!

<F3W> Well no:: like... no... no... <{shaking her head}>I can't see...

<Dave> Wh- are you working for a card company or something?

<F3W> No. I work in a shop but I know you have to plan things in advance. Like you
have to order- I know that we order things in July for Christmas=

<Dave> =Yeah, but you still have to take things of the shelf to put all the Christmas
stuff on it, d'you know?

<F3W> Exactly! Yeah, but you just make a room for Christmas products.

<Dave> No, you just... you're being inconsiderate to your customers.
No. No. <{shaking head}> Just let them know it's coming. Reminding them.

You=

=I wish it lasted all year. I love Christmas.

Huh? What kind of a statement is that?

Huh?

What kind of a statement is that?

<@> It's not (I'm just saying!)

Christmas all year @@

Yeah! It would be lovely!

Wh-@@ why do I hang @ out with you at all @@@@@ Why do I hang out with you? @@

Alright @@@

I'm not supposed to drive @@@@@ You-@@@@ you-@@@@ want Christmas all year @@@@@

@@@@ Yeah okay, fine.

This friendship is over. @@@@@

It's absolutely ridiculous, d'you know that they=

=What is?

That- that stores start selling Christmas products in October.

Why, like? Sure it's October. Only two months to Christmas, you know.

I know, but do you not feel- I've always thought it was- that they should start selling it after the eighth of December.

Are you mad? Think about a family with like three or four kids and they're all crying out for presents and there's like thousands euro involved and you'd have a kind of an idea of what they want so you can start buying in advance?

Yeah I know </hesitantly> but it's about discipline as well, you know. I just kind of... don't have to buy into this craze.

If you're organised like me, you'd go in, you know, and you just know what you want rather than...

But it's ridiculous as well about, you know... the: the: the hotels you know saying book your ehm Christmas meal now for your business and in in- October! I'm saying that's way too early!

With the recession on, you have make sure that they have bookings for that day, d'you know...
<Jimmy> Yeah.

<F3W> And you don't want them all on top of each other and people being disappointed that they didn't have a Christmas party? you know?

<JImmy> Yeah, it's true... it's just... it's a commercialisation of a religious festival that I just don't agree with, you know.

<F3W> Did it- I know, I know religion's behind everything, but at the end of the day, like, it's- it's all down to common sense, like and families and things.

<JImmy> It's true. I=

<F3W> =(And would really like to see) Christmas, you know.

<JImmy> Yeah, I can appreciate that as well, but- well... It's just from my own point of view... just looking back and... you know, the- it's about spending the time with the family and not kind of, you know, the presents- and it's about constantly being put in our face! You know, you need to buy this present, ah, go on! And, you know, it's not about that. It's about being around kind of your family, dinner... and you know... that's=

<F3W> =When you're that kind of impressionist person, you know then you'd really buy into that but like if you just- it's grand to see it there, all the decorations, tinsels... you know?

<JImmy> Yeah... yeah... ‘cos I remember just watching a program there by ehm... I don't know why it was but Cliff Richards was talking about Christmas, anyway. And he was saying about the- you know, he was saying well... It's not a bad thing that Christmas is being commercialised because if you want to buy your nearest and dearest a present, well then, if that's a commercial thing, well fair enough. But it- I mean, it's a token of esteem as well, so.

<F3W> Yeah.

<JImmy> Perhaps it's not too bad, I suppose.

<F3W> Yeah.

<JImmy> That's it.

RP-50-IE

<Anne> Oh my God! I was in Penney's the other day and there was Christmas decorations. That's absolutely scandalous!

<F3W> What? Sure it's October.

<Anne> Eee, no! At this stage it was probably the start of September.

<F3W> Ah, sure it's grand, like, you know. You have to start getting organised early.

<Anne> @@@ <@@> Are you actually serious?

<F3W> Yeah, deadly.

<Anne> But sure by the time Christmas comes around we're gonna get fed up with it.
<F3W> No. No. Definitely not. It's just not in the shops every day, like. Just have that stuff in. That'll be gone, then new stuff will be in. Just have it organised for families and things. I think it's a brilliant idea.

<Anne> I don't know @@

<F3W> Do you not see the point of it, no?

<Anne> {smiling}

<F3W> Get you in the mood, like. You know, get you excited.

<Anne> It doesn't. It would get you in the mood, but then when you're out of the mood by the time Christmas actually comes. ‘Cos it's just in your face all the time, like. And they actually played a Christmas song on the radio the other day. I was like... {what's going on look}>

<F3W> Ah, that's probably just a once off thing. I wouldn't say that it's- I like things in the shops. I like seeing like "it's pretty: and excited Christmas!" It's like (staying in) and buying presents... Doing Christ kindle and everything?

<Anne> {shrugging shoulders} I don't know... I don't think that way.

<F3W> No? I think it's brilliant!

**RP-51-IE**

<Sarah> God it's ridiculous how s- how ehm... how early all the Christmas stuff is in the supermarkets. It's just- it's October, it's crazy.

<FF2M> I don't know like. It's all about the spirit of Christmas. It's a nice time of the year so...

<Sarah> Christmas for three months of the year, though? Come off it!

<FF2M> I wouldn't mind if it was Christmas for twelve months of the year.

<Sarah> @@@

<FF2M> It's great like! I mean it's the season of good will amongst all men, you know...

<Sarah> @ Among marketing companies or the big corporations.

<FF2M> {smiling}>

<Sarah> I don't know. I think it's a complete joke.

<FF2M> You're just being cynical. You're being a Christmas scrooge. I don't know, like.

<Sarah> @@

<FF2M> It's nice, like, you know. You get to meet your family and get presents and...

<Sarah> I know that but I mean going into Dunnes like the first of October and there's Halloween and Christmas decorations next to each other it just seems a bit excessive.
<FF2M> I know <un> x </un>

<Sarah> I'm just putting away my flip-flops at that stage.

<FF2M> Yeah, yeah. That's true, I suppose. You know what, I'm not gonna argue. I think if Christmas was on for the twelve months of the year, I'd still be out buying presents.

<Sarah> Fair enough. You can buy me one while you're at it.

<FF2M> Yeah.
Appendix 3 – PL Role-Play Transcriptions

Scenario: Holidays

RP-1-PL

1
1 <Kasia> Ehmm. Can I talk to you for a second?
2 <BB1> Yeah, sure, no problem.
3 <Kasia> Ehmm. Like, because, you know ehmm we're working so hard and it's a way time
4 that we're working here for a long time and ehmm... is it okay if we'd be able to
5 pick up the dates for our weekends or something, like free days, so that we
6 would be able to get like a free day.
7 <BB1> So some holidays, is it?
8 <Kasia> Yeah, something like that.
9 <BB1> Okay. Well, {inhales} when when exactly would you want the holidays?
10 <Kasia> Ehmm... D'you know... {exhales loudly} I dunno, something maybe like two,
11 two days in the whole week that I'm working, you know. Like, free two days or
12 something like that because I work here for so long now and I'm working hard
13 and, you know, I see other people (work hard)=
14 <BB1> =okay. Okay. Well, usually, during the summertime we reserve most of the
15 holidays, well most of the busiest times, we'd reserve those for the FULL-
16 TIME employees? So generally they would get the preference as far as when
17 holidays are taken. So... most of the time it falls on the PART-TIME workers
18 to... fill in the gaps as such so... you'd probably have to work around the
19 schedule of the full-time workers a little bit more if you wanted to take some
20 time off.
21 <Kasia> Ehmm. That's grand. It's okay. Thanks, thanks.
22 <BB1> No problem.
23 <Kasia> Thanks for your time.

RP-2-PL

1 <Wojtek> Ehmm... so... listen boss, like, I think that people who are working longer here
2 in the newsagents should have some kind of priority taking holidays. You
3 remember this guy, he just started two weeks ago and he already went for three
4 weeks holidays. Like, this is mad! I don't know what's going on with that.
5 <BB1> <apologetic> Okay...
6 <Wojtek> What do you think about it?
<BB1> Well, I don't know about that particular case, but generally we would reserve the holiday slots for the full-time workers so generally we would allow people who've been working here for a long time to have preference as far as holidays are concerned. So ehm... When would you like to take holidays? Ehm do you...

<Wojtek> Look listen 'cos I was trying to take a holidays ehm... in... February, but... as I'm working over thirty years in this newsagent's like, some other people who booked their holidays first and like I cannot go! This is mad.

<BB1> Well, okay. I'll definitely take a look at it in the future, but generally I suppose if you if you want to plan a little bit to the future then definitely let me know early about your holidays and you'll definitely get preference=

<Wojtek> =okay=

<BB1> =since you've been since you got so annoyed.

RP-3-PL

<Magda> Hi Mr. John @@

<BB1> <silently> @@ </silently> How are you doing?

<Magda> Ehm. I just have a question. You know like, the way, like, I've been working in the shop for like a long time.

<BB1> Mhm.

<Magda> And... this Amy she's just like working two weeks. Would you say, like, I could be- I could choose ehm... day off like... whenever I want to not, like, look at whatever she picked.

<BB1> Well, I mean you do have some sort of responsibility as a full-time worker who's been working here for a very long time you do have a bit more responsibility than Amy so if- I'm sure if you give me a little bit more NOTICE ehm I'd Definitely be able to accommodate you over- over Amy's days considering she's just a part time worker here=

<Magda> =Yeah! Cos, like, I think, like, she's a part-time worker so she could cover for the full-time workers that are=

<BB1> =Absolutely, that's the nature of the job. That's the way it should be so I'm- I'm sure if you give me enough notice then I'll definitely be able to accommodate you. When- when would you like to take some holidays?

<Magda> I was thinking maybe in... three weeks’ time? ‘Cos I have a trip that I want to go to?

<BB1> Okay, yeah. That shouldn't be a problem. I'll take a look at the roster and I'll try to fit it in. Okay?
<Magda> Thanks a lot. Thank you.

**RP-4-PL**

1. <Janek> Hello boss.
2. <BB1> Hi, how are you doing.
3. <Janek> I'd like to go to... on holidays.
4. <BB1> Okay, when- when were you thinking of going on holidays.
5. <Janek> Eh. I don't know maybe ehm I would- I booked already ehm flight to home it's- it's two week from now.
6. <BB1> <surprised> Two weeks from now?!
7. <Janek> Yeah.
8. <BB1> Okay. Well <{scratching his beard}> There's already Jenny who's booked holidays for two weeks and there's- there's Jim. He's booked his holidays=
9. <Janek> = You know. <{pointing finger at B}> About this. About this problem. I was thinking about it because I know that Jenny already booked the flight. //-/// I think that I stay in the shop longer. I stay here ehm I spend here a lot more time than she and I think that I have- I should have priority to ehm pick ehm time-proper time for my holiday.
10. <BB1> //Mhm.// Yeah. I can- I can see your point definitely, that ehm you do have seniority (on) some of the other people, but they did come to me a little earlier than- than two weeks before they wanted to take holidays so=
11. <Janek> = Yeah, maybe ehm=
12. <BB1> =Maybe in the future if you gave me a little bit more advanced notice I might be able to accommodate you a little better.
13. <Janek> Mhm. Yeah that's the point, but ehm I already booked the flight so I'll get a little- BIG PROBLEM.
14. <BB1> <{inhaling heavily}> Right, I'll=
15. <Janek> = Could you, I don't know, help me to find a solution.
16. <BB1> Okay. I'll- I'll talk to- I'll talk to Jenny and James and I'll see if a... //if they can change their//... but I can't guarantee anything so...
18. <BB1> I'll definitely try though, I'll give it a try.
19. <Janek> Oh, thanks a lot.
20. <BB1> No problem.

**RP-5-PL**

1. <Jacek> Right, so ehm... I've been thinking, right? Is it possible for me to take some holidays?
<BB1> Well=
<Jacek> = I mean I understand d'you know I haven't been working here long enough and there are people who are in priority but if there was time off I could take and d'you know there was no one else... going to take the same.

<BB1> Well, okay, yeah if there's nobody else taking holidays at the same time yeah I could probably fit you in there but it depends when exactly because a lot of people are going to be taking their holidays around the this time so=

<Jacek> = D'you reckon it would be better for me to go and talk to the other guys and find out when they are going.

<BB1> Yeah you could. Well I can- I can give you a copy of the a... the holiday schedule and show you when- when people are taking time off ehm.

<Jacek> <{smiling}> It's good.

<BB1> Yeah. But if you talk to them and see if they're willing to change=

<Jacek> = I'll probably get back to you tomorrow or the day after... with my dates if that's possible.

<BB1> Okay. Cool.

<Jacek> Thank you very much.

<BB1> No problem.

RP-6-PL

<Asia> <{clears throat}> (4) <{thinking}> @@@ ehm... so ehm Robert, I was thinking that it would be a good idea if you could possibly consider that people who ehm work- //who have been working longer in here// could have a priority into taking the ehm... day offs rather than ask who are just like d'you know part time workers?

<BB2> //Mhm...mhm...// Mhm, right... okay.

<Asia> What do you think about that?

<BB2> Ehm...

<Asia> 'Cos it would be more fair for them=

<BB2> =Yeah, I can- I can understand what you mean, you know. It obviously would be fairer to give people who've been here longer first preference when it comes to taking time off but you see the problem is you know the summer's really, really busy for us=

<Asia>= Yeah.

<BB2> And, well I already have two people who have family circumstances and they're going to need to take time off during the summer so I'm not sure
whether everybody is even going to GET time off during the summer. They
might have to WAIT until after the summer to get their holidays.

<Asia> <{inhales as if to speak but stays quiet}> 
<BB2> I don't know how that affects you now but you know...

<Asia> Yeah, I guess ehm... I guess it would be a good idea but then ehm... Yeah, you
are totally right but ehm then at the same time you need to consider the ehm...
background and ehm... like neceSSIties of other //people// who work there for
longer. Don't you think? you know.

<BB2> //Mhm.// Yeah, well if it was just a situation of everybody was equal and
everybody could have time of then I would certainly give the people who have
been here longest, and most loyal, have given the most to the company a time
off. That would be no problem at all but I think it's only fair that if people have
a REAL reason to have to have time off during the summer that they get the
priority? and then maybe the rest of you?

<Asia> <{nodding}> Yeah.

<BB2> Maybe take time off after the summer or even just before the summer or after
the summer. I think that is...d'you think that might work for=

<Asia> =Yeah, kind of=

<BB2>== For yourself and maybe some of the others?

<Asia> Yeah, like. I think we might achieve some kind of balance. Don't you think?
Like.

<BB2> Right. Yeah.

<Asia> //If we discuss it...//

<BB2> //We can try and work// it out. I can talk to the other two that have the- the kind
of the real ehm urgent circumstances and ehm maybe we can all sit down
together and talk about it and we could see...

<Asia> Yeah, that would be perfect if //we could do it, like, some day in the future.//

<BB2> //If there's something we could work out?// We might be able to squeeze one
more person in for holidays during the summer.

<Asia> Yeah. Sounds perfect for me.

<BB2> Yeah?

<Asia> <{nodding}> Mhm.

<BB2> Okay. Great.

RP-7-PL

<Radek> I've been thinking lately about ehm getting time off and ehm how it works in-
in our news- newsagents.

<BB2> Mhm. Mhm. Right.
<Radek> Yeah.

<BB2> Ehm... basically what I normally do is I give the people <{gesticulating ‘up’}> who've been here the longest preference so people who've served the longest in the newsagents I give them priority for booking time off during the summer and stuff like that but this year I'm going to have to change things just a little bit because we have two members of staff and, for family reasons, they need time off during the summer so they're going to get the priority. And then unfortunately I'll only be able to give one other person time off during the summer because we're really busy as you know=

<Radek> =Yeah=

<BB2> =during the summer so it'll- it's going to be difficult to kind of get all of you to agree to allow that one person to get the time off and instead you might have to take time off <{gesticulating before and after}> just before the summer or just after? And I'm just wondering how would that work for you? <{gesticulating ‘so-so’}>

<Radek> <hesitantly> Okay </hesitantly> and what- what would you say if I- if I for example talk to the other people and we- we will come up with a: with some agreement.

<BB2> Mhm.

<Radek> Maybe somebody else would be willing to give up this time off during the summer and maybe I could take it then?

<BB2> Ri::ght, okay. Well if- if you want to just discuss it with the other people that work here and as long as you get their agreement, I'm- I'm happy to just give that one person the time off. If everybody else is happy, then I'm happy to do it as well. But those other two people they HAVE TO have the time off because it's a kind of a serious family situation so it's=

<Radek> =Okay, I understand that=

<BB2> =it's only fair=

<Radek> =if it's family.//That's fine// yeah.

<BB2> //Yeah, exactly.// Plus, I think, you know, a lot of people want the time off during the summer but surely it's not going to kill them if they take time off in May or September instead.

<Radek> Yeah, yeah.

<BB2> So do you think that would work?

<Radek> Yeah yeah.

<BB2> Okay so YOU talk to the rest of them and get back to me and then we can- I can just confirm once you give me an answer then I can confirm it with everybody else and we can organise it. Is that alright?

<Radek> Yeah. That sounds perfect.
<BB2> Perfect. Great.
<RP-8-PL>
Jurek: I'm actually thinking of organising some holidays, you know ehm... like, not
to- it's pretty soon and ehm... I was just wondering, you know, what kind of
dates I could possibly, you know, fit that into so=

<BB2> =Right=
<Jurek> = you know, we could work it out, in terms of, you know, scheduling my
work and so...

<BB2> Mhm. Okay, when- when were you thinking of taking your holidays?
<Jurek> I haven't booked anything. I've just looked at some offers so ehm... probably
end of May. Just, just, you know...

<BB2> Okay.

<Jurek> Going for a week so, you know=
<BB2> =So kind of the last week in May, is it?

<Jurek> Yeah, the last- the last week of May...
<BB2> Well that- that should be okay ehm... you see. We've a bit of a situation this
year.

<Jurek> Yeah.

<BB2> Ehm... normally, there wouldn't be any problem in- in a few people taking
holidays during the summer.

<Jurek> Yeah. Yeah.

<BB2> Ehm... and I always give priority to people who've been here the longest

<Jurek> Yeah.

<BB2> 'Cos it's only fair. Ehm... but this year two of the workers here have come to
me and they actually have kind of a family issue.

<Jurek> Yeah...

<BB2> And they're gonna have to go ehm... they're gonna have to leave the country
during the summer for- for two weeks each so ehm... So unfortunately- then
obviously the newsagent's is really, really busy during the summer=

<Jurek> =Yeah. No, I do understand.

<BB2> So I'll then have to try and give them priority

<Jurek> Yeah.

<BB2> to go because it's a- it's a serious situation kind of thing.
<Jurek> Alright.

<BB2> But if you're thinking of May, May should be fine because the two in question are kind of thinking of going away in July?

<Jurek> In July, yeah.

<BB2> Ehm:: so if you're thinking May that should be fine and likewise with the others if- if they're thinking kind of May September that should be fine as well. Even June is (approachable) but not too many people can go in June either kind of thing so ehm... If you ARE looking at offers and stuff like that, you could consider maybe June for a week kind of a thing=

<Jurek> =Yeah, I'll have to get //back to you though.//

<BB2> //But early- early June.//

<Jurek> I'll look at something, you know, specifically for the end of May to just make sure everything works out.

<BB2> Mhm. Right.

<Jurek> Time wise and=

<BB2> =Okay, that would be perfect.

<Jurek> And always- there'll be always someone to cover my shift and my work so...

<BB2> Yeah. Perfect. That sounds great.

<Jurek> <un> xx </un> time.

<BB2> Great.

Scenario: Tiger

RP-9-PL

<Kasia> Hi, how are you?

<BB1> Hi, how are you doing? Not too bad.

<Kasia> Ehm:: How was your weekend?

<BB1> Ah, it was okay. Nothing too busy, you know.

<Kasia> You know, I was listening to a lot of radio and stuff and like the media is saying a lot about Tiger Woods and like that's- that's not really they shouldn't be doing that like you know. He's a great fella and they should leave him alone. She, he's supposed to do just like you know he's supposed to concentrate on his- the way he plays not what he's doing in his private life, you know... not what, d'you know.

<BB1> Well, yeah he's, he is a very good golfer, but, you know those kind of scandals are... They- they don't really sho- make his character any better. They don't make him look very good in the eyes of the media and in the eyes of the people. But he is a great golfer on the other hand.
Yeah, but they shouldn't be talking about famous people this way, kind of, you know, like about their PRIVATE life. They should be just, you know, concentrating more of his, like, the way he plays and everything, not like talking about his wife or scandals or whatever like @@

Well professional golfers, they, they're going to be in the public eye so=

Yeah

=I mean being a professional golfer, being a professional sports person you're always going to be in the media and I suppose you should try to keep a clean image=

Yeah=

=BUT, having said that, he is a fantastic golfer, so I suppose, you can sort of let him off a little.

Yeah. <{doubtful or confused look}>

Have you heard about this Tiger Woods case. Like, it's MAD, like! Everyone is talking about him, like! What's going on with that? Like, the guy slept with few- few other women and...

Ah, you know he- he's a @ He's an excellent golfer. He's one- he's of the best that's ever played the game so I think... I think he's got a... little bit of leeway as far as his personal context is concerned.

Yeah, but this is mad like. I've never heard about Tiger Woods before and after he slept with some other girls, like, everyone started to talk about him. Who the f- <{mouths "fuck"}>

Who's Tiger Woods? Ehm... <stunned> Where have you been for the last fifteen years! He's been one of THE best golfers that's ever lived.

<giggling quietly> Okay. You've convinced me.

Well. What's- ehm... I think that the scandal with Tiger Woods, like, it's TERRIBLE! I think they should let him off, like. It's too much, like. He has a wife and I know that he was a bad person anyway, but like they should think about her as well, no?

Well, I've- I've- I don't know, I- my opinion of Tiger Woods is that he's just one of THE greatest golfers that ever played the sport so I think for that alone he should be absolved of all guilt.

Yeah, that's a good idea, actually, yeah.

Yeah. I- I don't think he has anything to feel sorry for, honestly. I think as his statue is one of the best in the world I just, I- ehm... it just lets him- well, it
doesn't give him a licence to do ANYTHING he wants, but the thing he did 
wasn't so bad, I mean...

<Magda> Oh no... I think it was a bit bad, no? Because like he cheated on her but like 
he's a famous golfer but like lots of people... like lots of other people cheat on 
their women- ehm wives and like there isn't- it's not on telly or anything so...

<BB1> Well, I suppose=

<Magda> =I know that he's famous=

<BB1> = Yeah, he is very famous, he's got a very high profile, so... yeah, I suppose 
he'd be in the media a little bit more, but yeah, I don't think- I don't think it 
should be that big deal. I think people should concentrate more on his golf and 
how great golfer he is rather than what he gets up to in his personal life. I don't 
think that's important.

<Magda> <{nodding and smiling}>

RP-12-PL

1  <Janek> Hi boss.
2  <BB1> Hey.
3  <Janek> Have you heard about Tiger Woods?
4  <BB1> What about him?
5  <Janek> Eh. I read something but I'm not sure. Do you know any details about it? 
   About this I don't know... whole thing around him?
6  <BB1> Ah... I don't pay much attention to anything apart from how well he plays golf.
7  <Janek> Me either, but ehm he's very popular in media now.
8  <BB1> Yeah.
9  <Janek> //I don't know. Something happened?//
10 <BB1> //Yeah... I think I saw something// I saw something about it. Yeah. It was some 
   scandal with him and his wife and some floozy from somewhere else.
11 <Janek> Oh. She was cheating her or something?
12 <BB1> Yeah. He was cheating on his wife. He was having an affair with some... ah, 
   somebody. I don't know. I don't know who it was. I don't pay much attention to 
   these things. (I'm a bit kind of)=
13 <Janek> =(because) I- I was curious because I found he is in a few newspapers and a...
14 <BB1> Pf! Ah! I mean, it's a- it's been- it's been plastered all over the place I think but 
   <{shrugging shoulders}> I don't think- I- I don't let it affect my opinion of the 
   man. I let his golf speak for him.
15 <Janek> Yeah. I think you're right. <{pointing finger at B}>
16 <BB1> Yeah. Thanks man.
RP-13-PL
1 <Jacek> Right. (2.0) Ehm did you see all the newspapers... the grieve that they're giving Tiger Woods and all.
2 <BB1> Ah, <S starts laughing in the background> <@@> They should just leave the man alone!
3 <Jacek> They should, shouldn't they?
4 <BB1> Yeah!
5 <Jacek> I mean, seriously.
6 <BB1> They should definitely leave him alone!
7 <all laughing>
8 <BB1> His golfing is so far beyond. It- It's out of this world.
9 <Jacek> Did you actually- did you know ehm apparently the- all the companies that are pulling him out of his from the- d'you know from the ads=
10 <BB1> Yeah, I've heard about that.
11 <Jacek> They actually- Gillette didn't take him off the posters in Japan and most of the countries that having plenty of mistresses is regarded as high status?
12 <BB1> Ah I didn't know that actually.
13 <Jacek> The man should be. Seriously, they should give him some leeway 'cos I mean=
14 <BB1> = I think- I think they should put him in the Gillette a... in the
15 <Jacek> D'you reckon?
16 <BB1> In the board of you know. Who was it? Roger Federer
17 <Jacek> Yeah, Roger Federer...//and Thierry Henry//
18 <BB1> Maybe then just //drop the other ones// and just have Tiger Woods.
19 <Jacek> Yeah, Thierry Henry should go, yeah.
20 <BB1> Yeah! Thie- Thierry Henry is a cheater.
21 <Jacek> Yeah. He's a=
22 <BB1> = I can't- I can't buy (cheater's)-
23 <F bursts out laughing>
24 <Jacek> (I mean) @@@
25 <BB1> Tiger- Tiger=
26 <Jacek> =It's Tiger.
27 <BB1> It's Tiger Woods!
33 <Jacek> Seriously, yeah!
34 <BB1> He's the best golfer. He's world- well, he's not world number one anymore but=
35 <Jacek> = Not for the moment.
36 <BB1> No. No. He'll be back though. He'll be back in the form. I mean he's a- he's a
terrific golfer.
37 <Jacek> They should leave him alone, shouldn't they?
38 <BB1> Definitely! I agree.
39 <Jacek> Nice one. Cool.

RP-14-PL
1 <Asia> Ehm... I saw it in ehm... I think it was last week ehm... I saw it in a newspaper
2 that they're still moaning about Tiger Woods
3 <BB2> Mhm.
4 <Asia> Isn't that ridiculous?
5 <BB2> Were you reading the newspaper while you were at work?
6 <Asia> No, it was after.
7 <BB2> Okay, (no bother). That's fine.
8 <Asia> Come on! I'm a serious worker.
9 <BB2> Yeah, yeah, okay. Fair enough. Yeah, I know. It's ridiculous, isn't it?
10 <Asia> //Isn't it? like.//
11 <BB2> //The way they're carrying on// in the media about it=
12 <Asia> It's been... I don't know. How many months now?
13 <BB2> Mhm, exactly.
14 <Asia> Like, six months now?
15 <BB2> And every day they find a way to kind of CHANGE the story and make it
sound even worse.
16 <Asia> Yeah. I mean, like, they keep revealing the new=
17 <BB2> =Mhm, mhm=
18 <Asia> =lovers of Tiger Woods, like. He's just a sportsman. Okay, it's enough.
19 <BB2> Exactly.
20 <Asia> Everybody knows it now, like.
21 <BB2> Exactly, exactly.
22 <Asia> I think it's enough!
23 <BB2> But I think it's really, it's really unfair to him and his family, really. //Isn't it?//
Isn't it? You know the way it's just CONSTANTLY there and they don't get a break. They don't get a chance to=

Yeah, I think his wife, ex-wife deserves it now to just to people be quiet.

Mhm, to be left alone.

It's enough, it's enough, I think so.

Yeah, exactly. And at the end of the day as well, fair enough, you know these kind of things happen, whatever, but, like, he's a brilliant golfer.

Exactly, yeah.

People don't need to be constantly harping on about his personal life.

Yeah.

'Cos at the end of the day, he's really good at what he does?

Yeah.

And he made a mistake. He's a normal person. Everyone makes mistakes. Why the hell should you be tortured in the media because of it.

Yeah. All the time, like. For such a long time.

Yeah.

Ridiculous, isn't it?

It is. Absolutely, but sure... Look, that's the media for ya.

Have you heard all the- all the drama about Tiger Woods scandals and everything lately. What do you think about it?

Oh Go:d, who hasn't, huh?

Yeah.

Jesus, it is absolutely everywhere. It's on bloody Sky News. It's in all the newspapers. Everyone is talking about it on the street.

Yeah. I think they should- they should stop it.

Yeah.

It's just making it worse, I think.

Yeah. Everything it's just all kind of been- okay, fair enough, what he did wasn't great=

Yeah.
But it's all been blown out of proportion, you know. I think it's really unfair not to him, he can probably take it because what he did was wrong and he probably deserves to be punished. But I think his poor family, you know, his poor wife and his kids. They don't need all the crap!

Exactly. They're just exaggerating the negative effects of what he did.

Yeah. Exactly. And it's just too much.

I think it's just the greediness of media.

Yeah, exactly. And it's just too much.

I think it's just the greediness of media.

Yeah. Exactly, yeah.

Yeah. On the other hand, you know, because the media is trying to attack him all the time people—people are more sympathetic towards him.

Yeah. On the other hand, you know, because the media is trying to attack him all the time people—people are more sympathetic towards him.

Exactly, yeah.

Mhm, and move on.

Yeah.

Leave his family alone, let him go back to playing golf and let him deal with the consequences of.

Yeah.

Losing money from promotions and whatever else goes with it and...

Yeah.

Just get over it. But sure... look, we'll see what happens.

Yeah, we'll see.

Mm.

Actually ehm... what did you make of Tiger Woods' sex scandal? I think it's been so blown out of proportion and I think media should just leave the guy alone. Just let him, you know, piece his life together.

Mhm.

I mean it's just— they're so intrusive in your private life. I mean just leave the guy alone just give him a breather.
<BB2> Mhm. It's absolutely ridiculous, isn't it? It's EVERYWHERE you go. It's on
the bloody internet, it's in the newspapers, it's on Sky News. Every five bloody
minutes there's a newsflash about the latest tiny piece of information=

<Jurek> =Yeah=

<BB2> =that you need to know about the scandal. It's <{exhales loudly}> I think it's=

<Jurek> =Yeah, especially with Sky News, you know, they're- they're supposed to be
like respectable centres of <{B nods along}> information but I mean that's just
like yellow papers. Kind of, you know, lowering themselves to the point of
Daily Mail or Daily Star, you know=

<BB2> =Yeah, exactly=

<Jurek> =just trying to dish out the dirt.

<BB2> And get loads of people (to watch it), yeah.

<BB2> Yeah! Exactly. It's just...

<BB2> I know, it's kind of gone too far at this stage.

<Jurek> It's a bit of a- you know- people are just trying to get rich on his back you
know

<BB2> Mhm.

<Jurek> That's really...

<BB2> Definitely. And you'd feel really sorry for his family.

<Jurek> Well I DO feel sorry for his family and, you know. And we don't really know
what actually caused him to get into those relationships.

<BB2> Mhm.

<Jurek> And, you know, it might have been actually a:: ehm some sort of- I don't
know- ehm I wouldn't call it disease but=

<BB2> =@@@@

<Jurek> Well I said a disease actually=

<BB2> =A condition. <{making air quotation marks}> @@

<Jurek> A condition. Yeah! A condition, you know. I mean, we don't really know
what put him- you know, to go down THAT road and you know...

<BB2> Mhm.

<Jurek> But I think people should actually let- just leave him alone, let him just
(rethink) what he did and just=

<BB2> Let him get back to playing golf @@

<Jurek> Exactly, yeah! No, I mean he needs that- he needs that time to kind of keep it
really low and just piece it together...

<BB2> Mhm. Mhm.
<Jurek> And just get his act together and just try to, you know... The last thing he needs is the really negative media attention that he's getting from all over <{B nodding along}>. People are just really trashing him...

<BB2> Mhm. Like, some of it he deserves because what he did=

<Jurek> =Yeah, no. What he did, yeah.

<BB2> But! At the same time I think, you know, enough is enough. It's done and dusted.

<Jurek> Yeah and you know he came out and- well, at first he was kind of trying to cover it up...

<BB2> Mhm.

<Jurek> Just deny... ehm... but then he just you know I mean he came out clean and he said guys I did it you know and I need professional help do deal with that issue and just=

<BB2> =Oh, I don't know if he was that (truthful). He was hmmm... <{gesturing uncertainty}>

<Jurek> Well... I know. I mean he's just trying, you know... He actually, he ehm... he started losing his sponsors so he obviously was trying to ehm you know make it probably ehm not as bad as as- as it is so ehm just to regain some of- some kind of ehm sponsorship, you know.

<BB2> Mhm, mhm.

<Jurek> And I think just you know leave the guy alone.

<BB2> Exactly.

<Jurek> If he wants to undergo some kind of I don't know... THERAPY.

<BB2> Mhm.

<Jurek> Then just let him deal with that and get back.

<BB2> I'm sure we=

<Jurek> ='Cos he's done SO MUCH for golf, you know, it's not only in America, it's- people love him all over for his actually golf-playing skills not for his personal life.

<BB2> Hopefully in the next few weeks it'll just disappear into the background.

<Jurek> Yeah! Kind of, you know, fade away and just- there'll be something else.

<BB2> Someone new.

<Jurek> Yeah! Something new, you know, where people can cling on and...

<BB2> Shrugging shoulders

Scenario: Party
**RP-17-PL**

1. <SS1M> Well, how are you doing?
2. <Magda> Hi, how are you?
3. <SS1M> Good, how are you?
4. <Magda> Oh, this party is very boring, don't you think so?
5. <SS1M> Oh man, totally. It really is. <{smiling}> It sucks! @@
6. <Magda> @ Yes! I wish I didn't come here actually but it's my friend birthday so I had to?
7. <SS1M> Exactly, you can't miss that otherwise you're a bad friend.
8. <Magda> @@ yeah. So... do you think, like, what time do you think it will finish or...
9. <SS1M> I thought there's people leaving already although you can't leave too early. It wouldn't look too good.
10. <Magda> No, no @@
11. <SS1M> Give it another half hour, three quarters of an hour. See how it goes.
12. <Magda> Yeah, maybe I'll stay a bit longer and then I'll just go, yeah?
13. <SS1M> Cool, sounds good.

**RP-18-PL**

1. <Janek> Hi, how is the craic?
2. <SS1M> Good. The party is a bit hmm <{showing a so-so gesture}> What'ya think of it?
3. <Janek> Yeah... I don't think ehm... not- not many activities in here.
4. <SS1M> Ah::! It is //very boring.//
5. <Janek> It's //very boring//. And we can only be drinking and do nothing.
6. <SS1M> That's it.
7. <Janek> It's good that I know you that we can=
8. <SS1M> Absolutely! I was gonna jump out the window.
9. <Janek> @@ I'll stay here. Maybe it- maybe it's get better.
10. <SS1M> Hopefully! (All you) need is some music or some- somebody needs to do something crazy. It's (nonsense).
11. <Janek> Yeah, that's a good idea.
12. <SS1M> Let's go tear up the furniture!
<Janek> @@@ Great! <{clicking fingers}> You first!

<SS1M> Right. <{looking around}>

**RP-19-PL**

1. <Jacek> Man, this party is dry.
2. <SS1M> Oh! This is so rubbish!
3. <Jacek> I swear to God now! <{clutching his head in frustration}> 
4. <SS1M> There's no one=
5. <Jacek> =Look at them <{pointing towards R, B and F}> They're just looking at us,
   sitting there drinking away. I swear to God!
6. <SS1M> Irish alcoholics, the bunch of them!
7. <Jacek> I'm telling ya! D'you know what! We should probably go <{making a}
   drinking motion with his hand}> for a pint=
8. <SS1M> = I think we (could) go for a PROPER pint, this is crap! I can't stand this.
9. <Jacek> Yeah, we'll go to the local. I'd say there is a better craic with the old fellas.
10. <SS1M> Yeah, and less bad language!
11. <Jacek> Seriously! I'll just grab my coat and we can head in!
12. <SS1M> Cool, I'll just grab my shoes and we'll go!
13. <All>: @@@

**RP-20-PL**

1. <SS1M> Hey. So what you think of this party?
2. <Kasia> Ehm... it's oka::y. I don't really like it though.
3. <SS1M> No <{shaking head}> I've=
4. <Kasia> =<@> Look at that person <{pointing towards F}> she's so drunk, like.
5. <SS1M> Oh, she's (doomed).
6. <Kasia> <@> Yeah! Yeah.
7. <SS1M> This is just=
8. <Kasia> = Do you know Michael?
9. <SS1M> Ah. Well, through a friend.
11. <SS1M> That's the reason I'm at the party. But it's bad. It's just really bad.
13. <SS1M> <{shaking head}> Ah. Have you been here long at it?
14. <Kasia> Ehm... a few hours, like. Yeah.
<SS1M> <{looking surprised}> I've been here a few minutes.

<Kasia> @@ Yeah. I'm just standing here talking d'you know because the people are just SO drunk. Like, I don't drink so just, you know, standing over here and doing nothing. Like, I- I thought I could talk to Michael but everyone- he's so busy with his friends so.

<SS1M> He's the most popular man. He's more popular than Tiger Woods like. (He's the man).

<Kasia> Yeah, so I just do nothing basically, like, you know.

<SS1M> Yeah. I think we should get out of here.

<Kasia> Do you think?

<SS1M> Yeah! I mean.

<Kasia> Okay! Let's just get out! @@

<SS1M> Let's go! @@

**RP-21-PL**

1. <SS1M> Well boy what you make of the party?
2. <Wojtek> <{scratching his head}> It's really boring.
3. <SS1M> It is. It REALLY is.
4. <Wojtek> There's nothing to do.
5. <SS1M> Not a thing! No party, no drinks, no food, no people.
6. <Wojtek> Yeah, no.
7. <SS1M> It's the worst party I've ever been at.
8. <Wojtek> Nobody broke anything, no one got sick or anything. It's pointless!
9. <SS1M> @@@@@ @@@ It's disgusting. I've walked into people's sick three times
   <{looking around the floor}> @@@ There's nobody even here. This is just weird!
10. <Wojtek> Really?
11. <SS1M> Yeah!
12. <Wojtek> I haven't seen it. But it would be a good party when people get sick... Maybe they drank too much or something.
13. <SS1M> Ah it is but they're being sick disgustingly!
14. <Wojtek> Oh yeah that's a big difference.
15. <SS1M> Oh man I'm telling you this is- I gotta get out of here!
16. <Wojtek> Yeah, me too.
17. <SS1M> Let's go.
<Wojtek> Will we go for a pint or something?

<SS1M> Sounds good.

**RP-22-PL**

1. <Jurek> Oh man this party is such a drag. I don't know, you know.
2. <SS2M> <{inhaling deeply}>
3. <Jurek> It's just really... I was hoping for like... more fun and it's just.
4. <SS2M> Yeah.
5. <Jurek> It turned out to be pretty dull you know and=
6. <SS2M> = Yeah, same here ... I don't know what the story is.
7. <Jurek> Yeah, yeah. Do you know the people here actually?
8. <SS2M> Yeah I know but you can't really say anything to their face though, can you.
10. <SS2M> You just have to kind of grin and bear it.
11. <Jurek> Yeah. Yeah. I'm pretty- I'm a good friend of the guy who actually organised the party=
12. <SS2M> =<{looking surprised}> Oh are you?=  
13. <Jurek> =so I don't wanna be in his FACE complaining about it so...
14. <SS2M> Yeah, ehm... Sorry, I didn't mean to be disrespectful=  
15. <Jurek> =Oh no, it's fine //you know//
16. <SS2M> //It's just...//
17. <Jurek> I totally agree with you. It's really...
18. <SS2M> Yeah...
20. <SS2M> Yeah. <{biting his lip signalling awkwardness}>.
21. <Jurek> I've seen better.
22. <SS2M> <{nodding}>

**RP-23-PL**

1. <Asia> Hmm... how are ya?
2. <SS2M> Hey, how are you doing.
3. <Asia> Yeah, well. It's not bad but could be better, no?
4. <SS2M> It could be a lot better to be honest.
5. <Asia> Yeah like I don't know.
6. <SS2M> I was expecting=
<Asia> =I'm not sure about the people here, you know.
<SS2M> Yeah, I was expecting more to be- to be honest with you.
<Asia> Yeah, again... stuff, again and again the same stuff, no?
<SS2M> Yeah, well the music's okay. I mean there's plenty of drink but there's a crowd of //assholes here.//
<Asia> //There's something missing.// Don't you think?
<SS2M> Yeah. Yeah.
<Asia> Yeah.
<SS2M> So, ehm do you know any of the people who lives here or...
<Asia> Yeah, just the- the fella who organised it and like nobody else like so yeah, good to meet you finally like some- some friendly person.
<SS2M> @@ Ah well.
<Asia> Finally. At last. Yeah.
<SS2M> Yeah, no you wouldn't – like I know John myself and he knows an awful lot of assholes for some reason. I don't know... and there all here tonight!
<Asia> @@ Are you friends, like, from school or what's the story, like. How do you=
<SS2M> =Ah, well yeah- yeah, like, friends from school. I mean, his mother basically paid me to be friends with him, you know.
<Asia> <{jaw-dropped expression}> Oh::
<SS2M> I mean, you know... he just hung around with me=
<Asia> =Good for you! No?=  
<SS2M> =You know, growing up. I can't really get rid of him now so I don't care because I feel really sorry for him to tell the truth.
<Asia> Yeah. I met him in the university as well. I'm like ah well he's a nice guy but at the same time I'm not sure about him. There's something weird about him.
<SS2M> Yeah. He's=
<Asia> =I'm not sure...=
<SS2M> =a bit of a sad sack. //Yeah. Yeah.//
<Asia> //Yes.// Totally. Totally.

**RP-24-PL**

<Radek> Hey. How are you enjoying the party?
<SS2M> <{looking around and nervously tapping fingers on his lap}> Ehm... not too well to tell you the truth man.
<Radek> No? Yeah. I just- I just came in and I realised it's not my crowd, to be honest.
<SS2M> Yeah. Do you know somebody here or...
<Radek> Yeah, I know the host. He- he invited me, yeah...
<SS2M> Same here.
<Radek> But otherwise I don't think it's ehm...
<SS2M> I was expecting=
<Radek> =What's your name, by the way?
<SS2M> I'm Mark <{offering hand to shake hands}>, sorry.
<Radek> Mark. I'm Paweł.
<SS2M> Pawel. //Pleased to meet you.//
<Radek> //Nice to meet you.//
<SS2M> Yeah. I was expecting something different from...
<Radek> Yeah.
<SS2M> ...this party. I mean it's pure awkward.
<Radek> It is. It is. Don't you think?
<SS2M> Yeah. <{with an awkward expression on his face}>>
<Radek> Well. I think I'll be heading home soon.
<SS2M> Yeah, better off. Just kinda show your face and then get out quickly as possible.
<Radek> Yeah, exactly. I did- I did- you know. I didn't want to:: make him feel sad so I just- I showed up but <{shaking head}>
<SS2M> Yeah.
<Radek> It's not working well for me. Okay. I think I'm gonna be heading home man.
<SS2M> Alright, talk to you later! <{quick wave goodbye}>
<Radek> <{quick wave goodbye}> See ya!

Scenario: Film

RP-25-PL

<Magda> Hey, I knew that it was going to finish like that. Don't you think so.
<SS1M> D'you think so.
<Magda> Yeah, //like//
<SS1M> //Why?//
<Magda> From the beginning he knew that the movie was going to finish like that, no?
<SS1M> I thought it was totally different but still BRILLIANT. Really good.
<Magda> No, I liked it, but just, like, the end was, like, terrible, no?
<SS1M> <doubtful> Yeah </doubtful> I suppose it was terrible <{while shaking head
in a 'not so sure' way}> It could be better.
<Magda> @@

RP-26-PL
<Janek> What do you think about this film?
<SS1M> Oh man, I thought it was cool. I thought the guy that was- I thought it was
brilliant. I thought it would be really boring, just the guy makes Facebook and
that's it.
<Janek> <quietly> Yeah?
<SS1M> But it was good. Really good. <{noding}><Janek> Eh, I don't think so. It's- ehm especially the ending. It's something-
something wrong with it. I- I didn't like it.
<Janek> No? Oh...
<SS1M> I- I'm not sure why, but ehm... it's difficult for me to say but ehm something,
something was- wasn't cool. I- I'm not sure why.
<SS1M> <{noding}> Fair enough. Fair enough. I suppose some people will like it,
some won't.
<Janek> Yeah, exactly.
<SS1M> <excited> I wanna see it again because it's just brilliant!
<SS1M> I'm going back in an hour!
<Janek> @@ I won't. I will just leave it.
<SS1M> (Come on we're going to) see it. Popcorn man!
<Janek> @@ No, no. </@
<SS1M> @@ Drinks! </@
<Janek> @@ Yeah, I can drink but in some other place.
<SS1M> Okay, fair enough.
<Janek> Yeah, thanks.

RP-27-PL
<Jacek> Ehm... So what you think about the movie?
<SS1M> <{exhaling loudly}> I don't know I=
<Jacek> = D'you not think the ending was a bit predictable I mean seriously, like, you
could see that coming from the beginning to- to the end=
SS1M: No.
Jacek: No?
SS1M: Batman didn't invent Facebook.
Jacek: @@
SS1M: It wasn't a bad film, but it's just that the end was just bizarre!
Jacek: I don't know. I just think it was fairly predictable. I didn't like the movie that much. Everyone is so hyped up about it, it's just blah <{shrugging shoulders}> movie.
SS1M: Sure, sure. But then again probably big American audience so it's Facebook we have to go and see it.
Jacek: Yeah.
SS1M: Love, love the Facebook.
Jacek: I don't know. I'll tell my friends not to go and see it anyways 'cos <{waved hand in dismissal}>.
SS1M: I wouldn't 'cos there's a recession on and Facebook needs money so...
Jacek: They- they- <{slams hand on the table}> I bet ya that they have more money than they want anyways.
SS1M: (Unless they-) They probably have. I want some of it.
Jacek: Me too.
SS1M: Let's go get some money.

RP-28-PL
Kasia: Ehmm... what you think of the movie?
SS1M: I actually found it pretty intriguing, actually. I thought it was good. It was different. I was expecting pretty different movie but that was- that wasn't bad.
Kasia: Yeah. Yeah. The ending was easy to like you know to predict and stuff like that.
SS1M: You reckon?
Kasia: Yeah.
SS1M: <{shaking head}> I didn't see that coming at all!
Kasia: No? It was easy like and... I don't know I just didn't like it for some reason. <{looking up}> It wasn't FUunny at all and...=
SS1M: = <{enthusiastically}> I thought it was brilliant! Did you see the guy's hair?
Kasia: @ No ///@@@///
SS1M: ///It was really funny!!
Kasia: No, I don't think so. I was really bored and you know.
Really?
I watch a lot of movies and this movie was so bad. I actually just came to see that movie because Leonardo DiCaprio was in it. And that's it like.
That was DiCaprio?
Yeah. DiCaprio. Didn't you know that?
I didn't recognise him with those shoes.
@@ Yeah. Yeah, it wasn't this- THIS good like you know.
I thought it was awesome.
I thought it was gonna be better. I really regret that I spend so much money for it.
<enthusiastically> (I don't know why!) (That's) the guy typing on the keyboard. That was cool!
Yeah... I don't know. What you think of the match in the movie? It was the best part, like.
Yeah, that was actually awesome. Big explosions and everything!
It's- something happened, you know, but, like, the whole movie was little crap for me.
No!
Yeah, it was crap. Maybe you have a different opinion but you know it's just what I think.
Cool. Yeah, that's fair enough.
At least Leonardo DiCaprio was in it.

Well man. What did you think of THAT movie?
It was really predictable.
D'you reckon?
Yeah!
No way!
From the very beginning I could say that what would happen.
Jesus no. That was totally unpredictable. I mean I jumped in my seat three times and that was only the opening credits!
Have we seen the same movie?
Yeah! This is my third time today!
Really?
And it still surprises me.

Oh God!

It's a good film!

You probably saw like Sex and the City or something...

don't watch crap! <quietly> @@

... No, it... it was really boring, uninteresting=

= No, no! Jeez man. I thought it was good.

It wasn't interesting! @@

I'm sorry, it was.

{both pretend to be getting up to fight}

Oh the ending was so Hollywood man. It's just- you could totally=

Really?=

expect that. Yeah. I mean.

I don't know. I thought it was kind of interesting.

Yeah I mean, kind of throughout the movie you're kind of on the edge of your seat but the way it kind of pans out in the end is really=

Well, I- I can kind of see that=

= I could see that coming totally you know.

Well, yeah but I mean at the same time the lead up to it was so good you could always //<un>xx//

//Yeah!/, the lead up was perfect but ehm you're kind of expecting something more from this guy? But then like take the shortcut and just create you know a sort of ehm... you know maybe throughout the movie he was, you know, really doing well you know building up the tension and trying to...

Well, yeah, I can see where you're coming from alright, but=

= being unorthodox and everything and trying to break=

At the same time-

And breaking with the Hollywood canons and THERE you go...

Yeah. I mean it's hard to kind of make a film about Facebook interesting, really. You know, it's kind of an impossible thing but I think he did it really well. You know. I mean you have to kind of--

Give him credit. Yeah, I would definitely give him credit for ehm you know, for the main part of the movie and the way it starts and kind of un-
unfolds but the ending? I don't know. I was- I was totally disappointed actually. I- I, you know. I'd say I've had totally different expectations for the way it would end but...

<SS2M> Well, we'll have to agree to disagree.

<Jurek> @@ Yeah.

<Asia> Oh, I knew that would happen, that thing. It was going to happen. Mark Zuckerberg, he's a total freak! Don't you think?

<SS2M> Well, he is but that's kind of why- why I find it interesting though.

<Asia> Did ya?

<SS2M> Yeah.

<Asia> I'm not sure 'cos like it was already- the story was already presented over the media, like everywhere so I- I was kinda expecting- expecting it. I knew that was gonna happen, like. That was like=

<SS2M> = Well, yeah, of course. I mean it's a true story.

<Asia> Yeah, but at the same time they could have introduced something new so that the audience would be like <{making a surprised face}> Ooh! They would grasp into the suspension, like wow, oh.

<SS2M> I suppose really it doesn't really have that kind of ehm suspense in it because, you know, it's about a bunch of computer nerds putting Facebook together but I think it was really interesting the way that... you know, they didn't try to make the characters, you know, likable. You know what I mean. They were ALL arseholes.

<Asia> Yeah.

<SS2M> They weren't trying to make them appeal or anything like that. I thought it was interesting the way they're trying to make an ENTIRE film around characters that are completely unsympathetic.

<Asia> I- actually it's a good point that you made it. I- I haven't seen that like. I was just like looking at the- from the perspective of the- d'you know the audience that already have some previous knowledge about the creators of Facebook. But then I- I wasn't really analysing the movie itself. I was like d'you know... okay that's following the story I already know so it's not that interesting as it could have been.

<SS2M> Hm... I suppose.

<Asia> But overall it was good movie. Wasn't it?

<SS2M> Well, I- I thought it was very good.

<Asia> I love the music, yeah.

<SS2M> Ah yeah, the music was fantastic.
<Asia> Really good. Justin Timberlake. Mmmm...
<SS2M> Ph:... we'll have to agree to disagree on that one @@@
<Asia> @@@

**RP-32-PL**

1. <Radek> So you're Mark, yeah?
2. <SS2M> Yeah. How's it going? Paweł, yeah?
4. <SS2M> Ah, yeah, yeah, yeah.
5. <Radek> You're studying together, right?
6. <SS2M> Yeah. That's it. That's it.
7. <Radek> So what do you think about the movie?
8. <SS2M> I thought it was very interesting.
9. <Radek> Really?
10. <SS2M> Yeah.
11. <Radek> I think the ending was a bit predictable.
12. <SS2M> Ah... well. The ending was predictable, yeah. But I thought it was just an interesting way that they made the whole film about //a bunch// of complete dickheads.
13. <Radek> //Yeah.// I suppose, yeah. @@
14. <SS2M> It's interesting that he was able to do that, d'you know and...
15. <Radek> Yeah, that's true but the thing is- I mean I don't enjoy movies when you can actually say what's gonna happen, you know. It's...
16. <SS2M> <{inhales as to speak, but doesn't}>  
17. <Radek> I think that's the whole point. I like to be, you know, SURPRISED.
18. <SS2M> Yeah, but when was the last time that that actually happened... @@@
19. <Radek> Yeah, that's true actually.
20. <SS2M> Well, I don't know. I- I- I kind of thought that this film was interesting. I mean it's not the BEST films I've ever seen, but you know it's interesting, alright.
21. <Radek> Yeah, it is actually. It is. The whole thing- the whole idea... maybe, but I think I- I would choose a different ending... in the end.
22. <SS2M> Yeah, more than likely.
23. <Radek>Yeah.
24. <SS2M> Probably could have done with...
<Radek> So you agree with me, yeah?
<SS2M> <hesitantly> Yeah. </hesitantly> Yeah, I do. I mean, I wouldn't throw the baby out with the bath water but...
<Radek> Yeah maybe. Yeah.
<SS2M> It's- it's still=
<Radek> =Maybe I'm too harsh, yeah?
<SS2M> It's still a good film.
<Radek> Yeah.
<SS2M> It's just- like the ending was a bit weak, but yeah...
<Radek> I always like to, you know, criticise movies. That's my thing so don't worry about it.

**Scenario: Licence**

**RP-33-PL**

<Jacek> So I'm thinking I'm gonna go and get a driver's licence.
<FF1W> <{nodding}> Okay.
<Jacek> D'you know, I've been driving around for a few months now so I think I should be able to pass it no bother.
<FF1W> <{nodding, then shaking head in disagreement}> Okay, and, like, to be honest, I don't really see the, the POINT? of, like=
<Jacek> Because- but you see with the L-plates, the motorway('s going around) and I can't really go too far and too fast.
<FF1W> Okay, I mean the whole concept of driving I'm not=
<Jacek> D'you not drive, no?
<FF1W> I- I just don't get it. <{shaking her head}>
<Jacek> What about d'rain and stuff.
<FF1W> The rain?
<Jacek> <{smiling}> Yeah, you like <{demonstrating holding an umbrella}> carrying umbrella, do you?= <{smiling}>
<FF1W> =I DO. I really like carrying umbrellas.
<Jacek> I always see you walking <{demonstrating holding an umbrella}>
<FF1W> <{nodding}> Yeah, //yeah, yeah, yeah.//
<Jacek> <{smiling}> //Especially in the windy weather.//
<FF1W> Yeah, much better.
<Jacek> Yeah.
<FF1W> Yeah.

<Jacek> <{smiling}> Then it flies away.

<FF1W> Best of luck with it and stuff, I just- I don't really... get why you do it.

<Jacek> <{smiling}> Can I do it anyways?

<FF1W> <squeaking> Sure you can </squeaking> @@ You don't need my permission.

<Jacek> <{slams the table with his hand as a signal of ‘that's it’}> @@ Okay @

**RP-34-PL**

<FF1W> So.

<Kasia> Hi, how are you?

<FF1W> I'm alright, how are you doing?=

<Kasia> =I was thinking of getting a driving licence. What do you think of that?

<FF1W> Ehm... okay, I gotta tell you I'm not a- fan of driving in general? I just, I-

I don't see the point. <{'don't know what's going on' expression on her face}>

<Kasia> <wondering> Yeah </wondering> //What's?//

<FF1W> //But why??// Why do you want one?

<Kasia> I don't know, like. In Ireland it's better to HAVE a car because the roads

(around here) and everything, like, you know...

<FF1W> Yeah, but like you know you can CRASH, it's exPENSive, it's... I don't know

I just- for me. No, the- the cons outweigh the pros kind of a way, you know.

<Kasia> Yeah. I don't know. I was ACTUALLY thinking about it because, you know.

I- I took some, like, driving lessons, like, I took some- like, my dad was

teaching me how to drive and NOW, you know, I'm just kind of trying to

maybe I should learn for the test and everything, the book //and then you

know.//

<FF1W> //Sure, sure.// <{nodding all along}>

<Kasia> And then do the- do it like...

<FF1W> <{gesturing ‘I don't know’}>>

<Kasia> I don't actually know how they do it in Ireland. D'you know, the driving

lessons. D'you know that?

<FF1W> Ehm. I don't. I've never looked into it ‘cos I really don't want one so

<{expression of ‘sorry’ on her face}>@@ //@@@//

<Kasia> <@> //You're not interested in that//, I know!

<FF1W> <@> No:: @@
<Kasia> Okay.
<FF1W> But. Work away! @@
<Kasia> Yeah @@

RP-35-PL
1. <Wojtek> <\{exhales loudly\}> I was thinking about getting a driving licence, you know.
2. <FF1W> Why?
3. <Wojtek> I don't know, like. I was thinking about it for last five years. It's=
4. <FF1W> =But, like, there's no point! You get a car, you get a driver's licence. What do you do then?
5. <Wojtek> It might- it might be really useful to have one, you know. Sometimes when you're looking for a job or something you're required to have a driving licence and ehm... it might be really hard ('cos)... you remember when I was driving car for the first time=
6. <FF1W> =Yes, I do. //Yes I do, yeah.//
7. <Wojtek> //I crashed the car (with a lamp).//
8. <FF1W> And that's why I think <@> you shouldn't get one </@> Now, look. To be honest I don't see ANY point. I- I just think it's expensive, it can be dangerous, it's just=
9. <Wojtek> =Yeah=
10. <FF1W> =It's not gonna work. 11. <Wojtek> It will be dangerous if I will be driving, you know.
12. <FF1W> Yeah. Yeah. I really don't think you should get one.
13. <Wojtek> Okay, maybe I won't.
14. <FF1W> <quietly> Okay.

RP-36-PL
1. <Magda> Hi. I was thinking of getting driving licence. What do you think? <\{F starts shaking head\}> Don't you think it's like very useful nowadays? No?
2. <FF1W> I don't think you should do it.
3. <Magda> But WHY?
4. <FF1W> I just- I've a really bad feeling. I- I really just don't want you to get a car to be honest.
5. <Magda> @ But you know like I whenever you go like want to get a good job or something they always ask you like do you have driving licence or something. I was really thinking like it's like the TIME that I should get it, no?
<FF1W> Get a scooter. Get a bike. <{shaking head}> Don't get a car.
<Magda> @@
<FF1W> Please don't get a car.
<Magda> <@> But I think I really should. </@> No? ‘Cos like=
<FF1W> =<{shaking head in doubt}> I- I- I don't think so.
<Magda> No?
<FF1W> No.
<Magda> Why would you say that?
<FF1W> I just- I- I-
<Magda> So many people have it.
<FF1W> I- I have a feeling you'd be a really bad driver. //I think you're gonna hurt
yourself// or someone else, okay? Just being honest.
<Magda> //@@@@ <@> Thanks. You're a great friend.// </@> But yeah but like still
like, no?
<FF1W> Still?
<Magda> Yeah.
<FF1W> <@> Still! @@
<Magda> I won't- I won't harm myself. I know myself like and I think I'd be a good
driver.
<FF1W> Well,=
<Magda> = I don't drink that much so like I wouldn't be in no accident.
<FF1W> @@@ I was talking about sober but like Jesus if you're gonna mix drinking
into the equation like I really don't know. Listen! If- if you want to do it it's
your own life but I- I'm never getting in the car with you.
<Magda> <{nodding}> <@> Okay. </@> I'll get you a taxi when I'll be driving.
<FF1W> Okay. Thanks.

RP-37-PL

<Janek> Hi, how are you?
<FF1W> Hey, how is it going?
<Janek> Oh shit, I=
<FF1W> =Any news?
<Janek> Sorry?
<FF1W> Any news?
<Janek> Yeah, I'm worried about ehm driving licence. I have to do... ehm... I think that ehm... nowadays life without car it's impossible. I have to do my driving ehm... I have to go to... on a course.

<FF1W> Why do you say that? Why do you want- Why do you want a licence?

<Janek> Look how many cars we got it's ehm life it's pretty easier with car.

<FF1W> I don't agree.

<Janek> Why?

<FF1W> I don't know. I just think it's- it's HIGHLY overrated just driving in general I mean having a car. You don't need one. There's busses, you could cycle, walk...

<Janek> Yeah, I know.

<FF1W> I just. It's pointless.

<Janek> Imagine situation. You get ehm because everyone got a lot of things to do every day so imagine that you get only one hour per week to go ehm shopping. You got a car, you can do a lot of shops and ehm... put it in your car and drive back home.  

<FF nodding all along> If you got no car. Do the same with your bike. Good luck!

<FF1W> Well, I- I mean ehm... not sure I'll burst your bubble or anything but I don't have a car. I go shopping. I just get the bus home.

<Janek> Yeah, that's your point. I get my point.

<FF1W> Okay then.

<Janek> @@

RP-38-PL

<Radek> So listen ehm... I'm planning to get a driving- a driving licence. Ehm... I think it's gonna be useful? for ehm for my job? I'm planning to be a sales person and what do you think?

<FF2M> Well, it might suit you but it wouldn't suit me because I don't- I don't really have a need for a car but=

<Radek> = Don't you think it's useful, you know, to have a car?

<FF2M> It's useful for you and I'm glad you're doing it 'cos I know it's going to be of a benefit for you but not to me. I don't know, I- I can't see any=

<Radek>= D'you think it's hard? D'you think I'll manage?

<FF2M> Ehm...

<Radek> 'Cos I'm not really good with cars.

<FF2M> You may want to do some lessons first 'cos it's pretty difficult.

<Radek> Yeah.

<FF2M> You know...
<Radek> <quietly> Okay.

**RP-39-PL**

1. <Jurek> I've been thinking about getting a driver's licence 'cos you know it's such a pain to just walk back and forth, like. I live so far out and just you know get up for college everyday and just walk down here and just walk back... it's just.

2. <FF2M> Oh yeah man.

3. <Jurek> My legs are just killing me, you know. I just have to get that thing done.

4. <FF2M> I know but I mean the cost of a car is- it's like astronomical and ehm you can always get the bus. Like, the guys do it, I- I do it myself.

5. <Jurek> Yea::h I just I don't I just can't really convince myself to the public transport here. Everything is behind schedule...

6. <FF2M> <quietly> @@@

7. <Jurek> And, you know, you can be stuck in traffic for hours and just cursing the day, you know, the minute you got on the bus. I think, you know, I need that- some sort of independence. You know, just have my own four wheels and just...

8. <FF2M> Okay, well if this is what you want like but I'm just, as your friend, I'm just advising you I think that you need to really think about the cost of it because I mean...

9. <Jurek> Yeah. No, I've been kind of thinking and ehm... and kind of researching and checking with the, you know, insurance companies how that would work out, you know and=

10. <FF2M> = It's gonna be okay, yeah?

11. <Jurek> Yeah, it should be fine ‘cos you know... I'll be turning twenty something so obviously I- I- you know... I wouldn't be paying the- ehm the highest insurance so... I might actually qualify for some kind of discounts off premiums and that kind of thing so...

12. <FF2M> Okay, cool, cool.

**RP-40-PL**

1. <Asia> Did you hear- did you hear that Siobhan just got her driving licence? I was thinking it could be useful, like, to have one. So I'm thinking that maybe I could do it as well. Do you think ehm... Do you know if it's difficult here in Ireland to get it?

2. <FF2M> Very difficult, yeah.

3. <Asia> Is it?

4. <FF2M> Yeah, really. Because, ehm... what they did is they brought in this new thing. It's like ehm... you have to do this pre-test first before you actually do your proper driving test. So it's like <{demonstrating a thick book with hands}> a
theory test so you have to read this big book first and they ask you all the questions on it. Ehmm... it's- it's=

<Asia> =Big book, like?


<Asia> Like, how many pages more or less?

<FF2M> Jesus, I don't know... five hundred?

<Asia> Jesus!

<FF2M> Yeah. Yeah.

<Asia> Are you joking me?

<FF2M> No! No.

<Asia> <{shaking head}> Has to be difficult.

<FF2M> <@> Yeah.

<Asia> Do you have one?

<FF2M> I have it, but you see I got my driving licence before they brought in the theory test=

<Asia> =Oh, yes, yes, yes. Yeah.

<FF2M> Because it's only like in the last two or three years.

<Asia> Ah, okay.

<FF2M> So I got mine when I was eighteen so I was kind of- I got it before it started.

<Asia> Lucky you!

<FF2M> Yeah.

<Asia> Yeah, I was also- I'm also really scary about driving on the other side of the road. It's like ridiculous and then the roundabout... I think I'm gonna get totally confused with it but well, sure I should start, no?

<FF2M> All you can do is try.

<Asia> Well. I think so.

**Scenario: Christmas**

**RP-41-PL**

<Jacek> Did you see that in Dunnes the other day? They have their Christmas music and the crackers and everything=

<FF1W> =I know, isn't it absolutely //BRILLIant!//

<Jacek> It's //ridiculous!//

<FF1W> I've been waiting for it since last January.

<Jacek> It is ridiculous!
I mean, I actually <{grasps her head with hands then swings them up apart}> I just love it so much.

I mean seriously=

=No! no, I - I- want to GET a job in Dunnes so I can just listen to the music all day long and=

Yeah! (@)

Surround myself with like tinse:l.

(Could you imagine) going there from seven until three, five days a week,
//Christmas music// and one CD changing around every hour. You'd LOVE it=

//Aww...// <enthusiastic> It's so brilliant!

For the first week @@@

Yeah, it's absolutely great. What have you got against Christmas man?

I don't have anything against Christmas as long as it's in December not November or October, you know.

Oh no. It could be Christmas all year round for me.

Yeah. yeah. <{scratching his head, then looking away}> Yeah, okay.

Absolutely. @@@@@@/<{covering her mouth with a hand}>

f-f- fine</@> @@@@@

RP-42-PL

<FF1W> <{grinning at Kasia}>

Kasia: Hey. (@) Hello.

Hello.

Do you find it there's a lot of like about Christmas <{F starts nodding vigorously}> like in //October and everything// about Christmas is- that's like, really annoying me <{F stops nodding – looks stunned}> because, like, you know like it's not December yet.

//Mhm. Mmh.// <{quietly}>

D'you know they want to sell the product, that's all=

=How could it annoy you? It's Christmas!

//No, I don't know../

//I mean, oh my// God. Like, Brown Thomas had their Christmas shop- shop downstairs //in like August// and I- it couldn't be soon enough for me. Like, I was waiting outside the doors before it opened.

/Yeah... yeah.../@@ @@@
I'd nearly have Christmas all year! It's just so: fanTAStic! The music, the- the- the- the trees, the- the- the Santa! Everything. //Just. oh my Go:d.//

//Yeah but I// think, like, in my opinion, you know, it's- it's annoying a bit, like, because it's too EARLY, like. They shouldn't be doing it=

<FF1W> <{shaking head in disagreement}> =No:=

=It's okay when they do it, like, the second of September or the fifth of- like the second or the fifth of December or whatever but not NOW. It's too early for that=

<FF1W> =No. No, it can't be too early.

<Kasia> I think so=

<FF1W> =it- it- No.

<I> (I don't know why d'you say that!) @@

Like, what have you got @@, What have you got against Christmas? @@ //It's just fantastic!!//

@ <@> (I don't know why d'you say that!) @@

<FF1W> =D'you know really annoying... //like, <annoyed> you walk down the street and the Christmas music// and happy people (are out)=

=It's about FAMILY and sure people spend money, but it's- it's- it's- it's- it's <{demonstrating like it's a ball hanging in the air}> out, a THING it's it's not just a commercial thing. //It's a THING!!//

//I don't kno:w// ... everyone has a different opinion, but I just don't like it at all, like.

<FF1W> I don't think I can be your friend any more.

<Kasia> Oh, yeah so bye... @@

We are two different types of people. @@

RP-43-PL

Did you notice that they str- sta- started selling Christmas products in October?

<FF1W> <{nodding enthusiastically while Wojtek spoke}> Isn't it brilliant?

Ts::: it's horrible!

Oh my-

Really? How can you say that!

Are you not, like, in HEAVEN right now?

Of cour=
<FF1W> = I mean <{Wojtek starts laughing}> I just... I can't get enough of it
[Wojtek]. I'm telling you. I mean, I'm playing these Christmas songs when I'm
going to sleep? I- I just=

<Wojtek> = Oh yes! Of course you are. I remember you have a Christmas tree for all
year round=

<FF1W> = Yes! Exactly!

<Wojtek> <quietly> Oh my God! <{clutching his head in disbelief}>

<FF1W> Ehm. For me Christmas is every day of the year. It's not just for Christmas,
it's for life!

<Wojtek> It's every day, every single day, all the year around=

<FF1W> =Yes! Yes!

<Wojtek> Okay.

<FF1W> Yes, even when I'm sleeping. It's just it's- it's- Christmas time.

<Wojtek> What- what's the point in having Christmas Day as such if you have
Christmas=

<FF1W> =That's like the MAIN DAY of celebration, you know. And then=

<Wojtek> = but you are celebrating Christmas=

<FF1W> =every other day of the year is celebrating THAT DAY <{gesturing}> in
effect.

<Wojtek> <hesitantly> Okay.<hesitantly> <ironic> That makes sense.

<FF1W> Yes, yeah.

<Wojtek> <{gesticulating that F is crazy}>

<{Wojtek smiling, F looking offended}>

**RP-44-PL**

<Magda> Hey, you know I went to the Dunnes Stores and they already have the- all
Christmas stuff on like.

<FF1W> I know. Isn't it just absolutely fantastic?

<Magda> It's- fantastic? I think it's crazy. Like it's only October. We didn't even have
Halloween yet and they already have like Christmas stuff.

<FF1W> But Christmas is SO much better than Halloween! In fact I think we should
just cancel Halloween? and just you know celebrate Christmas twice? I- I-
seriously=

<Magda> =But=

<FF1W> = it could be any day of the year for me and I would just love it. Love it!
<Magda> No. But don't you think like when you get all your Christmas stuff NOW, you won't really feel Christmas like in December because you already get used to it, no?

<FF1W> But I feel like Christmas all year round you see.

<Magda> No but like Christmas is special time. Come on!

<FF1W> Exactly!

<Magda> Yeah and if=

<FF1W> = and what more reasons to have special times all the time. No?

<Magda> No, no I don't think so. No.

<FF1W> But like the music and the=

<Magda> = And it's =

<FF1W> = and the lights and the foo:d. No?

<Magda> Well, like- But then you feel even like more special if it's only like December.

<FF1W> But it makes me feel special ALL the time.

<Magda> @@ You think so?

<FF1W> Mhm.

<Magda> No, I'd say we should really like tell them to stop, no?

<FF1W> I- I'd be kind of there doing the opposite. I'm gonna tell them to try to open in=

<Magda> = Like in=

<FF1W> = Maybe not in January. Maybe like in February or something like that?

<Magda> During summer?

<FF1W> Yeah.

<Magda> Christmas?

<FF1W> Oh God, yeah! Ye:ah!

<Magda> No:!

<FF1W> Totally! I mean next chance I get I'm on a plane to Lapland for the rest of my life so I mean, yeah.

<Magda> <{laughing silently}>

<FF1W> You can do what you want when I've left.

<Magda> Well I think like the opposite but anyway @@

<FF1W> Okay. We're gonna have to agree to disagree.

<Magda> Agree. Ehm disagree like Christmas shouldn't be in October no.
<FF1W> <{nodding}> We'll agree that we don't agree on=

<Magda> =Yeah.

<FF1W> Okay.

**RP-45-PL**

1 <Janek> Hi, how are you?

2 <FF1W> Hey.

3 <Janek> Tell me, what the heck with all this Christmas ehm in this month. It's not even

   December and you got a lot of Christmas promotions in the shops. Wha::?

   <{shrugging shoulders}>>

6 <FF1W> <{shaking head in amazement}> It's quite amazing, isn't it?

7 <Janek> Yeah, why so fast? Why so early?

8 <FF1W> I- to be honest, I think is not early enough? I- I just Like, what? September?

   October? It's- it's too late! It should be maybe going on from about May? June?

10 <Janek> <{taken completely by surprise}> What?

11 <FF1W> Do you not think October is like=

12 <Janek> =No.

13 <FF1W> Too late?

14 <Janek> I don't- I don't think so. I think it's very early.

15 <FF1W> They're only after turning on the Christmas lights in town last week.

16 <Janek> Two weeks before Christmas is enough to sell products=

17 <FF1W> =Oh no!: But how can you celebrate the joy of Christmas in a week? It's

   impossible!

19 <Janek> Why?

20 <FF1W> You need at least six months to kind of <excited> build up, get all excited...

21 <Janek> <@> Yeah?

22 <FF1W> Save every penny you've got just to spend it all.

23 <Janek> And you can spend it in one week.

24 <FF1W> <{looking puzzled}>>

25 <Janek> It's enough time, I think.

26 <FF1W> No, no... I don't agree.

27 <Janek> If you're trying to spend money it's pretty easy, you know. @ You don't need

   a lot of time to spend it.

29 <FF1W> I'm telling you. If I just- If I had a week to celebrate Christmas I- I'd just- I'd

   shut down, like. I wouldn't be able to...
<Janek> <quietly> You think so?
<FF1W> It's not possible.
<Janek> I think shops offer ehm I don't know, a lot of traps?
<FF1W> Traps?
<Janek> That you... Yeah, that you're buying something- you think it's cheaper but it's not and ehm...
<FF1W> Sure, but that's the commercial side of it. My- my ehm interest in Christmas is- It goes a lot further. It's- it's everything! It's the whole CONCEPT of Christmas!
<Janek> <smiling> Yeah.
<FF1W> No?
<Janek> Yeah. I think from that point of view you're right.
<FF1W> You're the first person I've convinced.
<Janek> Oh.

RP-46-PL

<Radek> Now listen. Have you noticed that, you know, all the shops around the city they start selling Christmas stuff in October. Don't you think it's a little bit annoying? That it's all, like, about making money?
<FF2M> No, no, no. I love it, actually because ehm... I just like... I don't know I think people are just happy it's a nice time of the year and it's just loads of lights-lights down in the city. I just like it, you know.
<Radek> Don't you think- like, in my opinion it's a bit- it's a bit too early. I think they're just trying to, you know, pull the money out of people's pockets, you know.
<FF2M> Ah:, you're just being too cynical=
<Radek> Maybe, I am.
<FF2M> You need to get into the spirit of things.
<Radek> I mean, you're right to some extent it's nice, you know.
<FF2M> I know, yeah @@@.
<Radek> All the Christmas atmosphere, yeah? I like it too, actually.
<FF2M> See? See? @@@
<Radek> <{smiling}> Yeah.

RP-47-PL
<Jurek> You know what annoys me is when they actually put up the Christmas stuff, like Christmas decorations and all the Christmas crap in whatever- the minute the minute Halloween is over, you know. It's- it's just in your face and =

<FF2M> = No, you're missing=

<Jurek> =And everywhere you go, you know.

<FF2M> No, you're missing the point. You're missing the point, like. Christmas is like the best time of the year. I- I wouldn't mind if it lasted all year long because like, you know, it's nice- the city looks nice with all the lights and all that and it's the season of the good will and this like, you know.

<Jurek> Yeah, I think there's more- it's more like thing of the past but everything has become so commercialised and no matter where you go I don't really feel that spirit of, you know, family spirit, gathering together, just, you know, seeing relatives that you haven't seen throughout the year. It's- now it's all about, you know, Christmas rush, presents and... and it really annoys me 'cos actually I actually work in a supermarket so ehm... the night of Halloween they already started stacking up like Christmas trees. I was like Jesus guys, I mean... give it a break.

<FF2M> Alright, okay. I think you're missing the point. It's- it's a nice time of the year and you just need to relax and enjoy it and calm down @@@

<Jurek> Yeah, ehm... I mean, I just, you know... everyone has kind of personal experience with Christmas and take on the topic I'd just say that, I've kind of lost the Christmas spirit and the more I actually, you know, the more I, you know, look around the people and see that, you know, it's just not about having a nice family time? It's just really... trying to- You know, people actually, for Christmas, you know, you try- you try to actually invite your family in and then, you know, make a nice meal, ehm...you know, make sure everybody ehm gets nice present, and just ehm it cost money. Especially these days you know with the economy being so tight. You know people take out loans or credits for Christmas to make sure that everybody has a happy face. It's just... I think it's ridiculous.

<FF2M> <quietly> Yeah.

<Jurek> Back in the day it was you know Merry Christmas to you, Merry Christmas to me and we were really you know... one big happy family you know.

<FF2M> Okay, alright. You've- I- As I said before, you're just missing the whole point. Christmas is about you know people meeting each other and just like, you know, meeting your family and having a good time. And I think that spirit. As soon as the lights go up that spirit starts, you know, and I mean, if Christmas lasted all year round, if people felt that way all year round, in my opinion that'd be a good thing.

<Jurek> Yeah.

<FF2M> I know you've your own personal experience but like=
<Jurek>= Yeah, yeah, it's just a personal experience that I have and you know I have
no really experience that Christmas spirit in my family and say I'm just a
typical grinch. I guess that's what I am and I'm with that and I'm just=

<FF2M> Yeah. Yeah.

<Jurek> I am! I mean, yes I am, you know and just- I'm not afraid to admit that I just-
people I have around me they just have to go along with it I guess <{smiling}>.

<FF2M> Yeah. @@

RP-48-PL

<Asia> Ehm... what annoys me really really about- like here in Ireland and like
Western Europe it's the idea that they're putting all the Christmas stuff really
early and then they're leaving it so long time. Like, have you seen it like still in
ehm... O'Connell Street there are those lamps over there but it's like ridiculous.
That long period of d'you know marketing ehm... how do you call it...
marketing tricks.

<FF2M> Commercialism.

<Asia> Yeah.

<FF2M> Yeah well=

<Asia> Don't you think it's ridiculous?

<FF2M> Well, I personally like I like Christmas because I think it's like the best time
of the year because everyone gets to see their family and their friends and... I
don't know, it's just kinda peace on earth and good will to all men and all that
kinda stuff. I like- I- I just like it. And ehm... I think certain people that don't
like it they just see it as being too commercial or whatever, but- it IS
commercial but if you cut through the commercial stuff you can see that, you
know, at the heart of it it is a good thing and I think all the lights and stuff in
the city it just makes me feel like you know like it puts me in a good humour.

<Asia> Yeah, but d'you know my point is that it would be GREAT to have all those
lamps, Christmas trees and all that kinda things ehm... just in December not
like ehm starting in October and then till now like. It's ridiculous! Plus, it's SO
environmentally unfriendly. //-/\ To, you know, get all those electricity and all
that kinda things. It's ridiculous.

<FF2M> //@@@@/ You're just being a grinch.

<Asia> Ah well. You should just throw it away @@@

<FF2M> @@@
Appendix 4 – IE Focus Groups Transcriptions

IE Focus Group 1st Round

1. <R> Guys, my first question is going to be...ehm...kind of relating back to the role
2. plays and I'd like you to think for a few seconds and maybe write down
3. whatever comes to your head first 'cos it's easy to lose ehm... the first thoughts
4. when other people are talking. So WHAT...what did you think of while you
5. were interacting in the role plays? (...) What were you thinking of.
6. (..)
7. <Peter> Try to appear naturally
8. <R> <{demonstrates writing with a pen movement – all start writing}>
9. <Andy> Do we put our name or... <{on the piece of paper}>
10. <R> No, no, no, just... This is just for yourselves so that you don't forget to mention it.
11. <R> So who'd like to start? (...) [Peter] I think you said something earlier on
12. <Peter> That's all I've got. I was just trying to act naturally and...well, talk to people
13. like you'd talk to people. (...) There's not much to it, really.
14. <R> okay
15. <B1> Self-conscious. Like, the camera, the other people. You, when everyone else is
16. here looking at us. So you're like centre of attention. That made me feel a bit
17. awkward. Just to get going.
18. <Andy> Trying not to be nervous...kinda. And to come across normal rather than being
19. forced, like, you know.
20. <R> Mhm...
21. <F1W> Trying to remember the relationship that you were meant to have with the
22. person, like, you know. Trying to remember that we're supposed to be friends
23. or whatever.
24. <R> Okay.
25. <S1W> Yeah. I was the same. I was kept having to remind myself that I was meant to
26. be a stranger... and... then, after I was thinking as well what I would do if I was
27. actually in this situation to try to be as natural.
28. <R> Okay. So did you think of any past experiences like that?
29. <B1> Yeah...a little bit. I was... I was trying to AVOID conflict.
30. <R> Okay.
As in... not that there was going to be a fight but it was like. I kinda figured... he obviously wants different things to what I want so you've got to try and come to a an agreement without ehm... without agreeing with what he wanted but at the same time... not saying- not getting what I wanted either. It was going to be somewhere in-between.

Although, possibly I could have just gone 'No, I'm your boss', but I think I wanted to give him something...

Yeah <{smiling}>

Did you think of any situations that actually WENT wrong and you were like 'Oh I can't make that mistake again'?

Yeah, I've probably done stuff in the past where I just... maybe... maybe where I haven't even, I haven't even asked. I've just assumed... nah, he'd just say no. So I haven't done it but maybe not like that. I don't think, I don't think I've really been a boss before, really

Okay.

When I was an employee, I had a boss who was quite tight with holidays and so you had to argue always tudu-tudu-tudu-tudu...but... I don't know. We're talking about... my boss has been really friendly so I don't know really see him as very formal so... <{shrugs shoulders}>

Mhm...okay.

I love Christmas so I always lose that battle. It's a conversation I have often

@@@.

Good, so you were lucky. Ehm... anyone thinking about being nice and polite?

Yeah... just to do with the setting. I don't really know anyone here so...

Mhm...

You're initially just going to be... super nice.

Okay.

It depends if you're talking to your friend you'd abuse him a little bit more, like, but... yeah, I suppose you're <un> (4) </un>

Okay, but you spoke with, like, three different people of different status. Did you think of... like, how to speak differently to them?

Not so much, really, no.

No? Just kind of...
When I was looking for the time off, you know, I was trying to make it sound nearly apologetic kinda and that...but for the rest of them it was kind grand, d'you know... just normal enough.

Okay. Ehm...

Yeah, when I was like in the party situation I was remembering... ehm I can't remember which one of yee is it <{talking to Peter and Andy}>, but I had to check if you weren't the actual birthday boy...whoever's party you're meant to be at @@@. I suppose it was politeness in that sense.

Okay. So I don't know if you've worked out what the situations were about... I don't think... the first one didn't go quite well, but ehm... all the other ones they're about expressing different opinions, yeah?

So what sort of opinions is it better to keep to yourself?

With the party you couldn't really say why the fuck did she pick this place...

Mhm...

Like, you could I suppose, but you'd appear extremely rude... especially to a stranger.

Okay.

Yeah, but like when we first went into that situation, I knew immediately that I was going to start hedging... Like, I wouldn't walk right up to a stranger and I wouldn't expect them to walk right up to me and be like 'God! This is crap', you know that kind of a way. So, like, opinions are great. And in the context of the following one, it got me a lot more quick to give an opinion in that context.

Hm..... <to 2> So what sort of opinions would you keep to yourself?

Ehm Well, like... You wouldn't, like, in this sort of situation, you wouldn't say a lot of the stuff I'd probably say to your- d'you know there when I was talking, I don't know which one of you was talking to about the book... but if that was, like, friend, d'you know, we'd probably ended up slating each other, like... because I forgot the book. But, yeah, you wouldn't do it here, you know.

Okay... right. Ehm...

Yeah. I think everyone was very understanding of that ...@@> I forgot your book </@@> @@@

Yeah, it probably would have escalated
Whereas if there was an actual, you know if there was a real fine involved or if there was, you know, a deadline or ...they might be like, oh sugar, I REALLY need it, like.

With the book, like, I felt more like I was talking to was a classmate more than an actual friend... When I borrowed something I didn't give back if that was a friend I'd usually be... I'd sort it out fairly rapid.

Okay. Right. And is it... would it be:: I don't know if you know, if you speak any other languages. Would it be just in English that you'd do it, do you think?

I don't use... I don't speak any other languages.

Yeah, but... let's say if it's opinions and, okay... you're speaking in English but you're speaking with people from other countries... Is it okay to express the same sort of opinions or are there topics that are... forbidden? What do you think?

I mean, like, I've lived in Germany and stuff and people talked about anything. I'm sure there's few things they'd consider taboo, but they'd actually talk about them anyway so I'd talk about anything then.

Okay.

I think we hedge a lot more here... than some other cultures and countries... d'you know like even when...like, I do German and I know when some of the other German people are talking or whatever they might come across slightly more direct. I know it might seem like a stereotype but sometimes it might just be but it, but if there's no kinda malice or you know or bad intention behind it but they might be that small bit more kinda direct whereas I'd be would you mind if... is it okay if you'd... So I think we hedge a bit more.

Okay. Try to think of the first, first feeling that comes into your head. How do you feel when somebody expresses an opinion that is contrary to yours?

Argumentative

hmm...

(You might start) debating.

It depends on the person...like, who they are, like. And who else is there but I might be inclined to correct them and say I don't agree with you, I think it's like this... Or in other situations you just go I'm not gonna get involved. I'm just gonna smile and nod and go yeah, whatever. And THEN remember it and tell it
to my friends later on. I met a guy the other week and he was thinking this...
What a crazy person! So it's like you go and find the people that WILL agree
with you and tell them about... instead of... talking to the person who's crazy.

<R> <[@> okay <[@> @@

<Peter> I prefer to argue it out. Talk to them for a while and see what happens. I have
strange opinions about things so you learn a lot by arguing with people. <un>
xxxxx <un> have a proper hard discussion.

<B1> Someone drinking then would be very different. I find, when I'm sober I'd be
much more ah... that's alright we can all have our own opinions. And then a
few drinks down and everyone's

<F1W> It's only MY opinion @@

<B1> yeah. I'm right. I'm right. I'm right. You're wrong. You're wrong. You're wrong.

<R> Okay.

<S1W> I think it would depend on the person. You know the way some people you
just need to have to say it's okay if we have different opinions and then because
you know you're not- there is no point they're not going to come around to your
way of thinking EVER!

<Various> mhm...

<S1W> So I think that would be a factor for me as well. I suppose that's with most of
your friends. But I suppose then outside of that unless it was overly offensive=
<B1>= and that's it. It's certain topics as well.

<S1W> I think I'd be a person to that would be like grand whatever you want to think
about… You think the sky is green that's fine by me as long as you're not
offending anybody… you know.

<R> Okay.

<B1> But like religion. Religion and politics… you just know from experience that
everyone has a different opinion and you could probably talk about it for five
weeks solid and no one is going to really change their mind.

<Peter> I remember working in a bar and sure that, that was the two rules - no religion,
no politics. But, sure, everything else, like, you'd argue about it. And 'cos you're
working in a place that is this small bar people talk about things and you can
have a good argument with people. You're talking about things and people have
two different opinions and trying to find <un> xxxx <un> different opinions
Sure it always <un> xxx <un> after a while.
Okay. Ehm…so what do you do then? You said you kind of… you agree to… you agree with them, but then you talk about them behind their back…

Yea- well that, that would be, that would be one way that I'll, I'll just. I wouldn't engage in- I wouldn't engage in a conversation with someone when I knew we have, we saw things very differently.

Yeah, I think it does kinda depend on the actual person that you're… that you're talking to. Because you know that some people are open to having a discussion whereas some people are just…it's my way and that's it so you're not even gonna engage, like. 'Cos there's no point.

Although I remember recently I did a kinda funny enough thing but I was kinda sick hearing the same argument over and over and it was, like, FACTUALLY wrong and that people were just picking on things wrong from the internet so I did actually go get my netbook, look up something on the government website that proved my point and showed it to the other person and they were like oh okay, fair enough. So exactly it was actually a media hype, it's not actually factually right. And I was- but I went in and I was like this not a, just to let you know that not everything you read in the paper is the right thing. Which was kinda direct, but I was just sick of it. It was an opinion I heard from lots of different people but it was misinformed… and I decided to go down that route.

I'm curious. I'm curious... Yeah @@

But people didn't believe you until you presented them with FACTS.

Yeah.

So that's one of the things that you need. To support your opinion so… You can't just suck it out of your finger…

Sometimes people, like that's all well and good, but you get someone who just got a strong personality and… they could basically like… say the sky is green and eventually people will go oh it is because…

You said so @@

Please stop talking @@

Yeah @@@
<R> So what do you do then when two people are...ehm have different opinions and
you know none of the sides is going to change their mind. What do you do
then?

<Andy> Drop the conversation and move on?

<S1W> Yeah.

<B1> Start making fun of them?

<F1W> You just have to accept it.

<all laughing>

<S1W> Start taking the mickey and then just kind of move on...

<R> <to F> What did you say? </to F>

<F1W> Just accept it. Like, that's their opinion and they're not gonna change it.

<R> Okay

<Andy> Like, you know. If you're discussing, let's say, the civil war in Ireland you'll
see these people they'll never going to be able to change your mind on it. Like,
you'll never turn a person who's a republican into a freestationary or a
freestationary into a republican. It's just... there's no way possible of doing it so
you just have to drop the conversation and move on, like.

<R> Okay.

<F1W> I think if someone is always my way, my way, my way then you (would) just
kind of make it a running joke about them, you know.

<S1W> Yeah.

<R> Mhm.

<R> So, but are there any general rules or is it everybody just does what they're, what
they're like. You know, according to their personality or are there any kind of
general rules. Let's say that you'd give to a foreigner, for example. You know,
when you're speaking English and there's some exchange of opinions. Do this
or don't do that. What would you say?

<B1> It would depend on the level of their English. Because=

<R> =Let's say it's perfect.

<B1> Yeah, ehm, okay. <{thinking}> Ehm...

<R> Like, they all know all the words and all the tenses.

<B1> Yeah. Hmm...I think you'd probably argue with the a bit and if it was gonna be
getting into an argument or like a discussion like that I'd be very aware of it that
they don't have the English.
<R> Mhm.
<Peter> D'you know if I was to give advice to people that travel to Ireland to England or (I don't know if that would really help them) but I'd tell them not to get too panicked when people, like, start to slag 'cos there's lots of...People here like slag people a lot like=

<F1W> =yeah=

<Peter> =when people have different opinions...and a lot of people could take it up the bad way...but, yeah, that's just the way things are.

<R> Okay.

<F1W> Yeah, I think a lot of it is kinda joking, you know. Just things are said in a... just a fun making. You just have to be aware of those cultural kind of norms, like, you know.

<R> Okay, so people don't take it too seriously. Just kind of relax. Isn't it?

<F1W>, <S1W> Yeah <{Peter nodding}>

<F1W> It's just kinda banter, like.

<Peter> I mean, some of the sentences they might come up quite rough, but I mean... You know, if somebody says Ahh would you fuck off. But, you know, it's not...

<F1W> Yeah!

<Peter> If you, if you just heard the words you would've went Okay, that's... <{looking surprised}>, but (not that firmly, but)...

<F1W> It's just kinda joking, like. It's not serious.

<R> Okay. Anything else to add? (..) About expressing opinions in English? (..) Or the study, the role plays?

<Peter> Try to do it with alcohol, see if it would change.

<{all laughing}>

<B1> Yeah, yeah.

<R> Oh so you think that would be a good study. First of all do it sober and then do it drunk.

<B1> the difference between the pub and let's say a café or like out conversation taking place on the bus at one o'clock in the afternoon and a taxi home at one o'clock in the morning would be very different.

<F1W> @@
<Peter> Opinions get stronger and voices get raised a bit more as well… yeah, it'd be a bit more entertaining I'd say @@
<B1> Till eventually no one's listening and everyone is just talking to themselves bla bla bla @@
<R> That's perfect. Okay. Thank you. That's it. Thank you so much.

IE Focus Group 2nd Round

<R> Okay. This is going to be just a few questions about... the role plays. So what- what did you think of while you were interacting in the role plays?
<Martina> I was a bit nervous anyway. I don't know...
<R> Yeah.
<Martina> It was- it was just not my opinion maybe each- each role that I was given.
<S2M> Mhm.
<Martina> And so I don't really believe what I'm saying so=
<R> =Okay.
<Martina> I don't know.
<R> Mhm. And what were you trying- thinking of at the time?
<B2> Well I was- I handed- well the first prompt anyway being a manager in a supermarket and they're looking for time off. My immediate thing was 'A month off?' Are you kidding? There's not a chance.
<Various> @@
<B2> But you know for the sake of it I think you know neglecting the actual management idea of it and ehm… from a personal interaction you know obviously- well I'd like to think that every person would be able to turn around and say yeah you can have a month off but you know I kind of went with the idea that yeah I'm happy to facilitate that from an interactive point of view I was happy enough to do that. Ehm... I suppose our conversations could have gone on longer but I think that's the kind of relationship you have with a manager, you know. Unless you... unless you, like, know them well enough to like- that you'd meet them outside or you're only going to have two or three minute conversation with them 'cos you wanna get away from them.
<Martina> @@
<F2W> So I found the one's where we were like best friends or whatever that it was a very contrived scenario.
<Martina> Yeah.

<F2W> And I found that quite difficult to- I guess to project. Again, it wasn't my point of view and it was someone I was supposed to be very intimate with. And a lot- you know, how long do you allow the conversation to go on before it naturally ends. I found that bit hard to (get).

<R> Okay.

<S2M> I found it fun. Ehm...

<R> Okay.

<S2M> It's ehm... Yeah, it was good. I actually felt like I was- you know sometimes you'd be talking in real life situations you fake them as well so...

<R> Okay.

<Martina> I tend to agree with the person like=

<S2M> =Yes to xxx

<Martina> Like for the boss definitely I was like okay yeah {nodding} that's a good idea.

<B2> @@@

<Martina> And then the stranger I was like ehm...

<S2M> Like you don't want to offend sometimes when somebody says this person's boring you don't want to say yeah...

<Martina> Yeah you wouldn't agree with that person...

<S2M> People put their shell on. Whereas if you're with somebody that you really really know and trust and you- there's something there already... you both say EXACTLY what you think.

<Martina> You'd be more confident with your own opinion, I think, and d'you know feeding off the other person's emotions or feelings.

<R> Mhm. Were you trying to be nice and polite?

<S2M> No @@

<B2> I think that in being the boss I was trying to sound professional.

<Martina> Yeah.

<R> Okay.

<B2> Ehm... but amenable at the same time. I think it was kind of the situation where I wanted to sound like I would hope a boss would speak to me.

<R> Okay.
So ehm... I don't know if that's what you wanted, but that's what I felt. In the second one ehm discussing the scandals of Tiger Woods I think maybe I don't know like I mean- obviously I don't mean it in any sort of sexist way but I think if it had been a male person talking to me I would have been completely- 'cos I=

You should have heard our conversation

But that's what I- I mean I just think I'm not saying You could love golf

Yeah.

It's got nothing to do with that. It's just simply I was trying to gauge=

Gauge the conversation and say like, you know, how far- deep do I go into this thing with Tiger Woods, like, I mean... 'Cos I can start talking about it- 'cos I know- like I play golf and stuff like that so when I heard that I was like Jesus! You know... We could be here all day! Eh... so I- again, as a boss, I kept the- you know, some bit above board and just tried to interact.

Mhm.

Gauge the conversation and say like, you know, how far- deep do I go into this thing with Tiger Woods, like, I mean... 'Cos I can start talking about it- 'cos I know- like I play golf and stuff like that so when I heard that I was like Jesus! You know... We could be here all day! Eh... so I- again, as a boss, I kept the- you know, some bit above board and just tried to interact.

Mhm.

But I do that with people outside and like I mean that's how I'd talk to somebody about golf. 'Cos I'd be like yeah he's still number one, he's- all these type of things.

Mhm.

And why wouldn't you do the other bit, like you did with me?

You see that's what I and my brother would talk about when I was laughing and joking. That's when it's- it's an intimate with you're family and friends and stuff

Mhm... it would be very different.

Okay so were you kind of thinking more of what I wanted or just kind of whatever the prompt said?

I didn't really read the prompts... I sort of...

I know. That's why it's- I think I will just cross it out.

Oh! Don't! I did read it. I just didn't get the last bit about.

Which was the most important bit.

Was it?
Mhm. Well there you go again. I mean, you know, you go to a movie and you don't really read the review. You go and see it.

Mhm.

Like I wouldn't go to a Facebook movie anyway so I was...

Facebook movie I think what I was focused on the conversation. I wasn't looking at the camera, I wasn't conscious of you and the camera and it was very much just the dialog, you know, as it as it progressed naturally.

Okay.

I was just saying when you're talking to [Martina], you forget everything, you know.

I didn't find the prompts- I don't think I was trying to respond to what you wanted. I genuinely think that in my own mind I would- I would interact like that if I was a manager.

Mhm. So you got just really into the role.

Yeah. I think, again, the manager role is- it's a different relationship- you wouldn't discuss in the same manner, you wouldn't discuss at the same length. Most of the time we're afraid of our managers, I imagine. To some degree. And asking them for anything so... Which I thought you did quite well. I thought it was very kind of sheepish almost. Asking a question that put me in a great authority position straight away.

I think I kind of would be like that anyway. Kind of in a normal setting... so it's not just like the BOSS. I think it's kind of anybody really. But ehm... yeah.

Okay, so all of the interactions were kind of about expressing opinions. In the first one I was kind of looking for you saying that people that have been here longer have the right to choose the dates first. I was looking how you'd express that opinion. Because asking for time off is not the same as saying I think that I have priority, you know. It's kind of- it's different. So ehm... what opinions would you kind of- do you think it's important to keep to yourself or it's better to keep to yourself in English.

In what context?
Within the context of our prompts or...

Yeah. You can say with boss I wouldn't say this... and- or with strangers I would do that...

I think ehm... with the whole Tiger Woods scandal thing it was like, you have to keep it professional anyway, you couldn't make any, like, scandalous... who-ha kind of thing. You have to keep it professional, like.

Do you think it would be small talk topic, though, sometimes?

Yeah.

Oh yeah.

But I=

Still, you wouldn't talk the same way to your boss or somebody you don't know.

Or would ya?

It depends on who your boss is. I mean some bosses like let's say Brian Cowen. He'd probably be very relaxed with his people, whereas another boss might be somebody like...

Really dry...

Very dry and you know, you talk to me about business and you've no other contact with them, except you know... It depends

It depends on your personal relationship with your boss. Mhm.

Mhm. So coming back... what opinions would you keep to yourself?

Well, I mean exactly what it said, he's a great golfer. That's- that was the opinion that I put forward and I would stick to it. I didn't care about the scandal stuff because it's not for me to care about so even if interacting when anybody start to talk about it and I know for a fact that it DID happen, my first (inform) is yeah, but he's still a great golfer, you know. It doesn't make a difference to his professional standing and that's how I'd view him. I don't KNOW him, I don't have any right to impinge on his personality. It's- it's it's- He's a professional sports-player. He's still a GREAT professional sports-player.

I think within certain limits- I mean we don't have a model of authority over people, you know.

Okay.

Unless it's something to do with the abuse of children or something like that.

But if the guy has his own, and a woman, have their own difficulties in a
relationship I don't think it's anyone's presence to be judging jury over it.

Unless it's something really below, you know, what's acceptable.

<R> And what about the other opinions? You know the kind of not as let's say
threatening, the kind of oh the party is boring. How do you approach that?

<Martina> Ehm... well <to S> you kind of brought that up </to S> that it was boring so
I kind of agreed with you that it was boring and I don't know... I didn't bring it
up, you see, so I don't know I didn't bring it into the conversation.

<R> Mhm. And in general? Just forgetting whatever the opinions that we saw today,
what would you keep to yourself? As a rule kind of...

<F2W> I think in a professional kind of working environment you have to be
particularly conscious of the messages that you're giving out either to your staff
or to your colleagues. So, you know, that would be a VERY ehm... artificial
communication environment.

<S2M> <to himself> Yes, yes, yeah. </to himself>

<R> Okay.

<F2W> In my experience.

<S2M> Because it's a constructed environment anyway, you know.

<R> Just a small talk, something unimportant.

<S2M> Yeah. Something unimportant becomes important because it sort of is- it's a
fake means of communication in other words it's a sort of ehm… it's a proxy
way of communicating with people that get's you through the day. You don't
have to talk about the (ugly) things.

<R> Mhm. What about politics, sex and stuff like that? Do you have any kind of
topics… that are taboo that you just don't=

<S2M> = Oh yeah I'm always talking about those two @@

<B2> @@

<F2W> You would in certain environments.

<R> Okay. So it depends on the environment. Yeah?

<Various> Yeah.

<B2> I think even, like I know when I- when I'm working in my part-time job outside
of here I know it's a completely different setting. And when people ask me
what am I doing I'm almost nervous to say well I'm stu- at the moment because
of the way things are I'm almost nervous to say well I study politics. Ehm…

<@> Because I know the next question is going to be oh yea? Well... who are
YOU voting for? And I'm like, you know, it's not that- you know it's not just about and I find I do find myself I keep that to myself as much as possible at the moment. Maybe ten years ago I might have thrown a bit of (fumble), you know I'm studying politics or whatever but… well I- I don't think I would have done it like that, but ehm… I think in the context of society at the moment I'm very AWARE of stating that or… or…

<S2M> Really?

<B2> Or even changing… not so much stating that I'm studying politics but categorically stating what I'm studying within it so if somebody says what are you studying I'd say, you know, politics and public administration looking at North-South relations rather than politics.

<F2W> Hmm…

<Martina> Yeah.

<B2> Because instantly I've removed the- I've removed the idea that it's just politics. I'm actually looking at a specific area so they won't ask me about it. Or they might ask me something more specific what I'm doing because nine out of ten when I do say I'm studying politics I get the impre- I'm pressed upon what do you think of such and such, he's such and such, you know, this and that and you're like… And then you're kind of thinking yourself well I can come back but if I come back they're gonna keep going and I really don't want that 'cos I'm here to work for four hours, I just wanna go home.

<R> Okay.

<B2> @@@ You know. But that's just- in a social setting that's how I'd react to an opinion. To politics anyway, sex I don't know @@@@

<S2M> You'd be talking about that for hours, you would be.

<B2> Exactly.

<R> Oh…I don't think so.

<S2M> <loud> @@ </loud> Okay, twenty minutes.

<F2W> No, no @@

<R> And how do you…

<B2><S2M> @@@

<R> Right, I would like you to think of just a feeling 'cos I'm looking for kind of key words. How do you feel when somebody expresses that is contrary to yours?

How do you feel?
<B2> Argumentative.
<R> Yeah?
<Martina> Frustrated.
<R> Frustrated.
<S2M> Yeah, I share a house with a racist at the moment. That={<S2M>}:  
<B2> Interesting.
<R> What do you feel kind of when somebody says=
<F2W> =Clearly they're an idiot.
<Martina> Yeah. It's like the ignorance of their behaviour.
<R> Okay. Ehm… angry? No?
<S2M> Not necessarily. I mean if somebody has a genuine difference of opinion  
ehm… fair enough. You know, we try and ehm… empathise where they're  
coming from sometimes but, you know, it DEPENDS again on the- on the  
issue. I mean if somebody like peanut M&Ms and you like chocolate M&Ms  
it's much different to if somebody a raving racist or a being Orangeman and  
you're brought up in West Belfast, you know, it's a different- it's a big  
difference of opinion.
<F2W> I think it's teamed up with the age as well. I think, you know, before I  
DEFINITELY would have got angry expressed a contrary opinion, but now,  
you know…
<S2M> I love it now.
<F2W> Yeah, exactly.
<R> So you like a good discussion, yeah?
<S2M> Oh yeah. I like a good discussion. I like a good argument about but, you know,  
an intelligent argument.
<R> <to Martina> Is it the same for you, yeah? </to Martina>
<Martina> Yeah.
<B2> I think as well if I'm feeling argumentative and I get into the argument and  
they're still fast not moving, I do resign myself to just saying look, you know,  
we're just gonna have to accept each other's opinions and just leave it at that. I  
don't keep pressing the point 'cos I don't feel like we're moving so I try to assess  
the situation.
<S2M><Martina> <F2W> {overlapping, unintelligible}
<S2M> {continued from previous line} you know you can have a really good debate.  
Well obviously not only when you've formed an opinion and <to B> as you  
said </to B> they're very <un> xx </un> then, you know, you're wasting your  
energy.  
<S2M> As [F] was saying there earlier. When you're younger, when I was younger I  
did try and impose my opinion on people even though my opinion mightn't  
have been that informed. But as you become more aware that your own  
opinions actually are constructed in any case from your own pervious- the  
baggage you carry and your ancestry and everything else and the influences in  
your life, you realise the other guy is also pretty much the same so ehm…  
<R> Mhm.  
<S2M> So it's good to hear and be educated by somebody else's opinion even though it  
mightn't fit with your=  
<R> =Okay so what would be your reaction to- kind of- you say A and somebody says  
B. What- how do you react then?  
<S2M> Say if it's a very important issue and we're both informed in our own minds  
about it in a good way, it's a good argument for me. I actually get excited about  
it.  
<F2W> Yeah I find it <to Martina> Sorry, go on through </toMartina>  
<Martina> Okay. If it's something that would anger me, if it was ABOUT me that the  
person was disagreeing with and I felt like absolutely that the person's wrong  
I'd definitely press it and I'd go- if it wasn't- If I was kind of separated from the  
whole d'you know discussion, like, if I wasn't included in it, I wouldn't be as  
inclined to press the… my opinion.  
<R> Okay. So if it's a personal topic then…  
<Martina> Yeah, something like racism anyway, it's a- it's just- it is easier ehm… to  
distance yourself 'cos if you think oh that person is just ignorant, they're not  
going to listen to me anyway, they have this preconceived notions about  
whatever it's just- it's easier for yourself. It depends on your mood too, like, I  
suppose. If you=  
<F2W> = Mhm, it would.  
<Martina> If you're like… happy go lucky. Ah, sure… I'll watch TV, I don't want to  
listen to you.  
<R> Okay.
I mean if somebody from let's say Southill is racist and they haven't had the means of good education or a means of a good family life or something like that, that's a lot more understandable. But somebody that's actually had an education and has been exposed and had the facilities and education and the society and all that and still is racist... this is what I (wouldn't accept).

Okay so you think that opinions have to be kind of based on some sort of facts, information, background… yeah?

Yeah.

I think there's a danger to- saying that thought because social context plays a big part in forming your opinions so I mean regardless of whether you have a fact or not folklore is as much a fact to some people as fact is to fact so when- I mean if you think of some of the Loyalists ideas and the Red Hand of Ulster and all that, they've such a prominent ehm… being such a prominent aspect of, you know, loyalist ideals ehm it is folklore but it still plays a fact into constructing their social context and then they use that. And nationalists as well.

Okay.

It depends on- it's not just dependent on fact. I think there is a certain- it's down to belief context as well.

Okay, so it's not that straightforward. It's not like- that you can-

= just develop a fact box and be able to bring it out every time, no. I think you have to take every person's true position into account.

I think that that's true, like. Especially if it's, like, just stay you're mother's opinion on this and then someone says actually I- that's completely wrong, you'd be very defensive and say no my mum think- my mum KNOWS this is right.

Yeah.

Mhm.

But then you realise how silly your parents are when you get older so @@@@

And what happens when nobody is going to budge in, nobody's going to give up their opinion. What do you do then?

I think sometimes it's easier to just take a moral high ground and just say, you know, you're not for turning, I'll just stop here, you know. There's no point. You're just gonna work yourself up and get really frustrated.
One of McNamara, the American Secretary of State former (said) over a
cruciative incident with Kennedy that empathise with your enemy. So see
where they're coming from and, okay, don't agree with them, you know that
there'll be no middle ground but try and get inside where they're coming from
and realise that they have a certain- even if the guy knows himself that his not
right and that he's not gonna back down out of in a sense of losing face or
feeling weaker so just, you know…

It also depends if you're gonna have to have an ongoing relationship with the
person. Like if you're going to work with them or study with them for the next
couple of years, you do have to make sure you don't do anything or say
anything that's gonna disrupt the relationship. And as you say in that instance it is better to take a longer trying to view and reach, you know,
some sort of a compromise. Particularly if the issue is going to keep re-
you know, rising over the duration.

Mhm.  
I think my general response is, if something goes on for a while, like, and I can
hear myself saying it. I kind of look at them and I smile and I go I don't know man, you know. That's- that's.. it's I DON'T KNOW. You know, I'm not trying to say that I know the answer. But I'm trying
to plant the seed that you mightn't know either.

You do disagree to a point and see what happens.

Okay, yeah.

And I've heard myself saying it SO many- and thinking about it. It's there. Even
the other night in work I was doing I- I don't know, you know. Going on about-
they were talking about Fianna Fáil and I went I don't know. You know,
it's a- it becomes that I DON'T KNOW. You know, I DO know < @ >
I DO know < @ >, kind of situations like…

Okay.

So there is a line does it becomes an impressed, you know, I DO KNOW or is it
just I don't know, leave it go kind of aspect.

And there's a point when in some arguments everyone is actually right but
they're coming at it from a different angle. I mean, the Arab-Israeli crisis for
example. Ehm…both very contentious issue, you know, very I mean you know
the issues in this country so I can imagine how tense the arguments are in Israel
and in Palestine over this. And ehm…so, you know, but in Arab history they'd
look at it from a different perspective what happened to the way the Jewish
people would've looked at what happened, to the way the British would look at
it what's happened, to the way the Americans look at what happened, and the
Turks and everyone else. So ehm… there's a lot of rights and wrongs on both
sides.

<R> Mhm.

<S2M> You know…it's ehm… it's not. And therefore if you're in an argument, it
depends on once you're actually aware of your own ignorance a lot of the time.
A lot of people don't look at that. We want to think=

<Martina> =We know it all.

<S2M> If I think that therefore… you know, this is correct.

<R> Mhm. Anything else to add about expressing opinions? Or the role plays?
Anything else you wanted to say?

<S2M> I just think that in general Irish people don't express their opinions
HONESTLY. It's...=

<R> = No?

<S2M> No, no they don't.

<B2> I- I'd kinda go along with that. I think to some degree we express the opinion
that's expected much more than our actual opinion. Ehm... and I don't know if
that's- I don't know if that's coming down to the idea that we have become
much more PC in everything we do or- I don't know if I should say that. I don't
know, you know. I'm not saying if it's for good or bad. I'm just saying that there
is- there is a very strong movement towards being completely above board on
everything and I think people are almost afraid now to express their opinion.
Whether it's good or bad.

<S2M> Some people connect it to ehm... the idea of the colonial master and the sort of
{saluting} and then talking behind their back {demonstrating covering mouth
to whisper to someone}.

<B2> Yes, yeah.

<S2M> But, you know, you're setting the table or doing his work out in the land or
whatever but you know. Yes sir, yes sir, yes sir... and then he's gone and it's
like what a... So it's a bit like that.

<B2> {nodding}
Okay. And are you like that?

I think the Irish psyche is like that, you know. I mean people are different as you say, people come from different backgrounds, they come from different family settings, with different opportunities in life but there is as Irish psyche there because we're all living on this island. Especially if you're here for a long time and you said yourself people=

=So whatever you say, say nothin'.

Yeah, don't always say what you mean, you know.

Or articulate it in a way that you can get across what you mean but not insult other people, I think.

Yeah, I'm quite neutral I'd say

Yeah.

I'm quite- unless it's, you know, your close friends.

Yeah.

You know, there are people that you will leave your defences down but, you know, when you've been out in the world and you've had to tailor your speech and communication ehm... it's hard to get out of that unless it's people you're very close to. And then you'd express your real opinions.

And that can be a good skill too, you know. We can be- we can be diplomatic too. It's like Micheál Martin.

Yeah.

He's clever, actually, you know, Micheál Martin.

I think as well, I mean, the amount of times yes and no would be put together in the same sentence to correlate the same point by an Irish person would be MASSIVE. I- I imagine that even today 'hm yeah no' {while shaking head side to side as 'not sure'} would be quite common.

Okay @@

And I think we do have a nature of avoiding making decisions and avoiding ehm...

Responsibility.

Responsibility by going {shaking head side to side as in 'not sure'} hmm... yeah... no... maybe...
Okay @@

I mean that's just- that's just me. I think there is a certain amount of it now. Obviously people CAN make decisions but I think it's something that they don't want to.

But it's like, I mean, the amount of people giving out about Fianna Fáil even five years ago. They still go in @@

But I mean they were still elected. Nearly with an overall majority in the last elections so I mean... But every second person I spoke to...

Hated them.

Couldn't stand them. Crooks, criminals, all of them. I mean, they were that bad, they were I think two or three seats short for a majority the last time. So you've got this all the time. People never say what they're actually thinking.

Or they say what they're NOT thinking=

Yes, and see what you're gonna think about it.

Okay @@@

Wait to see your response.

Fish, fish for the...

Yeah. Find- find like inlet to your mind and then you go so they kind of go oh what do you think of such? And if somebody says oh I think he's great, you know, they're gonna- they might very well turn around and argue it up but the chances are being Irish they'd go 'Ahh... he does some good stuff. He does this and he does that'. Or the chances are they'd just go 'Alright'. They wouldn't...

But even the question what do you think of, you know=

Yeah, exactly=

I think that in a lot of other countries you'd get the statement, not the question.

Yeah.

Yeah.

This is, you know, terrible! {smacking the table} You know.

Mhm. Kind of 'Communism is BAD'.

Yeah.

Yeah, straight out!

It's a fact.
It's not 'what do you think of communism?', you know. You're running the...

How do you feel about... @@

Irish people would or Polish in Poland, you know, under the communism they'd say 'what do you think of the communism?, you know.

That's correct.

It's easy for me, you know @@@

I think if you ask- like, if anybody asked that question it's normally to get a negative response, like. Anyway, you kind of- automatically, you'd know that if that person would ask you 'so what do you think of this or what'- Yeah, you'd just be 'yeah... I don't know'... {shrugging shoulders}. Definitely there's a negative response, I think, for questions like that. And you're feeding, like.

You're really looking for an opinion.

Yeah.

The same would be if you asked someone did they like ice-cream. The chances are they'd be exhilarated to talk about it. 'Yeah, I do like ice-cream, you know'. It depends on what it is.

But that's an easy topic, you know.

Yeah.

Whereas if it was 'what do you think of the Greens?', you know. But the person asking the question is actually the person who's got this double, you know, I could go either side.

Yeah.

So if the guy answers is 'they're fantastic, they've done so much for this, they've done so much for that'. Then they'd go 'yeah, they have, alright', you know. Whereas, if the answer was 'oh they're terrible, you know, look what they've done with the country', they might=

= They might hate them too @@@@@

I thought that- that gives the person asking the question a huge amount of control. Ehm... much more so than I would have even THOUGHT about.

Mhm.

But I mean it- there needs to- there needs to be an assessment I suppose.

Yeah.
How much control the question can have... 'Cos if you DO ask one of those skewed questions, it IS going to provide a skewed, biased answer no matter what. And it needs to be- there ehm- asking someone to respond to a statement is much easier to do on paper than it is in person.

Mhm.

Absolutely. Yeah.

You get a more honest answer.

That's right. That's why we write all our stuff rather than talking about it, I suppose @@ But that's- that's the way it is. Ehm... you- you can put yourself out there and defend yourself with a piece of paper much easier than it is to do linguistically.

Mhm.

Yeah, I'd agree. I think there's a lot of control in questions. In this country especially, if someone asks you a question people are intimidated a little bit by questions so they, you know, they mightn't necessarily say what they mean, and that kind of a way. As if you asked a question to somebody maybe in France or Germany, your answer you're gonna get would be... But you probably wouldn't get the question, you'd get the statement, I think, before the question.

Okay.

I think, you know. You do not get people saying 'what do you think of', you know, it would be {slamming fist on his lap} 'I think...' And then you give your opinion. And your opinion might be completely contrary.

Mhm.

Yeah, I think if it's a random stranger by the post-box asking you a question which more likely if it's an anonymous answer to give a real opinion, but if you have to provide a name... you'd be much more ehm... weary of giving your opinion. But if someone like a stranger came up and asked you something contentious you'd give an open and honest answer. I feel you'd be more likely to.

You'd be fairly less insulted even maybe. Maybe because it's I mightn't see them again.

Exactly. But it's easier to talk to a stranger. I mean, apparently it's easier to tell your troubles to a stranger than to somebody you know.

Mhm. That's it. Do you think you're finished?
IE Focus Group 3rd Round

1. <R> So. <{clears throat}> My first question is... what were you thinking of while you were interacting?
2. <Jimmy> How to make it as natural as possible.
3. <{various nodding}>
4. <S3M> Yeah.
5. <F3W> I think so.
6. <R> Mhm. Anything else?
7. <S3M> I think you're consciously thinking of what you're saying- I know- I know, you know what I mean, you were actually consciously really actually thinking of what you're saying as opposed to being- <{to Jimmy}> I know what you're saying about being natural <{to Jimmy}> but it wasn't... kind of a flow, you know.
9. <Paul> No. How to react to the other person. It was just...
10. <F3W> Kind of what turns are next...
11. <Paul> You're over-thinking it yourself...
12. <{various nodding}> Yeah.
13. <Jimmy> Which is not natural @@
14. <Paul> Exactly!
15. <Various> @@
16. <R> Were you trying to kind of do what I- thinking what my- what my goals were?
17. <Dave> I wasn't really.
18. <R> Trying to kind of... oh I have to do this because Weronika needs that.
19. <S3M> Initially yes.
21. <various> Yeah.
23. <B3> We didn't know what your goals were... so...
24. <R> Okay @@
25. <Various> @@
26. <R> Okay. Anyone stuck for words?
27. <Various> Yeah.
Why?
Well=
At the start you're a bit nervous, but...
A bit nervous, yeah.
I just because of that task pointing at B3>. I was like... how will I ask him without asking him directly. You know... I was actually thinking on the spot of indirect speech...
Mhm.
That's... my story anyway.
Okay. Ehm... anyone thinking about being nice?
I suppose- Yeah, that was the other thing. You were actually thinking of what you're- again what you were saying so... ehm... There was- you know- even the whole notion of one or two of them were- you were kind of put in a direct conflict in the kind of conversation. Well, not a conflict but a disagreement...
Mhm.
Whereas if it was kind of outside- outside of this scope it might have been- you might have been a bit more confrontational. Well. Not- you know what I mean... punches, but...
>@>@>@@
Okay.
I was trying not to be nice on purpose. I was the boss, but was that- was that one of your aims? </to R>
No. No, there's no aims that you could clearly see in it. There's absolutely- my aim is to get a language sample. That's all. That's all. Okay?
Well I suppose in the (instance) where you were wanted to get kind of holidays of your boss and not kinda say it directly... You'd be thinking about that maybe for a good few minutes beforehand what you're going to say so that you say it in a kind of... not an underhand manner, but you slip it in rather than being explicit... so you might think about it...
Hmm... that's interesting 'cos I didn't put any instruction ask indirectly about it.
But it- ehm... didn't it say... you were gonna- the way you were gonna approach it is by just talking about holidays in general.
Don't say=
=Don't ask him...
<Anne> Yeah, don't ask for holidays.

<R> Well it said- yeah, because it was about kind of exchanging opinions. It wasn't really- it wasn't a request so...

<Jimmy> Ah... maybe that's just what we inferred from it so.

<R> Okay. Alright.... Right, that's fine. Ehm... has anyone thought about, like, previous experiences.

<Various> Yeah.

<Dave> Yeah, I put myself in the shop I work in... when I was trying to get- when I was asking for work- ehm... when I was talking about the Christmas... Yeah, I put myself in the situations I'm familiar with.

<R> Mhm.

<S3M> The whole notion of the party... would you be... ehm...

<{Paul burst out laughing}>

<S3M> I don't think you'd be that sober @@

<Various> @@

<Paul> You see that was the whole- that was the part of the premise that you ARE sober at such a party.

<R> Yeah, but the idea was that you meet random people, right?

<Dave> That was a really good party by the way.

<Various> @ (5)

<S3M> So hard to stay in character, like...

<R> Okay. So, actually, I don't know if you noticed but the main idea behind all of the situations was that you were exchanging opinions. Ehm... and ehm... So what opinions do you think it's better to keep to yourself?

(Jimmy> Opinions where you're asking a favour of someone. Ehm... you try not to be too explicit that you're asking for a favour... you know.

<R> That's a request then, though.

<Jimmy> Yeah... ehm... it's... hm... yeah...

<R> It's just like... you want to express your mind, you want to let somebody know what you think about a certain topic...

<Dave> It's definitely more difficult to give an opinion about a certain person whereas it's easy to give an opinion about a movie or a book or Christmas.

<Jimmy> It depends...
<Dave> But... ehm... to give an opinion at the party about other individuals you should- you'd probably choose to keep it to yourself.

<R> Okay. You didn't, though. Did ya?

<Paul> Huh?

<R> None of you kind of said... Mm... I won't say a word.

<Dave> <@> I didn't really meet anyone I didn't like, though.

<Various> @ (5)

<R> Okay. So any opinions that you would kind of rather keep to yourself? So opinions about other people... that you probably don't know. What else?

<S3M> Well... outside of context of this... at the moment, like obviously, political. Is that? You know what I mean...

<R> Yeah. That's what I'm asking. In general... outside of this area as well.

<S3M> How far would you actually say to be- a total stranger or even a friend, you know what I mean, even political view or something like that.

<R> Mhm. Yeah. [B]?

<B3> Things that you don't know anything ABOUT. I know it didn't come up but I wouldn't start talking about anything I didn't know anything about ‘cos then I'd seem like a fool.

<R> Okay.

<B3> It didn't come up today, but just in general, like, you don't know something... keep it to yourself.

<R> Okay. Ehm... Anything else that you don't talk about? (2) Try to avoid it?

<Jimmy> Don't talk about politics or religion. That's what we were always told.

<Various> @

<R> That's what you're always told. And do you stick to it?

<Noelle> I suppose it depends on the context as well, you know.

<Jimmy> If you are familiar with the person.

<Noelle> Yeah.

<Various> Yeah. <{nodding}>.

<R> Okay. Right. Ehm... Now, a question. Just try to kind of imagine... How do you feel when somebody expresses an opinion that is completely contrary to yours?

The first feeling.

<Dave> Anger.

<Noelle> Frustration.
Various <{nodding}>

<R> What else?

<Noelle> Frustration... yeah...

<Paul> Annoyance.

<S3M> Disbelief... that someone <{@}> could disagree <@@@

<Various> @ (4)

<S3M> Well not... you know what I mean... if you know something intrinsically, you
  know what I mean- It obviously depends on the...

<R> Okay, I know what you mean now, yeah.

<S3M> And you have to kind of say how could that person, you know what I mean,
  see- see the other side, yeah?

<R> Yeah, to you it's obvious...

<S3M> It obviously depends on the context of the argument.

<R> Mhm. Anyone feeling angry?

<Jimmy> I think that the person is entitled to their opinion. They don't have to agree
  with you simply because that's the view you hold. It might not- you obviously
  don't agree with it, but they're entitled to it. <{shrugging shoulders}>

<Noelle> But I- you would feel angry, again depending on context. <{to B}> Like you
  were saying <{to B}> if I was talking to someone say about English language
  teaching, and they were telling me whatever was all fact or something. You
  know, they didn't have actually any experience then I'd be like... You- you don't
  know enough about it to- you know, to criticise me or whatever.

<S3M> I suppose when they're questioning something of your expertise.

<F3W> <{quietly}> Exactly.

<S3M> That is something that you'd know. You'd know it and you'd know it very,
  very well.

<Noelle> Yeah.

<S3M> And... obviously, you kind of, it's something personal and you've put a lot of
  time into it.

<Jimmy> It depends how strong your opinion is... that they're rejecting as well.

<S3M> Yeah.

<Dave> Or if the person is a friend or a family member and you expect a certain
  opinion from them. If you got something that was completely contrary it would
surprise you, surprise you (such a character) and possibly create feelings of anger.

<R> Mhm. Does anybody feel kind of stupid?

<F3W> Kinda, yeah. With the Christmas things @ @

<Various> @ @ @

<F3W> Loving Christmas stuff in the shops in October ‘cos I don't think it's...

<Various> @ (3)

<R> But I mean in general. Like in real life, you know. Do you feel sometimes you say something and somebody disagrees with you and you're like... oh I was so stupid to think that.

<Various> Yeah.

<S3M> I suppose if it's a situation where there's a lot of responsibility that... what was I going to say... that ehm... Supposing it was in at work situation or something to that effect and... especially like [pointing at B] the boss you'd be afraid talking- you know what I mean, a boss or something to that effect and if you felt that you were on the defensive you're always kind of defending yourself and that way then you kind of stutter and stumble and it does affect the way that you're- you're actually speaking.

<R> Okay. Ehm... And how do you react to somebody expressing an opinion that is different to yours? What's your reaction?

<B3> Try to understand them first. And then try to (come out) maybe.

<R> Okay.

<Jimmy> Exactly... to bring in a conciliatory approach, you know. Try and emphasise maybe the- the similarities maybe. Unless they're completely opposite to your own views. Then you just have to let it be, I think.

<R> Okay. And how do you go about doing it? You know, the...

<B3> Understanding them?

<R> Yeah.

<B3> Just listen what they say and try to take it from their point of view. And then if you wanna change them, you could say what about this and what about that...

But sure (it's normal for) people and their opinion, just naturally, like. (You'd think alright). Unless they come for you before you get them.

<Various> @ (5)
Okay. Ehm... I think that's all I wanted to ask. Do you have anything to add about this?

How come I never got invited to this party everyone was talking about?

You invited a stranger and you wouldn't invite your boss, like.

Don't worry, the party was boring anyway.

Okay. Ehm... Any other feelings? About the situations, the opinions and all that...

They were quite good. They were very good.

Very free-flowing, like.

As you say, we were trying to do- you know, we were all in those types of situations.

Yeah?

Yeah.

Okay. That's- that's really all- Actually, one more question. Let's say ehm... I'm a language learner or somebody like that, right? Or let's say I'm an American or something, it doesn't matter. But I speak English well and then I want to come to Ireland... and then what kind of warning or- or kind of tips would you give me about, you know, expressing my opinion on certain topics? What would kind of... you know=

Think. Think before- I know it's an- it's the obvious thing, but just even think before- before you speak because ehm... I think the Irish people do put a lot of emphasis on what people say and can form an opinion very quickly on what you say... even... even in the matter of seconds.

Okay.

So it would be that if it was a case just to even- the whole notion of just think for five seconds before you say something on the topic.

Mhm.

If you say it wrong the first time I'd just think that's what you meant. Even if you try to correct yourself I'd be like, no, you said that.

First impression.

So there's no space for kind of correction and explaining...
<Paul> Well, depending how something came up. I mean if they were- if it was
somebody in a scenario where they're asking about something, well then
that's... that's fine. But they're coming out saying x, y, z then they'd need to
have done a bit of research beforehand.

<R> Okay. So let's say in Ireland don't mention this and don't mention that. What
shouldn't I?

<Paul> The war.

<Various> @ (14)

<Jimmy> I don't know if there's any taboo topics really in Ireland

<Noelle> I wouldn't say so.

<Jimmy> Depending on how well you know the person.

<S3M> Yeah, exactly.

<Jimmy> You can talk about- you can talk about politics or religion but in terms of the
general discussion with a stranger, you just wouldn't mention those=

<F3W> =Yes=

<Jimmy> =topics because it depends on- you don't know how- you know, if someone
is a devout Roman Catholic, then you don't want to upset them by saying... you
know, look at priest paedophilia or something. And as well if you're an
American, Americans are notoriously (slow learners here).

<Various> @@

<Jimmy> They're notoriously blunt. And Irish people hedge a lot, you know. And to be
aware of that sometimes you'd want to be- as Irish people, we don't want to be
confronted directly. We want to... you know, hedge and question tags and so
forth. So Americans need to curb that.. maybe into the part of their...

<S3M> I suppose it's- ehm... keep- keep away from extremities. In other words if you
have an extreme view- an opinion, be careful how you approach it.

<R> What about Poles?

<Paul> Wow...

<R> You can't speak @@

<Various> @ (7)

<R> You know... I'm only joking 'cos he- he knows me too well to speak now so...

<Noelle> Well=

<R> =Well. Kind of... I know 'cos you've focused on the American... but I mean just in
general.
There's a good... I think there's a good... well, myself anyway...
It depends on the relationship really with the person, yeah?
Sure every- all communication is defined by the- the relationship between the interlocutors. You just can't take it out of context.
If it was to be as general as American, Polish or whatever, you would feel that the Irish-Polish relationship is pretty good anyway.
Mhm. Okay, and what do you do when you know that the other person is not going to change their point of view?
(Counter)opinion.
What?
Just (offer) your own opinion.
You can agree to disagree.
(You have to) let it be, I think.
What did you say [Noelle]?
Agree to disagree.
Yeah?
Yeah.
Just don't fall out, have fun.
Exactly. Find out what you can, really. Find out if there is common ground.
But stick to your guts
Don't back down!
Never!
@ (4)
Appendix 5 – PL Focus Groups Transcriptions

PL Focus Group 1st Round

2. <Wojtek> O chrupkach i coli.
3. <Various> @@@@@
5. <Magda> A może tak co powiedzieć i żeby jakoś tak gramatycznie.
6. <Kasia> Żeby dobrze wypaść. Żeby jakichś tam błędów nie porobić.
7. <Magda> No.
8. <Kasia> Pomimo tego, że na przykład ja mówię po angielsku to eeee <{being stuck for words}>.
9. <R> Mhm.
10. <Kasia> Musiała obrócić karteczkę. O co tu chodzi @/@.
11. <R> Mhm, czyli jak dobrać słowa.
12. <Kasia> Tak.
13. <R> Co jeszcze?
14. <Janek> Jeżeli o mnie chodzi to ja starałem się no mówić gramatycznie i z czasami, a w zasadzie to starałem się o tym nie myśleć bo wiem, że mi to zawsze przeszkadza w mówieniu. Ale niestety no to jest silniejsze ode mnie także w pewnym momencie się zawieszałem i to było takie y, y, czy ja dobrze te czasy ułożyłem, skonstruowałem, odpowiednie słownictwo dobrałem czy bym jakieś głupoty nie walnął. Aż czasami nie byłem pewien.
15. <R> A [Jacek]?
16. <Jacek> No żeby być w roli.
17. <R> Żeby być w roli?
18. <Jacek> No.
19. <R> Żeby wczuć się w osobę?
20. <Jacek> Tak.
21. <R> Mhm. A ktoś myślał na przykład o tym żeby być miłym i uprzejmym?
22. <Jacek> Nie::?
23. <Magda> @@
24. <R> Nie?
25. <Kasia> Tak, jak do szefa=
26. <Magda> =No, do szefa tak.
<Kasia> Ja mówię, no nie powiem cześć, how are you? Tylko hello, (good morning).

<R> To kiedy powiesz cześć?

<Wojtek> Do szefa? Cały czas <shrugging shoulders>.

<Kasia> Tak, ale to jest inaczej. No inaczej z nim rozmawiasz, nie tak jak koleżanką, czy nawet jeżeli go dobrze znasz możesz powiedzieć „Hi, how are you?” tutaj możesz powiedzieć do szefa tak =

<Magda> = No właśnie, inaczej jest jak w Polsce a inaczej jest=

<Kasia> = tutaj.

<Janek> Zgadza się.

<Kasia> To jest po prostu=

<Janek> = Rozmawialiśmy nawet za drzwiami nawet o tym, że w Polsce jest takie bardziej formalne podejście do zwierzchników, nie wiem, czy do nauczycieli czy do szefa, a tutaj jest takie mniej formalne.

<Magda> I też właśnie, też mi się wydaje, bo tak się zastanawiałam czy mówić tak bardziej jak w Polsce mamy tylko że po angielsku czy tak jak oni tutaj. Nie? Że tak na luzie...

<Kasia> <quietly> No tak. </quietly>

<Janek> <quietly> No ja wychodzę z założenia jesteśmy w Irlandii to jak w Irlandii. </quietly>

<R> Czyli tak sobie porównywaliście trochę między polskim i angielskim.

<Magda> No tak.

<Kasia> Tak.

<R> Aha. A czy myśleliście na przykład o wcześniejszych doświadczeniach tego typu? Co ja kiedyś powiedziałem, czy...

<Magda> Tak. Z tą książką jak zapomniałam.

<R> Tak? A to było takie na próbę. A w tych innych sytuacjach?

<Janek> Raczej spontanicznie wszystko.

<Kasia> Nie: wszystko po prostu przyszło.

<R> Mhm. Ehm... Okej. I w których momentach w takim razie czuлиście barierę językową. Z którym rozmówcą najbardziej.

<Kasia> Z pierwszym, bo tak po prostu no=

<Janek> = Z dziewczyną, tak?

<Kasia> Nie, z tym. No ja miałam chłopaka takiego, ale dlatego z pierwszym no bo się stresujesz na początku bo nieiesz jak to będzie, nie wiesz co powiedzieć. A dalej to już okej.

<Magda> Mi się wydaje, że tak z tym szefem? Bo to jednak trzeba.

<Kasia> Tak.
Niby to jednak się myśli, że to jest szef. Bardzo fajny był ten chłopak.

Tylko to tak żeby wyszło, że to jest szef.

Dla mnie najgorzej rozmawiało się z tą dziewczyną bo ona na wszystko mówiła nie. Zawsze się nie zgadzała ze mną.

Super.

Tak. Super.

@.@

@.@

Nie wiesz. [Wojtek]?

Nie wiem. @.@

@.@

@.@

@.@

@.@

@.@

@.@

Jacek? ty w którymś czułeś barierę językową?

No z szefem tak trochę.

Z szefem najgorzej było. @.@

No!

Okej. E:: Dobrze, także tak jak już zdradziłam scenki wszystkie polegały na tym, że wymianialiście się opiniami. Także, jakie tematy na przykład w języku angielskim byście omijali. Na jakie opinie- jakie opinie najlepiej zachować dla siebie (2) po angielsku.

Ehm... możesz jaśniejsiej?

Na przykład na jakie tematy się nie rozmawia. Nie wymienia się opinii na takie tematy.

Tu w Irlandii? Czy- czy jak?

No.

A jak na przykład=

= albo ogólnie. Możecie mi powiedzieć czy ogólnie, czy po polsku.

Mi się wydaje, że jeśli miałoby się, nie wiem, kulturę, zwyczaje zbyt mocno krytykować. Znaczy porównać można, ale jeśli miałbym zbyt mocno krytykować ich, no to wiadomo, żadna nacja sobie tego nie życzy.
<Magda> I też mi się tak wydaje. Jak na przykład było z tym Bożym Narodzeniem to chciałam tak im mówić ale u nas w Polsce jest normalnie=
<Kasia>= Ta:k.
<Magda> I nie mamy tak a wy tutaj macie tak tylko komercja. No ale tak też mi się wydaje, że=
<Wojtek> = W Polsce tak samo jest. Teraz już wszędzie będziesz miała ozdoby=
<Magda>= Tak, ale aż tak wcześnie nie.
<Wojtek> //Nie, ale teraz już jest. Już od paru lat jest tak samo.//
<Magda> //Tutaj czasami na- w sierpniu jak się idzie czasami do Dunnes Store’a to były.// Ale mi się wydaje, że- żeby tak samo jak [Janek] właśnie powiedział nie krytykować ich tak strasznie.
<R> Aha. [Jacek]?
<Jacek> Ja nie wiem.
<R> No jakie. Polityka? Seks? Religia?
<Jacek> F:: <{exhaling loudly}>
<R> Jakie tematy byś omijał?
<Jacek> Żadnych. //O wszystkim się rozmawia.//
<Wojtek> //Na wszystkie się rozmawia.//
<R> Tak?
<Jacek> No.
<Janek> Zależy w jaki sposób.
<Jacek> Jeszcze zależy z kim. Z szefem nie rozmawiałbym o seksie. Tak samo nie rozmawiałbym z przyjacielem o: nie wiem czym <to himself> xxxxx </to himself>.
<Janek> Polityce.
<Kasia> @@@
<R> O bieliźnie koronkowej?
<Jacek> Też.
<Various> @@@
<R> Twojej?
<Jacek> @@ Twojej prędzej.
<R> @@
Aha. No dobrze. Em::: Czyli na przykład to byłoby specyficzne dla danego ję-  

czekaj jakby to powiedzieć. Trochę mnie zainteresowało to, że powiedzieliście,  
że nie chcieliście tak jakby krytykować ich kultury.

Przy nich. Tak mogę, tak między sobą mogę mówić ach to oni robią głupio  
czy coś ale tak przy nich to jest jakby bo jesteśmy w ich kraju i mi się wydaje,  
że może=

Powinniśmy to akceptować no bo jednak to MY jesteśmy w ich kraju.

Co kraj to obyczaj.

No. <{nodding}>  

Mhm.

 кажмы ma swoje przekonania i trzeba to zrozumieć=

=Ta:k i to jest tak=

= ale może mi się nie podobać, mogę się- porozmawiać z innymi Polakami  
cyz dzielą moją opinię, że nie podoba mi się to to i tamto, ale z Irlanczykami  
jest jednak taka bariera no jeżeli im powiem, że to, to, to nie zacznę mi się nie  
podobać u nich to w końcu odbiorą to tak, że no chyba mu się wszystko nie  
podoba. Przyjechał Polak i się panoszy. Na takiej zasadzie ja to odbieram.

To znaczy ja myślę na przykład=

Porównać można. <to Kasia> Tylko ostatnie zdanie, dobra? </to Kasia>  
Porównać można, ale zbytnio. Jeżeli jest zbyt dużo różnic i wszystko jest na nie  
o to każdy to tak odbiera, że to jest jednak krytykowanie kogoś.

Ja myślę jednak, że Irlandczycy naprawdę im to nie przeszkadza na jakie  
tematy z nimi rozmawiamy i może ja na przykład obracam się wśród  
Irlanczyków, ale takich którzy są jak to się mówi very easy going, czyli nie  
przejmują się niczym, nie <{searching for words (2)}> Naprawdę my czasem  
mamy tak w Polsce mamy- Bardzo jesteśmy tacy=: suspicious, czyli podejrzliwi  
i po prostu tutaj jest wszystko, no tak bym powiedziała easy czyli=

=Ta:k. Tak nie wnikają.

Tak, nie wnikają bo oni- możesz im powiedzieć o na przykład ja nie lubię  
kiedy Irlandczycy powiekszają- przywieszają te wszystkie świąteczne ehm...  
ozdóbki w ogóle a oni nie oni mówią... „a to jest normalne”... Jakby to na  
przykład było- gdybym była z innego kraju i do Polaka bym powiedziała nie  
podoba mi się to w Polsce, że coś a on o::: czy coś zaraz by była awantura=  

Są tacy defensive zaraz.
Tak, a tutaj co ty powiedzielaś co o Polakach. A tutaj po prostu oni nawet się tym nie przejmują. Naprawdę.

Mhm. Okej.

Na pewno mają lepsze podejście do sprawy. Na przykład jak się zacznies krytykować Kościół. Niby Irlandia też jest katolicka, tylko w Polsce można się ładnie naciąć bo zaraz ktoś stanie w obronie a tutaj jeszcze się z tym nie spotkałem. Zawsze można ładnie pojechać czasami i raczej każdy przytaknie.


Mhm. A na jakie tematy byliby kłotliwi?

Hurling, Football. Rugby.

@@ @@@

Hurling, football, rugby? Aha. Czyli jakbyś powiedział na przykład, że Munster24 is the worst, najgorszą po prostu drużyną?

To byłaby kłótnia.

Aha.

Zależy czy by akurat wygrali mecz czy przegrali.

Takie tematy które są im drogie.

Tak.


Ciekawość

Ciekawość?

<{nodding}>

<very quietly> Ciekawość </very quietly>

<{nodding}>

Ja może jestem czasem zła. A dlaczego on tak myśli?!

Mhm.

---

24 ‘Munster’ refers here to a regional Irish rugby team.
Tak, dokładnie. No to taki sprzeciw. Może zło, że zły jestem to za duże słowo. Może przede wszystkim zaskoczony bym się czuł jeżeli ciężko mi zrozumieć argument. Dla mnie to jest na przykład totalnie oczywiste, ale ktoś jednak się nie zgadza i jeszcze argumentuje no to zaczyna mnie no po prostu=

Albo mówi jeżeli zabraknie mi argumentów no to zgodzę się z tą drugą osobą, przytaknę. A jeżeli ja mam swoje argumenty, ta osoba ma inne argumenty, tak chyba miałem w jednej scence, no dobrze to jest twój punkt myślenia, to jest mój i zostajemy przy swoim, no nie przekonałbym mnie i tyle. Ale jeżeli chodzi o uczucia no na pewno byłbym zaskoczony jeżeli to by było coś oczywistego dla mnie no i może faktycznie jeżeli jakichś nie wiem głupich argumentów ta osoba używa no to może troszeczkę złość, że nie traktuje mnie serio czy coś w tym stylu.

A jakie to są głupie argumenty?

Że przeczytał ktoś na Wikipedii.

Aha. Pan profesor Wikipedia?

Tak. Albo ktoś zobaczył w telewizji Trwam.

A tak poważnie?

Jeżeli ktoś na przykład, nie wiem, przykładowo a bo Polacy są tacy i tacy według stereotypów. Może mnie wtedy ktoś zdenerwować bo się nie zgodzę z tym.

Albo tacy niedoinformowani, tak? Że na Wikipedii, czyli temu nie można UFAć, nie? To nie jest wiarygodne źródło. Mhm. E:: jakieś inne jeszcze uczucia?

(Znaczy) na pewno tak jak [Jacek] powiedział ciekawość. No zawsze, zawsze trzeba założyć, że ktoś może wiedzieć więcej na ten temat niż ty wiesz. Może on ma rację, nie ty. Także zawsze warto się dopytać troszeczkę i się zorientować czy ktoś naprawdę ma o tym pojęcie czy w ogóle nie ma pojęcia i po prostu zmyśla.

A ktoś się czuje głupio? Tak od razu głupio?

A jakże to są głupie argumenty?
Jeżeli od razu zauważysz, że naprawdę nie miałaś racji <{smiling}> to możesz się poczuć głupio nie bo głupotę walnąłeś, ale...

Mhm. Dobrze. No i oboje powiedzmy macie inne opinie i jak sobie z tym radzicie. Jak na to reagujecie. Ja mówię A, a ty mówisz nie nie bo to jest B bo ja to widziałem gdzieś tam. Jak reagujecie na to?

To zależy ehm:: co jest przedmiotem spornym. W sumie najczęściej bym się dopytał skąd wiesz co wiesz i czym się różni moja wiedza od mojej i przy swoim był albo i tyle, prawdopodobnie bym nie zmienił swojego poglądu tak czy siak.

Też mi się tak właśnie wydaje. Ja bym pokazała jak ja to uważam i jeżeli ta osoba pokaże swoje, jeżeli są jej lepsze, no to dobrze, to rozumiem. Ale jeżeli nie, no to dobra ona ma takie a nie inne opinie, to zostawię w spokoju, a ja dalej bym uważała to co uważam.

To zależy od argumentów. Jeżeli użyje takich argumentów, które mnie przekonają, gdzie faktycznie stwierdzę no może ta osoba jednak ma rację to zróżnikowałbym, że moje źródła informacji były złe, błędne, a udowodniła mi, że jednak tak nie jest, albo nawet na przykładzie jakimś, to przyznam jej rację.

A:, tego, chciałam spytać czy są jakieś różnice między polskim i angielskim, takie właśnie typu „we agree to disagree”. Czy z Polakami bardziej tak ‘A spadaj, głupi jesteś i w ogóle nic nie wiesz’ a w angielskim jest takie ‘ah, it doesn’t matter’.

No raczej taka będzie. <{Jacek nodding}> Łatwiej się pokłócić z drugim Polakiem=

=Tak=

= niż na pewno z Irlandczykiem.

Tak?

No.

Tak na poważnie.

Dokładnie. Oni raczej jeżeli jest jakiś problem ktoś się zapyta ‘Do you have a problem with me?’ ‘Oh no, no, no problem’. Oni od razu. Polak to by się postawił i powiedział Co? Zacznasz ze mną?
<Janek> Taki butny.
<Kasia> Oni naprawdę. No problem.
<R> Czyli konfrontacji tutaj nie lubią.
<Various> <{nodding}>
<Kasia> Nie są kłóśliwi jak Polacy po prostu.
<R> Mhm. Jest taka opinia, że Polacy są bardzo tak jakby arogancyjnie jak wyrażają opinie, są takie bardzo dogmatyczne. Ja to wszystko wiem i to jest prawda, święta prawda to co ja, to co ja mówię. Czy zgadzacie się z tym?
<Wojtek> Po części tak. Szczególnie jak tutaj się zna troszeczkę, trochę Polaków i czasami widać nawet jakie mają podejście do Irlandczyków tutaj w ogóle, do kultury. Większość ci powie, chociaż sami często nie mówią w ogóle po angielsku, że Irlandczycy są strasznie głupi bo czegoś tam a kurat nie wiedzą, nie?
<R> Mhm.
<Wojtek> No i...nie wiem. No i na pewno są raczej tacy troszeczkę arogancyjni.
<R> Mhm. Spotkaliście się z tym?
<R> Dobrze. Jeszcze tylko ostatnie pytanie. Czy zauważyliscie, że mówicie w inny sposób po angielsku i po polsku. Jeśli chodzi właśnie o takie tylko zwykłe wymiany opinii między przyjaciółmi, między innymi ludźmi. Jakoś... Tak?
<Kasia> Na pewno polski jest dużo bogatszy moim zdaniem język. Więcej ma słów, na pewno, i:: Na przykład jak tu przyjechałam na początku ludzie mi mówili, że po polsku wyrazić się więcej niż po angielsku. Wyrazić to. Po angielsku jest to tak samo może wyrazić uczucie jak po polsku tylko będzie to troszeczkę prościej niż czasami=
<Kasia> = To zależy też od stopnia angielskiego jakim się posługujesz.
<Kasia> Tak.
[R] [Jacek]? Co ty mówiłeś? Że inaczej w ogóle wyrażasz opinie po angielsku i po polsku, tak?
<Jacek> Czy ja wiem? Pewnie tak samo, chyba.
<R> Tak?
<Jacek> Jakoś trudno mi zauważyć różnicę taką. Różnica jest na przykład, kiedyś jak rozmawialiśmy o tej uprzejmości językowej, tak proszę, tak mam. Po polsku tylko powiesz ‘Yes, I have’, ‘No, I don’t have’ a po polsku tylko powiesz tak,
nie, mam, nie mam i tyle. A jak odpowiesz Anglikowi albo Irlandczykowi 
tylko ‘tak’ ‘yes’ albo ‘no’ to to już jest mniej uprzejme niż jak po polsku. To 
taka jedna różnica ktrórejśmy się nauczyli. Ale to bo to ty mi o tym 
powiedziałaś to... tak to bym nie zauważył.

<Various> @@

<R> To tylko dzięki mnie. Awww... jestem zaszczycona. Y:: Dobrze. Czyli jak żadna 
ze stron nie zmienia zdania to co robimy?

<Jacek> Idziemy w (zaparte)

<R> Idziemy w co?

<Jacek> W zaparte.

<Janek> Twoja opinia, moja opinia. Każdy ma prawo do własnej.

<Magda> Tak. Każdy ma prawo do własnej opinii.

<Wojtek> <calmly> Zawsze można pobić kogoś. </calmly>

<Various> @@@@@

<Wojtek> Nie, no żartuję.

<R> Nie, to już chyba ostatnia- ostatni ten- Dobrze. Jeszcze macie jakieś wnioski z 
tych scenek? Coś- coś co zauważyliście?

<Various> (8)

<R> Nie?

<Jacek> <{shaking his head}> 

<R> No dobrze. W takim razie możemy skończyć. Ja tu sobie powyłączam wszystko.

<Wojtek> A teraz można iść na piwko?

<R> A teraz można iść na piwko.

PL Focus Group 2nd Round

<R> Okej. Także nie wiem czy zauważyliście czego dotyczyły te wszystkie scenki.

<Radek> No tak. Były:: friends, boss and a stranger.

<R> A o czym rozmawialiście?

<Radek> O::

<Asia> M:: O różnych- wydaje mi się, że to były tak jakby zależne sytuacje że jedno 
było na zasadzie ehm jak to się mówi... everyday interactions, coś tam ze 
świata... a jeszcze coś było...

<R> To było wszystko mniej więcej wyrażanie opinii.

<Jurek> No dobra.
Tak czy nie?  
No w sumie tak, no.  
\(\text{nodding}\)  
No i o czym myśleliście w czasie ogrywania tych scenek?  
Hm... ja przeważnie myślałem o tym jak- m... co powiedzieć żeby się rozmowa kleiła i żeby jakoś interesującco mógł odpowiedzieć mój rozmówca.  
Mhm.  
Ja próbowałam się wceuć tak w tą sytuację. Na przykład jeżeli tam było coś takiego, że jesteśmy na przyjęciu i że jest nudno to tak sobie myślę a tutaj stoję jący ludzie, \(\text{gesticulating}\) tutaj się przelewa coś i tak naprawdę próbowałam sobie pomóc gestami i wceuć się naprawdę w tą sytuację, że to jest taka sytuacja. Nie myślałam tak za bardzo ehm nad tym, że powiem teraz to i to żeby on mógł odpowiedzieć to i to. Nie chciałam tego sterować. Chciałam to zrobić jak najbardziej naturalnie i tak...  
Mhm.  
Tak jak zachowałbym się chyba w rzeczywistości tak mi się wydaje.  
To chyba zależało od scenki jaką odgrywaliśmy.  
Mhm.  
Właśnie w tej scence z tym Christmas. I tam była jeszcze scenka z newsagent’s to uważam, że w tym momencie starałem się po prostu chronić swoją pozycję i przekonać rozmówcę do mojego zdania. A jeśli chodzi o tą scenkę z imprezą to po prostu chciałem naturalnie się zachować. W sumie nie zastanawiałem się nad tym co- co będę odpowiadał. Po prostu zachowywałem się tak jak bym normalnie się zachowywał. \(\text{very quiet}\) Takie everyday situations \(\text{very quiet}\)  
Mhm. Czyli nie mieliście na przykład... jakieś problemy takie z dobieraniem słów czy...  
Hm... to chyba już tak automatycznie.  
N::ie.  
Nie. To taki odruch chyba już w mówieniu, wiesz.  
Mhm. A czy myśleliście na przykład o wcześniejszych doświadczeniach tego typu?  
Hm...  
O scence z imprezy, tak myślałem. Ale tak poza tym to chyba nie.
<Jurek> <silently> Nie. </silently> <{while shaking head}>

<Asia> Ja myślę, że tylko gdy ehm… najtrudniejsza z resztą scenka z szefem kiedy on siedzi obok mnie i ja mam prosić o coś takiego czego w rzeczywistości nie zrobiłabym. I wyobraziłam sobie mojego menedżera do którego mówię i… że w życiu czegoś takiego bym nie zrobiła i=

<Radek> =A dlaczego nie?

<Asia> No bo nie. Dlaczego miałabym=

<Radek> =Przecież to normalna sytuacja w pracy=

<Jurek> =Nie, nie. Ja bym oczywiście porozmawiał z menedżerem ale oczywiście jak była scenka z menedżerem czyli to wszystko było takie bardziej formal i to był taki trochę inny rodzaj interaction tutaj więc staralem się może dobrać inne słownictwo i nie być na takiej stopie koleżeńskiej jak podczas- podczas wcześniejszych rozmówek i… Ale nie miałem takiej typowej rozmowy tego typu z szefem wcześniej po prostu spytać się o holidays czy jaki termin będzie mi pasował.

<R> Mhm. A w których momentach czuliście w takim razie barierę jakąś językową?

<Asia> Ja tak jak powiedziałam właśnie kiedy rozmawiałam z szefem. Być może wynika to z tego, że nie mam za dużego DOŚWIADCZENIA ehm w rozmowach właśnie takich profesjonalnych. I nie za dużo używałam angielskiego właśnie w takich momentach gdzie muszę rozmawiać z szefem czy z jakimś przełożonym i tak dalej. Bardziej jest to- kiedy używam angielskiego jest to bardziej na stopie koleżeńskiej i ewentualnie ehm kiedy na przykład zwracam się do wykładowców czy do moich nauczycieli to piszę raczej maile niż mówię doustnie. Może to dlatego tak…to wynika z tego że wtedy było mi najtrudniej.

<R> Mhm.

<Jurek> Znaczy ja nie sądzę żeby była jakoś- jakakolwiek bariera. Chyba w rozmówce z szefem a wiem, że tutaj- różnica jaką zauważałem może między Polską i tutaj Irlandią jest tu trochę bardziej takie na stopie mniej formalnej.

<R> Mhm.

<Jurek> Więc nie ma- nie ma- czy jak tutaj rozmawiam nawet z wykładowcami na uczelni nie czuję jakiejś takiej różnicy między=

<Radek> =No właśnie.
<Jurek> Zawsze na przykład- znaczy wiem, że tutaj jest- nawet rozmawialem o tym z Irlandczykami po prostu widzę na przykład swojego wykładowcę mówię hey „David, how are you?” Nie ma proszę pana albo takiej jakieś bariery, że jesteśmy w ogóle z dwóch różnych światów.

<Radek> Tak. I to dużo ułatwia bo na przykład podczas scenki z szefem wcale nie-gdyby to była scenka po polsku, to bardziej bym się zastanawiał nad tym, że muszę używać formalnych zwrotów a mając doświadczenie w pracy w Irlandii i gdzieś tam nawet gdzieś indziej za granicą wiem, że- że raczej szanuje się takie przyjacielskie stosunki z szefem.

<R> Mhm.

<Radek> I dlatego nie miałem z tym jakiegoś wielkiego problemu.

<Asia> No dobrze. Ale z drugiej strony nie możesz się pokazać jako... nie wiem pijącego co tydzień- co weekend imprezowica przed twoim szefem.

<Radek> No oczywiście, że nie.

<Asia> Nie możesz być wyluzowany=

<Radek> =Ale ja tak się= 

<Asia> =Ja nie mówię o formalnym wyrażaniu swojej- ehm swojej postawy i tak dalej, ale musisz się umieć zachować. Jakieś takie...

<Radek> No oczywiście, //ale słuchaj//

<Asia> Wiem, //że różnica jest tak jak// [Jurek] powiedział że nie jest różnica tak jak między Polską i Irlandią.

<Jurek> @@@

<Radek> No oczywiście. Zgadzam się=

<Asia> =chodzi o to, że wiesz musisz zachować jakieś <{stukając się w czoło}> rzetelność!

<Radek> Ale kiedy- w rozmowie z każdym człowiekiem musisz zachować coś takiego.

<Asia> Ale zdecydowanie w miejscu pracy kiedy=

<Jurek> =Ale nie. O czym [Radek] mówił to po prostu czuje się trochę bardziej wyluzowany ale nie- nie idziesz na taką rozmowę- ja na przykład nie idę na taką rozmowę zestresowany.

<Radek> Ja też nie.

<Jurek> Bo wiem, że tam nie idę do swo- do swojego wroga tylko idę po prostu- też nie powiem przyjaciela, ale idę do osoby z którą wiem, że mogę porozmawiać
o takich rzeczach. Czyli nie czuję jakiegoś takiego strachu czy mam podejść do wykładowcy czy mam podejść do swojego szefa, po prostu tak samo jak oni podchodzą do nas i coś- coś chcą się spytać. Ja uważam, że nie odczuwam takiego stresu. Tutaj nie stresowałem się. Nie tylko- nie ze względu na to, że wiedziałem, że jest to scenka odgrywana ale po prostu wierzę, że tak robilem też w życiu.


<Radek> Hm... kontrowersyjne. @@

<Mhm.>

<Jurek> To zależy z kim rozmawiamy też. Bo jeśli rozmawiamy z przyjacielem nie chcemy mu po prostu powiedzieć czegoś =

<Radek> =//Co go urazi.//

<Jurek> //Co źle zabrzmi.//

<Radek> Albo coś co go urazi.

<Jurek> Ale wiem, że na przykład mam jakiś argument z kimś po prostu może nawet nie stranger ale osoba którą znam- albo nie, którą nie lu- nie darzyłbym...

<Mhm.> Sympatią.

<Jurek> Wielką sympatią.

<R> @@

<Jurek> Po prostu czasami staramy się tak jak to się mówi rub it in their face czy coś takiego.

<Radek><Asia> @@

<Jurek> Ale nie! Oczywiście chyba to zależy od sytuacji i z kim rozmawiamy i jaki to jest temat dyskusji.

<Mhm.>

<Asia> Mi się wydaje, że niestety moja osobowość jest taka. Być może z tym mam problem, że ehm ja biorę pod uwagę osobę jako osobę i jeżeli na przykład ehm rozmawiam... no nie wiem powiedzmy z:: z strangerem to ehm z osobą która jest mi obca i wydaje mi się, że to jest fajna osoba to czasami tak wyrażam to opinię bo mam wrażenie, że jest między nami jakaś koneksja, coś się- coś się dzieje między nami <{gesticulating vigorously while speaking}> i dlatego chętnie powiedzieć to co tak naprawdę czuję a nie że dopiero co się poznaliśmy to
nie, nie mogę wyrazić mojej opinii. Ale jeżeli czuję, że czuję się komfortowo i mogę powiedzieć to raczej tak.

<R> A jakieś takie... zauważyliście różnice, że między powiedzmy tutaj w Irlandii czy po angielsku ogólnie niektóre opinie jest- jesteście w stanie wyrazić, to znaczy czujecie się komfortowo, a w Polsce na przykład na takie tematy się nie rozmawia. Albo vice-versa?

<Jurek> Bardziej... znaczy nie potrafię podać przykładu ale sądzę, że tutaj mogę powiedzieć więcej i możemy podyskutować z Irlandczykami o różnych tematach o których może w Polsce bym nie podyskutował. Ale w sumie nie potrafię niczego teraz... tak... top of my head ale chyba najważniejszy chyba będzie temat religii. Mam po prostu znajomych którzy wierzą w Boga, wierzą w innych ehm też- znam osoby które są wyznawcami Islamu, są Protestantami i którzy nie wierzą w ogóle, ale zawsze możemy sobie jakoś porozmawiać na te tematy i nie ma problemów i...

<R> Mhm. Tutaj, tak?

<Jurek> Tak, tutaj.

<Radek> Bezkonfliktowo.

<Jurek> No i tutaj po prostu jest no no... Nikt nie będzie starał się ciebie...<Radek> Zmieniać.

<Jurek> Convert, czy po prostu możemy tak sobie porozmawiać... na różne tematy a w Polsce to zależy. Sądzę, że nie ma takiej- takiej ehm... różnicy wyznań i- i niektórzy ludzie może nie mogą zaakceptować tego. Wiem, że miałem też taki przykład ze swoja rodziną ehm... miałem też znajomych czy- czy poznalem kogoś i ta osoba była odmienniej religii i też był problem w domu.

<R> Aha.

<Jurek> A jeśli było to tutaj po prostu rozmawiałem z rodzicami, wiesz tam kogoś poznalem i tak wiesz... Więc pierwsze pytanie czy to jest chrześcijanka czy nie? Naprawdę takie troszeczkę... nie tutaj //jakoś już tak przyzwyczaiłem się.//

<Radek> //Staroświeckie podejście do tematu// @@

<Jurek> <smiling> Czasami. </smiling>

<Radek> Czasami.

<Jurek> No.

<R> Mhm.
<Asia> Co jest jeszcze interesujące. Na przykład ehm a propos Irlandii jest to, że
Irlandczycy są bardzo otwarcii na inne seksualności, są otwarcii na
homoseksualnych ludzi i wspierają ich i ehm... naprawdę- to jest wszystko
okej. Gdzie w Polsce to jest w ogóle temat tabu, niemożliwe, nie, nie
przyjaźnią się z nimi, oni są okropni, straszni. Mamy tak jakby nasze schematy
uprzedzeń, stereotypów i tak dalej, ale co z kolei jest zaskakujące, że
Irlandczycy mają swoje stereotypy i ich używają na temat innych narodowości.
Ehm... że na przykład Polacy będą tacy, ci będą tacy, ci tacy. I to jest takie jak
dla mnie ehm dosyć radykalne z perspektywy Polki. Że innna seksualność jest
okej ale inna narodowość już nie tak, także tak jakby to trochę burzy ten balans
wizji- mojej wizji Irlandczyków jako takich open people na:: wszystkie prawda
inne takie różne... różności co się dzieją.

<Radek> <silently> No. Mhm. </silently>

<R> Mhm.

<Radek> No ale nawet... Mi się wydaje, że to też się zmienia z czasem i z tym jak
evoluuje społeczeństwo. No bo przecież jak tam się- walczyli tam z
protestantami w Północnej Irlandii no to też to nie- to było na tle religijnym, a
teraz z drugiej strony mówimy, że- że są tolerancyjni więc też- też to się
zmienia i wydaje mi się, że to jakoś idzie z czasem i być może w Polsce też tak
będzie za- za kilka::naście kilka::dziesiąt lat @/@

<Jurek> Ja mam czasami takie wrażenie, że w takich ehm... personal relations
Irlandczycy są trochę two-faced ehm... dwulicowi sometimes. Mam takie
wrażenie. W two- że jeśli bez- bezpośrednim kontakcie z tobą mogą być tacy
ehm... bardzo otwarcii i mili, ale czasami tylko odwrócisz się i za plecami
potrafią powiedzieć kilka niemiłych słów. Zauważylem to.

<Asia> Może właśnie dlatego warto być ostrożnym z tymi opiniami.

<Jurek> Mm.

<Asia> Odnośnie pytania. Bo nigdy nie wiadomo, jeżeli to są takie ehm=

<Radek> Bo na pierwszy rzut oka jest może tolerancja, //ale trzeba też uważać.//

<Asia> //Coś jest, coś jest...//

<Jurek> Takie to Irish hospitality ale to sądzę, że czasami po prostu za plecami ktoś
potrafi powiedzieć kilka niemiłych słów o tobie. Albo po prostu czasami
odwróci się i wie nawet, że to usłyszysz, ale- nie wiem, może chce żebyś to
usłyszał. Nie wiem.
Mhm.

Ale ja sądzę, że my jesteśmy podobni.

Tak.

Tak. <very quietly>

My też tak czasami lubimy obsmarować Irlandczyków. Ale tak naprawdę to ja nie wiem co Irlandczycy naprawdę myślą o nas. Kiedyś próbowałem się pytać Irlandczyków, ale wykręcili się więc nie wiem tak naprawdę co myślą o nas.

Czyli nie uważasz, że powiedzieli ci prawdę? Taką szczerą opinię. Polakowi...

To zależy też od- od, od różnych ludzi.

<Asia> <noding in agreement>

Bo są ludzie którzy są bardziej otwarci na- na innych, a są którzy są mniej. Są tacy którzy chcą poznać inne kultury, a są tacy którzy żyją w swojej kulturze i to im wystarcza.

Tak jak, tak jak mówiła [Asia] kiedyś, że jeśli tym spotkał osobę, z complete stranger, na przykład w Polsce, trochę bym jednak starał się przystopować. Może niebyłbym aż tak otwarty jak bym był ze swoimi znajomymi w Polsce, ale w Irlandii po prostu jeśli kogoś poznam to <shrugging shoulders> zawsze możemy podyskutować na różne tematy i no i jak nasze opinie się ścierają, no to trudno, no ale no to też jest...

Jeżeli czu=

=okazja do podyskutowania. Ja uważam, że każda taka dyskusja o coś cię wzbogaca.

Jeżeli czujesz, że jest jakieś jakieś wzajemne, że tak powiem, interakcja, to tak.

HM, zawsze można- fajnie jest- fajnie jest podyskutować bo nawet tutaj to- to uczy cię żeby bronić twojego stanowiska. No ale czasami też nie można w upartego iść po prostu ehm... //nie, nie zgadzam się. //

//Dla samego faktu.// Tak.

Tylko dla samego faktu, że po prostu ktoś ma rację

No bo to jest głupie, no.

No: przecież potrafię przyznac się jeśli z kimś dyskutuję i sądzę, że z Irlandczykami może mi to łatwiej przyjdzie. Czy znaczy ja z nimi dyskutuję i potrafię ich przekonać do swojego punktu widzenia albo oni mnie do ich punktu widzenia.
Akurat mi się wydaje, że w tym przypadku ci ludzie którzy byli tutaj byli bardzo sympatyczni i dogadywaliśmy się nie tylko tutaj, ale siedząc tam gdzie- czego nie widziałaś, prawda. My tam też mieliśmy jakąś konwersację i wymianę zdań i myślę, że to pomogło temu, że tutaj te opinie były szczere. Przynajmniej z mojej strony.

Mhm. Chciałabym żebyście tak sobie pomyśleli o pierwszym uczuciu jakie wam przychodzi na myśl ehm jak ktoś wyraża opinię, która jest zupełnie przeciwna do waszej. Jak się czujesz?

Jak to się nazywa...?

Ja staram się zrozumieć ehm... postawić się ehm... na miejscu tej osoby i zrozumieć jej punkt widzenia. Ehm... natomiast jeżeli- i na przykład wyobrazić sobie dlaczego ta osoba tak myśli. Co jest powodem. Później zapytać dlaczego tak myśli i przemienić to w dyskusję i zargumentować swoje zdanie jak najlepiej potrafię i obronić swojego. Jeżeli się da. A jeżeli tamta osoba mnie przekona do swojego zdania to proszę bardzo.

Hm. Tak samo. Tak samo zgodziłbym się.

Ja staram się zrozumieć ehm... postawić się w ehm... na miejscu tej osoby i zrozumieć jej punkt widzenia. Ehm... natomiast jeżeli- i na przykład wyobrazić sobie dlaczego ta osoba tak myśli. Co jest powodem. Później zapytać dlaczego tak myśli i przemienić to w dyskusję i zargumentować swoje zdanie jak najlepiej potrafię i obronić swojego. Jeżeli się da. A jeżeli tamta osoba mnie przekona do swojego zdania to proszę bardzo.

Tak samo. Tak samo zgodziłbym się.

No a takie uczucie? Jak się czujesz? Zły, poddenerwowany...

Jakie uczucie?

Nie...Nie.

Ja się czuję zaciekawiony.

Ja się czuję taki challenged może. Że możemy sobie porozmawiać o czymś tak. Myślę, że mogę się zawsze czegoś nowego nauczyć od tej drugiej osoby. I ta osoba może ode mnie podczas takiej jak mamy taką ten conversation taką.

Mhm. A pani psycholog?

Ja się czuję taka, że chciałabym tak jakby dowiedzieć się więcej na ten temat żeby postawić wyzwanie mojemu.
Czyli też zaciekawiona...

Mhm. Czyli od razu=

=Nie. To nie jest zaciekawienie=

=Ale wydaje mi się, że ty od razu nie- nie sprzeciwiałybyś się tylko
wyciągnęłybyś więcej informacji i dopiero później...

Tak. Tak. Właśnie mówię, że chcę się dowiedzieć więcej dlaczego, co i jak,
jednocześnie egocentrycznie troszeczkę stawiając mój punkt widzenia i dopiero
później wyciągając, analizując co jest- ehm co jest okej a co nie.

Mhm. No i jak ktoś- ty mówisz „A”, ktoś mówi „B”, jak reagujesz? 

Ty już powiedziałeś. 

Ja bym musiał po prostu wyobrazić sobie jak bym się zachował w takiej
sytuacji. Ehm raczej nie sądzę żebym czuł się zdenerwowany w tym
momentie. To jest po prostu... Znaczy, to zależy też od tematu i od tego-
poziomu kontrowersji i dyskusji, wiadomo. Ehm...czy

Mhm.

I czy coś co go dotyczy na przykład osobiście czy nie.

//To jest to bo właśnie wtedy dochodzą jeszcze emocje i tak dalej.//

//Znaczy, nie: to właśnie bardzo zależy.// Mhm.

Czy to jest... czy emocje grają jakąś rolę w tym.

(Albo wtedy i tak) curiosity trochę.

No jest takie. Znaczy my tutaj czasami ze znajomymi, z Irlandczykami
właśnie, mam o ekonomii teraz dużo oczywiście ehm... conversations i::: i
czasami ścierają się te nasze punkty widzenia. Mamy takie swoje grupki, że
siedzimy przy stole i tam dwie osoby zgodzą się ze sobą, dwie inne nie i tak
dyskutujemy, dyskutujemy... ale to jest takie bardziej... nie wiem czy ktoś czuje
się źle albo ktoś czuje się zły, że ktoś stara mu się zarzucić- Znaczy nie
zarzucamy sobie że ktoś po prostu mówi totalne bzdury, na przykład jak- sądzę,
że można byłoby to czasami w Polsce usłyszeć, O! Mówisz totalne bzdury w
ogóle!

Zdecydowanie.

Tak! Tak.

Nie można- nie można po prostu takiego dialogu mieć z kimś na jakimś
poziomie czasami. Zależy też od osoby. Tutaj jedna strona wysłucha ciebie,
przedstawi swoje argumenty. Ty możesz przedstawić swoje. Jakieś takie jest to bardziej... takie... civilised może. Nie wiem.

<R> W Polsce cię od głupców wyzwą, tak?

<Radek> Tak.

<Asia> Mhm. <{nodding}>

<Jurek> No tak! Tak sądzę po prostu. To zależy też=

<Radek> =Bardziej radykalne poglądy mają i nie potrafią zaakceptować innych poglądów.

<Jurek> Po prostu nie można zaakceptować czegoś takiego jak=

<R> Naginanie tak trochę...=

<Asia> =Ale wiecie ja naprawdę //doświadczyłam czegoś takiego na-//

<Jurek> //Jak to się nazywa...// constructive criticism? O coś takiego...

<Asia> Tak, że nie możesz nic powiedzieć.Jesteś po prostu tak zadufany w swoich ehm...=

<Radek> =//poglądach//, że nie widzisz świata poza nimi.

<Asia> //=poglądach//, że (nie wiesz różnicy) już nic innego nie ma.

<Jurek> Tak! Ale to sądzę, że trzeba wyjechać po prostu i zobaczyć i-

<Asia> Tak.

<Jurek> I to nie tylko Irlandia, ale jak jesteśmy na uniwersytecie, spotkać się z ludźmi z różnych krajów i też- miałem też okazję ehm... rozmawiać z ludźmi z Iraku, z Iranu, bardziej kontrowersyjne nacie dla niektórych.

<R> Mhm.

<Jurek> I po prostu porozmawiać jak to na prawdę jest i jakie są ich stosunki do- do tego co się w ich kraju i... Ale to tak w sumie wszystko na stopie koleżeńskiej, nie to żebym kogoś oskarżał. Sądzę, że- ja czasami mam takie wrażenie, że my jesteśmy bardzo podobni do Amerykanów. Jak mam kontakt z Amerykanami, oni też po prostu potrafią bronić tak swojego zaciekle <{zaciskając pięść}>, nie dają- nie dadzą się przekonać czasami.

<Radek> Tak!

<Asia> Tak.

<Jurek> Uważaję, że ty jesteś- po prostu jesteś głupi! I nie masz racji! My mamy racje! Ja czasami mam takie wrażenie, że tyle jest po prostu podobieństwa między-

<Asia> =Ja między właśnie... Polakami i Amerykanami...jak- jak mam kontakt专门为
szczególnie tutaj na UL-u\textsuperscript{25} z dużą liczbą Amerykanów. Chociaż też, też-choć oni, oni po prostu bronią swojego stanowiska.

\textless R\textgreater Mhm.

\textless Jurek\textgreater <very quietly> To jest takie...

\textless R\textgreater No i co robicie jak żadna żadna ze stron nie chce zmienić zdania. Ty swoje, ja swoje?

\textless Jurek\textgreater Każdy ma prawo mieć swoje zdanie.

\textless Asia\textgreater Tak. Dokładnie.

\textless R\textgreater Ta::k?

\textless Jurek\textgreater <{shrugging shoulders}> No w Irlandii to na przykład... nie wiem. W Irlandii na przykład=

\textless Radek\textgreater =Teraz wychodzimy na zewnątrz i <{zacierając pięści}> rozwiązujemy problem siłą.

\textless Asia\textgreater @@@@@

\textless Jurek\textgreater @@ Ehm... każdy ma- czyli staram się jakoś w- w taki- znaczy JA bynajmniej, osoby z mojego kręgu będą w większości Irlandczycy sobie po prostu porozmawiamy i jeśli mamy różne opinie zdań no to każdy ma prawo mieć swoje zdanie i...

\textless Radek\textgreater Na tym się nie kończy świat...

\textless Jurek\textgreater Ale Irlandczycy... no ale oni tak fajnie bo coś im powiesz i oni na przykład się z tobą nie zgadzają to... „Oh I see where you’re coming from, BUT!” I wprowadzają swój argument. I później ja mówię no zgadzam się z tym punktem ale nie z tym i tak... no nie zgadzimy się, no mówi się trudno. Może zgodzimy się następnym razem. Nie sądzę żeby to było coś wielkiego.

\textless Radek\textgreater Świat się nie kończy na tym że się nie zgodziłeś.

\textless Jurek\textgreater Ale to chyba fajnie=

\textless Asia\textgreater =Ewentualnie można osiągnąć jakiś consensus.

\textless Jurek\textgreater Ale to fajnie chyba mieć swoje zdanie i nie tylko być po prostu taką choragiewką na wietrze co kto powie i po prostu przyznać tej osobie rację bez względu- w ogóle bez myślenia czy to się zgadza w ogóle ze mną czy...

\textless R\textgreater Mhm. A w Polsce?

\textless Jurek\textgreater Nie wiem... no trudno...

\textsuperscript{25} ‘UL’ stands for University of Limerick in this context.
<R> //No bo ja wiem/

<R> Tak?

<Jurek> Z tego co pamiętam bo ja też dawno nie byłem i tak naprawdę... no... a po prostu...

<R> Jak ostatnio na Święta byłeś, siedział rodzina, to co było?

<Asia> O:::: @@@

<Jurek> Ja ostatnio na Święta byłem ooo dawno dawno temu.

<Radek> Właśnie Święta to jest doskonaly przykład. Na przykład ehm... mój dziadek zawsze kłóci się ze swoim synem. I mają zupełnie inne poglądy //i jest zawsze to samo.//

<Asia> //I to... <to Radek> nie? </to Radek> to są poglądy// historyczno-polityczne.

<Radek> Tak.

<Asia> I to takie radykalne.

<Radek> Tak... radykalne.

<Asia> Byłam- byłam świadkiem. Uu...

<Radek> I właśnie to jest ciekawe bo oni nigdy nie- nie osiągną consensusu, a czasem to się tak pokłócą, że to nawet się przenosi na jakieś dalsze życie i chodzą naburmuszeni przez parę dni później przez to.

<Asia> Ja z kolei kiedy byłam na Erasmusie w Warszawie, miałam jedne zajęcia po polsku i odgrywałyśmy tam jakieś scenki i tak dalej i ja miałam być obserwatorem, który coś tam zobaczy. I zachowałam się tak jakby po irlandzku, że widzę co jest źle, co jest nie tak, więc mówię... No ty to i tak źle rozgorzała wielka dyskusja, wrzask na mnie, że <loud> Jak to? Że to jest nie możliwe! Ze jak ja mogę w ogóle na kogoś tak MÓWIĆ=

<Radek> =Oceniać.

<Asia> Oceniać! </loud> Słuchajcie przez trzy godziny...

<Radek> Kiedy to była rola taka, że to był obserwator i miał ocenić.

<Asia> Tak! Tak! Oni na mnie. Jeszcze między sobą powyciągali jakieś brudy. Przez trzy godziny. Jak wyszłam z tego wykładu, znaczy z tych zajęć to po prostu analizowałam to wszystko krok po kroku czy ja rzeczywiście coś zrobiłam nie tak. Gdzie wydaje mi się, że w Irlandii byłoby bardziej tak przeniesione neutralnie. Że okej, to są zajęcia, to jest fikcyjne.
<Jurek> Mhm. Mhm.

<Asia> Po co!? Po co robić z tego problemy i- które urastają w ogóle do skali takiej jakiej naszego życia prywatnego. Po co? Wykład to wykład.

<Jurek> Zgodzę się z tym, zdecydowanie.

<R> Mhm. Ehm... wsio. To były wszystkie moje pytania. Macie jeszcze do dodania?

Drodzy uczestnicy?

(Radek) No ja jeszcze bym dodał, że bardzo miło mi było brać udział w tym badaniu.

<Asia> Dziękujemy za współpracę. <{grinning}>
Appendix 6 – Translation of PL Focus Groups
Transcriptions

PL Focus Group 1st Round

1 <R> Right, a question. I’d like you to think for a moment, okay? Just think wha- wha- what’s the most important. What did you think about while interacting in the role-plays.
2 <Various> @@@@@
3 <R> Yes? And apart from that? Anyone else? About anything else?
4 <Magda> Maybe about what to say and kind of grammatically correct.
5 <Kasia> To make a good impression. Not to make any mistakes.
6 <Magda> Yeah.
7 <Kasia> Even though for example I speak English I was like eeee <{being stuck for words}>.
8 <R> Mhm.
9 <Kasia> I had to turn over the piece of paper. What’s this about @@.
10 <R> Mhm, so how to choose words.
11 <Kasia> Yes.
12 <R> What else?
13 <Janek> In my case, I tried to speak, well, grammatically and with the tenses, but in reality I tried not to think about it because I know that it always interferes with my speaking. But unfortunately it is stronger than me so there was a moment where I’d freeze and it was like uhm, uhm, did I use the right tense, constructed well, chose the correct words so I wouldn’t blurt out any stupidities. Sometimes I wasn’t even sure.
14 <R> How about [Jacek]?
15 <Jacek> To be in my role.
16 <R> To fulfil your role?
17 <Jacek> Yeah.
18 <R> To feel like the person?
19 <Jacek> Yes.
20 <R> Mhm. And did anyone think about being kind and polite?
21 <Jacek> No::?
22 <Magda> @@
No?

Yes, with the boss=

Yeah, with the boss, yes.

I’d say, well I wouldn’t say hi, how are you? Rather hello, (good morning). Rather

So when would you say hi?

To a boss? Always shrugging shoulders.

Yes, but it’s different. I mean you’d talk differently with him, not like with a friend, even if you know him well you can say ‘Hi, how are you?’

here you can say this to a boss=

Yeah, that’s right, it’s different in Poland and it’s different=

here.

Correct.

It’s just=

We even talked about it behind the door, that in Poland it’s a more of a formal attitude towards superiors, I don’t know, to teachers or to a boss, and here it’s less formal.

And also, I think so too, because I was thinking if I should talk more like in Poland but in English or like they do here. Right? More easy-going...

quietly Well, yes.

quietly Well, I suppose that if we’re in Ireland it should be like in Ireland.

So you were comparing a little between Polish and English.

Well, yes.

Yes.

Okay. And were you thinking for instance about earlier experiences of this type? What did I say that time, if...

Yes. The one when I forgot the book.

Yes? That was only a trial one. What about the other situations?

Mostly spontaneous everything.

No.: Everything just came together.

Okay. And in which moments did you feel a linguistic barrier. With which speaker the most.

With the first, simply because=

= With the girl, yeah?
<Kasia> No, with the- I had this guy, but it’s with the first one that you’re stressed out because you don’t how it’s gonna go, you don’t know what to say. But after that it’s okay.
<Magda> I think that maybe with the boss? I mean you have to.
<Kasia> Yes.
<Magda> Because somehow you keep thinking it’s a boss. That guy was really nice.
<Kasia> Yes. Great.
<Magda> But it was making sure it looked like he’s the boss.
<Janek> For me the worst conversation was with this girl because she was against everything. Always disagreeing with me.
<Kasia> @@@
<{Wojtek smiling to himself}>
<Janek> I ran out of strength to- yeah, that was probably her role. I ran out of strength to argue with her. Okay, you’re right and that’s it.
<R> Okay. So you felt like you gave up.
<Janek> Yes, I started to struggle for words a bit, I started to get confused and at some stage I gave up a bit, so to speak.
<R> Mhm. [Wojtek]?
<Wojtek> I don’t know. <{smiling}>
<Various> @@
<R> You don’t know. [Jacek] did you feel any linguistic barrier?
<Jacek> Maybe with the boss a little bit.
<Kasia> With the boss was the worst. @@
<Magda> Yeah!
<R> Okay. Ehm:: Right, as I’ve already revealed, all the role-plays focused on exchanging opinions. So what topics for example you’d avoid in English? What opinions are better to keep to yourself (2) in English.
<Jacek> Ehm... could you clarify?
<R> For example what topics are not talked about. People don’t exchange opinions about such topics.
<Kasia> Here in Ireland? Or what?
<R> Yeah.
<Kasia> For example=
<R> = or in general. You can say in general or in the Polish language.

<R> I think that if one were to, I don’t know, criticise a culture or their customs. I mean, you can compare, but if I were to criticise them too much, then it’s obvious, no nation would like that.

<Magda> I think so too. For instance, with the Christmas thing, I wanted to say to them, but in Poland it’s normal=

<Kasia> Yes.

<Magda> And we don’t have this whole thing you only have is commercialism. But I also think that=

<Wojtek> = It’s the same in Poland. Now you’d have all the decorations everywhere=

<Magda> = Yes, but not as early.

<Wojtek> //No, but now it’s there. It’s been the same for a few years now.//

<Magda> //Here sometimes on- in August you’d go to Dunnes Stores and they were there.// But I think it’s about not, just as [Janek] said not criticise them so much.

<R> Aha. [Jacek]?

<Jacek> I don’t know.

<R> Well what topics. Politics? Sex? Religion?

<Jacek> F:: <{exhaling loudly}>

<R> What topic would you avoid?

<Jacek> None. //One talks about everything.//

<Wojtek> //One talks about all of them.//

<R> Yes?

<Jacek> Yeah.

<Janek> It depends in what manner.

<Jacek> It also depends with whom. I wouldn’t talk with a boss about sex. Just as I wouldn’t talk to a friend about I don’t know <to himself> xxxxx </to himself>

<Janek> Politics.

<Kasia> @@@

<R> About lace underwear?

<Jacek> Also.

<Various> @@@

<R> Yours?
Rather yours.  
Okay. Very well. Ehmm... So would this be specific to a given lang- wait, how to say it. I found it quite interesting that you said that you didn’t want to sort of criticise their culture. 
In their presence. Other than that I can do that, amongst ourselves I can say this thing they do is stupid or something, but with them it’s kind of like we’re in their country and I think that maybe= 
=We should accept it because at the end of the day WE are in their country. 
=Everyone has their own customs. 
Yeah. ={nodding}>{/nodding} 
=Yeah. Mhm. 
=Everyone has their own convictions and we must understand it= 
=Yeah. and it’s like= 
=but I can dislike it, I can talk to fellow Poles if they share my opinion, that I don’t like this and that, but with the Irish there’s this barrier that if I tell them that this or that I don’t like, then they might start to think that this guy doesn’t like anything. This guy came from Poland and is all patronising. That’s how I perceive it. 
=I mean I think that for example= 
=You can compare. Last sentence, okay? =You can compare but too much- if there are too many differences and everything seems negative then everybody would feel the same, in the end it’s criticising someone. 
=I still think that the Irish really don’t mind what topics we talk about with them and maybe I’m in this circle of Irish people, but those that are, as you say very easy going =so they don’t get bothered by much, they don’t- ={searching for words (2)}> Seriously, we sometimes have this in Poland- we’re... suspicious =, or apprehensive and here it’s, I’d say easy =so= 
=Mhm. They don’t get involved. 
Yes, they don’t get involved because they- you can tell them for instance I don’t like it when the Irish put up all these Christmas ehm... decorations and all and they’d say “ah, it’s normal...” If that was- if I were from a different
country and said to a Pole that I don’t like this in Poland or something and they’d be like oh::: or something and they’d be a fight straight away=

<EN> = They’re so defensive immediately.  

<Kasia> Yes, and here what you said about the Polish. And here they don’t even care. Really.

<R> Mhm. Okay.

<Wojtek> It’s definitely a better attitude. For example if you start to criticise the Church. Ireland’s supposed to be Catholic as well, but in Poland you can have an unpleasant moment because someone else will try to defend it and here I haven’t come across that yet. You can always dish out the dirt and normally people would just nod in agreement.

<R> Mhm.

<Wojtek> Maybe they have differing opinions. Maybe they don’t express them.

<Kasia> They’re not quarrelsome. They’re not quarrelsome. When it to comes to those types of things. About those topics, they’re not quarrelsome really.

<R> Mhm. And about what topics would they be?


<VARIOUS> @@@

<R> Hurling, football, rugby? Okay. So if you said for instance that Munster\(^\text{26}\) is the worst, simply the worst team?

<Jacek> Then there’d be a row.

<R> I see.

<Wojtek> It’d also depend if they had actually won or lost a match.

<Magda> @@

<R> Mhm. So topic that are dear to them.

<Magda> Yes.

<Jacek> <nodding> 

<R> Okay. Right, Now I’d like you to imagine a first- a first emotion after this question. So when someone expresses an opinion, which is completely opposite to yours, I think [Janek] said something about that friend, then how- how do you feel at that moment. The first feeling when someone expresses an opinion contrary to yours.

<Jacek> <very quietly> Curiosity <very quietly>

<R> Curiosity?

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\(^{26}\) ‘Munster’ refers in this context to a regional Irish rugby team.
<Jacek> <{nodding}>

<Magda> I might be angry. But why does he think that?!

<R> Mhm.

<Janek> Yes, exactly. Maybe more like an objection. Maybe anger is too much of a word. Maybe above all I’d feel surprised if I’d find it hard to understand that argument. If something is completely obvious to me, but someone still doesn’t agree with me and even tries to present arguments then I’d be just=

<Kasia> = pissed off=

<Janek> = just driving me mad. <{all laugh}> Or I could say, if I run out of arguments, than I’d agree with the other person, nod in assent. But if I have my arguments, this other person has other arguments, I think it happened in one of the role-plays, okay, that’s your point of view, this is mine and we agree to differ, you just didn’t convince me and that’s it. And when it comes to feelings, then I’d definitely be surprised if it was something obvious to me and maybe indeed if someone was using stupid arguments then maybe a little bit of anger, that they’re not treating me seriously or something.

<R> And what are stupid arguments?

<Wojtek> Those someone read on Wikipedia.

<Kasia><Magda> @@

<R> Okay. Mr. professor Wikipedia?

<Wojtek> Yes. Or someone saw it on Trwam27 television channel.

<R> Okay.

<Janek> Yes. Or someone who depends on stereotypes.

<R> And more seriously?

<Janek> If someone for example, I don’t know, says that the Polish are this and that, basing it on stereotypes. Someone might annoy me then because I won’t agree with that.

<R> Or those that are uninformed, yes? Like on Wikipedia, that you can’t TRUst it, right? It’s not a reliable source. Mhm. E::hm any other feelings?

<Wojtek> (I mean) certainly like [Jacek] said, curiosity. One always has to suppose that someone might know more about that topic than you do. Maybe they’re right, not you. So it’s worth asking a little more

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27 ‘Trwam’ is a Polish religious television channel.
and figure out if someone really has an idea about it or is simply making things up.

<R> Does anyone feel foolish? Simply foolish?

<Jacek nodding a little>

<Wojtek> If you notice right away that you really were not right about something

{smiling}then you might feel stupid because you said something stupid, but...

<R> Mhm. Right. So let’s say you both have different opinions and how do you deal with that. How do you react to it. I say ‘A’ and you say no no no because it’s ‘B’ because I saw it somewhere. How do you react to it?

<Jacek> It depends ehm:: what the dispute is about. I suppose I’d most often ask where do you know this from and how is my knowledge different to yours and I’d rather stand by my opinions, I’d probably not change my point of view anyway.

<R> Mhm.

<Magda> I think so too. I’d show what I think and if that person shows their own points, if they’re better, then okay, I understand. And if not, then fine, they have these opinions and I’d leave it alone, and I’d keep thinking what I thought.

<Janek> It depends on the arguments. If they use arguments that would convince me, where I’d actually come to a conclusion that maybe that person is right, then I’d differentiate, that my sources of information were wrong, incorrect, and they proved to me that I was wrong, or even with an example, then I’d agree with them.

<R> Mhm. <to Wojtek> Yeah? <to Wojtek>

<Wojtek> I mean everything has been said.

<R> But:, so, I wanted to ask if there are any differences between Polish and English, in terms of this idea of “we agree to disagree”. Would it be that with Poles it’s more like “Oh, you’re stupid and you know nothing” and in English it’s like “Oh, it doesn’t matter”.

<Wojtek> Mhm. It’d probably be like that. <{Jacek nodding}> It’s easier to get into a row with another Pole=

<Magda>=Yes=

<Wojtek>= definitely more than with an Irishman.

<R> Really?

<Magda> Yeah.

<Wojtek> Like a serious argument.
<Kasia> Exactly. They are more like, if someone has a problem they might say <EN> “Do you have a problem with me?” “Oh no, no, no problem”. </EN> They do that immediately. A Pole would stand up for themselves and say What? You wanna start with me?

<Janek> Like, arrogant.

<Kasia> They’re really like <EN> “No problem” </EN>.

<R> So they’d don’t like confrontation here.

<Various> <{nodding}>

<Kasia> They’re simply not quarrelsome like Poles.

<R> Mhm. So there’s this opinion that Poles are kind of really arrogant when expressing opinions, that they’re really dogmatic. I know it all and it’s the truth, holy truth, what, what I’m saying. Do you agree with it?

<Wojtek> Partially, I do. Especially when you get to know a little bit the Poles here and sometimes you can see their attitude towards the Irish in general, to the culture. The majority would tell you, even though they often don’t even speak English, that the Irish are really stupid because they don’t know something, right?

<R> Mhm.

<Wojtek> I mean, I don’t know. And they’re definitely a bit arrogant.

<R> Mhm. Have you had that experience?

(3)

<R> Right. So just the last question. Have you noticed that you speak differently in English and in Polish. I mean when you’re simply exchanging opinions amongst friends, amongst other people. I mean... yeah?

<Kasia> Polish is certainly a richer language to me. There’s more words for sure, and... For instance, when I came here first people were telling me that you can express much more in Polish than in English. In English you can also express the same feelings, but I’d be simpler here sometimes=

<Wojtek> = It depends on the level of English that you’re using.

<Kasia> Yes.

<R> [Jacek]? What did you say? That you express opinions differently in Polish and in English?

<Jacek> Would I say that? Probably the same, I suppose.

<R> Yes?
It’s kind of difficult for me to notice any differences. It’s different for example, when we talked before about politeness, “yes please, “yes I have”. In English Polish you’d only say “Yes, I have”, “No, I don’t have”, and in Polish you’d say “yes”, “no”, “I have”, “I don’t have” and that’s it. But if you say to an English or Irish person “yes” or “no” then that’s less polite than in Polish. That’s one of the differences we learned. But it’s because you said it... otherwise I wouldn’t have noticed.

That was all thanks to me. Awww... I feel honoured. Ehm:: Right. So if none of the sides is changing their mind what do we do?

We stick to (our own).

We stick to what?

To our own.

My opinion, your opinion. Everybody has a right to their own.

Yes. Everybody has the right to their own opinion.

You can always beat someone up. 

You can always beat someone up. 

No, I’m just kidding.

No, so that’s probably the last- the last- Right. Any other conclusions from the role-plays? Anything you noticed?

No?

<shaking his head>

Right then. In that case we can finish. Let me just switch everything off.

So it’s okay to go for a beer?

So now it’s okay to go for a beer.

PL Focus Group 2nd Round

Okay. So I don’t know if you’ve noticed what all the role-plays were about.

Well... there were friends, boss and a stranger. 

And what did you talk about?

Abo::ut
<Asia> M:: About different Z I think there were situations based on... like one was about ehm... how do you say... <EN> everyday interactions </EN>, some world events and there was the one...

<R> It was all more or less about expressing opinions.

<Jurek> Okay then.

<R> Yes or not?

<Radek> I suppose yes, yeah.

<Jurek> <{nodding}> 

<R> And what were you thinking about during the role-plays?

<Radek> Hm... I was mostly thinking about how... m... what to say to keep the conversation going and so that my interlocutor could have an interesting response.

<R> Mhm.

<Asia> I tried to get the feeling of the situation. For instance, if it said that we are at a party that is boring, I was thinking there are some people here <{gesticulating}> here you’ve got something spilling over and I was really trying to help myself with the gestures and really feel the situation, that I’m in this situation. I didn’t think too much about what to say, that now I’ll say this or that so that the other could answer this and that. I didn’t want to steer the conversation. I wanted to do it in the most natural way and like...

<R> Mhm.

<Asia> Like I’d probably behave in reality, I think.

<Jurek> It probably depended on the situation we were enacting.

<R> Mhm.

<Jurek> Like in that <EN> Christmas </EN> situation. And there was the one with the <EN> newsagent’s </EN> where I think that at that moment I was simply trying to protect my position and to convince the interlocutor to my opinion. And when it comes to the role-play with the party, I just wanted to act natural. I didn’t really think about what I would answer. I just behaved like I’d behave normally. <very quiet> Some <EN> everyday situations </EN> </very quiet>

<R> Mhm. So you didn’t have for example... any problems with choosing words or...

<Asia> Hm... it’s probably more automatic.

<Radek> No::.

<Jurek> No. It’s like a natural reflex in speaking, you know.
<R> Mhm. And did you think for example about previous experiences of this type?

<Asia> Hm...

<Radek> About the party role-play, yes I did. But apart from that not really.

<Jurek> <silently> No. </silently> <{while shaking head}>

<Asia> I think that only when ehm... which was by the way the most difficult role-play with the boss when he’s sitting beside me and I’m supposed to ask him something that in reality I wouldn’t do. And I imagined my manager to whom I’d be saying this and... I thought that I’d never do something like that and=

<Radek> =And why not?

<Asia> Because I wouldn’t. Why would I=

<Radek> =But it’s a normal situation at work=

<Jurek> =No, no. I’d, of course, talk to a manager but of course in the role-play with the manager where everything was more kind of <EN> formal </EN> and it was a kind of a different type of <EN> interaction </EN> here so I was trying maybe to choose different words and in a not too friendly manner like during-during the earlier role-plays and... But I didn’t have this typical conversation with a boss before simply asking about <EN> holidays </EN> or what dates would suit me.

<R> Mhm. And at what stage then did you feel any kind of linguistic barrier?

<Asia> Like I said, when I was talking to the boss. Maybe it’s because I don’t have much EXPERIENCE ehm in this type of professional conversations. And I haven’t used English in such situations where I’d have to talk to a boss or a superior and so on. It was more- when I use English it’s on a more... friendly base and perhaps ehm when I’m talking to lecturers or my teacher I’d usually write an email rather than speaking. Maybe that’s why... it was the most difficult situation for me.

<R> Mhm.

<Jurek> I mean I don’t think that there’s any kind of barrier. Maybe in the role-play with the boss, I know that here- the difference that I’ve noticed between Poland and here- Ireland is that here it’s a bit less formal.

<R> Mhm.
<Jurek> So there’s no - there’s no - I mean when I’m talking even to lecturers here I
don’t feel this difference between = 
<Radek> =Yeah exactly. 
<Jurek> It’s always for example - I mean, I know that here it’s - I’ve actually talked
about this with some Irish people, I just see for example my lecturer and I say
<EN> “hey David, how are you?” </EN> There’s no “Sir” or any kind of
barrier that we’re from different worlds or something.
<Radek> Yes. It makes it much easier because for instance in the role-play with the
boss I didn’t- if it were a role-play in Polish, then I’d think more about the fact
that I have to use formal language, but with my experience working in Ireland
and even in other places abroad I know that they appreciate friendlier relations
with a boss.
<R> Mhm.
<Radek> And that’s why I didn’t have any serious problems with it.
<Asia> Right then. But on the other hand you can’t show yourself as a... I don’t know,
a drunk who gets - parties every weekend- in front of your boss.
<Radek> Well of course you can’t.
<Asia> You can’t be relaxed = 
<Radek> =But I=
<Asia> =I’m not talking about some formal expression of your- position and so on, but
you need to know how to behave. Kind of...
<Radek> Of course, //but listen//
<Asia> I know there’s //a difference like// [Jurek] said it’s not- there’s a difference
between Poland and Ireland.
<Jurek> @@@
<Radek> Well of course. I agree = 
<Asia> =it’s about the fact that you have to maintain some sort of <{taping her
forehead}> integrity!
<Radek> But when- you need to maintain that in a conversation with any
human.
<Asia> But definitely at your workplace =
<Jurek> =No but- What [Radek] was talking about is just that he feels like more
relaxed not- this type of conversation is not something you- at least I don’t go
stressed into it.
<Radek> Me neither.

<Jurek> Because I know that I’m not going to talk to my- to my enemy but I’m just- I wouldn’t say a friend, but to a person with whom I know I can talk about all this stuff. I mean I don’t feel this fear if I have to approach a lecturer or talk to my boss, it’s the same as when they want to talk to us and us- they ask- want to ask us something. I know that I don’t feel this kind of stress. I haven’t been stressed here. Not only- it wasn’t because I knew it was a role-play but I just know that I’ve done the same in real life.

<R> Mhm. (2) Okay. Right. In that case what kind of opinions is it better to keep to yourself? Not to express them.

<Radek> Hm... controversial ones @@

<R> Mhm.

<Jurek> It depends who we’re talking to as well. Because if we’re talking to a friend we don’t want to tell them anything=

<Radek> =//That might offend them.//

<Jurek> //That’d sound bad.//

<Radek> Or something that’d offend them.

<Jurek> But I know that for example if I have a discussion with someone who’s just- maybe not even <EN> stranger </EN> but someone who I maybe don’t-

<R> Like.

<Jurek> Like very much.

<R> @@

<Jurek> Sometimes we just try to, as they say <EN> rub it in their face </EN> or something like that.

<Radek><Asia> @@

<Jurek> No but! Obviously that also depends on the situation and who we’re talking to and what the topic of the discussion is.

<R> Mhm.

<Asia> I think that... unfortunately it’s just my personality. Maybe it’s an issue I have, that ehm... I treat a person as a person and if for example ehm I’m talking to... let’s say with a: <EN> stranger </EN> ehm a person I don’t know and I think they’re nice then I express my opinion because I feel there’s
a connection between us, there’s- there’s something going on
between us {gesticulating vigorously while speaking} and
that’s why I want to tell them what I really feel and not focusing
on the fact that we’ve only just met so no, I can’t express my
opinions. But if I feel comfortable to say it, then I’d probably do it.

<R> And how about... have you noticed any differences, between let’s say here in
Ireland or in English in general some opinions are- you are able to express, I
mean you feel comfortable, but in Poland for instance people don’t discuss
such topics. Or vice-versa?

<Jurek> It’s more like... I mean I can’t think of an example, but I think that here I can
say more and we can discuss things with the Irish, about different topics that in
Poland perhaps I wouldn’t discuss at all. But I can’t really think of... no... just...
<EN> top of my head </EN> but maybe- maybe the most important would be
the topic of religion. I just have some acquaintances who believe in God, they
believe in other ehm- I also know people who belong to Islam, Protestants and
who don’t believe at all, and we can always just talk about those topics and
there’s no problems and...

<R> Mhm. Here, yeah?

<Jurek> Yes, here.

<Radek> It’s <lit.> conflictless </lit.>.

<Jurek> And here it’s well... Nobody is going to try to make you...

<Radek> Change.

<Jurek> <EN> Convert </EN>, I mean we can talk... about different topics but in
Poland it depends. I think there’s no- there’s no such variety of religions and-
and some people can’t accept that. I know that I had this example, with my
family ehm... I also had some friends or- or if I met someone and this person
was of different religious beliefs it was an issue at home.

<R> Right.

<Jurek> And if it was here then I just talked to my parents, you know if I met someone
and you know... So the first question was if she’s Christian or not? Really, it’s a
bit... isn’t it here //I’m kind of used to it.//

<Radek> //Old-fashioned attitude// @@

<Jurek> <smiling> Sometimes. </smiling>

<Radek> Sometimes.
<Jurek> Yeah.

<R> Mhm.

<Asia> What’s also interesting. For example ehm in relation to Ireland is that the Irish are really open to different sexual orientations, they’re open to homosexuality and they support people in that ehm... really- it’s all good. Whereas in Poland it’s a taboo topic, impossible, no, no I’m not friends with these people, they’re horrible, disgusting. We have our own kind of types of prejudice and stereotypes and so on, but what is also surprising is that the Irish have their own stereotypes and they use them with reference to other nationalities. Ehm... for instance that the Polish are like this, the others are like that and another ones something else. And it seems quite radical to me as a Polish woman. That a different sexual orientation is okay but a different nationality is not, so it kind of destroys a bit the balance of vision- my vision of the Irish as open people... open to all these different... things going on.

<Radek> <silently> Yeah. Mhm. </silently>

<R> Mhm.

<Radek> Yeah but even... I think that it’s also changing with time and how a society evolves. Because when there- when they were fighting against the Protestants in Northern Ireland it wasn’t either- it had a religious background, and now we’ve been saying on the other hand that they’re tolerant so it- it also changes and I think that it kind of comes with time and that maybe in Poland it will be the same in a few years’...ehm... few decades’ time @@

<Jurek> I sometimes feel that in their ehm... <EN> personal relations </EN> the Irish are a bit <EN> two-faced </EN> ehm... double-dealing <EN> sometimes </EN>. I get that impression. In your- that if in- in direct contact with you they might be quite... very open and nice, but sometimes you only turn around and they can say a few unkind words behind your back. I’ve noticed that.

<Asia> Maybe that’s why it’s good to be careful with these opinions.

<Jurek> Mm.

<Asia> Regarding the question. You just don’t know if it’s kind of=

<Radek> Because the first impression is that there’s tolerance, //but you have to be careful.//

<Asia> //There’s something there, there’s something...//

<Jurek> It’s this <EN> Irish hospitality </EN> but I think that sometimes a person can say a few unkind words about you behind your back. Or even sometimes they
just turn around and they even know that you will be able to hear it, but I don’t know, maybe they want you to hear it. I don’t know.

<R> Mhm.

<Jurek> But I think that we are similar.

<Asia> Yes.

<Radek> <very quietly> Yes. </very quietly>

<Jurek> But we like to backbite the Irish as well sometimes. But I really don’t know what the Irish really think of us. I tried once to ask the Irish but they were beating round the bush so I don’t know what they truly think about us.

<R> So you don’t think they told you the truth? Like, an honest truth. To a Pole...

(3)

<Radek> It depends on- on different people.

<Jurek><Asia> <{nodding in agreement}>.

<Radek> Because there are people who are more open to- to others, and there’s others who are less. There are people who want to get to know other cultures and there are those who live in their own culture and it's enough for them.

<Jurek> It’s like, it’s like [Asia] said before, that if I met a person, with a <EN> complete stranger </EN>, in Poland for instance, then I’d try to take it slow. Maybe I wouldn’t be as open as with my friends in Poland, but in Ireland if I meet someone then <{shrugging shoulders}> we can always have a discussion about different topics and when our opinions clash, then tough, but it’s also=

<Asia> If you fee=

<Jurek> =occasion for a discussion. I think that every discussion like that enriches you in some way.

<Asia> If you feel that it’s kind of reciprocal, so to speak, there’s an interaction, then yeah.

<Jurek> Hm, you can always- it’s nice to- nice to have a discussion because even here it- it teaches you to defend your position. But sometimes you just can’t go on being stubborn ehm... //no, I don’t agree.//

<Radek> //For the sake of it.// Yeah.

<Jurek> For the sake of it, that someone’s just right.

<Radek> Because it’s just stupid.

<Jurek> I mean… I’m able to admit it when having a discussion and I think that with the Irish it might be easier. I mean I’m talking to
them and I can convince them to my point of view or they can convince me to theirs.

<Asia> I actually think that in this case the people who’ve been here they were really nice and there was an understanding between us not only here <{pointing ‘here’}> but also sitting out there <{pointing ‘there’}> where- what you didn’t see, right. We also had our conversations out there and an exchange of opinions and I think that it helped so that the opinions here were honest. At least on my behalf.

<Radek> <{nodding}> Mhm. I’d like you to think about the first feeling that comes to your minds when ehm... when someone expresses an opinion that is completely different to yours. How do you feel?

<Asia> <quietly> What do you call it... </quietly>

<Radek> I try to understand=

<R> <to Asia> You can say it in English. </to Asia>

<Asia> <{slightly intimidated}> @@

<R> Go on, go on.

<Radek> I try to understand ehm... put myself in the... position of this person and try to understand their point of view. Ehm... and when- and for example to imagine why this person thinks that. What’s the reason. Later ask why they think that and turn it into a::: discussion and present arguments to support my opinion the best I can and defend my own. If it’s possible. And if the other person convinces me to their opinion, they’re welcome to do so.

<Jurek> Hm. Same here. I’d agree as well.

<R> And what about a feeling? How do you feel? Angry, annoyed...

<Radek> A feeling?

<Jurek> No... no.

<Radek> No.

<R> Angry, annoyed, foolish...

<Radek> I feel curious.

<Jurek> I feel like <EN> challenged </EN> maybe. Like we can talk about something right... <{stuck for words}>. I think I can always learn something new from that other person. And this person can learn something from me during this- when we have this- like <EN> conversation </EN>.

<R> Mhm. And how about miss psychologist?
<Asia> I feel like I want to find out more about it to better challenge my
own.

<R> So also curious...

<Radek> Mhm. So immediately=

<Asia> =No. It’s not curiosity=

<Radek> =But I don’t think you’d not- you wouldn’t disagree but get more
information out of them and then later...

<Asia> Yes. Yes. That’s what I want to say that I want to know more, what and how,
at the same time a little egotistically putting my point of view and only later
concluding, analysing what’s- ehm... what’s okay what’s not.

<R> Mhm. And when someone- you say “A”, someone says “B”, how do you react?
<to Radek> You’ve already said it. </to Radek> How do you react?

<Jurek> I’d just have to imagine how I’d behave in a situation like that.
Ehm I don’t think I’d feel nervous at that moment. It’s just... I
mean, it depends on the topic and this- the level of controversy
and discussion, obviously. Ehm... if...

<Asia> Mhm.

<Radek> And if it’s something personal or not.

<Asia> Yes. //That’s it because then emotions come into play and so on.//

<Jurek> //I mean, no: it really depends.// Mhm.

<Asia> If it is... if emotions play a role in it.

<Asia> (And then maybe as well) a bit of <EN> curiosity </EN>.

<Jurek> It is a bit. I mean it happens sometimes with my friends here, Irish actually,
I’ve had many about economy actually ehm... <EN> conversations </EN>
a:::nd and sometimes our points of view clash. We have our small groups, so
sitting at a table and those two persons will agree with you, two others won’t
and we’re discussing, discussing... but it’s more... I don’t know if anyone feels
bad or angry, that someone is trying to accuse them- I mean we don’t accuse
each other of talking complete rubbish, for example if- I think that you
could hear that sometimes in Poland. Oh! You’re talking complete
nonsense!

<Asia> Absolutely.

<Radek> Yes! Yes.
<Jurek> You can’t- you just can’t have a like a civilised dialogue with someone sometimes. It also depends on the person. Here, one side will listen to you, present their arguments. You can present yours. It’s like it’s more... like...

<EN> civilised </EN> maybe. I don’t know.

<R> In Poland they’ll call you a fool, right?

<Radek> Yes.

<Asia> Mhm. <{nodding}> 

<Jurek> That’s it! That’s just what I think. It also depends=

<Radek> =They’ve more radical ideas and they can’t accept other ideas.

<Jurek> It’s simply impossible to accept something like=

<R> A bit perverting...=

<Asia> =But you know that I really have //experienced something like that on-//

<Jurek> //What’s it called...// <EN> constructive criticism? </EN> Or something...

<Asia> Yes, that you can’t say anything. You’re just so enveloped in your ehm...=

<Radek> =//ideas//, that you can’t see the world beside that.

<Asia> //ideas//, that (you don’t know the difference) nothing else exists.

<Jurek> Yes! But I think one just has to leave and see and-

<Asia> Yes.

<Jurek> And it’s not only Ireland, but when we’re at university, to meet people from different countries and also- I also had the chance ehm... to talk to people from Iraq, from Iran, more controversial nations to some people.

<R> Mhm.

<Jurek> And it’s just talking how it really is and what’s their attitude to- to what’s in their country and... But it’s all really just a friendly conversation, not that I’d be accusing anyone. I think that- it’s the impression I get sometimes that we’re very similar to Americans. When I’ve dealt with Americans they can really defend their position so firmly <{clenching a fist}>, you can’t- they won’t let you convince them sometimes.

<Radek> Yes!

<Asia> Yes.

<Jurek> They think you’re simply stupid! And you’re wrong! We’re right! Sometimes I get this impression that there’s just so many
similarities between... like... Poles and Americans... when- when
I’ve contact with- especially here in UL\textsuperscript{28} with:: many Americans.
Even though it’s- they, they simply defend their opinion. But
really defend their standpoint.

\(<R>\) Mhm.
\(<Jurek>\) <very quietly> It’s so...
\(</\text{very quietly}>\)
\(<R>\) And what do you do when neither- neither of the sides wants to change their
opinion. Everybody to their own?
\(<Jurek>\) Everyone has the right to their own opinion.
\(<Asia>\) Yes. Exactly.
\(<R>\) Really?

\(<Jurek>\) <\{shrugging shoulders\}> Well in Ireland for instance... I don’t know. In
Ireland for instance=
\(<Radek>\) =Now we’re going outside and \(<\{rubbing fists\}>\) we solve the problem with
force.
\(<Asia>\) @@@@@
\(<Jurek>\) @@ Ehm... everybody has- I mean I kind of try to- to- I mean-
at least ME, people from my circle would be mostly Irish we can
simply talk and if we have different opinions then everyone has
the right to their own opinion and...
\(<Radek>\) It’s not the end of the world...
\(<Jurek>\) But the Irish... it’s nice because if you tell them something and they for
example do not agree with you then.... \(<\text{EN}>\) “Oh I see where you’re coming
from, BUT!” \(</\text{EN}>\) and they introduce their argument. And then I say that I
agree with this point, but not with that one and so... well, we won’t agree, then
tough. Maybe we’ll agree next time. I don’t think it’s a big deal.
\(<Radek>\) It’s not the end of the world just because you disagreed.
\(<Jurek>\) But I suppose it’s nice=
\(<Asia>\) =Alternatively you can reach some sort of consensus.
\(<Jurek>\) But it’s nice, I suppose, to have your own opinion and not just being like a
weathercock, depending on what someone says and just agree with them
without- without even thinking if it actually is something I agree with or...

\(<R>\) Mhm. And how about Poland?

\textsuperscript{28} ‘UL’ stands for University of Limerick in this context.
<Jurek> I don't know... I mean... it’s hard...

<R> //Because I know//

<Jurek> //Just shouting//

<R> Really?

<Jurek> From what I remember because it’s been a while since I’ve been and to be honest... and it’s just...

<R> So the last time you were there for Christmas, the family was sitting together and what happened?

<Asia> Oh:::: @@@

<Jurek> It’s been lo::ng while since I was there for Christmas.

<Radek> Actually, Christmas is an excellent example. For example ehm... my granddad is always arguing with his son. And they have completely different opinions //and it’s always the same.//

<Asia> //And it’s... <to Radek> right? </to Radek> they’re opinions regarding// history-politics.

<Radek> Yes.

<Asia> And really radical.

<Radek> Yes... radical.

<Asia> I was- I was a witness. Uu...

<Radek> And that’s exactly what’s interesting because they’ll never- won’t reach a consensus, and sometimes they fight so much over it, that it continues on into everyday life and they’ll sulk for days over it.

<Asia> I, on the other hand, was on Erasmus in Warsaw, I had one class in Polish and we were doing some role-plays and so on and I was supposed to be the observer, who’ll notice some things. And I behaved like it was in the Irish context, so when I saw something was wrong, something’s not okay, so I say it... “So you’re this and that’s wrong” <{pointing towards Jurek}> bla bla bla... I’m expressing my opinion. And then! An argument raged, shouting at me that <loud> What the? That it’s unthinkable! And how can I even talk like that about a person=</loud>

<Radek> =Evaluate.

<Asia> Evaluate! <{loud}> Listen guys, three hours...<\loud>

<Radek> When that was the role, it was an observer who was supposed to evaluate.

<Asia> Yes! Yes! Them against me. On top of that they pulled out some dirt among themselves. Three hours it took. When I left that lecture- I mean seminar I was just analysing everything step by step to see if I really had done something
wrong. Whereas I imagine that here in Ireland it would have been more neutral.
That it’s a class, it’s fictional.

<Jurek> Mhm. Mhm.

<Asia> What for!? Why would someone make a problem out of it and- which then
reach the spectrum of our private life. What for? Lecture is a lecture.

<Jurek> I’d agree with that, definitely.

<R> Mhm. Ehm... that’s it. These were all my questions. Do you have anything to
add? Dear participants?

(3)

<Radek> Well I shall add that it has been very nice to take part in this research.

<Asia> Thank you for cooperation. <{grinning}>
Appendix 7 – Information Sheet & Consent Form for Participants

FACULTY OF ARTS, HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

POLISH-IRISH CROSS-CULTURAL STUDY
INFORMATION SHEET - IRISH PARTICIPANTS

• This study is a part of my MA/PhD dissertation and looks at differences in speech behaviour between Polish and Irish English. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

• The study will consist of six (video-recorded) role-plays where you will be interacting with a number of people. During that task, you will be given a short description of a certain situation and asked to interact as if it was a real-life situation (e.g. You are in a supermarket and you bump into someone causing the person to drop their belongings. You say...).

• The follow-up task will involve a group-discussion of the six situations you were involved in. It will be centred on linguistic issues and an opportunity to give feedback.

• The acting out of the role-plays and the group discussion will take no more than 2 hours in total and the study will all take place on campus at the University of Limerick; it will be organised at a time to suit all participants.

• Your name will be known only to the researcher and her supervisor and you will be given an identification code (e.g. student1, student2, etc.) for the duration of the research. The data will be stored for duration of 7 years in my personal secure location and only I and my supervisor will have access to the data.

• You have the right not to answer questions you do not want to and to withdraw at any time without any explanation.

• You can also contact the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee if you have any concerns about participating in this research.

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POLISH-IRISH CROSS-CULTURAL STUDY
CONSENT FORM – IRISH PARTICIPANTS

Consent Section:
I, the undersigned, declare that I am willing to take part in the above mentioned research project.

- I declare that I have been fully briefed on the nature of this study and my role in it and have been given the opportunity to ask questions before agreeing to participate.
- The nature of my participation has been explained to me and I have full knowledge of how the information collected will be used.
- I am also aware that my participation in this study may be recorded (video/audio) and I agree to this. However, should I feel uncomfortable at any time I can request that the recording equipment be switched off. I am entitled to copies of all recordings made and am fully informed as to what will happen to these recordings once the study is completed.
- I fully understand that there is no obligation on me to participate in this study.
- I fully understand that I am free to withdraw my participation at any time without having to explain or give a reason.
- I am also entitled to full confidentiality in terms of my participation and personal details.

______________________________________         __________________________
Signature of participant                                               Date