11 Epilogue: Culture and norms in politeness research

Michael Haugh

11.1 Introduction

Discourse about appropriate ways of behaving and interacting with others has a long and venerable history in East Asia. The teachings of Confucius and his disciples have been widely referenced in ideologies of appropriate behaviour that have developed, not only in China over the past two thousand years, but also in other East Asian countries. Discourse on *li* 禮 'propriety' or 'rite', one of the key *emic* politeness concepts in East Asia, is said to have its origins even further back in time in the ideal behaviour of the great rulers of the Zhou Dynasty nearly three thousand years ago. It thus seems somewhat appropriate for an approach that emphasises the importance of folk or lay understandings and discourse about politeness to now take a greater role in furthering our understanding of politeness in East Asia. This volume represents a concerted effort to explore the implications of employing an approach to politeness research that does not dismiss outright such ideologies as unscientific, and thus not an object worthy of study, but rather respects them as part of the overall cultural milieu in which politeness as a social practice emerges. Yet rather than seeing such norms as determinants of polite behaviour in East Asian societies, as some researchers of politeness in East Asia have been inclined to do, proponents of the discursive approach take a more critical and nuanced view of the role of norms and culture in analysing politeness.

In this chapter, after briefly overviewing some of the key themes and findings of this volume, the implications of the discursive approach for the ways in which norms and culture are theorised and analysed in politeness research are considered. The distinction between individual and social politeness posited by Mills and Kádár (this volume), and the relationship between these two levels are then further explored, particularly with regard to the analytical practices of politeness researchers. The chapter concludes by outlining possible areas for future research.

11.2 Politeness in East Asia: A discursive approach

As noted by Kádár and Mills in the introduction to this volume, and echoed in Pan's chapter on methodology, research on politeness in East Asia has been to date largely dominated by an ongoing debate between those who employ Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory, and those who prefer approaches drawing from *emic* ideologies of politeness in their analyses. While this debate has been useful in moving the field forward, it seems somewhat timely that we attempt to go beyond such (seemingly endless) controversies. Kádár and Mills propose here that by using the discursive approach more widely in examining politeness in East Asia we may do just that.

The roots of the discursive approach itself lie in a number of critical responses to Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987) highly influential theory, in particular, the edited volume of Watts *et al.* (1992 [2005]) and Eelen's (2001) penetrating critique of politeness theory, which in turn have prompted some of the most influential publications over the past decade in politeness research, including Mills (2003), Watts (2003) and Locher and Watts (2005). While those scholars claiming to employ a discursive approach to politeness differ somewhat in their theorising and practice of politeness research, there are a number of key features that unite those employing the discursive approach, many of which have been adopted more widely in the field, albeit not uncritically (see for instance, Terkourafi, 2005; Haugh, 2007c; Culpeper 2011, forthcoming). These include, as argued by Kádár and Mills (in Chapter 1): (a) the use of discourse data (i.e. longer fragments of authentic interaction) as opposed to single utterances that are often made up; (b) a greater focus on the hearer's evaluation of behaviour, not simply the speaker's production of utterances; (c) an increasing amount of research on impoliteness; and, perhaps most importantly, (d) greater emphasis on the need to analyse lay or first-order interpretations of politeness in theorising (second-order) conclusions. In this sense, we can discern a fundamental shift away from the previous observer coding of data in classic approaches to politeness (Lakoff, 1973; Brown and Levinson, 1978, 1987; Leech, 1983), which reflects an underlying objectivist epistemological stance and positivist ontology, towards approaches focusing on *emic* or participants' evaluations of interaction, which are grounded in a constructionist epistemology and interpretive ontology (Crotty, 1998; Haugh, 2007c). This philosophical shift reflects the broader interactional turn in pragmatics (Haugh and Liddicoat, 2009), where the analyst no longer imposes theoretically motivated understandings on participants, but rather seeks to explicate the evaluations made by the participants themselves. Eelen (2001) argues that such a paradigm shift is required if we as social scientists are to avoid losing sight of the ultimate aim of politeness research:

A situation in which the scientific account contradicts informants' claims and dismisses them as being 'wrong' does not represent a healthy situation. Such a practice

immediately leads to a rupture between scientific and commonsense notions, causing the theory to lose its grasp on the object of analysis. In an investigation of everyday social reality informants can never be 'wrong', for the simple reason that it is their behaviour and notions we set out to examine in the first place. (Eelen, 2001: 253)

However, this focus on explicating participant evaluations of politeness (and impoliteness) should not lead us into the trap of elevating lay perceptions to the status of theory. The place of the analyst is not simply to report those evaluations, but also to examine the categories which participants use in making those evaluations, and to investigate how those categories come to be used over time across communities of practice (henceforth CoP) and societies more widely. In this sense, then, the place of the analyst in the discursive approach is retained despite its explicit focus on examining first-order politeness.

The implications of employing the discursive approach for the place of culture and norms in politeness research emerges as a second key theme in this volume. In Eelen's (2001) seminal critique, the ways in which norms and culture have been used in politeness research are problematised. Consequently, there has been a general reluctance amongst practitioners of the discursive approach to explore politeness norms beyond particular situated CoPs. Yet CoPs do not exist in a social vacuum, being part of the broader social network that constitutes different societies. Whilst there are indeed localised norms, specific to the contingencies of particular interactions within a CoP, a denial of the existence of broader 'cultural' politeness norms flies in the face of the experiences of anyone who has ventured into other societies. Even when comparing politeness practices in roughly equivalent CoPs, such as student-academic relationships mediated through e-mail in universities in Britain and Australia, there appear to be at least some underlying norms influencing e-mail practices which echo broader societal norms (Merrison *et al.*, forthcoming). Mills and Kádár (this volume; see also Mills, 2009) thus take a more pragmatic view than Eelen (2001) about the value of the concepts of culture and norms for politeness research, arguing that we need a more nuanced view of culture and norms and their place in politeness research. They not only advocate the value of the CoP paradigm, and a need to talk about tendencies or 'dominant politeness norms' rather than 'absolute norms', but also argue that we need to distinguish between cultural norms of appropriateness or politeness norms at the 'individual' and 'social levels'.

At the individual (or arguably local interactional) level, they suggest that norms of politeness (and impoliteness) vary within societies or cultures, across different CoPs, classes, regions, and according to gender and age among other things. For this reason they argue that it is difficult to attribute particular politeness or impoliteness behaviours (and evaluations) to the individual's cultural background, as such behaviours and evaluations may be contextually motivated. Such a stance echoes that of conversation analysts who generally

eschew 'cultural' or 'normative' explanations of interaction unless the analyst can clearly demonstrate that the participants are indeed orienting to or invoking such social structures in the course of the interaction (Schegloff, 1991, 1992a, b). According to Mills and Kádár, then, the focus of analysis at the individual level should be an "examination of the types of judgement" about "appropriateness" within "community of practice norms" (p. 24). Pan (Chapter 4) expands upon this view in proposing that politeness researchers can employ four different analytical perspectives to examine the basic unit of analysis that is delineated in her 'grammar of politeness' approach, including: (a) members' generalisations, (b) individual case histories, (c) the views of external observers, and (d) contrastive studies (either the same behaviours across different groups/situations, or members' vs. analysts' explanations).

At the social level, politeness norms are characterised by Mills and Kádár as statements or positionings by those perceived to be economically or culturally powerful that are generally conservative, ideological and based on stereotypes. The aim, then, in examining politeness at the social level is that we as analysts should be examining the discursive means by which supposed norms are held in place or asserted as norms in the first place. In this way, we can better understand how cultural stereotypes about politeness (and impoliteness) are developed and circulated.

Stadler (Chapter 5), for instance, demonstrates that largely stereotypical views of politeness in East Asia abound in both popular and technical literature, and that these views originate from "members' generalisations, that is, what members of a group claim to do in relation to politeness" (p. 114). She then argues with reference to a number of intercultural incidents between British and Chinese academics that such stereotypes are not necessarily borne out in actual interactions, and so "a thoroughgoing critique of stereotypical views and a more 'local' focus on the norms within particular communities of practice" (p. 114) is required. Pizziconi (Chapter 3) also demonstrates how the same politeness phenomena, namely, honorifics, can be examined at both the individual and social level. In the case of the former, honorifics are characterised as indexical phenomena which are used to identify interactional and deferential roles. In the case of the latter, in contrast, honorifics are treated as a form of social capital, a view that can be substantiated through close examination of folk or lay discourse about honorifics.

A third key theme in this volume is the exploration of current and past 'dominant politeness norms' in a range of East Asian societies, including China (Kádár and Pan), Japan (Haugh and Obana), Korea (Kim), Singapore (Lee), and Vietnam (Chew). These dominant politeness norms are described in these chapters at the social level for the most part, and then their inherent discursivity and argumentativity (Eelen, 2001) is brought into focus at the individual (or interactional) level. The analyses draw from a variety of data sources, not

limited to just interactional data, such as recorded conversations or e-mail exchanges, but also including historical documents and etiquette manuals, ethnographic observations and native speaker intuition/introspection. Some of the key themes to emerge across these analyses are the importance of address terms/forms as well as face, and the shared '(Neo-)Confucian' heritage of politeness norms and ideologies in East Asia.

The place of culture and norms in research about politeness in East Asia thus receives a somewhat critical treatment in this volume, although, as previously noted, the position taken here is more pragmatic than that taken in Eelen's (2001) original critique. As can be seen from the overview in this section, the characterisation of the discursive approach in the volume is fairly broad and inclusive, and the different contributors are thus able to vary in their interpretations of it. The question thus arises as to just how purely discursive the approach to politeness research advocated in this volume is. In the following section, this issue is considered further with particular reference to the implications of Eelen's (2001) scathing critique of the use of culture and norms in previous theories of politeness.

11.3 The discursive approach to culture and norms

In the discursive approach to politeness sketched by Eelen (2001), he problematises both norms and culture in relation to politeness research. He argues that "culture" has been transformed from an "abstract descriptive notion" that is essentially "an a posteriori derivative of the observation of behaviour across a whole group", to a "concrete explanatory notion", which is assumed to function as "an a priori casual factor for individual behaviour" (Eelen, 2001: 166). The problem with such a view is that individuals are unwittingly treated as "cultural dopes" who employ certain politeness forms or strategies simply because they are Chinese, Vietnamese or Japanese, for instance. Moreover, variability in evaluations of politeness and impoliteness, which is revealed through empirical studies, challenges the assumption that politeness norms are uniformly or even "mostly" shared across members of particular cultures or societies. Eelen (2001) proposes that norms and culture should be examined as discursive phenomena, that is, as "social practices" that have their own particular "social effects, purposes and motivations" (pp. 236–7), and that variability in the perceptions of these should be treated as a fundamental component of a theory of politeness, not something to be explained away by the analyst. Eelen (2001) also claims that the link between so-called cultures and individuals is not well explained in most accounts of norms in politeness research:

sharedness by itself does not suffice as an explanatory tool: merely saying that norms are shared does not really explain how the connection between culture and individual

actually works. The link is still immediate: the norms are at the same time cultural as well as individual. How they come to have and are able to fulfil this dual role is still left unexplained. (Eelen, 2001: 132)

Various instantiations of the discursive approach to politeness, including this volume, constitute attempts by politeness researchers to address such problems.

Although it is not often acknowledged, the roots of the discursive approach to politeness lie not only in Bourdieu-influenced sociology, which receives the lion's share of attention in Watts (2003) and Mills (2003), for instance, but also in discursive psychology (Eelen, 2001: 236–7). One of the key aims of discursive psychology is to analyse "discourse in which mental states become relevant, as a form of social action which is oriented to interactional and inferential concerns" (Wooffitt, 2005: 89), with mental states including memories, knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and motives. Since politeness itself is arguably at its core an "interpersonal attitude" (Haugh, 2007a: 91; Culpeper, forthcoming), an examination of discourse in which politeness as an attitude becomes locally relevant to the participants is thus clearly discursive in nature.

However, as participants do not always explicitly deploy or debate evaluations of politeness and impoliteness in discourse, this approach has been extended by various theorists (notably Mills, 2003, 2005, 2009; Watts, 2003; Locher, 2004, 2006; Locher and Watts, 2005, 2008), to an examination of the implicit evaluations of politeness and impoliteness made by interactants (Culpeper, forthcoming). Culture in the discursive approach, then, is largely addressed through an investigation of variability in evaluations of politeness in interactions across different CoPs and other groups within a particular society. In doing so, however, a potential disconnect between the discursive approach to politeness, and the assumptions and practices of discursive psychology arises. Firstly, such analyses are often not actually discursive, at least in the strict sense of the word, as the analysts draw from second-order concepts, such as 'politic behaviour' (Locher and Watts, 2005), for instance (Culpeper, forthcoming). Consequently, the analysts' conclusions may not necessarily be consonant with the understandings of participants, yet explicating the participants' understandings is the avowed aim of discursive psychologists. Secondly, there is the question of whether discursive analysts are adequately warranting their analyses of the participants' evaluations, and not inadvertently confounding the participants' and analysts' perspectives in their interpretations of these evaluations (Haugh, 2007c; Arundale, 2010a).

Indeed, in regard to more adequately justifying their interpretations, it is perhaps surprising that in extending the analysis of politeness to instances where politeness and impoliteness are not explicitly commented on in discourse, there has been only limited uptake of conversation analytic methodologies by discursive politeness researchers. Drawing from research and methods in

conversation analysis to examine politeness and impoliteness remains in its relative infancy (although see Piirainen-Marsh, 2005; Arundale, 2006, 2010a; Cook, 2006; Haugh, 2007c; Bousfield, 2008; Hutchby, 2008; Márquez-Reiter, 2008, 2009), but it is perhaps one further means of grounding the discursive approach more empirically in the discourse data that it explicitly advocates. However, it is worth noting that it is a pragmatics informed by research and methods in conversation analysis rather than conversation analysis per se which is likely to be useful to discursive politeness analysts, since the former encompasses a wider context than is traditionally acknowledged in conversation analysis. This broader pragmatic context goes beyond local structures normally employed in conversation analysis as it includes "features of the situational context currently invoked by the participants in their talk/conduct, aspects of the currently invoked identity of the participants, or the history of the participants' interaction both prior to and within the talk/conduct being examined" (Arundale, 2010b: 157; cf. Haugh, 2007c: 311).

Moreover, in interpreting the participants' evaluations of politeness as they emerge in interaction, the analyst inevitably draws from some kind of underlying theory of politeness (Haugh, 2007c). In the case of Hutchby's (2008) analysis of evaluations of impoliteness arising from interruptions, for instance, while he explicitly rejects previous theoretical accounts of impoliteness as an analyst's imposition on the data, he nevertheless draws from an unstated theorisation of politeness (or perhaps native-speaker intuition), in claiming that interruptions are interpretable as impolite because they involve sanctioning or admonishing the participant who did the interrupting. Haugh (2007c; see also Arundale, 2010a), on the other hand, suggests that we as analysts need to explicitly formulate the theoretical framework in which we proceed, so that we can demonstrate that our interpretation is consonant with that of the participants, although not necessarily equivalent. After all, the ultimate aim of the discursive approach to politeness is not to simply reify *emic* or lay understandings of politeness, thereby elevating them to the level of theory. The aim instead is for the analyst to theorise about politeness so that we may better understand *emic* or lay understandings and *practices* of politeness, the latter not necessarily being synonymous with the former.

In examining the reconceptualisation of culture, norms, and indeed politeness as 'social practices' that have their own particular 'social effects, purposes and motivations', then, a number of analytical or methodological challenges face discursive politeness theorists. Whilst drawing from methodologies such as discursive psychology and a pragmatics informed by conversation analysis go some way towards grounding the discursive approach empirically in data, it has been argued here that theorising about politeness still has a crucial role to play. Without explicit theorisation we as analysts, no matter how well intentioned, will inevitably fall into the trap of making moral evaluations ourselves.

Even if we claim to only be representing the hearer's or speaker's evaluations in our analyses, this moral dimension remains, albeit somewhat masked, as Eelen (2001) points out:

even if one is rigorous enough to confine the analysis to the strictly *emic* viewpoint, including those interactants that agree with a certain description of behaviour, and only those specific interactional contexts in which the description is actually made, one still ends up with a description of behaviour from a particular viewpoint, i.e. the scientist still ends up taking the viewpoint of a particular hearer. So it seems that the problem of moral involvement of descriptions of politeness simply cannot be avoided. (Eelen, 2001: 183)

Rather than attempting to circumvent the moral dimension of evaluations of politeness, then, this inherent moral involvement needs to feature in our theorising of politeness.

An explicit theorisation of politeness (and impoliteness) goes some way towards at least acknowledging the inherently moral nature of politeness evaluations, since evaluations always involve someone's standards, even in the case of the evaluations of participants as explicated by the analyst (Eelen, 2001: 174; Mills, 2009: 1058–59). A theory of politeness can help make those standards explicit. The call in this volume (see also Mills, 2009) to theorise politeness at both the individual level and the social level thus points us in another direction that the issue of moral involvement in evaluations of politeness might be better addressed by researchers. In essence, it is proposed by Mills and Kádár (Chapter 2) that culture in the discursive approach can also be explored at the social level of politeness, as it is at this level that morally the involved positions of speakers in making evaluations of politeness and impoliteness become most apparent.

However, since the discursive approach has its origins in the analysis of interactional data ("longer fragments of authentic interactions", p. 7), and thus has largely focused on politeness at the individual level, in responding to the call for a theory of social politeness, a number of key issues arise. First, what kinds of data are allowable for analysis besides "longer fragments of authentic interactions"? Second, how should these other types of data be analysed? And third, can we reconcile the individual and social levels of politeness, or should they remain (for the moment) distinct areas of research?

The first two questions are implicitly addressed in this volume through the use and analysis of historical documents, etiquette manuals, ethnographic observations and native-speaker intuition/introspection. However, it remains an open question how the analyst's interpretation of folk discourses about politeness can be adequately warranted without making reference to how such discourses are received by their audiences. The key lies, at least in part, in very careful analyses of "the means by which these supposed norms are held

in place, or are asserted to be norms in the first place" in such discourses, as argued by Mills and Kádár (Chapter 2, p. 24; see also Mills, 2009). There are other possible sources of data, however, not explored in this volume, that might also prove valuable in theorising at the social level of politeness and impoliteness. These could include metapragmatic analyses of the use of *politeness*, *impoliteness* and related terms in corpora (Culpeper, 2009, 2011, forthcoming), surveys of lay evaluations of particular interactions (Chang, 2008), and analyses of interactions that have undergone 'scale shifts' into broader societal debates about appropriate/inappropriate behaviour (Haugh, 2008a, 2010c). The latter in particular provide valuable insight into the ways in which evaluations of politeness and impoliteness can be used to morally position both the originators and the targets of those evaluations.

The response of discursive politeness theorists to the third question, however, remains more equivocal. In the following section, then, possible links between the individual and social levels of politeness and impoliteness are tentatively explored.

11.4 The individual and the social in politeness research

As was briefly noted in the previous section, Eelen (2001) argues that the link between social or cultural norms and individuals has largely been assumed rather than explicated by politeness researchers. He asserts that "the ontology of the society-individual connection needs to be laid out in detail. Without it we are left with a gap between the abstract level of the collective where the norms and rules reside, and the level of concrete individual behaviour which is explained by those norms and rules" (Eelen, 2001: 129). In this sense, Eelen suggests that is not enough to theorise about politeness and impoliteness at the individual and social levels: we also need to explore interconnections between those levels. As Arundale (2009) succinctly points out, the individual and social levels can be conceptualised as ultimately being intimately connected through what he terms the 'individual-social dialectic'.

In the human experience, then, not only are individuals qua individuals dependent upon the nexus that is the social, but also the social qua social is dependent on individuals in nexus. What is individual in nature and what is social in nature are fully interdependent, whilst at the same time individual phenomena and social phenomena are distinct and functionally contradictory poles of human experience (Arundale 2009: 40–1).

At the individual level, then, we can explore how expectations about appropriate behaviour in particular local contexts and CoPs, or more diffuse social groupings, both afford and constrain evaluations of politeness and impoliteness. Politeness at the individual level can be theorised as pragmatic acts (Mey,

2001), involving both behaviours and evaluations enacted in interaction. However, rather than attempting to model the role of normative expectations as 'socially average behaviour', our focus instead should be on examining what Eelen (2001) terms a "working consensus":

A working consensus is an a posteriori rather than a priori notion: it is not a *mental* consensus where identical beliefs are the *input* of interaction, but rather a *practical* consensus which is the *outcome* of interaction. As the combined result of variable (possibly even contradictory) beliefs-in-action, it consists of practices rather than beliefs. As such, it is a truly social phenomenon that exists only in and through interaction between people rather than in individual people's heads. (Eelen, 2001: 219)

Such a perspective echoes one that has long been argued for by ethnomethodologists (Garfinkel, 1967; Heritage, 1984), and more recently by some scholars in European-Continental pragmatics (Mey, 2001). In other words, it is through examining the orientations of participants to particular normative positionings, which are implicit in their evaluations of politeness and impoliteness, that we can better understand the role that norms play at the individual level (see also Haugh and Obana, this volume).

At the social level, on the other hand, we can examine how politeness and impoliteness norms are debated (through discursive ratification or dispute), and in particular, how such debates are used to position certain individuals or groups as either lying within or outside 'normal' society, often in an attempt to disempower certain groups through exclusion. The power of statements about politeness and impoliteness lies in the fact that they constitute moral judgments, where "the evaluator imposes a moral order on the evaluated by means of which he or she condemns or commends" (Eelen, 2001: 174). This can be seen, for instance, in the way in which attempts by supporters to normalise "offensive" comments made by a Muslim cleric during one of his sermons were resisted by others through invoking broader societal norms (Haugh, 2008a: 216–17). In the following excerpt, the interviewer (KS, Australian television presenter Karl Stefanovic) frames the claim by one of the cleric's supporters (KT) that the cleric's comments had been decontextualised as "unacceptable" in broader Australian society.¹

(1) ("Keysar Trad defends Alhilali", *Today*, Channel 9, 30 October 2006)

- 1 KT: Now to take that (.) into a different context and read it- and really
- 2 nitpick a speech that's a really about modesty and abstinence is
- 3 very
- 4 very un[fair].
- 4 KS: [Keysar he described women as me:at. You ca:n't do
- 5 that.
- 5 No one accepts that that is acceptable.

Haugh (2008a) argues that the interviewer invokes societal norms in claiming that the cleric's comments were offensive.

This norm is invoked through reference to "no one" regarding Hilali's comments as being acceptable (implying that "everyone" thinks they are unacceptable). It is important to note here that it is also presupposed by Stefanovic that societal norms take precedence over particular norms of religious teaching in a mosque, which thus, in his view, renders Hilali's comments "unacceptable". (Haugh, 2008a: 217)

The way in which particular comments made by the cleric are evaluated as fairly innocuous relative to the norms of a particular CoP, namely, the mosque in question in Sydney, but as highly offensive relative to societal norms asserted by the interviewer, is indicative of the moral involvement of evaluations of impoliteness, and thus the way in which norms can be invoked to impose a 'moral order' on certain individuals and groups. As can be seen through this brief excerpt, then, if the object of analysis in the discursive approach is first-order politeness, we need to adequately theorise this moral dimension of politeness (and impoliteness). This moral element thus has a key role to play in a theory of social politeness, and in exploring links between the social and individual levels of politeness.

In exploring links between the individual (interactional) and societal levels of politeness, however, we need to carefully distinguish between two types of first-order perspectives on politeness, namely *emic* understandings versus participant understandings (Haugh, 2009: 5).² The former, *emic* perspective involves "understand[ing] speech practices which make sense to the people concerned, i.e., in terms of indigenous values, beliefs and attitudes, social categories, emotions, and so on" (Goddard, 2006: 2). The latter, participant perspective involves understanding "the participants' orientations to meanings, interpretations and evaluation of utterances" (Pirainen-Marsh, 2005: 214). Haugh (2009) argues that these two first-order perspectives need to be kept analytically distinct, referring to the *emic* notion of *wakimae* as a case in point:

while the notion of *wakimae* (translated as 'discernment') invoked by Ide (1989) in place of Brown and Levinson's (1987) *etic* (or 'universal') notion of face to account for politeness in Japanese is culture-specific and so *emic* in nature, Ide makes no claim that her analyses would be understood as such by the participants in interactions. In fact, Ide seems to not consider the participant's perspective at all, apparently comfortable with her status as a 'cultural-insider' to justify her analyses. (Haugh, 2009: 5)

The problem here, at least potentially, is that if we as analysts make recourse to folk or *emic* notions without proper consideration of their grounding in interaction, we may fall into the epistemological trap of reifying such first-order notions (Eelen, 2001: 179; Haugh, 2009: 5). There is also the danger that in

focusing on *emic* perspectives or concepts in analysing politeness we may neglect important politeness practices that are oriented to by participants, but not necessarily ever explicated in their *emic* ideologies of politeness (for similar arguments made in relation to 'face' in Chinese see Chang and Haugh, forthcoming).

It has been argued here, then, that grounding the analysis of politeness in both *emic* and participant perspectives is crucial if we are to further our understanding of politeness in East Asia. The implications of this position for possible future research directions is thus next considered.

11.5 Future research on East Asian politeness

If *emic* perspectives or concepts of politeness are to better inform politeness research, and to remain consistent with the focus of discursive politeness researchers on first-order politeness, there is work to be done on the metapragmatics of politeness in East Asian societies. While some studies of folk politeness terms in Japanese have been undertaken (for example, Ide *et al.*, 1992; Obana and Tomoda, 1994; Haugh, 2004; Pizziconi, 2007), there remains considerable work to be done on other East Asian languages. As we rely on vernacular terms in politeness research, it is clearly important to more carefully ground the concepts of politeness (and impoliteness) relative to these vernacular (or *emic*) terms. Scheff (2006: 61) proposes that there are two key steps involved in grounding these concepts:

- 1 List of the relationship of the new concept to already existing usage with respect to both vernacular and technical words and phrases.
- 2 Exploration of concrete examples, to show the plausibility and limitations of the new concept.

In this way, we can avoid vacillating between first-order and second-order understandings of politeness, a point which is seen by discursive politeness researchers to be critical to the field.

Another area worthy of further study is impoliteness in East Asia. While a number of contributions in this volume have addressed impoliteness in passing, there is clearly room for more focused work on impoliteness in East Asian societies. There is a growing literature that suggests that impoliteness is not simply the absence of politeness, but involves its own distinct norms and practices. One might talk, then, of 'dominant impoliteness norms' to complement the focus on politeness in this volume.

It is also worth noting that 'face' has surfaced in discussions of politeness in a number of chapters in this volume. It thus appears that the relationship between face and politeness (and impoliteness) requires further scrutiny. The

notions of face and politeness have been inextricably bound in the politeness literature, despite the existence of highly salient *emic* notions of face in East Asian societies, which are conceptualised as being distinct from *emic* notions of politeness. Yet while there are good reasons for treating face and politeness as distinct fields of study (Haugh, 2009; Haugh and Bargiela-Chiappini, 2010), there are also clearly important links between these two areas of study, albeit highly complex (Haugh, 2007b), and thus this is another area deserving of further research.

One final issue is that much of the work on politeness in East Asia thus far has focused on linguistic forms, perhaps due to the high profile of honorifics and address terms in those languages. The analyses in this volume, however, can be used to seed a greater focus on other politeness practices in East Asia, for example, the use of implicatures or other recurrent speech practices where evaluations of politeness may arise.

The discursive approach to politeness offers considerable promise in expanding our understanding of politeness in East Asia and more broadly. While taking a more critical stance on the place of culture and norms in politeness research is now increasingly a given, this does not mean that nothing can be said about politeness norms or politeness across cultures. Instead, it is incumbent on us as analysts to take a more nuanced view of their role in theorising politeness. The program of research sketched through this volume thus provides a way forward in pinning down the elusive notion of politeness across cultures.

Notes

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1 As different studies, such as Lattimore (1940), note, China and other East Asian cultivating countries differentiated themselves from the 'barbarians', i.e. nomadic people, as 'civilised' nations.
- 2 The only edited collection on multilingual linguistic politeness is Hickey and Stewart's (2005) *Politeness in Europe*, which does not touch upon East Asian languages.
- 3 But see H-S. Wang, 2006; J. Y. Cho, 2008; and Brown, 2010 on Korean, and Chew's overview of previous research on Vietnamese in the present volume.
- 4 Note that in Brown and Levinson's theory the terms 'positive' and 'negative' do not carry any value judgement.
- 5 Many 'early' postmodern theorists, including Eelen (2001), Watts (2003) and Mills (2003), have questioned the notion that Anglo-Saxon speakers necessarily draw on logic when composing all of their utterances. It is clear that social pressures and a sense of appropriateness weigh far more heavily in the balance than do questions of pure rationality in the production and reception of politeness and impoliteness.
- 6 It should be emphasised that Ide did not claim that there is a clear-cut East vs. West dichotomy and thus her argumentation is also valid for politeness in 'Western' or non-East Asian societies.
- 7 Although some alternative frameworks, such as that of Geoffrey Leech (1983), were utilised by some East Asian scholars (see e.g. Gu, 1990), they did not become as influential as Brown and Levinson in East Asian studies (interestingly, Leech himself focused on East Asian issues in some of his studies, see Leech, 2005 and 2007).
- 8 Postmodernism within politeness theory may be more accurately seen as a trend than a 'school', due to the fact that postmodern research is still very much in its early stages. Also, as Mills (2011: 34) notes, "not all of the [postmodern] theorists ... adopt the same theoretical position and this makes generalising about their positions very difficult".
- 9 First-order politeness can be taken as the way that politeness is interpreted within interactions – common-sense understandings of politeness; second-order politeness is the somewhat abstracted set of rules and definitions developed by analysts in order to describe politeness.

2 POLITENESS AND CULTURE

- 1 We should make clear that we are not citing these authors in particular to single them out for criticism. This is a trend which most writers on cultural difference in politeness and impoliteness norms simply adhere to.