



María Dolores García-Pastor (ed.)

**TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN  
LANGUAGE**

**Proposals for the language classroom**



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## **EFL TEACHING WITH A VIEW TO THE CLASSROOM**

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### **1. Introduction**

This volume presents a collection of papers that put forward proposals on the teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL). The onus here is on innovation in the language classroom along the lines of current trends in language teaching and learning, which promote the integration of technology in teaching and learning processes, attention to cultural diversity and intercultural exchanges, consideration of learners' personalities, attitudes, beliefs, and values (Council of Europe, 2001, 2011; Fitzpatrick, 2004; Alcón and Safont, 2007; etc.). However, the most important focus of this volume is the attempt to foster learners' pragmatic development in a second or foreign language (L2/FL) (Rose and Kasper, 2001; Kasper and Rose, 2002; Bardovi-Harlig and Mahan-Taylor; 2003; Martínez-Flor et al., 2003; Alcón and Martínez-Flor, 2005, 2008; Bardovi-Harlig et al., 2006; etc.).

While this is not a book on pragmatics in language learning *strictu sensu*, i.e. a collection of articles consisting of second or foreign language pragmatics studies, also referred

to as interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) investigations,<sup>1</sup> the contributions that are included here do address pragmatic aspects of the English language in instructional and non-instructional settings of a different nature (virtual, face-to-face, media-based). The aim is to make claims and establish proposals on how to teach English to speakers of other languages. Therefore, this volume contains: a) classroom studies in which a specific instructional treatment is offered, and/or implemented and assessed (Mugford, Pennock-Speck and Clavel-Arroitia, Brígido-Corachán); b) investigations of learner language in educational settings that aim to provide useful information for cross-cultural communication in general, and instruction in EFL in particular, advancing practical suggestions in this respect (Bayyurt and Marti, Bordería-García), and c) papers in which a didactic approach is suggested in light of an analysis of English as a first language (L1) or bilingual Spanish-English speakers' discourse (O'Keeffe and Clancy, Gregori-Signes and Alcantud-Díaz). From the perspective of L2 pragmatics research, it can be argued that all the papers in this collection except for O'Keeffe and Clancy's, and Gregori-Signes and Alcantud-Díaz's are comparative studies, that is, investigations that "are close to research on cross-cultural pragmatics" (Alcón and Martínez-Flor, 2008: 3), since non-native speaker productions and perceptions are contrasted to a greater or lesser extent with native speakers' *vis-à-vis* communicative action.

## **2. L2 Pragmatics: L1 and L2 im/politeness**

Common to the articles presented here is the premise that the pragmatic aspects of a second or foreign language

1. Only Bayyurt and Marti's study and Bordería-García's in this volume qualify as classical ILP research.

can be taught or, at least, learners can be made aware of them, in line with evidence culled from the ILP literature (cf. Bardovi-Harlig, 2001). The papers in this collection align with this premise in spite of how difficult an enterprise this may be, especially in the context of the classroom (Kasper, 1997; Cook, 2001), and despite the fact that L2 learners do not automatically put their knowledge to use in production (Kasper, 1997; Rose and Kasper, 2001b). Pragmatics in language learning has typically been conceived as *pragmalinguistics* and *sociopragmatics*. Pragmalinguistics has been identified with a set of linguistic resources for conveying illocutionary and interpersonal meanings (Leech, 1983; Thomas, 1983). In turn, *sociopragmatics* has been equated with the socio-cultural factors underlying the use of these resources across contexts (ibid.). Pragmalinguistics thus encompasses strategies like directness and indirectness, routines, and linguistic forms on the whole that intensify or soften communicative acts (Kasper, 1997; Rose and Kasper, 2001b). Sociopragmatics refers to speakers' and hearers' assessments of social variables such as social distance, power, rights and obligations, and the degree of imposition of a determinate communicative act in their communicative practices across speech communities (ibid.).

All the chapters here deal with the pragmalinguistic component, thereby converging with studies on L2 pragmatics teaching and learning (Alcón and Martínez-Flor, 2008). However, pragmalinguistics is explored in relation to the sociopragmatic component, since contextual factors such as the relationship between speaker and hearer, the discourse genre (O'Keeffe and Clancy, Pennock-Speck and Clavel-Arroitia; Brígido-Corachán), and the communicative situation in general (O'Keeffe and Clancy, Gregori-Signes and Alcantud-Díaz) are considered in connection with the linguistic elements interlocutors deploy in their communicative exchanges. As a result, all the studies in this collec-

tion unavoidably deal with im/politeness phenomena, since EFL, L1 English, and bilingual Spanish-English, speakers' linguistic behaviours and attitudes are seen as triggered to a certain extent by knowledge of appropriate (politeness) versus inappropriate (impoliteness) behaviour in a specific communicative situation (cf. Escandell-Vidal, 1996, Meier, 1997; Jary, 1998, Mills, 2003; Watts, 2003; Locher, 2004; García-Pastor, 2006, etc.).

Such knowledge is stored and organised in an individual's cognition in frames (Bateson, 1972), structures of expectations (Tannen, 1993), or the like, and is part of an individual's pragmatic competence in a specific language (cf. Bachman, 1990). Therefore, underlying the contributions to this volume is the understanding of im/politeness either in a first language, which I refer to as L1 im/politeness, or a second or foreign language, namely, L2 im/politeness, as an important element of a speaker's pragmatic competence in L1 and L2 respectively (Kasper, 1990; Beebe, 1995; Locastro, 1997; Beebe and Waring, 2005). Additionally, a second order approach to L1 and L2 im/politeness has been adopted in the chapters of this book (cf. Eelen, 2001; Watts, 2003).

In view of the above, L1 and L2 im/politeness involves a speaker's or writer's consideration of socio-cultural norms of his/her own speech community when communicating in his/her first language (i.e. English in the chapters of this book), and the target community when communicating in the target language (English as foreign language here). Such norms govern notions of personhood, relationships, and discursive practices in a given society and culture, and result from a process of reification and typification of social reality in and through the communicative practices of community members (cf. Berger and Luckman, 1966). In the case of L2 im/politeness, besides invoking L2 socio-cultural norms, language learners are expected to transfer those of

L1 to L2 usage (cf. Evans Davis, 2004), because some pragmatic knowledge is universal, for instance, the fact that interlocutors take turns during talk, the idea that communicative acts can be conveyed in a more direct or indirect manner, etc. (Kasper, 1997; Rose and Kasper, 2001a, Kasper and Rose, 2002a). Furthermore, certain communicative situations in L1 and L2 may be identical with regards to rules of social conduct. Consequently, it can be argued that L2 im/politeness is to some extent contingent upon L1 im/politeness within an individual's pragmatic competence.

At a cognitive level, this dependency relation is even more clear, if we consider that in learning the L2/FL, learners construct new concepts and reorganize their encyclopaedic knowledge as well as other cognitive structures, e.g. their interlanguage systems (Selinker, 1972), so that L2 im/politeness necessarily entails a process of reframing L1 frames (Pizziconi, 2006; Brown, 2010). Such process consists of "re-analyzing and enriching existing frames" (Brown, 2010: 250) by means of constructing new metarepresentations (i.e. representations of representations) and reshaping pre-existing ones, in the form of *reflective beliefs*, i.e. representations of the world inserted in a validating context, towards which one has a credal attitude (Sperber, 1997), especially when acquiring culture-specific norms of the target community (cf. Sperber, 1994). Culture-specific norms amount to culture-specific content that may be embedded within culture-bound speech events. Some examples of the above may be the acquisition of *dugri ritual* norms in the Sabra culture for learners of Hebrew (Katriel, 1986), the learning of norms underlying *palanca* narratives for learners of *non-peninsular* Spanish in Colombia (Fitch, 1998), etc. Therefore, L2 im/politeness is closely linked to L1 im/politeness, and is based on knowledge of socio-cultural norms.

This knowledge is expected to be observed in and through interactants' interchanges, in particular, the relation-

al work they realize (Watts, 2003; Locher, 2004; Locher and Watts, 2005), their attention or damage to face as an aspect of it (Brown and Levinson, 1987; Lachenicht, 1980; Culpeper, 1996; Culpeper et al., 2003; Bousfield, 2008), their concern for, or neglect of, the discourse genre in which the exchange is inserted, i.e. its operating patterns and expectations (cf. Lakoff, 1989; Penman, 1990; García-Pastor, 2006, 2008; Limberg, 2008; etc.), interactional principles on the whole (cf. Lakoff, 1973; Leech, 1983), participants' rights and obligations (Fraser and Nolen, 1981), an evaluation of social variables such as power, social distance, etc., and the degree of imposition of a given communicative act.

In the chapters of this volume, im/politeness thus surfaces in and through L1 English, and bilingual Spanish-English, speakers' and EFL learners' use of certain linguistic forms, e.g. deictics based on personal pronoun usage (O'Keeffe and Clancy), pragmatic markers (O'Keeffe and Clancy, Mugford, Brígido-Corachán), hedges also conceived as semantic formulas or components of communicative acts as defined in the L2 acquisition literature, e.g. modal expressions (O'Keeffe and Clancy, Mugford, Brígido-Corachán, Bayyurt and Marti); and strategies such as vague language (O'Keeffe and Clancy), directness and indirectness (Bordería-García), target formulas<sup>2</sup> and appraisal routines (Gregori-Signes and Alcantud-Díaz), politeness strategies à la Brown and Levinson (1987) (Pennock-Speck and Clavel-Arroitia), and broader interactional strategies like supportiveness, solidarity, self-disclosure, and face enhancement (Mugford) in the context of communicative phenomena like peer-tutoring and peer assessment practices (Pennock-Speck and Clavel-Arroitia, Brígido-Corachán), code-switching (Gre-

2. For a detailed review of formulas in second language studies and pragmatics, see Bardovi-Harlig et al. (2006).

gori-Signes and Alcantud-Díaz), and specific communicative acts like criticism (Pennock-Speck and Clavel-Arroitia), suggestions and advice (Bayyurt and Marti, Bordería-García), and others, e.g. requests, offers, etc. (Brígido-Corachán).

### **3. The organisation of the volume**

The papers in this collection have been organised considering their theoretical and methodological approaches along with thematic lines. It is precisely the variety of theoretical and methodological strands they present that give this volume an interdisciplinary character. The volume opens with two chapters, namely, O’Keeffe and Clancy’s, and Gregori-Signes and Alcantud-Díaz’s, which adopt a corpus-based approach to the study of L1 English, and bilingual Spanish-English speech respectively for teaching purposes. A corpus perspective on language use as regards language learning and instruction involves considering large or small corpora as powerful tools for the teaching of authentic language to non-native speakers (Ghadessi et al., 2001; O’Keeffe et al., 2007; Belles-Fortuño et al., 2010; Campoy et al., 2010; O’Keeffe et al., 2011; etc.).

O’Keeffe and Clancy thus argue that a corpus can provide language teachers and learners with the wide range of authentic linguistic choices made by native speakers and writers, and accurate frequency-based contextual information involved in making these choices. The authors especially advocate using a corpus to enhance learners’ awareness of L2 pragmatics in view of the restricted or inconsistent pragmatic content found in the ELT material, and the significant differences between native and non-native speaker discourse observed in corpus-based studies. In this regard, they provide empirical evidence on the use of pragmatic devices like hedges consisting of modals, prag-

matic markers, vague language, and deictics constituted by pronouns in spoken and written genres. Their aim is to offer practical strategies for searching through an electronic spoken corpus for pragmatic elements. To this end, they present an account of basic corpus analysis techniques, i.e. frequency lists, keyword lists, and concordances. Frequency lists prove a useful teaching tool for the illustration of the relationship between the frequency of occurrence of linguistic items and the language variety, genre or context in which they appear. Keyword lists can be helpful for exploring the different conventions of particular discourse domains. Lastly, concordances afford detailed contextual information about frequency lists, and allow for establishing whether or not an item has, in fact, a pragmatic function. Therefore, all these techniques can shed light on certain pragmatic devices and their importance in the pragmatic system of a language; they may allow student hypotheses about a variety, genre or context to be proven or disproven; and they can serve as a starting point for the design of awareness-raising activities. O’Keeffe and Clancy end their chapter offering three corpus-based activities that illustrate the use of an electronic corpus for raising learners’ L2 pragmatic awareness in the classroom. They conclude calling for research that integrates pragmatics and language corpora in relation to language teaching.

In the following chapter, Gregori-Signes and Alcantud-Díaz examine the phenomenon of code-switching between L1 Spanish and L2 English with a focus on the use of formulas and formulaic appraisal or evaluative devices within a corpus consisting of 20 episodes of the series *Handy Manny/Manny Manitas*. More specifically, the chapter aims to explore when and how L2 English is introduced and its functions in order to critically assess the potential of the series as language teaching material for Spanish children under the age of nine, to whom the series is addressed. The

authors show that L2 English is introduced on average every 42.65 words per episode, frequently in the form of a direct switch from L1 Spanish into L2 English without translation, but adequately contextualised, so that a particular expression is clarified for the targeted audience. L2 English in code-switching mainly comprises pragmalinguistic elements that Gregori-Signes and Alcantud-Díaz classify into: *permanent lexical items*, which are a hallmark of the series (e.g. L2 terms in the songs of the series), and *context lexical items*, which are more episode-related, and amount to *non-formulaic* units, and *formulaic* expressions with abundant instances of *evaluative* language. It is the latter that make up the bulk of L2 English expressions in *Handy Manny*. The chapter closes with a positive evaluation of the series as a learning tool bar a few specific drawbacks, namely, careless pronunciation, minor pragmatic errors, and insufficient exposure to L2 expressions. Nevertheless, exposure to formulaic language use at an early age contributes to language learning in general, and pragmatic development in particular, especially if such formulaic language has a relevant social function like that of regulating the relationships between the fictional characters in the series. In this regard, L2 English formulae and formulaic appraisal categories could be said to facilitate the acquisition of L2 im/politeness.

The volume continues with two classroom studies, Gerard Mugford's, and Pennock-Speck and Clavel-Arroitia's, which emphasize the interpersonal dimension of communication, with the former arguing for an *interpersonal pragmatic competence*, and the latter embracing Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness approach. Mugford's chapter is a longitudinal interventionist study (Kasper, 2001) that accounts for EFL users' development of what he calls 'interpersonal pragmatic competence' in advice giving. Advice giving is seen to cover suggestions, requests, etc., hence is

broadly understood in the paper. Interpersonal pragmatic competence refers to the free choices language users make to establish, develop, and maintain local relationships with others, in such a way that they act as *somes*, i.e. fully-fledged participative interactants who express their own personalities, identities and attitudes, as opposed to *anys*, competent but indistinct participants (Aston, 1988, 1989, 1993). Following a pre-test post-test design, Mugford elicits responses on advice giving in EFL from 45 Mexican learners through a Dialogue Construction (DC) questionnaire (Bergman and Kasper, 1993). Learners' initial responses evince a lack of interpersonal pragmatic competence in the foreign language that is reflected in the general formulaic use of 'should' to give advice. Taking such responses as a point of departure, the author instantiates an explicit instructional approach (Kasper and Rose, 2002a; Rose, 2005) which focuses on awareness-raising of all-encompassing interpersonal resources such as supportiveness and solidarity, and more specific interpersonal resources like self-disclosure and face enhancement along with certain pragmatic markers (hedges, cajolers and downtoners). By the end of the study, learners show more interpersonal and individual ways of conveying advice in the target language. This is discerned in their expression of supportiveness and solidarity primarily through a proposed joint activity with the addressee and identification with his/her feelings respectively; self-disclosure practices based on offering their own experiences to get reciprocal experiences from the hearer; and face enhancement strategies consisting of emphatic approval of the latter often combined with self-effacement and the use of specific pragmatic markers.

Pennock-Speck and Clavel-Arroitia employ Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory to look at the shape of criticism in EFL students' written peer reviews. Their chapter mainly aims to identify those areas in which learners

might need training in issuing criticism on the work of other students, whilst considering face needs. Learners were organised into 13 groups, and each group's critique was produced as part of an assignment within a sociolinguistics module at a Spanish university in the context of the competence-based higher education program fostered by the Bologna system in Europe. Students' reviews were based on previous in-class group presentations and contained a total of 137 critiques. The authors analyse these critiques in terms of positive and negative evaluations, and Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness strategies. Results reveal a predominance of positive over negative evaluations, with the latter typically emerging in an unmitigated form. This lack of mitigation is probably due to students' attention to showing their prowess at writing critiques in EFL over face concerns. Moreover, Spanish students may be less concerned with the negative effects of their negative evaluations, because they are less oriented toward negative politeness values, and are also centred on enacting sincerity, which seems to be characteristic of a Hispanic cultural ethos (cf. Fitch, 1998; García-Pastor, 1999, 2007). In spite of warning against correlations between positive evaluations and positive politeness strategies, and negative evaluations and negative politeness strategies, Pennock-Speck and Clavel-Arroitia find positive politeness strategies embodied in positive evaluative statements, and negative politeness strategies constituting mitigated expressions of negative evaluation. Unmitigated negative evaluations were observed to consist mostly of bald-on-record strategies. The authors conclude that students' written discourses in EFL, albeit adequate overall, need some fine tuning to bring them more in-line with politeness strategies employed by English native-speakers. They offer specific guidelines on how to address this issue in the classroom, underscoring the importance of heightening awareness of politeness issues in cri-

tiques, and by affording students the opportunity to actually be im/polite in the foreign language.

The next chapter in the volume, namely, Brígido-Corachán's, constitutes a bridge between Pennock-Speck and Clavel-Arroitia's study and the two final papers in this book, i.e. those by Bayyurt and Marti, and Bordería-García. Brígido-Corachán shares with Pennock-Speck and Clavel-Arroitia a focus on critical writing in an instructional context, and similarly to Bayyurt and Marti, and Bordería-García, considers suggestions and advice giving in her analysis. By contrast with all these studies, the author does not adopt any specific theoretical perspective; rather, she draws on general pragmatic notions like illocutionary acts and pragmatic markers to examine learners' peer-tutoring and peer-assessment practices in EFL within an online forum created in a literature course at a Spanish university in 2008-2009. In particular, she explores learners' deployment of pragmatic markers with a focus on expressions of modality to assess their progress on the acquisition of subject content, and the development of their pragmatic abilities in the target language – especially of a discursive kind. The online discussions under study are principally follow-ups of in-class face-to-face debates and interactions dealing with students' literature-related interests and discoveries. In her analysis, Brígido-Corachán conceives pragmatic markers broadly, and assorts these elements into: argumentative assertive and strong commitment markers; hesitation markers; and markers that evidence lack of confidence or willingness. The author shows an abundance of online threads consisting of original and creative interpretations of course contents, which contain mostly assertive and strong commitment markers. These threads and markers yielded an assertive pattern of interaction that became common by the end of the academic year, and unveiled joint argumentative scaffolding among forum participants. Learners' acquisition of subject

content and improvement of L2 discursive skills were clearly observed in these threads. Offers of peer-assistance were the next frequent thread type, and also showed a prominence of argumentative assertive and strong commitment markers. Finally, threads based on direct requests for help were not as abundant, and incorporated mainly hesitation markers that illustrated a tentative construction of knowledge. The chapter concludes with a call for a redefinition of assessment in tertiary education, which contemplates virtual forums as a suitable tool to monitor and evaluate students' work in the target language.

The two contributions that close the present volume, i.e. Bayyurt and Martí's, and Bordería-García's, investigate suggestions and advice giving from a classic interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) approach in educational settings. As opposed to other illocutionary acts, suggestions and advice do not have a long history in ILP research. These two final chapters thus look at these communicative actions, holding, however, divergent conceptualizations of them, and constituting also different studies in nature. Bayyurt and Martí use the cover term of 'suggestion-giving' for both suggestions and advice, including suggestions functioning as recommendations or requests. Therefore, similarly to Mugford, these authors adhere to an all-inclusive view of suggestions or advice. Bordería-García discards suggestions which might be classified as other illocutionary acts to concentrate only on 'pure' instances, which she denominates 'advice'. Additionally, Bayyurt and Martí's is a cross-sectional study of EFL suggestions in L1 Turkish speakers, whereas Bordería-García's is an empirically informed proposal for dealing with advice giving in the foreign language classroom.

Bayyurt and Martí analyse the EFL suggestions formulated by 101 freshman and senior undergraduate students of a state university in Turkey within 10 different relational scenarios outlined in a written Discourse Completion Test

(DCT). Suggestions in L1 English are potential threats to an addressee's negative face (Brown and Levinson, 1987), and interactants need to use linguistic devices to soften such possible face damage, taking the relationship with the interlocutor into account. By looking at learners' interlanguage suggestions, the authors aim to determine whether these qualify as adequate linguistic behaviour in the target language; hence provide information that may be useful for EFL instruction concerning L2 pragmatics, and cross-cultural research. Bayyurt and Marti thus scrutinize the semantic formulas learners avail themselves of to modify suggestions by paying heed to syntactic choices (imperative, interrogative, and declarative modes), and syntactic structures (modal expressions and their functions) across the relational scenarios. Among their principal findings is a general preference for the declarative mode and an overall inclination towards the use of 'can' and 'should', avoiding the latter with older and more powerful hearers. Freshman students displayed a tendency towards 'should', hence obligation versus ability in their suggestions, whilst seniors manifested a more balanced use of modals combining both obligation and ability. These differences indicate seniors' greater sensitivity to face threat, and freshmen's more bookish repertoire of formulas. The authors therefore recommend the inclusion of more appropriate options to formulate suggestions in ELT materials, and put forward guidelines for their instruction from a communicative task-based approach.

In the last chapter of this volume, Bordería-García convincingly argues for advice as a kind of illocutionary act that embraces significant cultural differences across languages such as Spanish and English. The author resorts to empirical evidence to depict advice as simultaneously threatening both positive and negative face in L1 English (*ibid.*). In any case, the production and interpretation of advice as face threat hinges upon a myriad of contextual factors she spec-

ifies in the chapter. Consequently, advice in L1 English is a complex and imposing communicative act that native speakers often avoid or soften. Spanish learners usually experience some difficulties in instantiating advice in EFL. These difficulties typically consist of excessive directness probably stemming from transfer of L1 pragmatic norms. Bordería-García thus advocates the need of integrating pragmatics in the foreign language curriculum, and offers a detailed proposal on how to teach the pragmatics of advice giving in L1 English to Spanish speakers. Raising learners' awareness of pragmatic concepts, namely, face, the socio-cultural factors that can affect face in different contexts, and the strategies that interactants can deploy to attend to face, is the basis of her proposal. EFL learners need to be taught that advice in English can be a highly context-dependent face-threatening activity requiring the use of certain pragmalinguistic strategies, i.e. advice-giving strategies. Through a classification of these strategies into direct, conventionally indirect, and non-conventionally indirect strategies, the author presents, evaluates, and contrasts the different advice-giving strategies in L1 English and their Spanish counterparts to help EFL teachers and learners identify potential areas of negative transfer and pragmatic failure. With this information, she suggests a combined explicit and implicit approach to the instruction of advice in EFL (Kasper and Rose, 2002a; Rose, 2005) she develops at the end of the chapter.

As an end note, the papers in this collection constitute a modest effort to innovate in the EFL classroom mainly by attempting to increase attention to pragmatic issues, among which im/politeness phenomena are crucial. In so doing, the contributions to this volume intend to underline the relevance of a learner-centred pedagogy that takes into consideration learners' changing needs in an increasingly globalized world, and the consequent flexibility this brings about

in teacher and student roles, teaching methodologies and learning materials in the classroom setting. Thus, the chapters in this book cover the use of new technologies in teaching and learning processes (O’Keeffe and Clancy; Brígido-Corachán), learners’ cultural backgrounds with a view to cross-cultural communication and international mobility (Bayyurt and Martí’s; Bordería-García), and learners’ personalities, attitudes, beliefs, and values, stressing learners’ freedom of choice in their acquisition of a second or foreign language (Gregori-Signes and Alcantud-Díaz; Mugford; Pennock-Speck and Clavel-Arroitia). All these issues are contemplated from many different angles that account for the divergent theoretical viewpoints and methodological perspectives adopted by their authors. Such diversity mirrors the hybrid and interdisciplinary character of this volume, which is necessary if we are to make further progress. The idea of this book emerged in an informal discussion over the dinner table, prompted by an interest in improving as language teachers among some of its contributors. This interest and other related topics were also shared with others through e-mail and at some conferences. The result is the compilation of their work in this direction here.

Finally, I would not like to finish this introductory chapter without thanking wholeheartedly the authors of the individual papers in this collection, who also participated actively in the reviewing process. Special thanks go to Carmen Gregori-Signes for her unconditional support and enthusiasm, and Barry Pennock-Speck and Judith Likin-Gasparro for their help and efficiency. I would also like to express my thanks to the general editor of the series *Estratègies*, Josep Ballester, and the editorial board, Jesús Figuerola, Manuel García, Pascuala Morote, and Paulina Ribera for making this project possible. Last but not least, any shortcomings that might remain are my responsibility.