



**Politeness and Pragmatic Competence in Thai
Speakers of English**

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Declaration

I certify that all materials in this thesis which are not my own work have been identified as such. No materials which have been submitted for any other awards or qualifications are included.

Signature:

Date: June 2011

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Abstract

This study examines the language use and specifically the level of politeness of Thai speakers of English when confronted with face threatening acts related to their daily life and workplace: requests, complaints and disagreements. Data were collected by role play and discourse completion test from people employed in hotels and travel agencies, and from Rajabhat university students. Brown and Levinson's politeness theory was used as a framework to analyse and interpret the data. The overall results showed that negative politeness is the most common strategy for all groups, followed by bald on record and positive politeness. Their participants' choice of politeness strategies in part reflected their occupational identities. For the hotel workers, negative politeness is the chosen strategy in most scenarios, and the focus is on showing deference to and maintaining distance from their interlocutors. For the other groups, although negative politeness is still the most common strategy, positive politeness and bald on record are found quite often. Use of both negative and positive politeness suggests that respondents attach importance to avoiding confrontation and showing solidarity as well as to direct expression. Through analysis of the use of negative and positive politeness for different scenarios and status levels, I determine that these participants possess pragmatic competence in the context of the "small culture" of the workplace. It is also clear that sociological variables (e.g. power, social distance) influence the use of language and the level of politeness on the speaker side.

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Abbreviations

General abbreviations

FTA = Face threatening act S = Speaker H = Hearer
B/L = Brown and Levinson DCT = Discourse completion test

Politeness strategies

PP = Positive Politeness NP = Negative Politeness B = Bald on record
O = Off record (indirectness) N = Not doing FTA

Realizations of politeness strategies in language

Positive politeness

1 = Notice, attend to H (his interests, wants, needs, goods)
10 = Offer, promise
13 = Give (or ask for) reasons
6 = Avoid disagreement
11 = Be optimistic
15 = Give gifts to H (goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation)
8 = Joke
12 = Include both S and H in the activity

Negative politeness

1 = Be conventionally indirect
6 = Apologize
2 = Question or hedge
8 = State the FTA as a general rule
5 = Give deference
PC = Please Command

Off record

1 = Give hints
12 = Be vague
8 = Be ironic
11 = Be ambiguous

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This chapter gives the motivation for conducting this study and provides background information related to Thai culture and society, the learning of English and the problems that hinder Thais in their efforts to use English. Then, an exploration of some features of politeness in Thai which may have influenced English language use will be presented. The purpose of study, research questions, and definitions of key words and scope of the study will be explained, ending with an overview of the structure of dissertation.

1.2 Rationale

English is arguably the prime medium for international communication. Although English is widely studied in Thailand, pragmatic competence in English is by no means evenly distributed throughout the population. Many people in Thailand have studied English in the educational system from primary to tertiary level, but have serious deficiencies in performance in all four skill areas (speaking, writing, listening and reading). Wiriyachitra (2002) observes that Thais' level of English proficiency is low in comparison with other countries in Asia (such as Malaysia, the Philippines and Singapore) since the country was not directly subject to colonial rule by an English-speaking power. Many factors contribute to the high variation in competence for Thais. Often they lack opportunities to use English in their daily life. English teaching very often is not challenging, practical or effective enough. More fundamentally, the structure of English is quite different from Thai, as are patterns of reference and politeness in Thai used as a model may not produce anything like the desired result in English. Researchers have various explanations on this, including pragmatics which I will focus on in this study. According to Blum-Kulka and Sheffer (1993), pragmatic competence has been claimed to be "the most difficult aspect of language to master in learning a second language" (p. 219). It involves the relation between a set of linguistic forms and the meanings intended by those forms in specific contexts, and selecting the appropriate form requires an assessment of

contextual and social factors (Bialystok, 1993, p.51). Pragmatic description is not as precise as grammar in accounting for linguistic competence. Indeed, pragmatics is “a delicate area and it is not immediately obvious how it can be taught” (Thomas, 1983, p.97).

Regarding politeness, Thai society pays much attention to this. Thais are taught in childhood to show respect verbally and through gesture and body language, and not to be too assertive toward adults, whether family members or not. They master different levels of speech for communicating with status groups - royalty, the monkhood and also common people. There is a level of complexity to their use of politeness strategies varying with the degree of formality, deference, and intimacy. This is one aspect of a hierarchical social system in which people need to gauge the level of politeness to their interlocutor's status within the interaction. Furthermore, certain values are also inculcated in order to maintain smooth relationships and reduce conflict, for instance '*krengjai*', or the feeling of reluctance to bother or impose on other people. Charoenngam and Jablin (1999) claim that Thais feel reluctant to refuse requests, accept assistance, show disagreement, give direct criticism or confront others in conflict situations (p.384). While no one actually behaves in a way that totally conforms to the ideal type, this is a significant cultural imperative that motivates many Thais to follow politeness norms.

As mentioned above, Thai students seem to spend significant amounts of time studying English, but generally do not seem to be successful in communicating in that language. In their English performance the intended message may be distorted, or it may not sound polite or appropriate for the circumstances. At the same time, Thai education lays stress on inculcating polite behaviour, something that often begins in the family, and there is a general social imperative to maintain interpersonal harmony. I do not mean to argue that all Thais behave according to such politeness norms, or that the Thai situation is unique. Yet one can inquire into the relationship between the two conditions (poor English performance and enhanced politeness sense). I would like to explore how Thai subjects use English in the context of face threatening acts, to what extent they succeed in transferring politeness into the foreign linguistic context of English, and to what extent this impacts general pragmatic competence.

1.3 Contexts of study

This section will present some information intended to put my investigation of Thai politeness in its larger context and to help us understand Thais and their English performance. They are Thai history and society; English in the Thai education system; problems relating to learning English; and the nature of Thai politeness.

1.3.1 Thai kingdoms and dynasties

In past centuries, Thai kings had absolute power, and this is one source of the strongly hierarchical thinking reflected in the levels of politeness used with different groups of people. Furthermore, the royal institution has been held in respect, because kings have developed the country in different ways, perhaps helping to explain why ordinary Thais have not resisted the social gap between them and the elites.

Thailand has a long history. The first Thai kingdom to leave a documentary record was Sukhothai, which came into existence in the 11th century. This period is known today for the political state of affairs roughly translated as “father governs children” where people could bring their problems directly to the king. The next kingdom was Ayutthaya from 1351-1767. Many countries came to trade with Ayutthaya, which was described by foreigners as one of the biggest and wealthiest cities in the East in the sixteenth century. There was substantial contact with foreign countries, both Western and Asian. The Ayutthaya kings adopted Khmer court customs, language and culture, and their rule was theoretically absolute. The king was known as an awesome figure or god-king. Later came Thonburi, which was the capital of Thailand for a short time from 1767 - 1782. That brief period of instability was followed by consolidation under the Chakri dynasty in what is referred to as the Bangkok period (1782 until the present). The country was ruled by kings with absolute power until 1932 (Wyatt, 1984). Since then, the country has turned to constitutional monarchy, with military coups periodically interrupting the democratic government. However, most coups were bloodless, the last taking place in August 2006. In May 2010, there was a huge protest by people who wanted the government to dissolve parliament and hold new elections. Instead those in power chose to suppress the demonstrators and force them to vacate the area they had occupied in

central Bangkok. In the process a large number of people were shot, making this unfortunate event one to be marked in Thai history.

Various Thai kings at different points in history have played important roles in developing and maintaining the stability of the country. For instance, King Ramkhamhaeng in Sukhothai period (13th century) personally invented the alphabet which Thais have used until the present time (at least this is what Thai people learn in school). Many kings in the past were able to preserve the country's independence up until the present through war or diplomacy. Kings of the Chakri dynasty used intelligent strategies to protect Thailand from being colonized from western countries, a fact that Thais are very proud of. Winichakul (1994) summarizes this attitude as follows: unlike other Southeast Asian countries, Thailand kept its autonomy "thanks to the intelligence of the monarchs who responded wisely and timely to the threats of the European powers by modernizing the country in the right direction at the right time" (p.13). Thai kings also developed the country, bringing about improvements in a variety of areas, such as education, infrastructure, and transportation.

1.3.2 Society

It is perhaps unsurprising that a country like Thailand, formally a monarchy, would exhibit a high degree of social hierarchy. There is a formal continuity in the social and linguistic norms established by the elite of former times that was not broken by colonization. Scupin (1988) characterizes the Thai case as follows.

All Thai and western scholars would concur that there is a definite differential distribution of wealth, power, authority, privilege and other status prerogatives within the Thai social order. They would agree that notions of inequality and status based upon grown-up or superior/child or subordinate, and royal/non-royal distinctions are integral aspects of the Thai social strata. These conceptions of rank and hierarchy are imbued with and conjoined with the Thai religious and moral ethos (p.333).

Even though the society has different social classes and a radically unequal distribution of wealth and power, there has been relatively little open defiance or organized resistance on a class basis. Recently, however, political events from the 2006 coup leading up to the 2010 "red shirt" protests have revealed the existence of a large group of people calling themselves '*phrai*' (common people in the traditional

system) who feel that they have been treated as lower class, without the same rights as the *'aamaat'* or elite officialdom. While this is sometimes presented in the media as a conflict between the privileged strata of Bangkok and deprived rural groupings, there is substantial political polarization within the population of the capital itself. Despite such undeniable manifestations of social conflict, Thais lay great stress on social harmony. Social norms such as Buddhism are drawn on in prescribing appropriate behaviour, and the doctrine of karma is used as a rationale for accepting one's lot in life.

Hofstede and Hofstede's (2005) concept of "power distance" seems to suit the Thai situation, including their description of family relationships and patterns of deference.

In the large-power-distance situation, children are expected to be obedient toward their parents. Independent behavior on the part of a child is not encouraged. Respect for parents and other elders is seen as a basic virtue and lasts through adulthood. Parents and grandparents are treated with formal deference even after their children have actually taken control of their own lives (p.51).

Seniority is thus an important aspect of relationships expressed through language. Although not stressing age, anthropologist Thomas Kirsch's (1975) view also supports the general characterization.

It is notable that notions of hierarchical status difference pervade Thai society. There are virtually no roles or relationships in Thai society which carry connotations of formal 'equality'. All social relationships involve a degree of status superiority or inferiority expressed by pervasive standards of etiquette, linguistic markers, and status idioms (p.190).

The original location of age relationships may be in the nuclear family, but we can draw a parallel between power in the family and that in the wider society. In Thai, terms used between family members are also often extended to others one interacts with, rather like a child learning to call unknown grownups "uncle". Thais may call people of the same age or younger they know only by their names, but they do not call older people only by their names, which would be taken as an insult. Instead a prefix is added which recognizes the interlocutor as older than the speaker.

1.3.3 Buddhism

Nearly 95% of Thailand's population is Buddhist (National Statistic Office, 2000). The fundamental teaching of Buddhism is 'to do good'. Kusalasaya (2005) explains that this concept leads to the performance of meritorious deeds, an imperative deeply ingrained in the minds of Buddhists (p.22). Making merit is necessitated by the law of karma, which is seen as a natural law existing in the nature of things, like a law of physics, not under the control of any god. Good and bad rebirths are not seen as rewards and punishments, but rather as simply the natural results of certain kinds of action. What determines one's karma will be actions carried out through body, speech and mind. People make their own 'destiny' by their actions. The aspects of life which are seen as the result of past karma include one's form of rebirth (human or animal), social class at birth, general character, crucial good and bad things which happen to one, and even the way one experiences the world (Harvey, 1990, pp.39-40). Kusalasaya (2005) further relates that as long as Buddhists are alive, they must try to do good in order to ensure good results in this life as well as in the life to come (p.22). Furthermore, Buddhists generally undertake to live by the five precepts, which forbid the taking of life, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, and consumption of intoxicants leading to loss of mindfulness. Buddhism is an important institution and the essential frame that leads people to accept their stations in life and be satisfied with what they have.

We can see here the ideal model of behaviour according to Buddhism which most people try to follow. This kind of belief is generally conducive to peace in society, and many aspects of Thai behaviour and styles of communication, key factors conditioning the nature of politeness, can be traced back to its influence, both on the personal and social levels.

1.3.4 Language in Thailand

Within Thailand, there are four major dialects of the national language, corresponding to the southern (*tay*), northern (*kammuang*), northeastern (*isaan* or *Lao*) and central (*klaang*) regions of the country. The national standard is based on the central or Bangkok variety and is taught in all schools, used for most television broadcasts, and widely understood in all regions (Slayden, 2008). Bangkok is the

administrative and commercial capital, as well as the most populous urban center, so its linguistic centrality is not surprising. Each regional dialect has a modification of the system of tone contours so words are pronounced in a manner associated with a certain geographical area. In addition, many dialect vocabulary items are different from standard Thai. However, Smalley (1994, p.13) points out that there is little overt conflict between linguistic groups (with the exception of the Malay-speaking minority in the South), so that these differences are often not even noticed and Thailand is considered to be overwhelmingly monolingual.

1.3.5 English in the Thai education system

The government has long realized the importance of the English language as a major foreign subject in schools, and in 1996 the ministry of education prescribed English as compulsory for all primary students from grade one onwards (Ministry of Education, 1996). The following section will give details about the Thai curriculum in learning English from elementary to tertiary level. This will reflect how Thai students gain exposure to English, and the effect on their pragmatic competence or lack thereof.

1.3.5.1 Elementary and secondary levels

In 2001, Thailand again reformed the basic education curriculum. Education is presented as an essential mechanism in developing human potential, and its purpose is to nurture Thai children to be ethical, intelligent, happy, and prepared to compete and cooperate in the world. Foreign language study is designated one of eight key content areas, with the teaching of English mandated, other foreign languages being optional according to appropriateness or school readiness. The English curriculum is divided conceptually into four areas: communication, culture, connection to other subjects and relationship to other communities. The Educational Act roughly prescribes that the annual time allocation for the eight subjects is altogether 800 – 1,000 hours for elementary level and 1,000-1,200 hours for secondary. Therefore, elementary students will study English approximately 100-125 hours a year and secondary ones 125-150 hours. However, schools can adjust this time-frame according to their capabilities (Ministry of Education, 2001).

1.3.5.2 Tertiary level

At the undergraduate level, each university has its own curriculum structure. The English major typically requires students to study English subjects varying from 70 – 102 credits (approximately 9-12 hours per week) for the whole curriculum of three and a half to four years of study. For other programs, students typically need to take six to nine credits of English over the duration of their study. Usually two subjects will be taught involving reading skills and communicative skills. Another common subject will be English for specific purposes relating to the student's area of study. Graduate students whose major is not English study the language as a compulsory subject, but generally it is taken on a pass/fail basis (Dhonburi Rajabhat University, 2007). The content of study is about reading which will prepare them to read relevant literature. Some instructors may add how to write an abstract in English as well. Even though on paper this system appears to produce universal fluency in English among those who complete secondary studies, in reality this is not the case. Many students enter tertiary education with only rudimentary English, and as a result university studies outside elite institutions consist largely of revision of basic skills. Even then few students make much progress, especially those who do not major in English.

1.3.6 Problems relating to learning English

The Thai language is in the Tai-Kadai (or Kadai) language family, while English is in the Indo-European language family. This can tell us roughly that the two languages are different. Even though the basic sentence word order of Thai is the same as for English (subject-verb-object), the details of grammar are very different.

Swan and Smith (2008) give details on some of the problems of language interference Thai learners of English encounter. For instance, Thai has contour tones that determine the meaning of words. Thais may often speak English with a “Thai accent” because they try to fit English into the Thai phonological system. Other sources of interference include adjectives following nouns, adjectives and adverbs functioning as verbs, and a rather complex system of pronouns reflecting different degrees of intimacy and hierarchy. The first two differences result in mistakes like

“water cool” and omission of verb “to be”. On the last point, English pronouns present problems for the Thai learners, because the two languages make different distinctions in both gender and number. The most commonly used third-person pronoun in Thai makes no distinction between gender, with the result that Thai learners frequently use *he* and *she* interchangeably in English (*My girlfriend, he is very nice*). Nor is there a distinction made between singular and plural (*My American friends are in Thailand. He stay at the hotel.*). In addition, Thai pronouns do not have separate forms to indicate subject, object or possessive functions. Possession in Thai is expressed in the terms ‘noun + of + noun/pronoun’ (*house of father*). The syntax of auxiliary verbs in Thai is different from that of English, which makes using basic constructions for questions and negative sentences in English more difficult. Another confusing point regarding negatives is that Thais typically answer ‘yes’ where English requires ‘no’: (*You’re not going, aren’t you?’ ‘Yes, I’m not’*). Question words like when, why or how can occur at either the beginning or the end of the sentence (*When he go? / He go when?*). *How many* is frequently used for *how much* (*How many the price that shirt?*) (pp.343-352). These are only some of the most basic points with the potential to create interference in the utterances of Thai learners of English.

As a study by Mahidol University (2002) relates, there are no suffixes, gender, articles, declensions or plurals in Thai. Tenses are indicated by standard auxiliaries, e.g. *pai* (go) with the auxiliary *ja* becomes *ja pai* (will go); with the auxiliary *kamlang* becomes *kamlang pai* (am going); and with the auxiliary *laew* becomes *pai laew* (go already, have gone). One can imagine how much Thais have to struggle when studying English when many features of the language are so different from their native tongue. Furthermore, Thais do not have much opportunity to communicate in English.

Biyaem (1997, cited in Wiriyaichitra, 2002) found that most Thai students consider English to be too challenging for them to acquire competence, for a range of reasons. For instance, the mother tongue interferes with their English, especially in the areas of pronunciation, syntax and idiomatic usage. English lessons are not challenging, and Thai students are often passive learners. They are too shy to speak English with classmates and do not take responsibility for their own learning (p.2). In

national surveys that were conducted by the Office of Educational Testing of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction in the Ministry of Education in 1997-1998, writing skills were considered to be below average and the students' proficiency in other language skills was far from satisfactory (Wiriyachitra, 2001, cited in Wongsothorn *et al.*, 2002, p. 111). "Although the 1996 English curriculum was aimed at improving the students' linguistic and communicative competence, the majority failed to achieve the standards required. There are a number of factors which probably contributed to this failure. Among those that could be listed are: the hasty implementation of compulsory English at grade one, the lack of teaching material for primary school students, and teachers who had minimal training in English. An immediate consequence of this was that there was no exposure to English as Thai was used almost 80-90% of the time in the classroom" (Wong, 1997; Puntakerngamorn, 1998, cited in Foley, 2005, p. 231).

Wongsothorn *et al.* (2002, p.113) present their findings concerning problems and obstacles in developing English language education at the secondary level in the table below.

Table 1.1 Problems and obstacles in developing English language education

Curriculum:	over-abundance of content
Students:	inadequate preparation for the level and students' learning inadequacies
Teachers:	inadequate preparation and overload of responsibilities
Teaching and Learning Media:	inadequate supplies of course texts, self-study texts, reference books, equipment and lack of IT support in the classroom
Budget:	lack of budget for extra-curricular activities
Teaching and Learning Processes:	large class size making English teaching and learning inefficient, inadequate classroom management and lack of integration with other subject areas
Testing and Evaluation:	problems of using multiple-choice test items as teachers do not have time to grade essay-type items and the problems of implementing authentic assessment
Output:	students still cannot achieve the desired ability in using the skills acquired in school for authentic, real life situations

Given the contradictions present in the way English is taught in the Thai education system, one wonders how workers with “inadequate preparation” negotiate the reality of interaction with foreigners using English. Pragmatic competence will most likely be gained on the job, not in the classroom. This in turn has implications for the way these people speak English, not least for the way politeness is expressed.

1.3.7 What is Thai politeness?

Politeness, a social norm, is important and expected in social interaction in any society. Lakoff and Ide (2005) suggest that it goes beyond the bare minimum required to keep a society cohesive (p.5). The extent to which politeness is universal or culturally conditioned is an open question. In the Thai context, public discourse in many cases foregrounds the degree of politeness exhibited by those who participate. Vulgarity, profanity and excessive sarcasm are considered inappropriate depending on context, and refined or good mannered people are careful to select language to deal with possible conflict and head off confrontational situations. Politeness in Thai involves a wide scope of ways of speaking, word usage and manners.

In Thailand as elsewhere, not only word usage but also behaviour reflects politeness norms. As we shall see from a variety of types of evidence, as in any other society, politeness is a part of Thai culture. As early as 1912, a book entitled “Qualifications for being a refined person” purported to teach people proper behaviour in the physical, verbal and emotional senses of the term. Khanittanan (1988) classified the features of Thai politeness into two categories, expression through mode of articulation and expression through linguistic selection of words. In the first, speaking too briefly or curtly is considered impolite while speaking softly and extending sounds is considered a feature of polite speech. The second category is divided into two types of word choice, which are realized both in speech and in writing. One expresses politeness directly (The ending particles ‘*kha*’ for female, ‘*khrap*’ for male as well as high-level words, e.g. the word ‘eat’, ‘*rapprathan*’ is considered more polite than ‘*kin*’.). The other involves words implying a deferential attitude of speaker self-effacement and elevation of the hearer (pp.353-354).

As Scupin (1988) explains: “Thai society, like other hierarchically based societies, contains a pattern of deferential norms which relate to the degree of status

superiority and inferiority. These norms are expressed with linguistic markers including pronouns and terms of address, and determine the etiquette which pervades social interaction” (p.333). Documents from Mahidol University (2002) tell us that Thai has at least 47 pronouns, including some 17 first person and 19 second person and different qualifying nouns and verbs which are used by different social classes. Therefore, there is no doubt that Thais have different levels of politeness, which are generally used among different groups of people for instance royalty, ecclesiastics and common people. Even in the general register, there are different level of politeness depending on the degree of (in)formality or intimacy. Khanittanan’s (1988) description clarifies: “When a speaker has selected a word expressing first person politeness it can be used widely or on nearly any occasion. Words referring to listeners however must be selected with decisions made as to whether a general politeness expression is to be used or a form expressing an elevating associated with age or with social position” (p.354).

In Thailand, apart from the physical attribute of voice that differentiates male and female, many things in language will indicate the gender of the speaker. One prominent gender-sensitive language feature is that Thais usually end their statements and questions with the polite particle ‘*khrap*’ for male and ‘*kha*’ for female. The words reflect the gender of the speaker rather than of the listener and show deference. The ‘*khrap*’ and ‘*kha*’ do not translate neatly, but simply convey politeness, much as ‘sir’ or ‘ma’am’ would in English. In everyday speech, the ‘r’ in ‘*khrap*’ is dropped to produce the simplified ‘*khap*’. It is not necessary to use these particles after every sentence in a conversation. Use of these is very common in daily life. It also helps the communication sound pleasant and shows respect to listeners in the perception of Thai people. These words are also used to answer ‘yes’ to a question, to show agreement, or simply to acknowledge that you are listening, for instance on the telephone.

The gesture ‘*wai*’ (putting both palms together and bowing the head) complements various aspects of the Thai honorific system. The ‘*wai*’ shows politeness, respect, honour, and friendship. It is typically used in daily life to express polite greetings, apologies or gratitude. In most situations it is initiated by those who are younger or of lower status and returned by those older or of higher status.

Komin's (1991) research on "Psychology of the Thai People: Values and Behavioral Patterns" identifies the "Smooth Interpersonal Relationship Orientation" as a national characteristic. This orientation is characterized by the preference for a non-assertive, polite and humble type of personality (expressed through appearance, manners, and interpersonal approach), as well as preference for relaxed and pleasant interaction, accounting for the "smiling" and "friendly" aspects of the Thai people. These values are internalized and actively function in everyday life in Thailand.

Certain expressions reflect core values connected to the ideology of politeness. '*Krengjai*' means to be considerate or afraid of offending others. Thais should be concerned that what they do will bother or offend other people. '*Haikiat*' means giving respect, honor or face to others. Another expression is '*namjai*' connoting generosity, a strong value among Thai people. One common example is when Thais travel, they will often come back with snacks or souvenirs for their friends and co-workers, both superiors and subordinates. To do this is to show one's '*namjai*'. This concept has a variety of uses but is generally applied to activities where people devote their time, money, intelligence or labour to help other people without intending to get anything back. One more expression '*mai pen rai*' means 'it doesn't matter; that's OK; it's all right'. Use of this phrase in cases of adversity seems to reflect the influence of Buddhist ideas about karma. In this way of thinking, the effects of all deeds actively create past, present, and future experiences, so a good deed will be repaid, even if there is no immediate benefit for the doer.

1.4 Purpose of study

The purpose of this study is to discover how polite Thai speakers of English appear to be when dealing with face-threatening acts in English: requests, complaints and disagreements.

1.5 Research questions

1. What levels of politeness and general pragmatic competence do Thai speakers of English demonstrate when dealing with FTAs in interactive situations with foreigners?

2. What politeness strategies do Thai speakers of English use when performing the three FTAs: requests, complaints and disagreements?

3. How do sociological variables such as power and social distance affect the politeness strategies chosen in English speech by Thais?

1.6 Definition of key words

Pragmatic competence here is defined as having the knowledge of communicative action and ability to use English appropriately according to the context.

Politeness in this case refers to language usage in order to make a situation less face threatening.

Foreigners mean people whose first language is not Thai. It is assumed that the respondents in this study have to use English in communication with them.

1.7 Scope of the study

The study focuses on language use in the context of face threatening acts in English. It does not analyse the linguistic accuracy of the responses, but seeks to determine what strategies are used to handle these situations.

The politeness which has been investigated here is that expressed in verbal communication, and the study does not address non-verbal or non-linguistic behaviour.

This study was conducted in Bangkok and Hua Hin (a small seaside town four hours south of the capital – see map in appendix 1) in commercial and tourism areas. Students respondents were drawn from five Rajabhat Universities, local and community universities in Bangkok and its vicinity. Professional respondents are hotel personnel and travel agents in Bangkok and Hua Hin.

1.8 Structure of dissertation

Chapter one is an introduction specifying the background and rationale of this study. The contexts of study will provide information of Thailand in different

aspects, e.g. Thai history and society, English in the Thai education system, Thai politeness. Purpose of study and research questions are provided in this chapter.

Chapter two provides an overview of pragmatics, the theoretical framework. Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory is presented and employed in this study. More generally this chapter reviews the literature on linguistic politeness in the Thai context and elsewhere. It attempts to make clear why Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory is appropriate for this study. This chapter also looks at other treatments of politeness, including both writers who accept Brown and Levinson's framework and ones who question their approach. The last section ends with a discussion of the concept of culture in relation to the situations.

Chapter three is the methodology section. This chapter discusses the research paradigm and provides information on three types of acts under investigation, what kind of instruments were used, who the subjects are, and how the data were collected and analyzed. Motivations for using discourse completion test and role play and their advantages and disadvantages are explained. After that, triangulation, reliability, validity and ethical issues are also discussed.

Chapter four is data analysis. The respondents' answers are analysed using Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness strategies (bald on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, off-record (indirectness) or do not do the FTA) as well as the realizations of these strategies in language (sub-categories). The aim is to see what strategies Thai speakers of English choose to use in dealing with different face threatening acts. Situations in the same function will be compared among different groups of respondents. Then the overview of problems in judging the realization of politeness strategies in language is given, and the chapter ends with general discussion of the research questions.

Chapter five is a discussion of the results. This chapter will relate the respondents' occupation to their language use, evaluate their level of pragmatic competence, detail the face threatening acts used in this study, address sociological variables and face saving, and finally draw out some implications for politeness theory.

Chapter six contains the conclusion, recommendations for further research, limitations and implications of the study.

1.9 Chapter summary

This chapter has provided information on Thai history and society as a backdrop to the investigation of politeness norms in Thai and how they might influence the way Thai people speak English. These norms reflect the hierarchical orientation of society. The place of English in the Thai education system is presented: although English is officially taught in Thai schools beginning in the primary grades, that does not mean that anything close to fluency has been achieved for the vast majority of students outside the elite. Thus, one goal of this study is to investigate performance in English, asking what politeness strategies Thai people use when handling face threatening acts in that language and how sociological factors affect their choice of words. The next chapter moves on to the literature review and theoretical framework.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter begins with an overview of pragmatics, moves on to discuss studies related to politeness and ends by sketching out the theoretical background informing the choice of methods. Since this study investigates pragmatic competence of Thai speakers of English, the first part tries to provide an understanding of what pragmatics is and what pragmatic competence consists of. The second part gives an overview of studies of politeness that address issues related to this study. This part is divided into two sections: general studies of politeness, including those in cross-cultural pragmatics; and studies specific to the Thai context. The last part contains a discussion of Brown and Levinson's politeness theory and suggests how this theory can act as a framework for the study. Other approaches to politeness and criticism of this theory are also discussed, finishing with the conceptions of culture in the context of this study.

Part 1: Pragmatics

This section introduces pragmatics: what this term is about, its definition and importance. Then 'pragmatic competence,' a key term for this study, will be discussed as one aspect of language competence more generally. Its specific meaning for the goals of this study will also be defined.

2.2 What is pragmatics?

Pragmatics is the branch of linguistics concerned with language use, and is different from syntax and semantics, which deal with the form and meaning of sentences respectively (Ninio and Snow, 1996, p.9). Pragmatics as a field of study emerged in the late sixties and early seventies. It is a shift from the paradigm of theoretical grammar, in particular syntax, to the paradigm of the language user (Mey, 2001, pp. 4-5). Chomsky's generative grammar refers to a whole set of theories. They share certain assumptions: language is a mental rather than social phenomenon and can be studied through specifying a system of rules and conventions with the data

obtained through native speaker intuition rather than other experimental methods. Generative grammar has been losing its position as the dominant paradigm of linguistics since about 1970 because of its limitations. More approaches which are wider than generative grammar have been engaged in. Areas of study such as sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, and discourse analysis now constitute alternative approaches to the formalist one of Chomsky. As one such alternative is pragmatics, which focuses on meaning in use rather than meaning in the abstract (Leech, 1983. pp.3-4). Since pragmatics focuses on 'message' and 'language users', some common topics studied in pragmatics are deixis (pointing via language, e.g. me, there), speech acts (actions performed via utterance), implicature or implicit meaning (the communication of something more than just the surface meaning of the words), conversation (what is going on in language use, e.g. turn taking, repair), presupposition (existing knowledge common to speaker and hearer that the speaker does not need to state), and politeness (consideration for others) (Yule, 1996; Grundy, 2000; Mey, 2001). In this study, I examine the language use of Thai speakers of English when they deal with situations that can damage face.

2.3 Definitions

Some definitions of pragmatics here will help us understand what this field is about. Leech (1983) defines pragmatics as the study of how utterances have meanings in situations (p.x). Kasper and Blum-Kulka (1993) view pragmatics as the study of people's comprehension and production of linguistic action in context (p.3). As for Mey (2001), pragmatics studies the use of language in human communication as determined by the conditions of society (p.6). Horn and Ward (2006) call pragmatics the study of those context-dependent aspects of meaning which are systematically abstracted away from in the construction of content or logical form (p.x). Yule (1996) describes four areas that pragmatics studies: speaker meaning, contextual meaning, how more gets communicated than is said (how listeners can get the intended message) and the expression of relative distance (what determines the choice between the said and the unsaid) (p.3). All of these definitions involve the study of human communication and its meaning in certain circumstances. The fundamental approach

to pragmatics taken in this study is that it is the study of people's utterances considered in relation to the contexts in which they occur.

2.4 The importance of pragmatics

Mey (2001) raises the question of why we need pragmatics and his answer is if we want a fuller, deeper and generally more reasonable account of human language behaviour, pragmatics can provide it (p.12). Leech (1983) also says that we cannot really understand the nature of language itself unless we understand pragmatics: how language is used in communication (p.1). Yule (1996) adds that among the three linguistic components of syntax, semantics and pragmatics, only pragmatics allows humans into the analysis. The advantage of studying language via pragmatics is that one can talk about people's intended meanings, their assumptions, their purposes or goals, and the kinds of actions (for example, requests) that they are performing when they speak (p. 4). In my opinion, it is interesting to study how professional subjects and students who are about to enter workplace use English in situations that can harm their interlocutors' face. What strategies do they use to convey their intended message without doing so? Now we will look at 'pragmatic competence' which will be used to judge the respondents' language use.

2.5 Pragmatic competence

Pragmatic competence is one component of communicative competence, as in Savignon's (1991) explanation "the communicative competence needed for participation includes not only grammatical competence, but pragmatic competence" (p.262). Pragmatic competence consists of the knowledge that speaker-hearers use in order to engage in communication, including how speech acts are successfully performed (Ellis, 1994, p. 719). Koike (1989b) emphasizes the speaker's ability, and according to him, pragmatic competence lies in the speaker's knowledge and use of rules of appropriateness and politeness which influence the way the speaker will understand and formulate speech acts (p.279). In Bialystok's (1993) account, "pragmatic competence entails a variety of abilities concerned with the use and interpretation of language in contexts. It includes speakers' ability to use language for different purposes - to request, to instruct, to effect change. It includes listeners'

ability to get past the language and understand the speaker’s real intentions, especially when these intentions are not directly conveyed in the forms-indirect requests, irony and sarcasm. It includes command of the rules by which utterances are strung together to create discourse. To participate successfully in such conversations, speakers need to have mastered the three aspects of language listed above” (p.43).

Bachman (1997, pp.87-98) gives a very detailed model of pragmatic competence which he considers as a part of language competence. He divides ‘language competence’ into two components: organizational competence and pragmatic competence. Organizational competence consists of grammatical competence and textual competence. By contrast, pragmatic competence consists of illocutionary competence and sociolinguistic competence.

Table 2.1 Components of language competence

Language Competence			
Organizational Competence		Pragmatic Competence	
Grammatical Competence	Textual Competence	Illocutionary Competence	Sociolinguistic Competence
vocabulary	cohesion	ideational functions	sensitivity to dialect or variety
morphology		manipulative functions	sensitivity to register
syntax	rhetorical organization	heuristic functions	sensitivity to naturalness
phonology		imaginative functions	cultural references and figures of speech

Bachman (ibid., p.87)

Illocutionary competence here is the knowledge of pragmatic conventions for performing language functions. Kasper (1997) simplifies illocutionary competence as ‘knowledge of communicative action and how to carry it out’ (p.2). Illocutionary competence as Bachman describes it covers different uses of language for expressing ideas, accomplishing goals, extending knowledge or giving vent to humour and the imagination. By contrast, sociolinguistic competence is the knowledge of the sociolinguistic conventions for performing language functions appropriately in a given context. Sociolinguistic competence covers sensitivity to differences in dialect

or variety; sensitivity to differences in register; sensitivity to naturalness; and ability to interpret cultural references and figures of speech. Perlocutionary acts (Searle, 1969, cited in Bachman, p. 90) or the effect of the utterance on the hearer is not included in Bachman's pragmatic competence because this act will depend on the competencies of both speaker (to convey the message) and hearer (to receive the message). Her framework emphasizes the speaker's competence.

This study is conducted with Thai people who study English as a foreign language. The student respondents use English in class (although Thai is the primary medium) and professional respondents mainly use English in their work in a service industry, not in academics. Therefore, pragmatic competence, according to me is simply defined as "having the knowledge of communicative action and ability to use English appropriately according to the context".

Koike (1989b) suggests that L1 pragmatic knowledge transferred to the L2 speech act situation causes learners to try to produce linguistic forms which they judge to be pragmatically appropriate to the context. Many often perceive that the act is too difficult for their grammatical competence, and produce a less appropriate but syntactically simpler form (p.279). According to my data, the respondents may not have problems in transferring their Thai pragmatic knowledge to English, but rather the problems I found are mainly from their first language transfer (e.g. literal translation, omitting auxiliary verbs or subject) or lack of English proficiency. Even though some responses are invalid or incomprehensible, most responses (85.40%) are understandable.

In Kasper's (1997) article "Can pragmatic competence be taught?", her answer is that it cannot. According to her, competence, whether linguistic or pragmatic, is not teachable. In her view, competence is a type of knowledge that learners possess, develop, acquire, use or lose. She explains more that the challenge for foreign or second language teaching is whether we can arrange learning opportunities in such a way they benefit the development of pragmatic competence in L2. And Kasper's research also supports the view that pragmatic ability can indeed be systematically developed through planned classroom activities. In my opinion, we can impart linguistic knowledge and students themselves who then will determine according to their seriousness or intention how much knowledge they want to acquire

until they reach a certain level of linguistic competence. Pragmatic competence will be acquired if the lessons have allowed for practice of language skills in realistic contexts, for instance through role play. Teachers can teach students to be aware of pragmatics but the competence will mostly come from experience.

Part 2: Studies related to politeness

In this section, studies of politeness and the speech acts of requests, complaints and disagreements in cross-cultural and Thai contexts are presented (in sections 2.6 and 2.7 respectively). These studies can be roughly grouped into two types of data collection: experimental and natural setting. Studies with experimental methods mostly make use of data collection in the form of discourse completion test and role play. Natural method studies gather data by observing natural interaction. My data are collected by employing role play and discourse completion test which are classified as experimental methods, although the goal is to obtain responses that approximate real interaction. Here I will discuss the main issues addressed in each study and attempt to find common points of interest with my study.

2.6 General studies of politeness and cross-cultural pragmatics

In the studies discussed here, experimental studies involve cross-cultural comparison of speech acts between native and non-native speakers, or between speakers of different languages. Studies employing natural methods seem to deal mainly with L1. We will see how speakers with different levels of language proficiency make choices about language use, and how situational factors can have a large influence on the strategies chosen.

2.6.1 Experimental method

Social status plays a role in language usage. Olshtain and Weinbach (1987) explore the speech act of complaining among native and non-native speakers of Hebrew and find that both groups tend to cluster around the three central strategies: disapproval, complaints and warning. When the speaker is of lower status than the hearer, he/she tends to choose less confrontational strategies (disapproval and complaint); when the interlocutors are equals or the speaker has higher social status,

they tend to use complaint and warning strategies. This finding would seem to have a psychological basis and therefore more general validity. People who are in a higher position or have more power feel more confident and thus dare to complain to or warn subordinates, whereas those of lower status do not want to take a risk by expressing strong complaints, fearing for their job or the relationship.

Complaining styles can differ according to gender and between native and non-native speakers. Geluykens and Kraft (2007) studied gender variation in native (English) and interlanguage (German-English - English produced by native speakers of German) complaints. The study used discourse completion tests to explore how complaints are realized in language. It found that FTA realization (Brown and Levinson, 1987) by non-native speakers was longer and more verbose than native speakers. In terms of using downgrading or mitigating strategies (e.g. 'please', 'I'm sorry') and upgrading strategies or negative terms of address and the use of swear words (e.g. 'You beast', 'Bloody Hell'), L2 speakers used significantly more downgrading than mother tongue respondents. Upgrading was far less frequent than downgrading in both L1 and L2. Male speakers used more upgrading than females, but female speakers used more mitigating strategies than male speakers. The respondents may perceive written complaint as a formal medium and therefore avoid using expressions that could cause offence.

Several researchers have compared how native and non-native speakers express disagreement. Kreutel (2007) studies how native speakers of American English and non-native speakers who are ESL students do so. Non-native speakers used desirable, mitigating features significantly less frequently than native speakers and displayed a higher frequency of undesirable rude and impolite features. Non-native speakers tend to lack mitigating devices and use impolite expressions instead. It is unsurprising that native speakers are able to use language to negotiate conflict situations in a mitigating manner, although the level of skill varies with the individual. Interestingly, no relationship between pragmatic skills and proficiency level among the non-native speakers could be found in her study. According to her, this confirms the assumption that pragmatic competence is not automatically linked to proficiency in the grammatical and lexical spheres. It may also be understood as an argument for the importance of explicit pragmatic instruction.

Other studies have found that the level of L2 proficiency is an important factor in appropriate language usage. Tanaka and Kawade (1982, cited in Aikawa 1996, p. 3) compare the politeness strategies of non-native English speakers with native speakers. Twelve different request phrases were prepared, and the subjects were asked to rank these in the order of the most polite to the least polite form. The result shows that advanced ESL learners were aware of the varying degrees of politeness of the prepared sentences, since there was a high correlation between the native speakers of English and advanced ESL learners in politeness judgements. Regarding the study's methodology, the sentences were provided for them and they rank which expression is more polite, so the skill tested is not production, but passive interpretation of polite forms. Harada's (1996) study did address production, finding that advanced learners seem to be more sophisticated in the employment of polite linguistic forms and strategies than intermediate learners. These differences between intermediate and advanced learners may reflect the attention paid to polite language at different stages of the curriculum, although LoCastro's (1997) study of Japanese ESL textbooks found a general lack of attention to the topic.

Proficiency for second language speakers is sometimes understood as an ability to transfer L1 to L2 successfully. However, non-native speakers often transfer behaviour that would be appropriate for the situation in their own culture into that of the second language, where it is not. This seems to be the case when Beebe and Takahashi (1989) compare Japanese vs. American performance of face threatening acts (disagreement) in English in two status-unequal situations using discourse completion tests. Japanese ESL learners acting as corporate executives were much more likely than in other roles to state an explicit criticism of their assistant's proposal. That is, the speaker with greater power choose to assert his/her authority over the addressee and to go 'on record' with the disagreement. The native speakers instead integrated positive remarks into their criticism and tried to sound original in their statements of gratitude. The Americans frequently made suggestions or requests to continue talking or reconsider, and they seemed to avoid direct disagreement. When the Japanese made suggestions, they seemed to express disagreement, and responses were shorter and more critical. It was not the intention of the Japanese subjects to appear brusque or unconcerned about face, but in Beebe and Takahashi's

analysis, they would appear so due to lack of proficiency in the target language's social rules of speaking. One can also point out that this result contradicts the prevailing stereotypes of the two cultures, with Americans more direct and Japanese more concerned with preserving face. Tanaka (1988, cited in Kasper and Blum-Kulka, 1993, p.8) also finds that non-native speakers largely use the same direct strategies with higher-status/distant interlocutors as with equal-status/familiar ones. They seem to ignore the need for attention to face when speaking L2, even though they belong to the culture most well-known for polite behaviour. This example shows that in studying second-language interaction, we need to question stereotypes about national culture and its role in speech behaviour.

Another type of experimental study compared politeness behaviour among speakers of several different languages. In their study on "Cross-cultural and situational variation in requesting behavior", Blum-Kulka and House (1989) compared the ways five different groups of subjects, native speakers of Hebrew, Canadian French, Argentinian Spanish, Australian English and German, realized requests in their L1. They interpreted the results as showing that the "cultural" factor interacts with situational factors. All languages vary their requests by situation, but differ in specific choices within each situation. The choices between the more direct and less direct strategies are culture-specific (patterns of speech or interactional styles). The findings show interesting cross-cultural differences in directness levels: from among the five languages examined, Argentinian Spanish speakers were found to be the most direct, followed by speakers of Hebrew. The least direct were the Australian English speakers. Speakers of French Canadian and German were found to be at the mid-point of directness.

Even though we can go by cultural stereotypes to try to predict the strategies people use when dealing with some acts, this is often misleading. The concrete situation often is more important in determining the language choices people make. Olshtain and Weinbach (1993, pp.111-113) compare L1 complaining in different cultural groups and find that respondents from all three cultures (British, American and Hebrew) behaved in similar ways when confronting the same situation. About two-thirds of the respondents in each group chose to realize the speech act of censure, while only one-third opted out, or in other words preferred to say nothing. They

expected that the findings would confirm the previous studies finding that Israeli society appeared to be more direct and positive politeness oriented, British more indirect and negative politeness oriented, and American falling somewhere in between. On the contrary, the results show that the differences among the three groups were not significant. This is because the chosen situations had a much stronger impact on strategy choice and this impact was similar in all three cultures. Generally these results suggest that one must take into account situational factors before generalizing about cultural characteristics.

Several generalizations can be made concerning these experimental studies. Often they study a specific speech act, contrasting the performance of native and non-native speakers. If the latter can adjust their language according to the status level of the interlocutor, they have mastered the demands of pragmatic competence in L2. Using an experimental method allows one to make the comparison between groups in a systematic way, without interference that might cause problems in observing real behaviour.

2.6.2 Natural method

Sociological factors can be used to understand the way disagreement is expressed. Rees-Miller (2000) observed seminar classes and academic talks at a large American research university to examine the choice of linguistic markers used to soften or strengthen disagreement. She found that Brown and Levinson's (1987) factors of power and severity do affect the choice of strategies for disagreeing, but in complex ways through the particularities of context. These general factors in her judgement are not sufficient to account for all means for expressing disagreements. In this study, professors tended to use more humour, positive comments, and inclusive pronouns when disagreeing with students than did interlocutors of equal power or students disagreeing with professors. Of course, the pedagogical context is important as well. Neither power nor severity accounts for how professors may use disagreement as a teaching device. Indeed, a seminar discussion is often only successful when differing points of view are argued for, so disagreement as a natural part of this process may not threaten face as it might in general conversation. In addition, efficiency of communication and getting on with the lesson may take

precedence over lengthy face-saving expressions. In this study, observation of natural discourse shows how the seminar room may become a place where different politeness strategies are appropriate, perhaps to be set by the professor or discussion leader. This would create real-life variation that conditions the ideal model of Brown and Levinson. However, it is generally true that power and the degree of imposition affect strategies used in interaction.

Natural methods have also been applied to studying the relationship between language use and cultural stereotypes. Edstrom (2004) cites studies that attribute a high level of frankness and directness to native Spanish speakers. Observing the conversations of Venezuelans, she found more direct expressions of disagreement than indirect ones. Her findings thus confirm those of previous studies that Venezuelans are confrontational when disagreeing. She would explain this as the nature of the culture. This brings to mind various books written on cross-cultural communication for people who will do business or move to live in another country, so that they will be equipped to understand the culture and prepare themselves in advance.

One disadvantage of the natural method is that it is often hard to collect data on different groups (L1/L2 speakers) or across cultures, so comparison is not systematic.

2.7 Studies of politeness in the Thai context

This section will discuss scholarship on the Thai case and again is divided into two parts: experimental or natural data. However, some studies seem to generalize directly from the researcher's own experience, or from conceptions of the norms of "Thai politeness" that can be found in didactic literature or other sources. I treat this type of study as using natural methods because they are basically from natural data or the researcher's experience, conceptions or direct interaction.

2.7.1 Experimental method

Hierarchy in Thai society takes linguistic form in the different degrees of politeness depending on status and power. The way Thais use L2 is naturally influenced by this, as argued in Wongwarangkul's (2000) research "Analysis of the

Nature of Interlanguage Pragmatics in Choice Making for Requesting Strategies by Thai EFL Learners”. She states that L1 social factors seem to have a prominent role in the learner’s judgement of the level of appropriateness. For instance, seniority of age in Thailand is one of the most prominent value systems which affect language use. She found that the age of the addressees determines the Thai speakers’ choice of politeness strategies, through the frequency of use rather than types of strategies, in both languages. Elements used for measuring the effect of age were the use of strategies in request patterns, internal modifications (e.g. politeness markers), the personal pronoun and length of utterance.

Srinarawat (1999) studies “Indirectness as a Communicative Politeness Strategy of Thai Speakers”. The data were collected both from novels and with a questionnaire where 475 respondents were asked to choose direct or indirect ways of speaking in certain situations. While in literary sources, indirect speech might be used to convey irony, the questionnaire subjects chose an indirect way of speaking predominantly to emphasize politeness. According to her study, it is clear that Thai speakers use indirectness as a communicative politeness strategy. In addition, there is a proportional relationship between the subjects’ use of indirectness and their educational level. In other words, the higher the group’s level of education is, the more likely they are to use an indirect strategy in communication.

The results of both experimental studies seem to confirm the general picture of “Thai politeness” (see chapter 1, section 1.3.7 and chapter 2, section 2.8).

2.7.2 Natural method

Communication online, in a chat room or discussion forum where people do not know or see one another, is a specific context where one might expect different rules to apply. A study by Hongladarom and Hongladarom (2005), “Politeness Ideology in Thai Computer-Mediated Communication”, investigates computer-mediated communication (CMC) on one popular Thai website, focusing on politeness strategies in Thai CMC. They look at a number of computer-mediated texts produced by users and find that the Thai members of Pantip.com demonstrate a significant amount of politeness toward one another through the language they use. Politeness appears to be consciously maintained. Their data suggest that Thai CMC participants

also adhere to the principles of politeness, attempt to avoid confrontation and make the addressee feel that he or she is part of the community. From the evidence in the use of politeness strategies, the researchers confirm that Thai norms of politeness are preserved in computer-mediated discourse and “Thai culture is resilient enough to withstand the tide of globalization coming through the use of internet technologies” (p.158).

In another instance of the natural method, although not of conversation, but of written discourse, Chakorn (2006) compares Thai characteristics with those of native speakers. Her article on “Persuasive and Politeness Strategies in Cross-Cultural Letters of Request in the Thai Business Context” focuses on a contrastive analysis of authentic letters of request written in English by Thai speakers and native English speakers. The overall investigation manifests the diversity in language use which distinguishes Thai-style business requests from western-style ones. The non-Thai requests tend to be more direct, often involving a “boldly on record” strategy. In a similarly formal context, the Thai request letters typically use more negative politeness in that they include more indirect, deferential and self-effacing strategies. This can reflect one Thai characteristic, *‘krengjai’* (feeling reluctant to bother or ask for help from other people) which mandates that language use should not show imposition or be too direct, and the requester should allow the requestee the option of refusing in case she/he cannot help, so that no one will lose face.

The remaining studies are not based on gathering data from real speakers, but investigate concepts and norms of politeness that are current in Thai culture, usually on the basis of the researcher’s own knowledge. In dealing with disagreement, certain strategies come into play in Thai contexts, as detailed in Phukanchana (2004), “Politeness in Thai Culture: Strategies of Disagreeing”. Her study provides an enhanced understanding of how Brown and Levinson’s (1987) politeness theory can be applied in non-Western contexts such as Thai culture. She develops eight propositions about choice of politeness strategy which Thais may make when disagreeing with others. 1) In the case of an emergency, the speaker is less aware of the hearer’s face; thus, the speaker is more likely to use bold on-record strategy regardless of the hearer’s social position or age. 2) Subordinate Thais tend to use an off-record strategy, such as attributing responsibility to someone else, when

expressing disagreement with their superiors. 3) It is socially acceptable for superiors to use a bold on-record strategy when opposing their subordinates. 4) With their intent to maintain harmonious and smooth relationships, Thais use positive politeness strategies by which speakers identify in-group membership and/or use in-group language while expressing disagreement with their opponents. 5) To harmonize interpersonal relationships as well as to deny being aggressive, Thais use a positive politeness strategy such as humour when opposing others. Ukosakul (2005) also explains that for Thais, jokes and teasing are often used to distract attention from the seriousness of the situation and used to communicate something that is sensitive and could make a person lose face (p.121). In Hongladarom and Hongladarom's (2005) study, when the members in the Thai computer-mediated communication (CMC) debated, the situation could well have ended in a confrontation, but in practice a humorous tone was maintained and no real disagreement was found at the end (p.158). 6) To mitigate disagreement expressions, the speaker uses mixed strategies of positive politeness (claiming common ground) and negative politeness (being conventionally indirect). 7) Thais are more likely to use silence to withdraw from disagreement and to prevent further argument. 8) Silence accompanying polite nonverbal behaviour will minimize face threat to the hearer, but silence accompanying impolite nonverbal behaviour can aggravate face threat to the hearer and potentially create a further dispute. The propositions all seem to lie within the boundaries of the strategies contained in Brown and Levinson (1987), but together they form a complex that for this researcher defines "Thai politeness".

The rules of polite speech vary from culture to culture. [Intachakra's](#) (2004) research on "Contrastive Pragmatic and Language Teaching: Apologies and Thanks in English and Thai" assumes that every society has its own rules of polite speech and attempts to pin down subtle differences between conversational interaction in British English and Thai. According to his study, there are more strategies for apologizing in English than in Thai, not only in terms of frequency (being used more often) but also of quantity (a wider variety of expressions). Considering direct acts of apologizing, British English speakers have at least six variants at their disposal, whereas there are half as many strategies in Thai. For thanking behaviour, the study suggests that both British and Thai speakers use gratitude expressions for similar communicative goals

such as making indebtedness known to each other and maintaining mutual negative face want. A significant difference can be found in the availability of thanking strategies in English and Thai, which suggests that Thais may not express thanks as effusively as the British.

“Face” is also important to Thais, and making people lose face is to be avoided. Elaborating on this key concept, Ukosakul (2005) studies “The significance of ‘face’ and politeness in social interaction as revealed through Thai face idioms”. Her study describes the relationship between face and politeness in Thai culture. For Thais, to be polite is to ensure that one maintains other people’s face. The Thai notion of face is very often associated with a sense of dignity, self-esteem, prestige, reputation and pride. Face is a root value underlying Thai social interactions, and Thai people make great effort not to offend anyone or cause them to lose face. Some politeness strategies for maintaining one’s face are indirectness, avoidance of confrontation or strong criticism, and suppression of negative emotions. This study shows how face as a value concept is expressed in the language of idioms. It seems to lean toward the “collectivist” understanding of face as maintaining social harmony.

Generally speaking, only a few of these studies provide with new data, either of the experimental or natural variety, and those that do seem mainly to confirm the existing picture.

Part 3: Theoretical section

This study investigates the performance of three speech acts (requests, complaints and disagreements) that can threaten or damage face, and Brown and Levinson’s politeness theory (discussed below), which focuses on how face is saved in such contexts, is used as a framework to analyse the data. The following sections will give information about how this theory is applied, and different approaches to the study of politeness are also presented. The last part will discuss how the situations the respondents have to deal with relate to the small and large cultures that form the study’s context.

2.8 The meaning of face

People who participate in interaction cannot ignore the need to maintain each others' face. Interaction, especially in business and professional contexts (as in this study) can promote or damage business interests, one factor being how the customers' or guests' face has been treated. If we accept the contention of Brown and Levinson (1987, p.62) that face is universal, it follows that each culture values the importance of face. In the cultural relativist view, the concept of face, although a universal, can vary from culture to culture. Often this is presented in terms of differences between "Eastern" and "Western" culture, yet differences also exist between individual cases within this grand dichotomy. In the Thai case, the treatment of face is not identical to either the Chinese or the Japanese one, nor does "the West" possess a homogenous understanding of face. There may be potential in a framework of three cultures (Chinese, Western and Thai) as a tool to shed light on politeness phenomena.

Before I discuss the concept of face in these cultures, I would like to clarify the notion of "culture" that this entails. "Culture" is used in different ways in different studies. Watts (2003) explains that "the term 'culture' in politeness literature has not been defined exactly and can cover various issues: "...'culture' ranges from national groupings, through languages, gender-specific differences, social classes, subcultures determined by interest groups, age groups, in-groups, etc. and back to broad, sweeping notions such as 'western European and North American culture', 'Asian culture'" (p.101). Culture used to explain the concept of face in this section refers to national culture, as reflected in the norms of behaviour that are accepted as "polite". Yet there are other dimensions of "culture" at work in the study, as in the interactions or situations existing in the home or workplace which can be considered "small cultures". This distinction is discussed in more detail in section 2.16. The following paragraphs will present the different concepts of face in the three cultures.

In discussions of face in the Chinese context, there are two key terms, *lian* and *mian-tzi*. *Mian-tzi* stands for a kind of prestige, whereas *lian* is the respect of the group and represents the confidence of society in the integrity of one's moral character, the loss of which makes it impossible for a man to function properly within the community (Hu, 1944, p.45). For Ho (1976), the concept of face is related to authority, standards of behaviour, personality, status, dignity, honour, and prestige which may vary according to the group within which a person finds himself. Losing

face is a serious matter which will affect one's ability to function effectively in society (p.867). Face is a complex concept. It is the respectability and/or deference which a person can claim for himself from others, by virtue of the relative position he occupies in his social network and the degree to which he is judged to have functioned adequately in that position as well as acceptably in his general conduct (p.883). These studies show the concept of face in the specific context of Chinese culture where face is attached to both the individual and the group, especially the latter.

As for the concept of face in Western cultures, Goffman (1967) defines face as "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact. Face is an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes" (p.5). Brown and Levinson (1987, p.61) derive the concept of face from Goffman and the English folk term, which ties face to notions of being embarrassed or humiliated ('losing face'). They define face as something that is emotionally invested, and that can be lost, maintained, or enhanced and must be constantly attended to during interaction. People cooperate in maintaining face when they interact, and this cooperation entails a mutual vulnerability. People can be expected to defend their face if threatened and in defending their own face to threaten other people's face. Face consists of two related aspects: positive face and negative face. Positive face is the person's desire be approved of or appreciated, whereas negative face is the desire not to be impeded. To a greater or lesser extent whenever we interact, our utterances are involved in the construction of either negative or positive face. Face in Brown and Levinson's understanding of the term is mainly related to the person one is interacting with, rather than to the society one finds oneself in. Accordingly, negative or positive face falls on that person as an individual.

Thai researchers have also made attempts to understand how face works within their national context. According to one study, Thais equate "face" and "ego", the root value underlying various key values of the Thai, such as "face-saving". Preserving one another's ego is the basic rule of all Thai interactions, whatever the relative status of or degree of familiarity between the interlocutors (Komin, 1990b). In another interpretation, the Thai notion of face is associated with the sense of

dignity, self-esteem, prestige, reputation and pride, in a similar way to Chinese, Japanese and other Asian cultures (Ukosakul, 2005, p.119). We can say that in Thai culture, the concept of face is seen from an individual perspective in some aspects, but from a group perspective in others. Thus it seems to be a combination of the Western and Chinese ideal types, although in reality these also combine individual and group, but to varying degrees. Individual face is important and damaging somebody's face should be avoided. At the same time, losing face can affect the group, especially people in the family, but the degree of feeling may not be as strong as for the Chinese. I believe the concept of Thai face is similar to many cultures in which face is treated as an attribute of the individual yet also extends to the group, depending on the situation and seriousness of action.

Ho (1976) makes an interesting point: "Face is distinctively human. Anyone who does not wish to declare his social bankruptcy must show a regard for face: he must claim for himself, and must extend to others, some degree of compliance, respect, and deference in order to maintain a minimum level of effective social functioning" (p.881). The three different cultures each have their own conceptions of face, which are semantically related but not identical. The variation is in concordance with the values of each culture. What Hu (1944) explains is so clear that "society may have formed different conceptions of even the most universal aspects of human life" (p. 45).

In this study, face is the concern of the individual. The study concentrates on how face is treated in the context of face threatening acts by the people whose interaction can affect their business.

2.9 Types of threats to face

Brown and Levinson (1987, pp.65-68) propose that certain kinds of acts threaten face or run contrary to face wants. The following acts are face-threatening to the speaker and/or the hearer.

1. Acts that threaten **the hearer's negative face** indicate that the speaker does not intend to avoid impeding the hearer's freedom of action. They include orders, requests, suggests, advice, reminding, threats, warnings, dares, offers, promises,

compliments, expressions of envy or admiration and expressions of strong negative emotions towards the hearer.

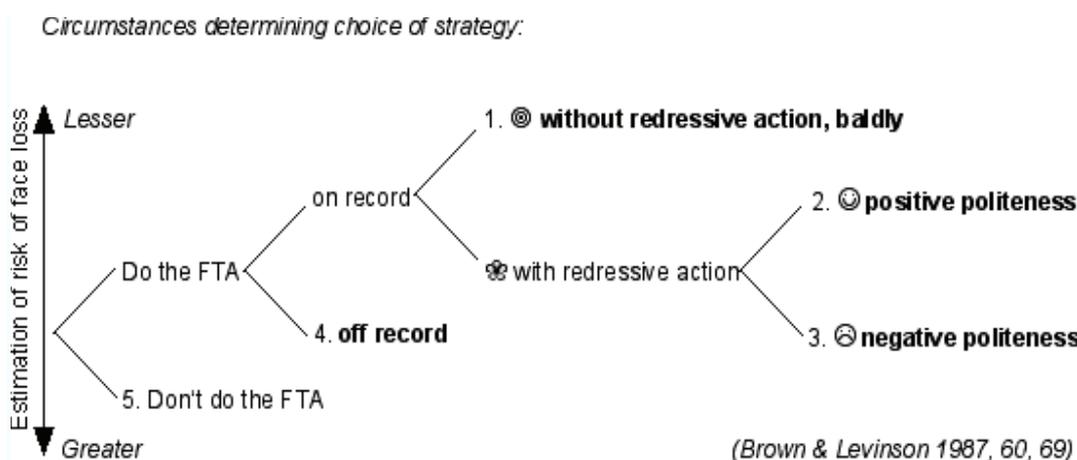
2. Acts that threaten **the hearer's positive face** indicate that the speaker does not care about the hearer's feelings or wants. These include expressions of disapproval, criticism, contempt or ridicule, complaints and reprimands, accusations, insults, contradictions or disagreements, challenges, expressions of violent emotion, irreverence, mention of taboo topics, bringing of bad news about hearer or good news (boasting) about speaker, raising of dangerously emotional or divisive topics, blatant non-cooperation in an activity and use of address terms and other status-marked identifications in initial encounters.

3. Acts that threaten or offend **the speaker's negative face** are expressing thanks, acceptance of hearer's thanks or apology, excuses, acceptance of offers, responses to hearer's *faux pas* and unwilling promises and offers.

4. Acts that damage **the speaker's positive face** are apologies, acceptance of a compliment, breakdown of physical control over body, bodily leakage, stumbling or falling down, etc, self-humiliation, shuffling or cowering, acting stupid, self-contradicting, confessions, admissions of guilt or responsibility and emotion leakage, non-control of laughter or tears.

2.10 Strategies for doing face threatening acts

A central element of Brown and Levinson's politeness theory is the notion that "some acts are intrinsically threatening to face and thus require 'softening' ..." (p.24). Therefore, they formulate five politeness strategies to save the participant's face when face threatening acts are inevitable or desired. This means that the speaker avoids these face threatening acts and uses certain strategies to minimize the threat. The diagram below outlines the strategies that a speaker can choose from when doing a face threatening act (FTA) (p.60, pp.91-227).



1. Do the FTA without redressive action: **bald on record**. This strategy is the most clear, direct, unambiguous and concise way of utterance. The speaker does not make an effort to minimize the threat to the hearer's face to reduce the impact of the FTA. The speaker says whatever he/she wants to say. Face is ignored or irrelevant. This strategy can be seen in cases of urgency, desperation and for pre-emptive invitation (welcomings, farewells and offers). Direct imperatives are clear examples.

2. Do the FTA with redressive action: **positive politeness**. This strategy is approach-based. It stresses the closeness between speaker and hearer. The speaker attempts to minimize the threat to the hearer's face by treating him/her as a member of one's group. The speaker tries to express friendliness, familiarity and solidarity to the hearer. The hearer's wants should be thought of as desirable. Some examples of linguistic strategy are exaggerated expressions of approval or interest in hearer, use of in-group identity markers (e.g. dialect, jargon), jokes, avoidance of disagreement.

3. Do the FTA with redressive action: **negative politeness**. It is assumed that the speaker is imposing on the hearer, or intruding into his/her space so negative politeness is avoidance-based. The speaker recognizes and respects the hearer's negative face wants and tries not to interfere with his/her freedom of action and freedom from imposition. Negative politeness is characterized as expression of self-effacement, distancing, formality and restraint. Some examples using this strategy are being indirect, use of hedges, deference, apologizing, and impersonalization of speaker and hearer.

4. Do the FTA "**off record**", or using indirectness. The communicative intention of the act is not clear. The speaker says something which is more general or

different from what he/she means. Some example strategies are giving hints, giving association clues, being ambiguous or vague. This way the speaker does not communicate directly so the meaning can be negotiable.

5. Do not do the FTA. This strategy avoids causing any offense at all.

Brown and Levinson do not prioritize one strategy over another, however, because this depends on contextual appropriateness. A higher numbered strategy is considered more polite than a lower numbered one. The strategy chosen will also reflect the type of social relationship.

2.11 Linguistic politeness strategies

Brown and Levinson (ibid., p.102, 131, 214) link the FTA strategies to the verbal expressions which they give a list of positive politeness, negative politeness and off-record linguistic strategies as shown below for doing FTAs. However, some acts may need no verbalization (e.g. gift-giving). Brown and Levinson observe regarding the output of these linguistic strategies that the more effort the speaker puts into face-maintaining linguistic behaviour, the more the speaker communicates his/her sincere desire that the hearer's face wants be satisfied.

Table 2.2 Realizations of politeness strategies in language

Positive politeness strategies	Negative politeness strategies	Off-record strategies
1. Notice/attend to hearer's wants	1. Be conventionally indirect	1. Give hints/clues
2. Exaggerate interest/approval	2. Question, hedge	2. Give association clues
3. Intensify interest	3. Be pessimistic	3. Presuppose
4. Use in-group identity markers	4. Minimize imposition	4. Understate
5. Seek agreement	5. Give deference	5. Overstate
6. Avoid disagreement	6. Apologize	6. Use tautologies
7. Presuppose/assert common ground	7. Impersonalize	7. Use contradiction
8. Joke	8. State the imposition as a general rule	8. Be ironic
9. Assert knowledge of hearer's wants	9. Nominalize	9. Use metaphors
10. Offer, promise	10. Go on record as incurring a debt	10. Use rhetorical questions
11. Be optimistic		11. Be ambiguous
12. Include both S and H in the activity		12. Be vague
13. Give (or ask for) reasons		13. Over-generalise
14. Assume/assert reciprocity		14. Displace hearer
		15. Be incomplete, use ellipsis

15. Give gifts to hearer (e.g. goods, sympathy, understanding)		
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The five main strategies in 2.10 and sub-strategies in 2.11 are used as a framework to analyse and interpret the data which will yield the answer to the research questions.

2.12 Sociological variables

Brown and Levinson (ibid., pp. 74-83) posit that the three sociological variables below are also important factors in determining the seriousness of an FTA.

1. Social Distance (D) of the speaker and hearer; the level of familiarity and solidarity between two people.
2. Relative Power (P) of the speaker and hearer; the power that the hearer has over the speaker.
3. Absolute Ranking (R) of imposition in the culture; the degree to which the speaker wishes to impose on the hearer and the degree to which the hearer accepts the imposition.

All three factors (P, D and R) contribute to the seriousness of an FTA and the speaker will calculate what politeness strategy will be used to mitigate the threat to face. The instrument of this study is designed to see whether these factors influence the speaker's language use.

2.13 Why is Brown and Levinson's politeness theory appropriate for this study?

This study investigates strategies of language use in situations that relate to the interlocutor's face. The following reasons are given in support of the contention that Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory is appropriate for this study.

1. The theory focuses on "face saving" which is an integral part of politeness. This study looks at situations that can violate a hearer's face, therefore, in

principle the purpose of the theory suits my study. The theory proposes five main politeness strategies for doing face threatening acts (bald on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, off-record/indirectness, and not doing the FTA). From my observation, people generally tend to use any of these strategies when handling communication and interaction. Bargiela-Chiappini and Haugh (2009) agree that Brown and Levinson focus on the linguistic dimension of politeness, showing how degrees of politeness can be expressed and determined in a principled way using the concept of 'face' (p. xi). Therefore these strategies are considered appropriate to use as a framework to see what strategies the subjects use to avoid face threat with different status interlocutors. Their responses can show whether the degree of politeness is appropriate to the position the respondents are in. Furthermore, the theory provides linguistic realization of politeness strategies (how politeness is realized in language) for avoiding face threat (Brown and Levinson, 1987, pp. 99-227). These strategies can help classifying and clarifying the responses whether in what way and how the respondents use their language choice (e.g. claiming the rule, apology) in face threatening situations. By using this framework, we will see the picture of the respondent's language use more clearly whether they have certain formulae when dealing with face threatening situations especially in their workplace.

Brown and Levinson (*ibid.*, p.61) treat face as a basic want, which everybody would like to claim for him/herself, and break it down into two aspects, negative face and positive face. Negative face is the desire to not be impeded by others, whereas positive face is the desire to be admired or approved of. Using the situations created for this study, we can see what type of face the speaker thinks it is important to preserve for the interlocutor. This can then be related to other variables such as the respondents' occupation. This is another reason that supports the appropriateness of my framework.

2. This study explores three speech acts (requests, complaints and disagreements) that can harm the hearer's face. The three speech acts are stated and classified as face-threatening acts in the theory. O'Driscoll (2007) confirms that "The claim that some acts threaten face is self-evidently true, as witnessed in many quotidian interpersonal animosities" (p.468). When performing these acts, one needs to be careful in one's choice of words. Requests threaten the hearer's negative face,

in that this act may impede the hearer's rights or freedom of action. Complaints and disagreements, by contrast, involve the hearer's positive face, which is expressed through the behaviour of familiarity, solidarity, interest or approval. The situations in this study are constructed to see to what extent the speakers are concerned with the hearer's face, and how they deal with these situations. Brown and Levinson's politeness theory mainly emphasizes reducing threats to the hearer's face rather than the speaker's, another reason why this theory is suitable for what I want to investigate.

3. This theory also takes into account the role of sociological factors (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p.74): the social distance between the speaker and the hearer (D), the relative power the hearer has over the speaker (P) and the rank of imposition (R). These factors are crucial in determining the level of politeness (see more discussion on D, P and R in criticism section 2.15), and they are also influential in Thai society (see chapter 1, sections 1.3.1; 1.3.2; and 1.3.7). Therefore, this concept has been used in constructing and formulating the instrument, and also used in analysing and interpreting the data for this study. The findings/data can tell us whether these factors still play a role when speaking in a second language (English).

4. This theory relies on speech act theory, which is "a sentence-based, speaker-oriented mode of analysis" (Brown and Levinson, *ibid.*, p.10). The data gathered in my study consists of elicited requests, complaints and disagreements in response to a variety of situations. Thus it is only possible to analyse single turns, not whole conversations. With this consideration in mind, Brown and Levinson's framework for analysing politeness strategies and how they are realized in language suits my study.

A large number of researchers studying cross-cultural or interlanguage pragmatics have used Brown and Levinson's (1987) model in different contexts to deepen our understanding of the cross-culture differences and politeness strategies for particular kinds of face threatening acts and speech acts. Seminars and conferences on politeness have been held and much academic writing has used this theory as a framework. One example was an international symposium of linguistic politeness held in Bangkok in 1999, where many of the presenters applied Brown and Levinson's theory in their study (see Lakoff and Ide, 2005). This can show that this theory is applicable to a range of cultures (see criticism, section 2.15 on pages 45-46).

Even though it has been criticized on the grounds that it uses the same criteria to judge politeness across cultures (discussed in section 2.15), I believe using Brown and Levinson as a framework is both appropriate and practical in this case, as discussed above (also see related studies, section 2.6 and 2.7). The study investigates the level of politeness in terms of verbal communication. The purpose is to see whether the Thai speakers of English can use English appropriately in the context of threats to face, and what strategies they choose when doing so.

2.14 Different approaches to study of politeness

There are different research approaches to the subject of linguistic politeness and these are discussed below. Fraser (1990) reviews four of them: the social–norm view; the conversational-maxim view; the face-saving view; and the conversational-contract view (p.219). Of the four views Fraser discusses, that of Brown and Levinson has already been outlined above. In what follows I will discuss Fraser’s approaches.

2.14.1 The social-norm view

Each culture has norms to establish certain rules of behaviour. As mentioned in chapter one, as early as 1912 a book called “Qualifications for being a refined person” was published in Thailand, with the purpose of teaching people proper behaviour. The norms in this book (for example, do not speak up before the other finishes his/her turn) are for the most part still considered appropriate and polite. The rules and norms in each culture may vary according to their value and culture. Since culture varies across nation, foreigners visiting Thailand will find a book “Dos and Don’ts” when staying there so that they will not offend the Thais and violate the rules. People have learned social norms from their family, school and even their workplace. Watts (2003) explains that “politeness is not something we are born with, but something we have to learn and be socialized into, and no generation has been short of teachers and handbooks on etiquette and ‘correct behaviour’ to help us acquire

polite skills” (pp.9-10). Lakoff and Ide (2005) add more that “politeness is the quality achieved by education or polish in the social arts ... and is seen as an adornment to a person’s behavior” (p.5). Therefore each culture has its own social norms and rules for proper conduct and quite often in the international environment we can see people’s cultural background from their behaviour. For example, younger Thai students who know me will generally ‘*wai*’ (a gesture of Thai greeting) me when we meet in Newcastle. This shows both greeting and deference.

2.14.2 The conversational-maxim view

The conversation maxim view relies on the work of Grice. His theory has proved to be one of the most influential theories in the development of pragmatics. Grice (1975) formulates a rough general principle called the Cooperative Principle (CP) which participants are expected to observe: “Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged” (p. 45). Fraser (1990) simplifies Grice’s CP as you should say what you have to say, when you have to say it, and the way you have to say it (p.222). Grice (1975, pp.45-46) also provides certain more specific maxims and sub-maxims into four categories (often called Gricean maxims) as follows:

- Quantity: Make your contribution as informative as is required
 (for the current purpose of the exchange).
 Do not make your contribution more informative than is
 required.
- Quality: Do not say what you believe to be false.
 Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.
- Relation: Be relevant.
- Manner: Avoid obscurity of expression.
 Avoid ambiguity.

Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity).

Be orderly.

Fraser (1990, p.222) explains that Grice's maxims do not provide an account of well-formedness for a grammatical structure (e.g. the passive construction: subject-verb agreement), but rather serve to provide a set of constraints for the use of language- for the use of linguistic forms in conversation.

Lakoff (1973, pp.293-298 cited in Fraser, 1990, p. 224) posits three rules for politeness (Politeness Principle) from the perspective of the speaker:

Rule 1: Don't impose

(used when Formal/Impersonal Politeness is required)

Rule 2: Give options

(used when Informal Politeness is required)

Rule 3: Make the listener feel good

(used when Intimate Politeness is required)

Moreover, Koike (1989a) explains that "according to Lakoff, the speaker can convey politeness in an utterance by following these rules, reflecting his or her attitudes towards the social context of the interaction. These attitudes include the speaker's relationship with and sensitivity toward the hearer, the importance of the information to be conveyed, the formality of the situation, and the effect the speaker wishes to achieve via the utterance" (p.188).

Another approach to politeness in the area of the conversational maxims is from the work of Leech (1983). Leech (*ibid.*, p.132) presents the maxims of the politeness principle which he adopts from Grice's conversational maxim.

I. Tact Maxim:

(a) Minimize cost to other; (b) Maximize benefit to other.

II. Generosity Maxim:

(a) Minimize benefit to self; (b) Maximize cost to self.

III. Approbation Maxim:

(a) Minimize dispraise of other; (b) Maximize praise of other.

IV. Modesty Maxim:

(a) Minimize praise of self; (b) Maximize dispraise of self.

V. Agreement Maxim:

- (a) Minimize disagreement between self and other: (b) Maximize agreement between self and other.

VI. Sympathy Maxim:

- (a) Minimize antipathy between self and other; (b) Maximize sympathy between self and other.

According to Leech (ibid., p. 133), “not all of the maxims and sub-maxims are equally important. Of the twinned maxims (I) – (IV), (I) and (III) appear to be more powerful constraints on conversational behaviour than (II) and (IV). This reflects a more general law that politeness is focused more strongly on *other* than on *self*. Moreover, within each maxim, sub-maxim (b) seems to be less important than sub-maxim (a), and this illustrates the more general law that negative politeness (avoidance of discord) is a more weighty consideration than positive politeness (seeking concord)”. Leech emphasizes that these maxims are observed ‘up to a certain point’, rather than as absolute rules and there are also cross-cultural variations.

Thomas (1995, p.161) gives her own example of a Tact maxim (minimize cost to other; maximize benefit to other) which reflects cultural difference. An MA student from Japan sent her a draft of her work with a note “*This is a draft of chapter 4. Please read it and comment on it.*” This made her infuriated, as she thought about what else the student imagined she was going to do with her work, like make paper aeroplanes. Later a PhD student, also from Japan, explained that the first student was actually going on record with the degree of her indebtedness. This is an instance of ‘impositives’ minimizing the expression of cost to other being by no means universally polite. Leech’s maxims have been questioned by Watts (2003, p.68) as to parameters, whether they are universally valid and whether people actually take all of them into account when speaking.

2.14.3 The conversational contract view

This approach proposed by Fraser (1990) emphasizes the requirements that both parties have to satisfy during the conversation. Fraser (ibid.) details that in conversation, each party brings an understanding of some initial set of rights and

obligations that will determine what the participants can expect from the other(s). During conversation there is always the possibility for the two parties to readjust what right and what obligations they hold toward each other. Fraser explains further that the dimensions of this relationship vary greatly. Some terms of a conversational contract are conventional or general in nature, for example turn taking, intelligible language, speaking sufficiently loudly, and speaking seriously. Terms and conditions need to be followed in social institutions as well, for example, whispering during a church service. Other terms may be determined by previous encounters or situations which would depend on contextual factors such as status, power, the role of each speaker and the nature of the circumstances. As opposed to general conditions, those depending on context are often negotiable (p.232).

For Fraser, being polite constitutes operating within the terms and conditions of the conversational contract. Being polite does not involve making the hearer feel good (as Lakoff or Leech), nor with making the hearer not feel bad (Brown and Levinson). It simply involves getting on with the task at hand in light of the terms and conditions of the conversational contract. Sentences are not polite nor are languages more or less polite. It is only speakers who are polite and then only if their utterances reflect an adherence to the obligations they carry in that particular conversation. Rational participants are aware that they are to act within the negotiated constraints and generally do so. When they do not, they are perceived as being impolite or rude (p.233).

2.15 Criticism of Brown and Levinson's politeness theory

Brown and Levinson's politeness theory (1987) has been influential and has gained recognition in a variety of social science fields. Much research has been conducted to test the theory and has shown that the theory works well in many cultural settings, although some deficiencies have also been noted. In this section, I am going to discuss some positive and negative feedback regarding this approach to the study of politeness.

Many researchers have found this theory both useful and attractive. Fasold (1990) describes the strength of the Brown and Levinson approach over the rule-oriented presentations of politeness by others such as Lakoff and Leech. Brown and

Levinson attempt to explain politeness by deriving it from more fundamental notions of what it is to be a human being (being rational and having face wants) (p.161). Yabuuchi (2006) agrees that Brown and Levinson's model is based on the theory of the most fundamental desires of human beings (p.328). Tracy (1990) states that Brown and Levinson's politeness theory is an elegant and impressive model that brings together identity concerns, situational influences, and discourse strategies. Furthermore, the theory provides us with a rich, linguistically elaborated sense of how positive and negative face, which she characterizes as identity concerns, are displayed (pp. 212-213). Brown and Levinson's theory is different from others because they provide realizations of politeness strategies in language for doing face threatening acts. Coupland, Grainger and Coupland (1988) mention that one of the great strengths of their analysis is they present the realization of communicative strategies as precise lexical/structural selections in various languages (p.255). Since this theory provides a set of efficient tools for the analysis of politeness, researchers from a wide range of cultural and linguistic settings have applied their framework to specific speech acts, such as requests and apologies. Beyond linguistics, Brown and Levinson's politeness model has been applied in other disciplines such as developmental and cognitive psychology, business and management studies, and language teaching (Watts, 2003, pp.98-99).

Brown and Levinson (1987) also consider sociological variables to be important factors in calculating the level of politeness. Indeed, it would be hard to deny that power, social distance and the degree of imposition influence the choice of interaction strategies. A number of researchers on testing these factors have found that Brown and Levinson's way of incorporating them into the model (sociological variables come into play when assessing the seriousness of an FTA) is adequate (see also the research cited in Brown and Levinson (*ibid.*), p. 15). Hill *et al.* (1986) studied "universals of linguistic politeness" in a group of Japanese and American students, concluding that Brown and Levinson's theory explains their findings well. This lends empirical support to the hypothesis of Brown and Levinson that "distance" and "power" are two major elements operating in all sociolinguistic systems of politeness and that the weight or priorities assigned to each will vary from group to group (p.363). Rees-Miller's (1999) observation of university courses and talks shows that

Brown and Levinson's factors of power and rank (severity) affect the choice of strategies for disagreeing. A study in the field of international business has also shown that "power distance" in different cultures affects both general communication patterns and politeness strategies. Therefore, understanding the underlying power relations is important for successful intercultural business communication (Daller and Yildiz, 2006).

As one might expect, Brown and Levinson's politeness theory has also been the target of a range of criticisms. A common line of attack is aimed at the claim to universality it makes, as various researchers have found problems in its application to specific cultures. Brown and Levinson respond to this in the introduction to the 1987 edition of the book. More broadly, Tracy (1990, p.213) has categorized the criticism into five different strands as follows.

1. The conception of politeness at the root of the theory may be culturally biased.
2. Brown and Levinson rank the politeness value of the various strategies, so some question if such a ranking can be universally valid.
3. Basing their theory on speech acts, as Brown and Levinson do, is problematic.
4. There are almost certainly more factors that may affect the perceived face-threat of an act other than power, distance, and rank.
5. Positive and negative politeness may be different in kind, rather than higher and lower amounts of global politeness.

Here I will discuss each of these points in turn.

1. One major criticism of the politeness theory is connected with the concept of 'face'. Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 62) make the following claim: "the mutual knowledge of members' public self-image or face, and the social necessity to orient oneself to it in interaction, are universal". They also consider face as belonging to the individual. However, this may not be appropriate in the context of a collectivist culture where people are integrated from an early age into strong, cohesive in-groups (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005, p.399). In this type of culture (if one accepts that

“cultures” can be divided into “individualistic” and “collectivistic” ones), people consider the group to be more important than the individual. To this way of thinking, many Asian cultures would belong to this type. Even though all cultures are concerned with face during interaction, there are fundamental differences in how it is approached. Thus, Gu (1990), Ide (1989), Matsumoto (1988, 1989), and Mao (1994) take issue with Brown and Levinson’s concept of face. These authors, working mainly with Chinese and Japanese, have argued that Brown and Levinson’s conception of face is applicable only to some Western languages and is not appropriate for the analysis of Eastern languages (de Kadt, 1988, p.173). Mao (1994) agrees that Brown and Levinson’s face is an individualistic, self-oriented image which may very well underlie Western interactional dynamics, can be problematic in a non –Western context. In East Asian cultures by contrast, face is oriented toward an ideal social identity which gives rise to a public image. Brown and Levinson’s formulation of face is oriented toward an ideal individual autonomy, producing instead a “public self-image” (p.455, 473).

Gu (1990) gives two reasons why Brown and Levinson’s model is not suitable for analysing Chinese society. First, some acts, such as offering, inviting, and promising, under ordinary circumstances will not be considered as threatening hearer’s negative face in the Chinese context. Yet Brown and Levinson would define these as impeding the hearer’s freedom. Chinese negative face is threatened when the person cannot live up to what s/he has claimed, or when his or her actions lead to a bad reputation. Second, in interaction, politeness is normative, not just instrumental. Face can be treated as wants as Brown and Levinson have done, but failure to observe politeness norms will incur social sanctions. In Chinese contexts, politeness exercises its normative function in constraining individual speech acts as well as the sequence of talk exchanges. Brown and Levinson failure to recognize this aspect of the problem is probably due to the construction of their theory on the model of two rational and face-caring persons. Politeness should also be seen as a phenomenon belonging to the level of society, which endorses its normative constraints on each individual (pp.241-242). Thus Brown and Levinson are accused of neglecting the social. I would agree that politeness needs to be concerned with face in its normative aspect, because we live in society and human relationships are a necessary part of our lives. Examining

politeness strategies for an Asian society like that of Thailand using Brown and Levinson's framework should allow us to evaluate the claims of Gu and others about the socially conditioned nature of politeness. However, neither should we assume that all Asian societies are uniform in this respect, and the Thai case may differ from those discussed by these authors.

Another issue is negative face, which has been seen as having little or no meaning in collectivist societies (Watts, 2003, p.102). Matsumoto (1988) explains that a notion of positive and negative face cannot be considered as basic to human relations. What is of paramount concern to a Japanese person is not his/her own territory, but the position in relation to the others in the group and his/her acceptance by those others. Loss of face is associated with the perception by others that one has not comprehended and acknowledged the structure and hierarchy of the group. The Japanese concepts of face, then are qualitatively different from those defined as universals by Brown and Levinson (p.405). Finally, further typological variation in notions of face has been shown for Africa. The notion of negative face and the need to avoid imposition does not seem to apply to the egalitarian Igbo society (Nigeria), in which concern for group interests rather than atomistic individualism is the expected norm of behaviour (Nwoye, 1992, p.310). This variation needs to be kept in mind when applying Brown and Levinson's categories to the analysis of non-Western polite behaviour.

2. As for the ranking of politeness strategies, Coupland, Grainger and Coupland (1988) find Brown and Levinson confusing, but conclude that their politeness hierarchy has an integrity because "no one has come up with clear evidence of a counter-ranking". The point would seem to be that evidence of any ranking among the five strategies would be difficult to interpret (p.255). Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 19) respond by pointing out that, for example, off-record (using indirect language and remove the speaker from imposing on the hearer) might not always be ranked as more polite than negative politeness (concerning the hearer freedom of action not being impeded). They admit that this may depend on the design of experimental scenarios, and on the norm of etiquette in each culture which determines how each strategy is valued. In this way they seem to take account of

social norms that may differ for different cultures. The relative ranking of each category may differ between cultures, but the categories themselves are still preserved.

3. The theory has also been criticized because the analysis is done at the level of individual speech acts rather than with larger units, as with conversational or discourse analysis (Coupland, Grainger and Coupland, 1988, p.255). Brown and Levinson's facework can only be explained in terms of single acts, a speaker-oriented approach (O'Driscoll, 2007, p.467). In response, Brown and Levinson (1987) admit that their framework relies on speech act theory, which "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." (p. 10). In other words, it may be difficult to assign each utterance to positive politeness, negative politeness or another category. Even though their model is just one exchange, Brown and Levinson also see that the location within the larger structure of the conversation is important. They try to address how this may affect the perception of a threat to face. Giving the example of repeated refusal of an offer before eventual acceptance, they claim that "FTAs can construct particular styles of verbal interchange," and even "generate well-structured sequences of turns" (p. 235). Thus it seems that we should not take the boundary between speech acts and larger units as absolute. Analysis of FTA avoidance using Brown and Levinson's categories can be integrated with discourse analysis, and can shed light on the motivations behind conversational structure.

4. Regarding the sociological variables, research could discover many factors other than power, distance and rank that affect performance of face threatening acts. Rosaldo (1982, p.230, cited in Brown and Levinson, 1987) states that variables like distance, power and rank of imposition are too simple to capture the complexities of the ways in which members of different cultures assess the nature of social relationships and interpersonal behaviour (p.16). Brown and Levinson (1987) accept that "we underplay the influence of other factors, especially the presence of third parties, which we now know to have much more profound effects on verbal interaction than we had thought" (p.12). Referring to "third parties" may be their way of acknowledging that social norms have force when the speakers know that others are listening and will form opinions of them based on what they say. They further

admit the need to take particular cultural factors into account when dealing with special cases such as caste in India, but in the end defend their choice of variables: “for cross-cultural comparison these three, compounded of culturally specific dimensions of hierarchy, social distance, and ranking of imposition, seem to do a remarkably adequate job in predicting politeness assessments” (p. 17). There are parallels here with the question of cultural differences in the understanding of face. As in the analysis of cultural differences, determining the role of sociological variables means attempting to come up with valid generalizations without ignoring the natural complexity of social interaction. When undertaking studies of single cases, it may be a good idea to accept that other social variables may play a role in the system of polite interaction, in addition to the presence of specific cultural factors.

5. Finally we come to the contention that positive and negative politeness may be different in nature and thus impossible to rank as higher or lower on a scale of politeness. Scollon and Scollon’s (1981, cited in Brown and Levinson, 1987) study shows that positive politeness and negative politeness are quite different phenomena. “Positive politeness is naturally escalated in interaction... and hence unstable, [whereas] negative politeness, lacking the escalating feedback loop, tends to be stable” (p.18). In my opinion, both strategies are polite but use different approaches depending on context and the speaker’s intention. Positive politeness expresses familiarity, solidarity and acceptance between the speaker and hearer, while negative politeness is a recognition that within the hearer’s territory, language use needs to be mitigated. This does not mean that one is more polite than the other, and it is not clear if such a valuation is inherent in Brown and Levinson’s approach. Related to this point, Watts (2003) explains that the politeness strategies employed in one culture might be addressed more to the support of positive face, while a different culture might be oriented to the avoidance of threatening negative face. In fact, one could postulate that there is a cultural spectrum of politeness types ranging from negative politeness cultures to positive politeness cultures (p.101). Brown and Levinson’s categories can thus be applied to describing and explaining cultural differences.

Politeness is culturally relative, so it is not surprising that Brown and Levinson’s politeness theory has been criticized, especially when it attempts to make generalizations that apply to all cultures. However, the core concept of face as a

basic psychological need is arguably a universal feature of human interaction. People need their face to be maintained and recognized, but the details may differ from culture to culture. As Brown and Levinson (1987, p.13) mention, “this is the bare bones of a notion of face which (we argue) is universal, but which in any particular society we would expect to be the subject of much cultural elaboration.” Ho (1976) also supports this, stating that “the conceptualization of what constitutes face and the rules governing face behaviour vary considerably across cultures, but the concern for face is always present.” (pp.881-882). For Thai society, face is valued as highly significant in social interaction, as Ukosakul (2005) and others have shown. The criticism of Brown and Levinson reviewed here suggests that we must look past their model to take account of both cultural specificity and the impact of social norms. However, its categories provide a useful framework for analysis, and the results can be compared with other cases, as long as we keep in mind that any results are contingent on the social and cultural context.

2.16 Conceptions of culture in the context of this study

Although this is an experimental study in the sense that data is not gathered directly from observed interaction, the situations posed to the respondents are meant to be simulations of real life. Cameo interactions are modelled between the respondents (who are hoteliers, travel agents and students) and people such as hotel guests, cleaning staff or siblings, in settings such as the workplace, university or home. Here I would like to situate the data and its interpretation in terms of Holliday’s (1999) small and large cultures. According to Holliday’s (ibid.) definition, “small culture attaches ‘culture’ to small social groupings or activities wherever there is cohesive behaviour and thus avoids culturist ethnic, national or international stereotyping” (p.237). By contrast, large culture looks at culture as an essential and defining attribute of ethnic, national or international groups (p. 241). For this study, although we can interpret the responses in terms of a hypothetical “Thai culture”, clearly the situations are well-defined enough to also be interpreted as reflecting various small cultures (located in the hotel, travel agency or classroom) that the respondents take part in.

For some of the situations dealing with people of equal or lower status, the interlocutors are their family members or friends. They know each other well and are able to adjust the interaction according to the level of intimacy, for instance being aware of how far they can go in using blunt expressions to each other. In other relationships, such as between respondent and waiter, they may not know or be familiar with each other, and thus may make use of general “polite” expressions that reflect distance. With situations in the workplace or the university, where respondents must deal with people of higher status such as guests, clients or teachers, the particular small culture has a major impact on interaction. Hoteliers and travel agents have their own organizational norms and values. Within the hotel category, big and small hotels have different approaches to dealing with guests’ problems, often defined as “hotel policy” as discussed in the respondent section (chapter 5, section 5.2). At the same time, there is also a factor we can refer to as “Thai culture” (discussed in section 2.8), consisting of behaviours inculcated since childhood and reinforced in the national discourse, which influences the way respondents deal with questions of face. We also need to keep in mind that this varies from person to person.

Indeed, in many cases the national culture may be less relevant to actual behaviour than other factors, such as occupational culture. Although it was not possible here to explicitly compare the language of different nationalities, the politeness strategies Thai hotel workers choose may have more in common with people in similar jobs in, say, Egypt or Costa Rica than with fellow Thais in other lines of work. One of the main findings of my study involves the influence of small cultures, especially occupational ones, on politeness behaviour. Thus travel agents have their own culture which is different from hoteliers (as discussed on section 5.2.2). The way Thai students express politeness and recognize face wants also reflects ideas about seniority and the relationship between student and teacher that, while often included in normative descriptions of “Thai culture” in general, in fact can be seen as reflecting the small culture of the school.

In sum, the situations constructed for this study can be used to interpret how the particular speech community or small culture influences politeness behaviour. Such speech communities both form a part of the large culture or national frame and

provide an alternative to explanations of politeness as a national characteristic. Many sections in chapter 5 (such as those on respondents, speech acts, and face saving) will give examples of how occupational factors, as well as individual preferences, affect the choice of strategies to the same or greater degree than national culture.

2.17 Chapter summary

This chapter has tried to lay the groundwork for the subsequent investigation of pragmatic competence in the Thai context. Some key terms are explained: pragmatics can be roughly defined as the study of language use of human beings in specific contexts, and pragmatic competence is the ability to use language appropriately for different purposes. A number of studies of politeness both in the Thai context and elsewhere that examine face threatening acts (requests, complaints or disagreements) or sociological variables have been presented. The last section has laid out how Brown and Levinson's politeness theory can be used as a framework for analyzing data. Two key concepts are positive and negative face. In interaction, people encounter either or both of these. Negative face is the desire not to violate or impose on the hearer's freedom of action or right, whereas positive face is the desire to show solidarity, friendliness or appreciation to the interlocutor. As speech can harm people's face or make them lose face, Brown and Levinson (1987) suggest five strategies for softening the threatening acts: negative politeness, positive politeness, bald on record, off-record and not doing the act. Furthermore, they explain the (linguistic) realization of politeness strategies for the different categories. Brown and Levinson's politeness theory has been highly influential in social science and works well for a range of cultures. However, it has been criticized by some scholars, especially ones from Asia, for applying the same criteria to all cultures. I however support their theory, because it focuses on face saving, a value which I believe is crucial for human cooperation and thus a fundamental value in any society. The situations occurring in the investigation of this study are treated as small cultures with their own rules of interaction. The next chapter will give details about the methodology chosen for the study and address issues of subjects and instruments, including validity and reliability.

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter first lays out the research paradigm followed in this study, then specifies the research questions. Since the study examines three types of face threatening acts, the meaning and details of requests, complaints and disagreements will be provided. This should make clear what is meant when it is stated that these acts threaten the hearer's face. This study employs discourse completion tests and role play as a mean to collect data, so some explanation about what these are is provided. The motivation for employing the two methods in collecting data is discussed. In addition I will discuss the participants, instruments, pilot study, data collection procedure, data analysis, triangulation, and the validity and reliability, finishing with ethical and practical issues.

3.2 Research paradigm

I would like to define the research paradigm for this study. In research, qualitative and quantitative are the basic, most widely discussed paradigms, which differ as follows:

Qualitative study is defined as an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting. Alternatively a quantitative study is an enquiry into a social or human problem, based on testing a theory composed of variables, measured with numbers, and analysed with statistical procedures in order to determine whether the predictive generalizations of the theory hold true.
(Creswell,1994, pp.1-2)

The present study mainly takes a qualitative approach, but also has a quantitative aspect. It is qualitative because it deals with understanding human beings using language in contexts where people can lose face. Bogdan and Biklen (1998) mention that "people conducting qualitative research are concerned with understanding behavior from the subject's own frame of reference" (p.2). The purpose of my study is to discover how polite Thai speakers of English appear to be when dealing with face-threatening acts in English. People are different and their

language use and the way they deal with problems vary from person to person, depending on their habits, experience, status or other factors. Qualitative research is “based on methods of analysis and explanation building which involve understandings of complexity, detail and context” (Mason, 1996, p.4). In the context of this study, qualitative analysis involves examining participant strategies and interpreting whether they are appropriate to each scenario, and also attempting to determine what factors affect or are behind these language choices.

The study also relates to quantitative process. After the responses are analysed into certain politeness strategies (e.g. positive, negative politeness), I then tally the number of uses for the strategies in each scenario and convert this into percentages. This allows us to compare groups and scenarios in a clear manner and lays the groundwork for qualitative interpretation.

I also would like to justify my position in conducting this study. As a lecturer at a community university, I teach students who later enter service industries such as hotel and tourism. In this study, all student participants come from, and many professional participants likely graduated from, such a university. Experienced or inexperienced participants would respond to each scenario in different ways, and by making comparisons I hope to discover how the pragmatic skills of the hotel and tourism workers might have developed. This in turn can suggest new approaches for teaching such skills, which often are not easily replicated in the context of the classroom. English instruction in Thailand too often focuses on teaching grammar to the exclusion of other areas of language. By contrast, the results of this study will be used to improve and adjust the teaching and learning of pragmatic English skills. Dealing with face threatening acts, where culturally specific norms of behaviour can lead to misunderstandings, is one area where students could benefit from focused training.

3.3 Research questions

The purpose of this study is to discover how polite Thai speakers of English appear to be when dealing with face-threatening acts in English: requests, complaints and disagreements. The study poses the following research questions.

1. What levels of politeness and general pragmatic competence do Thai speakers of English demonstrate when dealing with FTAs in interactive situations with foreigners?

2. What politeness strategies do Thai speakers of English use when performing the three FTAs: requests, complaints and disagreements?

3. How do sociological variables such as power and social distance affect the politeness strategies chosen in English speech by Thais?

3.4 Face threatening acts: requests, complaints and disagreements

In this study three types of face threatening act have been investigated. For each act, respondents were presented with three scenarios appropriate to their work and personal life. The professional participants work in the hotel and tourism area and many students will potentially enter the service industries after their graduation. Dealing with such face threatening acts is a vital part of this type of work, so investigating how well the situations are handled will help us to understand where the problems in English performance lie and suggest ways to improve it. We shall see in what sense these acts can be face threatening to the hearer.

3.4.1 Requests

Requests are important to beginning L2 learners because a great deal of interaction with native speakers takes place in the form of requests (Koike, 1989b, p. 280). Requests can be classified as face-threatening acts to the hearer's negative face (Brown and Levinson, 1978, pp. 66-67). In Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper's (1989) account, "requests are pre-event acts: they express the speaker's expectation of the hearer with regards to prospective action, verbal or nonverbal. Hearers can interpret requests as intrusive impingements on freedom of action, or even as a show in the exercise of power; speakers may hesitate to make the request for fear of exposing a need or risking the hearer's loss of face. Requests call for mitigation, compensating for their impositive effect on the hearer" (pp.11-12). Clark and Schunk (1980) also explain that when people make requests, they tend to make them indirectly. They generally avoid imperatives like *Tell me the time*, which are direct requests, preferring formulations like *Can you tell me the time?* In a request and its response, two people

coordinate an exchange. The problem with requests is that, on the surface, they are inequitable. While A benefits from the information she receives, it costs B some effort to give it to her (pp.111-113). Trosborg (1994) supports Brown and Levinson's position that a request is by definition a face-threatening act. "The speaker who makes a request attempts to exercise power or direct control over the intentional behaviour of the hearer, and in doing so threatens that person's negative face (his/her want to be unimpeded) by indicating that he/she does not intend to refrain from impeding the requestee's freedom of action" (p.188).

3.4.2 Complaints

Complaints are an expression of disapproval voiced by the offended party (Kasper and Blum-Kulka, 1993, p. 61). Brown and Levinson (1987) classify complaints as threatening the hearer's positive face (p.66). Complaints are meant to contrast the real state of things with what ought to be (Hatch, 1992, p.140). In the speech act of complaining the speaker expresses displeasure or annoyance as a reaction to a past or ongoing action, the consequences of which affect the speaker unfavorably (Olshtain and Weinbach, 1987, p.195). A complaint usually follows an unpleasant incident or indicates when things have gone wrong in some way. Something has occurred which had negative consequences for the speaker, or which displeased or annoyed him/her. It can prompt speakers to voice their discontent, and they direct their complaint at the person they hold responsible for the negative action (Geluykens and Kraft, 2007, p.144). A complaint usually serves two purposes: it enables speakers to vent their anger or express their (negative) emotions, and it gives them an opportunity to demand action to remedy the situation (Olshtain and Weinbach, 1993, p. 108). Most people avoid complaint situations because it is difficult to complain and still maintain and give face (Hatch, 1992, p. 142).

3.4.3 Disagreements

Sornig (1977, p.361) writes that disagreement is contingent upon what has been said before, just as complaining is contingent upon some unsatisfactory situation. It occurs in the form of statements and assertions. According to Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 66), disagreements threaten the positive-face want. They imply that the

speaker does not care about the hearer's feelings, which indicates a negative evaluation of some aspect of the hearer's positive face. Rees-Miller (2000, p. 1098) explains that disagreements are severe when they threaten the personal or professional identity, worth, beliefs, or values of the interlocutors. The more personally threatened the interlocutors feel, the more severe the disagreement. Sornig (1977, p.368) explains further that disagreement when uttered by a superior figure usually means reproach. When voiced by an inferior individual, it means protest and insubordination.

3.5 What are the discourse completion test (DCT) and role-play?

In the field of pragmatic studies, the most common methods used to obtain data are discourse completion test and role play, whereas authentic interaction is desirable but difficult to obtain and the researcher cannot control the variables (Geluykens, 2007; Felix-Brasdefer, 2008). Kasper (2000) states that "Frequently the most difficult part in gathering extended authentic data is to gain access to the research site. Institutions are often reluctant to allow any form of observation, and if they do, they may not allow recording. Yet without audio- and preferably video-recording, the entire research enterprise will be jeopardy" (pp.318-319; see Geluykens, 2007, p.39). In my work involving hotel and travel people, it is simply not feasible to observe their real interaction with customers, especially when the objective is to focus on specific face threatening acts. Discourse completion test and role play are better suited for this, since scenarios can be created that elicit the acts that are under study. Kasper and Roever (2005) explain that in cross-sectional studies of pragmatic development, discourse completion tests or tasks (DCTs) have frequently been used to elicit language targeted to a specific speech act. Role-plays are widely used for training, learning, testing, and research purposes not only in English teaching, but throughout the social sciences (p.328). Geluykens (2007) also mentions that in interlanguage pragmatic studies, DCT and role play have been used on a regular basis as data elicitation techniques (pp.22-23). I now discuss each method in greater detail.

3.5.1 Discourse completion test

DCT is a production (written) questionnaire and involves non-interactive elicitation of data. It is created to stimulate speech production and usually provides a number of scenarios or fictitious situations, which are designed to elicit the speech act under study. Each description is followed by a section of dialogue, in which the participants have to fill in their contribution in a way they believe suitable to the given context. To do so, they need to imagine what they themselves or some abstract person might do and say in that situation (Kasper and Dahl, 1991, p. 9; Geluykens, 2007, p.22, 34, 35, 38). Beebe and Takahashi (1989) give a similar characterization of DCT, stating that it is a role play questionnaire containing scenarios in which the subject is asked to write down what they would say (p.107).

3.5.2 Role-play

Role plays may be designed in open or closed fashion. Closed role plays like those used in this study are similar to discourse completion tests but are performed in the oral mode. Participants are presented with scenarios and are asked to give one-turn oral responses that are recorded or videotaped. Open role plays involve interactions played out by two or more individuals and do not observe the limits specified in closed role-play (Gass and Mackey, 2007, pp.138-9; Geluykens, 2007, p.38). The closed role play has been used by some linguists to elicit requests, apologies, and suggestions (Kasper and Roever, 2005, p.326). Role play is generally regarded as simulating more authentic responses than written tests. The respondents are asked to take a particular role requiring the performance of a speech act (Sasaki, 1998, p. 459). Trosborg (1995) distinguishes between one variation which requires that one “pretend to react as if one were someone else in a different situation” and another of “performing a role that is part of one’s normal life or personality” (p.144). It is the latter type that I have tried to design for this study.

3.5.3 Advantages and disadvantages of discourse completion test and role-play

Advantages

DCT and role-play have much in common in their design, and share the advantages of giving the researcher very good control over context and variables (for example, factors like the age/status of interlocutors can be specified). DCT can be useful because it can provide large amounts of data in a short period of time with a minimum of effort. There is no need for transcription and it is easy to compare responses from various speakers. Moreover, responses within a DCT can be seen as indirectly revealing a participant's accumulated experience within a given setting. Although DCT cannot provide authentic speech, it can provide insights into what subjects think they would do in a certain situation (Golato, 2003, p.92; Geluykens, 2007, p.36). In the view of Hill *et al.* (1986, p.353, cited in Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper, 1989), "using written elicitation techniques enables us to obtain more stereotyped responses; that is the prototype of the variants occurring in the individual's actual speech" (p.13). This method is particularly useful for investigating speech acts such as apologies, invitations or refusals (Gass and Mackey, 2007, pp.140). The DCT seems to be popular with many linguists and researchers in the area of pragmatics, especially for research in interlanguage pragmatics, intercultural communication and second language acquisition. This is because the simplicity of use and high degree of control over variables lead to easy replicability (Golato, 2003, p.93).

Role play allows examination of speech act behaviour in its full discourse context, but at the same time has an advantage over authentic conversation in that it is replicable and allows for comparative study (Kasper and Dahl, 1991, p.19). Other advantages of this method are that the subjects have the opportunity to say what they would like to say at their own chosen length, and their spoken language is thought to be a good indication of their "natural" way of speaking (Rintell and Mitchell, 1989, p.50).

The participants in this study do not have to pretend to act somebody else's role because the situations are related to their daily life and occupation. They can retain their own identities and respond according to what they have experienced.

Rintell and Mitchell (ibid.) compared DCT and role play, finding that written and oral methods gave similar results (p.270).

Disadvantages

Beebe and Cummings (1985, p. 4, cited in Kasper and Dahl, 1991) found that “written role plays bias the response toward less negotiation, less hedging, less repetition, less elaboration, less variety and ultimately less talk” (p.38). The data do not correspond to natural spoken language, or in other words the language collected with DCTs does not reflect real-time interactional sequences (Golato, 2003, p.92). For role-play, the subjects are aware of being recorded, which affects their speech in ways that are unclear. Some have claimed that there is little emotional involvement by participants, since they will not in fact experience feedback and bear no responsibility for the outcome, as could be the case in real life. In fact, the whole interaction can be seen as artificial and contrived. From a practical standpoint, the researcher also depends on recording equipment, and the transcription process is rather lengthy (Geluykens, 2007, p.35, 36, 38).

3.6 Motivations for using the role-play and discourse completion test

When conducting research of this type, it is important to ask if the data gathering method selected is a good match with the participants who will provide the data. Can the combination give valid answers to the questions under investigation? Here I would like to justify the choice of the two methods (role play and DCT).

1. The role-play method is appropriate for hotel personnel and travel agents because they mainly interact with their foreign guests or customers by speaking English. For professional participants, performing the role play is thus not at all different from normal behaviour at work. Although English/Business English majors are often assessed using speaking tests, these are not usually impromptu, but instead the students prepare the topic in advance. For both groups, their impromptu responses in this study can provide a picture of their real English performance.

2. Students participants are in their last year of study before entering the workplace. Therefore indirectly evaluating their pragmatic competence could help predict what kind of English they will use when beginning their careers. Since

relatively large numbers of students were available, I decided to obtain both written and spoken data from them, asking three to four students from each class to participate in role play, while the rest completed the questionnaires. Using both DCT and role play provides a more complete picture of students' pragmatic competence. The DCT format would also be familiar to them because they have typically sat many paper exams where they were required to write the answers down. Comparing the results of both methods will reveal differences between written and oral response formats.

3.7 Participants

The people participating in the study were drawn from three groups: students, travel agents and hotel personnel. The students are from five Rajabhat universities (a type of open enrollment community university with a student population from a fairly wide social spectrum) in Bangkok and its vicinity. The travel and hotel people work in Bangkok and in a small seaside town. All these participants are frequently exposed to English in their daily lives. The participants total 132 people in four categories as shown in the table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Composition of data collection

number	participants	instrument used	interviewer/person in attendance
78	students (5 universities)	questionnaire (discourse completion test)	researcher
14	students (5 universities)	role-play	researcher
25	hotel personnel (8 hotels)	role-play (audio recording)	researcher and English native speaker
15	travel agents (11 places)	role-play (audio recording)	researcher and English native speaker
total 132			

3.7.1 Students

The students are either Business English or English majors in their fourth year. Business English major students are preferable, since Business English programs

have a vocational focus, but in cases where universities do not have this major, English major students have been taken. The number of students in each class varies between 17 and 25, from which two or three students were randomly selected to do the role-play, the others doing the DCT. For convenience, I asked that the whole class participate in the activity. I also wanted to record the language use of the students as a group, in order to be able to make generalizations about how different groups might perform. Furthermore, students will feel they are being treated equally, with no one excluded. I sent an official letter to these universities and also made personal contact with the department heads to arrange the dates. Then I visited the Rajabhat universities and distributed the questionnaires to the students, allowing one hour for answering the questions. After the students started doing the questionnaire, I did the role-play with randomly selected individual students.

3.7.2 Travel agents and hotel personnel

These participants were chosen because they work at hotels and travel agencies that I was able to make contact with, although I had no direct familial or other ties to either them or their supervisors. They were recommended by my friends and colleagues, or we can say the subjects were chosen on the basis of availability. At first the intention was to have middle-level staff rather than executives to do the role play because such executives might be expatriates. However, in practice it depended on those in charge at each company as to who was considered appropriate to take part in the study. I feel that I should not request or bother more because these hotels were kind enough to allow their staff while on duty to do the role play for this study. Therefore, hotel participants are from various positions, for example executive manager, reservation manager/officer, front office, room controller, guest relations and business center staff. For the travel agencies, often there were only one or two individuals who were deemed proficient in English and had the time to provide data. The travel participants in Bangkok had job titles such as manager, tour leader, customer service supervisor, and accounting and ticketing staff. Travel participants outside Bangkok in the seaside town were owners or managers of small companies providing travel services. The hotel and travel participants are thus the people who have to use English in fulfilling their everyday tasks. In fact three of the travel agents

said they rarely use English, but were still willing to participate. For collecting role playing data with the professional participants, I asked one of my colleagues to assist me. In his early forties and from New York state, he has been teaching in Thailand for several years. This colleague read each situation to the respondents, and since this was a close approximation of interacting with a foreigner, we can assume that their responses would reflect the actual situation to a high degree. Before the role play, my colleague and I made small talk with them first to put them at ease and I briefly gave instructions for doing the role-play. All participants were asked for their permission before being recorded.

3.7.3 Justification for selecting study participants

Hoteliers, travel agents and Business English/English fourth year students are the subjects of this study. I have focused on these groups, rather than selecting from a broader array of social groups because there is a connection between professionals in these fields and the student cohort. Many of the students will do internships and eventually find employment in the hotel and tourism sectors. These sectors play a significant role in the Thai economy, and many hoteliers and travel agents come into contact with foreign tourists on a daily basis. Their language use in face-threatening situations, such as the ones presented in the role play, can impact their careers. For this reason, the degree to which they have mastered politeness norms in English has greater significance than for others who speak English on a casual basis. As for the students, they are in the fourth year and although they will enter the workforce soon, in most cases they differ from the professional group in not having practical experience in an English-language environment. We can assume that their English is much more influenced by what they have learned in class. Thus differences between their pragmatic competence and that of the professionals can tell us something about the role of classroom and on-the-job learning in the development of pragmatic competence in the specific areas examined. I mainly teach this type of student, and I can make use of this data to improve the teaching of English for the service professions, taking into account the aspects of language use that the student needs to be aware of when encountering sensitive situations.

3.8 Instruments

The study employs two methods in collecting the data: questionnaire (discourse completion test) and role-play. Here, I would like to explain how the scenarios are created. All situations were drawn from my experience with students doing internships at hotels, travel agencies, and similar companies. Typically I would visit them at the place of work for the purposes of evaluation. Students also submit reports on their experiences during the internship, where they often mention problems or situations that came up. These, especially ones where students had to deal with customers and hotel guests, provided ideas for creating the situations in the questionnaire and role play. Other situations, especially those in a family or school context, reflect my personal experience.

Both questionnaires and role-play consist of nine scenarios relating to three face threatening acts: requests, disagreements and complaints (three for each aspect). The situations in the questionnaire and role-play indicate the setting, the social distance between the participants and their status relative to each other. In both questionnaire and role-play, subjects are asked to deal with three groups of people: of lower status, the same or similar status, and higher status (for example, waiter, friend, boss) one for each type of face threatening act. The scenarios for each group are related to their daily life and work. Participants are asked to write down (DCT) or speak (role-play) their responses for each situation by imagining what they would say in context. Some scenarios are the same for all three groups, others such as those in the workplace are exclusive to one group, but broadly speaking parallel. For student participants, the situations in the role play and discourse completion test are the same.

The questionnaire consists of two parts: personal data and the scenarios. The role-play also records personal information about participants. The order of scenarios in the questionnaire and the role-play is mixed for each group. In the questionnaire, each scenario is posed in writing, and three lines are left for the written response for each situation. Students had one hour to finish the questionnaire. In the role-play, I read off each situation for the students, and an assistant who is a native speaker of English did the same for the professional participants. There is no time limit for producing the answer, which is recorded and transcribed (for travel agents and hotel

personnel). The scenarios in questionnaire and role-play are structured ones. All participants were asked to reply in English. The thesis topic and research focus were not revealed, so that the participants would not adjust their responses in any way.

3.9 Pilot study

Students: The questionnaires were tried out by seven fourth-year students at my home university. Even though their English may lack accuracy, from their responses they understood the situations and answered all the situations to the point.

Hotel and travel staff: To test the questions used for the hotel personnel and travel agents, I asked five of my colleagues to answer the situations and comment on any flaws. I did not try the questions with the people from the hotel or travel agency, because I wanted to keep the target participants for the actual study. The colleagues found that there was no problem with the interpretation of overall questions. However, they suggested that some questions should be shorter to make it easier for the subjects to respond. I revised some questions accordingly.

Two problems that might make the pilot study less valid are that the students who completed the questions did not give any comments, so I used my own judgement on the appropriateness of the situations. The other problem is that the questionnaires were completed at home, so they may have checked expressions from books. Some gave very formal answers that suggest such a source. However, this was not a problem during the actual data collection. For those who prepared their responses at home, it was more a reading exercise than a role play.

3.10 Data collection procedure

At this point I will provide more detail about data collection from the different groups.

3.10.1 Students

Discourse completion test (DCT): When distributing the questionnaire, I explained the instructions to the whole group in Thai briefly, and also gave clarification for some words which I expected might cause problems in understanding, like 'letter of recommendation', 'compliment' and 'internship.' For these the Thai meaning was given to ensure that everybody understood. I did not go

through each situation, and in fact in many cases students did not grasp the essence of the situation and produced inappropriate responses. For this reason some responses have been excluded. The first plan was to give them 30 minutes to do the test, but many of them could not finish it in time, so finally it had to be extended to one hour.

Role play: I read each situation at least twice. Occasionally I had to translate the situations into Thai. After listening to the description of the situations, many of them repeated the situations and made sure that what they understood was correct. Students whose English ability was low could answer in English for only some of the situations. For the rest, in order to save face I allowed them to answer in Thai but their responses were not counted. Most answers were to the point and not too long. It took on average approximately 16 minutes for each student to go through the nine situations.

3.10.2 Travel agents and hotel personnel

It was not easy to get two or three willing participants who could speak English from the travel agencies, so that for the most part there was one participant per company, whereas the Bangkok hotels typically had four or five respondents who could speak enough English and were available to participate in the study. The hotels in Hua Hin (a small seaside resort town) were smaller and the number of participants correspondingly fewer. This group of respondents did only the role play, not the discourse completion test. The role plays were conducted at the workplaces of the participants. I first gave the instructions, asking them what they would say in each situation in the exact words they would use. Then the situation was read by my colleague (mentioned in 3.7.2) and if they did not understand, more explanation in English was given. Occasionally a participant would ask in Thai to check whether they understood the situation correctly before answering in English. It took on average around 10 minutes for each travel agent and 12 minutes for hotel people to do the role play. I found that many hotel people enjoyed sharing their experiences relating to work situations which they often encounter. It is possible that they undergo similar interview-style exercises as part of their job evaluations, so that they seemed more comfortable with the format than the travel agents were, at least in some cases.

3.11 Data analysis

The responses are judged and analysed within the framework of Brown and Levinson's politeness theory. Even though the responses come from two types of instrument (discourse completion test and role-play), the criteria in judging are the same. First, the responses to the nine scenarios will be differentiated according to the language use as positive politeness, negative politeness, bald on-record, off record (indirectness) or not doing face threatening act. Then, the responses are analysed in detail to see the realizations of politeness strategies in language (sub-categories). The criteria for assigning each response to the type of politeness strategy is given in chapter 2, section 2.10 and 2.11. After that the results are evaluated generally to see the whole picture of language use of all groups of respondents. Then, each group and function will be analysed in detail. The analysis will be compared within the group (e.g. student) and among different groups by using percentage. In the main however, this study employs descriptive analysis which is concerned with summarizing and describing data based on the theoretical framework.

I would like to explain further about how the responses were handled. In differentiating the responses, only understandable responses have been analysed and included, so the number of participants for each situation is not equal in all cases. And if the participants switched from English to Thai because they could not think of English words to say or write, this is not counted either. The responses which have been analysed are not judged according to linguistic accuracy, but appropriateness in communicating approximately according to the context. Very often responses contained grammatical errors, but the communicative function was clear. The role play was a face to face interaction between interviewer and participant. If the respondents did not understand the situation, some clarification was given, at first in English but if necessary in Thai. This was most often done with the student respondents. Usable responses from the role play were obtained in most cases. The role plays for travel agents and hotel personnel were recorded, but the students spoke slowly enough so that I was able to write down the responses. All recorded role play responses, including those of the students, have been transcribed and appear in appendixes 5-12.

3.12 Triangulation

The two methods of data collection (role play and discourse completion test) are intended to check the language use of the participants, in order to see what type of politeness strategy (according to Brown and Levinson's framework) they use when dealing with FTAs in different situations and with different status groups. The use of multiple methods has been referred to as triangulation by some researchers. Cohen *et al.* (2007, p.141) define triangulation as the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of aspects of human behaviour. Triangular techniques in the social sciences attempt to explain more fully the richness and complexity of social phenomena by studying them from more than one viewpoint. The more the methods contrast with each other, the greater the researcher's confidence in the results can be (p.141). Altrichter *et al.* (2008) state that triangulation is an important method for contrasting and comparing different accounts of the same situation (p.147). The use of triangulation reflects an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question. Triangulation is not a tool or a strategy of validation, but an alternative to validation (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994, p. 2). For Burns (2000), triangulation is a commonly used technique to improve internal validity. Relying on a single method may bias or distort the researcher's picture of the reality being investigated. The researcher needs to be confident that the data generated are not simply artifacts of one specific method of collection. Triangulation can help to verify the validation of qualitative analysis by checking out the consistency of findings generated by different data collection methods and of different data sources within the same method (p.419).

The two methods of data collection can suggest answers to the research questions from different angles. The discourse completion test will produce data from students who for the most part have not had experience in real work. By contrast, role play produced data both from students and from people who already have jobs in which they use English on an everyday basis. Although the content of the two data collection methods is similar, the discourse completion test can elicit the students' writing proficiency, whereas role play shows speaking ability. Responses from students (both role play and DCT) can reveal the level of their English usage as

people who have not had much opportunity to use English outside class. On the other hand, it is good to see for the people who use English in their job how appropriate or deferential their English is. Often one feels that much of their learning came on the job rather than in the classroom. The responses from the two methods will show whether there is a difference in the politeness strategies they resort to writing as opposed to when responding orally. Role play is an impromptu interaction, and the respondents do not have much time to think or adjust their answers, whereas DCT allows the respondents plenty of time to consider their language use. Thus, using both methods allows us to draw conclusions about the relative influence of classroom learning vs. skills learned on the job, as well as the difference between performing the task vs. writing down the answers. This in turn may shed light on the question of the extent to which students need to “learn” politeness in a foreign language, and how the issue may best be approached in the curriculum.

3.13 Reliability and validity

Validity and reliability are common terms used to measure the quality of the research and are essential to strengthen the quality of the work. This section will provide information to support what makes this study reliable and valid in both qualitative and quantitative approaches.

3.13.1 Reliability in qualitative method

Reliability is an important parameter of research and different methods can be employed to achieve it. Dimensions of reliability in each study vary from case to case. Sarantakos (2005) states that “In the majority of cases, researchers avoid the use of the concept ‘reliability’ instead they use concept such as credibility, applicability or auditability” (p.89). Other terms that appear in qualitative research are *confirmability* (Guba and Lincoln, 1989), *coherence*, *openness* and *discourse* (Boguemil and Immerfall, 1985 cited in Sarantakos, 2005, p. 90). Here, I would like to explain the reliability of my work from these four points of view.

Regarding *confirmability*, my study looks at language use which involves analysis and interpretation according to politeness theory framework. In this context

it is impossible to have complete objectivity or absolute judgement, especially when evaluating responses according to the categories specified in Brown and Levinson (e.g. conventional indirect, apologize). However, I have tried to make my judgements consistent throughout the process of data analysis. As for the issue of *coherence*, there is a relationship between the methods chosen, my research objective and questions. Both role play and discourse completion tests can examine the respondents' pragmatic competence in English in the context of face threatening acts or what politeness strategy they prefer in these situations. The two methods of data collection can elicit data for the research questions. *Openness* is the degree to which suitable methods are allowed to be used. In my work involving language use of the hotel and travel professionals and fourth year students, it is not feasible to observe their real interaction with customers, guests or teachers, especially in the context of face threatening situations. Therefore, role play and discourse completion test are suitable in this case. Respondents are free to answer whatever they want to in the situations. I will not reveal their names or the institution where they study or which employs them. Another reliability to explain here is *discourse* which is the extent to which researchers are allowed to discuss the researched data and interpret them together and evaluate the consequences of such findings. For this point, I can discuss and interpret the data in different perspectives.

Bogdan and Biklen (1998) state that “qualitative researchers tend to view reliability as a fit between what they record as data and what actually occurs in the setting under study, rather than as literal consistency across different observations” (p.36). People might doubt whether in the same situations the participants in this study would say the same things in real life as they say in the role play (also questionnaire). In this case, the participants had to answer in English giving thought to vocabulary and structure, so that they could answer to the point as soon as possible. I noticed their answers came from their experience, what they thought and from their English proficiency. Thinking in Thai and delivering the message in English is hard enough, so I believe that in real circumstances, the participants would answer in a similar way. They may use different words, but the approach or politeness strategy should not be different. Therefore, responses (language use) can be considered reliable.

3.13.2 Validity in qualitative method

Validity has taken many forms in qualitative research. To achieve validity, it is important to use methods of data collection and analysis that are appropriate to the subject under investigation (Volmerg, 1983, p. 124 cited in Sarantakos, 2005, p.86). Here, the instrument or method used in collecting the data for each group of respondents has been chosen to suit the nature of their work. Travel and hotel personnel mainly use English for communicating orally (some travel agents may interact with their customers by email), so the role play format, which is modelled on the way they interact with guests or customers, is considered appropriate. Students participate in both the role play and the discourse completion test. Most of them are exposed to English in an academic setting, where they are evaluated mainly by written exam, sometimes including an oral component. Both methods are suitable for them because they experience similar systems in school.

Furthermore, validity can be addressed through the participants approached and the extent of triangulation (Winter, 2000 cited in Cohen *et al.*, 2007). In this case, the way I approach the respondents is the same. Before starting the role play, I and my American colleague (who assisted me for role playing with professional participants) made small talk first, then explained what they had to do. The situations were read in order and the participants gave impromptu answers according to their opinions and experience. If they do not understand, they can ask. For the DCT, I explained the meaning of some vocabulary items beforehand but gave no other information. Using two methods of data collection (triangulation) can check whether the preferred politeness strategy used is the same or different for written and oral responses. These increase validity of the study.

Validity in qualitative research has to do with description and explanation and whether or not the explanation fits the description. In other words, is the explanation credible? In addition, most qualitative researchers do not claim that there is only one way of interpreting an event. There is no “correct” interpretation (Janesick, 2000, p.393). The analysis of this study is based on the data, and therefore the description will be interpreted or analysed according to the responses and politeness theory framework. I interpret the data based on my experience. It is implicit that my culture,

social class and age can impact this judgement to an extent and I believe that if somebody else in another field interprets the data, he/she may analyse it differently according to his/her own perspective.

3.13.3 Reliability in quantitative data

In quantitative approaches, three types of reliability are usually mentioned. Stability reliability relates to a measure that produces reliable findings across time; representative reliability across groups of subjects; and equivalence reliability across indicators (Sarantakos, 2005, p. 88). My study involves a quantitative approach only insofar as responses are categorized according to politeness strategy and the totals for each category are rendered as percentages. To determine how reliable the overall results are, we need to look at the reliability of the qualitative part, because the quantitative results are secondary. This will help us compare, discuss and interpret the data in a transparent fashion.

3.13.4 Validity in quantitative data

When dealing with quantitative data, validity can be improved through careful sampling, appropriate instrumentation and appropriate statistical treatment of data. It is impossible for research to be 100 percent valid, and this has been called “the optimism of perfection” (Cohen *et al.*, 2007, p.133). In this study, the data are collected by qualitative methods, and the responses are classified according to the framework (e.g. positive, negative politeness) and converted to numbers and percentages. Percentages are used to compare and analyse the politeness strategies in each scenario for each group of participants. Therefore, percentage should be the appropriate statistical method to explain and compare the data of this study.

3.14 Ethical and practical issues

As Fontana and Frey (2000) mention, ethical concerns have revolved around the topics of informed consent (receiving consent by the subject after having carefully and truthfully informed him or her about the research), right to privacy (protecting the identity of the subject), and protection from harm (physical, emotional, or any other kind) (p.662). I kept in mind the need to respect the participants and what they say and not correct their English so that they would not feel embarrassed. Even

though the participants' responses appear in the appendix, the names of the hotel, travel agencies or universities are not given in the interests of anonymity.

Another issue is about losing face. Even though there is no risk of harming the subjects in this study, it still involves human sensitivity. Responses were recorded, but some participants may initially have felt uncomfortable with this, because they may have been afraid their impromptu English answer was not correct or the language use not beautiful enough. They might feel as representatives of their organizations, they have not performed well and so do not want their superior to know. With this in mind, I tried to make clear to the participants that the purpose is not to test their English ability as individuals, but to gain a general picture of the language situation. It was stated that results of the study will not be reported to the teachers or employers of the subjects, and for the professionals in no way constituted a language evaluation. In practice, many participants seemed happy to talk about work situations and explain how they deal with them.

3.15 Chapter summary

This chapter has detailed the research methodology in order to determine how best to accomplish the purpose of the study, which is to examine the utterances of people who use English in their careers to see the level of politeness when dealing with face threatening situations. This study collects qualitative data, but there is also a quantitative dimension, since the responses are categorized according to what politeness strategy they fall under, and these are tallied and presented in both number and percentage form. Two methods (role play and discourse completion test) are used in order to take advantage of triangulation by contrasting data from each method. I have attempted to evaluate the responses in a consistent and transparent manner. The model for data collection was designed in order to obtain responses that are as close as possible to real-life utterances. Although I cannot deny the possibility of cultural or personal bias in my interpretation, I believe the design and execution of the study has controlled for such biases to a large extent, and that the results are both reliable and valid, reflecting the actual pragmatic competence of the participants. The next chapter will be data analysis.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis

4.1 Introduction

This chapter concentrates on presenting and analyzing the data in order to relate it to the three research questions. After presenting information about the participants, the question of valid and invalid responses will be addressed, and then the sub-strategies of politeness strategies (how it is realized in language) and the participants' preferred strategies will be introduced. Following some general comments on the data as a whole, the results for each group will be examined in order to generalize about the politeness strategies and how they are realized in language. Then a comparison of the responses of the various groups for each function involving face-threatening acts will be made, with a brief discussion for each status level. Subsequently, problems in judging the realization of politeness strategies will be addressed. The chapter will conclude with a general discussion of the data with reference to the research questions.

4.2 Participants' personal information

The data for this study were provided by students and people who work in travel agencies and hotels. Altogether 132 individuals were involved in this study, of which 15 travel agents, 25 hotel personnel, and 14 students did the role play section and 78 students did the questionnaire (DCT).

A large majority of participants were female. (There are more females than males studying English or Business English program and working in hotels.) Students majoring in English or business English were in the fourth year and in day programs; none were over 25 years old. The ages of the travel agents and hotel people varied from 21 to above 41 years old. Most of the travel agents were between 31 and 40, and hotel personnel were in the range of 21 to 30 years of age. Regarding education, students were in the last year of bachelors' degree programs. Travel agents had either bachelors' (8 out of 15 - 53.33%) or masters' degrees (7 - 46.66%). The hotel people were more varied in their educational background, one having finished high school, half (13 out of 25 - 52%) with vocational college (post-secondary vocational training), nine (36%) with BAs and two (8%) with MAs. Generally speaking the travel agents

had undergone a more general, less career-oriented education than the hotel people had.

Table 4.1 Participants' personal information

		Role play			DCT	Total (n=132)
		Travel agent (n=15)	Hotel personnel (n=25)	Student (n=14)	Student (n=78)	
gender	male	9	8	5	12	34
	female	6	17	9	66	98
age (yrs)	below 20				1	1
	21-30	5	11	14	77	107
	31-40	6	9			15
	above 41	4	5			9
education	high school		1			1
	vocational		13			13
	BA	7	9	14	78	108
	MA	8	2			10
working experience (yrs)	1-5	2	11			13
	6-10	4	6			10
	11-15	4	4			8
	more than 15	5	4			9
spoken English	very poor				1	1
	poor			2	5	7
	fair	7	8	11	63	89
	good	8	16	1	9	34
	excellent		1			1
written English	very poor				1	1
	poor	1		1	18	20
	fair	5	7	9	51	72
	good	9	17	4	8	38
	excellent		1			1

Both travel agents and hotel people had working experience. Only 2 travel agents (13.33%) had 1-5 years working experience, on the other hand, 11 hotel personnel (44%) had 1-5 years working experience. This seems to contrast between two groups. The people who work in travel agencies in general are not new to their job. They have more experience and have been working in travel business longer than the hotel people. Whereas a large number of hotel personnel are new and belong to a younger generation. We usually see young people welcome the guests in hotels. On perceptions of their own level of English, almost half of travel agents (8 - 53.33%) considered their English 'good' and the rest (7- 46.66%) judged themselves 'fair'. Whereas most hotel people (16 - 64%) thought their English was 'good' and most students judged themselves 'fair'. Even though many hotel and travel people, in my opinion, have fluent English, they consider their English just 'good'. The humbleness evident here seems to back up the assertion of Charoenngam and Jablin (1999) that non-dominant (e.g., non-assertive and non-competitive) interpersonal styles are major

characteristics of Thai culture. Students accept the limited nature of their English skills. They are from community universities and usually are not strong in academics, so many rated themselves 'fair'. By and large their judgment reflects their real English proficiency. However, their self evaluation cannot be compared with results of exams such as IELTS or TOEFL. Only a small minority of participants would have taken such exams, and only two had studied in degree programs abroad.

4.3 Valid and invalid responses

I used the following criteria to judge whether the responses are valid or invalid. If the responses are not comprehensible, the speaker switches from English to Thai or gives a Thai response, or the answers do not go with the questions because the participant does not understand the questions, these responses are considered invalid. The table below shows the number of invalid and valid responses from both role play and DCT. Each participant had to respond to nine scenarios, so the third column from the left shows the total number of responses for each group.

Table 4.2 Valid and invalid responses

method	no of respondents	no of total responses	invalid responses	valid/usable responses
role-play	15 travel agents	$15 \times 9 = 135$	3 (2.22%)	132 (97.78%)
	25 hotel personnel	$25 \times 9 = 225$ (**222)	8 (3.60%)	214 (96.40%)
	14 students	$14 \times 9 = 126$	16 (12.70%)	110 (87.30%)
DCT	78 students	$78 \times 9 = 702$	146 (20.80%)	556 (79.20%)
total	132 respondents	1,188 (**1,185)	173 (14.60%)	1,012 (85.40%)
** 1 situation was missed and 2 responses were too soft to hear when transcribing.				

It was found that 14.60% of the overall responses were invalid, with travel agents making the least number (2.22 %), followed by hotel personnel (3.60%), role play students (12.70%) and DCT students (20.80%). The invalid response for travel agent is from one participant who could not think of English words and switched to Thai. For hotel staff, a few speakers switched between English and Thai. One participant in a Bangkok hotel, who uses some English only while on duty but not in

general situations, produced some responses which did not fit the scenarios or could not think of English words and switched from English to Thai. Actually, many hotel participants have good English, and the fact that the number of invalid responses is higher than for the travel agents, may be due to the circumstances of arranging the role plays. I had asked hotels to provide middle-level staff to do the role play and the person in charge tried to find people from different sections to participate. The ones who could communicate in and understand English in their routine work were often asked to do the role play, but then the situations they had to deal with during the role play may not have corresponded to their routine responsibilities, so quite often responses deviated from the point. This may have been a factor in the number of invalid responses being higher than for the travel agents. Role play students (they were selected at random) whose responses are invalid or incomprehensible generally have low English proficiency (roughly pre-intermediate). They did not understand the situations explained to them in English and could not think of English words to use. Even though I tried to translate the scenarios into Thai for them, they could not think of English vocabulary to produce a sentence and finally answered in Thai. Most responses from DCT students were understandable and usable, but some with poor English could answer in only two or three of the scenarios, so the 'invalid response' is the highest of all groups. However, 79.20% of DCT responses were usable and this can be considered quite high in terms of being able to communicate.

4.4 Linguistic politeness strategies

Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory as discussed in chapter 2, part 3, is used as a framework to analyse the data in this study. First the responses have been differentiated into five main strategies (positive politeness, negative politeness, bald on record, off-record (indirectness) and not doing face threatening acts (FTAs). Then they are classified into sub-categories according to how each politeness strategy is realized in language. Both the general strategies and the specific sub-strategies are relevant for the analysis of the way each group deals with face-threatening acts. Brown and Levinson (*ibid.*, pp.101-227) give the details of each type of strategy as follows.

4.4.1 Positive politeness

Positive politeness is the kernel of ‘familiar’ and ‘joking’ behaviour (p.129). When using this strategy, it is not necessary to redress the face want infringed by the FTA because the speaker wants the addressee’s face to be satisfied. According to Brown and Levinson, fifteen strategies (p.102, also see section 2.11) are mentioned under this type. In the data I have found nine strategies in use: notice and attend to H (his interests, wants, needs, goods) (1); use in-group identity markers (4); avoid disagreement (6); joke (8); offer, promise (10); be optimistic (11); include both S and H in the activity (12); give (or ask for) reasons (13); give gifts to hearer (goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation) (15).

The numbers in parentheses correspond to the categories in Brown and Levinson’s (1987) book, and also appear in the tables presented in this chapter.

4.4.2 Negative politeness

Negative politeness is the heart of respectful behaviour (p.129). The speaker is concerned with the hearer’s freedom of action and wants to redress or at least minimize the threat to the hearer. Brown and Levinson (p.132) propose ten strategies for this type, of which five strategies are found in this study: be conventionally indirect (1); question or hedge (2); apologize (6); impersonalize S and H by avoiding the pronouns ‘I’ and ‘you’ (7); state the FTA as a general rule (8). Apart from this, many responses either begin or end a sentence with ‘please’, for example “*Please turn off the music*”. Those responses have been interpreted as being in the general category of negative politeness, but since it is not clear which sub-strategy this would belong in, I have created a new category, ‘please command’ (PC), located in the negative politeness grouping. ‘Please command’ here is used as a politeness marker to reduce the imposition on the hearer or soften their statement.

4.4.3 Bald on record

This strategy is fairly self-explanatory. Brown and Levinson (ibid.) add the clarification that whenever the speaker wants to undertake a FTA with maximum efficiency more than he/she wants to satisfy the hearer’s face, he/she will choose the bald on record strategy (p.95). In this study, bald on record is mainly used to state the

speaker's intention directly. Therefore, sentences beginning with "I want..." or "Why..." are categorized under bald on record strategy.

4.4.4 Off record (Indirectness)

In communicating by using the off-record strategy, the speaker does not say his/her intension directly or clearly, in order not to commit him/herself with his/her utterance. He/She leaves the interpretation to the hearer. Brown and Levinson (ibid., p.214) suggest ten strategies for this type. In the data set, four of these strategies were found in dealing with the situations: give hints (1); be ironic (8); be ambiguous (11); be vague (12).

4.4.5 Not doing FTA

The speaker does not want to do anything to harm or affect the hearer's face. A response was placed in this category when the respondent stated that they would ignore the problem and just say nothing in the given situation.

Now I would like to explain the structure of the following sections. The scenarios in each table are grouped by functions (request, complaint and disagreement) and shown from lower, the same and higher status respectively. The numbers (except table 4.3) appeared in each scenario are the same as questions in the role play or questionnaire which can be seen in appendixes 2-4. The numbers under the strategy of PP (positive politeness), NP (negative politeness) and O (off record) are the sub-strategies of each politeness strategy (following Brown and Levinson) which the meaning can be found in section 4.4 or in Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 102, 131 and 214). There is a brief and general explanation of what politeness strategies are used on the top of the table of each group respondent. Then the detail of what politeness strategies are preferred and what scenario the participants use that strategy will be presented. Some examples are provided so that we can see the participants' language use for each strategy. (Each example indicates the individual subject, the group they belong to and the scenario (as detailed in the appendix). For instance, travel C3-8 means the third individual from travel agency C, situation 8. There is a summary of their language use at the end of each group. The significance of their choice of politeness strategy will be discussed in detail in chapter five.

4.5 All participants and their politeness strategies

This table shows the overall picture of the participants' answers both from the role play and discourse completion test. The questions are grouped by function, with the lower status hearer first, equal status second and higher status last within each function. Generally speaking, negative politeness (49.28%) is used most often, with bald on record (18.14%) and positive politeness (14.85%) also quite common.

Table 4.3 Participants and their politeness strategies (n=132)

No	Role play												Discourse completion test													
	Travel agents (n=15)						Hotel personnel (n=25)						Students (n=14)						Students (n=78)							
FTA	PP	NP	B	O	N	PP	NP	B	O	N	PP	NP	B	O	N	PP	NP	B	O	N	PP	NP	B	O	N	
1		11	4				22	3				9	2			1	55	17			1	55	17			
request		(73.33)	(26.66)				(88)	(12)				(64.28)	(14.28)			(1.28)	(70.51)	(21.79)			(1.28)	(70.51)	(21.79)			(1.28)
2	6	4	5			8	13	3	1			8	3			6	45	8			6	45	8			7
request	(40)	(26.66)	(33.33)			(33.33)	(54.16)	(12.5)	(4.16)			(57.14)	(21.42)			(7.69)	(57.69)	(10.25)			(7.69)	(57.69)	(10.25)			(8.97)
3	4	6	4	1			22	1				11	1				39	2				39	2			
request	(26.66)	(40)	(26.66)	(6.66)			(91.66)	(4.16)				(78.57)	(7.14)				(50)	(2.56)				(50)	(2.56)			
1		14	1				20	3				10	3			1	58	12			1	58	12			
complaint		(93.33)	(6.66)				(80)	(12)				(71.42)	(21.42)			(1.28)	(74.35)	(15.3)			(1.28)	(74.35)	(15.3)			
2	1	6	7			5	14	3		3	9		4			19	16	18	4		19	16	18	4		5
complaint	(6.66)	(40)	(46.66)			(20)	(56)	(12)		(12)	(64.28)		(28.57)			(24.35)	(20.51)	(23.07)	(5.12)		(24.35)	(20.51)	(23.07)	(5.12)		(6.41)
3	2	7	4	1			23				1	5	5	1		1	52	14	1		1	52	14	1		
complaint	(13.33)	(46.66)	(26.66)	(6.66)			(92)				(7.14)	(35.71)	(35.71)	(7.14)		(1.28)	(66.66)	(17.94)	(1.28)		(1.28)	(66.66)	(17.94)	(1.28)		
1	6	7	2			5	10	5	3		2	6	5			16	21	26			16	21	26			
disagreement	(40)	(46.66)	(13.33)			(20)	(40)	(20)	(12)		(14.28)	(42.85)	(35.71)			(20.51)	(26.92)	(33.33)			(20.51)	(26.92)	(33.33)			
2	4	4	6			5	14	5			4		7			25	14	4	1		25	14	4	1		4
disagreement	(26.66)	(26.66)	(40)			(20)	(56)	(20)			(28.57)		(50)			(32.05)	(17.94)	(5.12)	(1.28)		(32.05)	(17.94)	(5.12)	(1.28)		(5.12)
3	7	7				7	11	4	1		3	3	6			28	17	18			28	17	18			
disagreement	(46.66)	(46.66)				(29.16)	(45.83)	(16.66)	(4.16)		(21.42)	(21.42)	(42.85)			(35.89)	(21.79)	(23.07)			(35.89)	(21.79)	(23.07)			
average	30	66	33	2	1	30	149	27	5	3	19	52	36	3		97	317	119	14		97	317	119	14	9	
	(22.22)	(48.88)	(24.44)	(1.48)	(.74)	(13.51)	(67.12)	(12.16)	(2.25)	(1.35)	(15.08)	(41.27)	(28.57)	(2.38)		(13.82)	(45.16)	(16.95)	(1.99)		(13.82)	(45.16)	(16.95)	(1.99)	(1.28)	

Overall average NP = 49.28%; B= 18.14%; PP=14.85%; O=2.03% and N=1.10% (1,012 out of 1,185 = 85.40% of the valid responses)
(The number in each scenario is different because only the understandable responses are counted.)

Hotel people respond by applying negative politeness (67.12%) in the scenarios more than other groups and use bald on record (12.16%) the least often. The rationale for this might be stated as follows: their job is to provide service so that the customers will come back again, and a good or bad image of the hotel spreads by word of mouth. Therefore hotel people are trained to avoid complaining or saying things directly that will make customers feel bad. They try their best to impress their guests and treat them in a respectful manner. This is why negative politeness is used more than other strategies. Even though bald on record responses are not totally avoided, positive politeness (13.51%) still has a slightly higher proportion than bald on record.

Travel agents are the second group after hotel personnel who use negative politeness (48.88%). They perform bald on record (24.44%) and positive politeness (22.22%) more frequently than the hotel participants. Although they work in the business area, the nature of their work does not provide such a formulaic structure for dealing with customers as in the case of the hotel people. For the most part they are free to choose their own words to deal with different situations. Customer satisfaction for them will most likely relate to the product (the tour package, hotel, flight, etc.) rather than to the service experience in the travel agency itself.

Apart from negative politeness (role play 41.27%, DCT 45.16%), both groups of students use bald on record (role play 28.57%, DCT 16.95%) more often than positive politeness (role play 15.08% and DCT 13.82%). Role play students did not have as much time to think or revise their responses as DCT students, so many responses may have been more direct and blunt than they might have wished. On the other hand the difference between writing and speaking must also play a role. Role play students use bald on record the most of all groups.

Negative politeness: For *request 1* dealing with loud music from a younger cousin, travel people choose negative politeness with ‘please command’ (PC) more often than ‘conventional indirect’ (can you/could you). Bald on record is also chosen by some participants. For *complaint 4*, telling the waiter about their salty dish in a restaurant, negative politeness is universally used with ‘conventional indirect’ (can you/could you) as the first priority, followed by ‘please command’. *Complaint 7* involves a customer who has already called 4 times to change her departure date. Actually, the respondents use different strategies, but negative politeness especially ‘state the FTA as a rule’ comes first. The travel agents base their response on general airline policy in dealing with the customer. Bald on record is highly used as well to express their annoyance.

Request 1

Please stop playing the music, I would like to sleep. (please command) (travel A1-1)

Complaint 4

Could you please check this food for me because salty? Could you please tell the chef that today a little bit salty? If possible to change it.

(conventional indirect) (travel E1-4)

Complaint 7

You can change one time two time three time it's on quotation on ticket. But some class, sugar class, victor class, queen class, not different. You can change.

(state the FTA as a general rule) (travel F3-7)

Positive politeness: *Request 9* dealing with a friend who likes to talk while they have to do work, the participants use three main strategies, of which positive politeness occurs slightly more often than negative politeness and bald on record.

Request 9

Can I ring you back when I finish work? Because now I am very very busy.

(offer and promise) (travel G1-9)

Bald on record: For *complaint 2* and *disagreement 8*, bald on record is used in the greatest number of cases. *Complaint 2*, dealing with a co-worker who has made mistakes three times in correcting a brochure, has bald on record leading negative politeness. In *disagreement 8*, where a friend shows the speaker a promotional plan and asks for his/her opinion, bald on record is used more than negative politeness and positive politeness.

Complaint 2

Again I told you I think more than 3 or 4 times. I will tell you again, you must do by yourself. (travel B1-2)

Disagreement 8

This program is not interested for the customer so but it's not my duty to do this but up to you if you want to do. It's just my opinion but it's not good for the customer and for us. (travel A3-8)

Give me more time for have a look your plan and then I will give you advisor later on.
(travel C1-8)

Mixed strategies: In *disagreement 3*, where a cleaner asks for an opinion about her new hair style, negative politeness and positive politeness are used in a high degree. For *disagreement 5*, where a customer accuses the company of misleading advertising, no travel agent uses bald on record and the proportion of positive and negative politeness is equal. In *request 6*, asking a customer to pay for a ticket, negative politeness is used slightly more often than positive politeness and bald on record.

Disagreement 3

It look nice but it's better if you do another way. (negative politeness - hedge)
(travel K1-3)

Your hairstyle is good. It's good for you yourself to change to make you feel fresh.
(positive politeness –optimistic) (travel A2-3)

Disagreement 5

Today gasoline up so and that ticket class is promotion is fully booked already now only have a higher class. That why we confirm higher price because under promotion rate is fully booked. (positive politeness - give reasons) (travel B1-5)

Excuse me, I have to say so sorry for you but it's my mistakes to tell you the air ticket price but now the air ticket price is higher and so you have to pay for the new air ticket price. (negative politeness- apologize) (travel A3-5)

Request 6

Sir/Madam this is the condition of the booking flight so you have to pay full price at least two weeks before departure otherwise the flight will be cancel.
(negative politeness - state the FTA as a general rule) (travel K1-6)

Today your ticket is the deadline. We auto cancel today you should come to settle pay by today tomorrow the latest otherwise the booking will auto cancel because you are not pay. I cannot help anything the booking will cancel. The price may be change.
(positive politeness – give reason) (travel B1-6)

I have the message to tell you that you have to pay by next Wednesday otherwise you have to cancel if you are not ready to pay on Wednesday. (bald on record) (travel A2-6)

The strategies used here vary according to the scenario and to how each travel agent perceives them. The status difference between speaker and hearer seems to correlate with the strategy chosen. We can see that negative politeness is often used in request 6, complaint 7 and disagreement 5, where the participants must deal with a higher status hearer. However, in disagreement 5 positive politeness is used equally with negative politeness, but nobody uses bald on record. Interaction with lower status people also leads participants to choose negative politeness, as in complaint 4, where most use this strategy to talk to a waiter. We can see that bald on record is often used with scenarios dealing with people of the same status (request 9, complaint 7 and disagreement 8). They seem to feel comfortable with a direct style and do not have to be careful when talking with their friends or people who are of the same status. Another interesting point is that travel agents in many scenarios use positive politeness more widely than hotel people and students (discussed in detail in chapter 5). This is especially true for the disagreement scenarios 3 and 5. This may reflect their attitude in choosing expressions to show their friendliness when disagreeing with a customer (disagreement 5). Travel agents also use bald on record relatively often for almost all scenarios, except complaints 4 and 7, which involve lower and higher status hearers.

4.7 Hotel personnel

As we saw in table 4.3, negative politeness is the most popular strategy for all groups under the circumstances. In the case of the hotel personnel, **negative politeness** (67.12%) is clearly the preferred strategy, followed by positive politeness (13.51%) and bald on record (12.16%). Negative politeness is used with the highest frequency in all 9 situations. As for sub-strategies, ‘apologize’, ‘conventional indirect’ (e.g. Can you/Could you) receives the high score, following by ‘hedge’ (e.g. I think, maybe, in my opinion) and ‘please command’ respectively. Bald on record has been resorted to in almost every situation, whereas positive politeness is used only occasionally.

Table 4.5 Hotel personnel (n=25)

No	PP									NP					B	O			N
	1	6	10	11	12	13	15	1	2	6	8	PC	1	8		11			
FTA	1	6	10	11	12	13	15	1	2	6	8	PC	1	8	11				
1 request								11 (44)		2 (8)		9 (36)	3 (12)						
*9 request	1 (4.16)		6 (25)				1 (4.16)	5 (20.83)	1 (4.16)	3 (12.5)		4 (16.66)	3 (12.5)	1 (4.16)					
*6 request								4 (16.66)	2 (8.22)	12 (50)	2 (8.33)	2 (8.33)	1 (4.16)						
2 complaint								12 (48)	1 (4)	6 (24)		1 (4)	3 (12)						
7 complaint	4 (16)		1 (4)					3 (12)	3 (12)	7 (28)		1 (4)	3 (12)			3 (12)			
4 complaint								7 (28)		13 (52)		3 (12)							
3 disagreement		3 (12)		2 (8)					9 (36)		1 (4)		5 (20)	1 (4)	2 (8)				
5 disagreement		2 (8)			2 (8)	1 (4)		2 (8)	12 (48)				5 (20)						
*8 disagreement		1 (4.16)				1 (4.16)	5 (20.83)	2 (8.22)	1 (4.16)	6 (25)	1 (4.16)	1 (4.16)	4 (16.66)	1 (4.16)					
disagreement average	5 (2.25)	6 (2.70)	7 (3.15)	2 (.90)	2 (.90)	2 (.90)	6 (2.70)	46 (20.72)	29 (13.06)	49 (22.07)	4 (1.80)	21 (9.45)	27 (12.16)	1 (.45)	2 (.90)	3 (1.35)			
total				30 (13.51)						149 (67.12)			27 (12.16)	5 (2.25)		3 (1.35)			
Valid responses 214 out of 222 = 96.40%																			
*1 situation was missed and 2 responses were too soft to hear when transcribing.																			

Request: For *request 1*, dealing with a younger cousin who plays loud music, ‘conventional indirect’ and ‘please command’ are mostly used. A variety of strategies are used in *request 9*, where their friend keeps on talking while they have to do work. Apart from negative politeness, some prefer positive politeness, especially ‘offer or promise’ or bald on record. In *request 6*, telling a hotel guest not to smoke in the room, negative politeness is almost always used, especially the ‘apologize’ strategy.

Request 1

Please turn down for the radio because I cannot sleep. I will go to work.
(negative politeness - please command) (hotel B3-1)

Would you please make more quiet for me because I want to sleep tomorrow I need to wake up early. (negative politeness - conventional indirect) (hotel C1-1)

Request 9

I'm so sorry. Can you wait here at the moment because now I'm still busy then we have a lot of things to do. I'll order a drink for you first, read newspaper for reading to wait first.
(negative politeness – apologize) (hotel B1-9)

Please wait a moment, I will do this for the guest first, and then I will talk to you later.
Or if you cannot wait, it's ok. (positive politeness - offer, promise) (hotel A5-9)

OK you work now. You can start work now. (bald on record) (hotel F2-9)

Request 6

We are sorry, this room floor is non-smoking room. I think you cannot smoke in the room. After this time, if you smoke in the room, we have to fine you some money, or if you would like to move to a smoking room, maybe it would be better for you, you can smoke in that room. (negative politeness - apologize) (hotel C3-6)

Complaint: Negative politeness also predominates. For *complaint 2*, about salty food, a very high number of the hotel participants choose to use ‘conventional indirect’ to talk to the waiter. *Complaint 7* is in the context of dealing with a walk-in tourist who picks up too many brochures. Here participants use various strategies: positive politeness, bald on record and even not doing FTA, but ‘apologize’ in negative politeness again comes in for a high level of use. *Complaint 4*, telling a guest about the noise coming from his/her room, is the only scenario in which negative politeness is chosen across the board: ‘apologize’ is largely used. It is also the only one in which no hotel people use bald on record.

Complaint 2

Can you please try this? Cause it's too salty for me, so do you mind if I, you can change, or ask the chef to change it for me because I cannot eat it.

(negative politeness - conventional indirect) (hotel C4-2)

Complaint 7

Sorry sir, you take too more brochures, may be you can take 2 or 3 or you want to give someone if you want to take it for another one it's OK for you but if you want to keep by self you can take 1 or 2 is enough. (negative politeness - apologize) (hotel F1-7)

You interested about that? You come from travel agencies or not I can give you some more information (positive politeness – notice to hearer interest) (hotel H2-7)

Why you take a lot? You are travel agent? What 's your purpose? To reading only one is enough. If you are travel agent you need for your customer, we give you more.

(bald on record) (hotel E1-7)

Complaint 4

Excuse me sir, I call from the front office. The room no... called me that your room is very noisy. Can you reduce the noise or can you stop the noise?

(negative politeness - apologize) (hotel B1-4)

Disagreement: It is remarkable that in the scenarios expressing disagreement there are a number of participants who employ positive politeness strategies. Hotel people are similar to travel people in that they use negative politeness, positive politeness, bald on record and off record in disagreement 3, 5 and 8. In *disagreement 3*, where a cleaner asks about her new hair style, although the answers vary, it makes sense that hotel people use 'hedge' relatively frequently, to soften their comments. The same thing happens in *disagreement 5*, in which a friend shows the speaker a promotional plan and asks for an opinion. A variety of strategies is used, but 'hedge' is most frequent. In *disagreement 8*, dealing with a demanding guest who complains about food and then asks for a discount, most participants are still polite in this situation, apologizing (NP) to the guest and giving compensation (PP). This is one situation where there appears in many cases to be an explicit hotel policy which the employees are following. They might also have received training on handling such cases in English as well.

Disagreement 3

Your hair today is fine, but I think it's uh maybe you make it curl, cut it shorter, maybe makes you more beautiful. (negative politeness - hedge) (hotel C3-3)

Disagreement 5

I'm not quite sure that this marketing, this promotion will work or not, maybe let's try a bit in these few months, and let's see what will happen in the real things with the guests. If it's not work, maybe I recommend you to choose the old marketing, the old promotion may be better, because the old is work and make more revenue for us. You can try it first, because I'm not sure yet. (negative politeness - hedge) (hotel C4-5)

Disagreement 8

Mr. Smith, I do apologize for the inconvenient caused during your stay, for this time we will offer a discount for the food and beverage and we will ensure that the next time when you come back, you will not experience this again. And I will make sure that I have your record in the profile and also brief my staff regarding the unstable of the quality of the food service. (negative politeness - apologize) (hotel A1-8)

Hotel personnel use negative politeness quite often for all scenarios. This seems to be because their jobs involve deferring to the wishes of guests and holding them in a position of respect. In the scenarios involving guests, bald on record is rarely employed in request 6 (smoking guest) and not used at all in complaint 4 (guest making noise), but some show a direct reaction (bald on record) in disagreement 8 (guest asks for food discount) and positive politeness is frequently used as well. These three scenarios illustrate that sociological variables (higher status hearer – hotel guest) are a factor that affects choice of politeness strategy. Hotel people do not very often use positive politeness in other situations, but in all disagreement scenarios (3, 5 and 8) many of them rely on this strategy. On the other hand, this group is the only one using 'hedge' to a significant degree when expressing an opinion to the lower or same status interlocutors, which may suggest that their enhanced sensitivity to politeness norms operates across status levels. Or perhaps they are just better at expressing it.

4.8 Students (role play)

Students doing the role play section preferred strategies as follows: negative politeness (41.27%), bald on record (28.57%) and positive politeness (15.08%). Negative politeness is used to a high degree in five situations (request 6, 9 and 1, complaint 2, and disagreement 3), while bald on record appears most in disagreement 5 and 8, and positive politeness in complaint 7. Role play students mainly use negative politeness in all three request scenarios, as well as for complaint 2. Under negative politeness, ‘conventional indirect’ and ‘please command’ are more widely used than ‘apologize’ and ‘hedge’. Bald on record is also used in every scenario. Positive politeness is used only in scenarios dealing with complaint and disagreement, for which ‘avoid disagreement’ and ‘give reasons’ are the strategies.

Table 4.6 Students (role play) (n=14)

No	PP			NP				O		
	6	13		1	2	6	PC	B	11	12
FTA										
6 request				5 (35.71)			4 (28.57)	2 (14.28)		
9 request						4 (28.57)	4 (28.57)	3 (21.42)		
1 request				8 (57.14)			3 (21.42)	1 (7.14)		
2 complaint				1 (7.14)	2 (14.28)	6 (42.85)	1 (7.14)	3 (21.42)		
7 complaint	9 (64.28)							4 (28.57)		
4 complaint		1 (7.14)		3 (21.42)	1 (7.14)		1 (7.14)	5 (35.71)		1 (7.14)
3 disagreement		2 (14.28)		4 (28.57)	1 (7.14)		1 (7.14)	5 (35.71)		
5 disagreement	4 (28.57)							7 (50)	2 (14.28)	
8 disagreement		3 (21.42)		1 (7.14)		2 (14.28)		6 (42.85)		
average	13 (10.31)	6 (4.76)		22 (17.46)	4 (3.17)	12 (9.52)	14 (11.11)	36 (28.57)	2 (1.58)	1 (.79)
total	19 (15.08)			52 (41.27)				36 (28.57)		3 (2.38)
Valid responses 110 out of 126 = 87.30%										

Negative politeness: Role play students frequently use ‘conventional indirect’ (can you/could you) and ‘please command’ when dealing with a younger interlocutor in *request 6* (loud music from their cousin) and one of higher status in *request 1* (asking their teacher to write a recommendation letter). Some students mention the teacher’s name first before requesting. Whereas in *request 9*, where a friend keeps on talking, ‘apologize’ and ‘please command’ replace ‘conventional indirect’. In this scenario, ‘can you/could you’ is not used at all. Students will say sorry or excuse me before telling their friend they have work to do. For *complaint 2* (telling the waiter about salty food) most responses fall within negative politeness, especially ‘apologize’. For *disagreement 3*, expressing dissatisfaction with a younger sister about the way she dresses, ‘conventional indirect’ is used more than other strategies in negative politeness. Actually, bald on record is often used in this scenario as well.

Request 6

Could you listen the music with the headphone because now I am headache I want to sleep very much. (conventional indirect) (university E3-6)

Request 1

I want to apply the job. Could you sign the letter of recommendation, please? (conventional indirect) (university D1-1)

Request 9

Sorry, I won’t speak to you because I’m very busy do homework. (apologize) (university E2-9)

Complaint 2

Excuse me waiter, I would like to change the food because it’s very salty I can’t eat. (apologize) (university E2-2)

Disagreement 3

Can you change the dress because it’s so sexy? (conventional indirect) (university C1-3)

Bald on record: In *disagreement 5*, where a friend is not sincere in telling about their new hair style, half of the participants use expressions like ‘*I don’t believe you*’. *Disagreement 8*, they do not agree with their teacher about the place to do internship. Bald on record is used more than positive politeness and negative politeness, despite the teacher’s relatively high status.

Disagreement 5

You lie me. (bald on record) (university D3-5)

You must say the truth what is the new hair look like beautiful or not good.

(bald on record) (university D2-5)

Disagreement 8

I would like to know why you didn't agree me to internship in travel agency.

(bald on record) (university E3-8)

Positive politeness: In *complaint 7* where a friend has lost their book, the majority of the students use 'avoid disagreement' and try to give some kind of response like 'never mind', while the rest reacts with a direct question like 'why did you lose it?'

Complaint 7

You don't worry and I can buy a new one.

(positive politeness - avoid disagreement) (university D2-7)

Where did you lost my book? I will find my book with you and if it cannot see.

Never mind. I can get a new one.'

(positive politeness - avoid disagreement) (university E3-7)

Mixed strategies: For *complaint 4*, asking their teacher about a low grade, negative politeness and bald on record are used in equal proportion. This can show that one group of students are still careful with their speech, while the other group uses some kind of direct question like '*why my grade low?*'.

Complaint 4

Please tell me I do something wrong. Can you explain me, please?

(negative politeness - please command) (university C2-4)

I would like to know why I got low grade because I am sure I can do a good score.

(bald on record) (university E3-4)

The role play students had to respond promptly to the scenario, without recourse to writing. Therefore these responses represent well the students' pragmatic competence in English. The students mainly rely on negative politeness in request scenarios and in the complaint to the waiter. For the other two complaints (to the equal and higher status interlocutors) and all disagreement situations, positive politeness plays a role, but bald on record is used in every scenario, especially in the other two complaint and all disagreement situations. That means they do not mitigate their speech when disagreeing

and complaining. The data also show that seniority does not appear to mean much for role play students (except request 1- to their teacher). For instance, the responses to complaint 4 where students question their teacher about why their grade is low; and also to disagreement 8 where they do not agree with their teacher about the place to do their internship. In both scenarios, a high number of students respond with bald on record strategy. On the other hand I cannot confirm that this group would in real life exhibit this type of speaking, since it is a role play, time limitations might be a factor, and lack of English skills makes their utterance sound bald. However, this in effect reflects their level of pragmatic competence.

4.9 Students (discourse completion test)

For DCT students, negative politeness (45.16%) is chosen more often than bald on record (16.95%) and positive politeness (13.82%). Negative politeness is used more than other strategies in five situations (request 6, 9 and 1, complaint 2 and 4); positive politeness in disagreement 5 and 8; bald on record in disagreement 3. Three strategies in similar proportions (positive politeness, negative politeness and bald on record) are used in complaint 7. Bald on record appears quite often in almost all scenarios.

Table 4.7 Students (discourse completion test) (n=78)

No	PP										NP					B	O			N		
	1	4	6	10	11	12	13	1	2	6	PC	1	8	11								
FTA																						
6 request		1 (1.28)											27 (34.61)	2 (2.56)	7 (8.97)	19 (24.35)	17 (21.79)	1 (1.28)				
9 request	1 (1.28)		1 (1.28)	3 (3.84)		1 (1.28)						10 (12.82)	3 (3.84)	24 (30.76)	8 (10.25)	8 (10.25)	6 (7.69)	1 (1.28)				
1 request												33 (42.30)			6 (7.69)	2 (2.56)						
2 complaint			1 (1.28)									18 (23.07)	1 (1.28)	36 (46.15)	3 (3.84)	12 (15.38)						
7 complaint			17 (21.79)									2 (2.56)	9 (11.53)		2 (2.56)	18 (23.07)	3 (3.84)			1 (1.28)	5 (6.41)	
4 complaint												1 (1.28)	4 (5.12)	9 (11.53)	7 (8.97)	14 (17.94)	1 (1.28)					
3 disagreement	2 (2.56)	2 (2.56)										5 (6.41)	16 (20.51)			26 (33.33)						
5 disagreement			21 (26.92)		2 (2.56)							2 (2.56)	11 (14.10)		1 (1.28)	4 (5.12)			1 (1.28)		4 (5.12)	
8 disagreement			2 (2.56)									26 (33.33)				18 (23.07)						
average	3 (4.2)	3 (4.2)	42 (5.98)	3 (4.2)	2 (2.8)	1 (1.4)	43 (6.12)	134 (19.08)	53 (7.54)	84 (11.96)	46 (6.55)	119 (16.95)	119 (16.95)	11 (1.56)	11 (1.56)	119 (16.95)	11 (1.56)	2 (2.8)	1 (1.4)	2 (2.8)	1 (1.28)	9 (11.28)
total				97 (13.82)				317 (45.16)													14 (1.99)	9 (1.28)
Valid responses 556 out of 702 = 79.20%																						

Negative politeness influences five scenarios (6, 9, 1, 2 and 4). For *request 6* dealing with a younger cousin who plays loud music, ‘conventional indirect’ is used in a highest portion, followed by ‘please command’. In *request 9*, in which their friend keeps on talking while they have to do work, ‘apologize’ is mainly employed. For *request 1* asking their teacher to write a letter of recommendation, clearly ‘conventional indirect’ outnumbers other strategies. For *complaint 2* telling a waiter about the salty food, ‘apologize’ is much used more than ‘conventional indirect’. In *complaint 4* asking their teacher why their grade is low, again ‘conventional indirect’ is used in a high number. When we look at the nature of these four scenarios (6-loud music, 1-ask for recommendation letter, 2-salty food and 4-low grade), the data reflect the circumstances, as there is no need to say something to please their interlocutor. That is why the way they respond is classified as negative politeness. ‘Conventional indirect’ plays a big role in these scenarios, with the exception of *request 9*, for which the majority use ‘apologize’ in telling their friend that they need to work instead of talking; and *complaint 2*, where ‘apologize’ is highly used to tell a waiter about salty food.

The data from *request 1* may somehow reflect the gap in status between students and teacher. Can you/could you (conventional indirect) is typically used when students seek help from their teachers. From my experience as a teacher, Thai students normally try to soften their requests when asking teachers to do something. They barely ever use bald on record in this situation. Even though in *complaint 4* (ask their teacher about a low grade) some use bald on record, the majority rely on negative politeness, especially ‘conventional indirect’.

Request 6

Can you low volume? I can't sleep. (negative politeness - conventional indirect)
(university B2-6)

Request 9

I'm sorry my friend I have a lot of work and I try to do it. Ok.
(negative politeness - apologize) (university B20-9)

Request 1

I would like to apply for a job. Could you write a letter of recommendation for me, please? (negative politeness - conventional indirect) (university B5-1)

Complaint 2

Excuse me, my dish have a problem. It very salty. Would you mind if I want to change new dish. (negative politeness - conventional indirect) (university B16-2)

Complaint 4

Teacher I had a low grade in this subject. Maybe I did some mistake. Could you show me the mistake and give me some advice please?

(negative politeness - conventional indirect) (university D1-4)

Positive politeness is used to a greater degree in two scenarios: disagreement 5 and 8. *Disagreement 5* is what they are going to say to a friend who does not give a sincere comment about their new hair style and *disagreement 8* is telling their teacher that they do not want to do their internship at the place their teacher suggests. ‘Avoid disagreement’ is often used in *disagreement 5*, while ‘give reason’ is used in *disagreement 8*.

Disagreement 5

I feel very bad with my hair. I don't like it.

(positive politeness-avoid disagreement) (university D7-5)

Disagreement 8

I like work a travel agency because I want to be a guide. I don't like work about hotel.

(positive politeness -give (or ask for) reason) (university C1-8)

Bald on record is used most in *disagreement 3* in which the respondents tell their younger sister about her revealing clothes.

Disagreement 3

You shouldn't wear tight shirts and short skirts. You're may be victim to psychosis. You should beware. (bald on record) (university B18-3)

Mixed strategies, *complaint 7* deals with a friend who lost their book. Actually, it seems like three main strategies (PP, B and NP) are used with about frequency in this scenario. ‘Avoid disagreement’ is often used for positive politeness.

Complaint 7

Don't worry about it. Even love a book but I love you more.

(positive politeness -avoid disagreement) (university E9-7)

I want you to buy a new one for me. (bald on record) (university C11-7)

Could you buy a new book for me because I love it.

(negative politeness-conventional indirect) (university B13-7)

The data show that age and status are reflected in DCT student language use. Most students prefer negative politeness (request 1 - asking teacher to write a recommendation letter and complaint 4 - receive low grade) or positive politeness (disagreement 8 - disagree about the internship place) for interaction with their teacher

in these scenarios. DCT students are like other groups in that positive politeness is used in a high level in disagreement scenarios. The data show that DCT students avoid conflict, so positive politeness strategy is used to soften the impact of differing opinions. It is clear that even when complaining to a friend (complaint 7), positive politeness is used a little bit more or in the same degree as negative politeness and bald on record. Some just ignore conflict or do not want to express their discontent in this scenario.

For scenarios involving negative politeness, 'conventional indirect' has been used in a much higher number of responses. 'Apologize', 'hedge' and 'please command' also occur fairly often. It seems like 'avoid disagreement' and 'give reasons' are mostly used for positive politeness. Bald on record has been used rather often in all scenarios, especially disagreement 3 (younger sister wearing revealing clothes). When we look at the whole set of nine scenarios, the number of bald on record responses is a little higher than that of positive politeness. A number of students use off record, especially 'hints' in request situation 9, for example '*I want to do my homework*'. This is one way to tell their friend that they should not talk to him/her now. However, DCT students use less bald on record than role play students. This may be because they have more time to think about their responses.

4.10 Comparing scenarios in the same function among different participants

In this section, responses to the three face threatening acts (requests, complaints and disagreements) will be compared according to status (lower, the same and higher status) of the interlocutors. For each status group we will see what politeness strategy participants use in each situation. Some examples of responses are also provided, which will allow a direct comparison of the language use. Finally, I will try to draw some general conclusions about the attitude the participants display toward each status group.

4.10.1 Requests

The scenarios dealing with the lower and same status hearers are the same for all groups. The one dealing with someone higher is different and related to the participants' employment.

1. Requests directed to hearers of lower status

In the scenario where the participants have to deal with loud music from a younger cousin, **negative politeness** is a popular approach for the four groups. ‘Conventional indirect’ and ‘please command’ are preferred strategies. Travel agents, hotel personnel and role play students use the same strategies (negative politeness and bald on record). Students doing the questionnaire use a variety of strategies of negative politeness. Every group employs bald on record, travel agents at the highest level. Positive politeness is rarely used in these scenarios. Most respondents use negative politeness, which can show that they are still aware of their younger cousin’s freedom of action.

Table 4.8 Requests directed to hearers of lower status

Subject	PP	NP				B	O
	4	1	2	6	PC		1
Travel (n=15)		4 (26.66)			7 (46.66)	4 (26.66)	
Hotel (n=25)		11 (44)		2 (8)	9 (36)	3 (12)	
Student Role play (n=14)		5 (35.71)			4 (28.57)	2 (14.28)	
Student DCT (n=78)	1 (1.28)	27 (34.61)	2 (2.56)	7 (8.97)	19 (24.35)	17 (21.79)	1 (1.28)
Total (132)	1 (.75)	47 (35.60)	2 (1.51)	9 (6.81)	39 (29.54)	26 (19.69)	1 (.75)
Average	1 (.75)	97 (73.48)				26 (19.69)	1 (.75)

The followings are examples of requests to the lower status hearers:

1. Negative politeness

1.1 Please command

-Please do it low voice because it's quite late now. (travel K1-1)

-Please turn down/lower the volume because I go to bed. I want to go to sleep.

Thank you my younger brother. (role play, university D2-6)

-Please turn down very noisy. I'd like to sleep. (hotel F2-1)

1.2 Conventional indirect:

-Would you please make more quiet for me, because I want to sleep, tomorrow I need to wake up early? (hotel C1-1)

-I can't sleep tight so can you turn the volume down please? (DCT, university D1-6)

2. Bald on record

*-Hey you! What is the time! I wanna sleep and you must turn off radio now!
(DCT, university C12-6)*

-Slow down or turn off. You do the volume down I want to sleep. (travel B1-1)

2. Requests directed to hearers of the same status

This scenario deals with a friend who keeps on talking while the participant has work to do. Results from most groups show a high level of **negative politeness**, within which strategy 6 ('apologize') is used more than other strategies. Many speakers say sorry or ask for forgiveness from their friends before telling them that they want to do some work. Positive politeness and bald on record are used in similar proportions. For strategy 10 ('offer and promise') in positive politeness, they ask their friend to wait or to stop talking for a while and when they finish their work they will talk with them again. Bald on record is used by every group. Some DCT students use off record strategy ('give hints') in this scenario more than in others.

Table 4.9 Requests directed to hearers of the same status

Subject	PP						NP				B	O	
	1	6	10	12	13	15	1	2	6	PC		1	8
Travel (n=15)	1 (6.66)		4 (26.66)		1 (6.66)				3 (20)	1 (6.66)	5 (33.33)		
*Hotel (n=24)	1 (4.16)		6 (25)			1 (4.16)	5 (20.83)	1 (4.16)	3 (12.5)	4 (16.66)	3 (12.5)	1 (4.16)	
Student Role play (n=14)									4 (28.57)	4 (28.57)	3 (21.42)		
Student DCT (n=78)	1 (1.28)	1 (1.28)	3 (3.84)	1 (1.28)			10 (12.82)	3 (3.84)	24 (30.76)	8 (10.25)	8 (10.25)	6 (7.69)	1 (1.28)
Total (131)	3 (2.29)	1 (.76)	13 (9.92)	1 (.76)	1 (.76)	1 (.76)	15 (11.45)	4 (3.05)	34 (25.95)	17 (12.97)	19 (14.50)	7 (5.34)	1 (.76)
Average	20 (15.27)						70 (53.44)				19 (14.50)	8 (6.11)	

* Actually, there are 25 hotel participants, but 1 participant's voice was too soft and muffled for transcription.

The followings are examples of requests to the same status hearers:

1. Positive politeness

1.1 Offer, promise

Now I'm very busy so we can make appointment again in the evening after my job finish we can talk longer we can do something fun. (travel K1-9)

Excuse me, may I pay attention to my paperwork a few minutes first? And then after that I will talk to you, because I would like to finish clearly. That's ok, uh? (hotel C1-9)

2. Negative politeness

2.1 Apologize

I have a lot of work, I'm really sorry that I can't talk with you. Can I call you tomorrow? (DCT, university A 14-9)

Sorry, I won't speak to you because I'm very busy do homework.
(role play, university E2-9)

3. Bald on record

Right now. I have a lot of work. Today is Monday so talk to you later I need to finish work first. (travel C1-9)

4. Off record

I'm afraid. I have a lot of work to do. (DCT, university B10-9)

3. Requests directed to hearers of higher status

This scenario involves people who have more power than the speaker. The three groups have slightly different versions of this scenario related to their work. Travel and hotel people have to deal with a customer or guest, whereas students question their teacher.

Table 4.10 Requests directed to hearers of older or higher status

Subject	PP		NP					B	O
	10	13	1	2	6	8	PC		
Travel (n=15)	1 (6.66)	3 (20)	2 (13.33)	1 (6.66)		2 (13.33)	1 (6.66)	4 (26.66)	1 (6.66)
*Hotel (n=24)			4 (16.66)	2 (8.33)	12 (50)	2 (8.33)	2 (8.33)	1 (4.16)	
Student Role play (n=14)			8 (57.14)				3 (21.42)	1 (7.14)	
Student DCT (n=78)			33 (42.30)				6 (7.69)	2 (2.56)	
Total (131)	1 (.75)	3 (2.27)	47 (35.60)	3 (2.27)	12 (9.09)	4 (3.03)	12 (9.09)	8 (6.06)	1 (.75)
Average	4 (3.05)		78 (59.54)					8 (6.10)	1 (.76)

* Actually, there are 25 hotel participants, but 1 participant's voice was too soft and muffled for transcription.

The travel agents have to tell their customer that he/she has to pay for the ticket, otherwise the booking will be cancelled. If we look at their answers, they use different kinds of strategy to ask their customer to pay for the ticket. Dealing with higher status interlocutor, only travel people use positive politeness: some give reasons, specifying

what is going to happen in case of non-payment. For negative politeness, the answers vary from ‘conventional indirect’, ‘hedge’, stating the airline rules. Some travel agents even tell the customer directly that he/she has to pay.

The hotel personnel have to deal with a hotel guest who smokes in his/her room which is a non-smoking room. No strategies of positive politeness are used in this scenario. Most of the answers are negative politeness, especially ‘apologize’. They apologize first (to reduce the imposition on the hearer) before telling the guest about the hotel’s rule and give him/her a choice whether to change rooms or go and smoke in the designated area.

As for students, they have to ask their teacher about their low grade, even though they could do the exam. Neither role play nor questionnaire students use positive politeness. Most choose to use ‘conventional indirectness’ to ask their teacher to see their score or paper. The second most popular strategy is ‘please command’.

The followings are examples of requests to higher status hearers:

1. Positive politeness

1.1 Give reasons

Today your ticket is the deadline. We auto cancel today you should come to settle pay by today tomorrow the latest otherwise the booking will auto cancel because you are not pay. I cannot help anything the booking will cancel. The price may be change.
(travel B1-6)

2. Negative politeness

2.1 Apologize

I’m sorry, this is a non-smoking room. If you would like to smoke, right now in the hotel we have a smoking lounge, so you can go and enjoy your smoke at the lobby floor.
(hotel A2-6)

2.2 Conventional indirect

I am going to apply for a job and would you to write a letter of recommendation for me. Could you help me? (DCT, university C 9-1)

Can you write a letter for recommendation for me, please?
(role play, university D3-1)

3. Bald on record

You have to confirm before the day the due date, if you don’t come it automatic cancellation. (travel H1-6)

When the request scenarios are compared among the four groups (three role plays and one DCT), the data show that negative politeness is mostly employed. Even though positive politeness is used, the role play students do not use this strategy at all.

One reason could be that during the role play the researcher is waiting for their response, the students may not have time to think about their interlocutor's needs or come up with strategies that demonstrate their concern to the hearer before stating their request. This in turn may reflect the fact that they do not have much experience in dealing with problems like this in English, so their manner of request is rather straightforward. Most role play students prefer 'conventional indirect' and 'please command'. The strategy the respondents phrase requests to lower or higher status hearers is not differentiated, most of them mainly use negative politeness. It makes sense that when in the first request the respondents deal with loud noise, no positive politeness (except a single response from the questionnaire) is used. When it is late and they want to sleep, they just want their intention to be achieved. Therefore, most responses fall on negative politeness.

For the second request addressed to persons of the same status, every group except travel agents uses negative politeness more than other strategies. Travel agents by contrast use all three strategies in roughly equal measure. Positive politeness is used by all groups except role play students. Even though the participants want to request, at the same time they want to say something nice or to express their awareness of the closeness of the relationship to the hearers too. However, bald on record is very often used by all groups. The approach that the hotel people and two groups of students take in reacting to the third request (to the higher) is not a positive politeness strategy either. If we look at the situation, hotel guests must not be treated as close friends, and they have to violate the guest's freedom not to smoke in the room, so positive politeness is not appropriate in this case. As for students, asking their teacher to write a letter of recommendation, there is no connection with the teacher's satisfaction. They are simply seeking help from their teacher, so they just get to the point, and that is why negative politeness and bald on record are employed. Most travel agents employ negative politeness to ask their customers to pay for the ticket. In this case, claiming the airline rule or using indirect request seems polite and fits the scenario.

Furthermore, if we look at the interlocutor's higher status, the data show that most respondents mainly use negative politeness, but few use bald on record or positive politeness.

4.10.2 Complaints

Scenarios of complaint directed to lower status hearers are the same for all groups, but complaints to the other two status levels exhibit differences. Students deal with a friend and a teacher, while travel and hotel people interact with their co-worker and a customer or guest.

1. Complaints directed to hearers of lower status

The first complaint of the four groups is the same: the participants have to tell the waiter that their food is overly salty.

Table 4.11 Complaints directed to hearers of lower status

Subject	PP	NP				B
	6	1	2	6	PC	
Travel (n=15)		8 (53.55)	2 (13.33)		4 (26.22)	1 (6.66)
Hotel (n=25)		12 (48)	1 (4)	6 (24)	1 (4)	3 (12)
Student Role play (n=14)		3 (21.42)	2 (14.28)	2 (14.28)	3 (21.42)	3 (21.42)
Student DCT (n=78)	1 (1.28)	18 (23.07)	1 (1.28)	36 (46.15)	3 (3.84)	12 (15.38)
Total (132)	1 (.75)	41 (31.06)	6 (4.54)	44 (33.33)	11 (8.33)	19 (14.39)
Average	1 (.75)	102 (77.27)				19 (14.39)

We can see that all four groups use almost exclusively negative politeness. Travel agents and hotel personnel use ‘conventional indirect’ but DCT students rely to a large extent on ‘apologize’. Role play students seem to vary their strategies the most within the bounds of negative politeness. Students from both groups employ bald on record. Few hotel people and only one travel agent apply this strategy. This suggests that these people (travel and hotel) belong to service organizations and understand how their interlocutor is going to feel if they use words that are too strong, keeping in mind that it is not the waiter’s fault or his/her direct responsibility in this case. For students this situation may not be that serious, so most use negative politeness in asking the waiter to change the dish.

The following are examples of complaints to lower status hearers:

1. Negative politeness

1.1 Conventional indirect

This is so salty. Can you make a new one for me because I cannot eat it? (travel I1-4)

Do you mind to take this dish back and taste it a bit, because I think it's too salty for me? (hotel C2-2)

1.2 Apologize

Excuse me. My dish is very salty. What happen with it? Can you change it for me please. If you can't. I want some sugar. (DCT, university A4-2)

2. Bald on record

I want to change dish. It is salty. (DCT, university C6-2)

2. Complaints directed to hearers of the same status

Now we move to the second complaint. All three groups (travel agents, hotel personnel and students) have slightly different scenarios, but the idea is the same: dealing with a person of the same or similar status.

Table 4.12 Complaints directed to hearers of the same status

Subject	PP				NP				B	O		N
	1	6	10	13	1	2	6	PC		1	11	
Travel (n=15)		1 (6.66)			2 (13.33)			4 (26.66)	7 (47.66)			
Hotel (n=25)	4 (12)		1 (4)		3 (12)	3 (12)	7 (28)	1 (4)	3 (12)			3 (12)
Student Role play (n=14)		9 (64.28)							4 (28.57)			
Student DCT (n=78)		17 (21.79)		2 (2.56)	5 (6.41)	9 (11.5)		2 (2.56)	18 (23.07)	3 (3.84)	1 (1.28)	5 (6.41)
Total (132)	4 (3.03)	27 (20.45)	1 (.75)	2 (1.51)	10 (7.57)	12 (9.09)	7 (5.30)	7 (5.30)	32 (24.24)	3 (2.27)	1 (.75)	8 (6.06)
Average	34 (25.75)				36 (27.27)				32 (24.24)	4 (3.03)		8 (6.06)

The travel agents are faced with their typist co-worker who has already made three attempts to correct a brochure which still has some misspellings. The hotel people have to deal with a walk-in tourist who picks up too many brochures at the front desk. For students, their close friend loses their book.

What seems very interesting for the second complaint situation is that each group has its own style in dealing with their peer. Almost half of the travel people are happy with bald on record, one opts for positive politeness and the rest use negative politeness. Hotel people use various strategies from negative politeness, especially 'apologize'. Some also use 'notice, attend to hearer's interest' from positive politeness. Three people just ignore and do not want to say anything. Their reason is this can probably help to promote the hotel.

There are two main approaches for students doing role play. One group (64.28%) avoids disagreement, where they accept that the book has been lost and do not want their friend to worry about it, whereas the other (28.57%) uses bald on record; why and where it was lost, moving toward various kinds of serious criticism.

As for DCT students, bald on record, positive politeness and negative politeness are used in roughly equal proportions. Off record and not doing FTA are also applied.

The followings are examples of complaints to same status hearers:

1. Bald on record

You do so many time mistake so you have to approve English you need a time to learn more. (travel K1-2)

Why you lost. This book is important for me now and next class you buy it for me please. (role play, university D1-7)

I want you to buy a new one for me. (DCT, university C11-7)

2. Positive politeness

2.1 Avoid disagreement

I'm not happy that you lost my book but you are my best friend. So lets it down and don't think about it, okay? (DCT, university C2-7)

Never mind. I can borrow somebody to read or buy the new one. (role play, university B1-7)

3. Complaints directed to hearers of higher status

The third complaint is addressed to a more powerful person. The interaction for each group takes place in the public sphere, either work or school. Travel and hotel people have to engage with their customer or guest; and students deal with their teacher.

Table 4.13 Complaints directed to hearers of higher status

Subject	PP			NP					B	O		N
	10	13	15	1	2	6	8	PC		1	12	
Travel (n=15)	1 (6.66)		1 (6.66)	2 (13.33)	1 (6.66)		4 (26.66)		4 (26.66)		1 (6.66)	1 (6.66)
Hotel (n=25)				7 (28)		13 (52)		3 (12)				
Student Role play (n=14)		1 (7.14)		3 (21.42)	1 (7.14)			1 (7.14)	5 (35.71)		1 (7.14)	
Student DCT (n=78)		1 (1.28)		32 (41.02)	4 (5.12)	9 (11.53)		7 (8.97)	14 (17.94)	1 (1.28)		
Total (132)	1 (.75)	2 (1.51)	1 (.75)	44 (33.33)	6 (4.54)	22 (16.66)	4 (3.03)	11 (8.33)	23 (17.42)	1 (.75)	2 (1.51)	1 (.75)
Average	4 (3.03)			87 (65.90)					23 (17.42)	3 (2.27)		1 (.75)

One travel agency customer has already called four times to change her departure date. What are they going to say in this annoying situation? The hotel people have to tell a guest who is making noise in his/her room and disturbs other guests. For students, they have to ask their teacher why they received a low grade in their favorite subject.

Almost half of travel agents use negative politeness, especially by referring to airline policy (26.66%), but an equal number (26.66%) complain to the customer directly.

It is interesting that in this scenario the data show the hotel people never use bald on record. Only negative politeness is used, especially ‘apologize’ (52%). They apologize first, state the reason why they have come to ask to stop or lower the noise.

Role play students balance the use of negative politeness and bald on record. For the latter strategy they ask their teacher directly why their grade is low. For DCT students, among negative politeness ‘conventional indirect’ (41.02%) comes in at a very high level, with bald on record (17.94%) also a popular strategy.

The followings are examples of complaints to higher status hearers:

1. Negative politeness

1.1 Apologize

Sorry your room is very noisy please slowly down because the guest in next door cannot sleep, it the time to sleeping if you want to make a noise you can move to the beach far from here. (hotel G1-4)

1.2 Conventional indirect

Could you check my answer in this subject again teacher. I think I have a good grade because I understood in subject very well and I never missed class.

(DCT, university B5-4)

2. Bald on record

This is the last time that you can change. Are you sure you would like to change. This is your final, make sure you would like to change for the last time. You cannot change anymore. (It's OK if it says in the condition) (travel H1-7)

I'd like to know why my score is low. I don't understand that and I already did my best but it's not fair any more. (role play, university A1-4)

Professor I would like to know about grad of..... because I would like to know I make a mistake somewhere and I think I should have a good grade.

(DCT, university B10-4)

The majority of participants dealing with the complaint situations seem to prefer negative politeness. The response strategies here are similar to the request ones. Positive politeness is used more in scenarios dealing with the same status (except travel agents) especially in student responses. When the nature of the scenario is considered, it is not surprising that many of them avoid disagreement. We should remember they are young people who pay attention to their peer group and the relationships within the group. Positive politeness is rarely used in scenarios dealing with those of lower or higher status. Complaining to a waiter about food, speaking to a customer who has already changed the departure date several times, and a guest making noise in a hotel room: these scenarios normally need no positive politeness strategy. In scenarios dealing with the higher status, hotel people's responses reflect hotel policy in dealing with guests in common situations occurring around the hotel. In this case, negative politeness is solely used. Other groups also mainly rely on negative politeness. Bald on record is employed in all the scenarios, except when hotel people deal with guests. When considering the interlocutor's status, negative politeness comes in the first priority in most scenarios dealing with lower and higher status. Whereas dealing with the same status hearer, each group has its own way; positive, negative politeness and bald on record all play a greater or lesser role depending on scenario and group.

4.10.3 Disagreements

The three groups each have different situations (except the first situation of the travel and hotel people) which correspond to their work or people around them. Travel and hotel people deal with a cleaner, co-worker and customer or guest, whereas students deal with their younger sister, friend and teacher.

1. Disagreement directed to hearers of lower status

The scenario for travel agents and hotel personnel is identical. They are dealing with a cleaner at the workplace who just had her hair done and asks for their opinion. She herself likes it but they think it is strange. Students have to tell their younger sister about her revealing clothes.

Table 4.14 Disagreements directed to hearers of lower status

Subject	PP						NP				B	O	
	1	4	6	8	11	13	1	2	8	PC		8	11
Travel (n=15)			2 (13.33)	1 (6.66)	3 (20)			6 (40)		1 (6.66)	2 (13.33)		
Hotel (n=25)			3 (12)		2 (8)			9 (36)	1 (4)		5 (20)	1 (4)	2 (8)
Student Role play (n=14)						2 (14.28)	4 (28.57)	1 (7.14)		1 (7.14)	5 (35.71)		
Student DCT (n=78)	2 (2.56)	2 (2.56)				12 (15.38)	5 (6.41)	16 (20.51)			26 (33.33)		
Total (132)	2 (1.51)	2 (1.51)	5 (3.78)	1 (.75)	5 (3.78)	14 (10.60)	9 (6.81)	32 (24.24)	1 (.75)	2 (1.51)	38 (28.78)	1 (.75)	2 (1.51)
Average	29 (21.96)						44 (33.33)				38 (28.78)	3 (2.27)	

The data from both travel agents and hotel personnel show that the way they react to this scenario is the same, that is using ‘hedge’ (maybe, perhaps, I think) in negative politeness, ‘avoid disagreement’ and ‘be optimistic’ in positive politeness.

For students, they do not like the way their younger sister dresses. Negative politeness and bald on record are often used for role play students. DCT students prefer bald on record to other strategies. However, the data from the DCT students show that some students try to use positive politeness strategies, especially by giving the reason, in order to show their concern that wearing revealing clothes is not appropriate or even dangerous for the hearer.

The followings are examples of disagreements with lower status hearers:

1. Negative politeness

1.1 Hedge

Oh. New look but I think if you make the color a little bit low, may be better.
(travel C1-3)

You look lovely, but maybe add a little hairclip would be nicer. (hotel A1-3)

My sister. I think you should wear dress better tight shirts and short skirts. I believe you so cute if you wear dress. (DCT, university B8-3)

2. Bald on record

Change the shirts and skirts now. It too revealing. (DCT, university C8-3)

Your skirt is very short I want to change your skirt because it's very impolite.
(role play, university E2-3)

2. Disagreements directed to hearers of the same status

As in the previous category, the same scenario dealing with a friend is used for the travel agent and hotel personnel. The student scenario is somewhat different but also involves a friend.

Table 4.15 Disagreements directed to hearers of the same status

Subject	PP						NP			B	O	
	6	10	11	12	13	15	1	2	PC		8	11
Travel (n=15)	1 (6.66)	1 (6.66)		1 (6.66)		1 (6.66)	4 (26.66)			6 (40)		
Hotel (n=25)	2 (8)			2 (8)	1 (4)		2 (8)	12 (48)		5 (20)		
Student Role play (n=14)	4 (28.57)									7 (50)		2 (14.28)
Student DCT (n=78)	21 (26.92)		2 (2.56)		2 (2.56)		2 (2.56)	11 (14.10)	1 (1.28)	4 (5.12)	1 (1.28)	4 (5.12)
Total (132)	28 (21.21)	1 (.75)	2 (1.51)	3 (2.27)	3 (2.27)	1 (.75)	8 (6.06)	23 (17.42)	1 (.75)	22 (16.66)	1 (.75)	6 (4.54)
Average	38 (28.78)						32 (24.24)			22 (16.66)	7 (5.30)	

For travel and hotel people, their friend shows them the promotional plan to attract more customers and asks for their opinion, but they do not think it is practical or cost effective. Many of the travel agents (40%) do not hesitate to criticize the plan directly, while nearly half of the hotel people (48%) use ‘hedging’ in giving their opinions. This might reflect the smaller scale and less hierarchical operating procedures of the travel agency.

The scenario for students is they just had their hair cut and they do not like it because their hairdresser did not do exactly what they wanted. However, their friends give them compliments which the speakers think are not sincere. Half of the role play students (50%) react with bald on record strategies to the insincere friends. On the other hand, the responses from the questionnaire show that a significant number of students (26.92%) use 'avoid disagreement' in positive politeness. They just accept the lack of sincerity and do not talk back. One way to interpret this behaviour is that they consider it pointless to take their friend's words seriously. The friend may want to console them and does not want them to be worried about their hairstyle.

The following are examples of disagreement with hearers of the same status:

1. Negative politeness

1.1 Hedge

I think this plan is not completely yet. I think you better to do more. This year not very good economy. So I think you better to do something else cause we want to save our cost for the company. (travel G1-8)

umm... You know, for me, I'm pretty straightforward. After look at the plan, I don't think that's a very good idea. Maybe we should come up with the new strategy, con, concerning with the, the expenditure that we are facing right now. So maybe a new plan would be a better idea. (hotel A1-5)

Are you sure? I am not confident. (DCT, university C9-5)

2. Bald on record

If you would like to do you can do, but you have to accept that we have an expense that depend on your planning you can do you can try first. If don't success, that you have to accept. We can change it later. (travel H1-8)

Thank you for your lie compliment. (role play, university E3-5)

3. Positive politeness

3.1 Avoid disagreement

It doesn't really matter. I'm not serious. It's not too bad. (DCT, university A14-5)

3. Disagreements directed to hearers of higher status

In this case, each of the three groups has a different scenario which relates to their sphere of work.

Table 4.16 Disagreements directed to hearers of higher status

Subject	PP			NP					B	O
	6	13	15	1	2	6	8	PC		
Travel (n=15)	1 (6.66)	6 (40)				5 (33.33)	1 (6.66)	1 (6.66)		
*Hotel (n=24)	1 (4.16)	1 (4.16)	5 (20.83)	2 (8.33)	1 (4.16)	6 (25)	1 (4.16)	1 (4.16)	4 (16.66)	1 (4.16)
Student Role play (n=14)		3 (21.42)		1 (7.14)		2 (14.28)			6 (42.85)	
Student DCT (n=78)	2 (2.56)	26 (33.33)		2 (2.56)	7 (8.97)	8 (10.25)			18 (23.07)	
Total (131)	4 (3.05)	36 (27.48)	5 (3.81)	5 (3.81)	8 (6.10)	21 (16.03)	2 (1.52)	2 (1.52)	28 (21.37)	1 (.76)
Average		45 (34.35)				38 (29)			28 (21.37)	1 (.76)

* Actually, there are 25 hotel participants, but one participant's voice was too soft and muffled to be transcribed.

We can see that positive politeness prevails in this scenario, especially for DCT students who employ positive politeness more than negative politeness. This can show that most participants do not want to have arguments, especially with a higher status interlocutor.

The travel agents have to deal with a customer who complains that the company is not truthful when he/she finds out the final price is much higher than the one advertised. The travel people use both positive politeness and negative politeness in equal portions. They give reasons (40%) why the price is so different and they apologize (33.33%) for what has happened. Nobody uses a bald on record strategy for this scenario.

The hotel people have to deal with a demanding guest who orders room service and often finds fault with the food. The key point is how to handle the request for a discount. In this scenario, negative politeness ('apologize' 25%), positive politeness ('give goods to hearer', in this case give the discount 20.83%) and bald on record (16.66%) have been used. The travel and hotel scenarios, while different, are broadly

comparable in that they reflect problems that both groups stated were realistic and potentially causing stress.

The students must express disagreement with their teacher, who wants them to do their internship at a hotel instead of a travel agency, which they prefer. Role play students reacted with bald on record (42.85%) more than other strategies. This seems surprising when placed next to the responses of the professional groups, but probably reflects differences in context and life experience. For questionnaire students, positive politeness ('give or ask for reasons' 33.33%) is used much more, followed by bald on record (23.07%) and negative politeness ('apologize' 10.25% and 'hedge' 8.97%).

The following are examples of disagreement with higher status hearers:

1. Positive politeness

1.1 Give or ask for reason

Today gasoline up so and that ticket class is promotion is fully booked already now only have a higher class. That why we confirm higher price because under promotion rate is fully booked. (travel B1-5)

Please you tell me how difference about travel agency and hotel. Can you tell me about the reason because I want some information to discuss my internship. (DCT, university D14-8)

2. Negative politeness

2.1 Apologize

Mr. Smith, I do apologize for the inconvenient caused during your stay, for this time we will offer a discount for the food and beverage and we will ensure that the next time when you come back, you will not experience this again. And I will make sure that I have your record in the profile and also brief my staff regarding the unstable of the quality of the food service. (hotel A1-8)

3. Bald on record

I would like to know why you didn't agree me to internship in travel agency. (role play, university E3-8)

I would like to internship at a travel agency more than in a hotel. How should I do? Why I can't choose by myself? (DCT, university B22-8)

It is interesting to see that positive politeness comes into play in all disagreement scenarios, in contrast to those of request and complaint. When we look at the whole picture, negative politeness may be used in a greater number of instances. But if each scenario is compared, especially DCT students in disagreement 5 (friend tells insincere compliment) and 8 (disagree with teacher about internship place),

positive politeness leads negative politeness. We can assume that many of the speakers do not want to confront someone openly, so they need to use a nice and friendly strategy ('avoid disagreement' and 'give reason') first before going to the point. We can see that various strategies of positive politeness are put into practice. However, bald on record is used quite frequently, especially in all scenarios for role play students (50%) as well as travel agents (40%) in the second complaint (to the same status). Bald on record is also used quite often in the first (to lower) and third scenarios (to higher) of the questionnaire students. Participants feel it important that their disagreement not be misread and thus they choose the bald on record strategy.

4.11 Problems in judging the realization of politeness strategies in language

This study has employed Brown and Levinson's (1987) five strategies (positive politeness, negative politeness, bald on record, off record and not doing FTA) to analyse the responses from the nine scenarios. If the responses were roughly differentiated only by the main five strategies, this would be quite straightforward. However, subsequently they were also analysed in detail by using the linguistic manifestations of politeness strategies which Brown and Levinson suggest. One problem comes when analyzing the sub-strategies of negative politeness. Five out of ten possible strategies in negative politeness are found in this study: be conventionally indirect (1); question or hedge (2); apologize (6); impersonalize S and H by avoiding the pronouns 'I' and 'you' (7); state the FTA as a general rule (8). I found that some responses can be interpreted as fitting more than one strategy. In this section problems of interpreting the data in terms of politeness strategy ('apologize' and 'hedge') will be discussed.

1. When discussing the 'apologize' (6) strategy, Brown and Levinson explain that there are (at least) four ways to communicate regret or reluctance to do an FTA: 1) admit the impingement (e.g. *I'm sure you must be very busy, but...*); 2) indicate reluctance (e.g. *I don't want to bother you, but...*); 3) give overwhelming reasons (e.g. *I can think of nobody else who could...*); 4) beg forgiveness (e.g. *Excuse me, but.../I'm sorry to bother you*) (p.187). In the data I did not find structures like this, but only 'Excuse me' or 'Sorry/I'm sorry'. It is understood that Thais learn English as a foreign language so it is unlikely they will resort to sentences like Brown and Levinson's. In dealing with the face threatening situations in this study, many participants try to minimize their interference or transgression by begging forgiveness first before stating their intention. The expression the Thais including these respondents always use are "excuse me", "sorry" or "I'm sorry". Although these expressions in some situations can be a way to gain someone's attention, after consideration of the scenario and the speaker's intention, many responses beginning with "excuse me/ sorry/ I'm sorry" are placed first in the category of 'apologizing' because I (as a Thai) felt that the participants were thinking about how to soften their stance in relation to the hearer (discussed in chapter 5, section 5.2.1). One way to show this is to ask for forgiveness first and the Thai style in doing so often includes 'excuse me, (I'm) sorry'. The

speakers use these expressions as a strategy or an approach to convey their message as some examples below.

I'm sorry I have a lot of work to do. (DCT, university B15-9) In response to a friend who keeps on talking.

Sorry teacher, I don't agree with your thought because I like to do travel agency. (role play, university C2-8) A student disagrees with his/her teacher about the internship place.

Excuse me, sir I know that it's not the same price that you expect. It's not the same price that we already give to you. At this time it is changed. Anyway I would like to say that it's not the same price we sent mail to you. The extra rate is 200 baht. because of they have more tax. I am so sorry for this case. (travel A1-5) In response to a customer complaining about misleading advertising.

Very sorry your food is not good taste. Please back to change the other food and if you have the other recommend food for us. Please you change and you can take it back, please recommend. (hotel G1-2) Interacting with a waiter about salty food.

However, the expressions “excuse me”, “sorry”, “I’m sorry” are not always considered as ‘apologize’. The content of the response is also taken into the account and a different category is chosen as the example below.

Excuse me sir, may I help you first you want to need to more information first cause actually this brochure we provide all the guests we can explain for all the thing you want to know however if you want to get all the detail you can asking me and then the brochure we provide for you and also for another one would you like to keep for your friend or your colleagues or anyone else however this one is prepared for guest one by one actually. Just only one please. (hotel C5-7)

The response above is from a hotel worker dealing with a walk-in tourist who takes too many brochures. Even though the respondent begins with ‘excuse me,’ her approach shows that she notices the tourist’s interest. Therefore this response is judged as ‘notice, attend to hearer’ (1) in positive politeness.

2. Another problem is that ‘hedge’ in negative politeness and bald on record are sometimes hard to differentiate. The meaning of some responses is too blunt and these can be considered as bald on record. Some responses possess ‘hedge’ which Brown and Levinson (ibid.) explain that it modifies the degree of word or phrase that it is partial or true only in certain respects or more true and complete than might be expected (p.145). Sometimes the response is too direct and only one hedge is found, so this would be judged as bald on record. If the speaker produces a long, strong and blunt utterance, but then uses several hedging phrases, this is often judged as ‘hedge’.

As the following example, a participant is giving an opinion to his/her friend about the unpractical plan. At first glance, it could be judged as bald on record, but on deeper analysis there are some particles which make the statement sound less rough. So it is counted in the 'hedge' category.

*umm... **You know**, for me, I'm **pretty** straightforward. After look at the plan, **I don't think** that's a very good idea. **Maybe** we should come up with the new strategy, con, concerning with the the expenditure that we are facing right now. So **maybe** a new plan would be a better idea. (hotel A1-5)*

The example below is also considered as 'hedge' in negative politeness. The scenario is the same as the one above. The respondent saw the flaw in the program, but she/he tries to mitigate his/her opinion by using hedge (I think) in different places.

***I think** it has some mistake in this program may be we can discuss this program again **I think** you can make a new one on a low price make it better. **I think** so if you don't we will discuss. (travel I1-8)*

Therefore, the intention of the response is always considered to determine the realization of politeness strategy. I would like to clarify that categorizing the responses in this study always involved interpretation. To resolve ambiguous cases, I took into account not only the linguistic pattern but also the intended meaning, maintaining consistency throughout as much as possible. Hongladarom and Hongladarom (2005) mention that "no theory could ever fit all the possible data perfectly. If it did, it would cease to be a theory" (p.147).

4.12 Research questions

This study has posed three research questions and this section will attempt to answer these questions.

1. What levels of politeness and general pragmatic competence do Thai speakers of English demonstrate when dealing with FTAs in interactive situations with foreigners?

In general, in the responses we get a glimpse of the nature of human beings with different attitudes which lead to different strategies. How each participant handles the scenarios and chooses strategies depends on their position they feel they are acting in at that moment. The responses in the main vary between negative politeness (49.28%), bald on record (18.14%) and positive politeness (14.85%), with negative politeness

most often chosen over other strategies. However, in certain scenarios for some groups bald on record outnumbers the others or is used often. Different scenarios thus have different impacts on the choice of strategy. The participants seem to know fairly well what to say in each scenarios and when a higher level of politeness is called for. For instance, in the scenario dealing with younger cousin playing loud music, negative politeness is predominately used (*Please stop playing the music. I would like to sleep.*-travel A2-1), followed by bald on record (*turn down or turn off. You do the volume down, I want to sleep.*-travel B1-1), with only one speaker using a positive politeness strategy. These responses simply reflect the reality of our lives. Even though we know politeness is good conduct, it would be surprising and bizarre if people applied it in all kinds of situation. A human being is not a machine that always reacts the same way. In this scenario, within the family in a domestic setting, there is no need to show solidarity, especially when people feel they cannot stand the noise any more.

Their responses also reflect their empathy for the hearer, which is made clear in the scenario where they have to tell a waiter about salty food. Most use a negative politeness strategy which sounds polite (e.g. *Sorry waiter. The dish is very salty. Could you change for me.* – DCT, university B13-2). Bald on record is hardly ever used for this scenario.

In the case of travel agents dealing with a customer who accuses the company of false advertising, their responses show their skill in handling the angry customer. Only positive and negative politeness strategies are used. When it is necessary to protect the image of the company, they do not use bald on record or aggressive statements with the customer. (*Excuse me, sir I know that it's not the same price that you expect. It's not the same price that we already give to you. At this time it is changed. Anyway I would like to say that it's not the same price we sent mail to you. The extra rate is 200 baht because of they have more tax. I am so sorry for this case.* – travel A1-5)

Generally speaking, hotel people know exactly what they have to say in situations that often happen in the hotel, for example scenario 4 (a guest making noise) and scenario 6 (a guest smoking in the room). These people use roughly similar formulations to interact with guests in ways that sound polite. Negative politeness strategy predominates, not only in these two scenarios but across the board (*Excuse me*

sir, would you mind to turn down the noise because there is a complaint from the other guest. –hotel A3-4). Another example is from a middle-aged male manager from a three-star hotel outside Bangkok. His statement may not sound as indirect as is typical in the hotel responses, but he seems to achieve his goal when he admonishes a guest who is making noise (*Excuse me, what you doing it's very late make a noisy and we have a complaint from other guest beside your room if you open or make a noise please take down or choose come to lobby or anywhere not in the room to disturb the other guest.* – hotel E1-4).

Students are able to respond appropriately in all nine scenarios. Their responses can be seen as reflecting the mindset of teenagers who value highly the relationship between friends. One example is from the scenario where a friend has lost their book (*Not at all. I will buy a new book. Don't mind.* –DCT, university B21-7).

Looking at their style of speaking or writing, mistakes are common, for instance in the use of tenses or choice of vocabulary: *You **are a** lost my book.* (DCT, university D3-7); *I **not** happy...* (DCT university B2-7); *I can't **to eat for** food.* (DCT, university D4-2); *I am **interesting** apply for a job **kind air ground**.* (DCT, university D2-1); *You should **stop** your mouth, please* (DCT, university A15-9). These problems are in accordance with the views of many researchers as detailed in chapter 1, section 1.3.6. Such formal problems notwithstanding, the overall picture we get of their English ability is that it is practical and communicative. Their ability in using English reflects the general situation of Thai speakers of English and their language learning background. Quite often they have studied English for many years but have little opportunity to use it in real life, and English also differs radically from their native tongue in both structure and vocabulary. The results seem to show that their communicative skills are better than their grammar. Another factor is that the trend now is to teach communicative English, so the responses reflect that. However, this study does not intend to check the correctness of the respondents' English, but whether they use it suitably in particular contexts.

The average number of communicative and understandable responses is 85.40% (which breaks down into 97.78% for travel agents, 96.40% hotel personnel, 87.30% role play students and 79.20% DCT ones). This study defines pragmatic competence as having the knowledge of communicative action and ability to use English appropriately

according to the context. By this criterion we can assume that the respondents possess pragmatic competence.

2. What politeness strategies do Thai speakers of English use when performing the three face threatening acts: requests, complaints and disagreements?

Overall, negative politeness strategy is used predominately in all three functions. However, bald on record or positive politeness is used more often in certain scenarios.

The travel people do not seem to have a set framework for dealing with these scenarios. They generally say whatever they want to say, and therefore in many cases there is more variation: negative politeness, positive politeness and bald on record are all possible. However, on average negative politeness (48.88%) is employed most often, bald on record (24.44%) and positive politeness (22.22%) are used in about equal proportion. But in some scenarios, especially dealing with friends, co-workers or others of the same status, bald on record is used frequently. Travel agents are like other groups in disagreement situations, when they use positive politeness as much as negative politeness.

Hotel people by contrast have often been instructed how to respond in given situations. They apply these rules and thus have some common strategies in handling the problems. Negative politeness (67.12%) is their main strategy in all nine scenarios, especially in request and complaint situations dealing with their hotel guest. In other cases, where the scenario is whether they agree or disagree, like or dislike, many use positive politeness (13.51%) and bald on record (12.16%) as well. However, negative politeness still outnumbers other strategies.

For students, as mentioned earlier, negative politeness is often used (41.27% role play and 45.16% DCT students), especially ‘can you/ could you’ and ‘please command’ (begin or end a sentence with ‘please’) within that category. This would seem to be due to the influence of the classroom. There is a high proportion of positive politeness (15.08% role play and 13.82% DCT students), especially in the disagreement scenarios. When the interlocutors are friends or peers, students use positive politeness to express solidarity to a greater degree than with the professional participants. However, bald on record (28.57% role play and 16.95% DCT students) is also used at a high level in many cases.

3. How do sociological variables such as power or social distance affect the politeness strategies chosen in English speech by Thais?

The data show that power or social distance affects the politeness strategies of the respondents. We can see this in the three scenarios dealing with higher status interlocutors (here meaning hotel guests for hotel staff, customers for travel agents and teachers for students) where negative politeness seems to be the strategy of choice. Starting from **request 3** (table 4.3), all groups of respondents predominately use negative politeness, especially the hotel personnel, role play and DCT students. This is also the case for **complaint 3**, where negative politeness is mainly used, with the hotel people using it exclusively. **Disagreement 3** is less clearcut, as only hotel workers use negative politeness more than positive politeness and bald on record. Travel agents use positive politeness and negative politeness equally, but DCT students prefer positive politeness to other strategies. For role play students, the responses of positive and negative politeness are equal to bald on record. Negative politeness is the strategy that conveys respect, deference and concern with the interlocutor's rights and freedom of action. Positive politeness on the other hand highlights the relationship between the parties. Therefore, we can conclude that sociological variables reflected in relative status levels play a role in determining the politeness strategies for the participants. Even though they have to deal with these scenarios in English, their language use reflects Thai culture in the specific ways they respect senior/higher status and show deference to them. Although there are some who use bald on record, this does not necessarily mean that they are not concerned with these variables, but their English proficiency might not let them express themselves as they would like. In Thai, they know how to add particles or other words to make the sentence sound pleasant, but in English it is often different. Brown and Levinson (1987, pp.74-83) mention that social distance (D), relative power (P) and ranking of imposition (R) are the important factors in selecting a strategy to reduce FTA. In fact these factors are made particularly clear in Thai, as the language has a variety of pronouns and verbs to use with people in different status and positions.

4.13 Chapter summary

Analysis of the responses has shown that in dealing with face threatening situations, negative politeness is frequently used in all groups of respondents, followed by bald on record and positive politeness. When each group is considered, it is clear that their professions influence their language use. Hotel people need to maintain distance and show deference to their guests. This group also has formulaic structures to deal with some common situations occurring in the hotel, and as a result negative politeness is predominately used, with ‘conventional indirect’, ‘apologize’, ‘hedge’ and ‘please command’ preferred. Bald on record is found in most scenarios and positive politeness in some scenarios, especially with disagreement. Hotel personnel use bald on record the least often of all the groups. The second group are the travel agents, who on the whole seem more liberal and less bound by convention. For them as well, language use reflects their type of work. Apart from negative politeness, which is most often used, bald on record and positive politeness are used in almost equal measure. Within negative politeness, ‘please command’, ‘conventional indirect’ and ‘hedge’ are preferred. Positive politeness appears in many scenarios, while the hotel people use it only to a limited extent. The last group is students, who also often employ negative politeness in both role play and DCT. The two strategies, ‘conventional indirect’ and ‘please command’ are popular, which may reflect the influence of language teaching in the classroom. Bald on record appears as a second strategy for all scenarios. Surprisingly, positive politeness is found in a high proportion in certain complaint and disagreement scenarios. In some scenarios, offers of assistance or other active gestures toward the interlocutor are called for. An appropriate reaction in these situations would not solely consist of negative politeness, because that strategy implies leaving the interlocutor in peace, a more passive approach. One major implication of the data is no surprise, however: when the same function is compared among the groups, higher status influences choice of strategy, so that as the status of the hearer increases, negative or positive politeness predominates, but bald on record appears less often. Thus both negative and positive politeness are more “polite” relative to bald on record, and participants by and large succeed in employing these more polite strategies, thus demonstrating their pragmatic competence in a language radically different from their native tongue.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses six areas that present themselves as a result of the analysis carried out in chapter four. First we look at how the occupation of the participants relates to their predominant choice of politeness strategy, discussing each group in turn. There follow some comments on the general level of pragmatic competence for each group from my perspective. Then we approach the data in more detail for each of the three face threatening acts, making reference to related studies in the literature. Next we examine the relationship between sociological variables and the choice of politeness strategy. After that the concept of face and face-saving will be considered and finally the issue of bald on record will be discussed.

5.2 Participants

The individuals participating in this study consist of hotel personnel, travel agents and students. The overall responses show that they use three main politeness strategies in dealing with FTAs (requests, complaints and disagreements). Negative politeness strategies (49.28%) have been most widely used, followed by bald on record (18.14%) and positive politeness strategies (14.85%). One reason that negative politeness outnumbers other strategies is the strategies of ‘conventional indirect’ (can you/could you) and ‘apologize’ (I’m sorry or excuse me) are frequently used in most scenarios. We will look at each group in detail to see what makes them choose the language use in dealing with face threatening situations. To a large extent, their responses reflect their occupations.

5.2.1 Hotel personnel

The hotel participants are from either five-star hotels, or small hotels with a largely foreign clientele. These hotels generally have arrangements with travel agencies in order to ensure a regular flow of foreign guests booking over the internet or buying package tours that include accommodation. However, Thais also use these hotels for holding seminars or conferences, depending on the budget of organization in choosing a big or small hotel. The staff in these hotels are likely to have had direct

contact and exposure to foreigners to a greater degree than other groups, and seem to have many opportunities to use English. In this capacity they need to respond to various questions posed by guests and deal with difficult matters such as guests smoking or making noise. Working as hotel staff, they need to show hospitality and friendliness to their guests. This includes making small talk with guests, as I witnessed when arriving to carry out the role plays. This talk might concern where they come from, where they are going today, or whether they are having a good time in the hotel or in Thailand generally. Many guests are foreigners (non-Thais) so the medium of communication is English. Those from the five-star hotels (but not others) seem to have received training using English concerning how to handle certain situations that occur around the hotel. This was made clear when they made reference to hotel policy when responding to some scenarios. The hotel business is a competitive one, especially in a country like Thailand, so training the hotel staff to deal with sensitive matters can enhance perceptions of service quality. Hotel work involves service and one has to deal with guests all the time. From the data, the participants dealt with service encounters in a variety of positions, for example in guest reservation, business center, reception, front office and guest relations. Their work is also quite routine and they encounter more or less the same situations day in and day out. I found that many of them are often not required to make decisions on their own. Instead they follow the procedure of informing their supervisor about problems (e.g. guest making noise, ask for discounts), and the latter then takes care of the problem by talking to the guest him/herself. It could be that the ones who are in higher positions have more experience and training on how to tackle problems that arise, so that their judgement will be consonant with hotel policy.

The data for the hotel participants in the previous chapter (section 4.7) show that negative politeness (67.12%) is used the most frequently in all scenarios, followed by positive politeness (13.51%), and bald on record (12.16%). In request and complaint scenarios dealing with the same status, some of the hotel participants use positive politeness. They feel relaxed and comfortable when interacting with a friend or colleague of the same social level. The language use with these people shows friendliness and a relaxed attitude, as well as an understanding of their friend's needs, for example in a scenario where their friend would like to keep on talking while they

have to work. The following example shows the closeness and familiarity between the speaker and hearer - *“Hey, Smith, I know you have a lot of thing on your mind right now, but I’m quite busy at the moment, so just hold that thought, and I’ll come back to you”* (hotel A1-9). Furthermore, the situations or topics they are dealing with are not too sensitive or critical, so they do not have to be very careful with word choice. On the other hand, with the lower or higher status interlocutors they mainly choose negative politeness strategies.

Positive politeness is rarely used by hotel personnel. This is perhaps understandable given that it is not appropriate to show intimacy toward hotel guests. The exception to this is found in the disagreement scenarios, where positive politeness is used in the same proportion as bald on record, and more often when interacting with those of higher status (described in 4.10.3). As disagreements with guests can be detrimental to the hotel’s reputation, they are clearly to be avoided if possible. According to a hotel manager (hotel A- not one of my respondents), hotels will punish the staff if they do not take good care of guests. Some hotels may dismiss them if a customer reports or complains that the hotel staff have spoken rudely to him/her. This is why they avoid disagreement with the guests and show deference to them. However, this does not mean that the way they express politeness is based on fear of retribution by those in power. It is the norm of behaviour in any occupation to show politeness (except in cases like contact sports) and it is the nature of most people to avoid conflict. For Thais, smooth interpersonal relationship orientation has been identified as a basic value. They value smooth, kind, pleasant, conflict-free interpersonal interactions (Komin, 1990a, p.692). The study by Hongladarom and Hongladarom (2005) shows that in Thai computer-mediated communication (CMC), some heated arguments or serious topics could have ended in confrontation, but humour prevails and in the end no real disagreement is found (p.158).

The hotel participants’ language use reflects the need to show deference to guests, which is one aspect of negative politeness strategy. Human beings in general feel good if they are accepted, acknowledged and respected. Language use with guests shows deference and courtesy rather than intimacy. A manager in a five-star hotel stated that every hotel has a training department which fosters their staff that guests are like their god, so they need to respect and take care of them. Many hotel personnel in

Bangkok often address their guest as ‘sir/madam’, especially in five-star hotels. This also shows deference to the guests. By everyday Thai standards, room rates and facilities in these hotels are expensive, so people who can afford to stay there are considered rich. Hotel staff realize this and try to make the experience worth the money. The luxurious atmosphere in the hotel must also encourage them to show deference to the guests. This can show the standard of the hotel which needs to recruit qualified staff. These staff must meet the criteria and qualification of the hotel, so they need to do their best to preserve and maintain the image of themselves and the hotel as well.

Another possible reason explaining the language use of the hotel personnel is Thai culture. Thai society, like other hierarchically based societies, contains a pattern of deferential norms which relate to the degree of status superiority and inferiority. These norms are expressed with linguistic markers including pronouns and terms of address, and determine the etiquette which pervades social interaction (Scupin, 1988, p.333). It is not difficult for the hotel staff to address their foreign guests as ‘sir/madam’ because they are familiar with the Thai hierarchical system and at the same time the hotel personnel themselves use this strategy (e.g. respectful pronouns) to address the executives of their hotel as well. ‘Sir/madam’ in this case would have a rough equivalent in Thai in a second person pronoun used to address people who are of higher status than the speaker to show respect or honor. For instance, a provincial governor (or another person in a high position like president of the university, company head or government minister) expects to be addressed in the following way. His/Her subordinate may greet him/her in Thai by adding ‘you – ท่าน’ either at the beginning or end of the sentence. The meaning can be literally translated as for example “(you) good morning, (you)” which is like “good morning, sir” in English. Khanittanan (1988) explains that ‘ท่าน’ (you) indicates the listeners has superior status which is not merely due to elevation by the speaker, but is a status which the listener holds in society (p.355). Furthermore, ‘ท่าน’ (you) can be used with either singular or plural referent, and as an impersonal pronoun in addressing general readers or audiences (Hongladarom and Hongladarom, 2005, p.153).

The pattern of language use in dealing with scenarios relating to hotel affairs is fairly clear (as shown in table 5.1), especially in Bangkok hotels but the individual speech may differ, although perhaps not by much. The participants in many cases

follow a protocol to handle potential conflict situations with guests who smoke, make noise disturbing other guests, or request a discount. Among the nine scenarios, there are four (4, 6, 7 and 8) that involve dealing with guests (section 4.7). In scenarios 4 (guest making noise) and 6 (smoking guest), they overwhelmingly choose a negative politeness strategy ('apologize' - see examples in table 5.1). Even though smoking in the hotel is against the hotel rules, admonishing a guest who is smoking needs to be done carefully, because it is about prohibition and can cause dissatisfaction on the part of the guest. Similarly, the guest who is making noise is likely to feel that his/her freedom of action has been violated. Therefore, the language used to deal with these guests needs to be mitigated. The two activities (smoking and making noise) are not appropriate or accepted, so positive politeness strategy does not fit. Accordingly no hotel respondent uses this strategy in the two cases. In scenarios 4 and 6, many responses have the same structure, beginning with 'excuse me (sir/madam)' or 'I'm sorry' to reduce the imposition, and after that stating the reason or the hotel rule politely. As these scenarios involve the guests' freedom of action, these expressions can lessen or soften the intrusive nature of the statement.

Even though 'I'm sorry' can show regret at an unpleasantness suffered by the speaker and/or the addressee (Borkin and Reinhart, 1978), Thais also use this expression in the same sense as 'excuse me'. 'I'm sorry' and 'excuse me' are used as formulas to reduce the forthcoming imposition on the hearer or to express disagreement on the part of the speaker. In the hotel context, these expressions can be treated as formulaic language used initially when getting the guest's attention or informing guests that they should not do something that is against the hotel rules. 'I'm sorry' or 'excuse me' (in Thai) are commonly used among Thais to people in other contexts as in many places, for example when walking past senior people (to show respect, as seniority of age or social status is important in Thai culture), stepping on somebody's feet accidentally (to apologize), asking someone a personal question (a violation of privacy), asking people to give way or walking past people in the corridor (to reduce the imposition) or yawning in front of other people (to save his/her positive face). As I have observed, similar practices are common in many cultures, not least in British culture.

For scenario 8 (the demanding guest), several respondents stated that their hotels do have this kind of guest, one who often finds fault with the hotel service and

then asks for a discount. The responses from many hotel staff show that they choose to give discounts or vouchers, which is a positive politeness strategy. They have been trained to handle this situation, which is potentially quite stressful for the worker. Some hotel clerks stated that they would give a 10% discount if the guest insisted in asking for a discount. Some try to gauge the guest's mood, and if he/she is getting angry so they will hurry to give a discount, but if the guest does not have a serious look, they may not. Each hotel has a different policy. Many staff in three-star hotels cannot make decisions by themselves in this case, but they have another formula and employ a delaying tactic, e.g. *'May I have time to investigate about food first?'* (hotel B1-8). Several participants told me that guests who are about to leave the hotel often cannot wait for this and decide to drop the complaint and pay in full. On the other hand, many guests get a discount or voucher when complaining, even though the fault may have been exaggerated. Several hotel personnel stated that if they do not give a discount, it will be a long story, a long complaint message will be posted, so they are forced to deal with the problem proactively by giving discounts.

It is common for hotel staff in Bangkok to speak better English than the ones outside Bangkok. One reason is that Bangkok is the country's center for commerce and tourism where many graduates would like to work, so Bangkok hotels have a wider pool for recruiting qualified personnel than the ones outside Bangkok. According to the manager of a smaller hotel, big or five-star establishments offer higher commissions, and many of his staff leave when they have learned the hotel work and their English has improved. According to him, this is why few staff can speak good English in smaller hotels. This can be seen in appendix 5 (hotel E), apart from the manager (E1) in the hotel E, respondent E2 was the only staff member who could communicate in English on the day I went to collect data.

Hotel participants in Bangkok seem to be more aware of the interlocutor's status and adjust their responses accordingly (see appendix 5). These hotels have many foreign guests, so hotel staff speak to them in English, drawing on classroom learning, training in the hotel and their own on-the-job observations. The examples below show their language use in informing the guest who is making noise and disturbing other guests. The three (A-C) use 'apologize' strategy (for begging forgiveness) in negative

politeness to accomplish this. In this study judgement is based on the content of utterances, so I do not analyse tone of voice, eye contact or orientation of the body.

Table 5.1 Hotel staff inform their guests who are making a loud noise

Responses	Comments on the features of language
<p>A: Excuse me madam, excuse me sir, because I was informed for the near, your neighbor rooms, that there is some, a little bit sound, it's louder, out of the room of you. It make them cannot sleep or do something. I apologize and I would like to ask you to keep more quiet please. (hotel C1- 4)</p>	<p>A, B and C use the same pattern. All begin with 'excuse me' (see the discussion of this point on p. 128 above.) by asking for forgiveness to show that they are going to bother or interrupt the guest in some way. At the same time they show deference to the guest by addressing them sir/madam or surname. Using formal honorific register (sir/madam /Mr. Smith) reflects the desire of the hotel personnel not to show intimacy and to preserve distance between themselves and guests. When stating the problem, they make clear that they are not the initiators of the complaint. All shift responsibility to the rooms which have a problem with the noise. Finally, each ends the response in a similar way, by using explicit directives to the guest to reduce or stop their noise with different polite request forms. Addressing complaints to the guests is sensitive because it can damage the guest's negative face and also the hotel's image if the words are not carefully chosen. The pattern of language use here is to ask for forgiveness, formally address the hearer, state the problem by mentioning the third person's problem and ask for cooperation and perhaps end with another apology.</p>
<p>B: Excuse me sir, I call from the front office. The room no... called me that your room is very noisy. <i>Can you reduce the noise or can you stop the noise?</i> (hotel B1- 4)</p>	
<p>C: Excuse me, Mr. Smith, there's a complaint, uh, that there's a noise disturbance from your room. So <i>would you please mind</i> turn down the volume. (hotel A1- 4)</p> <p>(*all are negative politeness-apologize)</p>	

Generally speaking, most hotel participants can use English in responding to the nine scenarios appropriately. Responses from staff at small hotels tend to be shorter, whereas the ones from the big hotels are longer and more informative. The high use of negative politeness (67.12%) suggests that the hotel participants keep their distance, trying not to be too familiar in dealing with the guests. Since negative politeness is prevalent, their preferred realizations of the politeness strategies (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p.131) are 'apologize' (excuse me, I'm sorry, I do apologize), 'conventional

indirect' (can you/could you), 'hedge' (I think, maybe) and 'please command' respectively. In dealing with guests, especially if complaint or disagreement is involved, most use similar patterns beginning by asking forgiveness (excuse me) for what they are going to say, then going on to state the hotel's rule and ask for cooperation, sometimes offering alternatives. We can say that they apply Lakoff's (1973, cited in Fraser, 1990, p. 224) politeness principle (don't impose, give option and make the listener (guest) feel good) as their strategy to handle the face threatening situations. This is done with deference. Whether this is due to better training or more exposure to foreigners is difficult to say.

5.2.2 Travel agents

Travel people in my sample vary the use of politeness strategies as follows: 48.88% of participants use negative politeness, 24.44% bald on record and 22.22% positive politeness. This is different from the hotel participants, who use negative politeness in roughly two-thirds (67.12%) of the responses. Travel agents also employ more bald on record and positive politeness than the hotel people do. Clearly there is more variation in the strategies the travel agents choose than was the case among the hotel people. Their responses are different from those who work in hotels in part because there are diverse formulas or protocols for them in speaking English, except when dealing with the ticket prices most participants give similar reasons but use different styles (see table 5.2). As we understand it, their job is less regimented than that of hotel work. For example, the ones who work in the office earn commission from ticket sales rather than just a salary, and they can be held financially responsible for losses due to wrong bookings. This makes them less dependent on others. Furthermore, they work in an office and many of them deal with customers by telephone rather than face to face. Travel agents seem to have learned English for their work from their own experience and their responses are self-generated (i.e. they use their own style in handling scenarios). Doing the role play with them, I observed that generally they do not rely on predetermined formulas.

Even though there are standard procedures that the travel people need to maintain to avoid losing business, the politeness strategies they use represent their work, which does not involve showing as much deference to the customers as for the hotel

personnel (as the data show). One possible reason is that they are not strictly or systematically monitored by their supervisor or by the office manager, so they have more freedom to express themselves in their own way. Travel agent customer satisfaction mainly comes from booking flight, hotel and tour packages. From my perspective as a travel customer, I (like other people) expect good treatment from them, but I am not concerned whether they show much deference to me. What I do care about is whether their price is reasonable and their package tour well organized and worth the money. Furthermore, the atmosphere at the travel agencies is different from the hotel, being rather less formal. If the place was too luxurious and staff dressed professionally, people would be afraid they would be charged more. Travel agents generally wear casual clothes, not business attire or uniforms. This could be a deliberate strategy which helps their customers feel comfortable and relaxed when doing business with them in the office context. So these factors make them different from the hotel people in a certain sense.

Many of the travel participants are tour guides, and their work demands showing friendliness and care of their customers, so these people apply positive politeness in a high degree. It is understandable in that their customers' word of mouth can promote the company, sometimes more effectively than through advertising in the media. If the guides are friendly, helpful and informative, their customers will feel warm and happy, especially on a foreign tour. Also important is the possibility that they will receive a big tip from the customers if their service and communication are impressive. This means the way they interact with their customers must show friendliness, care and good humour, and positive politeness is a good strategy to apply in their job.

Travel participants are the second group after role play students who use bald on record to a high degree, especially with the people of the same status as in request 9, complaint 2 and disagreement 5 (section 4.6). This can reflect a more direct style, as people in general feel confident and familiar with their friends or co-workers, so they can express what they want to say in a direct way. However, when they deal with the higher status interlocutor (e.g. their customers- see section 4.10), negative politeness is the most preferred strategy, followed by positive politeness. This can show that many

of them are concerned with language choice when dealing with their customers in order to protect the image of the company and maintain their business.

Since this group uses different strategies in dealing with their customers, I would like to present the points where their language use differs. First, we will go over some responses in the scenario where a customer complains about the final price of the ticket, which is much higher than the one advertised in the newspaper. The respondents were familiar with the situation and that is probably why only positive politeness ('give reason') and negative politeness ('apologize') are applied in equal numbers. No travel participant uses bald on record here.

Table 5.2 Travel agents' responses to a complaint about ticket prices

Responses/ Politeness strategy	Comments on language features
<p>A: Today gasoline up so and that ticket class is promotion is fully booked already now only have a higher class. That why we confirm higher price because under promotion rate is fully booked. (travel B1-5) (positive politeness – give reason)</p>	<p>This response shows a common pattern for explaining the higher price of the ticket which customers might anticipate. A begins his explanation with a temporal deictic expression to emphasize that just today the oil price situation affects the ticket, and the customer has called too late because the promotion price has been sold out. The customer cannot blame the travel agency because the two factors (fuel price and full booking) occur in this limited timeframe which makes the price different. In this case, A uses the current situations as a reason to explain the guest.</p>
<p>B: Sorry to misunderstand. Anyway our price is cheaper than others although include the tax and surcharge and everything the price is also cheaper than another. Normally in the advertising we don't put the surcharge in the ticket. This is the policy of the travel agent. (travel D1-5) (negative politeness-apologize)</p>	<p>In response to this scenario (the difference between the advert and real price), first B expresses her regret that the customer has misunderstood the advert. B's reasons are like the ones from other travel agencies (see appendix 6 - situation 5). Here we can see another pattern in handling the scenario: apologize for the different price, make use of a marketing strategy (claiming their tickets are cheaper than other places) and state the agency's policy on advertisements.</p>

Next, we will examine some responses showing their style in dealing with customers, depending on what they think and the people they deal with. Here, the participants have to speak to a customer who has already changed her flight four times. The responses below reflect the variety of responses to the same scenario. In this case, negative politeness (7 out of 15 people) is used the most, and bald on record (4 people) is the second preferred strategy.

Table 5.3 Travel agents' reaction to a guest who has changed flight details several times

Responses/ Politeness strategy	Comments on language features
<p>C: If you can have a ticket somewhere cheaper than me, you can take it./ I do my best, you can change whatever you want because you are my customer. (travel G1-7) (bald on record)</p>	<p>Both C and D's utterances as speech acts have an expressive force which shows the speakers' feeling. C does not mitigate her speech in her first sentence. She seems to be confident that her prices are lowest and challenges the customer to prove her wrong. In offering a stark choice she ignores her customer's positive face, which may cause offence. Therefore the response is classified as bald on record. However, in her second utterance, she may be concerned about her business and acts as a helpful travel agent.</p>
<p>D: You should know this is the fourth or fifth time already. I will help you the last time. The next time you must to pay for the change. (travel B1-7) (bald on record)</p>	<p>This response is another bald on record strategy in that D criticizes his customer directly (you should know). In his further admonishments (I will help you the last time, 'you must to pay' for the next change) he does not redress his statements. Even though he helps her, at the same time he is trying to emphasize that the fine will be applied for the next change. D's effort to persuade his customer not to change the flight provides the perlocutionary force of the utterance.</p>
<p>E: Excuse me, the airline told me that this flight you change is very crowded if you change your mind and you want to take this flight you cannot change anything more. (travel D1-7) (negative politeness - rule)</p>	<p>E uses a different pattern in dealing with the problem. Since she is going to give bad news (cannot change/very crowded) to her customer, she expresses her regret (Excuse me) first. Then she gives the reason by making reference to the airline situation and at the same time she says directly 'you cannot change anything more'. Further argument is discouraged</p>

	not by mitigation, but when E shifts the responsibility of being unable to change the flight to the airline.
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In this case, C and D use a bald on record strategy. By contrast E applies negative politeness, shifting responsibility to the airline in order to get the message across. This can show and reflect the individual perspective of the travel agents, as they express what is on their mind and have more freedom than the hotel staff do. According to one hotel manager (hotel A), such complaints (C and D) directed at the guest are explicitly forbidden.

In general there is greater diversity in the choice of politeness strategies by the travel participants. (An exception is when dealing with the ticket, as most travel agents have a similar strategy in handling the scenario by giving reasons why the price is more expensive than the advert.) Apart from bald on record, some strategies of negative politeness frequently found are ‘please command’, ‘conventional indirect’ (can you/could you), and ‘hedge’ (I think). ‘Give reason’ in positive politeness is often found, especially in request and disagreement scenarios. Travel participants have different levels of English proficiency. The ones who work in the Bangkok metropolitan area are guides whose responsibilities include leading tours, and they generally have a good command of English, can express what they want to say and know enough vocabulary to give details. The ones who work in the resort town speak English quite well, because they come into contact with foreign tourists and residents daily. However, those who work in the suburbs of Bangkok do not use much English because they mainly deal with Chinese tourists.

5.2.3 Students

The lack of experience in using English to deal with real life matters is a key factor differentiating students from the other two groups. Most answers from role play students could be counted because they asked me for more clarification if they did not understand the scenario. Thus very few could not answer in English, even when their English proficiency was low. Responses from the role play students tend to be short and to the point, without much explanation or elaboration. Some possible explanations might be: the answers are impromptu, and students may not be able to think of more to

say in a short time. Some may not feel confident answering in English, so a short answer is enough. Students doing role play were randomly selected and I found that many of them have limited ability in English (roughly low intermediate), including limited vocabulary, so they have difficulty expressing themselves in English. Some say they understand the scenario, but do not know how to deal with it in English. These students come from different provinces of the country which English teaching and learning has many problems, resulting in low proficiency in English (see explanation in chapter 1, section 1.3.6). Some other reasons for short responses from role play students are that few English subjects require students to have a speaking test each semester. Even when they are provided for, not more than 15 minutes at most will be allotted for it, because there are many students in a class. Furthermore, I observed that these students treated me as one of their teachers (higher status), and after they gave an answer, they looked at me and waited to see how I might comment on their response. When the students stopped, I moved to the next question (scenario).

The responses from the questionnaire are longer and give more information to the hearer. If we compare the time the two groups of students took in doing the role play (speaking) and questionnaire (writing), there is a substantial discrepancy. Each role play student spent approximately 16 minutes to go through the nine scenarios, while it took an hour for DCT students to finish their task. Therefore, DCT students had more time to think and adjust their answers. The majority of students did DCT, and among these are some students who have better English (roughly intermediate level) than some role play students, because they can give the response in English according to the nine scenarios. Moreover, it seems easier for many of them to write down the response than to produce it verbally, because the format of DCT is like an examination paper which they are familiar with. We can say that these students have been trained to write more than speak. Doing DCT, students can write whatever they want without being afraid whether it is right or wrong, accurate or inaccurate, and it is not a face to face encounter like the role play.

If we consider their language use, the two groups preferred the same strategies (see sections 4.8 and 4.9). Negative politeness (role play 41.27%, DCT 45.16%) is most often used, followed by bald on record (role play 28.57%, DCT 16.95%) and positive politeness (role play 15.08%, DCT 13.82%). The frequency of negative politeness is

high for both groups. Their preferred strategy is ‘conventional indirect’ (can you/could you) mainly in request and complaint scenarios. This frequent use of ‘conventional indirect’ seems to reflect the influence of the English language classroom. It is quite clear that when students interact with a higher status hearer, for example in request 1 (asking their teacher to write a letter of recommendation), ‘can you/could you’ as a strategy in negative politeness is predominantly used (role play students 57.14%, DCT 42.30%) and bald on record is used the least. This result shows that the higher status of the interlocutor affects the choice of request strategy (see table 4.10). We can see some examples below.

Table 5.4 Students’ request to the higher status interlocutor (teacher)

<p>A: I would like to apply for a job. Could you write a letter of recommendation for me, please? (DCT, university B5-1)</p>	<p>A (DCT) and B (role play) use 'could you', the indirect speech act most commonly used in this scenario. Most students can differentiate the status of the higher status hearer (teacher) and choose to use ‘could you’ instead of ‘can you’. This may reflect the influence of classroom teaching that presents ‘could you’ as more polite than ‘can you’. B transfers Thai usage when addressing her teacher as ‘Ajarn’, meaning ‘teacher’. In Thai it is rude to leave off the title "ajarn" and address the teacher by name only. (Here name refers to first name, as Thai surnames are never used when addressing someone.)</p>
<p>B: Ajarn Ladda, could you write recommendation for me for my job? (role play, university E2-1)</p> <p>(*both are negative politeness – conventional indirect)</p>	

Students know that when addressing requests to their teacher they should use ‘can you/could you (‘could you’ is mostly used’) rather than bald on record, which is rarely used in this case (as the examples above show). Many students may not understand the meaning or function of ‘can you/could you’ when used as a request because equivalent expressions in Thai connote ability and do not have the sense of requesting. Many use ‘please’ instead of ‘can you/could you’. This is one reason that I designated ‘Please command’ (use ‘please’ either at the beginning or the end of a sentence) as one strategy in negative politeness - e.g. ‘*Please write the recommendation letter for me to apply for a job.*’ (role play, university D2-1). If we look at the data (table 4.7 and 4.8), many students use ‘please command’ in request scenarios because it

is simple to say and is in accordance with Thai usage. Escandell–Vidal (1996, p. 631 cited in Fracer, 2005) also mentions this issue, giving an example where “*Can you pass the salt?*” is taken as a conventional indirect request in English, while in Thailand, doubt about the hearer’s ability is inferred (p.73).

The way students use a high degree of ‘conventional indirect’ to both higher and lower status interlocutors seems to be in accordance with the findings of Tanaka’s (1988, cited in Kasper and Blum-Kulka, 1993) study that Japanese learners of English used the same (direct or barely mitigated) request strategies in both familiar and formal situations. LoCastro’s (1997) finding that English textbooks in Japan failed to provide training in pragmatic use of language seems relevant here. In the Thai case, many students often use the format or structure they have studied in class, therefore it is not surprising that their responses begin with ‘can you/could you’ or ‘please’ as we can see in some of the examples in table 5.4.

In general, students from both groups could respond to the scenarios depending on their English ability (see appendix 7 and 8). The preferred linguistic realizations (following Brown and Levinson) for the role play students are ‘conventional indirect’, ‘please command’, ‘apologize’ in negative politeness and ‘avoid disagreement’ in positive politeness. For DCT students, ‘conventional indirect’, ‘apologize’ in negative politeness and ‘give reason’ (especially in complaint and disagreement scenarios) and ‘avoid disagreement’ (with friends) in positive politeness are commonly used. Most can transfer what they want to say from Thai to English successfully, although many still produce English in ways that show the influence of first language transfer. There may also be some variation in actual performance, given their lack of experience.

5.3 Pragmatic competence

One of the tasks of this study is to examine the use of English by Thai speakers who do so for their jobs (and also students whose major is English or Business English) to determine the level of their politeness and general pragmatic competence in the context of face threatening acts. Pragmatic competence in this study is defined as ‘having the knowledge of communicative action and ability to use English appropriately according to the context’. The professional participants do not require highly accurate English to make themselves understood when speaking English in their

jobs, because other qualities (such as being service-minded) are more important. The student participants are from community universities, where the curriculum tend to emphasize vocational areas (here most study Business English). However, their pragmatic competence will be discussed according to two criteria. I will start with that of Ellis (1994) who defines it as the knowledge used in communication to produce a successful response, and move to the more complex concepts of Bachman (1997). Then we will examine the participants' pragmatic performance in certain scenarios.

5.3.1 Pragmatic competence according to two sets of definitions

According to Ellis (1994, p.719), pragmatic competence consists of the knowledge that speaker-hearers use in order to engage in communication, including how speech acts are successfully performed. Using these criteria, the percentage of valid responses (in my judgement) is 85.4% (section 4.3). We can say that almost all participants could get through all the scenarios. The proportion of valid responses is 97.78% for travel agents, 96.4% for hotel staff; 87.3% for role play students and 79.2% for DCT ones. Judging whether their speech acts are successfully performed (according to Ellis), means looking at language use, specifically what politeness strategies they prefer in performing the acts. 49.28% of the responses use negative politeness, 14.85% positive politeness and 18.14% bald on record. Even though Brown and Levinson do not state which strategy is more polite, we can assume that negative politeness (e.g. respect approach) and positive politeness (familiarity approach) are the strategies that show concern for the hearer's face. The low incidence of bald on record responses can be interpreted as indicating that the participants' pragmatic competence is high. Therefore, in this case I believe that these speakers demonstrate pragmatic competence in this most basic sense of the term.

Now we will consider Bachman's (1997, pp.87-98) version of pragmatic competence. Bachman divides pragmatic competence into two areas: illocutionary competence and sociolinguistic competence. Kasper (1997) succinctly defines **illocutionary competence** as the knowledge of communicative action and how to carry it out (p.2). For Bachman, it consists of different uses of language (for example, expressing ideas, accomplishing goals, extending knowledge, getting things done, forming or maintaining interpersonal relationships, giving vent to humour and the

imagination) in order to perform or produce different speech acts. In this sense it does not cover being able to produce statements which are appropriate in a specific context, which would be sociolinguistic competence. Pragmatic competence in a general sense as many linguists would see it (see chapter 2, section 2.5) can be roughly defined as 'having abilities and knowledge to communicate successfully and appropriately according to the context'. This means they combine sociolinguistic competence and illocutionary competence (in Bachman's sense) into one set of meanings, whereas Bachman separates pragmatic competence into two sets as explained earlier. Illocutionary competence in Bachman's sense is similar to Ellis's pragmatic competence, in that the speaker is able to engage in communication. Turning to the data in this study, 85.40% or 1,012 out of 1,185 responses were judged valid. This means the participants show illocutionary competence in the sense that they are able to use their English to engage in the nine scenarios related to face threatening acts successfully. Here, however, we cannot recreate real-life interaction that would force the speakers to use their pragmatic skills fully. Even so, 14.60% of the responses (173 out of 1,185) show problems in using English and do not achieve the tasks. On the whole we can consider that the participants show illocutionary competence (a part of pragmatic competence according to Bachman) in a high degree. We need to bear in mind that the students are from local government tertiary universities, which are open to all applicants without an entrance examination. These universities have English/Business English programmes with a vocational rather than academic focus that aim to produce graduates who work in service industries like hotel or tourism. The English textbooks used to teach these students are in the range of pre-intermediate to upper intermediate, but in fact these students require more basic help. Furthermore, the students have not had work experience. 87.30% of role play and 79.20% DCT comprehensible responses are considered to demonstrate pragmatic competence, the professional responses (97.78% travel and 96.40% hotel) definitely so.

For Bachman (1997), **sociolinguistic competence** covers sensitivity to differences in dialect or variety; sensitivity to differences in register; sensitivity to naturalness; and ability to interpret cultural references and figures of speech. It enables us to perform language functions in ways that are appropriate to that context (pp.94-95). If we consider the participants' sociolinguistic competence, in this case they have to use

English, either written or spoken depending on the group, in dealing with different face threatening situations related to their daily life and work. Their responses may not sound like the English native speakers, but are understandable in context of the task and they use appropriate strategies to suit their position and that of the interlocutor. The responses can be categorized in term of politeness strategies as negative politeness (49.28%), bald on record (18.14%), and positive politeness (14.85%). However, we should keep in mind that the parameters of the survey cover only a fraction of the sensitivity that Bachman refers to: while the participants ideally make use of differences in register to tailor their answers according to status, they do not have to interpret cultural references or dialects, which would be difficult or impossible to test for given the format. What the role plays or questionnaires do is to present them with scenarios related to their job and daily life, in effect giving them linguistic tasks which are basic to the environment which they usually encounter. But they cannot reflect contingent factors, such as imperfect knowledge or skills on the interlocutor's part, that would be present in real life. The survey format can thus only partially reflect the skills needed for a broad definition of sociolinguistic competence in Bachman's sense. In a limited sense, we can therefore say that the participants possess sociolinguistic competence in Bachman's framework.

The participants in this study use English mainly in their jobs or studies. I realize that the professional speakers use English as a means for communication in the service business, not in academic areas. Most are middle level staff who studied in Thailand and students are from community universities who tend to be good in vocational fields. As discussed earlier, this study sets the following fundamental criteria for validity: the whole statement or utterance needs to be in English, comprehensible and related to the scenarios. As a result, 85.40% of the responses are valid or comprehensible so the participants in this study demonstrate pragmatic competence of a sort, but in different degrees among the sample.

5.3.2 Pragmatic performance according to the scenarios

The participants (in cases where responses were understandable) possess pragmatic competence in different degrees depending on their English proficiency. The ones who have good English ability give responses that are more detailed, express

what they want to say, and are more natural. Many role play students' responses are short and lacking supporting detail, but comprehensible. DCT students had more time to think about their answers, so their responses in general are longer and more informative than the role play ones. The English of the travel agents and hotel workers in general shows communicative competence, being comprehensible and functional, depending on each individual's level of proficiency. In this section, we will get a glimpse of the participants' pragmatic performance which is used to measure (by using English in the given scenarios) their 'competence' from my perspective.

The responses presented in no.1- 6 show the most and second most preferred politeness strategies that participants employ in the scenarios. The responses are presented in different angles and selected as typical ones, in that most participants have similar or contrast ideas or strategies in handling the scenarios.

1. The responses (A-D) are from the scenario in a restaurant where the speakers complain about the salty food. All four groups of participants heavily use different varieties of negative politeness. This is understandable, since when people complain, strategies of positive politeness which express admiration or acceptance are not appropriate.

Table 5.5 Responses about salty food

Responses/politeness strategy	Comments on the language features
A: Excuse me , this food is so salty . You change it for me, please . (role play, university D1-2) (negative politeness-apologize)	In this case, the presupposition is that A and B cannot eat the food. Role play and DCT students use 'apologize' strategy in a high level. One explanation in this case is related to politeness strategies in Thai. As already mentioned, many Thais usually say 'excuse me –ขอโทษ' before asking somebody to do something. 'Excuse me' in this case could be glossed as 'I'm sorry to bother you'. Using this expression can convey the speaker's wish to be seen as polite and/or not impositional not to give an order to change the dish right away. Another reason is that although the waiter is considered a lower status hearer, students may not be willing to put themselves in the superior position, so asking the waiter to change their food, they need to lessen their imposition by saying 'excuse me' first as a
B: Excuse me , my dish is very salty . Can you change it for me? (DCT, university E6-2) (negative politeness-apologize)	

	convention. Both A and B are representative of the student responses (apologize for the FTA first, state the problem and ask for change). This pattern is widely used, not only by students, but also by hotel personnel when dealing with FTAs to minimize the particular imposition.
C: How come is the food is salty. Can you change for me the new one please . I can't eat it. This one too salty, may be something wrong about chef or not. Please change for me. (Travel C1-4) (negative politeness -conventional indirect)	Most travel and hotel participants prefer a 'conventional indirect' strategy by using 'can you/could you' in requests (see appendix 5 and 6). C uses 'how come' which is a slang of 'why' to complain about the salty food. Starting his sentence with 'How come' may sound blunt, but the rest of his speech shows a tone of polite request (Can you and please). He asks 'How come' and also was trying to find the answer for his question (wrong...chef). D again uses a polite request form, with the addition of small hedging phrases (a bit, I think) which soften the request.
D: Do you mind to take this dish back and taste it a bit , because I think it's too salty for me. (hotel C2-2) (negative politeness -conventional indirect)	

2. The hotel participants understand the scenarios and are able to respond to them, and many of them know pretty well which cases call for a more careful approach. For example, in complaint and disagreement scenarios, especially dealing with a higher status interlocutor (hotel guest), negative and positive politeness are mostly employed. The two examples (E and F) show the different strategies that the hotel staff use in the scenario where a demanding guest asks for a discount. Even though in this case most hotel staff in big hotel prefer negative politeness ('apologize') and positive politeness (give a discount), the hotel staff in the smaller hotel often use bald on record strategy, not to give a discount, delay or shift responsibility onto a person in a higher position.

Table 5.6 Hotel staff's responses to a demanding guest who asks for a discount (different strategies between big and small hotel)

Response/politeness strategy	Comments on the language features
E: Mr. Smith, I do apologize for the inconvenient caused during your stay, for this time we will offer a discount for the food and beverage and we will ensure that the next time when you come back, you will not experience this	Here we can see another pattern of hotel personnel language use in a situation where a guest is not satisfied with the service. The address form and apology expression are formal and show deference. E's following utterance accords with the rule that guests

<p>again. And I will make sure that I have your record in the profile and also brief my staff regarding the unstable of the quality of the food service. (hotel A1-8) (negative politeness-apologize)</p>	<p>are always right and staff must not mention the guest's fault or intention to get a discount to the guest (according to a hotel participant). This strategy has both expressive and commissive force and was often found in the big hotels. It generally showed the following pattern: address the guest formally, apologize, offer a discount to compensate the inconvenience and promise good service to the guest for his/her next stay. E's last statement reflects her position in the hotel as a staff member who can make decisions in giving discounts.</p>
<p>F: Right now I am not discount it for you but I will forward it the manager or someone who know anything if you have problem may be the manager give you some discount. (hotel E2-8) (bald on record)</p>	<p>Starting with proximal deictic form 'Right now' can imply that giving a discount will not take place at the moment of speaking. F's utterance is direct and reflects the position and the strategy of the speaker, here as someone not authorized to take the decision. This allows her to shift the responsibility to a higher-up (I will forward it the manager).</p>

3. The responses (G and H) are from a parallel scenario (as in no.2) for travel agents who are generally straightforward people and flexible with formulas (described in 5.2.2). Here are two examples in response to the scenario that a customer has already changed her departure four times. Even though they feel annoyed (according to the scenario) with their customer, negative politeness (G) is most preferred. However, bald on record (H) is the second preferred strategy.

Table 5.7 Travel agents' responses to their customer about changing flight

Responses/Politeness strategy	Comments on the language features
<p>G: Could you reconsider again, and think about it make it clear you don't have to call me many times, but think it. When is the perfect date you want and call me. I will book the seat for you. You don't have to feel that you not get a seat. I will do it for you. Please make sure the exact date that you want. Because if you change many times the airline will make extra fee the changing date fee. I don't want you have</p>	<p>G starts his speech with a polite indirect speech act (request). However, his choice of words (make it clear you don't have to call me many times, but think it) also conveys his feeling of annoyance, even though he is not explicit. This is achieved through ellipsis, or omission of polite phrases and use of direct commands after the initial polite request. Since his customer has changed her flight many times, he ends his speech by giving a mild warning</p>

to pay this extra fee. (travel E1-7) (negative politeness – conventional indirect)	regarding the next change (the airline will make extra fee).
H: This is the last time that you can change. Are you sure you would like to change. This is your final , make sure you would like to change for the last time. You cannot change anymore . (travel H1-7) (bald on record)	As described earlier, travel agents are straightforward people. They speak out what they think and many do not mitigate their speech (see 5.2.2 and table 5.3). This response can confirm this. H uses an expressive locution to convey a warning and shows that in this situation he has power over his customer (words in bold type) and will not allow him/her to change the flight again. H does not have to complain the customer, but his utterance limits the customer’s freedom of action (You cannot change anymore). However, it does not seem to threaten the hearer’s face and is generally in keeping with the rather direct approach taken by travel agents.

4. The following section (I and J) contains representative responses of two groups of students. According to this situation (students do not agree with their teachers’ suggestion), role play students have less time to think about their response so bald on record is used in a higher number whereas the majority of DCT students apply positive politeness by giving reasons.

Table 5.8 Students’ responses to their teacher about a place to do their internship

Responses/Politeness strategy	Comments on the language features
I: I know you want me to do it in a hotel but I don’t like at all and I think I can do well at a travel agency. (DCT, university C7-8) (positive politeness –give reason)	I and J use different approaches in disagreeing with their teacher. I does not attack or criticize her teacher, instead uses a psychological approach by showing she understands her teacher’s good intentions (I know you want me to do it in a hotel). She continues by giving reasons why an alternative is desirable in her view. At the same time she shows her assertiveness (I don’t like at all) against her teacher’s suggestion. Even though she wants to insist that she can do well in what she likes, using ‘ I think ’ can redress the degree of her

	disagreement. This can be an effective or appropriate strategy to persuade or change her teacher's mind.
J: I would like to know why you didn't agree me to internship in travel agency. (role play, university E3-7) (bald on record)	J's word choice ' I would like to know ' is an indirect locution and could be categorized as protecting the hearer's face, but ' why you didn't agree me ' sounds slightly blunt and implies criticism of the teacher. J does not try to negotiate with her teacher as I does.

5. The data also reflect the work and personal/group identity of the participants. Student responses in the scenario where their friend loses their book show that students try to maintain their relationship among friends. The majority of students use 'avoid disagreement' in positive politeness strategy.

Table 5.9 Students' responses to their friend who lost their book

Responses/Politeness strategy	Comments on the language features
K: I'm not happy that you lost my book but you are my best friend so let's it down and don't think about it , okey? (DCT, university C2-7) (positive politeness –avoid disagreement)	K and L's statements are similar in meaning and reflect the relationship between friends. Even though K refers to her unhappy feeling later she is conciliatory (so let's it down and don't think about it). K states the value of friendship (you are my best friend). L just consoles her friend without saying how she feels. ' You don't worry ' probably reflects the Thai structure where the subject (you) can be kept or omitted. The two responses show that they avoid assigning blame or mentioning their friend's fault or carelessness for losing their books. Both K and L end with a solution intended to make their friend feel better. As Lakoff (1973, cited in Fraser, 1990, p. 224) points out, 'making the listener feel good' is also a politeness principle.
L: You don't worry and I can buy a new one . (role play, university D2-7) (positive politeness –avoid disagreement)	

6. The following example (M) shows hotel people need to enforce hotel regulation and at the same time show their hospitality. In order to get over the possible contradictions, negative politeness with different strategies is mainly used.

Table 5.10 Hotel staff's responses to a smoking guest

Responses/Politeness strategy	Comments on the language features
<p>M: Mr. Smith, due to the law and regulation of Thailand, smoking on this... as your room is locating on the non-smoking floor, and smoking on this floor is prohibited. So, may I offer a room move to a smoking floor instead? (hotel A1-6) (negative politeness-rule)</p>	<p>We encounter here a formula that hotel staff use in dealing with a smoking guest. The way M addresses the guest (Mr. Smith) shows that she maintains distance and shows deference to him. Then she invokes the law on smoking in public. By using the expression 'Smoking on this floor is prohibited', M wants to avoid directly putting the blame on the interlocutor. Her utterance shows her illocutionary intention in that she wishes to stop Mr. Smith from smoking in the room. Blaming the guest or complaining about his behaviour must not be done, so the effective way is to use the law or rule to stop the guest. We can see the pattern which many staff use in this situation: cite the law and offer to change the room.</p>

We have seen the picture of the participants' apparent pragmatic competence in several of the scenarios. Kasper (1997) holds the view that "pragmatic knowledge simply develops alongside lexical and grammatical knowledge" and that "some pragmatic knowledge is universal and other aspects may be successfully transferred from the learners' L1" (p.2). I quite agree with Kasper on this point. In this study, the essential knowledge used to get the data is the English language. Most participants here use English in their work or study, so it is not too difficult for them to retrieve it for purposes of communication. They have learnt other knowledge and skills from their experience and apply it in their life. If we look at the valid responses here, the participants have a good enough knowledge of English to be able to produce comprehensible responses (85.40%). Therefore, we can say that most participants in this study possess pragmatic competence (see 5.3.1) and are able to perform basic functions in English. However, if we look at the data, bald on record (18.14%) is often used, and one way we can interpret this is that it may be the participants' personal character that they want their message to get across in a clear and unambiguous fashion. Alternatively, using bald on record can be interpreted as lack of linguistic proficiency.

5.4 Face threatening acts relating to this study

Requests, complaints and disagreements can be seen as face threatening acts. Brown and Levinson (1987, pp.65-67) state that requests threaten the hearer's negative face whereas complaint and disagreement threaten the hearer's positive face. The data show that in scenarios relating to requests, respondents mainly use negative politeness (section 4.5). This is especially true for hotel people and students (in both role play and DCT) whereas travel agents vary the use of negative politeness, positive politeness, and bald on record in most situations. Grundy (2000) describes that asking someone for something or complaining about the quality of their work can threaten the face of the person who is directed to so the language use should be redressed to compensate the threat to face and satisfied the face wants of the interlocutors (p.156). Complaints and disagreements involve the hearer's feelings, so the speaker needs to balance or mitigate their words when carrying them out. However, it depends on norm, situation and context. Brown and Levinson (1987, p.67) further explain that there is overlap, because some FTAs such as complaints or requests for personal information, threaten both positive and negative face. Even though complaints threaten the hearer's positive face, the majority of participants use negative politeness to express the complaint with both younger and older interlocutors. For disagreement, the responses vary among three politeness strategies (positive, negative and bald on record). There is no one strategy that prevails for the three groups. Each group's language use reflects their profession (discussed in 5.2), and there is also variation within each group (according to factors such as the size of the hotel, experience, or English proficiency). The strategies used in dealing with complaint and disagreement scenarios are influenced for a given individual by personality and career background, as well as by the scenario itself.

5.4.1 Requests

Requesting is a part of people's lives, and people make requests all the time to other people at different degrees of social proximity. When learning a foreign language, one needs to learn how to do it in an efficient and polite way. Koike (1989b) stresses that requests are important to beginning L2 learners, since in their future interaction with native speakers making requests will be prominent (p.280). This reminds me of student life many years ago (in the 1970s). At that time, grammar based teaching was

emphasized and the way I learned to request was to use “I would like...” or “Please...”. The role of “can you/could you” as a request was not emphasized. It was only during my first experience abroad, when I overheard a native speaker make a request and realized that “can you/could you” could be used as a form of a polite request (e.g. purchasing goods). Now, we will look at language use in making requests for each group.

1. Hotel staff need to maintain a relationship with guests that is formal yet welcoming, and this is no doubt the motivation for mainly using negative politeness in the three request scenarios. This may be possible that they expand this strategy (when speaking English) used at their work place (with the guests) to other people. The data show that their preferred strategies in requests are ‘apologize’, ‘conventional indirect’ and ‘please command’ depending on the scenario. However, they are like other groups when making requests to friends (i.e. of the same status), when positive politeness is used as a second strategy. For some scenarios there is no need to be too formal or distant in dealing with friends or same status interlocutors. Even though many hotel people can differentiate the interlocutor’s status, some may have absorbed the language used in the hotel and apply it to others outside of the work context. Perhaps a weakness of the survey methodology is evident here, since respondents must imagine the informal situation while the role play itself took place in the hotel. Here are some examples.

Table 5.11 A makes a request to her younger cousin who is playing loud Music

B and C make a request to their friends who keep on talking

Responses/Politeness strategy	Comments on the language features
A: Could you please turn off the music because I need to sleep? (hotel H3-1)	A, B and C use fairly formal request forms when talking to their younger cousin and friend. In the context, A and B use polite directive speech (‘could you’ and ‘please’). Actually, they do not have to be that polite or formal (could you) to talk to the people they know well (their younger cousin/friend). For C as well, ‘ may I ’ sounds very formal and looks like asking permission from a person who is in a higher position. We can see here that some hotel workers speak in a formal style to everybody when speaking English. Of course, in real life they probably have little
B: Could you please come back again this time now I’m busy I cannot talk to you? (hotel H3-9)	
C: Excuse me, may I pay attention to my paperwork a few minutes first? And then after that I will talk to you, because I would like to finish clearly. That’s ok, uh? (hotel C1-9)	

(*all are negative politeness – conventional indirect)	occasion to use informal English actively.
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Generally, hotel participants have no problem in making requests when given these scenarios. Bangkok hotel participants especially are able to produce requests to convey the necessary information, and they quite often back up the request by stating a reason (see example in table 5.22 or in appendix 5).

2. For the travel people, the nature of the work (e.g. tour guides should be fun and friendly) and their personality (open and straightforward as observed during the role play) affect their language use, which is often direct and concise, as in the examples below (D-F). In the request scenarios, with the same and higher status interlocutors, negative politeness, positive politeness and bald on record are used in similar proportions. With requests to a younger person, negative politeness is mainly used. When compared to other groups of participants in request scenarios, travel agents use bald on record more often (see table 4.3). Here are some examples of bald on record responses in the scenario where a friend's interruptions hinder them from doing work.

Table 5.12 Travel agents' responses to their friend who keeps on talking

Responses/Politeness strategy	Comments on the language features
D: It's OK. I have not too much time for you but I can talk to you. (travel A3-9) (bald on record)	The three travel agents use bald on record strategy or explicit illocution. D's response is the least harsh among the three here because she begins with a conciliatory phrase and offers her availability ' but I can talk to you '. However, her statement ' I have not much time for you ' can discourage her hearer. E and F are more to the point, but E uses a commissive expression (talk to you later), while F does not. In asking ' how many minutes ' F seems to have no intention of saving her interlocutor's face.
E: Right now. I have a lot of work. Today is Monday so talk to you later I need to finish work first. (travel C1-9) (bald on record)	
F: Hello, I'm busy now. Do you have something to talk? It's urgent. How many minutes? If it's not urgent, we can talk later. (travel H1-9) (bald on record)	

This should not be surprising for travel agents whose responses reflect more of the speaker's own personality and approach to human interaction (see 5.2.2 and table 5.3). That is why bald on record is used more frequently than it is by other groups. In general, travel people make their responses to the point, depending on individual inclination as well as the level of their English proficiency.

3. Most students' responses used 'conventional indirect' forms (can you/could you) - a strategy in negative politeness, especially to the lower and higher status hearer (table 4.6 and 4.7), only a very few expressing their requests with "I want" for example "*I want to change the dish please it is very salty*" (DCT, university C4-2). Using 'conventional indirect' for request probably reflects English teaching trends, which have brought a focus on communicative and functional approaches. This is the result of the development of English language teaching in Thailand, as elsewhere. Since 1996, English has been prescribed in Thai schools as compulsory from grade one onward. The approach to language teaching has been described as functional-communicative with an eclectic orientation (Wongsothorn *et al.*, 2002, p.108). This means it is not grammar oriented, but not strictly communicative or oriented to one specific area, like "English for tourism" either. From the data, many students often use "can you/could you" in request and other scenarios. Students may be exposed to English-language film and music more often, which allows them to hear these expressions in use. As mentioned earlier, the role of "can you/could you" is understood by many Thai students as expressing ability, not request. That is why a lot of them use 'please' in requests (e.g. "*Please keep the voice down.*" - DCT, university B7-6) because it has the same meaning in Thai which is generally recognized as polite. Other, more elaborate request structures are rarely found in this study, for instance "I am wondering whether you could...". These expressions may be too long and the structure too complicated for people whose English is not good. The key reason that blocks them from using these expressions is the meaning of those statements is not in accordance or equivalent to the Thai meaning, so they are not easy to remember.

5.4.1.1 Comparing politeness strategies used in request scenarios with other studies

1. Seniority (status) and politeness strategy

Wongwarangkul (2000) found in “Analysis of the nature of interlanguage pragmatics in choice making for requesting strategies by Thai EFL learner” that the age of the addressees in particular determines the Thai speakers’ choice of politeness strategies in both Thai and English. Seniority of age in Thailand is one of the most prominent value systems. Thus, the age difference of interlocutors influences or determines their L1 speech and is predicted to do so in their L2. The data of my study show that the respondents are able to choose strategies that suit higher status hearers. Most predominately use negative politeness (91.66% for hotel staff, 78.57% role play students, 50% DCT ones and 40% travel agents – table 4.3, request 3). The heart of negative politeness strategy is respect behaviour (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p.129). That is, the speaker is concerned with the hearer’s freedom of action and tries to minimize the imposition on the hearer. In this case we can understand why negative politeness is mainly preferred. One important reason is Thai hierarchical social norms which are expressed in both language and gesture (see chapter 1, section 1.3.7). Seniority and status are important and affect language use. As mentioned earlier, there are many different personal pronouns and different levels of polite language used with different groups, age and status of people. Another reason is the nature of the participants’ work, which requires showing deference and minimizing intrusion when making requests, especially for the hotel staff and students. There is no doubt that this influences their choice of words. This is in accordance with Panpothong’s (1999) finding that Thais are more reluctant to refuse someone of higher status or a close friend, due to the values of status and solidarity with peers.

2. Thai characteristics and politeness strategy

We will look at another study that compares Thai characteristics with those of native speakers in making requests. Chakorn’s (2006) findings on “Persuasive and politeness strategies in cross-cultural letters” were that Thai request letters written in English by Thai speakers in Thai business context, as compared to those of native English speakers, use more negative politeness. Thais employ more indirect, deferential and self-effacing strategies in business letters. Chakorn’s results are in accord with the

ones from the three request scenarios in the present study. Generally, negative politeness dominates in all groups (section 4.5). ‘Conventional indirect’, ‘please command’ and ‘apologize’ in negative politeness are mainly used to deal with request scenarios. Even though the linguistic realization of politeness strategies in Chakorn’s study (being deferential and self-effacing) may differ slightly from this study, such responses also constitute negative politeness in that their primary concern is to respect the hearer’s negative face wants. Chakorn’s method focuses on formal written documents (letters), but this study makes use of both written (DCT) and spoken (role play) language.

When making requests, all groups mainly use negative politeness (except travel people, who vary strategies). This suggests that respondents are aware that they are going to disturb their interlocutor (by asking him/her to do something) so negative politeness as an avoidance-based approach is mainly used. That means they try to avoid interfering with the addressee’s freedom of action. Parallels can be drawn with the Thai concept of “*krengjai*,” a cultural characteristic evoked in such situations. It means “to be considerate” or “afraid of offending” or “bothering other people” (see further discussion in 5.4.2.1).

5.4.2 Complaints

Complaints threaten the hearer’s positive face, since they express displeasure at some undesirable or annoying situation. We often hear complaints in service contexts like restaurants or hotels when things go wrong or do not go as people expect, but of course complaints also occur in non-institutional contexts. In this study three complaint scenarios for each group were created and related to interaction in daily life. Negative politeness is the main strategy of most groups in response. If we look at the results in more detail, when making complaints to those of lower or higher status, all groups strongly use negative politeness (see table 4.3 and section 4.10.2). This might be due to the factor of social distance between the speaker and hearer, in this case a waiter for lower status and teacher, hotel guest and travel customer for higher status, which makes them feel that they need to respect the other party even when complaining.

1. The hotel staff are the only group employing mainly negative politeness (76% see table 5.14) in all three complaint scenarios. When they deal with the guest who is making noise, these participants exclusively use negative politeness (92%), and nobody

chooses bald on record (discussed in 5.2.1 and see table 5.1). This is understandable, since in the service industry complaining about guests is to be avoided. Hotel personnel are supervised strictly (according to one hotel manager) and have strategies to deal with expected situations (e.g. a smoking guest). This is most likely why negative politeness is mainly used by hotel personnel.

2. For travel people, negative politeness is highly used with the lower and higher status hearer. Even though dealing with their customer, some of them (26.66%) use bald on record to react to their customer while no hotel people use this strategy when dealing with their guest. The scenario and the nature of each travel worker may affect their choice of words. Complaining to hearers of the same status (their friend and co-worker), travel agents mainly use bald on record and negative politeness in similar proportions. Seven (46.66%) out of 15 people chose language that was bald on record to point out mistakes to their typist co-worker. This can show that complaining to the same status interlocutor in their office, nearly half of them feel more comfortable with bald on record. We can see some of their language use in the examples below (G and H).

Table 5.13 Travel agents' complaints to a typist who has made mistakes several times

Responses/Politeness strategy	Comments on the language features
G: Again I told you I think more than 3 or 4 times. I will tell you again. You must do by yourself. (travel B1-2) (bald on record)	Both G and H use bald on record strategy, but take different approaches. G's expressive speech act conveys blame by stating the typist's mistake clearly. 'Again' emphasizes G's annoyance with the recurrent mistakes as does 'more than 3 or 4 times'.
H: Stop, relax take for 2-3 minutes after that back to work again. (travel A1-2) (bald on record)	The content of this response is directive and criticizes the mistakes. H's utterance presupposes that her hearer knows what is happening related to the context. Therefore, H tries to prevent any more mistakes by giving a series of instructions to the typist.

3. The data from both groups of students in one complaint scenario show the relationship between friends. According to Hatch (1992), most people avoid complaining, because it is difficult to complain and still maintain and give face (p.142).

Hatch's statement is true in this case. In a complaint to the same status hearer (a friend lost their book - table 4.3, complaint 2), students show their solidarity, especially role play students, as this group uses a high level of positive politeness (64.28%). DCT students also use three strategies ranging from positive politeness (24.35%) and bald on record (23.07%) to negative politeness (20.51%) in a similar portion. Many of them structure their sentence by using 'can you/could you', 'please', or 'excuse me/I'm sorry' which are strategies in negative politeness. For bald on record, some of them may like to express themselves directly, and some may have low English proficiency so their responses may not sound pleasant. But in this case, interacting with a friend who lost their book, we can see many of them value the importance of friendship and 'avoid disagreement' in positive politeness is used more than other strategies to avoid conflict with their friend (see examples in table 5.9). Using a high level of positive politeness in this scenario suggests that many students are concerned with maintaining friendships.

5.4.2.1 Comparing politeness strategies used in complaint scenarios with other studies

Culture orientation and politeness strategy

We can compare the results of Olshtain and Weinbach's (1993, pp.111-113) study of complaints to those of the present study in order to see what politeness strategies Thai respondents tend to prefer compared to the three different cultural groups (British, American and Hebrew). They found that participants opted out less than they chose to express censure. About two-thirds of each group chose to realize the speech act of censure. About one-third opted out, or in other words preferred to say nothing in the given situation.

If we look at the three complaint scenarios from the table below, very few participants chose to opt out (not do the FTA), 2.22% of travel agents, 4% of hotel personnel, 2.13% of DCT students ignored and did not want to say anything. This reflects the fact that Olshtain and Weinbach allowed speakers to opt out if they wanted to say nothing, while here they were asked to provide answers in every scenario.

Table 5.14 Complaint and politeness strategy of travel agents and hotel personnel

Status	Travel agents (n=15)					Hotel personnel (n=25)			
Situation	PP	NP	B	O	N*	PP	NP	B	N*
1 complaint		14 (93.33)	1 (6.66)				20 (80)	3 (12)	
2 complaint	1 (6.66)	6 (40)	7 (46.66)			5 (20)	14 (56)	3 (12)	3 (12)
3 complaint	2 (13.33)	7 (46.66)	4 (26.66)	1 (6.66)	1 (6.66)		23 (92)		
average %	3 (6.66)	27 (60)	12 (26.66)	1 (2.22)	1 (2.22)	5 (6.66)	57 (76)	6 (8)	3 (4)

Olshtain and Weinbach (ibid.) mention that from the previous studies, Israeli participants appeared to be much more direct and positive politeness oriented, British more indirect and negative politeness oriented, and Americans falling somewhere in between. The participants in this study express what Olshtein and Weinbach term *censure*, in which negative politeness is the most preferred strategy (hotel personnel 76%, travel agents 60%, DCT student 53.84% and role play ones 35.71%), followed by bald on record and positive politeness. Indirect or off record were not popular. From the data, the majority of participants in this study seem to be oriented to negative politeness and bald on record. Therefore, the politeness strategy chosen by Thai participants seem to differ significantly from those of the other three cultures. Perhaps cultural identity or characteristics is a determining factor here.

Here, most participants prefer using negative politeness strategies to deal with not only the complaint but also request and disagreement scenarios. Some possible reasons that can explain why these participants (we can assume most Thais as well) tend to prefer negative politeness strategy to deal with complaint and other FTAs is one of the Thai basic values called '*krengjai*' (being considerate or feeling afraid to bother or offend other people). Klausner (1993, cited in Foley, 2005) describes '*krengjai*' as a combination of diffidence, deference and consideration merged with respect (p.229). This value is arguably seen by many Thais to be a core component of Thai identity. When Thai students abroad live with other international students in the same flat, a common topic of discussion among them is that some cultures do not have the feeling of '*krengjai*'. For example, we normally do not want to play loud music, talk on the phone too loudly, or open or close the door too loudly especially late at night, because we are afraid that other people are studying or sleeping. This is because we feel '*krengjai*' to other people. In the case of dealing with FTAs, the social tendency in the

Thai context would be to behave in a '*krengjai*' way, that is we feel sorry or uncomfortable if we have to openly complain, make a request or show disagreement. However, I believe that every society has this, but it functions in different ways.

The data from this study show that the participants use 'apologize', 'please' or 'can you/could you' in a high level for each complaint scenario. We can see that these strategies are used to avoid conflict, which is in accordance with the concept of negative politeness, that is the avoidance-based approach. Bald on record is the second strategy used in complaint and other situations. We have to accept that it is the nature of people anywhere that some are straight and like to tackle things directly. Moreover, as this study is conducted in English, participants have different levels of English proficiency. The ones who have limited vocabulary may not be able to formulate statements as they would do in Thai, so their English messages may sound blunt.

5.4.3 Disagreements

Disagreements threaten the hearer's positive face and are a reflection of a preceding unsatisfactory situation or act. Participants here generally react in disagreement situations by using negative politeness, positive politeness and bald on record. All groups of participants use positive politeness in a higher proportion for the three disagreement scenarios than request and complaint ones. This is surprising in that even the hotel personnel and role-play students who rarely use positive politeness in the other scenarios do so here. One reason is disagreeing can make people uneasy, especially when dealing with others with whom they have to maintain at least outwardly friendly relations. Hotel people are a special case, as they have been trained to realize that their guests are their 'god' and guests are always right (to save the guests' face) so disagreement with guests must be avoided at all costs. Generally, Thais avoid showing disagreement. Charoenngam and Jablin (1999) explain that "many Thai people would prefer not to say anything if their comments tend to lead to conflict or interpersonal resentment" (p.385: see also Komin, 1991). The data show that many participants try to avoid disagreement by using strategies which make their statements softer to reduce the disagreement or conflict with the hearers.

1. Hotel personnel are the only group who use negative politeness in a higher degree than other strategies in dealing with hearers of all status levels for all three functions. Positive politeness, which is not often found in requests and complaints is

used at a similar frequency to bald on record in disagreement scenarios. It could be the scenarios that cause some of them to use a positive politeness strategy, for example giving a discount to demanding guests (discussed in 5.2.1). For other disagreement scenarios, the hotel staff try to soften their comments by using mitigational devices (e.g. I think, maybe), especially to interlocutors who are of lower status. We can see this in the scenario with the cleaner's new hairstyle, 48 % (12 out of 25 people) use 'hedge' strategy in negative politeness to deal with this scenario, trying not to make their hearer feel bad or disappointed. Here are some examples.

Table 5.15 Hotel staff's opinions regarding a hotel cleaner's new hairstyle

Responses/Politeness strategy	Comments on the language features
<p>I: Your hair today is fine, but I think it's uh maybe you make it curl, cut it shorter, maybe makes you more beautiful. (hotel C3-3) (negative politeness- hedge)</p>	<p>I begins with a supportive comment in a polite and neutral way, then shows her opinion with a mitigating phrase (but I think). Her words still show that she hesitates to give some advice (uh maybe). She tries to be constructive and does not show any criticism or negative feedback.</p>
<p>J: OK, beautiful, but you know, like sometime when you make up the rooms maybe when you come down, maybe the hair it's not nice when the guests see something like that. (hotel A2-3) (negative politeness- hedge)</p>	<p>J is criticizing the cleaner's hair style because it is not appropriate for her work. However, she starts her speech by giving a compliment (beautiful). Then 'but you know' introduces a contrast from what she has said before. J is criticizing the cleaner's hair style which is not appropriate for her work. 'Maybe' put before 'the hair is not nice' can reduce the admonishing tone.</p>

2. Travel people also use positive politeness for disagreement scenarios more than the complaint ones. Actually, positive politeness and negative politeness are used in almost the same proportions. For the situation of disagreeing with their customer, no travel participants use bald on record (discussed in 5.2.2), the only case of this among the nine scenarios (see examples in table 5.2). Although they generally express themselves in a straightforward manner, when a customer gets angry, they know how to deal with him/her.

3. DCT and role play students have different strategies in dealing with each disagreement scenario. Disagreeing with the same and higher status (their friend and

teacher), role play students prefer bald on record and most DCT students prefer positive politeness (see examples in table 5.8). On the contrary, the majority of DCT students prefer bald on record while the role play ones like negative politeness when dealing with the lower status hearer, their younger sister, about her revealing clothes. We can say that there is variation in each group of student in choosing politeness strategies for each scenario.

Table 5.16 Students disagree with a younger sister wearing revealing clothes

Responses/Politeness strategy	Comments on the language features
<p>K: Can you change the dress because it's so sexy? (role play, university C1-3) (negative politeness – conventional indirect)</p>	<p>This scenario presents a sensitive issue. The directive expression 'can you' indicates a request rather than a command. And at the same time K also gives a reason (because) to show his concern. His speech can affect the hearer's positive face and also make her feel embarrassed if his words are not carefully selected. This is a face to face encounter, so he avoids criticizing his sister directly.</p>
<p>L: This is impolite wear. You should change. (DCT, university B16-3) (bald on record)</p>	<p>L's utterance is an expressive speech act that is critical of the hearer's dress and states the need for change in a direct or imperative way. That is, the way the hearer dresses is not acceptable. She does not redress her words, which could therefore affect the hearer's positive face. However, since this is not a confrontational situation, L may not feel like she has to be concerned with her sister's face.</p>

5.4.3.1 Comparing politeness strategies used in disagreement scenarios with other studies

1. Disagreement scenarios and politeness strategies

Phukanachana's (2004) study on "Politeness in Thai culture: Strategies of disagreeing" develops eight propositions about politeness strategies used in Thai when disagreeing with others. Three choices out of her eight propositions are relevant to the ones that have been found in this study. 1) "**It is acceptable for superiors to use bald on record strategy when opposing their subordinates**" (p.13). Here choice of strategy serves as a linguistic marker for expressing superior status (Kirsch, 1975).

And the subordinates can accept it because they have been trained to listen to the seniors and accept what they say because the latter have more experience or power, even if they disagree. It is debatable whether, in the scenarios expressing disagreement with a younger interlocutor, the respondents will act according to this cultural prerogative and put themselves in the “senior” position. Indeed, only the group of DCT students use bald on record more often than other strategies in this situation (telling their younger sister about her revealing clothes – see example L in table 5.16). Even though role-play students do use bald on record (5 out of 14 students – 35.71%), negative politeness (6 students or 42.85%) is used slightly more often (example K in table 5.16). The hotel and travel people on the other hand do not often use bald on record in a high level when disagreeing with someone younger. 2) **“To harmonize interpersonal relationships as well as to deny being aggressive, Thais use a positive politeness strategy such as humour when opposing others”** (p.14). As mentioned earlier, all groups use positive politeness strategies (‘avoid disagreement’, ‘give reason’, ‘give gifts to hearer’ - voucher, discount) in a higher level for three disagreement scenarios. Komin (1990b) describes Thai social interactions in an ideal sense as pleasant, light, possibly superficial, yet fun and humorous in nature. This behaviour can be observed from small talk, gossip, jokes, and teasing. Even though in general Thais like to joke around, there is only one travel participant in my study who reacts to a disagreement scenario in a joking way. In this case he gives his opinion to a cleaner in his office who asks him about her new hair style *“What happen to you. Oh beautiful you changed your head.”* (in a joking tone of voice- travel B1-3). When doing the role play, the participants were not familiar with the interviewer(s), so they may not have ventured to make jokes and may think it would be inappropriate or it may be difficult for them to translate humour from Thai to English. 3) **“To mitigate disagreement expressions, the speaker uses mixed strategies of positive politeness (claiming common ground) and negative politeness (being conventionally indirect)”** (p.16). The participants in the present study use positive politeness, negative politeness and bald on record in disagreement scenarios. Used most frequently are ‘avoid disagreement’, ‘give reason’ and ‘give gifts to hearer’ (discount or voucher) in positive politeness; ‘hedge’ and ‘apologize’ in negative politeness. This depends on the scenario, however. For example, ‘hedge’ is often used to mitigate disagreement with the younger

status hearer, as in this example “*I think you should be cut a little bit hair here or here... I think it may be a bit more beautiful for you.*” (hotel A5-3). To disagree with a higher status hearer, many speakers use ‘apologize for doing the FTA’ strategy as the linguistic realization, in other words they ask for forgiveness before voicing their opinion. The main ideas or strategies for mitigating the disagreement utterance of the two studies (Phukanchana’s and my study) are the same, but the sub-strategies or linguistic realization are different, so any variation of strategies could be due to the different scenarios presented to participants.

2. Mitigational devices and disagreement scenarios

Probably due to lack of experience in negotiating in English or limitations in vocabulary and communicative skills, many non-native speakers compared to English native speakers have problems in expressing disagreement tactfully (depending on their proficiency in English). Kreutel’s (2007) study of expressions of disagreement between native speakers of American English and ESL students at different levels found that non native speakers tend to use mitigational devices such as hedges (e.g. well, just, I think) or explanations less frequently than native speakers, but often resort to undesirable features such as the blunt opposite or message abandonment. The data from disagreement scenarios (table below) show that travel agents, hotel people and DCT students use more ‘hedges’ with the lower and same status hearers, but only minimally with higher status hearers, whereas role play students do not use them at all (except in one instance).

Table 5.17 Strategies used in disagreement scenarios

Status Situation	Bald on record				Apologize				Hedge			
	T	H	S1	S2	T	H	S1	S2	T	H	S1	S2
1 disagreement	2 (13.33)	5 (20)	5 (35.71)	26 (33.33)					6 (40)	9 (36)	1 (7.14)	16 (20.51)
2 disagreement	6 (40)	5 (20)	7 (50)	4 (5.12)					4 (26.66)	12 (48)		11 (14.10)
3 disagreement		4 (16.66)	6 (42.85)	18 (23.07)	5 (33.33)	6 (25)	2 (14.28)	8 (10.25)		1 (4.16)		7 (8.97)
average	8 (17.77)	14 (18.91)	18 (42.85)	48 (20.51)	5 (11.11)	6 (8.10)	2 (4.76)	8 (3.41)	10 (22.22)	22 (29.72)	1 (2.39)	34 (14.52)

T= travel agents (15); H= hotel personnel (25); S1= role play students (14); S2= DCT students (78)
1= lower status, 2= same status, 3= higher status

On the contrary, the data (also in table 4.3) show that many groups use bald on record as the first or second strategy in dealing with disagreement scenarios. This seems to support Beebe and Takahashi’s (1989) finding that non-native speakers’

strategy choice is shorter, more critical, direct and harsh sounding than that of native speakers. My data show that some participants do not seem concerned how the hearer would feel, but just speak out to show their true opinion, so their statements are not mitigated. The reason could be they do not know any other way to lessen disagreement, as their linguistic resources may be limited and they may lack pragmatic competence. They may not have skills in dealing with disagreement issues. Or they just want their words to get through to the hearer. Due to these reasons, when showing disagreement, their speech is quite often harsh and direct, and as a result does not save the hearer's positive face.

3. The role of 'I'm sorry' in disagreement scenarios

From her finding, Kreutel (2007) further explained that "the non-native speakers expressed regret solely by mean of 'I'm sorry', a feature which is usually associated with an apology on the speaker's part. It implies failure and a morally weaker position and was thus not considered an adequate means for disagreement expression" (p.19). Here, many responses also show this usage; for instance, "*I'm sorry I am disagree with you because I cannot do well in a hotel*" (DCT, university C5-8); "*Sorry teacher, I don't agree with your thought because I like to do travel agency*" (role play, university C2-8). In this case, students confront their teacher with a different opinion, so that 'I'm sorry' is used when expressing views that contradict their interlocutors, especially those who are older or have more power. I personally do not think that saying 'I'm sorry' when disagreeing shows that the speaker is in a weaker position, apart from showing humility, 'I'm sorry' can reduce the aggressiveness on the hearer's part. It is a polite expression to show that the speaker would like to share his/her idea which is different from the interlocutor's. However, Kreutel (p.19) stresses that mitigated disagreement can be taught and learned effectively. In my opinion, even though mitigation techniques can be taught to non-native speakers, complaint and disagreement in a second language require skills and experience to give voice to conflicting views successfully and appropriately. Some people find that airing complaints to friends or neighbours, especially regarding sensitive issues, may lead to a break their relationship with the interlocutor (depending on context), while others are able to maintain the relationship.

The responses show that the three groups of participants know they have ways of dealing with face threatening acts. For example, some scenarios entail a threat to harm their organization, so negative or positive politeness is employed. The language use and in particular the politeness strategies used in this study reflect the respondents' profession and their English proficiency. Even though bald on record is used as the second preferred strategy, it also represents the nature of the human being who approaches matters directly.

In the wider analysis, other factors that affect politeness strategies chosen in each situation may be organizational, situational, individual or cultural in origin. Geluykens and Kraft (2007) confirm that speech behaviour is not only influenced by factors such as situational context and the severity of the offence (whether the occurrence that triggered the complaint was something minor or rather serious), but also by sociocultural factors such as the social role relationship and the gender of the interlocutor. A speaker's choice of phrases and politeness strategies is influenced by who they are talking to (p.145). This is generally true, especially in Thai because Thais have quite well defined levels of language for use with different groups (described in chapter 1, section 1.3.7). However, when dealing with face threatening acts in English, as the data in this study show, the use of bald on record strategy is preferred as the second strategy so we know that it is not easy for the participants (and many Thais as well) to find appropriate words that sound polite as in the first language. Here the level of English competence is crucial. Some Thai people may enjoy speaking or writing in English because they do not have to employ status markers, in effect do not have to lower themselves as in Thai. A clear example is when some younger Thai students studying here (Newcastle University) write email to me, they write it in English rather than Thai, but end their sentence by using Thai polite particle '*kha*' or '*khrap*' depending on whether the writer is male or female. Smalley (1994) similarly remarks that "some well-educated Thai are even rumored to speak English in audience with the king so as not to speak disrespectfully in standard Thai or be guilty of flagrant malapropisms" (p.55).

5.5 Sociological variables and politeness strategy

One of the research questions concerns how the sociological variables (power, social distance and rank of imposition) of the interlocutor affect the speaker's language use. Thai society is hierarchical and thus power and social distance affect the choice of language people use in social interaction (discussed in chapter 1, section 1.3.1). To investigate how this works with Thais speaking English, I analyse the data using Brown and Levinson's (1987, pp.74-83) three sociological variables. Social distance, power and rank of imposition can be used to explain the choice of language used in this study. We will take into account factors which clearly affect each group of participants. Power can affect the language choice of students to their teacher and the hotel or travel worker to their guest or customer. Social distance affects the hotel personnel and travel agents speaking to their customers. Rank of imposition, or what Rees-Miller (2000) calls 'severity' of situation affects all groups in this study.

The scenarios used in the role play and questionnaire were designed to produce examples of language use in the context of face threatening acts with interlocutors of three levels of relative status: lower, identical, and higher status. Status here is simply defined as the social role or position that each person is holding at the time of interaction (in their workplace or school). Lower status in this study is represented by the younger cousin, waiter and cleaner, a different figure for each group. The same status is that of friend or colleague, and higher status is people in the workplace: hotel guests for hotel staff, customers for travel agents and teachers for students. We assume that this status structure exists in Thai society and affects the way we use language. The relationship or status of these people is frequently unequal or asymmetrical, meaning that one is in a more powerful position than others (Mesthrie *et al.*, 2000, p.203). For example, in this case the hotel guests are considered to hold higher status than the hotel staff, because they are the customers of the hotel and hotel staff's job is to provide them with service. The guests' higher status is effective as long as they fill that role. A similar relationship pertains between the travel agents and their customers. Their relationship takes the form of a business exchange. However, the role between students and their teachers is somewhat different, since the relationship is a long-term one that can last even after the students finish their course. Students still show deference to their teachers as the people who teach them or give knowledge to

them, in contrast to the short-term commercial exchange (customer loyalty aside) of the other two groups. We will look at some details that power, social distance and rank of imposition affect the participants' language use.

Power: Teachers intrinsically have power over students, especially in Thailand. Thai children have been taught to respect and obey their teachers since entering school. Perhaps for this reason most students are not motivated to ask questions or raise problems in the class. From my experience as a student and teacher, disagreeing with the teacher is rarely seen. This is because Thai students have never been trained to ask or disagree in the class and may be afraid that their question will challenge or test the teacher's knowledge. As for teachers, many may not be used to being disagreed with in the class, when any students raise questions or shows different opinions, it may be hard for some of them to accept that those students really have inquiring minds, instead perceiving their questions or disagreement as face threatening. This may be connected with a supposedly Buddhist teaching that arguing with one's parents or with the person who imparts knowledge is a sin. Foley (2005) describes the status between teacher and students in Thailand as like the hierarchical status in language, in which both status and respect are expressed through vocabulary to show one's status and social relationships. There is also hierarchy in the educational context as well, where the status of teachers is quite high in relation not only to students but also to parents (p.228), and the system does not train children to disagree or express opinions in public. This situation is reflected in the data, since in scenarios containing student and teacher interaction, negative and positive politeness strategies outnumber bald on record.

Table 5.18 A student's disagreement with his teacher about the place to do internship

Responses/Politeness strategy	Comments on the language features
<p>A: My teacher I would like to work at the travel agency more than at the hotel because I would like to practice foreign language and I like service guests/ people more than in the restaurant. (role play, university B1-8) (positive politeness - give reason)</p>	<p>Even though A does not agree with his teacher, he does not express directly that he is against him/her. Instead he is trying to convince his teacher by giving reasons (e.g. practice foreign language) that benefits him. The way he addresses his teacher using the possessive pronoun shows affinity and could thus make a positive impression on the teacher, although it may seem awkward to others. Furthermore, 'I would like' shows that A is trying to soften or</p>

	mitigate his desire, making his statement sound polite and softer. The perlocutionary effect that A's response tries to bring about would be that his teacher allows him to work in a travel agency.
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Table 5.19 A student's complaint to his teacher about his grade

Responses/Politeness strategy	Comments on the language features
B: Excuse me. Could you check my grade again, please? (DCT, university E5-4) (negative politeness - conventional indirect)	B is approaching his teacher in a humble and mitigating way, as the indirect question form is used. From this example we can get sense of the power dynamic operating in the relationship. Even though he doubts that his grade has been calculated correctly, he does not ask his teacher directly, instead using an indirect request.

The power between the hotel guest or travel customer over the hotel staff or travel agents is not as clear as teachers and students. The guests or customers may have power before they decide what hotel or travel agency they are going to use. Travel customers can negotiate the price of the ticket. Hotel guests can choose the hotel which offers better facilities at the same price. But when these people become their guests and customers, they exercise their power in accordance with the hotel or travel agency's rules or conditions (e.g. ask for discount or change the flight). The power in this case may shift to the hotel staff or travel agents, which means the guests or customers cannot use power exceedingly (see examples in table 5.3). According to the data, there are two groups of hotel staff who handle the guests differently. The hotel staff especially from the five-star hotels usually let their guests exercise power. For example, when the guest complains about the service and asks for a discount, many staff fulfil the request by giving discounts in order to maintain the hotel's reputation and prevent complaints being made later. On the other hand, in a smaller hotel, in the same case very often the staff exercise their power over the guest. They ask for an investigation and delay the process of giving a discount (see examples in table 5.6 (F) and table 5.20). It is a short term relationship, so power on the customer or guest side cannot be seen as clearly as the teacher and student.

Table 5.20 A hotel clerk’s response to her guest who asks for a discount

Responses/Politeness strategy	Comments on the language features
<p>C: I’m sorry for the inconvenience regarding your room service... things, the room service bill that you order from us. But anyway, since the meal is already done and you take it all, and I’m not the authorized person who can give you the discount, so maybe we have to charge you all this full amount. But maybe for next time, we will ask for the room service and provide you with the best thing that we can do for you. (hotel C4-8) (negative politeness –apologize)</p>	<p>C begins her statement by apologizing to the guest which is a typical pattern when something goes wrong. Normally, many hotel staff apologize and choose to give a discount in the situation like this which shows clearly they want to end the problem and to fulfill the guest request (as a respondent says, 10% is not much in order to maintain a good attitude), but the way C is dealing with her guest is different from other staff. In this case, she seems to reduce the guest’s power over the hotel staff. Here person deixis is used in different places to indicate who is responsible in each incident. First, she takes herself ‘I’ as a hotel representative who apologizes the guest. Then ‘But anyway’ shows the contrast from her first sentence. The hearer should know that thing may not be easy as she demands. C points out directly that the guest finished all the food, not saving the guest’s face (you take it all). She uses ‘I’ again to show that she does not have authority to give a discount, but when giving the bill she extends the responsibility to inclusive ‘we’. In this case, she is trying to make the guest understand that not only her who thinks that the guest has to pay, but other staff would do the same. Even though she is trying to use ‘maybe’ to look like there is another option that the guest may pay less, but ‘maybe we have to charge’ shows that C does not let the guest have more power to receive a discount. However, her last utterance can leave a positive feeling on the guest for her stay next time.</p>

Social distance: The hotel staff and travel agents are in a different role or position from their customers when they are on duty. There is a social distance or gap between a service provider and a service receiver, especially in the case of hotel staff. They do not know each other and come into contact because of the business transaction. They are of unequal status. Generally the hotel guests and travel customers are in the

higher position because the hotel and travel workers' job is to provide service. Therefore, they generally need to avoid conflict and must be careful with their words in complaining to or disagreeing with their guests and customers so that their guests and customers will come back again.

Table 5.21 Hotel clerks' response to guests smoking in the hotel room

Responses/Politeness strategy	Comments on the language features
<p>D: Sorry for disturbing, but anyway this floor is a non-smoking floor, but the hotel is not allowed, but anyway we can provide you another floor, a smoking floor if you prefer. So if you are ready or if you have time to move the room, we will prepare another room type for you, and we will get my colleagues to help you move the luggage if you want to. (hotel C4-6) (negative politeness – apologize)</p>	<p>Here we can see the asymmetrical power relationship at work. Even though the guest is breaking the hotel rule, the hotel clerk is not allowed to forbid him/her directly from smoking. If we look at D's language use in this case, she is trying to reduce the imposition to the guest. We can see the pattern, first apologize, then state the policy, and offer options. The hotel clerk realizes that she is going to impede the guest's action, so 'apology' is typically used. She removes the responsibility from herself (the hotel is not allowed) and uses 'we' to show that she is speaking on behalf of the hotel.</p>

Rank of imposition: It is the degree of severity that the speaker will interfere or impose on the hearer. The disagreement and complaint scenarios created in this study are the heart of the participants' business, providing service (accommodation, food) and selling their products (ticket, package tours), so in this case there is a degree of severity. This is why we see that hotel personnel have a certain style of language use in coping with scenarios relating to their work so that guests will not lose face or feel frustrated. Travel agents have common reasons in explaining the ticket price (claiming an increase of the price of fuel). Their language use will affect the future business of their organization, if they do not handle the problem/situation appropriately. As for students, complaining or disagreeing with the teacher may cause him/her to get angry or upset. Therefore we can say that there is severity in the nature of each scenario for each group.

Table 5.22 Hotel clerk’s utterance to guests smoking in the hotel room

<p>E: Sir, would you like to smoke in the room? In this case, I would like to suggest you to change or move to the room, cause this floor is no-smoking floor. It may affect others who allergic to the smoke. (hotel C2-6) (negative politeness - conventional indirect)</p>	<p>E addresses her guest as ‘sir’ as staff in a big hotel do. ‘Would you like to smoke in the room?’ shows that E would like to reconcile the hotel rules with her guest’s needs. She does not mention the law or hotel policy about smoking as many other staff do, instead making reference to health. This is a case of implicature, since she is asking the guest to draw a conclusion rather than directly stating her point. Her utterance shows nothing that directly criticizes the guest, and “It may affect others who allergic to the smoke” is a plausible reason that encourages the guest to be thoughtful towards others. Informing a guest who is smoking that this is against the hotel rules must be done carefully.</p>
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The data show that sociological factors influence the choice of language by the speaker (table 4.3, situation 3). Apart from the concept of hierarchy, the professional participants work in competitive business areas, so their language use needs to maintain the image and business of their workplace. We can see and predict that power between the service provider and receiver depends on the scenario and the type of people who are involved. The power between teacher and student will never end in the sense that teachers are people worthy of respect who provide the ladder for them to reach their career. When there is social distance, it is common that people who are of lower status will be careful with their word choice when engaging in the interaction. In this study, negative politeness is mainly used in scenarios dealing with higher status hearers, where it connotes deference. Their preferred strategies are ‘apologize’ (using excuse me or I’m sorry) to reduce the sense of imposition, then state the problem (often implicitly) or provide options for the guest. Other strategies are ‘conventional indirect’ (can you/could you) and ‘give reason’ in positive politeness. This can be explained in accordance with the work of Hofstede and Hofstede (2005, p.51) that Thailand is a large-power-distance country which the power distance difference is rooted in the family. Respect for parents, teachers and other elders is seen as the basic virtue and is easily applied in personal and work life. We are not surprised to see the hotel personnel

or students show high deference or respect to their guests or teachers, since they have been socialized into this unequal system since childhood.

5.6 Face saving and politeness strategy

Thais value the importance of face as do many other cultures, and each culture has different ways of expressing it. Brown and Levinson (1987) explain face in a universal way: “face is something that is emotionally invested, and that can be lost, maintained or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction” (p.61). The concept of face in Thailand is very similar to Brown and Levinson’s. In her study, Komin (1990a, 1990b) describes that for Thais, ‘face’ is identical with ‘ego’ and very sensitive. Even though Thais are also known for being non-aggressive and affable, violation of this ‘ego’ self can provoke strong emotional reactions. To make a person ‘lose face’ is to be avoided at all costs, and criticism of whatever type is often perceived as a social affront, even a personal insult. Although the concept of face that operates in the Thai context is a universal one, for the above reasons it tends to be foregrounded in social interaction and expressions like ‘saving face’, ‘gaining face’ or ‘losing face’ are common. In fact, Ukosakul (2005) mentions that she collected 180 idioms associated with the term. This can confirm that face is an essential part of Thai social interaction.

The concept of social hierarchy reflected in both language and gestures makes Thais aware of preserving the face of their interlocutor. As mentioned elsewhere in this study, there are different degrees of politeness in language use for each group of people. This concept exists in the whole system of society (I could not say all Thais, but most). One example is Thais may not agree with some issues during the conversation, but many choose to say nothing in public (e.g. in the meeting - except possibly in a political context). If they argue or dispute a point, especially the younger to the older and if the other side is not fast enough to respond, this can lead either side to lose face. Many have difficulty separating work, academic and personal issues, so they do not like their idea to be rejected, attacked or criticized. Many choose to suggest their opinion personally, or if they dispute another person’s perspective in a meeting, very often as I have experienced they come to apologize afterwards in person for doing so. This can show that they are concerned with how other people feel and do not want to have conflict or be against others. In view of this we can understand why the participants

in this study adjust their responses to maintain face when interacting. We can say that the whole Thai cultural system affects and influences people's thought and behaviour, and Thais are careful not to make people lose face (if they are not attacked first). This way of thinking applies to all interaction, including in service areas like hotel or tourism, where language use especially when complaining and disagreeing needs to be chosen carefully and properly.

In this study the participants have to deal with scenarios related to face threatening acts which can damage the hearer's face. If we look at the data as a whole, participants choose negative politeness (49.28%) which is the heart of respect behaviour as their preferred strategy, followed by positive politeness (14.85%) and bald on record (18.14%). Even though bald on record is the second most common strategy used in this study, the number compared to negative politeness is much less. Most participants take an avoidance-based approach in dealing with face threatening situations. This means they try to soften or mitigate their speech to avoid imposition, disagreement or conflict, especially the hotel workers. Alternatively we could combine the negative and positive strategies, so that bald on record is the least used strategy. Using a positive or negative politeness strategy can have different motivations such as sociological factors including the scenario itself.

We will look at one scenario that can easily cause the interlocutor to lose face or feel embarrassed if the speaker does not try to mitigate or manage their speech. The first example is in a disagreement scenario between the hotel personnel and their guest, where a demanding guest is complaining about the poor quality of food which she orders from room service and asks for a discount. Among twenty five hotel employees, four use bald on record. The majority of participants use negative and positive politeness strategies respectively. Even the ones who use bald on record do not ask the guest why she still finished her food, even though the food was supposedly of poor quality. If we look closely at some bald on record responses, we can see that speakers A and B are trying not to make their guest lose face. C is the only one who gives a strongly worded comment to the guest which might cause a loss of face.

Table 5.23 Hotel personnel's responses to the guests who complain about food and want to get a discount

Responses	Comments on the features of language
<p>A: We cannot discount for you because we not have authorize, please wait for a moment I will talk with our manager. (hotel H1-8)</p>	<p>A and B use the same strategy, stating that they themselves cannot give discounts and shifting the decision making to their managers. The guests can expect that some reasons will follow after hearing the request denied. 'Right now I am not discount' can imply that the guest may be able to get discount at the next stage. Even though A and B's responses show refusal at the beginning of their speech, later they give the reasons why they cannot discount at the moment. If we look at their speech, they do not criticize the guest or damage the hearer's face. In this case, even though the hotel staff do not give the discount, they express a reasonable response which does not make the guest lose face.</p>
<p>B: Right now I am not discount it for you but I will forward it the manager or someone to know anything if you have problem may be the manager give you some discount. (hotel E1-8)</p>	
<p>C: You cannot get a discount because if you want to complain us or you want to get a discount you have to let me know before you order every dish in the morning you complain us but you never tell us that you want to get a discount. (hotel D1-8) (*all are bald on record.)</p>	<p>The illocutionary force is clear, since unlike with A or B there is no attempt to save the hearer's face. C reproaches the guest and does not try to mitigate his utterance. His blunt response starts at his opening sentence. 'You cannot get a discount' states clearly his rejection to give a discount which can damage the hearer's face and will make her feel embarrassed. His word choice shows strong emotion which can also insult the hearer, such as 'if you want,' 'you have to let me know,' 'but you never tell us'. C is still young and the manager of his family guest house business. We can understand that he is not an employee in the hotels as other hotel personnel, so he is not careful with his words. This influenced his approach in other scenarios as well.</p>

Even though the four responses (three are presented here) are considered bald on record strategy, only one response (C) can potentially damage the guest's face. The scenario above is like many others where the speakers do not blame or criticise the hearers (except C), instead trying to find alternatives.

We will look at another sensitive scenario between student and teacher. Here the student receives a low grade in their favourite subject, even though they believe they had done well in the exam. We find that DCT students heavily employ negative politeness strategy (66.66%), and role play students balance the use of negative politeness and bald on record in the same portion (35.71%). We will see what kind of language these students use with their teacher. As in Thai culture, students need to show respect to their teacher, and in questioning their teacher like this they need to do it carefully in order to avoid making their teacher lose face by challenging their competence.

Table 5.24 Students question their teacher regarding a low grade

Responses	Comments on the features of language
<p>D: Excuse me. Can I ask you some question? I was very disappointed with my grade. But I think I did very well on the exam and never missed class. Did I do something wrong? (DCT, university D6-4) (negative politeness –conventional indirect)</p>	<p>‘Excuse me’ in D can be interpreted as a way to gain attention from the teacher or it can be used to mitigate what D is going to say next. She is using a polite request to ask permission from her teacher first before stating her problem. She also uses a polite and psychological strategy by asking ‘Did I do something wrong?’, instead of asking directly, something like ‘Did you give me the wrong grade?’ It sounds polite because she is trying not to make her teacher lose face, but points instead to herself and the possibility that she is mistaken.</p>
<p>E: Excuse me teacher. I’m study with you last course and I feel worry about my grad, it’s low. I expect, I’ll get better than this so I would like to check what’s my fail, it can help me to improve in that point. (DCT, university A3-4) (negative politeness-apology)</p>	<p>E starts her statement in a humble way and ‘excuse me’ is used as a signal to mitigate her request. She motivates her inquiry by stating that the answer can help her improve. This approach can reduce the chance that her teacher perceives the statement as questioning the teacher’s competence or accuracy. This cannot harm the teacher’s face. In other words, both D and E are conveying their messages via implicature.</p>

These are only some examples showing that respondents try to soften their words in order to make their speech does not sound blunt and reduce the potential for conflict that would result from making the hearer losing face.

Even though Thais generally show concern about other people's face and do not want to make any one lose face (depending on the context), in this study, I cannot simply analyse all negative or positive politeness responses as reflecting the respondents' desire to save their addressees' face. Of course, the sense of face saving may be a factor, but other factors (e.g. organization, their business, situation) play a role to make them produce the responses that sound polite and as a result save the hearer's face.

5.7 “Bald on record” as a politeness strategy

According to Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, bald on record is one strategy used for doing face threatening acts. This strategy does not redress the hearer's face because it is clear, direct, unambiguous and concise (p. 69). They give two reasons for the use of bald on record: 1) when the speaker wants to do the FTA with maximum efficiency more than he wants to satisfy the hearer's face, possibly in cases of urgency, desperation or warning; when the speaker's desire to satisfy H's face is small; or when the FTA is primarily in H's interest such as sympathetic advice or warnings; 2) when face involves mutual orientation as in greetings, farewells and offers (pp.95-99). It seems like there is a limitation in Brown and Levinson's accounting for bald on record as a politeness strategy. In this study, bald on record is used as the second strategy after negative politeness in dealing with face threats. When I look at these responses (bald on record), a question arises as to whether the bald on record strategy deserves to be a politeness strategy. In a sense it is indicating absence of politeness which here 'politeness' is defined as "language usage in order to make a situation less face threatening". These responses are too straight or direct in the sense that the speakers may not think about the hearer's face or feeling so they do not mitigate or redress their strong utterance. It is common that people may disagree or complain with one another or have different opinions and use bald on record to a lesser or greater extent, according to their personal habit or to achieve their intention. In this case, bald on record is a strategy used in communication, not a strategy for expressing politeness as Brown and Levinson explain. Fraser (2005) criticizes that in the proper circumstances, bald on record is a polite way of communicating. However this strategy does not attempt to minimize the threat to the hearer's face and thus isn't really a

politeness strategy at all in the Brown and Levinson model, since it lacks any linguistic form which could communicate politeness (p.71). This means the speaker does not soften their speech or use any mitigation devices to redress their words. Kasper (1990) supports that Brown and Levinson’s politeness theory is seen explicitly to redress the action that affects the face threatening acts (p.194). In my opinion, in principle bald on record can be used to show familiarity or solidarity among friends. However, if bald on record is used in the scenarios presented in this study, it is considered impolite and inappropriate, because the scenarios created here are related to face threatening acts and involve people in business or one’s teacher. Therefore, positive politeness, which is used to express solidarity and familiarity, and negative politeness, which concerns the addressee’s freedom of action or showing deference, are considered polite and used to maintain the hearer’s face, whereas bald on record is not.

The following examples of bald on record from this study show a lack of politeness because the speaker does not employ any face-saving strategies. The first three examples (A-C) are from the role play. Even though intonation could be relevant, I did not note this down in transcribing the role play or otherwise take it into account.

Table 5.25 A Travel agent’s response to the scenario where a friend asks for an opinion about a promotional plan

Response	Comments on the language features
<p>A: This program is not interested for the customer so but it’s not my duty to do this but up to you if you want to do. It’s just my opinion but it’s not good for the customer and for us. (travel C3-8) (bald on record)</p>	<p>A criticizes her co-worker’s idea directly (This program is not interested for the customer) and does not try to save the hearer’s positive face or help by giving a suggestion (it’s not my duty to do this). She makes no attempt to mitigate her speech. The whole utterance really damages the hearer’s face and emphasizes the hearer’s failure in his/her project. This is a clear instance of bald on record or explicit expressive.</p>

Table 5.26 A hotel staff member talks to a walk-in tourist who has picked up too many brochures at the hotel counter

Response	Comments on the language features
<p>B: Why you take a lot? You are travel agent? What 's your purpose? To reading only one is enough. If you are travel agent you need for your customer, we give you more.</p> <p>(hotel E1-7) (bald on record)</p>	<p>B's direct interrogative here does not seem concerned with the tourist's face, because he may think the tourist will not bring him any business. 'Only one is enough' seems to convey the command and makes it seem like the speaker has power over the hearer. B damages both the hearer's negative and positive face (by limiting the number of brochures, and through impeding his wish). The final statement is business-like, because he may think his interlocutor may come back to support his business later. On the whole B's response is quite rude, especially in the hotel setting. In this case, B's personal characteristics as a middle aged manager and his three-star hotel in a small seaside town may help explain such a response.</p>

Table 5.27 A student gets a low grade even though she could do the exam and never misses the class. She reacts to his/her teacher

Response	Comments on the language features
<p>C: I don't believe it. I never missed class. I want to check the exam again.</p> <p>(DCT, university D13-4). (bald on record)</p>	<p>In directly questioning the grade, C does not show respect or save the teacher's face. Using 'want' here is quite direct and implies an insistence that the grade must be checked.</p>

Bald on record strategy is a normal strategy in human interaction, since people have different moods in dealing with various situations, and very often it shows the strong relationship among members of the group. However, if one asks whether bald on record is a polite strategy, it may not be in the context of this study. Therefore, I would like to argue that 'bald on record' used or found in this study is not a strategy of politeness, but a strategy in communication when the speaker wants the hearer to get the message directly. And at the same time this strategy does not redress the hearer's face. In this case, bald on record can go along with Grice's (1975, pp.45-46) maxims (do not make the contribution more informative than is required; be relevant; avoid ambiguity and do not say what you believe to be false) which are not concerned with

the hearer's face, but instead with the message getting through. However, any language that provides for degrees of politeness also provides for ways to express rudeness.

5.8 Chapter summary

This chapter has discussed the three groups of participants from different angles, and an attempt has been made to see things from their perspective. 85.40% of the responses were judged comprehensible and valid, so we can assume that these speakers possess pragmatic competence, although in different degrees. The data from the three face threatening acts: requests, complaints and disagreements show that negative politeness is the most preferred strategy. However, for some disagreement scenarios there is variation in the choice of politeness strategy depending on the group. Overall, there is no definite politeness strategy for this speech act, except for hotel people who mainly use negative politeness. The data also show that status of the interlocutor influences the choice of language use, which is probably the case universally. Social hierarchy as reflected in sociological variables (power, social distance and rank of imposition) makes the participants concerned about their hearers' face and thus affects word choice. In the same way, the institution or organization the participants belong to is also an important factor motivating speech, not just because it is a source of livelihood, but because the "small culture" creates local norms to be followed. I would also question whether bald on record should be considered a politeness strategy because the statements do not attempt to redress the hearer's face. Bald on record here should be a strategy to convey a direct message in communication.

The sample responses were selected as representative or typical for the scenarios to show the range of politeness strategies chosen. All responses are in the appendixes, which the reader can refer to in order to see the whole picture.

Chapter 6 Conclusions, recommendations, limitations and implications

6.1 Introduction

The last chapter presents the conclusions of the study. The main findings are discussed, and some recommendations for further research on the basis of the findings are put forward. Further I address possible limitations of the survey instruments and the methods of data interpretation, including the problems involved in determining the politeness strategy used in each response. Finally, some practical implications of the results are discussed.

6.2 Conclusions

This study examines the language use and specifically the level of politeness of Thai speakers of English when confronted with face threatening acts. Three research questions were set as follows.

1. What levels of politeness and general pragmatic competence do Thai speakers of English demonstrate when dealing with FTAs in interactive situations with foreigners?
2. What politeness strategies do Thai speakers of English use when performing the three FTAs: requests, complaints and disagreements?
3. How do sociological variables such as power and social distance affect the politeness strategies chosen in English speech by Thais?

The research was conducted with hotel personnel, travel agents and students who use English in their work or study. The data were collected by role play and discourse completion test (DCT). In both role play and DCT, participants were presented with nine face threatening scenarios which relate to their daily life, especially in the workplace. Participants must deal with three status levels: lower, same or similar status and higher status. Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory is used as a framework to analyse and interpret the data (discussed in chapter 2). One reason to investigate the language use of these groups was that hotel and travel people work in the service/tourism area, which is a major source of income for Thailand. Many graduates of Rajabhat universities work as staff in these fields. It is assumed that the

ability to speak politely impacts the quality of hospitality they are able to provide, which in turn influences how successful they will be in their jobs.

The overall picture shows that negative politeness is the most common strategy for all groups (49.28%), followed by bald on record (18.14%) and positive politeness (14.85%). ‘Conventional indirect (can you/could you)’, ‘apologize’ and ‘please command’ (PC) in negative politeness are commonly found as sub-strategies, whereas ‘avoid disagreement’ is often employed in positive politeness. Generally speaking, these findings are in line with other studies in the Thai and cross-cultural context (discussed in chapter 5, section 5.4.1-3). We can interpret the high use of negative politeness strategies as reflecting the Thai value-concept of ‘*krengjai*’, the literal translation of which would be ‘fear-heart.’ This means that Thais feel reluctant to bother or impose on other people, and thus show concern for the other’s face in language use.

Hotel people mainly use negative politeness in all nine scenarios, which is higher than other groups, and use bald on record the least. In general their preferred strategies for redressing their imposition on the listener are mainly ‘conventional indirect’ (‘can you/could you’) and ‘apologize’ (excuse me, or I’m sorry). Their language use reflects their responsibility to show deference to guests while also maintaining a professional distance. Travel agents are to an extent different from the hotel people in that the language they use should not be overly formal or create too great a distance to the customer. Their work does not require them to dress or behave in a certain way (unlike hotel personnel, who wear uniforms and ‘*wai*’ (give the Thai greeting) to guests) so they are free and flexible in dealing with customers. The results of the role play show that they vary the use of negative politeness (‘please command’, ‘conventional indirect’ are frequently used), bald on record and positive politeness. Their language use, at least in the context of my research, reflects the less structured character of their work, in the sense that they use their own judgement in dealing with customers. The exception would be in explaining ticket prices, where all the travel participants produced similar justifications for a discrepancy between the price advertised and the final one. For both groups of students, in the scenarios presented in this study, negative politeness is used more than other strategies, followed by bald on

record. Their responses show the influence of language taught in the classroom, and as a result ‘can you/could you’ (conventional indirect) are used in many cases.

Participants exhibit different degrees of English proficiency. The data show that 85.4% of responses were communicative and understandable, and by this measure we can assume that the participants possess pragmatic competence. Some occasionally give opinions bluntly. This may reflect a personal approach to interaction, where they believe it is best to say what they think without softening it, or it could be that they have a limited capacity to express themselves in English and do not know how to redress their speech.

Saving face is another important value that concerns most Thais, who try to avoid making anybody lose face during interaction. Although we can assume that this impulse is a universal one, its prominence in the Thai language context may be due to the hierarchical system which affects the way people treat each other. Since there is no assumption of equality in communicative situations in Thai, one needs to be aware of what may offend his/her interlocutor. In addition, for the participants in this study, the nature of their work, especially for those from hotels, does not allow them to make their customer or guest feel embarrassed or lose face. They need to maintain a positive relationship to preserve future business.

Bald on record is one of Brown and Levinson’s (1987) politeness strategies in doing face threatening acts. This strategy can show solidarity or closeness among friends or people in the same group, and in such cases it is not considered rude or blunt. However, I argue that this strategy should not be interpreted as a ‘polite’ strategy in handling the face threatening situations in this study, because its use may damage the hearer’s face.

Generalizing about the participants, there are really two orientations. For the hotel workers, negative politeness is the chosen strategy in most scenarios. Here the focus is on maintaining distance from their interlocutor and respecting other people’s rights and freedom of action. For the other groups, although negative politeness is still the most common strategy, positive politeness and bald on record are found quite often. This suggests that participants also attach importance to showing solidarity and avoidance of confrontation, as well as to direct expression when appropriate.

6.3 Recommendations

Reflecting on the investigation of how different groups handle three face threatening acts (requests, complaints and disagreements) in English, I would like to make some recommendations for further research as follows.

1. The study could be expanded to investigate other institutional contexts and other groups whose work requires the use of English, for example flight attendants, government officials in international relations offices, tourist information staff or traditional massage specialists. From the point of view of the tourism industry in Thailand, people in these professions become representative of the country to foreigners, and therefore it would be useful to study their language use when dealing with face threatening acts so that the results can be used to build the awareness in choice of words. Furthermore, this study focuses only on students from community universities, many of whom after graduation work in hotel and travel business. It might be useful to see how students studying in elite universities which have a more academic orientation use English in different situations. I expect that such research would produce findings that could be drawn upon to build the awareness of the people in the service industry whose jobs involve contact with foreigners and the use of English in communication.

2. It would also be interesting to conduct similar studies using the Thai language, in order to investigate politeness strategies chosen when the participants can express what they want to convey in their own language. This would allow us to compare results between Thai and English, to see if the same strategies are used in both languages, or if participants take a different approach when speaking in their native tongue.

3. This study looks at the acts that threaten only the hearer's face, and in general the data show that participants prefer negative politeness, bald on record and positive politeness respectively to interact with their interlocutor. Studying acts that threaten the speaker's face, for example expressing thanks, making excuses, or acceptance of offers, we would be able to compare strategy selection for each category of hearer and speaker. This might yield some insight into the self perceptions of Thai speakers of English and how they present themselves through language in a different way from the present study.

4. Closed role play (non-interactive) is one of the methods used to collect the data in this study. This method allows the participant only one turn in response according to the scenario. If the next study uses open role play, we will be able to observe the participant's language use in more detail and in a more natural context. In the open role play only the initial scenario, the roles and the goals are specified, and the course and outcome of the dialogue will vary according to what the participants decide to do (Geluykens, 2007, p.38).

5. The data from this study show bald on record is used as a secondary preferred strategy. Even though no group uses this strategy in more than 30% of responses (role play students 28.57%, travel agents 24.44%, DCT students 16.95% and hotel personnel 12.16%) and the general incidence of use is not that high (18.14%), it may indicate that more work needs to be done in teaching polite forms or more specifically in ways of mitigate complaint or disagreement. It would be worth examining the textbooks that are used in teaching English for specific purposes (e.g. English for hotel, tourism) and English textbooks for English or Business English major students to see whether they present basic issues of politeness in speech. This might in turn help reduce blunt or harsh speech when interacting with foreigners in English. If they use English appropriate to context, this will leave a better impression and be conducive to success, especially given the importance of tourism in Thailand.

6. An implicit finding of the study is that Thai speakers of English develop pragmatic competence quickly. This means they generally use appropriate strategies to deal with face threatening acts. One might try to link this to social factors, or to the relative importance of formal and informal learning. In any case, it should be further explored, and cross cultural approaches could be very useful in this regard. Subjects from different countries who use English as a second language could be compared in similar face threatening situations, in order to find causal factors in the development of pragmatic competence.

6.4 Limitations

From a methodological standpoint, there are undeniably limitations to what we can learn from discourse completion tests. The results from the DCT may not show what students would say when they have to deal with unexpected situations, because

the respondents have time to think before they write the answer down. Rintell and Mitchell (1989) point out that

it is hard to tell how representative what subjects write on such a discourse completion test is of what they actually say in spontaneous conversation. Other potential problems are that the length of response is constrained by the space the subjects have in which to write ... [and that] subjects may perceive writing as a more formal activity than speaking, and thus choose to write more formal language on the questionnaire (p.50).

Although these caveats do not apply to the recorded role plays, the latter also reflect real life situations only indirectly. In particular certain pragmatic aspects of real life performance may lie beyond the scope of the present study.

The responses had to be differentiated according to what politeness strategy is used from the five categories (negative politeness, positive politeness, bald on record, off-record and not doing FTA) posited in Brown and Levinson's politeness theory. There is less of a problem if the responses are classified only using the five politeness strategies, yet some difficulty in analyzing my data has arisen when considering how to place some responses in a sub-category (in other words, how the politeness strategies are realized in language). It is quite likely that some responses can be interpreted as or linked to more than one strategy (see discussion in chapter 4, section 4.11). This introduces an element of interpretational ambiguity into the analytical process. However, I have tried to make this as transparent as possible, so that readers can see the rationale behind the classification of each response. In any case, my own cognitive, cultural and occupational biases unavoidably affect the way I judged the participants' politeness strategies and interpret their language use. Somebody else with a different background may have analysed the data differently. Absolute judgements cannot be reached, and interpretational relativism in turn demands attention to pragmatic context.

6.5 Practical implications of the study

This study examines politeness and language use in face threatening situations by people who already work in service industry positions, as well as by fourth year university students soon to enter the workplace, where command of polite language is desirable. The data show that role play students use bald on record strategy 28.57% of

the time, which is in the highest level among all groups, although it was somewhat lower (at 16.95%) for DCT students. Students should be made aware of how to use English appropriately in requests and how to mitigate their speech when disagreeing or complaining. I work at a Rajabhat university, and the teaching of English at this type of institution has a largely vocational focus. I anticipate that the findings of this study can be used in designing lessons that can simulate workplace interaction, with the goal of teaching students to mitigate their speech so that it sounds more accommodating or less harsh in various face threatening contexts. This will be accordance with Kasper's (1997) study that the development of pragmatic competence can be furthered by arranging appropriate learning opportunities. Also, language assessment needs to place more emphasis on speaking and dealing with face threatening situations so students will be aware of the issue in their language use.

6.6 Chapter summary

This chapter has summarized the study's methodology and results. Further research could be conducted in the following areas. First, politeness strategies for different groups of subjects who are in the service industries could be examined; the study could be expanded to look at face preservation for the speaker as well as for the interlocutor; and comparison with other cases besides the Thai one could be undertaken as a cross-cultural pragmatic study. One limitation is that students may complete the questionnaire (DCT) in a way that does not reflect their real speech in a face to face interaction. Another problem involves categorizing the responses according to sub-strategies. I will try to use the outcome of this study to emphasize to my students the importance of awareness of language use especially in situations where face is threatened, because speech can enhance or harm people's face.

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Bangkok
and
Hua Hin

Hotel personnel

Instructions: Please read the following situations and if you were that person, what are you going to say in each situation. Please use your usual speech. Imagine yourself in the following situations and give a response.

1. Personal information:

- 1.1 Gender male female
- 1.2 Age below 20 21-30 31 - 40 above 41
- 1.3 Level of education High School Vocational
 BA MA PhD
- 1.4 Working experience 1-5 yrs 6-10 yrs
 11-15 yrs more than 15
- 1.5 How would you rate yourself in speaking in English?
 Very poor Poor Fair Good Excellent
- 1.6 How would you rate yourself in writing English?
 Very poor Poor Fair Good Excellent
- 1.7 Position _____

2. Question situations

1. Your younger male cousin is listening to music and the noise is so loud that you cannot sleep. It's quite late. What are you going to tell him?

2. You are having food in a good restaurant. The dish you are having is very salty. What are you going to say to the waiter/waitress?

3. A cleaner at your hotel asks you what you think of her new hair style. She seems to like it, but you think it looks rather strange. What are you going to say to her?

4. Working at the front desk, you receive a complaint about loud noise coming from another room. How will you inform the room's occupants that they are disturbing other guests?

5. Your friend from the marketing section shows you a promotional plan to attract more customers, but in your opinion it will be difficult to carry out and probably won't be very cost-effective. What are you going to tell him?

6. A guest has been smoking in his/her hotel room, which is against the rules. You need to tell him/her. What are you going to say to him/her?

7. A tourist just walked into your hotel and is picking up some brochures. You think he/she has taken too many copies. What are you going to tell him/her?

8. You have to deal with a demanding guest at your hotel. She likes to order food to eat in her room and often finds fault with the food. For example, she has complained that the prawns were not fresh and that some dishes were cooked poorly, yet she always finishes the food she is served. Now that it's time to pay the bill for room service, she asks for a discount. She states that she deserves one, given the problems she had with the quality of the food. What will you say to her?

9. You have a lot of work to do, but a friend keeps on talking. What will you say to?

5. A customer contacts you regarding your travel agency's advertisement for plane tickets at discount prices. When he finds out the final price (tax included) is substantially higher than what was advertised in the newspaper, he complains that your company isn't being truthful. You find the way he tells you this to be rude. What are you going to say to him?

6. You need to tell your customer that he/she needs to pay for the ticket by next Wednesday. Otherwise the booking will be cancelled. What will you say to him/her?

7. One customer has booked a plane ticket with your company. Before making the payment, she has called to make changes in the dates for departure four times already. You feel annoyed. What are you going to tell her?

8. Your friend from the marketing section shows you a promotional plan to attract more customers, but in your opinion it will be difficult to carry out and probably won't be very cost-effective. What are you going to tell him/her?

9. You have a lot of work to do, but a friend keeps on talking. What will you say to him/her?

Student

Instructions: Please read the following situations and if you were that person, what are you going to say in each situation. Please use your usual speech. Imagine yourself in the following situations and give a response.

1. Personal information:

- 1.1 Gender male female
- 1.2 Age below 20 21-30 31 - 40 above 41
- 1.3 How would you rate yourself in speaking in English?
 Very poor Poor Fair Good Excellent
- 1.4 How would you rate yourself in writing English?
 Very poor Poor Fair Good Excellent

2. Question situations

1. You are going to apply for a job and would like to ask your favourite teacher to write a letter of recommendation for you. What are you going to say to him/her?

2. You are having food in a good restaurant. The dish you are having is very salty. What are you going to say to the waiter/waitress?

3. Your younger sister has started to wear tight shirts and short skirts. You do not like the way she dresses because it is too revealing. What are you going to say to her?

4. You received a low grade in your favourite subject. You believe you did very well on the exam and you never missed class. You are disappointed with your grade and want to ask your teacher what happened. What are you going to say?

5. You just had your hair cut and you don't like it. Your hairdresser didn't do exactly the style you wanted. However, your best friend complimented you on it. You don't believe that he/she is sincere. What are you going to say to him/her?

6. Your younger male cousin is listening to music and the noise is so loud that you can't sleep. It's quite late. What are you going to tell him?

7. Your close friend has borrowed your book and lost it. You are not happy about this. What will you say?

8. You would like to do your internship at a travel agency, but your teacher wants you to do it in a hotel. You don't agree. What are you going to say?

9. You have a lot of work to do, but a friend keeps on talking. What will you say?

Hotel A

1st person

1	[I would say, like... first I would say,] would you mind turning the music lower because if you realize this is quite late. [So, umm I would just probably ask him to] turn down the volume.
2	Excuse me, I find my food is quite salty. So do you mind replacing a new dish for me.
3	You look lovely, but maybe add a little hairclip would be nicer.
4	[Let's say the guest is Mr. Smith.] Excuse me, Mr. Smith, there's a complaint, uh, that there's a noise disturbance from your room. So would you please mind turn down the volume.
5	[I don't think it's gonna work, right? I would say, umm... You know, for me, I'm pretty straightforward.] After look at the plant, I don't think that's a very good idea. Maybe we should come up with the new strategy, con, concerning with the the expenditure that we are facing right now. So maybe a new plan would be a better idea.
6	Mr. Smith, due to the law and regulation of Thailand, smoking on this... as your room is locating on the non-smoking floor, and smoking on this floor is prohibited. So, may I offer a room move to a smoking floor instead?
7	[I think I would, if that's happened, I would just, you know, went up to the guest, and maybe just...] Excuse me, how many do you need? Because we have a limited number of copies, for the other guests as well.
8	Mr. Smith, I do apologize for the inconvenient caused during your stay, for this time we will offer a discount for the food and beverage and we will ensure that the next time when you come back, you will not experience this again. And I will make sure that I have your record in the profile and also brief my staff regarding the unstable of the quality of the food service.
9	Hey, Smith, I know you have a lot of thing on your mind right now, but I'm quite busy at the moment, so just hold that thought, and I'll come back to you.

2nd person

1	Hi Peter, can you, you know like, turn the volume down a little bit?
2	Why it's like very salty like this. Maybe you know, you can eat and then you tell me why.
3	[If she asks me like, uh, I think...] OK, beautiful, but you know, like sometime when you make up the rooms maybe when you come down, maybe the hair it's not nice when the guests see something like that.
4	Ok, uh, Mr. Smith, that, you know, like from the guest, and then, he just inform us like, you know, maybe the music too loud, can you like turn [and then if we listen and the guest feel, like, angry or something, we have to inform the duty manager and then somebody will take of that.]
5	No good, not a good idea.
6	I'm sorry, this is a non-smoking room. If you would like to smoke, right now in the hotel we have a smoking lounge, so you can go and enjoy your smoke at the lobby floor.
7	[Maybe not.] Excuse me sir, would you like to take, for your know, for your company, or for yourself.
8	What about food, what taste or you see something it's not good for you. And then that you already inform somebody, like room service officer, something when you order food, or when you eat... if you not happy at that time you should call them. Not because you... day by day you just want like to get a discount when you check out. [You cannot say, oh, I'm not believe you, something like that.]
9	Please quiet.

3rd person

1	Please turn down the voice.
2	Would you mind to change a new dish for me because it's too salty.
3	Where did you do your haircut?
4	Excuse me sir, would you mind to turn down the noise because there is a complaint from the other guest.
5	Do you think this plan or this project will suit for this kind of economy?
6	This room is not allowed for the smoker, and would you mind to go to the hotel entrance, we have the space for the smoker, area.
7	May I ask you, how many would you like to take, how many brochures would you like to take, because we have not too many, right now.
8	Sorry to hear that you have the bad experience with the room service, so... it would be appreciate if you could give us recommend about the food, the service or the taste for you.
9	[?] it, please.

4th person

1	Hey, I'm about to get to bed, so would you mind to turn the voice a little bit...
2	Would you mind to try on this dish and tell me how it tastes.
3	I liked the previous one better, if you're asking me.
4	. [First I have to introduce myself, say that] I'm the front desk officer. There is one guest saying that your room's make quite a bit noisy so would you mind, because you know, reception just got a complaint from the guest next door.
5	Hey look, I would love to say that this plan is very cool. However, I think there is some point that we need to get it on the right track, you know the right way. [And give my opinion.] I feel like, you know... to be honest with you...
6	Sir, excuse me, I understand that you are a smoker, however this room is a non-smoking room. If you like to smoke, I would love to switch you to the smoking room, so that you can enjoy the smoking.
7	Excuse me sir, this brochure even though it's free of charge, however we allow to take only one at a time.
8	OK, I'll give you some discount.
9	OK, can I you know can you... just concentrate on my work first and then whatever I finish and then even if I [?] I'll just get back to you later, once you know I finish my work.

5th person

1	Please reduce your sound of the... because I cannot sleep, and tomorrow I work in the morning, early morning.
2	Do you mind to... uh can you change that meal because I cannot eat it. Sort of because... for the medicine or the doctor say that I cannot eat.
3	I think you should be cut a little bit hair here or here... I think it may be a bit more beautiful for you.
4	May I please inform you that... your next door... sleep because your room is make a loud noise.
5	I think it's not more interesting for the customer to... maybe, more, give a more discount for this customer... something like that.
6	Please be informed that this room cannot smoke, and would you mind to change the room, it's in the smoking room, or if you would like to smoke, you can go down at the lobby, we provide the smoking area for you. If you would like to stay in this room, but you would like to smoke you can go down to the lobby or you would like to change the room.
7	Sorry, for the brochures we have not too much, do you mind you can keep only two or three. If we have more this, maybe I will send to you later, by Fedex or mail.
8	Sorry for the room service, and then I can give you a discount, 25 percent discount, or maybe next time, if you come again, and then I will give you more, something like fruit or chocolate, amenities set up in the room.
9	Please wait a moment, I will do this for the guest first, and then I will talk to you later. Or if you cannot wait, it's ok.

Hotel B

1st person

1	Excuse me brother, can you reduce the music, please because I can't sleep?
2	Excuse me, this food is so salty and then the taste is no good. Can you change it for me or do the new one for me?
3	I think your hair style is not suitable for work in the hotel. You can use the net like this, it's better.
4	Excuse me sir, I call from the front office. The room no... called me that your room is very noisy. Can you reduce the noise or can you stop the noise?
5	Now it's low season. I think if we offer the higher rate the guest will not agree to come with us, may be give more discount than this price, it will be better.
6	Excuse me, Mr... your room is a non-smoking floor if you are smoking, can you come down to smoking at our area that we provide or if possible can you change to other room for a smoking floor.
7	I will ignore this case. If I talk something, he will get angry
8	May I have time to investigate about her food first, then will contact our manager. Inform him to give discount. My manager will check and investigate again.
9	I'm so sorry. Can you wait here at the moment because now I'm still busy then we have a lot of things to do. I'll order a drink for you first, read newspaper for reading to wait first.

2nd person

1	Excuse me, Kim, would you mind reduce your sound for playing music, because right now I would like to relax because last night I worked late go to the bed.
2	Excuse me for my food is so salty. Could you change for a new one for me or make a new one not so salty for me because I cannot eat this one?
3	I think it's nice, but if you regard for your hair or put something like this. It will be better for you. Your head will be (unclear)... or beautiful.
4	Excuse me sir, would you mind to reduce your voice because the next door she told me that to get the noise.
5	For your plan I think it's good but I think this one is so quite expensive. If you have the project, should I give you my idea for you.
6	Excuse me sir, for this room is non smoking room, if you prefer smoking, would you mind to change the room to smoking floor. We provide the new room for you
7	Excuse me sir, for this brochure, would you mind to take only for 2 because we have to take this one for another guest that come to stay in the hotel.
8	We are sorry sir for this situation for you that you ordered some food and it's not odd or it's not good taste for you. I'll discount for you for this case. For this situation. I will make sure that for the next time it will not happen for you again. I'm sorry.
9	Excuse me Nik, would you mind to give me 5 minutes. Let me finish for the project and I'll talk to you later.

3rd person

1	Please turn down for the radio because I cannot sleep. I will go to work...
2	Change for another plate.
3	Your new hair looks good, but the new hair which you that cannot suit the position in the hotel.
4	Take/write the message (talk with them they will angry). "I would be advised that for our client the adjourning room that inform us about your room that noisy can you slow down for your voice, please.
5	That's a good but I have some suggestion for you about this plan you can change for the new plan which I suggest you. That another way you can select this one or not.
6	(have/write the message) Excuse me, sir or madam because of for your room stay now that non smoking room we recommend that you can change for another room that smoking to you please contact the front desk to change another room for you.
7	Excuse me, do you prefer a lot of brochure you like to give another one or not. Because of I think you can take the one for you and should be you have another person you can give another one for them.
8	We cannot discount for you because that's too late to inform us because you finished your meal you can inform us that time.. ต้องดูพฤติกรรมของแขก
9	I'm busy now, please you wait for me. I think may be half an hour because I will try to make my work and see you.

4th person

1	Please turn on or turn down the radio because I cannot sleep I have to work in the early morning.
2	Can you change it for me? It's too salty. I cannot eat it.
3	If for the outside, it's good, beautiful but if in the hotel it's not for the hotel policy.
4	Excuse me, could you please keep quiet because another guest complains?
5	I will talk to you straight. Your project is quite expensive. Could you please change it or do it something that to cheaper?
6	(Leave a message) Kindly be inform you that our housekeeping report us you are smoking in the room, but we are very sorry to inform you the room you are staying is non smoking room. If you need to smoke, could you please contact me and we move the room.
7	Excuse me, sir for the our brochures for another guest we can give you about three four brochure for another person else.
8	Sorry for this happen. But did you inform the staff for this problem. I'll discount it for you about 20 or 25% for this case. Can you please write the comment for me I will send it to the another management to improve about the food. I'm so sorry about this happen.
9	Give me 10 minutes. I'll clear my work and I'll talk with you or if you want to talk with me now can you help me.

5th person

1	I'm very sleepy. Can you turn down the music? Thank you.
2	Excuse me, the food is very salty and I don't like it. Could you change it for me, please?
3	It look not good for you. I think if you change style, it will be better.
4	Excuse me sir, the guest next door to your room. I was informed by the guest next door to your room. Your room is very noisy. Could you keep quiet, please?
5	I don't like it
6	Excuse me madam, this is the non-smoking room. If you smoking, we will change the room for you to a smoking room.
7	Excuse me sir, the hotel brochure is provide for guest, for the visitor we can give you only 1 brochure.
8	Sorry, Madam but our policy you have to complain at time when you order the food. After you have the food, we cannot discount for you. (I have to see her face, if angry I have to give him discount, if she not too much angry, I will not discount).
9	I'm very busy now. Can you talk to me later?

Hotel C

1st person

1	Would you please make more quiet for me, because I want to sleep, tomorrow I need to wake up early.
2	[This is my order, because I thought the taste, it look different, I never tried the taste before. If the waitress told me yes, maybe I have to tell them,] "Can it possible to make me another one, because this one is quite salty." [If I didn't say like that, I wouldn't have it. But, I don't want to make the trouble for the waitress or the waiter.]
3	Did you uh, did you have had a new haircut style? [Or maybe,] Did you went to the hair shop, something? Because you look different from the, another days.
4	Excuse me madam, excuse me sir, because I was informed for the near, your neighbor rooms, that there is some, a little bit sound, it's louder, out of the room of you. It make them cannot sleep or do something. I apologize and I would like to ask you to keep more quiet please
5	In my opinion, I think your plan is also good, but I think the cost is quite expensive. If it's possible, do we have some chance to reduce the cost and then make more profit. And then should be fully by quality also. Maybe save our costs also. I would like to recommend like that.
6	Excuse me sir, excuse me madam, we would like to inform you, this room is non-smoking room. Would you like to request for the smoking room? If you prefer to get the smoking room, I will change the room for you.
7	Excuse me sir, are you interested in this brochure and the details inside? Yes, uh, if you interested, I would like to give you to read and get the information from our hotel also, but if you would like to take it for the other person, I agree with you also, but if it possible, we have a limited... we would like to separate to and [unclear] to our guests also.

8	???
9	Excuse me, may I pay attention to my paperwork a few minutes first? And then after that I will talk to you, because I would like to finish clearly. That's ok, uh?

2nd person

1	I don't mind your playing, but do you mind to low down your volume a bit?
2	Do you mind to take this dish back and taste it a bit, because I think it's too salty for me.
3	You look different today, but I'll tell you the truth, I like the old one better.
4	Would you please to lower down your volume due to the neighbors is complaining to us that they couldn't sleep.
5	Do you mind to promote this business for such a short period of time, maybe a month or maybe less than this period of time that we plan to because in the future I don't think it will work out, we may end up get more complaint than earning, which is not good for our business. At this time, like I said, it's better than doing nothing, doing something is better than doing nothing, so with low occupancy, it may be OK, but not too much, this kind of thing, for too long.
6	Sir, would you like to smoke in the room? In this case, I would like to suggest you to change or move to the room, cause this floor is no-smoking floor. It may affect others who allergic to the smoke.
7	Sir, may I suggest to give you this one [a complementary map] instead.
8	I appreciate your comments, but it would be better off if you tell me right there and then, so I can see if I can do something to make you more happy.
9	Look, I'm love to hear your story, but do you mind to let me, let me finish with... to concentrate on what I'm have to do now? I'd love to listen to your story later

3rd person

1	Stop it right away, because it's too late, I have to sleep now, I have a work early morning.
2	What happened with my order? It's very salty! What can I do? What did you do for me?
3	Your hair today is fine, but I think it's uh maybe you make it curl, cut it shorter, maybe makes you more beautiful.
4	[It's difficult to say.] Your room is very loud. It make noisy to another guest room. It would be... could you maybe turn it softer than this?
5	[First of all I have to think if this person is close to me or not.] We have to see what it, difficulty for this plan to do. Maybe some plans, some issues cannot go through, maybe like this period. Maybe the price is too high, or maybe how can I add more benefit to that plan.
6	We are sorry, this room floor is non-smoking room. I think you cannot smoke in the room. After this time, if you smoke in the room, we have to fine you some money, or if you would like to move to a smoking room, maybe it would be better for you, you can smoke in that room.
7	What would you like to, to find some information about the hotel? I think it's... I recommend you to bring a, a few of them. We have a contact number on website, you can see information, or if you have any problem you can call us

	directly, this is the telephone number, I think it's sufficient for you to bring a few [...] a brochure.
8	May I know, what is the problem about the room service that you ordered? If you would like to have a discount, can I have the details about the food that you ordered? If any mistake happened to you, alright, I think it's, your advice may be useful for us to provide... to make it be better to another guest. And for this time, alright, I give you a discount.
9	Sorry, right now I'm very busy. Would it be possible to talk two hours later? I'm available at that time. I think it'd be better.

4th person

1	Do you mind to increase the volume of the song or the music that you play right now because it kind of disturb me and I have to work next morning and I have to sleep and I need some time to relax and please.
2	Can you please try this? Cause it's too salty for me, so do you mind if I, you can change, or ask the chef to change it for me because I cannot eat it.
3	This style is OK, but I prefer the old style. Maybe it's a bit darker, but you can change. But that's OK, if you like it and you confidence with it, that's fine.
4	Sorry, Mr. A, but I got a complaint from the person next door that the sound is quite loud from the rooms, so maybe do you mind to like increase the noise, to not disturb another person in the room next door. So maybe a pleasure if you can help us, and thank you for your understanding.
5	I'm not quite sure that this marketing, this promotion will work or not, maybe let's try a bit in these few months, and let's see what will happen in the real things with the guests. If it's not work, maybe I recommend you to choose the old marketing, the old promotion may be better, because the old is work and make more revenue for us. You can try it first, because I'm not sure yet.
6	Sorry for disturbing, but anyway this floor is a non-smoking floor, but the hotel is not allowed, but anyway we can provide you another floor, a smoking floor if you prefer. So if you are ready or if you have time to move the room, we will prepare another room type for you, and we will get my colleagues to help you move the luggage if you want to.
7	Sorry, how many brochures do you require? May I keep another brochure for another guest, because right now we are on process for the printing, and right now I cannot provide another one for another guest. So if you don't mind, may I take it back?
8	I'm sorry for the inconvenience regarding your room service... things, the room service bill that you order from us. But anyway, since the meal is already done and you take it all, and I'm not the authorized person who can give you the discount, so maybe we have to charge you all this full amount. But maybe for next time, we will ask for the room service and provide you with the best thing that we can do for you.
9	Can I finish it first, and then I will talk to you later?

5th person

1	Sorry I have to inform you that please may be you want to listen that fine or you want to still that continue it fine please the volume keep it down for me please.
2	I have to suggest you cause this dish is quite salty for me so you don't mind please change or cause that one the other one you want to do like the better taste cannot I thought cause it already salty so if you don't mind please change another one for me.
3	Wow, actually it's a nice style may be but in my opinion it should be like this, but it's OK if you want still to do like this.
4	Excuse me miss, I'm calling from...may I inform you cause at this moment we have the reason that the other guest the room next door they want to stay the room quite quiet so could you please still keep noise. (I don't want to say you make noise).
5	This plan actually is quite better because of your attitude that you want to make our hotel get more occupancy or the benefit but this thing I mean even the plan or something is quite impossible in the future so we suppose to do depend on the situation first and follow and we have to know the reason.
6	Sorry, I apologize for you I have to inform you cause normally our hotel policy if the guest person who stay on non smoking floor this one we do not allow the guest smoke on that floor as a policy we have to do charge for 1,000 Thai baht for the room cleaning. I apologize for this or you like to change another room that would be fine.
7	Excuse me sir, may I help you first you want to need to more information first cause actually this brochure we provide all the guests we can explain for all the thing you want to know however if you want to get all the detail you can asking me and then the brochure we provide for you and also for another one would you like to keep for your friend or your colleagues or anyone else however this one is prepared for guest one by one actually. Just only one please.
8	Of course depend on the reason we suppose to do. We do discount this time for you we don't want that thing to happen again in our hotel. Thank you to let us know.
9	Very nice to see you thank you. You talk to me, may be in the 5 minutes I have to do the thing I have to do first

Hotel D

1	Please shut the radio.
2	Could you please do the new dish for me it's very salty?
3	It's very strange.
4	Could you please stay calm because it's nearly midnight? It may be disturb another guest.
5	Could you please do the new plan because it's good for me to choose which one is better because I think this one is not the best choice for me.
6	Please don't smoke in the room because it's the rule of the hotel.
7	Why do you want to have a lot of brochure?
8	You cannot get a discount because if you want to complain us or you want to get a discount you have to let me know before you order every dish in the morning you complain us but you never tell us that you want to get a discount.
9	I have to work now.

Hotel E

1st person

1	Please slow down, turn off the music because it's the bed time.
2	It's salty you can taste. Is possible you can change or make a new one?
3	If your private life, it's ok but if you come to work your service is your job you are in the public area the grooming and tidy is very important you good looking high light color is over it should be in the basic standard of the hair it should be the standard of the service. But if you take your private life, no problem if on the job on duty, it should be in the standard.
4	Excuse me, what you doing it's very late make a noisy and we have a complain form other guest beside your room if you open or make a noise please take down or choose come to lobby or anywhere not in the room to disturb the other guest.
5	OK it's good for your idea but if we need more detail to brainstorming and we will see what the strength what the weakness on your plan but only word in you present we do not detail yet it a good idea you create everything for the plan but we need to see more detail on your plan.
6	Please understand this non smoking room if we would like smoking we have the other place smoking area you can come this one.
7	Why you take a lot? You are travel agent? What 's your purpose? To reading only one is enough. If you are travel agent you need for your customer, we give you more.
8	We will take only the item the seafood (- the one she/he complain not the whole meal)
9	I'm busy. I'll see you back in 5 minutes if a long story we can make an appointment later.

2nd person

1	I need to sleep. It late it a long time to play, can you stop I need to sleep because tomorrow I start working morning time.
2	This food a little bit more salt. The next time a little bit slower for slower. Try to taste.
3	Good but if for me not so good but for you better. Good for you.
4	Sorry I have a little bit problem with another room beside you. (unclear)... .. Because so noisy. Can you slow down
5	This plan not so good, expensive not so safety. ...(unclear)..
6	Sorry, I need a little bit to tell you something for tell you in the room non smoking you go to balcony smoke outside.
7	How many have you, may be you need some information more for this brochure.
8	Right now I am not discount it for you but I will forward it the manager or someone to know anything if you have problem may be the manager give you some discount.
9	Could you wait a moment, may be take a seat first because right now I'm busy, may be you come next time.

Hotel F

1st person

1	We want to relax, because all the day we have to has work so please volume down.
2	Could you taste this food again it very เค็ม could you change the new food?
3	Your hair so beautiful but it not เหมาะสม for her work now.
4	Excuse me, I am calling from reception, but the next room, could you please to อธิบายไม่ถูก จะบอกอย่างไรดี ปกติก็คุยอยู่ in this room next to your room want to relax but now your room is so very noisy.
5	It's a good we have to recommend this one is better if you change to this, this one is not good, you will change to this one is better.
6	We are very sorry in this room you cannot smoking if you want to smoke you can change to another room it's better.
7	Sorry sir, you take too more brochures, may be you can take 2 or 3 or you want to give someone if you want to take it for another one it's OK for you but if you want to keep byself you can take 1 or 2 is enough.
8	I'm sorry we cannot give you a discount now. If you tell me before can I give you some discount may be we have to change the food for you the new food for you or give something for you more.
9	I'm working now.

2nd person

1	Please turn down very noisy. I'd like to sleep.
2	Could you change the new one? I cannot eat.
3	I don't like it.
4	Please because the room behind your room would like to sleep the room now is noisy. May be you have children. Please tell them.
5	Carry on this plan, I 'm not sure for your plan.
6	Please smoke outside room.
7	You can take it. (ignore)
8	We can give you a discount about 10% for the room. Or may be next time we give you the coupon for the room, one room one night.
9	Ok you work now. You can start work now.

Hotel G

1	Sorry, please make the sound slowly because the loudly music is loudly make me cannot sleep and cannot relaxing and please help me to slowly first
2	Very sorry your food is not good taste. Please back to change the other food and if you have the other recommend food for us. Please you change and you can take it back, please recommend.
3	I think I would like to suggest you good but sometime not polite for the appearance for the comfortable to working.
4	Sorry your room is very noisy please slowly down because the guest in next door cannot sleep, it the time to sleeping if you want to make a noise you can move to the beach far from here.
5	I would like to introduce the staff to try to make a plan again. I think the plan some thing is Ok and something is not Ok. I can solve something not OK and mix opinion again. And please fixing about for this plan is cannot you can think and solve the way for make it better. But I think this problem you can do for the plan.
6	Very sorry because for our hotel is the healthy hotel and I make all hotel for good healthy for the guest. This is the policy of the hotel. The guest who would like to stay with us so we have not smoking on the room. But we have set the area for the guest who would like to smoking.
7	All the document is very important and very information for us if you would like to know the most information please keep the one and the other if you would like to know for know I can explain for you.
8	Yes, <i>I would like to ask for F and B first</i> You can get <i>what happen for the food</i> . Yes, I can give you a discount I invite you to have lunch again by the same menu.
9	I think that it is no time for talking about something you would like to talk with me but now in the same time I have to do many things I think to quick the schedule for myself if you cannot say no but I can (unclear).....sorry and please something to drink and the snack to eat and wait for minute because necessary to do for the important thing to do first and I come back to talk with you again. If you have a time please wait me a moment, if I finish for the first one, I can hurry to talk with you again.

Hotel H

1st person

1	Stop the music because I want to sleep.
2	This dish is very salty for me. Could you please it or mix again?
3	Good.
4	Please calm down because you make too noise someone is not happy to stay with us. Thank you.
5	I think this plan is not very good, you have another plan?
6	We will change the room for you because you is the smoker.
7	Please take 2 or 3 pieces and if you would like to take more please take again later.
8	We cannot discount for you because we not have authorize, please wait for a moment I will talk with our manager.
9	Please stay calm down because I cannot work.

2nd person

1	Turn down for the volume because right now it's too late may be not only me the neighborhood also heard that, don't feel good.
2	I think the dish is too salty for me may be you can check if you think like that just make me one for me.
3	It's good (ทำเสียงไม่ชอบนัก)
4	Right now please be quiet because the room next door is complain.
5	I see this problem in your plan so I think we can talk to each other first may be both of us can think about it the new project or the new thing.
6	ไม่ได้ตาม
7	(if he opens the brochure) You interested about that? You come from travel agencies or not I can give you some more information. (if he takes it and go out, just him goes.)
8	I check every time that for your complain about your food so if you prefer to let us discount we can discount but actually this is a normal I mean the standard of every dish that you have. It like a standard already. So I can discount for you but may be next time if you come back again I will try more for you.
9	Next time OK. I don't have time, any space of my brain to listen to you.

3rd person

1	Could you please turn off the music because I need to sleep?
2	Excuse me, could you please change the food for it's salty may be I need to more repair cooking.
3	Your hair is nice but I think may be you have better change the style better for your job.
4	Excuse me sir, this time now we have another guest complain for you have music noisy. Could you please louder for have the music at your room?
5	I think your plan is correct but I think may be we have put more something or something repair new and may be I read first and call you back later
6	Excuse me I apologize this floor is non smoking area, may be you go to at the garden we have garden and smoking area if you need to smoke, in the room you cannot.
7	Excuse me for the brochure 1 pieces for 1 person. Could you please keep for another guest?
8	We cannot discount for you. I know for the problem for the food let me check with my boss. I come back immediately for you for this problem. We have no power for the discount.
9	Could you please come back again this time now I'm busy I cannot talk to you?

4th person

1	Please slow slowly because noise loud some sleep working tomorrow.
2	Please change again very spicy.
3	Please you want to change because in the hotel we have กฏ ระเณีขบ cannot change hair คุณทรงให้เรีขบร้อบ you have uniform you have haircut you have shave.
4	Please very slowly because next door cannot sleep may be working sometime it noise for your
5	We have to looking for the showroom first after that we have discount for room we have free for spa discount for restaurant.
6	We have smoking floor different we have smoking floor, non smoking if you like to have to smoking, smoking area outside.
7	Ignore.
8	Wait a moment please we can do like that, because we ask for the duty manager first. May be duty we can discount for you because problem from the food.
9	Wait a moment please. We working busy.

Travel Agency A

1st person

1.	Knock his door, just warning him. Please can it low could you please get it down
2	Stop, relax take for 2-3 minutes after that back to work again.
3	Smile at her at the first time. Oh it's quite nice. But I think it's better. You should get it longer or shorter. Give her some advise
4	Could you check for this dish something wrong with that? Could you please change or check with the chef?
5	Excuse me, sir I know that it's not the same price that you expect. It's not the same price that we already give to you. At this time it is changed. Anyway I would like to say that it's not the same price we sent mail to you. The extra rate is 200 baht. because of they have more tax. I am so sorry for this case.
6	Mr ..C your ticket for... is already confirmed and the ticket we have to issue the ticket on Wednesday. Could you please transfer money to our office before Tuesday because after that if you not pay in time we have to cancel this ticket.
7	Could you please specific the date for your destination and date? Because after You change many times sometimes they don't have flight you want to fly and the tax for the flight may be increasing.
8	I think your idea is quite good but I think it's better that if you would like to get it more smooth or something better. Could you recheck it again. I think that you have some point that I not agree with that. Could you please check with this? What about the other idea.
9	I'm sorry I'm a little bit busy at this time. Can you give me 5 minutes or 10 minutes. I'll back to you again. I'm so sorry.

2nd person

1.	Please stop playing the music. I would like to sleep.
2	Please take attention in typing the words.
3	Your hairstyle is good. It's good for you yourself to change to make you feel fresh.
4	It's salty. Please change it for me or do anything that make it not salty like this.
5	Please understand the price in newspaper the advertisement is low that not include tax and other fees yet. That's why the price's higher than usual
6	I have the message to tell you that you have to pay by next Wednesday otherwise you have to cancel if you are not ready to pay on Wednesday.
7	I'm pleasure to answer the question every time you call but please make understand about the conclusion of our conversation of each time that already finish or not if already finish and I would like to confirm that you should make sure by our words to make you understand that everything is already finished, don't have to call again. But in case you don't understand you want to call for the other information, please call.
8	I think we should make more investigation, make a research for all information about business we are going to do, expanding the business to make it more

	understand because there are some leaks of this plan to fix.
9	I think you should go to do your plan today first. You may come back again when I already finish my joy my paper work because I can't talk to you for along time. Thank you.

3rd person

1.	You have to stop to play the music now because I need to sleep because It's too late night for you and me. I have to sleep and you have to take a rest also.
2.	Excuse me, you have to typing again and please make sure that everything you type is right. You have to recheck before you give it to me.
3	It's not good for you in my opinion but It's up to you if you want to do that
4	Excuse me sir, this food is too salty. Could you please make a new dish for me or you have to recook or something for the better taste?
5	Excuse me, I have to say so sorry for you but it's my mistakes to tell you the air ticket price but now the air ticket price is higher and so you have to pay for the new air ticket price.
6	If you want to pay in the deadline so the booking may be cancel so if it is cancel I have to rebook for you and the system will give us the deadline again. I can give until the next deadline If you don't want to issue the ticket, I cannot do anything for you have to lose the seat or air ticket.
7	I am so sorry because I am so busy when I am free I'll check for you and I'll call you in five or ten minutes (in case busy). It's OK. I can change for you (in case free).
8	This program is not interested for the customer so but it's not my duty to do this but up to you if you want to do. It's just my opinion but it's not good for the customer and for us.
9	It's OK. I have not too much time for you but I can talk to you.

Travel Agency B

1	Slow down or turn off You do the volume down I want to sleep.
2	Again I told you I think more than 3 or 4 times. I will tell you again. You must do by yourself.
3	What happened to you. Oh beautiful you changed your head (joking)
4	What happened. Why I think something wrong with the chef or cooker. I need to change to change for a new plate or new dish.
5	Today gasoline up so and that ticket class is promotion is fully booked already now only have a higher class. That why we confirm higher price because under promotion rate is fully booked.
6	Today your ticket is the deadline. We auto cancel today you should come to settle pay by today tomorrow the latest other wise the booking will auto cancel because you are not pay. I cannot help anything the booking will cancel. The price may be change.
7	You should know this is the fourth or fifth time already. I will help you the last time. The next time you must to pay for the change.
8	What do you think if you do this plan how much business come to you. You should do another plan like promotion. If your customer pay by cash, give

	discount more than 5 %, like give voucher if they buy from us more than 1 million (give suggestion).
9	I will join with you and give me a time more than half an hour.

Travel Agency C

1	Please play slowly down. It's too loud
2	Please carefully about your typing. This is the third I found it so if only once or twice that's OK.
3	Oh. New look but I think if you make the color a little bit low, may be better.
4	How come is the food is salty. Can you change for me the new one please. I can't eat it. This one too salty, may be something wrong about chef or not. Please change for me.
5	We have remark in the newspaper or advertising that we didn't include the tax or fuel charge and everything but your ticket is include everything already you do not no need to pay then We can issue the ticket for you. We guarantee the price that we lower and not overcharge for you.
6	The time limit for the ticket in your booking is going to be on Monday so I think you should issue the ticket before Monday.
7	Never say anything (no complain). Next time if you change may be no seat available for you I think you need to think about it what date you travel.
8	Give me more time for have a look your plan and then I will give you advisor later on.
9	Right now. I have a lot of work. Today is Monday so talk to you later I need to finish work first.

Travel Agency D

1.	Tomorrow I have to go to work. You can play, listen to the music but you should not be loudly like this
2	Please pay attention more than this because I always tell you many times. It's not the first time so you should practice and adapt yourself, change yourself for the working good. Should pay attention more
3	Your new hair style is good but I think it's not suit for you. You had something. The old thing is better. It's good but it's not suit for you, for your personality
4	I think this dish is too salt, may be next time and for your customer, for your restaurant. You should change something like, not too salt like this. But everything is OK. But too much salt. You have a lot of salt.
5	Sorry to misunderstand. Anyway our price is cheaper than others although include the tax and surcharge and everything the price is also cheaper than another. Normally in the advertising we don't put the surcharge in the ticket. This is the policy of the travel agent
6	Excuse me for the ticket that I booked for you. You have to pay today before tomorrow because I have to inform the ticket number to the airline to guarantee that I already buy the ticket. If you don't pay the ticket I cannot issue the ticket for you. I have to cancel by automatic.

7	Excuse me, the airline told me that this flight you change is very crowded if you change your mind and you want to take this flight you cannot change anything more.
8	It's not the good project for you right now. Something may be you have to find out some more information about this business. If you have many details about this You can do it better. I think.
9	We should make everything is finish. Then after working, we can go to have some lunch, talk another story, conversation. You should talk in the break time. Right now we should do everything ready.

Travel Agency E

1	Could you please turn the music down or please be quiet a little bit because I have to work tomorrow. Please understand me. I am not angry with you at all. Please understand me too. If you want to work tomorrow or study tomorrow I will not do as the same.
2	Excuse me, could you please check it again. I think it has a mistakes on your work could you please be concentrate with the thing you did because it happen many time. It wastes your time also. Be concentrate with what you did and read it again before you print out. It will be better because when you print it out it waste not only waste of your time but the paper the property of the office. So be careful with the thing you did before.
3	Hey. You got a new hair cut. Where did you get it from? It's quite nice. But may be if you make it like more curl, different colors make you more beautiful and shiny.
4	Could you please check this food for me because salty? Could you please tell the chef that today a little bit salty? if possible to change it.
5	Sorry with the thing that happen but in the airline business sometimes they change the taxes or they change fuel charge. May be a little bit more expensive. Next time you come with me, I'll give you discount coupon or a voucher.
6	Excuse me, for your booking, today deadline already. Are you still confirm with the seat? could you please transfer your money to our bank account or we take our person/ staff to collect the money because it's the last day if you do not pay for today the seat will not have any more may be much more expensive that you book so not losing the seat we have to collect the money today. If we do not do this we have a problem with agency also.
7	Could you reconsider again, and think about it make it clear you don't have to call me many times, but think it. When is the perfect date you want and call me. I will book the seat for you. You don't have to feel that you not get a seat. I will do it for you. Please make sure the exact date that you want. Because if you change many times the airline will make extra fee the changing date fee. I don't want you have to pay this extra fee.
8	Your idea is nice and but sometimes but for me if I were you I like your idea. I'll put more something like this like that why we not do this, do that. If you do this you will get more profit. If you do this our client will come more or buy more.
9	Excuse me, can you give me a time. I'll talk you later after this. Don't worry after this we will go hang out. We have a lot of time to talk. But for now I have to work. If I will not finish my boss will kill me.

Travel Agency F

1st person

1	Please be quiet.
2	This word mistake, please ແຕ້ງໂງ
3	This is in the office, please cut hair, look like polite because in the office not the walk street.
4	Excuse me, this is very salt salty so much. Please new one for me.
5	In the ໂຈນໜ້າ not include fee and tax and airport tax because actually advertisement no show fee, tax and airport tax.
6	Please buy ticket first Monday because it's the deadline if you don't buy I am not guarantee you can take ticket.
7	Cannot change. This airline policy can change four time if you want to change the next one, cannot.
8	This a low season so I think you can buy airplane cheaper so and then you ແຕ້ງໂງ ticket down low because I think this cost very expensive for this time for low season.
9	Just a moment please.

2nd person

1	Young brother come to me please could you help me some about turn low and then I want to have time about an hour to sleep and then enough for me you free time.
2	Could you help me please for change some for mistake. Repair for another good more than this.
3	Wow you are new look, beautiful if you cut something out, you are very good more than if you do that extra, if you can find the red color, yellow color blue color, better more.
4	This is my food very very salty, can I change, because this salty I can't eat. I return and then you keep my food come back to the kitchen then I think chef taste he know salty.
5	What newspaper you see and when, when you are traveling. I know why the price is higher for advertising because tax, fare change everyday. If airline higher I have another airline.
6	(say another story don't about ticket) Today you pay money for customer already I should send the receipt for you by email by fax. (talk about something else first)
7	I can help you I have a charge because the customer change one-two-three time yet. This is four time – I charge you about... if it change for the five times, six times, seven times, the company charge you, charge you, charge you. And then either I can charge, or the next time, I don't change because the company charge. When I change the period, I can't to change myself, I call to airline, but then airline charge, don't this charge, because you change a lot.
8	I don't agree with you about this because dot-dot-dot. And then, she don't ask me only, you can ask another people and then agree with me? If another people agree with me, OK, you think you mistake and then you change another plan. And then some people don't agree with me , that I think so about opinion,

	another people don't same opinion and then can find the better. And owner, manager see the plan and then conference again.
9	OK, now I'm busy, and when I come back home, I call to you again. I can talk to you about one hour, but now I'm so sorry, I'm working, very busy. About your story, I know, and then I come back, I call to you again.

3rd person

1	Don't make noise. Please slowly voice. Tomorrow I have working.
2	You can check one more round or you can repeat how discorrect how about you, are you repeat again before to finish why why correct.
3	Wow It's wonderful. You change hair style, new collection. If you cutting your hair your hair feel good.
4	This food can you cooking again for me because I don't like this taste. You can make for me again, please thank you.
5	This price you can see sometime not include tax or surcharge. This price is ticket only not include tax or surcharge you can see remark or this way this country to country sometime this ticket not include tax or surcharge.
6	-This ticket on date to issue today are you did you go to this trip right? you have problem for the money I advance to pay for the ticket and when do you get the money receive for me (old customer) -This price this ticket include tax, surcharge is price...., you can pay to my company by cash or cashier check or pay on account (new customer).
7	You can change one time 2 time 3 time it's on quotation on ticket. But some class, sugar class, victor class, queen class, not different. You can change 1 time, 2 time, 3 time, when you change to pay money more at rate price of ticket.
8	Can change some program in trip, how about this one, we can change to some hotel, food, restaurant. How about you agree this one or not.
9	Are you important to talk to me if important I have time for you 5 minute, you can talk with me, or not important you can told me and speak with me after worker finish work

Travel Agency G

1	Excuse me, can you, because I want to sleep, can you stop to listen for a while?
2	This word is not right I think you d' better to go to the vocabulary or some book or word to check what it mean and then you edit them to make it to the right word.
3	If you like it or if you think it suit you it's OK do what you like.
4	Excuse me I think this food is a little bit salty.
5	When we put the advert the tax and gasoline price is up everyday. But the price I sell to you today is not much different from the advert. Please understand because tax and gasoline is up everyday. We have to check the promotion again because the promotion is not the same everyday. May be we have 5 or ten promotion and all they gone.
6	If you not pay for next day or today later the booking will be cancelled and I cannot keep the ticket. It's better for you to pay me half and I keep the ticket for you. It's OK if you not come back I gonna keep the deposit.
7	If you can have a ticket somewhere cheaper than me, you can take it./ I do my

	best, you can change whatever you want because you are my customer.
8	I think this plan is not completely yet. I think you better to do more. This year not very good economy. So I think you better to do something else cause we want to save our cost for the company.
9	Can I ring you back when I finish work? Because now I am very very busy.

Travel Agency H

1	Could you please slowly or quiet? I am working now. Give me one hour.
2	You should make correctly and then check it again. It wrong 3 time already. Then you have you make a good checking.
3	Do you like it? I don't like it. But you did already. Sometimes it looks nice for your style but my style sometimes it's not nice.
4	It's too salty. I cannot eat. May I change it?
5	Now the gasoline and our tax is fix cost and the moving cost depend on the airline we cannot fix The ticket will be checked every time when we buy it. It can be moved every time. The price advertising is just estimate price. We have to pay more gasoline, the airport, the insurance, many thing that depend on different of each airline.
6	You have to confirm before the day the due date, if you don't come it automatic cancellation.
7	This is the last time that you can change. Are you sure you would like to change. This is your final, make sure you would like to change for the last time. You cannot change anymore. (It's OK if it says in the condition)
8	If you would like to do you can do, but you have to accept that we have an expense that depend on your planning you can do you can try first. If don't success, that you have to accept. We can change it later.
9	Hello, I'm busy now. Do you have something to talk? It's urgent. How many minutes? If it's not urgent, we can talk later.

Travel Agency I

1	Excuse me, please open the radio or anything the TV make me to not sleeping. Can you turn off or take a little bit louder?
2	You make wrong 3 times this a lot to take a mistake. I think I will can explain to you something to correct and this the last time you cannot to correct again. I think to find some one. Because I think 3 times have a lot to mistake.
3	It's so nice. It looks very nice.
4	This is so salty. Can you make a new one to me because I cannot eat it?
5	You do not happy about the price. Because may be you know something about the price. It's OK I will low down the price for you but it not so much because we have many thing you know the price includes taxes any thing already.
6	You have a book a program anything we will pay to the agency tomorrow and you book to go to the airport anything in the Thursday but now it's Tuesday you can pay me now or because we pay money to the agency tomorrow.
7	You change your mind you change program 4 time so we cannot do program to you any more so if you want this the last time if you change again I will again to fine something like fine.
8	I think it has some mistake in this program may be we can discuss this program

	again I think you can make a new one on a low price make it better. <i>I think so if you don't we will discuss.</i>
9	Excuse me, I am so sorry today I am so busy if you don't have something important can I keep working.

Travel Agency J

1	Tomorrow I have a work I would like to get up early morning. If it's possible please make a noise lightly, lighter. Thank you.
2	Please correct this word because it's a mistake word, please type again.
3	Today you look nice you look beautiful, may be too short, too curl. But beautiful for you, suitable for you suitable for your characteristic.
4	If it's possible, please put a little sugar for me please because I like a little sweet.
5	I'm so sorry this is just only advertising in the newspaper this is good for you to come to my office I would like to explain to you may be we will have something get more money from the guest.
6	I would like to get the full price, another price that you deposit our money so we must get the full price to pay to the air ticket fuel it is good for your good trip to go to your home or to your country.
7	We very pleasure to help you. If it possible I would like to help you to change for timing, let me call to the airline and if they accept or if they can change for you we will arrange for you I think it's not problem for our office.
8	I think if you like to get more money for promotion of our office let us think about that and I would like to consult with my colleague in the office and after that I will let you know later. If you would like to get more money for our office.
9	That's OK, please come in and take a seat. May I help you? Do you have something to consult with me or to talk to me I'll appreciate to talk to you or to help you.

Travel Agency K

1	Please do it low voice because it's quite late now.
2	You do so many time mistake so you have to approve English you need a time to learn more.
3	It look nice but it's better if you do another way.
4	Please do it a new one to change it.
5	Why the price not exactly in the advertise because the price had to be add the fuel cost, service charge and whatever.
6	Sir/Madam this is the condition of the booking flight so you have to pay full price at least two weeks before departure otherwise the flight will be cancel.
7	If you do that way more than 4 or 5 time that might be you have to pay extra for cancellation or to change the flight.
8	Your plan is very good plan but now everything could be changed about word situation so you need to up date about the cost thing about the price about everything before planning the price or selling
9	Now I'm very busy so we can make appointment again in the evening after my job finish we can talk longer we can do something fun.

University A

1st student

1.	Could you make a recommendation for me on a job training?
2	Could you change another plate because it is so salty?
3	You should change to wear the right uniform.
4	I'd like to know why my score is low. I don't understand that and I already did my best but it's not fair any more.
5	It's a disgusting hair.
6	Don't disturb me.
7	It's OK, don't worry, just be happy.
8	I think I can do my best in travel agency more than the hotel management because I didn't study on tourism.
9	Don't be talkative during I study.

2nd student

1.	I want to apply for a job because I don't like for จดหมาย letter. You help for the write letter.
2	You change the food for me.
3	You wear a long dress because it's polite.
4	Why the subject is low. What I can do it a high grade.
5	I don't like it and I want to cut for beautiful.
6	Please turn off the radio or you lower the volume.
7	I don't happy in you do.
8	I don't like internship in hotel because I don't like the place.
9	Please lower the voice I have a lot of work.

3rd student

1.	You can write letter, please.
2	Please give me you make
3	May I wear shirt ใหญ่กว่า
4	วิชานี้ยากไหม
5	Thank you
6	Please may I open ค่อย
7	ไม่เป็นไร ซื่อไหมได้
8	ไม่เป็นไร ทำงานที่โรงแรมได้
9	ไม่เป็นไร I give may ให้คนอื่นช่วยทำได้

University B

1st student

1.	Please write the letter for about myself.
2	Excuse me, please, can you give me some sugar or something make my food really sour?
3	Please wear the good uniform more than you wear right now. It's not good for you. It really dangerous for you and different from Thai culture.
4	I think I can do exam very well. Why you got low grade for me. I would like to know why.
5	Oh really, thank you. But I think my style hair is not good for me.
6	Please turn the volume down. I cannot sleepy.
7	Never mind. I can borrow somebody to read or buy the new one.
8	My teacher I would like to work at the travel agency more than at the hotel because I would like to practice foreign language and I think service guests/people more than in the restaurant.
9	Please be quiet because I have to do homework.

2nd student

1.	Can you give me about letter of recommendation?
2	I think the food is very salty.
3	You don't dress like that.
4	Teacher. Could you repeat all my <u>ไม่ได้</u>
5	Than you. <u>ไม่รู้ว่าทำอะไรดี</u> I think it doesn't perfect for me.
6	Could you stop it? <u>อยากพูดแต่ไม่ได้คำศัพท์</u>
7	Don't worry, never mind.
8	Teacher, I don't like about hotel.
9	<u>ต้องอธิบายภาษาไทยถึงจะเข้าใจ</u> I'm sorry I have a lot of my homework?

3rd student

1.	Could you help me writing the letter?
2	Could you change that plate?
3	Change it now.
4	Why my grade low?
5	You could say the truth.
6	Turn off it now.
7	Don't worry about that.
8	Can I change to do my favorite job?
9	Please shut up.

University C

1st student

1.	I need you have me to write document.
2	Excuse me, can I change another one?
3	Can you change the dress because it's so sexy?
4	Excuse me teacher, can you check my grade again?
5	I don't believe you.
6	Can you use headphone because it's time to sleep?
7	No problem.
8	Why do you want me internship in hotel?
9	Sorry, I don't have free time because I am busy with my homework.

2nd student

1.	Could you writ about me with in class, พฤศจิกายน please?
2	Please change it for me, please because it's salty for me.
3	Please change a new dress.
4	Please tell me I do something wrong. Can you explain me, please?
5	Thank you for your comment, but I don't like it. It's not my style.
6	Please turn the radio, please.
7	Where you lost it, you will try to find it again.
8	Sorry teacher, I don't agree with your thought because I like to do travel agency.
9	Be quiet please, I can't do my homework, I want สมบัติ

University D

1st student

1.	I want to apply the job. Could you sign the letter of recommendation, please?
2	Excuse me, this food is so salty. You change it for me, please.
3	I think your shirt and skirt uncomfortable, If you wear the long skirt I think so good.
4	Excuse me teacher, I never missed the class. Everyday I have class I enjoy but my grade is very low. Could you tell me about this and you should suggest the way to prepare the grade.
5	Thank you
6	Could you please turn down please? you must go to bed because you are very young and tomorrow you have a class. May be late.
7	Why you lost. This book is important for me now and next class you buy it for me please.
8	I think the travel agency is good for you.
9	I'm sorry now I'm busy and if you want to talk with me I'll meet tomorrow.

2nd student

1.	Please write the recommendation letter for me to apply for a job.
2	Excuse me, waiter/waitress. The menu is very salty. Please turn it or cook it again.
3	It is unusual for student and you will change the shirt and skirt.
4	Why did my grade was very low. For me I think I could do the final exam very well for me and I quite understand the subject. I didn't understand why my grade is very low for me.
5	You must say the truth what is the new hair look like beautiful or not good.
6	Please turn down/lower the volume because I go to bed. I want to go to sleep. Thank you my younger brother.
7	You don't worry and I can buy a new one.
8	Sorry I don't like the hotel, but I like the travel agent and I didn't agree with you. I'm very sorry.
9	I'm very sorry I want to do an assignment because I will send it today.

3rd student

1.	Can you write a letter for recommendation for me, please?
2	This food is salty. Can you bring another one to change?
3	Wearing this not polite. It's impolite. Can you change wearing?
4	Why this grade because I can do.
5	You lie me.
6	Can you เขาเสียงหน้อย
7	You should take care my book you borrowed me.
8	I want to internship at travel agency.
9	Stop talking.

University E

1st student

1.	Could you write a letter of recommendation for me, please?
2	Why this food is salty?
3	Can you dress gentle?
4	Can I look my score, please? I will explain about my learning in your class.
5	I don't think so because I self-confident my hair style is bad.
6	Can you listen in head phone, please. I cannot sleep because tomorrow I get up early, please.
7	Never mind. If I give you next time, and you lost again, I will not give you.
8	I would like to do internship at travel agency because I can speak English more than internship in the hotel and I have opportunity to find foreigner more than.
9	Please be quiet I am doing homework, please.

2nd student

1.	Ajarn Ladda, could you write recommendation for me for my job?
2	Excuse me waiter, I would like to change the food because it's very salty I can't eat.
3	Your skirt is very short I want to change your skirt because it's very impolite.
4	Teacher, I have a problem with my grade. I misunderstand about grade.
5	Thank you for your compliment but I think when my hair is long I want to change my hair.
6	Excuse me, can you low the volume it's very loudly.
7	Never mind.
8	Teacher, I would like to change about internship. I want to go to travel agency.
9	Sorry, I won't speak to you because I'm very busy do homework.

3rd student

1.	Ajarn Ladda, could you write a letter of recommendation, please?
2	Why this food is very salty? You can change this for me.
3	Could you wear long skirt and untight shirt?
4	I would like to know why I got the low grade because I am sure I can do a good score.
5	Thank you for your lie compliment.
6	Could you listen the music with the headphone because now I am headache I want to sleep very much.
7	Where did you lost my book? I will find my book with you and if it cannot see. Never mind. I can get a new one.
8	I would like to know why you didn't agree me to internship in travel agency.
9	Now I'm very busy I want to do my homework more than talk with you.