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ท่องเที่ยวและบริการ

THAI EFL STUDENTS' PRAGMATIC AWARENESS IN HOTEL CONTEXT: A
STUDY OF TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS



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THAI EFL STUDENTS' PRAGMATIC AWARENESS IN HOTEL CONTEXT: A
STUDY OF TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

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บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยมีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาความตระหนักทางวัจนปฏิบัติศาสตร์ของผู้เรียนชาวไทย สาขาการท่องเที่ยวและบริการที่เรียนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศและเพื่อศึกษาอิทธิพลของระดับความสามารถภาษาอังกฤษต่อความตระหนักทางวัจนปฏิบัติศาสตร์ ข้อมูลถูกรวบรวมโดยใช้แบบทดสอบความตระหนักทางวัจนปฏิบัติศาสตร์และการสัมภาษณ์แบบกึ่งโครงสร้างกับกลุ่มตัวอย่าง นักศึกษาสาขาการท่องเที่ยวและบริการชาวไทยจำนวน 40 คน ที่มีระดับความสามารถภาษาอังกฤษสูง และ ต่ำ จากสถาบันการศึกษารัฐบาลแห่งหนึ่ง ผลการวิจัยพบว่าความตระหนักทางวัจนปฏิบัติศาสตร์ระหว่างกลุ่มตัวอย่างที่มีระดับความสามารถภาษาอังกฤษ สูง และ ต่ำ ไม่แตกต่างกัน กลุ่มตัวอย่างทั้งสองแสดงความตระหนักต่อบังคับด้านอำนาจและด้านระยะห่างทางสังคมในระดับมาก และแสดงความรับรู้ต่อความรุนแรงของความผิดในระดับน้อย ความแตกต่างระหว่างกลุ่มสูงและต่ำถูกพบในความตระหนักต่อบังคับด้านด้านระยะห่างทางสังคม และการแสดงออกถึงการเข้าใจความแตกต่างทางวัฒนธรรม ผลของงานวิจัยนำเสนอข้อเสนอแนะด้านการจัดการการเรียนรู้เพื่อส่งเสริมความตระหนักทางวัจนปฏิบัติศาสตร์ เพื่อพัฒนาหลักสูตรที่สอดคล้องกับการทำงานและสื่อการสอนที่สามารถส่งเสริมสมรรถนะการสื่อสารของผู้เรียนเพื่อการสื่อสารที่มีประสิทธิภาพในบริบทโรงแรม

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate Thai EFL Tourism and Hospitality undergraduate students' pragmatic awareness and to examine the influence of English proficiency toward pragmatic awareness of Thai EFL Tourism and Hospitality students. The data were gathered via a pragmatic judgment task and a semi-structured interview from 40 Thai EFL tourism and hospitality undergraduate students with high and low proficiency from a public university in Thailand. The findings revealed that the high and low proficiency participants' pragmatic awareness was comparable. They exhibited the high awareness of power and social distance dominantly, while they were less aware of the severity of the offence. The difference between high and low proficiency groups was the awareness of social distance and cultural awareness. The results suggested the pedagogical implications for pragmatic awareness- raising instruction for developing the job-related curricular and teaching materials to improve students' communicative competence for effective communication in the hotel context.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

EOP: English for Occupational Purposes

ILP: Interlanguage Pragmatic

NNS: Non-native Speaker

H: High proficiency participant

L: Low proficiency participant

P: Power

D: Social distance

R: Severity of offence



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The first chapter presents the introduction of the current study focusing on the background of the study, followed by the research objectives, research questions, scope of the study, and significance of the study. At the end of the chapter, the definition of specific terms is described.

1.1 Background of the study

Canale (1983) defines communication as the way two or more people exchange meaningful information and feelings by using verbal and nonverbal language, visuals, sounds, or texts. To achieve successful communication, communicative competence, which is language users' knowledge and ability to perform appropriate language in social contexts, is importantly needed (Canale & Swain, 1980).

Communicative competence is broadly defined as the knowledge of language rules and social conventions governing the abilities of transferring, interpreting, and negotiating the meanings of utterances appropriately in various communicative situations (Hymes, 1987). The concept of communicative competence including its models and the importance of linguistic knowledge and pragmatic competence is highlighted by many scholars (Bachman, 1990; Bachman & Palmer, 1996; Canale, 1983; Canale & Swain, 1980).

Canale (1983) developed a 'Communicative Competence Model' from the proposed model of Canale and Swain (1980) consisting of grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence as the four main components. Firstly, grammatical competence focuses on the knowledge of language rules and the ability to combine words and sentences grammatically. Secondly, sociolinguistic competence sheds light on the knowledge of social and cultural rules in order to perform language appropriately in various social contexts. Thirdly, discourse competence represents the language users' ability to stretch meaningful sentences in spoken and written forms. Lastly, strategic competence is defined as the use of verbal and nonverbal strategies in order to achieve

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communicative goals and avoid communication breakdown. Similarly, organizational knowledge and pragmatic knowledge are also included as the two main components of the 'Communicative Language Ability' of Bachman and Palmer (1996). According to the model, communicative language ability is required for successful communication, which includes organizational knowledge or knowledge of language structure, as well as pragmatic knowledge. Pragmatic knowledge is further subdivided into illocutionary knowledge, which focuses on the language user's ability to produce and interpret the meaning of utterances, and sociolinguistic knowledge, which refers to knowledge of social conventions that influence communicative production and comprehension.

These proposed models of Bachman and Palmer (1996), Canale (1983), and Canale and Swain (1980) share a similar view on the importance of language knowledge and pragmatic knowledge. In real-life communication, the mistakes of pronunciation, grammar, and syntax are not the major causes of communication failures, most of the failures commonly occur from pragmatic incompetence (Bowen, 2019). To avoid miscommunication and misinterpretation of utterances, language users should improve knowledge of language rules as well as raise their pragmatic awareness in order to communicate appropriately in a variety of contexts.

To date, English as a medium of communication is widely used by people around the world for various purposes such as business, trade, tourism services, and education (Jaroensak, 2018). In recent years, the tourism and hospitality industry has played an important role in Thailand's economy (Ministry of Tourism and Sports MOTS, 2017). According to arrival statistics from February 2020, the highest number of international tourists arriving in Thailand mainly came from China, followed by Malaysia, Russia, Korea, and India (Ministry of Tourism and Sports MOTS, 2020). The use of English in Thailand has steadily risen due to the increasing number of international tourists, especially within the tourism and hospitality industry in both metropolitan and local areas (Jaroensak, 2018).

The Ministry of Tourism and Sports (MOTS) proposed the second national development plan (2017- 2021) encouraging Thai tourism and hospitality industry to enhance competitiveness and develop employees' capacities in order to achieve a

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world-class tourism destination and international standards. Tourism and hospitality businesses, according to the plan, should promote professional training to develop employees' communication skills, IT skills, safety, and hospitality. Furthermore, educational institutions should develop curricula emphasizing practical skills and language proficiency to suit the industry's needs (Ministry of Tourism and Sports MOTS, 2017).

According to the researcher's three-month internship experience as a guest service agent, effective communication in the hospitality contexts can help build a good relationship with guests, avoid conflict, and create a positive experience for guests. Consequently, the practice and development of English is important for achieving successful communication. In order to prepare new graduates to be ready to work in a globalized world, the educational sector should promote linguistic knowledge along with pragmatic knowledge. However, English learning in EFL countries focuses primarily on the mastery of grammar rules rather than pragmatic knowledge, causing the EFL students to lack awareness about appropriate language use in different norms (Farnia, 2015). Additionally, Thai students often cannot perform pragmatic English expressions correctly and appropriately in real-life communication with foreigners. The problem is that the students do not receive sufficient pragmatic awareness-raising instructions and opportunities to use English outside the classroom (Prakaiborisuth & Trakulkasemsuk, 2016). Pragmatic knowledge and awareness can help students communicate effectively in international settings (Thijittang, 2010). Communication in international settings reflects the mixture of diverse languages, social factors, values, and cultures (Cioffi, 2003). In order for students to survive and keep communicating smoothly with people from different cultures, the educational sector should raise students' pragmatic awareness of different sociocultural norms such as culture, social class, and status in order to use the language appropriately (Schmidt, 1993).

Pragmatic awareness is one of the essential building blocks of pragmatic competence. Pragmatic awareness refers to the speakers' conscious knowledge and awareness of the social rules and conventions that govern appropriate language use in various situations (Soler & Jorda, 2007). Several researchers have looked into the

concept of pragmatic awareness in terms of pragmatic development on the awareness of grammatical errors and pragmatic infelicities, as well as the impact of individual differences such as language proficiency, learning environment, and length of stay in a target language country on pragmatic awareness (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998; Beltrán, 2015; Schauer, 2006). To the best of the researcher's knowledge, the number of pragmatic awareness studies in the Thai context is limited (Nipaspong, 2011; Pin-ngern, 2015; Siraranghom & Jarunthawatchai, 2018). Furthermore, most of the pragmatic awareness studies focus mostly on daily conversation, especially in academic contexts. Only a few research studies have investigated pragmatic competence in working contexts, particularly in a hotel (Sirikhan & Prapphal, 2011; Jaroensak, 2018).

Communicating in English is very significant in the tourism and hospitality sectors. Appropriate communication needs more than the communicator's ability to use language accurately. It is also important for communicators to be aware of how to perform language appropriately in relation to communicative purposes, participants, and situations (Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998).

The purpose of this study was to gain better understanding of tourism and hospitality students' awareness of appropriate and inappropriate utterances in a professional context. The findings can benefit language instructors and educational institutions as well as offer a newly established program to gain ideas for developing job-related curricula and teaching materials in order to raise pragmatic awareness and enhance the students' receptive and productive skills.

1.2 Research objectives

The current study was conducted to achieve the objectives as follows:

1. To investigate Thai EFL tourism and hospitality undergraduate students' pragmatic awareness; and
2. To examine the differences of English proficiency toward pragmatic awareness of Thai EFL undergraduate students.

1.3 Research questions

This study attempted to answer two research questions as follows:

1. To what extent are tourism and hospitality undergraduate students aware of appropriate and inappropriate pragmatic speech act expressions?
2. To what extent does English proficiency play an important role on Thai EFL tourism and hospitality undergraduate students' pragmatic awareness?

1.4 Scope of the study

The participants of this study were Thai EFL students majoring in Tourism and Hospitality at one public university in Bangkok, Thailand. The students' levels of English proficiency were based on the average scores of two English Foundation courses. To examine Thai EFL Tourism and Hospitality students' pragmatic awareness, the study was designed as a mixed-methods study using a pragmatic judgment task and a semi-structured interview. The pragmatic judgment task was designed to measure pragmatic awareness toward three types of speech acts, including informing, handling complaints, and requesting as developed by Sirikhan and Prapphal (2011) and a preliminary interview.

1.5 Significance of the study

For the educational sector, the findings of this study will benefit the newly established program, teachers and program committees, by presenting cooperation in planning and systematically designed curricula. Moreover, the findings can be used as ideas for English instructors to develop effective language support, which suits students and industry needs, such as job preparation courses, classroom activities, and lessons for enhancing students' skills and efficacy of English communication in a professional context.

1.6 Definitions of terms

The six key terms used in the present study: *communicative competence*, *pragmatic awareness*, *politeness*, *English proficiency*, *English for occupational purposes*, and *tourism and hospitality students* are explained.

1.6.1 Communicative competence

Communicative competence is defined as the language users' linguistic knowledge and sociolinguistic knowledge in using language appropriately and effectively to the social contexts (Hymes, 1972). In this study, *communicative competence* refers to the knowledge of grammatical structures and contextual factors governing the ability to perform appropriate language in various communicative situations.

1.6.2 Pragmatic awareness

Pragmatic awareness is described as the language users' knowledge of rules and conventions affecting the use of appropriate language to the social contexts (Soler & Jorda, 2007). In this study, *pragmatic awareness* refers to the Tourism and Hospitality undergraduates' awareness of situational variables including social power, relative distance, and severity of offence in identifying appropriateness of responses to the situations.

1.6.3 Politeness

Politeness can be broadly defined as a theory being used as an approach in many linguistic studies. Focusing on communicative purposes, in this study, politeness refers to the expression of language strategies that show respect and consideration to the feelings and face of interlocutors with whom we communicate (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

1.6.4 English proficiency

English proficiency refers to the English knowledge and ability of Thai EFL Tourism and Hospitality students based on the average score of the English Foundation courses that they have enrolled in the first year of university. The levels of proficiency were divided into high and low based on the ranked scores. The top twenty were assigned to the high proficiency group, while the bottom twenty were assigned to the low proficiency group.

1.6.5 English for Occupational Purposes (EOP)

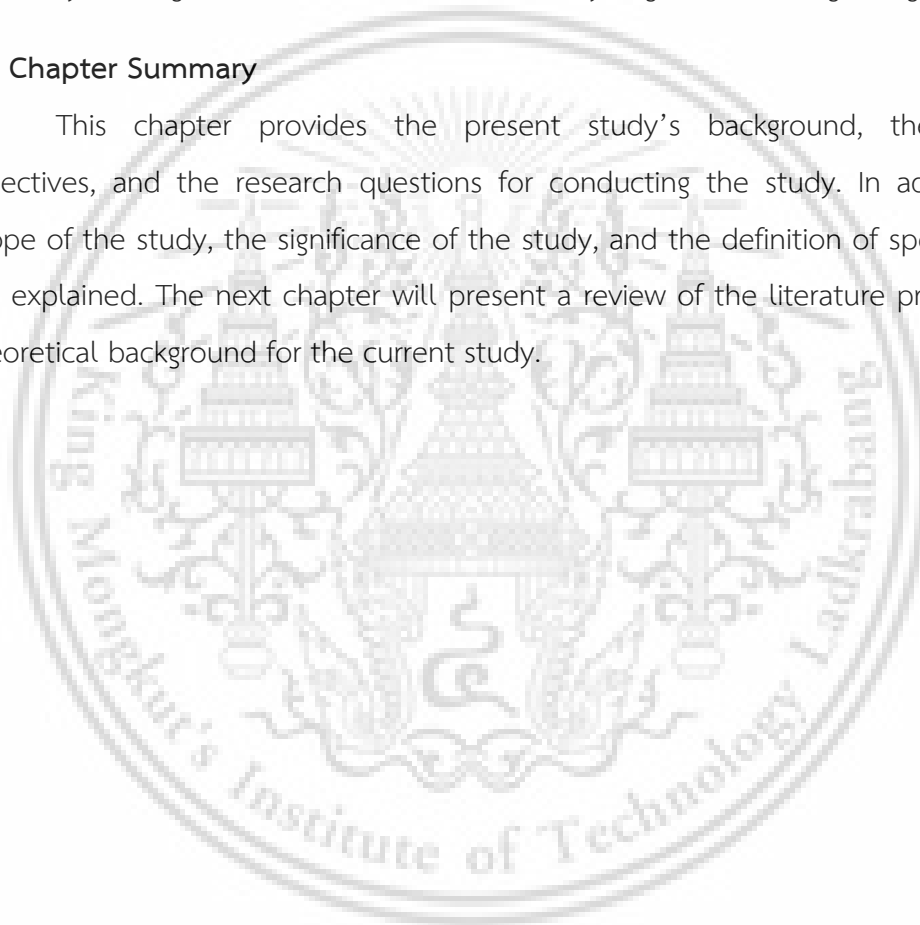
English for occupational purposes refers to the use of English language in a specific professional context. In this study, the English language focuses on the hotel front-office contexts including the hotel receptionist and concierge.

1.6.6 Tourism and hospitality students

In this study, *tourism and hospitality students* refer to the fourth-year undergraduate students majoring in Tourism and Hospitality from one public university in Bangkok, Thailand. All students study English as a foreign language.

1.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter provides the present study's background, the research objectives, and the research questions for conducting the study. In addition, the scope of the study, the significance of the study, and the definition of specific terms are explained. The next chapter will present a review of the literature providing the theoretical background for the current study.



CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter is divided into two major parts consisting of the theoretical background and the review of previous studies. The first part provides the underlying concepts of the study including socio-cultural theory, pragmatics theory, Interlanguage Pragmatics (ILP), English for Occupational Purposes (EOP), and research tools for assessing pragmatic competence and awareness. The review of previous studies of pragmatic awareness and pragmatic studies in hospitality context is presented in the second section.

2.1 Theoretical background

This section presents the theoretical background relating to the current study. Socio-cultural theory was firstly presented, followed by communicative competence, speech acts, politeness principles, Thai politeness, Interlanguage Pragmatics (ILP), English for Occupational Purposes, and the data-gathering instruments for assessing pragmatic production and awareness.

2.1.1 Socio-cultural theory

People exchange their thoughts and feelings through language. The use of language in social communication is based on socio-cultural theory. Socio-Cultural Theory (SCT) emphasizes mental process and cognitive development. Based on the SCT theory, social interaction plays an important role on the development of cognition (Vygotsky, 1978). The many theories and concepts relating to language in society or sociolinguistics, are explored in the following section.

2.1.1.1 Communicative competence

Linguistic competence is one of the essential aspects of effective communication. Chomsky (1965) points out that linguistic competence and linguistic performance are different. He views linguistic competence as a language user's tacit knowledge of language rules governing language production and comprehension, for example, the ability to distinguish ungrammatical sentences and the ability to create and understand a grammatically complete sentence. In contrast, linguistic

performance refers to the actual language performance in real communicative situations.

Chomsky's linguistic competence has generated controversy among many scholars (Bachman, 1990; Bachman & Palmer, 1996; Canale, 1983; Canale & Swain, 1980; Hymes, 1972). Hymes (1972) argues that linguistic competence mainly focuses on the ability to use language correctly and overlooks social and cultural aspects. He points out that linguistic competence is a part of communicative competence.

Communicative competence is defined as the ability to use grammatical knowledge in order to convey, interpret, and negotiate the meaning of messages in a variety of communicative situations. The concept of communicative competence highlights the importance of linguistic knowledge and sociolinguistic knowledge. Linguistic knowledge refers to the knowledge of language structure relating to Chomsky's linguistic competence, and sociolinguistic knowledge refers to the knowledge of socio-cultural rules such as the understanding of the audience, topic, setting, and cultural specifications.

Mirroring the approach of Bachman (1990), Bachman and Palmer (1996), Canale (1983), Canale and Swain (1980) and Hymes (1972) agree that sociolinguistic knowledge is an important part of communicative competence. Bachman (1990) defines sociolinguistic knowledge as the language user's knowledge of social and convention, including sensitivity to the specification of language use, social rules, and social contexts governing the appropriate language performance.

Accordingly, communicative competence is the knowledge and ability to perform appropriate linguistic expressions. The concept of communicative competence has garnered recognition from many scholars in postulating models of communicative competence (Bachman, 1990; Bachman & Palmer, 1996; Canale, 1983; Canale & Swain, 1980).

Table 2.1 Summary of terms used in the models of communicative competence

| Canale and Swain (1980) | Canale (1983) | Bachman and Palmer (1996) |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| Grammatical competence | Grammatical competence | Organizational knowledge (Grammatical knowledge) |
| Sociolinguistic competence | Sociolinguistic competence | Pragmatic knowledge (Functional knowledge and sociolinguistic knowledge) |
| Strategic competence | Strategic competence | Strategic knowledge |
| | Discourse competence | Organizational knowledge (Textual knowledge) |

Table 2.1 illustrates a comparison of terms used in three models. Firstly, the knowledge of language structure refers to “grammatical competence” (Bachman & Palmer, 1996; Canale & Swain 1980). Secondly, the knowledge of social and cultural rules refers to “sociolinguistic competence” (Canale, 1983; Canale & Swain 1980) and “pragmatic competence” (Bachman & Palmer, 1996). The term “discourse competence” of Canale (1983) refers to “textual knowledge” or the knowledge of conventions in combining and understanding spoken and written texts (Bachman and Palmer, 1996). Lastly, all models use the term “strategic competence” to describe the strategies used for achieving communicative goals. For this study, the model of Bachman and Palmer (1996) was used as a framework focusing on pragmatic knowledge and sociolinguistic knowledge.

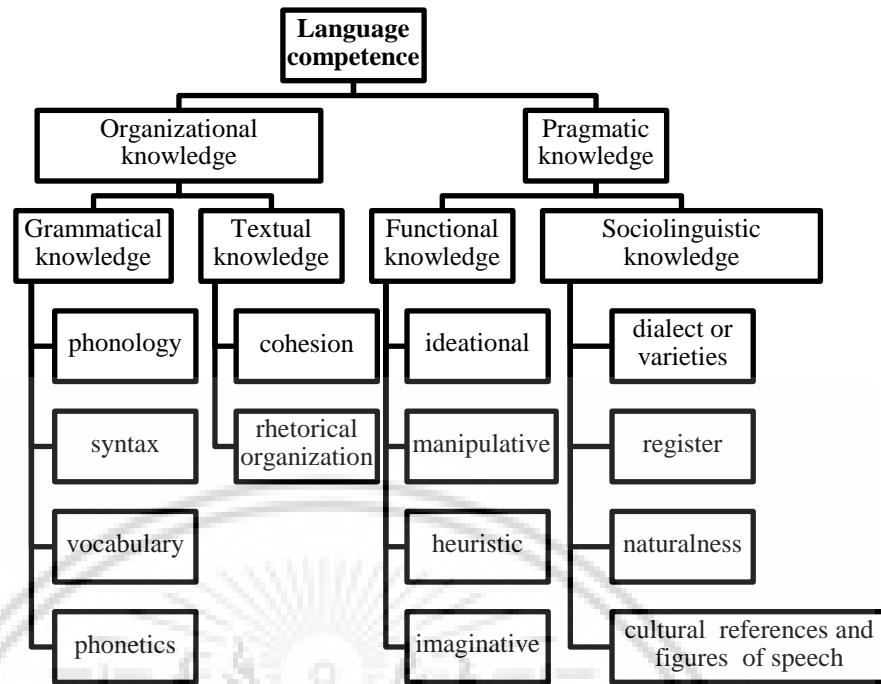


Figure 1 Communicative Language Ability Model (Bachman & Palmer, 1996, p.68)

Bachman and Palmer (1996) point out that the differences of individual knowledge, abilities, and characteristics among language users can affect communicative abilities. Focusing on language competence, Bachman and Palmer (1996) subdivide language competence into *organizational knowledge* and *pragmatic knowledge*.

1) *Organizational knowledge* is the knowledge of language structures for language production and comprehension divided into two subcomponents of *grammatical* and *textual knowledge*.

a. *Grammatical knowledge* involves the knowledge of lexis, morphology, syntax, phonology, and phonetics.

b. *Textual knowledge* is the ability to understand and produce spoken and written texts. It also includes the knowledge of cohesion and rhetorical organization.

- *Cohesion* refers to the ability to combine two or more words and sentences into spoken and written texts.

- *Rhetorical organization or conversational organization* refers to the ability in knowing how to start, maintain, and close a conversation.

2) *Pragmatic knowledge* refers to the ability to produce and interpret utterances, including *functional competence* and *sociolinguistic competence*.

a. *Functional knowledge* is the production of language functions in order to achieve communicative goals and the interpretation of the utterances' meaning. Language can also be characterized as *ideational, manipulative, heuristic, and imaginative functions*.

- *Ideational functions* are the ability to produce and convey the meaning of messages from one's experience such as the expression or exchange of opinions, thoughts, attitudes, feelings, and knowledge.

- *Manipulative functions* are the use of language to achieve goals, including instrumental, regulatory, and interpersonal functions.

- *Heuristic functions* are the use of language to extend one's knowledge and solve problems.

- *Imaginative functions* are the use of language and imagination such as humor and fantasy.

b. *Sociolinguistic knowledge* refers to sensitivity to social conventions governing the appropriate production and interpretation of utterances within a context.

- *Knowledge of dialects or varieties* refers to the variations of language used and appropriateness differing by geographic regions.

- *Knowledge of register* refers to the appropriateness of language in a discourse context, for example, the use of formal language in an academic essay.

- *Knowledge of naturalness* is the accuracy of utterance production and interpretation.

- *Knowledge of cultural references and figures of speech* refers to the language user's ability to use and interpret language of particular culture, events, or places.

3) *Strategic knowledge* is defined as the individual's metacognitive strategies governing language behaviors including *goal setting, assessment, and planning* in communication.

a. *Goal setting* is the speaker's decision toward possible tasks to be completed.

b. *Assessment* is the appropriateness of language's ability and context.

c. *Planning* is the plan of language used to achieve communicative goals.

To conclude, the models of communicative competence and communicative language ability just explored show the importance of the knowledge of language structures (grammatical competence or organizational competence) and the knowledge of social and conventions (sociolinguistic competence or pragmatic knowledge) for effective communication.

2.1.1.2 Intercultural competence

Intercultural competence is one of the essential components of communicative competence. Intercultural competence can be defined as the ability to perform an act and communicate effectively with people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Byram, 2009). Nowadays, people around the world can communicate with one another by using English as a medium of communication. To communicate effectively in the globalized world, intercultural competence is necessary for maintaining social group harmony and creating a comfortable environment.

There are three attributes of intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006). Firstly, knowledge refers to the individual's knowledge of cultural self-awareness, cultural rules, and socio-linguistic awareness. Secondly, skills are the abilities to learn, observe, evaluate, and interpret others' different cultures for enhancing

communication. Thirdly, attitudes are the individual's consideration, respect, openness, curiosity, and discovery of the differences from others' perspectives in order to develop knowledge and skills. These three acquired attributes lead to internal outcomes or the demonstration of an individual's flexibility and adaptability. Results of the three acquired attributes and internal outcomes indicate appropriate verbal and nonverbal behaviors or intercultural competence in intercultural situations.

To develop a language user's intercultural competence, such intercultural competence should be applied in foreign language teaching and learning. Intercultural learning is the acquisition of knowledge, attitudes, and skills to communicate effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds that should be implemented in a classroom setting (Byram, 2009). Liddicoat (2004) suggests that teachers can enhance learners' cultural understanding by teaching them to notice, compare, and reflect the understanding of their own and others' cultures.

To conclude, intercultural competence is considered as an essential skill for communication in intercultural settings. To communicate effectively and appropriately, intercultural competence learning should be applied in English language learning.

2.1.2 Pragmatics theory

Pragmatics is a branch of linguistic studies aiming to study the language user's language choices, restrictions from social interaction, and effects of language used (Crystal, 1985). Thomas (1983) further subdivides pragmatics into the study of *pragmalinguistics* and *sociopragmatics*. *Pragmalinguistics* refers to the study of the language user's linguistic resources for performing speech acts. *Sociolinguistics* refers to the impact of socio-contextual factors influencing communicative performance and comprehension.

Pragmalinguistics focuses on a language users' grammatical competence, while sociolinguistics sheds light on the aspects of sociolinguistic knowledge and pragmatic knowledge. As mentioned earlier, pragmatic knowledge is one of the

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essential elements of communicative competence. Bachman (1990) defines the term pragmatic competence, highlighting the importance of pragmatic competence as one of the major components which is equally important to grammatical competence.

Pragmatics theory related to the current study including Speech Act Theory (Austin, 1962; Brown & Levinson, 1987; and Searle, 1969) and Linguistic Politeness Theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Lakoff, 1975; and Leech, 1983, 2005) which are reviewed in the following section.

2.1.2.1 Speech act theory

Speech act is the area of pragmatics concerning how people use words to transfer information and carry out actions. Speech act theories and its classifications are presented by Austin (1962) and Searle (1969).

Austin's speech act theory

Speech act theory was firstly introduced by Austin's work "How to Do Things with Words" in 1962. Austin makes the distinction between *contrastives* and *performatives*. *Contrastives* are defined as statements used for describing something which can be true or false, while *performatives* is defined as the statements used for fostering the hearer's action.

The meaning of speech act is defined by Austin (1962) as an action performed by utterances or performatives. Austin (1962) divides performatives into *explicit performatives* and *implicit performatives*.

Explicit performatives refers to the use of a performative verb in utterances explicitly. For example, "I offer you a complimentary breakfast tomorrow".

Implicit performatives refers to the utterance without a performative verb which contains illocutionary force to be interpreted. The hearer's interpretation of an utterance is based on the surrounding context. For example, "Move from here!" shows a statement ordering someone to move from this area because it may be dangerous. This sentence can apply the performative verb of 'suggest' as "I suggest you move away from here".

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According to Austin's speech act theory, the utterances contain three main acts including *locutionary act*, *illocutionary act*, and *perlocutionary act*.

1) *Locutionary act* is the formation of words in producing meaningful sentences with correct grammar and pronunciation. For example, "It's hot in here" shows the speaker's intention to explain the relative temperature.

2) *Illocutionary act* refers to the production of utterances for some purpose. The utterances may contain illocutionary force or the intention of the speaker behind the utterances to force some action. For example, "It's hot in here" shows the speaker's intention to tell someone to act and adjust the temperature to a lower level.

3) *Perlocutionary act* refers to the uncontrolled effects following the utterances such as the hearer's feelings, attitude, or actions. For example, the hearer turns on the air conditioning after heard the speaker's utterance "It's hot in here".

Classification of illocutionary acts

More specifically, Austin classifies illocutionary acts into five main types, including *verdictives*, *exercitives*, *commissives*, *behabitives*, and *expositives*.

1) *Verdictives* represents the decision, estimation, and appraisal from one's evidence, or reasons such as the use of a verb: categorize, value, assess, measure, describe, etc.

2) *Exercitives* refers to the expressions of a speaker's right and power such as order, advice, warn, etc.

3) *Commissives* is a speaker's commitment to do something, for instance, promising, consenting, planning, contracting, etc.

4) *Behabitives* refers to a speaker's reaction, attitude, and feeling toward other's behaviors such as thanking, complaining, apologizing, blessing, congratulating, etc.

5) *Expositives* refers to the clarification the clarification of a rationale or explanation of a speaker's view such as mention, report, analyze, indicate, cite, etc.

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According to Austin's illocutionary acts classification, there have been some criticisms of the limitation of the classification (Searle, 1976). Searle (1976) argues that Austin's classification mainly focuses on illocutionary verbs rather than illocutionary acts. In addition, there is an overlapping of the verb in some categories. For example, the verb 'announce' can be used for various functions, such as making a statement or expositives, reporting or verdictives, and ordering or exercitives.

Searle's speech act theory

Searle (1969) revises the classification of speech acts because Austin's speech act categories distinguish illocutionary force unclearly. Searle suggests that the speaker's intention is an important force for making a successful speech act. Searle defines speech acts as an act of communication consisting of situation, speaker, hearer, and utterance to perform an act. Searle classifies Austin's illocutionary acts into five functions including *directive*, *commissive*, *expressive*, *representative*, and *declarations*.

1) *Directive* refers to the intention of a speaker to ask the listener to do something including begging, asking, inviting, commanding, and requesting e.g., "Can you give me a pen?"

2) *Commissive* refers to a speaker's commitment for future actions, for example, promising, warranting, and guaranteeing e.g., "I promise to go to your party".

3) *Expressive* means a speaker's feeling expressions such as apologizing, thanking, welcoming, and appreciating e.g., "I apologize for being late".

4) *Assertive* refers to a speaker's belief about what is the truth of a proposition such as asserting, reporting, concluding, and hypothesizing e.g., "The world is flat".

5) *Declaration* refers to a speaker's expressions about the change including christening, judging, and marrying e.g., "I pronounce you husband and wife".

In conclusion, speech acts theory explains how speaker makes utterances conveying intention for the hearer to interpret the underlying meaning. The theories of speech acts provide the theoretical background on how people produce utterance to achieve purpose or illocutionary acts for the study.

2.1.2.1.1 Speech acts in the hotel context

This section presents the speech acts used in the Thai hotel context as investigated by Sirikhan and Prapphal (2011) and Boontri, Prachanant and Kotcharat (2013).

Sirikhan and Prapphal (2011) indicate five problematic speech acts and situations that frequently occur in the hotel front office department by the hotel front office staff working at six leading hotels in Bangkok. Sirikhan and Prapphal (2011) highlight apologizing, handling complaints, requesting, informing, and promising as the most problematic speech acts, along with examples of situations occurring in the hotel, as follows:

Table 2.2 Speech acts in the hotel context

| Speech acts | Situations |
|-------------------------------|--|
| 1. Apologizing | Apologize for ineffective service Apologize for an unavailable room during checking- in |
| 2. Handling complaints | Deal with a malfunction of a water heater Deal with a noise disturbance from the next room or during the performance of house keep Deal with difficulty in finding an airport representative |
| 3. Requesting | Request a walk-in guest provide a deposit Request the check-in and check-out time Request check-out guests to pay an additional fee |

Table 2.2 Speech acts in the hotel context (cont.)

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| 4. Informing | Inform guests about internet access |
| | Inform check-out guest about an invalid credit card |
| | Inform guests the rate charge for a late checkout |
| 5. Promising | Promise to provide more room amenities |
| | Promise to arrange an airport limousine |
| | Promise to send a guest's lost items |

Firstly, the speech act of apology is one face-threatening act used for apologizing for unpleasant service, or the insufficiency of a hotel's facilities and amenities. Secondly, handling complaints is the way receptionists solve problems like a guest's raising of unpleasant issues such as problems with a hotel's damaged property, unsatisfactory service, or noise disturbances. Thirdly, requesting is used by receptionists to make requests of a guest such as inquiring about basic information, the production of documents, relating check-out times, or requesting a deposit. Fourthly, the speech act of informing is the way receptionists provide essential information of the hotel's facilities, internet connection, and additional fees. Lastly, promising or a commitment for future action is employed by a receptionist when offering to help a guests such as by sending items, arranging a car, or reserving a restaurant.

Furthermore, Boontri et al. (2013) present three types of speech acts and strategies mostly employed by hotel employees.

Table 2.3 Speech acts and strategies in the hotel business

| Speech act | Strategies |
|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1. Assertives | Answering |
| | Informing |
| | Confirming |
| 2. Directives | Asking |
| | Requesting |
| | Interrupting |
| 3 .Expressives | Accepting |
| | Thanking |
| | Greeting |

According to Searle's (1969) speech act classification, the researchers demonstrate the three speech acts most frequently used by hotel staff, including assertives, directives, and expressives. Firstly, the speech act of assertives includes answering, informing, and confirming. Examples include the way receptionists answer questions regarding service times and the locations of hotel facilities. For informing, the receptionists inform guests about room information, room locations, and the hotel's facility information.

Secondly, directives strategies consist of asking, requesting, and interrupting. For directives, some examples of asking could be the clarification of directions, hotel information, and facilities. For example, the phrases "May I have?" is used for requesting a key, deposit, or returned goods.

Lastly, expressive strategies involve accepting, thanking, and greeting. Examples of the speech act of expressives include the acceptance of utterances such as "Correct.", "No problem." and "That's fine". Furthermore, "Thank you" and "Thank you for staying with us" are used for thanking guests.

2.1.2.2 Politeness principles

Politeness is viewed as the communicative strategies using for avoiding conflicts with others (Goffman, 1967; Lakoff, 1975; Leech, 1983; Brown & Levinson, 1987). This material is reserved for educational use only, not allowed for commercial use.

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1987). Goffman (1967), for example, points out that politeness is associated with the notion of face referring to the representation of positive self-image in social interactions. Based on Goffman's concept of face, Brown and Levinson (1987) explain politeness as the use of strategies for softening possible threats on other's face. Lakoff (1975) and Leech (1983) indicate that politeness, which is developed from social norms, is used as the communicative strategies for avoiding conflict in conversation. According to the previous definitions, the concept of politeness sheds light on the communicative strategies employed by a speaker in order to mitigate threats toward a hearer's face and feelings. In this study, the theories of politeness proposed by Lakoff (1975), Leech (1983, 2005), and Brown and Levinson (1987) are described.

Lakoff (1975)

Lakoff (1975) defines politeness as the use of strategies for avoiding conflict between the speaker and listener. Lakoff proposes two rules of politeness for avoiding conflict in interactions.

The first rule is 'Be Clear' or the rules of conversation that include *the maxim of quantity, the maxim of quality, the maxim of relation, and the maxim of manner*.

- 1) *Quantity* refers to the way a speaker provides sufficient information.
- 2) *Quality* refers to the truthful information based on a speaker's own knowledge and evidence.
- 3) *Relation* refers to the relevance of utterances to the point of conversation.
- 4) *Manner* refers to the way speakers avoid confusion.

The second rule is 'Be Polite', or the rules of politeness in which speakers *don't impose, give options, and make others feel good*.

1) *Don't impose* or distance refers to the way a speaker keeps a distance or aloofness to a hearer. The rule includes the use of formal language such as the use of a title before a name or technical terms.

2) *Give options* or deference refers to the rule of hesitancy or the way a speaker provides a hearer the options to deny or accept requests. The speaker can use indirectness to soften messages to be more polite.

3) *Making others feel good* or camaraderie refers to a speaker's friendliness and solidarity to a hearer such as the use of a nickname and the giving of compliments.

Lakoff's rules of politeness are criticized for the reasons of subjective evaluation, confusion of some terms, and implication of rules. LoCastro, as cited in Al-Hindawi and Alkhazaali (2016), argues that the first rule (be clear) is subjective because the evaluation and perception are dependent on different individual backgrounds.

For the second rule, Reiter (as cited in Al-Duleimi, Rashid, and Abdullah, 2016) asserts that Lakoff fails to clearly identify the difference of some terms. For instance, the differences between 'formality' and 'aloofness,' and 'camaraderie' and 'showing sympathy' should be defined clearly.

Leech (1983, 2005)

Leech formulates politeness theory as the "Politeness Principle" including six maxims namely *tact*, *generosity*, *approbation*, *modesty*, *agreement*, and *sympathy*.

1) *Tact maxim* refers to the way in which a speaker minimizes cost to others and maximizes the benefit to others. According to Searle's speech act, commissives and directives are applied in the tact maxim. Commissives are the utterances showing commitment for future action. Directives are a need or suggestion for the hearer to do something. For example, "You can join the party with us, if you want", this sentence employs the use of indirectness to minimize the cost and give benefit to the hearer.

2) *Generosity maxim* is the maximization of cost to self and the reduction of self-benefit. Directives and commissives are used in this maxim for implying cost to

the speaker and a benefit for the hearer; for example, “Please have another glass of wine before you leave”.

3) *Approbation maxim* refers to the way a speaker minimizes the dispraise of others and maximizes the praise of others. The approbation maxim is used to avoid the a hearer’s unpleasant reaction or bad feelings. Assertives and expressives are used in this maxim. Assertives refer to those utterances that express the truth. An expressive utterance is the expression of the speaker’s attitude or feelings. For example, “Your painting is wonderful” shows the way the speaker expresses feeling towards the painting by maximizing praise to the hearer.

4) *Agreement maxim* is avoiding disagreement between an individual and another and the maximization of agreement between an individual and another. In the agreement maxim, expressives and assertives are used to avoid conflict arising from a disagreement.

A: “John is always late, isn’t he?”

B: “Yes, but he is a hard-working person”

The speaker (B) tries to mitigate disagreement with others.

5) *Sympathy maxim* refers to the way a language user minimizes antipathy and maximizes sympathy between self and other. Assertive utterance is applied for expressing sympathy between an individual and another. Assertive utterance is applied for expressing sympathy between the speaker and hearer in the sympathy maxim. An example is described below.

A: “I lost my job”

B: “I’m sorry to hear that!”

Speaker (B) expresses sympathy for the problem and shows solidarity to the interlocutor.

6) *Modesty maxim* refers to the way a language user minimizes praise of self and maximizes the dispraise of self. Similar to the approbation maxim, the modesty maxim includes the use of assertives and expressives. For example:

A: “You are the best pianist”

B: “Thank you, I have a good teacher”

This example shows the way the speaker (B) shows modesty towards the compliment.

Thomas (1995) argues that Leech's maxims of politeness overlap. In the same vein, Al-Hindawi and Alkhazaali (2016) advance three limitations of the six maxims. Firstly, Leech (1983) limits the 'Generosity Maxim' to directives and commissives. However, assertives and expressives can be recognized as the 'Generosity Maxim' aiming to minimize benefits to one's self and maximize the costs to one's self. Secondly, there is an absence of social and cultural conventions affecting different interpretations and evaluations. Thirdly, there is bias toward Western culture, especially British culture.

In 2005, Leech reformulates six maxims of politeness into a "Grand Strategy of Politeness (GSP)", explaining the politeness phenomena in communication. The framework of GSP refers to the way in which S (speaker or self) expresses or implies meanings by placing high value on O (addressee or others) or placing low value on S to be polite. An additional observation is that politeness can be interpreted differently from culture to culture (Leech, 2005).

In social interaction, politeness plays an important role in maintaining social group harmony among the members. Leech (2005) identifies five scales influencing the appropriate degrees of politeness. The five social factors include *vertical distance*, *horizontal distance*, *weight or value*, *strength of socially defined rights and obligations*, and *'self-territory'* and *'other-territory'*.

1) *Vertical distance* refers to the distance between a speaker and a hearer in terms of social status, relative power, and age.

2) *Horizontal distance* is the relationship between a speaker and a listener ranging from intimacy to unfamiliarity.

3) *Weight or value* refers to the cost and benefits to be received.

4) *Strength of socially defined rights and obligations* is defined as the relationship between interlocutors such as a service providers' obligations to guests, or a teacher' obligations to the student, etc.

5) *Self-territory and other-territory* are defined as the degree of in-group or out-group members.

Brown and Levinson (1987)

Politeness theory of Brown and Levinson (1987) is one of the most popular frameworks among the studies of politeness. Brown and Levinson (1987) introduce the notion of face, Face-threatening Acts, and politeness strategies, described below.

Face

Brown and Levinson (1987) define the term of face as “the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself” (p.61). In social interaction, it is important to maintain and enhance the face of the speaker and hearer. According to the notion of face, face is viewed as the basic wants divided into two types, namely *positive face want and negative face want* (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

Negative face want refers to the individual rights and freedom of action by excluding other interruptions. Negative face want can be seen as the need not to be imposed on by others or the need to be independent. For example, your friend wants you to buy a cup of coffee and you said, “I am in a hurry, and on the way back my hands will be full”.

Positive face want, however, emphasizes the personal want to be a part of the group and the need to be appreciated by others. For example, you bought some coffee for your colleagues and said, “Do you want to have a coffee break before our meeting?”

Positive and negative face can influence a speaker’s indirect way of communication in order to mitigate face-threatening directed toward the listener.

Face-threatening Acts (FTAs)

In every interaction, language expressions may threaten the face of a speaker and a hearer either with either negative face or positive face. FTAs are described below.

1) The act in which a hearer's positive face or self-image is threatened such as complaint, disapproval, criticism, accusation, contradiction, disagreement, etc.

2) The act in which a hearer's negative face is threatened such as suggestion, order, request, advice, remind, warning, etc.

3) The act in which a speaker's positive face or self-image is threatened such as apology, acceptance of a compliment, self-humiliation, confession, etc.

4) The act in which a speaker's negative face or personal freedom is threatened, for example thanking, promising, accepting of thanks, offering, and complimenting.

Politeness strategies

In order to perform an act that may threaten the face of the speaker and hearer, politeness strategies come into play. Brown and Levinson (1978) present five politeness strategies including *on record*, *positive politeness*, *negative politeness*, *off record*, and *don't do FTA*. Moreover, in performing FTA, three sociological variables consisting of *power*, *social distance*, and *ranking of imposition* are important factors affecting the weightiness of the FTA's seriousness and the selection of an appropriate politeness strategy. Power refers to the hearer's power over the speaker. Social distance refers to the distance or degree of familiarity between the speaker and the hearer ranging from very close to a stranger. Ranking of imposition refers to the degree of the hearer's freedom for action (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

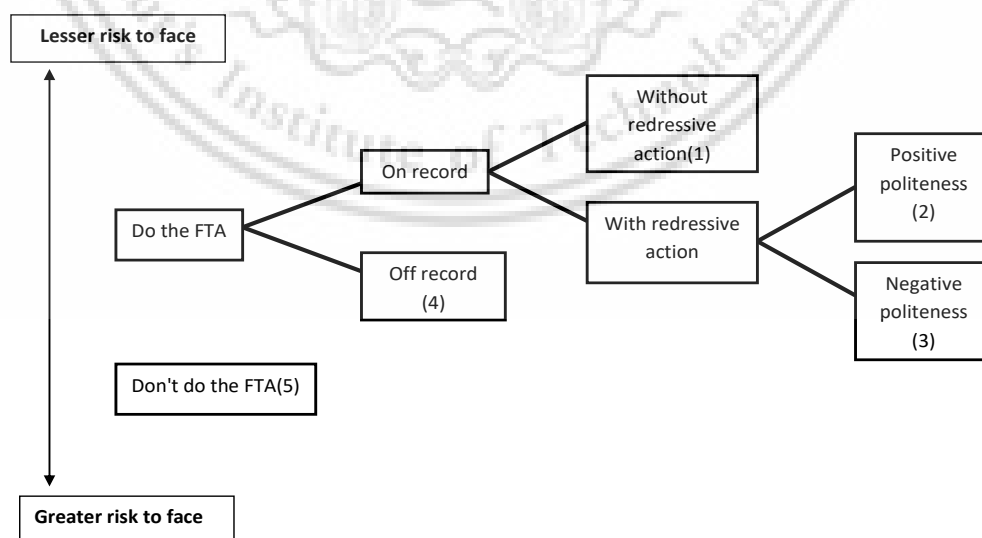


Figure 2 Brown and Levinson's strategies for doing an FTA (1987, p. 69)

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Brown and Levinson (1987) introduce five politeness strategies for performing a face-threatening act.

1) *Bald on record* is a strategy excluding the consideration to maintain a hearer's face. When people perform FTA without redressive action, an utterance is performed baldly. This strategy is used in the situation of an emergency when the relationship between the speaker and hearer is close. For example, the utterance "Help me!" can be used by close speakers and hearers or in an urgent situation when the speaker needs help.

2) *Positive politeness* refers to a strategy aiming to save a hearer's positive face by avoiding conflict toward the hearer. Positive politeness includes the strategies of using hedges or indirectness, avoiding disagreement, using humor, offering, and promising in order to reduce the distance between the interlocutors. For example, "I really like your idea, but I think our current plan might be better suitable for this situation." This example shows disagreement by using a compliment before the contrastive idea.

3) *Negative politeness*, however, is the use of indirectness, hedges, questions, and apologies for saving a hearer's negative face and avoiding an imposition on the listener. For example, "Can you help me, if you have time" shows a speaker's intention not to impose on the hearer in requesting the action.

4) *Off-record* is the use of hints. This strategy requires a hearer to interpret a speaker's intention. The strategies include giving hints, being vague, or being sarcastic. For example, "it is hot in here" shows the hint behind the utterance for the hearer to act on something, such as opening a window or turning on an air conditioner.

5) *Don't do the FTA* is the way the speaker avoids threats on the addressee's face by doing nothing.

The concept of politeness and face are universal (Brown and Levinson, 1987). However, many scholars criticize the concept of politeness and face in terms of Western bias that may not be suitable for Eastern cultures (Matsumoto, 1989; Leech, 2005). Matsumoto (1989) asserts that Brown and Levinson's politeness conventions

are based on individualism which may not be suitable for some cultures that value group harmony and hierarchical norms.

In conclusion, politeness explains how people use communicative strategies to avoid conflict and maintain good relationship with others. For this study, the politeness theories of Lakoff (1975), Leech (1983, 2005), and Brown and Levinson (1978) provide the theoretical basis. For example, the tact maxim of Leech (1983) is related to interactions in the hotel context concerned with minimizing costs and maximizing benefits to others. Furthermore, the politeness theory of Brown and Levinson (1978) provides a theoretical background for the concept of face, FTAs, and politeness strategies. Brown and Levinson (1987) point out that sociological variable, namely power, distance, and raking of imposition, are weighted differently by a specific culture. The perception of politeness is recognized differently because of cultural specifications, norms, and social behaviors (Yule, 1996). Thai politeness is described in the following section.

2.1.2.3 Thai politeness

This section presents politeness in the Thai context including the cultural values, norms, and influence of Thai culture on English language expression.

Regarding the concept of face (Brown & Levinson, 1987), Thai face is related to the importance of social harmony and social acceptance (Leelaharattanak, 2015). To maintain a good relationship, Thais value the norms of 'Krengjai' referring to consideration or fear of making offense to other people, 'Haikiat' referring to the way people give respect and honor to others, and 'Namjai' referring to the generosity of Thai people (Srisuruk, 2011). In addition, the impact of social hierarchy, socio-professional status, and seniority also play a crucial role on the speaker's expression of appropriate linguistic choices in hierarchical and non-hierarchical conversations (Ukosakul, 2005 as cited in Leelaharattanak, 2015).

Seniority in Thailand is one of the Thai values influencing language production and language choice regarding politeness strategies (Wongwarangkul, 2000). To communicate with others, politeness is essential in situations involving interlocutors of various ages and social positions (Chiravate, 2011). In the hospitality contexts,

hierarchy has an influence on the conversation between service providers and their customers. Communication in the context of providing a service involves commercial relationships. Therefore, the language of service providers is used implicitly in order to maintain harmony (Leelaharattanak, 2015).

In conclusion, characteristics and cultural norms are factors affecting different perceptions of politeness. Based on the literature, Thai culture is burdened by the concept of face-saving and the awareness of the addressee's social status, authority distance, and social relationship. Moreover, Thai speakers should be aware of social variables such as seniority, authority, and social distance in producing non-linguistic and linguistic practices. Thai politeness provides the basis for the nature of politeness, and the evidence of Thai culture with its influence on language usage in the present study.

2.1.3 Interlanguage Pragmatics (ILP)

Interlanguage Pragmatics (ILP) is a sub-branch of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and pragmatics. ILP studies focus on non-native speakers' speech act production, comprehension, and acquisition of pragmatic knowledge (Kasper & Blum-kulka, 1993; Kasper & Dahl, 1991).

Focusing on ILP studies, pragmatic production and comprehension are the two important domains of ILP research studies (Kasper & Blum-kulka, 1993).

Firstly, pragmatic production covers the studies of linguistic knowledge, strategies for producing linguistic actions, the impact of contextual factors, and the effect of L1 transfer on language production and politeness strategies (e.g. Susilo, 2017; Wannaruk, 2008; Yang & Wannaruk, 2018).

Secondly, pragmatic perception covers the study of language users' pragmatic comprehension, the understanding of illocutionary force, and the perceptions of politeness (e.g. Cook & Liddicoat, 2002; Garcia, 2004; Tanaka & Kawade, 1982).

Additionally, the study on pragmatic development has been investigated awareness of pragmatic infelicities and grammatical mistakes. The study on pragmatic development also examined the impact of individual differences and social factors

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on the development of target language awareness, for example, length of stay in target language country, learning environment (Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998; Olshtain & Blum-Kulka, 1985; Schauer, 2006), and language proficiency (Chiravate, 2011; Nipaspong, 2011; Pin-ngern, 2015).

To conclude, Interlanguage Pragmatics provides the theoretical background and previous studies on language learners' pragmatic production and comprehension. The present study aims to examine the impact of language proficiency on pragmatic awareness.

2.1.4 English for Occupational Purposes (EOP)

This section presents the act of speech in a hotel context and the use of English language in a hospitality context.

English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) is a sub-branch of English for specific purposes (ESP). To go beyond general English learning, the goal of English language teaching shifts to the study of English for work-related purposes (Widdowson, 1978). EOP teaching focuses on workplace language, functions of a specific language, register or a variation of language use, language functions, register or a variability of language use, and specifications of lexical and grammatical features for a specific purpose (Supriadi, 2019).

2.1.4.1 Hospitality language

According to the growth of the international tourism and hospitality industry, cross-cultural communication has become an essential skill for service providers to communicate with customers who have different linguistic backgrounds (Blue & Harun, 2003). In the hospitality industry, language proficient staff will benefit in communicating with foreign customers. The development of human resources is essential in order to upgrade service quality (Poon & Lock-Teng, 2005).

For the hotel business, effective hospitality is one of the factors influencing customer satisfaction. An effective, communicative, and pleasant front-desk staff has a high impact on customers' satisfaction and willingness to book again at the same property. (Poon & Lock-Teng, 2005). Language utilized in the hospitality industry is

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usually formal. For guest service agents, the use of language should be relevant, concise, and purposeful relating to the needs of guests.

Since the conversation between guest service agents and guests is seen as a commercial-based conversation, the guest service agents should have the competence to perform informative and resourceful speech in order to deal with situations such as checking-in, checking-out, dealing with complaints, suggesting tourist attractions, or reserving a room and meal. Most of the verbal exchanges occur in one- or two-word utterances and complete sentences in adjacency pairs, such as a question and answer, an apology and acceptance, or a request and acceptance (Blue & Harun, 2003).

Blue and Harun (2003) suggest that the use of language for hospitality should be polite. For example, the use of polite phrases such as “Would you”, “Can I”, “Could you” are usually employed by guest service agents when assisting guests in some activities such as asking for a signature, asking for some documents, and asking for the completion of a registration form. Moreover, politeness markers are employed when the guest service agent requests the guest to do something. For example, the utterances should usually end with “please” and “thank you”. It can be concluded that polite utterances are used in the hospitality context to show consideration, friendliness, and a welcoming manner.

To summarize, formal and polite language are important in hotel interactions. Hospitality language is seen as commercial-centric language centering on benefits to the receivers in an interaction, generating guest satisfaction. Since the present study attempted to study the tourism and hospitality students’ awareness in using appropriate language in the hotel context, hospitality language provided a useful resource as the theoretical background for the research instrument development.

2.1.5 Research tools for assessing pragmatic competence

This section presents the research instruments used for gathering spoken and written data of pragmatic production and pragmatic awareness.

2.1.5.1 Research tools investigating pragmatic production

Brown (2001) introduces six types of instruments for assessing pragmatics competence namely a Written Discourse Completion Task (WDCT), a Multiple-choice Discourse Completion Task (MDCT), an Oral Discourse Completion Task (ODCT), a Discourse Role-play Task (DRPT), a Discourse Self-assessment Task (DSAT), and a Role-play Self-assessment (RPSA).

a. Written Discourse Completion Task (WDCT)

A Written Discourse Completion Task (WDCT) is a pragmatic assessment requiring participants to read a prompt of situations varying by the settings, roles of interlocutors, social distance, status, power, and ranking of imposition. After that, the participants have to write the responses that they would say for the given incomplete dialogues (Brown, 2001). In realizing the benefits of WDCT, Woodfield (2008) suggests that WDCT is usually employed to investigate the production of speech acts. Moreover, WDCT is an effective tool for collecting data with a large group of participants in a short period of time.

However, there are some limitations of WDCT concerning the absence of authentic situations and natural language production (Aufa, 2013). Beebe and Cummings (1996) assert that there is an absence of conversational taking of turns, the negotiation of meaning, and emotional expressions using WDCT.

It can be concluded that the WDCT is a suitable tool for examining pragmatic competence in terms of linguistic expressions. However, WDCT fails to reflect the test takers' natural oral performance and conversational strategies in an authentic conversation.

b. Multiple-choice Discourse Completion Task (MDCT)

The Multiple-choice Discourse Completion Task (MDCT) is a multiple-choice questionnaire requiring the participants to read a description of situations and then select a suitable response for a given situation among three, four, or five alternative choices (Brown, 2001).

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Ahn (2005) indicates that the benefit of MDCT is time-saving because this instrument takes a short time to administer and collect data with a large size of participants. To analyze the participants' performance, moreover, there is no problem of inter-rater reliability.

As for the drawbacks of MDCT, Rose (1994) points out that MDCT may contain artificial situations because it provides only short written descriptions instead of real-life extracts. Therefore, the interactions in MDCT may not be similar to the actual interaction in a real-life conversation. Ahn (2005) points out that MDCT is a suitable instrument for measuring participants' pragmatic comprehension rather than actual language production. For the issue of reliability, Brown (2001) indicates that MDCT has low reliability because participants may select the answers by guessing.

c. Oral Discourse Completion Task (ODCT)

Apart from a paper-based instrument, an Oral Discourse Completion Task (ODCT) is a pragmatic instrument requiring the participants to read or listen to the description of situations and then respond to the given situations verbally. The responses of participants are usually recorded for scoring (Brown, 2001).

The use of ODCT allows the researchers to control the social variables and examine the ability of participants to perform appropriate responses (Yuan, 2001).

However, the limitations are the difficulties in collecting and analyzing data. The ODCT is a suitable tool for collecting data with a small group of participants because it may take time to collect data. Moreover, the participant may feel pressure and show unnatural language from the time limitation in performing ODCT (Yuan, 2001).

d. Discourse Role-play Task (DRPT)

To assess natural oral production, a Discourse Role-play Task (DRPT) is employed as a pragmatic instrument requiring the participants to read or listen to a description of situations and then perform role-playing as a pair verbalizing what the participants would say in given situations. The responses of participants are usually recorded for coding (Brown, 2001).

For the advantages, Brown and Hudson (1998) suggest that DRPT can elicit close-to-naturalistic oral data and the give and take process between the participants. Using DRPT, one can examine what participants would likely produce in the oral form, especially when the participants receive situations relating to their experience. Moreover, the researchers can control the social variables of situations and the interlocutor's role, such as social distance, social power, gender, and age.

However, there are some limitations of the model DRPT because researchers can incur some difficulties in controlling and managing the data collection procedures. Firstly, Cohen and Olshtain (1981) assert that the participants will possibly produce unnatural language and feel pressure to perform if they are inexperienced with the situations presented. Secondly, the researchers can hardly control a large number of participants. Therefore, the researchers have to ensure that all participants can perform the role play taking into consideration the ability and proficiency of the participants. Thirdly, data collection and transcription of the conversations using DRPT may take time. Finally, the scoring process is time-consuming because this process takes considerable effort in recruiting, schedule management, and the training of assessors concerning the scoring rubric to be employed (Brown & Hudson, 1998).

a. Discourse Self-assessment Task (DSAT)

A Discourse Self-assessment Task (DSAT) asks participants to read prompts in different situations and then rate their ability to perform responses correctly and appropriately on a Likert-scale (Brown, 2001).

Andrade and Valtcheva (2009) suggest that such self-assessment can evaluate a participant's thoughts about the appropriateness of their performance in the completion of various tasks. In addition, the participants are able to recognize their achievements and weaknesses in order to extend their knowledge. However, the use of self-assessment may cause an underestimation of a participants' knowledge and ability (Pakzadian & Tajeddin, 2014).

b. Role-play Self-assessment (RPSA)

A Role-play Self-assessment (RPSA) is a combination of the DRPT and the DSAT, requiring the participants to perform a role-play and rate their own pragmatic performances in fashioning appropriate responses from the previous performance on a Likert scale (Brown, 2001).

As for the advantages, RPSA is a suitable tool for gathering data with a large group of participants in a short period of time. Moreover, the use of self-assessment may spur a participants' motivation to enhance autonomous learning (Brown & Hudson, 1998). However, subjective errors such as school-records, or expectations from informants, peers, or parents may influence the judgment of a participants' ability (Blanche 1988 as cited in Brown & Hudson, 1998). For the researchers, the use of the RPSA may take time for scoring and briefing assessors on the criteria for rating.

Table 2.4 Summary of the advantages and disadvantages of pragmatic production instruments

| Instruments | Advantages | Disadvantages |
|---|--|---|
| 1. Written Discourse Completion Task (WDCT) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Takes a short time for collecting data ● Can control social variables | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Contain artificial situations |
| 2. Multiple-choice Discourse Completion Task (MDCT) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Takes a short time for administration and analysis ● Can control the conditions of situations and answers ● Can assess pragmatic comprehension | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cannot to assess the real negotiation |

Table 2.4 Summary of the advantages and disadvantages of pragmatic production instruments (cont.)

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| 3.Oral Discourse Completion Task (ODCT) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reflects close-natural data ● Assesses pragmatic production | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Take time to collect and analyze data ● Possibly leads to a participant's unnatural language, from pressure |
| 4. Discourse Role-play Task (DRPT) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reflect real interactions ● Assesses pragmatic production | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Takes time to collect and analyze ● Possibly leads to a participant's unnatural language, from pressure |
| 5.Discourse Self- assessment Task (DSAT) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Promotes self-reflection ● Saves time ● Administer with large size of participants easily | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Underrates or overrates of participant's ability ● Takes time for data analysis |
| 6.Role-play Self- assessment (RPSA) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Promotes self-reflection ● Saves time ● Administer with a large size of participants easily | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Underrates or overrates a participant's ability ● Takes time for analyzing data |

2.1.5.2 Research tools investigating pragmatic awareness

Schauer (2009) presents six instruments for measuring pragmatic awareness in the Interlanguage Pragmatic studies consisting of the verbal protocol, rank-ordering tasks, Multiple-choice Questionnaire (MCQ), and judgment task.

a. Verbal protocol

A verbal protocol or think-aloud protocol is employed to examine the participant's rationale of conscious decisions. The verbal protocol can be divided into *concurrent verbal protocol* and *retrospective protocol*. The *concurrent verbal protocol* is the way participants report their cognitive processes during the research task. The *retrospective protocol* is the way participants report their pragmatic awareness and productive skills after the research tasks are completed (Schauer, 2009).

There are three main advantages from using the verbal protocol. Firstly, the researchers can understand the rationale behind the participant's decision of the completed task. Researchers can infer a participant's performance with consideration of the participant's results in their choices and chosen strategies used for completing tasks (Tagushi & Röver, 2017). Secondly, the verbal protocol is an effective instrument for examining participants' sequentially cognitive processes in their language performance, pragmatic development, and research instrument validation (Sapsirin, 2016). Thirdly, Kasper and Dahl (1991) indicate that the interview can be used to examine possible L1 transfer and awareness of the power, social distance, and degree of imposition.

However, employing verbal protocol may lead participants to overestimate or underestimate their knowledge and strategies used. Berk (2000) suggests that self-presentation such as a participant's characteristics, such as exhibiting introversion or extroversion, or displaying confidence or embarrassment, may influence the accuracy of assessment outcomes and the actual use of cognitive processes and strategies.

b. Rank-ordering tasks

Rank-ordering tasks are divided into *a card sorting* and *a questionnaire*. Firstly, *card sorting* is a set of cards varying in the degree of directness but aiming to achieve the same purpose. Participants are asked to select the appropriate responses from a set of cards for the given situations. This kind of instrument is a cheap and easy tool for collecting data with a large size of participants. However, the limitation of using cards is the size and number of cards which may not contain sufficient descriptions of the various situations (Schauer, 2009).

The second type of rank-ordering task is *the questionnaire*. The participants are asked to rate or rank orders of the appropriateness of utterances on a provided scale ranging from vary rude to very polite. Similar to card sorting, Schauer (2009) suggests that the questionnaire of a rank-ordering task is an easy and cheap tool. The researchers can provide more detail of situational descriptions in the questionnaire. The drawbacks of rank ordering tasks include the absence of audio and visual cues that can clarify an interlocutor's emotion and tone of voice during interactions.

c. Multiple-choice Questionnaire (MCQ)

The Multiple-choice Questionnaire is an assessment measuring pragmatic awareness (Nemati, et al., 2014). The MCQ is a set of situations with possible alternative responses. The choices may be the interpretation of utterances or the possible responses to given dialogues. To collect data with MCQ, the participants will receive a short description of situations and then they will select the most appropriate answer for the given situation (Schauer, 2009).

The benefit of the multiple-choice questionnaire is the manageability of the instrument. Firstly, a multiple-choice questionnaire (MCQ) allows the researcher to describe in sufficient detail the selected scenarios and control the variables namely power, distances, and the degree of imposition from the interlocutors in the chosen situations. Secondly, the MCQ takes a short time to collect and analyze data (Ahn, 2005).

However, the use of MCQ has some limitations. Ahn (2005) argues that MCQ can assess only comprehension but fails to measure natural language production. Focusing on the effect on participants, Schauer (2009) points out that the questionnaire provides only written descriptions and then the participants have to imagine the tone of voice and feelings of the interlocutors. Therefore, the participants may demonstrate varied responses according to their individual differences. Furthermore, the reliability of the questionnaire will take time to develop, plus there can be possible differences of opinion over what are appropriate answers among native speakers.

d. Judgment task

A judgment task has been employed in many studies for investigating awareness of linguistic aspects and pragmatic appropriateness or inappropriateness (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998; Chen, 1996; Martinez-Flor & Uso-Juan, 2006; Pingern, 2015; Soler Jorda, 2007).

In Linguistics research studies, the judgment task can be designed in the forms of a forced-choice task, a yes-no task, and a Likert scale task (Schütze & Sprouse, 2014). Firstly, the forced-choice task requires the participants to select the most or least acceptable sentence from a list of prompted sentences. Secondly, the yes-no task is used to assess the participants' ability to determine whether the sentences provided are acceptable or unacceptable. Thirdly, the Likert-scale task is employed by asking the participants to rate the acceptability of provided sentences on a scale.

For a qualitative study, the use of the forced-choice task and the yes-no task can benefit researchers in comparing differences among two or more conditions. However, the tasks may not be suitable for a study aiming to answer quantitative questions. For a quantitative study, the use of the Likert-scale task provides numerical data for analyzing quantitatively. The Likert-scale is easily designed and applied. For the respondents, it is easy to understand and complete. However, it will tend to cause bias in answering, and can make for difficult interpretations of neutral opinions (Llauradó, 2015).

Table 2.5 Advantages and disadvantages of pragmatic awareness instruments

| Instruments | Advantages | Disadvantages |
|---|---|---|
| 2. Rank ordering tasks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Take short time ● Use low budget | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide insufficient details of situations |
| 3. Multiple-choice Questionnaires (MCQ) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Save time ● Can scope the area of answers ● Can control social variables ● Can examine awareness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assesse pragmatic comprehension |
| 4. Judgment task | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Can control contextual information ● Use effectively for quantitative study | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Require an open-ended question for clarifying reasons ● Cause bias of answer |

To summarize, Cohen (1996) suggests that each data collection instrument has its own advantages and disadvantages. Therefore, the use of multiple data collection methods can overcome the drawbacks of any single method employed. The present study applied a judgment task to investigate awareness in distinguishing appropriate and inappropriate responses in the hotel context. The rationale behind this selection was that the conditions over situations and responses could be controlled. In addition, the judgment task also included open-ended questions that allowed the researcher to examine in-depth information about the participants' awareness of sociological variables.

2.2 Previous studies

This section presents a review of empirical studies on pragmatic awareness and pragmatic studies in the tourism and hospitality context.

2.2.1 Pragmatic awareness

Pragmatic awareness has been investigated by many researchers for the impact of variables, such as length of stay in a target language country, learning environment, and language proficiency (Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998; Beltrán, 2015; Hergüner & Çakır, 2017; Hu, 2014; Li, Suleiman & Sazalie, 2015; Nipaspong, 2011; Olshtain & Blum-Kulka, 1985; Pin-ngern, 2015; Schauer, 2006; Siraranghom & Jarunthawatchai, 2018; Sorour, 2018).

Focusing on the development of pragmatic awareness, one of the most well-known studies was conducted by Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei (1998). The researchers examined grammatical awareness and pragmatic awareness of English language learners. The study employed a videotape with 20 scenarios and a judgment task questionnaire with three main groups of participants consisting of ESL learners in the U.S.A, EFL learners in Hungary, and EFL learners in Italy. The EFL and ESL learners were further divided into high and low proficiency groups. To examine learners' awareness, the participants were asked to judge the appropriateness of utterances, the correctness of grammar, and the severity of grammatical errors and pragmatic errors. The results revealed that the ESL learners could identify pragmatic errors correctly more often than the EFL groups. In addition, ESL learners also rated pragmatic inappropriateness as more serious than grammatical mistakes. Focusing on language proficiency, the low proficiency group reported that the pragmatic mistakes were less serious than the grammatical mistakes in contrast to the high proficiency group. The findings showed that EFL students devoted much attention to examination; therefore, they tended to focus on grammatical aspects rather than pragmatics. On the other hand, ESL learners focused on the importance of pragmatics because it was necessary for their daily tasks. It can be concluded that proficiency level, learning environment, and L2 authentic access were the major factors affecting participants' grammatical and pragmatic awareness.

Later, Schauer (2006) adopted the framework of Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei (1998) to study the impact of length of stay in a target language environment on the development of pragmatic awareness and the recognition of pragmatic errors and grammatical errors. A set of videos with a questionnaire and interview were conducted to gather quantitative and qualitative data. Three groups of participants consisted of 16 German students studying at a university in the UK, 17 German students studying in higher education in Germany, and 20 native English speakers. The participants were asked to watch videos of refusals, requests, apologies, and suggestions in educational contexts. Then, the participants rated the appropriateness of utterances on the given scale. The results indicated that the German EFL participants were less aware of inappropriate pragmatic expressions than the ESL group. In the same line with Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei (1998), Schauer (2006) found the influence of the learning environment on a participants' pragmatic awareness.

Maibodi and Fazilatfar (2015) examined an influence of Iranian EFL learners' individual differences, including language proficiency, age and gender, on pragmatic awareness. The researchers conducted a cross-sectional study to examine the EFL learners' ability to identify grammatical mistakes and pragmatic errors on the speech acts of apologies and requests. For the research instruments, the 'Oxford Placement Test' was employed to assign learners into three groups of language proficiency and a judgment task was employed to measure pragmatic awareness in the academic context. The EFL learners were asked to judge the appropriateness of responses and rate the acceptable level on a scale. In addition, the learners had to define the status of interlocutors, judge the appropriateness and grammatical correctness of provided responses, and provide suggestion of appropriate responses. For the results, three groups of EFL learners rated grammatical mistakes more serious than pragmatic mistakes. The findings indicated that the level of language proficiency had the highest effect on learners' performance, followed by age and gender. The low proficiency learners showed less sensitivity to pragmatic mistakes. At this point, the researchers pointed out that the EFL learners could not recognize the pragmatic errors to a high degree because of a lack of access to authentic native speaker communication and sufficient input for understanding the errors.

Tabatabaei and Farnia (2015) investigated the language proficiency and pragmatic comprehension of EFL learners. MDCT was used in 12 different situations. The participants were asked to select the best answer from four options for each item. The study found that learners' pragmatic comprehension was not affected by their language proficiency. Regarding the effect of English proficiency, Tai and Hu (2021) investigated the effect of proficiency on pragmatic comprehension of speech acts, as well as the strategies used by learners at various proficiency levels when comprehending a pragmatic task. The results showed that the high-proficiency group used more language strategies and performed more accurately than the low-proficiency group.

Li et al. (2015) investigated pragmatic production and awareness of Chinese EFL learners. The study employed three research instruments of a Multiple-choice Discourse Completion Task (MDCT), a Written Discourse Completion Task (WDCT), and a retrospective interview for collecting data from English major undergraduate students in China. The participants were asked to select appropriate responses to the given situations with varying in the social distance, power, and level of imposition. For the results, the study found a correlation between awareness and production. Since the participants reported that being polite is important for Chinese culture, they were aware of the power and showed social distance in their language production. The findings indicated that the Chinese EFL learners found difficulty in interpreting meaning and express language strategies appropriate to achieving communicative intentions.

Hergüner and Çakır (2017) studied Turkish ELT teacher trainees' pragmatic awareness in making refusals. The study employed a Discourse Completion Task (DCT) for investigating pragmatic awareness. The situations focused on three variables of gender, social status, and social distance. The results indicated that the participants mostly preferred indirect strategies. In making refusals, most of the participants preferred excuse, reason, and explanation strategies reflecting the Turkish culture of face-saving. To produce the appropriate responses, the participants showed their awareness of the requester's social status and gender. However, they were less aware of acquaintances. It can be concluded that an interlocutor's social

factors such as social status, gender, and distance influenced the awareness of appropriate responses.

In the Thai context, Nipasong (2011) conducted a cross-cultural research study examining pragmatic awareness of Americans and Thai EFL learners with high and low English proficiency. The study focused on the speech acts of requests and suggestions. A rating scale of requests and suggestions and a pragmatic appropriateness questionnaire were employed for eliciting pragmatic awareness. The findings found that both Thais and Americans showed their awareness of sociopragmatics and pragmalinguistics. Focusing on pragmatic awareness, both high and low English proficiency groups were mostly aware of power. The high English proficiency group viewed the power of an interlocutor from their social status, while the low English proficiency group viewed the interlocutor's power from age. The researcher suggested that the difference in pragmatic awareness was influenced by the incomprehension of English politeness strategies and the difference between sociopragmatic aspects of Thais and Americans.

Pin-ngern (2015) studied the production of apologies and meta-pragmatic awareness, comparing native speakers and Thai university students with variables of English language proficiency and English language experience. Five groups of subjects included native speakers, learners with high English proficiency and high English experience (HH), learners with high English proficiency and low English experience (HL), learners with low English proficiency and high English experience (LH), and learners with low English proficiency and low English experience (LL). The study employed an Oral Discourse Completion Task (ODCT) to measure apology production. In addition, a situational assessment questionnaire and a pragmatic judgment task were employed to measure metapragmatic awareness focusing on the situational variables, including social distance, power, and severity of the offence. The subjects were asked to judge the appropriateness of provided utterances and suggest an alternative response to any inappropriate utterance. The findings found the impact of English language proficiency and English language experience on the learners' pragmatic competence in both production and awareness. Focusing on metapragmatic awareness, the HH group displayed the highest level of awareness,

appropriate judgment, and ability to provide appropriate alternative responses. The HH group was aware of all three situational variables of social distance, power, and degree of severity of the offences, while the HL group was aware of distance and power, and the LL group was aware only of social distance.

Siraranghom and Jarunthawatchai (2018) investigated the pragmatic awareness of Thai cadets. The researchers employed MDCT as the instrument for gathering pragmatic awareness of apologizing, requesting, suggesting, complimenting, and responding to a compliment. The situations were created by concerning the factors of familiarity and power. The findings indicated that the Thai cadets were more aware of appropriate utterances in making suggestions than in apologies. The Thai cadets were mostly aware of the power, distance, and relationships of interlocutors in selecting appropriate language choices. Moreover, Thai culture and English ability were the important factors affecting the decision of appropriate utterances.

Onchaiya and Phimsawat (2021) examined the request strategies of Thai and Filipino teachers. The researchers used a Written Discourse Completion Test (WDCT) and an interview. Based on the findings, Thai teachers preferred direct requests more than indirectness. Both groups were keenly aware of their social status and social distance. Thai teachers had more difficulty making requests. However, differences in English proficiency had no effect on request strategy selection.

2.2.2 Pragmatic studies in the tourism and hospitality context

In the contexts of tourism and hospitality, Songkhro (2014) investigated the impact of English proficiency and gender on pragmatic knowledge of 231 fourth-year tourism students. The participants were divided into high, middle, and low proficiency groups from their TOEIC scores. The study employed two instruments including the English Proficiency Test developed from the TOEIC test, and the MDCT with 45 items on the speech acts of offering help, addressing people, and responding to compliments. The findings indicated that the pragmatic competence of Thai tourism students was at a moderate level. The study found a correlation between language proficiency and pragmatic knowledge. The high proficiency group got a high score on the pragmatic test, followed by the low proficiency group and the middle proficiency group. Focusing on gender, the male participants showed greater

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performance than female participants. The researcher suggested the implementation of pragmatic instructions in the classroom in order to foster students' pragmatic awareness.

Sirikhan and Prapphal (2011) created an FOP test to assess the pragmatic competence of Thai university students in the hotel front office context. The study aimed to study the relationship between levels of English proficiency and pragmatic ability. The study employed three main instruments including a needs assessment questionnaire, the Front Office Pragmatic Test (FOP-Test), and a pragmatic questionnaire to assess pragmatic ability. The findings revealed that language proficiency was an important factor affecting pragmatic ability. The performance on the pragmatic test of the high proficiency group was better than the low proficiency group. Moreover, the linguistic features such as politeness markers and words were used differently depending on the students' pragmatic abilities. In addition, the study found that all groups of Thai students performed pragmatic errors which included ineffectiveness and inappropriateness for hotel interactions.

Leelaharattanak (2015) examined face considerations of Thai agents and non-Thai clients in interaction including disagreements, refusals, and rejections. The participants included Thai agents working at a travel agency, hotels, and tourist information desks. To study face concerns in language production among Thai agents and non-Thai clients in the hospitality context, the researcher collected the data of natural interactions in the form of audio and video recordings. In addition, the researcher observed their communicative behaviors by making field notes. The findings revealed that the clients and Thai agents preferred the use of implicitness in making refusals and disagreement. The use of implicitness showed the way in which the Thai agents and clients considered the face of interlocutors.

Zhang, Wang, and Wannaruk (2019) investigated the pragmatic competence of Thai EFL students in their first and third years. A Written Discourse Completion Test (WDCT) with 16 business-related scenarios of refusal, request, complaint, and advice. The findings found that the third-year participants outperformed the first-year participants. The third-year students, who had taken five additional Business English courses, showed improvement in the pragmatic competence. The study showed the

influence of language input to the pragmatic competence. Regarding actual language use, Khanapornvorakarn and Gadavanij (2022) examined the use of “Sorry” in Thai flight attendants' service refusals. The researchers discovered a pragmatic transfer of L1 pragmatic norms in the use of apology. Furthermore, the study revealed the significance of organizational culture in appropriate language use in professional contexts.

To summarize, the previous studies reveal the influences of learning environment, length of stay in the target language country, and language proficiency on the development of pragmatic awareness. Moreover, social factors such as power, distance, and status played an important role on the use of appropriate responses. In the tourism and hospitality context, the literature displayed the importance of appropriate language, politeness, and face concerns for services. The review of related studies provides a basis for the current study as well as a guideline for the research design, data collection procedures, instrument development, and discussion. Thai EFL learners' pragmatic awareness for professional purposes was under investigated. The present study aimed to investigate whether high proficiency students and low proficiency students have similar or different awareness of appropriate and inappropriate language expressions in the hotel context. The theories can be drawn as a framework as follows:

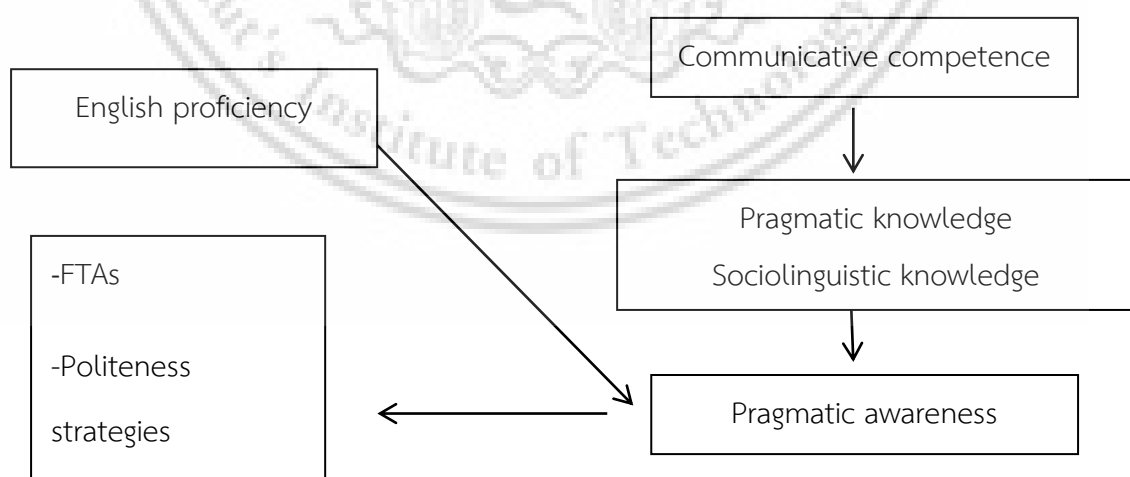


Figure 3 Theoretical framework

2.3 Chapter summary

The review of related theories and previous studies provided the theoretical framework as showed in Figure 3 including the concept of communicative competence, pragmatic competence, politeness theories, politeness strategies, and speech acts in the hotel. In addition, the review of related studies on pragmatic awareness provided resourceful information for the discussion of the variables that influence awareness. In the next chapter, the methodology of the present study is explained.



CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the research method, divided into six sections. Firstly, the research design is explained, followed by the population and samples, research instruments, data collection procedures, and data analysis. The ethical considerations are addressed at the end of the chapter.

3.1 Research design

The present study aimed to investigate Thai EFL Tourism and Hospitality students' pragmatic awareness and to examine the role of English proficiency on pragmatic awareness.

The current study was qualitative in nature. The qualitative study primarily focused on descriptive data which helps in understanding the reasons behind decisions and behaviors (Eyisi, 2016). The study employed qualitative methodology to gather in-depth insights into the participants' thoughts, experiences, and awareness of pragmatics. As stated by Ospina (2004), the qualitative method can be used to compliment numerical data. In this study, the qualitative data came from the part of open-ended and a semi-structured interview.

To improve the validity of the present study, quantitative analysis was used as a complement to the qualitative data in the way of a mixed-methods research design. Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2008) define the mixed-methods research design as the research sequence studies aiming to gather, analyze, and interpret both quantitative and qualitative data within one study. Dörnyei (2007) suggests that the mixed-methods approach is employed in sequence order. Therefore, the result of the first method was used as the direction for developing the second method. Moreover, the use of multiple data collection methods can overcome the drawbacks of the single method used (Cohen, et al, 2007).

The quantitative methodology helped in identifying characteristics of participants and displaying numerical data of the pragmatic judgment. The quantitative data included the percentage of closed-ended questions, which included personal information, as well as correct and incorrect judgments. To

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support the quantitative data, qualitative data was collected and analyzed sequentially.

3.2 Population and samples

The population of the present study was 62 Thai EFL fourth-year undergraduate students majoring in Tourism and Hospitality at one public university in Thailand.

3.2.1 Background of the participants

All of the participants were Thai native speakers who use the Thai language as their main language on a daily basis. The participants were taught by Thai lecturers in required subjects and elective subjects. For the required subjects, the participants had enrolled in Foundation English 1 and Foundation English 2 in the first year of their study.

The majority of the students had no prior experiences in traveling abroad before taking part in the study. Two students reported having participated in the program of Work and Travel USA and a summer course for a certain period of time.

Purposive sampling was employed as the sampling procedure for selecting 40 participants according to the average grades of two Foundation English courses. Lavrakas (2008) defines purposive sampling as the researcher's logical selection of samples to be the representative of the population relying on the objectives of the study. The participants' average scores of two English courses were ranked from highest to lowest.

The twenty-seven highest grades from the top were assigned to the high proficiency group, and the 27 participants from the bottom were assigned to the low proficiency group. According to the research objectives, the participants in the middle were excluded from the current study.

3.3 Research instruments

In the present study, two instruments were employed. The first instrument was a pragmatic judgment task, and the second one was a semi-structured interview.

3.3.1 Pragmatic judgment task

A pragmatic judgment task was employed for examining participants' pragmatic awareness. The pragmatic judgment task was developed by Sirikhan and Prapphal (2011) and a preliminary interview was conducted by the researcher. The preliminary interview with experienced service agents revealed the most common speech acts used as well as some examples of problematic situations. The preliminary study's findings showed that requesting, informing, and handling complaints were frequently used in the hotel context. The pragmatic judgment task was divided into two sections, which were as follows:

Part 1: Personal information

The first part of the pragmatic judgment task was the personal information, including the student number for references, grades of two Foundation English courses, aboard experience, and working experience.

Part 2: Pragmatic judgment

The second part was designed to investigate participants' pragmatic awareness, containing 18 scenarios in the hotel context. The scenarios were designed to investigate three speech acts of informing, handling complaints, and requesting, while differing in the social distance (stranger and acquaintance), power (high and equal), and severity of offence (high and low). All the interactions took place in hotel settings between a Thai receptionist, concierge, colleagues, and English - speaking guests. The second part of the pragmatic judgment task provided 18 scenarios and rating checkboxes to justify the appropriateness of the response provided. Moreover, the participants were also asked to provide reasons for their judgment in an open-ended part of each item.

The pragmatic judgment task was an appropriate instrument for administration and scoring. However, the results from the pragmatic judgment task might hardly elicit some ideas and hidden aspects (Beiske, 2002). Therefore, the semi-structured interview was conducted to complement the results of the pragmatic judgment task. The semi-structured interview provided an opportunity for the participants to clarify their answers and help the researcher to interpret the gained information accurately.

3.3.2 Semi-structured interview

All participants from the high and low proficiency groups engaged in the semi-structured interviews. Dornyei (2007) explains the characteristic of the semi-structured interview as two-way communication with an open framework which can help researchers understand insights into the participant's backgrounds, perceptions toward the degree of politeness, and the reasoning behind their decision.

The interview questions were created to find out the relationship between the completed task and the participant's awareness of appropriate and inappropriate responses, situational variables, and politeness. The interview was conducted using the Thai language in order to avoid language barriers and misunderstanding and to help the informants feel more comfortable to provide truthful information.

3.4 Development of the research instruments

The development of the pragmatic judgment task and the interview questions were described as follows:

3.4.1 The pragmatic judgment task

In the first step, the researcher reviewed Sirikhan and Prapphal's study (2011) to gain the scope of speech acts and conducted a preliminary interview with five hotel front-office agents working in Thailand to re-examine the most frequent use of speech acts and possible situations in an authentic hotel context. The respondents were also asked to evaluate the severity of the offence they had provided. The following table shows speech acts and situations in a hotel context:

Table 3.1 Speech acts and possible situations in the hotel

| Speech acts | Situations |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 1. Informing | Informing booking details |
| | Informing information of hotel and facilities |
| | Informing hotel policy |
| 2. Handling complaints | Handling room complaints |
| | Handling service complaints |
| | Handling breakfast complaints |
| 3. Requesting | Requesting documents and information |
| | Requesting signature |
| | Requesting Check-in/Check-out time |

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The findings revealed that informing was the most encountered task of hotel guest service agents, followed by handling complaints, and requesting.

Firstly, the speech act of informing included the way in which the guest service agents informed guests about hotel information, facilities, policy, breakfast time, hotel shuttle van service, and promotions of the hotel spa, restaurant, and bar. Moreover, the locations of hotel facilities such as the swimming pool, fitness area, and restaurant were informed to the guests upon check-in procedures.

Secondly, handling complaints was frequently encountered by the guest service agents. The guest service agents had to deal with complaints of unpleasant service and inconvenient experience. The examples of situations included the way the guest service agents dealt with the problems of unclean rooms and problem with room facilities such as water flush, key card, air conditioner, and water heater issues.

Lastly, the situations of requesting, which included requests of the guest's name, reservation document, passport, signature, check-out time, and credit card for guarantee upon check-in. In addition, the guest service agents had to ask the guests to pay any additional fees such as minibar, restaurant bill, and late check-out fee upon checkout.

The researcher compiled the most encountered situations to create a pragmatic judgment task consisting of eighteen scenarios with three speech acts.

3.4.2 The interview questions

The interview questions were developed to obtain detailed information about the justifications and views on the importance of pragmatics in communication. The five interview questions were developed with the purposes of investigating awareness of situational variables, perceptions of appropriate communication, and perceptions of the implementation of pragmatic awareness-raising activities. The interview questions and scenarios can be found in the appendix.

3.4.3 Validity of the research instruments

The pragmatic judgment task and interview questions were sent to three experienced hotel front-line agents to judge the appropriateness of responses in each situation. For content validity, the questionnaire was evaluated by three experts, including a Tourism and Hospitality instructor and two linguistic experts for evaluating content validity of the situations on the IOC.

The revised versions of the research instruments were tried out in a pilot study with five third-year students studying in the Tourism and Hospitality program. The pilot study was conducted to ensure the understanding and clearness of directions and scenarios in the instrument. The pilot study revealed the content validity and effectiveness of the pragmatic judgment task and interview questions (Panatta & Pin-ngern, 2021).

3.5 Data collection

The data were collected within two weeks during the first semester of the 2021 academic year. The official letter and the research proposal were sent to the School of Liberal Arts for approval to collect data.

Firstly, 40 participants were asked to complete pragmatic judgment task individually through an online platform.

Secondly, the researcher contacted and scheduled an appointment with 40 participants. There were 38 participants who conveniently participated in the interview session. The interview was conducted with each participant individually. The participants were informed about the research study's objectives, scope of the study, and anonymity of personal information. The participants were asked to acknowledge the conditions of participation on a consent form. The interview was then conducted individually via an online social media platform in which their responses were tape-recorded. Each interview lasted approximately 20 to 30 minutes.

3.6 Data analysis

The quantitative and qualitative data obtained from the pragmatic judgment task and semi-structured interviews were analyzed as follows:

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3.6.1 Quantitative data analysis

The personal information part of the questionnaire was analyzed using the statistical software SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) into the descriptive analysis of mean and standard deviation, as well as referential analysis of each item.

For the pragmatic judgment, the data were analyzed as either the correct or incorrect answers. The correct judgment was marked as one point and the incorrect judgment was marked as zero point. The numbers of correct and incorrect judgment was calculated into a percentage. The analysis criteria were adapted from Safont Jorda (2005) as follow:

1. Correct judgment: the participants can justify the inappropriateness or appropriateness of providing response correctly.
2. Incorrect judgment: the participants are unable to justify the inappropriateness or appropriateness of providing response correctly.

For the qualitative analysis, the researcher employed content analysis for analyzing provided justifications. The reasons were categorized into two groups.

1. Reasons related to politeness: the participants provide reasons relating to awareness of sociological variables such as power, distance, and severity of offence.
2. Reasons not related to politeness: the participants provide reasons that are related to grammatical aspects.

To compare the performance between two groups of different proficiency, an independent *t*-test was employed to compare the performance from the pragmatic judgment task between high and low proficiency groups to answer the second research question.

3.6.2 Qualitative data

The data from the interview were transcribed using intra-coder and inter-coder approaches for reliability. The researcher first transcribed the data and then re-

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analyzed it again. The two rounds of transcription analysis were then compared to find any differences. For inter-coder reliability, another graduate student analyzed the data and then compared the transcription with the researcher. Any found differences were discussed for agreement.

The steps for analyzing the interview data are explained as follows:

Firstly, the researcher read all of the transcriptions thoroughly. Then, the researcher reread the transcriptions and labeled relevant words, sentences, and concepts relating to the research objectives. Lastly, the researcher created relevant codes and combined them into themes for analyzing the qualitative data.

3.7 Ethical considerations

For data collected from humans regarding research objectives, ethical issues should be considered. This research study was conducted after the permission of the School of Liberal Arts via an official letter. The researcher informed the participants about the research objectives along with a brief explanation of the participants' rights. Besides, the participants were informed about the anonymity and confidentiality kept of the collected questionnaires. Moreover, the participants were asked for their permission to tape-record the interview. Pseudonyms were used for identifying participants in the interview session instead of the real names. The raw collected data were kept confidential and strictly anonymous. The transcripts of the interview session were returned to the participants for member checking of correctness and unrevealed information clarified.

3.8 Chapter summary

This chapter firstly explained the populations and samples, the development of research instruments, as well as the procedures of data collection and data analysis. The results reported in the chapter four. Lastly, the summary and discussion of the research findings, pedagogical implications, and recommendations for further research were explained in chapter five.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter presents the findings of the current study, which aims to investigate Thai EFL Tourism and Hospitality undergraduate students' pragmatic awareness in a hotel context. The chapter is divided into two sections: results from the pragmatic judgment task and results from a semi-structured interview.

4.1 Results from pragmatic judgment task

The pragmatic judgment task consists of two parts including a section of personal information and pragmatic judgment. Table 4.1 shows the previous experience in English-speaking an country and working experience in the hospitality fields.

4.1.1 Personal information

Table 4.1 Experience in English-speaking country

| Experience in an English-speaking country more than one year | n (40) | Percentage |
|---|--------|------------|
| Yes | 2 | 5 |
| No | 38 | 95 |
| Total | 40 | 100 |

Table 4.1 illustrates the percentage of the participants who had experiences in visiting English-speaking countries. There were 20 high proficiency participants (H=20) and 20 low proficiency participants (L=20) based on the average scores of two Foundation English courses. The majority of participants stated that they had no experience in an English-speaking country. Two participants from the high proficiency group who had exposed to an English-speaking environment for a significant period of time before participating in the current study. The previous study suggested that the length of time spent in the target language environment for a significant period of time (eight months to one year) could affect the development of pragmatic

awareness and the tendency to use a foreign language fluently (Matsumura, 2003; Schauer, 2006)

Table 4.2 Work experience in the hospitality fields

| Working experience | n (40) | Percentage |
|--------------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 23 | 57.5 |
| No | 17 | 42.5 |
| Total | 40 | 100 |

Table 4.2 presents the participants' work experience in the hospitality fields. In terms of work experience, 57.5% of the participants worked as a part-time job in the fields of hospitality such as waitress, cashier, customer assistant, and trainee in a tourism company. In contrast, 42.5% of participants had no prior work experience prior to participating in the study.

To summarize, most participants stated that they had no prior significant experience in an English-speaking country. Only two participants had experience in using the English language in international settings. The majority of participants had working experience in the hospitality field. The experiences in an English speaking country and work experience in hospitality fields might be partly related to familiarity with English language usage in the hospitality contexts.

4.1.2 Pragmatic judgment

The second section was of the appropriateness judgment with 18 scenarios. A judgment was marked as "correct" or "incorrect" judgment. Correct judgment shows a participant's ability to judge whether or not a language response is appropriate for a given situation, whereas incorrect judgment shows a participant's inability to judge the appropriateness of a given response. Appropriateness means the suitable use of language response in a specific context varying in level of power, familiarity, and severity of offence. An example of an appropriate request was as follows:

Scenario 9: A guest comes to the front desk for checking in. Somsri asks a guest, whom she is not familiar with, to sign a registration form.

Somsri: *Could you please give me your signature here?*

Focusing on the speech act of requesting, the results of correct and incorrect judgment display in the following table

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Table 4.3 Percentage of correct and incorrect judgment for requesting scenarios

| Requesting scenarios | High (n=20) | | | | Low (n=20) | | | |
|----------------------|------------------|------------|--------------------|------------|------------------|------------|--------------------|------------|
| | Correct judgment | | Incorrect judgment | | Correct judgment | | Incorrect judgment | |
| | n | Percentage | n | Percentage | n | Percentage | n | Percentage |
| Scenario 2 | 20 | 100 | - | - | 12 | 60 | 8 | 40 |
| Scenario 6 | 14 | 70 | 6 | 30 | 9 | 45 | 11 | 55 |
| Scenario 9 | 15 | 75 | 5 | 25 | 12 | 60 | 8 | 40 |
| Scenario 12 | 12 | 60 | 8 | 40 | 10 | 50 | 10 | 50 |
| Scenario 15 | 15 | 75 | 5 | 25 | 13 | 65 | 7 | 35 |
| Scenario 18 | 18 | 90 | 2 | 10 | 17 | 85 | 3 | 15 |

Table 4.3 shows the percentage of correct and incorrect judgments for six request scenarios. In scenario two, where the power is high (P+), the social distance is low (D-), and the severity of the offense is minor (R-), all participants with high proficiency could make correct judgment. Eighteen participants with high proficiency could make correct judgment for scenario nine, where the power is high (P+), the social distance is high (D+), and the severity of the offence is minor (R-) as well as scenario fifteen, where the power is high (P+), the social distance is high (D+), and the severity of the offence is severe (R+). Fifteen participants judged the appropriateness correctly for scenario nine with high power (P+), high social distance (D+), and minor offence (R-) and scenario fifteen with high power (P+), high social distance (D+), and severe offence (R+). Fourteen participants of the high proficiency group correctly identified the appropriateness of response in scenario six with equal power (P=), low social distance (D-), and severe offence (R+). Twelve participants with high proficiency could judge the appropriateness of response in scenario 12 with equal power (P=), low social distance (D-), and minor offence (R-). Overall, most of the high proficiency participants were able to make appropriateness judgment for requesting scenarios. However, some high proficiency participants incorrectly identified the appropriateness for the scenario with equal power (P=), low social distance (D-), and minor offence (R-).

The low proficiency participants' correct judgment was lower than the high proficiency group in the requesting speech act. Seventeen low proficiency participants correctly judged the appropriateness of response in scenario 18 with high power (P+), low social distance (D-), and severe offence (R+). Thirteen participants from the low proficiency group could correctly judge response in scenario 15 with high power (P+), high social distance (D+), and severe offence (R+) correctly. Twelve participants with low proficiency correctly judged the appropriateness of response in scenario two with high power (P+), low social distance (D-), and minor offence (R-) and scenario nine with high power (P+), high social distance (D+), and minor offence (R-). Half of the participants from the low proficiency group could notice inappropriate request in scenario 12 with equal power (P=), low social distance (D-), minor offence (R-). However, only nine low proficiency participants could make the correct judgment for scenario six with equal power (P=), low social distance (D-), and severe offence (R+). To summarize, the low proficiency participants correctly made a judgment for the scenarios with high power and low social distance. In contrast, most low proficiency participants struggled to make correct judgment in the scenario with equal power (P=), low social distance (D-), minor offence (R-), and severe offence (R+).

The pragmatic awareness of the high and low proficiency participants was comparable in the appropriateness judgment for requesting scenarios. Both high and low proficiency groups made correct identification for requesting scenarios with high power (P+). All of the high proficiency participants and 60% of the low proficiency participants could judge the appropriateness for scenario two, where the power is high (P+), the social distance is high (D+), and the severity of the offence is severe (R+). However, most of the high and low proficiency participants incorrectly made judgment for the equal power (P=) and low distance (D-) scenarios with the severe (R+) and minor offence (R-).

Table 4.4 High and low participants' pragmatic awareness for informing scenarios

| Informing scenarios | High (n=20) | | | | Low (n=20) | | | |
|---------------------|------------------|------------|--------------------|------------|------------------|------------|--------------------|------------|
| | Correct judgment | | Incorrect judgment | | Correct judgment | | Incorrect judgment | |
| | n | Percentage | n | Percentage | n | Percentage | n | Percentage |
| | | | | | | | | |
| Scenario 1 | 20 | 100 | - | - | 20 | 100 | - | - |
| Scenario 4 | 7 | 35 | 13 | 65 | 5 | 25 | 1 | 75 |
| Scenario 7 | 8 | 40 | 10 | 60 | 6 | 25 | 1 | 75 |
| Scenario 10 | 10 | 50 | 10 | 50 | 7 | 35 | 1 | 65 |
| Scenario 13 | 18 | 90 | 2 | 10 | 16 | 85 | 3 | 15 |
| Scenario 16 | 16 | 80 | 4 | 20 | 18 | 90 | 2 | 10 |

The table illustrates the percentage of correct and incorrect judgments for informing scenarios. All of the high proficiency participants made correct judgment for scenario one, where the power is high (P+), the social distance is high (D+) and the severity of offence is severe (R+). Eighteen participants with the high proficiency could judge appropriateness in scenario 13, where the power is equal (P=), the social distance is low (D-), and the severity of offence is severe (R+). Sixteen participants made correct judgment for scenario 16, where the power is equal (P=), the social distance is low (D-), and the severity of offence is minor (R-). Half of the participants from the high proficiency group could make correct judgment for scenario 10 with high power (P+), low social distance (D-), and minor offence (R-). However, less than half of high proficiency participants could notice the inappropriate informing response from scenario four, where the power is high (P+), the social distance is high (D+), and the severity of offence is minor (R-) and scenario seven, where the power is high (P+), the social distance is low (D-), and the severity of offence is severe (R+).

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The high proficiency participants could perform pragmatic judgment well on the scenario with equal power (P=), low social distance (D-), and severe offence (R+). More than half of the high proficiency participants failed to make correct judgment for the scenario with high power (P+), high social distance (D+), and minor offence (R-) and the scenario with high power (P+), low social distance (D-), and severe offence (R+).

Similarly to the high proficiency group, all of the participants with low proficiency also made correct judgment for scenario one, where the power is high (P+), the social distance is high (D+), and the severity of offence is severe (R+). Eighteen participants with the low proficiency could make appropriateness judgment for scenario 16 with equal power (P=), low social distance (D-), and minor offence (R-). Sixteen participants could make correct judgment for scenario 13 with equal power (P=), low social distance (D-), and severe offence (R+). However, less than half of the low proficiency participants could correctly judge the appropriateness for scenarios four, seven, and ten. Six participants made correct judgment for the context of scenario seven with high power (P+), low social distance (D-), and severe offence (R+). Only five participants from the low proficiency group noticed inappropriate response for the context of scenario 10 with high power (P+), low social distance (D-), and minor offence (R-). The results showed that the majority of low proficiency participants were unable to make correct judgment for the scenario with high power (P+), high social distance (D+), and minor offence (R-), the scenario with high power (P+), low social distance (D-), and severe offence (R+), and the scenario with high power (P+), low social distance (D-), and minor offence (R-).

To conclude, all participants with high and low proficiency could make the correct judgment in scenario one with high power (P+), high social distance (D+), and serious offence (R+). In contrast, when the scenario with high power (P+) and high social distance (D+) contained minor offence (R-), most of the high and low proficiency participants failed to identify appropriateness of responses correctly. The participants with low proficiency outperformed those with high proficiency in scenario 16, where the power is equal (P=), social distance is low (D-), and the severity of the offence is minor (R-). In addition, the majority of participants from both groups were unable to notice inappropriate response in the scenario with high

power (P+), low social distance (D-), and severe offence (R+). In this speech act, the low proficiency group's correct judgment was higher than the high proficiency group in the scenario with equal power (P=), low social distance (D-), and minor offence (R).

Table 4.5 High and low participants' pragmatic awareness for handling complaint scenarios

| Handling complaint scenarios | High (n=20) | | | | Low (n=20) | | | |
|------------------------------|------------------|------------|--------------------|------------|------------------|------------|--------------------|------------|
| | Correct judgment | | Incorrect judgment | | Correct judgment | | Incorrect judgment | |
| | n | Percentage | n | Percentage | n | Percentage | n | Percentage |
| | | | | | | | | |
| Scenario 3 | 8 | 40 | 12 | 60 | 2 | 10 | 18 | 90 |
| Scenario 5 | 11 | 55 | 9 | 45 | 7 | 35 | 13 | 65 |
| Scenario 8 | 12 | 60 | 8 | 40 | 11 | 55 | 9 | 45 |
| Scenario 11 | 12 | 60 | 4 | 40 | 16 | 80 | 8 | 45 |
| Scenario 14 | 14 | 70 | 6 | 30 | 12 | 60 | 8 | 40 |
| Scenario 17 | 20 | 100 | - | - | 20 | 100 | - | - |
| Total | 20 | 100 | 20 | 100 | 20 | 100 | 20 | 100 |

The table presents the percentage of correct and incorrect judgments in the speech act of handling with complaint. Except for scenario three, where the power is equal (P=), the social distance is low (D-), and the severity offence is low (R-), more than half of the participants with high proficiency could make correct judgment in most situations.

All the high proficiency participants made correct judgment for scenario 17 with equal power (P=), low social distance (D-), and severe offence (R+). More than half of the high proficiency participants could justify the appropriateness of response

for scenarios with high power including scenarios five, eight, eleven, and fourteen. Fourteen participants could justify the appropriateness for scenario 14 with high power (P+), low social distance (D-), and minor offence (R-). 60% of the high proficiency participants could make correct judgment in scenario eight with high power (P+), low social distance (D-), and severe offence (R+) as well as scenario eleven with high power (P+), high social distance (D+), and severe offence (R+). In scenario five with high power (P+), high social distance (D+), and minor offence (R-), eleven participants with high proficiency made judgment correctly.

However, only eight participants from the high proficiency group were able to notice inappropriate response in scenario three with equal power (P=), low social distance (D-), and minor offence (R-). The number of correct judgment of the high proficiency participants for scenarios of handling with complaint was lower than other speech acts. Overall, the high proficiency participants mostly made correct judgment for high power (P+) and low social distance (D-) scenarios with severe (R+) and minor offence (R-).

All of the low proficiency group could make correct judgment for scenario 17, with equal power (P=), low social distance (D-), and severe offence (R+). Sixteen participants with low proficiency could notice inappropriate response in scenario 11 with high power (P+), high social distance (D+), and severe offence (R+). Twelve participants with low proficiency made correct judgment for scenario 14, where the power is high (P+), the social distance is low (D-), and the severity of offence is minor (R-). Only two participants with the low proficiency made correct appropriateness judgment for scenario three with equal power (P=), low social distance (D-), and minor offence (R-). Seven participants from the low proficiency group could identify appropriate response in scenario five with high power (P+), high social distance (D+), and minor offence (R-). Overall, all low proficiency participants could correctly make judgment for scenario with equal power (P=), low social distance (D-), and severe offence (R+). However, they found difficulty in identify appropriateness of responses for the handling complaint scenarios with minor offence (R-).

According to the percentage of correct and incorrect judgment in handling complaint scenarios, the high proficiency group's correct judgment was higher than the low proficiency group in most scenarios. All of the high and low proficiency participants could make correct identification for scenario 17. However, the percentage of correct judgment among the low proficiency participants was higher than that of the high proficiency participants in scenario 11 with high power (P+), high social distance (D+), and severe offence (R+). When the handling complaint scenario with high power (P+) and high social distance (D+) contained minor offence (R-), less than half of the low proficiency participants could correctly judge the appropriateness of response. Most participants with high and low proficiency could not make correct judgment for the scenario with equal power (P=), low social distance (D-), and minor offence (R-). In addition, the most low proficiency participants failed to make correct judgment for scenario with high power (P+), high social distance (D+), and minor offence (R-).

To summarize, most of the low proficiency participants could not make judgment correctly in handling complaint scenarios with the high power. The participants from both groups struggled in making judgment for scenarios with equal power (P=), low social distance (D-), and minor offence (R-). The low proficiency participants also struggled in making correct judgment for scenarios with low and high social distance. In requesting and handling with complaint scenarios, most participants with high and low proficiency could not make correct judgment in the equal power (P=), low social distance (D-) scenarios with severe and minor offence (R+) (R-). In contrast, both groups of proficiency could perform appropriateness judgment for equal power scenarios in the speech act of informing.

Table 4.6 Comparison of pragmatic awareness between high and low proficiency groups

| Pragmatic awareness | Proficiency | \bar{x} | S.D | Sig |
|---------------------|-------------|-----------|-------|------|
| | High | 12.16 | 10.14 | 0.16 |
| | Low | 10.65 | 9.29 | |

Table 4.6 presents the mean score obtained from the pragmatic judgment task of the high and low proficiency groups. As shown in the table, the mean score of the high proficiency group was 12.16 and the mean score of the low proficiency group was 10.65. In most scenarios, high proficiency participants could make more correct judgment than the low proficiency participants. The following table presents the difference between the high and low proficiency in each scenario.

Table 4.7 Differences in pragmatic awareness

| Speech act | Scenario | Proficiency | | Sig |
|--------------------|----------|-------------|------------|-------|
| | | High | low | |
| | | Mean±S.D | Mean±S.D | |
| Requesting | 2 | 1.30±0.470 | 1.25±0.444 | .042* |
| | 6 | 1.45±0.510 | 1.65±0.489 | .115 |
| | 9 | 1.25±0.444 | 1.40±0.503 | .324 |
| | 12 | 1.40±0.503 | 1.50±0.513 | .537 |
| | 15 | 1.30±0.470 | 1.40±0.503 | .503 |
| | 18 | 1.10±0.308 | 1.15±0.366 | 0.643 |
| Informing | 1 | 1.20±0.410 | 1.10±0.308 | .389 |
| | 4 | 1.60±0.503 | 1.90±0.308 | .503 |
| | 7 | 1.30±0.470 | 1.55±0.510 | .520 |
| | 10 | 1.25±0.444 | 1.40±0.503 | .350 |
| | 13 | 1.40±0.503 | 1.50±0.513 | .643 |
| | 16 | 1.20±0.410 | 1.10±0.308 | 0.389 |
| Handling complaint | 3 | 1.20±0.410 | 1.35±0.489 | .029* |
| | 5 | 1.65±0.489 | 1.75±0.444 | .214 |
| | 8 | 1.65±0.489 | 1.75±0.444 | .503 |
| | 11 | 1.50±0.513 | 1.65±0.489 | .115 |
| | 14 | 1.10±0.308 | 1.15±0.366 | .520 |
| | 17 | 1.00±0.00 | 1.00±0.00 | 0.731 |

Table 4.7 shows the comparison of pragmatic awareness between the high and low proficiency groups. Two paired-sample *t*-tests were conducted to compare

scores from pragmatic judgment task. The results of the *t*-tests showed no statistical significance in the appropriateness judgment task between the high and low proficiency groups ($p < 0.05$) in most scenarios. However, the significant difference between the high and low proficiency groups displayed in scenario two with high power (P+), high social distance (D+), and minor offence (R-). Furthermore, the statistical difference also appeared in scenario three with equal power (P=), low social distance (D-), and the minor offence (R-).

4.1.2.1 Reasons for judgments

For more in-depth information, the justifications were qualitatively analyzed. The participants were asked to provide reasons for their appropriateness judgment in each scenario. All of the responses were classified into politeness-related and non-politeness-related reasons. Politeness-related reasons reflect participants' awareness of situational variables including relative power (P), social distance (D), and severity of offence (R). Non politeness-related reasons show concern about grammatical aspects.

Examples of politeness-related reason are as follow:

“The speaker has a lower status compared to the listener.”

“The request should be more polite because the listener has a higher status.”

An example of non-politeness related reason is as follows:

“There is a grammatical mistake in a response.”

Table 4.8 Percentage of politeness and non-politeness-related reasons

| Proficiency | Politeness-related reasons | | Non politeness-related reasons | |
|-------------|----------------------------|------------|--------------------------------|------------|
| | Reasons (360) | Percentage | Reasons (360) | Percentage |
| High | 173 | 48.1 | 187 | 51.9 |
| Low | 152 | 42.2 | 208 | 57.8 |

The findings indicated that the participants with high proficiency could provide more politeness-related reasons than those with the low proficiency.

However, both high and low proficiency participants expressed their non-politeness-
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related reasons in many scenarios. The high proficiency participants provided non politeness-related reasons at 51.9% and the low proficiency participant at 57.8%. According to the results of justifications, the high proficiency participants could provide more reasons showing their awareness of three situational variables at 48.1% and the participants with low proficiency showed awareness of the situational variables including power, social distance, and severity of offence at 42.2%.

4.1.2.1.1 Provided reasons in requesting scenarios

Focusing on the scenarios of requesting, the high proficiency participants displayed awareness of power (P) and social distance (D) dominantly. The high proficiency participants reflected their awareness of the high power and degree of familiarity in scenario 12, where the power is equal (P=), the social distance is low (D-), and the offence is minor (R-). The examples from participants, who correctly justified their responses as inappropriate, were given as follows:

H9: The request is too polite to talk with a colleague who is a close friend.

(P) (D)

H7: Since the requester is familiar with the hearer well, the formality of

(D)

language is not necessary.

The H9's reason shows concern of equal power and low social distance. Similarly, the H7's justification reflects his awareness of social distance.

For scenario six, where the power is equal (P=), the social distance is low (D-), and the severity of offence is severe (R+), the high proficiency participant shows awareness of three situational variables in the following reason.

H3: The meaning of this request is too polite to use with familiar friend and

(D) (P)

the request is not a big deal.

(R)

Some participants with the high proficiency expressed non-politeness-reasons. In scenario six with equal power (P=), low social distance (D-) and serious offence (R+), the H11 mentioned the grammatical aspect in her reason as follows.

H11: I think this request is used grammatically. The beginning with the phrase “May I” in a question sounds polite.

For the low proficiency participants, five participants provided politeness-related reasons for scenario 12 with equal power (P=), low social distance (D-), and minor offence (R-). The examples of politeness related-reasons showing awareness of social distance were given.

L5: The response is appropriate for use with intimate colleague.

(D) (P)

L14: The speaker is acquainted with the listener, so the response is

(D)

appropriate to request a friend with informal words.

(P)

Most of the low proficiency participants provided non-politeness-reasons which include the consideration of meaning and the use of politeness markers. Some participants with the low proficiency addressed the impact of unfamiliarity of language patterns and the misunderstanding of a response. The examples of non-politeness-reasons were as given.

L2: I don't understand the meaning of “Is it possible”, so I was not sure whether it was polite.

L5: I think the meaning of “I want to inform you.... ” can make negative feeling of a listener.

To conclude, both high and low groups could show their awareness of three situational variables. In most of the scenarios of requesting, the high proficiency participants mostly reflected awareness of power and social distance. The low proficiency participants mostly provided justifications showing awareness of the social

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distance in their reasons. The non-politeness-related reasons provided by the two proficiency groups were about the misunderstanding of meaning and the improper word choice.

4.1.2.1.2 Provided reasons in scenarios of handling complaint

For scenarios of handling complaint, eight participants with the high proficiency could notice that the inappropriate usage of "I see" for talking with customers. Seven high proficiency explained that "I see" was informally used with the unfamiliar and higher professional position. This explanation shows awareness of relative power and social distance. In contrast, most of the high proficiency participants said the response was polite and appropriate for this situation. Some of the participants with high proficiency stated that the meaning of the response was completely clear.

To justify appropriateness for scenarios of handling complaints, the high proficiency participants provided reasons showing awareness of three situational variables. For example, in scenario five, where the relative power is high (P+), the social distance is high (D+), and the offence is severe (R+). The participants with high proficiency showed awareness of the power (P), the social distance (D) and the severity of the offence (R). The following are examples of politeness-related reasons provided by the high proficiency participants.

H10: This response should be used with familiarity, rather than with an unfamiliar guest, especially in a severe offence scenario where a speaker has
 D) (P) (R)
 committed a mistake.

H7: "I see" should be used with familiars, and it is not appropriately used
 D)
 with a guest who has higher status when dealing with a serious complaint.
 (P) (R)

In addition, an example of reason relating to awareness of severity of offence was also addressed in scenario 14, where the power between speaker and hearer is high (P+), the social distance is low (D-), and the offence is minor (R-) as follows:

H7: The listener is a familiar supervisor, who has higher power.

(D) (P)

Even if the problem is not serious, the speaker should accept the mistake, explain the reason, and promise not to do it again.

(R)

H13: The response is not appropriately used with a senior. The response

(P)

should start with apology for the agent's serious mistake.

(R)

For the non-politeness-related reason, several high proficiency participants stated the inappropriate language usage and inadequate information to help guest. The following non politeness-related reasons were given in scenario five with high power (P+), high social distance (D+), and minor offence (R-) by the participants with high proficiency.

H4: The meaning of "I see" was impolite.

H18: The purpose of the response is suitable for the context of the situation. I think the speaker has already provided enough information to solve the problem.

The non-politeness-related reasons provided from the high proficiency participants were mainly on the meaning of word usage and the necessity of apology and solution to help guests.

For the low proficiency group, three participants displayed politeness related justification showing awareness of the power and the severity of offence as seen in the following examples:

L3: The speaker must apologize for a serious complaint. Moreover, a speaker

(R)

should provide more information in order to help an honor guest.

(P)

L7: Even a small mistake, the speaker should say sorry and explain more

(R)

why she/ he were late with a higher experienced supervisor.

(P)

L5: Being late is a severe mistake for a hospitality job. The speaker should be

(R)

more polite in making apologies.

Most of the low proficiency participants provided non-politeness-related reasons in scenario 13 with equal power (P=), low social distance (D-), and severe offence (R+). Seven low proficiency participants expressed that the usage of sorry was suitable in meaning and easy to understand.

To conclude, in the scenarios of handling complaints, the high proficiency participants reflected awareness of power (P), social distance (D), and the severity of offence (R). Some of high proficiency participants could show awareness of all situational variables. However, the low proficiency participants' awareness of situational variables appeared to concern the severity of offence (R) and the power (P) in their reasons. For non-politeness-related reasons, most reasons provided by the high and low proficiency participants mainly focused on the meaning of response and the absent of apology.

4.1.2.1.3 Provided reasons in scenarios of informing

For informing scenarios, the high proficiency participants tended to show their awareness to the three situational variables including power (P) social distance (D) and severity of offence (R) while low proficiency participants mostly showed their awareness on the power (P) and the social distance (D). The following examples of

politeness-related reasons were presented by the high proficiency participants in scenario four, where the relative power is high (P+), the social distance is high (D+), and the offence is minor (R-) as follows:

H3: In order to talk with a guest who holds a higher power politely,
 (P) (D)

the use of imperatives should be avoided.

H7: The speaker should respond politely and informatively to
unfamiliar guest who hold higher professional position.

(D) (P)

The reasons show the higher power of a hotel guest and unfamiliar relationship were concerned. One high proficiency participant reflects awareness of three situational variables as seen in the following example.

H5: The guest must be informed because he or she violated the serious hotel's rules.

(R)

The speaker's response was appropriate because she needed to show respect to the honored guest, who she had never met before

(P) (D)

The participant correctly judged the response of scenario one with high power (H+), high social distance (D+), and severe offence (R+) as appropriate. The H5's reason reflects her awareness of the power, the social distance, and severity of offence.

The participants with high proficiency displayed non politeness-related reasons concerning the aspect of the necessary use of apology before making informing, the sufficient detail of information, and the appropriate meaning.

For the low proficiency group, most of the participants displayed awareness of power and social distance in most informing scenarios. In scenario four with high

power (H+), high social distance (D+), and minor offence (R-) the following reasons were given.

L1: The response is abrupt to talk with an unfamiliar person who requires

(D)

pleasant service and additional information about hotel services.

L7: To provide information to unfamiliar guests, a short response may be

(D)

(P)

considered unprofessional and rude.

The participants correctly justified response as inappropriate. The L1's reason shows her awareness of the social distance. In the same scenario, L7's reason also reflects the participant considered the power and the social distance in her judgment.

In addition, the examples relating to awareness of the severity of offence for scenario seven, where the power is high (P+), the social distance is low (D-), and the offence is severe (R+), are as follows:

L9: Since the situation is about serious complaints, the speaker should

(R)

inform the supervisor, who has a higher degree of status, with formality and polite apologies.

(P)

L5: When speaking with a senior or supervisor whom you must respect in a

(P)

serious topic or serious mistake, Even the communicators were familiar with

(R)

(D)

each other, the use of "I want" is inappropriate

For non-politeness-related reasons, most participants with the low proficiency provided reasons relating to the entirety of information, the use of understandable

words, and the grammatical structure which were considered as non-politeness-related reasons.

For the speech act of informing, the high proficiency participants seem to show their awareness of three situational variables. The participants with low proficiency tended to show awareness mostly of power and social distance.

To summarize, the findings presented that the participants with high proficiency could provide more politeness related reasons than that of the low proficiency participants in all three speech acts. Furthermore, the participants from high group tended to be aware of all three situational variables in all situations when compare with the participants in the low proficiency group. Overall, the participants with high and low proficiency tended to focus on (P) and (D) in most scenarios. In scenarios of requesting, the participants with high proficiency showed awareness of the power (P) and social distance (D) variables, while the low proficiency participants reflected awareness only for the social distance (D) in most scenarios. For the scenarios of informing, the high proficiency participants reflected awareness of all three situational, and the low proficiency participants reflected awareness of power (P) and severity of offence (R). For the scenarios of handling with complaint, the low group mostly showed awareness of the power (P) and the social distance (D). They rarely mentioned about the social distance (D). However, the participants with high proficiency tended to reflect awareness of the power (P), the severity of offence (R) and the social distance (D) in scenarios of handling with complaints.

4.2 Results from semi-structured interview

This section presents in-depth information about the awareness of situational variables and pragmatic awareness-raising instruction needs. Twenty participants with high proficiency and 18 participants with low proficiency have participated in the semi-structured interview.

Question 1: How did you know that the responses were appropriate or inappropriate for the given situations?

The majority of participants with high proficiency mentioned the importance of the speaker's role and the listener's power as the main factors influencing the appropriateness judgment. Seven participants in the high proficiency group also

showed that the listener's power was the most important factor in justifying the appropriate response. The examples of answers are as follows:

H3: *“Since the speaker is a service agent and a listener is a customer in most situations, the utterances should be polite.”*

H5: *“To make appropriateness judgment, I firstly checked the role and social status of a listener.”*

The examples of answer show the concern of the power and social distance from the high proficiency participants.

Furthermore, some of the high proficiency participants also stated the possible effects on a listener in terms of feelings and impressions in justifying the appropriateness of responses. Three participants from the high proficiency group explained that the language use could affect the pleasure of a listener because all scenarios occurred in the hospitality contexts. Therefore, they believed the most polite response as the appropriate one. One participant with high proficiency also asserted that the appropriate response should not look offensive to a listener.

To conclude, the high proficiency participants were normally concerned about the power and the characteristic of a hearer in a conversation when making a judgment. In addition, the participants with high proficiency also looked at the possibility of a negative effect on a hearer. Similar to the high proficiency group, the low proficiency participants mentioned the impact of power and the communicative context of scenarios influencing an appropriateness judgment. The concern of power showed in the examples of statements as follows:

L2: *“I firstly looked for the role of speaker and hearer as well as the communicative situation for helping to make decision of appropriateness judgment.”*

L7: *“The appropriate response could be seen from whom a speaker talked to”*

Furthermore, the low proficiency participants asserted that the use of words “*please*” “*Can*” and “*Could*” in a question could make a response more polite. One low proficiency participant explained that the use of please could soften a threat while requesting. Another participant with low proficiency asserted the use of politeness markers in a response that could help the decision of appropriateness judgment.

To summarize, both high and low proficiency participants generally agreed that the power consideration was the most important factor in their appropriateness judgment. The high proficiency group asserted the meaning and effect on a hearer as the factors they were concerned with. The low participants found that the use of polite words could help them in making appropriate responses.

Question 2: Are you aware of the hearer’s power, the relationship between speaker and hearer, and the severity of the offence in justifying the appropriateness of responses?

According to the previous question, the participants with high and low proficiency showed concern toward the hearer’s power and level of familiarity. Focusing on the power factor, most participants with high and low proficiency reported a crucial role of the listeners’ power in order to make judgment. One participant with the high proficiency indicated the major concern was on a hearer’s role because communication took place in the hospitality contexts. One high proficiency participant asserted that the power was the first thing to be concerned when justifying a response was appropriate. Furthermore, the majority of the participants demonstrated high awareness of the social distance or relationship between a speaker and a hearer. One participant said that before making judgments, she thought about power and the relationship between the speaker and the hearer. Another participant with high proficiency explained that the familiarity had an effect on the level of politeness.

Ten participants with high proficiency indicated the severity of offence as the essential factor in justifying the appropriateness of response. Some participants with high proficiency explained that the severity of the offence should be considered in

making an apology in scenarios when dealing with a complaint. In addition, three participants with high proficiency stated that the severity of problems and its effect on the hearer's feelings were also important and should be considered. As a result, even if a speaker is acquainted with a hearer, language should be expressed carefully. The low proficiency participants reported concern of the power and the social distance. Twelve participants with low proficiency indicated that the understanding of the characteristics of and interlocutor in terms of professional roles and relationships were essential.

One participant with low proficiency said, *"I thought about how close the speaker was to the hearer to make a judgment."*

This statement shows the participant's awareness of social distance in making judgment.

For the severity of offence, most of the low proficiency participants did not show a concern for the seriousness of an offence. Five participants with low proficiency reflected their awareness of the seriousness of offence in the scenarios when handling a complaint. However, some participants with low proficiency paid no attention on the severity of offence; they did not notice the severity of an offense because they believed the most polite response was appropriate.

In conclusion, both high and low proficiency participants gave more weight to the factor of power, followed by social distance and the severity of offence in their appropriateness judgment. The high proficiency participants tended to be aware of the three factors of power, social distance, and severity of offence. In contrast, the low proficiency participants seem to give more attention to the factors of power and social distance in making appropriateness judgments.

Question 3: In your opinion, what are the factors influencing appropriate utterances when you communicate with others?

Most of the high proficiency participants stated that the impact of the hearer's power was the essential factor in determining appropriate utterances and the appropriate degree of politeness. The high proficiency participants further

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clarified the meaning of power, including the degree of education, professional positions, age, and economic status. One participant with the high proficiency said that a speaker should not be rude or implied inappropriate language to a hearer with higher job position, age, and social position. This statement reflected the influence of relative power on the use of appropriateness language. Fourteen high proficiency participants also showed their concern with the degree of familiarity and closeness between a speaker and a listener. The high proficiency participants further explained that the relationship between the speaker and the hearer was also important to be concerned in order to communicate politely.

For the low proficiency group, several participants from this group indicated the importance of factors that reflect a particular context. One participant with low proficiency said, *"The conversation takes place in the hotel, where communication needs to be formal and polite. I think the avoidance of conflict by using an apology and polite responses is necessary."*

Furthermore, many participants from the low proficiency group indicated that the factors of gestures, tone of voice, and eye contact were important in communicating appropriately. Interestingly, three participants from the low proficiency group asserted that being aware of cultural norms was important for avoiding rudeness in intercultural communication. One participant explained that in some cultures the use of abrupt phrase and repetitions were not impolite. Another participant with low proficiency stated that avoiding inappropriate utterances and behavior, understanding of norms, and cultural awareness were crucial for communicating appropriately.

To conclude, most of high proficiency participants showed the importance of three situational variables. Apart from situational variables, the low proficiency participants tended to focus on nonverbal behaviors and non-verbal expression such as facial expression, tone of voice, and gesture for avoiding rudeness. In addition, the participants with low proficiency also asserted the importance of cultural awareness.

Question 4: Have you ever learned how to speak and respond politely to customers in the hospitality context?

All participants with high and low proficiency indicated that the faculty provided courses regarding hospitality communication. On the other hand, they all had never explicitly learned about pragmatics in the workplace. Most of the participants with high and low proficiency realized the importance of appropriate language for service encounters. The majority of all participants agreed that awareness of (in) appropriate language was very essential for staff in the hospitality business because it might affect a client's loyalty and decision to rebook a hotel. One high proficiency participant said, *"In some lessons, they have learned about service-mindedness, hospitality language, and personality improvement."* Similarly, the participant with the low proficiency added that the faculty provided lessons relating to how to talk and deal with customers politely. The examples of the high and low proficiency participants' answers were as follows:

H1: *"If I know a variety of language patterns and the way to use language politely in urgent situations, it will benefit the efficacy and development of English communication."*

H11: *"The practice of hospitality communication may be useful for applying to jobs that require English communication skills."*

L4: *"I have learned about how to write a resume for applying to jobs. I also need the additional course to improve my speaking abilities."*

The statements showed opinion that even though the faculty has already offered language courses for students, all of the participants showed their preference for job-related courses such as English for professional course, intercultural communication, and professional training in order to be ready for attending a cooperative course and enhancing communication skills.

Furthermore, two low proficiency participants commented that a seminar with experience service agents would be benefit.

L15: *"I am not confident in my ability to speak English and deal with unexpected situations in the workplace. The internship and seminar can guide technique for solving problems effectively and pragmatically."*

The L15' opinion pointed out that the practice of language in authentic situation could also facilitate them to learn language pragmatically with native speakers.

To summarize, high and low proficiency participants expressed a desire for pragmatic instructions. Most of the high and low proficiency respondents showed a willingness to be proficient in communicating in English. All participants agreed that existing courses offered lessons for improving their writing and speaking abilities. However, they still need extra lessons and a language courses that help them speak and respond politely to customers in the hospitality context.

Question 5: Do you think whether pragmatic-raising activities should be implemented in your English course?

From the semi-structured interview, the findings showed positive opinions about the implementation of pragmatic awareness-raising instruction in the class. All of the high and low participants completely agreed that pragmatic awareness-raising instruction would benefit their improvement of English communicative skills. Most of the participants reported that the pragmatic awareness-raising instruction would enhance their competence in communicating appropriately in various social contexts. The following were some positive comments about the implementation of pragmatic instruction in class:

H10: *“Pragmatic instruction will help students in enhancing their efficacy in English communication for both daily communication and work-related purposes.”*

H16: *“The knowledge and practice of pragmatics will be advantage for enhancing communicative skills for English communication”*

L3: *“Learning pragmatics will facilitate foreign language learner use, interpret, and understand language appropriately.”*

One participant with low proficiency stated that pragmatic-raising activities will help low proficiency learners to learn and notice appropriate language use in specific contexts. "Understanding the structure of languages is hard for me, but I am interested in learning how to produce and interpret foreign languages correctly and appropriately."

This statement demonstrates the low proficiency learner's eagerness to improve communicative skills.

Four participants with the high proficiency also clarified that pragmatic awareness-raising instruction will enhance the ability to notice sociological and contextual factors in order to communicate politely and appropriately.

H10: *"I sometimes overlook the differences in culture and norms among people from different cultures. Therefore, it may cause misunderstandings in the transfer and interpretation of messages between interlocutors. The pragmatic awareness will be useful for being aware of inappropriate language expression."*

H17: *"I think pragmatic instruction is interesting to learn beyond correct communication. It's about the way to show respect and rapport to people with whom you speak. The activities will enhance my awareness and help me become more proficient and professional in using appropriate language."*

Some of the high proficiency participants suggested that classroom activities such as cooperative games, and role-play could be applied in language classes to teach pragmatics. Low proficiency participants also added that the support in their English foundation course might not be efficient for them in improving their English communication. She stated that the development of pragmatic awareness through lessons or activities will be useful for students who cannot speak English well. Pragmatic-raising activities will help language students become more competent in English communication and get familiar with the variety of language usage.

In addition, one participant from the high proficiency group stated, *"Raising language awareness will increase efficacy in communicating with clients from different cultures."* It can be concluded that the enforcement of pragmatic instruction will help EFL language users in being aware of appropriateness and inappropriateness in communication, especially in intercultural contexts.

4.3 Chapter summary

This chapter revealed the findings of the pragmatic judgment task and insightful information from the semi-structured interview. The findings found no significant difference between high and low proficiency participants' performance of appropriateness judgment. However, there was some noticeable difference in

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justifications relating to the awareness of situational variables. From the in-depth interview, all high and low proficiency participants addressed the importance of pragmatics. The findings will lead a call for pragmatic-raising activities, especially for professional purposes.



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CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This chapter mainly presents the discussion and conclusion of the present study. The four major sections consist of the summary of findings, discussion, pedagogical implications, limitations and recommendations for future research study.

5.1 Summary of the findings

The present study examined Thai EFL tourism and hospitality undergraduate students' pragmatic awareness in the hotel context and investigated the relationship between English proficiency and pragmatic awareness. The participants of the study included 40 Thai EFL tourism and hospitality students from one public university in Thailand. Two research instruments, the pragmatic judgment task and semi-structured interview, were employed to collect the data. The pragmatic judgment task included 18 scenarios of three speech acts varying in situational variables, namely power, social distance, and offence severity. Overall, the statistical analysis showed no significant difference between the high and low proficiency participants' pragmatic awareness in the three speech acts. However, the present study revealed some similarities and differences between the high and low proficiency participants in their awareness of situational variables among the three speech acts.

5.1.1 Pragmatic awareness of the high proficiency group

The high proficiency group outperformed the low proficiency group on the pragmatic judgment task in most scenarios. The results of the pragmatic judgment task revealed that more than half of the participants with high proficiency accurately judged the appropriateness in 15 scenarios out of 18.

When compared to the low proficiency participants, those with high proficiency provided more politeness-related reasons, showing awareness of three situational variables. Based on their justifications, they could reflect awareness of three situational variables to the requesting scenarios. Concerning pragmatic awareness in the informing scenarios, the majority of high proficiency participants could make justifications showing awareness of equal power, low social distance, and severe offence. To justify the appropriateness of dealing with complaint scenarios, the high proficiency participants could reflect awareness of high power, high distance,

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and severe offence. However, they were unaware of the equal power, low distance, and minor offence in the handling complaints scenarios.

To summarize, the participants with high proficiency correctly justify appropriateness of responses for scenarios containing high power, low power, high distance, and severe offence. The high proficiency participants mostly expressed justifications relating to grammatical aspects and word choices. In terms of politeness-related justifications, most of the participants with high proficiency showed awareness of high and low power as well as high and low social distance.

5.1.2 Pragmatic awareness of the low proficiency group

More than half of the low proficiency participants could correctly judge 12 of the 18 scenarios. Most of the low proficiency participants were unable to make appropriate judgment in requesting scenarios with equal power (P=), low social distance (D-), minor offence (R-), and severe offence (R+). All of the participants with low proficiency made correct judgment for informing scenario with high power (P+), high distance (D+), and severe offence (R+). However, the majority of them judged the appropriateness of responses incorrectly in scenarios involving high power (P+), low social distance (D-), severe offence (R+), and minor offence (R-). The participants with low proficiency were unable to make correct judgment in scenarios involving high power (P+), high social distance (D+), severe (R+), and minor offence (R-).

Based on their justifications, the majority of low proficiency participants mostly provided non-politeness related reasons showing the appropriateness of translated meaning. Interestingly, the low proficiency participants showed reasons relating to the essential use of politeness markers and cultural awareness. For the politeness-related reasons, the low proficiency participants mostly expressed concern for the power of the interlocutors and expressed concern about the feelings and effects on hearers.

The low proficiency participants showed high awareness of the power in most situations. In some scenarios, they could justify the influence of power and social distance. Regarding the awareness of situational variables in requesting scenarios, the low proficiency participants showed less awareness of equal power, low social distance, and severe offence. In addition, the low proficiency participants could not

show awareness of high power, low social distance, as well as severe and minor offence in scenarios of informing and handling with complaints.

To summarize, the low proficiency group made less accurate judgment than the high proficiency group. The participants with low proficiency showed their awareness of high power and high social distance. However, in most scenarios, they were still unaware of the equal power, low social distance and severity of the offence.

5.1.3 Comparing pragmatic awareness of high and low proficiency participants

The similarities between the high and low proficiency participants represented in their pragmatic judgment. Firstly, the participants from two proficiency groups accurately made correct judgment for scenarios of requesting, followed by handling complaint scenarios, and informing. Both groups of proficiency found the difficulty in making correct judgment for informing scenarios with high power (P+) and handling complaint scenario with equal power (P=), low social distance (D-), and minor offence (R-).

Secondly, the majority of participants with high and low proficiency reflected high awareness of power and social distance and less awareness of the severity of offence in most scenarios. Based on their provided reasons, the participants from both group of proficiency mostly indicated a hearer's role and levels of familiarity. The seriousness of offence was mentioned in some scenarios of requesting and handling verbal complaints.

Thirdly, similarities were apparent in the awareness of power among participants with high and low proficiency. Both groups could correctly judge the appropriateness of responses in most scenarios with high power in the requesting scenarios. However, in verbal acts of requesting and handling complaint scenarios constituting equal power, the majority of them were unable to make correct judgments. In addition, the participants with high and low proficiency also struggled to make correct judgments for the informing scenario with high power (P+), high distance (D+), and minor offence (R-).

Lastly, in terms of politeness-related reasons, both high and low proficiency participants provided reasons that justified the importance of power (P) and social distance (D). This material is reserved for educational use only, not allowed for commercial use.

distance (D) in the majority of situations. In addition, in their responses both groups of proficiency recognized the impact of Thai culture on politeness perception.

The difference between the high and low proficiency participants was reflected in their awareness of social distance. The high proficiency participants showed awareness of high and low social distance in the speech act of requesting. Conversely, the low proficiency participants showed less awareness of social distance in this speech act. Some of the low proficiency participants could not judge appropriateness for responses in scenarios with high and low distance correctly. In addition, the low proficiency participants were also less aware of low distance in the scenario of handling with complaint.

Regarding their provided justifications, the low proficiency participants provided reason relating to awareness of power and social distance while high proficiency participant could show awareness of three situational variables. The low proficiency participants could reflect awareness of equal power (P=), low distance (D-), and minor offence (R-) than those with the high proficiency in scenario of informing. Moreover, the low proficiency participants also made more accurate correct judgment and provided more justifications reflecting awareness of situational variables in scenario with high power (P+), high social distance (D+), and severe offence (R+).

The difference between high and low proficiency was the strategy used in making judgments. Some of the low proficiency participants mostly judged the appropriateness of a response from a literal understanding of the meaning. Moreover, the low proficiency participants also looked for the use of politeness markers in order to help them judge the appropriateness of responses. Compared to the low proficiency participants, several of the high proficiency participants frequently observed and understood the situational contexts before making decisions.

Some of the low proficiency participants also displayed some reasons showing an awareness of one's own cultural norms and those of other, different cultures. They drew attention to the underlying consideration of conflict and threat that could be interpreted as rudeness in a response. The high proficiency participants did not discuss the significance of cultural differences and possible threats underlying responses, in contrast to the low proficiency group.

To summarize, the qualitative analysis of the pragmatic judgment task and semi-structured interview revealed some similarities and differences in awareness of situational variables. The high proficiency participants showed a greater awareness of situational variables when making appropriateness judgment. The study also discovered that participants with high proficiency could show more awareness of situational variables through their politeness-related reasons. The impact of English proficiency will be discussed in the following section.

5.2 Discussion of the main findings

The findings from the pragmatic judgment task and semi-structured interview are discussed in this section. The section begins with a discussion of Thai EFL tourism and hospitality students' pragmatic awareness. The following section demonstrates some of the factors influencing the pragmatic awareness of participants with high and low proficiency: English proficiency, Thai culture, and communicative context. The section concludes by presenting perceptions towards pragmatic awareness-raising instruction.

5.2.1 Pragmatic awareness of Thai EFL tourism and hospitality students

Pragmatic awareness between the high and low proficiency participants was comparable qualitatively in three speech acts. Overall, the majority of participants with high and low proficiency could identify the appropriateness of responses for the speech act of requesting, followed by dealing with complaints, and informing. The findings are consistent with the studies of Farnia (2015) and Rafieyan (2018). Farnia (2015) investigated the relationship between language proficiency and pragmatic competence. This previous study found no influence of language proficiency on pragmatic knowledge. In addition, Rafieyan (2018) found no relationship between English proficiency and the ability to produce and understand language responses pragmatically.

According to justifications, participants from two proficiency groups focused on grammatical aspects rather than pragmatic errors. The current study found more non-politeness related reasons than politeness related reasons showing awareness of situational variables from both high and low proficiency participants. This is confirmed by Maibodi and Fazilatfar's (2015) study, which discovered grammatical

errors were the most common concern among EFL students. This study also suggests that the inability to recognize pragmatic errors in EFL contexts is due to a lack of communication practice and language input.

Even though there was no significant difference in statistical analysis, the high proficiency participants could perform better in making judgment and showed more awareness of three situational variables than those with lower proficiency in almost all scenarios. The results are in line with the previous studies, which improved the influence of English proficiency on awareness of situational variables, including power, social distance, and severity of offence (e.g. Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei (1998), Maibodi & Fazilatfar (2015), Nipaspong (2011), Pin-ngern (2015). The previous studies showed the greater role of language background on the development of pragmatic awareness and ability to be aware of contextual features in a particular situation. In the present study, the interview showed that the high proficiency participants were able to provide more politeness-related reasons, interpret the meaning of a given response, and understand a particular context of a situation better than those with the low proficiency.

Most of the high and low proficiency participants showed a high awareness of power and social distance in the speech act of requesting and informing. In terms of situational variables awareness, the majority of participants from the two proficiency groups showed greater attention on power (P) in most of the scenarios. The participants with high and low proficiency mostly showed awareness of high power (P+). In contrast, both proficiency groups struggled to judge appropriateness of responses for scenarios involving equal power (P=) in some scenarios of requesting and informing. The participants with high and low proficiency reflected heightened awareness of power (P) and social distance (D) when determining the appropriateness of requests. The finding is in line with Al-Khaza and Zainal (2015), the previous study found greater sensitivity to hierarchical power and social distance. In addition, the finding is also consistent with those of Onchaiya and Phimsawat (2021), who discovered that Thais have a high awareness of social status and social distance when making requests. This point may indicate that the sensitivity of the hearer has resulted in Thai participants' awareness of power and social distance. The primary

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concern of power in the high and low proficiency groups was also represented in the speech act of informing.

The participants from both groups of proficiency showed awareness of power (P) and social distance (D) in most scenarios of informing. For example, all of the high and low proficiency participants correctly identified the appropriateness of scenario one with high power (P+), high social distance (D+), and severe offence (R+). In this scenario, the high and low proficiency participants correctly identified the response as appropriate with a guest. Most of the high and low proficiency participants reflected their awareness of high power (P+) and high social distance (D+) underlying their justifications. In addition, some of them also reflected awareness of the severe offence (R+) of an event. The similarity between the two groups of proficiency was also found in a scenario of handling complaints.

Focusing on the speech act of handling complaints, both high and low proficiency participants emphasized the use of apology in dealing with a complaint. For example, most high and low participants struggled to justify the appropriateness of a response for scenario 11 with equal power (P=), low social distance (D-), and minor offence (R-). More than half of the participants with high and low proficiency indicated that a sincere apology is appropriate for the situation. However, the provided response was too polite for responding to a familiar colleague's non-serious complaint. In addition, they also found difficulty in making a correct judgment for the scenario of dealing with a complaint from a supervisor (P+) (D-) (a familiar, high-powered interlocutor). The consideration for politeness and preference for apology found in the present study correlates with the previous studies which found the preference of regret, and indirectness because of the lack of authority between service providers and customers (e.g., Cavalieri & Corizzato (2022), Khanapornvorakarn & Gadavanij (2022)).

In summary, language proficiency plays a role in the awareness of situational variables. The participants with high and low proficiency reflected an awareness of all three situational variables by giving high attention to power, followed by social

distance and severity of offence. The influence of English proficiency on pragmatic awareness is discussed in the following section.

5.2.2 Role of English proficiency on pragmatic awareness

The present study found similarities and differences in the awareness of situational variables between the high and low proficiency participants. The majority of the high proficiency participants could show awareness of three situational variables in three speech acts. In contrast, most of the low proficiency participants showed their awareness of between one and two variables on each speech act. Based on the findings, the participants with high and low proficiency reflected their awareness to power, followed by social distance, and severity of offence. The major concern about power when justifying language responses correlated with the previous studies of Pin-ngern (2015), Siraranghom and Jarunthawatchai (2018), which presented dominant concerns about power and social distance in Thai EFL students.

For the scenarios of requesting, the high and low proficiency participants could make correct judgment for the scenarios with a high power (P+). However, they both found it difficult to make the correct judgment for the scenario of requesting a familiar colleague (P=) (D-) and the scenario with minor offence (R-). Based on justifications, the participants were not familiar with asking for help from a familiar colleague. To request people with equal professional status, the high and low proficiency participants agreed that requests still needed to be polite. In this situation, the participants showed awareness of situational variables. However, there was a transfer of socio-cultural norms on the consideration to others in making a request, which influenced the participants' preference of politeness. This is supported by the study of Wannaruk (2008), which shows the impact of L1 characteristic of modesty and awareness of relative power on the choice of language strategies.

Focusing on the awareness of the social distance (D), the high proficiency participants showed awareness of the high and low distance (D+, D-). In contrast, the low proficiency participants showed less awareness of social distance (D) and severity of offence (R) in the requesting scenarios. For example, the low proficiency

participants were unaware of the social distance (D) and severity of offence (R) in scenario six with equal power (P=), low social distance (D-), and severe offence (R+). More than half of the participants with low proficiency incorrectly judged the appropriateness of the response. Most of the low participants indicated that they were not familiar with the use of "Is it possible...". Some of the low proficiency participants asserted that the use of polite questions is appropriate. Even with a familiar friend, politeness is preferred. This also shows the misunderstanding of indirectness due to limited language resources and a lack of awareness of situational variables among the low proficiency participants.

Regarding the informing speech act, the participants with high and low proficiency lacked awareness of social distance (D) and the severity of offence (R). Several participants from the high and low proficiency groups could not correctly identify the scenarios with high power (P+), low social distance (D-), and severe offence (R+), as well as the scenario with high power (P+), high social distance (D+), and minor offence (R-). For example, in scenario seven, most of the high and low proficiency participants could not notice that "I want to inform you..." was not appropriately used with a senior supervisor (P+) (D-), even though they are familiar with each other. Furthermore, in scenario 10, the participants with high and low proficiency judge an abrupt response as appropriate for informing the senior supervisor (P+) (D-). This reflects the lack of awareness of power (P) and social distance (D) among the two groups of proficiency. In addition, the justifications showed that most of the participants who incorrectly judged the response, asserted that they thought the provided response was appropriate in its meaning. Some of the low proficiency participants did not know that "I want" is inappropriate. The participants showed the misunderstanding of the meaning as well as the social context and the limited linguistic resources, causing incorrect judgment. This is confirmed by Xu and Wannaruk (2016) on the effect of limited lexical and linguistic resources on the understanding of pragmatically utterance meaning.

Apart from the requesting and informing situations, the participants with high and low proficiency showed awareness of equal power (P=) in the complaint handling speech act. The high and low proficiency participants could make correct

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judgments for the scenario with equal power (P=), low distance (D-), and severe offence (R+). In contrast, both groups of proficiency made incorrect judgments for scenarios with low social distance (D-) and minor offence (R-). For example, the high and low participants judged the response incorrectly in scenario five. In this scenario, the response was too vague for use with an unfamiliar customer (P+) (D+). In addition, the response could be interpreted as imperative, which is not appropriate for making a suggestion. The misinterpretation of intention underlying the response was also correlated with the studies of Tai and Chen (2021), and Xu and Wannaruk (2016). The previous studies display that limited linguistic knowledge leads to a misunderstanding of language expression. In a similar view, Tai and Chen (2021) assert that the low proficiency participants tend to focus on the literal meaning rather than other situational aspects. The researchers found that the high proficiency participants took advantage of their pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic resources in order to understand and use appropriate language.

The high and low proficiency participants reflected awareness of the severity of offence in the scenarios of the handling of complaints. To deal with complaints, most of the high and low participants agreed to first begin with an apology for the problems and mistakes. Therefore, the absence of apology in some responses was judged as inappropriateness. For example, in scenario five, most participants with high and low proficiency judged the response as inappropriate because of the absence of an apology. Actually, in real-life communication, there are many ways to respond to complaints. The participants had limited linguistic resources in knowing the variety of language patterns and language strategies affecting their ability to provide appropriate judgment. This is in line with Xu and Wannaruk (2016), who found that limited vocabulary and language strategies result in pragmatic inabilities in understanding and producing.

Interestingly, the participants with low proficiency could show more awareness of severe offence (R+) in the handling with complaints scenario than those with the high proficiency. For example, in scenario 11, most of the low proficiency participants correctly identified the appropriateness of complaint acceptance and reflected awareness of high power (P+) and severe offence (R+). Some of the low

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participants correctly explained that the complaint in this scenario is seriously affecting a guest's convenience. The low proficiency participants judged the response as appropriate because of the use of a polite apology before offering a solution for the problem. In contrast, some high proficiency participants failed to notice the inappropriateness of their response and be aware of power and severe offence.

The low proficiency participants mentioned the importance of cultural awareness in communication. They were aware of the possible conflict and misunderstanding though language use. The interview results revealed that the majority of the low-proficiency students intended to avoid or threaten the hearer. They asserted that when communicating between people of different cultures one needs to be aware of offensive language. Since some of them could not speak English well, they had to make sure that the language they used was understandable and polite. Furthermore, Trosborg and Shaw (2017) discovered that native language and culture have a significant impact on inappropriate language expressions. The participants with low proficiency emphasized the significance of cultural awareness because service agents must interact with people from various cultures and norms. Pragmatic competence is essential for avoiding misunderstanding and confusion. The majority of the low proficiency participants provided justifications relating to awareness of appropriate language rather than grammatical structure. The participant who mentioned the significance of cultural awareness previously worked in the service industry. Furthermore, the majority of those who reported the importance of power had prior work experience in the hospitality industry. This could imply that work experience could assist participants in learning how to use language appropriately and politely.

To sum up, the level of English proficiency was founded in the awareness of situational variables. The high proficiency participants have a greater awareness of the power, social distance, and severity of offence. The low proficiency participants mostly showed awareness on power and social distance in the majority of scenarios. Apart from awareness of situational variables, the low proficiency participants were mostly concerned with the appropriate language form, meaning, and cultural difference.

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Regarding justifications provided, the high proficiency participants were also able to provide more politeness-related reasons relating to awareness of situational variables than those with low proficiency. However, the qualitative analysis showed more non politeness-related reasons than politeness-related reasons among both high and low proficiency students. In Thai EFL contexts, learning English is mostly focused on grammatical aspects, language forms, and extended vocabulary for examination rather than language for communication. That was a reason why Thai EFL students automatically find out about mistakes in language structures or grammatical mistakes in their judgment task. The findings correlated with the study of Farnia (2015) regarding a high attention to grammatical instruction in EFL contexts. For the high proficiency participants, they mostly provided reasons for the concern of power and social distance in most scenarios. The high proficiency participants' greater awareness of situational variables is in line with the study of (Pin-ngern, 2015), which found greater awareness of three situational variables among the higher language proficiency participants. Moreover, the high awareness of power and distance also supported the finding from the previous studies (e.g. Li, et al., 2015; Sirarathom & Jarunthawatchai, 2018).

The politeness-related reasons given by high proficiency participants were primarily focused on the appropriateness of language response to context in terms of meaning and politeness, whereas the politeness-related reasons given by low proficiency participants were comprehension and appearance of polite signal word usage. The misunderstanding of meaning was the main reason for incorrect judgment for the low proficiency participants. Many low proficiency participants did not understand the unfamiliar use of language patterns and different degrees of politeness.

To conclude, English language proficiency affects the low proficiency participants in terms of the comprehension of responses. The low proficiency participants clarified that they could not understand the meaning of some phrases and words in responses. Moreover, they were not familiar with the use of some phrases in response; therefore, they could not judge the appropriateness correctly.

This is in line with past studies on the impact of language proficiency levels on

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pragmatic awareness Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei (1998), Jorda (2005), Maibodi and Fazilatfar (2015), Pin-ngern (2015), which indicated that a higher proficiency level correlates with a higher level of pragmatic awareness. Some participants with low proficiency said the direct request seemed inappropriate and rude. They recognized the use of imperatives such as ‘please’ to make the request softer. In addition, both high and low proficiency participants also preferred the use of conventional indirect requests such as the response that begins with would or could. This point showed the concentration of indirectness in Thai culture. In Thailand, people are normally considerate to others, especially when they make requests. Therefore, the low proficiency participants showed sensitivity to others’ feelings and preferences for indirectness.

5.2.3 Role of Thai culture on awareness of situational variables

This section presents the role of Thai culture on awareness of three variables of relative power, social distance, and severity of offence.

According to the justifications expressed by the high and low proficiency participants, the participants highlighted the importance of seniority, power, and levels of familiarity. These factors became the necessary influence on politeness in language. In the present study, both high and low proficiency participants totally agreed that politeness is serious in Thai culture. Respect for seniority and the elderly should be expressed through verbal and behavioral language. Based on results from the pragmatic judgment task, the participants with high and low proficiency showed the most awareness of power (P) and the least awareness of severity of offence (R). The finding of the present study was supported by Nipaspong (2011), which found that Thai EFL students were mostly aware of power (P). In most of the situations, the high and low proficiency participants completely agreed that their appropriateness judgment depended on the interlocutor’s power and closeness between interlocutors, or social distance (D). At this point, it might show the influence of Thai culture regarding the politeness perceptions of Thais. The reason is supported by many previous studies in Thai EFL contexts that found the transfer of Thai culture in language production and comprehension (e.g., Wannaruk (2008), Chiravate (2011), Pin-ngern (2015). Previous studies found that Thai EFL students tended to be

concerned about seniority and professional aspects in using the formality of word choices and degree of politeness (Chiravate, 2011).

The interview also reflected the impact of hierarchy in Thai culture on Thai EFL students' appropriateness judgments. Most participants asserted that power was determined by social status and age. In the context of the present study, the participants completely showed their awareness of power in the conversation, which shows the clear hierarchy of high power. Hierarchy is one of the influences on polite language use in Thai culture. The level of politeness and ways of language use are different from the level of language expressions. Similarly, Li, et al., (2015) also found the influence of power in Chinese culture. The study expressed the transfer of L1 norms and awareness of politeness in language production.

The influence of Thai culture is found in the speech act of handing of complaints. In scenario five, the high and low proficiency participants provided reasons to awareness of power and severity of offence. The reasons showed the awareness of power and the avoidance of threats on the hearer's feelings. The participants with low proficiency believed that apologies were important for dealing with mistaken complaints. This showed a lack of awareness of the severity of offence and Thai norms of consideration in accepting mistakes, even non-serious ones. This reason supports the use of apology in the refusals of Thai flight attendants. The frequent use of apology was influenced by Thai cultural values and characteristics of being caring, modest, and sensitive to an interlocutor's status (Khanapornvorakarn & Gadavanij, 2021).

Apart from awareness of power (P) and social distance (D), severity of offence (R) was less pronounced in the responses of Thai EFL students. The findings of the current study corroborated Pin-ngern's study (2015) regarding Thai EFL students' low awareness of the severity of offence. According to the findings, only a few participants in this current study mentioned awareness of the seriousness of offences. For example, the majority of high and low participants could not notice that a response in scenario three (see appendix) was too polite for apologizing in minor offence situation. This might reflect that apologizing was a priority in order to

be polite in Thai culture. Some participants asserted that a speaker must first apologize to a listener before making requests, apologizing for mistakes, or informing. That was a reason why most participants did not pay attention to the severity of offence (R).

5.2.4 Importance of communicative contexts

The participants with high proficiency also stated the importance of the hospitality context in underlying the appropriateness judgment. Since the context of the present study was the hotel context, the majority of high and low participants mentioned the necessity of politeness in communication. The study supported the perception towards the notion that "the customer is God" (Arrington, 1990). This notion reflects the belief that customers are always right. A service agent has to please every customer with both verbal and nonverbal language. According to a previous study, power, social status, age, and socioeconomic status all play an important role in the appropriate language used in Thai hospitality contexts (Leelaharattanarak, 2015). According to the interview findings, tourism and hospitality students unanimously agreed that appropriate and polite expressions were critical for communication in hotel settings. The majority of participants clarified that in order to maintain a proper impression and good relations with customers, a welcoming manner, the use of polite phrases, and the mitigation of intensity in severe situations were vital. Furthermore, appropriate verbal and nonverbal communication skills were essential to avoid offensive, rude, and impolite utterances. The current study focused on language usage in a specific context.

To summarize, the communicative context is one of the important aspects of using appropriate language. The high proficiency also mentioned this factor in appropriateness judgments.

5.3 Pedagogical implications

The current study examined Thai EFL students' pragmatic awareness. This section discusses the possible ways for pedagogical implications.

The majority of participants in the present study expressed a positive preference for the implementation of pragmatic awareness-raising instruction in the

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class. They all agreed that the teaching of pragmatics would help students understand the meaning of language within a situational context. In addition, the development of pragmatic competence will help language students in identifying and analyzing specific contexts in order to express appropriate language. The positive advantages of pragmatic teaching are found in many empirical studies (e.g. Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei (1998), He (2019). He (2019) suggested the importance of teaching cultural literacy in English language instruction. The understanding of one's own culture and other cultures, the cultural background of language use, and the enhancement of pragmatic awareness are important in order to minimize conflict and communication breakdown.

The previous studies showed that EFL students still lacked the ability to understand and interpret the meaning of expressions in their target language. Since pragmatic competence may lead to the ability to communicate and use English effectively in an intercultural setting for EFL students, based on the qualitative interviews conducted in the present study, Thai EFL students displayed their need for language supports, especially for professional purposes.

In the EFL contexts, awareness-raising instruction should be integrated into the EFL classroom in order to raise awareness about communicating effectively (Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998, Jorda (2005). The authentic practices and instructional media may facilitate and raise awareness of pragmatics for EFL students effectively. The participants from the current study also showed their interests and positive attitudes toward appropriate English communication for work related purposes. This point could also lead to a call for pragmatic teaching in EFL language classrooms. Furthermore, the study is in line with the study of Zhang, et al. (2019), which found the need for pragmatic instruction in raising pragmatic awareness in using and interpreting appropriate language for professional purposes. The present study also found that the enhancement of pragmatic awareness and competence will benefit Thai EFL students in communicating effectively in professional settings.

With the lack of pragmatic competence and awareness, inappropriate communication, misunderstanding and communication breakdown can occur (BardoviHarlig & Dörnyei, 1998). The findings revealed that the majority of participants

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indicated a lack of variety in language input and need of implementation of English for professional purposes courses. They all agreed that polite and appropriate English communication is essential. Based on the research findings, pragmatics should be taught in the EFL classroom, particularly English for professional purposes in order to increase learners' efficacy in English communication. Therefore, the findings lead teachers and program committees for cooperation in planning and designing pragmatic curricula systematically.

According to Tagushi (2011), pragmatics teaching can be applied both implicitly and explicitly. For pragmatic development, authentic resources, teaching methods and classroom practices is required. Furthermore, language instructors should emphasize the development of knowledge to understand the language forms, functional meanings, and communication contexts in order to achieve effective communication. Nguyen and Le (2019) revealed that pragmatic instructions develop positively in an EFL context. The researchers propose that implementing awareness-raising tasks that foster pragmatic and cultural norms, communicative practice, and corrective feedback are effective methods in pragmatic teaching.

To summarize, the study found that pragmatic awareness is an important factor in assisting foreign language students to be confident in English communication. As a result, the use of useful and meaningful pragmatic instructions, tasks, and activities will be the most effective means of facilitating communicative competence in real-world communication and professional settings. Educational institutions as well as companies in the hospitality field can gain valuable ideas for advancing language instructions and training for developing communicative skills.

5.4 Limitations and recommendation for future study

The current study attempted to quantitatively and qualitatively analyze Thai EFL students' pragmatic awareness in hotel context. According to the present study, the study still has some limitations that can be addressed by future investigations.

First of all, the limitation is the size of participants. The findings from a small group of 40 participants may not be generalized to other contexts. There is a light for future investigation to apply the study's framework or research instrument to examine pragmatic awareness with a large scale of participants.

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Secondly, during their first year of university, the participants had taken two Foundation English courses. As a result, the participants may have some language exposure and experience prior to participating in the study.

Thirdly, the study examined a specific context of the hotel in the hospitality industry. The hotel context contains the use of specific language patterns, politeness, and different weight of situational variables. Future studies in different contexts of communication may consider other variables such as gender, age, social norms, etc. Additionally, further studies can endeavor to investigate different professional contexts, such as aviation, business, or engineering.

Fourthly, the present study disregarded some factors, such as gender, learning environment, and language exposure. These influences may indirectly affect pragmatic awareness. Further studies may be conducted taking these factors into consideration in order to explore this issue in greater depth.

Lastly, The findings reflected the participants' need of pragmatic awareness-raising instructions. Some pedagogical implications may be proposed in light of the results from the present study. Future studies may be conducted as a classroom research study investigating the effectiveness and impact of pragmatic awareness-raising instruction both as implicit and explicit instructions for professional purpose

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Appendix A

Pragmatic judgment task (English version)

Pragmatic judgment task

Thai EFL Students' Pragmatic Awareness in Hotel Context: A Study of Tourism and Hospitality Undergraduate Students

Researcher: Miss Pattria Panatta (Master of Arts Program in Applied Linguistics
– English for Professional Purposes)

Advisor: Asst. Prof. Dr. Atinuch Pin-ngern

.....

Part I: Personal Information

Directions: Please fill in the information and place a checkmark (✓) to answer the following questions

1) Student ID:

2) Foundation English 1 grade:

Foundation English 2 grade:

3) Any experience in an English-speaking country more than 1 year

Yes (please specify)

No

4) Working Experience

Yes (please specify)

No

Part II: Pragmatic judgment task

Directions: There are 18 scenarios with English responses below. Please read the scenarios carefully and judge the appropriateness of providing responses. Please provide a reason for your judgment in Thai.

.....

Scenario 1: Somsri works as a receptionist. According to the hotel regulations, all the rooms are non-smoking rooms. The guests can smoke only outside or provided area. However, a housekeeper reports to Somsri that a guest is smoking in the room now. Somsri must inform the guest, whom she is not familiar with, that smoking is not allowed.

Somsri: *Sorry for interrupting sir, I would like to inform you that smoking in a room is not allowed. You can smoke in a provided area on the ground floor.*

Appropriate Inappropriate

Please explain your reason:

Scenario 2: Somsri asks her familiar supervisor to welcome the VIP guests at the entrance door of the hotel.

Somsri: *Come to the hotel entrance door please*

Appropriate Inappropriate

Please explain your reason:

Scenario 3: Somsri got a complaint from his colleague about a mistake in a guest's name spelling.

Somsri: *It is my fault. I sincerely apologize for my mistake.*

Appropriate Inappropriate

Please explain your reason:

Scenario 4: Non is a concierge. A hotel guest asks Non about a shuttle van schedule. Non needs to inform the guest, whom he is not familiar with, that a free airport transfer service runs every hour.

Non: *Every hour*

Appropriate Inappropriate

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Please explain your reason:

Scenario 5: A guest complains about the internet connection problem with Somsri who works as a receptionist. Somsri understands that the guest cannot use the internet because of the wrong password. Therefore, she asks the guest to reconnect Wi-Fi again with a new password.

Somsri: *I see, try to reconnect Wi-Fi again with your room number as the password.*

Appropriate Inappropriate

Please explain your reason:

Scenario 6: Somsri will have an important appointment tomorrow. She asks her close colleague to swap a work shift with her.

Somsri: *Is it possible to swap a work shift with me tomorrow?*

Appropriate Inappropriate

Please explain your reason:

Scenario 7: In a daily briefing, Somsri informs her familiar supervisor about a summary of guests' complaints.

Somsri: *I want to inform you that there are complaints about the slow working of Wi-Fi, the poor quality of breakfast, and the cleanliness of a swimming pool.*

Appropriate Inappropriate

Please explain your reason:

Scenario 8: According to the high season, many guests come to check in and checkout at a front desk. A familiar supervisor complains to Somsri about slow service causing a guest's complaint.

Somsri: *I am terribly sorry for that, there are many guests checked in in the morning. I will improve.*

Appropriate Inappropriate

Please explain your reason:

Scenario 9: A guest comes to the front desk for checking in. Somsri asks a guest, whom she is not familiar with, to sign a registration form.

Somsri: *Could you please give me your signature here?*

Appropriate Inappropriate

Please explain your reason:

Scenario 10: To update the information on the room status, Somsri informs his familiar supervisor to know about the number of check-ins, checkouts, and cancellations.

Somsri: *20 occupied rooms, 5 rooms expected departure and no cancellation*

Appropriate Inappropriate

Please explain your reason:

Scenario 11: Somsri works as a receptionist. A guest comes to the front desk and complains about loud noises from the next room. Somsri must deal with the guest whom she is not familiar.

Somsri: *I would like to apologize for your inconvenience. I will inform your next occupancy to be quiet immediately.*

Appropriate Inappropriate

Please explain your reason:

Scenario 12: A guest comes to a concierge counter and asks Non to arrange a car. Non is very busy now, so he asks his familiar colleague to call a car for the guest.

Non: *May I ask you to arrange a car for a guest?*

Appropriate Inappropriate

Please explain your reason:

Scenario 13: Somsri informs his familiar colleagues to acknowledge the arrival of special needs guests and a special request of the room.

Somsri: *Please note that today disabled and elderly guests are going to stay at our hotel. Please take special care of them and assign their rooms near an elevator.*

Appropriate Inappropriate

Please explain your reason:

Scenario 14: Somsri got a complaint from her familiar supervisor because she was late for a briefing.

Somsri: *Sorry for being late.*

Appropriate Inappropriate

Please explain your reason:

Scenario 15: According to a hotel policy, a walk-in guest has to pay a 50% deposit of a room price. Somsri asks a walk-in guest, whom she is not familiar with, for a credit card to pay a deposit.

Somsri: *Credit card, please*

Appropriate Inappropriate

Please explain your reason:

Scenario 16: In a daily briefing, Somsri informs his familiar colleagues to know about an upcoming event of a wedding ceremony.

Somsri: *Tomorrow a wedding ceremony will be held at the main meeting room.*

Appropriate Inappropriate

Please explain your reason:

Scenario 17: Somsri receives a complaint from his close colleague about the unpreparedness of room key cards and registration forms for arriving guests.

Somsri: *Sorry, I will do it immediately.*

Appropriate Inappropriate

Please explain your reason:

Scenario 18: A guest comes to the front-desk counter and asks Somsri for a possible discount because of an unpleasant room. Somsri cannot decide on a discount, so she asks her familiar supervisor to deal with the guest.

Somsri: *The guest asks for a discount because of an unsatisfied experience.*

Would you mind helping me talk with a guest?

Appropriate Inappropriate

Please explain your reason:

Appendix B

Pragmatic judgment task (Thai version)

Thai EFL Students' Pragmatic Awareness in Hotel Context: A Study of
Tourism and Hospitality Undergraduate Students

ความตระหนักเชิงวัจนปฏิบัติศาสตร์ของนักศึกษาชาวไทยที่เรียนภาษาอังกฤษในฐานะ
ภาษาต่างประเทศในบริบทโรงแรม: การศึกษานักศึกษาปริญญาตรีสาขาการท่องเที่ยวและบริการ

ผู้วิจัย: นางสาว ภัทรา ปันดตา

อาจารย์ที่ปรึกษา: ผศ. ดร. อติรุช ปิ่นเงิน

ส่วนที่ 1: ข้อมูลส่วนบุคคล

คำชี้แจง: โปรดกรอกข้อมูล และ ทำเครื่องหมาย (✓) เพื่อตอบคำถามต่อไปนี้

- 1) รหัสนักศึกษา:.....
- 2) เกรดวิชาภาษาอังกฤษพื้นฐาน 1:
- เกรดวิชาภาษาอังกฤษพื้นฐาน 2:
- 3) ประสบการณ์ในประเทศที่ใช้ภาษาอังกฤษในการสื่อสารมากกว่า 1 ปี

มี (โปรดระบุ)

ไม่มี
- 4) ประสบการณ์ทำงาน

มี (โปรดระบุ)

ไม่มี

ส่วนที่ 2: Pragmatic judgment task

คำชี้แจง: แบบสอบถามประกอบไปด้วยเหตุการณ์สมมุติ 18 สถานการณ์และคำตอบภาษาอังกฤษ โปรดอ่านสถานการณ์ที่กำหนด และ ตัดสินความเหมาะสมของคำตอบ โปรดระบุ เหตุผลการตัดสินใจของท่านเป็นภาษาไทย

สถานการณ์ 1: สมศรีทำงานตำแหน่งพนักงานต้อนรับ เนื่องจากระเบียบข้อบังคับของ โรงแรม ทุกห้องพักเป็นห้องปลอดบุหรี่ แยกผู้เข้าพักสามารถสูบบุหรี่ได้ในส่วนด้านนอกโรงแรมหรือ พื้นที่ที่จัดไว้เท่านั้น อย่างไรก็ตาม แม่บ้านแจ้งกับสมศรีว่าพบแขกกำลังสูบบุหรี่ในห้องพัก สมศรี จำเป็นต้องแจ้งให้แขกทราบเกี่ยวกับการห้ามสูบบุหรี่ภายในห้องพัก

Somsri: *Sorry for interrupting sir, I would like to inform you that smoking in a room is not allowed. You can smoke in a provided area on the ground floor.*

Appropriate (เหมาะสม) Inappropriate (ไม่เหมาะสม)

Please explain your reason (โปรดระบุเหตุผล):

สถานการณ์ 2: สมศรีขอร้องให้หัวหน้างานที่รู้จักมาที่ประตูทางเข้าของโรงแรมเพื่อต้อนรับแขกพิเศษ

Somsri: *Come to the hotel entrance door please*

Appropriate (เหมาะสม) Inappropriate (ไม่เหมาะสม)

Please explain your reason (โปรดระบุเหตุผล):

สถานการณ์ 3: สมศรีได้รับคำร้องเรียนจากเพื่อนร่วมงานเกี่ยวกับความผิดพลาดในการสะกดชื่อแขก

Somsri: *It is my fault. I sincerely apologize for my mistake.*

Appropriate (เหมาะสม) Inappropriate (ไม่เหมาะสม)

Please explain your reason (โปรดระบุเหตุผล):

สถานการณ์ 4: นนทคือเจ้าหน้าที่อำนวยความสะดวกและคอยช่วยเหลือลูกค้าของโรงแรม
แขกผู้เข้าพักของโรงแรมสอบถามนนทเกี่ยวกับตารางรถตู้รับส่ง นนทต้องการแจ้งแขกที่เขาไม่รู้จักรว่า
บริการรับส่งสนามบินมีบริการทุกชั่วโมง

Non: *Every hour*

Appropriate (เหมาะสม) Inappropriate (ไม่เหมาะสม)

Please explain your reason (โปรดระบุเหตุผล):

สถานการณ์ 5: แขกร้องเรียนเกี่ยวกับการเข้าใช้งานอินเทอร์เน็ตไม่ได้กับสมศรีที่ทำงานเป็น
พนักงานต้อนรับ สมศรีพบว่าแขกไม่สามารถเชื่อมต่ออินเทอร์เน็ตได้เพราะรหัสผ่านผิด ดังนั้นเธอจึง
ขอให้แขกเข้าใช้ตัวรหัสใหม่อีกครั้ง

Somsri: *I see, try to reconnect Wi-Fi again with your room number as the password.*

Appropriate (เหมาะสม) Inappropriate (ไม่เหมาะสม)

Please explain your reason (โปรดระบุเหตุผล):

สถานการณ์ 6: วันพรุ่งนี้สมศรีมีนัดสำคัญ เธอขอร้องเพื่อนร่วมงานที่สนิทเพื่อเปลี่ยนกะการ
ทำงานกับเธอ

Somsri: *Is it possible to swap a work shift with me tomorrow?*

Appropriate (เหมาะสม) Inappropriate (ไม่เหมาะสม)

Please explain your reason (โปรดระบุเหตุผล):

สถานการณ์ 7: ในการรายงานสรุปประจำวัน สมศรีแจ้งกับหัวหน้างานที่รู้จักเกี่ยวกับสรุป
รายงานข้อร้องเรียนของแขก

Somsri: *I want to inform you that there are complaints about the slow working of Wi-Fi, the poor quality of breakfast, and the cleanliness of a swimming pool.*

Appropriate (เหมาะสม) Inappropriate (ไม่เหมาะสม)

Please explain your reason (โปรดระบุเหตุผล):

สถานการณ์ 8: เนื่องจากช่วงฤดูท่องเที่ยวทำให้จำนวนแขกที่เข้ามาพักและออกมีจำนวนมากที่แผนกต้อนรับส่วนหน้า หัวหน้างานที่รู้จักร้องเรียนสมศรีเกี่ยวกับการทำงานที่ล่าช้า ส่งผลให้แขกร้องเรียน

Somsri: *I am terribly sorry for that, there are many guests checked in in the morning. I will improve.*

Appropriate (เหมาะสม) Inappropriate (ไม่เหมาะสม)

Please explain your reason (โปรดระบุเหตุผล):

สถานการณ์ 9: แขกมาที่แผนกต้อนรับส่วนหน้าเพื่อเช็คอินเข้าพัก สมศรีขอให้แขกที่ไม่รู้จักเซ็นชื่อที่แบบฟอร์มการลงทะเบียนเข้าพัก

Somsri: *Could you please give me your signature here?*

Appropriate (เหมาะสม) Inappropriate (ไม่เหมาะสม)

Please explain your reason (โปรดระบุเหตุผล):

สถานการณ์ 10: เพื่อแจ้งข้อมูลเกี่ยวกับสถานะห้องปัจจุบัน สมศรีแจ้งหัวหน้างานที่รู้จักให้ทราบเกี่ยวกับจำนวนของ การเข้าพัก การออก และการยกเลิก

Somsri: *20 occupied rooms, 5 rooms expected departure and no cancellation.*

Appropriate (เหมาะสม) Inappropriate (ไม่เหมาะสม)

Please explain your reason (โปรดระบุเหตุผล):

สถานการณ์ 11: สมศรีทำงานเป็นพนักงานต้อนรับแขกมาที่แผนกต้อนรับส่วนหน้าและร้องเรียนเกี่ยวกับเสียงรบกวนจากห้องพักร้างๆ สมศรีต้องจัดการกับข้อเรียกร้องจากแขกที่ไม่รู้จัก

Somsri: *I would like to apologize for your inconvenience. I will inform your next occupancy to be quiet immediately.*

Appropriate (เหมาะสม) Inappropriate (ไม่เหมาะสม)

Please explain your reason (โปรดระบุเหตุผล):

สถานการณ์ 12: แขกมาที่เคาน์เตอร์แผนกอำนวยความสะดวกของลูกค้าในโรงแรมและขอให้พนักงานช่วยนัดหมายรถให้ ตอนนั้นพนักงานกำลังยุ่งมากดังนั้นเขาจึงขอให้เพื่อนร่วมงานที่รู้จักช่วยจัดการนัดหมายรถให้กับแขก

Non: *May I ask you to arrange a car for a guest?*

Appropriate (เหมาะสม) Inappropriate (ไม่เหมาะสม)

Please explain your reason (โปรดระบุเหตุผล):

สถานการณ์ 13: สมศรีแจ้งเพื่อนร่วมงานที่รู้จักให้ทราบเกี่ยวกับการเข้าพักของแขกที่มีความต้องการพิเศษและมีคำขอพิเศษของห้องพัก

Somsri: *Please note that today disabled and elderly guests are going to stay at our hotel. Please take special care of them and assign their rooms near an elevator.*

Appropriate (เหมาะสม) Inappropriate (ไม่เหมาะสม)

Please explain your reason (โปรดระบุเหตุผล):

สถานการณ์ 14: สมศรีได้รับคำร้องเรียนจากหัวหน้างานที่รู้จักกันดีเพราะเธอเข้าการประชุมสรุปงานล่าช้า

Somsri: *Sorry for being late.*

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Appropriate (เหมาะสม) Inappropriate (ไม่เหมาะสม)

Please explain your reason (โปรดระบุเหตุผล):

สถานการณ์ 15: เนื่องจากนโยบายการเข้าพักของโรงแรม แยกเข้าพักที่ไม่ได้จองล่วงหน้า จะต้องจ่ายค่าประกันห้อง 50% ของราคาห้อง สมศรีขอให้แขกที่ไม่รู้จักจ่ายค่าประกันห้องด้วยบัตรเครดิต

Somsri: *Credit card, please*

Appropriate (เหมาะสม) Inappropriate (ไม่เหมาะสม)

Please explain your reason (โปรดระบุเหตุผล):

สถานการณ์ 16: ในการรายงานสรุปประจำวัน สมศรีแจ้งเพื่อนร่วมงานที่รู้จักของเขา ให้ทราบเกี่ยวกับการจัดงานแต่งงานที่กำลังจะจัดขึ้น

Somsri: *Tomorrow a wedding ceremony will be held at the main meeting room.*

Appropriate (เหมาะสม) Inappropriate (ไม่เหมาะสม)

Please explain your reason (โปรดระบุเหตุผล):

สถานการณ์ 17: สมศรีได้รับคำร้องเรียนจากเพื่อนร่วมงานที่สนิทว่าไม่เตรียมคีย์การ์ดของห้องพักและแบบฟอร์มการลงทะเบียนเข้าพักไว้ล่วงหน้า

Somsri: *Sorry, I will do it immediately.*

Appropriate (เหมาะสม) Inappropriate (ไม่เหมาะสม)

Please explain your reason (โปรดระบุเหตุผล):

สถานการณ์ 18: แขกมาที่เคาน์เตอร์ของแผนกต้อนรับส่วนหน้าและขอส่วนลดพิเศษกับสมศรี เพราะไม่พอใจของห้องพัก สมศรีไม่สามารถตัดสินใจเรื่องส่วนลดได้จึงขอให้หัวหน้างานที่รู้จักช่วยคุยกับแขก

Somsri: *The guest asks for a discount because of an unsatisfied experience. Would you mind helping me talk with a guest?*

Appropriate (เหมาะสม) Inappropriate (ไม่เหมาะสม)

Please explain your reason (โปรดระบุเหตุผล):



Appendix C

Interview Questions

1. How did you know that the responses were appropriate or inappropriate for the given situations?

คุณทราบได้อย่างไรว่าการตอบแบบนี้เหมาะสมหรือไม่เหมาะสมกับสถานการณ์ที่กำหนด

2. Did you aware of the hearer's power, the relationship between speaker and hearer, and the severity of the situation in justifying the appropriateness of responses?

คุณได้ตระหนักถึง อำนาจของผู้ฟัง ความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างผู้พูดและผู้ฟัง และความรุนแรงของสถานการณ์ในการตัดสินความเหมาะสมของคำตอบหรือไม่

3. In your opinion, what are the factors influencing appropriate utterances when you communicate with others?

ในความเห็นของคุณ ปัจจัยใดที่มีผลต่อการใช้คำพูดที่เหมาะสม เมื่อคุณสื่อสารกับผู้อื่น

4. Have you ever learned how to speak and respond politely to customers in the hospitality context?

คุณเคยผ่านการเรียนการสอนเกี่ยวกับการพูดและการตอบแบบสุภาพ เพื่อสื่อสารกับลูกค้าในบริบทการบริการหรือไม่

5. Do you think whether pragmatic-raising activities should be implemented in your English course?

คุณคิดว่ากิจกรรมเสริมสร้างด้านวัจนปฏิบัติศาสตร์ควรเพิ่มเติมเข้าไปในการเรียนการสอนภาษาอังกฤษหรือไม่

Appendix D

Distribution of social factors in pragmatic judgment task

| Speech act | Scenario | Item no. | Hearer | Power (P) | Social distance (D) | Severity of offence (R) |
|--------------------|---|----------|------------|-----------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Informing | 1. Informing smoking prohibition | 1 | Guest | + | + | + |
| | 2. Informing shuttle van schedule | 4 | Guest | + | + | - |
| | 3. Informing guest's complaints | 7 | Supervisor | + | - | + |
| | 4. Informing number of check-ins, check-outs, and cancellations | 10 | Supervisor | + | - | - |
| | 5. Informing upcoming event | 16 | Colleague | = | - | - |
| | 6. Informing special needs guests | 13 | Colleague | = | - | + |
| Handling complaint | 7. Handling noise disturbance complaint | 11 | Guest | + | + | + |
| | 8. Handling internet connection complaint | 5 | Guest | + | + | - |
| | 9. Handling ineffective service complaint | 8 | Supervisor | + | - | + |
| | 10. Handling lateness complaint | 14 | Supervisor | + | - | - |

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| | | | | | | |
|------------|--|----|------------|---|---|---|
| | 11. Handing spelling mistake complaint | 3 | Colleague | = | - | - |
| | 12. Handling unfinished work complaint | 17 | Colleague | = | - | + |
| Requesting | 13. Requesting payment deposit | 15 | Guest | + | + | + |
| | 14. Requesting signature | 9 | Guest | + | + | - |
| | 15. Requesting help | 18 | Supervisor | + | - | + |
| | 16. Requesting VIP guest greeting | 2 | Supervisor | + | - | - |
| | 17. Requesting car arrangement | 12 | Colleague | = | - | - |
| | 18. Requesting shift swap | 6 | Colleague | = | - | + |

Power

+P : the hearer has higher power than the speaker.

=P : the hearer and the speaker have the equal power.

Social distance

other.

+D : the hearer and the speaker are not familiar with each other.

-D : the hearer and the speaker are familiar with each other.

Severity of offence

+R: The offence is severe

-R: The offence is minor

Appendix E

Answers of pragmatic judgment

| Speech act | Scenario | Item no. | Judgment |
|--------------------|---|----------|---------------|
| Informing | 1. Informing smoking prohibition | 1 | Appropriate |
| | 2. Informing shuttle van schedule | 4 | Inappropriate |
| | 3. Informing guest's complaints | 7 | Inappropriate |
| | 4. Informing number of check-ins, check-outs, and cancellations | 10 | Inappropriate |
| | 5. Informing upcoming event | 16 | Appropriate |
| | 6. Informing special needs guests | 13 | Appropriate |
| Handling complaint | 7. Handling noise disturbance complaint | 11 | Appropriate |
| | 8. Handling internet connection complaint | 5 | Inappropriate |
| | 9. Handling ineffective service complaint | 8 | Appropriate |
| | 10. Handling lateness complaint | 14 | Inappropriate |
| | 11. Handling spelling mistake complaint | 3 | Inappropriate |
| | 12. Handling unfinished work complaint | 17 | Appropriate |
| Requesting | 13. Requesting payment deposit | 15 | Inappropriate |
| | 14. Requesting signature | 9 | Appropriate |
| | 15. Requesting help | 18 | Appropriate |
| | 16. Requesting VIP guest greeting | 2 | Inappropriate |
| | 17. Requesting car arrangement | 12 | Inappropriate |
| | 18. Requesting shift swap | 6 | Appropriate |

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