CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents a review of related literature from which the underlying concepts of this study were drawn. It covers the definitions and perspectives of pragmatics and pragmatic competence, theories of speech acts and politeness, the selection of speech acts, methods of testing pragmatics, a review of studies in pragmatic competence and assessment of pragmatic ability, and linguistic speech acts and politeness strategies in hotel communication.

2.1 Definitions of pragmatics

Pragmatics has been defined differently by many researchers. The term "pragmatics" is interchangeably referred to as interlanguage pragmatics because it is one of inquiries in second language acquisition.

According to Leech (1983), pragmatics is the study of people's comprehension and production of linguistic action in context. He classifies pragmatics into two sub-areas: sociopragmatics and pragmalinguistics. Sociopragmatics is related to relations of social behavior and the appropriateness of linguistic forms which depends on a given context or culture. It focuses on the rules of what is acceptable and appropriate language use. While pragmalinguistics is related to linguistic forms and is concerned with the linguistic strategies for expressing speaker's intention.

Yule (1996: 3) defines pragmatics as "the study of meaning as communicated by a speaker (or a writer) and interpreted by a listener (or reader). It has been concerned with the analysis of what people mean by their utterances more than what the words or phrases in those utterances might mean by themselves". In this sense, pragmatics is the study of the relationship between linguistic forms and their users. It essentially focuses on language in use and the users' interpersonal meaning of their utterances.

Kasper and Rose (2001: 2) define pragmatics as "the study of communicative action in its sociocultural context. Communicative action includes not only speech acts, but also participation in conversation, engaging in different types of discourse, and participating in speech events of varying length and complexity".

Regarding pragmatic competence, Bachman (1990) defines it as the knowledge that learners use to perform a speech act successfully when communicating with native speakers of the target language. It is also important to note that the term "competence" in pragmatics is different from the term "actual performance". It does not only depend on the abilities of understanding and producing speech acts and knowledge of different dialects or register, but also the ability to select appropriate linguistic forms to realize a certain speech act.

Thomas (1995) states that pragmatic competence is the ability to produce meaning in a socially appropriate manner and to interpret meaning explicitly or implicitly stated while Taguchi (2007) views that pragmatic competence has been analyzed mainly from production skills, especially production of speech acts.

As for interlanguage pragmatics (ILP), Kasper and Dahl (1991) and Kasper and Blum-Kulka, (1993) refer to this term as nonnative speakers' comprehension and production of speech acts, and acquisition of their L2 related to speech acts. It includes rules of discourse and the focus on illocutionary and politeness dimensions of speech act performance. Kasper (1998: 184) lately defines the term "ILP" in a narrow sense as "the study of nonnative speakers' comprehension, production, and acquisition of linguistic action in L2, or put briefly, ILP investigates how to do things with words in a second language".

According to Roever (2006), interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) investigates second language learners' development knowledge and ability for use of the pragmatics rules, conventions, and practices of the target language.

From the aforementioned definitions of pragmatics and interpragmatics, the term pragmatics in this study is narrowly referred to Thai students' knowledge of pragmatic rules and knowledge of its appropriate use in English. Since the context of hotel Front Office Department is the frame of this study, pragmatics means the appropriateness to select linguistic forms to respond to the simulated hotel guests related to given situations performed in hotel Front Office Department.

2.2 Pragmatic competence

Since many studies discuss the importance of pragmatic competence as an integral and indispensable component of communicative competence, the theoretical framework of pragmatic competence in this study is based on Bachman's (1990) framework of "communicative language ability" because this framework relates directly to the studies of L2 learners' comprehension of the production of speech acts and acquisition of their L2 related speech acts.

Traditionally, communicative language ability comprises a number of specific competences, such as grammatical, textual, illocutionary, and sociolinguistic competence. According to Bachman (1990), the term "communicative competence" is defined as "communicative language ability" and he classifies communicative language ability into three aspects: (a) strategic competence; (b) psycho-physiological mechanisms; and (c) language competence. Firstly, strategic competence is the ability to relate knowledge of language to the knowledge of structures of language users and also the features of the context in which communication takes place. This competence is used to perform assessment, planning, and execution function in order to meet communicative goals effectively. Secondly, psycho-physiological mechanisms are used to control the channel and the mode through which they are implemented. Lastly, language competence is broken down into two discrete components, namely organizational competence and pragmatic competence. Bachman's (1990) organizational competence consists of grammatical competence and textual competence. Grammatical competence involves the knowledge of vocabulary, morphology, syntax, and phonology/ graphology while textual competence is knowledge of cohesion and rhetorical or conversational organization to form a text. Pragmatic competence includes illocutionary competence and sociolinguistic competence. The former enables the speakers to use language to express a wide range of functions while the latter is the ability to perform appropriate language functions in a given context with the correct knowledge of sociolinguistic conventions. Illocutionary competence can be grouped into four macro-functions: (a) knowledge of ideational functions; (b) knowledge of manipulative functions; (c) knowledge of heuristic functions (use commonsense); and (d) knowledge of imaginative functions (figurative language). For sociolinguistic competence, Bachman (1990) defines it as the ability to perform language functions in ways that are appropriate to the context. Lately, Bachman and

Palmer (1996) locate knowledge of sociocultural rules within L2 "ability for use" framework as follows:

> Sociolinguistic knowledge enables us to create or interpret language that is appropriate to a particular language use setting. This includes knowledge of the conventions that determine the appropriate use of dialects or varieties, registers, natural or idiomatic expressions, cultural reference and figures of speech. When we use different register ... sociolinguistic knowledge is involved.
>
> (Bachman and Palmer, 1996: 70)

Figure 2.1 below illustrates Bachman's (1990) components of language competence affecting language learner performance.

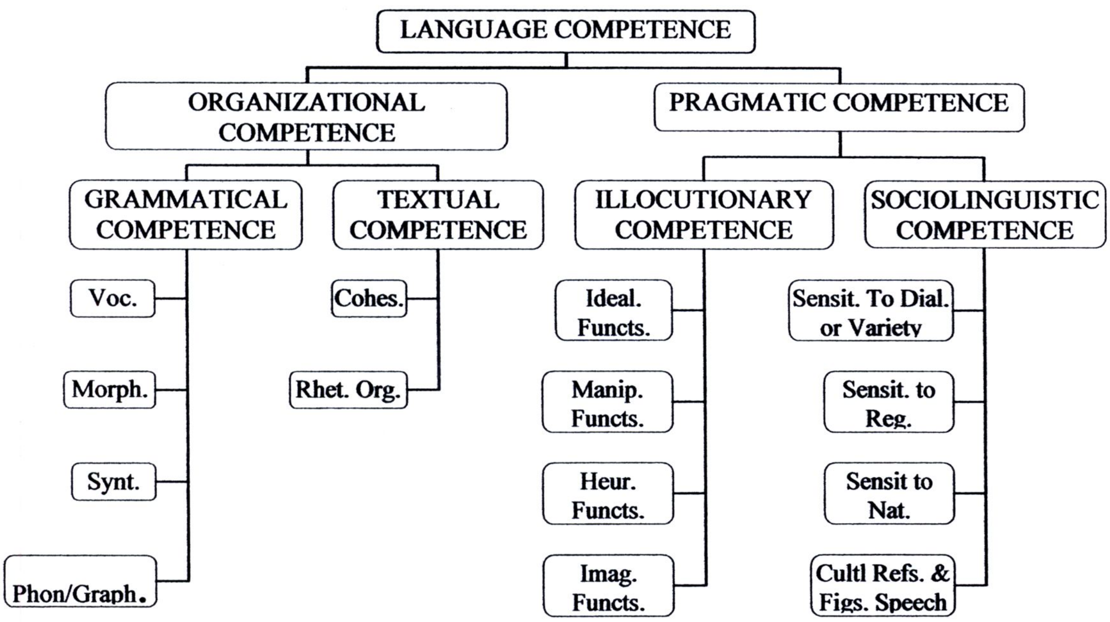

Figure 2.1 Components of language competence (Bachman, 1990: 87)

Overall, all three components of communicative language ability: strategic, psycho-physiological mechanisms and language competence are theoretical concepts of the test construct; however, Bachman's (1990) components in language competence, particularly in pragmatic competence, have the direct implication for the test of this study. It is also important to point out that, for communicate competence, there has been a trend to focus on sociocultural factors that affect L2 rather than focusing purely on linguistic aspects (Folse & Vitanova, 2006). This affirms the concept of speech acts (illocutionary) that the basic units of human communication are not linguistic expression, but rather the performance of certain "speech acts" (Austin, 1962).

In testing, based on Bachman's (1990) model of language competence which is related to testing, pragmatic competence is defined as follows:

> "The knowledge necessary, in addition to organizational competence, for appropriately producing or comprehending discourse. Specifically, it includes illocutionary competence, or the knowledge of how to perform speech acts, and sociolinguistic competence, or the knowledge of the sociolinguistic conventions which govern language use."
>
> (Bachman, 1990: 42)

In conclusion, pragmatics is the production and understanding of speech acts and their appropriateness in given situations. Thus, this study applies Bachman's (1990) notion of pragmatic competence to assess Thai hotel students' pragmatic ability in performing language functions occurring in the speech acts performed in hotel Front Office Department. The theories of speech acts are reviewed in the next section.

2.3 Theories of speech acts

Speech acts are the most commonly studies in the area of interlanguage pragmatic research so far (Roever, 2006). Austin (1962) and Searle (1975) have been regarded as the pioneers of speech acts. Austin (cited in Blum-Kulka, 1997: 42) provides the shift from "basic insight about the capacity of certain linguistic expression to perform communicative acts to a general theory of communicative actions". According to Austin's (1962) influential book named *How to Do Things with Words*, he makes an interesting point that when people talk, they not only say things, but also do things. Austin believes that each utterance contains three acts which have different specific force. According to Austin, the three kinds of acts are as follows (cited in Levinson, 1983):

1. *A locutionary act* is the act of saying something that has a literal meaning conveyed by the particular words and structures.

2. *An illocutionary act* is the speaker's intention in using the utterance to perform a particular language function such as offering, questioning, promising, etc. It is the act of saying something that has a certain force either explicitly or implicitly.

3. *A perlocutionary act* is the act that the speaker wants his/her speech to have the result or future effects on the addressee. In other words, it is an achievement of certain effects by saying something.

These three kinds of speech acts mentioned above can be illustrated by the utterance of a bartender to the customers, *"The bar will be closed in five minutes"* as follows (Batch, 2004: 466):

	Locutionary acts	To inform the customers of the bar will be closed in five minutes from the time of utterance.
"The bar will be closed in five minutes."	**Illocutionary acts**	To urge the customers to order a last drink
	Perlocutionary acts	To make the customs believe that the bar is about to close and to make them order one last drink

Regarding the three types of speech acts, the illocutionary act is regarded as the most important because the speaker normally performs implicit speech acts or an illocutionary force to achieve his purpose in mind. For example, the arrival guest speaks to the porter who shows the room "*I think this room is too stuffy*" can be performed implicitly either to complain or request for a new room.

Austin (1962: 99-100) explains that an illocutionary act is "the performance of an act ***in*** saying something as opposed to a performance of an act ***of*** saying something". This term is used to determine what kind of acts will make a successful communication. In addition, the utterance will be successful if there are certain actions from what people say. According to Austin (1962), he believes that an utterance is meaningful when the speaker performs certain actions in making such an utterance. Moreover, the utterance is meaningful if it happens in the right "circumstance" and is "appropriate" because it is necessary for either the speaker or the hearer to perform certain action either "physical" or "mental" (Austin, 1962: 8-9). Austin (1962) classifies illocutionary acts into five major categories below:

(a) Verdictives are acts that perform the action of making a judgment, e.g. *pronounce (guilty), estimate, judge, rule that,* etc.

(b) Exercitives are acts of giving a decision for or against a course of action, e.g., *appoint, dismiss, order, sentence, vote, warn*, etc.

(c) Commisserives are acts that commit the speaker to do something, e.g., *contract, give one's word, plan, agree, promise*, etc.

(d) Behabitives are expressions associated with social behaviors, e.g., *apologize, thank, congratulate, welcome*, etc.

(e) Expositives are acts of expounding of views, conducting of arguments, and clarifying, e.g., *deny, inform, assume, refer, affirm, state*, etc.

Austin's speech act theory has been expanded in Searle's (1975). Searle agrees with Austin that illocutionary act is an important part of speech act theory. Searle (1975) defines the notion of illocutionary as "the production of sentence taken under certain conditions". So, speech acts are the production of linguistic communication. According to Searle (1975), he groups illocutionary acts into the following five main types.

1. *Representatives*: an utterance that commits the speaker to the truth of the proposition expressed, e.g. stating, suggesting, complaining, arguing, informing, reporting, and claiming, for example, "*Check-out time is at noon.*" (front desk receptionist informs the hotel guest.)

2. *Directives*: an utterance to get the hearer to do something by acts like ordering, commanding, begging, requesting, instructing, advising, and recommending, for example, "*You can leave your luggage with the bell captain and collect it later.*" (front cashier recommends the check-out guest.)

3. *Commissives:* an utterance that commits the speaker to some future actions like promising, vowing, and offering, for example, "*I will check with the housekeeping and call you immediately.*" (front office manager promises to the hotel guest.)

4. *Expressives*: the expression of attitude or feelings, such as thanking, apologizing, congratulating, and condoling, for example, "*I'm so sorry to hear that.*" (front desk receptionist consoles to the hotel guest.)

5. *Declaratives*: the statement which brings about reality and has no psychological state, such as declaring peace and firing an employee.

In addition, Searle (cited in Schiffrin, 1994: 59) also proposes the notion of indirectness in speech acts and he defines it as "an utterance in which one illocutionary act (a "primary act") is performed by way of the performance of another act (a "literal act")". This means the illocutionary force is not derived from its surface structure or the structure of sentence. For example, with the utterance in this statement structure "*This room smells very stuffy*", this may be interpreted as a request to the porter who shows the room to the new arrival guest in order to inform the front desk receptionist to assign a new room for him or her. It also could be perceived as a complaint if it were said unsatisfactorily.

For Searle (cited in Blum-Kulka, 1997: 46), the interpretation of indirect speech act is governed by Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principles that call upon the speaker and the hearer to cooperate in order to make interaction effective and efficient. It also depends on the context given which includes the hearer's interpretation ability and sociocultural context as well. The Gricean principles are reviewed in the next section.

Another important contribution made by Searle (1975) is his attempt to use Austin's felicity conditions to categorize speech acts. According to Austin (1962), two conditions are associated with a particular act; one is felicity condition and the other is infelicity condition. The former one is also called "happiness" conditions or "appropriateness" because the illocutionary act is achieved, while the latter one leads to unhappy conditions. To explain the condition of "happiness", Austin (cited in Levinsion, 1983) proposes a set of felicity conditions as:

A. There must be a conventional procedure; the circumstance and people must be appropriate.
B. The procedure must be executed correctly and completely.
C. Often, the persons must have the requisite thoughts, feelings, intention, etc. and if consequent conduct is specified, then the relevant parties must do so. (Levinson, 1983).

Considering Austin's (1962) infelicity condition, sometimes people fail to act from what they say so or have no intention to make false utterances. It happens in the occasion when "the things that can go wrong" (Austin, 1962: 39). For example, the utterance "I promise" will be "unhappy" if the speaker has no intention for keeping it. In other words, infelicities make an utterance unhappy without making it true or false. According to Austin's (1962) view, infelicity condition is violation of utterances. The violation of felicity condition can be either 'misfires' or 'abuses'. Therefore, there must be certain conditions for utterances to be successfully performed and the illocutionary force to be achieved.

Searle (1975), however, emphasizes that successful felicity conditions consist of various illocutionary forces, and illocutionary acts can be differentiated one from one another. Searle (cited in Blum-Kulka, 1997: 44) classifies felicity conditions into four conditions as follows:

1. *Propositional conditions* specify features of the semantic content of an utterance. For example, requests usually contain references to an action in the future whereas an apology refers to an act in the past.

2. *Preparatory conditions* specify the necessary contextual features needed for the speech act to be performed. Those who perform the act must have the authority to do it in the appropriate circumstance and with appropriate actions. According to Austin, this matches with the violation of 'misfire' if the condition is not satisfied.

3. *Sincerity conditions* will be fulfilled if those who perform have appropriate beliefs or feelings. If sincerity condition has not been met, it is called an 'abuse' as Austin once stated.

4. *Essential conditions* are the speakers' intentions that the act must be carried out from their utterances. For example, in the utterance of a request, the speaker attempts to get the hearer to do what is requested. The intention to get things done must be from both the speaker and the hearer. If the speakers' intentions are not met, the act has not really been carried out.

Austin (1962) and Searle (1975) have paved the way to research into linguistic functions instead of linguistic forms as are often observed in earlier linguistic studies. Yet, regarding the classification of speech acts, both Austin's and Searle's taxonomies are criticized for allowing too much overlap between different speech act categories. Besides, it seems not to be clear and there is no firm agreement on the taxonomic system of illocutionary acts. So far, speech act is still most commonly researched in the area of pragmatic competence and indirectness is considered universal across all languages as it occurs in everyday conversation.

In conclusion, speech acts theories attempt to explain how the speakers use language to meet the intended actions and how the hearers infer intended meanings from what is said. Regarding the context of hotel Front Office Department in this study, the speech acts are used to study how the hotel students understand the hotel guests' utterances and how they use English to meet the guests' needs in situations occur in the hotel Front Office operations.

2.4 Theories of politeness

Politeness is a dimension that usually enters into speech act performance (Ellis, 1994). In this study, the concept of politeness is mainly related to the perspectives of the conversation principle and face-saving.

2.4.1 Conversation principle

The conversation principle is grounded principally on Gricean Cooperative Principles (Grice, 1975). According to Grice (cited in Blum-Kulka, 1997), all communication is based on the assumption of conversation principle which is claimed as a universal principle. Grice points out the differences between what linguistic expressions mean and what speakers mean in using them (Batch, 2004). Grice (1975) stresses that the intention of communication between the interlocutors does not necessarily state explicitly. Grice (cited in Sadock, 2004) calls things that are communicated beyond what is said as implicatures and those implicatures depend upon the hearer's assumption. It is then called conversational implicatures which mean the speaker intentionally implies something from what he actually says and the hearer can infer the speaker's intention by using contextual information or his world knowledge to decode a message adequately. Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principles contain four maxims as follows:

1. Maxim of Quantity
   1.1 Make your contributions as informative as is required;
   1.2 Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.
2. Maxim of Quality
   2.1 Do not say what you believe to be false;
   2.2 Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.
3. Maxim of Manner
   3.1 Avoid obscurity;
   3.2 Avoid ambiguity;
   3.3 Be brief;
   3.4 Be orderly.
4. Maxim of Relation: Make your contribution relevant

(Grice, 1975: 45-6)

Thus, to sustain conversation, the hearer expects whatever the speaker says to be truthful, informative, appropriate, clear and relevant.

According to Grice's (1975) maxims, the violation of conversational maxim will be perceived as signaling the speaker's intentions to say something that seems to have hidden meaning. This view is regarded as politeness which is discussed in the following section. The violation of conversational maxim can be illustrated in the situation given below when a front desk receptionist responds to the arrival guest who does the registration:

Front desk receptionist	:	*What time will you be checking- out, sir?*
Arrival guest	:	*My departure flight will be at 8.00 pm.*
Front desk receptionist	:	*Well, we're quite fully booked at this time. Half day price will be charged if you want to keep the room after the check-out time, sir.*

From the example illustrated above, the arrival guest indirectly signals for the approval of late check-out while the front desk receptionist informs the condition of half day charge without the guest's enquiry.

Lakoff (1973) proposes a "politeness rule", which implements the Gricean's "clarity rule". According to Lakoff's view, if communication is the major aim, the speaker will make the message clear in order to avoid any possible misunderstanding. On the other hand, if the main purpose is to make the hearer feel good, politeness should be implied. Lakoff (1973) proposes three rules of politeness from the speaker's point of view as follows:

(1) Don't impose (used when formal/impersonal politeness is required);

(2) Give options (used when informal politeness is required);

(3) Make the others feel good (used when intimate politeness is required).

Leech (1983: 108) views that indirectness and politeness are associated and the indirect illocutions "increase the degree of optionality" and "the more indirect an illocution is, the more diminished and tentative its force tends to be". Leech (1983) also builts his politeness model on Gricean Cooperative Principle but equates politeness along the scale of cost vs. benefit, praise vs. dispraise, agreement vs. disagreement, and sympathy vs. antipathy. For example, in classifying imperatives according to the cost-benefit scale, Leech claims that an imperative is more polite when it brings benefits to the hearer and less polite when it is uttered at cost to the hearer. Thus, for example, "*Bring me the manager*" sounds impolite (at cost to the hearer), while "*Have a welcome drink in the lobby*" does not (at benefit to the hearer). Leech (1983) provides six Interpersonal Maxims as follows:

(1) Tact Maxim: Minimize hearer cost; Maximize hearer benefit

(2) Generosity Maxim: Minimize your own benefit; Maximize your hearer's benefit

(3) Approbation Maxim; Minimize hearer dispraise; Maximize hearer praise

(4) Modesty Maxim: Minimize self- praise; Maximize self-dispraise

(5) Agreement Maxim: Minimize disagreement between self and others; Maximize agreement between self and others.

(6) Sympathy Maxim: (a) Minimize antipathy between self and others; (b) Maximize sympathy between self and others

Among the six maxims mentioned, tact maxim seems to be the most related and essential in hospitality services since it directly involves in the hotel staff-guest interaction. According to Leech (1977: 24), tact is a strategy to avoid the confrontation. He proposes three criteria of the amount of tact more required in a given situation when: (1) the more power the hearer holds over the speakers; (2) the more socially distance the hearer is from the speaker; and (3) the more costly X is to the hearer. Lakoff (1973) also agrees that tact is a tool used in order to reduce friction in personal interaction. Thus, it can be seen that tact maxim is needed to be applied in the hotel staff-guest communication. Besides, it is perceived as politeness in business interaction because it could maximize the benefit and minimize the cost to the hearer. Tact is also associated to face-saving which is reviewed in the next section.

2.4.2 Face-saving

The fundamental view of face-saving has been derived from Goffman's (1967) notion of face. Face becomes a public image that comes from judgments from society. According to Goffman (1967: 15-20), face is a "public property" and the public image in which people engage in is called "face-work". In other words, face becomes a public image from judgments of the society. With regard to face saving, House and Kasper (1987) point out that it is a defense act to save one's own face and protective orientation to save the other's face. They also call this phenomenon as tact.

Brown and Levinson's (1987) notion of "face" is based on Goffman's (1967) definition of face. They expand the definition of "face" as "the public self-image and "face is something that is emotionally invested, and that can be lost, maintained, or enhanced and must be constantly attended to in an interaction" (Brown and Levinson, 1987:61). For Thais, Richards and Sukwiwat (1983) suggest that the concept of face in Thai is referred to by the term "*krengjai*" which means taking the other person's face needs and feelings into account so that no threat should be involved either to the speaker or to the hearer.

Brown and Levinson (1987) also emphasize that face is characterized as an individual's wants rather than a social norm. They state that every individual has two kinds of face: positive and negative face. Positive face is the individual's desire that his wants be accepted and appreciated in. It is the wish to create a positive self-image in relation to other members of society. Negative face can be defined as the individual's desire to have freedom to act without being impeded or invaded by others. Therefore, these two types of face are needed to be continually attended to when communicating so that politeness can be achieved (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

Despite the fact, it is sometimes necessary for the speakers to perform acts that threaten their addressees' face. These acts are referred to as "face threatening acts" ('FTAs' for short). Brown and Levinson (1987) state that a certain type of speech act inherently threatens either the speaker's face or the hearer's or both the speaker's and the hearer's face. Brown and Levinson (1987: 66-68) propose the following four-way analysis as follows:

(i) Acts threatening the hearer's negative face: e.g., requesting, ordering, advising, threatening, warning;

(ii) Acts threatening the hearer's positive face: e.g., complaining, criticizing, disagreeing, raising taboo topics;

(iii) Acts threatening the speaker's negative face: e.g., accepting and offering, accepting thanks, promising unwillingly;

(iv) Acts threatening the speaker's positive face: e.g., apologizing, accepting compliments, confessing.

Brown and Levinson (1987) state that the speaker can soften or intensify the face-threatening acts according to his evaluation of the situation on the hearer. The speaker can select a choice either positive or negative politeness strategies when a particular speech is performed. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), the degree of threat posed by an FTA depends on the three social context variables: (D) the social distance, the degree of familiarity and the relationship between the speaker and the hearer; (P) the relative power, the status of the speaker with respect to the hearer; and (R) the rank of imposition, the speaker difficulty when asking the hearer to do something. These three variables are considered to be the three independent and culturally sensitive variables that play important roles in speech and behavior. Thus, if the speaker chooses to perform an FTA, he or she can estimate the seriousness or calculate the risk of face loss by the formula that assesses the weightiness of an FTA. The weightiness of an FTA is calculated in the following equation:

$$Wx = D(S,H) + P(H,S) + Rx \qquad \text{(Brown \& Levinson, 1987: 76)}$$

From the formula, $D(S,H)$ represents the social distance between interlocutors; $P(H,S)$ is a measure of the power that the hearer has over the speaker; and Rx is the degree to which an FTA is rated an imposition in that culture. Apparently, whenever the speaker intends to do an FTA, she or he must determine the seriousness of an FTA based on three factors in order to decide which strategy should apply to.

On the basis of Brown and Levinson's "weightiness" calculation, the speakers have several strategies to protect their faces or commit FTAs in different ways. Brown and Levinson (1987) propose a taxonomy of possible strategies for performing FTAs which are given in Figure 2.2 below (the higher the number of the strategy, the more polite it is) (Brown & Levinson, 1987: 69).

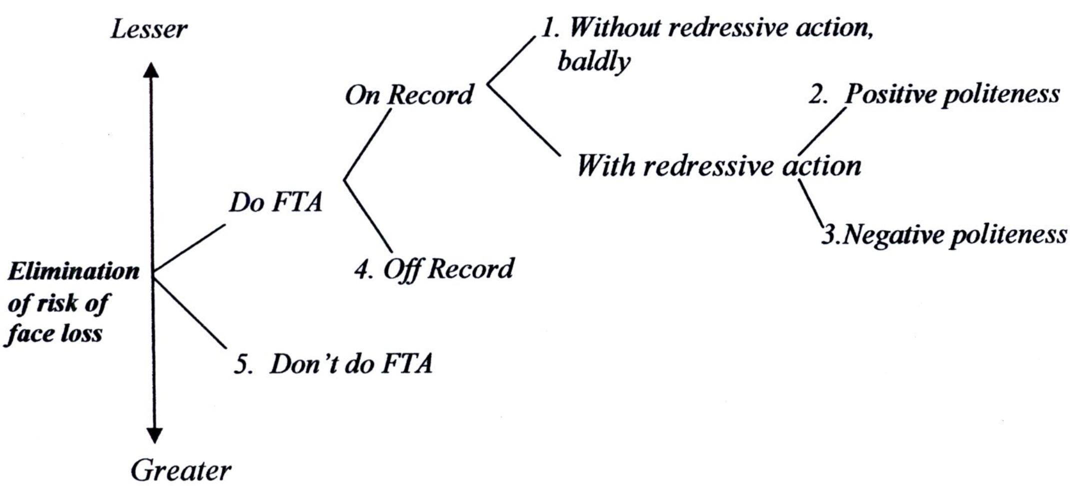

Figure 2.2: Possible strategies for performing FTAs

From Figure 2.2, in performing a particular speech act, the speaker has a choice to decide whether to do the acts that threaten his addressee's face by choosing "on record" or "off record" strategy. On record means that the speaker's intention is clear and unambiguous and can be so interpreted by the hearer, i.e. perform a direct speech act. It is act which makes the intention of the speaker understand. When the speaker chooses the FTA "on record" or direct strategy, he can either commit it without a redressive action (baldly) in a blunt and straightforward manner by adopting either one or two kinds of the redressive action namely positive politeness and negative politeness. However, if the speaker wants to minimize the threat, it is also possible to commit an FTA "off record", threats which are ambiguous or where the speaker's intention is unclear i.e. choose to use more indirect strategies such as a metaphor, an irony, rhetorical questions, an understatement, tautologies, and all kinds of hints.

Despite the fact mentioned above, there is no clear-cut politeness rules; however, to date, Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory is considered one of the most influential and comprehensive politeness models. Therefore, this study is based on Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory in terms of appropriateness as it considerably explains the use of English for nonnative speakers and it is the most useful for second and foreign language pedagogy.

2.4.3 Politeness strategies in the hotel encounters

Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness has been used to describe pragmatic features in business documents and communication widely. However, the issue whether Brown and Levinson's politeness theory and politeness strategies should be claimed universal is not a major concern in this study since Brown and Levinson's rules of politeness are generally implied in cross-cultural business communication. Especially in the hotel encounters, both hotel staff and guests expect roles and acts within the rules of commercial game, though those front-line hotel staff need to concentrate on attending the guests' needs which is related to Brown and Levin's notion of "face" (Blue & Harun, 2003: 80). Brown and Levinson (1987) conclude politeness strategies which are presented in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: A summary of politeness strategies

Positive politeness strategies	Negative politeness strategies
1. Notice, attend to hearer's interests, wants, etc.	1. Be conventionally indirect
2. Use in-group markers	2. Question, hedge
3. Be optimistic	3. Be pessimistic
4. Seek agreement	4. Minimize the imposition
5. Indicate common ground	5. Give deference
6. Offer, promise	6. Apologize

Since face is known as the basic wants or needs that every society member wants to satisfy, so do the hotel guests. According to the aspect of politeness in the context of hotel Front Office staff and guest interaction, not only positive politeness is used in hotel context, negative politeness is also frequently used as well (See Table 2.1).

This study focuses on linguistic politeness that Thai students related to hospitality oriented programs express verbally through their use of language in the situations related to hotel Front Office Department. Linguistic form of speech acts and politeness strategies in the hotel-guest communication can be concluded as follows:

First, the use of modal verbs (e.g. "could", "would") come with sociolinguistic rules of language that are important for service industry. Modals can be used to make speech more indirect, which are often viewed as more polite. In business or commercial like interaction, the interaction or relationship between the hotel staff and guests is impersonal (Blue & Harun, 2003). It can also be perceived as the status-unequal encounters. So, the less direct and therefore less confrontational tone is important in the hotel-guest communication. Notice how these utterances made by the receptionist to the hotel guest gradually increase in indirectness and politeness:

Sign your name.

Can you sign your name?

Could you sign your name?

Would you sign your name? (Folse & Vitanova, 2006: 52-53).

This example can explain in terms of the weightiness of politeness that the speaker calculates the weight of his speech acts from his social variables. Apparently, modals contribute to politeness. However, modal verbs do not add much change to the degree of politeness in the interrogative mood as it is already in a question form, but it differs in the declarative mood. Moreover, the degree of politeness in the modal of past tense does not affect much the degree of politeness.

The second feature is the address forms and politeness markers. Addressing people by title, first name, last name, nickname, or some combination of these also depend on the variables of the social distance (D), the relative power (P), and the rank of imposition (R). For example, *"Mr. Higgins"* indicates inequality and unfamiliarity while addressing the first name indicates equality and familiarity (Wardllaugh, 1990). Since the relationship between the hotel staff and guests is determined involves the transactional status (e.g. a doctor – patient relationship), the social condition affects the language use. Besides, the hotel staff are required to treat the guests as superior or show them the respect, so negative politeness strategies are also used. For so doing, the hotel staff spontaneously address the guests by using *"Sir"* or *"Madam"* and addressing the title and last name, *"Mr. Lewis"*' and *"Miss White"*. In addition, *"please"*' is used in order to mark for indirect force like *"Hold the line, please" or "Can you just check through the details, please?"*. Hence, when the hotel staff decide on a choice of politeness strategies, they have to consider how socially close or distant they are from the guest. Therefore, social condition affects the language use in the hotel staff- guest communication.

Third, the realization of speech act strategies affects the degree of politeness as well. For example, in making a request, mood contributes the greatest to the politeness hierarchy, in the order: interrogative – most polite (e.g., *"Could you ...?"*); declarative – next most polite (e.g., *"I'd like ... ".*); imperative – least polite (e.g. *"Give me..."*). Using a request as a question gives the hearer a greater negative "face" or negative politeness, than does either the declarative or the imperative mood (Carrell and Konneker, 1981: 27-8). Clearly, the mood of distinction contributes the greatest to politeness distinctions.

The last feature is the use of formulaic expressions. It was found that the language use taken from the dialogues in the textbooks is different from that in Blue and Harun's (2003) job site observation. Obviously, the dialogues taken from the textbooks are formal, patterned and overly explicit. Many sentences use conventional means, for example, "I *will put you through to ...* ", *"Would you like ...?", "Would you like X or Y?", "Do you have a preference for ...?"* and *"May I take your home address, please?"* The utterances are formal even there are some of ellipses like *"And the name, sir, is ..."* and *"And your address?"* in the hotel encounters.

2.5 The selection of speech acts

The selection of speech acts from previous studies is varied. In order to utilize the speech acts, a number of studies to date have generally selected the speech acts of requests, refusals, and apologies to be investigated. In terms of testing, the process of determining which variables to include in the test of speech acts is considered in the selection of power (P), social distance (D), and degree of imposition (R) as the sociopragmatic variables. These variables are selected because, within the research of pragmatics, they are identified as the three independent and culturally sensitive variables (Hudson, 2001). Hudson et al. (1995) describe the definitions and descriptions of the variables used in the development of the assessment instruments in pragmatic performance as follows:

Relative power (P): It shows the power of the speaker with respect to the hearer. In effect, it is the degree to which the speaker can impose his or her will on the hearer because of a higher rank within an organization, professional status, or as the result of the hearer's need to have a particular duty or job performed. This power relates to the relative rank, title, or social position between the speaker and the hearer.

Social distance (D): This represents the distance between the speaker and the hearer. In effect, it is some affiliation and solidarity of the degree which they share through in-group or out-group membership.

Absolute ranking of imposition (R): This is the potential imposition of carrying out the speech act, in terms of the expenditure of goods and/or services by the hearer, or the obligation of the speaker to perform the act. The rank of imposition depends on the extent to which the expenditure of goods, service, or energy is involved or how severe the offence would be made in a certain kind of a speech act such as a request, a refusal, or an apology.

Besides, since politeness and speech acts are in the filed of pragmatics, these two aspects have been investigated mutually due to the construct of appropriateness. In terms of politeness aspect, requests and apologies also have been studied most because these two acts constitute face-threatening acts and call for a redressive action. Requests affect the face of the hearer while apologies counteract the speaker's face wants (Kasper & Blum-Kulka, 1993). Apparently, the notion of politeness plays important roles in considering what speech acts will be examined. Thus, if one wants to study the aspect of acts threatening to face, both positive and negative face, he might consider Brown and Levinson's (1987) four types of threatening acts as mentioned earlier.

Regarding the speech acts assessed in hotel Front Office Department in this study, it is clear that speech acts performed in the hospitality business are varied. However, kinds of speech acts generally depend on job descriptions in each department. The front-line staff such as the receptionists, guest relation officers, or concierges need to employ more politeness strategies because they have the highest frequency of interaction with the guests. Thus, the selection of speech acts included in this study is based on the hotel Front Office staff's perception in kinds of speech acts that they perceive to be problematic for them. The speech acts assessed in this study are presented in Chapter 3.

2.6 Methods of testing pragmatics

There are different kinds of methods that have been used to elicit particular speech acts. Hudson et al. (1995) originally design prototypic measures for testing cross-cultural pragmatics. They develop six measure instruments to assess Japanese learners' pragmatic competence in English. The instruments consist of written and oral production questionnaires, role-plays, two types of self-assessment and multiple-choice production. The assessments are limited to study the speech acts of requests, apologies, and refusals. The six measure instruments assess the appropriateness of learners' performance on speech acts under high and low settings of the parameters' relative power, social distance, and degree of imposition. So far, researchers have used at least six types of Hudson et al.'s (1995) work for interlanguage pragmatics assessment because the reliability and validity of the instruments have been evaluated and developed. The characteristics of each instrument are described as follows:

2.6.1 A written discourse completion test

A written discourse completion test (WDCT or DCT) has been used in many cross-cultural and interlanguage pragmatics studies (Kasper & Dahl, 1991; Johnston et al., 1998). Blum-Kulka (1982) first developed the WDCT to investigate the L2 learners' knowledge required for achieving specific communicative functions by comparing the speech act realization patterns of native speakers and L2 learners. It is a written questionnaire consisting of a number of brief situational descriptions. The test takers are required to read the written description of each situation where a certain kind of speech act is expected. Also, settings, participation roles, and degree of imposition are given. The test takers are asked to provide a response that they think is appropriate in that situation. The basic objective of the WDTC is to elicit a speech behavior that is appropriate to the context of a situation. Originally, the test consisting of dialogs requires the insertion of one utterance in a blank. An example is given below.

At the restaurant
Dan: What would you like to eat?
Ruth: I don't know, let's have a look at the menu?
Dan: (to the waiter): Waiter ______________________________?

The WDCT can include a rejoinder, an utterance from the imaginary interlocutor that follows the gap in which the test takers give their responses, as in the following example from Johnson et al. (1998: 175):

Your term paper is due, but you haven't finished yet. You want to ask your professor for an extension.
You: ____
Professor: I'm sorry, but I never allow extension.

The objective of rejoinder is to elicit the expected response at least one supportive move (Johnson et al., 1998). It limits the length of the test takers' responses and see whether the test takers give sufficient responses or not.

Since the WDTC is the most common type of research instrument in the first and second language pragmatic research (Kasper, 2000) and it has been used in many cross-cultural and interlanguage pragmatics studies (Kasper & Dahl, 1991), researchers state its advantages in many ways. Cohen and Olshtain (1994) point out that the WDCT allows the researcher to control certain variables, i.e. age and gender of respondents and features of the situation. It can be administered to a large group of respondents and is easy to statistically compare responses of native and non-native speakers (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989). Kasper & Roever (2005) affirm that the WDCT does elicit knowledge about possible speech act realizations and it is an appropriate instrument for testing pragmalinguistic knowledge. Besides, the WDCT can serve directly as a testing tool for establishing learners' levels of pragmatic competence if it is administered to learners of various levels of linguistic proficiency (Olshtain and Blum-Kulka, 1987).

However, there are some negative aspects of the WDCT that need to be considered. It has been regarded as a limited tool in assessing authenticity of the situations they represent (Billmyer & Varghese, 2000; Kasper & Dahl, 1991). Holmes (1991) points out that the WDCT method does not correspond to natural data and does not allow the test takers to use language spontaneously as it is found in spoken speech. Also, it is an offline task in which the test takers have time for introspection. Most importantly, it lacks negotiation and sequential moves. Galato (2003: 92) suggests that the WDCT is a valid instrument for a symbolic action, not a pragmatic action. He claims that the WDCT is suitable for the study of "what people *think they would say*" than to study "what people *actually do say*" in a given speech setting. Aston (1995) points out that the WDCT does not cope with social and psychological constraints of real-life interactions.

2.6.2 A multiple-choice discourse completion task

A multiple-choice discourse completion task (MDCT) is the selected response test that requires the test takers to read a written description of a situation and select what would be best to say in that situation. The correct response and distractors follow in a random order. The following is an example of a multiple-choice item for pragmatic production (Davies et al., 1999):

> *You are a student. You forget to do the assignment for your Human Resources course. When your teacher whom you have known for some years asks for your assignment, you apologize to your teacher.*

A. *I'm sorry, but I forgot the deadline for the assignment. Can I bring it to you at the end of the day?*
B. *Pardon me, sir, I forgot about that. Shall I do the assignment at once? So sorry! It's my fault!*
C. *I've completed my assignment but forgot to bring it with me. I'll hand it in tomorrow.*

Multiple choice questions have their advantages. First, a large number of items can be included in a language test. Second, no special expertise is required to score them because there is only a possible correct answer for each item and the answers can be scored by machine. Third, scores derived from them may easily be analyzed (e.g. item analysis) giving a clear idea of the difficulty and reliability of each item, as well as the test as a whole. Analysis can also identify successful and unsuccessful distractors. Fourth, to score objectively, multiple choice questions need a careful process of reviewing, pre-testing, trialing, analysis and revision. This would make the test more reliable than the other forms of testing (Brown & Hudson, 1998; Davies et al., 1999; Hopkins & Antes, 1985).

However, multiple choice questions are frequently criticized for lacking validity, partly because they seem to be able only to assess test takers' ability to recognize correct forms, but not to produce language (Roever, 2004). Another criticism is that the development of the MDCT test options is very time-consuming. Besides, the high problematic feature of the MDCT is it is nearly impossible to create distractors that are clearly incorrect (Brown, 2001). Options of the MDCTs are not always right or wrong, but rather need to be considered in terms of appropriateness. Thus, high-quality response options for the MDCT is time consuming and strenuous particularly writing distractors for politeness (Liu, 2006). Roever (2004: 194) says that "politeness is not black-and-white. Many shadings exist along a continuum between polite and impolite responses". Moreover, writing high-quality distractors for all situations in a test of pragmatics is extremely laborious, just as Hudson et al. (1995: 54) comment:

> *The answers and distractors were edited numerous times. For many items, the distractors had to be modified due to their not being clearly incorrect from a pragmatic perspective.*

Roever (2004) suggests that multiple choice questions could work well for testing implicature and routines, not for assessing speech act performance which requires sociopragmaitc knowledge, especially in politeness.

2.6.3 A discourse self-assessment task

A discourse self-assessment task (DSAT) is an instrument that provides a written description of a situation and asks the take takers to rate their own ability to perform the pragmatics necessary in that situation. Self-assessment (also known as self-evaluation, self-rating, self-testing, and self-appraisal) gives the learner continuous feedback on what he or she has learned and enables the learner to assess his or her total achievement.

Hudson et al. (1995) developed two types of self-assessment. The first one was an instrument for the examinees to evaluate the extent to which they could succeed in one of the DSAT situations. The participants were asked to give an overall rating of their intended performance on a five-point scale after reading each situation. The second type of self-assessment was the participants' assessment of their performance on the structured interview in which the participants were asked to rate their actual pragmatic performance, also using a five-point scale. The following is an example of the self-assessment from Hudson et al. (1995: 190):

Situation: *You are a salesperson in a gift shop. You need to get something out of a display case now. However, you are unable to get into the case because a customer is standing in the way and blocking your path.*

Rating: *I think what I would say in this situation would be*

very unsatisfactory	*1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5*	*completely appropriate*

2.6.4 A discourse role-play task

A discourse role-play task (DRPT) is an instrument that provides a description of a situation requiring the performance of a speech act and asks the test takers to take a particular role with another person in that situation. Role-plays are simulations of communicative encounters based on role descriptions (Kasper & Rose, 2002). The DRPT has been widely used in research on interlanguage pragmatics. This is because it is an online production task and has features similar to an actual conversation such as turn-taking, sequencing, and hesitation phenomena.

Despite the advantages of role-plays, many researchers point out their drawbacks. First, Kasper (2000) states that a role-play is predominantly motivated by the researcher's goals rather than those of the interlocutors. Second, the context of the interactions within role-plays is often imagined, and thus not real. The interactions in role-plays and in authentic discourse are not the same (Yuan, 2001). Olshtain and Blum-Kulka (1987) call a role-play as a semiethnographic technique which requires participants to take on roles that are not always their own. This agrees with Roever (2006) who concludes that role-plays cannot be regarded as authentic communication in the real-world, but rather a simulated communication. There is no guarantee that role-plays provide valid representations of pragmatic practices in an authentic context (Kasper & Rose, 2002). Third, Galato (2003) states that role-plays cannot observe sociolinguistic variables which naturally occur in everyday conversation. Lastly, role-plays are time consuming for data transcription analysis. It would be worth if a role-play is carried out with a small number of examiners and is combined with video-taping (Olshtain and Blum-Kulka, 1987).

2.6.5 An oral discourse completion task

An oral discourse completion task (ODCT) is a pragmatic instrument that requires the test takers to listen to a description of a situation (usually on a tape recorder) and to say aloud what they would say in that situation (typically into another tape recorder). According to Kasper and Dahl (1991), the oral DCT is a form of closed role-plays which is very close to authentic discourse more than the written DCT does. Yuan (2001) points out that the oral DCT has certain advantages over the written DCT in terms of eliciting conversational features. However, Beebe and Cummings (1996) state that a drawback of the oral DCT is that the respondents have no opportunity to negotiate or interact with the interlocutor.

2.6.6 A role-play self-assessment

A role-play self-assessment (RPSA) is a pragmatic instrument that combines the discourse role-play task (DRPT) with the discourse self-assessment task (DSAT) by requiring the test takers to rate their own pragmatic performance in a previously performed role-play that is recorded on a video recorder.

Brown (2001: 320) concludes practical considerations of the six types of pragmatic tests which are given in Table 2.2 below:

Table 2.2: Practical considerations for the six types of pragmatic tests

Test types	Practical advantages	Practical disadvantages
WDCT	Easy to administer because of paper-and- pencil	Written receptive and productive language only; does not encourage oral production or self-reflection; difficult to score because it requires recruiting, training, scheduling, and paying raters
MDCT	Easy to administer because of paper-and-pencil; easy to score	Written receptive language only; does not encourage oral production or self-reflection
DSAT	Encourages self-reflection; easy to administer because of relatively quick and paper-and pencil; easy to score	Not suitable for high-stakes decisions
DRPT	Encourages oral production; relatively quick to administer	Difficult to administer because it must be administered individually using video equipment and an interlocutor; difficult to score because it requires recruiting, training, scheduling, and paying raters
ODCT	Encourages oral production; relatively quick to administer	Relatively difficult to administer because it requires two audiocassette recorders; difficult to score because it requires recruiting, training, scheduling, and paying raters
RPSA	Encourages self-reflection; easy to score	Relatively difficult to administer because it must be administered individually using video equipment; not suitable for high-stakes decisions

Brown (2001) shows that all instruments except the multiple-choice DCT had satisfactory reliability but varied widely in their practicality. This agrees with Yamashita (1996) who adopted Hudson et al.'s (1995) test for Japanese as a second language. He found that all sections had high reliabilities except the multiple-choice, whose reliability differed between test forms and was overall low. Hinkel (1997) points out that all instruments have more or less valuable and each instrument has its advantages and disadvantages from the researcher's point of view. Any kind of test depends on whether it allows researchers to collect data that provide insights into speech act realizations and the norms of appropriateness accepted in various speech communities. Olshtain and Blum-Kulka (1987) suggest that researchers should use more than one tool in order to get a more complete picture of speech act behaviors. Even ethnographic means can be best for collecting the most authentic data; however, it is hard for large scale testing. Therefore, one should also consider the practical aspect of the research tool.

In sum, each test method has its own strengths and weaknesses. The adoption of a test method lies in the purpose of testing along with the desired levels of reliability and validity. The test method used in this study is typically an oral discourse completion test (ODCT); however, it has been designed by using the computer which can facilitate the test face with audio-visual simulation. Details of the test are presented in Chapter 3.

2.7 The studies in pragmatic competence and assessment of pragmatic ability

Most studies on pragmatic competence are based on three kinds: longitudinal, cross-sectional, and single-moment. Cross-sectional studies are commonly found in the studies of pragmatics. Most studies focus on illocutionary competence or the comprehension of indirect speech acts of EFL (NNS) students from various cultural backgrounds (Holtgraves, 2007). A number of cross-sectional studies have been conducted to investigate in what ways learners perform illocutionary acts in the NNSs differently from NSs of the target language. Kasper and Rose (1999) conclude the topics investigated in pragmatic studies as follows:

1. The perception and comprehension of illocutionary force and politeness;
2. The production of linguistic action;
3. The impact of context variables on choices of conventions of means (semantic formulae or realization strategies) and form (linguistic material used to implement strategic options);
4. Discourse sequencing and conversational management;
5. Pragmatic success and failure;
6. The joint negotiation of illocutionary, referential, and relational goals in interpersonal encounters and institutional settings.

Cohen (1995: 27) points out that the evaluation of the production of speech acts behavior of nonnative speakers is problematic because of the four questions he raises as follows:

1. To what extent have learners acquired the sociocultural and sociolinguistic abilities needed to realize the particular speech acts?

2. To what extent is the learner's speech act behavior similar to or different from a native speaker's behavior under the same circumstances?

3. What compensation strategies do learners use when their language is inadequate?

4. What are the learners' selection route and decision making process with respect to strategy preference, modification preference, content limitation, and illocutionary intent?

In terms of assessing pragmatic ability, test constructs are a priority to concern. According to Davies et al. (1999: 31), a test construct is defined as "an ability or a set of abilities that will be reflected in test performance, and about which inference can be made on the basis of test scores". Brown (2004: 3) simply states that "test is a method of measuring a person's ability, knowledge, or performance in a given domain". So, test constructs in assessing pragmatic ability are the constructs that can measure pragmatic ability in dimensions and contexts based on the researchers' objectives.

There are not many tests to assess the learners' pragmatic ability, though pragmatic knowledge is an indispensable part of language proficiency as defined by Bachman (1990). Few studies have been dedicated to show an important role of pragmatics in communicative teaching and testing. One of the reasons why such measures have not been much produced is that developing a measure of pragmatic ability in an EFL context is not an easy task (Roever, 2006; Liu, 2006). In addition, because tests of pragmatics try to assess language use in context, the researchers have faced the challenge of establishing a real-word context. Besides, it is still not completely clear which elements of the context are important to ensure that pragmatic tasks engage respondents' relevant knowledge and skills. Also, establishing a context that resembles the real world is often not feasible even in the most sophisticated role-plays. So, tests of pragmatics have often focused on testing knowledge rather than the ability to use the language and most tests focus on sociopragmatic knowledge at the level of speech acts (Rover, 2006). Because there are not many studies related to pragmatic ability in the field of testing, researchers have given more effort in developing different methods in measuring such ability systematically.

Owing to the lack of pragmatic ability studies in the field of hotel services, the studies based largely on the concept of pragmatic ability in different learning contexts (EFL and ESL) are reviewed in the following section.

Carrell and Konneker (1981) compared the learners' politeness strategies in a speech act of requests between native English speakers and the ESL learners. The study was based on the basic scale of imperative/declarative/interrogative mood to investigate the degree of politeness in making requests. They also added models and the tense distinctions to examine the degree of politeness. The subjects of the study were two groups of the ESL learners and native speakers of American English. The ESL group was a heterogeneous group whose overall ESL proficiency was at intermediate and advanced levels. The construct was comprehension of politeness and realization strategies. The learners had to determine which of several possible strategies was the most polite in the given situations. The findings revealed that there was a high correlation between the native and ESL judgment of politeness in the request strategies. Their findings gave the attribution to the effect of learning environments. However, the ESL learners made a more politeness distinction than native English speakers did. Some questions were made that the ESL learners probably did a kind of "'over-sensitivity' to syntactic/semantic form distinctions" (Carrell & Konneker, 1981: 27).

The most well-known research on speech acts is the Cross Cultural Speech Acts Realization Project (CCSARP) (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984). The study was carried out by a group of international researchers as the first major group who attempted to study speech acts across a range of languages and cultures to investigate whether there are universal principles in speech act realization and what the patterns may be. This project investigated speech act realization patterns cross-culturally from both native and non-native speakers of several languages by using a discourse completion test (DCT). The construct of this study was the strategies used in requests and apologies which were associated to Bachman's (1990) components of pragmatic competence in the aspects of understanding the illocutionary force and the choices of speech acts realization and linguistic forms. The findings showed that conventional indirectness was preferred in requesting in all languages examined.

Regarding the study of apologies, it was found that expressing an overt apology by employing illocutionary force in the speech acts and assuming responsibility for the offense were applied in nonnative speakers. The CCSARP has also produced useful instruments for data collection and a coding scheme that has been widely used in other speech act studies.

Bouton (1988) investigated the ESL learners' interpretation of conversational implicatures. The construct of this study was the ability to recognize illocutionary force, which is the ability to recognize a mismatch between the literal utterance and the intention of utterance and to comprehend the intention of the utterance. Two groups of subjects were American NSs and NNSs from different cultures. The instrument of the study was a multiple-choice test that comprised a brief description of a scenario followed by a short dialog containing the inferred message and four possible interpretations of the utterance in question. Bouton's findings revealed that the ESL learners' performance in interpreting the implicatures was significantly poorer. The findings suggested that cultural background is a reliable predictor of nonnative speakers' (NNS) ability to interpret implicatures the way native speakers (NSs) do. Not only did NNSs differed from the NSs, but they also differed significantly among themselves. This finding also showed that individuals with different backgrounds drew different implicatures from the same utterance. Bouton's (1988) study reported that there was a significant difference in the way NSs and NNSs interpreted the implicatures found in the contextualized dialogues in the test. Even though the findings suggested that cultural backgrounds played an important role in predicting the implication, this test did not resolve the question of whether one's cultural background is an important influence on the nature of the implicatures that he or she draws. Thus, it may be concluded that the insufficient in interpreting the implicatures in cross-cultural interactions has potentially obstructed successful communication.

Bardovi-Harlig and Dornyei (1998) examined L2 learners' detection of pragmatic and grammatical errors in different EFL and ESL learning contexts. The objective of the study was to investigate the learners' abilities in distinguishing appropriate-inappropriate and correct-incorrect utterances. The construct of the study was the language learners' ability in distinguishing appropriateness and correctness of utterances. Based on Bachman's (1996) framework of language competence, the awareness of correctness was investigated under grammatical competence while the dimension of appropriateness reflected sociolinguistic competence. The method of data collection was videotaped scenarios. The finding showed that the ESL learners recognized a considerably higher number of pragmatic errors than grammatical errors. Conversely, the EFL groups rated grammatical errors significantly higher than the ESL learners did. In addition, the low-proficiency students gave lower ratings to both grammatical and pragmatic errors in comparison with the high-proficiency group; however, the high-proficiency students demonstrated a much greater increase in grammatical awareness than in pragmatic appropriateness. The high-proficiency ESL group also noticed more pragmatic inappropriateness when compared with their low-proficiency learners. The findings of this study suggested that the learning context (ELF/ESL) and proficiency levels affected the ability in pragmatic and grammatical awareness.

Cook and Liddicoat (2002, cited in Schauer, 2006) investigated L2 learners' comprehension of request speech acts at different levels of directness. The construct of this test was to examine the language learners' knowledge in illocutionary force and realization strategies on how correctly they identified the meaning in request ranking from direct, conventionally indirect, and non-conventional indirect. They employed a cross-sectional design in their study that compared the high-and low-proficiency ESL learners' pragmatic awareness of requests with that of Australian English native speakers. It was found that there were significant differences in the interpreted action of conventionally indirect and non- conventionally indirect requests between the native speakers and the learner groups of both proficiency levels. The native speakers correctly identified the meaning of requests with a higher frequency than the ESL learners. In addition, the low-proficiency ESL learners also interpreted a significantly lower number of direct requests correctly than the native speakers did. To compare the performance from the high and low proficiency ESL learners, it was found that the high-proficiency learners correctly identified the meaning of conventionally and non-conventionally indirect requests with a significantly higher frequency than the low-proficiency learners. Thus, this suggests that increasing proficiency levels might enhance L2 learners' ability to interpret request utterances correctly.

Matsumura (2003) investigated Japanese ESL learners' perception of appropriateness in an advice situation. The construct of the test was related to sociolinguistic competence. This study was one of the few longitudinal developmental studies in interlanguage pragmatics that was based on data that were elicited before the learners left their L1 context to the L2 context. The data were collected during their time in the L2 context and were gathered in 3-month intervals. The findings showed that those learners who had a greater exposure to English displayed a greater amount of competence. The results further revealed that the amount of exposure in the learners' home country influenced their pragmatic development abroad. The findings also suggested that proficiency only had an indirect effect on pragmatic development when interlinked with exposure to L2. This means that those "Japanese learners who reached a higher level of proficiency when they were in Japan sought more opportunities to be exposed to English in the target speech community, and as a consequence of a greater exposure, they could become more pragmatically competent" (Matsumura, 2003: 485). Matsumura's (2003) study has shown that the length of stay in the L2 context and the overall level of proficiency in the target language play an important role in the acquisition of pragmatic awareness.

Liu (2006)'s study was to find the reliable and valid methods in assessing pragmatic ability of the ESL learners. This study was direct to the field of testing and the test construct revealed the perception of appropriateness in meaning and form of requests and apologies in speech acts with three sociopragmaic variables (familiarity, power, and imposition). It also investigated whether learners of different EFL proficiency levels (i.e., the high-level group and the low-level group) performed differently in pragmatics tests. The objectives of the study were whether the test methods used in this study were reliable and valid and whether learners of different EFL proficiency levels performed differently in pragmatics tests. The three test formats: written discourse completion test (WDCT), multiple-choice discourse completion test (MDCT), and discourse self-assessment test (DSAT) were used in the study. The results showed that the WDCT and DSAT were highly reliable and the MDCT was also reasonably reliable. The two proficiency groups in this study were shown to differ significantly in terms of their English proficiency which indicated that the higher level of English proficiency of Chinese EFL learners seemed not to have correspondingly higher pragmatic ability in English. The constructs also involved strategies that the test takers adopted in answering questions with different test methods that appeared to differ. Their relevant knowledge constructs were not significantly different in the test methods of the WDCT and

DSAT; however, the two proficiency groups were significantly different in the MDCT. Thus, it can be concluded that this difference might result from the effect of the test method.

To conclude, the constructs reviewed in the previous studies test the students' comprehension of speech acts and politeness and how they produce language appropriately and correctly according to the speech acts under study. The constructs investigated are based on Bachman's (1990) components in pragmatic competence: illocutionary competence or speech acts competence and sociolinguistic competence.

2.8 Linguistic speech acts and politeness strategies in the hotel communication

To date, the studies focusing on the linguistic speech acts used in hotel services are considerably rare. The latest work named *Hospitality Language as a Professional Skill* written by Blue and Harun (2003) has been reviewed widely. It is related to English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in the field of hospitality industry. Regarding language form, hospitality language has not been studied distinctively because the scope of hospitality language is quite wide as there are several kinds of business related to the patterns of hospitality language such as hotels, travel agents, restaurants, information centers, and tourist attractions (Blue & Harun, 2003). So, linguistic forms of speech acts and politeness strategies in this study are referred to "hospitality" and "hospitality language" which are associated with the hotel-guest interactions in hotel Front Office Department. Blue and Harun (2003: 74) define the word "hospitality" as "the cluster of activities oriented towards satisfying guests" while "hospitality language" refers to "all linguistic expressions which relate to and represent hospitality concerns".

Hospitality language arises from a combination of procedures in hospitality cycle (Blue & Harun, 2003). Baker et al. (2000) show the hotel guest cycle that can associate with the language functions needed for hotel Front Office staff-guest encounters as illustrated in Figure 2.3 below.

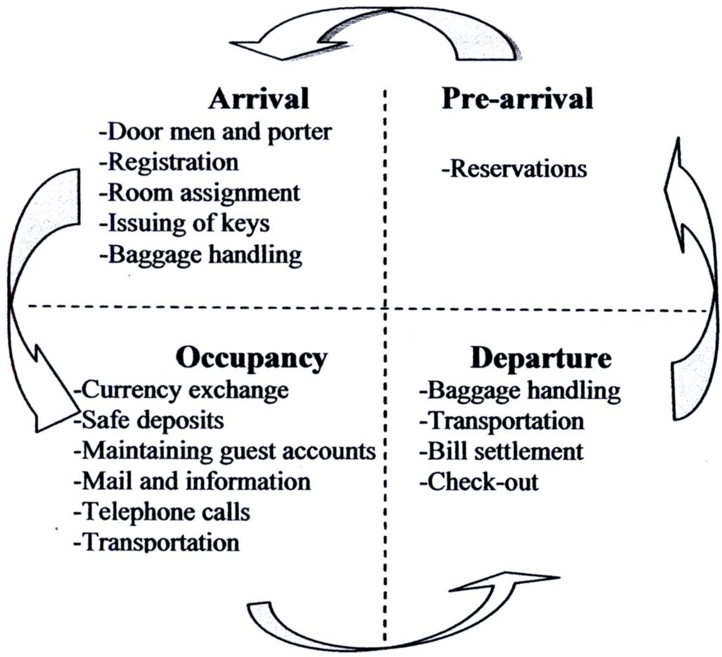

Figure 2.3: A typical hotel guest cycle (Baker et al., 2000: 46)

Blue and Huran (2003) draw the characteristics of hospitality language since hospitality language arises from a combination of procedures in hospitality cycle. The difference between the traditional hospitality cycle and the commercial hospitality cycle or hotel services is the former one is non-commercial while the latter one involves payment. Table 2.3 shows the language used in the commercial hospital cycle which is related to the linguistic forms of speech acts and politeness strategies used in hospitality language.

Table 2.3: The commercial arrival-departure hospitality cycle

Stage	Activity	Language used
Arrival	Pick-up service in some hotels; luggage may be carried by porters; registration at the reception. All services are commercial.	Greeting by driver, welcome by receptionist, Routine and Rehearsed language used, Formal question-answer transactions in formal tone, Varies with category of hotel
Familiarization	Receptionist briefs guest on what and where in-house facilities are available, and on meal and check-out times; guest may also read in-house brochures and ask questions about hotel.	Briefing style, rehearsed message, additional questions and answers, formal tone, language use varies according to category of hotel

Table 2.3: The commercial arrival-departure hospitality cycle (cont.)

Stage	Activity	Language used
Engagement	Independent use of facilities in rooms and in different sections of the hotel. Popular items include: TV, restaurant and bar, pool, gymnasium, sauna, disco.	Mostly formal and impersonal, but may depend on how long guest stays in a hotel. Difficult to predict exact language needs other than those relating to use of facilities.
Departure	Language transfer, preparation of bill, perfunctory farewell conversation.	Mostly rehearsed language, mostly formal and impersonal.

Blue and Huran (2003: 75)

From language used shown in the commercial hospitality cycle, the distinctive aspects of language used in the hotel-guest interaction are generally formal and impersonal. However, it also depends on the acquaintance between the speakers and the hearers (the hotel staff and guests and vice versa). The factor that appears to contribute to formal language use in the hotel staff-guest communication includes Brown and Levinson's (1987) three social variables as mentioned previously. The commercial hospitality is indeed a business transaction which aims at cost and benefit, not for non-commercial hospitality like in the traditional arrival-departure hospitality cycle.

Besides, Blue and Harun (2003) made a field observation of reception encounters at the Front Desk in order to observe the domain functions in hospitality language. It was found that the domain functions in hospitality language was transactional and informative. The functional activities that were exchanged at the hotel reception were information and queries, miscellaneous requests, check-ins, check-outs, and complaints and criticisms respectively. The structure of the conversation for those who had face-to-face interaction like receptionists and those who dealt indirectly like the telephone operators was very similar. Blue and Harun (2003) summarize the utterances at hotel receptions as follows:

a. The utterances are formal, short, straightforward, and purposive. This is because the interaction and communication at the hotel counter is more like a business transaction. The interlocutors have specific purposes in an interaction. The role of the hotel staff and guests is expected in one another and their responses are mostly functional.

b. The utterance of hospitality language is predictable. The utterances mostly come in a form of adjacency pairs. Both the hotel staff and guests can recognize the utterances that they are expected to respond.

c. Politeness plays a crucial role in hospitality language. The title and the guest's last name is used to mark the respect in a formal way. Conventional words for asking requests like "*Would you...?*", "*Could you...?*", and "*Can I...?*" are also used frequently. "*Please*" and "*Thank you*" are commonly found in hospitality language.

d. The hotel staff's utterances are more like a routine interaction. The pattern of conversation and language function is performed repeatedly according to its job descriptions or responsibilities. Because of this, the utterances are predictable and purposive.

To conclude the utterances taken from Blue and Harun's (2003) site observations, it has been found that the utterances in the hotel context are short, direct, and purposive. Utterances can also be described as formal and commercial-like where each participant is expected the force from a specific action. Regarding the degree of formality, it could be either formal or informal. This depends on the level of acquaintance among participants themselves as well. Moreover, the utterances are mostly predictable. Both the speakers and hearers (namely the hotel staff and guests and vice versa) understand the utterances, not only from literal meaning (locutionary acts), but also the force or an act by uttering a sentence (illocutionary).

The other relevant source that is directly related to the needs of language use in service industries is the English benchmark for Thai hotel Front Desk. This benchmark has been initially established by the English Language Development Center (ELDC) in order to encourage Thai people to improve their English communication skills in their careers (ELDC, 2005). Initially the English benchmark for 25 occupations has been set and each career is expected to meet four standards. Table 2.4 shows the two benchmark indicators that are associated with language functions in the arrival-departure hospitality cycle and politeness aspects used in hotel Front Desk (ELDC, 2005: 21-22).

Table 2.4: The English benchmarks for Thai hotel Front Desk

Standard 2: Use spoken English to participate in work interaction at an advanced level.	**Standard 3: Use an appropriate language variety and register according to audience, purpose, setting and culture.**
1. Use and respond to basic courtesy formulas, e.g. greeting, leave-taking, introductions.	1. Use appropriate language register to interact with guests.
2. Ask and respond to guests' questions, request, opinions, suggestions, and advice.	2. Respond appropriately to compliments, refusals, negative value judgments, criticism and complaints from guests.
3. Give guests directions, instructions, suggestions, advice, confirmations, apologies, warnings, and compliments.	3. Use polite language to interact with guests, epically when persuading, handing complaints, expressing value judgments, emotions, and negotiating.
4. Explain and describe information to guests, e.g. bookings, hotel facilities, current promotions, daily activities problems, weather.	4. Use idiomatic expressions appropriately.
5. Promote house activities, special functions, special offers by providing specific details along with using convincing language.	5. Recognize humor and respond appropriately.
6. Provide precise information upon guests' requests about Thai history, cultures, institutions, Thai dishes, drinks, fruits, current events.	
7. Initiate and carry on small talks.	
8. Handle phone situations and diplomatic replies.	
9. Speak fluently with clear pronunciation patterns.	
10. Adjust language for clarity and accuracy.	

Language functions shown above are similar to the hospitality cycle mentioned by Blue and Harun (2003). The additional aspects are appropriateness and politeness that are major dimensions in the linguistic form of speech acts and politeness strategies used in hotel business.

Summary

Chapter two presents a review of related literature that provides the underlying concepts of this study. The review includes the definitions of pragmatics, the concept of pragmatic competence, theory of speech acts, theories of politeness, the selection of speech acts, methods of testing pragmatics, the studies in pragmatic competence and assessment of pragmatic ability, and linguistic speech acts and politeness strategies in hotel communication. They are then employed as the basis for instrument development, data collection and analysis, and interpretation of the findings. The next chapter presents the research methodology of this study.