

Sirawat Thaithae 2012: The Politeness Strategies of Refusal towards Airline Passengers' Requests:
A Case Study of Customer Service Agents of Thai Airways International Public Company Limited.
Master of Arts (Applied Linguistics), Major Field: Applied Linguistics, Department of Linguistics.
Thesis Advisor: Miss Pananda Lerlertyuttitham, Ph.D. 232 pages.

This research aims to study the politeness strategies of refusal to airline passengers' requests and the relationship of such strategies applied, the class of service and the severity of imposition. The data on for the analysis was collected from 80 selected passenger service agent of Thai Airways International Public Co., LTD and subsequently processed with the Discourse Completion Test. The findings were analyzed by means of percentages and the Chi-square statistical test.

The results of the study revealed a multitude of politeness strategies employed to refuse passengers' requests. Each individual politeness strategy has its own characteristics which can be classified by their communicative functions. A total of 14 strategies, for instance: giving deference, giving reasons, Showing to understand hearers' suffer, apologizing, showing to understand hearers' suffer, showing attempts to help, suggesting, hedging, requesting the hearer action, offering an alternative, consulting consider-makers, offering compensation, thanking, accusing the company, showing attempts to accept responsibility, were identified.

It was further found that the relation of politeness strategies, class of service and the severity of imposition influenced the selection of politeness strategies to refuse passengers' requests. Passenger service agents used politeness strategies to refuse first class passengers' requests more frequently than for the refusal of request of both business and economy class passengers. In consideration of the severity of the imposition factors, it was moreover found that the gravity of imposition also affects the selection of the politeness strategies. Passenger service agents were revealed to use politeness strategies for passengers' requests refusal in the most serious situations rather than in more serious and serious situations. The most distinguished politeness strategies are offering compensation, accusing the company, and showing attempt to accept responsibility. However, such politeness strategies were found to be employed by passenger service agents only to refuse requests to first class passengers and in the most serious of situations. The passenger service agents have to be prudent in the selection of the aforementioned three strategies as they are potentially detrimental to the benefits and the image of the organization.

Student's signature

Thesis Advisor's signature