

Politeness in Intercultural Exchanges: A Case Study of Thai Pre-service Cruise Ship Crew

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Abstract—This study sought to examine the politeness strategies of Thai pre-service cruise ship crew during their intercultural exchanges with foreign cruise passengers. The participants were third-year students majoring in cruise tourism at a university in Thailand. They were purposefully selected since they had been offered to begin their first official employment contract as crew members on foreign cruise lines. Eight participants were instructed to complete an Oral Discourse Completion Task (ODCT) in English, which comprised diverse scenarios validated by five cruise experts. The data collection was video recorded, transcribed, and then analyzed based on the politeness framework proposed by Brown and Levinson (1978). During the analysis, minor grammatical mistakes were discarded. To enhance interpretative triangulation, the researcher collaborated with three other coders, including pragmatics specialists and a native English instructor at the tertiary level. Participants also underwent a Stimulated Recall Interview (SRI) to clarify ambiguous aspects. The study indicated that the predominant strategy was negative politeness, bald on-record, and positive politeness. The study's findings may aid educational institutions across the nation in equipping their graduates to serve as proficient communicators by integrating suitable politeness strategies in global communication scenarios. This study further advises the Thai government and cruise industry stakeholders to provide present and prospective personnel with suitable politeness strategies for intercultural interactions.

Keywords—politeness strategies, Thai pre-service cruise ship crew, intercultural exchanges

I. INTRODUCTION

Cruise tourism has grown significantly in the 21st century, with the number of cruise passengers worldwide increasing dramatically [1]. Consequently, cruise manufacturers have built more cruise ships to respond to the immense demand, leading to an increase in job opportunities in the cruise industry. Following a temporary pause during the COVID-19 pandemic between 2020 and 2021, the cruise business triumphantly resumed its operations in 2022, and there are expectations of continued expansion [2]. Because the cruise industry has been flourishing worldwide, the Thai government included a plan to expand the cruise business in Thailand in the 13th National Economic and Social Development Plan (2023–2027) [3] to develop human resources and improve infrastructure in the cruise industry.

These crew members operate in a highly multicultural environment, assisting cruise passengers from a variety of cultural backgrounds. Particularly, crew members who start their first contract are expected to be able to perform their tasks right away, without training. They must therefore have a high level of English proficiency and possess advanced intercultural communication skills [4]. These crew members usually operate under six-to-ten-month contracts. Staff in

these crew members are required to use English to perform their tasks, which involve frequent interactions with foreign cruise passengers. Therefore, merely having a high level of English proficiency is insufficient. They also need to be strategic in politely communicating with the passengers in various situations [5, 6].

Politeness is a significant concept in intercultural and interpersonal communication, commonly used in linguistics as well as sociolinguistic domains. Consequently, researchers have extensively studied politeness both globally and in Thailand. Pan [7] characterizes politeness as a language that effectively displays a speaker's intention to lessen potential facial threats. This aligns with Brown and Levinson's [8] notion that speakers employ politeness in order to mitigate Face-Threatening Acts (FTAs). The purpose of such a strategy is to alleviate the interlocutor's sense of imposition during the exchange. Furthermore, several scholars, such as Scollon and Scollon [9], confirm that politeness strategies have a solid foundation within various cultural values and individuals' expectations concerning what is considered polite. Simply put, politeness is believed to have a strong connection with socially dependent features, particularly the beliefs and values of the interlocutors. The officers' adequate level of English proficiency and their successful deployment of politeness strategies ensure that foreign cruise passengers have memorable experiences during their trips [10].

Although research studies have explored English proficiency needs and politeness strategies in various discourse communities, this project is the first to investigate politeness strategies employed during intercultural exchanges between Thai pre-service cruise staff and foreign cruise passengers. Several related studies have been conducted, including one that investigates politeness and miscommunication between foreigners and Thai police officers. The role of tourist police officers shares similarities with that of Thai pre-service cruise staff, in that staff in both cases are required to provide service while ensuring the maintenance of high safety standards. Rattanapian [11] conducted a study on politeness and miscommunication between Thai tourist police officers and foreign tourists using audio recordings and observations at a tourist police office. The study revealed that Thai tourist police officers employed a combination of positive and negative politeness, bald on-record, and off-record strategies. In a further study related to intercultural interaction in the field of tourism in Thailand, Sodpiban [12] conducted a quantitative study using a survey to determine foreign tourists' levels of satisfaction with Thai service providers at different hotels. The findings revealed that they were satisfied with the politeness strategies employed by the service providers despite experiencing

difficulty communicating with them. A further study explored difficulties using English experienced by Thai tourist police officers at a tourist police office and their intercultural communication skills [13]. It was found that tourist police officers struggled to understand different English accents and possessed poor English grammar. While these studies included observations made by participants in actual settings, their findings may not provide an accurate guide to how Thai pre-service cruise staff would handle similar situations. This is because different discourse communities have their own communication of practice. The latter two studies placed an emphasis on communication during intercultural exchanges between Thai officers and foreigners; however, they do not explore the pragmatic features of linguistics, notably politeness strategies. It is hoped that in addressing such issues, the current study will add clarity to an under-researched field of communication.

II. OBJECTIVE

The study aimed to investigate the politeness strategies of Thai pre-service cruise ship crew in their intercultural exchanges.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Politeness Theory and Face-Threatening Acts

Politeness theory, chiefly formulated by Brown and Levinson [8], offers a paradigm for comprehending how individuals manage social interactions to alleviate potential adverse effects from Face-Threatening Acts (FTAs). This idea is crucial to sociolinguistics and pragmatics since it elucidates how individuals preserve social harmony by mitigating dangers to their own and others' "face". The notion of "face", first articulated by Goffman [14], denotes the social value individuals assert for themselves in interactions. Comprehending the role of face in communication has been pivotal in the examination of politeness, especially regarding how speakers utilize language to preserve beneficial social interactions.

The concept of face is categorized into two types: positive face and negative face. Positive face signifies the individual's aspiration for social validation and connection, whilst negative face denotes the desire for autonomy and freedom from encroachment. In communicative interactions, speakers frequently equilibrate these two elements to uphold civility. In pragmatic circumstances like service exchanges, such as cruise embarkation, travelers may demonstrate positive face by requesting assistance or negative face by wishing to minimize imposition. Brown and Levinson's approach examines how speakers navigate these desires through verbal tactics that either preserve face or diminish the probability of FTAs.

B. Strategies for Politeness

Brown and Levinson [8] delineated four primary politeness strategies: plain on-record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off-record. Each approach differs in its degree of directness and the extent to which it aims to alleviate risks to face.

Bald on-record is the most explicit method, entailing the

articulation of clear and unequivocal declarations or requests without any effort to mitigate the potentially face-threatening consequences. This method is frequently employed in circumstances where urgency or clarity takes precedence over interpersonal sensitivities. For example, in a cruise check-in scenario, an officer may employ a bald on-record strategy when issuing explicit directives such as "Proceed this way" or "Present your passport". This method may be effective, but its suitability is contingent upon the social or cultural context [9].

Positive politeness prioritizes the preservation of amicable social relationships by highlighting similar values, solidarity, or mutual interests. This method seeks to fulfill the interlocutor's desire for a good face, ensuring they feel valued or included. In service contacts, positive politeness may encompass praises or inclusive language, such as "We will resolve this together," which cultivates rapport and facilitates conversation.

Negative politeness is to reduce imposition and recognize the interlocutor's autonomy. This method encompasses indirect demands, hedging, or recognizing the imposition on the other side. In circumstances necessitating courtesy, such as appeals for compliance during embarkation, officers may state, "Could you kindly present your passport?" This alleviates the burden and honors the passenger's desire for independence.

Off-record civility, or indirect communication, enables the speaker to circumvent direct assertions that could jeopardize the hearer's face. The speaker suggests their request or observation, enabling the listener to deduce the meaning. A passenger may express, "It's quite hot today," implying a need for expedited service without explicitly issuing a request. Off-the-record tactics are less adversarial and provide greater interpretative liberty.

C. Corrective Measures and FTA

Redressive action denotes the measures undertaken by speakers to rectify or alleviate the possible damage inflicted by an FTA. Typical redressive measures encompass apologies, justifications, or the provision of aid to mitigate the effects of a request or imposition. An apology after a direct request (e.g., "I'm sorry, but could you show me your passport?") serves as a conventional redressive move to mitigate the potential face threat associated with the imposition. Furthermore, techniques such as articulating appreciation or highlighting shared objectives might facilitate the restoration of face injuries incurred during communication.

In service environments, such as the cruise industry, remedial steps are essential for preserving pleasant interactions between personnel and passengers. Providing assistance after a request or recognizing the passenger's efforts (e.g., "Thank you for your patience") indicates knowledge of possible face risks and facilitates more effective communication.

D. Avoiding FTAs

A crucial tactic within politeness theory is the complete avoidance of FTAs. Opting against a possibly face-threatening action enables the speaker to preserve a

positive relationship, mitigate conflict, and cultivate a cooperative environment. This method may foster mutual respect and collaboration in professional and social contexts by maintaining both positive and negative faces.

E. Summary

Politeness theory, namely Brown and Levinson's [8] paradigm, offers significant insights into the management of face-threatening activities in communication. By comprehending the techniques employed by individuals—be they direct, redressed, or indirect—researchers can more effectively study the dynamics of social interaction. In service sectors such as cruise embarkation, identifying these methods is crucial for establishing successful communication that harmonizes urgency, courtesy, and respect for personal liberty. As communication evolves in multicultural and high-stakes contexts, politeness theory remains an essential framework for comprehending and navigating interpersonal dynamics.

IV. METHODOLOGY

A. Participants

The eight participants were purposefully selected for this study based on one particular criterion: they must have had a job contract from an international cruise company. This can guarantee an additional two sub-criteria. The first requirement was that they must be university students majoring in cruise tourism at a university in Thailand. Secondly, participants must have completed foundational English courses and an English for Seafarers Course mandated by the program, demonstrating a B1 English proficiency level or higher on the CEFR scale. These guaranteed the homogeneity of the participants. The participants were male and female students aged 20 to 23 years.

B. Instrument

The Oral Discourse Competition Task (ODCT), a study instrument in pragmatic studies concerning politeness, was employed to examine participants' strategies for politeness in international interactions. The ODCT comprised six sets of scenarios aligned with the operational responsibilities of the cruise ship crew. The chosen issues demonstrated how the Thai cruise ship crew will manage diverse scenarios throughout their multicultural interactions. Five specialists in Thailand's cruise industry assessed each scenario, confirming that the content precisely corresponded with the responsibilities of the cruise ship personnel.

C. Data Collection

The ODCT data was gathered at a university in Bangkok in July 2024. The participants were instructed to provide verbal responses to six scenarios during a 10-minute timeframe. The objective was to obtain prompt reactions from the participants. Throughout the data-gathering phase, the researcher was on-site to offer clarification as necessary. About 15 minutes before the data collection session, the researcher was engaged in an informal conversation with participants in Thai. This rapport-building was established to foster trust between the two parties, enabling participants to

feel at ease during the ODCT session. The data collection instructions were conveyed to the participants in Thai to minimize the risk of misinterpretation. The participants were not required to disclose their names, enabling them to complete the ODCT without apprehensions over the confidentiality of their personal information. The researchers' presence did not influence the participants' interests due to the absence of personal or professional contact with them. Despite Thai being their primary language, they were required to utilize English as a means of communication. Consequently, the ODCT was completed in English. Consent forms were executed before to data collection to guarantee that all individuals engaged in the study voluntarily.

D. Data Analysis

The ODCT data was analyzed using qualitative analysis to identify patterns of politeness techniques utilized, adhering to Brown and Levinson's [8] framework to examine how participants implemented these strategies in various contexts. Due to the participants' employment with foreign cruise lines, the replies were in English; thus, the researcher disregarded minor grammatical and spelling errors that did not substantially affect the intended meanings. The objective of such interactions is comprehensibility, and grammatical precision is not imperative. The researcher gave the analyzed data to the participants to facilitate member checks, which entailed verifying the accuracy of the interpretation and elucidating any confusing aspects. Stimulated Recall Interview (SRI) was conducted with participants to clarify any ambiguous points.

V. RESULTS

Upon concluding data collection, we aggregated all responses and conducted a qualitative analysis utilizing Brown and Levinson's [8] politeness framework to ascertain the frequencies and patterns of employed politeness methods. The analysis concentrated on the intended meanings of the responses in English. The secondary focus was on analyzing language in utterances to discern participants' utilization of politeness tactics. The information is displayed in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Holistic politeness strategies

Politeness strategies	Frequencies
a. bald on-record	18 (39.13%)
b. positive politeness	2 (4.35%)
c. negative politeness	26 (56.52%)
Total	46 (100%)

The results indicated that participants employed merely three politeness methods. The predominant category was "negative politeness", which garnered 26 answers (56.52%). The second most prevalent reaction was "bald on-record", with 18 replies (39.13%), followed by "positive politeness", which received 2 replies (4.35%).

Table 2 demonstrates that two politeness techniques were utilized in Situation 1, with seven out of eight individuals adopting the negative politeness strategy and one participant applying the positive politeness strategy.

Table 2. Politeness strategies in situation 1

Situation 1:

A passenger is preparing to check in. She just found out from a custom official that her passport will expire in two months, which exceeds the passport's validity period. As a result, she is unable to join the cruise. She claims that it is not her fault because she is unaware of such a requirement. What would be your response?

Politeness strategy	Responses:
Positive politeness (1 token)	(1) I apologize for the inconvenience, and I understand your point; I must do this for safety. (2) We're sorry about this, however, this is our responsibility to take care of everyone. (3) I'm sorry but I could not allow you to board the ship. You need to renew your passport. (4) Please renew your passport. We're sorry, but this is the regulation.
Negative politeness (7 tokens)	(5) Based on the regulations, we are sorry to tell you that you are not permitted to embark on the ship. (6) I'm truly sorry. But I must follow the regulations. I could not let you in, I'm afraid. (7) Please accept my apology for the inconvenience. Please make sure that your passport is valid before travel. (8) We're sorry that you have to face this situation, but everyone needs to follow the rules.

Table 3. Politeness strategies in situation 2

Situation 2:

A passenger is preparing to check in his luggage, but the quantity and weight are above the permissible limits according to baggage laws. He seems rather distressed and requests that you inspect all his luggage. What would your reply be?

Politeness strategy	Responses
Bald on-record (6 tokens)	(1) Your bag is more than the weight limit regulations. You need to pay an additional fee for that. (2) Your baggage exceeds the weight and number limit regulations. So, I cannot let you on board. (3) We must follow the regulations. Remove some items from your baggage due to the baggage regulations. (4) Your baggage exceeds the limit. As per our regulations, we cannot check you in. (5) Every passenger must obey the baggage allowance. I might get in trouble if I let you in. (6) Your baggage is too heavy. Please remove something from your bag.
Negative politeness (2 tokens)	(7) We're deeply sorry that you need to face this situation, but please take something away from your bag to make it lighter. (8) We apologize for causing you this trouble. As the regulations say, you need to remove some of your belongings away from your baggage.

Table 3 demonstrates the utilization of two civility methods in Situation 2. Six of the participants utilized the bald on-record technique, and the other two adopted the negative politeness strategy.

Table 4 illustrates the implementation of three civility methods in Situation 3. Five replies entailed redressive action, comprising four instances of negative politeness and one of positive politeness, while the remaining three did not incorporate any redressive measures.

Table 4. Politeness strategies in situation 3

Situation 3:

You've just issued baggage tags to a passenger. However, the passenger is perplexed by the tags, which are in two distinct colors. In addition, he must gather each bag with a different color code in various locations. The passenger seemed to be troubled and upset by this. What would be your response?

Politeness strategy	Responses
Bald on-record (3 tokens)	(1) There are baggage tags in different colors, and they will be in different locations. You must follow the regulations. (2) You need to comply with this policy of different color-coded baggage tags. (3) This is the regulation regarding the baggage tag. You must do accordingly.
Positive politeness (1 token)	(4) We're sorry for this inconvenience which may cause. I understand that this may seem difficult to understand. Let me explain more in detail. (5) We're sorry you feel this way. We will try our best to help you.
Negative politeness (4 tokens)	(6) I'm sorry for this problem but it needs to be done for safety. (7) I am sorry for this inconvenience. We just want the baggage delivery to be organized. (8) We apologize for the trouble, but these bags must be collected in different places.

Table 5. Politeness strategies in situation 4

Situation 4:

During luggage check, the machine finds a few forbidden goods. You must obtain permission from the passenger to conduct the manual inspection. However, he refuses, claiming that you do not have the authority to search through his personal belongings. What would be your response?

Politeness strategy	Responses
Bald on-record (7 tokens)	(1) You cannot get in since we have found some prohibited goods. (2) When the bag does not pass the inspection, you cannot board the cruise. (3) Due to prohibited goods, I need to search your bag manually. (4) We must manually check your bag because the machine found something wrong. (5) Prohibited items have been detected. Due to regulations, I need to open your baggage. (6) You're having a problem, so we inspect your baggage. You are not allowed to get in. (7) I need to remove prohibited items from your baggage if you want to get in.
Negative politeness (1 token)	(8) I'm deeply sorry. But for safety reasons, I need to open your bag to see what's inside.

Table 6. Politeness strategies in situation 5

Situation 5:

A passenger is waiting for the keycard to his room. However, there is a technical issue with issuing the card. The room reservation is duplicated. As a result, the system incorrectly registered two passengers in the same room. You'll need at least half an hour to resolve the issue. The passenger is upset and claims that it is your fault, not his. He doesn't want to wait. What would be your response?

Politeness strategy	Responses
Negative politeness (8 tokens)	(1) We're sorry that you need to face this. (2) I apologize for the situation. I will do what I can to solve it. (3) I deeply apologize for the mistake. I'll see what I can do for you. (4) We're sorry for this. You need to wait so that we can fix the problem. (5) I'm sorry for this situation. I know how you feel. I'll try my best and get back to you as soon as possible. (6) I'm apologizing for this mistake. I will upgrade you to a better room for free. (7) Sorry about this. I'll get back to you in a moment. (8) I'm sorry for this. Here is a voucher for dinner at our finest restaurant. Please accept my apology.

Table 5 presents the outcomes of the civility strategies employed in Situation 4. The analysis revealed that most

answers (seven) did not document any redressive activity, although one employed negative politeness.

Table 6 delineates the civility strategies utilized in Situation 5. The statistics indicated that all eight individuals employed “redressive action, negative politeness”.

Table 7. Politeness strategies in situation 6

Situation 6:

A passenger is waiting for a wheelchair. However, the information does not appear in the system. We can presume that an error occurred during the online reservation. As a result, you are unable to provide her with the wheelchair immediately, and she must wait for half an hour. She is unhappy and insists that she requested a wheelchair during the online reservation. What would be your response?

Politeness strategy	Responses
Bald on-record (2 tokens)	(1) I will get you a wheelchair right now. (2) There was a technical problem. You must wait for a wheelchair.
Negative politeness (6 tokens)	(3) We're so sorry for your inconvenience. We're trying our best to fix it right away. (4) I apologize. I will do my best to solve the problem. (5) Please forgive me. There could be a technical problem with the reservation. I will get back to you as soon as I can. (6) We're sorry for the inconvenience. This happens sometimes through online reservations. We will get you the wheelchair soon. (7) I'm very sorry for this. There must have been a flaw in the system. I will fix it as quickly as I can. (8) I'm sorry for this. Here is a voucher for compensation.

Table 7 illustrates the civility strategies employed in Situation 6. The majority of the responses (six) employed an “on-record with redressive action, negative politeness” technique, whilst two utilized an “on-record without redressive action, baldly” strategy.

VI. DISCUSSIONS

The findings align with the study's research objective: to examine the politeness methods employed by the Thai pre-service cruise ship crew during intercultural interactions. The participants employed merely three etiquette methods. The most prevalent reaction was “negative politeness”, garnering 26 replies. The subsequent category was “bald on-record”, which received 18 responses, followed by “positive politeness”, which garnered two comments. The results may stem from the nature of the exchanges, as the Thai pre-service cruise ship crew envisioned the challenges associated with addressing issues involving international cruise customers in several scenarios.

Additionally, the foreign passengers in the circumstances expressed grievances and exhibited a bad demeanor, suggesting a wish to engage in the issue or to involve others. Consequently, the participants were required to react. Consequently, they were incapable of opting out of executing FTAs. Furthermore, the participants' language proficiency constrained the diversity of their responses, leading them to refrain from using direct remarks. Moreover, in each instance, the foreign cruise passengers appeared to encounter challenges, and the participants' reactions did not exhibit the application of a positive politeness technique. It is crucial to note that offering compliments in challenging situations is nearly impossible. Participants in each scenario might have

either acknowledged the presence of the specific issue or expressed their feelings. These results may also stem from the necessity to communicate their messages explicitly and immediately while addressing issues. This may result from their inadequate English proficiency, prompting them to limit their conversation to brevity. Nonetheless, the brevity of the statements may have imparted an appearance of rudeness due to their directness. This led to three replies utilizing a positive politeness method.

Furthermore, numerous individuals employed the inclusive phrase “we” to express themselves on behalf of the organization. This may render utterances as though the speakers had acclimated to use positive politeness. Upon thorough examination, the term “we” in many instances does not denote both the speaker and the listener, hence lacking a sense of togetherness. Conversely, “we” in this context pertains to the Thai cruise officials and the cruise line, excluding the foreign cruise passengers. The officers' use of this term indicates that collectivism is more prominent than individuality in this environment, highlighting cultural disparities in intercultural communication [15]. The use of “we” involves other-face and mutual-face methods that are significant in collectivist societies, including Thailand and several Asian nations [16]. The subsequent replies exemplify the concept:

Situation 1, Response 2: *We're sorry about this, however, this is our responsibility to take care of everyone.*

Situation 5, Response 4: *We're sorry for this. You need to wait so that we can fix the problem.*

The analysis of low-context and high-context cultures revealed that the majority of Thai pre-service cruise staff employed a direct communication style in their duties. They appeared to be direct and consistently substantiated their assertions to enhance the persuasiveness of their discourse. Hall [17] categorized Thai individuals as part of a high-context culture, signifying their propensity for indirect communication. The speech acts documented in this study indicate that the Thai participants successfully adapted to an environment predominantly populated by passengers from Western nations, characterized by low-context cultures that prioritize direct communication [9].

In addition, certain participants utilized a constructive politeness method in addressing issues by demonstrating empathy towards the complaining passengers. This fostered a sense of kinship between the Thai pre-service cruise staff and the international cruise passengers. Instances of this method are seen in the subsequent responses:

Situation 1, Response 1: *I apologize for the inconvenience, and I understand your point; I must do this for safety.*

Situation 3, Response 4: *We're sorry for this inconvenience which may cause. I understand that this may seem difficult to understand. Let me explain more in detail.*

Moreover, the participants frequently utilized modal verbs to implicitly convey their opinions. Employing modal verbs mitigates tension between interlocutors by rendering communications less direct and less authoritative. This is shown in the subsequent statements:

Situation 1, Response 6: *I'm truly sorry. But I must follow the regulations. I could not let you in, I'm afraid.*

Situation 6, Response 5: *Please forgive me. There could be a technical problem with the reservation. I will get back to you as soon as I can.*

Negative politeness is employed when commands must be issued. Participants frequently issued directives to international cruise guests to ensure adherence to rules and regulations. This is shown in the subsequent examples:

Situation 1, Response 6: *I'm truly sorry. But I must follow the regulations. I could not let you in, I'm afraid.*

Situation 4, Response 5: *Prohibited items have been detected. Due to regulations, I need to open your baggage.*

Nevertheless, the statements were modified by incorporating apologies. This action rendered the messages more courteous. However, when participants issued orders, they frequently omitted apologies. This rendered the statements more direct. For instance:

Situation 3, Response 2: *It was our policy, so you need to comply.*

Situation 3, Response 3: *It is the regulation. You must do as I told you.*

The findings indicated that negative politeness was the predominant politeness approach employed. This contrasts with the findings of Rattanapian [11], who observed that Thai tourist police officers predominantly employed on-record civility without redress. This may result from their inadequate English skills and insufficient expertise in intercultural conversation, particularly regarding etiquette. Furthermore, the findings of this study indicated that participants experienced challenges in communicating in English, which was not their primary language. This aligns with the findings of Tipmontree [13], who discovered that the tourist police officers had inadequate English grammar and struggled to comprehend various English accents. This may also explain the bad politeness exhibited by numerous Thai pre-service cruise staff without any rectification. To clarify, when speaking succinctly and directly, they should not concern themselves with any potential grammatical errors. The results of this study indicated that the Thai pre-service cruise staff effectively managed issues with international cruise guests, attributed to their use of negative politeness and enough English proficiency. This may suggest that they possess a certain level of proficiency in communication during multicultural interactions.

The study's findings indicate that documented redressive action is the most successful politeness method. This may be attributable to the participants' functions as service providers. Nonetheless, several issues may arise during the embarkation process, as illustrated in the six scenarios inside the ODC. The passengers appeared to exhibit displeasure when faced with difficulties. The participants, as service providers, exhibited courtesy through redressive actions to alleviate further issues and to indicate their awareness of the difficulties while attempting to resolve them. Notably, while "on-record without redressive action" ranked as the second most utilized politeness technique, its frequency was

considerably less than that of "on-record with redressive action". This may result from the dynamic and fast-paced conditions in the actual settings when international cruise guests typically seek to embark on their vessels promptly. Due to their positions in customer-facing professions on the frontline, the participants were required to exhibit courtesy by rephrasing their language to engage with passengers professionally. Their performances dictated their success and failure in these multicultural interactions.

Some individuals unexpectedly included inaccurate information in their statements, potentially to mitigate conflictual circumstances. For instance:

Situation 5, Response 6: *I'm apologizing for this mistake. I will upgrade you to a better room for free.*

Situation 6, Response 8: *I'm sorry for this. Here is a voucher for compensation.*

Providing misleading information to suggest that a problem will be addressed can exacerbate conflict. This is due to the possibility that the complainants may not obtain what was assured to them. A potential explanation for the participants providing inaccurate information is that they were university students who had not genuinely completed the actual activities. Consequently, they may not have been sufficiently informed on what actions were permissible or impermissible in specific situations. Consequently, they may have generated spontaneous solutions to address specific issues. Upon seeking clarification from participants regarding this problem, we found that many were anxious and felt incapable of substantiating their assertions. Consequently, they had fabricated narratives independently. This illustrates the necessity for cruise agencies in Thailand to exercise caution when hiring college students for their initial contracts.

VII. CONCLUSION

The results correspond with the study's research aim: to investigate the politeness strategies utilized by the Thai pre-service cruise ship crew in intercultural exchanges. The participants utilized only three politeness techniques. The predominant response was "negative politeness". The next category was "bald on-record," succeeded by "positive politeness". The outcomes may arise from the characteristics of the interactions since Thai pre-service cruise ship personnel anticipated the difficulties related to managing issues involving overseas cruise clientele in various situations.

A. Recommendation

The outcomes of this study provide multiple avenues for future investigation. This study primarily investigated politeness techniques utilizing the ODC as the exclusive tool; however, subsequent research may consider examining additional pragmatic elements, including speech acts and politeness systems. Subsequent studies may incorporate non-linguistic components by employing additional methodologies such as audio recordings, observations, and interviews. This method facilitates the integration of verbal data and social semiotic elements, which are intrinsic to in-person interactions. Secondly, since the participants in this study were university students specializing in Cruise Tourism,

future studies may incorporate actual cruise crew members. Given their extensive expertise with foreign cruise guests, these officers may employ varied politeness methods when addressing issues in intercultural interactions. The situations presented in the ODCCT for this study were purely imaginary ones. The instrument employed in the next research may integrate various other conceivable scenarios. The researcher proposes employing various situations to determine if they yield divergent results.

B. Implications

Due to a scarcity of politeness studies pertaining to Thailand's cruise sector, this study possesses academic significance, rendering efforts to address this gap in the existing literature increasingly imperative. Language educators should integrate the concept of speech acts into their curricula, as indicated by the findings of studies like this one. The findings of this study indicate that the utilization of politeness methods in international interactions is significant, not solely for students specializing in Tourism. This is due to the fact that employees in the cruise sector frequently possess varied educational backgrounds. This study underscores the professional ramifications for existing and prospective cruise ship personnel, as well as for those in service-oriented occupations within ethnic settings. Finally, trainers employed by cruise lines and other service-oriented enterprises in Thailand may utilize the study's findings as a reference for creating high-quality instructional materials, manuals, and courses designed to train employees in this sector to become adept global communicators.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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