

การถ่ายโอนทางวัจnvัjnปภิบัติศาสตร์ : การใช้กลวิธีการตอบปภิเสธของนักศึกษาไทย ที่เรียนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศ

Pragmatic Transfer : Refusal Strategies of Thai EFL Learners

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บทคัดย่อ

วัตถุประสงค์ของงานวิจัยนี้เพื่อศึกษาการถ่ายโอนวัจnvัjnปภิบัติศาสตร์เกี่ยวกับการใช้กลวิธีการตอบปภิเสธ และศึกษาความแตกต่างของกลวิธีการตอบปภิเสธระหว่างการตอบแบบสอบถามแบบสนทนากลยุทธ์เปิด (WDCT) และแบบพูด (DRPT) ของนักศึกษาไทยที่เรียนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศ กลุ่มตัวอย่างในงานวิจัยนี้ แบ่งออกเป็น 3 กลุ่มได้แก่ กลุ่มนักศึกษาไทยที่ไม่ได้เรียนสาขาวิชาภาษาอังกฤษ, กลุ่มนักศึกษาไทยที่เรียนสาขาวิชาภาษาอังกฤษ และนักศึกษาชาวอเมริกัน

ผลการศึกษาวิจัยพบว่า มีการถ่ายโอนวัจnvัjnปภิบัติศาสตร์ในกลวิธีการตอบปภิเสธจากภาษาแม่หรือภาษาไทย ไปยังภาษาอังกฤษ นอกจากนี้ยังพบว่านักศึกษาไทยที่เรียนสาขาวิชาภาษาอังกฤษขาดการใช้กลวิธีการแสดงความเห็นหรือความรู้สึกที่เป็นบวก ซึ่งพบมากในกลวิธีการตอบปภิเสธของนักศึกษาชาวอเมริกัน และยังพบอีกว่า นักศึกษาไทยที่เรียนสาขาวิชาภาษาอังกฤษใช้กลวิธีของคุณน้อยกว่านักศึกษาชาวอเมริกัน แต่เน้นใช้กลวิธีการขอโทษมากกว่า

คำสำคัญ : การถ่ายโอนทางวัจnvัjnปภิบัติศาสตร์ กลวิธีการตอบปภิเสธ การตอบปภิเสธ

Abstract

The purposes of this study were 1) to study pragmatic transfer of Thai EFL learners, focusing on refusal strategies, and 2) to investigate the differences in refusal strategies used in Written Discourse Completion Tasks (WDCT) and Discourse Role-Play Tasks (DRPT). The participants in this study were native Thai learners who did not major in English, native Thai learners who majored in English, and American learners.

The results of the study revealed that pragmatic transfer was found in refusal strategies used by Thai EFL learners both in WDCT and DRPT. However, native Thai EFL learners lacked strategies in expressing positive opinions that were found in refusal making by American learners. Also, compared to American learners, Thai EFL learners expressed gratitude less frequently and expressed regret more frequently.

Keywords: pragmatic transfer, refusal strategies, refuse

Introduction

English is vastly used in intercultural communication (Lin, 2008) It has been accepted as the most widespread language in the world and used as international language to communicate between groups of people who have different first language (Kitao, 1996; Riemer, 2002) Althought, English has been considered as lingua franca which is employed by English native speakers and non-native English speakers (Wardhaugh, 2006 as cited in Suksiripakonchai, 2012) The misunderstanding in interpretation or expression are still the main problem due to the cultural differences is not considered in English teaching (Laopongharn & Sercombe, 2009) Since, the speakers are from different countries, what is considered as appropriateness in each culture might not be the same. As Al-Eryani described when non-native speakers communicate, they always transfer the conversational rules of their first language into the second (2007) As consequent, lacking of culturally relevant information is the most powerful condition in the pragmatic transfer's inhibition or promotion (Eisenstein & Bodman, 1986 as cited in Franch, 1998) This causes the communication breakdown and the speakers might sound rude or impolite.

In cross-cultural communication, refusals are also different from culture to culture (Chen & Yang, 2007) The speakers have to concern about relationship, status of the

interlocutors, and the situations so making a refusal in English is not an easy task for EFL learners. Different cultures employ different strategies and norms in conversation so when they refused, the choices of the strategies may vary across language and culture (Al-Eryani, 2007). The speakers are likely to face problems in performing refusal speech act appropriately in English. This can lead to misunderstanding and negative judgment in the interlocutors because the listener might misinterpret the speakers' intention. Many studies on pragmatic transfer have been done and well-documental (Abduse Satta, Che Lah, & Raja Sulieman, 2011; Al-Eryani, 2007; Chen & Yang, 2007; Choomchuen, 2005; Hong, 2011; Lauper, 1997; Oktoprimasakti, 2006; Sinem Gene & Teyildiz, 2009; Tanck, 2002; Umale, 2011; Wannarak, 2005; Yamagahashira, 2011) The written discourse completion tasks (WDCTs) were used as instruments in these studies. However, many researchers suggested that using WDCT still has weakness. The subjects may use different strategies when they respond in written and oral form and they may have opportunity to consider and edit their responds (Lauper, 1997; Tanck, 2002; Wannarak, 2005) Unfortunately, there are a few related works that study on the difference of using between written discourse completion tasks (WDCTs) and discourses role-play tasks (DRPTs) (Ling-Li & Wannarak, 2008; Rasekh & Alijanian, 2012; Yuan, 2001)

According to Kasper (1992) pragmatic transfer was referred as "the influence exerted by learners' pragmatic knowledge of languages and cultures other than L2 on their comprehension, production, and learning of L2 pragmatic information" This can be assumed that the speakers apply cultural rules from their L1 when they communicate in L2. So, the misunderstanding or miscommunication in cross-cultural communication is mainly caused by pragmatic transfer (Zegarac & Pennington, 2008) There are 2 main types of pragmatic transfer; positive transfer and negative transfer. Positive transfer took place when specific conversations of usage and use between L1 and L2 are shared (Kasper, 1992) In other words, if L1 speakers use the same structure, function, and distribution in the same context, and these features are consistent to the target language or L2, the existence of positive transfer is possible (Kasper, 2010) In contrast, negative pragmatic transfer can be observed when pragmatic features e.g structure, function, distribution are based on L1 but different from pragmatic perceptions and behaviors of L2 or target community (Kasper, 1992) Kasper also described linguistic action that is accepted or used regularly in learner's social may influence the same action which they carry out in the target language (1992) Pragmatic transfer can be caused due to L2 learners have

improperly generalized L1 pragmatic knowledge to L2 situation when they communicated (Zegarac & Pennington, 2008)

In the same situation, politeness is the one of crucial problem in cross-cultural communication. Since what is concerned as politeness in each culture is different and people do not share the same perception of how to be polite in target community. According to Pan, (2000), politeness is known as knowledge about how to behave appropriately in a certain situation and the way to maintain smooth interaction and good social relationship with other people. The approach of politeness in this study based on Scollon and Scollon's politeness system (1995). This system is based on a power differences (+P, -P), and on the distance between participants (+D, -D). They categorized the 3 main types of politeness system; the deference politeness system (-P, +D), the solidarity politeness system (-P, -D), and the hierarchical politeness system (+P, +/-D). Although, it contains 3 main types in this model, focusing on the participants' everyday life, this study mainly based on 2 politeness systems; the solidarity politeness system (-P, -D) referred to the system that the participants feel or express closeness to each other and the hierarchical politeness system (+P, +/-D) is that the participants recognize and pay respect in the social differences that one is in superior position and the other is in subordinate position.

Refusals are employed in all language, however, not all cultures are refuse in the same way. Saying 'no' is difficult task in any language because the speaker might risk offend with the interlocutor and the situation might get worse (Wannarak, 2005) For EFL learners, refusals are particularly difficult area since it requires pragmatic skills in order to refuse socially and culturally appropriate (Al-Eryani, 2007). As consequence, an inappropriate performance may lead to a misunderstanding and negative impression since refusals are sensitive to social variables such as gender, age, level of education, power, and social distance (Brown and Levinson, 1987; Fraser, 1990; Smith, 1998 as cited in Felix-Brasdefer, 2006) Thus, refusal is related to everyday life in all language but the way to refuse of each country might not be the same. It may appropriate for one but sound rude or impolite for another due to pragmatic transfer of L1. In contribute to elicitation tools, the written DCT is one of discourse elicitation tools but it does not reflect real-time interaction (Ling-Li & Wannarak, 2008) Since in real life, the speakers have no time to

realize what they must say in order to refuse while discourse role-play reflects real-time and face to face situation.

In conclusion, this study aims to investigate pragmatic transfer in Thai EFL students when they making refusal in different situations with person who has different social statuses and distances.

Purposes of the study

1. To investigate pragmatic transfer of Thai EFL learners, focusing on refusal strategies.
2. To compare the pragmatic transfer of Thai EFL learners between the use of written discourse completion tasks (WDCTs) and discourse role-play tasks (DRPTs).

Research Questions

1. What are refusal strategies used by Thai EFL learners in written discourse completion tasks (WDCTs) and discourse role-play tasks (DRPTs)?
2. Are there any differences of refusal strategies EFL learners use between written discourse completion tasks (WDCTs) and discourse role-play tasks (DRPTs)?
3. Is there any evidence of pragmatic transfer in Thai EFL learners in their use of refusal strategies?

Research Methodology

1. Participants of the study

The participants of this study were 10 native English speakers who were students from Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE), 30 non English major students from Khon Kaen University, and 30 English major students from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at Khon Kaen University. The data from all three groups were used to compare the similarities and differences of refusal strategies used. Data from native English speakers' group and native Thais' group were used as based line to compare with the strategies used by Thai EFL learners.

2. Research instruments

A questionnaire of written discourse completion tasks (WDCT) and discourse role-play task (DRPT) were used to collect data. In this study the WDCT and DRPT consisted of 8 situations related to everyday life which modeled from Beebe, Takahashi, & Uliss-Weltz, 1990; Lauper, 1997; Ling-Li & Wannarak, 2008; and Oktopimasakti, 2006 (table 1) The questionnaire and discourse role-play task were categorized into 4 types of eliciting acts; requests, invitations, suggestions, and offers. The situations will be varied in terms of social status based on 2 politeness system of Scollon and Scollon (1995); solidarity politeness system and hierarchical politeness system. Deference politeness system was not used in this study because in everyday life the students rarely interact with the person whom they are not familiar. The questionnaire of written discourse completion task (WDCT) and discourse role-play task were constructed into 2 versions; Thai version was responded by native Thai group and English version was responded by Thai EFL learners group and native English speakers group. The situations in WDCT were the same as in DRPT.

Table 1 : Types of eliciting acts

Situation	Eliciting acts	Types of politeness systems
1	Request: planning activities	Hierarchical politeness system
2	Request: borrowing money	Solidarity politeness system
3	Invitation: birthday	Solidarity politeness system
4	Invitation: attend a seminar	Hierarchical politeness system
5	Suggestion: doing more exercise	Solidarity politeness system
6	Suggestion: study advanced statistical course	Hierarchical politeness system
7	Offer: offering a ride	Solidarity politeness system
8	Offer: offering a ride	Hierarchical politeness system

3. Data collection and data analysis

The participants in each group were asked to do the discourse role-play tasks (DRPTs) and after that the questionnaires of written discourse completion tasks (WDCTs) were provided. In doing DRPTs, the participants were given a minute to read the detail for each situation and acted out with the interlocutors. Native Thai group were asked to read the situation and act out in Thai. For native English speakers and Thai EFL learners were asked to read and act out in English. The performances of all situations were audio-taped. After doing DRPTs, the questionnaires were provided to participants to in all situations in the questionnaires within 10 minutes to write down what they want to in each situation.

The transcriptions of WDCTs and DRPTs data were analyzed based on a sequence of semantic formulas proposed by Beebe et al., 1990 refusal strategy taxonomy (table 2). For example, a respondent refuse a friend's invitation for dinner saying "I'm sorry, I have theater tickets that night. Maybe I could come by later for a drink" can be coded as: I'm sorry [expression of regret]/ I have theater tickets that night [excuse]/ Maybe I could come by later for a drink [offer of alternative] (Beebe et al., 1990)

Table 2 : Refusal strategy taxonomy (Beebe et al. 1990)

Refusal strategy taxonomy	
I. Direct	
A. Performative	e.g. "I refuse"
B. Non-performative statement	1. "No" 2. Negative willingness/ability ("I can't". "I won't". "I don't think so".)
II. Indirectness	
A. Statement of regret	e.g. "I'm sorry..."; "I feel terrible..."
B. Wish	e.g. "I wish I could help you..."
C. Excuse, reason, explanation	e.g. "My children will be home that night"; "I have a headache"

Table 2 : (Continued)

Refusal strategy taxonomy	
II. Indirectness	
D. Statement of alternative	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I can do X instead of Y (e.g. “I’d rather...”; “I’d prefer...”) 2. Why don’t you do X instead of Y (e.g. “Why don’t you ask someone else?”)
E. Set condition for future or past acceptance	e.g. “If you had asked me earlier, I would have...”
F. Promise of future acceptance	e.g. “I’ll do it next time”; “I promise I’ll...” or “Next time I’ll...” --- using “will” of promise or “promise”
G. Statement of principle	e.g. “I never do business with friends”
H. Statement of philosophy	e.g. “One can’t be too careful”
I. Attempt to dissuade interlocutor	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Threat or statement of negative consequences to the requester (e.g. “I won’t be any fun tonight” to refuse an invitation) 2. Guilt trip (e.g. “waitress to customers who want to sit a while: “I can’t make a living off people who just order coffee.”) 3. Criticize the request/requester, etc. (statement of negative feeling or opinion); insult/attack (e.g. “Who do you think you are?”; “That’s terrible idea!”) 4. Request for empathy, and assistance by dropping or holding the request

Table 2 : (Continued)

Refusal strategy taxonomy	
II. Indirectness	
I. Attempt to dissuade interlocutor	5. Let interlocutor off the hook (e.g. “Don’t worry about it.” “That’s okay.” “You don’t have to.”) 6. Self-defense (e.g. “I’m trying to do my best.” “I’m doing all I can do.” “I’m not doing anything wrong”)
J. Acceptance that functions as a refusal	1. Unspecific or indefinite reply 2. Lack of enthusiasm
K. Avoidance	1. Nonverbal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Silence b. Hesitation c. Do nothing d. Physical departure 2. Verbal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Topic switch b. Joke c. Repetition of part of request, etc. (“Monday?”) d. Postponement (e.g. “I’ll think about it”) e. Hedging (e.g. “Gee, I don’t know.” “I’m not sure”)
III. Adjunct to refusals	
1. Statement of positive opinion/ feeling or agreement (“That’s a good idea...”; “I’d love to...”) 2. Statement of empathy (e.g. “I realize you are in a difficult situation.”) 3. Pause filler (e.g. “uhh”; “well”; “oh”; “uhm”) 4. Gratitude/ appreciation	

The data was counted as frequency and calculated as percentage of each formula for each situation to investigate the strategies that they used in WDCTs and DRPTs. After all of the semantic formulas were calculated, the similarity and difference across groups of subjects will be compared.

Results of the study

1. Refusing to requests

Table 3 : Refusal strategies used in refusing a professor's request to help planning the activities (Hierarchical politeness system)

Thai		Thai EFL		Native English Speakers	
DRPT	WDCT	DRPT	WDCT	DRPT	WDCT
1. Explanation (39%)	1. Explanation (42%)	1. Explanation (36%)	1. Explanation (39%)	1. Explanation (33%)	1. Explanation (39%)
2. Regret (23%)	2. Regret (22%)	2. Negative ability, Regret (24%)	2. Regret (33%)	2. Regret (28%)	2. Regret (29%)
3. Alternative (8%)	3. Negative ability, Alternative (7%)	3. Alternative (6%)	3. Negative ability (19%)	3. Positive opinion (20%)	3. Positive opinion (25%)

Table 3 data shows that expression was the most frequently used strategy when refusing request from a higher status person, in all three groups. The second most frequent refusal strategy used in all three groups was regret. Native Thais and Thai EFL learners employed similar strategies; negative ability and alternative in DRPTs and WDCTs but in different order. On the other hand, positive opinion was used by native English speakers both in DRPTs and WDCTs but this strategy was rarely used by Thai EFL learners.

Table 4 : Refusal strategies used in refusing a friend's request to lend her/him money
(Solidarity politeness system)

Thai		Thai EFL		Native English Speakers	
DRPT	WDCT	DRPT	WDCT	DRPT	WDCT
1. Explanation (57%)	1. Explanation (49%)	1. Explanation (48%)	1. Explanation (49%)	1. Explanation (46%)	1. Explanation, Regret (33%)
2. Alternative (19%)	2. Regret (15%)	2. Regret (34%)	2. Regret (36%)	2. Regret, Negative ability (15%)	2. Negative ability (22%)
3. Negative ability (12%)	3. Alternative (14%)	3. Alternative (8%)	3. Negative ability, Alternative (5%)	3. Alternative (8%)	3. Alternative (11%)

Explanation is the most frequently used strategy in all three groups both in WDCTs and DRPTs. The participants in all three groups employed similar strategies, namely, regret, negative ability, and alternative but in different order.

2. Refusing invitation

Table 5 : Refusal strategies used in refusing a friend's invitation to a birthday party
(Solidarity politeness system)

Thai		Thai EFL		Native English Speakers	
DRPT	WDCT	DRPT	WDCT	DRPT	WDCT
1. Explanation (43%)	1. Explanation (34%)	1. Explanation (34%)	1. Explanation (42%)	1. Explanation (33%)	1. Explanation, (29%)
2. Negative ability (22%)	2. Negative ability (24%)	2. Regret (24%)	2. Regret (26%)	2. Negative ability (20%)	2. Negative ability (25%)
3. Regret (11%)	3. Regret (19%)	3. Negative ability (20%)	3. Negative ability, (14%)	3. Positive feeling (19%)	3. Positive feeling (22%)

From the data in table 5, all three groups used explanation the most when refusing a familiar person of equal status. In this situation, native Thais and Thai EFL learners employed similar strategies which were *negative ability*, and regret but in a different order, both in discourse completion tasks (DRPTs) and written discourse completion tasks (WDCTs). Refusal strategies used by native English speakers were negative and *positive opinion*.

Table 6 : Refusal strategies used in refusing a professor's invitation to attend a seminar (Hierarchical politeness system)

Thai		Thai EFL		Native English Speakers	
DRPT	WDCT	DRPT	WDCT	DRPT	WDCT
1. Explanation (53%)	1. Explanation (49%)	1. Explanation (42%)	1. Explanation (42%)	1. Explanation (50%)	1. Explanation (29%)
2. Negative ability (16%)	2. Regret (17%)	2. Regret (19%)	2. Regret (27%)	2. Gratitude (17%)	2. Negative ability (25%)
3. Regret (13%)	3. Negative ability (14%)	3. Negative ability (17%)	3. Negative ability (16%)	3. Negative ability (15%)	3. Negative ability (13%)

The most frequently used strategy when refusing an invitation from a familiar person of high status for all three groups is explanation, both in discourse completion tasks (DRPTs) and written discourse completion tasks (WDCTs). In this situation, native Thais and Thai EFL learners employed the same second and third strategies, namely, regret and negative ability, but in a different order, both in DRPTs and WDCTs. While Thai EFL learners frequently used regret, native English speakers always employed gratitude.

3. Refusing suggestion

Table 7 : Refusal strategies used in refusing a friend's suggestion to do more exercise and stop eating snacks (Solidarity politeness system)

Thai		Thai EFL		Native English Speakers	
DRPT	WDCT	DRPT	WDCT	DRPT	WDCT
1. Explanation (45%)	1. Explanation (46%)	1. Explanation (35%)	1. Explanation (35%)	1. Explanation (33%)	1. Explanation (31%)
2. Let interlocutor off the hook (19%)	2. Acceptancce that function as a refusal (21%)	2. Negative ability (17%)	2. Negative ability (17%)	2. Acceptance that functions as a refusal (25%)	2. Accptance that functions as a refusal (25%)
3. Acceptance that function as a refusal (18%)	3. Let interlocutor off the hook (17%)	3. Acceptance that function as a refusal (12%)	3. Direct no (15%)	3. Gratitude (10%)	3. Gratitude (13%)

The most frequently used strategy in this situation is *explanation* in all groups. Native Thais used the same second and third strategies, namely, *let interlocutor off the hook* and *acceptance that function as a refusal* but in a different order. Native English speakers employed *acceptance that function as a refusal* and *gratitude* as the second and third most frequently used strategies. Interestingly, Thai EFL learners employed different strategies from native Thais and native English speakers; they employed *negative ability* as the second most frequent strategy used, both in discourse role-play tasks (DRPTs) and written discourse completion tasks (WDCTs). Thai EFL learners employed *direct no* which sound blunt when they refused a friend's suggestion in WDCTs.

Table 8 : Refusal strategies used in refusing a professor's suggestion to study an advanced statistical course (Hierarchical politeness system)

Thai		Thai EFL		Native English Speakers	
DRPT	WDCT	DRPT	WDCT	DRPT	WDCT
1. Explanation (52%)	1. Explanation (56%)	1. Explanation (42%)	1. Explanation (45%)	1. Explanation (36%)	1. Explanation (40%)
2. Negative ability (21%)	2. Alternative (15%)	2. Negative ability (18%)	2. Regret (19%)	2. Negative ability (29%)	2. Alternative (27%)
3. Alternative (16%)	3. Gratitude (8%)	3. Alternative (11%)	3. Negative ability (13%)	3. Alternative (14%)	3. Negative ability (20%)

Explanation is the most frequently used strategy employed by all three groups, both in discourse role-play tasks (DRPTs) and written discourse completion tasks (WDCTs). Thai EFL learners employed the second and third most frequently used strategies similar to native Thais and native English speakers when they responded in DRPTs; they used *negative ability* and *alternative* but in a different order. It was noted that native Thais employed *gratitude* when they responded in written discourse completion tasks (WDCTs) but it was found in very low percentages. Also, in WDCTs, Thai EFL learners used *regret* which was different than native Thais and native English speakers.

4. Refusing offer

Table 9 : Refusal strategies used in refusing an offer for a ride from a friend
(Solidarity politeness system)

Thai		Thai EFL		Native English Speakers	
DRPT	WDCT	DRPT	WDCT	DRPT	WDCT
1. Explanation (35%)	1. Let interlocutor off the hook (35%)	1. Explanation (29%)	1. Gratitude (32%)	1. Gratitude (32%)	1. Gratitude (35%)
2. Let interlocutor off the hook (34%)	2. Explanation (29%)	2. Gratitude (26%)	2. Explanation (29%)	2. Explanation (30%)	2. Alternative (26%)
3. Self-defense (20%)	3. Gratitude, Self-defense (17%)	3. Self-defense (11%)	3. Alternative (12%)	3. Alternative (15%)	3. Explanation, Let interlocutor off the hook (17%)

The data from table 9 shows that explanation was employed by all three groups, both in discourse role-play tasks (DRPTs) and written discourse completion tasks (WDCTs), but in a different order. The group of native Thais employed *let interlocutor off the hook*, *self-defense*, and *gratitude*. In Thai EFL learners' refusals, they employed *gratitude* and *self-defense* in DRPTs, which were similar to native Thais. Interestingly, Thai EFL learners' responses in WDCTs were similar to native English speakers. They employed *gratitude* and *alternative*, but in a different order.

Table 10 : Refusal strategies used in refusing an offer for a ride from a friend's parents
(Hierarchical politeness system)

Thai		Thai EFL		Native English Speakers	
DRPT	WDCT	DRPT	WDCT	DRPT	WDCT
1. Let interlocutor off the hook (40%)	1. Let interlocutor off the hook (34%)	1. Gratitude (34%)	1. Explanation (37%)	1. Explanation (46%)	1. Let interlocutor off the hook (35%)
2. Explanation (37%)	2. Explanation (30%)	2. Explanation (31%)	2. Gratitude (36%)	2. Gratitude (31%)	2. Explanation (26%)
3. Self-defense (15%)	3. Gratitude (24%).	3. Let interlocutor off the hook, self-defense (10%)	3. Self-defense (13%)	3. Let interlocutor off the hook (15%)	3. Gratitude (22%)

In refusing an offer from a person of higher status, the data in table 10 shows that Thai EFL learners transferred strategies used from L1 into L2. Thai EFL learners and native Thais used *gratitude*, *explanation*, *self-defense*, and *Let interlocutor off the hook* but in a different order. The refusal strategies employed by native English speakers were *explanation*, *gratitude*, and *let interlocutor off the hook* both in discourse role-play tasks (DRPTs) and written discourse completion tasks (WDCTs). Hence, *self-defense* was not found in the responses of native English speakers.

Conclusion

The conclusion of this study based on the 3 research questions is as follows:

Research question 1 : What refusal strategies are used by Thai EFL learners in written discourse completion tasks (WDCTs) and discourse role-play tasks (DRPTs)?

In general, Thai EFL learners always employed the following refusal strategies in the responses in discourse role-play tasks (DRPTs) and written discourse completion tasks (WDCTs): *direct no, negative ability, regret, explanation, statement of alternative, let interlocutor off the hook and self-defense*. These were similar to refusal strategies employed by native Thais. However, the strategies which were found in native English speakers were *negative ability, regret, explanation, alternative, let interlocutor off the hook, acceptance that functions as a refusal, positive opinion and gratitude*. In the results presented in the previous section, it was revealed that Thai EFL learners employed *regret* more than native English speakers. In contrast, Thai EFL learners employed *gratitude* less than native English speakers. It was interesting that Thai EFL learners used *positive opinion* very little; this strategy was found in very low frequency.

Research question 2 : Are there any differences in refusal strategies that Thai EFL learners used between written discourse completion tasks (WDCTs) and discourse role-play tasks (DRPTs)?

Generally, the refusal strategies Thai EFL learners used with written discourse completion tasks (WDCTs) and discourse role-play tasks (DRPTs) were similar. However, in situations of refusing suggestions and offers, the strategies used with them were different; *direct no* was employed only in refusing a suggestion from a friend when they responded in WDCTs. Thai EFL learners used *regret* in WDCTs when they refused a suggestion from a professor but they used *alternative* in DRPTs in the same situation. *Let interlocutor off the hook and self-defense* was employed only in DRPTs when refusing an offer from a friend.

Research question 3 : Is there any evidence of pragmatic transfer in Thai EFL learners in their use of refusal strategies?

According to the result, negative pragmatic transfer appeared in most cases. Thai EFL learners always applied the rule of refusal strategies from their L1 when they

communicated in L2. In refusing a request from a professor (sit.1), they employed *negative ability*, which was found in refusals by native Thais but not in native English speakers (table. 3). When refusing in the situation of invitations from a professor (sit.3) and from a friend (sit.4), they employed *regret*, which was similar to native Thais. However, native English speakers employed *positive opinion* when making refusals to a request from a professor (sit.1) and to invitation from a friend (sit.3). In addition, when they refused offers from a friend (sit.7) and from a friend's parents (sit.8), *self-defense* was used. This strategy was also found in native Thais, when they refused in the same situations.

Discussion

1. The differences in strategies used

The results of this study show that Thai EFL learners employed refusal strategies similar to native Thais in many situations. That is to say, pragmatic transfer from L1 into L2 is likely to exist. Generally, the strategies used between discourse role-play tasks (DRPTs) and written discourse completion tasks (WDCTs) were not different. Based on the result of the study, it is noted that *regret* was employed by Thai EFL learners more frequently than native English speakers. Thai EFL learners used it in refusing requests, invitations and suggestions. Native English speakers used *regret* in refusing requests and frequently employed *positive opinion* in refusing requests and invitations from a person of higher status, while Thai EFL learners lacked this strategy. This related to Wannarak's study (2005), she stated that Thai EFL learners use *regret* because they probably want to show their politeness and think that it is appropriate. In addition, they use *regret* in order to express their feelings of guilt about being unable to comply with the interlocutor's wish (2005)

It was also noted that Thai EFL learners employed *gratitude* in very low frequency while Native English speakers always used this strategy. In this study, they employed *gratitude* only in the situation of refusing an offer from a friend's parents. Wannarak (2005) found that Thai EFL learners were aware that they must be polite when they speak English. Furthermore, in Thai culture, the children are taught that they have to say *thank you* when someone has done something for them or offered them something.

2. Thai EFL learners lacked of cultural realization

The result of this study also showed that Thai EFL learners did not realize about the cultural differences when they communicate in English. They employed the strategies similar to the native Thai speakers in many situations according to the result. They were likely to commit pragmatic failure in cross-cultural communication. For example, they employed *self-defense* in refusing offers, as native Thais did in L1. The learners might cause offence due to pragmatic failure and be considered impolite. Zegarac and Pennington (2004) claimed that lack of cultural realization in intercommunication might lead to miscommunication or misinterpretation.

Recommendations

1. In the process of collecting data, it should not be done continuously since the participants might remember or recognize what they have responded earlier. They might use the same or similar strategies when they respond in later materials. Thus, in further study, more time should be allowed between collecting data from discourse role-play tasks (DRPTs) and written discourse completion tasks (WDCTs).
2. English proficiency or experience in English speaking countries should be used as a factor to investigate pragmatic transfer.
3. The interlocutors who interact with the subjects should be native speakers of the target language to make the situations be more realistic and the subjects have a chance to interact with native speakers.
4. From the results of this study, Thai EFL learners lacked positive opinion and employed less gratitude than native English speakers. When teaching refusals in English, teachers should teach the use of these strategies when making refusals, in order to develop students' pragmatic abilities. EFL learners should be taught to aware of the differences between the native and target language speech (Eslami-Rasekh, 2005)

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