

# Interlanguage Productions of Student-Lecturer Disagreements in Classroom: Comparing Thai EFL Learners' Pragmatic Knowledge

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## Abstract

The study's chief goal is to compare two groups of Thai EFL learners in terms of their pragmatic knowledge when they express student-lecturer disagreements in English in a classroom context. The two groups of Thai EFL learners had different intensities of interaction (*i.e. more frequently versus less frequently*) with English inside the classroom. Their levels of English proficiency were equally intermediate, based on their average scores from an English proficiency test. Although disagreements were in identical contexts, it was postulated that their pragmatic knowledge was divergent due to the imbalanced frequencies of interaction with English in the classroom. The data were collected by a means of videotaping two selected classrooms of 18–20 students for 30 hours for 10 consecutive weeks. The results show that those who had more intensity of interaction with English in the classroom (henceforth the EFL<sub>e</sub>) normally utilized on-record strategies, that is, they disagreed with the lecturer explicitly. By contrast, those who had less intensity of interaction with English in the classroom (henceforth the EFL<sub>t</sub>) normally used negative politeness strategies, that is, they modified their disagreements through imposition minimizers. Thus, the variable was confirmed to invoke dissimilarities between the two groups in terms of their pragmatic knowledge; intensity of interaction with English inside the classroom has been proved to influence the Thai EFL learners' pragmatic knowledge.

**Keywords:** Pragmatic knowledge, Politeness strategies, Disagreement

## 1. Introduction

Dating back to the Mid-60s, Chomsky (1965) introduced the concept of linguistic knowledge that enabled native speakers of a language to be fluent due to their (subconscious) knowledge of pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar. Linguistic knowledge has been claimed to govern the speakers' successful performance. Later, Chomsky's concept of linguistic knowledge and performance was called into question by Hymes' (1962, 1971) concept of communicative competence. Hymes proposed that linguistic knowledge alone did not necessarily warrant a speaker's successful communication. In any given context, the speaker should also be capable of communicating in pragmatically appropriate manners. The same holds true for learners. To be considered 'communicative,' the learners' use of a target language is expected to be not only grammatically correct but also pragmatically appropriate (cf. Canale & Swain, 1980 and Bachman & Palmer, 1996).

Bardovi-Harlig (2013, pp.68–69) simply defined 'being pragmatically appropriate' as when a (native) speaker knows 'how-to-say-what-to-whom-when.' She expanded the principle of appropriateness to L2 learners and explicated that the learners become to know 'how-to-say-what-to-whom-when' in a target language. Potentially, the process of acquiring L2 pragmatic knowledge can consume considerable time, especially when the learner's intensity of interaction with a target language is low (Dietrich, Klein and Noyau, 1995; Kasper & Rose, 2002 and Bardovi-Harlig & Bastos, 2011). Bardovi-Harlig (2013, p.80) contended that intensity of interaction should encompass the notions of inputs available to the learners in terms of the quantity and quality-in other words, how often the learners are allowed to be exposed to the target language and what types of language the learners encounter. Kasper & Rose (2002, p.237) presented a rather different view about the intensity of interaction. They contended that learners' pragmatic knowledge can be developed through either explicit or implicit teaching of pragmatics or even when pragmatic knowledge is not a learning objective. The learners (sub)consciously acquire L2 pragmatic knowledge regardless of how pragmatics is taught in class.

The current study is a part of my ongoing Ph.D. dissertation. In the dissertation, two groups of native speakers (of Thai (henceforth the NT), and of English (henceforth the NE)) were tested in terms of their pragmatic knowledge when using their native languages in student-lecturer disagreements in the same context. The preliminary results instantiated that the NT and the NE did not use the same pragmatic knowledge. The NT most often used negative politeness strategies (48.61%), while the NE most frequently utilized on-record strategies (44.57%). In this study, two groups of the Thai EFL learners, who had different degrees of intensity of interaction with English inside the classroom, were compared in terms of their pragmatic knowledge. In these classes, pragmatic knowledge in English was not taught at all. Following Kasper & Rose (2002), the Thai EFL learners are surmised to have dissimilar pragmatic knowledge; they use different politeness strategies when expressing their student-lecturer disagreements.

## 2. Literature Review

In ordinary talk exchanges, disagreement is an expression of a view or an opinion that is

different from that expressed by the first speaker (Rees-Miller, 2000; Kakava, 2002; Edstrom, 2004; Sifianou, 2012). Traditionally, disagreement has been construed as an inherently positive-face threatening act (Leech, 1983; Brown & Levinson, 1987). According to the traditional view, disagreement always jeopardizes the first speaker's positive face. Several studies on disagreement tried to present characteristics of disagreement from novel perspectives, and these characteristics can be subsumed as dichotomies, such as face-threatening (e.g., Brown & Levinson; Leech, 1983) versus face-enhancing (e.g., Schiffrin, 1984; Angouri & Locher, 2012), dispreferred (e.g., Sacks, 1987; Pomerantz, 1984) versus preferred (e.g., Tannen, 1984; Kakava, 1993), impolite (e.g., Rees-Miller, 2000; Walkinshaw, 2007) versus polite (e.g., Tracy, 2008; Angouri & Tseliga, 2010), and confrontational (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig & Salsbury, 2004) versus non-confrontational (e.g., Edstrom, 2004; Habib, 2008). The presence of these dichotomies earnestly urges future studies to define the disagreement more carefully since it can be a multidimensional speech act rather than a traditionally face-threatening act. However, the disagreement per se cannot be straightforwardly labeled as face-threatening or face-enhancing. Its social and cultural constraints should be taken into account (e.g., Brown & Levinson, 1987; Rees-Miller, 2000; Kakava, 2002; Locher, 2004; Edstrom, 2004). Disagreement among family members and intimate friends, for instance, can be socially non-confrontational (e.g., Kakava, 2002; Edstrom, 2004). Disagreement in East-European Jewish communities, for example, can be culturally preferred (e.g., Schiffrin, 1984; Kotthoff, 1993). In the current study, disagreement is performed in an institutional context where the students are marked with an inferior power status compared to the lecturer (e.g., Rees-Miller, 2000; Walkinshaw, 2007). From this point of departure, disagreement is initially assumed to be face-threatening, dispreferred, impolite and confrontational due to the asymmetrical power relationship between the students and the lecturer.

In the coarse-grained analysis, disagreement is intuitively presumed to be face-threatening. Brown & Levinson (1987, pp.94–227) proposed 'politeness strategies' to counteract the threats of any face-damaging speech acts. In particular, if an expression of disagreement connotes a threat to the hearer; the speaker should mitigate or counteract the threat in order to eradicate potential conflicts between the interlocutors. It is important to clarify the term 'politeness' because people tend to perceive 'politeness' literally differently. Terkourafi (2005; 2011) delineated two views on politeness and distinguished them as 'politeness1' and 'politeness2.' The former encompasses an ordinary definition<sup>1</sup> of 'politeness' taken from any dictionary. Politeness1 is claimed to be nurtured (Terkourafi, 2011, p.160). In other words, polite manners and etiquettes are trainable or teachable (e.g., table manners, ritual etiquettes, personal grooming and so forth). Politeness1 is rather culture-specific. It is because table manners, for instance, are sure to be different across languages and cultures. In contrast, the latter originated from the universal concepts of 'face' (Goffman, 1967); all humans by nature own two types of face-wants: (i) the want to be liked (the 'positive face') and (ii) the want to be free from imposition (the 'negative face'). Since everyone has two kinds of face-want, we basically deal with four facets of face from two parties in any social interactions; namely (i)

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<sup>1</sup> Politeness is the behavior that is respectful and considerate of other people (Oxford Dictionary).

the speaker's positive face, (ii) the speaker's negative face, (iii) the hearer's positive face and (iv) the hearer's negative face. If disagreement happens to threaten the positive face of the hearer (Brown & Levinson, 1987, pp.65–68), the speaker is motivated to save the hearer's face so that their social concord will not be disruptive. At this point, politeness<sup>2</sup> appears to be more predominantly relevant to my study when disagreement labeled as a face-threatening act is performed by learners who are literally understood to be inferior to the lecturer (e.g. Rees-Miller, 2000; Kakava, 2002; Walkinshaw, 2009).

There are a handful of studies on interlanguage disagreements that looked at intensity of interaction with English inside the classroom and investigated how the variable affected the learners' pragmatic knowledge (Kakava, 2002; Walkinshaw, 2007). These studies also speculated the impact of intensity of interaction with English outside the classroom context. Walkinshaw (2007), for instance, conducted a longitudinal study and noticed that the Japanese learners of English became more pragmatically competent over a period of ten weeks living in Christchurch, New Zealand, where the learners had ample opportunities to interact with English both inside and outside classrooms. It is implied that the learners' intensity of interaction with English positively engenders development of L2 pragmatic knowledge. In contrast, there are abundant studies on interlanguage disagreement that inspected the correlation between the learners' levels of proficiency in English and their pragmatic knowledge (e.g., Xuehua, 2006; Chen, 2006; Behnam & Niroomand, 2011; Choyimah & Latief, 2014). However, these studies exhibited controversial discussion and inconclusive results. Some studies (e.g., Xuehua, 2006; Choyimah & Latief, 2014) found out that the learners with high proficiency in English had genuinely acquired sophisticated pragmatic knowledge. Their expressions of disagreement were refined with complicated linguistic structures used to minimize the threat of disagreement. On the other hand, results from other studies (e.g., Chen, 2006; Behnam & Niroomand, 2011) declared that the learners with high levels of English proficiency did not abide by the same presumption.

### **3. Methodology**

#### *3.1 Participants*

Two groups of the Thai EFL learners were purposefully selected to control the research variables. All participants were native speakers of Thai. They were third-year undergraduate students from two universities<sup>2</sup> around Bangkok. The EFLe more frequently interacted with English used in 34 subjects within three academic years, while the EFLt less frequently interacted with English used in 4 subjects within three academic years. The EFLe majored in Management Information System whilst the EFLt majored in Tourism and Hotel Management. The participants' demography and details of their classes are elaborated in Table 1.

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<sup>2</sup> The selection of these two classrooms was based on a pilot study. One is Rangsit University located 30 km north of Bangkok. The other is Burapha University situated 60 km south of Bangkok.

Table 1. Participants and their Classroom Contexts

	<u>EFLe</u>	<u>EFLt</u>
<b>Participants</b>		
Male: Female	9:11	7:11
Nationality and Native Language	Thai	Thai
Age Range	20–22	20–22
Level of education	3 <sup>rd</sup> year	3 <sup>rd</sup> year
English proficiency	intermediate	intermediate
Intensity of interaction with English inside the classroom	thirty-four courses	four courses
<b>Classroom context</b>		
Subject	Oral English	Oral English
Class period	3 hrs per week	3 hrs per week
Instructor [Age, Nationality and Gender]	56 American Male	58 American Male
Language of instruction	English	English

The learners' English proficiency levels were measured by their scores from the same English proficiency test taken before their university admissions. The average scores from the EFLe and the EFLt were 53.33% and 52.00%, respectively. The EFLe's maximum score was 65.33% while the minimum score was 44.00%. The EFLt's maximum score was 60.00% whereas the minimum score was 43.33%. The intensity of interaction with English outside the classroom context was rather restricted. The learners' self-reports indicated that they all interacted with English (i.e. both productive and receptive dimensions) less than 5 hours per week outside the classroom. The lecturers were native speakers of English who had profound teaching skills at a tertiary level. Andrew taught the EFLe students, while Paul taught the EFLt students. Andrew and Paul had never taught these classes before because they were assigned to teach third- and fourth-year undergraduate students and some postgraduate students. Andrew and Paul were ideal English teachers who consistently invited their students to participate in class. They provided an equal opportunity for everyone to speak out in class. Andrew and Paul both addressed the students by their first names. Based on my observation, they both were friendly; as a consequence, students did not feel embarrassed to talk to them in English. Andrew and Paul could eventually speak and understand Thai but were not fluent.

### 3.2 Research Instrument

Collecting the naturally-occurring data has been reported to have both advantages and disadvantages (e.g., Kasper & Dahl, 1991; Hartford & Bardovi-Harlig, 1992; Cohen, 1996; Tseng, 1999; Yuan, 2001; Felix-Brasdefer, 2003). On the one hand, the obtained data are purported to be spontaneous, reflecting what the speakers actually say rather than what they think they are supposed to say. With this regard, the collected data should be a rich source of pragmatic structures. On the other hand, there is no guarantee that adequate samples of disagreement will be found in a natural setting, particularly during the time when the classroom has been videotaped. It would likely consume considerably more time to gather sufficient data. In addition, it is less probable to control contextual variables such as power, social distance and ranking of imposition (cf. Brown & Levinson, 1987, pp.76–84) in natural settings. Even though there are numerous drawbacks to gather the data by videotaping the

classrooms, I decided to do so because the primary objective here is to compare two groups of Thai EFL learners in terms of their pragmatic knowledge when disagreeing with their lecturer in an authentic environment. Furthermore, due to the fact that L2 pragmatic knowledge was not explicitly taught, the participants' pragmatic knowledge should by no means be explicitly elicited either (cf. Bardovi-Harlig, 2013, p.73).

### *3.3 Data Collection*

Each classroom was videotaped for three hours every week for ten consecutive weeks. Prior to the procedure of videotaping, an information sheet and a consent form were distributed to all participants. All students reserved the right to accept or refuse the invitation to be involved in the project at any time. A videotape recorder was set up in front of the class fifteen minutes before the beginning of each class. The videotape recorder mainly captured the learners' interactions with their lecturer.

### *3.4 Data Analysis*

Disagreements that appeared in the first week of videotaping were deliberately removed from the analysis to ensure that the presence of the recording device has marginal effects on the analyzing data. This was done to allow all participants at least a week to be familiar with the data collection method. Disagreements that appeared after the first week were extracted and transcribed in a form of talk exchanges that embed at least one token of student-lecturer disagreement (see turn 5 in Extract 1).

- Extract 1: 1.L: Hard working  
2.L: (long pause) Is that POSitive or negative  
3.Ss: (silent)  
4.L: Many /k<sup>h</sup>ōn t<sup>h</sup>āi/ would say negative  
5.S: (long pause) (the student shakes his head) (P) No (P)  
6.L: No(/) hard working is positive(/)  
7.S: I don't know

In this study, a token of disagreement comprises a disagreement marker<sup>3</sup> with or without propositional content of disagreement. A provision of justification is discarded from the disagreement token because the justification in itself may not genuinely convey an

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<sup>3</sup> A disagreement marker refers to a lexical or a syntactic unit that, when standing on its own, can express disagreement semantically. The presence of these markers may exclude the propositional content of disagreement. In this study, there are three kinds of disagreement markers that can independently convey a semantic meaning of disagreement. They are (i) negative particles ('no,' 'not'), (ii) conventional expressions ('I don't think so,' 'I don't think like that') and (iii) a performative verb in a declarative sentence ('I disagree') and another performative verb in a negative sentence ('I don't agree').



illocutionary force of disagreement. The locutionary act of justification semantically aims to give a reason to support or clarify a point of disagreement. All tokens of disagreement produced by both groups of the participants were then summed up. The sum of all disagreement tokens was then converted into percentages for compatible comparisons. Finally, each token of disagreement was analyzed in terms of politeness strategies. At this stage, an anonymous rater who shared the same research interests assisted in cross-checking the accuracy of the analysis.

### 3.4.1 Politeness Strategies

In the current study, sets of politeness strategies in Brown & Levinson's (1987) framework are adopted as a starting point. There are four sets of politeness strategies, which are (i) on-record strategies, (ii) positive politeness strategies, (iii) negative politeness strategies and (iv) off-record strategies. These sets of strategies refer to linguistic forms that are used to express disagreement, which is traditionally labeled as a face-threatening act (Brown and Levinson, 1987; Leech, 1983). On-record strategies are used when the speaker intends to perform his disagreement unambiguously without any mitigation. Positive politeness strategies and negative politeness strategies are used when the speaker deliberately counteracts the potential face-threat of disagreement and such mitigation is oriented towards the hearer's positive and negative face respectively. Off-record strategies are used when the speaker wants to express his disagreement ambiguously. All politeness strategies were adapted from four empirical studies on disagreement, focusing on linguistic features (Beebe & Takahashi, 1989; Dogancay-Aktuna & Kamisli 1996; Rees-Miller, 2000 and Walkinshaw, 2009).

Table 2. Politeness Strategies Used in this Study

Sets of Politeness Strategies	Politeness Strategies
On-record	Use a negative particle 'no' to disagree with H unambiguously
	Use a performative verb 'disagree' in a declarative sentence to disagree with H unambiguously
	Utilize a declarative sentence to disagree with H unambiguously
	Begin with a negative particle 'no', followed by a phrase to disagree with H unambiguously
	Begin with a negative particle 'no', followed by a declarative sentence to disagree with H unambiguously
Positive politeness	Preface a discourse connective 'but' with a positive comment and disagree with H
	Preface a discourse connective 'but' with an agreement token and disagree with H
	Use a performative verb 'agree' in a declarative sentence to show an agreement and disagree with H
Negative politeness	Mitigate S's disagreement with a lexical hedge
	Soften S's disagreement with the conditional sentence structure and a lexical hedge
	Downgrade S's disagreement with a lexical hedge and 'I think'
	Use 'I think' to mitigate S's disagreement
	Utilize a conventional expression "I don't think so" to disagree with H

	Ask a question to disagree with H
Off-record	Give H a clue in a declarative sentence to disagree with H ambiguously
	Use a rhetorical question to disagree with H ambiguously
	Use ellipsis to disagree with H ambiguously

#### 4. Results

Over twenty-seven hours, the EFLt and the EFLe produced 67 and 61 tokens of disagreement in English respectively. These participants utilized all sets of politeness strategies to disagree with their lecturer in the classroom context. In 67 tokens of disagreement, the EFLt utilized (i) on-record strategies in 13 tokens (19.41%), (ii) positive politeness strategies in 8 tokens (11.94%), (iii) negative politeness strategies in 39 tokens (58.21%) and (iv) off-record strategies in 7 tokens (10.44%). In 61 tokens of disagreement, the EFLe utilized (i) on-record strategies in 34 tokens (55.74%), (ii) positive politeness strategies in 9 tokens (14.76%), (iii) negative politeness strategies in 15 tokens (24.59%) and (iv) off-record strategies in 3 tokens (4.91%).

The EFLt normally used negative politeness strategies to disagree with their lecturer in English. They utilized six<sup>4</sup> strategies to assure that their lecturer's negative face was minimally interfered with and could possibly be free from imposition. The participants most frequently used 'I think' as a preface to downgrade the force of disagreements (see Extract 2).

- Extract 2**
- 1.L: Listening to English is easier than reading it
  - 2.S: (short pause) When you read, you can read=
  - 3.S: =many times many times as you want
  - 4.S: But in listening, you can listen just once
  - 5.S: (short pause) I think reading in English is easier /k<sup>h</sup>ʌ ʔā:cjā:n/

Extract 2 illustrates that an EFLt student used 'I think' (a quality hedge according to Brown & Levinson, 1987, p.164) to initiate her disagreement in turn 5. The use of this quality hedge implies that the truth of her utterance is subjective. Although the primary source of information derives from her personal thought, 'I think' also plays a role as a hedge to diminish the force of disagreement (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p.164; Locher, 2004, pp.122–124). Following Locher (2004), 'I think' can either decrease or increase face-threats of an act, depending on other (para)linguistic features that concur (Rees-Miller, 2000; Kakava, 2002). In other words, to consider whether 'I think' is a hedge or a booster is relatively context-dependent. In excerpt 2, however, the use of 'I think' is more likely to be a hedge because its production was delayed. The student did not spontaneously disagree with the lecturer. Her initial contribution in turns 2, 3, 4 aims to clarify her point of disagreement that people are normally allowed to go over a written text but never in a spoken text. Providing such a justification, the student happens to construct a logical argument. Apart from prefacing her disagreement with 'I think,' there is credible evidence that the student does not desire to

<sup>4</sup> Six strategies are (i) mitigate S's disagreement with a lexical hedge, (ii) soften S's disagreement with the conditional sentence structure and a lexical hedge, (iii) downgrade S's disagreement with a lexical hedge and 'I think', (iv) use 'I think' to mitigate S's disagreement, (v) utilize a routine expression 'I don't think so' to disagree with H and (vi) ask a question to disagree with H.



impinge on the lecturer's negative face. Considering the syntactic structure of the disagreement, it was encoded in a compatible structure, which is syntactically identical to the lecturer's. A marked difference lies in the absence of the word 'listening.' The student did not reiterate the entire sentence; as a consequence, the lecturer's negative face was not openly imposed. Additionally, the student encoded two polite words in Thai, which are (i) /k<sup>h</sup>ʌ/ the

Thai polite particle for female speakers in a falling tone to end her statement and (ii) /ʔā:cjā:n/ an address term for lecturers, after the polite particle. The use of these lexical items envisages the hierarchical relationship between the lecturer and the student in a respectful fashion (Kummer (2005, pp.325–331).

On the other hand, the EFLe normally utilized on-record strategies when disagreeing with their lecturer in English. They used five<sup>5</sup> strategies to warrant that their communicative intention was unambiguously expressed. In other words, their expressions of disagreement were not mitigated at all. The EFLe most frequently began their disagreements with a negative particle 'no' and then a declarative sentence to disagree with the lecturer unambiguously (see Extract 3).

- Extract 3:**
- 1.L: An aisle seat is better than a window seat
  - 2.S: (short pause) No (short pause) (P)the window seat is better(P)
  - 3.L: (long pause) In what way you think the window seat is better(/)
  - 4.S: (short pause) Well they they can look out the window

Extract 3 demonstrates that an EFLe student initiated her expression of disagreement with a negative particle 'no' (according to Locher (2004, pp.143–145), it is a non-mitigating disagreement strategy). After another short pause, the student continued to encode the propositional content of disagreement in a declarative sentence to argue with the lecturer that a window seat (i.e. a seat arrangement in a cabin compartment of airplane) is better than an aisle seat. Considering the student's linguistic realization, she did not use any linguistic devices to mitigate the force of her disagreement. Instead, her expression of disagreement was performed unambiguously. Yet the student did not immediately disagree with the lecturer. Her explicit disagreement was delayed by a short pause. In addition to that, her propositional content of disagreement was uttered in a soft volume of voice. According to Kakava (2002, pp.1557–1562), these paralinguistic features can be used to weaken the force of disagreement. In this extract, the student did not spontaneously clarify her point of disagreement. After a long pause in turn 3, the lecturer appeared to ask her with an open-ended question to deliberately elicit a clarification response (i.e. in what way do you think the window seat is better). Then the student, albeit reluctantly, explicated that people sitting on a window seat are likely to enjoy looking at the view outside of the aircraft.

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<sup>5</sup> Five strategies are (i) use a negative particle 'no' to disagree with H unambiguously, (ii) use a performative verb 'disagree' in a declarative sentence to disagree with H unambiguously (iii) utilize a declarative/negative sentence to disagree with H unambiguously and (iv) begin with a negative particle 'no', followed by a phrase to disagree with H unambiguously and (v) begin with a negative particle 'no', followed by a declarative/negative sentence to disagree with H unambiguously.

## 5. Discussion and Conclusions

The variable of intensity used in this current study was demonstrated to affect the Thai EFL learners' use of politeness strategies when performing student-lecturer disagreements. The findings support Kasper and Rose's (2002, p.237) hypothesis that the EFL learners' pragmatic knowledge can be influenced no matter how pragmatic knowledge is instructed during the class periods. Recently, there have been a small number of interlanguage studies on disagreement that investigated the influences of intensity of interaction with English inside the classroom context (Kakava, 2002; Walkinshaw, 2007). It is possibly but not restrictedly due to Kasper and Rose's (2002, pp. 234–236) position that L2 classroom is an uninteresting context to investigate the EFL learners' development of pragmatic knowledge. Kasper and Rose (2002), however, refer to them as traditional classrooms where students rarely participated in class activities and the lecturers had predominant time of talking. The chosen classrooms, however, disconfirmed Kasper and Rose's consensus because they were not teacher-fronted classrooms. Andrew and Paul, for instance, encouraged the students to speak out in class. Bardovi-Harlig's (2013, p.80) claim regarding intensity of interaction of a target language that should also consider the inputs available in terms of their quality and quantity is plausible. Non-traditional EFL classrooms should be one of the ideal environments for EFL learners to be exposed to the target language due to the quality and quantity of the inputs available.

In addition, disagreements performed in the identical context by different groups of the participants are not necessarily perceived equally. The EFLt might interpret student-lecturer disagreements performed in the classroom context as face-threatening (e.g., Brown & Levinson; Leech, 1983), dispreferred (e.g., Sacks, 1987; Pomerantz, 1984), impolite (e.g., Rees-Miller, 2000; Walkinshaw, 2007) and confrontational (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig & Salsbury, 2004). As a consequence, their expressions of disagreements were normally mitigated. The EFLe, on the contrary, might interpret student-lecturer's disagreements in the classroom context as face-enhancing (e.g., Schiffrin, 1984; Angouri & Locher, 2012), preferred (e.g., Tannen, 1984; Kakava, 1993), polite (e.g., Tracy, 2008; Angouri & Tseliga, 2010), and non-confrontational (e.g., Edstrom, 2004; Habib, 2008). As a result, they did not normally use any linguistic devices to minimize the force of their disagreements. In other words, disagreements should not be straightforwardly perceived as inherently positive-face threatening acts. The results presented in this current study suggest that disagreements are multidimensional even though they are performed in the same given context. This study investigated the learners as groups, but further studies might inspect student-lecturer disagreements performed by individual EFL learners in order to examine the effects of this variable on the learners' uses of politeness strategy in a fine-grained fashion. In addition, inspecting participants as individuals enables future researchers to verify whether or not individual differences (cf. Sifianou, 2012; Bardovi-Harlig, 2013) have any influences on the learners' pragmatic knowledge.

## Appendix 1

The conventions of paralinguistic features used in the study, adapted from Locher (2004)

\ : A backslash is used to indicate a falling intonation.

/ : A slash is used to indicate a rising intonation.

CAPS : Capital letters carry the primary stress in a monosyllable word.

= : In order to show an immediate connection between two turns uttered by the lecturer and the student.

::: : Colons are used to indicate lengthened vowels

[...]: Square brackets indicate speech overlap uttered by lecturer and student or vice versa.

@ : This symbol is used to represent laughter in syllable.

X : The letter X indicates an unclear or unintelligible syllable or word.

A...A : Utterances marked by this are rapid speech.

S...S : Utterances marked by this are slow speech.

P...P : Utterances marked by this are soft.

@...@ : Utterances marked by this are produced with laughs.

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