USE OF POLITENESS STRATEGIES DURING INTERACTION BETWEEN CUSTOMERS AND HOTEL EMPLOYEES IN SELECTED HOTELS IN KITUI COUNTY

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A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH AND LINGUISTICS OF KENYATTA UNIVERSITY

MAY 2015
DECLARATION

This research report is my original work and has not been submitted or presented for examination in any other university, either in part or as a whole.

Signature

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This research report has been submitted for examination with our recommendation and approval as University supervisors.

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Signature Date 25/5/2015
DEDICATION

This research work is dedicated to my father, Mutuku Mulinge and to my husband, Festus Malombe for inspiring me to work hard for a promising future. The work is also dedicated to my two sons, Mumo and Victor, for their encouragement and understanding during my study.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am ever grateful to God for giving me the grace to do this work. Secondly, I would like to appreciate my supervisors Dr. Emily Ogutu and Mr. Charles Gecaga for their unwavering support, understanding and guidance through all the steps of this research work.

I thank Kenyatta University for availing the precious chance for me to pursue my Masters of Arts course in English and linguistics. It was such an eye opener and experience.

I also would like to thank the managers of Kitui town Hotels for providing me with the opportunity to conduct my research in their hotels.
Where business is conducted productively, effective communication is necessary to facilitate the flow of information that is vital for both customers and the business people in order for them to achieve their goals harmoniously. If effective communication in hotel business is not achieved, friction may arise between the customers and hotel employees which may bring some misunderstanding and bad feelings from the customers' side. This may lead to some hoteliers losing customers and thus business people in hotels are increasingly concerned with the question of how they can achieve customer control in their business. In this study, politeness strategies were studied as one of the methods of customer control in hotel industry. This study provides some information and knowledge about politeness strategies which hotel employees require in order to communicate effectively with their customers. A sample size of 50 people was drawn from the target population of 330. The sample was taken from the 10 selected hotels out of the 30 hotels in Kitui town. Random stratified sampling was used to come up with the 10 hotels. Four episodes from each of the ten hotels were recorded while a questionnaire was administered to the 10 managers. Stratified random sampling was appropriate for the study because the researcher wanted to take in to consideration all the categories of hotels found in the town i.e. high class, middle class and low class. Simple random sampling was used to come up with a sample of four conversations from each of the ten hotels, two of which were between customers and the front office staff and the other two between customers and the waiters. Simple random sampling method was used to come up with the respondents and utterances used. Data was first coded and entered in statistical package for social science (SPSS) computer software to enable the analysis. Tables were used to present the information from which interpretation was done by comparing the frequencies and percentages. The results showed that the hotel employees used all the four types of politeness strategies as described by Brown and Levinson (1987). It was also established that, of all the four politeness strategies used, negative politeness strategies were the most used followed by positive strategies. The second least used strategies were the bald on-record while the least used strategies were the off-record.
**ABBREVIATIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>B.O.R-</td>
<td>Bald on-record</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F.T.A-</td>
<td>Face threatening acts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.F-</td>
<td>Negative face</td>
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<tr>
<td>N.F.T.A-</td>
<td>Negative face threatening acts</td>
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<tr>
<td>N.P.S-</td>
<td>Negative politeness strategies</td>
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<td>O.R-</td>
<td>Off-record</td>
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<td>P.F-</td>
<td>Positive face</td>
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<td>P.F.T.A-</td>
<td>Positive face threatening acts</td>
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<td>N.P.S-</td>
<td>Negative politeness strategies</td>
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<td>P.P.S-</td>
<td>Positive politeness strategies</td>
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<tr>
<td>S.P.S.S-</td>
<td>Statistical package for social sciences</td>
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<td>T.V-</td>
<td>Television</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Face</td>
<td>The positive image or impression of oneself that he/she intends to show to the other participants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face threatening acts</td>
<td>An act that causes a threat to positive and negative face of the hearer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative face</td>
<td>The desire that one’s actions be unimpeded by others.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Politeness</td>
<td>The expression of the speaker’s intention to mitigate face threats carried out by certain face threatening acts towards another.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politeness strategies</td>
<td>Techniques used by the speakers to mitigate face threats carried out by certain face threatening acts and negative face of the hearer.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Positive face</td>
<td>The desire of every member that his/her wants be desirable to at least some others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episode</td>
<td>An event that forms part of a longer series but is considered separately.</td>
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INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter constitutes the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the objectives of the study, the research questions, the rationale of the study and scope and limitation of the study.

1.2 Background of the study

Effective communication is necessary in a working environment where business can be conducted productively, to facilitate a flow of information that is vital for both customers and the business people in order for them to achieve their goals harmoniously.

Business communication poses various difficulties to all those who are involved. This is because customers desire to be treated with dignity and respect. Customers are happy and willing to go back for the services and goods if they are treated and spoken to in a way that makes them feel good about themselves. If, on the other hand, customers are treated with disrespect, they are unhappy and not willing to go back for the services and goods and this may lead to the business going down or even collapsing.

According to Kusluva, (2003) one of the major benefits of the development of the hospitality industry in any economy is the provision of employment. Kenya, being no exception, the hoteliers are looking for ways of improving the use of polite language in order to achieve smooth communication between the customers and their employees. However, this is not always the case as sometimes the employees may seem impolite to customers even when they don’t mean to.
This is because of the differences existing in their cultures, especially in the use of non-verbal cues where different non-verbal cues may have the same meaning and the same non-verbal cues may have different meanings. The staff may also seem impolite when they don’t mean to if they have no proficiency in the language used by the customers. For example, the customers may be familiar with English language only which the staff may not have mastered. If this is the case, the staff will not be able to communicate smoothly with the customers which may be interpreted as being impolite by the customers.

According to Brown and Levinson, (1987) politeness is a redressive action taken to counter-balance the effects of face threatening acts. By being polite one shows that he/she wants the interaction to be smooth and satisfying. Expressions of politeness could be achieved by saying something that makes the addressee feel important or by showing appreciation towards what the addressee has done or said, or not saying something that can potentially offend or demean the addressee (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

Politeness has become very important in the hospitality industry because, first of all, it is used to avoid conflict which is one of the cardinal rules of customer service. Apologizing, which is a classic form of politeness, is an obvious conflict avoider. By being polite one shows the other person respect which is likely to lessen any feelings of hostility or even just annoyance. Politeness is also a persuasive strategy, designed to influence someone to respond more favorably to another person’s message or to gain someone’s compliance. In such a case, politeness functions like a lubricant to get the wheels of compliance turning. Thus hotel employees may use politeness to influence customers to their side.
Although there have been a variety of approaches to analyzing politeness, the most widely used framework comes from the face-saving view, usually associated with Brown and Levinson’s (1987) theory on politeness. According to them, politeness is a redressive action taken to counter-balance the negative effects of face threatening Acts [FTAs] in interaction. The principle motivation behind politeness strategies is to avoid damaging both the speaker’s face and the face of the other person or people in the exchange. Face, drawn from Goff Man’s early concept of face (1967), is the public image that each person wants to portray in a social setting.

Although the Brown and Levinson framework has been applied in studies, rarely has it been used in the hospitality industry. Tanskanen’s (1998) study examined politeness strategies used in a mailing list discussion group. This study found out that many spoken language strategies were also found in the discussion group, including the use of hedges, stance markers and third person pronouns.

According to Ungureanu, (2004) the desire to avoid face damage acts as a constraint in language is seen in the avoidance of the simplest and most straightforward option when choosing what we say. The assumption is that we are usually trying to avoid damaging face, by adjusting the choice of words in order to protect the interlocutors from feeling unease.

It is the customer-contact employee who is truly responsible for much of the success of the business transaction; therefore, it is a golden rule of hospitality sector that the employees use language in a polite way to achieve smooth communication and interaction with customers. The major concern of this study therefore, was to find out the use of politeness strategies as a customer control method in hospitality service delivery.
1.3 Statement of the problem

Politeness may be considered as a necessary social ritual that ensures that interaction between people is orderly and that the desired goal is achieved. In the hospitality industry, people desire to achieve such a goal through the use of politeness. Any success in the hospitality industry depends on whether the desired goal is achieved. Thus there has been a great need to use politeness strategies in the hospitality industry.

In hotel business, people use language to transmit information but to do it effectively, language should be used in a manner that will promote understanding between the customers and hotel employees. If effective communication in hotel business is not achieved, friction may arise between customers and hotel employees which may bring some misunderstanding and bad feelings from the customer’s side. Thus business people in hotels are increasingly concerned with the question of how they can achieve customer control in their businesses. In this study, politeness is studied as one of the strategies used to achieve smooth interaction between customers and hotel employees and hence acting as a strategy used for attracting and maintaining customers.

The study used Brown and Levinson politeness theory. Brown and Levinson assert that, politeness is redressive action taken to counter-balance the effects of face threatening acts. When face-threatening acts are inevitable or desired, politeness strategies are used to formulate messages in order to save the hearer’s face. Brown and Levinson outline four main types of politeness strategies: bald on-record negative, positive and off-record politeness strategies.
1.4 Objective of the study

The main objective of the study is to investigate the use of politeness strategies during the interaction between customers and hotel employees in hospitality service delivery. To achieve this, three specific objectives were identified, namely:

1. To describe the nature of the politeness strategies used by hotel employees during their interaction with customers
2. To establish the extent to which hotel employees use politeness strategies during their interaction with customers.
3. To investigate the influence of politeness strategies on customers during their interaction with hotel employees

1.5 Research questions

The study was guided by the following questions:

1. What is the nature of politeness strategies used by hotel employees during their interaction with customers?
2. What is the extent to which hotel employees use politeness strategies during their interaction with customers?
3. What is the influence of the use of politeness strategies on customers during their interaction with hotel employees?
1.6 Assumptions

The study was based on the following assumptions:

1. Hotel employees use different types of politeness strategies during their interaction with customers.
2. Hotel employees use politeness strategies often during their interaction with customers.
3. Use of politeness strategies by hotel employees has some positive effects on customers.

1.7 Rationale of the study

Politeness touches on issues that are crucial in the life of the human beings who are communicating. In the present study linguistic politeness is conceptualized as a social phenomenon. The study argues that understanding politeness properly might constitute an important key to the understanding of a number of social problems. The study highlights some of the main points and notions presented by Brown and Levinson (1978-1987) concerning politeness strategies.

Hotel business is a daily activity which is largely managed through verbal interaction. Conversations are mainly between the customers and the hotel employees. As mentioned earlier, previous related studies have focused on various contexts such as; Doctor – patient discourse (Drew, 1979), Banking discourse (Walya, 1996), Communication in intercultural discourse (Ali, 2000), Adapting Brown and Levinson theory to the analysis of casual conversation (Nariko, 2000) and the importance of excellent hospitality communication (Leith, 2010). Though some scholars as the ones mentioned above have attempted to study politeness, to the best of my knowledge little has been done specifically on politeness strategies as a customer control method.
in hotel management. Lack of politeness language between hotel staff and customers may lead to business people losing customers and some business going down or even collapsing.

It is hoped that this research will highlight politeness strategies that can attract and c nature of verbal interaction that takes place between the hotel employees and customers and thus help them constantly improve on the language they use.

This study may provide some information and knowledge about politeness strategies which the hotel employees employ or require in order to communicate effectively with their customers. The knowledge of customer relations skills which is concerned with hospitality to guests could benefit the hotel industry since its success relies heavily on human relations. The research findings may also be found useful by other institutions where customer care is paramount especially in this era of liberalization, competition and customer oriented industry.

1.8 Scope and limitations

This study examined the verbal communication events between the hotel employees and the customers. In this study, the researcher described the politeness strategies as suggested by Brown and Levinson (1987). These politeness strategies include; positive politeness strategies, negative politeness strategies, on-record politeness strategies and off-record politeness strategies. These strategies according to Brown and Levinson (1987) are used to counteract the face threatening acts (FTAs) and hence could be used as strategies influencing customers in hospitality delivery services in hotel industry.
The study was conducted in Kitui town which is found in Kitui County. The town was chosen because it is one of the towns in Kenya where the hotel industry is growing at a very high rate and hence the study could be generalized to other hotels.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction
This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section covers literature review on politeness strategies and hotel industry. The second part deals with the theoretical framework used in the analysis of the data used in this study.

2.2 Literature review

2.2.1 Politeness strategies
The concept of politeness has been examined by different scholars. Brown and Levinson (1987) being some of the scholars who did a comprehensive work on politeness, came up with a theory of politeness which was used in this study as expounded in the theoretical framework section.

According to Brown and Levinson, politeness is a redressive action taken to counter-balance the negative effects of Face Threatening Acts [FTAs] in interaction. The principle motivation behind politeness strategies is to avoid damaging both the speaker’s face and the face of the other person or people in the exchange. Face, a concept drawn from Goff man’s early concept of face (1967), is the public image that each person wants to portray in types of a social setting.

Brown and Levinson assert that there are two different face wants: negative face (N.F) and positive face (P.F). N.F is the desire that one’s actions be unimpeded by others which is the basic claim to territories, personal preserves and freedom from imposition. P.F, on the other hand, is the desire of every member that his wants be desirable to others.
There are two types of face-threatening acts: Negative face-threatening acts (N.F.T.A) and positive face-threatening acts (P.F.T.A). Negative face is threatened when an individual does not avoid or intend to avoid the obstruction of their interlocutor's freedom of action. Positive face, on the other hand, is threatened when the speaker or the hearer does not care about their interactor's feelings, wants, or does not want what the other wants.

When face-threatening acts are inevitable or desired, politeness strategies are used to formulate messages in order to save the hearer's face. Brown and Levinson outline four main types of politeness strategies: bald on-record, negative politeness, positive politeness, and off-record (indirect).

Although Levinson and Brown have looked at the use of politeness strategies and came up with the politeness theory which was used in this research, they did not look at specifically politeness in hotels which is the main concern of this study.

Nariko (2000) in his paper, *Adapting Brown and Levinson to the analysis of casual conversation*, looked at the analysis of casual conversation using Brown and Levinson politeness theory. He analyzed a small segment of casual conversation to show how Brown and Levinson politeness theory can be used and applied in non-goal oriented interaction. His paper concludes that politeness phenomena can be identified utilizing Brown and Levinson's theory in casual conversation.

Nariko's study is similar to the current study in that he used Brown and Levinson politeness theory in the analysis of his study which was used in the analysis of the data of the current study.
However, the two studies are different in that Nariko examined the analysis of casual conversation while the current study analyzed the conversation in hotel industry.

Leech (1983) accounts for politeness in terms of politeness maxims. He lists six maxims: tact, generosity, approbation, modesty, agreement, and sympathy. According to him, these maxims vary from culture to culture: what may be considered polite in one culture may be strange or downright rude in another culture.

The tact maxim states: 'Minimize the expression of beliefs which imply cost to other; maximize the expression of beliefs which imply benefit to other.' The first part of this maxim fits in with Brown and Levinson's negative politeness strategy of minimizing the imposition, and the second part reflects the positive politeness strategy of attending to the hearer's interests, wants, and needs.

Leech's Generosity maxim states: 'Minimize the expression of beliefs that express or imply benefit to self; maximize the expression of beliefs that express or imply cost to self.' Unlike the tact maxim, the maxim of generosity focuses on the speaker, and says that others should be put first instead of the self.

The Approbation maxim states: 'Minimize the expression of beliefs which express dispraise of others; maximize the expression of beliefs which express approval of others.' It is preferred to praise others and if this is impossible, to sidestep the issue, to give some sort of minimal response (possibly through the use of euphemisms), or to remain silent. The first part of the maxim avoids disagreement; the second part intends to make other people feel good by showing
solidarity. The Modesty maxim states: 'Minimize the expression of praise of self; maximize the expression of dispraise of self.

The Agreement maxim runs as follows: 'Minimize the expression of disagreement between self and others; maximize the expression of agreement between self and others. This is in line with Brown and Levinson's positive politeness strategies of 'seek agreement' and 'avoid disagreement,' to which they attach great importance. However, it is not being claimed that people totally avoid disagreement. It is simply observed that they are much more direct in expressing agreement, rather than disagreement.

The Sympathy maxim states: 'minimize antipathy between self and others; maximize sympathy between self and others.' This includes a small group of speech acts such as congratulations, commiseration, and expressing condolences - all of which is in accordance with Brown and Levinson's positive politeness strategy of attending to the hearer's interests, wants, and needs.

Leech, (1983) also suggested a relationship between politeness and indirectness; the more indirect/ off-record a suggestion or request is, the more polite the utterance is perceived to be.

Although Leech has shared much with Brown and Levinson notion of politeness which was used in this study, the two studies are different in that Leech accounts for politeness in terms of six maxims while the current study looks at politeness in terms of politeness strategies.

Ladegaard, (2004) points out that politeness helps to identify with the hearer. It helps interlocutors to assert mutual friendship, and reduce future debt by keeping the social distance between them. He further observes that parents the world over take part in explicitly instructing their children on the use of polite devices. Although Ladegaard looked at politeness, he
specifically looked at politeness in children while the main concern of this study is politeness in the hotel industry.

Kimotho, (2009) focused on how politeness could be used to resolve conflict in interpersonal communication. He came up with politeness strategies similar to those of Brown and Levinson such as positive politeness, negative politeness and bold on record politeness strategies. He further came up with factors affecting the choice of politeness strategy such as gender, social status and social distance. Kimotho’s study is similar to the current study in that he examined politeness strategies during verbal communication which the current study also looked at. However the two studies are different in that Kimotho examined the utterances produced during a conflict situation and relationship between politeness strategies and conflict resolution while the current study examines the utterances produced during the interaction between customers and the hotel employees and the relationship between politeness strategies and customer control in the hotel industry.

Mburu, (2011) examined politeness strategies used by the pupils in Machakos municipality. Although Mburu used Brown and Levinson theory on politeness which was used in this study, she concentrated on gender and use of polite forms. The current study specifically looked at the use of politeness strategies as a customer control method in the hotel industry.

Avianti (2001) looked at the variation in the use of politeness strategies by people from different cultural backgrounds. In this case an American and Japanese. Avianti’s study is similar to the current study in that it is anchored on the Goffman’s (1967) notion of face which is the same case with the current study. The two studies are different in that Avianti’s study mainly described the different types of politeness strategies and the frequency in the use of these strategies by the
two speakers from different cultures while the current study focused on how the politeness strategies are used as a customer control method.

2.2.2 Literature review related to hotel industry

Leith (2010), hospitality communication in the workplace is always an important issue which is constantly addressed by employers and staff alike. Excellent communication is a vital issue, because customers are paying not only for the product: the food, the room or the facilities but also for the service. And service is just as much about communication as it is about skill. Leith asserts that hospitality communication covers two important areas: customer service, and 'behind the scenes' staff and management interaction. Good communication is essential in both areas for the high standards of operation everyone expects in the industry.

According to Leith, a client may have a bad day, or be in a bad mood, but a genuine smile from the receptionist and a warm welcome from all the staff might just change their outlook for the rest of that day and the days to come. The same applies for the waitperson at the restaurant, the housekeeping or maintenance staff, or any other employee that comes in contact with the guests.

It requires patience when dealing with customers from overseas who have a hard time making themselves understood in English. It requires 'putting up' with grumpy people or ones whose manners are not always impeccable. This is because, up to a certain point, 'the customer is always right'. These are situations that staff learns to deal with and they take pride in the professional manner in which they handle 'difficult customers'. (Leith 2010).

Another important aspect of hospitality communication with customers is providing clear and useful information when asked by customers. Restaurant staff should know the menu inside out,
understand special dietary requirements, know about the source of the ingredients they are serving, etc. Reception staff at the hotel should be up-to-date not only with the facilities and services that the hotel offers, but also with all the other information travelers need: activities, transport, eating and entertainment, and opening hours of shops and agencies. It is part of the service, and guests appreciate well-informed and courteous staff for this can make a difference between "just another day" and a memorable day. (Leith 2010).

In the modern times, the way people spend their vacations has undergone a great change. People like to spend good times with family and friends while at the same time exploring various tourist places across the globe. As a result, the tourism industry across the globe has seen an unprecedented growth which in turn has also resulted in tremendous growth in the hotel and accommodation facilities. (Ahliya 2008)

Ahliya (2008), comfortable hotels and accommodation facilities play a very important role in popularizing any tourist destination. If a person, who is quite far away from home, gets to enjoy the same facilities and comforts as he enjoys at home, then he is bound to become attached to the place.

On the other hand if the tourist ends up at a place where the hotels and accommodation facilities are not satisfactory, it is quite likely that he/she might never return to that place. Perhaps that is why, hotels and accommodation facilities being made available at different tourists spots, have shifted focus on providing maximum comfort to tourists at reasonable rates. It is also vital to provide comfortable accommodation to people from diverse economical backgrounds. While five star hotels can cater for the needs of affluent visitors, small and medium range hotels and lodging houses are available for use by middle class travelers, (Ahliya 2008).
2.3 Theoretical framework

The study examined Brown and Levinson politeness theory (1987). According to them, Politeness is the expression of the speaker’s intention to mitigate face threats carried out by certain Face Threatening Acts (FTAs). Being polite therefore consists of the attempts to save another person’s face. Face Threatening Acts (FTAs) are speech acts that inherently threaten the face wants of either the speaker or the hearer.

According to Brown and Levinson the principal motivation behind politeness strategies is to avoid damaging both the speaker’s face and the face of the other person or people in the exchange. Face, drawn from Goffman’s early concept of face (1967), is the public image that each person wants to portray in a social setting.

Brown and Levinson assert that there are two different types of face wants: negative face and positive face. Negative face is the want that one’s actions be unimpeded by others which is the basic claim to territories, personal preserves and rights to non-distraction i.e. freedom from imposition. Positive face, on the other hand is the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others.

Positive and negative face exists universally in human culture. In social interaction, face-threatening acts (FTAs) are at times inevitable based on terms of the conversation. Most of these acts are verbal; however, they can also be conveyed in the characteristics of speech such as tone and intonation or in non-verbal forms of communication.

There are two types of face-threatening acts; negative face-threatening acts and positive face-threatening acts. Negative face is threatened when an individual does not avoid or intend to avoid
the obstruction of their interlocutor’s freedom of action. This can cause damage to either the speaker or the hearer, and make one of the interlocutors submit their will to the other.

Negative face-threatening acts may cause damage to the hearer’s face through an act that affirms or denies a future act of the hearer. Such an act creates pressure on the hearer to either perform or not perform the act, examples: orders, requests, suggestions, advice or warnings. Negative face-threatening acts may cause damage to the speaker through an act that shows that the speaker is succumbing to the power of the hearer. If the hearer does not accept the speaker’s thanks and congratulations, this threatens the speaker’s face.

Positive face, on the other hand, is threatened when the speaker or hearer does not care about their interactor’s feelings, wants, or does not want what the other wants. Positive face-threatening acts may cause damage to the hearer’s face through an act that expresses the speaker’s negative assessment of the hearer’s positive face. The speaker can display this disapproval in two ways. The first approach is for the speaker to indicate that he dislikes some aspects of the hearer’s possessions, desires or personal attributes. The second approach is for the speaker to express disapproval by stating or implying that the hearer is wrong or misguided, example: insults, accusation, complaints, contradiction, disagreements or challenges.

Positive face-threatening acts may cause damage to the speaker through an act that shows that the speaker is in some sense wrong, and unable to control himself, example: apologies. In this act, the speaker is damaging his own face by admitting that he regrets one of his previous acts.

When face-threatening acts are inevitable or desired, politeness strategies are used to formulate messages in order to save the hearer’s face. Brown and Levinson outline four main types of
politeness strategies: bald on-record, negative politeness, positive politeness, and off-record (indirect).

Bald on-record strategies usually do not attempt to minimize the threat to the hearer’s face. Often using such a strategy shocks or embarrasses the addressee, and so this strategy is most often utilized in situations where the speaker has a close relationship with the hearer, such as family or close friends. Brown and Levinson outline various cases, in which one might use the bald on-record strategy, in which threat minimizing does not occur. These include:

1) Great urgency or desperation. Example; _Watch the slippery floors!_

2) Speaking as if great efficiency is necessary. Example; _Hear me out I need a break!_

3) Task-oriented. Example; _Pass me the wood!_

4) When doing the face-threatening act in the interest of the hearer. Example; _your wallet has fallen down!_

Positive politeness strategies seek to minimize the threat to the hearer’s positive face. They are used to make the interactants feel good about themselves, their interests or possessions, and are most usually used in situations where the interactants know each other fairly well. The following are examples from Brown and Levinson:

1) Attend to hearer’s interests, needs; wants. Example _you look sad. Can I do anything?_

2) Use solidarity in-group identity markers. Example; _Hey, mate; can we have a talk?_
3) Including both speaker and hearer in activity. Example; *If we help each other, I guess, we’ll both sink or swim in this course.*

4) Offer or promise. Examples; *if you wash the dishes, I’ll clean the floor.*

Negative politeness strategies are oriented towards the hearer’s negative face and emphasize avoidance of imposition on the hearer. These strategies presume that the speaker will be imposing on the listener and there is a higher potential for awkwardness or embarrassment than in bald on record strategies and positive strategies. Examples of Negative politeness strategies include:

1) Be indirect. Example; *would you know their prices?*

2) Use hedges or questions. Example; *Perhaps, he might have taken it, maybe.*

3) Being pessimistic. Example; *you couldn’t find your way to showing me the rooms?*

4) Apologizing. Example; *I’m sorry; it’s a lot to ask, but can you lend me a thousand dollars?*

5) Use plural pronouns. *We regret to inform you that it is not ready.*

The final politeness strategy outlined by Brown and Levinson is the off-record which is indirect strategy; this strategy uses indirect language and removes the speaker from the potential to be imposing. For example, a speaker using the indirect strategy might merely say "*wow, it’s getting cold in here*" insinuating that it would be nice if the listener would get up and close the windows without directly asking the listener to do so. The speaker may also say ‘*I have forgotten my*
phone and I wanted to make a call' insinuating that it would be nice if the listener would lend the speaker his phone.
CHAPTER THREE
METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction
This chapter deals with the methodology used in the study. It presents research design, area of study, target population, the sampling procedures, sample size, research instrument, data collection procedures and finally, the data analysis and ethical issues.

3.2 Research design
The approach which was used is descriptive – qualitative approach which involves studies concerned with describing the characteristics of a particular individual or a group. In this study, the researcher described the politeness strategies used by hotel employees during their interaction with customers.

Utterances made by hotel employees and customers in conversation was recorded and analyzed later. Utterances used were in Kiswahili and Kikamba because the respondents were mostly from within Kitui area where Kikamba language is the first language and Kiswahili the second.

3.3 The area of study
The population from which the sample was drawn is Kitui town which is found in Kitui County. Kitui town was chosen because it is one of the towns in Kenya whose hotel industry business is growing at a very high rate and hence the study could be generalized to other hotels.
3.4 Target Population

This study targeted 30 hotels in Kitui town. All the 30 hotels contain approximately 300 hotel employees and 30 managers who made up the target population of 330 people. The targeted hotel employees were those that deal with customers’ service directly such as front office staff and waiters.

3.5 Sampling procedures and sample size

The sample in this study comprised of hotel staff during their interaction with customers and hotel managers who filled in questionnaires. 40 hotel employees and 10 managers were drawn from the target population of 330 making a total sample size of 50 people. The sample was taken from the selected 10 hotels out of the 30 hotels found in Kitui town. Stratified random sampling was used to come up with the hotels.

The hotels were drawn from high class, middle and low class as rated by Kitui municipal council licensing board. In each of the 10 hotels, 4 hotel employees and 1 hotel manager were identified to be the respondents. Four episodes from each of the ten hotels were recorded while a questionnaire was administered to 10 respondents at the management level.

Stratified random sampling was appropriate for the study because the researcher wanted to take into consideration all the categories of hotels found in the town. Simple random sampling was used to come up with a sample of 4 episodes from each of the ten hotels. Two of which were between customers and front office staff and the other two between customers and the waiters.

Although there are about 30 hotels in Kitui town, only 10 were studied in order to avoid redundancy and reduplication of results.
3.6 Research instruments

Since the study focused on conversational analysis, the main research instrument was a tape recorder. A powerful pocket-size recorder was used.

Interference from the normal background noise of day to day living such as hooting of vehicles, strong wind and shouting mobs may make it difficult to obtain good quality recordings on some occasions at some site. The researcher therefore had to move very close to the interactants in order to capture the verbal data.

The second instrument which was used was self-administered questionnaire. This is because all the hotel managers who filled in the questionnaire are literate and so capable of responding to the items on their own. The researcher constructed one questionnaire for the hotel management which had two parts. Part A focused on personal information such as; age, sex, and educational level, Part B focused on obtaining information on the use of politeness strategies, their nature and impact on customer control in their hotels.

3.7 Data collection procedures

The data for this study was obtained from the conversations between the hotel employees and the customers during their interaction. Good quality tape recorder was used to capture the verbal conversational data required. The researcher posed as part of the hotel staff at one time and at another as a customer during data collection. The researcher obtained prior consent from hotel management to pose as one of the hotel employees. Field notes taken during the conversation were used to supplement and enrich the tape-recorded data.
Data was also collected by use of a questionnaire which was administered to the hotel managers. It contained both closed and open-ended questions in order to acquire information in depth. The researcher paid a visit to each of the hotel management to discuss and make arrangements on the most suitable days, time and procedure to be followed in conducting the study in the hotel. The participants were assured that strict confidentiality was to be maintained in dealing with all the information they provided.

3.8 Data analysis

Data was first coded by assigning qualitative data quantitative values. Data was then entered in statistical package for social science (SPSS) computer software to enable the analysis. Inferences from the analyzed data were made and this was used to answer the three research questions. Tables and graphs were used to present the information from which interpretation was done by comparing frequencies and percentages.

3.9 Data management and ethical consideration.

Great care was taken to assure respondents that their identity was treated with a lot of confidentiality. A research authorization permit was obtained from Utalii house in Nairobi in order to be allowed to collect data. A copy of the permit was submitted to the management of the selected 10 hotels. The hotel managements were pre-visited by the researcher to establish rapport before the actual data collection date. The researcher requested the hotel management to inform those who were to be tape recorded on the data collection without giving many details on the dates and methods which were to be used. The participants were asked not to write down their names on the questionnaire. They were also assured that their identity was to remain anonymous in order to uphold their privacy.
CHAPTER FOUR
DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter consists of data presentation, analysis and interpretation of politeness strategies used by hotel attendants as they interact with customers. Using Brown and Levinson politeness theory (1987), the data obtained from this study was used to pursue the following objective:

1. To describe the nature of the politeness strategies used by hotel employees during their interaction with customers.
2. To establish the extent to which hotel employees use politeness strategies during their interaction with customers.
3. To investigate the influence of politeness strategies on customers during their interaction with hotel employees.

4.2 The nature and frequency of politeness strategies used by hotel employees

The utterances made by hotel employees and customers that contain politeness strategies were classified in accordance to Brown and Levinson (1987) theory of politeness i.e. whether they were bald on-record, positive, negative or off-record politeness strategies. The frequency of occurrences of each of the strategies during verbal interaction were counted and recorded in a table. Examples of verbal conversation between customers and employees were also recorded, transcribed, and written down to illustrate more on the nature and frequency of politeness strategies used.
Table 1 below represents the nature and number of occurrences of each of the four categories of politeness strategies used by hotel attendants in the 10 hotels. According to the table below, all the four kinds of politeness strategies as outlined by Brown and Levinson (1987) were used by the hotel employees.

Table 1: The nature and occurrences of politeness strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hotel</th>
<th>B.O.R</th>
<th>N.P</th>
<th>O.R</th>
<th>P.P</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>80/80</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>18.75</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>8.75</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following is a discussion of the four kinds of politeness strategies presented in the table above. These politeness strategies were used by hotel employees as outlined by Brown and Levinson (1987).

4.2.1 Negative politeness strategies

In table 1 above, negative politeness is the most used politeness strategy by the hotel employees in the ten selected hotels. N.P strategies were used 30 times in all the ten selected hotels and accounted for 37.5% of all the politeness strategies used.

Negative politeness strategies are oriented towards the hearer’s negative face and emphasize avoidance of imposition on the hearer. These strategies presume that the speaker will be imposing on the listener and there is a higher potential for awkwardness or embarrassment than in bald on record strategies and positive politeness strategies. Examples of negative politeness identified during this study:

1) Be indirect. Example; would you know their prices?

2) Use hedges or questions. Example; Perhaps, he might have paid it, may be.

3) Being pessimistic. Example; you couldn’t find your way to showing me the way, could you?

4) Minimizing the imposition. Example; It’s not too much out of your rooms, just a couple of blocks.

5) Apologizing. Example; I’m sorry; we have no ready food at the moment.

6) Use plural pronouns. We regret to inform you that all the rooms have been booked.
The following examples from the verbal communication between the hotel employees and customers show the nature and usage of negative politeness strategy.

**Example 1**

*Employee:* Habari ya jioni? (*Good evening?*)

*Customer:* Njema. (*Good evening*) Tunaweza kupata nyumba? (*Can we get some rooms*)

*Employee:* Twasikitika nyumba zimeisha (*We regret to inform you that the rooms are fully booked.*)

*Customer:* Na sasa tutafanya nini? (*What do we do now?*)

*Employee:* Pole sana tafadhali angalia Signal Hotel

 (*We are very sorry. You could probably check at Signal hotel*)

In the episode above, the employee uses negative politeness when he tells the customer that they regret that the rooms are not available. The employee does so in order to minimize FTA on the hearer’s face. The employee also uses Negative politeness when he is advising the customer to check the rooms in the next restaurant when he says they are sorry.

**Example 2**

*Customer:* Unaweza kunitengenezea ugali fish? (*Would you please prepare for me Ugali and fish*)

*Employee:* Samahani samaki zimekwisha. Unaweza kutumia kuku?

 (*We apologize that fish is not available. Would you use chicken Instead?)

*Customer:* Ni sawa wacha nitumie kuku (*It’s okay I can use the chicken*)
In the episode above, the employee uses negative politeness when he uses the indirect phrase *(would you)*. Negative politeness is also seen when the employee apologizes. On the other hand, the customer uses negative politeness when he asks the employee if he could prepare ugali and fish, this is because the customer feels that he may be imposing on the employees.

**Example 3**

**Employee:** Kuna shinda, nikusaidie vipi? *(Is there any problem, how can I help you?)*

**Customer:** Maji yale yanayotoka ni baridi. Naweza pata maji moto? *(The water which is flowing is cold, May I get warm water?)*

**Employee:** Pole sana kwa hayo tutaleta maji moto kwa chumba chako *(We are really sorry for the inconveniences. We are going to provide warm water in your room).*

In the episode above, the employee uses negative politeness, by use of hedge, when he asks the customer how he could help him, the employee uses this kind of politeness strategy to avoid imposing on the customer.

**4.2.2 Use of Positive politeness strategy**

As seen in table 1, positive politeness is the second most used politeness strategy by the hotel employees in the ten selected hotels. P.P strategies were used 28 times in all the ten selected hotels and accounted for 35% of all the politeness strategies used.

Positive politeness strategies seek to minimize the threat to the hearer’s positive face. They are used to make the interactants feel good about themselves, their interests or possessions, and are usually used in situations where the interactants know each other fairly well. Strategies of
positive politeness include; statements of friendship, solidarity, compliments, and the following are examples from Brown and Levinson.

1) Attend to hearer’s interests, needs; wants. Example you look sad. Can I do anything?

2) Use solidarity in-group identity markers. Example; Hey, mate; can you lend me a dollar?

3) Be optimistic. Example; I’ll just come along, if you don’t mind.

4) Including both speaker and hearer in activity. Example; If we help each other, I guess, we’ll both sink or swim in this course.

5) Offer or promise. Examples; If you wash the dishes, I’ll clean the floor.

6) Avoiding disagreement. Example; Yes, it’s rather long; not short certainly!

The following examples from the verbal communication between the hotel employees and customers show the usage of positive politeness strategy.

Example 4

Employee: Habari ya saa hizi? (How are you?)

Customer: Niko salama (I am fine).

Employee: Unataka tufanye nini? (What do you want us to do?)

Customer: Mko na 'rooms'? (Do you have rooms?)

Employee: Ndio tuko na rooms na kama hujali nitakuonyesha. (Yes, we have rooms and I will possibly show you if you don’t mind)
In the episode above, the employee uses positive politeness when, he includes both the speaker and the hearer (i.e.) himself and the customer when he asks the customer what he wants them to do. In this case he wants the customer to feel good about himself and his interest. The employee also uses positive politeness by being optimistic when he tells the customer he would show him the room if he did not mind).

**Example 5**

*Employee:* Unaonekana hujasaidika nikusaidie vipi? *(You seem not to have been assisted. What can I do for you?)*

*Customer:* Nahitaji chakula tafadhali *(I need some food please).*

*Employee:* Tafadhali angalia menu yetu. *(Please check our menu)*

In the episode above, the employee uses positive politeness when he attends to the hearer’s needs by requesting the customer to assist him as he seems not to have been assisted. In this case the employee wants to minimize the threat to the customer’s positive face.

**Example 6**

*Employee:* Sema mwenzangu *(what can I do for you mate)*

*Customer:* Unaweza tuonyesha ‘rooms’ zenu. *(would you please show us your rooms)*

*Employee:* Ndio naweza; karibuni sana. *(Yes I can. Welcome).*

*Customer:* Asante *(Thanks)*
In the episode above, the employee uses positive politeness when he uses solidarity in-group identity marker i.e. mates to refer to the customer. In this case the employee minimizes the threat to the customer’s positive face.

4.2.3 Bald on-record

As it was seen in table 1, bald on-record politeness strategy is the second least used politeness strategy by the hotel employees in the ten selected hotels. B.O.R strategies were used 15 times in all the ten selected hotels and accounted for 18.75% of all the politeness strategies used. B.O.R strategies are mainly used whenever the speaker wants to do the FTA with maximum efficiency more than he wants to satisfy the hearer’s face.

Bald on-record strategies usually do not attempt to minimize the threat to the hearer’s face. Often using such a strategy will shock or embarrass the addressee, and so this strategy is most often utilized in situations where the speaker has a close relationship with the hearer, such as family or close friends. Brown and Levinson outline various cases, in which one might use the bald on-record strategy, where threat minimizing does not occur. These include:

1) Great urgency or desperation. Example; *Watch your fingers*!

2) Speaking as if great efficiency is necessary. Example; *Hear me out I need a break*!

3) Task-oriented. Example; *Pass me the wood*.

4) Little or no desire to maintain someone’s face. Example; *don’t forget to wash the curtains*!

5) When doing the face-threatening act is in the interest of the hearer. Example; *your wallet has fallen down*!
The following examples from the verbal communication between the hotel employees and customers show the nature and usage of bald on-record politeness strategy.

Example 7

Customer: Kwani leo hamuuzi? (Are you not selling today?)

Employee: Unataka (What do you want?)

Customer: Mko na chakula gani? (What types of food do you have?)

Employee: Hatuna chakula tayari. Chakula hutengenezwa kwa 'order.' (We do not have ready meals as they are Prepared by order)

In the above episode, the employee uses B.O.R when he tells customer directly, that they had no food which was ready. The employee uses B.O.R because he thought the customer was rude enough and hence attempting to redress the hearer’s face was not a priority of the speaker.

Example 8

Customer: Mko na chakula gani? (What type of food do you have?)

Employee: Angalia menu yetu. (Check the menu.)

Customer: Leo ningependa kula githeri. (Today I would like to eat githeri.)

Employee: Ni sawa. Nitakuletea (It’s O.K. I will bring)
In the above episode, the employee uses B.O.R politeness strategy. In this case, he does not attempt to minimize the threat to the hearer’s face as he directly tells the customer to check in the menu for the type of food he would like to be served with.

Example 9

Customer: Hii chai yenu ni baridi. *(Your tea is cold)*

Employee: Kweli? *(is it true?)*

Customer: UKweli kabisa. *(Very much true)*

Employee: Nitapasha moto *(I will warm it for you)*

In the above episode, the customer uses B.O.R when he tells the employee directly that the tea is cold. The customer uses B.O.R because he thought the employee did not care much about the food he was serving.

### 4.2.4 Off-record politeness strategies.

As it was seen in table 1, off-record politeness strategy is the least used politeness strategy by the hotel employees in the ten selected hotels. O.R strategies were used only seven times in all the ten selected hotels and accounted for 8.75% of all the politeness strategies used.

Off-record politeness strategies which is indirect strategy uses indirect language and removes the speaker from the potential to be imposing. For example, a speaker using the indirect strategy might merely say "*Wow, it’s getting cold in here*" insinuating that it would be nice if the listener would get up and close the windows without directly asking the listener to do so. The speaker
may also say ‘I have forgotten my phone and I wanted to make a call’ insinuating that it would be nice if the listener would lend the speaker his phone.

The following examples from the verbal communication between the hotel employees and customers show the nature and usage of off-record politeness strategy.

**Example 10**

*Employee:* Umelipa kwa keshia? *(Have you paid to the cashier?)*

*Customer:* Samahani nilikuwa nimesahau Wacha nilipe. *(Sorry I had forgotten. Let me pay.)*

In the episode above, the employee has used off-record politeness strategy where the employee uses indirect strategy in order to avoid his imposition to the hearer. In the above case, the employee does not tell the customer directly to pay but instead asks the customer if he had paid.

**Example 11**

*Employee:* Habari zenu. *(How are you?)*

*Customer –* Salama. *(We are fine.)*

*Employee:* Karibuni mketi. *(Welcome and sit down.)*

*Customer:* Tuna njaa. *(We are hungry.)*

*Employee:* Tuwape chakula gani? *(Which type of food would you prefer?)*

*Customer:* Chapati na karanga *(Chapati and karanga)*
In the episode above, the customer has used off-record politeness strategy where he asks for food indirectly. Instead the customer says that they are hungry insinuating that they should be given food.

**Example 12**

*Customer:* Unaweza nisaidia na maji? (*Could you help me with some water?*)

*Employee:* Baridi au moto. *Cold or warm?*

*Customer:* Kuna joto sana. (*It’s very hot*)

*Employee:* Sawa wacha nikulette baridi. (*It’s o.k, let me bring cold water*)

In the conversation above, the customer uses off-record strategy when he is asked by the employee whether to be given cold or hot water, instead of directly saying he needs cold water, he says that it is hot insinuating that he should be given cold water and not warm.

From the data above, it was established that the hotel employees used all the four types of politeness strategies as described by Brown and Levinson. These were; positive, negative, bald on-record and off-record politeness strategies. It was also found out that, negative politeness was the most used strategy followed by positive politeness. Bald on-record was the third used while the least used strategy was off-record.

**4.3 The influence of politeness strategies on customers.**

In this section, data from the questionnaires which had been filled by the 10 managers from the 10 hotels was analyzed, interpreted and presented to show the influence of the use of politeness strategies on customers. The hotel managers listed the commonly used politeness statements and the influence they had on customers. This data revealed that the commonly used politeness
statements are: sorry, please, kindly and thank you. The next section is a discussion on the
effects of these politeness statements on customers

4.3.1 Effects of 'sorry'
According to Brown and Levinson (1987) 'sorry' is a negative politeness strategy which is
oriented towards the hearer's negative face and emphasizes avoidance of imposition on the
hearer.
The table below represents a summary of the findings from the questionnaire on the effects of the politeness strategy ‘sorry’ on customers.

Table 2: Effects of the politeness strategy ‘sorry’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Politeness strategy</th>
<th>Effects</th>
<th>frequency</th>
<th>percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sorry</td>
<td>The customers will come back for the services</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The customers will bring others to the hotel</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The customers will be happy with the services</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From table 2 above, the effect of the use of politeness strategy ‘sorry’ which occurred many times was that the customers would go back for the same services and this accounted for 50%. The second occurred effect of the use of the negative politeness strategy was that the customers would bring other customers for the services. This accounted for 40%. The least occurred effect was that the customers would be happy with the services offered in the hotel and this accounted for only 10%.

4.3.2 Effects of ‘please’

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), ‘please’ is a negative politeness strategy which emphasizes avoidance of imposition on the hearer.
The table below represents a summary of the findings from the questionnaires on the effects of the politeness strategy ‘please’ on customers.

**Table 3: Effects of politeness strategy ‘please’**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Politeness strategy</th>
<th>Effects</th>
<th>frequency</th>
<th>percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Please</td>
<td>The customers will come back for the services</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The customers will bring others to the hotel</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The customers will be happy with the services</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From table 3 above, the effects of the use of politeness strategy ‘please’ which occurred many times were that the customers would go back for the same services and that customers would take other customers for the same services. Each accounted for 40%. The least occurred effect was that the customers would be happy with the services offered in the hotel and this accounted for 20%.

**4.3.3 Effects of ‘kindly’**

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), ‘kindly’ is a negative politeness strategy which emphasizes avoidance of imposition on the hearer. This strategy presumes that the speaker will be imposing on the listener.
The table below represents a summary of the findings from the questionnaires on the effects of the politeness strategy ‘kindly’ on customers.

Table 4: Effects of politeness strategy ‘kindly’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Politeness strategy</th>
<th>Effects</th>
<th>frequency</th>
<th>percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kindly</td>
<td>The customers will come back for the services</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The customers will bring others to the hotel</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The customers will be happy with the services</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From table 4 above, the effect of the use of politeness strategy ‘kindly’ which occurred many times was that the customers would go back for the same services and this accounted for 50%. The second occurred effect of the use of the negative politeness ‘kindly’ strategy was that the customers would bring other customers for the services. This accounted for 30%. The least occurred effect was that the customers would be happy with the services and this accounted for only 20%.
4.5 Effects of ‘thank you’

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), ‘thank you’ is a positive politeness strategy which used to make interactants feel good about themselves, their interests or possession, and is usually used in situations where the interactants know each other fairly well.

The table below represents a summary on the findings from the questionnaires on the effects of the politeness strategy ‘thank you’ on customers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Politeness strategy</th>
<th>Effects</th>
<th>frequency</th>
<th>percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thank you</td>
<td>The customers will come back for the services</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The customers will bring others to the hotel</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The customers will be happy with the services</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From table 5 above, the effect of the use of politeness strategy ‘thank you’ which occurred many times was that the customers would go back for the same services and this accounted for 50%. The second occurred effect of the use of the negative politeness ‘thank you’ strategy was that the customers would bring other customers for the services. This accounted for 30%. The least occurred effect was that the customers would be happy with the services and this accounted for only 20%.
4.4 Discussion of the findings

This study found out that the hotel employees used all the four types of politeness strategies to account for politeness as described by Brown and Levinson (1987). These are; positive politeness strategies, negative politeness strategies, bald on-record politeness strategies and off-record politeness strategies. This is different from Leech (1983) who accounts for politeness in terms of six maxims namely: tact, approbation, modesty, agreement, generosity and sympathy.

The most used strategies in the hotels were found to be negative strategies while the least used strategies were off-record politeness strategies. It was also found out that the use of politeness strategies by hotel employee had the following influence on customers: the customers would go back for the goods and services, they would influence other customers to go for the goods and services and still the customers would be happy with the services.

As it has been shown above, the use of politeness strategies by hotel employees has positive effects on customers and hence it can be used to attract more customers which in turn will result to growth in hotel industry. This is also shown by Leith (2010) who points out that hospitality communication in the workplace is always an important issue which is constantly addressed by employers and staff alike. She further asserts that excellent communication is a vital issue, because customers are paying not only for the product: the food, the room or the facilities but also for the service which is just as much about communication as it is about skill.
4.5 Summary

In this chapter, data has been presented according to the objectives of the study. The topics dealt with are: The nature of the politeness strategies used by hotel employees, the extent to which hotel employees use politeness strategies and the influence of the use of politeness strategies on customers. In the next chapter, summary of the study, conclusion, recommendation and suggestions for further research are presented.
CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Introduction
In this chapter a summary of the study is presented which consists of the findings, the conclusion, the recommendation and suggestions for further areas of research. Guided by Brown and Levinson theory of politeness, the research sought to investigate the use of politeness strategies during the interaction between customers and hotel employees in hospitality service delivery in Kitui County in Kenya.

5.2 Summary of the study
In response to the first research question, i.e. what is the nature of politeness strategies used by hotel employees? it was found out that the hotel employees used all the four types of politeness strategies as described by Brown and Levinson (1987). These are; positive politeness strategies, negative politeness strategies, bald on-Record politeness strategies and off-Record politeness strategies.

In response to the second research question, i.e. what is the extent to which hotel employees use politeness strategies? The research found out that the most used strategies in hotels were negative strategies which accounted for 37.5%. Positive politeness strategies followed and accounted for 35%. Bald On-Record strategies were the second least used strategies and accounted for only 18.75% of the strategies used while the least used politeness strategies were the off-record which accounted for only 8.75% of all the strategies used.
In response to the third research question, i.e. what is the influence of the use of politeness strategies by hotel employees on customers? The research found out that the use of politeness strategies by hotel employees had the following effects on customers; the customers would go back for the goods and service, the customers would take others to the hotel and the customers would be happy with the services.

5.3 Conclusion

It can be concluded that hotel employees used all the four types of politeness strategies as described by Brown and Levinson (1987). Of all the four politeness strategies used, negative politeness strategies were the most used followed by positive strategies. The second least used strategies were the bald on-record while the least used strategies were the off-record. It was also concluded that the use of politeness strategies on customers make them happy and may take other customers for the same services which in turn may lead to growth in hotel business.

5.4 Recommendation

This study recommends that hotel managers encourage their employees to use more politeness strategies while interacting with customers as this would attract more customers to their hotels. This is because customers desire to be treated with dignity and respect and that they are happy and willing to go back for services and goods if they are treated and spoken to in a way that makes them feel good about themselves.

5.5 Suggestions for further research.

These are the potential areas of study that a researcher might be interested in investigating.

1. Use of politeness strategies in other business settings. for example; salon business
2. A research on other forms of counter-balancing effects of face threatening acts other than use of politeness strategies.
REFERENCES


Fraser, B. (1990) Perspectives on Politeness: Journal of pragmatics, 14,219-236


APPENDICES
APPENDIX 1

Letter of introduction to the respondents

KENYATTA UNIVERSITY,
ENGLISH AND LINGUISTICS DEPARTMENT,
P.O. BOX 43844,
NAIROBI.
20-12-2013

Dear Respondent,

I am a post-graduate student in Kenyatta University pursuing a Masters degree in English and Linguistics. I am carrying out a research for my final year project which is a requirement for the degree program. The topic is ‘The use of politeness strategies during interaction between customers and hotel employees in selected hotels in Kitui town’.

The study is expected to be of use to hotel managers and hotel employees in the way they handle customers during their interaction.

I kindly request you to participate in this study research. The information you give will be entirely confidential and was only be used for the purpose of this study.

Thanks in advance for your cooperation and assistance.

Eunice Mutuku
REG.NO.C50/CE/14397/2009
APPENDIX II

Extracts

Example 1

Employee: Karibuni. (welcome)
Customer: Asante (karibu)
Employee: Mnasema tufanye nini? (What would you like us to do?)
Customer: Unaweza tuonesha ‘rooms’ zenu. (would you please show us your rooms)
Employee: Ndio naweza; karibuni sana. (Yes I can, welcome very much).

Example 2

Employee: Habari zenu? (How are you?)
Customer: Salama (we are fine)
Employee: Karibuni mketi (welcome and sit down)
Customer: Tuko na njaa (We are hungry)
Employee: tuwape chakula gani? (which type of food would you prefer)
Customer: chapati na karanga (Chapati and karanga)

Example 3

Customer: Mko na chakula gani? (What type of food do you have?)
Employee: Tafadhali angalia menu (Please check the menu).
Customer: (leo ningependa kula Githeri. (Today I would like to eat Githeri.)
Example 4

Customer: Habari yako? (How are you?)
Employee: Salama (I am fine.)
Customer: Tunataka rooms (We are in need of rooms)
Employee: Poleni sana rooms zimeisha (We are very sorry the rooms are over)

Example 5

Customer: Unaweza nisaidia na maji? (Could you help me with some water?)
Employee: Baridi au moto? (cold or warm?)
Customer: Kuna joto sana (Its very hot)
Employee: Sawa wacha nikuletee baridi. (Its o.k, let me bring cold water)

Example 6

Employee: Habari yako? (how are you?)
Customer: Njema (fine)
Employee: Semeni (Speak out)
Customer: Nyumba za kulala ni pesa gapi? (How much is a room?)
Employee: Elfu moja na mia mbili (One thousand two hundred.)
Example 7

Customer: Tafadhali nisaidie na funguoya msalani? (Please help me with the key to the Washroom?)

Employee: Enda tu, kumefunguliwa (Just go it is opened)

Customer: Asante. (Thanks)

Example 8

Customer: Unaweza kunisaidia na bill? (would you assist me with the bill?)

Employee: Ngojea kidogo nikuletee (wait a bit as I bring it for you).

Customer: Tafadhali harakisha niko na haraka “Please hurry up am in a hurry).

Example 9

Customer: Hii chai yenu ni baridi. (Your tea is cold).

Employee: Kweli? (is it true?)

Customer: UKweli kabisa (very much true)

Employee: Nitapasha moto (I will warm it for you)

Example 10

Employee: Umesaidika? (have you been assisted?)

Customer : Hapana, nahitaji chakula tafadhali (No! I need food please).

Employee: Tafadhali angalia menu yetu. (Please check our menu for your favourite food)
Example 11

Employee: Habari yako? *(How are you?)*

Customer: Tafadhali tuonyeshe mahali pa kukaa *(Please show us a place to sit).*

Employee: Njooni niwaonyeshe *(Come and I will show you).*

Example 12

Employee: Mmetumana? *(Have you requested?)*

Customer: Bando *(not yet)*

Employee: Mnataka kupewa nini? *(what would you like to be served with?)*

Customer: Chai na nduma *(Tea and arrow roots)*

Employee: Nduma zimeisha utajaribu Ngwaci *(Arrow roots are over will you try sweet potatoes.)*

Customer: Ni sawa leta ngwaci *(Its o.k I can have the sweet potatoes)*

Example 13

Employee: Karibuni *(welcome)*

Customer: Tunatafuta nyumba. *(We are looking for rooms).*

Employee: Kama ngapi customer? *(How many?)*

Customer: Tunaweza pata kumi hivi? *(can we get 10 rooms?)*
Employee: Zenye zimebaki ni tano. Mtachukua hizo? (We only have five rooms – will you have those ones?).

Customer: Hapana, tulitaka kuwa mahali pamoja (No. We wanted to be at the same place)

**Example 14**

Customer: Kwa nini umeniletea chakula baridi? (Why have you served me cold food?)

Employee: Kweli ni baridi? hiyo chakula imetoka kwa moto saa hizi. (is it cold? because the food has just been cooked now).

Customer: Kwani hamna micro-wave? (Don’t you have a micro-wave?)

**Example 15**

Employee: Habari ya asubuhi? (Good morning?)

Customer: Njema (Fine)

Employee: Utakula chakula gani? (Which food are you going to be served with?)

Customer: Ugali na kuku (Ugali and chicken)

Employee: Ni sawa (Its O.K)

**Example 16**

Customer: Samahani, hiki chakula hakina chumvi. (Excuse me, this food does not have any salt).

Employee: Pole sana, wacha nikuletete (Am sorry, let me bring it for you).
Example 17

Customer: Habari ya jioni? (Good evening?)

Employee: Njema (We regret to inform you that the rooms we had are over.)

Customer: Na sasa nitafanya nini? (What do I do now?)

Employee: Pole sana tafadhali angalia Signal Hotel

(We are very sorry. You could probably check at Signal hotel)

Example 18

Customer: Unaweza kunitengenezea ungali fish? (Would you please prepare Ungali and fish?)

Employee: samahanisamaki zimekwisha. Unaweza kutumia kuku?

(We apologize that fish is not available. Would you use chicken? Instead)

Customer: Ni sawa wacha nitumie kuku (Its okay I can use the chicken)

Example 19

Employee: Kuna shinda, nikusaidie vipi? (Is there any problem, how can I help you?)

Customer: Maji yale yanayotoka ni baridi. Naweza pata maji moto? (The water which is flowing is cold, May I get warm water?)

Employee: Pole sana kwa hayo tutaleta maji moto kwa chumba chako (We are really sorry for the inconveniences we are going to provide warm water in your room).
Example 20

Employee: Habari ya saa hizi? (How are you?)

Customer: Niko salama (I am fine).

Employee: Unataka tufanye nini? (What do you want us to do?)

Customer: Mko na 'rooms' (Do you have rooms?)

Employee: Ndio tuko na rooms na kama hujali nitakuonyesha. (Yes, we have rooms and I will possibly show you the rooms if you don't mind)

Example 21

Customer: Kwani leo hamuuzi? (Are you not selling today?)

Employee: Unataka? (What do you want?)

Customer: Mko na chakula gani? (What type of food do you have?)

Employee: Hatuna chakula tayari. Chakula hutengenezwa kwa order. (we do not have ready meals as they are Prepared by order)
APPENDIX III

Questionnaire for the hotel management in Kitui town

The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather information on the use of politeness strategies during the interaction between customers and hotel employees in Kitui town. Your responses was be accorded great confidentiality and was only be used for the purpose of this study. I request you to cooperate in this exercise. Please indicate your option by putting a tick against one of the multiple choices and in the provided space write your chosen opinion (s).

SECTION A-Background information

1. Your current responsibility/position.........................

2. Indicate your gender

   a) Male
      [ ]

   b) Female
      [ ]

3. What is your age bracket in years?

   a) Below 20
      [ ]

   b) 20-30
      [ ]

   c) 31-40
      [ ]

   d) 41-50
      [ ]

   e) 51 and above
      [ ]

4. What is the level of your academic qualification?

   a) Below secondary
      [ ]

   b) Secondary
      [ ]

   c) College (diploma)
      [ ]

   d) University
      [ ]

   e) Any other (specify).........................
5. How many years have you worked in the hotel sector?

   a) Below 1 year
   b) 1-5 [ ]
   c) 6-10 [ ]
   d) 11-15 [ ]
   e) 16-20 [ ]
   f) 21-25 [ ]
   g) Above 25 [ ]

SECTION B

1b. Information on the nature and use of politeness strategies used by hotel employees

List some of the politeness statements commonly used by hotel employees during their interaction with customers.

A)-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
B)-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
C)-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
D)-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
E)-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
F)-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
2b) Indicate how often the politeness statements listed in 1b are used by hotel employees by use of a tick in the spaces provided.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The statement</th>
<th>How often the statement is used</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very frequently used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>

3b) Indicate the effects of using the politeness statements Listed in 1b in the spaces provided by use of a tick.

**EFFECTS ON CUSTOMERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EFFECTS ON CUSTOMERS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. They will come back for the services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. They will bring other customers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. They will be happy</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Any other effect. Specify...........................................
### APPENDIX IV

**Budget plan**

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<th>ITEM</th>
<th>COST</th>
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<tr>
<td>Computer services</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i) Typing</td>
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<tr>
<td>(ii) Photocopying</td>
<td>4,000/=</td>
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<tr>
<td>(iii) Internet</td>
<td>5,000/=</td>
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<tr>
<td>Questionnaire designing and Administration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tape recorder; buying and administration</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stationery</td>
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<tr>
<td>Data collection</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i) Travelling expenses</td>
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<tr>
<td>(ii) Food and accommodation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Data analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
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<td>TOTAL</td>
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APPENDIX V

Activity time plan

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October-November 2014</td>
<td>Proposal writing for the research</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 2014</td>
<td>Presentation of the proposal to the supervisors and approval of Research work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January-February 2015</td>
<td>Data collection</td>
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<tr>
<td>March-April 2015</td>
<td>Data analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May-June 2015</td>
<td>Report writing and submission of the research final report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2015</td>
<td>Graduation ceremony</td>
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