

THE UNIVERSITY OF DANANG  
UNIVERSITY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE STUDIES



**BÙI THỊ ANH THU'**

**AN INVESTIGATION INTO POLITENESS  
STRATEGIES USED IN CONVERSATIONS IN  
THE COURSE BOOKS "LET'S TALK" 1, 2 AND 3**

**Major: ENGLISH LINGUISTICS**

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## **Chapter One**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1. RATIONALE**

Language is the most important means for people to communicate to each other from a country to another country. Nowadays, English becomes an official and effective international language. As a result, more and more people have been studying English with the hope that they can meet the requirements of society in general and of their jobs in particular.

In daily life, people communicate to each other using languages and through conversations. In order to avoid embarrassing other people or making people feel uncomfortable, it is advisable for participants in the conversations to be aware of politeness strategies. People use politeness when they try to minimize the potential threat in interaction and to avoid making other people feel embarrassed or uncomfortable.

Different ethnic groups have different ways to perform their daily interactions. The Western people, namely the Americans, to a certain extent, have different spoken languages different behaviors from those of Eastern people, such as Vietnamese. In the field of cross-cultural communication, the degree of politeness strategies applied is a significant factor. Therefore, in the English teaching and learning, teachers not only teach students about the language itself, but also guide learners on how to use language politely in communicating with others.

As an English teacher for years, I have accessed to a textbook set title “Let’s Talk 1, 2 and 3” published by Cambridge Press in 2007. The textbook set contains conversations using politeness

strategies, from which students can learn. It has been used by many teachers and students in teaching and learning English speaking skills. When I use these books in teaching, I find that there are a wide range of politeness strategies utilized in conversations in these books. I really want to investigate the language of the books so I can teach students more effectively. Particularly, I give them lessons which contain the politeness strategies for them to practice in daily conversations.

For the reasons above, I decided to carry out a study titled “An Investigation into Politeness Strategies in the Conversations in the Course Books Let’s Talk 1, 2 and 3” with the aim to reveal linguistic politeness strategies in conversations in listening sections in the course books. Last but not least, I expect that this study might be helpful for further research relating to politeness strategies in many other forms of discourse.

## **1.2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

- Provide readers with a general idea of politeness strategies and point out the significance of politeness strategies in communication.

- Classify politeness strategies employed in conversations in listening sections of the course books “Let’s Talk” 1, 2 and 3”.

- Supply some implications of teaching politeness strategies in English communication.

## **1.3. SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

This study focuses on investigating positive and negative politeness strategies only in conversations in the listening sections of the course books “Let’s Talk” 1, 2 and 3 under the light of Brown & Levinson’s politeness theory (1987).

#### **1.4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

- What politeness strategies are used in the conversations in the course books “Let’s Talk” 1, 2 and 3?

- Which politeness strategy is most frequently used in the conversations in the course books “Let’s Talk” 1, 2 and 3?

#### **1.5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The study aims to investigate politeness strategies in series course books “Let’s Talk” 1, 2 and 3”. The research hopefully helps not only raise the students’ awareness of the necessity of politeness strategies in communication in general but also provide them with the knowledge of politeness strategies and their markers used in conversations.

### **Chapter Two**

## **LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

### **21. PREVIOUS STUDIES RELATED TO THE RESEARCH**

Over the last four decades, politeness has become one of the most popular topics in pragmatics, sociolinguistics and cross-cultural communication. There have been a great number of studies on pragmatics in which have an impact on many aspects of human interactions.

In 2003, Pamela Hobbs at the University of California, Los Angeles conducted a study on “The medium is the message: politeness strategies in men’s and women’s voice mail message”, this research suggests that women are more likely than men to use politeness strategies in their speech. Researchers reported that women pay more compliments than men, that women in talk with

same-sex peers use a large number of positive-politeness strategies while men in analogous situations do not, and that women are more likely to apologize, soften criticism or express thanks than men. In this study, data were drawn from voice mail messages in a legal setting where male Ss' use of politeness markers was roughly equal to that of women's. Moreover, positive politeness strategies were used almost exclusively by male Ss, and only by attorneys. The two Ss who used the greatest number of politeness markers in individual messages were both men. Factors which may play a role in explaining these findings include the one-sided nature of voice mail communications and the fact that the data were generated in a legal setting.

In Vietnam, there have been some studies concerning about politeness strategies expressed in course books at schools or universities. Trieu Thi Trang (2009) focused on positive and negative politeness strategies in conversational activities of the course book "New Headway, Intermediate". The theoretical framework of the study is politeness theories proposed by Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987). The research shows that positive politeness strategies are used more frequently than negative politeness strategies in the course book "New Headway, Intermediate". Meanwhile, in English speaking cultures, when interlocutors become more familiar to each other, they tend to use negative politeness strategies in communication, especially in making requests (M Saadatmandi, SM Khiabani, 2018).

Another study in 2012 of Pham Thi Hong Lien, Hanoi National University, on the topic "A Study on Politeness Strategies in the Conversational Activities of the Coursebook New English File (Intermediate)". The study is an attempt to describe and systematize

politeness strategies in the light of theoretical framework proposed by Brown & Levinson and Nguyen Quang. Besides, the author tries to provide readers with a thorough and brief overview of theory to find out the types of politeness strategies employed in this course book. The findings show that both negative and politeness strategies are employed in conversational activities in the course book. However, positive politeness strategies are more frequently used than negative politeness strategies.

Many previous studies showed the importance for English speaking learners to understand and better use politeness strategies in the daily conversations. For that reason, I would like to investigate the types of politeness strategies in a very popular book set of Vietnamese students which is Let's Talk 1, 2 and 3, to promote the understanding and application of politeness strategies in teaching English speaking to students especially young learners.

## **2.2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

### **2.2.1 Speech acts**

#### ***2.2.1.1 Theory of speech acts***

According to Austin (1962), and Searle (1969), a speech act always consists of three related acts: Locutionary act, Illocutionary act and Perlocutionary act

1) Locutionary act is an activity in which the S uses linguistic elements and grammatical rules to create more or less meaningful sentences. This is just a surface meaning, a literal meaning, not taking into account any implication in the sentence.

Example: This morning it rained a lot, Dad. (I told my father).

This sentence simply means that the son wants to inform him about the weather this morning.

2) Illocutionary act is an activity that both Ss and listeners

understand Illocutionary force of the speech. The lingual force is the true meaning of speech in a realistic communication situation. Example: Offer, ask, praise, apologize, refuse, reject, etc (Fitra, 2015).

3) Perlocutionary act – It normally creates a sense of consequential effects on the audiences. The effects may be in the form of thoughts, imaginations, feelings or emotions. The effect upon the addressee is the main charactership of perlocutionary utterances

The locutionary act describes a dangerous situation, the illocutionary act acts as a force of the warning and perlocutionary acts frighten the addressee.

### *2.2.1.2 Classification of speech acts*

Searle (1990) states divided illocutionary acts into five major categories: Directives, Representatives, Expressives, Commissives and Declaratives.

- **Declarations:** Declaratives are speech acts that make the world change via utterances. By using a declarative, S wants to make both the world match the words and the words match the world. These are words and expressions that change the world by their very utterance, such as ‘I bet’, ‘I declare’ ‘I resign’...

- **Representatives:** Representatives are speech acts by which S commits himself to the belief that the propositional content of the utterance is true. These are acts in which the words state what the S believes to be the case, such as ‘describing’, ‘claiming’, ‘hypothesizing’, ‘insisting’, ‘predicting’.

- **Commissives:** Commissives are speech acts that S uses to commit himself to some future course of action. This includes acts in which the words commit the S to future action, such as ‘promising’,

‘offering’, ‘threatening’, ‘refusing’, ‘vowing’ and ‘volunteering’.

- **Directives:** Directives are speech acts that embody an effort on the part of the S to get the H to do something, to “direct” him/ her towards some goals. This category covers acts in which the words are aimed at making the H do something, such as ‘commanding’, ‘requesting’, ‘inviting’, ‘forbidding’, and ‘suggesting’.

- **Expressives:** Expressives are speech acts that express inner states like feelings or attitudes to some prior actions or states of affairs. This last group includes acts in which the words state what the S feels, such as ‘apologizing’, ‘praising’, ‘congratulating’, ‘deploring’, and ‘regretting’.

### **2.2.2. Conversation**

Although when mentioning conversation, people think of the major proportion of most people’s daily language, there are still different definitions of conversation (Thornbury & Slade 2006). As stated in Oxford dictionary, conversation is a talk, especially an informal one, between two or more people, in which news and ideas are exchanged.

It is obvious that conversations take a really important role in social life because people can exchange ideas and cooperate to help our society grow and develop. It is extremely essential to make effective conversation to interact with our surroundings and people living in the surroundings.

### **2.2.3. Theory of politeness**

#### ***2.2.3.1 Politeness and face theory of Brown and Levinson***

- ***Politeness***

In everyday communication, people act in a way that shows respect for the face or the face needs of the person involved in the conversation. The politeness in language research is (Brown &

Levinson, 1978):

(1) The way language expresses the social gap between communicating participants and their different role relationships;

(2) How to face activities, means the effort to establish, and maintain face in the conversation process in a speaking community.

• ***Face***

Following Brown & Levinson (1987) defined face as a “the public self-image that every member of society wants to claim for himself” (page) in which an individual’s emotions is involved. In communication, this “self-image” is maintained, protected or lost. A desire in communication is maintaining each other’s face. This is done by recognizing the wants of other interaction and understanding their desires.

**2.2.3.2. *Face threatening acts***

Face-threatening act is threatening the H’s self-image. It includes expressions negatively evaluating the H’s positive face as in disapproval, criticism, complaints, accusations, contradictions, disagreements, etc. There are other expressions which show that the S does not care about H’s positive face, e.g. expressions of violent emotions, taboo topics, bad news, emotional topics, and interruptions.

Both verbal and nonverbal acts are found in a face threatening act. To add more detail, Brown & Levinson (1978) explained that it is FTAs that oppose the negative and/or positive face of either S or H.

**2.2.4. *Politeness strategies***

Mentioning the subject of politeness, Brown & Levinson (1987) concluded that human politeness behavior in four strategies: bald on record, off-record-indirect strategy, negative politeness strategy, and positive politeness strategy.

### ***2.2.4.1 Positive politeness and positive politeness strategies***

Positive techniques are usable not only for FTA redress, but in general as a kind of social accelerator, where S, in using them, indicates that he wants to ‘come closer’ to H. Therefore, Brown and Levinson sketch 15 positive politeness strategies

**Strategy 1:** Notice, attend to H (his interests, wants, needs, goods).

**Strategy 2:** Exaggerate (interest, approval, sympathy with H)

**Strategy 3:** Intensify interest to H

**Strategy 4:** Use in-group identity markers (usages (i) of address forms, (ii) of language or dialect, (iii) of jargon or slang, and (iv) of ellipsis.)

**Strategy 5:** Seek agreement (by the safe topics, repetition or minimal encouragers)

**Strategy 6:** Avoid disagreement (instances of ‘token agreement’, of ‘pseudo-agreement’, of ‘white lies’, of ‘hedging opinions’)

**Strategy 7:** Presuppose/ raise/ assert common ground

**Strategy 8:** Joke

**Strategy 9:** Assert or presuppose S’s knowledge of and concern for H’s wants

**Strategy 10:** Offer, promise

**Strategy 11:** Be optimistic

**Strategy 12:** Include both S and H in the activity

**Strategy 13:** Give (or ask for) reasons

**Strategy 14:** Assume or assert reciprocity

**Strategy 15:** Give gifts to H (goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation)

### ***2.2.4.2 Negative politeness and negative politeness strategies***

There are 10 negative politeness strategies pointed out by Brown and Levinson (1987, 1990) as follows:

**Strategy 1:** Be conventionally indirect

**Strategy 2:** Question/ Hedge

**Strategy 3:** Be pessimistic

**Strategy 4:** Minimize the imposition

**Strategy 5:** Give deference

**Strategy 6:** Apologize (for doing an FTA with at least 4 ways to communicate regret or reluctance to do an FTA)

**Strategy 7:** Impersonalize S and H

**Strategy 8:** State the FTA as a general rule (S doesn't want to impinge but is merely forced to by circumstances, stating the FTA as an instance of some general social rule, regulation, or obligation)

**Strategy 9:** Nominalize

**Strategy 10:** Redress other wants of H

## **Chapter Three**

### **RESEARCH METHODS AND PROCEDURES**

#### **3.1. DATA COLLECTION**

The study focuses on 60 conversations which used politeness strategies in speaking and analyzes politeness strategies used in conversations based on Brown & Levinson's theory. At the same time, the researcher would like to investigate on the frequency of five speech acts type according to Searle theory of five categories of speech acts.

#### **3.2. RESEARCH METHODS**

This study employed both quantitative and qualitative

methods. The quantitative method involves synthesizing conversations, pointing out and comparing the frequency of different tactics of politeness strategies based on the theory presented in the literature review. The qualitative method, which was the main method in this study, focused on analyzing conversations to answer the research questions of the study.

### **3.3. RESEARCH PROCEDURES**

In implementing the study, steps are presented as follows:

1. Collecting 60 conversations from the listening sections in the 3 books with politeness strategies employed.
2. Analyzing conversations and identifying the politeness strategies in such conversations. (positive or negative politeness).
3. Categorizing strategies and speech acts employed.
4. Making comparison among politeness strategies/ speech acts to see the most frequent methods to be used and which politeness strategies usually come with what type of speech acts.
5. Suggesting possible ways of teaching and learning politeness strategies.

### **3.4. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY**

The thesis is composed of five main chapters as follows:

**Chapter 1:** Introduction.

**Chapter 2:** Literature review and Theoretical background

**Chapter 3:** Research methods and Procedures.

**Chapter 4:** Findings and Discussion.

**Chapter 5:** Conclusion

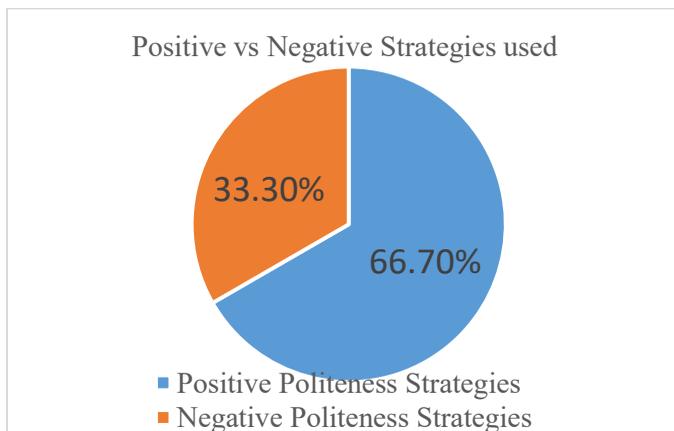
## Chapter Four

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### 4.1. POLITENESS STRATEGIES USED IN EACH SPEECH ACT IN LET'S TALK 1, 2 & 3

The below parts will show the findings by types of speech acts and their proportions among 60 examples in the corpus. The proportions of five types of speech acts within the total 60 conversations are presented as follow: Representatives: Most popular act at 51.6%, Directives: 2<sup>nd</sup> popular act at 25%, Expressives: 3<sup>rd</sup> popular act at 11.6%, Commissives: 4<sup>th</sup> popular act at 6.67%, Declarations: Smallest proportion of 5%.

The use of politeness strategies the results are as followed chart:



*Figure 4.2. The use of positive vs negative strategies in the Corpus*

From all these figures, it is believed that in English speaking regular conversations from these books, positive politeness is considered to be politer than negative strategies and within the scenarios of the book, people seem to use positive strategies in many

situations. As a result, the percentage of positive strategies employed in these books is high at 66.7%.

In the next sections, researcher will analyze all strategies used in each speech act. The statistical results were summarized in the table below:

Table 4.2. The use of politeness strategies in each speech act

Speech act	Positive Strategies	Negative Strategies
Representatives	67.7%	32.5%
Directives	66.7%	32.3%
Expressives	85.7%	14.3%
Commissives	100%	0%
Declarations	46.7%	53.3%

#### 4.1.1. Politeness Strategies in the Representative speech act

The results showed that the speech act “Representatives” was used the most in these books with 51.6% of total 60 examples. Out of 31 examples of Representatives t, 21 examples used positive politeness strategies, accounting for 67.7%. The other 10 examples with negative politeness strategies accounted for 32.5%.

##### 4.1.1.1. Positive Politeness Strategies used

In this section, the analysis of positive politeness strategies used in Representatives type of speech acts will be presented

##### Example 1: (LT2, Page 24)

*Interviewer: Linda, you must really enjoy your work.*

*Linda: Oh, it's the best job in the world!*

In this conversation, positive politeness strategy 2 was evident in the sentence 2. Linda agreed with Interviewer's exaggerating comment (*it's the best job in the world!*). That S shows the interests, approval or sympathy with H in an exaggerating way is the sign of

positive politeness strategy 2.

#### **4.1.1.2. Negative Politeness Strategies used**

Similarly, in this section, negative politeness strategies used in this type of speech act are illustrated.

##### Example 3: (L2, P69)

*Guild 4: But in my opinion, the best time to be here is at night. It's open until midnight. If you want to come again, you just have to make reservations in advance. And you can do that on the internet, or in one of the ticket agencies around the city. All right, so I'll let you walk around and enjoy the view.*

In this sentence, S gave H another option which S thought would be better for H, and the sentence also meant to advise H on how to best watch the view of the city. However, there was no imposition from the S at all because he only made a suggestion for to H. The Strategy 4 - negative politeness is to minimize imposition in the utterance on H.

#### **4.1.2. Politeness Strategies in the Directive speech act**

The second popular speech act which was found in our corpus is Directives speech act with 25%, equivalents to 15 examples. This is the only speech act in which the Negative politeness strategies were employed more frequent than the positive ones. There are 8 examples used negative politeness strategies; this number in Positive politeness strategies is 7. The reason may come from the semantic figure of the speech act which embodies an effort on the part of the S to get the H to do something, to “direct” him/ her towards some goals. They are commands, orders, requests, advice, invitations, etc.

##### **4.1.2.1. Positive politeness strategies used**

##### Example 1: (LT1, P26)

*Interviewer: Cliff, now you try to save money too, don't you?*

This was an interview on how people think about saving money. The interviewer was suggesting Cliff the answer right in his question. And he wanted to guide/direct the interviewee to the saving-habit. This is an example of Positive politeness Strategy 13 – Giving H the answer right inside the question or giving H the reason when S asked for the reason.

#### ***4.1.2.2. Negative politeness strategies used***

##### Example 1: (L1, P10)

*Matt: So, Diane, tell me about your friend Alex.*

*Diane: Oh, Alex is always telling jokes and making people laugh.*

*Matt: Oh, so you mean he is very funny.*

*Diane: That's right.*

This example is an interview about interviewee's best friends. The interviewer asked about Alex best friend (Strategy 2 of negative politeness– Make questions and orders). The first sentence is a request, S asked H to talk about her friend, Alex. This is an order from the S. The second sentence means a confirmation question on other meaning of what Dianne said.

#### **4.1.3. Politeness strategies in the Declaration speech act**

Declarations speech act was the least common in all examples with only 5 percent of 60 examples. There were only 3 examples of Declaration speech act, in which two examples used positive politeness strategies and only one example used Negative Politeness strategy.

##### ***4.1.3.1. Positive Politeness strategies used***

##### Example 1: (L1, P36)

*Game show host: Well, that's absolutely correct! OK, Donna, what are you going to do now? Do you want to stop there, or do you*

*want to spin the wheel?*

*Donna: Uh...I ... Oh,oh, I think maybe I'd like to ...*

*Game show host: Now don't forget. **If you stop now, you can go home with five hundred dollars.***

The conversation took place in a game show. The game show host declared the results of player's answers and he noticed what changes would be if the player chose to stop the game or continue with the spin. He used "if" in the statement, to assert a reciprocity with the players. This is in line with the Strategy 14 as the S assumed or asserted reciprocity in the utterance that contained "If" clause.

#### ***4.1.3.2. Negative Politeness strategies used***

##### Example 1: (L3, P60)

*Woman: I'm curious to know a little more about your background. **Is it ok if I ask you a few questions about your family?***

This was a job interview. She asked H if she could have more questions for him. Although the S asked the question, she knew she would get the approval from H. The S used Negative Politeness Strategy 2 – Asking question.

Generally, Declarations refer to words and expressions that change the world by utterances, such as 'I bet', 'I declare, and' 'I resign. As shown in the first two examples, although there was no "declare" word in the sentence, the meaning of whole sentence is to inform changes to the H. In those sentences, changes really took place after whatever was said. This speech act has the smallest proportion in our corpus, it only accounted for 5% of all examples.

#### **4.1.4. Politeness strategies in the Commissive speech act**

In the corpus, there are 4 examples of this speech act and that accounted for 6.67%. This speech act is the only one act which all of examples employed Positive politeness strategies. There are no

negative politeness strategies were used.

To sum up, in performing a Commissive, S makes the world match the words (via the S). For all examples above, we can see the Ss expressed intentions and offered Hs for their help or something else or convince H about things S promised them that those things will happen in the future. All those actions are which Ss committed themselves to do in the very near future. This type of speech acts did not appear much in our corpus with only 6.67% over total 60 examples found.

#### **4.1.5. Politeness Strategies in the Expressive speech act**

This speech act was used at the average level in conversations in these books. The use of this speech act was at the 3<sup>rd</sup> place with 11% of examples used. The typical characteristic of Expressive speech act is that it shows the S's emotional expression in the utterance. In general, the Strategy 1 (Notice/attend to H's conditions) and Strategy 2 (Exaggerate- showing interest, approval, sympathy with H) of positive politeness strategies are commonly found in the Expressive speech act.

##### ***4.1.5.1. Positive Politeness strategies used***

The strategy is clearly presented in the following example:

##### **Example 2: (L1, P64)**

*Interviewer: Wow, Grant, uh... You have a fantastic home!  
This is a perfect location!*

We can see clearly how the S made comments about things with their feelings expressed. This made H feel more interested in the conversation and pay more attention to what the S said. In this example, the S used Strategy 2 – Exaggerate by saying “You have a fantastic home!” to express his interest on the house.

#### ***4.1.5.2. Negative Politeness strategies used***

##### **Example 1: (L1, P64)**

*Interviewer: Matt, this is a really amazing home. I just can't believe you actually live here!*

*Matt: Well, it's not just me- there are four of us. Me and my wife and our two kids. We like the unusual location, and we don't mind that it is small. All we have to do if we want more space is climb down and enjoy the forest around us. There is plenty of room there.*

***Interviewer: You know, Matt, what I really like is the way you seem to be part of the nature. But, you know, it seems like it might be a bit dangerous. Do you have any accidents?***

*Matt: No, nothing serious so far. And the view is pretty, too. Look over there- you can just see the ocean, and we get fantastic sunsets looking west. We really love it here!*

It is the same example but in this conversation, in the second turn, the interviewer used negative positive strategies. He opened the topic by gave compliment to Matt, next, he talked about his worry “***it seems like it might be a bit dangerous***” and asked Matt if he had got any accidents so far. In this sentence, the mix of Strategy 8 – avoiding too directly talk about a problem, and strategy 2 – asking question were employed.

The last group is at the 3rd popular place with 11% over all examples. And the use of positive politeness strategies accounted for the majority with 7 times compared to 1 time of negative politeness strategies. In this type of speech act, as people were close with each other, they put many emotional expressions in their utterances. This helped shorten the gap between S and H.

### 4.3. DISCUSSION ON FINDINGS

The findings show that positive politeness strategies outnumbered negative politeness strategies with 66.7 % and 33.3 % respectively. The usage of strategies (Positive or negative) are diverse and flexible. The results showed that people used positive politeness more often compared to negative strategies. This trend is similar to that of Vietnamese conversation style. Vietnamese people tend to choose positive politeness to show their attention or concern to others and lessen the distance between S and H.

In terms of positive politeness strategies, the strategy 4 (Use in – group identity markers) did not appear in the corpus. In the total 20 examples of negative politeness strategies, the strategy 3 and 7 did not appear in the conversations in these course books. It seems that in English speaking countries when communicators tend to use positive politeness strategies to narrow the distance between S and H. Another explanation involves the nature of the book's conversations. The conversations were made between friends or close people; therefore, they mainly used positive politeness strategies in their speech. Strategies 1 and 3 and 7 of positive politeness strategies were used more frequently compared to other strategies 6, 8 and 5.

In term of negative politeness strategies, the strategy 2 and 5 were used the most with 7 and 5 examples respectively over total of 20 examples. S directly asked questions to H or always showed respect to H by using words or clauses n. Besides, in the Commissive speech act, the there was no negative politeness strategy employed in this type of speech act. Therefore, we can conclude that the negative politeness strategies were not used in Commissive speech act utterance of the three books Let's Talk 1, 2 and 3.

Some politeness strategies are perfectly fit with typical type of speech act. Strategy 10 of Positive politeness strategies – Offering and Promising is frequently applied in the Commissive speech act. In the meantime, Strategy 1 (Notice/attend to H's conditions) and Strategy 2 (Exaggerate- showing interest, approval, sympathy with H) of positive politeness strategies are common in the Expressive speech act.

Table 4.3. Politeness Strategies used in each Speech Act

<b>Speech act</b>	<b>Positive politeness strategies used</b>	<b>Negative politeness strategies used</b>	<b>Total number of examples found</b>
Representatives	21	10	31
Directives	7	8	15
Commissives	4	0	4
Expressives	6	1	7
Declarations	2	1	3
Total number of examples found	<b>40</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>60</b>

The percentage of positive politeness strategies is greater than that of negative politeness strategies used among the total examples with an exception of the Directives type. This may result from the nature of Directives which are to guide, direct, order or request others to do something. In Directives, the need to closer the gap between S and H is low.

In conclusion, this chapter has summarized the results of 1 findings with numbers, tables and charts. Moreover, discussions on results helped bring readers the general picture of how people in conversations of this book used politeness strategies in each circumstance.

## Chapter Five

### CONCLUSION

#### 5.1. CONCLUSION

This study examines conversations in listening sections of the book set “Let’s Talk 1, 2 and 3” and indicates the ways speakers applied politeness strategies. This study mainly focuses on the politeness theory of Brown and Levinson’s (1987) as theoretical background to investigate politeness strategies applied in conversations. The data included 60 conversations categorized into five types of speech acts: Directives, Representatives, Expressives, Commissives and Declaratives.

The use of speech acts was varying. This can be explained by the fact that the nature of these three books is daily topics about many aspects of daily life (family, friends, house, jobs, interests, study, and work). The most commonly used speech act was Representatives with 51.6%, followed by Directives with 25%, and Expressives with 11.6% examples. Commissive speech act was not seen much in these books with only 6.67% and the least common one was Declarations with the smallest proportion of 5%.

In terms of positive or negative politeness strategies positive politeness strategies accounted for two thirds (40/60 examples) and negative politeness strategies took up one third (20/60 examples). The reason may come from the nature of the strategy. In the negative politeness strategies, S tends to focus more on the *Face* of H compared to negative politeness strategies. The strategy is used by the S who is not really closed to the H or it is used in formal situation. In the three books, the conversations were mainly among friends, family members, husbands and wives (72%), or among those

who were not close or even strangers (asking for road directions, asking for help from a stranger, in the interviews, talk show, job interviews, or in the restaurant, or a public place).

From the speech act theory, politeness strategies largely depend on particular situations, relative power and the social distance between the S and the H. Nevertheless, within the scope of the study, the most common situations were from daily life and conversations of people of close relationships. As a result, in four types of speech the majority of politeness strategies used are positive ones. Only in Directives, the use of Negative Politeness strategies was greater than positive strategies. Especially no negative politeness strategies were employed in the Commissive speech act examples.

In this investigation, differences in the choice of strategies were analyzed. Regarding the choice of strategies, Strategies 1 and 3 and 7 of Positive politeness strategies were used much more frequently than other strategies with 6, 8 and 5 examples respectively. In terms of negative politeness strategies, the strategies 2 and 5 were used the most with 7 and 5 examples respectively out of 20 examples.

## **5.2. IMPLICATIONS**

There are some useful implications for the teachers and students.

Firstly, the teacher should help students understand more about the definitions of politeness strategies and how to properly use politeness strategies in each speech act across cultures. Students should be taught about which politeness strategies are acceptable and preferable in each speech act in English and Vietnamese. While some conversations are suitable in English, they might be rude in Vietnam or vice versa.

Secondly, the teacher should focus more on teaching the functions of language in use rather than structures. It helps students communicate well in reality to solve the problem that after a long course of study. Students may know much about grammar or vocabulary, but they cannot use that knowledge in communication naturally and politely.

Lastly, when teaching English using the Let's Talk 1, 2 and 3 books, the teacher is advised to let student discuss the scenarios in conversations and link these conversations content with Vietnamese situations. Or, with the same speech act, teacher can ask students to try different politeness strategies.

In conclusion, teaching English should not be separated from teaching its culture and its politeness strategies. This will help connect students with foreigners and avoid cultural barriers in communication. In order to help students who may use these books, the teacher should focus on politeness strategies. This is a good chance for students to study how to use English fluently and politely with foreigners.

### **5.3. LIMITATIONS**

Although the author has made great efforts, shortcomings are unavoidable. Initially, because of the limited sources of reference books, majority of the references utilized in the study have been taken from the internet websites, which affects the reliability of references. Because of time limit, the author was only able to investigate the positive and negative politeness strategies in only the course books "Let's Talk" 1, 2 and 3. Therefore, the range of data was small to some extent.

#### **5.4. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY**

Based on the results of the research, the following suggestions are made. Future research should continue to observe and study the factors that govern the politeness in speech as well as the variation of politeness strategies in each period. It is hereby suggested that a further study be carried out in relation to politeness strategies, such as: a study of politeness strategies use in showing agreement and disagreement to other opinions in the same course book or an investigation into the distribution of politeness strategies in each books in the book set.