

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING
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**A STUDY ON POLITENESS STRATEGIES
IN THE CONVERSATIONS OF THE
COURSE BOOKS “NEW CUTTING EDGE”
BY PETER MOOR, SARAH CUNNINGHAM
AND JANE COMYNS CARR, PUBLISHED
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. RATIONALE

Cultural knowledge is obviously an important key for Vietnamese students to succeed in learning English because second language learning is second culture learning. Therefore, in order to acquire the second language – English, it is necessary to learn not only linguistic language and interaction skills but also knowledge of the culture. Cultural factors are included in the course designs in universities and schools today. When understanding the culture factors, students will have chances to expose themselves to the native speaking environment. Normally, Vietnamese students tend to employ English based on their native culture, and thus, cause many misinterpretations in the communication. They are sometimes impolite, unfriendly, or even hostile by chance. Hence, to communicate well across culture, students must be aware of the native culture as well as English speaking countries' culture, especially the hidden parts of culture, including politeness strategies. Politeness is really an important part in all social interaction. The author of the study aims at investigating and drawing out the important role of politeness strategies in conversational activities in the course book "*New Cutting Edge*".

1.2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.2.1. Aims

This study investigates the semantic features of the conversational activities of the course book *New Cutting Edge*. It is aimed at helping Vietnamese learners of English to interpret and to use these strategies in communication effectively.

1.2.2. Objectives

In order to carry out the above aims successfully, the following objectives must be taken into consideration:

- Drawing out the important role of politeness in social communication, especially in cross – cultural communication.

- Studying on – record: positive and negative politeness strategies, off –record strategies in most typical contextual environments in conversational activities of the course book “*new cutting edge*”.

- Identifying the aspects of the semantics of politeness strategies in conversational activities of the course book “*new cutting edge*”.

1.3. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Due to the time and resource constraints, this thesis focuses on 700 samples expressing politeness strategies found in the course book “*New Cutting Edge*”, including “*New Cutting Edge*” elementary, intermediate and advanced.

1.4. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

1.5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In order to achieve the aims and objectives of the study, the following questions could be put forward:

1. What are conversational politeness strategies?
2. What are the linguistic features used for expressing politeness strategies in the conversations of the course book *New Cutting Edge*?
3. What are the implications of the study?

1.6. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. REVIEW OF PREVIOUS STUDIES

In “*Responding to compliments A contrastive study of politeness strategies between American English and Chinese speakers*” by Rong chen,, the paper reports a study on politeness strategies American English speakers and Chinese speakers use to respond to compliments. It has three aims: (1) to discover similarities and differences of politeness strategies between the two groups, (2) to provide empirical evidence for or against existing theories of linguistic politeness, and (3) to reveal differences of social values between the two cultures.

The two groups were found to use largely different politeness strategies: the American English speakers' strategies are mostly motivated by Leech's Agreement Maxim, whereas the Chinese speakers' strategies are motivated by his Modesty Maxim. This difference is then related to differences of social values between the two cultures, particularly in their respective beliefs about what constitutes self-image.

The findings of this study point to some inadequacies of Brown and Levinson's (1987) model of politeness, since it cannot explain all strategies used by the two groups of subjects, particularly those used by the Chinese speakers. Gu's (1990) model, on the other hand, accounts for the Chinese data well, but cannot explain most of the American English speakers' strategies. Leech's (1983) Politeness Principle is shown to be the most adequate model to analyze the data of the present study.

Moreover, in “*An Investigation of Compliance-gaining as Politeness*” by Leslie a. Baxter, the study considers an alternative perspective on the compliance-gaining phenomenon, specifically the theory of politeness articulated by Brown and Levinson (1978). They posit that all interaction is characterized by concern over the other person's autonomy needs and his or her desire to be liked, manifested in message behavior that addresses these needs (i.e., politeness). Brown and Levinson's typology of politeness strategies was translated into 32 items to which 155 respondents indicated likelihood of use and perceived politeness. Respondents assessed the items while imagining themselves in one of eight hypothetical scenarios created to manipulate the three situational factors posited as significant by Brown and Levinson: relationship distance, relationship power, and the magnitude of the request. A factor analysis reduced the 32 tactics to four underlying factors, which in turn served as one variable set for a canonical correlation whose second variable set was the situational factors and the agent's gender. Results indicated that females and persons in close relationships use more polite tactics than males and persons in more distant relationships. Secondly, results also indicated that persons with power use less politeness than less powerful people.

Further more, there are also some graduation papers or thesis studied politeness strategies such as politeness strategies in showing disagreement in group work by Phuong Thuy K39 A11 or Thanh, D.M. (2000) with “*Some English Vietnamese Cross – cultural Differences in Requesting*” M.A thesis.VNU – CFL, Hanoi. In this thesis, the author listed 15 strategies according theories of Brown and Levinson's and Nguyen Quang as well.

2.2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.2.1. Language and Culture

2.2.2. Communicative Competence

2.2.3. Speech Act

2.2.4. Definition of Politeness Strategies

Definition of politeness

Politeness is interpreted as a strategy (or series of strategies) employed by a speaker to achieve a variety of goals, such as promoting or maintaining harmonious relation(Thomas, 1995 : 157).

b. Definition of face

c. Definition of politeness strategies

According to Brown and Levinson (1978;101):

“Positive politeness is redress directed to the addressee’s positive face, his perennial desire that he wants (or the actions/acquisitions/value resulting from them) should be thought of as desirable.”

a. Positive politeness.

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

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

*Strategy 3: Intensify interest to H

*Strategy 4: Use in – group identity markers

*Strategy 5: Seek agreement

*Strategy 6: Avoid disagreement

*Strategy 7: Presuppose/ raise/ assert common ground

*Strategy 8: Joke

*Strategy 9: Assert or presuppose H’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)

b. Negative politeness

Brown and Levinson (1987; 129) claim:

“Negative politeness is redressive action addressed to the addressee’s negative face: his wants to have his freedom of action unhindered and his attention unimpeded.”

*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

*Strategy 7: Impersonalize S and H.

*Strategy 8: State of FTA as a general rule

*Strategy 9: Nominalize

*Strategy 10: Go on record as incurring a debt, or as not indebteding H

c. Off-record

A communicative act is done off-record if it is done in such a way that it is not possible to attribute only one clear communicative intention to the act. A speaker wants to do a FTA but wants to avoid responsibility for doing it, he can do it off-record and leave it up to the addressee to decide how to interpret it.

*Strategy 1: Give hints

- *Strategy 2: Give association clues
- *Strategy 3: Presuppose
- *Strategy 4: Understate
- *Strategy 5: Overstatement
- *Strategy 6: Use tautologies
- *Strategy 7: Use contradictions
- *Strategy 8: Be ironic
- *Strategy 9: Use metaphors
- *Strategy 10: Use rhetorical questions
- *Strategy 11: Be ambiguous
- *Strategy 12: Be vague
- *Strategy 13: Over – generalize
- *Strategy 14: Be incomplete, use ellipsis

2.2.5. Semantic Features

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODS AND PROCEDURES

3.1. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1.1. Description of Samples

3.1.2. Data Collection and Analysis

- Data Collection

- Data Analysis

3.2. RESEARCH PROCEDURES

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1. SEMANTIC FEATURES OF POLITENESS STRATEGIES USED IN CONVERSATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE COURSE BOOK “NEW CUTTING EDGE”

After studying 700 samples of conversational activities in the course book *New Cutting Edge*, the author aims at analyzing the frequency of occurrence of positive, negative and off - record strategies used in conversational activities of the course book and studying these strategies through different kinds of speech act found such as *inviting, making suggestions, requesting, responding* and *social behavior*.

4.1.1. Positive and negative politeness strategies, off – record strategies found in “Requesting” conversational activities of the course book “New Cutting Edge”.

- Positive politeness strategies
- Negative politeness strategies
- Off- record.

4.1.2. Positive and negative politeness strategies, off – record strategies found in “Making suggestion” conversational activities of the course book “New Cutting Edge”.

- Positive politeness strategies.
- Negative politeness strategies.
- Off - record.

4.1.3. Positive and negative politeness strategies found in “Responding” conversational activities of the course book “New Cutting Edge”.

- Positive politeness strategies

- Negative politeness strategies

4.1.4. Positive and negative politeness strategies found in “Inviting” conversational activities of the course book “New Cutting Edge”.

- Positive politeness strategies

- Negative politeness strategies

4.1.5. Positive and negative politeness strategies, off-record strategies found in “Social behavior” conversational activities of the course book “New Cutting Edge”

- Positive politeness strategies

- Negative politeness strategies

- Off – record.

4.1.6. The frequency of using politeness strategies in the books New Cutting Edge.

Table 4.1. The frequency of using politeness strategies in the books New Cutting Edge.

<i>Kinds of conversational Frequency activities of using P.S</i>		<i>Requesting</i>		<i>Making suggestion</i>		<i>Responding</i>		<i>Inviting</i>		<i>Social behavior</i>	
		<i>%</i>	<i>sum</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>sum</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>sum</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Sum</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>sum</i>
New Cutting Edge – Elementary	P.P.S	46.6	27	31.4	11	41.2	21	40.5	17	29.2	19
	N.P.S	53.4	31	45.7	16	58.8	30	59.5	25	43.1	28
	Off-record	0	0	22.9	8	0	0	0	0	27.7	18
New Cutting	P.P.S	39.7	21	25	11	57.1	20	33.3	12	25	12
	N.P.S	50.9	27	43.2	19	42.9	15	66.7	24	43.8	21

Edge - Intermedite	Off- record	9.4	5	31.8	14	0	0	0	0	31.2	15
New Cutting	P.P.S	49.2	30	31.6	12	23.6	13	44.4	16	26.1	12
	N.P.S	47.5	29	55.3	21	76.4	42	55.6	20	47.8	22
Edge - Advanced	Off- record	3.3	2	13.1	5	0	0	0	0	26.1	12

The table above shows the sum together with the respective percentage of politeness strategies occurrence in the whole course books “New Cutting Edge”. It is generally asserted that negative politeness is used more frequently than positive politeness in all kinds of conversational activities as well as in all New Cutting Edge. Negative politeness strategies are mostly preferred by “Responding” interaction, especially at 76.4% in New Cutting Edge-Advanced, then followed by “Requesting” and “Inviting” conversations. They take lower rate in “Making suggestion” and “Social behavior” activities.

Positive politeness strategies are mostly-used by “Requesting” in all New Cutting Edge, of which New Cutting Edge-Advanced prefers them most at 49.2%. Meanwhile in “Making suggestion” and especially in “Social behavior”, people do not often use positive ones. Most of them employ at fewer than 32% in New Cutting Edge-Elementary, Intermediate as well as in New Cutting Edge-Advanced.

In terms of off – record, they are used mostly in “Making suggestion” and “Social behavior” situation with the percentage of 31.8% at the highest, then follow by “Responding”. It can not be denied that off – record is not in favors of the authors to describe “Inviting” and “Requesting” activities.

Obviously, English-speaking cultures have the tendency of using negative politeness. They consider negative politeness as a more polite and formal way in social communication. In contrast, according to Nguyen Quang (2002), Vietnamese people, who are deeply affected by Asian culture, almost choose positive politeness in communication. They always want to show their attention or concern to others as well as to narrow the distance between S and H. Therefore, this big difference must be much noticed and emphasized in teaching and studying the course *New Cutting Edge* in particular and English in Viet Nam in general, so that students can avoid misinterpretation or culture breakdown in daily social communication.

4.1.7. Concluding remarks

4.2. POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE POLITENESS STRATEGIES USED DEPENDING ON THE S-H RELATIONSHIP.

4.2.1. Positive politeness strategies.

Table 4.2. Positive politeness strategies used by friends, teacher-student, strangers, lovers and mother/father-son/daughter.

<i>Positive politeness strategies</i>	<i>Friends</i>	<i>Teacher-student</i>	<i>Strangers</i>	<i>Mother/father-son/daughter</i>	<i>Lovers</i>
1.(Notice, attend to H)	1.6%	0%	0.8%	0.5%	0%
2.(Exaggerate)	4.9%	0%	2.9%	0.8%	0%
4.(Use in-group identity markers)	7.9%	0%	7.8%	2.6%	0%
5.(Seek agreement)	11.1%	0.5%	10.2%	1.1%	0.3%

6.(Avoid disagreement)	2.6%	0%	1%	0.5%	0%
7.(Presuppose)	0,3%	0%	0%	0%	0%
9.(Assert S's knowledge of and concern for H's wants)	1.8%	0%	2.6%	0%	0%
10.(Offer, promise)	4.4%	0%	3.9%	0.5%	0.5%
11.(Be optimistic)	0.3%	0%	0.3%	0%	0%
2.(Include both S & H in the activity)	5%	0.3%	2.6%	0.5%	0%
13. (Give or ask for reasons)	3.1%	0%	1.8%	0.8%	0%
14.(Assume or assert reciprocity)	0%	0%	0.5%	0%	0%

The table 4.2 above show that the relationship between S and H also affect the frequency of positive politeness strategies in all kinds of conversational activities of the course New Cutting Edge. The relationship may be between friends; strangers including between assistant-customer, policeman-solicitor, doctor-patient, etc; lovers; mother/father-son/daughter and teacher-student.

It would be obvious that English-speaking countries appear to be interested in using the positive politeness strategies in the books New Cutting Edge as well as in English communication. Nevertheless, the frequent use of these positive politeness strategies depends much on the relationship between speaker and the hearer. The most frequent-used strategies belong to the speakers who have a friendly relationship with each other. It accounts for 51%, the highest percentage. The reason why friends like to use these positive politeness strategies is to make the distance between them narrow, or to encourage, even to pay more attention to each other. Strategy 5

“Seek agreement” is mostly appreciated by friends with the rate 11.1%. The second choice of them may be strategy 4 “Use in-group identity markers”, or strategy 12 “Include both S & H in the activity”. The other strategies are used less and at different rates.

Also, strangers use positive politeness strategies in their interaction. They do choose strategy 5 “Seek agreement” as a preferable strategy. However, it only makes use of 39.2%, the considerably high rate. Strategy 11 “Be optimistic” and 14 “Assume or assert reciprocity” are not their favorite strategies. Especially, strategy 7 “Presuppose/raise/assert/common ground” is not mentioned at all.

Moreover, people who have a bloody relationship such as father/mother-son/daughter...are still interested in positive politeness strategies, but with the much lower percentage, only 8%. Interestingly, lovers and teacher-student take up the same rate 1% and it is also the lowest percentage. In brief, most positive politeness strategies are employed by friends who have the tendency or like to make their relationship closer and closer.

4.2.2. Negative politeness strategies

Table 4.3. Negative politeness strategies used by friends, teacher-student, strangers, lovers and mother/father-son/daughter

Negative politeness strategies	Friends	Teacher-student	Strangers	Mother/father-son/daughter	Lovers
1.(Be conventionally indirect)	1.6%	0.2%	10.2%	0.8%	0.3%
2.(Question, hedge)	18.9%	0.5%	21.4%	2.1%	0.2%
3.(Be pessimistic)	1.5%	0%	4.3%	0%	0.2%
4.(Minimize the imposition)	2.5%	0%	1.5%	0.2%	0%
5.(Give the	0.8%	0%	8.7%	0%	0%

deference)					
6.(Apologize)	1%	0.3%	2.3%	0.3%	0%
7.(Impersonalize S & H avoid the pronoun, I, you)	2.5%	0.3%	7.2%	0.8%	0.2%
8.(State the FTA as general rule)	0.8%	0%	0.5%	0%	0%
9.(Norminalize)	1%	0%	1.6%	0.2%	0%
10.(Go on record as incurring a dept, or as not indebting H)	1.8%	0%	2.1%	0%	0%

According to the data analysis, negative politeness strategies are used much frequently in comparison with positive politeness strategies since they are always the formal way in communication of English people.

Most strangers tend not to restrict or impose on their freedom to maintain the distance between S and H and negative politeness strategies are employed by them almost with the highest percentage 58%. Among these strategies, “Question, hedge” – strategy 2 takes the first position with 21.4% while strategy 8 “state the FTA as a general rule” are least used.

31% is the total rate of occurrence of negative politeness strategies that are used by friends. That is, friends also favor negative politeness strategies quite much, but still less than strangers. The most appreciated strategy 2 “question, hedge” is employed at 18,9%, while strategy 8 gets zero percentage.

For teacher-student, father/mother-son/daughter or even lovers negative politeness strategies are rarely mentioned in the course book *New Cutting Edge*.

In short, negative politeness strategies are mostly used by strangers or unknown people in all formal conversations.

4.2.3. Off record.

Table 4.4. Off - record strategies used by friends, teacher-student, strangers, lovers and mother/father-son/daughter.

Off – record strategies	Friend s	Teacher -student	Stranger s	Mother/father -son/daughter	Lover s
2. Give association clues	1.6%	0.2%	10.2%	0.8%	0.3%
3.Presuppose	20%	0.5%	21.4%	2.1%	0.2%
4.Understate	1.5%	0.5%	4.3%	0%	0.2%
5.Overstatement	2.5%	0%	1.5%	0.2%	0%
6.Use tautologies	0.8%	0.3%	8.7%	0.9%	0%
9.Use metaphors	1%	0.3%	2.3%	0.3%	0%
10.Use rhetorical questions	2.5%	0.3%	7.2%	0.8%	0.2%
12.Be vague	0.8%	0%	0.5%	0%	0%

As can be seen from the chart, strategy 3 “presuppose” is used with high rate both between strangers and friends with 21.45 and 20% respectively. There are few relationships among teachers-students and lovers. The percentage of off record strategies used by friends dominates the table. In short, off record is not used as many as the two others politeness strategies in the whole course book.

4.3 EXERCISES AND ACTIVITIES FOR THE COURSE BOOK “NEW CUTTING EDGE”

4.3.1. Exercise 1: Greeting.

4.3.2.Exercise 2 : Make Arrangement

4.3.3.Exercise 3: Safe or unsafe topics

4.3.4.Exercise 4: Appropriateness

a. How do you say in the following situations:

1. You are fifteen minutes late for class. The teacher is explaining something to class when you arrive.
2. You are ringing your doctor to make an appointment for Friday evening.
3. You are calling the post office to send 20 roses to your friend in another city so that they arrive in time for her/his birthday.
4. You have got a question about something the teacher has just said in class.
5. You are ringing the local railway station to get known about the earliest train to the capital.
6. You want to try a nice T-shirt in a clothes shop.
7. You are in the city centre. Someone asks you the way to the nearest bank.
8. You are calling the cinema to find out if there are any tickets left for the last show of the day.
9. You are a travel agent. You’ve just met a foreign visitor at the airport. You want to make the visitor feel welcome.
10. You are ringing to the travel agency to know how to book a holiday abroad.

b. Discuss in groups to find out if what is said in the situations above is the same as in Vietnamese.

4.3.5. Exercise 5: Suitable Reply

a. *What responses can be made for the following utterances:*

1. Excuse me!
2. I have just lost my wallet in the supermarket, mum
3. You look tired. What's the matter?
4. Peter, I have passed an important exam, you know.
5. You see, thousands of babies are born every day.
6. Tom and Mary are going to get married next week.
7. My

son is going to start work tomorrow. He has been unemployed for long.

b. *What can people say in the following situations:*

1. Assistant: Can I help you?

Customer:

2. Customer: I'd like a room for two days, please.

Receptionist:

3. A: Would you like to go to the party tonight?

B:

4. A: Shall we go swimming this afternoon?

B:

5. A: Is there a post office near here?

B:

c. *Discuss in groups to find out what is said in the situations above is the same as in Vietnamese*

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1. CONCLUSIONS

This study provides a range of politeness strategies and classifies the politeness strategies in the conversational activities of New Cutting Edge on the theoretical background of politeness proposed by Brown and Levinson. The politeness strategies used in the conversational activities of the Course Book fall into three main types:

a) *Positive politeness*, which is mainly used to narrow the distance between S and H, and enhance their solidarity. Politeness strategies are generally preferred by the Vietnamese and sometimes may cause culture shock with typical concerning questions in Vietnams, which are considered inappropriate in English.

Positive politeness strategies used are:

Politeness strategies used are:

- Noticing to H
- Exaggerating
- Using in-group identity markers
- Avoiding disagreement
- Seeking agreement
- Pre supposing / asserting common ground
- Offering / promising
- Giving reasons
- Giving gift to H

b) *Negative politeness*, which is used to create the distance between S and H in order to show deference and formal air to H, thus freeing H from imposition. Negative politeness is employed more in

social situations that potentially cause FTAs, Negative politeness strategies used in the conversational activities are:

- Being conventionally indirect
- Hedging
- Being pessimistic
- Minimizing the imposition
- Giving deference
- Apologizing
- Impersonalizing

c) *Off-record*, which is used when S wants to do a FTA, but wants to avoid the responsibility for doing it.

Off-record strategies used in the conversational activities are:

- Understating
- Using metaphors
- Using rhetorical questions.

The study has proved that in English speaking countries people tend to use negative politeness much more in comparison with positive politeness, and off-record has less frequency of use.

The thesis also provides some exercises and implications in order to help teachers and students to teach and study politeness strategies more effectively.

5.2. IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING POLITENESS STRATEGIES

As mentioned above, teaching and learning a second language is teaching and learning a second culture. Thus it is hardly an exaggeration to say that teaching a foreign language can not be separated from teaching its culture. However go techniques and methods for teaching culture in general and politeness in particular,

and applying it to foreign language teaching is difficult to be found and shared.

Once the understanding of the relationship of thought and culture to language, as well the awareness of cultural similarities, differences, and how they affect language learning has been reached, teachers should notice the importance of incorporating cultural factors into FLT lessons. During lessons teachers should provide students with both linguistic and cultural input. Robert Polizer has seen the tight relationship of the language and its culture, and he states:

“As language teachers, we must be interested in the study of culture in the social scientists sense of the words not because we necessarily want to teach the culture of other country but because we have to teach it. If we teach language without teaching at the same time the culture in which it operates, we are teaching meaningless symbol or symbol to which the students attach the wrong meaning.” (1959; 100-1).

There are no perfect textbooks, which completely and successfully integrate language instructions with cultural components. Therefore, language teachers play an important role because they themselves are the first source through which students learn the second culture. In order to help teachers to teach cultural awareness better Geogre Hughes suggests some techniques which are described as follows.

1) Comparison method: The teacher begins with each discussion period differences might cause problems.

2) Culture assimilators: This is a brief description of a critical incident of cross-cultural interaction that would probably be misunderstood by the students.

3) Culture capsule: The teacher gives a brief presentation showing one essential difference between the source and target cultures.

4) Drama: This technique is especially useful for directly involving students in cross-cultural misunderstanding by having selected members to act out in a series of short scenes to aware misinterpretation of something happening in the target culture.

5) Audimoto unit or Total Physical Response: This method employs a carefully constructed list of oral commands to which students respond.

6) Newspaper: Many aspects of culture that are not usually found in a textbook are present in the newspaper. Good cultural insights can readily be found in headlines, advertisement, sport pages, even the weather forecast or humour.

7) Projected media: Films, filmstrips and slides provide cultural insights as well as providing a welcome variety of classroom activities.

8) The culture island: Through the use of posters, pictures, bulletin board ECT, the teacher can attract the students' attention, elicit questions and comments (Geogre H, Hugdes, 1986: 167-8).

Besides, in the author observation and teaching experiences, she realizes it is useful to add the following technique.

9) Context: The teacher can also provide students with some cultural situations with some solutions. Students work out if the solutions are appropriate or not.

EFT teacher also can improve upon textbook selection by following these guidelines:

1. Examine each new textbook carefully to determine if it takes an intercultural point of view.

2. Try to identify the cultural aspects inherent in the textbook and list them by chapter or units. Are they positive or negative? Mixed?

3. Examine the exercises carefully. Determine if they will assist you in drawing students into intercultural activities.

4. Check to see to vocabulary items, examples, grammar structures, drills, are placed in some meaningful cultural context.

5. Examine photographs and illustrations, if any, to see if they are cultural related.

6. Carefully examine dialogues, if any, for their cultural context.

7. Go back and re-examine those textbooks which take a string intercultural point of view for possible cultural bias. Are they objective? Do they stereotype or overgeneralize about foreign cultures or US? (Stephen C. Dunnett; 1986:160)

It is necessary to remember that students do not have to share the native cultural context of the target language. However, the insertion of cultural factors into language lessons is very important when teaching a second language.

Apparently, having good knowledge of politeness strategies is essential in language teaching process and politeness strategies help to keep the conversations going in a smooth, natural and effective way. Therefore, good methods for teaching culture in general and politeness in particular in foreign language teaching need to be focused and discussed, especially when teaching the communicative course book “New Cutting Edge at Hanoi University of Industry.

Firstly, through the book - culture- related material, the teacher ought to help the students understand more about cultural values and be aware of cultural differences. That is, the students may be pointed

out whether positive or negative politeness strategies are acceptable or preferable in English or in Vietnamese in certain conversational activities. They should grasp the reality that some linguistic expressions which are appropriate in English cannot be interpreted in Vietnamese and vice versa.

Secondly, teaching a language with its functions, or speech acts rather than structures should be emphasized by teachers. In fact, most students who have the knowledge of structures only can make something grammatically correct but culturally inappropriate or impolite. In real life communication, to be polite or show respect is more important than the meaning of words together. Thus, the teacher is suggested to instruct students about what to say and how to say politely in English in a certain situation. Polite or appropriate utterances should be subtly introduced in a way that language functions are focuses as well as forms.

Finally, when teaching ““New Cutting Edge Intermediate (the Third Edition)”” teachers are advised to create chances of social interactions for students because one of the best ways to teach social English is through social situations. Under the teacher’s instruction, students are given situations and encouraged to join the conversations. Through daily conversations the teacher may help them recognize which utterances are acceptable or polite in English.

Clearly, English which belongs to Western cultures is quite different from Vietnamese or Eastern cultures. Therefore, when teaching politeness or politeness strategies used in communication, teachers must have a deep understanding about English speaking cultures which always consider negative politeness as a polite and formal way of communicating. Meanwhile,

Eastern people tend to use positive politeness in almost all interactions. That is why when teaching politeness strategies used in conversational activities of the course book the teacher should know about this difference to help avoid miscommunication. Also, it should be noted that it is necessary to teach cross-culture and politeness for the students so that the students can overcome all difficulties or culture shock in real-life communication. In conclusion, teaching English should not be separated from teaching its culture and its politeness strategies. In order to help the students, especially the ones at TLU to acquire English effectively while using the course book “New Cutting Edge” politeness strategies should be highlighted by teacher. Some of the effective ways for studying and understanding politeness of English will be presented in cultural exercises and activities

5.3. SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER STUDIES