

Arja Piirainen-Marsh

Face in Second  
Language Conversation

UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

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*To my parents  
Vanhemmilleni*

## ABSTRACT

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This study investigates the role of face and face-work in conversations between native and non-native speakers. The specific focus of the study was on the ways in which second language learners and native speakers of English negotiate face-threatening encounters. The study had two broad aims. Firstly, it sought to describe the linguistic and conversational strategies which the participants use in their attempt to manage potentially face-threatening conversational activities. Secondly, the study aimed to make a methodological contribution to the study of second language discourse by proposing an analytic framework for the description of the politeness dimension of interaction. The purpose of this was to integrate previous research on the linguistic aspects of face-work with a systematic study of the dynamic and interactive construction of discourse. The framework thus aims to capture both the linguistic choices which speakers make in dealing with potentially face-threatening actions and the intricate interactional strategies which the participants draw upon in negotiating the encounter. The methodology of the study builds on previous studies of interlanguage speech act production and second language discourse. The empirical data came from elicited dyadic conversations between native speakers of English and second language learners whose first language is Malay. The method of analysis combined concepts developed in interlanguage pragmatics, interactional sociolinguistics and ethnomethodological conversation analysis. These were integrated into a pragmatically oriented framework which pays systematic attention to the linguistic strategies and patterns of conversational organization which arise from the participants' attempts to pursue various transactional and interactional goals through talk. The findings partially support previous studies of interlanguage linguistic action patterns: while the strategies used by non-native speakers reflect their limited linguistic resources, they also show an awareness of the social and interpersonal constraints which guide patterns of language use in face-to-face interaction. More importantly, the results highlight the complex ways in which the dynamics of the interactive context regulate the linguistic choices made and the patterns of negotiation through which potentially face-threatening activities are dealt with in interaction between native and non-native speakers.

Keywords: second language acquisition, non-native interaction, face, politeness, linguistic strategies, conversational organization

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Orientation

The concepts of face and politeness are linked to the underlying social forces which influence human interaction and interpersonal communication, such as the social need to be accepted and respected by others. The linguistic and interactional phenomena which seem to be oriented to this need in communication are the main focus of interest in the study of linguistic politeness. The pivotal work of Lakoff (1973), Brown and Levinson (1978/1987) and Leech (1983) placed the study of politeness among the central concerns within pragmatics and defined it in terms of patterns of linguistic action and the use of language to enhance interpersonal relations and avoid conflict. Since these pioneering studies, a wealth of research has emerged in a variety of fields, ranging from anthropology and sociology to applied linguistics and discourse analysis. In recent years the scope of this research has expanded from patterns of linguistic action to forms of interaction and processes of discourse in various domains of social activity.

Since the appropriate use of language for different purposes in various social contexts is a central component of the communicative competence of all 'competent adult members' of a speech community, politeness has also become a central concern in second language acquisition research. *Interlanguage pragmatics* has investigated non-native speakers' acquisition and performance of linguistic action patterns, focusing on diverse problems, such as the production and comprehension of a variety of speech acts, the social, linguistic and cultural factors underlying the linguistic realization of speech acts, and culture-related interactional styles (see e.g. Kasper 1989b, Blum-Kulka 1991, Kasper and Blum-Kulka 1993a, 1993b). Studies in *contrastive discourse analysis* have investigated a range of pragmatic aspects of language use in conversations between native and non-native speakers and shown that the social and interpersonal features

of language are a central stumbling block for even advanced learners (see e.g. Edmondson et al. 1984, Nyyssönen 1990). Finally, recent work investigating problems of understanding in second language interaction and intercultural communication has established that aspects of face and politeness have bearing on the ways in which meanings are negotiated and communicative problems are dealt with in contexts where the participants come from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

With a growing interest in the pragmatic and social aspects of second language acquisition and use, aspects of discourse organization and the collaborative process of interaction have become an increasingly important focus of study. In the study of non-native interaction the concepts of face and politeness are sometimes called upon to explain problems which may be caused by, for example, learner-specific use of language to express intentions or cultural differences in communicative styles. In contexts where the participants' linguistic and sociocultural resources are not shared, failure to use appropriate linguistic means to show concern for the interlocutor may be interpreted as uncooperative and may cause offense.

The politeness dimension of language is thus highly relevant to the study of second language interaction and intercultural communication. By addressing the social and interpersonal aspects of language use, the study of politeness can contribute specifically to those areas of research which address the problem of unshared meaning and explore the ways in which meaning is negotiated in actual interaction. These fields include the study of *input and interaction in second language acquisition* (e.g. Long 1983a, 1983b, Varonis and Gass 1985a, 1985b), the study of *interlanguage communication strategies* (e.g. Faerch and Kasper 1983a, 1983b, 1986, Bialystok 1990, Aston 1993) and the study of culture-specific aspects of *discourse management* in interactional sociolinguistics (e.g. Gumperz 1982, 1992, Fiksdal 1989, 1990). Recent work on the pragmatic and discursal aspects of non-native interaction has shown that politeness has global significance in the way in which intercultural interaction unfolds (e.g. Aston 1993, Shea 1993, 1994) and highlighted the need to establish links between the study of utterance level linguistic strategies used and the interactive management of discourse.

In spite of the wealth of studies in the field, there are areas in which research has merely begun. While the illocutionary and politeness dimensions of speech act behaviour have been studied extensively, the ways in which politeness is manifest in a broader discourse context have received much less attention. There is thus a need for further empirical work which explores politeness in ongoing interaction and examines the discursal and interactional resources which are drawn upon in the management of potentially problematic communicative situations.

The present study is concerned with the ways in which a potentially face-threatening interactional task is dealt with in dyadic conversations between native and non-native speakers of English. The primary focus is on the manner in which the task at hand is achieved through a sequence of actions and joint process of negotiation in the course of the conversation. The analysis seeks to uncover how the interactionally demanding activity is manifest in the

linguistic and conversational behaviour of the participants in the encounter and what kinds of strategies the participants use in their attempt to negotiate various goals through talk. Politeness is thus examined as a dimension of language use which is oriented to the establishment and maintenance of interpersonal relations and which arises from the mutual cooperation and coordination of conversational contributions in interaction. The study investigates the linguistic and interactional means that the participants draw upon in participating in potentially face-threatening discursive activities and examines the ways in which they orient to the underlying face-threat in the management of these activities.

## 1.2 Aims

In the context outlined above, the study addresses the following principal research questions: (1) How do native and non-native speakers participating in a dyadic interaction jointly manage interactionally demanding and potentially face-threatening conversational activities in non-routinized situations? More specifically, how do the participants (a) cooperate in the construction and negotiation of the activities and (b) share the interactional responsibility in the process of negotiation? (2) What kinds of linguistic and conversational strategies do the interactants employ in managing potentially face-threatening activities? In other words, the study seeks to describe the ways in which the participants orient to a specific activity in the context of talk; how they bring it into focus, how they pursue various complex goals associated with the activity and how they deal with the implications of these goals linguistically and conversationally in the course of the interaction. In brief, the study aims to capture the ways in which the concept of face enters into the linguistic and conversational treatment of various discursive activities.

The main focus of the study is thus on the description of the interactive treatment of face-threat in the conversational context. The analysis aims to highlight the participants' joint orientation to the interactive problem and the ways in which this orientation is displayed in their linguistic behaviour and the organization of the conversation. This type of description requires close qualitative analysis which takes into account the specific dynamic aspects of conversational data, and simultaneously pays systematic attention to the choices which the participants make from their linguistic resources. To meet these requirements the study aims to develop an analytic framework which is pragmatic in orientation and which incorporates both linguistic and conversational (or interactional) means with which particular activities are negotiated in context. In addition to the descriptive aim, the study thus also has a methodological goal: it aims to combine insights from various relevant fields of study and weave them into an analytic framework which captures the ways in which politeness and face-work are dealt with not only linguistically, but also interactionally in the context of interlanguage conversation. In pursuing this goal, the study builds on and aims to extend current work in interlanguage

pragmatics by pulling together resources from the study of politeness and linguistic action, and the study of conversational interaction in pragmatics, interactional sociolinguistics and conversation analysis, as well as the most important approaches to the study of second language interaction.

While the study does not seek to compare native and non-native behaviour, nor to arrive at any generalizations concerning learner behaviour, it aims to contribute to the study of second language acquisition by addressing the interpersonal and social dimension of interlanguage talk. The study approaches the politeness dimension of second language interaction through a broad pragmatic framework which extends the description of linguistic action to the level of conversational organization and content. On the basis of this type of analysis it is possible to draw hypotheses on the ways in which linguistic and conversational action is managed cooperatively in talk between native and non-native speakers. Further, it is possible to examine the kinds of asymmetries of knowledge and ability which affect the interaction, the problems which such asymmetries may cause, and the ways in which these problems are negotiated. Finally, attention can be paid to the kinds of resources that are drawn upon by the participants in the context of conversation in order to manage a face-threatening situation. Ultimately this type of research can thus shed light on the nature of native-non-native interaction and on the constraints which shape interlanguage use in the context of negotiated interaction between native and non-native speakers.

In brief, the present study aims to contribute to current research into second language interaction and interlanguage pragmatics by (i) carrying out a systematic in-depth description of the joint management of potentially face-threatening discursal activities in conversations between native and non-native speakers and (ii) proposing an analytic framework which enables the systematic description of face-work in non-native interaction.

### 1.3 Data and methodology

The data consist of eighteen elicited dyadic conversations between native speakers of English and Brunei second language learners whose first language is Malay. The data were collected by means of simulation tasks which were based on three basic illocutionary functions and which were partially controlled by varying the situational variables of power (P) and distance (D). The situations were designed to represent three types of social relationship between the speakers: (i) an asymmetrical relationship, in which one participant was in a position of power over the other, (ii) a relationship which was symmetrical with respect to power, but which involved some social distance between the participants, and (iii) a symmetrical relationship in which the distance between the interactants was small.

The tasks were designed on the basis of the following central illocutionary functions: getting the interlocutor to do something, committing the speaker to doing some future action and expressing dissatisfaction with

something that the interlocutor had done. The actual situations thus included making and responding to requests, invitations, offers and complaints. The functions can be described as constituting a threat to the interactants' face and thus requiring careful handling. The tasks represented varying levels of complexity in terms of potential face-risk and built-in conflict of interests, and thus it was expected that they would not lend themselves easily to routinized treatment but would elicit negotiation. The simulation method and its strengths and limitations are described in detail in chapter 5.

The use of role-play data has been widely criticized in the context of conversational interaction (see e.g. Aston 1988a, Heritage 1989). In the light of the aims of the present study, it can be argued, however, that the simulation method has some definite advantages compared to other types of data used in studies concerned with manifestations of face-threatening tasks (see Kasper and Dahl 1991 for review). Firstly, it elicits data which in a concise and economical way make manifest the phenomenon under observation. Secondly, the data are rich in the type of negotiation the study seeks to observe and thus offer an abundance of material for a detailed in-depth analysis of the linguistic and conversational strategies through which this negotiation is created. Due to the partially controlled situations, the analysis can thus claim to be both close to the data and, at least to some extent, replicable in future research. In this respect the findings are also comparable to previous studies in the field, most of which have been based on elicited data. Thirdly, the method elicits interaction in which the participants are required to negotiate their mutual roles and relationship and the contextual assumptions they carry with them to the conversation. The data can thus provide some valuable insight into the way that the speakers jointly create discourse on the basis of their interpretation of the assumed context.

The analytic approach adopted in the present study builds on previous research on face-threat in linguistic action and the study of conversational interaction. The description of face-work is carried out in a pragmatic framework in which linguistic action is approached through interactional activities embedded in a conversational context. In accordance with previous work on politeness, the analysis seeks to identify and describe the linguistic realizations of the strategies which signal orientation to face in interaction. The main focus of the analysis, however, is on the ways in which the linguistic strategies arise in the interactive process as a result of mutual orientation to the conversational activity. The analysis of the process of interaction and the dynamic turn-by-turn construction of discourse is greatly influenced by the insights of pragmatic and ethnomethodological conversation analysis.

The approach adopted can be broadly labelled discourse pragmatic; it focuses on interactional phenomena which extend beyond the level of individual utterances or pairs of utterances and takes a pragmatic perspective in attending to language use and the speakers' contextualized management of discourse. As the interactions to be analysed involve second language learners, the present study is most appropriately seen in the context interlanguage pragmatics, the study of pragmatic aspects of second language learners'

language use and interaction (see Kasper 1989b, Kasper and Blum-Kulka 1993a).

The study thus draws from methods associated with both the qualitative and quantitative research paradigms. The data were elicited by means of a task-based simulation method which has been used in previous quantitative studies of second language discourse. However, the data are not used to test or validate some a priori hypotheses in accordance with the experimental and quantitative tradition, but rather as a source for drawing hypotheses on the nature of the phenomenon to be observed and a sample for testing the analytic framework which is proposed. The analytic methodology arises from the principal aims of the study. As the main interest is on interactionally demanding conversational activities, methods must be selected which can provide the most promising means for an in-depth, systematic analysis of such activities in their interactive contexts. The qualitative approach which pulls together resources from various sources is believed to provide such means.

#### **1.4 The study: an outline**

Chapter 2 discusses the central concepts of face and politeness in linguistic action and conversational interaction as they have been conceptualized and operationalized in previous research. Relevant studies of politeness and face-work in both first and second language interaction are reviewed. On the basis of the review, a pragmatic approach to politeness in second language interaction is outlined as a starting point for the present study. In chapter 3 research concerned with second language interaction is reviewed. The relevance of this research to the present study is discussed through examining the role of face and politeness in such interaction. Chapter 4 outlines the aims and the specific research questions addressed in this study. Chapter 5 discusses the methodology of the empirical part of the study and describes the data collection procedure. Chapter 6 outlines the analytic framework used. The results of the empirical research are presented in chapters 7, 8 and 9. In chapter 7 the focus is on the ways in which face-threatening activities are introduced and the transactional and interactional goals associated with the activities are realized. Chapters 8 and 9 describe the findings with respect to the more global aspects of the conversational management of the face-threatening situation. The sequential development and organization of the activities and major topics are described in chapter 8 and the impact of the face-threatening activity on the organization of the opening and closing sections of the conversations is discussed in chapter 9. Finally, in chapter 10 the main findings of the analysis are discussed and evaluated, some tentative conclusions are drawn and the implications of the study for future research are discussed.

## **2 FACE AND POLITENESS: THEORY AND RESEARCH**

The purpose of this chapter is to review major theoretical and empirical approaches to the study of linguistic politeness and outline their relevance to the present thesis. The chapter examines the relationship between face-threat and linguistic politeness and discusses the central concepts and assumptions underlying current empirical work in the field. The discussion is selective, focusing on those aspects of politeness theory and research which are of relevance to the present study. Thus, the studies selected for review represent three central areas of politeness research: the realization of politeness in linguistic action, politeness as an interactional phenomenon, and the politeness dimension of second language use and intercultural communication. For thorough reviews of other aspects of politeness, the reader is referred to the following: Brown and Levinson (1987), Fraser (1990), Kasper (1990, 1994), Tracy (1990), Held (1992), and Janney and Arndt (1993).

### **2.1 Politeness in language and interaction**

#### **2.1.1 Politeness as conflict avoidance**

The background for the study of politeness can be traced to the discussion of the foundations of social life and interaction order in sociology. Following scholars such as Durkheim (1915) and Weber (1947), Erving Goffman (1967, 1974, 1981) investigated the role of *rationality* and *ritual* in human action and discussed ways in which human action and interaction can be seen to reflect, on the one hand, fulfillment of ego-centric goals and, on the other hand, adherence to social and cultural norms. This work gave rise to a view of social interaction as an interplay between efforts towards communion and togetherness, and a

simultaneous delicate, ritualized handling of the 'sacred' nature of human personality (see e.g. Goffman 1971:201). This view underlies the most influential theory of politeness to date: Brown and Levinson's (1987) model of politeness in interaction aims to describe the communicative means through which people attempt to present themselves in socially suitable ways and simultaneously avoid infringement or violation of the rights and personal space of the addressee. Politeness behaviour in this sense is seen as a fundamental force in human social life: it is "basic to the production of social order and a precondition of human cooperation" (Gumperz 1987:xiii). Brown and Levinson's theory has inspired a wealth of research which aims to uncover the principles underlying politeness behaviour in social interaction and the ways it is manifest in language use.

The fundamental ideas of presentation of self, concern for the other, and the avoidance of infringement and offense are still at the heart of politeness research (see e.g. Brown and Gilman 1989, Fraser 1990, Kasper 1990, 1994, Arndt and Janney 1989, Janney and Arndt 1992, Watts, Ide and Ehlich 1992a, 1992b). Although rarely explicitly defined, linguistic politeness is generally seen as motivated by the desire to avoid offense and to achieve and/or maintain cooperation or 'smooth' or 'successful' communication. However, different approaches to politeness conceptualize the link between this overall goal and actual verbal interaction in different ways. Some assume that politeness behaviour is guided by underlying, even universal, principles of human interaction, such as rational means-ends reasoning and the social need to act in an acceptable way (Brown and Levinson 1987, Leech 1983, Haverkate 1988). Others emphasize the importance of cultural differences in norms associated with social interaction and their relevance to politeness (Ide 1988, 1989, 1993, Matsumoto 1988, 1989, Watts 1992, see also Janney and Arndt 1993).

Following Fraser (1990), four different approaches to politeness can be distinguished: the social norm view, the conversational maxim view, the face-saving view and the conversational contract view. In the social norm perspective politeness is understood as behaviour or action which is in congruence with the norm in a given society or culture. This view can be seen to underlie what is referred to as the lay notion of politeness, i.e. appropriate conduct. The social norm perspective has also influenced current approaches of politeness, particularly those emphasizing the society and culture-specific aspects of polite language use (see e.g. Hill et al. 1986, Watts 1992). The conversational maxim view builds on Grice's (1971, 1975) work on conversational cooperation and conceptualizes politeness as a principle or a set of maxims which underlie language use (see e.g. Lakoff 1973, Leech 1983). The face-saving perspective, represented by Brown and Levinson (1978/1987), views politeness as a global interactional strategy manifest in the ways in which speakers in a social encounter manage inherently problematic, or face-threatening, activities linguistically or non-linguistically. This view remains the most comprehensive and influential treatment of politeness. The fourth view of politeness is based on the concept of 'conversational contract' (Fraser and Nolen 1981, Fraser 1990) and is built on the assumption that participants enter a conversation with an understanding of some initial set of rights and obligations



that determine what they can expect from each other (Fraser 1990:232-233). Being polite constitutes operating within the terms and conditions of the conversational contract, in other words behaving in a manner appropriate to the situation. The conversational contract view marks an attempt to link politeness to situation-specific norms of interaction. Other recent attempts to link politeness to ways of managing interaction are seen in the work of Arndt and Janney (1985, 1989, Janney and Arndt 1992) and Watts (1989, 1992).

While the different approaches to politeness build on quite distinct concepts and assumptions, some areas of overlap can be identified. Firstly, politeness behaviour is primarily social in nature and thus, by definition, a highly complex area of study where links between language, culture and social interaction can be explored. Secondly, politeness is associated with the ways that communicative intentions or goals are pursued in interaction, and the ways in which these goals are reflected in verbal behaviour. Thirdly, politeness provides one way of explaining the link between linguistic utterances and their contexts of use. Given these areas of common ground between various approaches, it seems that politeness is best described as a pragmatic aspect of speech, with crucial links to linguistic and social action and interpersonal relationships. The main goals of politeness work can thus be captured in the broad aim of investigating "how human beings successfully manage interpersonal relationships to achieve both individual and group goals" (Watts, Ide and Ehlich 1992a:1).

### 2.1.2 The pragmatics of politeness: some central concepts

The study of linguistic politeness within a pragmatic framework is generally associated with scholars such as Lakoff (1973), Leech (1983) and Brown and Levinson (1978/1987). Their work shares an interest in linguistic politeness as situation-specific selection of linguistic means for the achievement of interactional and interpersonal goals. They also share a view of language and communication which builds on the work of Grice (1971, 1975) and on speech act theory (Austin 1962, Searle 1969, 1972, 1975, 1976). Grice's (1975) influence is seen in the significance of the *cooperative principle*<sup>1</sup> as a point of reference to which politeness behaviour is compared. Brown and Levinson (1987:5) view the cooperative principle as a "socially neutral, indeed asocial, framework for communication", and their own politeness model as providing a descriptive framework for the social dimension of communication. While Grice's theory presents a model for describing "maximally efficient" communication, the politeness framework thus explains the frequently inefficient and uncooperative (in the Gricean sense) nature of everyday communication.

A pragmatic view of politeness entails the description of politeness phenomena in language with reference to the language user and the context of

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<sup>1</sup> Grice argued that in their attempt to achieve efficient communication, conversationalists follow the Cooperative Principle and try to make their conversational contribution "such as is required" at each stage of the conversation (Grice 1975:45). The cooperative principle entails four maxims which guide efficient communication: the maxims of quantity, quality, relevance and manner (Grice 1975:46).

use (see e.g. Levinson 1983, Mey 1993). Thus, concepts such as speaker intention, communicative or illocutionary goals, and the means, procedures or strategies used in realizing such goals are central to the description. Similarly, with respect to contexts of use, concepts such as the speech situation and event, the activity engaged in, and the interactional sequence in which a particular utterance is embedded are of crucial importance. Due to the terminological variation in the use of these concepts in politeness research, they are briefly examined below.

The concept of *speaker intention* underlies the view of communication presupposed in Brown and Levinson's (1978) original theory: communication is seen as a special kind of intention, designed to be recognized by the recipient (Brown and Levinson 1987:7). In other words, a sender intends the hearer to recognize what s/he wants to achieve by an utterance. In the introduction to the later edition of their work, Brown and Levinson (1987), however, no longer subscribe to this view. The concepts of *communicative* and *illocutionary goals* are related to communicative intentions and also refer to the effects that speakers wish to achieve by a certain utterance (see e.g. Leech 1983:13, 17) and the varied purposes and uses which utterances may have in communicative situations (see also Hymes 1972). Other terms used in this context are the *function* or *purpose* of an utterance (e.g. Halliday 1973, Sinclair and Coulthard 1975), or the *illocutionary point* of a speech act (Searle 1976). *Illocutionary force* can be understood as the strength with which a particular function is expressed, for example, whether an utterance with a directive function is to be interpreted as a request or an order (e.g. Holmes 1984, cf. also Verschueren 1985). All the concepts referred to above are used in the study of linguistic acts, or, more recently, *pragmatic acts* (see e.g. Levinson 1983, Thomas 1991a, 1991b, Mey 1993).

Central to politeness work is also the assumption that a speaker has a repertoire of communicative and linguistic options from which to choose the most suitable means for expressing a particular function or illocutionary goal in a particular situational context. The selection process is described in terms of use of *strategies*, defined narrowly as means for achieving communicative goals (Brown and Levinson 1987) or more broadly as ways to proceed or respond in a communicative situation (Craig and al. 1986:442). In the context of interlanguage research (see section 3.1 below), strategies have been defined as potentially, but not necessarily conscious plans which enable speakers to select appropriate means for pursuing a desired outcome (see e.g. Edmondson 1981, Faerch and Kasper 1983a, see also Leech 1983).

The selection of strategies and the linguistic realization of specific speech act functions or illocutionary goals is largely dependent on the *context* in which the speakers find themselves. Context can be defined as a multidimensional concept involving social, cognitive and interactional phenomena which constrain and are constrained by language use. The use of language in context is a complex process of inference, action and behaviour which is situated in time and space (Duranti and Goodwin 1992a:149, see also van Dijk 1985, Goodwin and Duranti 1992). Thus, utterance meaning is seen as shaped, if not wholly determined, by the *speech activity* or *event* in which it

occurs and the *sequence of turns* in which it is embedded (Hymes 1972, Levinson 1979, 1983, 1988, Gumperz 1982). While the term speech event emphasizes the social aspect of a communicative encounter, the term *speech activity* foregrounds the cognitive dimension involved. Gumperz (1982:166) defines speech activities as "means through which social knowledge is stored in the form of constraints on action and on possible interpretation". Activities can thus be seen to cover the interpretive resources which the participants use in building interaction.

### 2.1.3 Sources of conflict: face-threat and linguistic action

Brown and Levinson (1987) view politeness as socially motivated linguistic action which is organized by the interactants' mutual orientation to *face*, i.e. their public self-image or self-esteem (Goffman 1967). Politeness behaviour consists of the participants' mutual interactive efforts to support and maintain each other's face, which is continuously under threat in interaction. Face consists of two fundamental human needs: the need for togetherness and the need for autonomy. Accordingly, two types of face are distinguished: positive face refers to a person's desire to be liked, accepted and approved of and negative face to the need to maintain freedom of action, in other words to a person's 'want to be unimpeded'.<sup>2</sup>

Threat to face arises from linguistic action which in some way restricts the addressee's autonomy or questions his/her claim to be approved of. Threat to negative face is often described in terms of the degree to which a specific act *imposes* on the hearer, in other words, the extent to which an action interferes with his/her autonomy of action (Sifianou 1993:72). Thus, an explicit connection is made between imposition and a verbal act: as Watts (1992:46) points out, politeness behaviour arises from an "underlying need to minimize the imposition on the addressee arising from a verbal act and the consequent possibility of committing a face-threatening act". *Imposition*, in Brown and Levinson's (1987:15,32,74) terms, is something that is "involved in doing" a particular face-threatening act (FTA), and reflects the degree of "danger" or face risk associated with this act. Thus, the more risk or imposition an act involves, the more it threatens the face of one or both participants.

The identification of face threat and imposition with particular linguistic acts is a central distinguishing feature between different models of politeness. While some approaches, e.g. Brown and Levinson (1987) and Leech (1983), link politeness to inherently polite or impolite speech acts and their realizations in language, others (Fraser 1990, Watts 1989, 1992) emphasize that politeness is not a property of linguistic acts but has more to do with the general conditions of interaction that constrain conversational language use. In strategic accounts of politeness, threat to face is associated with particular linguistic acts (FTAs, impolite acts, or *impositives*, cf. Leech 1983, Haverkate 1988, Muikku-Werner 1993). Politeness behaviour covers the verbal means of

<sup>2</sup> While Brown and Levinson's theory views politeness as face-oriented behaviour and its realization in language, work in communication research uses the concept of face-work as a cover term for communicative behaviour which is oriented to face (i.e. social identity or image). Face-work in this sense includes politeness, but may also involve other types of behaviour (e.g. self-presentation) (see Ting-Toomey 1994).

expressing the face-threatening content, or conveying the illocutionary point, in such a way that the threat to face is minimized.

Face-threatening acts can be classified in a variety of ways. Brown and Levinson propose a four-way classification of acts based on the degree of threat that they impose on the speaker's or hearer's different face wants. Thus, an act may threaten either the speaker's or hearer's face, and the threat may be directed to either (or both) participant's positive or negative face. Acts have also been categorized on the basis of their intrinsic cost or benefit to the speaker or hearer, so that some acts can be seen as inherently beneficial to the hearer (e.g. thanks and apologies), and hence polite or hearer-supportive, and others as costly and impolite (e.g. requests, complaints) (see e.g. Leech 1983, Edmondson 1981, Holmes 1986).

Two further dimensions of face-threat are important, namely the cultural and situational features which influence the assessment of threat associated with particular actions. Brown and Levinson (1978/1987) propose a detailed model for the prediction of utterance-level politeness strategies on the basis of three central social factors which determine the level of risk involved: power (P), distance (D) and the degree to which a particular FTA is rated an imposition in a particular culture (R). In other words, the amount of risk associated with a particular FTA in a particular context is determined by the relationship between the participants in terms of relative power and interpersonal distance and the seriousness of the imposition. These situational parameters, then, determine the choice of politeness strategy. The model thus assumes that cultures and situations vary in terms of the specific rights and obligations of the speakers and the extent to which they allow different types of impositions. The power factor, for example, entails certain rights and obligations and makes certain types of impositions permissible for those holding power (Brown and Levinson 1987:74,77).

In spite of the apparent simplicity of the framework, Brown and Levinson (1987) emphasize that each situational factor is subject to complex situational and sociocultural constraints which make it difficult, if not impossible, to arrive at any stable classification of acts into polite and impolite or face-supportive and face-threatening. In Brown and Levinson's approach practically any linguistic act may involve threat to some aspect of either (or both) the speaker and hearer's positive or negative face. Even 'polite' acts (e.g. offers, expressions of thanks) may be seen as restricting the freedom of action of the hearer and thus imposing the speaker's will on the addressee in some way. The model also allows for considerable flexibility and overlap in the two-way system of face. For example, while paying respect to an addressee's negative face, a speaker may simultaneously threaten the addressee's positive face by emphasizing a power difference or increasing the distance between the speakers (Brown and Levinson 1987:74, Scollon and Scollon 1981:172). Balancing the threat to face inherent in communicative acts is thus presented as a highly complex and delicate affair.

In sum, the concept of face-threat is understood as a quality of linguistic action associated with the potential for causing offense. Politeness research aims to describe the linguistic means through which face-threat is

avoided and negotiated in interaction. The central aims of this research are, on the one hand, to identify and describe the varied linguistic means through which particular face-threatening acts are mitigated in order to reduce their potential for causing offense and, on the other hand, to explain the choice of particular linguistic realizations on the basis of various aspects of the social situation in which the linguistic action occurs.

## 2.1.4 Avoidance of conflict through language

### 2.1.4.1 Brown and Levinson's approach

The linguistic enactment of politeness is generally associated with the selection of socially appropriate means for expressing speaker intentions and achieving communicative goals. Linguistic politeness is seen as revealed in utterance-level realizations of different speech acts: the assumption is that impolite or face-threatening speech acts must be mitigated by means of various linguistic strategies. Politeness strategies, then, have the dual function of facilitating the communication of impolite or face-threatening messages, and communicating the speaker's polite intention, i.e. his/her awareness of the interpersonal equilibrium based on mutual respect for face, and his/her desire to protect it.

The situation-specific assessment of the face threat involved in the performance of a particular act determines the means with which the act is expressed and the type of linguistic strategy which is appropriate. The strategies are typically associated with the direct or indirect expression of face-threatening acts, in other words the *illocutionary transparency* or opacity with which a particular act is expressed. The linguistic realizations ('output strategies') which carry out particular acts are derived from higher-order goals associated with the following five 'super strategies': (1) bald on record (2) positive politeness, (3) negative politeness, (4) off record and (5) refrain from doing FTA. Bald-on-record strategies are direct means of expressing a FTA; in other words, doing the FTA with maximal efficiency. Strategies of positive and negative politeness refer to an overall goal of protecting or maintaining the addressee's positive or negative face, respectively. Thus, they are strategies which express a face-threatening act on record, but with some mitigation of its force. Off-record strategies, then, cover a range of indirect means for expressing a face-threatening intention, such as ambiguity, vagueness and contradictions. Off-record strategies thus serve to hide the element of face-threat associated with the act and give the speaker the option of denying any face-threatening intention.

The choice of strategy is linked to a situation-specific assessment of the face-risk involved in doing a particular act: the more the act threatens the hearer's face, the higher-numbered - and the more indirect - the strategy that the speaker chooses. This ranking of politeness strategies according to the risks involved is sometimes taken to represent a straightforward link between indirectness and politeness (see e.g. Leech 1983:108). Such a view is clearly oversimplified, as Brown and Levinson (1987:17-18) themselves stress. Firstly, linguistic strategies must be distinguished from the perception of politeness

levels in particular contexts: interpreting utterances as polite or impolite is a matter of inference, and always dependent on the immediate circumstances. In some situations, for example, direct on-record FTAs are more polite than indirect off-record ones. Secondly, as Blum-Kulka (1987) has convincingly argued, culture-dependent factors such as clarity and communicative efficiency are also highly relevant in the assessment of utterances as polite or less polite. Finally, strategies of politeness are not mutually exclusive: an utterance or an utterance complex may subsume elements of various strategies, thus reflecting an orientation to both positive and negative face, and/or both the speaker's and the hearer's face (Brown and Levinson 1987:17-18, Penman 1990).

In spite of the complexities involved, the linguistic behaviour associated with making one's intentions explicit or masking them in indirect or ambiguous language has been found to reflect orientation to face across cultures and situations. Brown and Levinson (1978/1987) have demonstrated systematic variation of politeness strategies in relation to the dimensions of power, distance and imposition in a number of unrelated languages. Others have explored the nature of the cultural and situational variables which constrain patterns of variation in linguistic politeness (e.g. Blum-Kulka 1987, Wolfson 1989b). The relative transparency of illocutionary goals remains a central analytic interest in pragmatic studies of politeness and language use.

As empirical findings of politeness research have accumulated, Brown and Levinson's theory has been increasingly criticized. Its focus on goal-oriented, rational and intentional behaviour and its overemphasis on potential conflict have been claimed to represent a misguided view of the fundamental organization of social interaction (see e.g. Kasper 1990, Ide 1989, 1993, Held 1992, 1993). Similarly, the model has been criticized for ethnocentric assumptions about the complex forces underlying social behaviour. Recent research has shown that the most basic assumptions on which the theory is built should be re-examined in the light of evidence from cross-cultural research. The concept of face, for example, has been shown to be interpreted in different ways in different cultures (Matsumoto 1988, 1989, Mao 1994). Similarly, the notion of politeness itself appears to invoke different assumptions about social action in different cultures. In a critique of Brown and Levinson's face-oriented, rational and '*volitional*' view of politeness, Hill et al. (1986) suggest that cultures differ in the way they weigh different elements of politeness: in some cultures (e.g. Japan) *discernment*, i.e. the almost automatic observation of socially agreed-upon rules is the main system for politeness, whereas in other (mainly Western) cultures politeness behaviour can be better explained in volitional terms, i.e. on the basis of rational choices regarding verbal behaviour.

In the light of recent empirical evidence many of the assumptions originally put forward by Brown and Levinson seem inappropriate and the model is inadequate to fully account for politeness in interaction (see Brown and Levinson 1987:7-21 for a discussion of some problematic issues). It is thus clear that the original model cannot be taken to have universal applicability or explanatory power. Rather, as Janney and Arndt (1993:38) note, it offers "a particularly clearly articulated, well-reasoned account of politeness in a

specifically Anglo-Western cultural context". Rather than universals of politeness, Brown and Levinson's findings can be used as a "set of baseline hypotheses" for studies of politeness in other cultural contexts.

In spite of its shortcomings, Brown and Levinson's approach captures phenomena which are fundamental to linguistic politeness better than any other model to date. In the present investigation the framework is adapted and extended to examine interaction in an intercultural context, where participants in a dyadic interaction have an "Anglo-Western" and Asian background and where the language used for communication is English. In its attempt to adapt the framework for the analysis of such interaction, the present study builds on three central assumptions in Brown and Levinson's (1987) work: (i) politeness is best viewed as a global strategy of interaction which is manifest at various levels of language use; (ii) politeness is context-dependent and negotiable; (iii) politeness is reflected in the dimension of directness/indirectness (or illocutionary opacity/transparency) in language use; and (iv) through indirectness politeness is linked to basic processes of interaction, such as cooperation and the negotiation of shared meaning (Held 1993).

#### **2.1.4.2 Linguistic realization of speech acts**

In accordance with the focus on linguistic action in the theoretical treatment of politeness, much of the empirical research on politeness phenomena has focused on realizations of categories of speech act in different contexts. The early studies succeeded in establishing systematic connections between specific speech act types and aspects of politeness, such as degrees of deference and indirectness, and underlying social norms (e.g. Ervin-Tripp 1976, Fraser and Nolen 1981). In the last two decades research has proliferated and studies of a range of face-threatening speech acts across cultures and languages have provided empirical evidence for both systematic variation and underlying similarities in the production of these acts. The speech acts in English which have been studied most extensively are apologies (e.g. Borkin and Reinhart 1978, Fraser 1981, Owen 1983) and requests (e.g. Ervin-Tripp 1976, Craig, Tracy and Spisak 1986, Blum-Kulka 1983, 1987, 1989, House and Kasper 1987). Attention has also been paid to complaints (or expressions of disapproval) (e.g. House and Kasper 1981, D'Amico-Reisner 1983, Olshtain and Weinbach 1987), expressions of gratitude and thanks (Eisenstein and Bodman 1986, 1993), invitations (Wolfson 1981, Wolfson, D'Amico-Reisner and Huber 1983) and compliments (Wolfson 1981, 1983, 1989b, Holmes 1986, 1988, Herbert 1989, 1991). However, there are still types of speech act which have received very little, if any, attention (e.g. threats, warnings or promises).

A central aim in speech act research has been to identify routine ways of performing speech act functions in different cultures and situations. Studies of speech act realization have sought to establish regular patterns of use and variation in the syntactic and semantic formulae with which particular speech acts are typically expressed by native speakers. The findings of these studies have shown that the choice of linguistic forms is highly patterned and routinized, and that often a strikingly small number of linguistic realization

patterns are identified for specific speech act functions (see e.g. Wolfson 1983, Holmes 1988 and Herbert 1989 for complimenting patterns). Thus, empirically based classifications of speech act patterns have been proposed to describe the syntactic and semantic means available for expressing speech act functions (e.g. Blum-Kulka 1987, Cohen and Olshtain 1981, see also Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper 1989a). The notion of *speech act set* has been used as a framework within which the strategies can be described and dimensions of variation can be established (Olshtain and Cohen 1983, 1989).

Another central focus in speech act studies has been the level and type of politeness associated with utterances. This is often studied with reference to strategies of *minimizing* or *maximizing* the force of a potentially face-threatening illocutionary act. The framework of cost and benefit to the speaker and hearer respectively (Leech 1983, Brown and Levinson 1987) has been used to establish why certain speech acts are expressed indirectly with mitigating strategies, and others emphatically with strategies which boost or maximize their illocutionary force. The findings indicate that speech acts which are deemed costly to the hearer are generally mitigated (House and Kasper 1981, Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper 1989b), whereas acts which are judged as beneficial to the hearer are expressed with maximizing strategies (see e.g. Holmes 1986, 1988, Held 1989).

A third central aspect of politeness addressed in speech act research is the variation of linguistic realization patterns in relation to contextual features. Following the predictions of Brown and Levinson's theory, attempts have been made to relate the range of linguistic strategies observed to the social and situational conditions in which they are typically used and to identify the features of context which underlie systematic variation in the choice of strategies. While some of the findings have supported Brown and Levinson's claim that increased risk results in more indirect verbal strategies (see Brown and Levinson 1987 for review), counter-evidence has also been offered. The role of social distance in contributing to the riskiness of an act has been found particularly problematic: increased distance does not always result in the choice of a more indirect politeness strategy (see e.g. Brown and Gilman 1990). Wolfson (1988, 1989a) challenges the original argument by arguing that the relationship between speech act patterns and social distance is not direct and linear, but can be better described with a bulge-shaped pattern. In her empirically based theory, minimal and maximal social distance relationships predict similar patterns of behaviour, whereas the centre of the distance scale is associated with a markedly different pattern (hence 'the bulge-shaped curve').

In recent empirical work, the scope of analysis has extended from the display of realization options and their politeness values in isolated utterances to the description of the syntactic, semantic and pragmatic means for expressing speech acts in groups of utterances or utterance complexes (Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper 1989a, Held 1989). The analysis of a *speech act complex* is often based on a hierarchical scheme: the central focus or nucleus of the speech act is identified, and adjacent utterances are analysed in terms of the type of subsidiary act or 'supporting move' (Edmondson and House 1981, Faerch and Kasper 1989) which they represent. Held (1989:182), extends the



hierarchical approach by adding an interactional dimension: her analytic framework seeks to describe how politeness is displayed (i) *formally* (i.e. what kinds of linguistic forms signal a particular strategy), (ii) *structurally* (i.e. within what structural phases of an utterance complex do strategies occur and what is their role within the illocutionary hierarchy), (iii) *functionally* (i.e. what does a strategy refer to within a pragmatic framework; is it mutual face-work, the hearer's profit, the state of mutual obligations etc.) and (iv) *interactively* (i.e. the place of a strategy in relation to the sequence and organization of turns). Her analysis, however, remains at the utterance level.

Until recently most speech act studies have been concerned with utterance-level realization patterns observed in elicited, mostly non-interactive data (e.g. discourse completion tests). However, some attempts have been made to approach speech acts as parts of verbal exchanges or speech events. In ethnographic studies (e.g. Wolfson 1983, 1989b, Holmes 1986, 1988, Herbert 1989, 1991, Boxer 1993) samples of naturally occurring speech acts have been collected in their context of occurrence. The identification of particular speech acts has proved to be more difficult in naturally occurring discourse than in elicited data. Research has shown that in continuing discourse utterances are frequently ambiguous, indeterminate or multifunctional, and do not fall neatly into the definition of a specific speech act category (see e.g. Thomas 1990, 1991a, 1991b, Herbert 1991). This may in part explain the fact that some speech acts have received little attention in research.

In short, speech act studies have accumulated substantial evidence for systematic patterns and routines used to perform specific acts in a number of languages and cultures. Further, they have investigated the underlying social dimension of politeness behaviour and demonstrated complex contextual variation in patterns of linguistic politeness. Finally, they have developed analytic methods and categories for the description of the linguistic strategies observed, and increased current understanding of the ways in which politeness is reflected in language use.

### 2.1.4.3 Limitations of the speech act approach

There are several problems which can be identified in the speech act approach to politeness. The speech act as an analytic category has been widely criticized in discourse analysis and pragmatics for its failure to account for the dynamic and negotiable aspects of interaction (see Piirainen-Marsh 1992 for review). While the speech act and related concepts (illocutionary act, pragmatic act) remain central in pragmatics (see e.g. Kasper 1989b, Thomas 1991a, 1991b, van Rees 1992, Mey 1993), the use of the traditional speech act in the description of interactional phenomena involves many problems.

Many of the studies seeking to identify the patterns available for expressing a particular speech act have come to recognize the problem of multifunctionality. Not only does the force of a particular act vary according to context, but a single act may involve multiple, overlapping functions. For example, the expression of gratitude may involve compliments or ritual refusals (Eisenstein and Bodman 1986), or a refusal (to a request, invitation or

an offer) may involve apologies, excuses or suggestions (Beebe et al. 1990). Further, speech acts often serve different functions at different stages of an interaction and their interpretation may vary across speech events. Compliments, for example, have been found to occur in specific places in greeting or parting routines, serving to enhance interpersonal relationships (Wolfson 1989a, 1989b). Similarly, complaints, apologies or expressions of disapproval may occur as a parts of troubles-telling sequences (cf. Jefferson 1984, 1988) or arguments (Boxer 1993) and invitations may serve a variety of social functions, such as a purely 'phatic' function in conversational closings (Wolfson 1983).

Much of the research which focuses on individual speech acts and their realization patterns tends to overlook those dimensions of politeness which shape complex linguistic action in interactive contexts. Even studies which claim to examine speech acts as parts of speech events in fact often ignore the actual sequential negotiation of the acts. For example, responses to the speech acts of invitation, offering, complimenting or requesting, have been analysed in a variety of speech events (e.g. Wolfson 1989b, Beebe et al. 1990, Garcia 1993, Chen 1993), but little attention has been paid to the conversational sequences which actually give rise to these actions in context. Even though the need to examine aspects of politeness and speech act realization from the interactive point of view has been recognized (see e.g. Held 1989, Kachru 1992, Kasper 1994), little systematic work has been done to relate conversational organization and the politeness dimension of linguistic action (but see Owen 1983).

From the point of view of this study, the most important questions left unanswered by speech act research concern the interactional and sequential treatment of potentially face-threatening actions. More research is needed to investigate the ways in which potentially face-threatening actions are realized and managed in negotiated interaction to account for many of the subtle and less prototypical aspects of face-work which are not covered in speech act studies. These include issues such as the multifunctionality of utterances and the contextualized interpretation of (sometimes ambiguous) illocutionary goals, the realization of face-work in forms other than categories of speech act, the relationship between aspects of conversational organization and the linguistic strategies used and the processes by which contextual assumptions and expectations are negotiated in extended discourse.

### **2.1.5 Politeness and discourse domain**

As a result of insights in conversation and discourse analysis, the scope of politeness research has recently broadened from the properties of linguistic acts to complex actions and interactional sequences. This work has emphasized the interactional nature of politeness and drawn attention to the situational constraints which bear upon the concept of face and its treatment in a particular social setting. Aspects of politeness have been examined in relation to discourse type (or domain) in a variety of institutionalized and non-institutionalized contexts. Studies of therapeutic discourse (Labov and Fanshell 1977, Lakoff 1989) and courtroom discourse (Lakoff 1989, Penman 1990) represent

institutional settings where risk of face-loss is great. Studies of family discourse (e.g. Watts 1989, Blum-Kulka 1990, Blum-Kulka and Sheffer 1993), on the other hand, examine aspects of politeness in familiar, non-institutional settings.

In these studies politeness is linked to discourse type, 'genre' or speech event. Lakoff (1989), for example, draws on Brown and Yule's (1983) dichotomy of *transactional* and *interactional* types of *discourse* by distinguishing forms of interaction which are designed primarily for the purpose of communicating information from forms which are intended mainly to maintain interaction. Lakoff (1989:102) further argues that the more interactive a type of discourse is, the more it requires adherence to politeness conventions. Thus, politeness could be seen as particularly central in conversational language use. However, empirical analyses of various types of interaction have shown that different phases in conversational discourse reflect different functions and orientations (Edmondson 1981, Ventola 1987, Schneider 1988), and that transactional and interactional goals coincide even at the level of individual utterances. Thus, goals oriented to conveying a particular message or illocution and those oriented to interpersonal relations operate simultaneously, so that they jointly determine the speaker's choices of surface forms of their conversational contributions. In fact, it is the handling of such complex simultaneous goals which is at the heart of many aspects of politeness behaviour, such as ambiguity, vagueness and indeterminacy (cf. Leech 1983, Thomas 1985, 1990).

Watts (1989) relates the study of politeness to the speech event by building a framework where verbal politeness is seen as part of *politic behaviour*, defined as "socio-culturally determined behaviour directed towards the goal of establishing and/or maintaining in a state of equilibrium the personal relationships between the individuals of a social group ... during the ongoing process of interaction" (Watts 1989:135). He argues that the following aspects of the discourse context are decisive for the way in which politeness is conceived: (i) the nature of the social activity in which the interactants are involved, (ii) the type of speech event they are engaged in, (iii) the shared assumptions in relation to the information state of the discourse, and (iv) the social distance between the interactants and their status with respect to the social activity. Watts's approach draws attention to the need to examine the discourse event as whole rather than isolated utterances. Further, in its focus on the sociocultural context within which politeness operates, it draws attention to possible cultural differences which may surface in the interactive handling of interpersonal relations.

In brief, a broad discourse analytic or ethnographic approach to politeness has not only highlighted the complex functioning of politeness in an extended speech event, but has also shown how the situational and institutional context restrict the options and strategies available for the participants. The ways in which the global situational frame and the organization of discourse itself determine politeness behaviour are an important focus of current politeness research.

### 2.1.6 Politeness and conversational organization

In the introduction to the reissue of their politeness model Brown and Levinson (1987:10-11) note that speech act theory may not provide the most promising approach for the study of politeness and face-threat in interaction as it entails a sentence-based, unilaterally speaker-oriented mode of analysis and fails to account for the emergent phenomena of conversation and their connections with politeness. Instead of sentence-like units, face-threatening acts could, in their view, be seen as utterance-types occurring in some recurrent sequences, thus embedded in the overall organization of conversations. Brown and Levinson (1987:48) conclude that "work on interaction as a system thus remains a fundamental research priority, the area from which improved conceptualizations of politeness are likely to emerge". Further, they refer to numerous points of convergence between their own framework and the achievements of ethnomethodological conversation analysis (below CA), and call for research which integrates the study of politeness and conversational organization (see also Atkinson and Heritage 1984, Heritage 1989). In broad terms, the connection of conversational behaviour and politeness can be seen to be succinctly captured in the concept of *recipient design*, in other words the participants' display of orientation to each other in the structuring of conversational activities (Sacks et al. 1974, see also Held 1993:143).

Many of the types of utterance analysed as speech acts have also been studied in detail by conversation analysts as interactional actions in sequential contexts. Work on the sequential organization of invitations (Davidson 1984), requests (Wootton 1981, Schegloff 1990), compliments (Pomerantz 1978, 1984a), offers (Drew 1984), and proposals (Houtkoop 1987) deals with the conversational treatment of such actions and demonstrates the ways in which they are handled cooperatively by the participants. The focus of attention is on the coordination of conversational turns in the management of interactional activities. While speech act studies examine the relationship between the function, form and structure of similar actions, conversation analysts look for the recurrent sequential patterns, such as adjacency pairs or triplets and action chains (Pomerantz 1978, Houtkoop 1987), in which the actions are embedded. Similarly, while the speech act approach is primarily concerned with the speaker's choice of strategies, conversation analysts focus on the interpretations displayed by the participants. In accordance with the ethnomethodological principles of analysis, the analysts aim to discover how the participants themselves make sense of each turn and how they display their understanding in their contributions.

Brown and Levinson (1987:38-42) draw particular attention to some areas of sequential organization in which politeness may play a central part. One of these organizational patterns is *preference organization* (Pomerantz 1978, 1984a, 1984b, Atkinson and Heritage 1984:55-56, Heritage 1989:26-27). Conversation analysts have shown that certain types of responses to initiating actions in conversation are structurally 'preferred' over others. For example, agreement is generally preferred to disagreement, acceptances (as second pair-

parts to offers, invitations, etc.) are preferred to refusals, and answers to questions are preferred to non-answers. It has been proposed that there is a link between dispreferred actions and the type of language use associated with politeness. Not only are dispreferred actions routinely avoided in conversation, but when they are expressed, they are usually performed indirectly, which means that they are delayed and prefaced, and mitigated with various linguistic means. These structural features of dispreferred actions are clearly parallel to strategies observed in politeness research (e.g. indirectness, hedging).

Politeness can thus be seen to motivate particular types of response and explain certain structural options in the way in which the responses are formed. As Brown and Levinson (1987:38) note, politeness may also be seen as the motivation for conversational preference for some types of sequences (e.g. offer - acceptance) over others (e.g. request - compliance) and the types of repair work engaged in after some conversational trouble (e.g. self-initiated repair vs. other-initiated repair).

Interestingly, the consideration of politeness can also be seen to broaden the concept of preference organization in conversation analysis. The view of preference organization as a strictly structural phenomenon, "an institutionalized ranking of alternatives" (Atkinson and Heritage 1984:53, see also Levinson 1983:307, Nofsinger 1991:75), has recently been criticized within CA and pragmatics (e.g. Taylor and Cameron 1987, Bilmes 1988, Mey 1993). In the light of these criticisms and the wide-spread confusion arising from the term itself, it may be necessary to replace the concept of preference with a more pragmatic, user-oriented concept which relates the conversational pattern of treating certain actions as marked and others as unmarked (Mey 1993) to processes of inference, and which acknowledges that specific 'design features' in response behaviour may be used by speakers for interpersonal purposes, that is, to enhance conversational cooperation and avoid conflict (cf. Heritage 1989).

Other features of conversational organization which can be seen to involve the consideration of politeness and face are *pre-sequences* (Merritt 1976), *insertion sequences* (Schegloff 1972), *side sequences* (Jefferson 1972), *opening* and *closing sequences* (Schegloff and Sacks 1973, Schegloff 1986) and *repair sequences* (Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks 1977). Levinson (1983) and Blum-Kulka and House (1989), for example, note the conversational use of pre-sequences as checks on the potential success of the following action. In Brown and Levinson's (1987:40) terms, pre-sequences thus allow "the off-record negotiation of business with face implications well in advance of the possible on-record transaction" (see also Schegloff 1990: 60-61). Side sequences and insertion sequences, in other words sequences embedded in, but structurally and topically to some extent distinct from the main thrust of the conversation, could also be seen to be motivated by face concerns. They might be used, for example, to negotiate aspects related to a face-threatening topic. The connections of opening talk and politeness are mainly related to the establishment of the relationship between the interactants and the establishment of an initial context from which to proceed. The patterns of achieving a coordinated exit from the

conversation, on the other hand, may reflect the participants' efforts to ensure a mutually satisfactory end to the encounter. If the participants fail to close the conversation in a coordinated fashion, the result may have repercussions on their relationship and thus amount to a threat to face.

More global aspects of conversational organization have also been shown to have connections with politeness. The most obvious connections can be seen in conversations in which some interactionally problematic topics are dealt with, as in 'troubles' talk (Jefferson and Lee 1981, Jefferson 1984, 1988), remedial interchanges (Owen 1983), and arguments or conflict talk (Goodwin 1982, 1983, Goodwin and Goodwin 1990, Grimshaw 1990). Consideration for the conversational partner and the mutual orientation to face can be seen to motivate the ways in which problematic topics are introduced and closed and the ways in which the participants' relationship is negotiated in the course of the talk. Jefferson (1988), for example, describes how the deference shown by conversational partners to the 'troubles' topic and to each other is reflected in a delicate pattern through which the topic is developed and interpersonal relations are dynamically adjusted in line with the organizational developments of the sequence.

Although Brown and Levinson (1987) mainly discuss the achievements of ethnomethodological conversation analysis in relation to their theory, other approaches to the analysis of extended talk have also paid attention to aspects of politeness. In discourse analysis politeness has the most explicit status in Labov and Fanshell's (1977) model of therapeutic discourse and Edmondson's (1981) model of spoken discourse. Labov and Fanshell (1977:78ff.) acknowledge the face-threatening nature of speech acts by incorporating social felicity conditions into their model and using them to explain indirect speech acts. They also distinguish between strategies of mitigation and aggravation of speech acts, on the basis of which a scale of politeness can be predicted along the lines of Brown and Levinson's model (Brown and Levinson 1987:42). Edmondson (1981) builds on politeness research by adopting the concepts of face and face-work, and integrates the concept of *conversational strategy* into his model, as a means through which interactants may put their underlying communicative competence to use in order to achieve goals without endangering face (Edmondson 1981:7). More recent approaches to discourse analysis also pay attention to politeness and face-work, albeit less systematically (e.g. Fairclough 1992).

Brown and Levinson (1987:232) suggest that face considerations not only explain and motivate certain patterns of conversational organization, but that violations of such patterns (e.g. turn-taking violations such as interruptions, not responding to prior turns) constitute threats to face. The problem with this hypothesis is the implication of a cross-culturally valid norm for interactive behaviour. Recent research into cross-cultural differences in features of conversational organization (e.g. interruptions, overlap, silences) has shown that no cross-culturally valid 'normal' system of interaction, from which significant violations occur, can be identified. Nevertheless, it has been shown that cross-cultural differences in communicative style may lead to difficulties and assessments of one or the other interactant as uncooperative

(see e.g. Basso 1979, Scollon and Scollon 1981, 1991, 1994, Erickson and Schultz 1982, Tannen 1984a, 1984b). Thus, in inter-ethnic encounters where the participants have different expectations of norms concerning interactive behaviour, unexpected patterns may be interpreted as deliberate face-threats and lead to problems.

While obvious connections between aspects of face-work and patterns of conversational organization can be identified, it is not self-evident that the speech-act-centred speaker-oriented theory of politeness and the stringent empirical methodology of CA can be successfully combined. The goals and methods of description are fundamentally different: Brown and Levinson present a framework within which, as they claim, both universal aspects of language behaviour and cross-culturally variable manifestations of this behaviour can be described and explained. In CA, however, the aim is to uncover those rules or norms underlying conversational phenomena which the *participants* themselves orient to in particular interactions (see e.g. Heritage 1989, Nofsinger 1991, Psathas 1990, 1995 for discussion of CA concepts and methodology). From the point of view of conversation analysis, at least in the 'pure' sense (Schegloff 1988, Mazeland 1994, see also Held 1993), the explanatory hypotheses and descriptive categories offered by the politeness framework are thus superfluous. The emphasis is on detailed, meticulous description of patterns and regularities in conversation, and the structural and normative aspects of interaction, as they are displayed in unique, naturally occurring conversational contexts. Explanations in terms of external situational, cultural or psychological factors are consciously and systematically avoided (Psathas 1990:7-8).

From the pragmatic point of view, there are aspects of conversational behaviour which are not dealt with adequately in CA. The concept of context and the lack of situational and/or cultural information in conversation analytic descriptions has been widely criticized (see e.g. Levinson 1983:295-296, Duranti 1985:212-213). Similarly, in their interest in the systematics of interactional sequences, conversation analysts have paid much less attention to the content of what is said and the language with which interactional phenomena are accomplished (cf. Mey 1993:185-186)<sup>3</sup>. The perspectives of the language users are also sometimes neglected in conversation analysis: conversational actions are viewed as structural elements in the sequential patterns of interaction rather than choices made by the speakers in their attempts to express some intentions or goals.

It can also be argued that CA as such is not suited for the analysis of conversations between speakers from different ethnic or cultural backgrounds. Participants in intercultural interactions typically hold different sets of expectations concerning the norms of interaction and may rely on different interpretive procedures which guide interactional understanding. The participants thus lack the 'membership' knowledge which is the very element

<sup>3</sup> Topic organization and other more global patterns of interactional structure have been found to be problematic in CA (see e.g. Atkinson and Heritage 1984, Jefferson 1988, Heritage 1989). Some attempts to link the description of interactional phenomena and linguistic structure have been made (e.g. Goodwin 1979, Goodwin and Goodwin 1992).

that conversation analysis seeks to describe in monocultural contexts. Importantly, conversation analysis also relies on member's knowledge in the actual analytic process: it is through shared member's intuitions and interpretive procedures that the analyst has the authority to interpret conversational organizations and make claims about their significance to the participants (see e.g. Atkinson and Heritage 1984, Psathas 1990). The problems of employing a conversation-analytic methodology in a context where the speakers come from different cultural backgrounds, and the analyst can at best be assumed to share some aspects of the participants' background, are therefore considerable. Recent attempts to combine CA with other analytic approaches, such as the ethnography of communication (e.g. Moerman 1988) and pragmatics (e.g. Bilmes 1993) reflect attempts to overcome some of these problems. Similarly, the combination of linguistic and conversation analytic description in interactional sociolinguistics (e.g. Gumperz 1982, 1992), provides a framework specifically designed for the analysis of intercultural interaction. These approaches, however, do not pay systematic attention to aspects of face or politeness.

For the purposes of the present study, a pragmatic approach to conversational interaction is adopted. It must be acknowledged, however, that no systematic pragmatic theory of conversation exists, but the description draws heavily from the concepts, methodology and findings of conversation analysis (see e.g. Levinson 1983, Thomas 1985, 1990, Mey 1993). Nevertheless, the strength of the pragmatic perspective is that it places conversation in a broader context than the strictly empiricist conversation analysis. It offers systematic analytic tools for the description of interactional phenomena not only in terms of their 'locally constructed' order and structuring, but also in relation to the more global context by taking into account the participants, their purposes and goals, and the constraints on language use which arise from the settings or discourse domains in which conversations takes place. Finally, pragmatic theory provides a crucial link between the interactional phenomena through which speakers organize conversational activity and the language they use for creating such activity and for expressing conversational content. Politeness, then, in a pragmatic framework can be viewed as a *dimension*<sup>4</sup> of language use, an aspect of discourse which must be attended to by the speakers and those who analyse conversation. The role and actual realization of politeness in different contexts is a matter of empirical investigation.

## 2.2 Politeness and second language use

Considerable attention has been paid to the politeness dimension of second language use (see Wolfson 1989a, Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper 1989a, Kasper and Dahl 1991 and Kasper and Blum-Kulka 1993b for reviews). The

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<sup>4</sup> Hymes (1986:49) distinguishes *dimensions* of discourse from *categories* and defines a dimension as "an aspect of discourse to which one should attend, but whose status in a particular case remains to be discovered."



growing interest in the area is reflected in the recent emergence of a new discipline within second language acquisition, interlanguage pragmatics, within which "non-native speakers' use and acquisition of linguistic action patterns" are examined (Kasper and Blum-Kulka 1993b:3, see also Kasper 1989b, Blum-Kulka 1991). In addition to work on speech acts, aspects of politeness have been studied in contrastive and interlanguage discourse analysis. Below the central findings of this research are reviewed and their relevance to the present study is outlined.

### 2.2.1 Cross-cultural variation in speech acts

The aim of facilitating the learning of speech act behaviour and thus improving the sociocultural competence of language learners has motivated rich cross-cultural research addressing different aspects of speech act behaviour. Evidence has been collected for systematic differences and similarities between different cultural groups with respect to the linguistic realization patterns of particular speech acts and contextual parameters which bear upon the linguistic variation (see e.g. Tannen 1981, House and Kasper 1981, Blum-Kulka 1982). Observed differences indicate that culture-specific features can be identified in the interactional styles which operate in specific communities. Differences have also been found to result in communicative problems in intercultural encounters (e.g. Gumperz 1982, Erickson and Schultz 1982, Tannen 1984).

Scollon and Scollon (1981:175-177) relate culture-specific communicative styles to politeness by extending Brown and Levinson's positive and negative politeness to *global politeness systems* based on deference and solidarity. Such global systems are assumed to reflect different underlying assumptions about the social dimensions of power and distance, and to operate differently not only in different interactions but also in different social groups or even whole cultures. While several cross-cultural studies support the idea that cultures reflect different communicative styles, and that these differences may be described in terms of different politeness systems, the results of these studies are often conflicting. Mainstream North American culture, for example, is often characterized as reflecting a typical approach-based solidarity politeness system (Brown and Levinson 1987:245, Scollon and Scollon 1981:183). Yet, a number of studies comparing American speakers with members of other cultures have shown quite different patterns (e.g. Nash 1983, Garcia 1989, 1993). Similarly, while a number of studies using data from Asian subjects, e.g. Chinese, Japanese or Malays, have suggested that in these cultures less direct and more formal and deferential strategies are preferred, others have come up with quite different results (e.g. Banerjee and Carrell 1988, Beebe and Takahashi 1989b, Gu 1990). Such contradictions in the findings of comparative studies are in part due to the varied methodological approaches adopted: the type of data used for analysis varies from written questionnaires and closed role-play tasks to recordings of naturally occurring interactions. Undoubtedly the complexity of the phenomena to be compared also plays a role: the difficulty of establishing comparable units of analysis and the multiplicity of

relevant contextual factors involved (cultural, situational, idiosyncratic) make comparison of interactional phenomena difficult.

The complexities of comparing speech act strategies across cultures are illustrated in the findings of the recent Cross-cultural Speech Act Realisation Project (CCSARP) carried out in eight different languages or varieties (see Blum-Kulka and Olshtain 1984, Blum-Kulka et al. 1989a). The studies in the project mapped out cross-cultural realization patterns for requests and apologies in a limited set of situations on the basis of data elicited by means of a discourse completion test. The results of the project suggest both underlying similarities and systematic variation of speech act patterns across cultures and situations. Cultural differences were observed at practically every level of analysis. First, the imposition involved in making requests turned out to be perceived differently in different cultures (see Blum-Kulka and House 1989). Secondly, the linguistic encoding of requests, as manifested in the level of directness, perspective and types of modification, was found to vary in relation to the first language backgrounds of the subjects (Blum-Kulka 1989, 1991). Thirdly, there were differences in the ways in which the situational factors of distance and power interacted with the imposition in shaping the request outcome.

An important aspect of the findings of cross-cultural research is the interaction of cultural and situational variation in affecting the choice of linguistic means for carrying out speech acts. The findings of the CCSARP project revealed high degrees of both types of variation (Blum-Kulka and House 1989, Blum-Kulka 1991). Interestingly, the degree of cross-cultural variation was found to vary in different types of situation. As reported by Blum-Kulka and House (1989), in some of the situations analysed there was very little cross-cultural variation of the linguistic encoding of requests, whereas other situations reflected a much wider range of variation. Conversely, cultures were found to differ in relation to the range of situational variation allowed: Australian English reflected a relatively low degree of situational variation in contrast to Argentinean Spanish, in which the realization of requests varied most in relation to the situation.

There are several possible explanations for the complexity of variation, as Blum-Kulka and House (1989) suggest. In broad terms, the variation observed in CCSARP was related to specific aspects of the situational context, specifically context *external* factors such as degree of power and familiarity, and context *internal* factors, i.e. specific features of the situation such as the legitimacy of the speech act. Although the situational variables turned out to be significant and clearly correlated with language behaviour, Blum-Kulka and House (1989:150-151) stress that they do not explain the linguistic choices nor their variation according to situation unless they are related to other contextual and cultural factors.

The findings of the detailed cross-cultural analyses carried out in CCSARP have shown that although regularities in linguistic behaviour can be observed and related to both cultural and situational factors, the complex ways in which culture influences and interacts with language cannot be easily explained by means of clear-cut differences or easily identifiable variables.

Situational and cultural factors interact with elements of the speaker's general pragmatic knowledge (Blum-Kulka 1991) and universal features of social action in complex and context-dependent ways, which cannot be fully captured in comparative studies based on pre-selected, isolated variables of the context. To complement the contrastive approach, it is necessary to carry out qualitative analysis which focuses on the ways in which contextual constraints operate in actual talk, and on the participants' adjustment to the situation at hand. Thus, the 'internal context' of the speech event must extend to the actual interactive management of talk in which utterances are produced and interpreted.

In short, cross-cultural studies of speech act behaviour have increased our understanding of the linguistic, social and cultural aspects of speech act production and generated interesting hypotheses for further research. They have pointed to various problem areas where subtle differences in the pragmatic aspects of language use may increase the risk for intercultural misunderstanding and communicative breakdown. Many of the findings have found support in research into intercultural communication, specifically in interactional sociolinguistics (see 3.3. below). The limitations of the contrastive speech act approach, from the present point of view, are related to three central issues: the strength of the contrastive hypothesis, the use of non-interactive data and the focus on utterance-level realizations of speech acts. Cross-cultural differences in speech act production do not necessarily predict or explain actual communicative problems. To complement the descriptive approach of contrastive studies it is thus necessary to examine in detail actual negotiated interaction in various intercultural contexts.

## 2.2.2 Interlanguage speech act production

The production of speech acts has been studied extensively among different groups of learners and non-native speakers (see Kasper and Dahl 1991 and Kasper and Blum-Kulka 1993b for reviews). In accordance with the interlanguage hypothesis<sup>5</sup>, the main interest of this work has been in identifying systematic differences in learners' and native speakers' speech act production and learner-specific patterns of behaviour.

The early interlanguage studies were mainly concerned with non-native speakers' perceptions of different speech act realization patterns and their politeness levels (see e.g. Walters 1979, Carrell and Konneker 1981). These 'metapragmatic judgment studies' (Kasper and Dahl 1991:19) were aimed at uncovering the state of pragmatic knowledge of the subjects and were concerned with more or less permanent assessments of politeness associated with selected hypothetical situations. The studies confirmed that learners are able to perceive politeness distinctions even though their assessments may differ from those of native speakers. They also shed light on the role of linguistic form, particularly indirectness, and the role of selected contextual features in the interpretation of speech acts. More recently, the scope of this

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<sup>5</sup> Following the work of Corder (1971), Nemser (1971) and Selinker (1972), language learners' developmental dialects or language systems are studied in their own right, as distinct from both the learner's native language (L1) and the target language (L2).

research has extended to other aspects of pragmatic knowledge which enter into the comprehension of speech acts (see e.g. Bouton 1988, 1992, Bergman and Kasper 1993, House 1993).

Another line of research has concentrated on second language learners' actual production of speech acts. Using mostly elicited data, mainly discourse completion tests or role play techniques, studies in this tradition have observed patterns of native and non-native usage in selected speech act situations. Particular attention has been paid to differences in the level and type of politeness displayed in native and non-native usage. The findings have been somewhat problematic: while some studies suggest that learners appear more direct in their speech act behaviour than native speakers (Rintell 1981, Kasper 1981, Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford 1990), others have found little difference in the degree of directness between learners and native speakers or have found learners to appear even less direct than native speakers (Zimin 1981, Banerjee and Carrell 1988, Olshtain and Weinbach 1987, 1993). In a study of suggestions by Chinese and Malay subjects, Banerjee and Carrell (1988), for example, found that the non-native subjects were less likely to perform the speech act, particularly in embarrassing or slightly embarrassing contexts, thus opting for the strategy of avoiding the face-threatening act altogether. No significant differences in the directness of the other strategies used by native and non-native speakers were observed.

The results of recent speech act production studies indicate that learners have access to the same range of realization strategies for speech acts as native speakers. However, differences have been identified at the level of actual realization strategies selected and the distribution of these strategies in relation to different situational and sociocultural contexts. The learners' limited linguistic, pragmatic and sociocultural knowledge has been found to be reflected in the ways in which interlanguage speech act realization patterns differ from native speaker usage. Quantitative and qualitative differences have been found, for example, in the range and type of semantic formulas used, the length of realization strategies, and the ways in which the illocutionary force of the act is modified (see e.g. Olshtain and Cohen 1989, Faerch and Kasper 1989, Beebe, Takahashi and Uliss-Weltz 1990). The set of strategies actually used by learners has been shown to be more limited than that of native speakers' and to deviate from native speakers' selections, reflecting transfer from the learners' native language and limited knowledge of target language conventions.

Most IL speech act studies have shown that learners as well as native speakers are sensitive to contextual variation and modify their use of strategies according to a range of contextual features. Although the studies rely on different types of contextual variables as well as largely different terminology, the findings seem to broadly support Brown and Levinson's (1987) prediction that the three crucial social dimensions which are related to politeness are power or status, interpersonal distance and the degree of risk involved in performing a particular act. Thus, learner behaviour has been shown to vary according to the status of the addressee, distance or familiarity between the participants in the interaction and the amount of face-threat and related aspects of the speech act task, e.g. gravity of offense, need or obligation to respond in a

particular way, and degree of embarrassment (see Kasper and Dahl 1991). Blum-Kulka (1991) argues that the learners' ability to vary the choice of strategy and the linguistic structure of speech acts situationally, irrespective of mother tongue and proficiency level, arises from a *general pragmatic knowledge base*, on the basis of which the learner is able to assess the relevant communicative goals in a context-sensitive way and search for situationally appropriate linguistic means for achieving these goals.

However, learners may have difficulty in combining linguistic choices with situational and sociocultural information to produce utterances which are appropriate for specific contexts. Research has demonstrated that learners' strategies are often situationally or socioculturally inappropriate. Even advanced learners have been found to clearly deviate from the target language norm and to fail to choose strategies which convey the intended illocutionary point in a socially appropriate manner. In a study of native (American) and non-native (Hebrew) productions of apologies Cohen and Olshtain (1981), for example, found differences in the stylistic appropriateness of strategies used in situations in which status and familiarity were controlled. Kasper's (1981) study of a range of initiating (e.g. requests, invitations) and responding (e.g. acceptances, rejections) speech acts in interactions between German learners of English and English native speakers showed that the learners' linguistic choices reflected limited awareness of the situational and sociocultural aspects of speech act production. She found, for example, that although the learners successfully managed to reach referential and actional communicative goals, i.e. were able to convey the content or the illocutionary point of the act, they often failed in the expression of interpersonal goals. These findings have been corroborated in recent studies of learner performance in various face-threatening situations (e.g. Kärkkäinen and Raudaskoski 1988, Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford 1990).

It has been suggested that learners, specifically of high intermediate proficiency level, produce speech acts using systematically longer utterances than native speakers, and thus exhibit inappropriate 'verbosity' (e.g. Blum-Kulka and Olshtain 1986, Faerch and Kasper 1989). Learners have been found, for example, to express requests by using overelaborate and overcomplex utterances and providing lengthy explanations and justifications which are not necessarily appropriate in the context. In light of recent research, however, it seems that this finding is, at least in part, a product of the methodology used: although supported in many studies using data elicited through questionnaires and discourse completion tests, the hypothesis has not been confirmed in studies based on more interactive types of data, such as role play or naturalistic data (see Eisenstein and Bodman 1986, 1993, Edmondson and House 1991, Piirainen-Marsh 1992). According to Kasper and Blum-Kulka (1993a:61), the differences in the linguistic responses to the different elicitation tasks are due to the different cognitive demands which the tasks make on the subjects: questionnaires do not demand the same kind of automatized computing of contextual and linguistic material as an interactive task design or naturally occurring interaction.

Non-native speakers' deviant speech act behaviour has been attributed to a number of factors linked to interlanguage development. Thus, learner-specific problems have been related to negative transfer from the learners' L1 and levels of proficiency in the target language (e.g. Thomas 1983, Beebe et al. 1990, Blum-Kulka 1991). Non-native speakers' speech act behaviour has been found to approach native speaker patterns with increased proficiency or increased familiarity with the conventions of the target culture (e.g. Trosborg 1987, Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper 1989a). A further factor which is claimed to cause deviant non-native patterns of use is the effect of language teaching: in foreign language teaching the interpersonal aspects of verbal behaviour have until recently largely been ignored; thus some of the learners' behavioural patterns may well be teaching-induced (Kasper 1981, 1989a, Edmondson et al. 1984).

In addition to processes of language transfer, interlanguage development and language teaching, learner-specific problems may result from cultural differences in interactional styles (e.g. Kärkkäinen and Raudaskoski 1988, Garcia 1989, 1993). Recent research suggests that even learners with high levels of proficiency retain patterns of interaction typical of their native culture and resist convergence with interactional norms prevalent in the target culture (see e.g. Blum-Kulka 1991, Blum-Kulka and Sheffer 1993). Second language speakers have been found to develop an interlanguage-specific or intercultural communication style, which is not fully consistent with either the native or target language conventions.

Recent developments in interlanguage pragmatics and speech accommodation research have shown that patterns of language use are closely linked with the learner's identity and cultural membership (Janicki 1986, Beebe and Giles 1984, Eisenstein 1989, Blum-Kulka 1991). The degree to which learners accommodate features of the target culture by showing convergence towards its conventions in language use is affected by complex socio-psychological factors and may reflect a conscious or unconscious tendency to resist maximal convergence (Blum-Kulka 1991:269-270). The findings of this research raise important questions concerning some of the underlying assumptions of interlanguage speech act research, such as (the sometimes implicit) reliance on native speaker usage as the norm against which non-native performance is evaluated.

Two conclusions may be drawn from these findings. Firstly, instead of taking nativelike competence as the point of reference, second language performance might be more fruitfully examined in relation to intercultural or bilingual competence, as has been suggested by a number of researchers (see e.g. Chen 1989, Blum-Kulka 1991, Blum-Kulka and Sheffer 1993, Nyssönen and Rapakko 1992). Secondly, there is a need for more research which examines learner performance in the context of reciprocal and cooperative process of interaction. This type of enquiry entails a change of focus in interlanguage study: instead of examining differences between learners and native speakers and limitations of learner performance, it aims to describe how the learner draws on the resources of his/her interlanguage and the

interactional context in the attempt to contribute to the mutual accomplishment of interaction.

To summarize, studies addressing the politeness dimension in interlanguage speech act production have described the different linguistic strategies with which specific language functions are realized by language learners and native speakers. They have accumulated empirical evidence for specific problems which learners from different native language backgrounds face in acquiring patterns of linguistic action. Similarly, they have generated hypotheses on factors which may cause interlanguage-specific behaviour and examined the kinds of pragmatic and sociocultural knowledge that learners need access to in order to perform speech acts more appropriately in the target language.

### 2.2.3 From speech acts to speech events

Most of the work concerned with aspects of politeness and face-threat from the point of view of second language acquisition and use has examined individual speech acts, usually in a minimal discourse context. However, recent research into linguistic action has established that the interactive treatment of face-threatening acts generally involves elaboration and negotiation which cannot be captured in studies focusing on utterance-level realizations of individual acts. Accordingly, an increasing number of studies has addressed the production of speech acts in naturally occurring speech.

Wolfson (1989a, 1989b) analyzed naturally occurring compliments and compliment responses in a corpus which included examples from both native and non-native speakers. She found that non-native speakers display difficulties in choosing appropriate responses and fail to recognize the function of compliments as 'social lubricants' in American culture. Beebe and Takahashi (1989b) described some naturally occurring disagreement and chastisement sequences and noted a Japanese tendency to use indirect questions as an interactional strategy through which disagreement may be expressed. However, their data was based on written notes from only a few random speech events, and thus did not allow a systematic analysis of the type of negotiation observed. Beebe et al. (1990) mention a larger scale ethnographic project in progress in which the negotiation of refusals is examined in natural contexts of occurrence. They note that naturally occurring refusals involve a long negotiated sequence and that their form and content varies according to the act to which the refusal is sequentially related, which they term the eliciting speech act.

In a study of expressions of gratitude based on a variety of data types (questionnaires, role plays, naturalistic data) Eisenstein and Bodman (1993) noted the need to view speech acts as jointly developed events rather than unilateral acts. The interactive data in their database showed that the realization of thanking involved mutual adjustment of contributions by the speakers and various forms of negotiation through several turns. Eisenstein and Bodman (1993) reported on differences in native and non-native speakers'

performance at the sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic levels of use<sup>6</sup>. While the learners' performance was found to be relatively unproblematic in contexts that required routinized responses, problems were identified in situations which demanded more complex and unroutinized expressions. The learners' performance was also found to be affected by culture-dependent views pertaining to the speech event and underlying values such as modesty, gratefulness and indebtedness.

Clyne, Ball and Neil (1991) reported on a research project on communication between immigrants from different non-English speaking backgrounds in work situations in Australia. They focused on the realization of complaints and apologies in naturally occurring conversations, paying attention to aspects of turn-taking behaviour and discourse sequencing as well as the linguistic expression of the selected speech acts. The study showed that complaints and apologies are realized through complex realization patterns extending over stretches of discourse rather than acts at the level of individual turns. Clyne, Ball and Neil (1991:258-260) found evidence for communicative breakdown arising from differences in discourse rhythm and the relationship between speech acts and length of turn.

The studies which have focused on the interactive qualities of speech acts in natural contexts reflect a shift towards an ethnographic approach in the study of linguistic action in a second language. An ethnographic perspective entails detailed attention to the events or activities in which a particular speech act is embedded and the broader social contexts which give rise to such events. Accordingly, some studies have focused on the types of act and patterns of realization which are required in a specific type of speech event.

Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1990) compared the performance of native and non-native graduate students in academic advising sessions. The speech event in their focus represents a specific type of 'gate-keeping event' (Erickson and Schultz 1982): it is characterized by the institutional context which sets specific roles for the participants (a graduate student and a member of academic staff) and it has special significance for the student whose academic career and future are being discussed. Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1990) discuss the success and failure of these events in terms of the negotiation of the role and status of the participants through linguistic action. In their view, success largely depends on the speakers' context-dependent pragmatic competence in the appropriate use of speech acts. Specific acts are viewed as appropriate to the extent that they are *congruent* with the roles of the participants in the event, in other words to the extent that they conform to situation-specific expectations. In the advising sessions the advisor is expected to *give advice* and *provide* and *solicit information*, whereas it is appropriate for the student to *request information*, *permission* or *advice* (Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford 1990:476). Acts which are at odds with the role-specific expectations are seen as non-congruent and hence generally inappropriate. Bardovi-Harlig and

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<sup>6</sup> Following Thomas (1983), the sociopragmatic level of language use involves assessment of various social parameters which interact with language use. The pragmalinguistic level refers to actual linguistic strategies associated with speech act production in different languages.



Hartford (1990:477) argue that the balance between the appropriate use of congruent speech acts and the successful negotiation of non-congruent ones reflects the prescribed status relationship of the situation and is the major element in the success or failure of the sessions.

In an analysis of suggestions (an act which is potentially non-congruent with the student's status) and requests for advice (a congruent act), Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1990) found clear differences between native and non-native graduate students. While the native speakers frequently initiated suggestions, the non-native speakers generally offered them only as responses to previous linguistic contexts or waited to agree with the advisor's suggestion. Similarly, requests for advice were both more frequent and more explicit in the native speakers' usage. Furthermore, whereas the native speakers used various mitigation ('status-preserving') strategies, e.g. downgraders (cf. House and Kasper 1981), for making their non-congruent contributions more acceptable, the non-native speakers frequently did not. These findings were interpreted as reflecting a difference between the native and non-native speakers' context-dependent pragmatic competence and taken to explain the perceived success or failure of the sessions.

Fiksdal (1989, 1990) also examined academic advising sessions between members of university staff and native and non-native (Taiwanese) students. Her aim was to account for the relative success or failure of the sessions and to seek explanations for the communicative difficulties experienced by the participants. Fiksdal's (1990) approach, however, differs considerably from that of Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford's study: she focuses on strategies at the level of discourse rather than speech act performance. Building on previous work on gate-keeping interviews, Fiksdal (1990) develops a 'time-based' model of spoken discourse organized around the systems of turn-taking and *rapport*, in other words strategies which participants use to build and maintain a 'harmonious' relationship based on mutual empathy and supportiveness (see Fiksdal 1990:8, 39, 49). The term *rapport* has obvious connections with politeness, in particular with positive politeness in Brown and Levinson's model and with other related concepts, such as solidarity politeness (Scollon and Scollon 1981), comity (Leech 1983, Aston 1993), and involvement (Tannen 1984). From the point of view of the present study, the significance of Fiksdal's (1990) work lies in the way in which she links politeness to conversational organization and the speech event. Through a careful analysis of her data she shows that strategies of *rapport* are interrelated with turn-taking and timing, specifically tempo, and thus contribute to the sequential organization of talk. She further illustrates how strategies of *rapport* are realized verbally (e.g. through seeking agreement) and nonverbally, e.g. through smiles, head nods and laughter.

Fiksdal's (1990) study of *rapport* strategies indicated that native speaker advisors use different strategies with native and non-native students. Interactions between native speakers were characterized by *rapport-building* strategies (e.g. telling stories, presupposing common ground), which were generally used when discourse proceeded smoothly. Interactions involving non-native speakers, however, displayed more *rapport-maintaining* strategies

(maintaining common ground, seeking agreement), which were used to frame problematic topics and conversational trouble spots (Fiksdal 1990:97). Differences were also found in the contexts in which native and non-native students used rapport strategies: native speakers relied on the rapport system in the negotiation of uncomfortable moments, whereas non-native speakers tended to avoid explicitly framing problematic moments with rapport strategies (Fiksdal 1990:97, 112). The non-native speakers' underlying politeness system was also found to differ from that of the native speakers. Fiksdal (1990:112) suggests that the Taiwanese students' strategies might be best described in terms of a deference (negative politeness) system whereas the American native speakers seemed to follow a positive politeness system based on rapport. Although it is unclear to what extent the differences observed were due to proficiency, cultural differences or different perceptions of the situation, the results would seem to imply that both the native and non-native participants interpreted the NS-NNS situation as involving more distance and less common ground to build upon than interactions between native speakers.

The studies described above have made an important contribution to the study of politeness by focusing on aspects of politeness behaviour which go beyond speech act production. They have shown how speech act behaviour is related to expectations associated with the speech event, specifically the expectations arising from the roles and the status of the participants. Further, they have demonstrated the need to establish connections between politeness strategies and aspects of negotiated discourse, such as turn-taking and the more global organization of conversation. As is often the case in research using naturalistic data, the studies are limited by their focus on only one type of speech event. Moreover, in most cases the event studied represents institutional domains of discourse. Their findings thus need to be compared to analyses of other types of situation where the relationship between the participants is more negotiable and the type of speech event less restrictive in terms of the types of activities or speech acts expected.

#### **2.2.4 Politeness in second language discourse**

Studies of interlanguage and contrastive discourse analysis have shown that second language learners even at an advanced level differ from native speakers in their interactive behaviour and that many of the differences identified are specifically related to the interpersonal aspects of language use (see e.g. Kasper 1981, 1984, 1989a, Edmondson et al. 1984, Kärkkäinen and Raudaskoski 1988). While the main focus of these studies has been on a broad range of pragmatic and discursal aspects of interlanguage use (see section 3.2), they have highlighted many problem areas in the social and interpersonal dimension of second language interaction, and thus bear particular relevance to the present study.

In a contrastive discourse analysis project in German and English at Bochum University, a corpus of simulated conversations was analysed with respect to a range of discursal features in order to identify differences between interlanguage and native language usage (see e.g. Kasper 1981, Edmondson et

al. 1984, House 1984). The data consisted of three sets of conversations which represented native speaker interaction by speakers of English and German and interlanguage interaction between German learners of English and English native speakers. The analysis covered various aspects of discourse organization: systematic attention was paid to the opening and closing phases of the interactions, the use of conversational strategies, the use of discourse regulating 'gambits', and the realization of some central illocutionary acts. Particular attention was paid to 'speech act modality', in other words the degree to which the politeness function was accounted for in speech act behaviour. A general finding from the contrastive analyses was that the English native speaker subjects operated more frequently on an interpersonal level of interaction and resorted to more routinized and formulaic conversational behaviour than the German subjects, who were found to behave in more content-oriented ways (Kasper 1981:449, Edmondson et al. 1984:119, House 1984:251-253).

Analyses of the interlanguage data (see Edmondson et al. 1984:118-119 for summary) revealed many types of pragmatic problems in learner performance. The research showed, for example, that learners displayed a smaller range of linguistic means for realizing particular pragmatic functions than native speakers. Learners were also found to use structurally simpler ways of realizing functions and to use routine formulae inappropriately. Similarly, they displayed 'non-responsive discourse behaviour' in a variety of ways: their 'responding moves' often did not match with preceding moves, they did not use hearer-supportive strategies to the same extent as native speakers, and they failed to initiate, thus appearing more passive in their discourse behaviour. Further, the strategies used by learners to mitigate speech acts were often inappropriate. Acts classified as inherently face-threatening (e.g. *requests* and *complaints*) were performed directly and without mitigation, whereas face-saving acts (e.g. *offer*, *invite*, *accept*, *promise*, *apologize* and *thank*) were realized more indirectly and with mitigation (Kasper 1981). Finally, some strategies associated with politeness and interpersonal relations (e.g. discourse regulating gambits) were used inappropriately or were completely absent from the learner data.

In a recent project at the University of Oulu (see Kärkkäinen and Raudaskoski 1988, Nyssönen 1990), aspects of Finnish learners' social competence were examined in a corpus of simulated conversations collected using the same procedure as with the German data. The simulation tasks were based on situations where the speakers' social competence was put to test and involved four types of face-threatening activities: invitations, offers, complaints/criticism and admitting guilt. The situations were controlled according to the power and distance relationship between the interactants. The main focus of analysis was on the conversational strategies used, in other words the ways in which interactional structures were used in the attainment of conversational goals (Kärkkäinen and Raudaskoski 1988:107). The analysis was based on the assumption that a conversational strategy can manifest itself at various levels of discourse (e.g. types of exchange, move and gambit used) and that it is chiefly motivated by politeness considerations (Edmondson 1981,

Edmondson and House 1981). Drawing from structural models of discourse (mainly Edmondson 1981) and the politeness theory of Brown and Levinson (1987), the analysis sought to identify elements of conversational strategy at three structural levels of description: the level of the whole encounter, the level of the interactional sequence in which an imposition is made and the level of the individual turn (Kärkkäinen and Raudaskoski 1988:108).

The analytic framework thus incorporated the study of face-threat into aspects of conversational organization. Firstly, it encompassed global strategies which contribute to the establishment of a mutually supportive conversational climate and serve as cooperative strategies enhancing the tone of the whole conversation. Secondly, it focused on the conversational episode in which a particular face-threatening act was expressed and responded to, thus extending the scope of analysis towards sequential aspects of discourse. The actual realization strategies with which the face-threatening speech act was expressed were also systematically analysed. The multi-level approach to analysis made it possible to examine interlanguage performance from a much broader perspective than that of speech act production. As Kärkkäinen and Raudaskoski (1988:119) point out, a "socially skilled" way of expressing a face-threatening act involves much more than the content and directness level of the individual speech act.

Finnish learners were found to display inappropriate discourse behaviour at all the levels of interaction identified. At the global level of the whole encounter, reports from native speaker informants indicated that learners did not engage in enough hearer-supportive behaviour and did not use listening strategies to a sufficient degree. At the more local level of particular speech act sequences, they did not always use appropriate preparatory or supportive devices for expressing speech acts, and at the most local level of individual turns, they often used situationally inappropriate linguistic strategies for minimizing face-threat. Such deviations from the target norms were explained mainly in terms of culture-specific conventions in interaction and culturally different assessments of the underlying principles (e.g. assessments of power and/or distance). Interviews with native speaker informants indicated that these features of learner behaviour were taken to imply lack of interest towards the interlocutor (Kärkkäinen and Raudaskoski 1988:112-113).

The main objective of the projects discussed above was to identify actual and potential problems in the social and communicative competence of advanced learners of English so that language teaching practices could be developed. For this reason the focus of the analysis was mainly on the performance of the learners rather than the negotiation of the conversational situation. The analytic approach used was based on hierarchical models of discourse: a wide range of categories was used for classifying structural elements at different levels of organization, e.g. phases, exchanges, moves and acts. While this approach yielded rich information on a range of problems faced by learners and produced specific recommendations for language teaching (see Kasper 1981, Edmondson and House 1981), it is restricted by its focus on structural aspects of discourse and its emphasis on learner performance. To

complement this research, studies with a more interactive approach to interlanguage discourse should be carried out so that the role of the interlocutor and various dynamic and negotiable aspects of conversation can be better accounted for.

Another contrastive project which is of relevance here is the PIXI project which examined the pragmatics of public service encounters in English and Italian (see Aston 1988b). The aim of the project was to describe the strategies used for negotiating outcomes in service encounters (book shop interactions). The project aimed to contribute to the needs of second language teaching by examining strategies used in naturally occurring discourse events from a contrastive perspective (Aston 1988a:3-4). While politeness or face-work was not a central focus of the project, the researchers were interested in the ways that "non-problematic social consensus is constructed" and "a climate of solidarity" is created in service encounters, and hence paid attention to the negotiation of interactional and interpersonal goals (Aston 1988a:12). The theoretical framework and methodology differed from the two interlanguage-oriented projects described above: the analytic approach was based on conversation analysis, the data consisted of naturally occurring interactions and the focus was on the joint strategic management of the encounter rather than interlanguage performance.

Although the main aim of the project was to compare the strategies for managing service encounters in the two languages, some attention was also paid to non-native speakers' ability to negotiate the speech event. Anderson (1988) examined the instances of native-non-native interaction in the data in order to shed light on two central issues (1) how non-nativeness emerges as a factor relevant to interaction and (2) how activity type and role relationships interact with non-nativeness in shaping the structure and organization of NS-NNS discourse. She found that non-nativeness tends to become a significant variable leading to miscommunication in certain types of interactions, notably those in which the learner is in a subordinate position and has few opportunities to take control of the interaction.

Aston (1993) further extends the work on negotiating outcomes by investigating the process of building *comity* (Leech 1983) in interactions involving non-native speakers. He examines the ways that comity is constructed through two types of affective convergence: strategies of negotiating *solidarity*, i.e. displays of common experience and like-mindedness, and *support*, i.e. strategies which express sympathy and concern for the interlocutor. Aston (1993:234-237) argues that the grounds for expressing comity in NNS discourse are different from those in NS interaction, and that the interactional resources available for its expression are also different. He suggests that the resources which are used for the negotiation of solidarity and support in a non-native context are drawn from the lack of shared sociocultural background (lack of 'consociacy') and unshared competence. The exploitation of these resources in non-native interaction may, as is demonstrated by Aston (1993:237-244), give rise to negotiating strategies which lead to a mutually satisfactory process of building common ground, and facilitate the negotiation of a successful outcome.

Building on the studies reviewed above, Piirainen-Marsh (1992) investigated the interactional dimension of politeness and face-threat in native-non-native conversation. The study paved the way for the present investigation by outlining a broad theoretical framework within which face-threat can be approached from an interactive perspective and by carrying out a preliminary analysis of the cooperative management of face-threatening activities. The present study extends this work by carrying out a more in-depth analysis of the data and developing a more coherent framework for the description of the interactive management of face-work. It also seeks to explore connections with the study of face-work strategies and other aspects of conversational management in the NNS context (see chapter 3).

In sum, while the politeness dimension of second language interaction has been explored extensively, the focus of this research has been limited in two respects. Firstly, the majority of empirical studies has approached politeness in terms of speech act production or comprehension in a limited, often non-interactive context. Secondly, in research which has examined aspects of politeness in extended speech events or conversational interaction, the focus has largely been largely restricted to the deviant interactional behaviour of the non-native participants. The present study aims to contribute to this field of study by examining the interactive and negotiated aspects of face-work both in relation to the building of solidarity and the avoidance of face-threat. It also aims to extend current work on linguistic action in interlanguage pragmatics by suggesting an empirically based analytic framework for the study of face-work in interlanguage discourse.

### **2.3 Politeness in second language interaction: a pragmatic view**

The study of politeness from the perspective of both native and non-native interaction has shown that face and face-work are an integral part of the organization and functioning of speech activities and events. Two alternative points of view emerge from this research. Firstly, politeness and face may be conceptualized as possible pragmatic universals which underlie and constrain the organization of speech events and activities through which interpersonal relationships are negotiated. Secondly, politeness can be placed within the culture-specific norms of speech communities and speech events. In the latter view, events within a particular cultural context constrain the basic expected interactive norm, which defines the framework within which politeness is seen to operate. These two alternative points of view are related to the broader theoretical issues currently under discussion within politeness theory, such as the universality hypothesis (see Watts, Ide and Ehlich 1992a, 1992b, Janney and Arndt 1993) and the role of politeness within a comprehensive theory of action and interaction (Ide 1989, Ide et al. 1992). While it is beyond the scope of this study to explore these issues in any theoretical depth, it seems that the detailed analysis of face-threatening encounters between participants from different

linguistic and cultural backgrounds who jointly manage a potentially face-threatening situation, will provide some insight into the ways in which politeness arises in actual interaction and operates outside a specific (mono)cultural or situational norm. This type of encounters reflect the ways in which politeness considerations and the mutual awareness of face may enter into, constrain and organize conversation in interethnic and interlingual contexts.

The approach to analysing and describing politeness in interaction in the present study is pragmatic in orientation. Politeness is conceived of as a global interactional, and thus by definition social, phenomenon which reflects the ways in which language users adjust to, and negotiate, a social situation. Rather than viewing politeness as a measurable and quantifiable set of linguistic routines, the present study sees it in relation to processes of conversational inference, negotiation of meaning and the management of interpersonal relationships.

In the present context politeness is also seen as an *interactional resource* which shapes the ways in which particular activities are negotiated by the participants and influences the language used in participating in such activities. In conversations in which the linguistic and sociocultural resources of the participants are largely unshared, politeness may be realized in specific ways which are different from the conventions manifest in conversations between speakers of a shared background. Firstly, the linguistic strategies used and the patterns of negotiation engaged in when dealing with a particular activity can be assumed to reflect the asymmetries of the intercultural context. Secondly, the interactional means which are used to avoid face-threat, build solidarity or show mutual support may be different. The ways in which the resources available to the speakers are used in the context of particular interactions is a central focus of the present work.

The description of face-work in the present study builds on Brown and Levinson's (1987) model of politeness. The model is adapted and extended with concepts drawn from the pragmatic and ethnomethodological study of conversation. The central assumptions on which the approach is built are summarised below.

(i) The concept of face (Goffman 1967, 1971, Brown and Levinson 1978/1987) is understood as a primarily social, interactional and interpersonal concept, "located in the flow of events" (Goffman 1967:7, see also Mao 1994:453-454, Lim 1994: 210) rather than belonging to the individual, the 'self'.

(ii) Strategies of face-work reflect the participants' mutual orientation to face and the mutually recognized need to preserve one's own and the interlocutor's face, thus "reflecting the tension between cooperation and antagonism in social relationships" (Craig et al. 1986:463).

(iii) Threat to face may arise from interactional activities which can be seen to endanger the mutual respect for face. Politeness in conversational language use, then, consists of the linguistic and interactional procedures through which (a) threat to face is avoided or minimized (negative politeness), and (b) solidarity is established and supportive face-work is carried out (positive politeness). In interactions involving non-native speakers, face-threat may arise from specific features of such interaction: unshared linguistic and sociocultural resources and a different interpretation of the situation at hand.

(iv) Politeness behaviour is reflected in the ways in which participants pursue various *goals* in interaction through language. A dynamic view of goals is adopted: firstly, the speakers' goals may be shared, overlapping or unshared in the context of interaction, and secondly, they are complex, context-dependent, and negotiable (Craig 1990, Penman 1990). In other words, any one utterance may reflect multiple goals, relating to both the illocutionary point which is intended and considerations of face. Goals are also emergent, that is, they are adjusted and renegotiated in the course of the interaction and may evolve as a result of the negotiation process (Hopper and Drummond 1990). A rough distinction can be drawn between transactional and interactional goals, i.e. goals oriented to conveying a particular message or illocution and those oriented to interpersonal relations. In language use these goals operate simultaneously, jointly contributing to the meaning and level of politeness of an utterance. Language learners often have difficulties in selecting appropriate or adequate means for expressing these goals and these difficulties may have consequences for the outcome of the interaction.

(iv) Some of the goals relevant to the participants in an encounter are made recognizable to other participants through linguistic and conversational action, and are thus observable in the interaction. Goals are observable both at the level of *conversational content*, i.e. the topics which are talked about (e.g. talking about a party) and the activities engaged in (e.g. inviting interlocutor to the party), and *form*, i.e. the language used at the level of individual turns, and the sequencing of turns in negotiating actions and responses. Linguistic action in a conversational context can thus be described on the following three dimensions: the (a) *pragmatic or illocutionary acts*<sup>7</sup> which utterances can be said to perform in context, and the linguistic means with which the acts are performed; (b) the *sequences or chains* of action which a particular utterance can be seen to belong to; and (c) the *activities and topics* which the interactants engage in through participating in the conversational encounter. Politeness considerations enter into the organization of the conversational event both locally and globally, through all three dimensions. They motivate the ways in which goals are expressed, the ways in which action patterns or chains are formed, and hence shape the activity which emerges over sequences of discourse.

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<sup>7</sup> Pragmatic acts are distinct from speech acts in that they are seen as complex and dynamic (Thomas 1991a, see also Mey 1993). Firstly, they may be conveyed through instances of discourse ranging from individual utterances to longer stretches of interaction, or may be performed nonverbally. Secondly, they derive their meaning and force from complex contextual sources which include the speaker's goals or intentions and the hearer's interpretations, immediately preceding and subsequent discourse as well as situational constraints.



### 3 ASPECTS OF NON-NATIVE INTERACTION

This chapter reviews the most important approaches to the study of conversational interaction in which learners are involved. Three main areas of study are particularly relevant for the present study: (1) studies of interactional modifications and strategies of communication, which deal with the ways in which communicative problems are solved and meanings are negotiated in interactions involving non-native speakers, (2) research in pragmatics and interactional sociolinguistics, which focuses on sociocultural aspects of meaning and communicative problems in interethnic interactions, and (3) conversation and discourse analytic studies of the organization of NS-NNS conversation. For the sake of clarity, the following terminological distinctions will be followed throughout the chapter. The term *non-native (NNS) interaction* is used to refer to all conversational interaction involving learners or non-native speakers. *NS-NNS interaction* refers specifically to interaction between native speakers and second language speakers, and *NNS-NNS interaction* to conversations between learners. Interactions between native speakers will be referred to as *NS interaction*.<sup>1</sup>

#### 3.1 On the nature of NNS interaction

##### 3.1.1 Underlying assumptions

Research concerned with language learners suggests that interaction which involves non-native speakers is in many respects fundamentally different from most types of interaction between native speakers. Three central problem areas can be identified which are generally seen to underlie the specific characteristics of such talk: (1) problems of comprehension arising from the limited communicative competence of the learner, (2) problems of communication resulting from different language and culture-specific norms

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<sup>1</sup> The terms learner, second language speaker and non-native speaker are here used interchangeably to refer to speakers whose language use reflects some stage of the process of second language acquisition.

concerning language use and conversational behaviour, and (3) difficulties in solving communicative problems arising both from the limited resources of the learner's interlanguage and from the intercultural communicative situation.

While such problems may be characteristic of all NNS interaction, they seem to lead to specific constraints in interaction between native and non-native speakers: NS-NNS interaction is often characterized as asymmetrical or unequal in relation to power or dominance. The more competent native speaker is seen as the dominant and powerful party, who also carries most of the responsibility for conducting the interaction, and the non-native speaker as the 'powerless', non-competent one. In this respect NS-NNS interaction has been found to display similarities with other types of communication where the participants' linguistic and interactional repertoires are not shared, such as interaction between children and adults, experts and nonexperts, hearing-impaired and unimpaired participants and doctors or therapists and patients (see e.g. Py 1986, Thomas 1990, Leiwo 1992, 1994). In such contexts successful negotiation of meaning requires interactional efforts and the use of linguistic and interactional resources in specific ways. On the one hand, native speakers may *modify* their language use and adjust their conversational behaviour for the benefit of the less competent speaker so that shared understanding can be achieved. On the other hand, learners use various *communication strategies* to prevent and solve communicative problems and convey intended meanings to the native speaker addressee.

In addition to communicative problems resulting from unshared linguistic competence, NS-NNS interaction is often characterized by interpersonal distance resulting from differences in the participants' background knowledge and cultural membership. Culture-specific features of language use and *interactive style* enter into the conversational encounter and may result in uncomfortable moments or even communicative breakdown. Further, the lack of shared interpretive procedures may hinder a successful negotiation of such problems when they occur.

Sociolinguistic studies of learner interaction have shown that NS-NNS interaction is both systematically variable and dynamic. The features which characterize NS-NNS interaction are context dependent, and to some extent negotiable in the interaction process. In recent research *contextual variation* according to activity or task, setting, and topic has been found to interact with other features associated with non-nativeness (e.g. language proficiency) in giving rise to those characteristics of interaction which were previously regarded as typical of NS-NNS encounters (see e.g. Anderson 1988, Woken and Swales 1989, Zuengler 1993). A dynamic view of non-nativeness is therefore necessary: as Anderson (1988:268) suggests, non-nativeness could be treated as an emergent and negotiable factor in interaction. This view entails the assumption that non-native participants as well as native speakers are not only negotiating a task but also their mutual relations and identities in a social context.

In brief, contact situations between native and non-native speakers involve various asymmetries arising from the participants' unshared linguistic competence and sociocultural background. However, NNS interaction shares

certain fundamental features with more symmetrical instances of conversational language use between native speakers. Firstly, it comprises the social environment in which the (second) language is used and to some extent also acquired. It displays the participants' communicative competence in the context of a specific interaction. Secondly, it is context-dependent and therefore complex and variable. Learner performance must hence be seen in relation to relevant features of the situational context, such as the participants, topics, tasks and activities which create the social event. Finally, it is subject to the demands of a dynamic social encounter in which the participants' negotiation of contextual expectations constrain the organization and outcome of talk.

### 3.1.2 Central concepts

A comprehensive description of the type of discourse that learner interaction represents would require a broad multidisciplinary approach which is not within the scope of the present research. However, certain concepts which have proved central for the description and analysis of such discourse are relevant, and due to their often problematic character, deserve specific attention. The concepts of interlanguage, communicative competence, interaction, discourse, negotiation (of meaning), strategy and (communicative) goal are therefore briefly discussed below.

*Interlanguage* (below IL) has become established as the term which is used to refer to the underlying, dynamic and complex language system which a learner, through an active cognitive contribution, develops in the course of the process of second language acquisition and which is distinct from both the learner's source (L1) and target language (L2) (see Corder 1971, Nemser 1971 and Selinker 1972, 1992). As a result of recent developments in second language research (see e.g. Kasper 1981, Hatch 1984, Eisenstein 1989, Kasper and Blum-Kulka 1993a), interlanguage has increasingly come to be associated with not only a cognitive and linguistic system which a learner possesses, but a socially and culturally defined phenomenon which is displayed in, and shaped by, the learner's interaction with various speakers in different situational and cultural contexts. Interlanguage is thus not seen as a learner-specific, inherently deficient combination of source and target language forms, but as a dynamic, adaptable form of language and communicative style which has links with the linguistic and sociocultural processes of bilingualism, biculturalism (or interculturalism) and language variation and change (Loveday 1982, Davies 1989, Blum-Kulka and Sheffer 1993). This dynamic, social and context-dependent use of the term is adopted for the present purpose. As the focus of the present study is on conversational performance rather than a cognitively based underlying IL system, the term *intertalk* (Py 1986) can be used to refer to the situation-specific manifestation of a learner's IL performance.

One of the most problematic of the central concepts is *communicative competence*. In accordance with previous research (see e.g. Hymes 1972, 1979, 1992, Canale and Swain 1980, Chomsky 1980, Edmondson 1981, Thomas 1983, Fillmore 1984, Faerch and Kasper 1984, Kramsch 1986, Bachman 1990), communicative competence can be approached as an abstract theoretical

concept which covers a broad range of knowledge and abilities which native speakers of a language have (and non-native speakers attempt to achieve), which enable them to use language to achieve different communicative goals in a socially appropriate way in a particular context. It is generally conceived of as an integral component of overall language competence, which involves knowledge of structural and organizational features of the target language and ability to apply this knowledge in use of language for socially defined purposes. Communicative competence is thus a necessary complement to grammatical or structural competence and covers those elements of language competence which are primarily social and interactional in origin.

Communicative competence can be further broken down to a number of components to highlight different aspects of the types of knowledge and abilities involved. The following, somewhat overlapping, distinctions are among the most widely used: (i) *sociolinguistic* or *sociocultural competence* refers to elements specifically associated with the socioculturally appropriate use of language (Canale and Swain 1980, Cohen and Olshtain 1981, Wolfson 1989a); (ii) *social* or *conversational competence* is associated with the ability to put one's knowledge of conversational rules and organization to use (Edmondson 1981); (iii) *strategic* competence covers the mastery of communication strategies, i.e. the ability to solve communicative problems (Canale and Swain 1980), or, can be understood more broadly as the "ability to select effective means of performing particular communicative acts" (Yule and Tarone 1990:3); and (iv) *pragmatic competence* refers to the ability to use language effectively for specific purposes, for example, to express different functions, and to produce, understand and make judgments of the effects of utterances in context (Chomsky 1980, Thomas 1983, Kasper 1989a, 1989b, Bachman 1990, Bialystok 1993). It can be argued that the last category - pragmatic competence - covers all the components of communicative competence mentioned above: situated use of language requires that the speakers draw on their structural, conversational and sociocultural knowledge and make use of their social and strategic competence to be able to participate in the process of negotiating meaning in context-sensitive ways.

A comprehensive framework for defining the pragmatic component of communicative competence is proposed by Faerch and Kasper (1984). They see pragmatic competence in terms of *declarative* and *procedural* knowledge: 'knowledge that' and 'knowledge how'. Declarative knowledge is conscious and static, comprising, for example, the speaker's knowledge of the rules of a language not related to any specific communicative goals. Procedural knowledge is unconscious, process-oriented and dynamic, and covers the ability to select and combine parts of declarative knowledge "for the purpose of reaching specific communicative goals, observing constraints imposed by language processing in real time" (Faerch and Kasper 1984:215)<sup>2</sup>. Declarative

<sup>2</sup> It has been suggested that the whole interlanguage system, or IL competence, should be viewed in terms of this basic distinction. Bialystok and Sharwood-Smith (1985) and Sharwood-Smith (1989) propose that IL should be analysed within a framework of *knowledge systems* and *control mechanisms* used to manipulate that knowledge in real time. Bialystok (see e.g. 1993) has used the terms *explicit vs. implicit knowledge* and *controlled vs. automatic processing*.

knowledge is seen to subsume many of the elements of communicative competence referred to above: linguistic knowledge, speech act knowledge, discourse knowledge, sociocultural knowledge, context knowledge and knowledge of the world. According to Faerch and Kasper, elements of this knowledge are combined in *pragmatic procedures* in different phases of speech production: in the initial stages when the speaker formulates his goals and analyzes the context, at a subsequent phase when the speaker converts the goal into linguistic form through verbal planning, and throughout the interaction as the speaker monitors the feedback of his interlocutor (other-monitoring) and in this way compares the outcomes of his actions with his intentions.

Since the focus of the present study is on the way in which NS and NNS participants in a conversational encounter deal with interactionally demanding activities in different phases of discourse, it is the procedural aspects of pragmatic competence that are of primary interest here. Some aspects of procedural knowledge are observable in interaction directly or indirectly through the study of *discourse regulation*, i.e. procedures which serve to establish, maintain, regulate and terminate discourse (Kasper 1989a:189). Since these procedures manifest themselves in interactive performance, they can be studied through a detailed analysis of interactive data. The specific focus of the present study is on the *interactive achievement* of procedural competence (see Meyer 1990:196,209-210). Rather than examining selected features of discourse regulation, the aim is to examine and describe the negotiation of discourse in actual contexts of talk. In brief, the study thus seeks to examine the competencies that the participants use and rely on in participating in interaction and to describe the ways in which forms of interlanguage are used meaningfully by learners in interactive contexts (cf. Atkinson and Heritage 1984:1, Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991:66)

The other central concepts referred to in the beginning of this section will be examined in some detail in the sections below, and hence a brief preliminary definition will suffice at this point. *Interaction* can be defined in terms of the reciprocal participation in a communicative event and the collaborative construction of discourse which constitutes such an event (see e.g. Riley 1985:13). The related concept of *discourse*, then, refers to the use of language (speech, text, conversation) in a communicative event. In current discourse study the term has acquired a more social reading: it is used to refer to the interactively produced, and therefore by definition dynamic and contextualized, use of language in a specific social context, i.e. *discursive* and *social practice* (e.g. Fairclough 1992). Interaction and the production of discourse, at least in a conversational context, always involves *negotiation* of meaning. The expression of subjective (personal) meaning and the negotiation of intersubjective (interpersonal) meaning requires some degree of adjustment of one's speech and interpretation to the demands of the context and to the interlocutor(s) (Riley 1985, Kramsch 1986, Sajavaara 1988).

## 3.2 Negotiation of meaning

### 3.2.1 Interactional modifications

While the early study of language learners' spoken interaction was mainly interested in the way learners displayed their grammatical competence in a conversational context, later research has focused on the nature of conversational interaction between learners and native speakers as a specific context where language acquisition takes place (see Wesche 1994 for review). Since Hatch's (1978:404) observation that conversations in which second language learners are engaged are likely to have an important role in shaping their language development, NNS interaction has been studied extensively from the point of view of its special characteristics which might facilitate language learning.

The 'input and interaction' tradition (see e.g. Long 1983a, 1983b, Long and Sato 1984, Gass and Madden 1985, Day 1986) in second language acquisition research builds on the assumption that NNS conversations represent a specific *modified* form of interaction, and that the special interactional characteristics of such conversations serve as an important source of second language acquisition in providing *comprehensible input* to the learner (see also Krashen 1985, 1992). In accordance with this hypothesis, a large number of studies have sought to identify the ways in which NNS interaction differs from interaction between native speakers and to examine the specific types of interactional modifications which might serve as input for language learning. A central focus of this research has been on identifying the procedures for avoiding or repairing 'trouble' or communication breakdown typical of NNS interaction (see e.g. Scarcella and Higa 1981, Long 1983a, 1983b, Varonis and Gass 1985a, 1985b, Gass and Varonis 1989, 1991). Specific attention has been paid to the interactional resources which the native speakers make use of in their attempt to facilitate mutual understanding in interaction with non-native speakers. It has been claimed that such linguistic and interactional modifications are required for successful language learning (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991).

Long (1983b) distinguishes three kinds of interactional procedures used by native speakers for avoiding communicative problems and increasing understanding: *strategies*, which serve to avoid conversational trouble; *tactics for discourse repair*, which are used to negotiate actual problems when they occur; and *strategies and tactics*, which serve both functions. Strategies involve prior planning and may govern the way entire conversations are conducted, e.g. by constraining the selection and treatment of topics. Examples of such strategies are selection of salient topics, treating topics briefly, making new topics salient and using comprehension checks. Tactics refer to "spontaneous solutions to immediate, short-term problems" (Long 1983b:132), and affect the ways in which topics are talked about. Thus, native speakers who are 'good input givers' are likely to accept unintentional topic switches, request clarification when they do not understand a NNS's turn, confirm their comprehension when

they do understand and tolerate ambiguity. Interactional modifications which can be seen as both avoiding and repairing trouble (strategies and tactics) include the use of slow pace of speech, stressing and pausing before key words, repetition of one's own and the other speaker's utterances, and decomposition of topic-comment constructions (i.e. breaking utterances into parts).

While the early interactionist studies focused more or less exclusively on native speakers' linguistic modifications and specific features of foreigner talk discourse, more recent research emphasizes the reciprocal negotiation of meaning which is reflected in adjustments to the interactional structure of NNS conversations. Varonis and Gass (1985a) propose a model for describing such negotiation. The model is based on identifying and describing the structure of conversational episodes which interrupt the main flow of talk for the purpose of negotiating a communicative problem. Following Krashen's (1985) hypotheses about comprehensible input, research into negotiation of meaning assumes a relationship between the amount of negotiation which occurs in learner interaction and interlanguage development: conversations where meanings are successfully negotiated provide good quality input and facilitate acquisition. Hence, participation in interactions in which unshared meanings are negotiated is seen as beneficial from the point of view of acquisition (see e.g. Long 1983b:131, 138, Varonis and Gass 1985a:87). Varonis and Gass (1985a:73) suggest that the main function of such negotiation is to allow the less competent participant to keep 'equal footing' in the conversation, in other words, to fully participate in the conversation by showing "ability to respond appropriately to another interlocutor's last utterance - in other words to take a turn when it becomes available with full understanding of the preceding turn and its place in the discourse". This is achieved through negotiating non-understanding and by means of routines which contribute to sustaining conversation.

The research on interactional modifications has contributed to a view of NS-NNS interaction as inherently asymmetric or unequal in terms of power. In the early research native speakers were presented as 'the knowers' who lead the negotiation and interaction in general, and serve as 'good input givers' to non-natives by facilitating their comprehension and helping them to take part in the conversation (see e.g. Hatch 1978). This view of NS-NNS interaction has proved to be an oversimplification. It has been shown that when the roles related to expertise and knowledge of topic or task are reversed, it is often the non-natives who dominate the interaction (see e.g. Anderson 1988, Woken and Swales 1989, Zuengler 1989, 1993, Zuengler and Bent 1991).

Recent research has established that NS-NNS conversation and the interactional modifications made by the participants in such contexts are highly variable and complex: contextual features as well as the broader social environment which the data represent have an effect on the amount and type of modifications which occur. Thus negotiation of meaning is shaped by the type of activity engaged in, the point or phase of conversation at which a particular activity occurs (Ehrlich, Avery and Yorio 1989), and contextual variables relating to the participants (e.g. proficiency, age, gender) and their relationship (e.g. social distance) (see Aston 1986, Wesche 1994:232-233).

The extent to which interactional modifications actually increase comprehension or communicative efficiency is not clear. There is evidence which suggests that overt indications of 'understanding' are often conversational strategies of 'feigning understanding' when no actual understanding occurs (Aston 1986:133, Ehrlich, Avery and Yorio 1989:398-399). A speaker may, for example, pretend to understand something in order to avoid the face-threatening implications of admitting lack of understanding. Further, many of the interactional phenomena listed as features of negotiation can also have other functions. They may, for example, operate as conversational continuants and serve as strategies for sustaining interaction. Such strategies are frequent in ordinary conversations between native speakers. This problem is acknowledged by Varonis and Gass (1985a:82), who note that many interactional features are ambiguous in this respect and cannot be dealt with in their model of the negotiation of meaning.

The link between interactional modifications, comprehensibility of discourse and language acquisition is thus far from straightforward. Discourse comprehension and the achievement of mutual understanding have proved to involve complicated interactional phenomena which are not always explicitly signalled in interaction (see e.g. Blum-Kulka and Weizman 1988, Gass and Varonis 1989, Nikko 1990, House 1993, Bremer et al. 1993). Understanding thus cannot be approached from the narrow point of view of the linguistic encoding and decoding a message. Firstly, ambiguity and indeterminacy are normal features of utterances in their interactional context (see e.g. Thomas 1984, 1985, 1990, Weizman 1989, 1993). Secondly, misunderstandings and communicative problems clearly occur in both NS and NNS interaction, and may remain unnegotiated or even unnoticed in interaction (Varonis and Gass 1985b, Blum-Kulka and Weizman 1988). Further, as Blum-Kulka and Weizman (1988) have shown, the negotiation of an acknowledged misunderstanding does not always guarantee that the problem of understanding is resolved.

It is also unclear whether and to what extent modified interaction actually leads to successful acquisition. While some evidence has been found for the use of discourse strategies to compensate for lack of control over syntactic or lexical forms (see e.g. Long and Sato 1984), longitudinal studies of acquisition do not fully support the original hypothesis. In an investigation of the learning of past-time reference by two Vietnamese children, Sato (1986:42), for example, comes to the conclusion that interactional, or 'discourse-pragmatic', features facilitate the learner's participation in conversation, but do not necessarily lead to the acquisition of particular linguistic features. Similar findings have been reported by others (see e.g. Schmidt and Frota 1986). The outcome of these studies is that interactional procedures may facilitate the learning of some linguistic features, but not others. While there is undoubtedly a connection between understanding linguistic input and learning (see Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991:139-145), the (apparent) comprehensibility of input is not sufficient for acquisition. The main weakness of the negotiated input hypothesis is that it ignores the social dimension of interaction. As recent studies of pragmatic aspects of language learning (see e.g. Kasper and Blum-Kulka 1993a) and work in language socialization (see e.g. Schieffelin and Ochs



1986) have demonstrated, language acquisition is interlinked with processes of acquiring social and cultural meanings as well as learning to adapt to new social and cultural environments. The complex process of language learning and socialization and the role of second language interaction in this process thus remains an important concern in second language research.

The study of modified interaction has also been subject to criticism on methodological grounds (see e.g. Gass et al. 1989). The choice of subjects and experimental design of the studies have been criticized for producing particular types of interaction in which the learner is mostly in a subordinate role (Woken and Swales 1989). It has also been claimed that the experimental design and quantitative approach to analysis is unsuitable for the study of conversational data (Wagner 1994): complex conversational phenomena, such as establishing shared meaning, cannot easily be reduced to a number of pre-determined categories of microphenomena, and studied in strictly quantitative terms. Such an approach may not only misrepresent the actual negotiation which goes on in interaction by restricting attention to selected items (e.g. clarification requests, repetitions, etc.) but also give a biased view of conversational interaction by ignoring the interactive context in which such phenomena occur. It is noteworthy that some studies of naturally occurring interactions have found very little evidence for negotiation of meaning of the type identified in input studies (see e.g. Fiksdal 1990). While this may be due to contextual factors (e.g. relatively high proficiency of learners) or the type of activity, it is clear that in natural contexts negotiation of meaning is more complex because it requires more attention to the social context.

In order to clarify the significance of interaction to language acquisition, it is thus necessary to adopt a broader view of the resources which are drawn upon by native and non-native speakers in conversation. The interactional modifications of native speakers must be related, firstly, to learners' means of negotiating unshared meaning, and secondly, to more socially oriented views of the negotiation involved. Of particular importance from the point of view of this study is the possibility to establish connections between negotiated input and the concept of face and face-work in interaction.

As was already noted above, the need to arrive at sufficient shared understanding is related to the need to protect face. Obvious non-understanding or misunderstanding is face-threatening to both participants, and the avoidance and repair of such trouble through various strategies may thus be necessary from the point of view of interpersonal relations. From this point of view, interactional modifications which facilitate understanding can be seen as contributing to the smooth running of interaction. On the other hand, concern for face may also explain why explicit negotiation for meaning is absent in some interactions. Admitting interactional trouble through explicit appeals for help or attempts to offer interactional assistance can also be face-threatening in calling attention to the asymmetries of the interaction: they make explicit the unshared knowledge and linguistic competence which often constrain NNS interaction. In such cases other types of strategies for managing interaction and maintaining rapport may prove more successful. Indeed, in

some cases strategies which increase the ambiguity and indeterminacy of the message may be favoured because of their face-protective dimensions.

### 3.2.2 Communication strategies

The learner's point of view in the negotiation of unshared meaning in NNS discourse has been dealt with in the literature on interlanguage communication strategies which learners typically use in order to compensate for shortcomings in their control of the target language. Although different definitions and classifications of strategies of communication exist (see e.g. Tarone 1981, 1983, Faerch and Kasper 1983a, Paribakht 1985, Kellerman 1991), these strategies generally refer to a number of procedures which allow learners to communicate specific meanings when they do not have access to target language expressions appropriate to the purpose.

While the study of interactional modifications and IL communication strategies share an interest in the processes of establishing shared meaning in learner interaction, they are based on fundamentally different aims and assumptions. Input researchers investigate the facilitative role of specific interactional procedures in the negotiation of comprehensible input and the eventual benefit of such negotiation for language learning. IL communication strategies, however, are generally explicitly distinguished from learning strategies, and examined as procedures which simply facilitate communication by enabling learners to achieve problematic goals (see Selinker 1972, Corder 1983, Tarone 1981). The link to language acquisition has mostly been viewed as indirect, the focus being more on the study of learner talk as a reflection of systematic aspects of interlanguage development (see Faerch and Kasper 1983b, Yule and Tarone 1991).<sup>3</sup>

Two main approaches in the systematic study of communication strategies can be identified: a *learner-focused* ('intra-organism') point of view, which is psycholinguistic and cognitive in orientation, and an *interaction-focused* ('inter-organism'), pragmatic or sociolinguistic point of view (Aston 1993:224). In the former, communication strategies generally refer to learners' strategies or plans for solving communicative problems (Faerch and Kasper 1983b:16). A central concern of empirical work in this area has been the identification and classification of learners' solutions to problems in referential communication. Two general types of strategies are often distinguished: *achievement strategies*, which expand the learner's existing resources by, for example, elaborating alternative expressions, and reduction or *avoidance strategies*, which serve to adjust the message or avoid the problematic function or content to be expressed (see e.g. Corder 1983, Tarone et al. 1983, cf. also Faerch and Kasper 1983b, 1986). Recent learner-focused research has studied communication strategies with reference to the psycholinguistic and cognitive constraints which give rise to the various problem-solving strategies observed in referential communication (see e.g. Bialystok 1990, 1991, 1993).

<sup>3</sup> Some attempts have, however, been made to link strategies of communication and language use and learning under the concept of strategic competence (see Paribakht 1985, Bachman 1990).

The other main approach represents an interaction-focused 'inter-organism' perspective, in which communication strategies are seen as mutual attempts to agree on a meaning in the process of seeking common ground (Tarone 1983, Tarone and Yule 1987, Yule and Tarone 1990, 1991). Rather than examining individual problem-solving strategies, communicative strategies are viewed in terms of 'cooperative strategies' in an interactive context. The interactive approach to communication strategies has an obvious connection with the study of negotiated input. Both are concerned with the procedures through which shared meaning is pursued and the types of moves which advance the collaborative process of negotiation for meaning. Attempts have been made to integrate the two approaches. Yule and Tarone (1990, 1991), for example, argue for a negotiation framework, which is based on the identification of key moves of both participants in the process of negotiating communicative problems and seeking common ground. Suni (1991) examines learner-initiated and native speaker-initiated meaning negotiations empirically in a series of conversations between a Finnish native speaker and a Vietnamese learner of Finnish.

Strategies of communication are clearly not specific to interlanguage communication. Native speakers use similar strategies in order to compensate for possible problems in understanding and to communicate 'effectively' with each other. Particularly in contexts where the linguistic resources of native speakers are asymmetrical (e.g. experts and novices, therapists and patients), compensatory communication strategies play an important role (Kellerman 1991, Leiwo 1994). Comparisons between native and non-native use of communication strategies in referential communication have also revealed surprisingly few differences (see e.g. Bongaerts and Poulisse 1989). A distinction has been proposed between production strategies, i.e. native speakers' attempts at using their linguistic and cultural knowledge in an efficient way, and interlanguage-specific communication strategies, which refer to non-proficient non-native speakers' production strategies, i.e. attempts to negotiate unshared meaning (Ciliberti 1988:44). It is not clear, however, to what extent the two types of strategies are distinct, and to what extent they overlap in both native and non-native speaker usage. Both native and non-native speakers need access to strategies for putting their linguistic and cultural knowledge into efficient use as well as strategies for negotiating unshared meanings.

Recent research has broadened the concept of communication strategies from referential communication and problems of unshared linguistic meaning to other aspects of negotiated interaction. Communication strategies, like the NS-initiated interactional modifications (see 3.2.1. above), can be seen to overlap with strategies of politeness and face-work and the overall management of conversational interaction. The negotiation of ambiguity and indeterminacy, for example, may be seen to arise from both the need to establish shared meanings and the need to pay attention to interpersonal considerations such as face. Two attempts have recently been made to explore possible connections between communication strategies and strategies of face-work. Weizman's (1993) study of hints as a request strategy in interlanguage

use addresses the question whether the frequent use of hints by learners can be explained by an IL-specific tendency to exploit hints as a communication strategy. Although her findings do not support the hypothesis, Weizman's work points to a need to explore the relationship further. There is a need, for example, to examine the possibility of two conflicting tendencies in IL use, a tendency for explicitness (see e.g. Kasper 1981, 1989a) and a tendency for risk avoidance through indirectness, e.g. hints (Weizman 1993:134). While Weizman's work is based on an utterance-level analysis of hints, the study of indirectness as a discourse strategy in interactive data can shed more light on these issues.

Another attempt to seek connections between communication strategies and face-oriented behaviour is Aston's (1993) study of comity (positive politeness) as an interactional resource in interlanguage conversation. Aston (1993:224) argues that the interactive perspective on communication strategies should be extended beyond strategies of negotiation of meaning to include also *strategies of recipient design*, "which aim to alleviate the hearer's eventual problems of understanding" and *preparatory strategies* "designed to influence assumptions and expectations preemptively". Examples of strategies of recipient design in NNS interaction, according to Aston (1993:225), are the use of repetition, explanation, explication, and avoidance of reference to unshared culture-specific knowledge. Preparatory strategies, on the other hand, include overt and covert disclaimers of competence, i.e. strategies which make explicit the unshared resources of the interactive partners, thus activating a "NNS set of expectations" (Anderson 1988, Aston 1993:225).

Aston (1993) thus places the study of communication strategies into a broader social context by adding a situational and sociocultural dimension to negotiation of meaning. This extends the somewhat decontextualized study of negotiated input and communication strategies towards an analysis of NNS interaction as *discourse* in its proper sense, as negotiated linguistic and social activity in context. It is not clear, however, how useful the two types of communication strategies are in the description of actual interaction. It may be difficult to distinguish between strategies which, on the one hand, alleviate problems of understanding and, on the other hand, influence assumptions and expectations in actual data. The categories are clearly overlapping: both, for example, have a preparatory element, in that they refer to strategies which are designed to take into account the specific constraints operating in NNS discourse. Thus, it seems that the single concept of *recipient design* covers both types of strategies, if it is understood in its original sense as the specific interactional resources through which conversationalists display orientation to each other in the structuring of conversational activities (Sacks et al. 1974, Jefferson 1988). It is noteworthy that in this sense the concept can also be seen to cover strategies of politeness and face-work.

In brief, the concept of communication strategy is relevant for the present study inasmuch as it can be seen to have connections with other means of managing interactional problems, such as strategies oriented to the building and maintenance of interaction and those oriented to face and interpersonal relations. In this context, communicative strategies must be seen from an

interactional, inter-organism perspective as reciprocal strategies which facilitate the management of discursal activities in their interactional context. Such strategies cover not only procedures for negotiating problems in referential language use, but also strategies for solving a range of other interactional problems, such as problems arising from unshared pragmatic and sociocultural knowledge or unequal access to features of the context.

### 3.3 The sociocultural context of meaning

The problem of negotiating shared understanding has also been addressed in research into inter-ethnic or intercultural conversation. A substantial body of research in interactional sociolinguistics deals with miscommunication and strategies for dealing with problems of communication. Recent research in interlanguage pragmatics and work on second language conversation has contributed to this area of enquiry by relating the study of sociocultural aspects of language use to interlanguage research. This research is relevant to the present study in two respects: firstly, it addresses a broad range of interactional phenomena which may vary cross-culturally and describes their role in the discourse context, and secondly, it examines the communicative significance of possibly culture-specific or NNS-specific features of discourse.

#### 3.3.1 Culture-specific interactional style

The main interest in interactional sociolinguistics has been on identifying instances of problematic communication arising from culture-specific features of discourse. Instances of intercultural communication are examined through a detailed microanalysis of data on various levels of language use, such as syntactic, lexical, prosodic, nonverbal and organizational aspects of discourse management, in order to identify subtle differences of interpretation which may lead to uncomfortable moments or communicative breakdown. Gumperz (1982, 1992) presents a framework which seeks to describe the interpretive norms and procedures which interactants use to make sense of the encounter. He aims to uncover how (unshared) sociocultural knowledge operates in the interaction process through the analysis of what he calls *contextualization cues*. These cues are signalling mechanisms at different levels of language use, ranging from prosody, lexis, and syntactic structures to speech acts and discourse organization, through which the speakers negotiate meanings and interpretations. Contextualization cues serve as surface indicators of the discourse 'frames' within which the interactants are operating (Gumperz 1982:5, 35-37, 131ff., see also Tannen 1984a:24, Ochs 1986:3). By identifying and describing seemingly insignificant differences in such contextualizing conventions, Gumperz shows that speakers in an interethnic encounter may rely on different interpretive procedures and strategies for making sense of the activity in which they are participating, and thus experience severe problems in understanding each other.

Research in interactional sociolinguistics has demonstrated that different constellations of contextualization cues form different communicative or interactional styles, which distinguish between different speakers or groups of speakers. Systematic differences in interactional style have been shown to cause difficulties in cross-cultural communication and lead to negative stereotypes and prejudice (see e.g. Basso 1979, Tannen 1981, 1984a, 1984b, Scollon and Scollon 1981, 1991, 1994, Erickson and Schultz 1982, Thomas 1983, Tannen and Saville-Troike 1985, Gumperz and Roberts 1991). Shared style, on the other hand, plays a crucial role in the creation of solidarity and rapport in interpersonal relationships (Scollon and Scollon 1981, Tannen 1984, Fiksdal 1990). Current evidence further suggests that differences of interactional style do not necessarily lead to communicative problems: styles may be complementary, so that a mutually satisfactory framework for the interaction can be established (Byrnes 1986), or differences in style may be neutralized by other aspects of the interactive context, such as the activity engaged in or other aspects of shared background (Erickson and Schultz 1982).

Work in interactional sociolinguistics has thus also drawn attention to the dynamic nature of interaction: the participants are engaged in a process of negotiation where sociocultural knowledge has to be dealt with step by step in the course of the interaction, and interpretations of this knowledge have to be reciprocally checked and, ideally, agreed upon as the interaction unfolds. A successful interaction requires both participants to tune into each other's ways of speaking by signalling agreement or disagreement with the style of response and listenership cues that they employ. In this way the participants establish a conversational rhythm, which signals that they have successfully negotiated a frame of interpretation for the speech activity. Communicative trouble, on the other hand is signalled by breaks in the rhythm or mismatches between content and cues which suggest that something has gone wrong and has to be dealt with (Erickson and Schultz 1982, Fiksdal 1990).

While rich evidence is available of miscommunication resulting from unshared communicative style, research has also highlighted the need to examine the interactional resources which are drawn upon when problems are successfully negotiated and overcome. Some studies have identified such strategies in attempts to establish and maintain common ground, for example through locating shared membership (co-membership) in relation to some aspect of the communicative context (see e.g. Erickson and Schultz 1982, Shea 1993) or building solidarity through shared experience (Fiksdal 1990). These strategies, then, may contribute to a successful negotiation of a potentially problematic situation by neutralizing differences which might otherwise lead to problems. Such strategies are clearly parallel to politeness behaviour: firstly, they can be seen to operate on the macro-level of interaction as strategies of conflict avoidance and/or repair; secondly, they seem to be motivated by a concern for interpersonal relations; and, thirdly, they manifest themselves linguistically in similar ways (e.g. through seeking common ground, strategies of solidarity, such as displays of agreement and laughter, etc.).

In brief, the main achievement of work in interactional sociolinguistics has been the systematic attention to the ways in which sociocultural aspects of

meaning are dynamically negotiated in intercultural communication and the problems which subtle differences in culturally specific signalling mechanisms and inferencing procedures may cause in inter-ethnic encounters. The main shortcoming of this approach is its limited emphasis on the situated character of interaction: interpretation tends to be viewed in terms of culture-specific conventions rather than situated participation in different discursive activities (Shea 1994). As a result, the contextualization framework runs the risk of overemphasizing the problematic nature of cultural differences and overlooking cases where differences in discourse conventions are an acceptable feature of discourse. The negotiation of ethnic and/or sociocultural identities is not straightforward; identities may be relevant to different degrees in different contexts and their significance may vary in relation to a range of complex situational, interactional and interpersonal dimensions of the situation.

### 3.3.2 Pragmatic negotiation of meaning

The sociocultural aspects of second language discourse and their role in the interactional dynamics of a particular event have also been examined from a pragmatic point of view. The central assumption of a pragmatic approach to negotiation of meaning is that any utterance carries not only linguistic and referential but also social meaning. In a social or pragmatic approach to second language interaction, pragmatic notions of discourse organization and coherence combine with the ethnographic and ethnomethodological concepts of *intersubjectivity* and the social *identity* of the speakers (see e.g. Firth 1990, Shea 1993, 1994, Day 1994). The emphasis is on the situated construction of a discursive activity rather than socioculturally determined processes of interaction and interpretation. Such an approach acknowledges the incompleteness of understanding: intersubjectivity refers to a shared interpretation of a social activity or event for the practical purposes of the interaction rather than full understanding of mutual intentions or a shared world view (Riley 1985, Rommetweit 1985, 1987, Shea 1994). From this perspective second language discourse is approached as a holistic process of negotiation in which the participants not only convey and receive messages but also negotiate their sociocultural identities.

The focus of pragmatic descriptions of negotiated interaction is on the various interactive means through which participants identify themselves in relation to each other and the activity in progress. Such procedures are crucial for the negotiation of intersubjectivity (Shea 1993:29). Shea (1993) demonstrates how an intercultural conversation between native speakers of American English and a Japanese advanced non-native speaker is constructed through a joint process of negotiation which serves to create a 'locally constructed sociocultural context' for the purposes of the interaction. He analyses features of discourse which reflect the participants' assumptions of their own and each others' social and/or cultural membership. He further shows how the strategies used by the participants reflect clearly different views of social membership, and how these different frames are interlinked with patterns of participation in the interaction.

In Shea's (1993) data the American participants' discourse is characterized by strategies which serve to create solidarity and intimacy, whereas the Japanese participant exhibits greater distance by using strategies of deference and indirectness. However, the culture-specific patterns and frames of reference are dynamic: they are not salient throughout the interaction and they shift over time. These culture-specific frames are linked to the construction of a participation framework, i.e. the patterns with which conversational participation and turn-distribution are regulated. At some stages of the sample conversation the patterns of solidarity and intimacy typical of the American interactants inhibits the Japanese speaker from fully participating in the conversation, thus reflecting the native speakers' 'ethnolinguistic' dominance. At other times, a shared negotiated context appears to facilitate equal participation and contribute to intersubjectivity. Thus, the emergent context of the interaction itself can be seen to modify the culture-specific frames of interpretation (Shea 1993:41).

Shea (1994) develops the analysis of sociocultural differences and the situated construction of a participation framework further, and shows that participation patterns are not a reflection of the ethnic and/or cultural identities of the speakers, but complex, locally constructed achievements of the participants in specific situational contexts. The quality of participation, then, determines, for example, what a non-native speaker can say, to whom and when, and how his/her contributions are interpreted. Shea (1994) analyses instances of NS-NNS conversation in terms of the degrees of intersubjectivity and interactional control which they reflect, in other words the extent to which the participants are able to adopt a joint perspective on what is talked about and the extent to which the conversations are characterized by equal (or symmetric), or unequal (asymmetric) rights to participate. He finds four different patterns in his data: (i) conversations where no shared perspective is established and the production of talk is unequally distributed; (ii) conversations with divergent perspectives but equal control over discourse production; (iii) conversations with shared perspective but asymmetric participation patterns; and (iv) conversations in which a shared perspective is established and the patterns of interactional control are balanced (Shea 1993:364). Shea (1994:377-380) also links these findings to the way in which the non-native speaker is perceived in the interaction: he notes that in conversations which are characterized by lack of shared perspective and asymmetric patterns of participation, the NNS is marginalised and perceived as inappropriate and lacking in fluency, whereas in more balanced interactions the NNS is able to display his/her fluency and to adopt an equal role in the construction of discourse.

In brief, the study of NNS interaction in interactional sociolinguistics and pragmatics has extended the concept of negotiation of meaning to cover the sociocultural contexts of meaning. It has broadened the focus of study from subjective problems of conveying or interpreting referential messages to strategies of discourse with which intersubjective understanding is achieved. The current pragmatic orientation in this work can be seen as a reflection of the recent shift in the study of NNS interaction towards a more social and



'ecological' perspective (Wesche 1994:219, see also Pennycook 1994). It emphasizes, firstly, the study of longer stretches of interaction and discursive activity and, secondly, the analysis of the discursive and sociocultural aspects of context as complex interrelated phenomena which are interactively negotiated, rather than predetermined by external social or cultural constraints on discourse.

### 3.4 Discourse organization

While the line of research investigating negotiation of meaning in NNS interaction is concerned with problems of understanding and strategies for facilitating understanding, studies concerned with the organization of interlanguage discourse have attempted to, firstly, identify the ways in which NNS discourse reflects the learners' interlanguage and, secondly, describe how the organization of interaction involving language learners differs from NS discourse. Using methods derived from conversation and discourse analysis, studies in this tradition pay systematic attention to different aspects of discourse regulation and conversational structure in the interlanguage context. Thus, observations have been made of the distribution and sequencing of conversational turns, strategies of repair and aspects of overall organization.

#### 3.4.1 Turn-taking

Aspects of discourse regulation which are associated with the distribution of conversational turns in ongoing discourse are fundamental for conversational organization, because they regulate the patterns of *participation*. The way in which the turn-taking system operates reflects the participants' ability (and/or willingness) to listen to each other, attend to, and follow what is going on and take active part in the activity in progress. Patterns of conversational participation and the ways in which it is reflected in turn-taking have been described from two alternative perspectives in studies of non-native interaction: some studies adopt a quantitative perspective whereas others take a qualitative approach.

The quantitative approach is closely related to the line of study which views NNS talk as modified interaction (see 3.1.1 above), and examines selected aspects of turn-distribution as constraints on the speakers' ability to actively participate in interaction. Thus, conversational participation is measured through a quantitative analysis of instances of interruptions, amount of talk (e.g. number and/or length of turns), minimal feedback items, linguistic signals for turn-taking, etc. (see e.g. Gass and Varonis 1986, Zuengler and Bent 1991). In contrast to this approach, some researchers have adopted an interactive, qualitative perspective on turn-taking, and examined the local accomplishment of turn-distribution along the lines first established by Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974) in their influential study of rules for turn-taking in NS interaction. Qualitative studies of patterns of turn-taking have mainly sought to identify the ways in which the distribution of turns in contexts

involving non-native speakers deviates from the norms established for NS interaction.

Studies representing the quantitative approach have established that contrary to some claims (e.g. Beebe and Giles 1984), there is no overt tendency for native speakers to control and dominate all interaction with non-native speakers. Rather, conversational dominance and control are dependent on a variety of contextual factors, most importantly the conversational topic or activity which the speakers engage in (Anderson 1988, Woken and Swales 1989, Zuengler and Bent 1991, Zuengler 1993). It has been suggested that aspects of interpersonal dynamics, such as the extent to which the interaction is perceived as an intragroup encounter or an intergroup one, have an effect on patterns of participation (Zuengler 1993). Thus, when linguistic and sociocultural differences between the participants become salient in interaction, the native speaker may act on the assumption of 'ethnolinguistic superiority' and take the dominant role. The dominance of the NS participant, then, may be reflected in the tendency to control turn-taking (e.g. more interruptions, more speech in terms of number and length of turns, etc.).

A slightly different approach to turn-taking behaviour is seen in studies of contrastive discourse analysis which have sought to describe how turn-taking patterns reflect IL-specific features. Kasper (1981, 1989a) examined aspects of turn-taking in IL interaction through a detailed study of *gambits*, i.e. the linguistic means which mainly serve to regulate speaker and listener roles in on-going discourse. She identified four different turn-distributing functions which gambits may signal: (i) *uptaking*, i.e. reinforcing the current distribution of speakership through listenership cues; (ii) *turntaking*, or changing from a hearer's role to a speaker's role; (iii) *turnkeeping*, i.e. attempts to keep the floor; and (iv) *turngiving*, that is, yielding the turn to another participant. Through a quantitative analysis of the number and type of gambits in her data, Kasper (1989a:210-211) was able to demonstrate that there is a tendency for increased *uptaking* activity through listenership cues in IL interaction on the part of both native and non-native participants. This, according to Kasper (1989a:211), points to an interesting hypothesis concerning the communicative requirements of IL interaction: she argues that the finding reflects an increased tendency to signal understanding during the interlocutor's turns of speech. In comparing the types of gambits used by learners and native speakers, Kasper (1981, 1989a) found that although the same basic types were used, the learners' use was characterized by less variety and a different frequency and distribution of the types of gambit used. While some gambit types were overrepresented in the learner data, others were not used at all, or were used in different ways and in different, often inappropriate, contexts.

Some of the learner-specific features in the linguistic signalling of turntaking behaviour in Kasper's data were found to have bearing on the interpersonal dimension of language use, i.e. orientation to face. It was found that some 'norms' of interactional behaviour followed in native speaker interaction were not observed by learners. There was a learner-specific tendency, for example, not to preface 'non-cooperative moves' (or 'dispreferred' contributions), such as disagreement, with appropriate linguistic means

(Edmondson and House 1981:80, Kasper 1989a:213). This tendency was reflected in the inappropriate use of certain gambits, such as *well* and *yes*. Further, the types of gambits which did not occur in IL data to the same extent as in NS data were those associated with the interpersonal level of language use (Kasper 1989a:216, see also Faerch and Kasper 1982).

Gambits and other aspects of turn-taking behaviour in interaction between native and non-native speakers were also examined in the Finnish contrastive discourse analysis project (Kärkkäinen and Raudaskoski 1988, Nyyssönen 1990). With respect to the use of gambits, the findings largely supported the tendencies found in Kasper's (1981) work: the learners' use of gambits was characterized by lack of variety, unidiomatic usage, overuse of certain types (e.g. *well*) and underrepresentation of others (e.g. turn-keeping and turn-giving gambits) (Kärkkäinen and Raudaskoski 1988:116-117). Some attention was also paid to the way that problems in discourse regulation resulted in *asynchrony* in the overall tone of the conversation, thus reflecting problems in the speakers' ability to orient to each other in the course of the conversation. It was found that asynchrony was common, especially in conversations where the learner was noticeably less competent linguistically than the native speaker. These conversations were characterized by a slow, sometimes stumbling tempo, lengthy pauses, short responses and reluctance to take the floor when offered.

While the studies by Kasper (1981, 1989a) and the Oulu group examined turn-taking behaviour mainly through the speakers' use of gambits, i.e. the linguistic devices which signal a speaker's orientation to the current or next turn, recent work has paid more attention to the speakers' interactive management of turns through a range of verbal and nonverbal means. The approach in this line of study is mainly qualitative and based on a detailed microanalysis of the local organization of conversation. Fiksdal (1990), for example, adopts a time-based approach to turn-taking behaviour, and examines the rhythm and *tempo* of academic advising sessions between native speaker advisors and foreign students. The students included both native and non-native speakers. Interestingly, Fiksdal (1990) found surprisingly few differences between the turn-taking patterns displayed in NS-NS and NS-NNS discourse. Her findings indicated that (i) both NS-NS and NS-NNS discourse were characterized by a regular underlying tempo which generally remained unchanged even during disruptions in the turn-taking system (e.g. overlap, corrections, etc.) and that (ii) disturbances of tempo (arhythmia) occurred in both types of discourse. While the non-native speakers' proficiency level was not systematically controlled in Fiksdal's study, it is interesting that a regular tempo was found to be a recurrent feature even in interactions where the non-native speaker's proficiency was perceived as low, and that the participants strived to re-establish this regular beat if disturbances occurred (Fiksdal 1990:72).

Many recent studies of non-native interaction build on the conversation-analytic approach to turn-taking. Three approaches to the norms underlying turn-taking patterns can be identified in these studies. Some take the system of turn-taking described by Sacks and al. (1974) to represent a norm

which has general applicability and examine how turn-taking behaviour in NNS interaction deviates from this norm (e.g. Kalin 1994, 1995). Others assume that turn-taking patterns and norms differ in different languages and cultures and examine turn-taking from the point of view of cross-cultural variation and the effects of culture-specific conventions on interethnic conversation (e.g. Clyne, Ball and Neil 1991, Wieland 1991). The third approach examines the ways in which the participants in an interethnic, non-native interaction create their own locally constructed norm and manage to construct a mutually recognized, "orderly, if not elegant" pattern for conversational participation in spite of different cultural norms (Firth 1994).

In a study addressing the problem of negotiating understanding in interethnic interaction, Kalin (1994, 1995) examined the turn-taking system in interactions between native speakers of Swedish and Finnish immigrants, finding evidence for the deviant nature of turn-taking behaviour in NNS talk. Kalin (1994:45-47) demonstrates that both participants experience difficulties in interpreting each other's orientation to the current turn. Similarly, they cannot rely on the same resources for identifying turn boundaries as they would in a NS context. Instead of using syntactic and prosodic criteria for identifying turn boundaries, they seem to look for units of 'sufficient information' on the basis of which a contribution can be interpreted and responded to. Thus, 'rules' for structuring turns, the shape of turn-constructive units and the signalling of turn-boundaries through transition relevance places (TRPs), as they have been described by conversation analysts for NS conversations, do not seem to hold in NNS interaction. In spite of the 'deviance' of turn-taking behaviour observed in the data, Kalin (1994:177) notes that an orderly and systematic turn-taking system is observed by the speakers. Both native and non-native participants make interactive efforts to signal their interpretation of the other speaker's turns and use all available resources to maintain the flow of interaction. She relates this to a tendency for 'exaggerated politeness' in NNS interaction: substantial breaches and deviant behaviour are tolerated by the participants, particularly the native speakers, in order not to make the situation more uncomfortable and face-threatening.

While the principle of orderly exchange of conversational turns may have universal significance, cross-cultural research suggests that the norms and conventions for turn-distribution vary considerably across cultures, situations and social groups. Clyne et al. (1991) examine interactions between non-native speakers from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, and find evidence for communicative breakdown resulting from different turn-taking patterns. They identify problems in the speakers' ability to recognize the completion of turns and their ability to pick up a turn when offered. Different patterns for turn length are also observed, which lead to unequal participation: one participant may control most of the conversational 'floor time' and thus take a dominant role in the interaction. Wieland (1991) similarly presents evidence for communicative difficulties arising from cross-culturally varied patterns of turn-taking. Her study of French-American cross-cultural conversations indicates that the use of interruptions and overlap are interpreted in different ways by the two groups of participants.

Some studies of interaction between two non-native speakers have shown that while the participants may display both non-native-specific problems and different culture-related expectations concerning the patterns of turn-distribution, they can nevertheless engage in an orderly and meaningful exchange of conversational turns without much overt trouble. Firth (1990, 1994), for example, demonstrates how *lingua franca* (NNS-NNS) business negotiations can proceed relatively smoothly in spite of markedly non-native patterns of behaviour. He shows that the resources which the participants use in constructing a mutually satisfactory participation framework arise from the situated aspects of talk. Thus, the participants may build on features of the non-native context, e.g. each others' idiosyncracies, in negotiating a common frame of reference on the basis of which the distribution of conversational contributions is managed. However, Firth's results may, at least to some extent, be limited to the type of interaction his data represent. Firstly, when both speakers are non-native speakers, neither party has an obvious advantage in terms of linguistic resources. The participants thus proceed from a more or less equal footing in terms of negotiating the distribution of turns. Secondly, in the context of business talk, established patterns of interaction may have already emerged through repeated contact between partners.

To summarize, the quantitative approach to patterns of turn-distribution in the NNS context has yielded important results by establishing parameters along which conversational participation may vary and showing how the limited linguistic resources of non-native speakers are reflected in patterns of turn-taking. Quantitative studies do not, however, examine how the participation framework is established in NNS interaction. They do not capture the intricate local negotiation which each interruption or turn-change may involve in the actual conversational context. Qualitative micro-analytic studies of the management of turn-taking in NNS interaction have shown that while specific non-native tendencies can be identified, the participants make considerable interactive efforts in order to create an orderly framework for the distribution of turns. The findings suggest that neither the native speakers nor the non-native speakers can fully rely on their native norms of interaction, but that different, situation-specific resources need to be drawn upon to negotiate mutually satisfactory patterns for conversational participation.

### 3.4.2 Repair

Repair is a conversational resource which speakers employ when some problem occurs in the conversational contribution of one participant. It is closely related to turn-taking in that disturbances in turn-taking (e.g. lengthy overlap, interruptions, pausing, silence, hesitations) often signal some interactional trouble which needs attending to, and thus initiate repair. In this way repair may also be motivated by the need to protect face.

In NS interaction the concept of repair generally refers to all kinds of corrections or revisions of the current or previous utterance by the speaker or the hearer, including word-searches and hesitations (see Jefferson 1974, Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks 1977, Schegloff 1987, Norrick 1991). While

corrective sequences in interactions involving non-native speakers are generally placed within the broad framework of negotiating understanding (see 3.1.1. above), some attention has been paid to the role of repair in the organization of NNS conversation and to contextual factors influencing repair behaviour. The types of repair distinguished in these studies follow the terminology of conversation analysis: corrections of one's own speech (self-repair) are distinguished from corrections of another speaker's errors (other-repair), and self-initiated repair from other-initiated repair. In a NS-NNS context it is also relevant to examine whether it is the NS or the NNS who initiates repair (Faerch and Kasper 1982).

The key question addressed in studies of repair has been to what extent learner interaction differs from NS interaction in terms of the amount and type of corrective action engaged in. While the early studies indicated that a pattern of preference for self-repair is observable in learner interaction as well as interaction between native speakers (Schwartz 1980, Gaskill 1980, cf. Schegloff et al. 1977), recent research has focused more on other-corrections as an important feature of learner interaction and the types of negotiation which are associated with corrective behaviour (see e.g. Norrick 1991, Suni 1991, Kalin 1994). Specific patterns of repair have been found to arise as a result of problems of turn-taking in NNS interaction: the linguistic and processing difficulties of non-native participants lead to specific pausing patterns and structuring of turns, which trigger corrections and repair sequences. Silences and other disturbances in the regular distribution of turns, for example, have been found to be an indicator of trouble and lead to corrective sequences initiated by both learners and native speakers (Varonis and Gass 1985a, Suni 1991, Kalin 1994, 1995).

The type of corrective behaviour which occurs in NNS interaction has also been found to vary in relation to contextual features. Firstly, the non-native speakers' level of proficiency has been shown to influence repair behaviour in NNS interaction. In a study of interactions between a native speaker and various non-native speakers representing beginning, intermediate and advanced levels of proficiency, Faerch and Kasper (1982) found, for example, that a native speaker frequently corrected a beginning learner's speech, whereas repairs of advanced learners were not common. Similarly, a native speaker was found to do much more self-repair with beginners than with advanced learners. This seemed to indicate an attempt by the NS to match her contributions with the learner's abilities: when she inferred a problem of understanding on the non-native speaker's part, the native speaker self-repaired, i.e. modified her utterance, in order to make her meanings explicit to the NNS. Often this type of repair was triggered by a problematic or noncoherent reaction to a previous utterance by the non-native participant. Further, as the proficiency of the learners increased, they were more likely to self-repair rather than wait for the native speaker to do the repairing. Faerch and Kasper (1982) suggest that these tendencies can be explained in terms of the principles of face-saving. For instance, explicit NS-initiated other-correction in interactions between advanced learners and native speakers is avoided because it would be face-threatening: it would reflect unfavourably on the

learner's competence and would thus increase the asymmetry of the situation. Similarly, admitting nonunderstanding may be more face-threatening to an advanced learner than to a beginner, which would explain why advanced learners are reluctant to request repair from the native speaker.

Other contextual features which affect patterns of repair include the relationship between the speakers, the activity engaged in, and the overall purpose of the interaction. It has been found, for example, that a native co-participant will feel free to explicitly correct a non-native participant's errors when the interactants know each other well and/or when they can engage in corrective behaviour reciprocally (Day et al. 1984, Norrick 1991). In such contexts corrective feedback may indeed be seen as face-supportive. In other types of context more indirect 'off-record' repairs may occur: a native participant may produce a corrective utterance which is ambiguous in that it may be interpreted as an understanding check or a simple continuation of the topic rather than a repair strategy (Day et al. 1984). In some situations repairs are rare, and even obvious errors pass without comment, or even unnoticed, perhaps because the error is not significant in relation to the primary activity or task engaged in, or because explicit correction would be interpreted as face-threatening. Kalin (1994) suggests that a tendency of native speakers of Swedish to avoid explicitly repairing non-natives' erroneous or problematic utterances can be explained by a concern for face in contexts where the social need to maintain interaction is primary. Firth (1994) reports a noticeable lack of explicit repair in lingua franca business negotiations in English. He suggests that in the lingua franca context the participants follow a 'let-it-pass' principle and accept unknown words and problematic language or grammar as a normal feature of interaction. Both these studies seem to indicate that the purpose of the interaction and the situation at hand shape repair behaviour.

A further contextual factor which influences the occurrence and organization of corrective behaviour in NNS interaction is the type of error or trouble-source. Most of the literature on repairs and corrections deals with errors at the phonological, lexical, and syntactic levels of language use. Errors at the pragmatic level, however, have been found to be much more problematic in interaction because they can remain latent and yet influence the interactants' perceptions of the successfulness of the interaction and the personality of the co-interactant (Thomas 1983, Kreuz and Roberts 1993). While a range of potential and actual problems arising from unshared pragmatic competence and interactional styles has been documented in research, little attention has been paid to corrective behaviour arising from pragmatic errors in NNS interaction. Interestingly, however, in an experimental study with native speakers, Kreuz and Roberts (1993) found that the responsibility of repair for pragmatically problematic utterances lies with the listener rather than the speaker: when pragmatic errors occurred in the sample conversations used, both the speaker who produced the error and the listener were rated negatively by informants. Kreuz and Roberts (1993:249) concluded that the collaborative process of communication entails that both parties are responsible when collaboration fails and both are responsible for reparative action when failure at the pragmatic level occurs.

The notion of repair as a feature of conversational organization is of particular interest to the present work because of its intricate connections with interactional trouble and the maintenance of face. Communicative problems and difficulties in understanding clearly pose a threat to the smooth flow of interaction and may reflect on the interactants' relationship by emphasizing the asymmetries of knowledge and ability. Repair is a resource which can be used to remedy such problems and thus balance some of the asymmetries which arise. In this sense it can have a face-supportive role in interaction. However, in some cases repair itself may amount to face-threat: drawing attention to problems and explicit correction of the interlocutors' turns may not reduce asymmetry but increase it, which is face-threatening to one or both of the participants. Thus, different means of doing repair (e.g. on-record and off-record) may be appropriate in different contexts. Finally, it is possible to view repair broadly to cover also interactional efforts to restore face: in addition to clarifying lexical, grammatical or other linguistic problems, it can serve to clarify illocutionary intent and the pragmatic force of utterances, and also to negotiate their face implications. Such 'face-repair' may occur, for example, as a result of other-monitoring: if a speaker sees that his/her utterance is interpreted as face-threatening, s/he may revise or rephrase it in order to reduce the face-threat.

In brief, the research on repair as an interactional resource highlights the need to examine instances of repair as part of the collaborative and context-dependent process of communication. Errors or communicative problems and possible corrective behaviour resulting from them must be examined in relation to the task or activity in which they are embedded, the relationship between the participants and other features of the situational context. Communication problems may be perceived and responded to in different ways in different types of interaction, and while explicit other-corrections can generally be seen as carrying the potential for face-threat, whether they are interpreted as face-threatening (or indeed face-supportive) is dependent on the context.

### 3.4.3 Sequencing

Although the sequential accomplishment of conversation has been a central focus of interest in the study of NS interaction, relatively little systematic attention has been paid to it in studies of NNS interaction. However, some attempts have been made to examine the specific problems of constructing discourse in the NNS context. Learner-specific problems have been identified in response behaviour and in the sequential structure of the interactions. As a result of such problems NNS conversation is often characterized as discontinuous and lacking in coherence.

In Kasper's (1981) groundbreaking, study attention was paid to learners' ability to respond to previous acts by native speakers. Evidence was found for inappropriate sequencing: the learners' actions sometimes did not match with preceding utterances by the native speakers. The realization patterns for responsive speech acts were often deficient and/or the acts themselves were not sequentially appropriate, reflecting only partial



understanding of the meaning and implications of the previous utterance. Similarly, Kasper (1984) reports a lack of coherence in paired organizations (e.g. adjacency pairs) in NS-NNS conversations: the second-pair parts produced by learners were not sequentially in line with the first-pair part produced by a native speaker, indicating insufficient inferencing procedures on the part of the learners.

Thomas (1983) calls attention to the ways that misunderstanding may lead to responses which are not coherent with previous utterances. In NNS interactions the participants do not always understand the pragmatic (illocutionary) force of each other's utterances and responses may therefore be unexpected or inappropriate. In this way speakers may fail to achieve their goals in interaction and communicative breakdown may occur. Thomas (1983) also points to the possible effects of a failure to respond as expected: often inadequate or inappropriate responses by a non-native speaker are interpreted as intentional or unintentional uncooperativeness and hence reflect on the way that the speaker's personality is perceived.

Inappropriate sequencing can also be caused by a lack of awareness of the sociocultural constraints of a particular speech event. Learners' difficulty to interpret the purpose or nature of the speech event may be reflected in the organization of discourse. Thus, learners may produce unexpected speech acts or give inappropriate feedback; they may have trouble signalling different phases of discourse or they may introduce unexpected or unacceptable topics and thus fail to contribute to an orderly completion of the conversational encounter (Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford 1990, 1991, Nyssönen 1990, Fiksdal 1990).

Problems of comprehension and interpretation thus often underlie the sequential organization of NNS interaction. Such central organizational patterns as adjacency pairs (e.g. question - answer, request - compliance), for example, may take complicated forms, being interrupted by lengthy meaning negotiation episodes which serve to clarify possible problems of understanding (cf. e.g. Varonis and Gass 1985a, see also 3.1.1. above). Similarly, organizations of this type may be disrupted so that second parts are not produced at all, topics are changed abruptly or the communication may break down.

#### **3.4.4 Overall organization**

Non-native speakers' ability to take part in the global management of discourse has not been widely studied. However, some attention has been paid to the bounding exchanges of conversations, i.e. opening and closing sequences, and to aspects of topic development.

##### **3.4.4.1 Openings and closings**

Studies of conversations between native speakers of English (see e.g. Schegloff and Sacks 1973, Schegloff 1986) have established that the opening and closing sequences of conversations display specific, recurrent features which reflect the social context and event in which the conversation takes place. In non-

institutional contexts openings and closings are characterized by ritual elements, such as specific types of adjacency pairs (e.g. exchange of greetings, enquiries of mutual well-being, etc.) expressed through routine formulae. Opening and closing phases are highly significant for the development of an encounter: the opening phase sets the scene for the ensuing conversation through the negotiation of relevant contextual expectations and the closing phase lays the foundation for any future interaction. Thus, if NNS interaction is seen to reflect features, principles and problems of its own, they are likely to be reflected also in the opening and closing phases.

One of the few systematic studies of the opening and closing phases of conversations involving learners is Kasper's (1981) study of pragmatic aspects of German learners' communicative competence, in which she also examined the learners' performance in the opening and closing phases of the conversations. The analysis of opening strategies (see Kasper 1981:276-302, Kasper 1989a:193-199) revealed that learners attempted to perform the same types of opening moves as did the English native speakers in the control group, but that the strategies with which the openings were realized differed markedly from those of the native speakers. The German learners' performance in the opening phases of the conversations was identified as clearly non-nativelike: learner-specific and unidiomatic features of language use were frequent. Specific problems were found in the learners' ability to select suitable opening routines and manage them sequentially in the conversational context. Similarly, the learners often failed to use appropriate linguistic formulas to realize routine functions.

Kasper (1989a:195) argues that the problems reflect a failure in the learner's *procedural knowledge*, i.e. their ability to select and combine relevant aspects of their discourse knowledge and linguistic repertoire in order to reach the communicative goals typically pursued in opening phases of conversation. While the learners did not seem to modify their actual communicative goals in the opening phase of the interaction, they tended to select inappropriate linguistic forms and routines to pursue these goals, and use routines in inappropriate 'slots' in the structure of opening sequences. Some of the learner-specific features in opening strategies may also be explained by cultural differences. In a contrastive analysis of opening strategies in the same set of data, House (1982) found that certain opening moves realized by routine formulae in English were expressed through less routinized and more content-oriented expressions by the German subjects than by the English native speakers.

In her analysis of closing phases in the learner data, Kasper (1981:303-324, 1989a:201-204) sought to identify ways in which the participants used closing signals and routines to express typical closing functions and to reinforce their relationship for future interaction. The specific problems identified in the learners' performance included inefficient use of closing routines, as reflected in selection of unsuitable linguistic realizations of routine formulae, and preference for non-routinized, content-oriented preclosing strategies ('legitimizing' strategies). These deficiencies were interpreted as reflecting lack of appropriate resources in the learners' declarative knowledge or an

inadequate selection from this repertoire at the procedural level. However, the findings also showed that learners were sometimes able to select perfectly appropriate closing strategies, for example, responding to NS-initiated closing signals by repeating parts of the initiating utterance (Kasper 1989a:203-204).

The learners' closing behaviour reflected not only an inappropriate selection of means but also a 'functional reduction' of communicative goals (Kasper 1989a:204). Learners were much less active in participating in the closing exchanges than in the opening phases: very few closing exchanges were initiated by learners. In most closing exchanges it was the more competent native participant who produced all the initiating functions. Kasper (1981:323-4, 1989a:203) notes, however, that this finding was partly due to the role play data: while the role description did require the learner to initiate in the opening phase, the situations were open-ended in terms of closing negotiation and did not require the learners to actively initiate closing routines. Kasper (1981:308, 319-320) concludes that unless required by the situation to initiate, learners tend to avoid taking the initiative and prefer to leave it to the more competent partner.

Closing phases in NS-NNS interaction were also examined by Hartford and Bardovi-Harlig (1992) in their work on academic advising sessions. In their investigation of closing routines in these interviews, Hartford and Bardovi-Harlig (1992) contrasted what they define as *felicitous* (successful) closings by native speakers and highly proficient non-natives, on the one hand, with *infelicitous* (unsuccessful) closings by non-natives, on the other. A successful closing was defined in terms of knowledge of how to close a conversation in general, how to sequence topics, what topics are allowable and how to judge the appropriate time for closing the interview. The primary aim was to identify the constraints which determine successful or unsuccessful closings in this type of speech event. Hartford and Bardovi-Harlig (1992:99) sought to outline these constraints on the basis of evidence from non-native behaviour, on the assumption that the deviant behaviour of non-native speakers confirms the existence of underlying rules. The rules for successful closings are thus based on the norm adhered to by the native-speaker participants.

Hartford and Bardovi-Harlig (1992) found that the sessions involving non-native speakers were frequently closed in 'infelicitous' ways. Difficulties in negotiating closings were found to arise when a NNS student did not respond to the advisor's closing-initiating utterances, when the student initiated topics which were not expected at the final stages of the interview, or when the session extended beyond the normal time frame. For example, while native speakers were found to engage in successful 'post-session conversations' by taking up topics which contribute to the maintenance or establishment of common ground (legitimate 'comembership' topics), non-native speakers often initiated topics which were not in accordance with the advisor's expectations (non-felicitous topics) and which led to abrupt exchanges where the topic was rejected by the advisor. Non-native students were also found to overextend the interview by opening up multiple or complex topics, or topics which had already been dealt with. However, Hartford and Bardovi-Harlig (1992:103) also recognized non-nativelike closings which were successful. These were

characterized by explicit displays of 'incompetence' by the non-native speakers and appeals for assistance from the more competent native speakers.

The work on openings and closings seems to indicate that the following features are specific to openings and closings in NNS interaction: (i) non-native participants have problems in selecting appropriate (native-like) means for expressing functions which typically occur in opening and closing sequences; (ii) non-native participants have problems in adhering to constraints specific to the speech event, and these problems are reflected, for example, in the selection of inappropriate topics and lack of sensitivity to sequencing and timing constraints; (iii) non-native participants tend to adopt an inactive role in the negotiation of closings, which is reflected in failure to initiate closing moves or failure to respond to closing moves initiated by the native participant; and (iv) a non-native participant may contribute to a successful opening or closing phase by using native-like patterns of conversation, by reacting and responding appropriately to NS speech or through an explicit display of limited competence which can be seen as an appeal for the NS's cooperation or assistance.

#### **3.4.4.2 Treatment of topic**

While considerable attention has been paid to the negotiation of understanding at utterance level and the negotiation of specific referential meanings in NNS interaction, the overall content and organization of NNS discourse in terms of topic development and sequencing of activities has been largely neglected in previous research. Some aspects of the treatment of topic have, however, been addressed in studies of modified interaction and communication strategies, and in work on intercultural communication and interlanguage variation.

Although some attention is given to topic in studies of negotiation of meaning - it is noted, for example, that negotiation sequences break the main flow of interaction - these studies mainly describe the sequence dealing with the secondary activity rather than the main topic (e.g. Varonis and Gass 1985a, 1985b). Some studies of modified interaction, however, indicate that conversational topics are treated in specific ways in NNS interactions. Long (1983b) identifies the following features which represent modified forms of topic selection and treatment in NS-NNS conversations: topics are selected for their salience in the interactional context, i.e. they tend to focus on the 'here and now' rather than more distant or complex phenomena; abrupt and unintentional topic shifts are accepted, topics are treated briefly, and new topics are made salient through various discourse strategies. Such modifications are seen to reflect the native speaker's attempts to act as a cooperative conversational partner and adjust his/her behaviour for the benefit of sustaining interaction.

From the learners' point of view, specific tendencies in the treatment of topic may be reflected in the communication strategies used: topic change or abrupt topic shift may, for example, serve as an avoidance strategy to turn conversational focus away from a problematic activity (see e.g. Tarone et al. 1983). Learners may also display difficulties in directing the choice of topics in

conversations: some studies have indicated that, depending on the topic or task, learners may use few topic-initiating moves and may have difficulty in getting the topics or activities which they initiate accepted by native participants (see e.g. Edmondson et al. 1984, Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford 1990). Similarly, the timing of topics may fail: a native speaker interlocutor may perceive the topic initiated by the learner as inappropriate in the context and reject it or find it face-threatening (Kärkkäinen and Raudaskoski 1988, Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford 1990).

The treatment and timing of topics has been found to vary cross-culturally, and thus cause problems in interethnic interaction (see e.g. Gumperz 1982, Scollon and Scollon 1991). Scollon and Scollon (1991) show how different patterns of introducing topics in Asian (Chinese, Korean, Japanese) and Western (American English) discourse may lead to problems in contact situations. They claim that in certain contexts, mainly non-institutional, private interactions (situations based on 'inside' relations), Asian discourse is characterized by an 'inductive', or delayed, pattern of topic introduction which often leaves Western interlocutors confused about the current topic. This pattern contrasts with a Western 'deductive' pattern in similar contexts, which strikes Asians as rude and abrupt. According to Scollon and Scollon (1991:116), the tendency to defer the introduction of a topic in Asian discourse serves a face-supporting function. Initial small talk is seen as a form of extended face-work: a topic, along with its possibly face-threatening implications, is not introduced until sufficient face has been given to the addressee. The different patterns of topic introduction may lead the conversationalists to problems in responding to each other's turns and in bringing a conversation to a close. Scollon and Scollon (1991:117) note how the speakers may misunderstand the significance of the points being made and end up extending the conversation well beyond the point which is appropriate (see also Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford 1990). Such subtle cross-cultural differences may thus lead to problems of communication and have implications for interpersonal relations. Both participants may feel that their positive face has been damaged: the Asian may feel insulted by the apparent abruptness of the Western pattern, whereas the Western participant may feel his interlocutor is distant and evasive.

Another area of research examining topics consists of studies which examine the effect of topic on patterns of conversational participation and on interlanguage performance (see Zuengler 1993 for review). These studies have established that topic affects IL performance: on the one hand, IL performance varies from one topic to the next; on the other hand, there is variation according to relative expertise or knowledge of a given topic. Similarly, the broader discourse context or domain with its typical topics affects IL use and development. Thus, it has been suggested that topic is an important determinant of interactional dynamics: it may determine how the roles of nativeness and non-nativeness or ethnic and sociocultural differences become salient in the context of interaction, and thus affect the flow and outcome of the interaction (Zuengler and Bent 1991, Zuengler 1993). From the non-native speakers' point of view it is therefore important to acquire strategies for

maintaining, changing and closing topics, and thus actively contributing to the flow of conversation in various contexts.

In short, it seems clear that NNS interaction reflects specific constraints on topic organization and development. The learner's ability to actively contribute to the treatment of topic may be limited and may vary as a result of a range of contextual factors. It is also likely that there are culturally specific ways of treating conversational topics which may cause problems for non-native speakers. However, very little attention has been paid to the ways that topics are negotiated in the actual process of interaction in a NNS context. Thus, little is known about the strategies and negotiation patterns through which NS and NNS participants come to terms with each other's different conventions and whether and how they are able to establish some cooperative basis for the treatment of topics.

To summarize, research on non-native discourse has revealed various restrictions which constrain interactions between native and non-native speakers. Many of these result from the asymmetry which arises from the unshared linguistic and sociocultural resources of the participants in such interaction. Firstly, studies of interactional modifications and communication strategies have demonstrated how the limited proficiency of non-native speakers causes problems for mutual understanding and how native and non-native participants use various interactional resources to avoid and negotiate such problems. Secondly, research in interactional sociolinguistics and pragmatics has highlighted the sociocultural aspects of discourse which enter into the negotiation of shared meaning. Thirdly, studies of discourse organization have examined the kinds of problems that even advanced language learners may have in participating in the construction of discourse in a foreign language. Recent developments in these lines of research have shown that the social and interpersonal aspects of discourse, such as the management of face, are central to the success and outcome of interaction in the second language context and may thus also be significant from the point of view of acquisition.

## **4 FACE IN SECOND LANGUAGE INTERACTION: POINTS OF DEPARTURE FOR THE PRESENT STUDY**

### **4.1 Implications of previous research**

The studies of negotiation of meaning and discourse organization reviewed in the previous chapter have approached non-native discourse from a variety of perspectives. While the different approaches have increased our understanding of the specific problems and characteristics that influence non-native interaction, there are questions which remain to be solved in future research. Many of these are linked to the social and interpersonal aspects of discourse. Two issues are of particular interest for the purpose of the present study: one concerns the multifunctionality and context-dependence of the interactional resources used for negotiating meaning and constructing discourse and the other the role of politeness and face in the process of interaction.

Many of the interactional features described in studies of modified interaction (see section 3.2.1) and communication strategies (see section 3.2.2) are not oriented simply to enhancing efficient communication but are also linked to other aspects of conversation management. Furthermore, procedures for negotiating mutual understanding are not context-free, but vary and adapt to the demands of each communicative event. It has been established that in some contexts meanings are made explicit and negotiated whereas other contexts seem to allow - or even encourage - considerable indeterminacy and vagueness. For this reason, strategies of meaning negotiation must be observed in a broader discourse context so that their links with conversational organization and contextual factors can be explored. A qualitative analysis of a range of interactive procedures associated with the social need to maintain and support face may prove useful in this respect.

The increased need to negotiate unshared meaning and the efforts to make meanings more explicit by both native and non-native speakers have given rise to a hypothesis that a specific principle of 'clarity' (Kasper 1989a, Garcia 1993) or 'mutual intelligibility' (Clyne et al. 1991) operates in NNS discourse and explains many of the features that are typical of such interaction. However, there is also an increased element of risk in this type of interaction: the interpersonal relationship between the participants may be more vulnerable in a NNS context due to various asymmetries arising from unshared linguistic and sociocultural resources. The interpersonal needs of protecting face may thus be in conflict with the need to establish mutual understanding through explicitness and clarity of communication. This, in turn, may require increased attention to the interpersonal dimension of interaction and motivate reciprocal efforts to avoid possible conflict (e.g. by being indirect) and to increase interpersonal rapport through various strategies of face-work. In some contexts concern for face may even override the principle of clarity.

Studies of discourse organization (see section 3.4) have highlighted the kinds of problems that even advanced language learners may have in participating in the construction of interaction in a foreign language. However, being limited in number, these studies have only been able to examine some aspects of discourse in limited contexts. Similarly, the analytic perspective in most of these studies is restricted by a focus on selected problematic features of NNS talk. The reciprocal and collaborative aspects of discourse organization are often overlooked and NNS behaviour is evaluated against the norm of NS interaction. It has been shown, however, that NNS-specific features of interaction do not necessarily lead to communicative problems, and even if they do, the participants may use a range of contextual resources to negotiate difficulties and repair possible damage (see section 3.3). To complement the study of problems in non-native speakers' language use, there is a need for further study of the specific resources that both native and non-native participants draw upon to achieve a mutually satisfactory outcome in interaction. These resources are displayed in the local context of conversation, in the participants' attempts to adjust to the demands of the interaction and to build intersubjective meaning in a situation constrained by asymmetries of knowledge, resources and ability. This *pragmatic* negotiation of meaning is central in the process of NNS interaction. It is in this type of negotiation that politeness as a global strategy can be seen to operate.

In sum, the process of negotiating shared meaning and constructing discourse may be extremely complex and involve a range of strategies for solving linguistic and interactional problems. These strategies involve modification of language use according to the negotiation of contextual assumptions at different phases of interaction. The description of such negotiation requires a multidimensional, multilevel approach, in which attention is paid to aspects of language use and patterns of interaction through which conversations proceed and develop. Further, the description must be sensitive to the participants' perspective: the collaborative process of discourse must be examined both from the point of view of the learners, and the specific problems that they experience, and the native speakers, who undoubtedly have



to make various modifications to their interactional style in order to facilitate the negotiation of shared meaning.

The present study aims to contribute to the research discussed above by focusing on the social and interpersonal aspects of discourse which are associated with face and politeness. Through a detailed analysis of a number of interactionally demanding conversations between native and non-native speakers of English, the study aims to observe the patterns of negotiation which arise as a result of the participants' interpretation of the face-threatening situation and their moment-by-moment adjustment to the conversational context. The joint management of a potentially face-threatening situation builds on the participants' ability to negotiate common ground from which to proceed, to establish a mutual understanding of the task and activity in focus, to negotiate a mutually acceptable interpersonal relationship and to monitor each other's reactions and interpretations of meaning at the local level of interpretation. It is these processes that the present study seeks to explore.

## 4.2 Research questions

The two main aims of the study are (i) to describe the ways in which a native and non-native participant jointly manage a face-threatening encounter linguistically and conversationally, and (ii) to develop an analytic framework which pays systematic attention to the ways in which face-threat is reflected in the linguistic and interactional patterns of organization through which the participants construct discourse. The first aim involves, on the one hand, a detailed description of the data with respect to the interactive management of the potentially face-threatening task, and, on the other hand, systematic observation of the role of face and politeness in the organization of the interaction. This aim can be broken down to the following research questions:

- I *How do the participants jointly construct and organize activities which are potentially face-threatening?*
  - (i) How do the participants cooperate, i.e. make mutual efforts to construct the activity?
  - (ii) How do they share interactional responsibility in constructing the activity?
  - (iii) What kinds of linguistic and interactional strategies do the participants employ in pursuing the complex transactional and interactional goals associated with the activity?
- II *How does concern for face shape the overall organization of the conversations?*
  - (i) How does politeness and the management of face-threat operate as an interactive strategy in the organization of talk?
  - (ii) What kinds of activities and action sequences unfold as a result of the negotiation of the face-threatening task?
  - (iii) How do the participants negotiate their interpersonal relationship through face-work?

The second main aim is to contribute to the study of politeness and face-work in the interlanguage context by proposing an analytic framework which builds on previous research in the area and extends this work by approaching the concept of face and the linguistic enactment of politeness in the emergent context of conversational interaction. This requires that attention is paid to the linguistic utterances and conversational activities with which goals are achieved as well as to the interactive management of talk itself. An analytic framework which seeks to capture the management of face-threat in an interactional context must thus meet the following requirements:

(i) It must be sensitive to the *dynamic and emergent nature of conversation*. It must take into account that conversations evolve in a time-bound process of coordinated action. The description of the negotiation and exchange of turns, and the coordination of contributions by the speakers is therefore a central feature of the conversational behaviour which needs to be described: it provides systematic means for studying the ways that the native and non-native participants cooperate in constructing activities and share the responsibility for participating in conversational action.

(ii) It must provide the means to describe the *linguistic choices* made by the speakers and to examine the ways in which these choices are interpreted and responded to by the participants. Utterances must thus be described as embedded in conversational contexts, and attention must be paid to both the strategies for achieving goals and the effects of the selected strategies in context.

(iii) It must be sensitive to both *form* and *content* without viewing them as distinct, but rather approaching them as inseparable in the conversational context. Thus the linguistic choices observed must be examined in relation to the underlying goals which they may express. Similarly, the types of organizational patterns that are observed must be examined in the light of the activity which the participants are engaged in.

(iv) It must be sensitive to *context*. The meaning of an utterance to the participants cannot be determined without systematic attention to the preceding discourse which gave rise to the utterance and the following discourse which deals with the effects of the utterance. Further, the meaning and significance of an utterance must be seen within the broader frame of the conversational situation. Thus, attention is paid to the participants' orientation to relevant features of the situation (e.g. setting, participants, activities, purpose, etc.).

The analytic framework which is outlined in chapter 6 aims to meet the requirements summarized above by integrating concepts from the study of the politeness dimension of linguistic action and the study of conversational interaction in pragmatics and conversation analysis. While the present methodology is not compatible with the strictly inductive, empirical procedure of conversation analysis, the analysis is guided by some of its central principles. Firstly, close attention is paid to the details of interactive management of talk, without dismissing any conversational contribution or phenomenon a priori as insignificant or disorderly. Secondly, the analysis aims to examine the local interpretation of meanings by the participants rather than evaluate the effectiveness of specific message strategies. Finally, systematic attention is paid to the context in which utterances are embedded, concentrating on the ways in which aspects of the context are made relevant by the participants themselves in the process of interaction.

## 5 DATA AND METHODOLOGY

### 5.1 Type of data

A wide range of methodological approaches has been used in studies of second language interaction. Within interlanguage pragmatics methods of data collection have included various elicitation procedures, such as questionnaires, discourse completion tests and closed and open-ended role plays (see Kasper and Dahl 1991 for review). In addition to elicitation methods, various ethnographic methods have been used to collect data from naturally occurring conversation: information on different speech events has been gathered through observation and field notes (e.g. Wolfson 1989a, 1989b, Beebe and Takahashi 1989b) and by recording actual interaction (e.g. Boxer 1993, Clyne et al. 1993). Some studies have combined different methodological approaches, and used data from both elicited and authentic interaction (e.g. Eisenstein and Bodman 1993). Similarly, research focusing on the organization of NNS interaction has employed a wide variety of data collection methods, ranging from elicitation tasks (see e.g. Bremer et al. 1988, Gass et al. 1989) to recordings of spontaneous interaction in different situational contexts (e.g. Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford 1990, Fiksdal 1990).

The strengths and weaknesses of the various methodological approaches have been discussed extensively (see e.g. Aston 1988a, Beebe and Takahashi 1989a, 1989b, Seliger and Shohamy 1989, Kasper and Dahl 1991, Rose 1994). Clearly different data collection procedures serve different research purposes, and their relative merits must be examined in light of the questions addressed. The multiplicity of approaches enables a broad and many-sided view of the problems which research attempts to deal with, and makes it possible to apply a variety of descriptive and explanatory models to account for these problems. As is pointed out by Chafe (1990:19), "understanding increases with an expanded field of vision," in other words, discourse phenomena are

best studied from a broad perspective, through a wide range of data and models of analysis. Different approaches can offer useful insights which may contribute to the development of an integrated and interdisciplinary model which is needed to explain the complexities involved.

The approach adopted in this study builds on previous research on interlanguage interaction. The data consist of 18 dyadic role-play conversations between Brunei Malay second language speakers and native speakers of English. The data were selected from a larger body of data (30 conversations) collected in Brunei Darussalam, South-East Asia, for a Brunei Malay English Language Project in which the present writer took part during 1987 and 1988 (see Marsh and Piirainen-Marsh 1987, Piirainen-Marsh and Marsh 1987).<sup>1</sup> The data collection method was based on a procedure used in two recent projects examining pragmatic aspects of interlanguage discourse at the Universities of Bochum and Oulu (see Kasper 1981, Edmondson et al. 1984, House 1984 for details of the Bochum project; Kärkkäinen and Raudaskoski 1988 and Nyyssönen 1990 for the Oulu project). In this method simulated task-oriented situations, i.e. situations involving some kind of interactional problem to be solved through talking, were used as means for eliciting conversation between pairs of subjects.

The reasons for choosing the simulation method arose partly from practical problems of data collection and partly from the questions addressed in the study. In the early stages of this research an attempt was made to collect data by recording naturally occurring interaction from consultation sessions between students and staff at the University of Brunei. This procedure was abandoned, however, because the quality of the recordings was not satisfactory. As the questions addressed in this study were clearly related to earlier studies on interlanguage speech act behaviour and discoursal aspects of pragmatic competence, the decision was then made to use a data collection procedure which would yield comparable and replicable data from a group of subjects not previously studied. The design based on open-ended role plays was preferred to other forms of elicited data for the following reasons: (i) it allows the actual negotiation of the interactive task; (ii) it allows relatively free development of conversational topics; (iii) it does not restrict or constrain the conversational process or outcome to the same extent as other types of elicitation techniques; and (iv) it has the main advantage of elicited data in providing a sufficient amount of data from a range of situations quickly.

The role play method has some of the advantages of controlled data in being replicable, ensuring good quality recordings and enabling the collection of a number of comparable interactions. It also avoids some of the disadvantages of other types of controlled data and data collected from naturally occurring interaction. Firstly, unlike some other elicitation techniques, the method does not restrict the topics discussed to those presented by the researcher, nor does it predetermine the development or the outcome of the

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<sup>1</sup> The conversations for this study were selected on the basis of three criteria: perceived success of the role play in terms of commitment to the task, the feasibility of the situation design and the length of the conversation. Many of the conversations not included in this study were too long for a detailed turn-by-turn analysis.

conversation. Secondly, unlike data collected from naturally occurring interaction, the conversations are not restricted to those involving the researcher herself or her friends and acquaintances, or to public service encounters. Instead, the method allows the use of a range of activities and situational parameters which can be assumed to be relevant to the way in which interaction unfolds. Finally, role plays have been found useful for examining aspects of pragmatic knowledge, since they make similar demands on the speakers' processing abilities as naturally occurring interaction and require the same type of cognitive and interactive effort: the speakers are involved in a process of cooperation and coordination of action on the basis of a continual assessment of contextual information (see Kasper and Blum-Kulka 1993b, Eisenstein and Bodman 1993).

It seems safe to assume that the subjects are not consciously aware of the linguistic and conversational phenomena in the focus of the investigation (the interactive management of face-threat). Further, the emergent and negotiable properties of conversational interaction are largely unconscious and not easy to manipulate even in non-natural settings (see Fiksdal 1990, Cameron 1990). These aspects of the subjects' behaviour can thus be assumed to be represented in a relatively natural manner. However, it is recognized that the data do not represent a natural discourse event but a simulated one, and cannot therefore be taken to be representative of real-life interaction. Although the subjects are not consciously aware of their interactive behaviour as far as the largely automatized linguistic and conversational patterns are concerned, they are certainly aware of the non-naturalness of the social context and may to some extent manipulate their behaviour in accordance with their perception of what is expected in the simulated context they are presented with. In this respect the data may be more appropriately seen as revealing the subjects' meta-knowledge; their knowledge or expectations of how people should, or how they are likely to, behave in the situation in question. Accordingly, the data are not expected to provide a full representation of the phenomena in focus, but are used as an empirical resource for building and putting to use the analytic framework developed. It is hoped that on the basis of this, some hypotheses may be drawn which can be further explored or tested with naturally occurring data.

From the point of view of the strict methodological position advocated by representatives of ethnomethodological conversation analysis (see e.g. Atkinson and Heritage 1984, Psathas 1990, 1995), the present data thus cannot be said to be an adequate representation of ordinary conversation. However, recent research has shown that the conversation analytic approach can be successfully applied also to data elicited in laboratory conditions (see e.g. Hakulinen 1989) and that the analysis can yield highly valuable findings. It might also be pointed out, following Cameron (1990:226), that if aspects of conversational organization, such as patterns of turn-taking, are as ubiquitous and compelling as conversation analysts seem to believe they are, they should be observable in laboratory as well as natural contexts. Even though the social context of a simulation task can be criticized as unnatural, it does not

necessarily inhibit the participants' use of language in a natural manner on the basis of their interpretation of the context.

In spite of the undeniable problems associated with elicited data, the data are useful in light of the purpose of this study in that they allow an in-depth investigation of aspects of interlanguage conversational behaviour which have not been studied extensively to date, namely the conversational management of face-threat. The data make it possible to examine research questions which both complement previous research in the area and highlight aspects of face and politeness which require more investigation for a fuller understanding. More specifically, they allow the investigation of the sequential and interactive dimensions of face-work as well as the detailed examination of the linguistic choices made at the level of individual turns. Finally, the data are rich in the type of negotiation which is of primary interest to this study: the subject dyads generally chose to act out the situations quite thoroughly and seemed to invest a surprisingly high level of involvement in carrying out the task.

In addition to the elicited conversational data, some background information on the Malay subjects' age, sex, language background and contact with the English language was collected in a questionnaire. Section 5.2. is based partly on this information, and partly on field notes, interviews and observations made during the present writer's stay in Brunei in 1986-1988.

## 5.2 Subjects

The data consist of 18 recorded dyadic interactions involving 22 subjects, 10 native speakers of English (6 male and 4 female) and 12 nonnative speakers (6 male and 6 female) whose native language was Malay. Due to the relatively small number of subjects and local culture-specific constraints the sex of the participants was not systematically controlled in the study. The native speakers came from different English-speaking countries, namely Great Britain (England, Scotland), Canada and Australia. Broadly speaking, they can be said to share a Western cultural orientation as opposed to the South-East Asian cultural background of the non-native participants. It is recognized, however, that in spite of the shared language the NS subjects may have been influenced by different culturally specific values and ways of thinking which may be reflected in their communicative behaviour. The native speakers had lived in Brunei from 6 months to 3 years at the time of the data collection, and reported regular contact with the local inhabitants in a variety of institutional or informal contexts. Thus, they had to some extent adapted to the cultural context in which they were working. The native speakers ranged from 25 to 45 years of age and were working in Brunei as teachers or lecturers.

The Brunei subjects were all undergraduate students at the University of Brunei and ranged from 20 to approximately 35 years of age. They were not students of English (or other languages) but represented a variety of subject areas. Some of the more mature students had some professional qualifications

and had been working mainly as teachers, and were continuing their studies in the newly founded university (Universiti Brunei Darussalam was founded in 1985). All the Brunei subjects spoke Malay as their mother tongue. However, some of them reported knowledge of other local languages (mainly Tutong) and most of them reported that they used English in different contexts outside their home and educational setting. Although the level of proficiency of the students was not tested specifically for the purposes of this study, the learners were assessed as representing a high intermediate to advanced level of proficiency in English. English was part of their course requirements as a subsidiary subject. In accordance with the bilingual policy implemented in education since 1984, the students had contact with the English language in their studies.

Although Brunei promotes English as a second language in various official and institutional contexts, the national language is Malay (see Jones 1990, 1992 and Pakir 1993, for a discussion of Brunei language policy). The status of English in Brunei is in some respects similar to Singapore. However, whereas in Singapore English is fast acquiring more status as "something between a first and second language" for a large section of the population (Pakir 1993:7), for the Malay population in Brunei it remains a second language (see Jones 1990, Martin 1990).

With respect to their cultural background, the Malay subjects represented a relatively homogeneous group. In a number of anthropological and sociological studies on Malay people and on Brunei (e.g. Brown 1970, Husin 1981), Malay culture is often characterized by four major elements: Islam, beliefs and values predating the introduction of Islam, codes of behaviour or customs ('adat') specific to Malays, and the influence of contact with non-Malays. The group of subjects in the present study represent the young and educated Malays mainly of a non-rural background, and it is likely that in their lives the influence of older beliefs and values as well as the Malay 'adat' is decreasing, whereas the influence of increasing contact with non-Malays, especially Western people and their way of life, is growing. In interviews the Malay students reported attitudes and values often associated with modern Western culture. They seemed to value achieved rather than ascribed status, and emphasized individualism and orientation to change rather than more traditional values. Characteristics traditionally attributed to Malays (e.g. Husin 1981:158-162), such as fatalism, conformity, willingness to compromise and indecisiveness were often explicitly denounced.

Nevertheless, there are undoubtedly salient culture-related values and attitudes which distinguish the Malays from the English native speaker subjects. The nature and significance of these values are matters of empirical research which are beyond the scope of the present work. However, some features of the cultural context in which this research was begun bear specific relevance to the study in that they had an effect on the methodology used. The single most important factor in this respect is Islam. Although Brunei is now a modern and wealthy state which is influenced by aspects of Western culture and way of life, Islam still has a significant influence on the everyday life, attitudes, and values of the people, and it is actively promoted by the heads of

the nation as a unifying force and a value in its own right. Islam imposes some rules of conduct which have had their influence on this study. For instance, there are rules about conditions in which males and females can interact, and situations where for instance a non-Malay male and a Malay female can come into contact in dyadic interaction are limited and usually restricted to official or institutional settings. For this reason, modifications were made to the data collection methodology. As a result, 13 out of the 18 conversations used as data are between members of the same sex, and both sexes are included only in situations reflecting relatively high distance between the participants (situations D2, D3 and A1).

Some cross-cultural differences can also be expected in the respective communicative styles of the two groups of subjects. In a study designed to find possible cross-cultural differences in aspects of communicative behaviour between Malay and English speakers and to identify possible problem-areas in intercultural communication (Pirainen-Marsh and Marsh 1987), several areas of difference were located. The results, which were based on questionnaire responses from 200 participants in Brunei, indicated that the Malay subjects expected English speakers to be more abrupt in the way they open and close conversations (60% of the subjects), to be more direct and straightforward in asking and answering questions (74%), and to be more open in their expressions of opinion and personal feelings (77%). English speakers were also perceived as talking more, using more small talk, and engaging less in silences than Malay speakers. While these differences are not evidence of actual differences in interactive styles, they gave some indication of where the Malay subjects themselves expected differences and problems to occur, and how they perceived themselves as communicators in relation to English native speakers.

### 5.3 Design of the situations

The role-play situations used in the study were designed so that each of them contained a task, an interactional problem (e.g. presenting and responding to an invitation, making an offer or complaint) which had to be solved through talk. Adapting the approach used in contrastive discourse analysis projects at the Universities of Bochum and Oulu, three interactional bases originally derived from different typologies of speech acts (see Searle 1976), served as a basis for the design of the role-play situations. These were used as guidelines to help compile the hypothetical situations and to ensure that they would elicit a range of linguistic action. The interactional bases were the following:

1. X wants Y to do A (directive function: invitations, requests)
2. A needs to be done (commissive function: offers, suggestions)
3. Y did A, A bad for X (expressive function: complaints, challenges, criticism)

The criteria for choosing the interactive task (A) and designing the situations were that they should be feasible as contact situations for the groups



of subjects, and that they should not contain roles which would be far removed from the subjects' own experience. Hence the Malay subjects were in most cases asked to act as themselves, as university students, in a variety of situations where they might come into contact with a native speaker of English. The role of X was always given to the non-native participant and the role of Y to the native participant. Furthermore, the situations were always open-ended so that the outcome, or solution to the interactive problem was not pre-determined but had to be negotiated in the actual encounter. These criteria were used in order to enhance the subjects' personal involvement in the situations and to reduce possible artificiality of the role-play which might result in lack of participant involvement in the task (cf. Aston 1988:26).

Three situations representing each interactional base were designed, each of them reflecting different participant relations in terms of two controlled variables, power (P) and distance (D), to produce a total of nine situations. The P and D factors were systematically varied to yield three main types of situations, as follows. In (i) *asymmetrical (+P/+D)* situations one participant holds a position of power over the other. These situations also involve relatively high distance between the participants, since situations with built-in power but low distance would have been unrealistic (e.g. parent - child). In (ii) *symmetrical (-P/+D)* situations, neither participant is in position of power, but the distance between them is relatively high, as in conversations between strangers. Finally, in (iii) *symmetrical (-P/-D)* situations, no power difference is involved and the distance is assumed to be relatively low, as in conversation between friends. The nine situations are summarised below.

#### **Symmetrical situations (-P, +/-D):**

##### *Situation S1, -P/-D, base 1 (request)*

The NS and the NNS are fellow students and have become friends. They sometimes go out together e.g. to a cinema. The night before this conversation they went out again and the NS borrowed 40 Brunei dollars from the NNS as she had run out of cash and the banks were closed. The NS is a fairly careless person and has forgotten that she had also previously borrowed a set of earrings which she had not returned to the NNS. The NNS is now short of money and wonders how best to approach the NS on the subject of the loan.

##### *Situation S2, -P/-D, base 2 (offer, proposal)*

The NNS is a student of Malay language and Literature at the University of Brunei. He has heard that a friend (the NS) who is also a tutor at the University is looking for a private tutor to teach him some Malay. The NNS has also been asked by another young Englishman to give him private classes in Malay, and it occurs to him that he could teach the two people simultaneously, and at the same time gain some experience in teaching. The NNS decides to go and see the NS to find out how he feels about the plan.

##### *Situation S3, -P/-D, base 3 (complaint, criticism)*

The NS and the NNS are both students at an American university and have also shared an apartment for a few months. The NS has a wide circle of friends and frequently goes out with them. S/he has also organised a few parties at the joint apartment. S/he is planning to organize another party the following day and has already spoken to some friends about it over the phone. The NNS overheard these telephone conversations and is not happy about the plans, as s/he has an important paper to finish and had planned to spend the next couple of days working on it.

*Situation D1, -P/+D, base 1 (invitation, request)*

The NNS, a student at Brunei University, has decided to organise a party with some fellow students. He has heard of a young Australian visitor who plays the guitar and has played in other parties recently. The NNS sees the young Australian sitting in a coffee bar and decides to approach him.

*Situation D2, -P/+D, base 2 (offer, proposal)*

The NNS is a student taking an English course at the University of Cambridge and lives in a student hostel on the campus. One day s/he is sitting in the lounge reading a newspaper and happens to overhear a conversation where an English person (the NS) is asking somebody whether s/he knows of anybody who would speak the Dusun language. Apparently this person is studying for a Ph.D. in Anthropology and has some information in a local language (Dusun) which s/he wants translated into English. The NNS has some knowledge of the language because of its similarity with his/her native language, and decides to approach the NS.

*Situation D3, -P/+D, base 3 (complaint, challenge)*

The NNS is a university student living in a flat in the centre of Bandar Seri Begawan. He has borrowed his father's car for the week. One day he sees from his kitchen window that an old 4-wheel drive which is often parked next to his car, reverses from the parking place and damages his father's car. The 4-wheel drive stops for a while but then drives away. The NNS finds out that the car belongs to a young man living in the same block who works for the Australian High Commission. Some time later the NNS sees the 4-wheel drive return and decides to go and talk to its owner to sort out the problem.

**Asymmetrical situations (+P)***Situation A1, +P/+D, base 1 (invitation)*

The NNS, a Brunei student of Economics, has a temporary job at a London advertising agency. S/he has decided to organize a get-together with the other staff of the agency in order to get to know them - s/he feels a little isolated being new to the job and the only foreign person on staff. S/he has invited everybody except the head of the agency who always appears very busy. The NNS now sees him sitting down in the coffee room and sees that an opportunity has arisen for putting forward the invitation to him.

*Situation A2, +P/+D, base 2 (offer, proposal)*

The NNS is a student of English staying with an English family in London. Recently a friend of the NNS's landlady asked her if the NNS would be able to baby-sit for her on the following Wednesday. The NNS had other plans for Wednesday evening: she wanted to stay in and watch a documentary on TV. However, on Tuesday the NNS finds out that her host family's TV set is broken and she will miss the programme she wanted to watch unless she thinks of something. She remembers the NS's request for a baby-sitter and realizes that if she had agreed to baby-sit for her she could watch the programme on her TV. The NNS decides to find out if the NS still needs a baby-sitter. Meanwhile, the NS has made alternative plans.

*Situation A3, +P/+D, base 3 (complaint, criticism)*

The NNS, a student of biology, has taken a holiday job as laboratory assistant at a foreign university. S/he has got on well with her boss (the NS) so far, but recently has noticed that she has started imposing more duties on her/him, some of which have been to do with the boss's domestic affairs (e.g. looking after her children). In addition, the NNS has heard that her boss is planning to cancel his/her day off for the week, and has not told him/her about it yet. The NNS has already made some plans for the day. The NNS feels unhappy about what is happening and decides to approach the NS. The NS is having some personal problems the NNS is not aware of.

On the basis of the situations, role descriptions were designed for the two participants. The descriptions were different for each participant, and open-ended as far as the outcome of the encounter was concerned. The role descriptions for the nine situations outlined above are enclosed in the appendices (Appendix 2).

As noted above, the situations were designed to reflect different social relations between the two participants. Building on previous research (e.g. Kasper 1981, Brown and Levinson 1978/1987, Scollon and Scollon 1981, Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper 1989a), two central contextual factors shaping the relations between the participants in the interaction, the relative *power* (P) of one participant over the other, and the social *distance* (D) between them, were systematically varied. The two participant factors selected were adopted in the sense defined by Brown and Levinson (1987:76-77). Thus, power was taken to refer to an asymmetric social dimension of relative power, based on the degree to which one person can impose his/her plans on the other ('right to impose'). Distance was taken to refer to a symmetric social relation of similarity or difference within which the participants stand for the purposes of a particular activity, for instance their familiarity based on previous interaction (e.g. friendship v. non-acquaintance). Although P and D are complex variables with culture and context-dependent elements, they can be described in terms of some stable qualities. For the purposes of this study, power is understood as built-in for instance in a situation displaying the role-set of employer - employee. In accordance with the decision to avoid asking the nonnative subjects to adopt roles far removed from their actual experience, it is always the NS who is in the position of power in such situations. Distance, on the other hand, is seen mainly in terms of previous contact, so that there is assumed to be a relatively low distance relationship between friends and a high distance relationship between non-intimates.

In Brown and Levinson's (1978/1987) politeness theory there is a third factor which is assumed to directly influence the type of politeness strategy selected: the imposition involved in doing a particular act (R). In the present study no attempt was made to predetermine and control R for a variety of reasons. Firstly, the factors which affect the seriousness or riskiness of the act are so complex and context-dependent that even a detailed ethnographic analysis of basic types of speech act in the cultures involved would not have captured all the features affecting the riskiness of these acts in the respective cultures (see Brown and Levinson 1987:12, 16, 77-80, 228ff.). Secondly, even if a rating for R could have been obtained through ethnographic analysis, it would not have predicted the actual riskiness of the activity in the context of interaction. It is ultimately the participants themselves who negotiate the type of activity and the face risks involved in it in the context of actual interaction. The potentially face-threatening tasks embedded in the situations are thus not arranged in any predetermined rank order of seriousness from either subject's point of view, but are treated as interactional problems, the seriousness of which is subject to negotiation and reflected in the strategic behaviour of the two participants.

## 5.4 Recording and transcription

The data consist of two audio and videorecorded conversations (versions 1 and 2) based on each of the nine situations outlined above. The two versions were obtained by using a different pair of volunteer subjects each time. In the selection of the pairs of subjects for the recordings some background factors were taken into account for reasons of feasibility and cultural appropriateness. The age and sex of the subjects were taken into account so that in situations assessed as having low distance values, the speakers were also in reality of roughly the same age and the same sex. In recordings involving male - female interaction the situations always had a high distance relationship, and sometimes also a power differential.

The recordings took place in a room at the University of Brunei. Prior to the recording, each participant was given a role description, which s/he could study for an unlimited period. As the descriptions were not very long, this did not usually take more than ten minutes. After this the participants were left alone in the room and asked to act out the situation. The situations were thus recorded ad hoc without prior rehearsing. The students were also instructed to use the role description as a general basis for their own interpretation of the situation and were told not to worry about the details, but to change them if they wanted to. No time limit was given.

The length of the conversations varies from approximately 3 to 8 minutes. The conversations were transcribed using conventions outlined in appendix 1. The transcription reflects an analysis of the distribution of turns of speech between the interactants. A time-based definition of the conversational turn was used (see e.g. Bublitz 1988, Fiksdal 1990): turns and turn-change were seen as negotiated by the participants in the process of interaction. Elements which were seen as outside individual turns, such as listener feedback and long silences, were systematically recorded. The transcription also took account of extralinguistic features such as hesitations, corrections, laughter and pauses. Due to the complexity of the task, intonation patterns were not transcribed in detail, but a crude distinction was made between rising intonation (typical for some questions and expressions of uncertainty) and an unmarked falling intonation.

The videorecordings were used to support the transcription and to check interpretations during various stages of the analysis. No systematic analysis of nonverbal aspects of interaction was carried out, because the main interest of the study was on verbal aspects of face-work and because a detailed investigation of nonverbal behaviour would have required an entirely different system of transcription and analysis, which was outside the scope of the present study.

## 5.5 Summary

The data consist of eighteen NS-NNS conversations based on nine different simulated situations (see Table 1). The situations represented three different types of role relations between the participants: (i) symmetrical situations (-P) with low distance (-D), (ii) symmetrical situations with high distance (+D) and (iii) asymmetrical situations (+P) with relatively high distance (+D). The tasks involved three broad types of linguistic activities which were designed to be performed by the NNS participants. The tasks represented the following interactional bases:

1. X wants Y to do A.
2. A needs to be done.
3. Y did A, A bad for X.

In terms of traditional speech act categories, the tasks performed were expected to be realized as requests, invitations, offers, suggestions, proposals and complaints or challenges. For the three different role constellations, a simulated situation reflecting each of the three interactional bases was designed, giving a total of nine situations. Two recordings of each situation yield the 18 conversations comprising the data for the present study. Table 1 outlines the distribution of the 18 conversations in terms of the situational parameters (role relations and activity type represented by interactional base).

TABLE 1 Distribution of the data in relation to situational parameters.

SITUATIONAL PARAMETERS	BASE 1	BASE 2	BASE 3
symmetrical -P/-D	S1 (1 and 2)	S2 (1 and 2)	S3 (1 and 2)
symmetrical -P/+D	D1 (1 and 2)	D2 (1 and 2)	D3 (1 and 2)
asymmetrical +P/+D	A1 (1 and 2)	A2 (1 and 2)	A3 (1 and 2)

## 6 FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS

The analytic framework outlined below seeks to capture the dynamics of face-work by adopting a multidimensional pragmatic approach in which the management of face-threat is described in relation to conversational content and form at different levels of organization. The analysis seeks to describe what the participants say and do when they are negotiating a potentially face-threatening activity (e.g. dealing with a request or a complaint) and how they orient to and participate in the activity by making use of different conversational and linguistic resources. In this context the term *conversational activity* (Levinson 1979, Gumperz 1982, Goodwin and Goodwin 1992) is adopted to refer to the conversational events and acts that the participants engage in when making, for example, an invitation, request or complaint. Activities are goal-defined, socially constructed, bounded events with constraints on the participants' contributions and typical organizational patterns.

Following an established pattern of description, the analysis pays attention to both local and global aspects of discourse (see e.g. Linell and Luckman 1991:4). Local description focuses on conversational contributions (utterances, turns) in relation to immediately preceding and (anticipated and actual) following contributions. Conversely, description at the global level covers phenomena which are realized in longer stretches of talk, such as sequences, activities and topics. The negotiation of a face-threatening activity is described at three levels of organization: the levels of individual turns, conversational sequences and the face-threatening encounter. At the microlevel of conversational turns and utterances, the focus is on the illocutionary goals associated with a particular activity (e.g. making a request), the linguistic choices which can be seen to realize these goals and the ways in which the linguistic strategies interact with turn-taking. The second level consists of the sequences in which the face-threatening activity is negotiated, for example, a stretch of talk where a request is made and responded to. The global level of

overall organization involves the study of the patterns of action and development of topics in the course of the whole encounter. At the global level attention is paid to the ways that different organizational patterns reflect the negotiation of contextual assumptions, e.g. the purpose and goals of the conversation and the participants' mutual relations. While the three levels are not seen as distinct or independent, they are a useful starting point in the analysis since they enable a systematic focus on a range of conversational phenomena the scope of which may vary and make it possible to link the description of linguistic patterns with other patterns of organization.

Some conversational phenomena which are a central focus of the analysis clearly extend beyond any one of the three levels of organization, or may operate and be displayed in all three levels. Possible interactional asymmetries arising from the participants' different access to linguistic and sociocultural knowledge, for example, constrain patterns of conversational participation and may lead to difficulties and problems of communication at any level. There may be asymmetries in the ways that individual utterances are produced and interpreted, or in the ways that conversational activities or topics are developed. Thus the three levels of analysis merge in the actual description of the data and an important aspect of the description is to relate the observations on the local level to those which emerge at higher levels of organization.

## 6.1 Linguistic and interactional realization of goals

This section describes the microlevel linguistic and interactional resources with which face-threatening action can be expressed and the way these strategies operate in the interactive context of conversation. The units of analysis are the conversational utterances and turns in which the participants recognizably orient to some face-threatening activity at a particular point in discourse. At this level the analysis seeks to capture how the speakers introduce a particular activity into the conversation as a relevant topic and how they express the illocutionary goals associated with this activity, in other words how they make these goals recognizable (or accessible) and acceptable to the interlocutor through various linguistic strategies (Aston 1988).

The description of the linguistic patterns and strategies goes beyond the structural or functional properties of the utterance by linking the linguistic realization strategies with aspects of turn-taking and conversational participation. Through examining the negotiation of conversational turns, the analysis seeks to link the production of utterances with aspects of discourse regulation, e.g. monitoring the interlocutor's reactions (Faerch and Kasper 1984, Kasper 1989b). In this way it aims to capture the way in which utterances and actions are negotiated in the time-bound process of talk, and the way in which they structure patterns of participation in the conversation. The concepts and analytic distinctions described at the lowest level of analysis are summarized in Table 2.

TABLE 2 The analytic framework: realization of goals.

<p><b>MAKING GOALS ACCESSIBLE</b></p> <p>TYPES OF ILLOCUTIONS (e.g. <i>request, invitation, complaint</i>)</p> <p>SIGNALS FOR IDENTIFICATION</p> <p>A linguistic devices which indicate goal (e.g. speech act verb)</p> <p>B sequential clues (e.g. preceding utterance anticipates a request)</p> <p>C contextual signals (e.g. gestures, objects)</p>
<p><b>MAKING GOALS ACCEPTABLE</b></p> <p>TYPES OF STRATEGY</p> <p>A minimizing strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-weaken (mitigate) the force of the utterance</li> <li>-typically (but not exclusively) to avoid face-threat to other (e.g. negative politeness)</li> </ul> <p>B maximizing strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-strengthen (aggravate) the force of the utterance</li> <li>-typically (but not exclusively) to enhance face-support (e.g. positive politeness)</li> </ul> <p>TYPES OF MODIFICATION</p> <p>A internal modification</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-verbal/linguistic choices (lexical, syntactic, semantic)</li> <li>-level of directness (e.g. direct, conventionally or non-conventionally indirect)</li> <li>-non-verbal cues (e.g. tone of voice, intonation, gestures)</li> </ul> <p>B external modification</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-preparatory and/or supportive moves</li> </ul> <p>ORIENTATION TO FACE</p> <p>to support, protect or aggravate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- hearer's positive face / hearer's negative face</li> <li>- speaker's positive face / speaker's negative face</li> </ul>
<p><b>NEGOTIATION OF GOALS</b></p> <p>discourse regulation</p> <p>other-monitoring</p> <p>patterns of turn-taking and participation</p>

The utterances and groups of utterances (utterance complex) in which a face-threatening activity becomes relevant in the conversational context are described on three dimensions. Firstly, the ways in which the participants



make potentially face-threatening goals *accessible* or transparent at a particular point in interaction are examined. In pragmatic terms, the analysis aims to capture the *types of illocution* (e.g. *request, invitation*) which occur, and the *linguistic and interactional means* with which these illocutions are signalled (e.g. linguistic signalling devices such as a speech act verb). An illocution can be made transparent through specific verbal strategies, in other words linguistic (lexical, syntactic, semantic) choices, and through the use of non-verbal means (tone of voice, intonation, gestures, etc.). In some cases a particular illocutionary goal is not made linguistically explicit at all, but implied and inferred through various contextual signals, such as nonverbal resources available in the situational context and sequential aspects of the organization of talk (e.g. through preparatory moves). Secondly, the ways in which the illocution is made *acceptable* to the interlocutor are identified. These include strategies for modifying the strength or force of the utterance so that it might be received as less face-threatening. The types of strategies available can be described in terms of the ways that they either *minimize or maximize the illocutionary force* (Held 1989) of the utterance, in other words either mitigate or aggravate the strength with which for example a *request* or a *complaint* is expressed. In addition to identifying the type of strategy, the means for modifying the force of the utterance are examined.

Following Faerch and Kasper (1989), two types of modification are distinguished: *internal* and *external modification*. Internal modification refers to the ways in which the illocutionary force of an utterance may be modified (mitigated or aggravated) through lexical and syntactic devices within an utterance. External modification, on the other hand, refers to modification by means of supportive moves adjacent to the utterance. Particular attention is paid to the linguistic choices made and the level of directness of utterances. Directness is perceived as the degree of *illocutionary transparency* associated with an utterance, i.e. the relative ease of identifying its illocutionary point or goal (cf. Blum-Kulka 1987:133, see also Leech 1983:38). The degree of directness is not discussed in terms of discrete, classificatory categories, but rather as a relative and context-dependent feature of utterances. A distinction is made between conventional and non-conventional types of indirectness (see Blum-Kulka 1987, see also Searle 1975, Ervin-Tripp 1976). Finally, the ways in which utterances reflect *orientation to face* are discussed in terms of face-work strategies. Utterances may reflect orientation to one's own or the interlocutor's positive or negative face (strategies of positive or negative politeness) and a goal of enhancing or protecting face. Utterances may also be neutral with respect to face, or overtly threaten or aggravate negative or positive face (e.g. bald-on-record strategies) (Brown & Levinson 1987, Penman 1990). Brown and Levinson's (1987) categories of on-record and off-record politeness provide the basic framework for this description.

The strategies for expressing illocutions are not mutually exclusive. They may operate within one utterance or turn or across turns of speech, as the speaker adjusts his/her language to the reactions of the interlocutor. Thus, the third dimension of utterances which the analysis seeks to describe concerns the ways that the participants cooperate in bringing to focus some goals and how

they deal with them jointly through a reciprocal exchange of turns. In conversation the speakers are required to continually monitor each other's reactions and dynamically adjust their contributions on the basis of their assessment of current requirements. Linguistic expressions can thus be formed interactively; they may emerge through cooperative action as the speakers share the means and resources for expressing and interpreting goals.

A detailed study of the distribution of conversational turns is thus a necessary step in the attempt to identify when and how particular activities are introduced into the conversation and to examine the *participation framework* which the interactants establish in the course of the conversation (see Goodwin 1986, Bublitz 1988, Goodwin and Goodwin 1992). It is through negotiation of conversational turns that the interactants set the boundaries of conversational participation. Through an analysis of turn-taking behaviour it is thus possible to observe how the native and the nonnative participants cooperate and share the responsibility for initiating topics and activities to be discussed. Similarly, it is possible to examine how the participants negotiate *interactional control*: one of the speakers may, for example, noticeably inhibit the other speaker from fully participating in the activity, and thus adopt a dominant role in the interaction, which may then be reflected in the subsequent discourse and the outcome of the interaction. Patterns of conversational participation reflected in turn-taking behaviour are described in terms of the participant roles, i.e. the roles of speaker and listener which are negotiated in the course of the interaction and which reflect the distribution of interactional responsibility and possible patterns of interactional dominance.

## 6.2 Management of conversational activities

Beyond the micro-level of linguistic expressions and aspects of turn-taking behaviour, it is necessary to examine the ways in which patterns of negotiation build up conversational activities which emerge over a longer sequence of conversation and form action sequences or chains (Pomerantz 1978). Potentially face-threatening activities set up expectations concerning the way they should be handled, and in this way shape the organization of the conversation. They generally project some form of a response, and may also restrict the type of response to some extent (preference organization, see e.g. Levinson 1983, Pomerantz 1984a, Heritage 1989). For example, different responses to an invitation are accomplished in different ways, and the different ways of responding can be seen to be related to the need to maintain face. A face-supportive way of accepting an invitation is generally emphatic and makes use of maximizing strategies, whereas a rejection is often delayed, softened and justified by, for example, giving reasons for refusing. In this way all conversational activities have interactional consequences and affect the organization of the sequences in which they are embedded.

The unit of analysis is thus the phase of talk which (ideally) begins with the introduction of a particular face-threatening activity to be dealt with,

consists of the negotiation of the activity and its sequentially relevant response, and ends when an agreement is achieved in the negotiation and some arrangement for relevant future action is made. Such sequences are identifiable in discourse through the orientation of the speakers to the specific activity to be dealt with. The analytic distinctions used in the description of the sequential management of a potentially face-threatening activity are summarized in Table 3 below.

In the description of these sequences, attention is paid, first, to the ways in which actions are prepared with anticipatory sequences (pre-sequences), which guide the interlocutor towards a new activity in conversation. Secondly, observations are made on the ways that actions project particular types of reaction and response from the interlocutor. In this way the analysis aims to examine how the participants negotiate interpretations of the activity in focus and how they interpret the constraints which the activity sets for subsequent discourse. An invitation, for example, projects a limited set of responses: it sets up the expectation that it is accepted or turned down, and whatever follows an invitation in discourse will probably be interpreted in the light of this expectation. Thirdly, the analysis focuses on the kinds of sequences that the actions form, and seeks to find out whether paired structures such as request - compliance or invitation - acceptance (prototypical adjacency pairs) can be observed or whether the sequences take more complicated forms. Through identifying and describing such patterns of organization in the conversation, it is possible to examine how the concept of face and face-threat interacts with the ways that the activities emerge in the process of conversation.

TABLE 3 The analytic framework: management of the face-threatening activity.

PREPARING AND FOCUSING ON THE ACTIVITY	
PRE-SEQUENCES, ANTICIPATORY MOVES INSERTION SEQUENCES	
NEGOTIATING THE RESPONSE	
SEQUENTIAL PATTERNS FOR UTTERANCE AND RESPONSE e.g. paired organization (adjacency pairs), preference organization	
<i>First pair parts</i>	<i>Second pair parts</i>
	<i>preferred/dispreferred</i>
request	compliance/refusal
invitation	acceptance/ refusal
offer	acceptance/refusal
complaint	denial/admission
NEGOTIATING PROBLEMS AND IMPLICATIONS	
CORRECTIVE SEQUENCES e.g. meaning negotiation; 'repair' of face damage	

### 6.3 Overall organization

Table 4 outlines the aspects of organization which are examined at the most global level of analysis, that of the whole conversation. At the most global level of analysis the focus is on the overall development of the conversational event. Particular attention is paid to the exchanges at the beginning and end of the conversations, the development of participant relations and the patterns of participation and interactional control which provide the framework within which conversational topics and activities are negotiated.

The activities at conversational boundaries, openings and closings, are an important aspect of organization because they generally reflect the 'ambience' or the atmosphere in which the conversation takes place (Mey 1993:214). They also often show the participants' attempts to coordinate contextual assumptions. In opening sequences the participants create the context for further talk, they make manifest their contextual assumptions regarding, for example, their mutual relationship, and negotiate an initial domain of 'common ground' on the basis of which to continue. Openings are thus particularly important in interethnic second language conversations where shared background may be very limited. Closings, on the other hand, can be seen to reflect the participants' orientation to the outcome of the preceding discourse and their possible expectations for future interaction.

Conversational topics and activities are the content of the conversation, in other words, what is talked about. At the macro-level of analysis it is possible to focus on the ways topics develop and follow each other, and the kinds of chains which action patterns form. Topics which are face-threatening can be seen to form episodes in which the speakers deal with some *interactional problem* or *trouble* (cf. e.g. Jefferson 1988). By describing such episodes, it is possible to follow the process of negotiation which starts with opening up the topic, focuses on the problematic activity and deals with possible problems and/or arrangements arising from it, and finally leads to the closing of the face-threatening topic.

At the global level attention can also be paid to the ways in which the participants negotiate contextual assumptions throughout the encounter. Attention can be paid to the development of interpersonal relations: the distance between the participants, for example, may shift in the course of the encounter. Similarly, various interactional *asymmetries* arising from the participants' different access to the language used and different background knowledge in relation to sociocultural and situational factors (e.g. institutional role in +P situations) may influence the overall patterns of *interactional control*, so that one participant may come out as the dominant party, and may appear to achieve his/goals better than the other. At the global level of analysis observations can be made on the ways that locally emerging asymmetries influence the development of the conversation.

Apart from the opening and closing sequences, global aspects of the conversations are not dealt with separately in the following chapters, but will be examined in connection with the local achievement of conversational

organization. Thus the analysis aims to reveal how global phenomena may become salient in the actual process of interaction and how the participants call upon them to make sense of the current activity.

TABLE 4 The analytic framework: global aspects of organization.

CONVERSATIONAL BOUNDARIES
OPENING AND CLOSING SEQUENCES
TOPIC DEVELOPMENT
CHAINS OF TOPICS AND ACTIVITIES
NEGOTIATION OF CONTEXT
PARTICIPANT RELATIONS INTERACTIONAL ASYMMETRIES PATTERNS OF CONTROL

## 7 MANAGEMENT OF FACE-THREAT: REALIZATION OF GOALS

The focus of this chapter is on the turns which introduce the main face-threatening task in the conversation and on the strategies used by the speakers to convey the central illocutionary goals associated with the task in each situation.

### 7.1. Realization strategies

This section examines the strategies employed by the participants for introducing and expressing the particular face-threatening actions elicited by the situation. The description focuses on the linguistic and/or contextual devices used for making a particular illocutionary point *accessible* and *acceptable* to the hearer. First, the types of pragmatic acts which realize the central illocutionary goals to be expressed and the ways in which these acts are manifest in the conversation are examined and described. Secondly, linguistic strategies for minimizing or maximizing the illocutionary force of the utterance (or utterance complex) are identified. Thirdly, linguistic means of modifying the illocutionary force are described, paying particular attention to the strategies of directness/indirectness displayed and the face-work strategies that the linguistic choices seem to reflect.

#### 7.1.1 Symmetrical low distance situations

The situations in the symmetrical low distance category do not involve a built-in power factor but the participants are expected to approach the interaction on an equal footing. In addition to this, the social relationship between them is

assumed to be one of relatively low distance. In S1 the participants are two female students who have become acquainted and formed a friendship during a summer course at the University. In S2 two male speakers, a Brunei graduate student and an English teacher, have become friends. S3 is similar to S1: two female students share an apartment on campus and have formed a close relationship. On the basis of the social relationship, the interaction could be expected to reflect strategies which emphasize closeness, solidarity, and mutual cooperation (Scollon and Scollon 1981).

### 7.1.1.1 S1: request

The main task in S1 consists of two related *requests*, one for paying back a loan and the other for returning a pair of earrings also borrowed by the NS from the NNS. In this case the NNS is thus expected to perform an act which threatens the hearer's positive and negative face. Her negative face is threatened in the sense that she will be expected to respond by for instance apologizing (an act threatening her own face), and committing herself to the social act of returning the borrowed items. Her positive face is also under threat as she might be thought of as a forgetful and inconsiderate person. The linguistic management of the act thus requires a careful consideration of factors associated with the weight of the imposition and its implications on the interpersonal relationship between the participants.

The transactional goal of the NNS is to get the message across to the NS and reach an arrangement whereby the NS agrees to return the money and earrings. The interactional goals, from the NNS's point of view, comprise conveying the message in such a way that she will assure the NS's cooperation and will not cause unintended or unnecessary offense. The two goals are, at least to some extent, in competition (Leech 1983:104): if the NNS decides to fulfill the transactional goal in an efficient manner, she will risk the attainment of the interactional goals. The speaker is thus required to weigh the goals and possible means for achieving her goals against the interactional balance based on solidarity and mutual friendship.

The two conversational versions of this situation display some similarity in terms of the strategies adopted by the NNS to accomplish the task. In both cases the strategies reflect a high level of indirectness. This is seen for instance in the way in which the impositions are anticipated and prepared in the conversation. In S1(1) the non-native speaker opens up the face-threatening topic by asking a question with a preparatory function and mentioning the earrings. This can be seen as a type of preparatory move (Faerch and Kasper 1989), i.e. a move which prepares ground for another, more specifically impositive move.

S1(1), lines 18-21

NNS: Umm \* there is one particular thing, er, I would like to ask you about.

NS: Yea?

NNS: Will you erm, this is regarding the ear-rings.

The NNS then goes on to specify which earrings she is talking about, and although she has some difficulty in this task, she manages to state that the NS had borrowed the earrings from her. However, even though the initial preparatory move clearly anticipates a question or a request, and thus conveys an intention to impose on the NS, the NNS does not make the request or question explicit at any point in the talk. Instead, the NS infers the problem from her initial turn and asks a question which makes it possible for the NNS to avoid stating the imposition directly:

S1(1), line 33

NS: Have I not returned them to you?

In response to the question, the NNS continues her very indirect strategy by giving a vague and non-committal answer, which in politeness terms is an off-record hint:

S1(1), lines 34-35

NNS: Well, I don't know but, er, either you borrowed them or er I've misplaced them somewhere

It might be claimed that the NNS's difficulty to perform the actual request is due to her inability as a learner to find suitable means for performing it. However, it seems that this does not fully explain her behaviour. The above response violates the Gricean maxims of quantity and quality: the NNS is saying less than she means and is not being entirely truthful; it has already been established in earlier talk that the NS did borrow the earrings (lines 25-31). Lack of competence does not explain why she departs from a conversational fact already established and resorts to such vagueness - a simple negative response would have been linguistically much easier to produce.

An alternative explanation can be sought in the face implications of her utterances. It seems that the NNS interprets the imposition as a relatively serious one, and therefore prefers to avoid expressing it explicitly. By doing this she avoids any risk of being interpreted as making an accusation or complaint, or some other face-damaging act. She also gives the hearer more options for choosing her response strategy. Instead of directly asking or telling her to return the earrings and thus putting pressure on her to either comply or to challenge her, she gives the NS the option to politely offer to find them, which is precisely what the NS does (line 45).

The NNS's response to the offer by the NS to check her bag provides some further evidence which suggests that the NNS's highly implicit strategy is indeed intended as an implicit directive. The first part of the response accepts the offer and the second part, a want statement, confirms that the offer is in accordance with the NNS's implicit transactional goal. The statement also contains internal markers which are oriented towards minimizing the imposition, note especially the use of *just*:

S1(1), lines 46-47

NNS: okay okay \*\* I just thought er \* I just want you to er \* to look around



A very similar strategy for dealing with the problem of the earrings is adopted by the NNS in the second version of this situation, S1(2). Again the topic is taken up in a preparatory move, but a direct expression of a request or even a question is avoided. Similarly also, it is the NS who initiates the question of not having returned the earrings. The NNS avoids making explicit the directive to return the earrings, and eventually it is the NS who offers to return them. The examples below show the way the act is jointly negotiated by the speakers.

S1(2), lines 63-65, 79-90, 95-96

NNS: okay \*\* and \*\* another thing\*

NS: oh

NNS: just regarding er my \*\* earrings (pair of earrings)

NS: what and \* did I borrow them or something? \*\*

NNS: yes er \*\* last night

NS: I borrowed them

NNS: yes

NS: oh

NNS: it was last night

NS: and I've not given them back

NNS: yes \* when we went (er

NS: ah let's see)

NNS: out to see the movie

NS: what have I got on now \*\*\* are these yours?

NNS: No

NS: Well I'm sorry \* I'll try and remember to bring them next time I see you

The second face-threatening topic (money which the NS had borrowed from the NNS) is also taken up by the NNS in both S1(1) and S1(2). In both cases a similar preparatory move opens up the topic:

S1(1), lines 50-52

NNS: --- Er \*\* another thing is about erm what is it, the earrings and the money, this other thing, the 40 dollars \*\*\* that you borrowed from me

S1(2), lines 26-28

NNS: --- so \*\* er \* actually (inaudible) er \*\*\* do you still remember last time er \*\* ehm \*\* that you \*\* mm \*\* when you asked me to \* lend you the forty dollars?

Both examples show that the speakers have some difficulty in formulating the turn. Both appear halting and contain several false starts, pauses, and hesitations. It seems unlikely that the difficulty arises solely from lack of fluency or specific linguistic problems. A plausible explanation for at least some of the difficulty would seem to lie in the social difficulty of the topic and the face risks involved in it. As was seen above, the topic of requesting the return of the earrings was handled in very indirect terms, and the same is true for the second imposition dealing with money. In both cases the turns produced by the NNS are vague and somewhat non-committal, thus indicating

a desire to avoid making an explicit on-record request, as the following examples show.

S1(1), line 54  
NNS: Maybe you paid that?

S1(1), line 65  
NNS: It's either I forget things or I don't... (laugh)

S1(2), lines 40-41  
NS: you mean I haven't paid you back  
NNS: yes\* but er \*\*\* do you still remember that?

In S1(1) no explicit request is made. However, the utterance on line 54 does seem to convey the illocutionary goal that the NNS wants the money returned. A closer look at the linguistic strategies used shows how this is achieved. The utterance could be described as a non-conventionally indirect *request* or *proposal*. The NNS's contribution is syntactically a statement, but a rising intonation pattern indicates a question with a suggestive function. In terms of face-work, the utterance is an interesting mix of negative and positive politeness strategies. The use of an indirect, hedged question or statement to perform e.g. a request is a common negative politeness strategy (see Brown and Levinson 1987:131). At the same time the utterance appears to imply an optimistic and polite assumption, i.e. that the NS has returned the money, and there is no further need to ask for it. The lexical modifier *maybe*, however, adds an uncertainty factor to the statement, and hence contributes to its interpretation as a question. While *maybe* is often used as a typical negative politeness mitigator or softener of impositions (see Brown and Levinson 1987, Holmes 1984), in this context it has a different effect. It seems that the optimistic assumption that the utterance implies is to some extent reduced by *maybe*. In this way, by weakening rather than emphasizing the optimistic and polite assumption, the speaker implicitly makes a less polite one, i.e. that the money has not been returned. This interpretation is supported by the negotiation that follows: the NS eventually apologizes and agrees to return the money (see section 8.1.1).

In S1(2) the request for money is made indirectly in the form of a need statement which is modified internally by two hedges *you know* and *I think*:

S1(2), line 39  
NNS: You know \* I think \*\* I need that forty dollars now

The utterance seems to display an off-record strategy of politeness which can be described as a relatively strong hint. In its hedged form it is something of an understatement and a violation of the quantity maxim: the speaker does not say she wants the hearer to return the money, but instead gives a legitimate reason for making such a request. The indirectness can, however, be seen to be conventionalized, at least to some extent (see e.g. Blum-Kulka 1987): the semantic content is such that it is closely linked to making requests. Reasons and justifications are, for example, frequently used as supportive grounding for requests (see Faerch and Kasper 1989:239). Here, however, the need statement

stands on its own rather than being adjacent to some 'head-act' of request, and it seems that the mere mention of a supportive reason for asking for the money serves as the request itself. The speaker also uses her voice very softly, which further mitigates the underlying directive force. The strategy thus seems to be highly protective of the addressee's negative face: the obligation inherent in a more direct request for the money is carefully avoided and the hearer is given a high degree of option.

In both S1(1) and S1(2) the speakers take up the topic again towards the end of the conversation and attempt to repair possible face damage caused by the earlier exchanges. In both cases the speakers show awareness of the face damage by expressing doubt about their own grounds for making the imposition: they refer to the possibility of having made a mistake. In this way the speakers appear to reduce the obligation on the interlocutors, thus minimizing the face-threat involved after the event.

S1(1), line 73

NNS: --- but, **but** I'm worried that I might be wrong

S1(1), lines 79-80

NNS: But please don't make me feel a bit \*\* guilty. So what I mean erm  
\*\* er \* I mean \* there's no proof.

S1(2), lines 97-98

NNS: mmm \* yes it's okay \*\*\* but er \*\* are you sure that you-you have them?

### 7.1.1.2 S2: offer/proposal

Situation S2 was designed to elicit an *offer* or a *proposal* from the NNS. Offers and proposals are often characterized as 'polite' or hearer-supportive acts rather than face-threatening ones because they are oriented towards the interests of the addressee (see e.g. Leech 1983, Haverkate 1988). In this sense the transactional and interactional goals of the speaker could be seen to coincide (Leech 1983:104): to perform an action which is beneficial to the hearer can be seen as face-supportive and thus also supportive of the relationship.

In this situation the NNS has heard about the NS's interest in finding somebody to teach him Malay. At the same time the NNS has a plan of his own to present to the NS: he is planning to give private tutoring to another person who needs classes in Malay, and he thinks of the possibility of teaching the two young men simultaneously. The task for the NNS is to present this plan to the NS. In this case the proposal is at least to some extent beneficial to the NS, as his need could be fulfilled as a result of the arrangements made in the conversation. However, the action also involves some face-threat: it impinges on the hearer's (the NS's) negative face in that it requires some response from him and restricts his freedom of action. If the NS accepts the proposal he will have to commit himself to the arrangement, and if he rejects it, he may be considered as uninterested or uncooperative and may threaten the NNS's positive face.

In both the conversations based on this situation an offer/proposal is made and the pattern for making the act recognizable is in part similar to the request patterns discussed above. The topic is taken up first in a preparatory move and the offer/proposal is made some turns later. Both the preparatory moves and the utterances conveying the act of offering are presented in the examples below.

S2(1), lines 11-12, 25

NNS: --- now, regarding to er, you are interested in learning Malay?

---

NNS: er), in some way, maybe, I can, I can help you

S2(2), lines 1-2, 8-10

NS: I understand that, er, you have been trying to find er a a teacher to teach you Malay

---

NNS: So, er, if you wish (inaud.) er erm I can do, I can teach you Malay because I'm going to teach only er in the next three months, so, what do you think of this (laugh)

The strategies for making the initial proposal show some similarity: in both cases a simple statement *I can help you/teach you* forms the core of the offer. In S2(1) this core proposal is modified internally by lexical devices with a downtoning (Holmes 1984) effect: *in some way* and *maybe*. These serve to minimize the force of the utterance. In S2(2) two supporting moves modify the proposal externally: first a preparatory conditional clause *if you wish* and after the core, a *grounder* (see Edmondson 1981, Faerch and Kasper 1989), giving a reason for making the offer. S2(2) is also followed by a question inviting a reaction from the NS.

In both cases the strategies appear somewhat inappropriate for the situation. As was pointed out above, the offer/proposal here is potentially beneficial to both parties, and in this sense a 'polite' act in this context. It might, then, be expected that for a successful outcome, the mutual benefit and shared goals would be asserted or even emphasized in expressing the act. A hearer-supportive way of making an offer would generally be more optimistic and emphatic and would convey that the speaker's wants are at least in part similar to the addressee's wants (Leech 1983:109, Brown and Levinson 1987:101). As the relationship between the participants does not involve any great distance nor a power factor, it would also be possible to emphasize mutual closeness and common interests to enhance the relationship. However, the strategies selected by the non-native speakers realize the offer/proposal in a weak and unemphatic form in both cases. Instead of making their intentions clear and unambiguous the speakers seem to prefer to express them in vague and equivocal terms: the modifiers used (e.g. *in some way, maybe*) are of a softening type, reducing rather than strengthening the force of the offer and thus minimizing its effect.

The reasons for this behaviour are not easy to detect. In addition to linguistic problems which may discourage the non-native participant from taking a more emphatic position, it may be that the NNS participants interpret the imposition as more weighty than anticipated. They may interpret the

situation as involving risk to the NS's face, or they may perceive the interpersonal distance as relatively high. The vagueness and indirectness may thus serve as a communication strategy oriented to both problems in selecting appropriate means to express one's goal and problems of a more interpersonal nature arising from the face-threatening situation.

In S2(1) the offer is particularly weak because the NNS does not repeat, confirm or reformulate it even later in the conversation. The interpretation of this strategy as inadequate to communicate the intention of offering in this context seems to be supported by the fact that the NS eventually takes up the topic and asks a question about the NNS's intentions:

S2(1), lines 52-53

NS: Uhu. So, so what would you be offering me then? Would you be offering me your services?

It seems, then, that the NNS has not been able to make his goal transparent or accessible to the NS, who is required to explicitly solicit the relevant information from him.

In S2(2) the offer is reformulated in a later turn but again in a weak form: it occurs as a second part of an utterance where the NNS first gives supportive grounds and then offers to do his best. The offer is very unemphatic and even ambiguous: the supportive moves probably intended as grounds for the offer are not such that the NS interlocutor would readily recognize them as preparation for an offer.

S2(2), lines 20-22

NNS: So I think it's (inaudible) since in studying Malay in in, er, in university and also in er secondary school and I'll try my best to teach you.

### 7.1.1.3 S3: complaint/criticism

S3 deals with a situation where the NNS has grounds for making a *complaint* or *criticizing* the NS: the NS frequently gives parties in the flat shared by the two participants, and is planning to give another one although she has not informed the NNS yet. The NNS, however, is aware of the plan and not happy about it. A complaint or criticism poses a threat to both the hearer's negative and positive face. On the one hand, it restricts the interlocutor's freedom by requiring a response and by putting pressure on her to engage in some action which would threaten her own face (e.g. agreeing to change her plan or volunteering some repair or apologizing). On the other hand, it threatens the addressee's positive face by suggesting that s/he has done, or is about to do, something that the speaker does not approve of. The interactional goal of maintaining comity and the face-threatening transactional goal of making a complaint are thus in conflict.

In both of the conversations based on this situation the problematic topic (party) turns out to be initiated by the NS, who makes a request. In S3(1) the NS asks the NNS if she can borrow her stereo for the party and in S3(2) she asks if the NNS has any objection to her having the party in the shared

apartment. In both cases, however, the non-native participant does convey her goal of expressing unhappiness about the NS's plans in her response to the NS-initiated request. The non-native participants in the two different versions of the situations select different types of strategies for this purpose.

In S3(1) the NNS first asks a preparatory question to establish when the party was going to be held, and then simply states that there is a problem about the plan. After the NS's short response, she appears to start a directive (*you have to, er*) but then self-repairs her utterance so that it takes a form of a statement which makes explicit what the 'problem' mentioned in the previous turn refers to. The two turns together thus jointly convey the complaint.

S3(1), lines 8-11

NNS: Oh, \*\*\* that's a problem

NS: Oh

NNS: you have to, er, you've never mentioned before you're going to have, you're going to have a party.

The strategy with which the complaint is expressed is quite direct: reference is made both to the action causing dissatisfaction and to the interlocutor who is responsible for the action. The utterance could thus be characterized as an explicit complaint (Olshtain and Weinbach 1987, 1993). Further, apart from the initial *oh* and the pause, the utterance is not mitigated by any softening strategies.

In later turns the NNS repeats the complaint and gives justification and grounds for it in several supportive moves: she mentions her need to finish her work, the need to do it in the apartment, and the importance of the work and her scholarship as supporting justification (lines 18, 20, 23-25). She finally makes a request asking the NS to change her plan, and supports the request in a subsequent turn by repeating her justification once again:

S3(1), lines 30-31, 34

NNS: Can't you make another, er, can't you arrange it for another day?

---

NNS: I **really** have to finish my work for tomorrow

The form of the request can be described as a *query preparatory*, i.e. a conventionally indirect request which questions or states the 'preparatory condition' for H's doing the action desired (see Searle 1975:71-72, see also Blum-Kulka 1987). Here the NNS's question strongly implies that the NS should be able to make a new arrangement. This strategy has been reported to be the most widely used request category in certain contexts, mostly contexts in which the face-risk is relatively low (see e.g. House and Kasper 1981, Faerch and Kasper 1989).

In terms of the politeness framework, the utterance displays a relatively direct on-record strategy of negative politeness, mitigated only by the modal verb *can*. Its directness is further increased by the negation which appears to reduce the optionality of the request from the hearer's point of view. Thus the request contains few elements which would minimize its force. The negative question also gives it a strong element of persuasion, even obligation (cf.

Thomas 1990): it requires an explicit response and appears to constrain the type of response by putting pressure on the addressee to respond affirmatively.

The non-native speaker's strategies in this conversation thus do not seem to be primarily oriented towards protecting the native speaker addressee's positive or negative face, but rather protecting her own negative face. She resists agreement to the NS's original request, because agreement would restrict her own options. The excessive grounding and justification appears to serve a defensive purpose, whereby the NNS tries to argue the appropriateness of her position and thus protect her own negative face against the threat that agreeing to the party would impose on her freedom of action.

The conversation in S3(2) takes a different form from S3(1). As was mentioned above, the topic of the party is introduced by the NS, who takes it up in a preparatory turn and then makes a request asking the NNS to agree to her plan. The request is softened with various mitigating devices, e.g. conventionally indirect forms, such as *I was wondering* and *would you agree*, and a disarmer, *I know you've got a lot of studying to do*. In this conversation the NNS does not express her own point of view through a complaint or criticism. Instead, she conveys her attitude in her turn responding to the NS's request: her response strategy is a very direct bald-on-record refusal. The following example shows the NS-initiated request and the NNS's response.

S3(2), lines 14-18

NS: Well, erm, I was wondering whether it would be possible to give a party in our apartment tomorrow night \* and I know you've got a lot of studying to do but would you agree \* to give a party?

NNS: Course not.

In subsequent turns the NNS continues her direct strategy by refusing to give in to the NS's various attempts at persuading her to change her mind or even to compromise. Her response is repeatedly a blunt *no* or *course not* (e.g. lines 29, 37, 39, 42). In comparison with the NS's various negative politeness strategies in performing the request and trying to persuade the NNS, the NNS's direct bald-on-record strategies give the impression of inflexibility and do not show any indication of her paying attention to the NS's face wants. Interestingly, the politeness pattern that results from this is identical to a pattern found in some asymmetrical situations, where the person with power characteristically has the right to be direct and use bald-on-record strategies, but the person in the subordinate role is expected to be deferential and use off-record and negative politeness strategies (Scollon and Scollon 1981:179). The non-native participant thus claims interactional control and power through the use of highly direct, bald-on-record strategies which are not in line with the tentative and deferential approach taken by her interlocutor.

The asymmetry in the strategies used in this case has consequences for the way the conversation develops: it almost evolves into an argument towards the end (see sections 8.1.3 and 9.2.1 for discussion). In this encounter the NNS's goal of protecting her own face wants clearly takes priority over any other goals, which are sacrificed for the sake of satisfying her own needs.

## 7.1.2 Symmetrical high distance situations

Situations D1, D2 and D3 differ from the symmetrical situations discussed above in that they are based on the assumption of a greater social distance. In D1 two students meet for the first time in a local coffee bar, in D2 a visiting student and a postgraduate student meet by chance in the lounge of a student hostel, and in D3 a student approaches a stranger whom he has seen causing damage to his car. On the basis of the social relationship alone, the interaction would thus be expected to reflect a mutual assumption of deference and reluctance to impose on each other's territory (Brown and Levinson 1987, Scollon and Scollon 1981). The central task in the situation, however, interacts with the social relationship in affecting the approach that the participants take.

### 7.1.2.1 D1: invitation

In D1 the task that the NNS is expected to perform consists of an invitation to a party which the NNS is arranging for some student friends. There is an ulterior reason for the invitation: the NNS hopes that the NS might play the guitar in his party. Hence the pragmatic act expected is not necessarily a straightforward 'polite' act such as an *invitation* (Leech 1983), but might be seen as having the combined force of requesting and inviting, or alternatively as a hybrid between the two. Nevertheless, the central illocutionary point is to get the hearer to comply to something, and in this sense the act carries a directive force (Searle 1976).

In Leech's (1984:104) terms, an invitation involves illocutionary goals which coincide with interactional goals: the goal of an invitation is 'courteous' in that it is generally polite to invite people to e.g. parties. An invitation can thus be seen as an act which is in some sense beneficial for the recipient. However, an invitation also imposes on the hearer's negative face by restricting his freedom of action: it requires either an affirmative or negative response. Further, an invitation places some pressure on the interlocutor to accept the invitation: a 'preferred' response to an invitation is acceptance (see e.g. Levinson 1983). If the interlocutor chooses to decline the invitation ('dispreferred' response), he risks threatening the positive face of the person doing the inviting.

In both versions of D1, the potentially face-threatening topic of the party is taken up in a preparatory turn which paves the way for the invitation, expressed in a subsequent turn.

D1(1), lines 25-30, 37

NNS: --- I'm - I'm a student of Management studies at the \* University of Brunei Darussalam

NS: ah yes?

NNS: so we have made the arrangement to \*\* have the informal party \* but \*\*\* but now we don't have so er \* a person that can play guitar and sing \* (songs

---

NNS: Are you, do you have time?



D1(2), lines 54-59

NNS: Is lucky to meet you here because I think on \*\* Friday evening I have an informal party. I invite my friends, er some of these are UBD students, and others from my family, so, so I decide to invite you to my party

NS: Oh that's very nice (of you

NNS: So you) please do come.

In D1(1) the speaker (the NNS) uses the preparatory moves to introduce himself and announce his plan to hold a party. He also gives a justification or reason for inviting the NS by pointing out that the organizers do not have anybody to play the guitar and sing in the party. The mention of the reason both places on record that it is in the NNS's interest to get the NS to come, and serves as a preparatory hint at the subsequent act of invitation. The subsequent turn expresses the actual invitation in conventionally indirect terms by means of a *query preparatory* type of question (Blum-Kulka 1987): the NNS does not explicitly ask the NS to come to his party, but enquires about the NS's ability to come, thus paying attention to the NS's possible objections to coming. The main motivation for such a strategy would seem to lie in the desire to protect the NS's negative face: the utterance conveys a high degree of optionality by not assuming that the NS is available and by making it easy for him to decline the invitation on the basis of previous arrangement or lack of time. The approach taken by the NNS thus seems to be an example of a deferential negative politeness strategy. The use of this strategy suggests that he interprets the act as a request involving some threat to the NS's negative face, rather than an invitation supportive of his positive face.

The expression of the invitation in D1(2) takes a slightly different form. As in D1(1), the preparatory turn first gives a general announcement concerning the party, but in a more direct way. The invitation itself is made explicit, albeit in an unidiomatic way, by means of an illocutionary force indicating device (IFID): the NNS uses the actual speech act verb (*so I decide to invite you*). In a subsequent turn, the invitation is rephrased with an imperative statement which is modified internally by the lexical softener *please* and the more emphatic 'booster' *do* (Holmes 1984).

An imperative is considered a positively polite way of making an act beneficial to the hearer, such as an invitation (see Brown and Levinson 1987:142, 229, Leech 1983:104, 109). It does not emphasize optionality, but puts pressure on the addressee to accept the invitation, which would be the polite thing to do in a context where it can be expected that it is in the addressee's interest to accept it. The emphatic *do* further strengthens the force of the invitation. Thus in this conversation the act is expressed as less of an imposition on the addressee's negative face, and more as a mutually beneficial act supportive of both speakers' positive face.

#### 7.1.2.2 D2: offer/proposal

In D2 the non-native participant is expected to *offer* assistance to the NS. The NNS overhears a conversation in which the NS talks about needing some help

with translating a document. The NNS has some knowledge of the language involved (Dusun) and thus has a reason to offer some assistance. The transactional goals are thus related to the expression of willingness to help, and to making some arrangement to solve the NS's problem. As was pointed out above, an offer can be seen as an act which involves both costs and benefits for both participants. The benefits of the arrangement seem to lie on the NS's side, but in making an offer, the NNS would also gain by appearing helpful and considerate. In this sense the transactional goals would seem to mainly coincide with the interactional goal of comity, i.e. protecting both speakers' positive face. However, offers may also have face-threatening consequences by putting pressure on the hearer to accept whatever is proposed. In this case the possibility of face-threat is also increased because of the interpersonal distance involved.

The two versions of this situation deal with the imposition in remarkably similar ways. In both cases, as in D1 above, the topic is initiated by the NNS in a turn which looks like a preparatory move anticipating an offer. In neither conversation, however, an explicit offer is expressed by the NNS. Instead, the activity of the NNS giving help to the NS is negotiated jointly and turns into a joint proposal, which is initiated by the NS. In both cases the NS requests or proposes cooperation and the NNS subsequently offers help. The way in which the proposal becomes explicit through joint action is illustrated in the extracts below.

D2(1), lines 1-3, 9-14, 19-24

NNS: Hello. \*\* I er, I heard you you talk-talking to your friend just now about something, you need information on Borneo, erm you're doing some research on the anthropology of Borneo.

NS: -- are you from Borneo?

NNS: yes, I'm from Borneo and in fact, that er, \* I know some of the Dusun language.

NS: Could you just have a look at this article for me? Just a quick look and see if you can follow --

NS: Oh. Well maybe if you could help me translate this article and if you need any help on the courses you're doing I could I could maybe help (you

NNS: Yea), yea

NS: If you don't mind.

NNS: Uhu. So we could exchange some informations.

D2(2) lines 3-5, 22-26, 37-41

NNS: Well I'm new around here but I couldn't help \* hearing your conversation, er something to do with, er,\* Dusun? Is that right? Am I right?

NS: Well perhaps we could do two things. If I showed you the article you could \*\* tell me if it is in Dusun...

NNS: ah sure

NS: ...and then perhaps you could er \* perhaps you could translate it

NNS: ...but if you, if you well if you show me the article

NS: (well look ...

NNS: maybe I could help)

NS: ...I'll bring the article to you and we could perhaps go through it together. --

The strategic and linguistic choices in the two conversations are also remarkably similar. A positive politeness strategy of emphasizing cooperation appears to be adopted by both speakers in both conversations, although some negative politeness strategies are also used. The positive politeness strategy is manifested, for example, by the use of inclusive *we*: *so we could exchange some informations* (D2(1), line 24), *well perhaps we could do two things* (D2(2), line 22) and *I'll bring the article to you and we could perhaps go through it together* (D2(2), lines 40-41). A similar strategy of conveying cooperation is apparent in the way in which the speakers establish an arrangement whereby both participants benefit. This is achieved through an explicit assertion of reciprocity, as in *well maybe if you could help me --- I could maybe help you* (D2(1), lines 19-21). The emphasis on cooperation and joint action is also clearly illustrated in D2(2), where the two speakers' utterances overlap and are closely latched together when they make a joint proposal (lines 37-41).

Negative politeness strategies are also displayed in both the native and non-native speaker's turns. The native speaker in D2(1), for example, modifies her request for help with internal modifiers, such as *could*, minimizes the weight of the imposition by asking the NNS to *just have a look, just a quick look* (instead of *translate*) and further mitigates the act with the phrase *if you don't mind*. The NS in D2(2) also modifies his request with *could* and also with *perhaps*. The non-native speakers use similar patterns, for instance, *could* (D2(1), line 24) and *maybe I could* (D2(2), line 39).

In brief, the main concern of the speakers appears to be the joint protection of each other's positive face wants, which is displayed in the overt emphasis on cooperation and reciprocity. At the same time, the threat which the proposal poses towards the negative face of both parties is also acknowledged and various linguistic mitigating devices are used.

### 7.1.2.3 D3: complaint

The third situation in this category, D3, deals with a relatively serious complaint: the NNS is expected to confront the NS, whom he has seen damage his car in a car park. The imposition that the NNS is expected to make is a serious one, involving high cost to both participants: the NNS may be interpreted as making an accusation which he has to support with some evidence, and the NS is under pressure to admit guilt, explain his action, and provide compensation. The illocutionary acts which might be expected from the NNS to reach his transactional goals range from *complaints* or *challenges* to *accusations*. The NNS is faced with the task of seeking compensation for the damage he has suffered and persuading the NS to admit causing the damage and to take some action to repair it. The central goals of face-work in this context are associated with minimizing the seriousness of the imposition in order to secure some cooperation and make it possible to reach some arrangement. There is a high degree of conflict between the transactional goal

of making the complaint and the interactional goals associated with maintaining cooperation, which would seem to require a rather careful handling of the imposition if a successful outcome is to be reached.

In the two conversations based on the situation the main act is taken up in similar ways. In both cases the NNS initiates and prepares the topic of the complaint by establishing that the 4-wheel drive which did the damage to his car belongs to the person to whom he is talking:

D3(1), lines 1-2, 8-10

NNS: Hello, I'd like to ask you whether you drive a car, the car with \* diplomatic plates.

NS: -- \* I would like to, just - to like to know - just like to enquire whether you're the one who's driving \*\* the car (5 sec) driving the Land Cruiser?

D3(2), line 10

NNS: er is it you \* own the \* er old Land Cruiser?

In D3(1) the statement of the problem follows some turns later, and is in fact elicited by the NS:

D3(1), lines 18-23

NS: Well (laugh)

(7 sec)

NS: Have you got a problem?

NNS: Yes, er, I (5 sec) I have have a scratch on my father's Mercedes car and, I believe it was caused by your Land Cruiser.

It seems that in this conversation the NNS is having serious difficulty in expressing the face-threatening illocution. The lengthy pauses indicate that he is reluctant to state the problem or is having difficulty in finding appropriate means for doing it. Also, he does not initiate the problem until the NS prompts him to do so. When he does, however, his turn appears quite well-formed and considered. He uses a strategy of negative politeness: he states the problem on record by coming straight to the point, but mitigates it by using somewhat formal language (e.g. *I believe*). He also impersonalizes the complaint by using the passive (*it was caused by*) and avoiding direct reference to the addressee (*your land cruiser* rather than *you*). The turn is formed in such a way that it gives the hearer some option to deny the implicit accusation; the speaker does not state that he knows it was the NS who did the damage. He does not in fact provide any support for his complaint until later, when he actually admits he saw the incident. In this case the NNS thus opts for an indirect approach, which would seem to be motivated by a desire to protect both the addressee's and his own face. By impersonalizing the imposition and giving options to the NS, he avoids a direct confrontation and simultaneously protects his own positive self-image by not appearing confrontational and aggressive.

The negotiation of a solution to the problem in D3(1) is initiated by the native speaker, who first asks the NNS to state what he wants to do (line 37-38), and later suggests sharing the repair costs (lines 62-63). The non-native appears to be reluctant to make further impositions: he avoids responding to the NS's

attempt to elicit some form of proposal (see lines 40-41), and does not take the initiative later in the conversation either (see section 7.2.3 below).

In D3(2) the NNS initiates the complaint immediately after the response to his initial question. He also uses a negative politeness strategy and appears to give the hearer some options by softening his utterance with the modifier *I think*. His approach, however, is noticeably more direct than the NNS's in D3(1): he directly refers to the action causing his complaint and also makes explicit that he knows who is responsible.

D3(2), lines 13-14

NNS: ah I think er \*\* I think you \*\* you scrape er my \* my my car \*\* in the \* parking lot this mor - this afternoon

In a later turn the NNS expresses a follow-up the complaint and requests the NS to repair his car. He does this in a direct way using a bald-on-record strategy, a *want statement* without any explicit softening devices. The hesitation phenomena, which may have some softening effect, may also be simply an indication of some difficulty in the production of the turn:

D3(2), lines 32

NNS: er \*\*\* I wan- er I want to \* you to \* repair my car

Although the situation could be seen to allow quite direct strategies because of the strong grounds for making the complaint, the strategies used by the non-native participants in both versions of D3 indicate a desire to avoid action which might be regarded as confrontational. The actual problem is expressed in negative politeness terms in both cases and softened by preparatory utterances which serve as anticipatory hints. The participants thus seem to be aware of the high cost which the complaint involves to both interactants. The situation involves a conflict of interests and considerable potential for face threat to both parties. It is also interesting that the option of a more indirect strategy, doing the face-threatening act off the record through hints, is not used. It seems that it is more important for the speakers to make their intentions clear and unambiguous to the hearer than to appear overly tactful and non-coercive. A more indirect off-record strategy would not even necessarily be appropriate here: such an approach would leave the meaning of the complaint more negotiable, and possibly make it more difficult for the NNS to look after his own interests in the conversation later.

### 7.1.3 Asymmetrical situations

In asymmetrical situations there is an in-built power factor which can be expected to affect the rights and obligations of the participants in the interaction. The power relationship in all three situations arises from some form of employer-employee relationship: in A1, the NNS is a student working in the NS's advertising agency as a holiday substitute, in A2, the NNS is a student who has been baby-sitting for her neighbour, and in A3, the NNS is employed as an assistant in a laboratory run by the NS. The relationships thus

also involve some distance between the two speakers. In previous work on strategic politeness it has been proposed that situations of this type display asymmetrical patterns of verbal behaviour, thus reflecting the different rights and obligations of the participants (Scollon and Scollon 1981, Brown and Levinson 1987, see also Thomas 1990). The assumption is that the subordinate participant will show deference and respect towards the superordinate and use relatively indirect strategies such as off-record hints and negative politeness, whereas the superordinate has the right to approach the subordinate in direct and non-deferential terms selecting bald-on-record or positive politeness strategies.

### 7.1.3.1 A1: invitation

The task in situation A1 involves the NNS presenting an *invitation* to his/her employer, the owner of an advertising agency. While an invitation can be seen as a hearer-supportive act, it also carries an element of imposition in this case because of the power relationship. The goals associated with conveying the invitation and the maintenance of face may therefore be in competition (Leech 1983): even though the invitation can be seen as supportive of the speakers' interactional goals, it imposes on the hearer's autonomy in a situation where the subordinate's right to impose is limited.

In both versions of A1 the invitation follows the same pattern: a preliminary turn prepares the act and a subsequent turn expresses the invitation on record. In A1(1), the preparatory move introduces the topic of the party and the subsequent turn presents the invitation in the form of a performative statement. The performative is softened by a number of modifications: the opening utterance *it's just between the staff* has an external preparatory function, the modal phrase *I would like to* serves a softening function, and the embedded *if you're not busy* functions as an external supportive move, as a kind of a 'sweetener' (Edmondson and House 1981:46), with the function of removing a possible objection that the hearer might have.

A1(1), lines 5-8

NNS: Well \* er \*\*\* actually I'm trying to organize er \* some party

NS: Oh really? (when

NNS: Yes) er \* it's just between the staff and er \* and I would like to, if you're not busy, to invite you.

The speaker in A1(1) also supports the invitation later on in the conversation by first giving a reason for organizing the party (lines 30-34), and then mentioning his status as a new staff-member and his desire to meet the other employees and socialize with them, and finally rephrases the invitation at the end of the conversation (line 46: *yea I'll appreciate it if you could come*).

The strategies used by the non-native participant are clearly unidiomatic. They do, however, display awareness of politeness considerations and can be described as rather deferential negative politeness strategies. They contain various softening elements which minimize the force of the utterance and give options to the interlocutor by offering possible grounds for him to

turn the invitation down (e.g. *if you're not busy*). The strategies used by the NNS thus reflect a relatively high degree of indirectness. Even though the invitation is placed clearly on record, it is mitigated both externally and internally with various lexical and syntactic means. The overall impression of the strategies is a careful consideration for the NS interlocutor's negative face.

The second version of the same situation displays partly similar strategies. In contrast to A1(1), however, the invitation in A1(2) is expressed in a single turn. The speaker opens with a preparatory move introducing the topic, and then continues to express the invitation in the same turn:

A1(2), lines 22-26

NNS: Ah, before I forget, Mr Swan, Sir, er, er, I'm at this instant, I'm organizing a, a party for our agency, so, you are the last person I would like to invite, because, because I'm new around here and I'm quite afraid to approach you, so, I would like you to come to this, to this party, which (will be

The strategies for making the invitation display overt deference towards the NS. The power relationship is made explicit with the address terms *Mr Swan Sir*. In the following preparatory utterance the relationship is again referred to in a phrase in which the NNS adopts a subordinate role and refers to the difficulty of encroaching on somebody in a higher position: *I'm afraid to approach you*. The core of the invitation itself shows a similar mixture of strategies as the example from A1(1): the NNS first uses the hedged performative pattern *I would like to invite* as above, but later rephrases the invitation as a conventionally indirect want statement *I would like you to come to this party*. The first phrase is part of a pragmalinguistically inappropriate utterance which might give rise to a serious misunderstanding (*you are the last person I would like to invite*). The speaker seems to intend to say that she has already asked all her other colleagues, but has not found the courage to approach her superior until this moment. While the error is a reflection of the speaker's limited control over the target language expression, it also seems to reflect the social difficulty of the situation. It can also be described as an interaction slip (Dufva 1991) which arises from the uncertainty and possible embarrassment of trying to act in a socially appropriate way in a demanding interactional situation.

As is apparent from the example, the speaker is also about to continue the utterance with a supporting and expanding strategy, and give more details about the party (*which will be --*), but is interrupted by the NS at this point. The NNS's lengthy turn here shows some indication of a tendency towards using a large number of words for the expression of an utterance which a native speaker would probably express in a much shorter form. Such a tendency for 'verbosity' has been found to be typical of interlanguage use in many studies comparing native language and interlanguage speech act production (see e.g. Faerch and Kasper 1989, Nyyssönen 1990). In this context the verbosity effect, combined with fast delivery, seems to further support the impression of social difficulty or nervousness associated with the situation. The monologue is cut short, however, by the co-interactant who interrupts the NNS's turn. The

example thus highlights the way in which the interactive context shapes the learner's behaviour.

The orientation of the NNS's strategies appears to be the protection of the NS's negative face: she pays overt deference to the NS, noting the power relationship between them and the resulting difficulty of approaching the NS. She further supports and modifies the imposition by giving grounds and using a number conventionally indirect mitigating devices, which increase the impression of optionality.

Later in the conversation, after a refusal of the invitation by the NS, the speakers start talking about another possible party, which prompts the NNS to express another invitation in a slightly different form. The strategies in this case display less deference than the first invitation, but still reflect some indirectness: the turn contains a relatively indirect suggestory formula softened by the conventionally indirect hedges *maybe* and *could*. The pattern also shows some similarity to certain positive politeness features, such as including both speaker and hearer in the activity (lines 48-51: *we can, mix, mix with the rest of the workers*).

A1(2), lines 50-56

NNS: --- Maybe you could come to the next party, along with your wife, and er, we can, mix, mix with..

NS: Yea

NNS:...the rest of the, er our workers and

NS: Right

NNS: families, yea.

### 7.1.3.2 A2: offer/proposal

The task in situation A2 deals with making a mutually beneficial arrangement and was anticipated to induce an *offer* or a *proposal* from the NNS. The topic concerns a baby-sitting arrangement, which the NS had suggested before but to which the NNS had not previously agreed. The NNS is now in the position where it would be in her interest to offer to baby-sit. The native speaker in this situation is in a position of some power over the non-native by virtue of her age and her right to make the decision about the arrangement. The power factor and the complications in the circumstances of the situation can be expected to increase the weight of the imposition, which might otherwise be seen as a hearer-supportive offer because of the mutual benefits associated with the arrangement.

The two conversations based on this situation turn out in different ways, and in only one of them is an offer made and negotiated. In A2(1) the NNS first offers her services for baby-sitting and then goes on to negotiate an arrangement whereby she also benefits by being able to use the NS's TV and video. The offer is anticipated in a preliminary turn which seeks to establish whether the NS has arranged for another baby-sitter. This is done with a hedged performative question: *I would like to ask you whether--* (lines 7-8). The offer itself is made with a hedged question:



A2(1), lines 15-16

NNS: Would you like me to - would you like me to baby-sit for the baby with her alone ? \* I could stay (inaud.)

The offer is also later supported by a related offer: *You don't have to pay me* (line 23). The NNS then uses the second offer as a strategy for making a proposal for a reciprocal arrangement: she uses it as supportive grounding for a request to use the NS's TV and video (see the example below). The proposal is made with an extended negative politeness strategy: a preparatory, conventionally indirect question (line 26) precedes and anticipates a conventionally indirect request, which is then presented in the same turn as a restatement of the offer (lines 28-29). Later turns by the NNS present supporting reasons for the request and thus serve as further grounding (lines 31-34). Finally, the proposal is restated and a request for response is made (lines 36-38).

A2(1), lines 26-38

NNS: Do you mind if I ask, ask you something?

NS: No, not at all, go ahead.

NNS: Actually, er, actually I wonder if I could use your, your TV or video, it's just er, then you don't have to pay me.

NS: Uuh.

NNS: Since, I am in a desperate - I'm very desperate to see er this Brunei programme..

NS: Ah.

NNS: ...on the TV. I'm very desperate to watch it.

NS: Aha.

NNS: So I would, er, I think it's only appropriate if \* you let me to see, to watch the TV and don't have to pay me. Do you like the idea?

The linguistic manifestations of the strategy here are characterized by unidiomatic usage and syntactic problems (e.g. *I'm very desperate to watch it, if you let me to see, to watch the TV and you don't have to pay me*). Also the use of the question *do you like the idea?* (lines 37-38) is unidiomatic in this context, and reflects the NNS's lack of precise linguistic means with which to convey her intentions. The strategies on the whole, however, reflect awareness of the type of interactional problem that the proposal presents in this situation and of the way that it needs to be modified. The extended proposal displays a great deal of negotiation and interactive work which shows awareness of the hearer's wants. This is illustrated, for instance, by the anticipation and mitigation of the actual offer and by the use of preparatory questions and supportive grounding in later turns. It is also displayed in the use of conventionally indirect language (e.g. *do you mind, would you like me to, I wonder if I could, etc.*), and lexical softeners, such as *actually*. Strategies of positive politeness are also made use of: cooperation is asserted in proposing a reciprocal mutually beneficial arrangement and making an offer designed to make the proposal more acceptable.

The conversation in A2(2) takes a strikingly different form. No offer or proposal is made by the NNS, and the first part of the conversation is largely devoted to the NNS confirming and giving grounds for her earlier decision not to comply to the NS's request. The actual refusal is not stated by the NNS but is

made explicit by the NS, who reports: *I asked --- Mrs Johnson to ask you to come and baby-sit for me, but she says that you won't come* (lines 7-11). The NNS subsequently gives a number of supportive reasons for not accepting the request (e.g. her need to watch a documentary, her need to do her homework, and difficulty of carrying books). The listing of the reasons can be seen as an extended off-record strategy which implies a restatement of the refusal. However, towards the end of the conversation, the NNS actually provisionally agrees to come and baby-sit. Her contribution cannot be treated as an offer in a similar sense as the offer in the above example, because it follows a series of attempts by the NS to persuade her to comply to her request. Thus, in discourse terms, it has a responsive function. The response is not an unequivocal acceptance; it contains various hedges (e.g. *well, let's see, I think* and *probably*) and tentative conditional structures (*if I can make it, if the family isn't going away*), which suggest that the NNS does not want to make a direct, on-record agreement to comply. She also asks a question about video equipment in the NS's house, but does not elaborate on the subject nor make a request to use it, as the NNS in the previous example.

A2(2), lines 51-58

NNS: Well, let's see if I can make it. And you have a video in your house?

NS: Yes, of course.

NNS: Yea, if \*\* if Mrs Johnson, now won't be going away, I mean if the family isn't going anywhere, I think, yes, probably, I can come to your house...

NS: oh (great

NNS: and baby-sit)

In this conversation the primary face-goals of the NNS do not seem to be oriented to the protection or maintenance of the addressee's face. Rather, the NNS appears to adopt a self-directed defensive strategy of protecting her own negative face-wants. She resists committing herself to any arrangement by referring to a range of possible reasons for not agreeing to the NS's earlier request, and in the final turn where she partially agrees to comply, she leaves herself the option to still say no later. She also makes this explicit in the language she uses; she expresses several preconditions on the basis of which she intends to make the final decision and only gives a tentative promise to do the desired action. From the hearer's point of view, this approach may, of course, be seen as less than polite: such vagueness and lack of commitment in an expression of agreement to a proposal by the NS can be understood as posing a threat to her positive face in indicating lack of willingness to accept her goals and to support her face.

The power relationship does not appear to have a significant role in the way the participants behave. The NNS does not make explicit any awareness of a difference in power, and the strategies that she uses do not display much deference. Her softening devices are mainly short lexical and syntactic modifiers, such as *well, actually, I think*, and *I don't think so*. She also uses some devices typically associated with positive politeness (e.g. *you see* and *let's see*), which claim common ground between the speakers. The NS's strategies

similarly display relatively direct on-record negative and positive politeness or are neutral with respect to politeness. Thus, it seems evident that the situation is not interpreted as significantly asymmetrical in terms of power.

The conversation also demonstrates an interesting process whereby relevant goals evolve and are defined interactively by the participants. While some form of offer is made by the NNS towards the end of the interaction, it arises after a long negotiation in which the NS repeatedly expresses her goal of persuading the NNS to agree to her request.

### 7.1.3.3 A3: complaint

Situation A3 involves the NNS in expressing unhappiness about her position at work and hence making a form of *complaint*. The situation gives the non-native speaker two reasons for complaining: first, the NS has cancelled the NNS's day off without telling her and secondly, she has been asking her to do things that are not part of her job. The imposition here is more serious than in the other two asymmetrical situations, involving a clear threat to the NS's positive and negative face: on the one hand, the complaint may involve criticism towards the NS's personality; on the other hand, it also restricts her freedom of action in putting pressure on her to respond in a particular way, perhaps to admit fault, apologize and/or promise to change things. The transactional goals to be expressed are thus in conflict with the social goal of maintaining good relations and showing respect for face.

The two versions of A3 present two strikingly different ways of negotiating the socially demanding situation. The NNS in A3(1) proceeds cautiously, using strategies which reflect a high level of indirectness and deference towards the NS. The NNS in A3(2), however, adopts an extremely direct approach, which appears to challenge the NS's power. The extracts below illustrate the differences in the approach adopted by the two non-native speakers. The topic at this point in the conversation is on the amount and type of work the NNS has been asked to do. In both cases the NNS is expressing a complaint about the amount of work her employer (NS) has been giving her.

A3(1), lines 45-48, 52-70

NNS: Actually, I was er \* asking \*\* erm, if you can consider it like this.  
First er (5 sec) I don't know, let me tell you the truth \*\* er, so \* I think  
that er \*\* I think that I need a holiday so that even if it's only for a day er  
\*\* I've been working very hard.

-----  
NNS: Yes but sometimes er \* I'm not, happy with the situation \*\*  
because erm \* but I think er \* I hope that you, you won't very be angry  
with what I have to say

NS: No. Come on. Be honest.

NNS: It's just that erm \*\* well I know that I have to do a lot of work here

NS: yea

NNS: erm, have to feed all the animals er \*\* and the many other things.

NS: yes

NNS: but apart from that \* er I'm asked to do some other works which  
are not relevant to to I mean to why I come here...

NS: Yes.

NNS: to study

NS: Only you don't like that

NNS: er, not really. I like, I like your two children but, but then \* erm \*\*  
 sometimes, erm I don't like being forced to do things er that I don't - not,  
 not (part of  
 NS: not part of your job) okay (fair enough

A3(2), lines 4-7, 46

NNS: You've been asking me to do a lot of work to do.

NS: Oh I'm sorry. I didn't realize I'd asked you to do that much. Have I  
 been overworking you?

NNS: Yea.

---

NNS: Yea, you're my boss but you've been working me too hard.

The first example shows an interesting variety of strategies which represent both distance-based and deferential off-record and negative politeness, and approach-based positive politeness. It opens with a somewhat typical negative politeness strategy of paying attention to the hearer's want not to be impinged upon: the NNS questions and hedges rather than assumes that what she is going to say is acceptable to the NS (see Brown and Levinson 1987:131). At the same time the opening utterance communicates that the NNS is trying to avoid coercing the hearer and is not assuming that the NS will agree with what she is going to say. The opening utterance also serves a preparatory function: it clearly anticipates some later activity.

After the first utterance, the NNS, however, pauses and changes direction; she does not present the point she was anticipating but reapproaches it with a different strategy. She appears to adopt a direct and approach-based strategy and makes a comment anticipating that she is going to be frank and direct about something (*let me tell you the truth*, line 46). What the NNS conveys in the subsequent utterance, however, is not "the truth", but only a part of the problem: she hints at the complaint by referring to the amount of work she has been doing, but appears to hold back the actual complaint. In politeness terms, she is still giving off-record hints rather than stating the problem on record as was anticipated in the previous utterance.

In the next exchange (line 52 onwards) the strategy of delay seems even more evident: the NNS begins by stating her dissatisfaction and starts to give reasons (*but sometimes er \* I'm not, happy with the situation \*\* because erm*), but again withholds the reasons themselves, and instead proceeds with a supportive move with a disarming function (*I hope that you you won't be very angry with what I have to say*). The disarmer pays deference to the NS by implying that it would be within the NS's rights to get angry, by conveying the social difficulty that the NNS has in stating the imposition, and by appealing for understanding before the imposition is actually made explicit. The disarmer appears to work, as it prompts the NS to respond with *no* and to invite a direct statement of the complaint (*come on be honest*, line 55). These utterances also illustrate the mutual orientation of the speakers to the imposition (see Brown and Levinson 1987:99): the NNS conveys the difficulty of imposing and anticipates the NS's possible reaction to it, and the NS orients to this difficulty and tries to alleviate it by encouraging the NNS to state the problem.

After this exchange the NNS launches into an explanation about her work situation. The final, explicit statement of the problem, however, is not

unilaterally expressed by the NNS, but is achieved interactively and cooperatively with the NS: the NS takes part in its production by first encouraging the direct expression of the complaint, then by making a comment referring to the complaint (*only you don't like that*, line 66) and finally by completing the NNS's utterance for her (*not part of your job*, line 70). The NNS, for her part, continues her indirect and deferential strategy by hedging her agreement with the NS's comment (e.g. *not really*, line 67). She also displays a positive politeness strategy of avoiding disagreement (Brown and Levinson 1987:113-114) by first making a point about liking the NS's children and then continuing with a clause opened by *but* and restating the problem.

In brief, the series of preparatory hints and disarming moves, and the delay of the actual problem in the NNS's turns give an impression of a concern for the NS's negative face. The non-native speaker's strategies, especially in the initial turns, reflect difficulty in expressing the problematic content of the complaint and result in a lengthy negotiation sequence where the act of complaint is constructed interactively. As the conversation proceeds, however, the NNS's handling of the topic seems interactively quite skillful and reflects a high degree of orientation to the interlocutor's face. The NNS avoids and delays stating the actual problem, and seems to invite the NS to take some responsibility for its expression. These strategies do not seem to arise only from linguistic problems or the NNS's difficulty of getting herself understood, but rather from the social and interpersonal implications of the face-threatening task. A communicative strategy of avoiding and delaying a problematic activity thus seems to serve the interactional function of appealing for assistance from the NS and showing concern for her face. Similarly, the NS's turns which provide assistance (e.g. lines 55, 66, 70), seem to be oriented to the interactional goals of supporting the NNS's face rather than making her utterances more comprehensible or effective.

In a striking contrast to the first extract, the NNS in the latter example plunges straight into the complaint, which she expresses twice, each time bluntly on record without any mitigation or redress (*you've been asking me to do a lot of work*, line 4, and *you've been working me too hard*, line 46). In the latter turn she also explicitly refers to the power relationship (*yeah you're my boss*, line 46), challenging it with a restatement of the complaint. The NNS thus makes no attempt at protecting the NS's positive or negative face, but chooses a bald-on-record strategy, which can be seen as aggravating the addressee's face. She may be using the strategy to protect her own negative face, with the intention of winning a strong position in an argument and protecting her rights.

The unexpected use of direct bald-on-record strategies brings an element of power struggle into the interaction: one way of claiming power or interactional control is the use of strategies associated with the rights of the more powerful party in the interaction. If successful, such a strategy may tip the power relationship in the interaction; if not, it may have serious consequences for the outcome (Brown and Levinson 1987:228). In this case, the conversation turns out to take an antagonistic direction in which concerns for the hearer's face are overridden by other factors. A detailed look at the

conversational sequence reveals the role and interactional effects of these strategies (see section 8.3.3 below).

The second reason for complaint, the problem of cancelling the NNS's day off, is also dealt with in different ways in the two conversations. In A3(1) the NNS makes a form of a complaint in rather indirect terms: she approaches the topic with a preparatory move (lines 3-4, see extract below), then states the problem and a reason for a potential complaint and requests for clarification or justification from the NS (lines 7-10). Both the preparatory move and the turn expressing the problem and doing the request contain a question (*can I go straight to the point*, lines 4-5, and *can I know the circumstances*, lines 9-10). The questions seem to operate as negative politeness strategies: instead of making assumptions, the speaker asks for the recipient's reaction, and thus avoids appearing coercive.

A3(1), lines 3-4, 7-10

NNS: Okay, umm \*\* well I well erm (6 sec) can I get straight to the point?

---

NNS: Umm \* I heard from \* one of the lecturers said er \*\* that tomorrow is supposed to be my holiday and \* then I heard that it's \* going to \* erm \* it has been put off \* and \* can I know the circumstances?

In A3(2) the NNS does not initiate talk about the problem, but the topic is opened by the NS, who makes a request asking the NNS to work on her day off and take time off later. The strategies used by the NS here are similar to those used by most of the non-natives in requests, although their manifestation is different. The NS opens with a preparatory move and states she has something to say. She then states the situation and gives a reason for her request in another supportive grounder move, and finally makes the request in conventionally indirect negative politeness terms, combining it with an offer of compensation, which can be seen as a positive politeness strategy in indicating willingness to cooperate (see Brown and Levinson 1987:102). The NNS's strategies are again direct: her responses consist of blunt bald-on-record refusals (lines 19, 21-22, 28, 36), with which she makes clear her goal of protecting her own negative face rather than paying respect to the NS's face wants.

A3(2), lines 15-19, 35-36

NS: Well I'm afraid I've got something else to tell you. Uum. I have to go to a job interview and I won't be able to work full time this week, so \* uum \* do you think you could work on your days off and I'll give them to you another week?

NNS: No!

---

NS: Well, I'm sure you wouldn't mind just one (extra day

NNS: Ah, I do) mind

#### 7.1.4 Summary of realization strategies

The conversations reflect a range of strategies for taking up and conveying the central face-threatening task and the goals associated with it. The analysis

suggests that while the non-native participants' strategies are often clearly unidiomatic and non-nativelike, they reflect an awareness of complex face needs. This awareness is displayed in the way in which the face-threatening activity is taken up and supported through a variety of linguistic and conversational means.

The overall pattern of bringing up the face-threatening activity is the same in most of the conversations: a preparatory turn introduces the topic and sets expectations for some future activity, and the relevant act itself is expressed in a later turn or turns. Face-threatening utterances are regularly supported by external modification, mainly through preparative and anticipatory turns prior to the actual imposition. Modification through subsequent turns which provide supportive justification or grounding is also used. This finding is in accordance with results obtained in previous studies (see e.g. Blum-Kulka et al. 1989a). However, as can be expected in interactive data, the preparative and supportive moves do not cluster around the main act in a single turn, but precede or follow in alternation with turns produced by the co-interactant.

Awareness of face is also reflected in the ways in which utterances expressing various potentially face-threatening illocutionary goals are worded, mainly in the type face strategy selected and the degree of directness or illocutionary transparency of the acts expressed. The strategies reflect the speakers' orientation to the seriousness of the imposition and consideration of their own or the hearers' face. The strategies used to express the main goals represent mainly on-record negative politeness, but a variety of off record strategies can also be identified in cases where the imposition is judged serious (e.g. request to return a loan). Relatively few strategies of positive politeness were used by the non-native speakers, even though they might have been expected in some of the situations. The absence of positive politeness strategies is particularly noticeable in situation (S2), which is a symmetrical situation designed to elicit a typically hearer-supportive act (offer). Where positive politeness strategies were used, they were not as emphatic as they might have been. In the conversations based on D2, for example, it was noteworthy that the strategies were very much part of a joint negotiation of a proposal rather than an emphatic offer by the NNS. However, this section has concentrated on the turns expressing specific impositions, which generally constitute the environment where negative politeness can be expected even in situations otherwise characterized by positive politeness (Brown and Levinson 1987:129). A more detailed analysis of the sequence in which the acts are embedded is needed to shed more light on this finding.

The analysis indicates that the directness level used most frequently for expressing a face-threatening action is that associated with negative politeness: conventional indirectness. However, some of the conversations are characterized by highly direct strategies which appear to reflect the speaker's strong orientation to her own face as opposed to consideration for the interlocutor's face. This behaviour may be motivated by the speakers' attempt to secure their rights or even claim a stronger position in the interaction. From the point of view of the addressee, this type of approach runs the risk of aggravating face relations in the conversation, as no attempt is made to convey

support to the addressee's face. As the majority of the conversations display varied face-supportive behaviour, it is unlikely that the directness of some of the non-native speakers is due to any specific linguistic problems or cultural differences. Reasons for this type of behaviour may be sought in the negotiation of the power relationship in the conversation, the precedence taken by other goals over face-work, and the dynamics of the interaction from a more global point of view.

The linguistic means used by the non-native participants show evidence of interlanguage features in their deviant grammar (e.g. *we have made the arrangement to have the informal party, exchange informations*), in their tendency to use routines inappropriately (e.g. *so I decide to invite you, so you please do come*) and lack of fluency.

## 7.2 Patterns of participation and the negotiation of goals

The analysis of the turns which focus on the main face-threatening activities indicates that there are different ways of introducing a face-threatening topic into the conversation. Four main patterns can be identified in the data. First, the face-threatening activity may be introduced by the non-native participant, who also makes explicit the specific illocutionary goals associated with the activity (e.g. makes an on-record invitation or request). This is the pattern which was anticipated in the design of the situations. Secondly, a face-threatening activity may be initiated and implied by the NNS, but made explicit by the native participant (e.g. the NS asks what the NNS's goals are). Thirdly, the activity may arise as a result of joint action, and become a joint focus of talk through reciprocal negotiation of goals. Finally, talk about the interactive problem may be initiated by the NS and focus on the activity from his/her point of view, and the non-native participant's goals may remain implicit. These patterns of making the face-threatening activity a focus of talk show that the ways in which conversational goals unfold in actual talk are linked to the negotiation of participation and the rights and obligations associated with different participant roles. This section examines the ways in which the introduction of the face-threatening topic is accomplished through negotiating an initial framework for conversational participation. The initial phases of the conversations provide important information in this respect: they show how the interactants are able to negotiate their participant roles which regulate the rights to speak and to initiate and contribute to the distribution of turns and development of topics in subsequent phases of the conversation.

### 7.2.1 Symmetrical low distance situations

An analysis of the opening sequences of the two versions of S1 shows how different patterns of participation are established by two sets of participants in the same situation frame. The differences between the two conversations can be described by the participant roles adopted by the speakers and resulting



patterns of interactional control. The orientation of the two speakers to the development of the conversation is different in each case: in S1(1) the native speaker adopts a dominant role and the non-native speaker assumes a subsidiary role, whereas in S1(2) it is the non-native participant who is dominant while the native speaker takes a secondary role. Thus, in S1(1) the NS is the *primary speaker* making major contributions to the development of the topic and the NNS the *secondary speaker* supporting the NS's turns (Bublitz 1988:162). In S1(2) the participant roles are reversed. A closer look at the opening phases of these conversations reveals how this pattern emerges.

It has been noted in conversation analysis that the initiator of a conversation usually has the right to introduce the first topic(s) and hence s/he often gains interactional control, at least initially (see Schegloff 1986:354, Scollon and Scollon 1981:23, Thomas 1990:144). In S1(1) it is the native speaker who initiates the conversation and also the subsequent topics. The NS takes control by asking a series of questions, whereas the NNS responds, reciprocates (e.g. *what about you*, lines 3 and 7), and comments on the NS's responses (e.g. lines 15-16). The NNS sometimes does not take a turn to talk even if there is an opportunity to do so (e.g. during a lengthy pause, line 9). The NNS does initiate the main activity, but only after a prompt from the NS: the NS's brief turn on line 17 (*so er*) and the subsequent pause seem to treat the previous topic as closed and indicate that the NS wants to pass the turn to the NNS and expects her to initiate the next topic. The NNS accepts the turn and launches into preparing her request (*there is one particular thing, er, I would like to ask you about*, lines 18-19). The turn thus also marks a shift from the opening phase of the conversation to a next phase, where the main activity takes place.

In S1(2) it is the non-native participant who is the initiator. She opens the conversation in a manner which is typical of a relationship in which the distance between the interactants is minimal: she greets the NS, addresses her by her first name, and asks how she is. In accordance with her initiator role, the NNS then introduces the next topic by asking a question about the NS's studies. The NS, for her part, shows supportive attention to the NNS's turns by offering listener feedback (*you've finished everything*, line 8, *mm*, line 10) by which she signals that she is paying attention but does not want to claim the floor (see e.g. Bublitz 1988, Fiksdal 1990). In the next turns the NNS continues to hold her primary speaker status by asking questions with a clearly preparatory orientation. The NNS's turn on lines 11-12 marks a shift in the topic and direction of the conversation: she asks the NS whether she is free at the moment of speaking. It seems clear that the question is intended as some kind of preparation for a significant new topic, since it implies that the NNS wants to take up some of the NS's time. This is also how the NS interprets the turn: she responds with a proposal which would enable the speakers to sit down and talk for some time (*you want to go and have some coffee?*, lines 13-14). Her proposal, however, is not taken up by the NNS in the following turns, perhaps because of overlapping speech by the NNS. On line 19 the NNS asks another preparatory question (*have you had \* er your lunch?*). This time the NS does not respond by a proposal but answers and reciprocates the question. The NNS then comes out with a proposal to order some food and continue talking (lines

23-24). Her proposal appears to confirm that the sequence initiated by her questions is to be treated as a pre-sequence which serves to lead to the negotiation of a specific activity. The acceptance of the NNS's proposal (line 25) closes the sequence, and the next turn by the NNS marks the beginning of the actual negotiation: the NNS introduces the topic of the earrings.

In brief, while the non-native participant introduces the main activity in both conversations, the way the activity is introduced differs because of different patterns of participation established in the very beginning of the conversation. In S1(1) the NNS initiates the first main topic only after a prompt from the NS, whereas in S1(2) the NNS seems to orient towards the main activity early on and prepare it with her actions at the opening part of the talk.

Situation S2, which was designed to elicit an offer or a proposal from the NNS, requires the NNS to take the initiator role: he is the one who goes to see the NS with the idea of offering to help him with Malay and using the opportunity to gain some practice and experience in teaching. In S2(2) the non-native participant opens the conversation by immediately taking up the main topic, thus preparing for the proposal which he makes explicit in his next turn. S2(1) opens with a different pattern. The extract from S2(1) below shows how the speakers negotiate a pattern of participation which creates an opportunity for the NNS to initiate the potentially face-threatening topic.

S2(1), lines 1-12

NS: Come in, yes, come in and sit down (in my office.

NNS: Oh (laughter ) hello Robert.

NS: Hello nice to see (you

NNS: hey) how are you?

NS: Nice to see you. How unusual to see you in an office situation. I normally see you out drinking.

NNS: (giggle) How, how are you this, er, this afternoon?

NS: Well, I've been working quite hard, I'm still having some difficulty with my languages but I'm getting by. It, it's been quite (hard

NNS: Yes) that's why I came here for, yes, now, regarding to, er, you are interested in learning Malay

The first lines of the conversation are interesting in showing the importance of the initiator's role in a conversation. The opening utterance by the NS (*Come in, yes, come in and sit down*) is a typical second position turn in a summons-answer sequence (Schegloff 1986), in which the first position is taken by some non-verbal action. In this situation the two participants meet in the NS's office, where the NNS comes to see the NS. The NS here responds to an assumed knock on the door, which serves as the summons. By responding to a non-verbal action, the NS thus hands over the initiator role to the NNS.

In a typical summons-answer sequence the turn following the answer provides an opportunity for the initiator to give the reason for the summons. Here the NNS does not take up the reason for his visit (the proposal) immediately, but initiates a brief opening sequence with a greeting and a *how are you*, which the NS responds to with a teasing comment. The NS's response to the NNS's second enquiry brings up the topic of having difficulty with languages, which gives the NNS the occasion to introduce his business, i.e. the topic of Malay classes. The NNS readily takes the opportunity by latching onto

the NS's turn immediately with an acknowledging *yes*, which partly overlaps with the NS's utterance. The NNS continues the turn by orienting to the previous topic (*that's why I came here*, line 11). The assertion seems to serve two important interactional functions here: firstly, it indicates that the NNS is aware of the NS's difficulties and takes an interest in them, and secondly, it establishes that the NNS has something more to say and thus projects a next action in which the NNS has an opportunity to state his reasons for coming more explicitly. The next utterance shows that this is exactly what the NNS begins to do. The utterance (*regarding to er you are interested in learning Malay*, lines 11-12) introduces the topic of Malay classes and also serves as a preparation for the activity to follow.

The two conversations based on S3, which was expected to elicit a complaint, are initiated by the NS. In S3(1) the NS opens with a request which brings up the main topic and immediately opens a negotiation of the main activities. S3(2) is also initiated by the native speaker, who adopts the role of primary speaker. She initiates a number of small-talk questions and then proceeds to introduce the face-threatening topic (organizing a party). The NNS adopts the role of secondary speaker and provides responses to the NS's initiating turns. The NNS seems to resist taking an active role in the interaction: she does not reciprocate the NS's questions or show active interest in contributing to her attempts to build rapport. Her laughter (lines 6 and 8) also seems to indicate lack of involvement with the activity: it is not oriented to any joint focus in the talk, nor does it invite a response from the co-participant. Since it occurs in turns following the NS's questions, it also displays a failure to adequately attend to the NS's turns and thus contributes to an impression of lack of cooperation. In the absence of any overt cooperation on the NNS's part, the NS takes the initiative and produces a turn in which she introduces the main topic (a plan to hold a party) from her point of view.

S3(2), lines 1-10

NS: Hi! How are you doing?

NNS: Fine, thanks.

NS: Did you have a good day today?

NNS: Not really.

NS: Why not?

NNS: (laughter)

NS: Working hard?

NNS: (laughter) because we have the exams coming.

NS: Ah yes. Uum, you know I like to give a lot of parties don't you.

## 7.2.2 Symmetrical high distance situations

In both conversations representing situation D1, it is the NNS who initiates talk and initially adopts a primary role in developing the first topics. While both conversations seem to proceed in a similar manner with the NNS taking a leading role by asking questions and actively introducing topics, they differ with respect to the way that their participation framework reflects interactional control.

In D1(1) the opening phase of the talk proceeds smoothly with both participants sharing the conversational floor and taking an active role. Some

asymmetries in the distribution of talk can be observed. The NNS leads the flow of talk by asking a series of questions which the NS responds to and elaborates. The NS's turns are longer and more elaborate than the NNS's. On the whole, however, the conversational turns are negotiated smoothly; there are no observable disturbances (e.g. long pauses, overlap) and no unexpected shifts of perspective or participant roles. The pattern of participation can thus be described as balanced. The conversation proceeds to the main activity, the topic of the invitation, in an orderly manner, and the topic is introduced by the NNS, as is expected on the basis of both the situation and the initial participation framework.

In D1(2), however, there seems to be a mismatch of expectations associated with the obligations of the first speaker. The interactive situation places the constraint of initiating the main topic on the NNS. The NNS initiates the conversation and proceeds to ask a series of questions oriented to establishing common ground. While the questions cover various topics common in conversational openings (e.g. climate, weather, the NS's background), they do not show any indication of other activities which might be expected in the conversation. The NS's turns show that he initially orients to the sequence as an instance of social talk: he responds to the NNS's questions and elaborates his answers with comments closely aligned with the current topics. As the conversation proceeds, however, some of the NS's turns seem to indicate lack of attention to the topic introduced by the NNS and a desire to move on in the conversation. For example, the NS closes a sequence oriented to the topic of fever caused by heat somewhat abruptly (line 20). Similarly, in his response to a series of turns commenting on his guitar playing, he ends the sequence by a *closing-implicative* utterance (*well I suppose I ought to get going soon*, line 46) (see Levinson 1983:316-317). While the NS makes no attempt to initiate new activities or topics in the talk, he thus assumes interactional control through his response behaviour. It is in fact his closing initiation which prompts the NNS to finally express the main activity, the invitation to his party (see lines 40-57).

In brief, the NS's behaviour suggests that he expects the NNS, who initiated the conversation and immediately took over the role of primary speaker, to initiate the main topic. As the NNS fails to do this, the NS uses the resources available to him to take decisive action to move the conversation along. The NNS thus does not conform to the NS's expectations concerning the obligations of the first and primary speaker. From the NNS's point of view, however, the NS's action seems somewhat abrupt and perhaps uninterested. Hence, the interactants fail to negotiate a mutually satisfactory framework for participation which would pave the way for the main activity. The development of the opening part of the conversation leads to observable uncomfortable moments which are signalled by minimal one-word turns and momentary interruptions in the flow of talk (e.g. *so*, line 39, and *oh*, line 50), and extended hesitations and pauses (e.g. lines 42, 50-52) before the main activity is taken up and dealt with.

In situation D2 the NNS was expected to make an offer. However, in both versions of this situation the main activity is introduced by the NS as a

proposal or a request. Although the non-native participants open the conversations, they fail to introduce the reason for their first contributions in the form of an offer of help. However, the fact that the activities turn out to be initiated by the NS cannot be explained by any explicit failure or incompetence on the NNS's part. Rather, it is the joint and dynamic aspects of the interaction which bring about the shift of roles. It seems that in spite of the non-natives' initial dominance as the initiators of the conversation, the native speakers, through an active participation in the development of the first topics, succeed in claiming a dominant participant status. They seem to treat the initial contributions by the NNS as prompts to bring up and elaborate on the problem from their point of view, and rather than accepting the initial distribution of turn-taking patterns, they actively claim the floor (note, for example, the overlap in D2(1), lines 5-6). They also initiate the next topics by asking questions which require responses (D2(1) lines 9-10, D2(2) lines 9-10, 15). The non-native participants then respond to the questions in sequentially relevant ways, by answering and elaborating them. Thus, they adapt to the active role taken by the NS by adopting a less dominant secondary speaker's role. It is this negotiation of participant roles which brings about the introduction of the main activity as a NS-initiated request or proposal which the NNS then responds to.

In both versions of situation D3 the NNS opens the conversation, as is required by the situation. In both cases the main activity, in this case a complaint, is also introduced and made explicit by the NNS. The patterns of turn-taking and participation in the opening phases show, however, that in one of the conversations the introduction of the main activity is accomplished relatively smoothly, whereas the other conversation displays serious difficulties and interactional trouble.

In D3(2) the non-native participant uses a strategy similar to some of the conversations described above: in accordance with the expectation associated with the opening of a conversation, he assumes the role of primary speaker and asks a series of questions which gradually lead to the introduction of the complaint. In D3(1), however, it is the NS who does most of the interactional work leading to the main activity. In spite of the initiating role which the NNS assumes, he is not able to bring up the main activity in the expected way. The NNS does not, for example, take the opportunities provided by the interactional context to initiate new topics: instead of producing topic initiations in possible first-topic positions, the NNS only gives minimal responses (e.g. lines 4, 6, 17) or fails to respond altogether (e.g. line 18). Thus, the NS is interactionally obliged to take over the role of primary speaker and start initiating. The NS tries to elicit from the NNS the reason for his visit by asking questions (*can I help you*, line 7; *have you got a problem*, line 18-20). Thus, it is only after extensive interactive efforts by the NS to solicit talk from the NNS that the NNS finally takes the initiating role and brings up the main topic.

### 7.2.3 Asymmetrical situations

The first of the asymmetrical situations, A1, is an office encounter between an employer and an employee. The NNS, the subordinate, is expected to invite the

NS to a party. In both versions of this situation the NS adopts the initiating role and opens the conversation. In A1(1) the opening phase turns out to be very brief. The NS's initiating turn opens with a greeting, which is followed by a three-second pause. The pause offers an opportunity for speaker change. The NNS, however, does not claim the floor, so the NS continues his turn by referring to the context (coffee break). After a pause at the end of the turn, the NNS responds by offering the NS a cup of coffee. Having declined the offer, the NS initiates the next topic in accordance with her initiator role: she asks a question, which seems to fulfill a typical opening function in a social chat between colleagues (*so what is everyone doing for the weekend?*, lines 3-4). The question gives the NNS an opportunity to bring up his main topic, the party, in his response (line 5). In A1(1), the topic of the party thus emerges from the immediate context: it is occasioned by a question by the NS which provides a topically and interactionally appropriate place for introducing the main activity. The mention of the party then serves as a preparatory move for the actual invitation.

A1(1), lines 1-5

NS: Hello everyone! \*\*\* You grabbing a cup of coffee? \*\*\*

NNS: You want a coffee?

NS: No, I don't drink coffee. So what is everyone doing for the weekend?

NNS: well \* er \*\*\* actually I'm trying to organize, er \* some party.

In A1(2), the opening is longer and seems to reflect some difficulty of negotiating a mutually accepted framework for participation within which the topic of the invitation could be naturally taken up. The primary speaker is the NS: he opens the conversation, introduces the first topic, and continues to control the flow of interaction by asking a number of questions through which he asserts common ground and tries to elicit talk from the NNS (e.g. *you're the newest here aren't you?*, line 11, *are you enjoying working here?*, line 15). The NNS, on the other hand, mostly responds very briefly with minimal listener responses (e.g. *oh yes, yes, uh-huh*). After the NS's second question, the NNS, however, produces a more elaborate response in a turn which seems to indicate that she is experiencing some trouble (lines 16-20). The topic of the party is introduced by the NNS somewhat abruptly after the troubled response turn (lines 22-26). The NNS thus takes advantage of a shift in the speaker - listener roles caused by her previous long turn and holds the floor by initiating a new topic. While the new topic is unexpected at this point in the interaction, it cannot be said to be wholly inappropriate: the NNS brings it up in a way which clearly indicates a topic shift (*before I forget, Mr Swan---*) and thus signals her intention to change the focus of talk to a new activity.

Both conversations based on A2 seem to proceed relatively easily from the beginning to the first mention of the main topic. In both cases the initiator of the conversation takes interactional control by asking some questions oriented to the situational context, and then introduces the main topic. In A2(1) the NNS takes this primary role, whereas in A2(2) it is the NS who initiates the conversation and assumes control. It is noteworthy, however, that the situation

was designed to place the onus of initiating on the NNS rather than the NS. Hence, in A2(2) the NS-controlled pattern can be seen as arising from the failure of the NNS to act according to the expectation.

A2(1), lines 1-8

NNS: Anybody in?

NS: Oh. Hello.

NNS: Uum, er, do you remember me?

NS: Uum, you're the Bruneian girl who lives with Mrs Johnson?

NNS: Yes, I do.

NS: Aha, yes.

NNS: Uumm, I would like to ask you whether, er, whether you have got a replacement for the, er, for baby-sitting your babies?

A2(2), lines 1-11

NS: Hi! How are you?

NNS: Oh, fine thank you.

NS: Good, are you enjoying yourself?

NNS: Oh yes I am.

NS: Working hard?

NNS: \*\* Yes, it seems like that (laughter)

NS: So, uum, I asked, er, one of - someone you know, Mrs Johnson..

NNS: Uhu.

NS: ...to ask you to come and baby-sit for me. But she says that you won't come.

The conversations based on A3 also proceed quickly to the main issues to be negotiated. The first version of situation A3 follows a pattern where the NNS initiates talk with an utterance which is clearly anticipatory, and then proceeds to take up the main topic, a complaint. Interestingly, the opening turn projects a future activity so strongly that the NS does not take the floor even though there is a pause of six seconds during the NNS's second turn (line 3).

A3(1), lines 1-10

NNS: I have something, could I speak for - to you for a while?

NS: Yes, right, come in.

NNS: Okay, umm \*\* well I well erm (6 sec.) can I get straight to the point?

NS: Yes, there's something I want to talk to you about too, actually.

NNS: Umm \* I heard from \* one of the lecturers said er \*\* that tomorrow is supposed to be my holiday and \* then I heard that it's \* going to \* erm

\* it has been put off \* and \* can I know the circumstances?

The second version of this situation opens with a NS-initiated greeting and phatic enquiry. After an unexpected and somewhat uncooperative response by the NNS and a question-answer sequence oriented to the NNS's reasons for her response, the NNS states her problem rather bluntly. The main topic is thus introduced as a response to prior questions by the NS, and it arises as part of an irregular opening exchange.

A3(2), lines 1-4

NS: Hi! How are you? Have you had a good week?

NNS: No.

NS: Why?

NNS: You've been asking me to do a lot of work to do.

#### 7.2.4 Summary of participation patterns

The analysis of participation patterns shows that the ways in which activities are made topical or relevant in interaction are closely linked to the negotiation of an initial participation framework which determines who has the right (or obligation) to introduce topics, whose contributions are treated as primary, and how they are attended to in discourse. The analysis shows that the role of the initiator is of special importance in regulating the development of the sequence and the expectations governing the introduction of new topics. The initiator of the conversation is expected to adopt the role of primary speaker (at least initially), and to actively contribute to the development of the opening sequence towards the introduction of the main activity. The co-interactant thus often acts as a secondary speaker, also making a significant contribution with displays of supportive interactional behaviour. However, the patterns of participation are often complex: roles of participation and interactional dominance may shift and produce phases where explicit negotiation is required to accomplish a mutually acceptable relationship. It is this type of negotiation which gives rise to the interactional activities and constrains when and how they are introduced.

As was seen in the extracts analyzed above, non-native speakers also conform to these expectations, and are sometimes able to successfully adopt an active and even dominant role in the interaction, and lead the conversation towards topics which they want to deal with. However, non-native speakers often have difficulties in meeting the expectations of their co-participant. The difficulties are displayed in some non-native participants' failure to initiate and take the floor when offered or their failure to follow a pattern already initiated, and their failure to contribute to the negotiation of a balanced participation framework. Thus, while non-native participants frequently make the first move in introducing the main activity, their initiating move is in fact often occasioned by interactional work done by native speaker participants.



## **8 MANAGEMENT OF FACE-THREAT: NEGOTIATION OF RESPONSE**

The focus of this chapter is on the negotiation of the face-threatening activity in its sequential context. The central aims of the description below are (i) to examine the way in which the face-threatening task emerges as a sequence of conversational action attended to by the participants in the central phases of the conversation, and (ii) to show how the participants' negotiation of the central activity and its response reflects concern for face.

### **8.1 Symmetrical low distance situations**

#### **8.1.1 S1: Money and earrings**

The situation in S1 presents the following interactional problem: the NS has borrowed some money and a pair of earrings from the NNS and has not returned them. The NNS is thus faced with the task of conveying to the NS that she wants her money and earrings back. The task can be said to cover two face-threatening topics. In both conversations based on S1 the topic of money and the topic of earrings are dealt with separately and comprise two relatively distinct conversational activities.

The complex negotiation of the two face-threatening topics in S1(1) shows how multiple goals organize the management of such complex activities. The face-threat involved appears to explain the deliberate ambiguity and vagueness of many of the NNS's contributions and plays an integral role in the NS's interpretations of these utterances. The fact that ambiguities are a central feature of the negotiation, however, makes it difficult to make any definite claims about the specific actions performed in this conversation. Thus, the structure of the conversation is also ambiguous: whether the speakers are

managing a REQUEST - COMPLIANCE, a PRE-REQUEST - OFFER or even an implicit COMPLAINT/ACCUSATION - APOLOGY sequence is open to interpretation. In brief, it seems that no particular sequence pattern can be said to unambiguously represent what is going on in the conversation. Even the participants themselves may have a different idea of the significance of the actions, and the activities are organized around a negotiation of the ambiguities involved. A turn-by-turn analysis of the development of these sequences will demonstrate the subtlety of the organization.

As already noted in the previous chapter, both of the conversations based on S1 open with a pattern of preparing a conversational activity in one or more turns before the activity is actually made explicit in talk. It has been argued (e.g. Houtkoop 1987:104) that turns preceding some conversational activity can only truly be said to have a preparatory function when they actually lead to the activity they are meant to preface (e.g. pre-requests preceding actual requests). In these conversations the anticipatory turns do not actually lead to an explicit performance of a request, but initiate a sequence where the face-threatening topic is made explicit in an interactive process which leads to the native participants making an offer to return the borrowed items. Nevertheless, the anticipatory turns can be shown to have a potentially preparatory role. Their preparatory potential arises partly from their position in the organization of the conversation: they occur at particular points in the interaction, where a phase with a particular orientation (opening talk) has just been completed, and a new topic and a new phase begins. The utterances also explicitly project some future activity either by introducing a new topic or making clear the illocutionary goal of the speaker (e.g. *there is one particular thing I would like to ask you about*, S1(1) lines 18-19).

The utterances initiate a specific type of negotiation: they are followed by an exchange of turns which seeks to establish the interactive problem, i.e. that the NS has borrowed the items from the NNS and has not returned them. In S1(1) the turns following the preparatory utterance display a negotiation which seems to establish that the NS borrowed the earrings:

S1(1), lines 22-31

NS: (Ear-rings?)

NNS: The (the) ear-rings that er... (4 sec.)

NS: uh? Which ear-rings?

NNS: The, the ear-rings that \*\* er you wore at I think it was during the movie that you \* erm \* that you borrowed from me.

NS: On Monday night?

NNS: I guess so, I...

NS: I borrowed your ear-rings on (Monday?)

NNS: Yes) (inaudible) earrings

NS: Oh.

The turns following this exchange, however, do not treat the matter as definite, nor lead to a quick solution to the problem. Instead they continue the negotiation, eventually suggesting an alternative interpretation of the problem (*perhaps, perhaps they dropped into my bag*, line 43), which leads to a solution whereby the NS offers to check her bag and the NNS accepts the offer. Instead of a regular PRE-REQUEST - REQUEST - ACCEPTANCE pattern, the sequence thus

exhibits a more complex organization where a NNS-initiated preparatory turn is followed by off-record negotiation of the imposition and an offer by the NS.

The complex organization of this stretch of talk shows how aspects of face-work come into play in the organization of the conversation. The assertion that the NS has borrowed something from the NNS and has not returned her property is clearly face-threatening. The face-threat is acknowledged by both participants: the NNS expresses the assertion in hesitant and tentative terms, and also offers the NS an option to deny having borrowed anything at all (*Well I don't know but, er, either you borrowed them or I've misplaced them somewhere*, lines 34-35), thus protecting the NS's positive and negative face. The NS takes the option offered by the NNS: she asserts that she does not remember borrowing the earrings, and suggests an alternative course of events (the earrings dropped in the room or in her handbag). The NNS then appears to accept this solution (*that's possible*, line 44), and thus again shows attention to the NS's positive and negative face.

As was pointed out above, this negotiation leads to an offer of a solution to the problem, which is also a response to the implicit request: the NS offers to look for the earrings. This solution can be seen as supportive of both interactants' face. From the NS's point of view, the response provides a face-saving escape from the situation: she has successfully protected her own positive face by not admitting any fault, but she is also protecting the NNS's face by volunteering to rectify the situation. The NNS, on the other hand, protects the NS's negative face by not making a direct request, and her positive face by cancelling her assumption that the NS borrowed the earrings and accepting the alternative account of the problem, which avoids any blame directed at the NS. This strategy pays off in terms of her receiving a voluntary offer to carry out the desired action. The NNS's utterance accepting the NS's offer (*okay, okay \*\* I just want you to er \* to look around*, line 46-47) appears to confirm that she has achieved her illocutionary goal. It also prompts a repetition of the offer from the NS (*oh well I'll look in my bag*, line 48), and thus ratifies the solution and leads to the closing of the first face-threatening topic.

The sequence is similar to organizations observed in other face-threatening contexts: Levinson (1983:343, 360-361) and Brown and Levinson (1987:40), for example, note that face considerations can explain why certain types of sequences are preferred over others. These typically involve the use of preparatory elements to make an implicit face-threatening act (e.g. request) transparent, so that the co-interactant can infer the illocutionary point without it being explicitly expressed, and can volunteer an offer to carry the desired action.

Concern for face is also apparent in the management of the second face-threatening topic, the money which the NS borrowed from the NNS. When this topic is introduced, the NS's reaction is considerably stronger than her response to the first topic (*OH WHAT*, line 53; see also lines 55-56, 63-64). The NS's reactions indicate that she interprets the NNS's turns as highly face-threatening. The first responding utterance with the raised pitch and volume shows that the second preparatory turn comes as something of a shock to the NS. It also seems that the NNS's ambiguous second turn (*maybe you paid that*, line 54) is

interpreted by the NS as an indirect request to pay back the money. This interpretation is displayed in the NS's direct and emphatic response, which explicitly denies the suggestion that she borrowed the money. The NS thus immediately challenges the face-threatening implication, and by doing this attempts to protect her own positive and negative face. It seems likely that the timing of the second topic contributes to the face-threat. Firstly, the fact that the second topic is introduced with a pattern similar to the first one makes the NNS's goals immediately transparent to the NS. Secondly, because a similar topic has just been dealt with and closed, the second topic comes as a surprise and disturbs the interactional balance for the second time.

In spite of the challenging response to the utterance mentioning the topic of money, the NS quickly changes her strategy: she offers to pay back the forty dollars and even apologizes:

S1(1), lines 66-68

NS: No, well I'll give you 40 dollars again because I'd rather be sure that I paid you back. If you say I haven't paid it, well, okay, fine, but I thought I - I thought I had paid you back. Sorry.\*\*

An explanation for the abrupt change of direction has to be sought in the negotiation preceding it, specifically the NNS's turns and the analysis of them that the NS displays in her turn. The above example shows that the NS has interpreted some preceding NNS turns as indicating that the money has not been paid back in spite of her earlier assertions. A look at these turns, however, shows that the NNS does not make such a claim explicitly. The turns (see lines 59, 61-62, 65) contain an explanation of the circumstances in which the NS borrowed the money, and a vague and non-committal statement which seems to suggest that the NNS may indeed have been wrong in assuming that the NS has the money: *it's either I forget things or I don't...* (line 65). The NNS's turn is ambiguous: while it does not assert or assume that the NS took the money and has not returned it, it does not accept the NS's prior assertion of having paid it back either. The ambiguity thus appears to lead the NS to interpret that the NNS is indirectly suggesting that she still owes her money.

A similar pattern is seen earlier in the negotiation: after the NS's first denial of the implication that she has not paid the money back, the NNS also fails to acknowledge or accept the denial in her next turn (line 57). The turn, which consists of hesitations and a pause (4 seconds), may thus be interpreted as implying non-acceptance of the NS's claim. Thus, in failing to accept the NS's claim of having paid the money back, the NNS is interpreted as implying that she believes that the NS has not paid it. This interpretation then leads to an offer to repay the money, and an apology.

The NS's change of direction and apology, however, is not accepted by the NNS in her next turn. The NNS's response seems to convey some difficulty or embarrassment: there is a pause (3 seconds) before any reaction, and the reaction is minimal (*erm*, line 69). This prompts the NS to confirm her intention to pay back the money (*no problem, just wait till pay-day*, line 70; *as soon as I get paid I'll come and see you*, line 72). Conversation analysts (e.g. Davidson 1984 and Houtkoop 1987) have noted that speakers frequently extend or rephrase offers

and proposals to make them more acceptable to the receivers, and that these extensions are often triggered by responses such as delays or weak acceptance forms, which may indicate possible non-acceptance. It appears that the NS's subsequent versions of the offer to return the money here may exhibit a similar motivation in making the offer more explicit and acceptable. It might even be asked whether the NS's original offer was a 'sincere' one, as the NS did not unequivocally admit having borrowed the money (e.g. *I'll give you the money again because I'd rather be sure that I paid you back. If you say I haven't paid it, well, okay*, lines 66-68). The subsequent version may thus be oriented to as necessary confirmation.

In her next turn the NNS accepts the confirmation (*that will be okay*, line 71). This point in the sequence provides a potential closing point for the negotiation: an agreement in terms of a solution to the problem has been achieved. However, at this point the NNS seems to feel there is some need for face repair: she continues with an utterance which seems to minimize the imposition implied by the earlier turns (*I'm worried that I might be wrong*, line 73). This strategy prompts the NS to give further reconfirmation that he intends to pay back the money (lines 76-78). The subsequent turns display more negotiation addressing the face damage caused by the imposition. The NNS initiates face-oriented talk by conveying regret at having imposed on the NS. She expresses her feeling of guilt and almost cancels her face-threatening action (*I mean there's no proof*, lines 79-80). In this way she displays sensitivity to the face risks involved in the type of solution that was reached in the preceding negotiation. This face-supportive follow-up also has interactional consequences: in the next turn the NS in fact for the first time admits having borrowed the money and reconfirms her offer to pay it back (lines 81-85). She also attends to the NNS's positive face by referring to the close relationship between the two interactants and their shared experiences.

The second conversation based on the same situation, S1(2), follows a similar pattern. A face-threatening activity is initiated in a preparatory turn and negotiated over a number of turns, and an agreement is finally reached through mutual action. In the same way as in S1(1), the initial negotiation seeks to establish the interactive problem: the NNS first implicitly requests the NS to return the money, and the next four turns establish and confirm that the money has not yet been paid back. The following segment of the conversation illustrates the way in which the confirmation is achieved:

S1(2), lines 39-45

NNS: you know \* I think \*\* I need that forty dollars now

NS: you mean I haven't paid you back

NNS: yes \* but er \*\*\* do you \* still remember that

NS: well, to be honest I-I-I don't know if I've paid you back or not, but I suppose I'll take your word for it so I still owe you forty dollars

NNS: yes mm you still owe me (forty dollars)

After the problem is established, the NS responds with an apology, and an offer to repay the money. As is seen in the excerpt below, the response is also achieved over a number of turns, in which the NS first offers to check if she can pay the money right away and then proposes an arrangement whereby

she will pay it the following week. The NNS's participation in this activity is minimal. She merely accepts the offer with a single *okay* (line 48) and then repeats parts of the NS's utterances as she extends her offer and subsequently proposes to pay her back later (line 51). The NNS's response to the proposal is somewhat vague and hesitant (*until next week \*\* mm \* I need it um \* I think that will be alright*, lines 52-53), which may suggest to the NS that there is a problem with the proposed arrangement. Thus, a confirmatory exchange follows where the NS checks the acceptability of her proposal and the sequence is brought to a close. Both speakers thus finally confirm the arrangement and thereby reach an outcome in the negotiation.

S1(2), lines 46-56

NS: oh I'm ever so sorry about that \*\* okay, yes erm yes I - well I'll see if I've got it on me first

NNS: okay

NS: I'll just check in my purse \*\* erm \* not today \* (can I \*

NNS: not today erm)

NS: can I pay it to you next week perhaps

NNS: until next week \*\* mm \* I need it um \* I think that will be alright

NS: that will be okay

NNS: yes

NS: oh well

The negotiation of the second topic (earrings) in S1(2) is led by the NS, who takes a dominant role in the activity: while the NNS initiates and introduces the topic, she fails to elaborate it by making explicit her reason for bringing up the topic. She seems to repeatedly avoid taking a turn offered by the NS, and responds with a minimal *yes* (line 67) or by simply answering the NS's questions (lines 69-70, 76, 80). As the NNS does not take the opportunity to make her illocutionary goal explicit, the NS adopts the role of primary speaker, and initiates questions through which she infers the NNS's message, i.e. that she borrowed the earrings and has not returned them. The interactive problem is thus established through a question-answer sequence in which the NS adopts the leading role, as is seen in the following excerpt:

S1(2), lines 63-70, 75-88

NNS: okay \*\* and \*\* another thing \*

NS: oh

NNS: just regarding er my \*\* earrings (pair of earrings

NS: earrings? )

NNS: cough) yes

NS: oh well \* what are they like

NNS: um \*\*\* well they are \*\*\* they're the one that I show you last time

NS: were they gold or silver or er \*\* (plastic

NNS: erm \*\*\* is er \*\* silver - silver earrings

NS: silver earrings

NNS: yea

NS: what and \* did I borrow them or something ? \*\*

NNS: yes er \*\* last night

NS: I borrowed them

NNS: yes

NS: oh

NNS: it was last night

NS: and I've not given them back

NNS: yes \* when we went (er  
 NS: ah let's see)  
 NNS: out to see the movie

The negotiation of a solution to the problem is similar here as in the context of the first topic: it extends over a number of turns where the NS first offers the NNS a pair of earrings she has with her, which is not accepted by the NNS, and finally apologizes and promises to bring the earrings next time they meet. A remark by the NNS after the first offer (*that one is er special gift*, line 94) seems to contribute to the formulation of the final response: the NS seems to interpret the comment on the special value of the earrings as a hint inviting some further offer to repair the situation and, accordingly, immediately proceeds to apologize and offer to bring the earrings. The response is then accepted by the NNS (line 97).

In the same turn the NNS also initiates another sequence oriented to confirming the arrangement and repairing possible face damage (*mmm yes it's okay \*\*\* but er \*\* are you sure that you - you have them*, lines 97-98). The NS's response suggests that she is not quite sure how to interpret this opening. She delays her response and declines to answer the question directly (*well \* I can't remember losing them*, line 101). In the same turn the NS initiates an insertion sequence which establishes that the NS wore the earrings the previous night. This finally prompts her to conclude that she still has the earrings and to again offer to look for them (lines 104-105). The offer is then accepted by the NNS and confirmed in a four-turn sequence (lines 106-111).

S1(2), lines 95-111  
 NS: Well I'm sorry \* I'll try and remember to bring them next time I see you \*\*\*  
 NNS: mmm \* yes it's okay \*\*\* but er \*\* are you sure that you - you have them ?  
 NS: um  
 NNS: still (inaudible)  
 NS: well \* I can't remember losing them \* did I have them on last night ?  
 NNS: last night mmm  
 NS: I had them on last night oh I think I still have them they must be at the flat \*\*\* yea I'll have a look as soon as I get home\*  
 NNS: (okay  
 NS: I'll have a look)  
 NNS: yea  
 NS: and if I can't find them I'll let you know \* but I'm sure I've still got them  
 NNS: mm alright

In brief, both conversations based on S1 reflect mutual concern for face and interactive efforts to protect both the speaker's own and the interlocutor's face. The concern for face seems to extend the negotiation of the activities beyond the requirements of communicative efficiency. The non-native participants seem to delay and avoid the explicit expression of an act which may be interpreted as face-threatening and use off-record hints to gradually approach the topic. They also initiate new sequences which are oriented to the protection of their interlocutors' face and which seem to serve to minimize the face-threat implied.

### 8.1.2 S2: Malay classes

The activity dealt with in S2 has to do with the NNS offering help to the NS, who is looking for a private tutor to teach him some Malay. In both conversations based on this situation, the main topic is introduced and brought up in a similar way: a pre-sequence establishing the NS's need for help prepares the actual offer, which follows in a later turn:

S2(1), lines 11-25

NNS: Yes) that's why I came here for, yes, now, regarding to, er, you are interested in learning Malay

NS: I have been, yes, I'm busy looking for a tutor but I'm not having any diff- any luck at all.

NNS: Then, I heard, er, your friend Tim, is also interested.

NS: (Tim?

NNS: inaudible)

NS: Yes, he's interested in finding one but, um, I'd rather not actually learn Malay with him. I'm looking for more of a personal coach.

NNS: I see

NS: I'm looking for a one-to-one basis.

NNS: One-to-one.

NS: Yea, that's the type of (thing.

NNS: Er,) in some way, maybe, I can, I can help you.

S2(2), lines 1-10

NNS: I understand that, er, you have been trying to find er a teacher to teach you Malay.

NS: Yes yes that's right, uum, I tried I tried to er get into the University but they don't have a university course doing Malay speaking language and, er, they actually have one class but it's at a time when I have a lecture so I can't get there, so, yea, I got to find er someone I can learn Malay from.

NNS: So, er, if you wish (inaudible) er, erm, I can do - I can teach you Malay because I'm going to teach only er in the next er three months, so, what do you think of this? (laugh)

In S2(1) the preparatory turn is treated by the NS as a question or request to confirm an assumption, and is responded to with an affirmative answer. The next turns form a sequence which establishes a related issue (another friend, Tim, is looking for a tutor) and specifies that the NS is looking for a private tutor. It seems that the reason why the NNS mentions Tim at this point is to include him in the arrangement. The NS's turn on lines 18-20 confirms that the preceding turns are oriented to as preparatory: the latter part of the turn suggests that the NS interprets the preceding turns as anticipating some proposal for including Tim in a possible tutoring arrangement and that he is not receptive to such a proposal. In the next four turns the NNS accepts this response and the speakers jointly confirm the preliminary agreement (lines 21-24).

This sequence has consequences for the subsequent interaction. It restricts the NNS's options by excluding one possible arrangement that the NNS may have intended to propose. It may also explain in part why the actual offer by the NNS is so vague and unemphatic: if the NNS's initial turn was anticipating or preparing a proposal to teach the two young men at the same



time, the NS's response forces him to change direction in making such a proposal redundant. Thus, a new plan must be instantly formed and implemented in the interaction. The NNS's hesitations may reflect processing of the new situation which he is faced with and his attempts to formulate a new plan (line 25).

The organization of the pre-sequence in S2(2) is more straightforward: it consists of the preparatory turn which introduces the topic and the NS's response which confirms and elaborates the assumption expressed in the preparatory turn (lines 1-7).

In both conversations a form of offer follows the pre-sequences. The two conversations differ, however, in the way in which the participants negotiate the activity. In S2(1) the negotiation proceeds in a less than orderly manner. Many problems can be identified which reflect a lack of joint focus and shared perspective to the activity and a failure to establish a cooperative basis for the negotiation. These problems seem to arise from the non-native participant's inability to make his goals transparent enough for the native speaker to recognize and from asymmetries in the expectations guiding the interaction. The description below demonstrates how these asymmetries emerge at the local level of conversational organization.

In S2(1) the actual offer of help, in spite of its somewhat vague form, is followed by an immediate acceptance by the NS (*well, if you can help me at all--- I'd be very grateful*, lines 26-28). It thus seems that the sequence displays a regular OFFER - ACCEPTANCE pattern which has now been completed and the conversation could move on to other related topics, e.g. making arrangements. In the turns following the offer and its acceptance, however, the NNS seems to indicate that the arrangement is still conditional on some further negotiation: he initiates a question-answer sequence seeking more information about the NS's knowledge about the Malay language (*but er before that I should like to get some information---*, lines 29-31). The sequence proceeds with the NNS having the dominant role of primary speaker: he asks questions and the NS responds.

At a later stage in the conversation the offer is taken up again: the NNS makes an assertion which seems intended as a restatement of the offer on lines 48-51. The language in the turn is highly problematic and non-nativelike, which makes it difficult for the NS interlocutor to interpret it. The NS's response suggests, however, that he does indeed interpret it as some form of offer. While his response takes the form of a request for clarification, it builds on the assumption that an offer is being negotiated: *Uhu. So, so what would you be offering me then? Would you be offering me your services?* (lines 52-53).

It seems that the prior sequences have given the NS grounds for expecting a more specific offer at this point, and the NS is thus attempting to prompt the NNS to state the offer explicitly on the record and then to start negotiating the details of the arrangement. The need to make the offer explicit at this point is supported by the exchange following the above turns: after the NNS confirms that he is offering his services (*yes certainly*, line 54), the NS requests further confirmation (*yes?*, line 55) and receives an assurance from the NNS in return (*certainly*, line 56). The second version of the offer is thus confirmed in a four-turn sequence.

In the turn confirming the offer, however, the NNS launches another sequence similar to the negotiation following the first offer and its response. He proceeds to advise the NS on what he should do in addition to taking classes. He also again adopts a more dominant role by stating his purpose of holding the floor for some time in order to give advice (*there are a few things you should do*, lines 56-57) and then proceeding to give advice (lines 60-64, 66-67, 69-70). The NS adopts the recipient role by responding with minimal utterances, e.g. *yes* and *right* (lines 61, 63, 65, 68). It seems, however, that this sequence is not accepted by the NS as entirely relevant to the negotiation of the offer. After being advised to get a dictionary, the NS produces a turn, in which he, first, partially accepts the NNS's advice and, secondly, brings up the topic of the NNS's offer to teach him in a rather subtle way, indicating that he is still not treating the arrangement concerning the offer as complete (note especially the phrase *I will certainly endeavour to use it if you were to teach me*):

S2(1), lines 71-74

NS: Yes, er, I-I've already got one of those but I could make neither head nor tail of it. I understand the English but when I come to use the Malay I always forget the words but I-I will certainly endeavour to use it, if you were to teach me.

In his extended response the NNS does not respond to the hint, but focuses on the first part of the turn, reporting having experienced similar problems with learning English (lines 75-90). He thus shows support to the NS's face by invoking common ground and showing sympathy, but fails to infer the possible hint concerning the relevance of his advice, and does not show any intention of moving on to another topic. The NS finally indicates explicitly that he wants to complete the negotiation of the offer and possible details associated with it:

S2(1), lines 91-97

NS: Well, act-actually, I've not got very long just now. I've got, I've only got a few more minutes and I'm expecting someone to come to my office...

NNS: I see

NS: in about five minutes. If you could just give me a few more details as to how you intend to teach me, and also, very importantly, how much it will likely to cost.---

The two turns above achieve the effect of changing the focus of the interaction: they contain closing-implicative items, such as the reference to lack of time, and an explicit request for more details concerning the prior offer. The following turns mark a change of orientation in the conversation and the beginning of a sequence oriented to the negotiation of details, which leads to a closing of the conversation.

There seems to be a mismatch in the expectations and goals of the two speakers in S2(1). The native participant's behaviour suggests that he expects a pattern where the initial, rather weak offer is explicitly restated and thus confirmed, and details associated with it are then negotiated. The NNS, on the other hand, displays an interest in the NS's problem by asking background

questions, elaborating on a similar problem shared by himself and giving related advice. The NNS thus seems to have a broader view of the problem and, accordingly, orients to different aspects of the topic and tries to give assistance in the form of support and advice. The NS, however, shows some signs of impatience when the negotiation does not progress according to the pattern in accordance with his expectations. In brief, the extended unsuccessful negotiation shows that the participants are not aligned to the situation in the same way: both speakers act according to their own expectations and have trouble with orienting to each other's talk. An overview of the opening section and the negotiation phases of the conversation shows that the NNS has expressed in his preparatory utterance that he came to see the NS for a purpose and that the purpose is associated with the NS's current problem. Thus, there seem to be grounds for the NS's expectation that the NNS has some arrangement in mind which may solve his problem and that the negotiation of this arrangement is the main business of the conversation. As the NNS fails to make explicit moves to advance this negotiation, the NS is puzzled and confused. However, at the beginning of the conversation the NS made explicit his assumption of a close relationship between himself and the NNS and started talking about his problems apparently at a rather personal level. This may explain the NNS's broader orientation to the NS's language problems and his lengthy attempts to give general advice.

At first sight the second version of S2 seems to show a more orderly pattern of organization where the NNS prepares and makes the offer explicit at an early stage in the conversation (see lines 1-2, 8-10) and then does a subsequent version of it at a later stage (lines 20-22). Similar patterns have been observed in native speaker conversations in invitation and offer sequences: Davidson (1984), for example, observes these organizations in sequences where a first version of an invitation or offer is either rejected or inadequately accepted. 'Weak' acceptance forms, such as *hm*, *uh-huh* and *yeah*, are generally taken to indicate inadequate acceptance.

In S2(2) the NS does not immediately respond to the NNS's first offer in a sequentially relevant way. He delays his response with *well*, *I think* and laughter (lines 11-12), and then initiates another sequence prior to responding to the offer. Such 'insertion' sequences positioned after the first part of a pair of sequentially relevant turns are frequently used by speakers to negotiate conditions for the response to the first turn (see e.g. Levinson 1983:304-306, Houtkoop 1987:102-103). Here the inserted sequence appears to be focused on the NNS's reasons or grounds for making an acceptable or valid offer: the NS asks whether the NNS is a student of Malay (lines 11-12) and then seeks confirmation for the assumption that he is a native-speaker of Malay (lines 16). The insertion sequence results in a subsequent version of the offer: the NNS restates the offer in a turn which pays attention to the conditions negotiated in the prior sequence (*so I think it's (inaudible) since I er I've been studying Malay in in er in university and also in er secondary school and I'll try my best to teach you*, lines 20-22). The NS interprets the turn as a restated offer without difficulty and proceeds to accept the offer in a lengthy utterance in which he expresses appreciation (*that would be super*, line 23; *that would be great*, lines 29) and gives

an account oriented to the prior insertion sequence (the NS is looking for a native speaker teacher). The basic organization of this sequence can be summarized in a simplified schematic format as follows:

	(PRE-SEQUENCE)
NNS:	OFFER
	(INSERTION SEQUENCE)
NNS:	RE-OFFER
NS:	ACCEPTANCE

Both participants thus seem to orient to the need to re-establish the offer at a particular point in the conversation. The NNS, in spite of his linguistic difficulties, manages to convey the offer, and even shows some indication of trying to make the offer 'more acceptable' to the NS by not assuming that he is a qualified teacher but stating he is going to 'try his best'. The NS, for his part, shows no sign of difficulty in understanding, but treats the turn as a re-offer and responds to it with an acceptance. In the response turn the NS also initiates a negotiation of arrangements by enquiring about the rate that the NNS would charge for tutoring. The ensuing negotiation, however, brings some problems and takes a considerable time before an understanding of even the basic goals of the two speakers are established. The problematic negotiation will be examined below.

The negotiation is concerned with an issue related to the NNS's offer, i.e. his plan to teach both the NS and another acquaintance interested in learning Malay simultaneously. This issue extends over a considerable part of the conversation (lines 31-152). As pointed out above, it is initiated in the sequence following the NS's acceptance of the offer. The NS initiates a sequence, which from his point of view looks like a negotiation of arrangements subsequent to the actual offer-sequence by asking about the fee that the NNS would charge for tutoring. At this point the NNS, however, introduces the fact that another friend is interested in learning Malay and makes a proposal to the effect that he joins a group with the NS:

S2(2), lines 31-35

NNS: Er, this, I think it is as we are friends, the thing is it's up to you to decide because er one friend also is trying to learn Malay er Tim and so if you wish we can at the same time with him you can join er one group to study, to study Malay at the same time

The turn is followed by an insertion sequence, which negotiates and seems to confirm the NS's understanding of the proposal. The NS then challenges the proposal by making explicit that he is interested in private tutoring (*okay. Uum would it be possible to have private tutorship for just the one person?*, lines 38-39). The NNS's responses to the counter-proposal are rather vague and confused: on the one hand he suggests that the proposal is acceptable (e.g. *it's up to the person*, line 42; *it's up to you*, line 47; *it doesn't matter to me*, line 49); on the other hand, he continues talking about learning in groups and gaining practice with other people. The NS, for his part, rephrases his own proposal twice (lines 50-51, 54-58), at the same time orienting to the NNS's prior responses by acknowledging both his apparent acceptance of the first

proposal and his comments on the advantages of learning in a group. The latter of the subsequent versions of the proposal amounts to a suggestion for compromise: the NS proposes that he joins a group but also receives private tuition (lines 54-58). The NNS, however, fails to respond to this re-proposal in his next turn but carries on talking about groups. His goal does not become clear to the NS, who finally attempts to make it explicit with a request for clarification (*so is your preference then to have more than one \* student?*, line 67). This time the NNS's response seems to (at first) suggest that the NNS's goal is indeed to form a group rather than give private tuition. Subsequent talk shows, however, that there is a fundamental problem of understanding concerning the issue of private tuition, which leads to considerable confusion before it is clarified (see e.g. lines 71-77, 89-97, 104-113). The following segment of talk shows the negotiation of meaning which clarifies the problem.

S2(2), lines 114-119

NS: I see. Is it okay if, er, I just have individual tuition?

NNS: You mean, er, for yourself only you mean

NS: Yes, just myself.

NNS: Without er

NS: Without Tim.

NNS: Without Tim. Well, okay but ---

After this sequence, the NNS first accepts the NS's counter-proposal for private tuition (fourth version). The subsequent negotiation finally establishes a partial solution, whereby the NS agrees to go and talk to Tim before making any definite arrangements. This arrangement is then confirmed in a brief four-turn exchange (lines 148-153). The next sequence addresses arrangements associated with the original offer. However, this negotiation is not successful, but once again makes explicit the two speakers' different goals and expectations. The outcome of the conversation is that the NS abandons his proposal to get private tuition (lines 164-175). At the end of the conversation the NS makes explicit that he had difficulty in following the NNS's line of argument: *I didn't quite follow what you were getting at* (lines 179-180).

The problems in this lengthy negotiation sequence arise from several sources. First, the limited linguistic resources of the NNS cause problems for both speakers: neither participant is able to make his goal unambiguous and explicit enough for the other to understand and they have difficulties in following each other's arguments. Second, both appear to address each other's face wants with expressing at least partial agreement instead of putting their divergent points unambiguously on record, which further confuses the issues. Displays of 'surface' cooperation are interpreted by both parties as genuine agreement with actual goals, which leads to apparent agreement, but later surfaces as further breakdowns. Finally, the participants are unable to align to the purpose or focus of talk at each stage of the conversation. After the initial exchange focusing on the activity of offer, the NS appears to assume that the main arrangement has been established and what is going on after that has to do with related but subsidiary arrangements. The NNS, on the other hand, seems to continue making efforts to settle an issue which to him is an integral part of the main arrangement (including Tim in the arrangement). The non-

alignment also becomes apparent at later stages of the conversation, where several subsequent versions of the NS's proposal are negotiated without arriving at a satisfactory outcome. The passage also illustrates, however, the way in which agreement and solutions to problems are actively pursued by both parties: neither abandons his goals and the negotiation is not closed until an arrangement, albeit an unsatisfactory one, is finally achieved.

In brief, the conversations based on S2 reflect difficulties of managing the face-threatening activity resulting from the failure of the participants to negotiate sufficient reciprocal alignment to the situation. Problems of understanding arise from divergent interpretations of the activity in focus and the overall purpose or focus of interaction at specific phases of the conversation.

### 8.1.3 S3: Party plan

The conversations based on the third symmetrical situation, S3, are concerned with the NS wanting to arrange a party in the flat shared by her and the NNS. Both versions of the conversations seem to be organized by a negotiation of a *request* made by the NS. However, in both conversations other possible organizational patterns affect the way in which the talk unfolds. These are reflected in the negotiation of the initial request and its response.

In S3(1) the NS's opening turn introduces the topic of the party and continues to make a request to borrow the NNS's stereo for the party. This turn is followed by a two-turn insertion sequence establishing the time planned for the party (lines 6-7). After this, the NNS responds with a statement indicating that there is a problem with the NS's proposal (line 8). Although the response does not make explicit whether the NNS intends to comply with the actual request or not, it may be taken as an indirect response of a dispreferred type, i.e. non-compliance, by virtue of its content, shape, and timing. The organization could thus be described as a REQUEST - (POTENTIAL) REFUSAL sequence, with an inserted QUESTION-ANSWER sequence.

S3(1), lines 1-11

NS: Well, Siti, erm \* I was thinking of having a party \* tonight \* if \* you're not busy studying (5 sec.) and, um \* well, my stereo's broken, huh, and I was wondering if uum \* if you're not doing anything with your stereo, I could possibly borrow your stereo for the party?

NNS: When did you say you are going to have the party?

NS: Uum, tomorrow night.

NNS: Oh, \*\*\* that's a problem,

NS: Oh.

NNS: you have to, er, you've never mentioned before you're going to have, you're going to have a party.

A more detailed study of the sequence reveals, however, that other potential forms of organization may be at play, which constrain the subsequent development of the conversation. The first turn by the NS, for example, appears to involve a potential for ambiguity and possibly multiple, emergent goals. It opens with an announcement of the NS's plan to have a party, which is mitigated with typical negative politeness strategies. The announcement is

followed by a relatively long pause (5 seconds), which is a possible turn-completion point and an occasion for the NNS to respond to the first utterance. The NS's silence indicates that she treats her first utterance as potentially complete and stops for a possible reaction. Whether her utterance was intended as an off-record request or an announcement of a plan is open to interpretation, but its potential for doing one of these actions is evident, and one motivation for stopping at this point would be to check if the NNS has any objection. The NNS does not respond, however, which results in the NS continuing to make a further request: in the latter part of the turn the NS then makes a more transparent request concerning the stereo.

It seems that two possible interpretations of the NNS's silence are open to the NS. On the one hand, she might treat it as an implicit dispreferred response indicating that the NNS indeed has some objection to her announcement (or proposal). In this case the NS might have proceeded to make a subsequent version of the first announcement. On the other hand, she may simply treat it as a signal for her to continue talking. Since what follows is not a subsequent version of the first utterance but a request concerning a related but different topic, the latter interpretation is more likely. In this case the first part of the turn becomes significant as a preface leading up to the second part. The NS thus appears to realign her goals in the course of her own turn on the basis of her assessment of the NNS's (non)response.

The insertion sequence is also of interest here. It focuses on the first part of the request turn concerning the NS's plan to arrange a party, and not the request (to borrow a stereo) itself. In this way the sequence conveys to the NS that it is this part of the proposal that has to be negotiated prior to any response and that the NNS may indeed have possible objections to her plan. The NNS' subsequent response (lines 8, 10-11) makes these objections explicit by indicating that she sees a problem with the plan. Thus, rather than orienting to the request concerning the stereo, the NNS seems to question the NS's grounds for making the actual request. The NNS also makes an implicit complaint about the NS's behaviour (*you've never mentioned before you're going to have a party*), which obliges the NS to respond and thus constrains the following turn. The complaint poses a threat to both his negative and positive face: it restricts the NS's alternatives for a possible next action (threat to negative face) and conveys a criticism directed at her behaviour (threat to positive face). The insertion sequence thus reflects a subtle shift in the pattern of interactional control: through her failure to provide a direct response to the NS's previous turns, the NNS gains control over the next topic and activity to be negotiated.

The subsequent turns in the conversation attend to the complaint: in her following turn the NS explains why she has not mentioned the party before and minimizes the problem (*well it's kind of spontaneous, just some friends, well, well we were just chatting*, lines 12-13). The NNS, however, in her next turn expresses the complaint in a stronger form: she rephrases the earlier assertion in more personal terms (e.g. *I've got a problem---*, *---I feel it's bad for me*, lines 14-16), and goes on to give further grounds for not agreeing to the NS's plan for the party (her need to work and get high marks, etc.) In these turns the NNS expresses her complaint quite unambiguously and without mitigation, which

may explain the NS's subsequent response: the NS challenges her supportive grounds with a counter-complaint and a directive (*but you're always working. Take a **night off**, I do*, line 22). At this point in the conversation both the interactants seem to adopt a strategy of protecting their own ground, and maintaining both their positive and negative face, and not paying equal attention to the other's face. Such self-directed strategies, however, simultaneously threaten the interlocutor's face.

Over a number of turns the negotiation continues in a similar fashion. The NS uses various persuasive strategies minimizing the imposition she is making (e.g. *surely one day's not going to make any difference*, lines 26-27 and *if you're working does it matter which day you take off*, lines 32-33) and, conversely, maximizing the imposition that the NNS is making in not accepting her proposal (*well I've **arranged it all**, huh*, line 29). The NNS, for her part, lists more reasons to justify her position and suggests that the NS arrange the party on another day (lines 23-25, 28, 30-31, 34). A solution is finally found when the NS retracts from her position and compromises by accepting the NNS's proposal of changing the date of the party (having already once refused it), and suggests having it the day after (line 35). This arrangement is then accepted and confirmed (lines 36-38).

Having confirmed the date of the party, the participants return to the original request: the NS restates the request to borrow the NNS's stereo, and this time the NNS complies (lines 39-40). The NS thus refocuses on the initial request, which until now has not been attended to, and does a subsequent version of it after the problem concerned with its pre-condition has been negotiated. The subsequent version is now acceptable to the NNS, who complies. The conversation reaches a point where agreement has been achieved and the topic is closed. This is accomplished with a turn in which the NS acknowledges the NNS's acceptance of the request (*oh that's good*, line 41). The segment below illustrates the way in which the final agreement is reached:

S3(1), lines 30-42

NNS: Can't you make another, er, can't you arrange it for another day?

NS: Well, huh, I can't really, I mean if you're working does it matter which day you take off?

NNS: I **really** have to finish my work for tomorrow.

NS: So if I have it the day after?

NNS: I feel the day is up to you.

NS: So if I if I choose Saturday night?

NNS: It's okay for me, I (think

NS: Right) and I can borrow your stereo?

NNS: Yea, that's okay.

NS: Oh, that's good (laugh)

NNS: (laugh)

An overview of the whole sequence shows that it builds on complex layers of organization. While its basic organization seems to follow a REQUEST - ACCEPTANCE pattern, other organizations are also in evidence. Even though most of the talk seems to be focused on negotiating preconditions for a final acceptance of the original request, it also incorporates a negotiation of an implicit complaint which leads to an extended negotiation phase and results in



a compromise with respect to the main topic (arrangement for the party). Thus the main activity is complex and negotiable, and the organization of the conversation reflects the participants' interactive management of different aspects of the main topic.

In the second conversation based on the same situation, S3(2), the sequence oriented to the main activity opens with a pre-sequence followed by a request, which is bluntly refused in the next turn:

S3(2), lines 9-18

NS: Ah yes. Uum, you know I like to give a lot of parties don't you.

NNS: Well, (inaudible) (laughter)

NS: (laughter) anyway, I like to give a lot of parties, okay?.

NNS: Yea.

NS: Well, erm, I was wondering whether it would be possible to give a party in our apartment tomorrow night \* and I know you've got a lot of studying to do but would you agree \* to give a party?

NNS: Course not.

The organization of the pre-sequence has interesting implications on the subsequent request. The NS initiates it with a preparatory utterance which presupposes common ground (*you know I like to give a lot of parties don't you*, lines 9-10). The utterance ends with a tag question which invites an affirmative response. Such a response would in this context serve as a continuer which would encourage the speaker to continue. The NNS's response, however, is not a continuer, but begins with a gambit which typically prefaces a dispreferred turn (*well*) and continues with some inaudible speech and laughter (line 11). This prompts the NS to restate the preparatory utterance in her next turn, this time ending it with an explicit device for requesting acceptance (*okay?*, line 12). This seems to indicate that the NS is following a particular organization and objects to the NNS's disruption of this organization. The NNS then conforms to the NS's expectation by responding with a continuer (*yea*, line 13), thus accepting the previous turn as a preface and passing the turn back to the NS, so that she can continue with the projected action.

The next turn presents the actual request itself, which is followed by an immediate refusal (lines 14-17). The response (line 18) is not delayed nor marked as dispreferred in any way (e.g. by delay or softening devices), but is delivered bald-on-record, as if it were a preferred response. It is, however, clearly treated as dispreferred by the NS. One feature of dispreferred responses is that they require an explanation or account (Levinson 1983:334). The NS here explicitly requests an explanation (*why not?*, line 19). The fact that the NNS's response is not mitigated or softened suggests a disregard for other-directed face-work, which is also seen as the latter part of the sequence unfolds (see e.g. lines 20, 22, 24-25). The NS's attempts at persuading the NNS to consider changing her mind or accepting a compromise (lines 26, 28, 35-36) also fail, and the sequence becomes confrontational: the NNS starts making direct attacks on the NS's positive face (e.g. *you are irresponsible---*, lines 33-34).

The conversation continues in a similar vein for some time. The NS tries various persuasive tactics to get the NNS to reconsider. She appeals to the NNS's good will (e.g. *because our apartment is the only place we can have a party*,

*you see*, lines 40-41), and uses other strategies of positive politeness, e.g. rephrases her request making her insistence slightly humorous (*so you're sure we can't have one tomorrow night-- absolutely positive?*, lines 53, 55). She finally also invites the NNS to the party (*and of course you are invited*, line 57). These attempts, however, meet with blunt refusals and directives to find another place or time for the party (lines 42, 46, 52, 54, 56). The NS's invitation turn is followed by a further confrontational sequence, where the NNS refuses the invitation by indicating that she does not appreciate its face-supportive potential (*but I have work to do, why should I come*, line 59).

The subsequent turns display a similar profound conflict of interests (lines 60-73). The arguments expressed in each speaker's turns reflect different goals and underlying values: the NS emphasizes the need to have fun and relax, whereas the NNS continues to stress the need to finish her work. The NS's positive politeness tactics fail because of the NNS's refusal to accept the kind of cooperation or common ground they try to invoke. In this way the same tactics have a face-aggravating effect.

Some kind of a solution in the argument is finally reached when the NS, after yet another check confirming that the NNS will not change her mind (line 74) and will not accept a compromise (lines 76-77), accepts the NNS's refusal and counter-proposal by agreeing to change the date (line 79). The NNS does not respond to the NS's acceptance immediately, but only laughs. This is apparently not sufficient for the NS, who proceeds to request for explicit acceptance of her turn, which would ratify the arrangement (*okay?*, line 81). The NNS then accepts the proposal with a reciprocal *okay* (line 82), which confirms the arrangement and closes the sequence. The segments below show the achievement of the sequence-closing arrangement.

S3(2), lines 46-52, 79-82

NNS: So you can get) postpone, postpone the party, later date.

NS: oh.

NNS: After I have my work done.

NS: But when will your work be done?

NNS: Ah, by Saturday.

NS: By Saturday.

NNS: Friday, Friday or Saturday, you can have a party then.

---

NS: Okay, if that's what you want. Okay, so I book it for Saturday.

NNS: (laughter)

NS: Okay?

NNS: Okay.

The negotiation in S3(2) illustrates the way that conflicting goals are reflected in the organization of the conversation. From the outset, the NNS's conversational behaviour appears to diverge from the NS's expectations: she disrupts the organization of the opening sequence and the pre-sequence, and responds to the request with a dispreferred turn without marking it as dispreferred. It seems that her behaviour cannot be explained by lacking linguistic resources or incompetence: in other contexts in the conversation she displays awareness of the organizational constraints and expectations. It seems rather that the NNS manipulates the organization for her own purposes, i.e. to

express her position and pursue her goals rather than accept those of the NS. Her illocutionary goal is to refuse the NS's request. In terms of face goals, the NNS's primary orientation appears to be the preservation of her own negative face, i.e., to resist the imposition which the party would amount to. She pursues these goals systematically and makes no attempt to do other-directed supportive face-work, which might compromise her own goals.

This strategy, then, as can be expected, poses a threat to the NS's face, who has to adopt a similar strategy in self-defense. Her means of pursuing her goals (to get the NNS to accept her request) are more subtle in that they manipulate other-directed positive politeness strategies. Her strategies, however, are unsuccessful. The NNS does not treat them as face-enhancing strategies but challenges them, which leads to further face-aggravation on both sides. The conflict is finally partly resolved by settling the issue of the date of the party. In order to reach this solution the NS has to abandon her position and accept an arrangement proposed by the NNS. Although a solution is reached, a fundamental conflict of interests remains: the NS has lost face by failing to achieve her goals in spite of elaborate attempts at persuading the NNS. This conflict is also reflected in the way that the closing of the conversation unfolds (see 9.2.1 below).

## 8.2 Symmetrical high distance situations

### 8.2.1 D1: Student party

The first situation involving a symmetrical high distance relationship concerns an invitation to a party. In both conversations representing this situation the organization of the sequences which attend to the activity of inviting reflects complex patterns of other-directed face-work and preference organization. In D1(1), this organization can be summarized as follows: the NNS opens the topic with a pre-invitation and makes the invitation explicit in a subsequent turn; the NS initiates an insertion sequence which establishes the time and place of the party, and then initiates a negotiation of the response which leads first to an acceptance of the invitation, but later to a refusal. The pattern both resembles and departs from a more predictable (and perhaps 'preferred') format, where an invitation is first followed by a dispreferred response, which is then challenged with a subsequent form of the invitation (re-invitation) leading to a preferred response (cf. e.g. Davidson 1984). A more detailed examination of the sequence shows how the organization emerges in the conversation.

The opening part of the sequence where the invitation is introduced departs from the typical format for pre-invitations and invitations. As is seen in the extract below, the first part of the NNS's utterance is already responded to as a potentially complete invitation by the NS, who initiates the inserted question-answer sequence as soon as the NNS has announced that he is having a party. 'Reportings' of this type are a recurrent feature in invitation sequences

in English and they can be used, among other things, to hint at an invitation unofficially and thus possibly avoid doing the actual act of inviting (Drew 1984). The NS thus appears to follow a pattern which is common in English NS interaction: he interprets the mention of the party as projecting an invitation and responds to it without waiting for a more 'official' on-record act of inviting. It is only after the insertion sequence that the NNS actually enquires about the NS's ability to come to the party, which seems to count as a conventionally indirect invitation.

D1(1), lines 25-40

NNS: I see - see I'm - I'm a student of Management Studies at the \*  
University of Brunei Darussalam

NS: ah yes ?

NNS: so we have made the arrangement to \*\* have the informal party \*  
but \*\*\* but now we we we don't have so er \* a person that can play  
guitar and \* sing \* (songs

NS: er ) where is this party?

NNS: it's in the University of Brunei

NS: And when would that be?

NNS: It's er, it will be, but I'm not sure, it will be on Tuesday night.

NS: Tuesday night

NNS: Are you, do you have time?

NS: Well, \*\* I think \* unfortunately, that is a night that my parents are  
having a party themselves.

NNS: (I see

While the non-native speaker's turns thus seem to follow a pattern of preparing an invitation and then putting it on record, the actual invitation unfolds interactively through active participation of the recipient (NS) in the activity. An invitation is inferred on the basis of the first preparatory turns, which can thus be seen as performing the invitation implicitly. The insertion sequence, then, is oriented to clarifying some related arrangements and details. The second turn by the NNS produces a subsequent version of the invitation designed to make it 'more acceptable' to the NS: it orients to the preceding insertion sequence by taking into account the possibility that the NS might not have time to come.

The negotiation of the response to the invitation is similarly a collaborative process extending over a substantial part of the interaction. In fact the final response is not accomplished until the very end of the conversation. The NS's first reaction to the invitation (lines 38-39) suggests that there is a problem with the preliminary arrangements, i.e. the time of the party, but does not give an unequivocal reply to the invitation. Instead, the response is suspended, and the NS thereby avoids threat to both his own and the NNS's face. He does not commit himself to any course of action, and also avoids the risk of offending the other party, which a quick refusal might do. At the same time the NS supports the NNS's positive face by claiming common ground and seeking agreement (lines 41-43).

The NNS, for his part, appears to interpret the turns reporting the problem as implying a dispreferred response. His first reactions (*I see*, line 40 *uh-huh*, line 44) simply acknowledge the NS's explanation and encourage him to continue, but later he appears to accept the NS's response as an implicit

refusal (*yes, I see*, line 47). The NS's turn on lines 48-51, however, partly cancels the dispreferred implication of his first response and establishes that a preferred response is also a possibility: he suggests that he 'will consider' attending the NNS's party. Thus the NS still avoids making an explicit on-record decision between the two alternative responses. His turn can, however, be seen to imply acceptance. In the first part of the turn he seems to come up with a proposal whereby he can both attend the NNS's party and keep a previous arrangement to be with his parents (*I tell you what, I - I will consider that is first to do what you're talking about*, lines 48-49). The second part of the turn implies acceptance even more strongly: the NS continues by giving the NNS a reason to believe that he is more interested in his party than his parents' (*because quite honestly my parents' friends can be a little boring*, lines 50-51). The NNS's response shows that he treats the turn as a possible 'preferred' response: he attends to the NS's turn by taking up and supporting the NS's grounds for accepting the invitation and builds on the NS's positive politeness by further emphasizing common interests (lines 52-53). The NS's responses similarly display positive politeness through expressions of appreciation and agreement (e.g. *ah that would be very good ---*, line 56; *I would prefer that yea*, line 61).

The NNS thus appears to interpret the talk so far as indicating a preferred response, an acceptance of the invitation. Accordingly, he starts a new type of sequence oriented to elaborating the topic of the party with more details and arrangements: he announces that there will be a singing contest (line 62). At this point, however, the NS interrupts with an utterance which seems to function as a question (*but there would be many people at the party*, line 63). Although the form of the NS's utterance does not indicate that a question is intended, it can be interpreted as one by virtue of its intonation contour, its content and the sequential context (see Schegloff 1984 for discussion of sequential criteria for questions). The NS's turn does not orient to the sequence-initiating function of the NS's prior turn. Rather than taking up the topic of arrangements to do with the party, the NS initiates another insertion sequence, which seems to be oriented to clarifying a possible problem or condition to the acceptance of the invitation. Thus it seems that something triggers an objection in the NS's mind and causes him to ignore the topic introduced by the NNS (singing contest) and to address an earlier topic (number of people).

This brief and somewhat ambiguous sequence marks a shift in the negotiation, leading towards a final dispreferred response. This point in the conversation also appears to reflect an asymmetry in the expectations concerning the development of the encounter: the participants' interpretation of what is going on is different. While the NS is negotiating a possible condition for accepting the invitation, the NNS seems to assume that an acceptance has already been made explicit and proceeds to negotiate actual arrangements.

In his response to the NS's question (lines 64-66, 68, 70), the NNS shows no sign of recognition of any problem (note his comment: *that will be, you know, joy and fun*, line 70). These turns are followed, however, by a final, extended refusal of the invitation by the NS. The dispreferred and potentially face-threatening character of the response to follow is indicated over a number of

turns, where the NS hesitates and delays his response, shows partial agreement, and finally declines the invitation using various softening devices:

D1(1), lines 64-75

NNS: We, we assume that there will be a lot you see since we have invited most of the Management students as well as the others, er, you know, students who are taking, taking...

NS: Ah

NNS: ...other courses

NNS: I see, well

NNS: ...that will be, you know, joy and fun.

NS: yea, er, uum, ah, ah, I do not mind maybe one or two people, maybe even three people to play my guitar in front of but by party I thought you meant just a small group that I could maybe join in playing guitar with. To sit and sing in front of many people, uum, I do not think I would be able to come along to that. ---

In subsequent turns the NS further softens the impact of the dispreferred response by giving supportive grounds (e.g. lines 78-80, 85-86, 88-89). The sequence is finally closed in an exchange where the NS again expresses appreciation for the invitation and restates his refusal twice, and the NNS accepts the response:

D1(1), lines 97-104

NS: I, I think I must say no (because...

NNS: Oh yes)

NS: I, I do, I like small parties but not big parties I - oh, they, no I do not think I can go to that one. But very kind for the invitation but

NNS: Yea

NS: I think I will have to say \* no

NNS: It's okay.

The lengthy negotiation which is required before an outcome is reached in D1(1) reflects the asymmetries in the participants' expectations concerning the nature of the invitation and the kind of imposition it entails. An overview of the conversation suggests that the NS would have been willing to accept an invitation to a small informal party, but the NNS was interested in asking him to perform and play the guitar for an audience. This is not acceptable to the NS, who then eventually declines the invitation. The negotiation is managed in a highly face-supportive and orderly way: both participants make efforts to take each other's wants into consideration and use various positive politeness strategies to maintain rapport. Even though the conversation ends with a dispreferred response, it does not seem face-threatening in the context. The extended face-supportive activity appears to ensure a cooperative atmosphere in which threat to face is minimized and repaired so that no conflict or embarrassment arises.

The second version of D1 shows a quite different handling of the situation. The invitation and its response are negotiated in a much shorter sequence displaying a more straightforward, but less than orderly, organization, which might be summarized as follows:

NNS: PRE-INVITATION / INVITATION  
NS: ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

NNS: RE-INVITATION  
 (INSERTION SEQUENCE)  
 NS: REFUSAL  
 (INSERTION SEQUENCE)  
 NS: COMPLIANCE (PARTIAL)

The following segment shows how the organization unfolds in the conversation:

D1(2), lines 54-74

NNS: Is lucky to meet you here because I think on \*\* Friday evening I have an informal party. I invite my friends, er, some of these are UBD students, and others from my family, so, so I decide to invite you to my party.

NS: Oh, that's very nice (of you

NNS: So you) please do come.

NS: I'd love to come, you know, but, er, I mean I really would very much like to come. The only problem is that, I erm, I've promised somebody else that I would go to, er, go bird watching with them on Friday evening, you know, and I think I will be leaving about five o'clock in the evening. What time does your party start?

NNS: I think at, starting at eight

NS: Oh what a shame. That will be right in the middle of my jungle walk looking for birds.

NNS: Oh

NS: They're special night birds that only fly at night.

NNS: Couldn't you cancel and go out the next day?

NS: Oh well, yea, well, it might be very difficult. Why don't you give me your tele-your address and I'll try and get over, I'll try and cancel my bird watching exercise.

The invitation is taken up after an extended opening phase in which several problems occur (see 9.1.2 for discussion). The NNS introduces the invitation in two turns, first preparing it and then stating the invitation on record (lines 54-57, 59). The NS responds to the invitation with an expression of appreciation (line 58) and with a turn in which he indicates a problem with the date of the party (60-64). In the latter turn he also initiates a brief two-turn insertion sequence (lines 64-66) which establishes the exact time of the party. The NS's turn following the insertion sequence (lines 67-68) implies a refusal of the invitation by establishing that the time of the party coincides with another arrangement. This prompts the NNS to request the NS to remove the obstacle (*Couldn't you cancel and go out the next day?*, line 71), which would then enable the NS to accept his invitation. In this sense the turn fulfills a similar function as a re-invitation in trying to make the invitation more easy to accept. The form of the utterance, however, is only minimally polite, placing a high degree of obligation on the addressee.

The NS's response (lines 72-74) to the request is ambiguous. On the one hand, it contains features indicating a dispreferred response (*oh well it might be difficult*). On the other hand, it offers a partial acceptance of both the request and the invitation itself, thus treating the NNS's request as a re-invitation, (*I'll try and get over, I'll try and cancel my bird watching exercise*). In the same turn the NS makes a proposal which initiates a new sequence oriented to negotiating arrangements (*why don't you give me your tele-your address*). The NS's response

thus appears to achieve a number of goals. Firstly, it fulfills the function of giving a response both to the prior request and the actual invitation by expressing (partial) acceptance. Simultaneously, it fulfills a number of face-goals in protecting both the NS's own negative face (by avoiding commitment to go to the party) and the NNS's positive face (by not giving an immediate dispreferred refusal). Finally, the turn also closes the sequence dealing with the invitation and initiates a negotiation of details, which moves the conversation towards its closing and postpones the actual decision of whether the NS will accept the invitation or not.

An overview of D1(2) reveals that while the participants reach an interactional outcome or agreement through various means of surface cooperation, they leave the actual social outcome of the talk open: the participants do not arrive at an unambiguous agreement on whether the NS is to attend the party or not. It could be argued, however, that the NS's failure to accept the invitation on record and the very fact that the response is vague and ambiguous strongly imply that he has no real intention of going to the party.

### 8.2.2 D2: Dusun language

The two conversations based on the second distance-based situation do not conform to a straightforward OFFER - RESPONSE type of sequence as might be expected. In both cases the conversation is initiated by the NNS with opening turns which seem to project an offer. In neither conversation, however, is a subsequent offer made, but the NS instead requests for help. Furthermore, in both cases the sequences oriented to the activity display a similar organization where the request is taken up in two contexts and accomplished as a joint product of the two participants.

In both conversations the native speaker responds to the introduction of the topic by elaborating on the topic and subsequently initiating questions which can be seen as preparatory for the requests to follow (D2(1) lines 6-10, D2(2) lines 6-7, 9-10). The requests themselves are then expressed for the first time (D2(1) lines 13-16; D2(2) lines 22-26). The parallels between the two conversations continue after the expression of the request. In both cases the native speaker then initiates an insertion sequence with a further question (*are you here on a language course?* D2(1) lines 16-17; and *what language do you speak?* D2(2), line 26). In D2(1) the question follows a brief (3 seconds) pause in the NS's turn, which might be seen as a missed opportunity for the NNS to respond to the first request. In D2(2), however, the NNS does provide a response to the initial request prior to the question: she agrees to comply (*ah sure*, line 24). The second versions of the request activity also reflect some similarity: both display a strategy of emphasizing joint action. The following segments show, however, that the second activity unfolds in a different way in the two conversations.

D2(1), lines 19-28

NS: Oh. Well, maybe if you could help me translate this article and if you need any help on the courses you're doing I could I could maybe help (you

NNS: Yea, Yea.



NS: If you don't mind.  
 NNS: Uhu. So we could exchange some informations.  
 NS: Oh, that would be super because I don't have time to send this back to Borneo now that term's over.  
 NNS: Yes, yes, uhu.  
 NS: Oh that would be great. What's your name by the way?

D2(2), lines 30-44

NS: Yes, of course) (inaudible overlapping speech) Yes, of course, I mean, er, is Dusun similar to Malay?  
 NNS: Not exactly, but I think, er, there are similar, well I can say, not exactly words but there are some, you know, connection somehow, erm, for example, \*\* well \*\* I can't think of one at the moment, (laugh) but...  
 NS: Ah  
 NNS: ...but if you, if you, well if you show me the article  
 NS: (Well, look...  
 NNS: maybe I could help?)  
 NS: ... I'll bring the article to you and we could perhaps go through it together. I have a little bit of Malay that I picked up in Sarawak, er, perhaps I should say what I'm doing. I'm doing, I'm doing, er, I'm doing a, I'm writing a thesis about the, er, people of Niah \*

In D2(1) the NS restates the request as a proposal for joint action, which the NNS appears to accept. The acceptance is unemphatic at first (*yea, yea*, line 22), but later, after another softening device from the NS (*if you don't mind*, line 23), the NNS rephrases the proposal in a way which seems to confirm acceptance (*uhu. so we could exchange some informations*, lines 24). The NS then acknowledges the NNS's acceptance with a comment showing appreciation (*oh that would be super*, line 25) and further supports her request by providing justification. A confirmatory exchange finalizes the agreement and closes the sequence (lines 27-28). The non-native participant's role in this sequence is thus not very active: he responds to and restates the NS's proposal, thus showing agreement, but does not initiate or contribute to the development of the activity by initiating any new aspects of the topic.

In D2(2) it is the non-native participant who introduces the activity, initiating an offer (line 37). The actual offer overlaps with the NS's second version of the request, which now takes the form of a proposal for joint action (lines 38-41). This interactionally achieved activity thus combines two different (but related) illocutionary functions, each pursued by a different speaker to reach a joint goal. Through this joint effort towards a common goal the arrangement seems to be jointly accepted, and no further confirmatory exchanges are needed. In terms of face-work, this display of interactional reciprocity also fulfills complex face goals for both participants: it supports and enhances both participants' positive face by showing agreement and emphasizing cooperation. It also enhances rapport by displaying a 'preferred' type of sequence: the NNS initiates an offer rather than waits for the NS to re-initiate his request, and thus gains face by showing initiative and appearing helpful and considerate.

### 8.2.3 D3: Car

The two conversations based on D3, a complaint encounter, reflect a different approach to the face-threatening situation by the participants, and, accordingly, display quite different patterns of organization. D3(1) reflects serious difficulties mainly on the NNS's part. The NNS fails to take up the complaint, even though it is the principal reason for initiating the conversation. The complaint is finally induced from him by the NS, who forces him to put it on record by asking an explicit question (*have you got a problem?*, line 20). The NS's strategy of forcing the NNS to initiate the problematic activity changes the balance of the interaction and puts her in a dominant position: with an explicit question which requires an answer she takes control over who speaks and when the main topic is introduced, and in this way dominates the way that the interaction proceeds. Her action can be described as one type of discourse control act, a 'discoursal imposition', typical in the speech of dominant parties in confrontational interactions (Thomas 1990). The early difficulties in the conversation and the imposing character of the turn leading up to the NNS's complaint indicate serious interactional trouble and asynchrony, which also affect the ensuing interaction.

When the complaint is finally expressed (*I have a scratch in my father's Mercedes and, and I believe it was caused by your Land Cruiser*, lines 21-23), it is not responded to immediately by the NS. Instead, the NS initiates an insertion sequence with a question which not only requests more information but also appears to challenge the NNS's complaint: *well what makes you think that?* (line 24). The challenging character of the question may be said to arise partly from the content of the question and partly from its position in the sequence. On the one hand, the question explicitly requests the NNS to provide some justification for his complaint. On the other hand, at this point in the sequence the question delays a response to the actual complaint and thus gains time for the speaker, forcing the NNS to place his complaint even more explicitly on record before he can expect a response.

In response to the question, the NNS gives his justification for the complaint: he actually saw the incident. This appears to come as a complete surprise to the NS, who reacts with a loud and high-pitched repetition of the NNS's assertion (line 26). After a pause the NNS reconfirms the assertion and closes the insertion sequence (line 28). Interactionally, the NS is now obliged to respond to the pending complaint. Further, because of the evidence presented by the NNS, it seems inevitable that some form of admittance of guilt is expected. The NS's response (lines 29-32), however, does not produce an admission of guilt and apology but makes partial concessions, at the same time avoiding explicitly accepting any blame. Only after another insertion sequence seeking to confirm the NNS's evidence (lines 35-36), the NS admits she may be to blame (*well, perhaps, perhaps it was me*, line 37). In the same turn she attempts to initiate negotiation about a possible solution to the problem (*well, what would you like to do? Are you insured or?*, line 38). By asking a question rather than making a proposal she thus puts the onus of initiating a solution on the NNS, at

the same time minimizing the problem (*it's such a small scratch though it's hardly worth it*, lines 38-39). The NS's behaviour seems to be characterized by a goal of protecting her own face: by avoiding admitting blame and by trying to force the NNS to take the initiative, she keeps her own options open.

The NNS, however, does not respond to the NS's attempts to solicit a proposal for a solution. Thus, he again resists taking the initiative and, for example, making an on-record request for some compensation for the damage. Instead, the NNS reacts to the NS's comment minimizing the problem and challenges it in indirect terms (note the surface agreement in *yea, but, but the problem is--*, lines 40-41). The subsequent sequence consists of an off-record negotiation concerning payment for the damage, with the NNS matching the NS's attempts at minimizing the problem with similar attempts at maximizing it (lines 44-54). Interestingly, the topic of payment is not made a direct focus of talk, but is only mentioned in passing, as is seen in the following excerpt:

D3(1), lines 37-51

NS: You think so? Ah. Well, perhaps, perhaps it was me. Umm, well what would you like to do? Are you insured or? \*\*\* It's such a small scratch though it's hardly worth it.

NNS: Yea, but, but the problem is, the problem is that the car is not belonging to me. It's my boss's car.

NS: Your boss's car.

NNS: Yes.

NS: Ah. Well it's a company car.

NNS: No, it's not, it's my boss's, my boss...

NS: He's got enough money to pay for it himself then!

NNS: Ah, no.

NS: I'm just a poor housewife.

NNS: But the problem is, ah, I have to look after this car since I'm using it. My boss will \* be very mad at me to find it in such condition.

Eventually, it is the NS who proposes further action in order to arrive at some arrangement about the payment. The off-record negotiation has established that the NNS (or his boss or his father) cannot be expected to pay for the damage. There is a strong implication arising from this negotiation and the prior establishment of the NS's guilt that the NS is expected to offer to pay. By avoiding making any proposal himself, the NNS has also conveyed the expectation that the NS is to initiate a solution. Accordingly, a compromise proposal is made by the NS (lines 65-66). The proposal is rejected by the NNS, however, on the grounds that he has no money. A second proposal is then made by the NS, which does not solve the problem of the payment but achieves a partial solution, whereby the NNS gets a quote concerning the repair costs, and the two parties agree to use it as a basis for further negotiation (lines 70-71). The NNS's acceptance of the proposal (line 72) is followed by a four-turn sequence consisting of the statement of the agreement, an exchange of *okays* and a final *yes*. The sequence thus confirms the arrangement and closes the negotiation.

D3(1), lines 65-81

NS: How about we go halves in the repair bill? Rather than me paying the whole lot. You're partly at fault taking up two spaces.

NNS: But no. The problem is I got no money.

NS: Nor have I.

NNS: Very funny. (4 sec)

NS: Well, how about you go and get some quotes? \*\* and we'll work it out after that.

NNS: Okay then, we'll do, then we'll do it.

NS: Okay we see what the quotes come to and if I can afford it, if it's only a small amount. Okay? Otherwise we might have to get somebody to arbitrate for us.

NNS: It shouldn't be necessary though.

NS: Solves that problem. You get the quotes \* and we'll work it out from there.

NNS: Okay.

NS: Okay.

NNS: Yes.

In spite of some pauses and lack of initiation on the part of the non-native participant, the latter part of the conversation in D3(1) seems to progress more smoothly than the sequence leading up to the complaint and its response. The NNS's behaviour displays the same tendency of avoiding contributions which might involve imposition, such as a request for compensation or a specific proposal to solve the problem of payment. Through an off-record negotiation, however, his position becomes clear to the NS, who takes it into account in making her compromise proposals.

It seems likely that the NNS's behaviour is explained both by linguistic difficulties in terms of lack of appropriate means for expressing his intentions and his awareness of the face-threat embedded in the situation. Linguistic problems surface at some points in the conversation. On lines 53, 55 and 64, for example, the NNS signals trouble hearing and/or understanding the NS's utterance. Similarly, on line 69 the NNS seems to be at a loss for both words and for appropriate next action: he does not know what to do or say next. Also the means used for challenging the NS's arguments are rather limited (e.g. *but the problem is* is repeated on three occasions). Face concerns, however, also appear to be reflected in the NNS's behaviour, affecting the choices he makes: he uses various mitigation devices to soften the impact of the complaint and succeeds in countering the NS's attempts of denying blame. Thus, the apparent interactional control of the NS does not give her the upper hand in the negotiation. Furthermore, in spite of the early trouble, the interactants avoid direct confrontation, and the outcome reached in the negotiation in a sense saves the face of both participants even though it does not fully solve the actual problem. Finally, it seems that the NNS's strategy of resisting taking a more active or dominant role and avoidance of actions which might be interpreted as face-threatening may operate both as a communication strategy and as a face-strategy oriented to the maintenance of his own and the co-participant's face.

The other conversational version of the same situation, D3(2), unfolds in a different manner. Here the organization of the complaint sequence shows a more regular pattern. A pre-sequence initiated by the NNS establishes that the

NS is the owner of the car causing the damage to the NNS's car (lines 10-12). At the completion of this sequence the NNS brings up the main complaint, which is followed by an admittance of blame and an apology (lines 13-18). This sequence is then extended with a chain of actions consisting of a re-statement and grounding of the complaint and subsequent versions of the apology with supportive explanations (lines 19-28). The extract below shows how this organization unfolds in the conversation. Schematically the sequence may be summarized as follows:

(PRE-SEQUENCE)  
 NNS: COMPLAINT  
 NS: ADMITTANCE/APOLOGY  
 NNS: COMPLAINT 2  
 NS: APOLOGY 2  
 (INSERTION SEQUENCE)  
 NS: APOLOGY 3

D3(2), lines 10-31

NNS: er is it you \* own the \* er old Land Cruiser?

NS: oh-oh er yes, yes I do yes that - that's mine that that you see in the drive there that Land Cruiser \* (yeah

NNS: ah I) think er \*\* I think you \*\* you scrape er my \* my my car \*\* in the \* parking lot \* this mor - this afternoon

NS: oh-oh, oh I see, erm \* yeah er yeah I think I might have done I'm I'm really sorry about that er \*\* what - wa - wa was it a bad scratch I \* didn't think I touched I - I - I think I just touched your car but I didn't think I really \* scratched it

NNS: I saw it \* is a long scratch \* in the \* er \* in the in the left hand door

NS: oh dear I'm I'm really sorry I was \* I was very late for a er an appointment and I was reversing out you know (and er

NNS: I see)

NS: I - I couldn't see through the back \* windscreen because it was muddy so I opened the door \*

NNS: yeah

NS: to reverse \* and I think my door \* might have touched \* your car then \* so it's a blue \* Mercedes (then yes

NNS: yeah the) blue one

NS: yes \* oh yeah well I'm really sorry about that \* erm \* right well er \* what er what shall we do about this?

Some of the specific features of the sequence require more detailed examination and comparison with the corresponding sequences in D3(1). The NS's response here is of particular interest. As was pointed out above, it displays agreement with the complaint and admittance of guilt. In conversation analysis, agreement with a complaint is generally seen to be the preferred alternative (e.g. Houtkoop 1987:55). The admission of blame here, however, is only partial and is mitigated by modifiers such as *I think* and *might*, which minimize the agreement. The turn also contains various elements which delay the response (*oh-oh, oh I see, erm \* yeah er yeah*, line 15). By virtue of its indirectness and delay features, the turn is thus marked as dispreferred. Interestingly, in terms of content, the NS's response shows only a difference of degree compared to the corresponding response in D3(1): here the admission of blame is evident, although indirect, whereas in D3(1) the emphasis is on avoidance of blame, although concessions are made. In both cases the turns are

formed as dispreferred. It seems that complex constraints affect the shape of these turns and that these constraints can be linked to face considerations.

If preferredness is linked to face-work so that preferred actions are those which show concern for the hearer's face, as is suggested by Atkinson and Heritage (1984:56) and Brown and Levinson (1987:38-39), then an immediate admission of guilt should take the preferred format because it shows maximum support for the recipient's face. Such an admission, however, poses (in this case) a serious threat to the speaker's own face, which may explain why the utterances are marked as dispreferred. The native speakers' responses in these two conversations would thus seem to reflect the combined goals of displaying conversational cooperation by supporting the co-interactant's face and simultaneously protecting the speaker's own face by avoiding immediate acceptance of the complaint.

The NS's response avoiding full admission that he is to blame prompts the NNS to challenge the NS's turn and restate his complaint. He does this by giving more details about the problem (lines 19-20). This turn is followed by the NS's further extended apologies and supportive explanation (lines 21-28), possibly designed to make the response 'more acceptable' and solicit an acceptance of the apology from the NNS. Possible acceptance of the apology is indicated in the NNS's responses on lines 23 and 26, but the forms used are 'weak acceptance forms' (Davidson 1984), which do not convey full acceptance and hence seem to explain the extended version of the action by the NS.

In his final apology turn (lines 30-31), the NS also initiates a negotiation of a solution by first indicating a shift of focus with markers often used to indicate turning points in discourse (*erm \* right well er \**) and then asking a question (*what shall we do about this?*). The NNS's response to this turn differs markedly from the behaviour of the NNS in D3(1): he shows no indication of wanting to avoid the issue but asserts his goal in very direct terms (*er \*\*\* I wan - er I want to \* you to \* repair my car*, line 32). The NS's response to this turn opens with extended hesitation which seems to indicate surprise or a need to gain some planning time (line 33). In the latter part of the turn the NS does not attend to the directive force of the NNS's utterance, but focuses on a related topic (insurance). By choosing this strategy the NS avoids taking an explicit position to the request and thus gains time to come up with an alternative proposal (lines 41-42), which further delays the decision as to whether he has to pay for the damage or not. This approach provides a face-saving way out of the situation for the NS and also supports the NNS's face: the NS does not commit himself to paying for the damage, but does not refuse the NNS's directive either. The NNS's highly direct and unidiomatic request thus eventually leads to a mutually satisfactory outcome, but it is reached through the NS's choice of strategy which is mutually face-supportive and cooperative. There is a marked difference between this strategy and the somewhat more confrontational approach adopted by the native participant in D3(1).

The subsequent negotiation continues with the NS pursuing the alternative proposal and initiating several insertion sequences concerned with details (lines 44-45, 46-51, 52-56). He also restates his apology again (line 61) and introduces a third proposal related to the negotiation of payment: he

requests the NNS to get an estimate of the cost for repairing the damage (lines 71-72). The negotiation is closed with a NNS-initiated sequence which seeks to confirm the arrangement proposed by the NS (lines 78-88). This sequence is a type of negotiation of meaning episode in which the participants cooperatively reach a confirmation. The NNS rephrases the proposal made by the NS, as if to check that he has understood it correctly, and the NS confirms and restates part of the proposal. In this way the interactants jointly confirm and ratify the arrangement, and the sequence is closed. The negotiation sequence is illustrated in the following excerpt.

D3(2), lines 78-88  
 NNS: first thing I - I \* I take my - my car to the workshop first then I ask  
 for the the cost then  
 NS: right  
 NNS: and tell you  
 NS: then you tell me yes that's it, yeah, so \* get - find out how much it'll  
 be, come back to me, and then \* I'll er work out how to pay you  
 NNS: yeah  
 NS: you know, insurance or \* just cash  
 NNS: yeah

In brief, the complaint encounter is managed in different ways by the two pairs of interactants. While D3(1) is characterized by serious difficulties especially in the beginning stages of the interaction and a noticeable unwillingness to take the initiative on the non-native speaker's part, in D3(2) the main topic is taken up relatively quickly with the non-native speaker taking an active and direct approach to the complaint activity. The two native speakers also seem to adopt a clearly different perspective to the problem. In D3(1) the non-native speaker seems to be mainly concerned with protecting her own negative face and keeping in control. In D3(2), on the other hand, the native speaker appears cooperative and supportive, even at the cost of his own face. In both conversations the participants reach a mutually satisfactory outcome.

### 8.3 Asymmetrical situations

#### 8.3.1 A1: Office party

The first asymmetrical situation, A1, deals with an invitation to a party presented by the NNS. The first version of this situation displays an interesting organization where the invitation is not accepted initially, but after successive deferential utterances from the NNS, the response evolves into an unequivocal acceptance. In A1(1) the invitation is introduced early in the conversation, and the introduction of the topic is occasioned by a question by the NS (*so what is everybody doing for the weekend?*, lines 3-4). In response to the question, the NNS reports that he is planning to arrange a party (line 5). Reportings such as this one have been found to be a recurring phenomenon in invitation sequences, leading to various patterns of organization (Drew 1984). They may, for example, lead to invitations by the reporters themselves or be treated as

transparent invitations and lead to indirect refusals or self-invitations by the recipients. In A1(1) it seems that the reporting of the party is treated as a transparent invitation by the NS, who responds with an expression of surprise and/or interest (*oh really?*) and an attempt to initiate an insertion sequence (*when?*). The potential insertion sequence is interrupted, however, as the NNS's next turn overlaps with a part of the NS's turn. The next turn by the NNS then performs the invitation explicitly. The reporting is thus interactionally defined as a pre-invitation.

The invitation is not followed by an immediate response, but an assessment (*oh that sounds like a nice idea*, line 9) and two insertion sequences, which are oriented towards clarifying some details of the party (lines 9-11, 12-14). The insertion sequences display different patterns of organization: the first consists of a three-part sequence (QUESTION - ANSWER - ACKNOWLEDGEMENT) and the second comprises four turns (QUESTION - ANSWER - REQUEST-FOR-CONFIRMATION - CONFIRMATION). The following excerpt shows the invitation and the two insertion sequences.

A1(1), lines 7-17

NNS: Yes) er \* it's just between the staff and er \* and I would like you, if you're not busy, to invite you.

NS: Oh that sounds like a nice idea. Where are you having it?

NNS: Um \*\* well \* I haven't decided where to \*\* organize this party but um \* probably \*\* at er Brunei Hall in London.

NS: Oh that sounds very nice. And when do you think you'll have it? What night? Saturday? Sunday?

NNS: Um my plan is to organize it on er Saturday night.

NS: Saturday night.

NNS: Yes

NS: Oh, it might be difficult.---

The NS's turn starting on line 17 could be interpreted as an implicit refusal of the invitation. It acknowledges the preceding exchange, indicating a problem with the date of the party (*oh it might be difficult*), and then reports an alternative arrangement that the NS has made for the same evening (*I have a dinner with my in-laws*). The NS, however, immediately initiates a third insertion sequence requesting more detailed information (the exact time of the party, lines 18-20), which is followed by another similar sequence concerned with the nature of the party (lines 21-25). It is only after these sequences that an actual response is offered by the NS. The insertion sequences thus seem to negotiate preconditions for the response. The response amounts to an acceptance of the invitation, although only a partial one. The NS confirms that she intends to keep the previous arrangement and then agrees to attend the NNS's party:

A1(1), lines 26-29

NS: Oh) well, that that shouldn't be too hard to arrange. We're supposed to go over to \* my in-laws place at about six-thirty for supper. We'll make it fairly early and I think we can make it there for about nine, at least for the last hour of the (party).



The NNS's turn following the acceptance of the invitation departs from a pattern which might be expected at this point in the sequence. It does not acknowledge the response in any way, but instead appears to provide further support for the invitation by giving reasons and grounding for it (lines 30-34). This suggests that he interprets the invitation as involving some degree of imposition and thus requiring justification. These turns lead the NS to do face-supportive work: she shows appreciation of the invitation (e.g. *oh. That's really nice Haji*, line 35; *that would be really good*, line 38-39) and agreement with the NNS's turn by expressing that she shares his interest in socializing (lines 36-40 and line 42), and thus enhances the NNS's positive face. She further restates the acceptance of the invitation, this time expressing it in a more overt way (*we will try to make it --- we'll just try to leave the dinner early, it's nothing special*, lines 43-44). The NNS responds to the second acceptance by showing appreciation in deferential and tentative terms (*yea I'll appreciate it if you could come*, line 46). After the NNS's turn, the NS finally restates her acceptance again, and appears to commit herself and promise to come to the party (*Oh. Okay. well, we will. Don't worry!*, line 47).

An overview of the sequence shows that the native speaker's response to the invitation evolves from a potential rejection (lines 17-19) and a partial acceptance (lines 26-29) to a more overt acceptance (lines 42-45) and finally an unequivocal promise to come (line 47). The way this response emerges in the interaction appears to be related to the participation framework and to the type of face-strategies that the speakers adopt.

First, the asymmetrical character of the encounter is reflected in the way that the participants negotiate their relationship in the course of the sequence. The NNS adopts a highly deferential strategy for approaching the NS and the topic of the party, expressing the invitation tentatively and giving the NS options to reject it. He also later provides supportive justification, thus making the invitation seem even more deferential. Even his eventual acknowledgement of the NS's acceptance of the invitation avoids making the assumption that the NS is actually going to come to the party. The NS, for her part, shows overt positive politeness towards the NNS in response to his deference, thus conforming to a politeness system typical of asymmetrical situations (Scollon and Scollon 1981). The interpersonal relationship of the participants thus seems to be based on an assumption of distance and asymmetry on the learner's part, and an attempt to reduce this asymmetry on the part of the native speaker.

Secondly, the asymmetry of the encounter is reflected in the participation framework established by the speakers. From an early stage in the conversation the NS assumes interactional control by adopting a dominant role in moving the conversation forward: the conversation proceeds with her asking questions and the NNS responding rather than taking the initiative. The NNS's subordinate role is seen also in the types of response he gives to the NS's questions. His responses are somewhat hesitant and often also slightly delayed. On one occasion the NNS also fails to respond to a sequentially important contribution by the NS: he does not acknowledge the NS's response turn in which she partially agrees to accept his invitation (line 30). The interactional

consequences of the NNS's failure to explicitly acknowledge and accept the NS's response to the invitation are interesting: it leads the NS to restate her acceptance in several gradually more emphatic versions which seem to be oriented towards protecting the NNS's face.

In brief, a participation framework is established in which the NNS takes a deferential and relatively passive role and the NS assumes dominance by initiating and controlling the interaction. This asymmetrical pattern, however, does not cause problems in the negotiation, but leads to a successful, preferred outcome which is accomplished through face-supportive action engaged in by both interactants. The asymmetrical patterns of face-strategies and participation thus appear to complement each other rather than result in interactional trouble or conflict.

The second conversation based on the same situation, A1(2), shares certain features with the first one, although a different response is given to the invitation and a different arrangement is arrived at. The NNS prepares and performs the invitation in one lengthy turn in which she reports her plan to have a party, produces an on-record, albeit deferential, invitation, and supports the invitation with reasons (lines 22-26). The NNS also shows an intention of giving more details about the party, but is interrupted by the NS who initiates an insertion sequence establishing the time of the party. The turn following the insertion sequence (lines 33-34) indicates that its outcome entails a problem, i.e. the time of the party is not suitable, and thus counts as a potential refusal of the invitation. The turn is also immediately treated as a rejection by the NNS who responds with the acknowledgement *Oh I see* (line 35).

A1(1), lines 22-36

NNS: Ah, before I forget, Mr Swan, Sir, er, er, I'm at this instant, I'm organizing a, a party for our agency, so, you are the last person that I would like to invite, because, because I'm new around here and I'm quite afraid to approach you, so, I would like you to come to this, to this party, which (will be...

NS: Well, well) when is the party?

NNS: Sorry-

NS: When is the party?

NNS: Oh, it's on Saturday evening.

NS: Oh, this coming Saturday?

NNS: Yes.

NS: Ah, well now that's a problem for me because, er, my wife has, er, organized a dinner party...

NNS: Oh I (see.

NS:...for this Saturday, for her mother and father...

The organization of the sequence can be summarized in a schematic format as follows:

NNS:	PRE-INVITATION
	INVITATION
	(INSERTION SEQUENCE)
NS:	REFUSAL
NNS:	ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The next turns by the NS serve to extend his refusal by providing further supportive grounding and simultaneously showing attention to the

NNS's face. The NS seems to avoid possible face damage caused by the implicit dispreferred response by displaying overt interactional cooperation. He minimizes the face-threat of the refusal by emphasizing that he is tied to a previous engagement and showing agreement with the NNS's goals (e.g. *I'm sure your party would be much nicer to go to*, line 44). He then restates his refusal again in rather indirect terms (lines 44-47). In the same turn he also initiates a proposal concerned with another possible party which he might be able to attend (lines 47-48). This turn seems to initiate a new sequence which may be partly motivated by face concerns: it can be seen to compensate for the face damage caused by a dispreferred response. The extract below illustrates how the response unfolds in the conversation.

A1(2), lines 33-48

NS: Ah, well now that's a problem for me because, er, my wife has, er, organized a dinner party...

NNS: Oh I (see

NS: ...for) this Saturday, for her mother and father...

NNS: Mm.

NS: ...I don't really like them very much but, er, they, er, they've been invited round to our house on, on Saturday of this week.

NNS: Oh.

NS: And, er, I don't really think I can get out of that, er, as much as I would *like* to get out of that, and...

NNS: Yea.

NS: ...I'm sure your party might be much nicer to go to!

NNS: Yea.

NS: But, er, I think I would have to apologize and erm, perhaps, er, perhaps another time, would that be, would, would there be another party sometime, that I could come to?

As is apparent from the above sequence, the NNS takes a subsidiary role in its accomplishment. After his acknowledgement of the initial implicit refusal of the invitation he only gives minimal listener feedback (*oh, mm, yea*) and does not comment on the NS's extended explanations. It is noteworthy that the NNS's failure to convey a more explicit acceptance of the dispreferred response leads to extended face-work by the NS and to a new sequence which starts with an alternative proposal to the original invitation, a 'self-invitation' to another party (see 9.2.3 for discussion). Thus, the NS seems to have interpreted the NNS's withdrawal from active participation in the activity as signalling loss of face and requiring some face-work.

In brief, while the two conversations based on A1 reflect different patterns of overall organization, they display similar orientation to face. The non-native participants in both cases opt for a deferential approach, whereas the native speakers mainly use positive politeness strategies. Interestingly, in both cases the native speakers seem to orient to the face-threat involved in refusing an invitation by doing extended face-work to compensate for an initial refusal.

### 8.3.2 A2: Baby-sitting

The second asymmetrical situation is concerned with a baby-sitting arrangement, where the NNS has previously not agreed to the NS's request to baby-sit, but now has some reason to reconsider her earlier decision. The two conversations based on this situation turn out in quite different ways, with A2(1) focusing on negotiating an offer by the NNS and A2(2) dealing with a request by the NS.

In A2(1) the sequence consists of a complex negotiation of an initial offer and subsequent proposals whereby the NNS attempts to persuade the NS to agree to an arrangement which would benefit both parties. The negotiation of the offer opens with a pre-sequence, where the NNS first seeks to find out if the NS has already made other arrangements for baby-sitting, thus apparently checking the potential success of her subsequent offer. The pre-sequence establishes that another arrangement has been made, but that it is not completely satisfactory to the NS (see lines 7-13). The NNS's overt agreement with the NS's indication of a problem with the arrangement seems to confirm that the pre-sequence is intended to preface an alternative proposal from her. Accordingly, in her next turn the NNS makes a proposal to join the other baby-sitter and help look after the children (lines 15-16). The following segment shows the sequence leading to the offer.

A2(1), lines 7-16

NNS: Uumm, I would like to ask you whether, er, whether you have got a replacement for the, er, for baby-sitting your babies?

NS: uuh, that's awkward, er \* well, I've asked the girl down the road...

NNS: Oh I (see

NS: ...only) only problem is \* she's fourteen \*\* and well...

NNS: Yes, she's too young for you.

NS: Yes \* but, what, what to do I mean...

NNS: Would you like me to - would you like me to baby-sit for the baby with her along \* I could stay (inaud.)

The proposal does not elicit an immediate acceptance, but a potential rejection: the NS reports a problem about paying two people (lines 17-20). This prompts the NNS to make another proposal apparently attempting to remove the objection (*you don't have to pay me*, line 23). Although oriented (from the NNS's point of view) towards making the original offer/proposal more acceptable, this turn does not achieve the desired result: the NS objects to such an arrangement on the grounds that it is bad for the NNS (lines 24-25).

As the early part of the conversation has not produced a preferred result, the NNS proceeds to try a different approach: after a lengthy pause she initiates another proposal sequence with a pre-request (*do you mind if I ask you something*, line 26) and continues with a request which makes explicit her motivations for offering to baby-sit (*I wonder if I could use your TV---*, lines 28-29). This time the act is expressed in a more deferential manner: it is mitigated and supported with extended supportive grounding. The NNS thus shows sensitivity to the different face-risk involved in making a proposal from which she would benefit, in comparison with the offer which might be seen as

beneficial to the recipient. During the turns in which the NNS makes her proposal the NS takes a listener role, providing minimal feedback but not taking the floor. She thus delays her response to the proposal and encourages the NNS to come up with more supportive grounding for her request. This leads the NNS to produce a second version of the proposal and to explicitly request a response from the NS (*do you like the idea?*, lines 36-38).

The NNS's request for a response at the end of the extended turn solicits a partial agreement and acceptance from the NS: she shows agreement with the proposal (*ah yes, er, that sounds good to me*, lines 39-40), but also expresses some reservation in the latter part of the turn. This initiates another sequence where the NS conveys more potential problems with the arrangement and the NNS addresses the NS's reservations and appears to assure her that the arrangement will work (lines 42-50). Finally, a preferred response is achieved as the NS accepts the proposal, although the acceptance is partial and expressed in the form of another proposal (lines 51-55). The arrangement is ratified with the NNS acknowledging and accepting the NS's proposal.

A2(1), lines 39-56

NS: Ah, yes, er, well that sounds good to me, but, well I don't well, if you'd get on with this fourteen-year-old yea you see \*\*

NNS: Yea?

NS: you know, you're a nice Bruneian girl, she's a punk rocker.

NNS: Oh, I think I can cope with...

NS: (laugh)

NNS: ...with her

NS: You think you can cope with her **and** my two little children?

NNS: Yes, yes, I've seen them around...

NS: Yea?

NNS: ...such people, I mean, I've seen such people around even if they dress like that!

NS: Yes, okay, I tell you what \* if you come round tomorrow night and she's here I will give you, maybe, ten minutes, and if you don't like each other...

NNS: Okay.

NS: ...then you're free to go, okay?

NNS: Yea, that would be fine.

Schematically, the extended sequence can be summarized as follows:

	(PRE-SEQUENCE)
NNS	OFFER
NS	REJECTION
NNS	OFFER/PROPOSAL 2
NS	REJECTION
	(PRE-SEQUENCE)
NNS	REQUEST/PROPOSAL
	(INSERTION SEQUENCE)
NS	ACCEPTANCE

An overview of the sequence shows that the non-native speaker in A2(1) appears to take an active and primary role in constructing the activity in focus and in moving the negotiation forward. In some phases of talk she clearly has the dominant role: she initiates the main activities to be dealt with and is in control by holding the floor over stretches of talk. The native participant, on the

other hand, shows remarkable interactional tolerance in this conversation. She seems to follow the 'let it pass' principle with respect to the long and pragmatically problematic contributions by the NNS: she orients to the content and pragmatic force of the NNS's utterances, ignoring the linguistic difficulties which shape them.

The second version of the same situation negotiates a different type of activity, a request initiated by the NS. The overall organization of the sequence is not dissimilar to A2(1): A2(2) also opens with a pre-sequence and develops into a negotiation where a dispreferred response is not accepted but the NS pursues a preferred response with several versions of the request. Finally a preferred response is accomplished and accepted. The overall organization of the negotiation thus appears to be an extension of a three-part proposal sequence: REQUEST - ACCEPTANCE - ACKNOWLEDGEMENT (cf. Houtkoop 1987). The sequence is made more complex by the initial dispreferred response and the negotiation sequences embedded in it. In this conversation it is the NS who does most of the interactional 'work': she initiates the topic, defines the activity in focus by making a request and uses various strategies to persuade the NNS to accept it. The NNS's attempts to initiate are weak and most of her turns consist of elaborate grounding for her initial refusal of the NS's request. A closer look at the turn-by-turn development of the sequence reveals how the negotiation unfolds.

The initial request by the NS is a result of a failure to take up the topic of the baby-sitting arrangement by the NNS. It is the NS who opens up the topic by initiating a pre-sequence in which she mentions her earlier unsuccessful request (lines 7-11). The NNS's response gives reasons for her earlier behaviour, thus implicitly restating and accounting for her dispreferred response (lines 12-13). This prompts the NS to restate her prior request, showing attention to the objection expressed by the NNS in her turn (*well couldn't you come and watch it at my house while you're baby-sitting?*, lines 14-15). The NNS's response to the second request amounts to a dispreferred response, without actually explicitly stating a refusal: she delays the response (*uum, well, uum, \*\* er,---*) and gives an account of her reasons for not accepting the request (lines 16-18).

However, her explanation is not treated as adequate by the NS, who requests more reasons (*why?*, line 19). The NS, furthermore, does not accept the NNS's account but produces another version of the request, which also challenges the grounds given by the NNS: in spite of the NNS's explanation of the difficulty of carrying books to another house, the NS requests her to do so (lines 22-23). This time the NNS's response is a more direct dispreferred (*no, I don't think so*, line 24). The NS, however, still refuses to accept the response, but requests more justification and rephrases the request again for the third time (lines 27-29). This leads to more reasons implying non-compliance on the NNS's part (lines 30-32) and yet another (fourth) version of the request by the NS (lines 39-41).

The fourth version of the request leads to an insertion sequence initiated by the NNS. The NNS asks a somewhat vague question concerning the NS's children (*uum, how about our children*, line 42), which she then clarifies,

initiating a five-turn sequence where the children's ages are discussed (lines 44-48). In the next turn the NS makes a comment, which seems to be oriented to the relevance of the insertion sequence (*so they wouldn't be much trouble---*, line 49). The NNS, however, fails to make her intentions explicit: she does not comment in any way on why she initiated the insertion sequence. Instead, she produces a turn in which she expresses a partial acceptance of the NS's request (lines 51-52). In the same turn she initiates another insertion sequence, where she asks if the NS owns a video and the NS gives an affirmative reply. Again the relevance of the second insertion sequence is not made clear by the NNS. It seems, however, that she treats both sequences as oriented to clarifying some preconditions for finally agreeing to the NS's request, because in the following turn she tentatively accepts the proposal (*if the family isn't going away anywhere. I think, yea, probably I can come to your house and baby-sit*, lines 54-56). The final preferred, albeit tentative, response is then emphatically accepted by the NS (*oh great, that's brilliant*, lines 57, 59-63) and confirmed by both parties in an exchange of *thank you* and its acknowledgement. The sequence leading to the final agreement is illustrated in the excerpt below.

A2(2), lines 39-65

NS: ...well, are you sure you couldn't just come and do the work at our house or couldn't you leave your work for another evening?

NNS: Uum, how about your **children**?

NS: What about them?

NNS: Er, how old, how old are your children?

NS: Uum, Mick, as you should know is two and...

NNS: Mm.

NS: ...and Pete is four.

NNS: Ah \*\* two and four.

NS: So they wouldn't be much trouble. They'd just stay in bed while you do your work and watch the television downstairs.

NNS: Well, let's see if I can make it. And you have a video in your house?

NS: Yes, of course.

NNS: Yea, if \*\* if Mrs Johnson, now, won't be going away, I mean if the family isn't going anywhere, I think, yea, probably, I can come to your house...

NS: Oh (great

NNS: and baby-sit).

NS: Oh, that's brilliant because the other girl that...

NNS: Mm.

NS: ...Mrs Johnson (inaudible) is a bit young, so...

NNS: Mm.

NS: ...so I think it would be better if you came. Oh, that's great. Thank you very much.

NNS: Mm. okay, welcome---

While the participants seem to reach a satisfactory arrangement, the overall impression of A2(2) is that the conversation does not proceed in an entirely felicitous manner. As was noted above, it is the native speaker who does most of the interactional work, initiating main activities and contributing to the development of topics, whereas the non-native speaker takes a rather passive role and even appears uncooperative. Firstly, she does not initiate the first topic although the situation entails a strong expectation for her to do so. Secondly, she does not agree to the NS's repeated attempts to persuade her to

agree to her request, and she does not use many face-strategies to soften her refusal. Thirdly, she does not make explicit the relevance of some of her actions (e.g. the insertion sequences). Finally, her acceptance of the request at the end of the conversation is highly tentative and unemphatic, thus leaving the outcome of the situation somewhat vague.

### 8.3.3 A3: Problem at work

The two conversations based on A3 deal with a complaint by the NNS and a request for a favour by the NS. In A3(1) the two activities are managed in a complex, jointly managed negotiation, where aspects of face are a primary concern. A3(2), however, displays little other-directed face-work and develops into a confrontation. The two sequences will be discussed in some detail below.

A3(1) appears to open with a negotiation seeking to establish what (and whose) topic and activity is to be dealt with. The NNS initiates the conversation and makes clear in the opening sequence that she has something to discuss (lines 1-4). She then expresses a complaint concerning the cancelling of her day off in indirect terms by reporting the problem and requesting more information about it (lines 7-10). The NS's response, however, does not accept her request nor address the turn as a potential complaint. Instead it brings up the same topic from the NS's perspective (*well, actually that's what I was going to be-speak to you about*, lines 11-14). The NS's turn rephrases the problem mentioned by the NNS and seems to redress it as an indirect *request/proposal* (*I was hoping that you would be able to help me out tomorrow---*, lines 12-14). The NS thus changes the focus of talk from the NNS's problem to her own situation and her need for the NNS's assistance. By doing this she also redefines the situation and her participant status in it: she resists adopting the role of a recipient of a complaint and claims a different status by initiating another activity from her own point of view.

The next overlapping turns contain two questions which seek to clarify the problem from the two respective points of view. The NNS responds to the NS's request with an attempt to initiate an insertion sequence in which she could clarify the nature of the proposed arrangement (line 15). By doing this she also delays her response to the request. The NS, however, interrupts her turn at this point, and continues her request with a question (*Is there a problem with that?*, line 16). The question seems to suggest that she has inferred a problem, and tries to make it more explicit. The turn also seems to reflect the NS's attempt to assume interactional control: instead of cooperating with the NNS's projected insertion sequence she pursues her earlier request and produces a question which requires a response.

The NNS, however, resists the NS's attempt to take control. In her next utterance the NNS briefly acknowledges the NS's question and then reinitiates an insertion sequence by asking another question (lines 17-18). In this way she further delays her response to the NS's request and succeeds in changing the perspective back to the topic which she has already mentioned (the problem of her day off). The NNS's question, however, is linguistically and pragmatically problematic, and causes a misunderstanding which triggers a repair sequence.



Instead of asking what she is expected to do the following day, the NNS chooses the wrong pronoun (*you*) and asks what the NS is doing. The error is corrected in a NS-initiated repair sequence: the NS requests for clarification and the NNS then rephrases her question, self-correcting the error (lines 19-20). While both of the NNS's question turns display problematic language, they seem interactionally successful. They are shaped in a way which indicates that they are to be treated as a preface to something that follows (e.g. *yes, erm, but the first thing I want to do---*, line 17; *I think to discuss what we will do tomorrow--so, erm I 'll be doing my normal work or?*, lines 20-23). In this way they enable the NNS to claim the floor for not only the current turn but for some turn(s) to follow, and also establish her topic as the focus of talk.

The main orientation of the sequence which follows seems to be to clarify the focus and purpose of the NNS's question (lines 20-32). While it seems to consist of two restatements of the question by the NNS and relevant responses provided by the NS, the sequence can also be seen as reflecting strategic indeterminacy through which the participants implicitly orient to an underlying face-threatening topic. A closer look at the sequence shows how this is reflected in the discourse.

The sequence begins with the NNS's turn in which she rephrases her earlier question (*so, erm, I'll be doing my normal work or?*, lines 22-23) and also provides some grounding for it by reporting that she wishes to find out whether it is truly necessary for the NS to ask her to work on her day off (lines 21-22). The NS answers the question apparently confirming the assumption expressed by the NNS (*---it's your normal day's work*, lines 24-26). The NNS, however, does not accept the response, but asks for further confirmation (*so, what, no other duties?*, line 27). While the NNS's latter question seems like a request for confirmation, the NS's response shows that the utterance carries more meaning to the participants: the NS does not provide confirmation, but restates her need for the NNS's assistance in somewhat vague terms (e.g. *--I just need your help that's all*, lines 28-30). She also pays attention to the NNS's face by making a compliment (*you're very good umm in a task like that*, line 30) and minimizing her imposition (*I hope tomorrow you'll, you'll be able to erm just do a few jobs for me*, lines 31-32). It seems, then, that she orients to the NNS's turn as implying some face-threat and declines to respond to it directly. Examined from a broader perspective of the face-threatening topics, these turns seem to establish an implicit link between the NS's earlier request to get the NNS to work on her day off and a complaint which the NNS makes more explicit at a later stage in the conversation (the NNS's dissatisfaction with her duties at work). In brief, the clarification sequence thus appears to make an off-record reference to the main complaint of the NNS's, i.e. that the NS has asked her to do jobs which the NNS does not consider part of her duties.

After a brief pause during which the NNS does not take the turn, the NS continues talking and again restates her earlier request by appealing to the NNS's willingness and ability to help (*I really need a day off tomorrow and it would really help me if you could come in*, lines 32-33). She also repeats her earlier question (*is that a problem?*, line 33), perhaps as an attempt to bring the implicit complaint on record. In her next turn the NNS responds to the request by

indicating that there is a problem and reporting an alternative arrangement which she has made for the following day (lines 34-37). This is treated as an implicit refusal by the NS, who challenges the dispreferred response and restates her request in two more turns (lines 38-39 and 42-44), asking the NNS to change her plans.

At this point in the conversation, however, the NNS changes the direction and focus of the talk, and initiates another sequence, which finally leads to the main complaint that she has to make. Over several turns she seems to prepare some problematic issue that she wants to raise in a very indirect way, but fails to bring it up (see lines 45-48, 52-57, 59-65). Finally, the participants jointly establish the problem, i.e. that the NNS is unhappy about being asked to do work which is not part of her job (lines 62-66). The NS then acknowledges the jointly negotiated complaint (*okay fair enough*, lines 70, 72), but does not respond to it by showing agreement or providing justification or explanation.

Instead of orienting to the NNS's complaint and accounting for her behaviour or apologizing for it, the NS continues pursuing her own goals and re-initiates her pending request. She first uses a similar strategy as the NNS adopted in her turns prefacing the complaint (*well let me be honest with you*, line 72), and then restates her request in more explicit and detailed terms than before, as a potentially jointly beneficial proposal (lines 74-80). Here she also refers to the NNS's complaint, making a connection between the NNS's problem and her own request: she suggests that if the NNS agrees to her proposal, the problem will be solved. In a lengthy turn following the request, the NNS again avoids responding by reporting her own problems and initiating an insertion sequence, in which she negotiates a precondition for agreeing to the proposal: the NNS requests for permission to leave work early in order to make a new arrangement with her friends (lines 81-86). The NNS's request is granted by the NS in the following turn, in which the NS also again restates her proposal (lines 89-92). This turn, however, still does not elicit a response from the NNS, but is followed by another insertion sequence (93-98). The request is then expressed one more time by the NS (lines 99-102). In her next turn the NNS finally gives a preferred response to the NS's proposal (*okay, okay that will be fine*, line 103). In the following turn the response is acknowledged by the NS (*Great. Thank you very much Aini*, line 104) and the sequence is closed.

In the lengthy sequence in which the response to the NS's proposal request is finally negotiated, the participants display reciprocity and mutual attention to face needs in various ways. For example, they show reciprocal adaptation by echoing each other's strategies. The NNS's strategy of being frank (e.g. *can I get straight to the point*, lines 3-4, *let me tell you the truth*, line 46) is echoed by the NS's similar strategies (e.g. *come on. be honest*, line 55, and *well let me be honest with you*, line 72). They also emphasize cooperation by showing mutual appreciation (e.g. *you're very good in a task like that*, line 30; *I appreciate the work you've done--*, line 51; *I like your two children but*, line 67, *but I love working in the garden*, line 97) and by displaying attention to each other's points

of view (e.g. *I hope you won't be very angry ---*, lines 53-54; *only you don't like that*, line 66 ).

To summarize, the conversation deals with two competing face-threatening activities, a complaint by the NNS and a proposal by the NS, which are negotiated in a highly complex and indirect manner. A large part of the conversation is characterized by both parties pursuing their own line of argument in order to elicit a preferred response to their respective actions. Although the two speakers' goals are competing, the conversation appears to arrive at a solution where agreement is reached and both interactants' goals satisfied, at least partially. This is achieved through both participants' adjustments of their initial goals. The conversation is also characterized by an active negotiation of a participation framework which regulates the way the interaction proceeds. In some phases of the conversation the participants seem to compete over interactional control, in other words, over whose topics are dealt with and whose perspective is primary. Patterns of control thus shift in the course of the encounter. Both parties also engage in other-directed face-work, which displays attention to face goals and contributes to the outcome of the conversation. The face-work also partly explains the complicated and extended negotiation characterizing this phase of the conversation. The NNS's reluctance to make an on-record complaint leads to extended off-record allusions to the complaint and numerous prefacing turns which show deference and face-support to the NS and delay the face-threatening topic. Similarly, it seems that the NS's failure to provide sufficient information and supportive grounding for her proposal in the early part of the conversation leads to exchanges where the nature of the proposal is clarified and linked to the other main topics.

As was pointed out above, the second version of the same situation unfolds in a different way. The two main activities which are dealt with are the same as above, and the overall organization resembles the organization of A3(1), but the outcome and tone of the conversation are different. The lengthy sequence dealing with the main activities will be described in detail below.

The main complaint arises early in the conversation. It is occasioned by the NS's question apparently intended as a phatic enquiry (*have you had a good week?*, line 1). As the NNS's complaint has to do with her work situation, the question provides an opportunity for a challenging response (*no*, line 2), which then leads to the NNS's direct and explicit complaint concerning the amount of work she has been given by the NS (*you've been asking me to do a lot of work*, line 4). The complaint is thus expressed in a second-position turn in a question-answer sequence (lines 3-4). The complaint is immediately followed by an acceptance which reflects the format of a preferred response: the NS apologizes, supporting her apology with an explanation (*Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't realize I'd asked you to do too much*, lines 5-6). In the same turn the NS also initiates another sequence where the complaint is confirmed, and then restates her apology (lines 6-8). She thus shows attention to the NNS's face. Another question-answer sequence follows, where the NS requests for justification for the complaint and the NNS supports her complaint by giving details (8-14).

It seems that the two post-apology sequences arise from the NNS's uncooperative interactional behaviour: the complaint is expressed by the NNS in extremely direct terms, with no softening or mitigating devices. Furthermore, the NNS does not respond to or accept the NS's immediate apology. This behaviour on the NNS's part poses a threat towards the NS's face, which is also threatened by the self-initiated apology. It seems, then, that in requesting justification for the complaint, the NS may be attempting to elicit from the NNS some acknowledgement of the apology and some kind of face-supportive behaviour that one might expect in the context. The NNS, however, simply reconfirms the complaint and gives details which may serve as justification for it, but does not show any indication of a desire to protect the NS's face. In interactional terms, the sequences initiated by the NS also suggest that although a potentially complete two-part sequence (COMPLAINT - AGREEMENT/APOLOGY) has been accomplished, the sequence is not treated as closed, but the NS appears to expect a third turn, an acceptance of the apology, to complete the sequence.

After the initial complaint sequence, the NS brings up another face-threatening topic and makes a request/proposal concerning the NNS's day off (lines 15-18). The request is met with a blunt, bald-on-record refusal, with no justification or supportive reasons given. This prompts the NS to again initiate a clarification sequence by asking a series of questions opened with *why* (lines 20, 23, 25). These are followed by two restatements of the request (*but surely you could make it Thursday I'm in a real trouble here---*, lines 27-29; and *well I'm sure you wouldn't mind just one extra day*, lines 35-36), which again are met with unmitigated dispreferred responses (*no I can't*, line 28; *Ah I do mind*, line 36). The dispreferred responses solicit another sequence where the NS asks for reasons and challenges them in several turns (lines 37-43). These exchanges give rise to an increasingly confrontational tone in the conversation, which is reflected in the fast delivery of responses and competitive turn-taking (e.g. overlapping speech). Interestingly, the NS seems to gradually adapt to the NNS's style of speech: she repeats parts of the NNS's utterances in her questions and adjusts her strategies to the NNS's directness by being more direct herself (compare *do you think you could work on your days off*, lines 17-18; *Well I'm sure you wouldn't mind just one extra day*, line 35; *but why can't you shop on Thursday?*, line 39). The following extract demonstrates this development in the conversation.

A3(2), lines 15-43

NS: Well, I'm afraid I've got something else to tell you. Uum, I have to go for a job interview and I won't be able to work full time this week, so \*uum \* do you think you could work on your days off and I'll give them to you another week?

NNS: No!

NS: Why?

NNS: Because tomorrow, Wednesday, is my day off and I really want it very much.

NS: Why do you want it very much?

NNS: Because I promised my mother to go shopping \* with her.

NS: Why can't you go shopping with her on Thursday?

NNS: I, because I already promised her.

NS: But surely you could make it Thursday I'm (in a...  
 NNS: No, I can't)  
 NS: ...real trouble here, I can't come to work on Wednesday.  
 NNS: You can ask somebody else. If (you're  
 NS: No, there's)  
 NNS: (asking me  
 NS: no one else) to ask.  
 NNS: It shouldn't be too much.  
 NS: Well, I'm sure you wouldn't mind just one (extra day  
 NNS: Ah, I do) mind.  
 NS: (Why.  
 NNS: because) tomorrow I promised my mother.  
 NS: but why can't you (shop on Thursday?  
 NNS: to do shopping, lah) cannot, 'cause she won't be here on Thursday.  
 NS: Why? What, is she going somewhere?  
 NNS: Yes (inaudible) she's not staying here, she's in K.B.

The sequence leads to another subsequent version of the proposal (*well couldn't you just try because I mean, I am your boss*, lines 44-45), which seems to be an attempt to persuade the NNS to change her mind by making the asymmetrical relationship explicit. The NS claims power by referring to her status as the NNS's boss, apparently assuming that this status is enough to give her the interactional authority to expect the NNS to conform to her expectations and agree to the proposal. The restated proposal, however, does not accomplish the desired result, since the NNS explicitly and strongly challenges it in the following turn. First, the response (*yea you're my boss but you've been working me too hard*, line 46) declines to fulfill the sequential expectation of the prior turn by ignoring the request. Secondly, it challenges the assumption of authority claimed by the NS and, thirdly, it restates the complaint the NNS made earlier in the conversation, again in a direct and unambiguous way. The NNS thus claims control in the interaction by changing its direction: she breaks the pattern of NS-initiated questions followed by her own answers, which characterizes the preceding sequence, and re-initiates a complaint sequence, thus forcing the NS to adopt a recipient role.

Interestingly, the NS's subsequent response to the complaint differs markedly from her response to the first complaint: here the NS does not display agreement with the complaint or apologize. Instead she explicitly, although relatively politely (note the conventional indirectness), disagrees with it (*oh I don't think so*, line 47). Following the NNS's counter-argument (line 48), the NS provides justification for her response (*no, no one else has complained*, lines 49-50). Thus, it seems that in contrast to the earlier 'cooperative' and other-supportive response to the complaint, the NS here adopts a strategy aimed at preserving her own positive face. In the absence of any face-support from the NNS, she has to defend her own face-goals. The NNS, for her part, challenges the NS's grounds and makes implicit reference to the inherent power in the NS's role as the employer: she states that the other employees *don't dare to, to tell you, what they want to tell you* (lines 51-52). The NNS is thus clearly aware of the power constraint and recognizes the NS's claim for authority, but chooses to challenge it.

In the following turn, the NNS continues her somewhat antagonistic approach by restating her complaint for the third time in exactly the same form

as the previous version (line 54). This time her complaint is met with a more direct, and explicitly face-threatening challenge from the NS (*maybe you're just lazy?*, line 55). At this stage in the conversation a culmination point is reached, and both interactants resort to explicit, on-record face-aggravating strategies: reciprocal accusations are made with raised voices.

The complaint sequence then gradually evolves into a negotiation of the NS's request/proposal without reaching a solution. Interestingly, here the NS claims a different relationship with the NNS, appealing to an assumed friendship rather than a position of power and authority (e.g. *but usually, since-as we're friends, I mean you can easily change it.*, lines 64-65). It thus seems that the NNS's strategy of challenging the power claimed by the NS has defined a new relationship between the interactants. The NS's different strategy does not, however, prove much more successful than the earlier one, since the NNS repeatedly refuses to accept her request. Nevertheless, some change in her approach is observable: she supports her refusal with unsolicited grounding (lines 66-68) and even introduces some humour which invites positive politeness from the NS in the following turns. No agreement is reached, however.

Instead, the subsequent exchange appears to establish that the participants have a quite different idea of the weightiness of the imposition. The NNS challenges the NS's request by asking her to change her plans and indicating that it is impossible for her to agree to the NS's request. She thus treats the NS's request as weighty, at the same time presenting her own request as if it were only minimally imposing. However, some traces of positive politeness here suggest that the participants are not orienting to the situation as a serious problem: they appear to find humour in their inability to reach an agreement. This is reflected in the extended repetitive play on the word *impossible* and the joint laughter (lines 75-81). Nevertheless, as the excerpt below shows, the momentary solidarity does not lead to a more successful outcome in the negotiation. It may, however, have an important role in preventing the situation from taking a more serious turn and in improving the atmosphere in which the negotiation is carried out.

In the sequences which follow, the proposal is made and declined two more times (lines 82-84 and 104-107), with intervening challenging and supporting arguments by the NNS and attempts to persuade her by the NS. The final version of the proposal is a compromise on the NS's part. The NNS's response indicates appreciation of this cooperative act of the NS's, but the response remains the same. Thus, the NS has no option but to accept the refusal, and the sequence is closed with the turn expressing this acceptance (lines 108-109). The extract below shows the final agreement and closing of the sequence.

A3(2), lines 104-109

NS: Well, how about if I give you, if you work for half a day tomorrow and then I give you the whole day Thursday off. You've really gained half a day.

NNS: No thanks, that's very kind of you but no thanks (laughter)

NS: Ah, okay, well I'll try and find someone else to work for me.

NNS: Yea (laughter)

In brief, the conversation consists of two central activities: a complaint and a proposal. The complaint sequence evolves into an extended and increasingly confrontational exchange where subsequent versions of the complaint are expressed and responded to in increasingly face-aggravating ways. This development is largely due to the NNS's failure to show any concern for the NS's face. As a result of extreme directness on the NNS's part, the NS adopts a gradually more direct and face-aggravating approach, and the tone of the conversation becomes confrontational. The sequence is never closed but is left unresolved. The proposal sequence, however, proceeds through a number of different subsequent versions and inserted negotiation sequences towards an outcome (dispreferred), which is finally accepted and ratified. The negotiation of the proposal is also characterized by the NNS's direct and unmitigated strategy of protecting her own ground. However, some traces of positive politeness are observable, which seem to prevent more face aggravation and make it possible for the participants to reach an outcome.

#### 8.4 Summary of sequential patterns

The negotiation of face-threatening activities embedded in the conversations takes a variety of different forms ranging from relatively straightforward underlying patterns of organization to extremely complex and extended variations of such patterns. A straightforward two-part pattern, such as REQUEST - COMPLIANCE, is regularly made complex with embedded insertion sequences, which may, for instance, serve to negotiate pre-conditions for the response. Such sequences can combine into complex layers of organization, where counter-proposals and subsequent versions of the original activity are negotiated before a response is given and a final agreement is reached. Further complications in the organization of the sequences are caused by strategic indeterminacy associated with face-work: concern for the co-interactant's face may result in lengthy off-record negotiations and indirect allusions to possible problems, which may delay and obscure the nature of the activity to be dealt with. The dynamic and cumulative nature of conversation is also reflected in the complexity of organization: sometimes an apparently complete sequence may not be treated as closed, but further negotiation follows which may change the outcome of the initial negotiation. Finally, the sequences may evolve into negotiations of more than one major problem, and the two participants may each pursue their own divergent goals, which are reflected in the organization as shifts of focus and possibly different strategic approaches. The complex organizations seem to reflect the constraints arising from preference organization and mutual concern for one's own and the co-interactant's face.

## 9 OPENINGS AND CLOSINGS

This chapter extends the analysis in the previous chapters by examining the role of the opening and closing phases in the negotiation of a face-threatening activity. Particular attention is paid to the way in which the participants establish and develop their interpersonal relationship through strategies of face-work.

### 9.1 Opening phases

The opening phases of conversations serve an important framing role in establishing the initial cooperative basis of the interaction. As was demonstrated in chapter 7, it is in the opening part of an encounter that the interactants negotiate an initial framework for conversational participation. Similarly, certain utterances and actions in the opening phases may serve as 'off record hints' leading the focus of interaction towards the potentially face-threatening activities without actually making any explicit mention of the activity. Finally, it is in openings that implicit assumptions about relevant contextual knowledge can be first tested, compared, and negotiated. This section complements the analysis in the previous chapters by focusing on two aspects of opening talk: (i) the negotiation of interpersonal relations through face-work and (ii) the development of topics towards the main activities in the conversations.

#### 9.1.1 Symmetrical low distance situations

The two versions of S1 open in a similar way: in both cases the early part of the conversation focuses on topics assumed to reflect the common ground shared by the interactants. The topics in opening sections of conversations are



generally 'safe' (see e.g. Ventola 1979:273, Brown and Levinson 1987:112), i.e. they enable the participants to display solidarity and agreement with each other, and thus serve as a basis for creating an atmosphere of cooperation and rapport. In conversations where the distance between the interactants is minimal, openings are typically more personal than in interaction between strangers, where predictable topics such as the weather might be expected (Schneider 1988:287, Brown and Levinson 1987:112). As both participants are students in this encounter, an expected and relevant shared topic is associated with their studies. In both S1(1) and S1(2) an exchange of *how are you* occurs in which the topic of studies is taken up. The same topic is elaborated in later turns with related subtopics, e.g. essays, lectures and exams.

The opening sequence in both cases thus appears to be oriented to the establishment of a symmetrical relationship and building up of rapport as a basis from which to proceed to the main 'business'. Both sequences display features considered typical for small talk phases in opening sections of conversations (see e.g. Brown and Levinson 1987:112, 117): expressions of solidarity and agreement and supportive feedback (e.g. *nice to see you, it's okay, yes* and/or *mm*, laughter). The sequences also reflect the close relationship between the participants: first names are used as terms of address, and common ground is presupposed (note e.g. the opening questions *How's things then?* and *How's your studying?*). The organization of the opening phases in the two conversations is also similar: both consist of adjacent pairs of questions and answers in which one participant initiates a question and the other party responds and reciprocates with another question, which the first party answers. In this way interactional reciprocity and cooperation is established at the start of the conversation. In S1(1) the initiator of this pattern is the native speaker whereas in S1(2) it is the non-native speaker. This organization can be summarized as follows:

- S1(1)  
 NS: a How's things then?  
 NNS: b Oh not too bad...  
       a what about you?  
 NS: b Well it's alright
- S1(2)  
 NNS: a Er how's your studying?  
 NS: b Oh fine I suppose...  
       a how about you?  
 NNS: b well mm it's okay

The extracts below demonstrate how this organization is accomplished in the conversations.

- S1(1), lines 1-12  
 NS: How's things then?  
 NNS: Oh, not too bad. I haven't had much of a chance to do much studying. I've been out every night this week, what about you?  
 NS: Well, it's er \* it's okay.  
 NNS: Yes, erm. \*\*\*  
 NS: Did you go to (inaudible) last night?

NNS: Er, yes I did, what about you?  
 NS: Yes, yes it was quite a good show (5 sec.) what have  
 you been doing since Monday?  
 NNS: Erm \*\*\* I've been, I've got an essay to do but, but I've  
 finished it already uum, I'm \*\* finishing it soon (inaudible)  
 NS: yea?)

S1(2), lines 1-12  
 NNS: Hello Dee how are you  
 NS: Hello Aini nice to see you again  
 NNS: er how's your \* studying?  
 NS: oh \* fine I suppose \* a bit late for this and that but er \*  
 yea I've been doing alright, how about you ?  
 NNS: well mm is mm \* it's okay \* cos er \*\* I think I've  
 done all my assessment already  
 NS: you've finished everything  
 NNS: ye:s \*\* (assessment  
 NS: mm)  
 NNS: yes \* since the er exam is coming \* so \* mm \*\* are  
 you free now?

Both the above extracts show that the interactants find it necessary to engage in talk about 'safe' topics for a while before any other activity is taken up. The function of such small talk sequences as preparatory for face-threatening activities has been observed to be a regular feature in some societies (Brown and Levinson 1987:117-118). It has also been suggested that in certain contexts (mainly in-group encounters) in Asian discourse relatively long small talk phases typically function as extended 'face-work' and that these lead to problems in intercultural encounters with Westerners because they delay the introduction of the first topic beyond the expectations based on the Western pattern (Scollon and Scollon 1991).

In both conversations the opening phase serves as extended preparation for the main topic to follow. In both cases there appears to be some confusion concerning the timing of the main topic. In S1(1) several topics are dealt with briefly by the speakers but no hint is given about anything to follow. While the beginning of the conversation proceeds in a reciprocal and cooperative manner, the participants do not agree on when the opening phase should be treated as finished and talk should proceed to other business. On line 9 there is a relatively long pause (5 seconds) at a turn-completion point, which clearly offers the NNS an opportunity to introduce the main topic. The NNS, however, does not use this opportunity, but waits for the NS to initiate another small talk topic. After some further turns on the common ground topic of studies the participants come to another possible completion point where they negotiate a shift of focus to the face-threatening activity. This is achieved by the native speaker's decision not to attend to a previous turn by the NNS and pausing (line 17), and thus creating another opportunity for the NNS to take the floor and initiate the topic, which she does in her next two turns (lines 18-19, 21).

In S1(2) the opening phase has a more clearly preparatory role: several of the NNS's turns suggest that a specific topic is to follow. She asks questions which clearly project a future activity (e.g. *Are you free now?*, line 11-12; and *Have you had lunch?*, line 19) and indicates that she has something more to say

in making a proposal to "get some food together" and "continue talking" (lines 23-24). The following excerpts show the development of topics towards the main activity in both conversations. In both cases the word *so* marks a transition to the negotiation of the main activity.

S1(1), lines 13-19

NNS: but English is not my first language

NS: I don't speak Brunei either, I don't even speak Malay.

NNS: Yes, that's the same as Malay (inaudible), but I study in your country.

NS: (laughter) *so* (4 sec.)

NNS: Umm \* there is one particular thing, er, I would like to ask you about.

S1(2), lines 15-28

NNS: no lectures today?)

NS: sorry?

NNS: no lectures today?

NS: not just now no no no

NNS: mmm I see, have you had \* er your lunch?

NS: have I had lunch?

NNS: yes

NS: no just about to, (have you had yours?)

NNS: I see) erm (inaud.) about to call (inaud.) to erm get the \* some food together \* er and then er we can continue \* mm talking

NS: fine, good idea ((inaud.))

NNS: thank you) \*\* so \*\* er \* actually (inaudible) er \*\*\* do you still remember last time er \*\* ehm \*\* that you \*\* mm \*\* when you asked me to \* lend you the forty dollars

The two conversations representing situation S2 open in different ways. S2(1) shows similarities with the two conversations discussed above: greetings and opening enquiries are exchanged (lines 2-5), and a close informal relationship is established between the participants. This is accomplished by an exchange, where the NS makes a joke about meeting the NNS in an unusual context (the NS's office at work), which is responded to by the NNS with laughter (lines 5-7). The teasing joke is a clear indication of the minimal distance assumption prevailing in the NS's turn: it is a rapport-maintaining positive politeness strategy and it serves to claim common ground through its rather personal content. However, there is potential for a cross-cultural misunderstanding here: the mention of the topic of drinking is somewhat risky since it is not normally a 'safe' opening topic in Malay culture. While the NNS's laughter in his response can be interpreted as indicating appreciation of the joke, it may also reflect an element of embarrassment caused by the topic. The comment which follows, however, indicates that no offence has been taken: it repeats the earlier friendly question concerning the NS's well-being, and thus reciprocates the solidarity.

Both participants in this way signal an orientation to each other's positive face: the NNS by addressing the NS by his first name and expressing interest in his well-being (*how are you* occurs twice), and the NS with his supportive comments and humour. This brief exchange affirms the assumed minimal distance relationship between the participants and establishes a

context of cooperation and reciprocity. The opening phase of this conversation is short. The NS's response to the NNS's second *how are you* brings up the topic of having difficulty with languages, which gives the NNS the occasion to introduce his business, i.e. the topic of Malay classes. The utterance *regarding to er you are interested in learning Malay* (lines 11-12) introduces the topic of Malay classes and also serves as a preparation for the proposal to follow.

S2(1), lines 1-12

NS: Come in, yes, come in and sit down (in my office.

NNS: Oh (laughter) hello Robert.

NS: Hello nice to see (you

NNS: hey) how are you?

NS: Nice to see you. How unusual to see you in an office situation. I normally see you out drinking.

NNS: (giggle) How, how are you this, er, this afternoon?

NS: Well, I've been working quite hard, I'm still having some difficulty with my languages but I'm getting by. It, it's been quite (hard

NNS: Yes) that's why I came here for, yes, now, regarding to, er, you are interested in learning Malay

S2(2) contrasts with S2(1) in that the type of opening exchanges characteristic for the three conversations above do not occur. In this conversation the NNS proceeds directly to business and introduces the main topic in his first turn (*I understand that, er, you have been trying to find er a a teacher to teach you Malay*, lines 1-2).

The two versions of S3 also display very little solidarity-based opening talk of the type discussed above. In S3(1) the native speaker participant opens the conversation by going straight to the point; she introduces the topic of the party and subsequently makes a request associated with the party:

S3(1), lines 1-5

NS: Well, Siti, erm \* I was thinking of having a party \* tomorrow night \* if \* you're not busy studying (5 sec.) and, um \* well, my stereo's broken, huh, and I was wondering if uum \* if you're not doing anything with your stereo, I could possibly borrow your stereo for the party?

The NS's turn displays strategies of both positive and negative politeness. She addresses the NNS by her first name, which indicates the assumption of minimal distance, and mentions the possibility of the NNS being busy studying, which also indicates assumed common ground and at the same time softens the request. While the NS's turn thus prepares and softens the actual imposition, it does not contain any talk specifically oriented to establishing friendly relations or extended face-work as a prelude to the imposition itself.

S3(2) opens with a brief exchange of greetings and a chain of questions and responses oriented to the topic of studies. The sequence is initiated by the native speaker, who also assumes a dominant role in developing the topic. She initiates the questions and also introduces the topic of the party, which shifts the attention to the main activity to be dealt with. The NNS adopts the role of secondary speaker and provides responses to the NS's initiating turns.

S3(2), lines 1-10  
 NS: Hi! How are you doing?  
 NNS: Fine, thanks.  
 NS: Did you have a good day today?  
 NNS: Not really.  
 NS: Why not?  
 NNS: (laughter)  
 NS: Working hard?  
 NNS: (laughter) because we have the exams coming.  
 NS: Ah yes. Uum, you know I like to give a lot of parties don't you.

A closer look at the NNS's response behaviour in this excerpt reveals that the opening phase does not unfold in an entirely satisfactory and mutually supportive way. The first response to the NS's opening question is of a predictable type (*fine thanks*), indicating agreement with the purely social function of the question. However, the NNS's response to the following question does not display polite agreement and cooperation in the same way. Instead of giving a vague affirmative response (e.g. *it was okay* or *not too bad*), as might be expected, the NNS responds with *not really* (line 4). Her response can be seen as 'dispreferred' in the context. It can be assumed that when a question of this type occurs immediately after opening greetings, it is not normally intended as a question seeking information, but rather as a display of attention and interest in accordance with the general functions of opening routines. Thus, it could be expected to invite an affirmative response as 'preferred'. The NNS's response departs from this expectation. Accordingly, the NS appears to treat the NNS's response as dispreferred by asking the NNS to account for it (*why not?*, line 5, and *working hard?*, line 7). In her response the NNS provides the expected account: (*because we have the exams coming*, line 8). The NS's turn which accepts the account (*ah yes*) terminates the opening section somewhat abruptly and introduces the topic of the party (*you know I like to give a lot of parties don't you*, lines 9-10).

The dispreferred response here appears to signal some lack of cooperation and asynchrony. The questions that it triggers indicate that it is clearly unexpected in the context. The NS had intended her enquiry as a rapport-maintaining solidarity politeness strategy rather than a genuine question on the NNS's welfare. The response is not, however, necessarily inappropriate or out of place in the situation as such: in minimal distance encounters the need to overtly cooperate and support the other's face is often overridden by other concerns (cf. e.g. Wolfson 1989), and more personal patterns of response are quite typical (e.g. giving a genuine responses to phatic questions instead of the 'preferred' surface cooperation). However, the overall tone of the conversation at this point and the brief, minimal response from the NS (line 9) suggest that the NNS's turn is interpreted as indicating lack of cooperation. For example, while the NS's questions which ask for reasons are delivered with a soft voice and rising intonation expressing interest, the account provided by the NNS is blunt and direct with no indication of orienting to or reciprocating the NS's friendliness. As was pointed out in section 7.2.1, the NNS's laughter (lines 6 and 8) also contributes to a lack of alignment: it is not directed at any joint focus in the talk, nor does it invite a

response from the co-participant. Thus, rather than creating a 'climate of solidarity', the opening in this conversation seems to give a hint of some latent trouble.

### 9.1.2 Symmetrical high distance situations

D1(1) and D1(2) both open with a relatively long (14 turns and 38 turns) phase of talk where no mention of the main topic is made and where common ground is established and participant relations are negotiated. The lengthy opening phases display features similar to some of the sequences described above. For example, reciprocal greetings are exchanged, pairs of questions and answers are produced and 'safe' topics selected. The talk focuses on the establishment of common ground (e.g. *are you Robert Dunston?* and *what's your name?*), and other predictable topics, e.g. the visitor status of the NS in Brunei, the weather and the tropical climate. The topics reflect the fact that the relationship between the participants in this situation involves more distance than the relationship between the participants in situations S1, S2, and S3: instead of presupposing and affirming assumed common ground, the speakers engage in continuous interactive work in order to establish common ground.

In both conversations based on D1 the opening phases reflect a positive politeness orientation: solidarity and rapport is displayed through expressions of agreement, through repetition and 'echoing' of the co-participant's utterances, and questions expressing interest. In D1(1), for example, the NNS shows attention to the NS's positive face by asking a question indicating interest (*are you visiting?*, line 12) and complimenting the NS (*I heard that from \* from my parents that you are good \* at singing and playing guitar*, lines 19-20). The NS, for his part, supports the NNS's positive face by showing agreement, echoing and rephrasing parts of the NNS's turns (e.g. *so how do your parents know mine \* parents*, line 7; *I think I have seen you as well*, line 11). These strategies serve positive politeness functions by displaying attention to the previous speaker's turn and establishing agreement (see Brown and Levinson 1987:113). The excerpt below shows how the opening of D1(1) unfolds.

D1(1), lines 1-20  
 NNS: Hello  
 NS: Oh hello there  
 NNS: Are you \* Robert Dunston?  
 NS: I am. How did you know that?  
 NNS: Well I \*\* my parents knows \*\* knows your - your - your father  
 NS: Ah \* so how do your parents know mine \* (parents  
 NNS: He - he) lives next door to \* to our - to our \* house  
 NS: ah  
 NNS: but I - I've seen you before  
 NS: yea I was going to say I think I have seen you as well  
 NNS: mm \* but I wonder \* are you visiting \*\*  
 NS: yes \* I have come yea I live in Australia  
 NNS: mm  
 NS: and because my parents work here I have just come over here for \* a  
 visit of maybe twelve weeks three months, just to see how life is in  
 Brunei and then \* I will be going back to my course \* in Australia  
 NNS: I heard that from \* from my parents that you are very good \* at  
 singing and playing guitar

In D1(2) the NNS similarly asks questions which both express interest and serve to establish common ground (e.g. *where do you come from?*, line 21; and *what's your name?*, line 30). He also compliments the NS by referring to his home town as *such a beautiful city* (line 27). The NNS's turns referring to the NS's guitar playing and singing (lines 32, 34, 36-37) can also be seen as an expression of polite interest. The native speaker in D1(2) reciprocates by displaying (surface) agreement and attention to the NNS turns, (e.g. *yea it's very hot*, line 11; *yea from Sydney*, line 24; *yea I study there*, line 28). He also repeats and echoes the NNS utterances (e.g. *yea I play guitar*, line 33; *you heard that from your parents*, line 40). Further, the native speaker appears to adapt to the NNS's style: for example, he repeats part of an incorrect utterance by the NNS (*some fever*, line 16) and thus momentarily switches to 'foreigner talk'. The reciprocal attempts at building rapport through face-work can also be seen in the way that topics are dealt with: after an initial, somewhat inappropriate and problematic opening of a topic by the NNS (*what are you doing here?*, line 5), both speakers seem to build on the main topic of tropical heat cooperatively, by showing attention to each other's contributions and elaborating them from their respective perspectives. The following extract shows the participants' mutual attempts at establishing a face-supportive relationship.

D1(2), lines 1-35

NNS: Hello

NS: Oh, hello, hi!

NNS: Hello

NS: Hi

NNS: What are you doing here?

NS: Ah, just having a drink \*\* it's a bit er...

NNS: I see

NS: ...it's a bit hot today you know.

NNS: I think it is okay to me because our country is very, such a very hot country

NS: Yea, it's very hot. Yea. I just find the sweat just pours off me,\*\* almost all the time, so when I come to town I have to have a drink as much as I can.

NNS: I know and er I think for the first few weeks that you come over here you can get some fever

NS: Some fever

NNS: Yes

NS: What from the heat?

NNS: I think so

NS: Aha, huh, yea,\* yea, well we don't want that

NNS: Where do you come from?

NS: I come from Australia

NNS: I see

NS: Yea, from Sydney

NNS: Sydney

NS: Yea

NNS: That's such a beautiful city

NS: Yea, I study there, I'm just here because my family are, my parents are working in Brunei so I'm staying with them

NNS: Ooh \* what's your name?

NS: My name is Frank

NNS: Oh, Frank, that's the one who plays guitar

NS: Aaah, yea, I play guitar, sure, I don't think I'm very (good.

NNS: and singing)

NS: Yeah I sing but I don't think I'm very good.

In both D1(1) and D1(2) the opening sequences also prepare ground for the face-threatening activity (an invitation). In D1(1) the non-native participant's assertion that he has heard that the NS is good at singing and playing the guitar (lines 19-20) seems to have an important preparatory role. First, it introduces a new topic which is linked to the previous turns and to the main activity, i.e. that the NNS wants to invite the NS to his party to play the guitar. Simultaneously, it fulfills a face-supportive function by expressing a belief favourable to the hearer, i.e. complimenting him (see Brown and Levinson 1987:102), thus enhancing his positive face. The utterance thus moves the conversation forward by approaching the main topic in a subtle way and also softening the impact of the subsequent invitation by paying attention to the hearer's positive face wants.

The NS orients to the face-supportive aspect of the utterance and treats it as a compliment. His turn displays some typical features of compliment responses (see Pomerantz 1978): he does not immediately accept the compliment but delays (*well it's er my fame has gone in front of me*, line 21), expresses disagreement (*I wouldn't call myself very good*, lines 21-22) and shifts the focus of the compliment from being good at something to enjoying doing something (*they are two things that I do enjoy*, line 22). His reply is thus a polite compliment response, reflecting avoidance of self-praise and modesty (Pomerantz 1978, Leech 1983). The next turn, where the NNS introduces himself (lines 25-26), marks another shift towards the topic of the invitation. This turn is clearly interpreted as a preparation for something by the NS, whose response (*ah yes?*, line 27) encourages the NNS to continue. The turn is followed by an introduction of the topic of the party (lines 28-30). The following excerpt shows how the NNS leads the conversation gradually towards the topic of the main activity.

D1(1), lines 19-30

NNS: I heard that from \* from my parents that you are very good \* at singing and playing guitar

NS: Well it's er my fame has gone in front of me er I wouldn't call myself **very** good but er \* they are two things that I do enjoy er I - I like to go running and I like to play the guitar \* and singing, singing along to my \* guitar

NNS: I see - see I 'm - I'm a student of Management Studies at the \* University of Brunei Darussalam

NS: ah yes?

NNS: so we have made the arrangement to \*\* have the informal party but now we don't have so er a person that can play guitar and \* sing \* (songs

In D1(2) the opening section appears to flow somewhat less smoothly and the participants take longer to get round to the main topic. A more detailed look at the sequence reveals why. The conversation opens with an extended exchange of greetings (two pairs of utterances) initiated by the NNS. After the greetings the NNS asks a question which is inappropriate in this context: *what*



*are you doing here?* (line 5). The question might be appropriate in an unexpected meeting of two acquaintances, and even in such a context it would probably be marked with a stress on *you* or *here*. In an encounter between two strangers in a coffee bar the utterance is clearly sociopragmatically inappropriate. The sociopragmatic failure by NNS does not, however, invite any explicit reaction from the NS, who seems to treat the turn as an information-seeking question, and answers it by referring to the hot weather and a resulting need for refreshments (lines 6-8). Even though the NS's turn does not show explicit recognition of any failure, it seems that the initial hitch in the conversation has consequences for the later developments.

In subsequent turns both participants orient to the topic of the weather and elaborate on it, thus proceeding to an exchange of turns more typical of opening talk between strangers. These turns also suggest that the initiating question by the NNS was also intended as an expression of attention and interest. The next turns continue to build on the topic of heat (lines 9-13). On lines 14-15 the NNS introduces a (to him) related topic of fever, which from the NS's point of view seems slightly unexpected. This results in a brief negotiation sequence, where the connection of the NNS's contribution to the topic is established. First, the NS passes the turn back to the NNS by repeating the words *some fever* (line 16), thus indicating that he wants the NNS to elaborate or explain. Next the NNS confirms that he is talking about fever with a simple *yes* (line 17), which seems inadequate for the NS, who requests more clarification (*what from the heat?*, line 18). The NNS then confirms this interpretation with a vague agreement form (*I think so*, line 19). The next and final turn in the sequence seems to indicate some dissatisfaction with this brief exchange: it opens with several hesitations by the NS (*aha, huh, yea \* yea well*) and continues with a general comment which seems to indicate unwillingness to continue the topic (*we don't want that*, line 20).

In addition to resembling meaning negotiation sequences observed in NNS interaction (see e.g. Varonis and Gass 1985a, 1985b), this sequence is similar to a particular type of four-turn organization observed by Schenkein (1978:68-69): it seems to be an extended puzzle-pass-solution-comment sequence, where the 'solution' element is filled by the turns which establish the connection between *fever* and *heat* (lines 18-19). Negotiation sequences of this type are common in conversations where there is some distance between the participants. In this case it seems to be linked to the negotiation of an interactional problem in order to build common ground: it reflects the unexpectedness of the NNS's handling of the initial topics and a resulting need to engage in some negotiation of meaning. It also marks a shift away from the initial topics towards other business.

The opening phase of D1(2) continues with NNS-initiated information-seeking questions which serve to build common ground (lines 21, 30). The question which seeks to establish the NS's identity (line 30) appears to have a preparatory role: it gives the NNS an occasion to claim common ground in a later turn (*Oh Frank that's the one who plays guitar*, line 32) and make a comment on the NS's interest in music (lines 36-37). These utterances seem to serve a similar anticipatory and face-supportive function as the NNS's compliment in

D1(1). It is noteworthy that the NS's response is also very similar to the response given by the NS in D1(1). However, the NNS does not proceed to talk about the party at this point, but instead the participants engage in another attempt at building common ground (lines 40-45). Although the preparatory turns in the previous exchange have created an opportunity for the NNS to introduce the main topic (note the apparent markers of topic shift *yea?* and *so* in lines 38-39), he fails to take it up. Subsequently the NS claims the floor and continues on the previous topic requesting more information about the connection between the two speakers' parents. The NNS seems to have difficulty with formulating his response (note the hesitation and abandonment of turn, line 42), and the NS shows cooperation by doing interactive work in support of the NNS: he suggests an answer to his own question, formulating a turn for the NNS (lines 43-44). The two participants then jointly acknowledge the answer (lines 45-46).

In completing the exchange the NS also changes the direction of the conversation: he initiates an action which is strongly closing-implicative (*well, I suppose I ought to get going soon*, line 46). It seems that the failure of the NNS to come to the point, and possibly his momentary difficulties in sustaining the conversation, give rise to an attempt to initiate a closing. The opening has by now taken some time and no other topic has been initiated by the NNS, in spite of several opportunities for doing so (e.g. lines 14, 21, 39, and 45). In the absence of other topics in positions where they might be expected, the NS appears to treat the sequence as an instance of purely social small talk. However, at this point in the conversation he displays an interest in discontinuing the encounter, and hints at wanting to close the conversation. The NS's closing-implicative utterance is potentially face-threatening to the NNS: the utterance is obligating in that it sets an expectation for the NNS to either accept the initiation of a closing procedure or bring up his pending topic of inviting the NS to the party. The face-threat is slightly alleviated, however, by the tentative nature of the comment (*I suppose I ought to--*).

The NNS does not accept the NS's comment about leaving as an initiation of a closing sequence. However, he does not take up the topic of the invitation either, but asks a question concerning the NS's plans (*going soon, where*, line 47). Again, the question seems sociopragmatically inappropriate in the context. Firstly, it does not conform to the expectations set by the previous utterance: it disrupts the closing sequence which the NS seems to have wanted to initiate and it also fails to bring up further topics to provide a reason for continuing the conversation. Secondly, it also fails to mark the utterance as unexpected or 'misplaced' (e.g. with *by the way*), which would be an expected thing to do at this stage of the conversation (see e.g. Levinson 1983:322). Thirdly, the utterance is also face-threatening in the sense that it requires an answer, and appears to oblige the NS to tell the NNS (a stranger) something that he might not regard as relevant in the context. The NS's subsequent turn, however, is cooperative: it provides an answer to the NNS's question (line 48-49). The answer is also softened by the use *well* and *I mean* and the past tense (*I was going to go to--*).

The subsequent turns finally lead to the introduction of the topic of the invitation. The NS's utterance *so* (line 51), a potential pre-closing item (see e.g. Levinson 1983:317), marks the previous sequence as closed. However, the NS seems to interpret the NNS's silence and hesitations (lines 50, 52) as indicating that he has something more to say, and encourages the NNS to continue (*yea?*, line 53). This finally prompts the NNS to bring up the main topic and present the invitation (lines 54-57). The extract below demonstrates the somewhat disorderly way that the main topic is arrived at in D1(2).

D1(2), lines 35-57

NS: Yea I sing but I don't think I'm very good

NNS: ah \*\* I think its quite well known because I heard from, I think \* my parents \*\* that

NS: Yea?

NNS: So

NS: You heard that from your parents. How do your parents know about playing the the guitar?

NNS: Maybe your parents are, I mean perhaps, uum \*\* er \*\*\*

NS: Perhaps that you mean perhaps that er my parents talk to your parents, yea, maybe

NNS: maybe

NNS: maybe, yea. Well, I suppose I ought to get going soon.

NNS: Going, soon, where?

NS: Well, I mean, I was going to go to Klasse and over to Yaohan to finish my wash-my shopping.

NNS: Oh \*\*

NS: So (er

NNS: er)

NS: Yea?

NNS: Is lucky to meet you here because I think on \*\* Friday evening I have an informal party. I invite my friends, er, some of these are UBD students, and others from my family, so, so I decide to invite you to my party.

In brief, the lengthy opening phase of D1(2) demonstrates how asymmetries in expectations concerning appropriate topics, the timing of new topics and the linguistic means for bringing up topics cause problems in an intercultural encounter. It also demonstrates that the problems are partly implicit: no explicit linguistic reactions or attempts to repair trouble can be seen. At the level of conversational organization, however, problems are apparent. Due to the inability of the NNS to act according to expectations, the NS assumes control by making obligating interactional moves, which finally force the NNS to come to the point.

In situation D2 the NNS is expected to offer to help the NS with translating an article. In both conversations based on this situation the NNS opens the conversation and brings up the main topic very quickly. In D2(1) the NNS greets the NS and then brings up the NS's need for some assistance in the same turn (lines 1-3). In D2(2), a brief exchange of greetings occurs, and the third turn is taken up by the NNS who mentions the main topic (lines 3-5). In both cases the opening utterances thus establish the main focus of the conversation relatively clearly, and no other topics are introduced. This feature of the conversations is largely explained by the situation: the NNS is sitting in the student common room and has overheard the NS's conversation in which

s/he mentions needing help with translating an article. Thus the immediate situation provides a certain amount of common ground, and offers a motivation for the NNS to initiate talk. Before the main activity is taken up, however, the participants engage in some negotiation focused on establishing more common ground, as is seen in the extracts below.

D2(1), lines 1-13

NNS: Hello. \*\* I er, I heard you you talk talking to your friend just now about something, you need information on Borneo, erm, you're doing some research on the anthropology of er Borneo.

NS: Yes.

NNS: (and that

NS: oh sorry.) Yea, I'm working on a thesis on the people of Niah in Sarawak and I have an article here and I'm not sure which language it's in, could be the Dusun language but I don't know and I can't find anyone on campus who can translate. Are you from Borneo?

NNS: Yes, I'm from Borneo and in fact, that er,\* I know some of the Dusun language.

NS: Could you just have a look at this article for me? ---

D2(2), lines 1-22

NNS: Hello

NS: Oh, hi.

NNS: Well, I'm new around here but I couldn't help \* hearing your conversation, er, something to do with, er, Dusun? Is that right? Am I right?

NS: Well, yes, I mean, er, something to do with Dusun, yes, erm it's an article we've got that er \* we think may be written in Dusun.

NNS: I see

NS: But, er, I \* I, do you know about Dusun? It's, it's, er, one of the languages of er \* of Brunei. Brunei is a small country in erm

NNS: Yea, actually I come from Brunei

NS: Oh, sorry, ah, very (sorry

NNS: Yea) that's why I couldn't help, er, listening to you, to your conversation just now (er.

NS: So), do you speak Dusun?

NNS: Well, not exactly, not exactly, but I have a lot of friends, er, Dusun friends and I'm used to hearing them, you know, speaking in, well, I sometimes heard them speaking with er, because I, I, know a little bit about that language...

NS: Oh, (well.

NNS: ...no)t language, (but

NS: Well), perhaps we could do two things. ---

In both cases the negotiation follows a somewhat similar pattern. The native speaker responds to the NNS's initiation by elaborating on the opening topic and later asks a question seeking a reason for the NNS bringing it up. In D2(1) the NS asks a question seeking a connection between the NNS and the topic (*are you from Borneo*, lines 9-10). In D2(2) the NNS's first topic turn leads to a similar question (*do you know about Dusun?*, line 9) and an elaborating explanation. In both conversations the non-natives' answers to the NS-initiated questions establish that the NNS is from Borneo/Brunei, and thus add to the common ground between the participants.

The opening exchanges also move the conversation forward by projecting a future activity which is somehow oriented to the NS's problem. In D2(1) the NNS hints at a possibility of assistance in formulating his response to

the NS's question: he mentions his knowledge of the Dusun language (lines 11-12). This prompts the NS to request help. In D2(2) the NNS interrupts the NS's turn explaining the link between the Dusun language and Brunei, and establishes her connection with the topic (*yea actually I come from Brunei*, line 11). She also confirms that this connection was the reason for her initiation (*that's why I couldn't help er listening--*, lines 13-14). In both cases these turns are treated as sufficient preparation for the NS to request help and thus open the negotiation of the main activity.

The opening sections of the two conversations based on D3 resemble the opening phases of D2 in that they contain few 'phatic' elements oriented towards the establishment of contact and negotiation of a relationship. They both open with sequences attending to the main topic. Again the situation largely explains the direct approach: the conversations take place as a result of the NNS's decision to go and see the NS on account of a problem. Furthermore, by going to see a stranger in his/her home the NNS is in a sense intruding and has a good reason to make the interaction brief. Since the problem that the NNS is expected to introduce is quite serious, an extended phatic exchange in the opening phase might also give the wrong impression about the purpose of his visit, perhaps by suggesting it is a social call (cf. discussion of D1(2) above).

The opening sections of the two versions of D3 differ from each other in terms of their conversational flow. On first impressions D3(1) appears less successful than D3(2): the interaction seems halting and the two interactants have difficulty in adapting to the situation and finding a common focus for their talk. The opening section of D3(2) appears to proceed in a smoother and easier manner. The two openings are examined in more detail below to suggest what it is that gives these impressions of the interactions. The following extracts show how they unfold in the conversations.

D3(1), lines 1-23

NNS: Hello, I'd like to ask whether you drive a car, the car with \* diplomatic plates. It's...

NS: Diplomatic plates? \* Yes \* I've got a 4-wheel drive.

NNS: A 4-wheel drive.

NS: Yes

NNS: (laugh) \*\*

NS: Can I help you?

NNS: Thank you, yes, of course umm \* I would like to, just - to like to know - just like to to enquire whether you're the one who's driving \*\* the car (5 sec.) driving the Land Cruiser.

NS: Uh? (inaudible)

NNS: Yea.

NS: Yea. You were parked at the squash courts the other day?

NNS: Pardon?

NS: You were at the squash courts the other day? Oh no. Then it was before the squash courts.

NNS: Yea.

NS: Well (laugh)

(7 sec.)

NS: Have you got a problem?

NNS: Yes, er, I (5 sec.) I have have a scratch on my father's Mercedes car and, and I believe it was caused by your Land Cruiser.

D3(2), lines 1-14  
 NNS: Good evening sir  
 NS: Oh hi, good morning \* yeah  
 NNS: good morning  
 NS: good morning  
 NNS: morning sir er \*\*\* are you \*\* are you from \* Australia em - er \*\* are you from Australia?  
 NS: yeah but \* I wo - I work at the Australian High Commission  
 NNS: ah  
 NS: yes \* that's right  
 NNS: er is it you \* own the \* er old Land Cruiser?  
 NS: oh-oh er yes, yes I do yes that - that's mine that that you see in the drive there that Land Cruiser \*  
 (yeah  
 NNS: ah I think er \*\* I think you \*\* you scrape er my \* my my car \*\* in the \* parking lot \* this mor - this afternoon

In D3(1) the NNS initiates the conversation and brings up the topic of the NS's car in his first turn. The next turns establish the NS's ownership of the vehicle which has damaged the NNS's car (lines 3-5). After this exchange the interaction has proceeded to a point where a new topic could be introduced, and the NNS, as the initiator, has the floor and an opportunity to bring up his complaint. The NNS, however, fails to initiate the topic, but fills his turn with quiet laughter. The laughter seems to be associated with the social difficulty that the NNS is facing; it can be interpreted as a sign of embarrassment or 'troubled' laughter, which suggests that there is something that troubles the NNS, but he does not want appear to take it very seriously (see e.g. Jefferson 1984 for the role of laughter in troubles-talk interaction). The native speaker does not reciprocate the laughter, and in her next turn (*can I help you?*, line 7) she returns the floor to the NNS, thus displaying an expectation that the NNS is to introduce the next topic. The NNS's response reflects difficulty in meeting this expectation. The turn opens with hesitations and false starts and a lengthy silence (5 seconds), and does not provide the expected next topic: having responded to the NS's turn, the NNS simply reformulates his initial request. Thus it appears that in terms of topic development, the conversation has not progressed from the preparatory first utterance.

The subsequent sequence is initiated by the NS as an attempt to establish a connection between the NNS's visit and some possible event in the past, but this is not successful, as is indicated by the NS's turn abandoning the topic (lines 15-16). As the sequence does not lead to a result, the NS finally forces the NNS to come to the point: she shows that she is expecting the NNS to take over by asking *have you got a problem?* (line 20). The next turn by the NNS then finally introduces the main topic, i.e. the complaint (lines 21-23).

The strategies used by the NNS in the opening of D3(1) display orientation to the NS's negative face and include several examples of somewhat formal and deferential language. In addition to using conventional indirectness (e.g. *I'd like to ask*, lines 1-2; *I would like to, just- to like to know---*, lines 8-10), the NNS appears almost too polite in some of his turns (e.g. *thank you, yes*, line 8). The NS's strategies evolve from negative politeness towards a more direct, bald-on-record strategy (e.g. *can I help you*, line 7; *have you got a problem*, line 20), reflecting increasing dissatisfaction with the NNS's inability to initiate the main

activity. The linguistic strategies thus also reflect the participants' lack of alignment to the situation and to each other.

D3(2) opens with an extended greeting sequence consisting of two adjacency pairs, which are initiated by the NNS. The approach taken by the NNS is deferential: the use of *sir* appears to signal that the NNS perceives the situation not only as reflecting distance, but also possibly a power difference. The NS' response to the first greeting (*Oh hi*, line 2) is much less formal, and suggests a different interpretation of the relationship between the two speakers. It is followed, however, by a further exchange of greetings echoing the NNS's first utterance, which appears to negotiate a distance-based relationship between the interactants (lines 2-5). A sequence seeking to establish the identity of the NS follows. It is organized around two NNS-initiated questions and the NS's responses to these questions. In this case the questions lead up to the topic of the damage to the NNS's car without further delay or any perceivable difficulty on the NNS's part. After sufficient common ground has been established and put on record, i.e. the NNS can assume he is talking to the right person, the first topic slot is filled by the turn expressing the complaint (lines 13-14).

### 9.1.3 Asymmetrical situations

Both conversations based on A1, an encounter between an employer (NS) and employee (NNS), open with greetings and opening turns focusing on a contextually 'safe' and predictable topic (having a cup of coffee). In both cases the NS opens the conversation, adopting an approach-based positive politeness strategy. The positive politeness approach is reflected in the use of informal language (e.g. *you grabbing a cup of coffee*) and the use of the NNS's first name as an address term. In A1(1), the conversation quickly proceeds from the opening topic to the introduction of the main activity (invitation): in response to the NS's question on weekend plans, the NNS mentions the party she is planning to organize. This immediately opens a sequence in which an invitation is negotiated, as is seen in the extract below.

A1(1), lines 1-5  
 NS: Hello everyone! \*\*\* You grabbing a cup of coffee? \*\*\*  
 NNS: You want a coffee?  
 NS: No, I don't drink coffee. So what is everyone doing for the weekend?  
 NNS: well \* er \*\* actually I'm trying to organize, er \* some party.

In A1(2) the opening sequence is longer, and the approach to the topic of the party seems to reflect some discomfort for both participants. A closer look at the development of the sequence (see excerpt below) shows how this comes about.

A1(2), lines 1-23  
 NS: Have you got your coffee, er, Noorqamar, er, that, that was poured for somebody else (but, er  
 NNS: Oh, I need) not because I'm full because I've just eat.  
 NS: You've just eaten

NNS: Yeah (laughter)

NS: Ah, I, yea, well, erm, we like, you know we like to get together over coffee in this, er, agency because, I feel, well, it's important that we get to know one another \* well, and it should be, everybody should feel they're a part of the team...

NNS: Oh yes.

NS: ...and, er, since you, you're the newest here aren't you? (You...

NNS: Yes)

NS: ...just started a month ago.

NNS: Uh-huh.

NS: Are you enjoying working here?

NNS: Yea, I really enjoy working here. In fact, as being a Bruneian, at first I feel quite, I feel quite an outsider working in this agency...

NS: Uhu.

NNS: ...but, but I'm quite, I'm not adjusting to the situation.

NS: Uhu.

NNS: Ah, before I forget, Mr Swan, Sir, er, er, I'm at this instant, I'm organizing a, a party for our agency, ---

The first four turns already indicate asymmetries in the participants' expectations and resources: the NNS's response to the NS's opening turn, which seems to be intended as a somewhat vague offer, is unidiomatic and triggers a brief repair sequence initiated by the NS (lines 4-5). The NS's next turn (lines 6-9) opens with lengthy hesitation, possibly indicating social difficulty. The turn shows that the NS interprets the encounter as a friendly social chat (note his comments about getting together and getting to know each other) and an opportunity to show (or at least be interpreted as showing) interest in the new member of the staff. The turn is characterized by the use of positive politeness strategies: it emphasizes common ground and togetherness (e.g. *you know*, inclusive *we* and *everybody should feel they're a part of the team*). The questions which the NS asks in his next turns (e.g. *you're the newest here aren't you*, line 11, and *are you enjoying working here?*, line 15) similarly convey friendly interest in the NNS.

While the NS's strategies in the opening part of the conversation serve to express solidarity with the NNS, they also make salient her asymmetrical position in relation to the NS. Firstly, the brief repair sequence in the beginning makes 'non-nativeness' explicit as a relevant aspect of the interaction and leads to embarrassed laughter on the NNS's part (line 5). Secondly, the references to the need to get to know the NNS, so that she can then become 'part of the team', make salient the apprenticeship relationship of the NNS in relation to the other members of the agency.

Thus, it is not altogether unsurprising that the non-native participant seems to have some difficulty in coping with the NS's positive politeness approach. The trouble which the NNS is experiencing is reflected in her somewhat confused turn on lines 16-18, where she first gives a rather emphatic affirmative answer to the NS's question (*yes, I really enjoy working here*), but then seems to contradict herself (*at first I feel quite, quite an outsider working in this agency ---but, but I'm quite, I'm not adjusting to the situation*). The turn appears to signal the pressure felt by the NNS to give a 'preferred' answer by showing agreement with the prior turn (a 'yes but' strategy, Brown and Levinson 1987:114). The latter part of the turn, however, hints that she may in fact not



enjoy her work due to difficulties in adjusting to a new job. This ambivalence may suggest that she is not sure whether to interpret the NS's question as a genuine question seeking a sincere reply or as a mere display of attention inviting a 'preferred' affirmative response. It may be that from the NNS's point of view the asymmetries which have become apparent in the encounter give rise to conflicting expectations. On the one hand, the NNS may feel pressure to display respect and deference and thus maintain distance by engaging in surface cooperation and avoiding personal topics, especially topics which concern problems and may involve face-threat. On the other hand, there is pressure to cooperate with the NS's approach-based positive politeness strategy, which would involve expressing solidarity by asserting common ground and perhaps even talking about personal topics, such as difficulties in adjusting to the job.

The NNS's solution to the problem is a somewhat abrupt change of direction and subsequent introduction of the topic of the party in her next turn (lines 22-26). This seems to confirm that she was getting into trouble with the previous topic and wants to move on. Interestingly, the NNS seems to be quite aware of the unexpectedness of her new topic: the turn is marked as 'misplaced' with *before I forget*, and it contains several explicit expressions of deference (e.g. *Mr Swan, Sir, and I'm afraid to approach you*). The non-native speaker's conversational strategy of changing the topic to introduce the invitation at this point can thus be seen as a communication strategy of avoiding conversational trouble which arises from unfamiliarity with both the social expectations constraining this kind of encounter and the linguistic strategies for dealing with the situation.

In brief, while the participants in A1(1) are able to proceed to the main activity without delay, the participants in A1(2) have difficulty in establishing reciprocal alignment in the situation and developing a mutually recognized and satisfactory relationship on the basis of which to approach the activity. Rather, the conversation is characterized by asymmetries of expectations and resources resulting in interactional trouble, which leads to an abrupt topic change and a somewhat infelicitous opening of the main topic.

In the conversations based on situation A2 the opening section is brief, consisting of six turns in both cases. A2(1) is initiated by the NNS, who opens the sequence with a summons (*anybody in?*), which is responded to by the NS with a greeting. The NNS then continues with a question checking common ground (*do you remember me?*, line 3). Having received confirmation that the NS knows her, and having thus established sufficient common ground, the NNS proceeds to introduce the reason for her visit, which is the main topic of the conversation (lines 7-8). In A2(2) the opening sequence is initiated by the NS. It consists of three question-answer exchanges: a *how are you* and its response, and two exchanges focused on topics reflecting common ground (lines 3-4 and 5-6). The native speaker appears to follow an approach-based positive politeness strategy, showing attention and interest towards the NNS by asking two questions concerned with the NNS's studies (*are you enjoying yourself and working hard?*). The NS then proceeds to introduce the topic of her earlier

request for the NNS to baby-sit, which changes the focus of the interaction to the negotiation of the main activity.

A2(1), lines 1-8

NNS: Anybody in?

NS: Oh. Hello.

NNS: Uum, er, do you remember me?

NS: Uum, you're the Bruneian girl who lives with Mrs Johnson?

NNS: Yes, I do.

NS: Aha, yes.

NNS: Uumm, I would like to ask you whether, er, whether you have got a replacement for the, er, for baby-sitting your babies?

A2(2), lines 1-11

NS: Hi! How are you?

NNS: Oh, fine thank you.

NS: Good, are you enjoying yourself?

NNS: Oh yes I **am**.

NS: Working hard?

NNS: \*\* Yes, it seems like that (laughter)

NS: So, uum, I asked, er, one of - someone you know, Mrs Johnson..

NNS: Uhu.

NS: ...to ask you to come and baby-sit for me. But she says that you won't come.

In the conversations based on A3, the opening sections are similarly short, and promptly develop into negotiations about the main activity. In A3(1), the NNS opens with a question with a clearly preparatory function, requesting a moment of the NS's time. This serves as a summons, which is responded to with an invitation to come in (line 2). The subsequent turn by the NNS is again clearly preparatory in nature, anticipating that she has a specific topic that she wants to discuss (lines 3-4). At the same time the turn seems to reflect some social difficulty on the NNS's part (note the hesitations and the lengthy pause, line 3). The NS's response to this turn reciprocates the NNS's anticipatory question with a similarly preparatory statement asserting that the NS too has something to talk about. At this point the interactants appear to have jointly arrived at a point where the main topics may be addressed, and the NNS introduces the problem concerning her day off (lines 7-10).

In A3(2) the opening exchange is even shorter. The NS initiates the conversation with a positively polite greeting and a question (*have you had a good week?*, line 1). The NS responds with an unmitigated, undelayed dispreferred answer *no*. This prompts the NS to request an explanation (*why?*, line 3). The NNS responds to the question with a complaint, which shifts the focus of talk to the main topic. The beginning of the conversation resembles the beginning of S3(2), in which the NNS also departs from a predictable pattern of conversational organization by giving a similar dispreferred response to the NS's opening utterance. Here the marked nature of the response is even more explicit, since no softening items are used. The pattern gives an impression of an antagonistic relationship developing between the participants right from the start: no attempt is made by the NNS to display polite attention towards or cooperation with the NS.

A3(1), lines 1-10

NNS: I have something, could I speak for - to you for a while?

NS: Yes, right, come in.

NNS: Okay, umm \*\* well I well erm (6 sec.) can I get straight to the point?

NS: Yes, there's something I want to talk to you about too, actually.

NNS: Umm \* I heard from \* one of the lecturers said er \*\* that tomorrow is supposed to be my holiday and \* then I heard that it's \* going to \* erm \* it has been put off \* and \* can I know the circumstances?

A3(2), lines 1-4

NS: Hi! How are you? Have you had a good week?

NNS: No.

NS: Why?

NNS: You've been asking me to do a lot of work to do.

## 9.2 Closing phases

This section examines the final phases of the conversations, paying particular attention to (i) the topics which occur after the sequence dealing with the face-threatening activity is closed, (ii) the interactants' orientation to face, and (iii) the means with which the participants approach and arrive at an agreement to close the conversation.

### 9.2.1 Symmetrical low distance situations

The interactional problem dealt with in S1 involves getting the NS to return some money and a pair of earrings that she had borrowed from the NNS. As was demonstrated in section 8.1.1, the two topics are dealt with separately in different parts of the conversations. Thus, the overall organization does not consist of a single request-response sequence, but rather two central sequences, each focusing on a different topic. In S1(1), the two sequences are juxtaposed to each other: the first one (dealing with the earrings) is closed when a solution to the problem is agreed upon, and after this the second topic is introduced. The second sequence appears to arrive at a potential closing when the NS offers to return the money and the offer is accepted by the NNS (lines 66-72). However, instead of closing the topic here, the participants continue the negotiation with talk oriented to the face damage involved. In the next sequence the NNS shows concern for the NS's positive face by almost cancelling the implications which the preceding face-threatening activity might have (lines 73, 79-80). The NS responds to this strategy by paying attention to the NNS's positive face and reconfirming her offer to pay the money back (lines 76-78, 81-85).

After the face implications have been dealt with the sequence approaches the final closure step by step. The next sequence is also oriented to face-work, and provides a gradual transition away from the immediately preceding topic of the money. Finally, the negotiated arrangement is reconfirmed in an exchange which also closes the conversation. The development of the sequence towards its closing is examined in more detail

below. The way in which the sequence unfolds in the conversation is seen in the following extract.

S1(1), lines 79-110

NNS: But please don't make me feel a bit \*\* guilty. So what I mean erm \*\* er \*\* I mean \* there's no proof.

NS: No but our friendship. I mean I'd rather pay the 40 dollars, because perhaps \* I've borrowed so many times previously and perhaps I thought I'd paid it back but haven't so, so, so as soon as I get some money at the end of the week (I'll pay...

NNS: Do you) Do you usually er \* usually ask er \*\* a lot of your friends to lend you money?

NS: No, you're the only one (laugh), so you're a good friend.

NNS: Ah (laughter) so forgive me (laugh) so \* next time I think we'd better...

NS: Next perhaps we'll write an I-O-U, first.

NNS: Write it down, yes.

NS: Yes, I think while we're at it and that way we won't get mixed up again.

NNS: Okay (inaudible) earrings if you-they're not with you.

NS: Yea, I don't remember borrowing them.

NNS: Yes.

NS: But as I say if you were showing them to me perhaps they either dropped in my bag or \*\* but I'll check when I get home tonight. If I have them I'll certainly return them.

NNS: Okay, okay.

NS: Okay.

NNS: Well, thank you, yes, thank you.

NS: And I'll give you the er 40 dollars \*\* tomorrow or at the end of the week.

NNS: Positive?

NS: Positive, as I say I like to pay my debts.

NNS: Okay, thank you.

NS: Okay.

NNS: Okay.

The exchange of turns on lines 86-88 moves the conversation forward in two respects. First, it marks a shift away from the borrowed money as the immediate topic of conversation and relates the problem to more general circumstances (the NS's habit of borrowing money, the interactants' friendship). The transition away from the face-threatening topic signals the speakers' decision to discontinue the previous topic and return to 'business as usual'. Second, the humour, laughter and the explicit reference to the participants' friendship in these turns have an important face-supportive function. They invoke intimacy between the participants, thus rebuilding the interactional balance which existed prior to taking up the face-threatening topics.

The next turns (lines 89-94) are more explicitly oriented to bringing the negotiation to a close and moving towards an exit from the conversation: the participants start talking about future actions, specifically an arrangement whereby they could avoid the problem arising again. The exchange is achieved cooperatively: the NNS initiates it by referring to possible future problems (*so \* next time*) and anticipates a proposal (*we'd better*), but has not finished her utterance when the NS takes over and continues by making a specific proposal (*next perhaps we'll write an I-O-U, first*, line 91). The NNS then shows explicit agreement with the NS's proposal (*write it down, yes*, line 92), thus confirming

that the NS's interpretation of her intention is correct. Finally, the NS shows similar agreement, and the sequence is completed by confirming the joint goal of avoiding the problem in the future. The sequence is also highly face-supportive: reciprocal positive politeness is displayed through laughter, display of agreement and repetition of the prior speaker's words and phrases (note e.g. *next time* and *next, write an I.O.U* and *write it down* and the repetition of *yes* in adjacent turns). It contributes to the restoring of interactional balance by allowing the interactants to display shared goals and arrive at a mutually satisfactory solution on-the-record, in spite of the problematic aspects of the preceding negotiation.

The next stage in the movement towards closure is the return to the topic of the actual problem, and confirmation of the arrangement reached (lines 95-102). The NNS takes up the topic of the earrings, avoiding possible further face-threat: she merely hints at it, pointing to the possibility that the NS does not have the earrings (line 95). This prompts the NS to restate her interpretation of the problem and also to reconfirm the offer to find and return the earrings (lines 96, 98-100). In the next turns the NNS accepts the offer and the NS acknowledges the acceptance, thereby confirming the arrangement (101-102). Following this sequence, the NNS appears to move to a pre-closing by thanking the NS twice (line 103). At this point another confirmation exchange follows, as the NS takes up the topic of money, and reconfirms the offer to pay it back (lines 104-105). The next two turns confirm this arrangement (lines 106-107), and the conversation is finally closed with a pre-closing *okay* and a *thank you* in the NNS's turn, and a final exchange of *okays* (lines 109-110). The NNS's thanks not only anticipate a closing, but can also be seen as bearing on the whole conversation: they mark the preceding sequence as somehow oriented to serving the NNS's interests (cf. Levinson 1983:318) and thus provide further face-support.

In brief, the closing of S1(1) is accomplished jointly through gradual movement from the face-threatening activity towards future events and re-establishment of rapport. During the closing section of the conversation the NNS has a dominant role: she initiates the face-supportive negotiation and the subsequent sequences, moving the conversation gradually towards its closing, and she concludes the conversation with her final *okay*. While some of her contributions are unidiomatic and potentially problematic (see e.g. lines 79-80), the NNS's approach is rather successful from the point of view of its strategic and interactional effects. She displays negative politeness by humbling herself and conveying regret for the impingement, which solicits a reconfirmation of a desired response from the NS. Further, she initiates a mutual exchange of positive politeness which restores intimacy between the participants. Finally, she initiates a closing-implicative sequence by returning to the face-threatening topic, which brings about a mutually accomplished closing.

In S1(2) the first face-threatening activity, which is concerned with the topic of the money, is closed in a similar way as above: an offer of returning the money is made, accepted and confirmed in a five-turn sequence (lines 51-56). The completion of the sequence is followed by a brief exchange focusing on making specific arrangements:

S1(2), lines 57-63  
 NNS: where shall I meet you?  
 NS: here again?  
 NNS: here again \* same day  
 NS: same day  
 NNS: okay (same day  
 NS: and same place \* yes)  
 NNS: okay \*\* ---

The sequence marks a shift from the immediately preceding topic and concentrates on the making of future arrangements. In this way it anticipates a possible closing of the conversation. It also appears to have a face-supportive function: it progresses as a rhythmic exchange where turns follow each other smoothly and preceding utterances are reciprocally attended to through partial repetition and elaboration. The sequence thus displays overt cooperation and conversational synchrony. Rhythmic sequences, such as this one generally reflect the speakers' tendency towards convergence and equilibrium (Gumperz 1982:142-143,167, Fiksdal 1990). Thus the brief sequence oriented to making arrangements shows features similar to the face-supportive sequences in S1(1) above. Here, however, it occurs between the two face-threatening activities, the second of which is initiated at the closing of this sequence (line 63).

The second activity is closed with an exchange where the NS expresses an apology and an offer to return the earrings, and the NNS accepts the apology (lines 95-97). In the same turn the NNS seems to initiate a similar face-oriented sequence as the NNS in S1(1) by asking if the NS is sure she has the earrings (lines 97-98). An exchange of turns follows which establishes that the NS is indeed likely to have the earrings in her flat. This culminates in another offer by the NS to find them (lines 104-105). The offer is then accepted and confirmed in a sequence which evolves into a pre-closing and closing (lines 106-112). A series of pre-closing *okays* is exchanged and the conversation is closed with the NS's *see you next week* (line 114) and joint laughter. The laughter here does not seem to be associated with any overt face-work or rapport-building in order to achieve a face-supportive outcome of the situation. Rather, it seems to reflect a joint change of frame and exit from the role-play situation. The excerpt below shows how the closing is achieved.

S1(2), lines 95-116  
 NS: Well I'm sorry \* I'll try and remember to bring them next time I see you \*\*\*  
 NNS: mmm \* yes it's okay \*\*\* but er \*\* are you sure that you - you have them?  
 NS: um  
 NNS: still (inaudible)  
 NS: well \* I can't remember losing them \* did I have them on last night ?  
 NNS: last night mmm  
 NS: I had them on last night oh I think I still have them they must be at the flat \*\*\* yea I'll have a look as soon as I get home\*  
 NNS: (okay  
 NS: I'll have a look)  
 NNS: yea  
 NS: and if I cant find them I'll let you know \* but I'm sure I've still got them

NNS: mm alright  
 NS: okay  
 NNS: okay \*\*\* okay  
 NS: right see you next week  
 NNS: (laugh)  
 NS: (laugh)

The second symmetrical situation deals with a NNS-initiated offer. As was illustrated in the analysis of S2(1) in 8.1.2, the participants have some problems in aligning to the situation and finding a joint focus for the talk. The overall organization of the conversation reflects these problems in several respects. The participants display different expectations concerning appropriate topics and actions at different phases of the conversation. The NNS's turns making an offer, in particular, cause problems in being 'weak' and ineffective, and lead to confusion. The non-alignment of the participants is also reflected in the way that the focus of the conversation shifts from the main activity to other topics. The sequence which is specifically focused on the offer activity does not seem to reach a full interactional outcome: although the participants agree that the NNS is offering to give the NS private classes in Malay, the agreement does not seem to be adequately confirmed or 'ratified' (lines 52-56). Rather than confirming an arrangement with some specific details or arrangement, the NNS opens another topic oriented to giving advice to the NS. This leads to a closing-implicative turn initiated by the NS (lines 91-93) and an explicit request to talk about the specific arrangements to do with the offer (lines 95-98). These turns mark a transition towards a closing: over the next 20 turns the participants negotiate a time schedule for the Malay classes and an hourly charge for his tutoring. Lines 119-132 feature a negotiation exchange where the final charge is agreed upon and the sequence oriented to the arrangements is closed.

After this sequence, the NS initiates a pre-closing sequence in a manner which obliges the NNS to conform and accept an imminent closing of the conversation: the NS explicitly requests the NNS to leave (lines 133-134). The NNS's acceptance of the request (line 135) is followed by four turns which reconfirm the agreement reached in the earlier negotiation, and the two interactants make a specific arrangement to meet at a set time. Finally, pre-closing items are exchanged (lines 142-143) and the conversation is terminated with an exchange of *byes*. The interactants thus achieve a coordinated exit from the conversation, even though the closing section was unilaterally initiated by the NS and enforced on the NNS. The excerpt below demonstrates how the closing is accomplished.

S2(1), lines 125-145  
 NS: Well, shall we...  
 NNS: It is  
 NS: shall we consider bringing that down to fifteen dollars...  
 NNS: Yes  
 NS: ...and I think we can strike a quick bargain here.  
 NNS: Yes.  
 NS: fifteen dollars?  
 NNS: Yes, it's done (giggle)  
 NS: Right there you go young man, well, I really must ask you to leave me (just now  
 NNS: yea)

NS: Can we start next week?  
 NNS: Yes, certainly.  
 NS: Monday then?  
 NNS: Monday, ah Monday at 12 o'clock?  
 NS: Splendid  
 NNS: Yes, (splendid  
 NS: Okay) thank you (very much then  
 NNS: Okay, thank) you very much  
 NS: Bye bye  
 NNS: Bye bye.

The closing section of S2(1) differs from the two versions of S1 in that it is concerned with the business of making arrangements and face-concerns thus appear to have a less significant role. No face-supportive sequences oriented to repairing possible face-damage occur. This is partly explained by the situation: in S2 the main activity is (at least potentially) mutually beneficial, and thus requires less attention to the face-threatening aspects of the activity. However, some attention is paid to face. In the negotiation of the payment, for example, positive politeness is displayed in the humorous bargaining exchange (lines 125-132). Some traces of face-work oriented towards the return of intimacy can also be observed towards the end of the conversation. Cooperation and reciprocity are established through the repetition of items in the prior speaker's turns (e.g. *Monday, splendid, thank you very much*) in the sequence where the participants agree to meet (lines 136-141). The invocation of intimacy is not, however, entirely reciprocal: it is mainly the non-native speaker who shows willingness to cooperate with the NS's turns by expressing explicit agreement.

The dominance of the NS in the closing sequence seems to reflect the problems in the earlier part of the conversation: at several points in the conversation the negotiation does not progress according to the NS's expectations, and the NS responds by claiming interactional control through strongly obligating contributions, which might be described as discursal impositions (Thomas 1990). Through making his goals unambiguously explicit he reduces the options of the interlocutor and in this way controls the kinds of reactions that can be expected. The closing sequence displays a similar pattern of dominance.

The second version of S2 is even more problematic: the non-alignment of the interactants in the situation leads to a break-down in the communication. The break-down is reflected in the way in which the conversation is brought to a close. After a lengthy and problematic negotiation an apparent solution is reached in the main activity (see lines 99-103). At this point the NS attempts to initiate a sequence which could move the conversation towards its closing by shifting the focus of talk to the negotiation of specific arrangements (lines 104-106). This, however, leads to further problems (lines 107-132). A form of solution is finally reached at a later stage, when the main misunderstandings have been solved (lines 147-152). The agreement reached by the participants does not, however, solve the main problem, which has to do with the NNS's offer to give classes to the NS. It merely establishes where the interactants stand in relation to this problem, i.e. that they are not in a position to make any decisions at this stage, and postpones the decisions until later. The sequence is closed by making and confirming an arrangement which partially satisfies the



goals of the participants (lines 164-177). After these exchanges, the NS goes back to the problem once more and makes explicit his problem of following the NNS's approach in the negotiation (lines 179-180). At this point the NNS exits the conversation by simply acknowledging the NS's comment without further comment and abandoning the turn (line 181). The conversation thus closes in an uncooperative and less than orderly manner. No mutually face-supportive closing talk occurs, which would repair possible face damage and affirm the relationship between the interactants. The short extract below illustrates the closing of S2(2).

S2(2), lines 168-181

NS: so er my concern is that I'd really like to get one on one tuition ...

NNS: yea

NS: so er if Tim is still interested and you don't have time for two people

NNS: for two

NS: then I'll \* er I'll still try to find another person who has enough time for private tuition

NNS: okay but in this situation I cannot er forget Tim

NS: **no** I appreciate that

NNS: it's unfair (laughter)

NS: no I didn't realize that at first when you mentioned Tim. I didn't quite follow what you were getting at.

NNS: Okay

Both conversations based on S3 consist of an extended negotiation of the main activity, a request initiated by the NS in both cases, and only a brief a closing section. The main activity in S3(1) is closed with an exchange where the NS, having received a dispreferred response to her request, makes an alternative proposal which is accepted by the NNS (lines 37-38). A closing-implicative exchange follows: the NS returns to the first topic and restates a request to borrow the NNS's stereo (line 39). The sequence is closed with the NNS's acceptance of the request and an acknowledgement of this response by the NS (lines 40-41). The conversation is finally closed with joint laughter.

In S3(2), the negotiation of the request is characterized by direct and even confrontational actions on both sides, and this is reflected in the closing phase of the conversation. A solution to the main negotiation is reached in a sequence where an alternative arrangement is agreed upon and confirmed (lines 79-82). This point in the conversation provides an opportunity for initiating a face-supportive closing sequence, or proceeding directly to an exchange of closing items. The next action by the NS, however, shifts attentions away from the preceding topic and takes up an issue dealt with earlier in the negotiation by referring to the NNS's insistent refusal of her request (lines 83-84). The turn is also marked with an initial *so*, which often prefaces conversation closings (see e.g. Levinson 1983:317). The turn continues the topic with an utterance which is explicitly face-aggravating in nature (*you just want to be boring and work*) and thus suggests that the NS is displeased with the outcome of the negotiation. This utterance initiates a sequence where further face-aggravating remarks are exchanged and the divergent goals of the interactants displayed. No agreement is reached, and the conversation is finally brought to its close with the NNS declining to comment on the NS's preceding

utterance and abandoning a turn with laughter (line 96). Reciprocal *okays* are then exchanged (lines 122-123), whereupon the interactants agree to exit. In contrast with the face-supportive closings in S1, for example, the closing here is characterized by explicit disagreement and non-cooperation, which is reflected in the language used. The following extract illustrates the closing section in S3(2).

S3(2), lines 83-98

NS: So, you won't let us have a party? You want to be very boring and work.

NNS: I'm not boring, it's just that, er

NS: Yea (inaudible)

NNS: Why do you want so much to have a party? You've been having parties all the...

NS: Yea, but its nice to have parties, you know?

NNS: (You should realize

NS: get on well with friends)

NNS: it's irresponsible for...

NS: No, I'm very responsible, I do my work quickly, you see

NNS: but not well (enough

NS: yes) well enough. I get good marks!

NNS: (laughter)

NS: Okay?

NNS: Okay.

### 9.2.2 Symmetrical high distance situations

In D1(1) the whole conversation is taken up by the negotiation of an invitation performed by the NNS and eventually declined by the NS. The conversation ends with the closing of the main activity: the NS restates his final response, which is accepted by the NNS, and no pre-closing or closing sections follow. The other version of the same situation is different in this respect. In D1(2), a closing-implicative topic is introduced by the NS quite early on in the conversation (line 46). The NS's reference to his need to leave at this stage is an attempt to change the direction of the conversation and to move towards closing, or possibly serves as a hint to solicit some topic-initiating action from the NNS, who has not yet taken up the activity of inviting. The closing-implicative turn does not lead to a closing sequence, but brings about a turning point in the conversation: the subsequent sequence deals with the invitation. The invitation sequence is followed by talk specifically oriented to bringing the conversation to a close.

In a turn where the NS responds with a partial but non-committal acceptance of the NNS's invitation, he also initiates a negotiation oriented to specific arrangements, which moves the conversation closer to its termination (lines 72-74). The negotiation extends over the next seven turns, which establish information required for possible further contact. After this sequence, the NS initiates a closing in a turn opening with pre-closing items and a restatement of the earlier closing-implicative utterance (*okay, so okay, thanks Haji, listen I'll see you around. I'd better go over to Klasse*, lines 81-82). The NNS, however, apparently fails to recognize the closing function of the utterance, or at least fails to respond to it appropriately: his response is a simple acknowledgement

(*I see*, line 83). This prompts the NS to again restate his intention to go shopping (line 84), and request explicit response to his closing initiation (*okay?*). This utterance finally invites a more appropriate closing utterance from the NNS, who offers the NS a polite wish for a pleasant holiday (*I wish you, I wish you have a very nice holiday in Brunei*, line 85). The NNS's contribution thus attends to the positive face of the interlocutor. The NS's next turn expresses appreciation for this (line 86). The final three turns contain an exchange of pre-closing and closing items. The extract below illustrates the closing section of D1(2).

D1(2), lines 72-89

NS: Oh well, yea, well, it might be very difficult. Why don't you give me your tele-your address and I'll try and get over, I'll try and cancel my bird-watching exercise.

NNS: You can contact me on telephone number 24790

NS: 24790

NNS: And what's your name? It's er?

NNS: Uum, just call me Haji Mohamad

NS: Haji Mohamad

NNS: (yea

NS: okay) so okay, thanks Haji, listen, I'll see you around. I'd better go over to Klasse

NNS: I see

NS: Yea, I'm going to go and do some shopping, okay?

NNS: I wish you, I wish you have a nice holiday in Brunei.

NS: Oh, thanks mate, that's very nice of you.

NNS: Okay

NS: Okay, see you then, bye.

NNS: Bye.

The two conversations based on D2 also close with a phase focused on making arrangements and marking the termination of the conversation. In D2(1) this section shares certain features with the closing section discussed above, with the NS taking a dominant role. The NS initiates the closing in the same turn as the main activity is closed by asking her interlocutor's name (line 28). This action marks a change of topic away from the main activity (note that the topic shift is marked with *by the way*). It also, however, appears to serve a face-oriented function by minimizing the distance between the participants. It is followed by the NS's introduction of herself and a proposal for an arrangement to meet (lines 30-31, 33). The proposal is accepted by the NNS (lines 32, 34), and the arrangement is confirmed with an acknowledgement from the NS (*that's super*, line 35). A subsequent exchange reconfirms and specifies the arrangement (lines 37-38), and the conversation is closed with the NS's expression of thanks.

D2(1), lines 28-39

NS: Oh that would be great. What's your name by the way?

NNS: My name is Nadi.

NS: Nadi? Oh my name is Gloria. Well, maybe we could meet up later then in the library...

NNS: Yes

NS: ... and go over some things if you don't mind?

NNS: Yes, uh - huh.

NS: Okay, that's super, are you staying on campus?

NNS: Yes, I'm staying on campus.

NS: Oh great. Well could I meet you at the library at about four?  
 NNS: Yea, okay, I will be there.  
 NS: Thank you very much.

In D2(2) the main activity, which closes with an interactively achieved restatement and confirmation of the proposal of assistance, is followed by an extended sequence of talk which deals with a number of topics. The sequence is initiated by the NS, who starts giving details about himself and the article that he needs assistance with (lines 41-47). The sequence continues with a further exchange of information and details about the article (lines 55-67). After these exchanges there is a topic shift: the NNS refers back to the actual proposal, asking if the NS needs the work to be done soon (lines 68-69). This turn appears to have a preparatory function: after the NS's affirmative answer, the NNS states that he has a friend who might be of some help, apparently with the intention of offering to bring him to meet the NS (*do you think it would be a good idea, I've got a friend, you know a Dusun friend*, lines 73-74). The following turns jointly negotiate the proposal with a fast exchange of turns and partially overlapping speech (lines 75-84). This exchange gives rise to more detailed arrangements, and the participants start talking about meeting for lunch (lines 85-89). After the lunch arrangement is agreed upon, the participants move on to arrangements about contacting each other: the NS receives the NNS's telephone number and promises to get in touch at a set time (lines 91-104). The NNS accepts the arrangement (line 105) and in the next turn the NS both acknowledges the response and initiates a pre-closing sequence with *well* and a repeated and emphatic expression of thanks (lines 106). The pre-closing sequence continues with the NNS's acknowledgement of the NS's thanks and the NS's ritual comment about looking forward to meeting the NNS's friend (lines 107-108). Finally, an exchange of pre-closing and terminal elements brings the conversation to a close. The extract below illustrates the final turns leading to a closing.

D2(2), lines 100-111

NS: So, if you give me your number please.  
 NNS: Okay, my number is, erm, 3294957.  
 NS: 3294957, that's a long number. 3294957, right, I've got a note of that so I'll get in touch tonight, round about, round about seven o'clock.  
 NNS: Alright, that'll be fine.  
 NS: That's terrific, well, thank you, thank you very much indeed.  
 NNS: Pleasure.(Pleasure  
 NS: And I look forward) to meeting your friend.  
 NNS: Okay  
 NS: Okay, bye.  
 NNS: Good-bye.

In brief, in D2(1) the native participant has a clearly more dominant role in the closing section than the non-native. The native speaker does more initiating and is responsible for the shifting of topics towards the closing of the conversation. The non-native participant adopts a secondary role, making a minor contribution to the topic or responding with minimal feedback or short affirmative responses displaying agreement and compliance with the NS's proposals (e.g. *yes, uh-huh, okay*). In D2(2) the non-native participant takes a

more active part in the joint accomplishment of the closing: she initiates the sequence leading to the negotiation of arrangement by returning to the main topic. She also initiates a proposal which leads to the final arrangement and actively participates in the negotiation of arrangements. The actual closing, however, is initiated by the NS.

The first conversation based on D3, the complaint situation, closes with the acceptance and confirmation of the solution arrived at in the negotiation of the main activity (lines 70-81). The second version, however, progresses towards the closing through various stages of negotiation. The negotiation unfolds through a dynamic flow of topics oriented towards arrangements for having the car repaired (line 32 onwards). Finally, a NNS-initiated sequence confirms the agreement made (lines 78-88). A pre-closing sequence is then initiated by the NNS with a deferential expression of thanks (line 89), which is followed by the NS's acknowledgement, a restatement of an apology (line 90) and another reconfirmation of the arrangement reached (lines 92-96). An exchange of pre-closing and terminal elements then closes the conversation, as the following extract shows.

D3(2), lines 78-100

NNS: first thing I - I \* I take my - my car to the workshop first then I ask for the cost then

NS: right

NNS: and tell you

NS: then you tell me yes that's it, yeah, so \* get - find out how much it'll be, come back to me, and then \* I'll er work out how to pay you

NNS: yeah

NS: you know, insurance or \* just cash

NNS: yeah

NS: yeah

NNS: thank you sir

NS: okay well thanks a lot I'm really sorry \* (about this

NNS: yeah)

NS: but er I mean you know \* you \* you come - come back to me as soon as you know

NNS: yeah

NS: how much it costs

NNS: yeah

NS: okay?

NNS: okay

NS: right okay, bye

NNS: bye

While no explicitly face-oriented talk is engaged in in the closing section of D3(2), the gradual shift of attention from the actual problem to a negotiation of a possible solution enables an orderly and mutually satisfactory end to the encounter. The negotiation is highly interactive: although the NS adopts a leading role, the NNS also makes an active contribution in requesting clarification through repetition and reformulation of the NS's turns. Further, he initiates the exchange which finally leads to a termination of the conversation by thanking the NS in a deferential way (*thank you sir*, line 89). This turn solicits a restatement of the apology from the NS (line 90), and thus serves as a face-supportive initiation to the closing exchange.

### 9.2.3 Asymmetrical situations

The two conversations based on A1 deal with a NNS-initiated invitation to a party in a situation where the NS holds some institutionally established power over the NNS. The interactants in A1(1) negotiate a preferred response to the invitation, which is finally confirmed by the NS in the last turn in the conversation. This also accomplishes the closing of the conversation. In A1(2), however, the outcome of the negotiation is different: a dispreferred response, i.e. a refusal of the invitation is arrived at. This is followed by further negotiation which is oriented to making an alternative arrangement and repairing face damage arising from the dispreferred outcome. The lengthy negotiation leading to the closing of the conversation is examined in more detail below.

The face-repair begins in the turn which finalizes the NS's dispreferred response: instead of simply refusing the invitation, the NS inquires about the possibility of another party which he could come to, thus initiating a potential self-invitation (lines 46-48). In the following turn the NNS seizes the opportunity to achieve a preferred outcome; she suggests that another party will be held the following month and invites the NS (lines 49-56). The NS's responses accompanying the NNS's invitation turn acknowledge the invitation, but do not amount to full acceptance (*yea*, line 53 and *right*, 55). In his following turn, the NS, however, appears to address another aspect of face damage possibly caused by the first invitation: he makes an indirect request concerning the future invitation (*could you, maybe you could give us some warning next time you could give us longer*, lines 57-60). The NNS seems to immediately interpret this turn as a veiled criticism directed at her and admits fault in a self-deprecating way (*that's my mistake anyway. I should have invited you earlier*, lines 61-62). She also refers to her subordinate status by repeating a phrase which she used earlier on in the talk (*I'm quite new around here as I said so I'm afraid to approach you*, lines 62-63). This self-humbling strategy prompts the NS to take an overtly face-supportive and protective approach in his next contribution. He adopts a positive politeness strategy to complement the NNS's deferential approach: he emphasizes the common ground between the participants as colleagues and friends, but at the same time makes explicit his own power status by referring to himself (albeit humorously) as *Uncle John* and by stressing his busy schedule (lines 66-73). His strategy thus both reflects and strengthens the asymmetrical relationship between the participants. The following turns return to the topic of the second invitation and confirm its acceptance (lines 75-80). The following excerpt illustrates the strategic face-work in this phase of the conversation.

A1(2), lines 46-80

NS: But, er, I think I would have to apologize and erm, perhaps, er, perhaps another time, would that be, would, would there be another party sometime, that I could come to?

NNS: I hope so, but, mmm, maybe there will be another party which will, be held perhaps next month. Maybe you could come for the next party, along with your wife and, er, we can, mix, mix with...

NS: Yea.  
 NNS: ...the rest of the, er, our workers and...  
 NS: Right.  
 NNS: ...families, yea.  
 NS: Could, maybe you could give us some warning next time you could give us (longer...  
 NNS: Yea)  
 NS: I can, I'll put it on my calendar.  
 NNS: That's my mistake anyway. I should have invited you earlier because, I'm, I'm quite new around here as I said so I'm afraid to approach you...  
 NS: Mm.  
 NNS: ...(after all  
 NS: But you shouldn't) be, I mean, everybody here should be able to come and talk to Uncle John and er, you know, this is this kind of agency where we like people to be, good friends and, er, if you've got a problem or if you've got something to discuss, come in, erm, mind you, I must admit I'm always busy...  
 NNS: (Yes  
 NS: and) er, in fact, er, I have somebody, I have to see in a few minutes now but, er...  
 NNS: Yea.  
 NS: but you should feel free to come anytime, erm, I'm not with a client, or if there is something that, er, you want to discuss...  
 NNS: Yea.  
 NS: certainly if you've got an invitation...  
 NNS: Yes, I will do it.  
 NS: I'd be pleased to accept it.

The NS's acceptance of the invitation shifts the conversation towards its closing. The NNS at this point changes topic and launches into an explanation about her temporary status as an employee in the office, perhaps as grounding for her earlier invitation (lines 81-88). She also takes up the topic of the second invitation again: she asserts her intention to approach the NS with the invitation at the end of her stay the following month (lines 87-90). Although her utterances are somewhat ambiguous, they seem to be oriented to the NS's prior request to give him more time (*yea I will, I will approach you earlier--so that I can warn you*, lines 90, 92). The NS then makes a point of bringing the NNS's utterance on record as a promise, i.e. as something which is beneficial to him (*so, so that's a promise is it?*, line 93). The NS thus shows willingness to cancel the face-threatening implications of his own earlier request and to protect the NNS's positive face. This exchange confirms the agreement reached and the conversation is brought to a close with an exchange of pre-closing elements (*thank you, alright*, lines 95-97) and laughter. The reciprocal thank you sequence at the end is also mutually face-supportive in the sense that it suggests that both parties wish to mark the encounter as successfully closed. The excerpt below demonstrates how the closing is achieved.

A1(2), lines 81-98  
 NNS: mm, so I will be here for about two months...  
 NS: Uhu.  
 NNS: I'm just on, you know, on a temporary basis.  
 NS: Right.  
 NNS: I'm a student from Brunei just doing an economics course here, so maybe **next month** I will approach you. That's, that will be on my final,

final, I mean I will be here, I'll be working at this agency for the last time.

NS: Right.

NNS: Yea, I will, I will approach you **earlier** (laughter)

NS: Erm.

NNS: So that I can (warn you

NS: So, so that's) a **promise** is it?

NNS: Yes, yea, that's a (promise

NS: Alright) good, thank you.

NNS: Thank you.

NS: Alright.

NNS: (laughter)

Both conversations based on A2 deal with the main activity of proposal in a lengthy negotiation sequence, but do not proceed to a distinct closing phase. In A2(1), the conversation is brought to end with the closing of the main activity and making of an arrangement. In A2(2) the main negotiation sequence is followed by a very brief closing sequence: it begins in a turn in which the NS expresses appreciation of the NNS's preferred (but ambiguous) response and thanks him (lines 63-64), and is followed by an acknowledgement, an unidiomatic pre-closing (*I can see you*, line 65) by the NNS, reciprocal laughter, and an exchange of *byes*:

A2(2), lines 59-67

NS: Oh, that's brilliant because the other girl that...

NNS: Mm.

NS: ...Mrs Johnson (inaudible) is a bit young, so...

NNS: Mm.

NS: ...so I think it would be better if you came. Oh, that's great. Thank you very much.

NNS: Mm. okay, welcome, I can see you (laughter).

NS: (laughter) Bye.

NNS: Bye.

The two versions of A3, similarly end with only minimal closing sections: most of the conversation is taken up with the problematic negotiation of the main activity, and a solution is reached at the end of the conversation. In both cases the turns accomplishing and confirming the solution also bring about the closing of the conversations. A3(1) concludes with a two-turn confirmation exchange: the NNS's preferred response is followed by an acknowledgement and an expression of thanks (line 104), which is reciprocated by the NNS in her next, final turn (line 105). In A3(2), the NS's acceptance of the NNS's dispreferred response (line 108) is followed by an acknowledgement by the NNS (line 109) and an exchange of pre-closing and closing elements (lines 110-111). The following extracts illustrate the closings of A3(1) and A3(2):

A3(1), lines 103-105

NNS: Okay, okay that will be fine.

NS: Great. Thank you very much Aini.

NNS: Same to you.



A3(2), lines 108-111

NS: Ah, okay, well I'll try and find someone else to work for me.

NNS: Yea (laughter)

NS: Okay, thanks, bye.

NNS: Bye, thanks.

In brief, in all the conversations representing asymmetrical situations it is the native speaker participant who initiates and largely controls the closing of the conversation. Also in conversations where no extended closing phases occur, it seems to be the native speaker who largely controls when the main activity is treated as closed and initiates the final terminal exchanges. In conversations based on more symmetrical situations other patterns are also observed: in some cases it is the non-native participant who initiates a closing phase, in others the native speaker initiates but the non-native also takes an active role and the participants jointly accomplish a coordinated closing. The closings also reflect the success of the interaction as a whole: two of the conversations are characterized by severe problems which result in unsuccessful closings. In S2(2) the conversation is abandoned rather than closed in an orderly way, and in S3(2) it ends in a confrontational manner.

### 9.3 Summary of opening and closing phases

The opening phase of a conversation is important in constructing the foundation on which the rest of the encounter can be built. In many of the conversations the opening clearly serves as a prelude to the phase where the face-threatening activity is negotiated. Opening sections display exchanges where the two participants are engaged in interactive efforts to establish their interpersonal relationship through expressions of solidarity and the building of common ground so that the face-threatening topic can be taken up in an atmosphere of cooperation. A supportive opening sequence is not, however, a feature of all the conversations. Some open with very short greeting/opening exchanges, or even with turns introducing the purpose of the interaction relatively directly (see e.g. the conversations based on D2 and D3). The nature of the situation in these cases may account for the direct opening.

The conversations are initiated by both native and non-native speakers. In ten of the conversations the non-native participant has the initiator role (in one of them the NS hands over this role to the NNS), and in the remaining eight conversations the NS initiates. The overall pattern of opening sequences is similar regardless of which participant initiates the conversation: openings consist of paired utterances and longer four or five-turn sequences in which mutual support is expressed and identities and common ground negotiated. The most common face strategy is that of positive politeness. Positive politeness is displayed in a variety of ways: informal greetings, address terms, topics of common interest, displays of attention to the prior speaker's turns through expressions of (surface) agreement, preferred responses, repetition and

reformulation of prior turns, etc. In some cases, however, the openings reflect problems arising from asymmetries of expectations and/or resources. While the problems rarely become explicit, they are reflected in the underlying patterns of organization and observable moments of difficulty.

A phase of talk which is oriented specifically towards bringing the conversation to a close is not as central as the phases focused on the introduction and negotiation of the main activity: half of the conversations end with the closure of the main topic or display a minimal closing sequence. With one exception, all of the conversations which terminate without specific closing talk represent situations with a high distance factor. Thus it seems to be situations between friends and acquaintances which generally require a more extended closing phase. This finding seems to support Wolfson's (e.g. 1989) 'bulge' hypothesis about the social distance factor in suggesting that it is those relationships which are the most negotiable (e.g. between acquaintances) which require most explicit face-work.

In conversations where closing phases do occur, certain regularities can be identified. Firstly, the introduction of pre-closing or closing phases follows two main tendencies. Either a new topic is initiated and there is a perceivable boundary between the sequence(s) which negotiate the main activity and those which follow the negotiation, or the main activity gradually evolves into subsequent talk. In this case no clearcut boundaries can be identified but topics follow each other in a step-wise or chained manner. Secondly, the topics occurring in the closing sections fall into a few general categories. Topics associated with the negotiation of specific details of the arrangement reached in the prior negotiation are frequent, especially in situations reflecting some distance between the participants. Another recurrent topical feature is a return to the topic(s) of the main activity and a reconfirmation of the agreement reached. In some conversations the closing sections repair face damage and re-establish the interactional balance, which may have been lost in the course of the handling of the face-threatening topic(s). However, face-work is generally intertwined with the negotiation of other topics rather than being the specific focus of talk.

## 10 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

### 10.1 Results

This study has attempted to investigate the role of face and face-work in native-non-native interaction through a detailed analysis of a set of systematically elicited conversational data, in which the participants were required to solve an interactional problem through talk. Building on previous research on linguistic politeness and the study of conversation, an analytic framework was proposed which seeks to capture patterns of face-work at different levels of conversational organization. An in-depth analysis of the data was carried out using the concepts and distinctions outlined in the framework. The analysis sought to identify the ways in which mutual concern for face shapes patterns of language use and discourse in interactions which involve various asymmetries arising from the different linguistic and sociocultural backgrounds of the participants.

The study addressed two broad research questions: (i) How do the participants jointly manage conversational activities which involve face-threat? and (ii) How does concern for face shape the organization of the conversations? In order to answer these questions, the analysis focused, firstly, on the linguistic strategies used to express and negotiate a variety of goals associated with particular face-threatening tasks and, secondly, on the interactional means with which the participants constructed conversational activities and negotiated solutions to the specific interactional problems arising from these activities. Since the study not only sought to identify the linguistic means with which face-threatening goals are expressed but also attempted to examine the linguistic strategies in relation to the dynamic aspects of discourse, an analytic framework was developed which took as its starting point the interactive management of a potentially face-threatening activity and aimed to capture the ways in which this was reflected at various levels of conversational

organization. Thus, both local and global dimensions of discourse were systematically examined, with the analytic focus extending from the linguistic expression of various goals associated with particular activities to the negotiation of relevant responses and to global patterns of organization, such as the topics and chains of activities engaged in throughout the conversation. This multilevel approach enabled an in-depth analysis of a range of interactional phenomena which reflect the participants' concern for aspects of politeness and their mutual awareness of face. Below the central results of the analysis are examined in some detail.

### 10.1.1 Face and interlanguage use

The analysis of the turns which introduce the face-threatening topic or activity revealed a range of specific problems that the non-native participants faced in expressing their conversational goals. Firstly, the non-native participants' conversational behaviour reflected difficulties in initiating the main topic(s) and expressing the central illocutionary goals associated with the face-threatening task. Although the situations were designed to encourage the non-native participant to introduce and carry out a potentially face-threatening task, in only half of the conversations the non-native speaker both initiated the topic and expressed the transactional goals associated with the central activity through a clearly identifiable pragmatic act (e.g. *invitation, offer, request*). The rest of the conversations displayed a variety of patterns with which the main topic and activity were introduced. In some cases the non-native participant brought up the topic and successfully prepared the activity through preparatory and anticipatory turns, but the main activity itself was achieved through joint action or expressed by the native participant from a different point of view (e.g. a NS-initiated *offer* or a joint *proposal* instead of a NNS-initiated *request*). Some conversations turned out to be organized around an activity initiated and controlled by the native speaker, with the non-native participant acting as a recipient rather than taking an active role in making his/her goals a central focus of talk. Thus, the non-native participants sometimes had difficulties in taking an active and equal role in participating in the conversation. They seemed to fail to respond to the native speakers' cues signalling an offer to yield a conversational turn and did not always take the opportunity to introduce new topics at appropriate points in the conversation. These findings lend support to previous research which has indicated that non-native speakers often avoid taking the initiative and yield the dominant role to the more competent native speaker (see e.g. Kasper 1981, 1989a).

Secondly, the linguistic means which the non-native speakers used in making the central activity recognizable to their interlocutors were characterized by grammatical and pragmatic problems. In addition to grammatical inaccuracy and unidiomatic language, the non-native participants' utterances sometimes reflected lack of awareness of the pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic aspects of utterances. For example, pragmatic routines were formed inappropriately (e.g. *so I decide to invite you to my party, so you please do come*) or used in unexpected contexts. Similarly, patterns of preparing a

particular topic or activity were sometimes contextually inappropriate (e.g. *what are you doing here* as an opening routine in a conversation with a stranger). The linguistic problems identified were very similar to learner-specific problems found in previous interlanguage research (see e.g. Kasper 1981, Thomas 1983, Edmondson et al. 1984, Kärkkäinen and Raudaskoski 1988). The findings thus corroborate previous results which have demonstrated the limited range of linguistic means available to learners for expressing pragmatic functions in a second language and the limited access to relevant sociocultural knowledge which constrains language use.

While both grammatical and pragmatic problems of language use were frequent, the non-native speakers used a broad range of strategies which clearly reflected concern for the interlocutor's and/or the speaker's own face. Potentially face-threatening utterances were regularly mitigated through the directness level selected and various means of internal and external modification. Firstly, face-threatening utterances were redressed in various forms of indirect speech, ranging from the transparent conventional type to extremely opaque strategies of off-record politeness, which served to prepare and soften activities involving threat to the interlocutor's face. No evidence was found for an overall trend to use more direct or indirect language than native speakers would use (cf. e.g. Banerjee and Carrell 1988, Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford 1990, Weizman 1993). The most common pattern for realizing a potentially face-threatening goal was conventional indirectness. This finding supports the results of previous studies of speech act production, which have found conventional indirectness to be the prevailing strategy in both native and non-native use (e.g. Blum-Kulka et al. 1989a, Faerch and Kasper 1989, Blum-Kulka 1991). Secondly, utterance-internal means of modification were used to some extent by the learners. However, as previous studies of interlanguage use have demonstrated (see e.g. Kasper 1981, Kärkkäinen and Raudaskoski 1988), the range of means used by the learners was clearly limited, leading to frequent use of the same modifiers (e.g. *maybe*). Thirdly, patterns of external modification were a highly regular feature of the data. Face-threatening activities were nearly always anticipated and mitigated through preparatory turns, which served to orient the interlocutor to the future activity and give him/her the option of inferring the next topic or activity before it had actually been made explicit. In the interactive context of conversation this pattern often led to a joint effort in constructing the actual face-threatening activity. Because of the clearly anticipatory function of the preparatory turn, the native participant frequently inferred the illocutionary goal of the NNS on the basis of a brief mention of the topic, and then actively participated in the actual expression of the goal. Thus, the failure of the NNS to express the transactional goal as expected on the basis of the situation was sometimes not due to lack of competence as such, but was a result of the active participation of the more competent native speaker.

The results of the present study do not support previous hypotheses about a learner-specific problem of 'verbosity' in the expression of a particular function (see e.g. Blum-Kulka and Olshtain 1986, House and Kasper 1987, Faerch and Kasper 1989). As a number of studies based on interactive data have

already indicated (e.g. Edmondson and House 1991, Eisenstein and Bodman 1986, 1993, Clyne et al. 1991, Piirainen-Marsh 1992), the interactive context of elicited as well as naturally occurring conversation encourages reciprocal and joint interactional effort through which actions are negotiated. However, since substantial evidence is available to support the verbosity hypothesis, some also in studies based on conversational data (see e.g. Nyyssönen 1990), more research is needed to determine what gives rise to this trend in some contexts of interlanguage use.

In brief, the findings of the analysis of linguistic strategies follow the trend established in previous research. Learners seem to use the same range of strategies which native speakers use and are also sensitive to the contextual constraints which affect the choice of strategies. However, the strategies used by learners clearly differ from patterns which native speakers use in similar contexts, reflecting different access to linguistic and sociocultural knowledge which shapes language use.

### **10.1.2 Face in non-native interaction**

While utterance-level patterns of politeness strategies have already been widely documented in previous research on interlanguage speech act production, the present study has attempted to demonstrate how some of these patterns emerge in conversation and are shaped by the discourse context. Through an in-depth analysis of the interactive aspects of the conversations, it has been possible to examine how patterns of linguistic action are constrained by aspects of conversational organization, such as turn-taking and sequencing patterns. Similarly, it has been possible to examine how new topics and activities arise in specific contexts, how the participants cooperate in constructing discourse and how the linguistic strategies selected are adjusted to the immediate context of interaction. The analysis has also revealed how asymmetries in the participants' expectations and/or resources become salient in the process of interaction and how they may shape the management of a socially demanding encounter.

The way in which a particular activity was introduced in the conversations was clearly shaped by the conversational context and the patterns of participation which the interactants negotiated in the early stages of the encounter. In accordance with studies describing conversational participation in native speaker interaction (e.g. Bublitz 1988, Thomas 1990), the results of the present study indicate that the initiator of the conversation has a particularly important role in the distribution of conversational rights and obligations. Both native and non-native participants seemed to be aware of these constraints, although some non-native speakers had difficulty in adjusting their conversational behaviour to meet them. For example, while some non-native speakers were active in taking the role of initiating and introducing the first topic, others seemed to avoid the conversational responsibility placed on the initiator.

Some of the conversations seemed to display a balanced pattern of participation where the talk unfolded through relatively equal contribution by both parties. Others, however, were characterized by an inability to establish

shared alignment with respect to the distribution of conversational floor and participant roles. In such cases it was generally the native speaker who took a dominant role in introducing and developing topics and moving the conversation along. While some of these difficulties were likely to arise from lack of proficiency, other reasons, such as the social difficulty associated with the task and different expectations concerning the situation also seemed possible. The analysis of participation patterns in the opening phases also showed that conversations in which the speakers were able to establish balanced and relatively equal patterns of participation in the early phases of interaction proceeded more smoothly to the main activities, whereas conversations which displayed problems in establishing a mutually satisfactory framework for participation often led to observable interactional trouble.

As previous studies of second language interaction have demonstrated (e.g. Clyne et al. 1991, Eisenstein and Bodman 1993), face-threatening actions such as requests, complaints or invitations, are accomplished through a constant process of negotiation where the participants jointly determine the focus of talk and the nature of the activity engaged in. The results of this study show that the linguistic means with which the goals associated with various activities are expressed are shaped by this negotiation process. For example, non-native participants sometimes receive interactional support and assistance from their native speaker interlocutors so that utterances are formed jointly and cooperatively, rather than unilaterally by one speaker. Some non-native speakers seemed to use various strategic devices to induce relevant utterances from the native participants in order to avoid making an on-record imposition.

The negotiation of responses to particular activities is also an interactive process in which subtle linguistic and conversational cues affect the types of response given and the linguistic strategies with which the responses are expressed. Thus, for example, the cues given - voluntarily or involuntarily - by the non-native speakers may lead to specific patterns of response behaviour on the part of the native speakers.

The results of this study show that strategies of face-work have an important role in the negotiation process. Concern for the interlocutor's face is reflected in the use of indirect language and in the conversational management of face-threatening activities so that actions, responses and topics involving face-threat are mitigated, delayed or even avoided in interaction. Indirectness and delay, then, extend the negotiation and lead to sequences focusing on topics other than the main activity and even sequences which seem to be primarily oriented to aspects of face. Thus, the patterns of organization which emerge as a result of negotiating potentially problematic activities systematically reflect concern for face through linguistic and conversational strategies which serve to reduce face-threat.

Further, mutual orientation to face may lead to overt interactional cooperation which is reflected at various levels of language use. It may, for example, lead to preference for some conversational actions and sequences over others (e.g. *offers* instead of *requests*), to the selection of strategies which display surface cooperation and agreement even in cases where there are underlying reasons for non-cooperation, or to attempts to redefine or adjust the current

activity to make it more acceptable to the interlocutor (e.g. attempts to cancel face-threatening implications of a current or previous activity).

Face concerns are also prominent in encounters where problems occur and may explain some of the organizational patterns of these conversations. In two of the conversations in the data the non-native participants seemed to adopt an overall strategy of protecting their own face rather than showing concern for the interlocutors' face. In these cases the linguistic strategies used by the non-native speakers were often extremely direct and few attempts to mitigate or soften the impact of face-threatening utterances were used. This choice of strategy was also reflected in the organization of the conversations. Lack of concern for the co-interactant was displayed, for example, by not attending to the topics or actions initiated by the interlocutor and by refusing to accommodate the interlocutor's attempts to be persuasive or appeals for cooperation. The non-native speakers' overtly self-oriented strategies had clear interactional consequences: the native participants in these conversations seemed to adapt to the style and choice of strategy of the non-native speaker, and resorted to increasing directness or even face-aggravating strategies themselves.

It is not possible on the basis of the present study to identify the reasons for these strategies in the non-native speakers' language use. Previous research on Asian subjects suggests that concern for face and avoidance of overt conflict through deference and indirectness is an expected pattern in the Asian cultural context (see e.g. Piirainen-Marsh and Marsh 1987, Fiksdal 1990, Scollon and Scollon 1991). However, evidence has also been found for linguistic choices which clearly depart from this expectation (Beebe and Takahashi 1989b). Clearly actual intercultural encounters do not necessarily reflect the respective cultural styles of the speakers. For example, participants in an intercultural context may be affected by stereotypical notions of cross-cultural difference, which lead to uncharacteristic patterns of behaviour. Thus, extreme directness may occur in contexts where directness is associated with the co-participant's cultural style. More research on actual instances of intercultural interaction is needed to shed more light on the issues affecting situated choices of strategy in the NNS context.

As recent studies of non-native interaction have shown, successful, cooperative interaction is characterized by the participants' ability to actively negotiate their mutual alignment to the situation, to establish a balanced pattern of participation in the discursual activities in focus and to negotiate their respective goals in contextually appropriate ways (e.g. Clyne et al. 1991, Gumperz 1992, Shea 1993, 1994). The conversations in the present data reflect different levels of success in this respect. While some of the conversations proceed smoothly with an equal or balanced participation in the negotiation of topics and activities and with reciprocal attention to aspects of face, others are characterized by difficulties in adjusting to the situational context, failure to establish a shared perspective on the topics introduced and inability to establish mutual alignment with respect to conversational expectations or goals.

The reasons for problems in some of the conversations are clearly complex, reflecting asymmetries in the participants' expectations, linguistic and



interactional resources, as well as cultural differences. Although problems arising from the limited resources of the non-native participants can be identified, these do not fully explain the difficulties which arise in the management of the conversation. Firstly, linguistic problems occur to some extent in all the conversations but they do not always lead to problems in interaction. Secondly, asymmetries in the linguistic abilities of the participants are not always salient in the interaction process: although obvious problems may occur in the non-native speaker's usage, they are often ignored. Instead, the native participants seem to orient to the content and underlying interactional functions of utterances, treating them as relevant and sufficient contributions in the context. In this respect they seem to orient to a NNS-specific set of expectations and follow a 'let-it-pass' principle with respect to non-native patterns of behaviour (see Anderson 1988, Aston 1993, Firth 1990, 1994). Interestingly, however, it seems that when linguistic problems are made salient through explicit correction or repair procedures, for example, they may increase the asymmetry of the interaction and lead to further trouble. As noted in some studies of repair in NNS interaction, there may thus be face-related reasons for avoiding explicit repair in some second language contexts (see e.g. Faerch and Kasper 1982, Norrick 1991, Kalin 1995). In brief, while the speakers show subtle orientation to specific constraints arising from the second language context, 'non-nativeness' does not always become salient in the interaction. When it is explicitly oriented to by the participants, it may become an added source for asymmetry and possible communicative difficulty.

Recent studies of non-native interaction have suggested that non-native-specific patterns of behaviour can also be seen as interactional resources which the participants may draw upon in order to establish rapport and/or to gain interactional support from the native participant (Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford 1990, Fiksdal 1990, Aston 1993). Some patterns of conversational behaviour observed in the present data seem to support this hypothesis. Firstly, in some conversations specific non-native patterns of behaviour (e.g. failure to respond or observable difficulty in formulating a turn) seemed to solicit overt cooperation and assistance from the native participant. Secondly, some of the situations involving considerable distance or asymmetry seemed to invite excessive deference by the non-native speaker which led to an increased expression of solidarity and rapport by the native participant. In such cases observable interactional asymmetry may thus not be a problem for communication, but may even enhance intersubjective understanding and interpersonal cooperation.

While cross-cultural comparison was beyond the scope of the present study, culture-related aspects of conversational behaviour also surfaced in some conversations. One aspect of conversational organization which seemed to lead to problems in some interactions was topic development. Some conversations showed characteristics of the NNS delaying the introduction of the main topic or the next relevant topic. Often this pattern led to native speakers' attempts to solicit the relevant information from the non-native participant or to assume interactional control and move the conversation along by using other means. This potentially problematic pattern has been observed

in interaction between Asian and Western subjects and explained by culturally specific patterns in the treatment of topics (Scollon and Scollon 1991). However, this pattern was observed in some conversations whereas others did not show any indication of a similar trend. More research is therefore needed to establish whether specific kinds of context give rise to this pattern and whether it is a significant cause of problems in encounters between East and West.

To summarize, the results highlight the pervasiveness of face in the organization of conversations which deal with interactional problems. Following Brown and Levinson (1987), strategies of face-work can be seen to fulfill two broad functions: the avoidance and/or mitigation of face-threat arising from specific interactional problems (e.g. actions which involve imposition) and the attempt to support the interactional equilibrium based on mutual respect for face. Strategies of both types of face-work were found to motivate the interactive construction of conversations in a variety of ways, ranging from the linguistic encoding of specific illocutionary goals and the joint management of conversational activities to the ways in which topics were introduced and negotiated.

In the second language context these patterns of organization may reflect specific problems which arise from the unshared linguistic and sociocultural backgrounds of the speakers. In spite of a number of linguistic problems, many of the conversations in the data seemed to display a successful handling of the interactionally demanding situation. These conversations reflected a global orientation to face and a mutual concern for the interpersonal aspects of interaction through reciprocal face-work. The more successful conversations were also characterized by a tendency by the native speakers to ignore problems arising from non-native speakers' limited linguistic resources, a tendency by the non-native speakers to use interactional means to compensate for linguistic problems, and a reciprocal attempt to negotiate a shared perspective and balanced participation framework for the management of the conversation.

## 10.2 Limitations

Before any conclusions can be drawn, several limitations of the study must be pointed out. First, it is important to note the ways in which the methodology of the study has restricted its scope and the generalisability of the results obtained. The study was based on data elicited by means of simulation tasks which required the participants to manage an interactionally problematic situation. Thus, its findings cannot be generalised to all non-native or intercultural interaction or to interaction involving the cultural groups which were represented in the present study. The findings must therefore be seen as tentative. Accordingly, they should be used as a basis for generating hypotheses for future research rather than a body of evidence from which extensive conclusions can be drawn.

It has been argued that certain types of data collection methods, e.g. some forms of structured questionnaires, present problems in some cultural contexts and that such pre-patterned forms of eliciting data may not be culturally appropriate in non-Western societies (e.g. Rose 1994). It is possible that role-play and simulation tasks also involve such cultural biases which may have a hidden effect on the data collected. To minimize such effects in the present study, adaptations were made to the elicitation method in order to avoid restricting the participants' options in the situation. Thus, the situations were designed to be open-ended, the subjects' background, e.g. their student status, age and sex, was taken into account when they were asked to perform a particular task, and the instructions given prior to the recordings emphasized the subjects' own interpretations of the situations.

More specific problems which arise from the elicitation method can also be identified. Some of the situations may be less likely to occur in real life than others and hence may have been unfamiliar to the subjects. As is pointed out by Eisenstein and Bodman (1986), unfamiliarity with situations may cause problems for non-native speakers, who may produce more inappropriate choices in such contexts. In the present study the situation involving damage to the NNS's car (D3) seemed most difficult for the non-native participants. However, as Eisenstein and Bodman (1986) note, familiarity with the situation (or lack of it) is not in itself enough to explain the difficulty of a language task. Difficulties arise as a result of complex factors, which cannot always be predicted. Further, non-native speakers are frequently faced with unfamiliar situations in real life, in which case those involved have to assess suitable ways of dealing with them. None of the subjects in the study reported finding the situations difficult or inappropriate nor wanted their recordings to be discounted.

Another methodological limitation concerns the factors which were controlled in the study. While participant relations with respect to power and relative distance were controlled, the sex of the speakers was not. Thus, it was not possible to systematically compare patterns of interaction used by male and female subjects or interactions involving male-female dyads as opposed to single sex dyads. However, as was pointed out in chapter 5, the methodology was affected by a conscious attempt to take into account culture-specific expectations concerning male-female contacts, which resulted in most of the conversations being between members of the same sex. Nevertheless, a comparison of discourse styles in interactions in which the sex of the participants is controlled would undoubtedly yield interesting results and remains a concern for future research.

A third methodological issue which deserves attention concerns the decision to only use data from actual interactions rather than combine it with other types of data, such as playback interviews. If the subjects had been interviewed immediately after the recording sessions, it would have been possible to gather data on their own interpretations of the events and possible explanations of problems which they experienced during the interaction. Such information would undoubtedly have been valuable in providing the participants' personal accounts of the situation. However, as has been

established in other pragmatic and sociolinguistic studies of spoken interaction (see e.g. Fiksdal 1990, Blum-Kulka and Sheffer 1993), participants are not necessarily aware of their own linguistic and interactional choices, their situated interpretations or the subtle strategies or cues which give rise to these in interaction. The choices which are made in the course of a dynamic conversational event are based on that moment in time and will not necessarily be accessible after the event. As Blum-Kulka and Sheffer (1993:219) point out, the awareness of one's own language behaviour is at best partial, and it seems that pragmatic aspects of language use are particularly evasive to most, if not all speakers. Finally, the reliability of play-back interviews may be crucially affected by the types of question asked by the analyst and even a slight delay in conducting the interviews.

The present study is thus primarily based on the analysis of the verbal behaviour of the interactants. Paralinguistic features such as intonation were not given detailed systematic attention, although it is fully recognized that they may have a paramount role in the communication process. However, intonation and other paralinguistic features were transcribed and analysed where they seemed to be significant for the participants' interpretations. Similarly, videorecordings of the interactions were used as supportive material to facilitate the transcription and analysis, whereas the systematic study of nonverbal aspects of communication (e.g. gestures, posture and movements) remains a task for future research.

Apart from methodological issues, the present study is restricted by the questions addressed. As the main focus of analysis was on the description of the linguistic and interactional strategies used by the participants in the management of a socially and interactionally demanding task, it was not within the scope of the study to attempt a systematic comparison of native and non-native usage or to seek culture-specific patterns of language use. Rather than examining Asian or Malay discourse patterns or seeking instances of learner-specific use, the present study built on previous comparative research and sought to observe and describe the process of negotiating communicative activities in a specific intercultural context. Thus, any reference to learner behaviour and possible cultural aspects of use above must be taken as tentative and may be developed into more specific hypotheses to be explored in future research. Consequently, the study has little predictive power in the study of interlanguage use as such. However, the procedure and analytic framework used in the study could easily be adapted to make it possible to adopt a more traditional interlanguage perspective. The present approach could be placed in the interlanguage paradigm by collecting sets of comparable data from monolingual L1 situations and IL conversations and adapting the analytic framework for comparative analysis.

### 10.3. Directions for future research

While the present study has attempted to shed more light on some issues related to aspects of politeness and face in non-native interaction, it leaves many important questions unanswered. Further empirical research is therefore needed to address problems which were beyond the scope of the present study and to seek more clarification on some of the findings. Some possibilities for future study are suggested below.

With respect to culture-related aspects of interaction, future research might address the following question which emerged in the analysis: do conversations in Malay or in the local variety of English reflect different patterns of topic development from the 'Western' patterns observed in English NS interaction? A thorough investigation of this research question would require data from a variety of naturally occurring conversations between speakers of Malay in their native language and in English and a detailed microanalysis of the data with respect to topic development. The results could then be compared to studies of native speaker interaction in English, or to a comparable set of data from conversations by native speakers of English. A second question which arises from this concerns the role and effects of possible differences in actual contact situations between speakers of Malay and English. The present study suggests that some problems may indeed arise from, for example, different expectations concerning the timing of new topics. To shed light on this problem, interactions between a variety of subjects in different communicative situations could be analysed.

Another sociocultural issue which requires further study is the extent to which the patterns observed in the present data reflect linguistic and sociocultural adaptation. As was noted in chapter 5, the subjects of the present study represented educated, non-rural and relatively young second language speakers and educated native speakers of English who had stayed in Brunei from approximately one to three years. Thus, it could be expected that both groups of subjects had to some degree adapted to different styles of interaction which might be identified with each group. The results discussed above showed that unidiomatic non-native usage was in general tolerated by the native speakers and that few serious breakdowns of communication were identified in the analysis. In order to determine whether this is a reflection of adaptation to an intercultural style by both groups of speakers, it would be useful to examine interaction between Malay subjects and English native speakers in other types of context, e.g. interaction between newly-arrived Brunei students in England and native speakers of English or English-speaking newcomers and local residents in Brunei.

Such research could also be valuable in broadening the perspective of interlanguage research. Because of the practical needs of language teaching most IL studies are conducted from the ethnolinguistic and cultural perspective of native speakers. However, it would be of great interest to combine the insights of interlanguage research with the study of non-native usage in environments where the foreign language, e.g. English, is used as, or

developing into, a lingua franca. This would require the integration of theoretical approaches to language acquisition and bilingualism with the sociolinguistic and ethnographic study of English as an international language (see e.g. Kachru 1982, Kachru 1992, Firth 1990). Such a perspective would also benefit from the insights of speech accommodation research (see e.g. Beebe and Giles 1984, Janicki 1986, Eisenstein 1989).

While the present study has been able to demonstrate some of the resources which native and non-native speakers draw upon in managing socially demanding interaction, further research must cover a range of different contexts where non-native sets of expectation come into play. A detailed analysis of a variety of interactional features in naturally occurring speech events would increase our understanding of the range of possible resources available to native and non-native speakers and the constraints which shape their use in actual encounters. Of particular interest from the point of view of the present study is the use of non-native-specific patterns to solicit interactional support or to evoke rapport in intercultural contexts. To examine whether this is a real option in non-native interaction and to identify the contexts where it might be expected, it is necessary to conduct detailed analyses of interactions where a native and non-native participant know each other well and compare them with interaction where the relationship involves more distance. Similarly, interactions which take place in institutional settings might be compared to interactions in non-institutional contexts.

Further research is also needed to explore the connections which seem to exist between strategies of face-work and those strategies of interaction which have been studied in negotiated input research and studies of communication strategies. For example, some interactional phenomena in the present data (e.g. avoidance or delay of difficult topics or actions) seemed to be motivated both by concern for face and by lack of resources for the linguistic expression of problematic content. It would be interesting to examine this phenomenon further to shed more light on both the social and the cognitive or psycholinguistic constraints which may give rise to such a strategy.

For the purposes of the present study, an analytic framework was developed which enabled an in-depth study and description of various dimensions of face-work and conversational organization in actual interaction. While this framework proved useful and flexible in the analysis, it needs to be further developed and put to test in studies of naturally occurring interaction in a variety of contexts. Since the present study was concerned with the interactive management of specific face-threatening activities, the framework is most detailed in the levels of description which are most relevant to this task, and needs further development to adequately capture other aspects of interaction. To overcome this limitation, insights from the ethnography of communication might be used to extend the framework to cover aspects of social events which are not adequately accounted for in the present study, e.g. the setting and the participants of communicative events. A more comprehensive version of the framework could then be applied to different types of interaction in a range of settings to explore, for example, some of the issues outlined above. Finally, the approach adopted in the present study is not necessarily restricted to the study

of NNS interaction, but could be adapted and extended to the analysis of other types of interaction where various asymmetries can be expected to arise. It might, for example, be applied to data collected from various institutional settings or settings where members of different sociocultural groups engage in communication.

## 10.4 Implications

The results summarized above give rise to a number of theoretical and practical implications, some of which have already been briefly discussed above in the form of suggestions for future research. However, some further observations can be made about the direction of future theoretical enquiry and the general applicability of the present results to language teaching.

From a theoretical point of view, the present study can be seen to contribute to the study of linguistic action patterns in a second language and the study of discursal activity in a variety of domains where native and non-native speakers may come into contact. The results lend support to suggestions voiced recently by other researchers (see e.g. Yule and Tarone 1990, Aston 1993) which promote the integration of different approaches in second language research and the need to combine methods from different fields of study to gain a more comprehensive view of non-native interaction. More specifically, the present results point to a need to develop improved empirically and theoretically informed accounts of second language conversation and the role of politeness and face in this context. It seems that the recent insights of research in a broad range of fields (interactional sociolinguistics, speech accommodation, intercultural communication, interlanguage pragmatics, foreign language conversation analysis) could be brought together in a framework which could then be developed towards a more satisfactory approach to second language interaction and integrated into second language acquisition theory.

Specific recommendations for the practical needs of second and foreign language teaching are beyond the scope of the present study. However, some general observations can be drawn from the results. Recent pragmatic and discourse-oriented study of second language use and interaction has made an important contribution to second and foreign language teaching in emphasizing the importance of social, interpersonal and cultural aspects of language use (see e.g. Edmondson and House 1981, Kramsch 1993, Nyssönen and Rapakko 1992). Consequently, second language teaching and intercultural training has shown increasing awareness of the need to sensitize learners to aspects of culture and communicative situation which often cause problems for non-native speakers, who may rely on their native language norms of interaction. It seems, however, that the emphasis of cultural differences sometimes leads to an oversimplified approach in language teaching. Results of comparative studies, in spite of the frequently contradictory results, have been taken as direct guidelines for teaching, leading, for example, to

recommendations for increased directness or indirectness, for the use of negative rather than positive politeness or to overemphasis of politeness routines.

The present study, alongside other recent studies of pragmatic orientation, has highlighted the difficulty of describing politeness in terms of clear-cut, utterance-level choices which can be explained by a limited set of external variables. Instead, aspects of politeness must be seen in relation to the whole speech event and the multiplicity of contextual features which may become relevant in the course of participating in these events. Hence, it seems that rather than taking politeness as a specific focus of attention in language teaching, it would be more useful to place emphasis on the analysis of different types of communicative event from a holistic perspective. Through a sensitization of learners to the regularities and peculiarities of a variety of relevant communicative practices in different discourse domains, a more realistic view of the appropriate use of language could be gained. Within such a perspective, the concepts of face and politeness are useful in increasing awareness of the underlying social and interpersonal considerations which motivate choices at different levels of language use.

A valuable component in a holistic, discourse-based approach to language use would be to focus on second language learners' own communicative practices in their native tongues. A better awareness of the skills used in handling discursal practices in a variety of communicative situations in the learner's mother tongue could be made use of in an attempt to bring into focus possible differences in such practices between the source and target language. Similarly, it would make it possible to examine language ability as involving more than knowledge of a new system of rules to cover structural, pragmatic and sociocultural aspects of language use and to include aspects which learners already implicitly know as a result of their general pragmatic knowledge base (Blum-Kulka 1991). The availability of some of this knowledge in the learning of a new language may then improve learners' awareness of their own resources and limitations, and encourage them to utilize their resources in creative ways. While this may not lead to fully idiomatic and native-like usage, the better availability of resources should help the learner to select adequate and situationally relevant face-supportive strategies and use them to overcome possible communicative difficulties. Furthermore, such awareness could help learners to develop their ability to negotiate a range of discourse events which may arise in a variety of contexts.

## 10.5 Concluding remarks

The present study has been concerned with the ways in which potentially face-threatening activities are dealt with in interactions between native and non-native speakers. The study has demonstrated that interpersonal concerns such as those associated with the concept of face are central in shaping the linguistic strategies and patterns of interaction in situations where such activities may



occur. The study has also revealed how participants in such encounters make reciprocal interactive efforts to avoid face-threat and to establish and maintain a cooperative and balanced relationship based on mutual respect for face.

The study has sought to examine face-work from a broad interactional perspective which is based on both previous research from action theoretical perspectives and research on negotiated interaction in both native and non-native contexts. This perspective has made it possible to examine in some depth those dimensions of face-work which have received relatively little systematic attention in second language research. It has enabled a detailed study of both linguistic strategies and interactional procedures used to modify face-threat, and made it possible to relate such strategies to patterns of organization and structures of participation in discourse. The results of the study demonstrate how threat to face and the need to deal with such threat may arise from a variety of sources at different levels of discursal activity. They also highlight the broad range of linguistic and interactional means which participants in intercultural encounters make use of in their attempt to negotiate face-threat.

In order to deal with the complexities and ambiguities of language use in actual interaction in intercultural and interlanguage contexts, a more comprehensive theoretical and empirical basis must be developed than the currently influential speech act based approaches. Notwithstanding its limitations, it is hoped that the present study has made a contribution in this direction.

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## Appendix 1

**Transcription conventions**

( )	Overlapping speech for example: NS: you want to go and (have some coffee NNS: no lectures today?)
*	pause, 0-1 second
**	pause, 1-2 seconds
***	pause, 2-3 seconds
(n sec.)	pause, over 3 seconds
,	brief pause indicating end of tone-group
?	rising intonation typical of some questions
!	exclamation
<b>always</b>	emphasis
<b>WHAT</b>	marked emphasis with raised voice
(inaud.)	inaudible speech
...	continuation of previous utterance without interval; second utterance 'latched on' to the first for example: NNS: ...but if you, if you, well if you show me the article NS: (Well look... NNS: maybe I could help?) NS: ... I'll bring the article to you
-	false start for example: NS: I was going to do some wash-shopping
(laugh)	laughter

## Appendix 2

## SITUATION S1(1) -P/-D

NNS: Malay Female

NS: English (Australian) Female

- 1 NS: How's things then?  
 2 NNS: Oh, not too bad. I haven't had much of a chance to do much  
 3 studying. I've been out every night this week, what about you?  
 4 NS: Well, it's er \* it's okay.  
 5 NNS: Yes, erm. \*\*\*  
 6 NS: Did you go to (inaudible) last night?  
 7 NNS: Er, yes I did, what about you?  
 8 NS: Yes, yes it was quite a good show  
 9 (5 sec.) what have you been doing since Monday?  
 10 NNS: Erm \*\*\* I've been \*\* I've got an essay to do but, but I've  
 11 finished it already uum, I'm \*\* finishing it soon (inaudible)  
 12 NS: yea?  
 13 NNS: but English is not my first language  
 14 NS: I don't speak Brunei either, I don't even speak Malay.  
 15 NNS: Yes, that's the same as Malay (inaudible), but I study in  
 16 your country.  
 17 NS: (laughter) so er (4 sec.)  
 18 NNS: Umm \* there is one particular thing, er, I would like to ask  
 19 you about.  
 20 NS: Yea?  
 21 NNS: Will you erm, this is regarding the ear-rings.  
 22 NS: (Ear-rings?  
 23 NNS: The the) ear-rings that er... (4 sec.)  
 24 NS: uh? Which ear-rings?  
 25 NNS: The, the ear-rings that \*\* er you wore at I think it was  
 26 during the movie that you \* erm \* that you borrowed from me.  
 27 NS: On Monday night?  
 28 NNS: I guess so, I...  
 29 NS: I borrowed your ear-rings on (Monday)?  
 30 NNS: Yes) (inaudible) earrings  
 31 NS: Oh.  
 32 NNS: Uh.  
 33 NS: Have I not returned them to you?  
 34 NNS: Well, I don't know but, er, either you borrowed them or er  
 35 I've misplaced them somewhere.  
 36 NS: Ah? Which, which? Which were they?  
 37 NNS: Umm \* the ones I showed you when I moved in here, umm  
 38 \* from a very close friend of mine in Brunei.  
 39 NS: I see. Umm. Oh well I don't remember wearing them, I don't  
 40 know anything about them actually but perhaps you were  
 41 showing them to me and then dropped them in the room.  
 42 NNS: I don't remember.

- 43 NS: Perhaps, perhaps they dropped into my bag.  
 44 NNS: (that's possible  
 45 NS: Look I'll check my bag when I get home.  
 46 NNS: Okay, okay \*\* I just thought er \* I just want you to er \* to  
 47 look around.  
 48 NS: Oh well, I'll look in my bag. \* Maybe \* maybe they dropped in  
 49 there but I don't remember you loaning them to me.  
 50 NNS: I guess that's-great (giggle). Er \*\* another thing is about the  
 51 erm what is it, the ear-rings and the money, this other thing, the  
 52 40 dollars \*\*\* that you borrowed from me.  
 53 NS: **OH WHAT?**  
 54 NNS: Maybe you paid that?  
 55 NS: No, I always, always I pay back my debts. If I owed you 40  
 56 dollars I'd have paid it back to you.  
 57 NNS: Uum (4 sec.) well?  
 58 NS: Explain the situation. When did I borrow 40 dollars?  
 59 NNS: Uum \*\* it was \* when you \* ran out of money.  
 60 NS: That happens frequently.  
 61 NNS: yes, but then er all the banks were closed \* so you came to  
 62 me and asked me whether I could lend you 40 dollars.  
 63 NS: you know I've done that frequently but I **always** pay you  
 64 back very quickly. \*\*\*  
 65 NNS: It's either I forget things or I don't...(laugh)  
 66 NS: No, well I'll give you 40 dollars again because I'd rather be  
 67 sure that I paid you back. If you say I haven't paid it, well, okay,  
 68 fine, but I thought, I - I thought I had paid you back. Sorry. \*\*\*  
 69 NNS: Erm.  
 70 NS: No problem, just wait 'til pay-day.  
 71 NNS: That will be okay.  
 72 NS: But as soon as I get paid I'll come and (see you.  
 73 NNS: You could) but, **but** \*\* I'm worried that I might be wrong.  
 74 NS: No, er, er, I, I  
 75 NNS: but  
 76 NS: No, I always feel I pay my debts very quickly but if you think  
 77 I said I owe you 40 dollars I'd rather pay it \*\* so it's all fair and  
 78 square.  
 79 NNS: But please don't make me feel a bit \*\* guilty. So what I mean  
 80 erm \*\* er \*\* I mean \* there's no proof.  
 81 NS: No but our friendship. I mean I would rather pay the 40  
 82 dollars, because perhaps \* I've borrowed so many times  
 83 previously and perhaps I thought I'd paid it back but haven't so,  
 84 so, so as soon as I get some money at the end of the week (I'll  
 85 pay...  
 86 NNS: Do you) Do you usually er \* usually ask er \*\* a lot of your  
 87 friends to lend you money?  
 88 NS: No, you're the only one (laugh), so you're a good friend.  
 89 NNS: Aah (laughter) so forgive me (laugh) so \* next time I think  
 90 we'd better...  
 91 NS: Next perhaps we'll write an I-O-U, first.  
 92 NNS: Write it down, yes.

93 NS: Yes, I think while we're at it and that way we won't get mixed  
94 up again.  
95 NNS: Okay (inaudible) earrings if you-they're not with you.  
96 NS: Yea, I don't remember borrowing them.  
97 NNS: Yes.  
98 NS: But as I say if you were showing them to me perhaps they  
99 either dropped in my bag or \*\* but I'll check when I get home  
100 tonight. If I have them I'll certainly return them.  
101 NNS: Okay, okay.  
102 NS: Okay.  
103 NNS: Well, thank you, yes, thank you.  
104 NS: And I'll give you the er 40 dollars \*\* tomorrow or at the end of  
105 the week.  
106 NNS: Positive?  
107 NS: Positive, don't worry as I say I like to pay my debts.  
108 NNS: Okay, thank you.  
109 NS: Okay.  
110 NNS: Okay.



## SITUATION S1(2) -P/-D

NNS: Malay Female

NS: English (English) Female

- 1 NNS: Hello Dee how are you  
 2 NS: Hello Aini nice to see you again  
 3 NNS: er how's your \* studying?  
 4 NS: oh \* fine I suppose \* a bit late for this and that but er \* yea I've  
 5 been doing alright, how about you ?  
 6 NNS: well mm is mm \* it's okay \* cos er \*\* I think I've done all my  
 7 assessment already  
 8 NS: you've finished everything  
 9 NNS: ye:s \*\* (assessment  
 10 NS: mm)  
 11 NNS: yes \* since the er exam is coming \* so \* mm \*\* are you free  
 12 now?  
 13 NS: just now yes I've got an hour or so \* yea \* you want to go and  
 14 (have some coffee  
 15 NNS: no lectures today?)  
 16 NS: sorry?  
 17 NNS: no lectures today?  
 18 NS: not just now no no no  
 19 NNS: mmm I see, have you had \* er your lunch?  
 20 NS: have I had lunch?  
 21 NNS: yes  
 22 NS: no just about to, (have you had yours?  
 23 NNS: I see) erm (inaud.) about to call (inaud.) to erm get the \*  
 24 some food together \* er and then er we can continue \* mm talking  
 25 NS: fine, good idea ((inaud.)  
 26 NNS: thank you) \*\* so \*\* er \* actually (inaudible) er \*\*\* do you still  
 27 remember last time er \*\* ehm \*\* that you \*\* mm \*\* when you  
 28 asked me to \* lend you the forty dollars  
 29 NS: ooh \*\* (yeah  
 30 NNS: do you still) remember that  
 31 NS: um \* have I forgotten about that, I seem to remember  
 32 something about forty dollars \*\* yes ?  
 33 NNS: it was erm \* the bank was closed and er you (had  
 34 desperately little money  
 35 NS: aah \*\*) that's right I \*\* I asked you for forty dollars did I  
 36 (right?  
 37 NNS: yes)  
 38 NS: aha  
 39 NNS: you know \* I think \*\* I need that forty dollars now  
 40 NS: you mean I haven't paid you back  
 41 NNS: yes \* but er \*\*\* do you \* still remember that  
 42 NS: well, to be honest I-I don't know if I've paid you back or not,  
 43 but I suppose I'll take your word for it so I still owe you forty  
 44 dollars

45 NNS: yes mm you still owe me (forty dollars  
 46 NS: oh I'm) ever so sorry about that \*\* okay, yes erm yes I - well  
 47 I'll see if I've got it on me first  
 48 NNS: okay  
 49 NS: I'll just check in my purse \*\* erm \* not today \* (can I \*  
 50 NNS: not today erm)  
 51 NS: can I pay it to you next week perhaps  
 52 NNS: until next week \*\* mm \* I need it um \* I think that will be  
 53 alright  
 54 NS: that will be okay  
 55 NNS: yes  
 56 NS: oh well  
 57 NNS: where shall I meet you?  
 58 NS: here again?  
 59 NNS: here again \* same day  
 60 NS: same day  
 61 NNS: okay (same day  
 62 NS: and same place \* yes)  
 63 NNS: okay \*\* and \*\* another thing \*  
 64 NS: oh  
 65 NNS: just regarding er my \*\* earrings (pair of earrings  
 66 NS: earrings? )  
 67 NNS: (cough) yes  
 68 NS: oh well \* what are they like  
 69 NNS: um \*\*\* well they are \*\*\* they're the one that I show you last  
 70 time  
 71 NS: you showed me your earrings wow mmm  
 72 NNS: the one that I showed -  
 73 NS: (sigh)  
 74 NNS: a gift from a friend  
 75 NS: were they gold or silver or er \*\* (plastic  
 76 NNS: erm \*\*\*) is er \*\* silver - silver earrings  
 77 NS: silver earrings  
 78 NNS: yea  
 79 NS: what and \* did I borrow them or something ? \*\*  
 80 NNS: yes er \*\* last Monday  
 81 NS: I borrowed them  
 82 NNS: yes  
 83 NS: oh  
 84 NNS: it was last Monday  
 85 NS: and I've not given them back  
 86 NNS: yes \* when we went (er  
 87 NS: ah let's see)  
 88 NNS: out to see the movie  
 89 NS: what have I got on now \*\* are these yours  
 90 NNS: no  
 91 NS: no not these ones um \* you don't want these ones  
 92 NNS: no  
 93 NS: no (okay  
 94 NNS: that one) is er special gift

95 NS: Well I'm sorry \* I'll try and remember to bring them next time  
96 I see you \*\*\*  
97 NNS: mmm \* yes it's okay \*\*\* but er \*\* are you sure that you - you  
98 have them?  
99 NS: um  
100 NNS: still (inaudible)  
101 NS: well \* I can't remember losing them \* did I have them on last  
102 night ?  
103 NNS: last night mmm  
104 NS: I had them on last night oh I think I still have them they must  
105 be at the flat \*\*\* yea I'll have a look as soon as I get home\*  
106 NNS: (okay  
107 NS: I'll have a look)  
108 NNS: yea  
109 NS: and if I can't find them I'll let you know \* but I'm sure I've still  
110 got them  
111 NNS: mm alright  
112 NS: okay  
113 NNS: okay \*\*\* okay  
114 NS: right see you next week  
115 NNS: (laugh)  
116 NS: (laugh)

## SITUATION S2(1) -P/-D

NNS: Malay male

NS: English (English) male

- 1 NS: Come in, yes, come in and sit down (in my office.  
 2 NNS: Oh (laughter) hello Robert  
 3 NS: hello nice to see (you  
 4 NNS: hey) how are you?  
 5 NS: Nice to see you. How unusual to see you in an office  
 6 situation. I normally see you out drinking.  
 7 NNS: (giggle) How, how are you this, er, this afternoon?  
 8 NS: Well, I've been working quite hard this afternoon, I'm still  
 9 having some difficulty with my languages but I'm getting by. It,  
 10 it's been quite (hard  
 11 NNS: Yes) that's why I came here for, yes, now, regarding to, er,  
 12 you are interested in learning Malay  
 13 NS: I have been, yes, I'm busy looking for a tutor but I'm not  
 14 having any diff- any luck at all.  
 15 NNS: Then, I heard, er, your friend Tim, is also interested.  
 16 NS: Tim?)  
 17 NNS: inaudible)  
 18 NS: Yes, he's interested in finding one but, um, I'd rather not  
 19 actually learn Malay with him. I'm looking for more of a personal  
 20 coach.  
 21 NNS: I see  
 22 NS: I'm looking for a one-to-one basis.  
 23 NNS: One-to-one.  
 24 NS: Yea, that's the type of (thing.  
 25 NNS: Er,) in some way, maybe, I can, I can help you.  
 26 NS: Well, if you can help me at all...  
 27 NNS: Yes.  
 28 NS: ...I'd be very grateful.  
 29 NNS: But, er, before that I should like to get some information  
 30 regarding, well, er, what, how many Malay words have you  
 31 known?  
 32 NS: Well, my Malay is, is nil. I know nothing at all.  
 33 NNS: I see  
 34 NS: I've just picked up, maybe, one word, terimah kaseh and  
 35 that's my lot. That's the only one I know, doesn't...  
 36 NNS: It, it is the first word that normally the foreigners knew.  
 37 NS: Yes.  
 38 NNS: There are of course a few other words  
 39 NS: Yes.  
 40 NNS: When you arrive to Brunei \* uh, have you received any \* er  
 41 publication from the tourist centre?  
 42 NS: No, nothing at all.  
 43 NNS: 'cos they are only distributing, er, publications of you know  
 44 simple Malay words, a few useful Malay words.  
 45 NS: No, not at all. When I came I received nothing. Nothing that

- 46 would help me with my Malay anyway. I think it was mainly in  
47 English.
- 48 NNS: Ah \*\* actually I'm, I'm doing my Malay language doing my  
49 undergraduates, er,\*\*\* I'm not experienced but I get er tools of er,  
50 how maybe the foreigners\*\* much easily learn the Malay  
51 language.
- 52 NS: Uhu. So, so what would you be offering me then? Would you  
53 be offering me **your** services?
- 54 NNS: Ah, yes, certainly.
- 55 NS: Yes?
- 56 NNS: certainly, er, I think - what - there are a few things you  
57 should do, although maybe you received, er, one, one person to  
58 one person, er, you know, er.
- 59 NS: That's (right
- 60 NNS: method of teaching) which is I think much more effective...
- 61 NS: Yes
- 62 NNS: than learning in groups.
- 63 NS: Yes.
- 64 NNS: for the beginning...
- 65 NS: Right
- 66 NNS: for the beginners, I think, what you should do is, you  
67 should buy before I teach you, you should buy a dictionary.
- 68 NS: Uhu.
- 69 NNS: there are, nowadays, there are many, er, Malay dict-Malay-  
70 English dictionaries.
- 71 NS: Yes, er, I-I've already got one of those but \* I could make  
72 neither head nor tail of it. I understand the English but when I  
73 come to use the Malay I always forget the words but I-I will  
74 certainly endeavour to use it, if you were to teach me.
- 75 NNS: I think it's natural, you know, when you ah, keep, ah, came  
76 across the words...
- 77 NS: Uhu.
- 78 NNS: ...in your - for example, in English and then you came  
79 across the Malay words...
- 80 NS: Yes
- 81 NNS: It's the same, my case it's normally, when I'm learning  
82 English...
- 83 NS: Yes.
- 84 NNS: through my experience... when I - first impression is not  
85 really effective...
- 86 NS: Uhu.
- 87 NNS: but the second and third maybe by knowing the usage of  
88 the word maybe I can remember...
- 89 NS: Right.
- 90 NNS: the - after that, I think that's natural.
- 91 NS: Well, act-actually, I've not got very long just now. I've got,  
92 I've only got a few more minutes and I'm expecting someone to  
93 come to the office...
- 94 NNS: I see
- 95 NS: in about five minutes. If you could just give me a few more er

96 details as to how you intend to teach me, and also, very  
97 importantly, how much it will be likely to cost. And I have to  
98 (inaud.)  
99 NNS: Ah. Er, how many times are you available. Are you, ah,  
100 three times a week, could be.  
101 NS: Ah, yes, I can, \*\* I can put aside about an hour every lunch  
102 time.  
103 NNS: One hour every lunchtime?  
104 NS: Well, I-I should like to have some lunch so I think if we were  
105 to say three days a week  
106 NNS: three (days a week  
107 NS: But I must warn) you I'm not prepared to pay a huge amount  
108 of money.  
109 NNS: well, er, \*\* actually we try to encourage foreigners to learn  
110 our language (giggle)...  
111 NS: Jolly good, yes, that's what (I wanted.  
112 NNS: then you know) I won't charge you high ('cause, er, since...  
113 NS: Well, how much?)  
114 NNS: ...this is also my my - I'm trying to get some experience so I  
115 just charge you maybe the minimum to cover my petrol  
116 (giggle)  
117 NS: and  
118 NNS: and then, my, a fee for service addition to my salary.  
119 NS: So how much do you think that would be for one hour?  
120 NNS: For one hour it would be only six dollars.  
121 NS: six dollars  
122 NNS: So if it is three hours per week...  
123 NS: Aha  
124 NNS: you only pay me eighteen dollars.  
125 NS: Well, shall we...  
126 NNS: It is  
127 NS: shall we consider bringing that down to fifteen dollars  
128 NNS: Yes  
129 NS: and I think we can strike a quick bargain here.  
130 NNS: Yes.  
131 NS: fifteen dollars?  
132 NNS: Yes, it's done (giggle)  
133 NS: Right there you go young man, well, I really must ask you to  
134 leave (just now.  
135 NNS: Yea.)  
136 NS: Can we start next week?  
137 NNS: Yes, certainly.  
138 NS: Monday then?  
139 NNS: Monday, on Monday at 12 o'clock  
140 NS: Splendid  
141 NNS: Yes, (splendid  
142 NS: Okay) Thank you (very much then  
143 NNS: Okay, thank you very much  
144 NS: Bye bye  
145 NNS: Bye bye.

## SITUATION S2(2) -P/-D

NNS: Malay male

NS: English (Canadian) male

- 1 NNS: I understand that, er, you have been trying to find er a a  
2 teacher to teach you Malay.
- 3 NS: Yes yes that's right, uum, I tried I tried to er get into the  
4 University but they don't have a a university course doing Malay  
5 speaking language and, er, they actually have one class but it's at  
6 a time when I have a lecture so I can't get there, so, yea, I got to  
7 find er someone I can learn Malay from.
- 8 NNS: So, er, if you wish (inaud.), er, urm, I can do - I can teach  
9 you Malay because I'm going to teach only er in the next er three  
10 months, so, what do you think of this? (laugh)
- 11 NS: Well, I think (laugh) you're a postgraduate student of Malay  
12 language, Samat?
- 13 NNS: Yes, I am
- 14 NS: So, you're studying Malay I understand?
- 15 NNS: no.
- 16 NS: But, it's your, it's your mother tongue I assume?
- 17 NNS: Yea er the Malay is my mother tongue of course er in Brunei  
18 we have, actually, Malay in the \* er \* the Malay chronicle
- 19 NS: Uhu.
- 20 NNS: So I think it's (inaudible) since I er I've been studying Malay  
21 in in er, in university and also in er secondary school and I'll try  
22 my best to teach you.
- 23 NS: Well, er, that would be super, er, I didn't want to, I didn't  
24 want to ask one of the other English speaking erm lecturers at the  
25 University because they would have learned Malay as a foreign  
26 language to them, so, I was hoping to get somebody like yourself  
27 who speaks Malay as your mother tongue as opposed to  
28 somebody who is an English-speaker and had learned Malay  
29 second-hand so, so that would be great. Do you, er, for private  
30 tutoring do you have a fixed rate that you charge?
- 31 NNS: Er, this, I think it is as we are friends, the thing is it's up to  
32 you to decide because er one friend also is trying to learn Malay er  
33 Tim, and so if you wish we can at the same time time with him  
34 you can join er one group to study, to study Malay at the same  
35 time.
- 36 NS: Oh, I see, there's a there is another fellow who's going to...
- 37 NNS: Yea.
- 38 NS: Okay. Uum, would it be possible to have private tutorship for  
39 just the one person? Do you have classes like that
- 40 NNS: (I think yea
- 41 NS: or do you have more than one)
- 42 NNS: Actually, it's up to the person who wants to who wants to  
43 study if, for instance, he happens to find friends so we can form a  
44 group or...
- 45 NS: Yes

- 46 NNS: ..else we just er I mean, you can learn just, er, in a two or  
47 three people (inaudible) it's up to you, you know, it...
- 48 NS: Uh, okay
- 49 NNS: ...it doesn't matter to me
- 50 NS: So it would be alright, if er say once or twice a week you and I  
51 got together for about an hour and went through some Malay?
- 52 NNS: Sure, if you wish, er, we can discuss the er the time and get  
53 on with the (inaud.) also.
- 54 NS: Okay. Yea, I wouldn't, er, I wouldn't mind having, er, being a  
55 group as well because, erm, like you say, once you're in a group  
56 you can speak to other people in the group and all learn at the  
57 same time, but I'd also like to get, erm, private tutoring, just one  
58 on one erm, in addition to that, if that will be alright.
- 59 NNS: because, er, actually, if you are wanting for somebody to  
60 join in with the group it takes time to...
- 61 NS: Mm.
- 62 NNS: so for a start it is better if, er, if we do you can practice -  
63 apply what you learn-learned-what you are going to learn in a  
64 real live situation because since we, er in in UBD, we have, er,  
65 Malays, a lot of Malay students and, er, Malay lecturers also.
- 66 NNS: Uhu.
- 67 NS: So, is your preference then to have more than one \* student?
- 68 NNS: So it will be very good, it will be better if you can find, er,  
69 other, other people also to join in the group if possible.
- 70 NS: Somebody else to take it with me, to take tuition from you?
- 71 NNS: Yea, if possible but, er, I don't mind if you er and Tim, er, I  
72 don't mind if you, er, if there's just two of you, er, studying out  
73 there sometime, or private tuition.
- 74 NS: Uhu, so, it would, it would be okay with you if there were  
75 two of us or three of us or just (us only
- 76 NNS: Yea, yea) it's up to you. Actually, to me it doesn't matter.
- 77 NS: (Okay
- 78 NNS: As long) as you want to learn, study Malay, and er as long  
79 as I can, I will teach then I know how to (inaudible). I don't mind  
80 the number.
- 81 NS: Okay, so it doesn't matter whether it is just myself or whether  
82 it is two people or three people.
- 83 NNS: Yea.
- 84 NS: Okay, what - that will be good. Uum, maybe what I could do  
85 is try and see if there is other people interested as well and er if I  
86 can't find someone else or they would rather have private tuition  
87 as well
- 88 NNS: Yes
- 89 NS: I would then maybe each of us can get private tuition.
- 90 NNS: There is also, I think, er er idea, because er or as you said  
91 before that you can have a good (inaudible) have a good  
92 (inaudible) because you can in two or three, er, in a group, would  
93 be better.
- 94 NS: Okay, as far as you're concerned then if you and I can, er,  
95 sometime have some tuition for private time just you and myself



- 96 and then maybe some other time we can, we can get, er, on one or  
97 two people in.
- 98 NNS: Actually (inaudible)
- 99 NS: Okay, alright, well erm, I don't have my calender with me  
100 now that shows all my teaching times and everything but, er, I'll  
101 have a look through it, er, and see what times are free for me and  
102 you, you have classes at certain times too, I guess?
- 103 NNS: Yes.
- 104 NS: Okay well I'll let you know what times I'm free and you can  
105 see which of those times are suitable for you \* and er would twice  
106 a week be okay?
- 107 NNS: Er, on this matter we better discuss er with Tim first before  
108 deciding.
- 109 NS: Er, I'm sorry, who is Tim?
- 110 NNS: Tim is the, the other guy, the, er, the, er, teacher in the  
111 English department at UBD.
- 112 NS: Oh, he's another fellow (who wants tuition  
113 NNS: Well, yes he wants to) do the, er, the class.
- 114 NS: I see. Is it okay if, er, if I just have individual tuition?
- 115 NNS: You mean, er, for yourself only you mean  
116 NS: Yes, just myself.
- 117 NNS: Without er  
118 NS: Without Tim.
- 119 NNS: Without Tim. Well, okay, but I think its unfair also to Tim  
120 because, er, Tim this past week said several times, er, he's been  
121 wanting to learn Malay and, er, he's said to me, since we are  
122 friends and if he hears about er this situation, I think its not  
123 something very good, so, I think I'd better ask him also about  
124 this, er.
- 125 NS: Oh, (I see  
126 NNS: situation)
- 127 NS: He's asked you about the teaching (before?)  
128 NNS: Yea, yea), yea, because, er, last time, er, I talked, said,  
129 actually in reality, that I have no time about, er two or three  
130 months ago not have time and it's not nice to \* if I don't er ask  
131 Tim also to
- 132 NS: Oh, yes (I see  
133 NNS: to have teaching)
- 134 NS: so you were busy last time (asking Tim to  
135 NNS: Yea yea) yea
- 136 NS: I see, so now you've  
137 NNS: Yea
- 138 NS: You're sort of ready  
139 NNS: So if
- 140 NS: So you don't want to say to me sure I'll teach you teach you  
141 malay but not include Tim, yea? I (can see that now.  
142 NNS: So, it's up) to Tim to decide whether he wants to join er this  
143 class or not, if he's not or if he's not keen then I can teach you  
144 (inaud.) private tuition.
- 145 NS: Okay, well we'll ask Tim then, he's in the English

146 department?  
147 NNS: Yea  
148 NS: Okay, well why don't you go and chat with Tim and see what  
149 he feels about this?  
150 NNS: Right  
151 NS: Why don't we, erm, we get in touch with Tim. You and I can  
152 talk to Tim and, er, see what he would prefer.  
153 NNS: I think that, er.  
154 NS: Do you have  
155 NNS: Yea.  
156 NS: Do you have a time? You said you were busy before. Do you  
157 have time to - if Tim wants individual instruction and I want  
158 individual instruction? Would you have time to do that?  
159 NNS: Er you mean, er, I could have to give private tuition to Tim  
160 and also to you?  
161 NS: Yea, would you have time or are you too busy for that?  
162 NNS: Ah (laughter) I think the position is er since er I have erm  
163 other work to do as well, I think (I can't really manage  
164 NS: That would be too much for you). Okay, well, okay, I'll check  
165 er maybe we can check with Tim and if he's still interested in er  
166 Malay in having Malay classes  
167 NNS: yea  
168 NS: so er my concern is that I'd really like to get one on one  
169 tuition ...  
170 NNS: yea  
171 NS: so er if Tim is still interested and you don't have time for two  
172 people  
173 NNS: for two  
174 NS: then I'll \* er I'll still try to find another person who has  
175 enough time for private tuition  
176 NNS: okay but in this situation I cannot er forget Tim  
177 NS: no I appreciate that  
178 NNS: it's unfair (laughter)  
179 NS: no I didn't realise that at first when you mentioned Tim. I  
180 didn't quite follow what you were getting at.  
181 NNS: Okay

## SITUATION S3(1) -P/-D

NNS: Malay Female

NS: English (Scottish) Female

- 1 NS: Well, Siti, erm \* I was **thinking** of having a party \* tomorrow  
 2 night \* if \* you're not busy studying (5 sec.) and, um \* well, my  
 3 stereo's broken, huh, and I was wondering if uum \* if you're not  
 4 doing anything with your stereo, I could possibly borrow your  
 5 stereo for the party?
- 6 NNS: When did you say you are going to have the party?
- 7 NS: Uum, tomorrow night.
- 8 NNS: Oh, \*\*\* that's a problem
- 9 NS: Oh
- 10 NNS: you have to, er, you've never mentioned before you're  
 11 going to have, you're going to have a party.
- 12 NS: **well**, it's kind of spontaneous, just some friends, well, well,  
 13 we were, were just chatting down the shop.
- 14 NNS: But you \*\* uum \* I \* I've got a problem with your things,  
 15 the (inaudible) parties. You've never mentioned about a party  
 16 have you. I **feel** that is bad for me,  
 17 NS: yea
- 18 NNS: since I have to do my work...
- 19 NS: Uhu.
- 20 NNS: and this is the only place I can go to except the, the library \*  
 21 but I need to finish my work in time.
- 22 NS: Ah, but you're **always** working. Take a **night off**, I do.
- 23 NNS: I have to finish my work and \* if maybe it's not for you, for  
 24 me it's very important to get high marks. I don't know, since I, er,  
 25 you know, I'm on scholarship basis and I have to (to..
- 26 NS: Ah but) one day, **SURELY** one day's not going to make any  
 27 difference!
- 28 NNS: It makes a difference to me maybe it's not for you. \*\*\*
- 29 NS: Well, I've **arranged** it all, huh.
- 30 NNS: Can't you make another, er, can't you arrange it for another  
 31 day?
- 32 NS: Well, huh, I can't really, I mean if you're working does it  
 33 matter which day you take off?
- 34 NNS: I **really** have to finish my work for tomorrow.
- 35 NS: So if I have it the day after?
- 36 NNS: I feel the day is up to you.
- 37 NS: So if I if I choose Saturday night?
- 38 NNS: It's okay for me, I (think  
 39 NS: Right) and I can borrow your stereo?  
 40 NNS: Yea, that's okay.  
 41 NS: Oh, that's good (laugh)  
 42 NNS: (laugh)

## SITUATION S3(2) -P/-D

NNS: Malay Female

NS: English (English) Female

- 1 NS: Hi. How are you doing?  
 2 NNS: Fine, thanks.  
 3 NS: Did you have a good day today?  
 4 NNS: Not really.  
 5 NS: Why not?  
 6 NNS: (laughter)  
 7 NS: Working hard?  
 8 NNS: (laughter) because we have the exams coming.  
 9 NS: Ah yes. Uum, you know I like to give a lot of parties don't  
 10 you.  
 11 NNS: Well, (inaudible) (laughter)  
 12 NS: (laughter) anyway, I like to give a lot of parties, okay?.  
 13 NNS: Yea.  
 14 NS: Well, erm, I was wondering whether it would be possible to  
 15 give a party in our apartment tomorrow night \* and I know  
 16 you've got a lot of studying to do but would you agree \* to give a  
 17 party?  
 18 NNS: Course not.  
 19 NS: Why not?  
 20 NNS: I (inaudible) can't afford to do and er  
 21 NS: Oh, it will be very quiet.  
 22 NNS: Yea?  
 23 NS: Yea.  
 24 NNS: That's what I want. You can have a party somewhere else  
 25 (laughter)  
 26 NS: Are you sure?  
 27 NNS: Yea, not in my (apartment  
 28 NS: Couldn't) you, but it's my apartment too.  
 29 NNS: No (laughter)  
 30 NS: That's wasting (inaudible) (laughter)  
 31 NNS: Yea.  
 32 NS: Couldn't you go to...  
 33 NNS: You are irresponsible, you only, I thought you were a  
 34 student (inaudible)  
 35 NS: So, you couldn't go and spend an evening at your friend's  
 36 apartment...  
 37 NNS: No.  
 38 NS: ...to do your studies there?  
 39 NNS: Course not.  
 40 NS: Because our apartment is the only place we can have a party,  
 41 you see.  
 42 NNS: No, can ask your friends...  
 43 NS: But they don't (have anywhere to have a party.  
 44 NNS: or some other place).  
 45 NS: (...so they asked me.

46 NNS: So you can get-) postpone, postpone, party, later date.  
47 NS: Oh.  
48 NNS: After I have my work done.  
49 NS: But when will your work be done?  
50 NNS: Ah, by Saturday.  
51 NS: By Saturday.  
52 NNS: Friday, Friday or Saturday, you can have a party then.  
53 NS: So you're sure we can't have one tomorrow night.  
54 NNS: No.  
55 NS: Absolutely positive?  
56 NNS: (laughter) yes.  
57 NS: Even if we're very quiet and, of course, you're invited. Don't  
58 you think it would be fun for you to come to a party?  
59 NNS: But I have work to do, why should I come?  
60 NS: Ah, you don't have to work all the time.  
61 NNS: Huh, I have to.  
62 NS: Why?  
63 NNS: It's a lot of work.  
64 NS: Are you sure?  
65 NNS: Yes.  
66 NS: I'm sure you'll do well in your exams without working.  
67 NNS: Ah \* that's not possible.  
68 NS: But isn't it okay to relax for just one evening?  
69 NNS: Huh, how can I relax if I'm - if I haven't finished my work?  
70 NS: It (doesn't matter.  
71 NNS: I won't be enjoying myself) at the party.  
72 NS: But you have to have fun once in a while.  
73 NNS: Yea, after the exams, huh.  
74 NS: huh, yea. So you're sure you won't change your mind?  
75 NNS: No.  
76 NS: And you're sure that I can't have my half of the apartment for  
77 a party?  
78 NNS: Er, no, er, maybe some other time.  
79 NS: Okay, if that's what you want. Okay, so I book it for Saturday.  
80 NNS: (laughter)  
81 NS: Okay?  
82 NNS: Okay.  
83 NS: So, you won't let us have a party? You want to be very boring  
84 and work.  
85 NNS: I'm not boring, it's just that, er  
86 NS: Yea (inaudible)  
87 NNS: Why do you want so much to have a party? You've been  
88 having parties all the...  
89 NS: Yea, but its nice to have parties, you know?  
90 NNS: (You should realize  
91 NS: get on well with friends)  
92 NNS: it's irresponsible for...  
93 NS: No, I'm very responsible, I do my work quickly, you see

- 94 NNS: but not well (enough  
95 NS: yes) well enough. I get good marks!  
96 NNS: (laughter)  
97 NS: Okay?  
98 NNS: Okay.

## SITUATION D1(1) -P/+D

NNS: Malay male

NS: English (English) male

- 1 NNS: Hello  
 2 NS: Oh hello there  
 3 NNS: Are you \* Robert Dunston?  
 4 NS: I **am**. How did you know that?  
 5 NNS: Well I \*\* my parents knows \*\* knows your - your - your  
 6 father  
 7 NS: Ah \* so how do your parents know mine \* (parents  
 8 NNS: He - he) lives next door to \* to our - to our \* house  
 9 NS: ah  
 10 NNS: but I - I've seen you before  
 11 NS: yea I was going to say I think I have seen you as well  
 12 NNS: mm \* but I wonder \* are you visiting \*\*  
 13 NS: yes \* I have come yea I live in Australia  
 14 NNS: mm  
 15 NS: and because my parents work here I have just come over here  
 16 for \* a visit of maybe twelve weeks three months, just to see how  
 17 life is in Brunei and then \* I will be going back to my course \* in  
 18 Australia  
 19 NNS: I heard that from \* from my parents that you are very good  
 20 \* at singing and playing guitar  
 21 NS: Well it's er my fame has gone in front of me er I wouldn't call  
 22 myself **very** good but er \* they are two things that I do enjoy er I -  
 23 I like to go running and I like to play the guitar \* and singing,  
 24 singing along to my \* guitar  
 25 NNS: I see - see I 'm - I'm a student of Management Studies at the  
 26 \* University of Brunei Darussalam  
 27 NS: ah yes?  
 28 NNS: so we have made the arrangement to \*\* have the informal  
 29 party \* but \*\*\* but now we we we don't have so er \* a person that  
 30 can play guitar and \* sing \* (songs  
 31 NS: er ) where is this party?  
 32 NNS: it's in the University of Brunei  
 33 NS: And when would that be?  
 34 NNS: It's er, it will be, but I'm not sure, it will be on Tuesday  
 35 night.  
 36 NS: Tuesday night  
 37 NNS: Are you, do you have time?  
 38 NS: Well,\*\* I think \* unfortunately, that is a night that my parents  
 39 are having a party themselves.  
 40 NNS: (I see  
 41 NS: I think) they're having some kind of swimming party. I mean  
 42 it's not really my type of thing. As you know I prefer to go  
 43 running and playing guitar...  
 44 NNS: Uh-huh  
 45 NS: ...but, er, my parents are pressurising me to some extent that I  
 46 should stay in their party because I'm going on holiday.

- 47 NNS: Yes, I see  
48 NS: but I tell you what, I - I will consider, that is, the first to do  
49 what you're talking about, to go along to an informal party and  
50 mixing with people that I feel more relaxed with because quite  
51 honestly my parents' friends \* can be a little boring.  
52 NNS: Yea, there will be a lot of er people, you know, we invited er  
53 mostly students from er Management Studies and others  
54 NS: Mmm, but they'll be students  
55 NNS: Yea, they'll be students invited as well  
56 NS: Ah, that would be very good because you know the friends of  
57 my parents they are quite old and they are, well, they're a little bit  
58 boring, so for me to go to a student party, it would be better  
59 because I'm also a student in Australia.  
60 NNS: I see  
61 NS: I would prefer that, yea.  
62 NNS: Then we will have you, you know\*\* a singing contest (and  
63 NS: mm) But there would be many people at the party?  
64 NNS: We, we assume that there will be a lot you see since we  
65 have invited most of the Management students as well as the  
66 others, er, you know, students who are taking, taking..  
67 NS: Ah  
68 NNS: ...other courses  
69 NNS: I see, well  
70 NNS: ...that will be, you know, joy and fun.  
71 NS: Yea, er, uum, ah, ah, I do not mind maybe one or two people,  
72 may be even three people to play my guitar in front of but by  
73 party I thought you meant just a small group that I could maybe  
74 join in playing guitar with. To sit and sing in front of many  
75 people, uum, I do not think I would be able to come along to that.  
76 Er, I do not like being in the centre  
77 NNS: I see  
78 NS:...I like to sit behind people. I can play guitar and I like to sit  
79 behind someone else maybe or be next to someone else that can  
80 play. I do not like to  
81 NNS: But there'll be someone, ah, singing a song and you play  
82 guitar  
83 NS: But so many (people  
84 NNS: its) yes, there there will be a lot of people in the party see  
85 NS: Yea, see I - I get very nervous when I play in front of many  
86 people..  
87 NNS: Do you  
88 NS: and laughter), oh, I to sit in front of what what maybe fifty  
89 people or  
90 NNS: Yes, approximately  
91 NS: ah, I think, (I  
92 NNS: but) then its - it depends on the, what, you know, this  
93 depends on the response  
94 NS: Yes, but there'll be (more there'll be more than three or four  
95 NNS: yes there will be more certainly there will be) more more  
96 than four  
97 NS: ah I, I think I must say no (because...



98 NNS: Oh yes)  
99 NS: I, I do, I like small parties but not big parties I - oh, they, no I  
100 do not think I can go to that one. But very kind for the invitation  
101 but  
102 NNS: Yea  
103 NS: I think I will have to say \* no  
104 NNS: It's okay.

## SITUATION D1(2) -P/+D

NNS: Malay Male

NS: English (English) male

- 1 NNS: Hello  
 2 NS: Oh, hello, hi!  
 3 NNS: Hello  
 4 NS: Hi  
 5 NNS: What are you doing here?  
 6 NS: Ah, just having a drink... it's a bit er...  
 7 NNS: I see  
 8 NS: ...it's a bit hot today you know.  
 9 NNS: I think it is okay to me because our country is very, such a  
 10 very hot country  
 11 NS: Yea, it's very hot. Yea. I just find the sweat just pours off  
 12 me,\*\* almost all the time, so when I come to town I have to have a  
 13 drink as much as I can.  
 14 NNS: I know and er and I think for the first few weeks that you  
 15 come over here you can get some fever  
 16 NS: Some fever  
 17 NNS: Yes  
 18 NS: What from the heat?  
 19 NNS: I think so  
 20 NS: Aha, huh, yea,\* yea, well we don't want that  
 21 NNS: Where do you come from?  
 22 NS: I come from Australia  
 23 NNS: I see  
 24 NS: Yea, from Sydney  
 25 NNS: Sydney  
 26 NS: Yea  
 27 NNS: That's such a beautiful city  
 28 NS: Yea, I study there, I'm just here because my family are, my  
 29 parents are working in Brunei so I'm staying here with them  
 30 NNS: Ooh \* what's your name?  
 31 NS: My name is Frank  
 32 NNS: Oh, Frank, that's the one who plays guitar  
 33 NS: Aaah, yea, I play guitar, sure, I don't think I'm very (good.  
 34 NNS: and singing)  
 35 NS: Yea I sing but I don't think I'm very good  
 36 NNS: ah \*\* I think its quite well known because I heard from, I  
 37 think \* my parents \*\* that  
 38 NS: Yea?  
 39 NNS: So  
 40 NS: You heard that from your parents. How do your parents  
 41 know about playing the the guitar?  
 42 NNS: Maybe your parents are, I mean perhaps, uum \*\* er \*\*\*  
 43 NS: Perhaps that you mean perhaps that er my parents talk to  
 44 your parents, yea, maybe  
 45 NNS: maybe  
 46 NS: maybe, yea. Well, I suppose I ought to get going soon.

- 47 NNS: Going, soon, where?  
48 NS: Well, I mean, I was going to go to Klasse and over to Yaohan  
49 to finish my wash-my shopping.  
50 NNS: Oh \*\*  
51 NS: So (er  
52 NNS: Er)  
53 NS: Yea?  
54 NNS: Is lucky to meet you here because I think on \*\* Friday  
55 evening I have an informal party. I invite my friends, er, some of  
56 these are UBD students, and others from my family, so, so I  
57 decide to invite you to my party.  
58 NS: Oh, that's very nice (of you  
59 NNS: So you) please do come.  
60 NS: I'd love to come, you know, but, er, I mean I really would  
61 very much like to come. The only problem is that, I erm, I've  
62 promised somebody else that I would go to, er, go bird-watching  
63 with them on Friday evening, you know, and I think I will be  
64 leaving about five o'clock in the evening. What time does your  
65 party start?  
66 NNS: I think at, starting at eight  
67 NS: Oh what a shame. That will be right in the middle of my  
68 jungle walk looking for birds.  
69 NNS: Oh  
70 NS: They're special night birds that only fly at night.  
71 NNS: Couldn't you cancel and go out the next day?  
72 NS: Oh well, yea, well, it might be very difficult. Listen, why  
73 don't you give me your tele-your address and I'll er try and get  
74 over, I'll try and cancel my bird-watching exercise.  
75 NNS: You can contact me on telephone number 24790  
76 NS: 24790  
77 NNS: Okay and what's your name? It's er?  
78 NNS: Uum, just call me Haji Mohamad  
79 NS: Haji Mohamad  
80 NNS: (yea  
81 NS: okay) so okay, thanks Haji, listen, I'll see you around. I'd  
82 better go over to Klasse  
83 NNS: I see  
84 NS: Yea, I'm going to go and do some shopping, okay?  
85 NNS: I wish you, I wish you have a nice holiday in Brunei.  
86 NS: Oh, thanks mate, that's very nice of you.  
87 NNS: Okay  
88 NS: Okay, see you then, bye.  
89 NNS: Bye.

## SITUATION D2(1) -P/+D

NNS: Malay Male

NS: English (Canadian) Female

- 1 NNS: Hello. \*\* I er, I heard you you talk talking to your friend just  
2 now about something, you need information on Borneo, erm,  
3 you're doing some research on the anthropology of er Borneo.  
4 NS: Yes.  
5 NNS: (and that  
6 NS: oh sorry.) Yea, I'm working on a thesis on the people of Niah  
7 in Sarawak and I have a article here and I'm not sure which  
8 language it's in, could be the Dusun language but I don't know  
9 and I can't find anyone on campus who can translate. Are you  
10 from Borneo?  
11 NNS: Yes, I'm from Borneo and in fact, that er, \* I know some of  
12 the Dusun language.  
13 NS: Could you just have a look at this article for me? Just a quick  
14 look and see if you can follow through what it has to say I \*\*\* I  
15 need to translate it into English so I can understand what the  
16 article is about. I'm just finishing off my Ph.D. thesis. \*\*\* Are you  
17 here on a language course?  
18 NNS: Yes, I'm here on a language course.  
19 NS: Oh. Well, maybe if you could help me translate this article  
20 and if you need any help on the courses you're doing I could I  
21 could maybe help (you?  
22 NNS: Yea), Yea.  
23 NS: If you don't mind.  
24 NNS: Uhu. So we could exchange some informations.  
25 NS: Oh, that would be super because I don't have time to send  
26 this back to Borneo now that term's over.  
27 NNS: Yes, yes, uhu.  
28 NS: Oh that would be great. What's your name by the way?  
29 NNS: My name my name is Nadi.  
30 NS: Nadi? Oh my name is Gloria. Well, maybe we could meet up  
31 later then in the library...  
32 NNS: Yes  
33 NS: ... and go over some things if you don't mind?  
34 NNS: Yes, uh - huh.  
35 NS: Okay, that's super, are you staying on campus?  
36 NNS: Yes, I'm staying on campus.  
37 NS: Oh great. Well could I meet you at the library at about four?  
38 NNS: Yea, okay, I will be there.  
39 NS: Thank you very much.

## SITUATION D2(2) -P/+D

NNS: Malay Female

NS: English (Scottish) Male

- 1 NNS: Hello  
 2 NS: Oh, hi.  
 3 NNS: Well, I'm new around here but I couldn't help \* hearing  
 4 your conversation, er, something to do with, er,\* Dusun? Is that  
 5 right? Am I right?  
 6 NS: Well, yes, I mean, er, something to do with Dusun, yes, erm  
 7 it's a article we've got that er \* we think may be written in Dusun.  
 8 NNS: I see  
 9 NS: But, er, I \* I, do you know about Dusun? It's, it's, er, one of the  
 10 languages of er \* of Brunei. Brunei is a small country in erm...  
 11 NNS: Yea, actually I come from Brunei  
 12 NS: Oh, sorry, ah, very (sorry  
 13 NNS: Yea) that's why I couldn't help, er, listening to you, to your  
 14 conversation just now (er.  
 15 NS: So), do you speak Dusun?  
 16 NNS: Well, not exactly, not exactly, but I have a lot of friends, er,  
 17 Dusun friends and I'm used to hearing them, you know, speaking  
 18 in, well, I sometimes heard them speaking with er, because I, I,  
 19 know a little bit about that language...  
 20 NS: Oh, (well.  
 21 NNS: ...not) language, (but  
 22 NS: Well), perhaps we could do two things. If I showed you the  
 23 article you could \*\* tell me if it is in Dusun...  
 24 NNS: ah, sure.  
 25 NS: ...and then perhaps you could er \* perhaps you could  
 26 translate it. What language do you speak?  
 27 NNS: Well, I speak Malay.  
 28 NS: And  
 29 NNS: And I converse in English as (you  
 30 NS: Yes, of course) (inaudible overlapping speech) Yes, of course,  
 31 I mean, er, is Dusun similar to Malay?  
 32 NNS: Not exactly, but I think, er, there are similar, well I can say,  
 33 not exactly words but there are some, you know, connection  
 34 somehow, erm, for example, \*\* well \*\* I can't think of one at the  
 35 moment, (laugh) but...  
 36 NS: Ah.  
 37 NNS: ...but if you, if you, well if you show me the article  
 38 NS: (well, look...  
 39 NNS: maybe I could help?)  
 40 NS: ... I'll bring the article to you and we could perhaps go  
 41 through it together. I have a little bit of Malay that I picked up in  
 42 Sarawak, er, perhaps I should say what I'm doing. I'm doing, I'm  
 43 doing, er, I'm doing a, I'm writing a thesis about the, er, people of  
 44 Niah \*  
 45 NNS: Oh.  
 46 NS: In Sarawak, you know, where they have those caves and

47 things.  
48 NNS: Yes, have you been there?  
49 NS: Well, yes, I have, but, er, I mean, I learnt a lot about the  
50 people but not a lot about the language, I know a little about their  
51 dialect.  
52 NNS: Uum, er.  
53 NS: But, er, this Dusun article is just, is just (beyond me.  
54 NNS: Where), where did you get this Dusun article from?  
55 NS: Well, it was sent, it was sent to me from er \* it was sent from  
56 Brunei.  
57 NNS: Oh, I see.  
58 NS: Er, why the thing was written in Dusun, I, I really don't  
59 know,  
60 NNS: mm  
61 NS: but, er, it just came to me through the post from a friend  
62 who's working in the University of Brunei.  
63 NNS: Uum.  
64 NS: And, er, anyway, it will be, it appears that it will be very  
65 useful, for my, for my thesis because this is something that's very,  
66 the work, that this researcher had done is very similar to what I'm  
67 doing and it will be like comparing notes.  
68 NNS: Yes, I see, do you want this done, er, as soon as possible, I  
69 mean, you want to do your thesis as soon as possible?  
70 NS: Well, er, yes, I mean, I'd like to get this article done as soon as  
71 possible, read as soon as possible, just to see how useful it is er  
72 going to be.  
73 NNS: Do you think, er, it would be a good idea, I've got a friend,  
74 you know, a Dusun friend.  
75 NS: Here in Cambridge?  
76 NNS: Yes, yes.  
77 NS: Bring him along!  
78 NNS: Yea, that would be nice, (I mean  
79 NS: Well, look)  
80 NNS: Could even, er, well, talk, talk to (him.  
81 NS: Is he?) is he free this afternoon or today?  
82 NNS: Well, I don't know. Probably I can arrange for (him...  
83 NS: Well)  
84 NNS: ...to come.  
85 NS: Well, why don't we arrange a time \* er \* and then we could  
86 perhaps meet for lunch together and we could (I...  
87 NNS: Yes) (that would be a good idea)  
88 NS: ...could take you) for lunch and he can at least take a look at  
89 the article?  
90 NNS: Yes, I'm very pleased about that.  
91 NS: Thanks a lot, well, look, I'll give you my telephone number...  
92 NNS: Sure.  
93 NS: ...or I'll take your telephone number.  
94 NNS: Oh sure.  
95 NS: And I can, or you can perhaps call him and I'll give you a call  
96 \* this evening, will you be in about seven o'clock?  
97 NNS: Alright.

98 NS: (Right  
99 NNS: that would)  
100 NS: So, if you give me your number please.  
101 NNS: Okay, my number is, erm, 32949S7.  
102 NS: 3294957, that's a long number. 3294957, right, I've got a note  
103 of that so I'll get in touch tonight, round about, round about seven  
104 o'clock.  
105 NNS: Alright, that'll be fine.  
106 NS: That's terrific, well, thank you, thank you very much indeed.  
107 NNS: Pleasure. (Pleasure  
108 NS: And I look forward) to meeting your friend.  
109 NNS: okay  
110 NS: Okay, bye.  
111 NNS: Goodbye.

## SITUATION D3(1) -P/+D

NNS: Malay Male

NS: English (Australian) Female

- 1 NNS: Hello, I'd like to ask whether you drive a car, the car with \*  
2 diplomatic plates. It's...  
3 NS: Diplomatic plates? \* Yes \* I've got a 4-wheel drive.  
4 NNS: A 4-wheel drive.  
5 NS: Yes  
6 NNS: (laugh) \*\*  
7 NS: Can I help you?  
8 NNS: Thank you, yes, of course umm \* I would like to, just - to  
9 like to know - just like to to enquire whether you're the one who's  
10 driving \*\* the car (5 sec.) driving the Land Cruiser.  
11 NS: Uh? (inaudible)  
12 NNS: Yea.  
13 NS: Yea. You were parked at the squash courts the other day?  
14 NNS: Pardon?  
15 NS: You were at the squash courts the other day? Oh no. Then it  
16 was before the squash courts.  
17 NNS: Yea.  
18 NS: Well (laugh)  
19 (7 sec.)  
20 NS: Have you got a problem?  
21 NNS: Yes, er, I (5 sec.) I have have a scratch on my father's  
22 Mercedes car and, and I believe it was caused by your Land  
23 Cruiser.  
24 NS: Well, what makes you think that?  
25 NNS: Oh, because I saw you the other day.  
26 NS: you **SAW ME!**  
27 (5 seconds)  
28 NNS: Yes, yes.  
29 NS: Well, I was I was in a terrible hurry, I was backing the car out  
30 \* and I stopped, and I thought I may have scratched your car \* but  
31 then I didn't know if it was me or if it was there already so I did  
32 nothing.  
33 NNS: The paint was not scratched, it was in such good condition  
34 the day you...  
35 NS: And you saw me do it?  
36 NNS: I think so.  
37 NS: You think so? Ah. Well, perhaps, perhaps it was me. Umm,  
38 well what would you like to do? Are you insured or? \*\*\* It's such  
39 a small scratch though it's hardly worth it.  
40 NNS: Yea, but, but the problem is, the problem is that the car is  
41 not belonging to me. It's my boss's car.  
42 NS: Your boss's car.  
43 NNS: Yes.  
44 NS: Ah. Well it's a company car.  
45 NNS: No, it's not, it's my boss's, my boss...  
46 NS: He's got enough money to pay for it himself then!



47 NNS: Ah, no.  
48 NS: I'm just a poor housewife.  
49 NNS: But the problem is, ah, I have to look after this car since I'm  
50 using it. My boss will \* be very mad at me to find it in such  
51 condition.  
52 NS: Do you think he'll notice?  
53 NNS: What's that?  
54 NS: Do you think he'll notice that little scratch?  
55 NNS: You?  
56 NS: That little scratch on the car, do you think he'll notice it?  
57 NNS: Yes, I think so, he's got a sharp eyes.  
58 NS: Ah. \* so you'll have to give it a bit of paintwork, you think \*\*  
59 you don't think your father will pay for it?  
60 NNS: No, I don't think so.  
61 NS: Well, you er were just over the line \* in the parking space and  
62 were taking up the two spaces but I am partly in the wrong so  
63 how about we, we go halves?  
64 NNS: Pardon?  
65 NS: How about we go halves in the repair bill? Rather than me  
66 paying the whole lot. You're partly at fault taking up two spaces.  
67 NNS: But no. The problem is I got no money.  
68 NS: Nor have I.  
69 NNS: Very funny. (4 sec.)  
70 NS: Well, how about you go and get some quotes? \*\* and we'll  
71 work it out after that.  
72 NNS: Okay then, we'll do, then we'll do it.  
73 NS: Okay we see what the quotes come to and if I can afford it, if  
74 it's only a small amount. Okay? Otherwise we might have to get  
75 somebody to arbitrate for us.  
76 NNS: It shouldn't be necessary though.  
77 NS: Solves that problem. You get the quotes \* and we'll work it  
78 out from there.  
79 NNS: Okay.  
80 NS: Okay.  
81 NNS: Yes.

## SITUATION D3(2) -P/+D

NNS: Malay male

NS: English (English) male

- 1 NNS: Good morning sir  
 2 NS: Oh hi, good morning \* yeah  
 3 NNS: good morning  
 4 NS: good morning  
 5 NNS: morning sir er \*\*\* are you \*\* are you from \* Australia em - er  
 6 \*\* are you from Australia?  
 7 NS: yeah but \* I wo - I work at the Australian High Commission  
 8 NNS: ah  
 9 NS: yes \* that's right  
 10 NNS: er is it you \* own the \* er old Land Cruiser?  
 11 NS: oh-oh er yes, yes I do yes that - that's mine that that you see  
 12 in the drive there that Land Cruiser \* (yeah  
 13 NNS: ah I think er \*\* I think you \*\* you scrape er my \* my my car  
 14 \*\* in the \* parking lot \* this mor - this afternoon  
 15 NS: oh-oh, oh I see, erm \* yeah er yeah I think I might have done  
 16 I'm I'm really sorry about that er \*\* wha - wa - wa was it a bad  
 17 scratch I \* didn't think I touched I - I - I think I just touched your  
 18 car but I didn't think I really \* scratched it  
 19 NNS: I saw it \* there's a long scratch \* in the \* er \* in the in the left  
 20 hand door  
 21 NS: oh dear I'm I'm really sorry I was \* I was very late for a er an  
 22 appointment and I was reversing out you know (and er  
 23 NNS: I see)  
 24 NS: I - I couldn't see through the back \* windscreen because it was  
 25 muddy so I opened the door \*  
 26 NNS: yeah  
 27 NS: to reverse \* and I think my door \* might have touched \* your  
 28 car then \* so it's a a blue \* Mercedes (then yes  
 29 NNS: yeah the) blue one  
 30 NS: yes \* oh yeah well I'm really sorry about that \* erm \* right  
 31 well er \* what er what shall we do about this?  
 32 NNS: er \*\*\* I wan - er I want to \* you to \* repair my car  
 33 NS: erm yeah right well that yeah \* er \* okay erm I'm not sure  
 34 about my insurance policy, I think there's a - well I am insured  
 35 don't worry but  
 36 NNS: yeah  
 37 NS: there's a a no claims er \* clause here isn't there in Brunei erm \*  
 38 so \* I tell you what, if- if you if you leave me your name and  
 39 address \* and telephone number  
 40 NNS: yeah  
 41 NS: I'll check with my insurance company \* er how much my no  
 42 claims is because it may may be better for me just to pay \*  
 43 NNS: yeah  
 44 NS: you \* because it's just the - just \* one door is it  
 45 NNS: yeah one door  
 46 NS: there's no more so it'd just be re-spraying one door (right?)

47 NNS: yeah)

48 NS: so that that might be cheaper to - for me to pay \* you cash \* to

49 do that than to get my \* insurance company and (you know

50 NNS: yeah)

51 NS: then I'll lose my no claims and that might be more expensive \*

52 do \* do you know how much it would cost to spray?

53 NNS: maybe it would er \*\* two hundred dollars

54 NS: two hundred two hundred dollars yeah that's just about \*\*

55 kind of \* the no claims \* okay I better check that, but I think I'll

56 probably just \* pay you cash

57 NNS: yeah

58 NS: er \* if it's about two hundred dollars yeah \* an expensive

59 scratch (yeah

60 NNS: (laugh))

61 NS: erm \* okay well I'm really sorry \* about that but if you leave

62 me your name (address

63 NNS: yeah)

64 NS: telephone number

65 NNS: I live - actually I live below \* below

66 NS: Oh you (you

67 NNS: yeah)

68 NS: you live here

69 NNS: yeah live the same building yeah

70 NS: oh well that - that's easier then, right, okay, erm \* okay well

71 that's much easier okay, well look \* I tell you what, could could

72 you get an estimate for re-spraying the door\*

73 NNS: yeah

74 NS: and then \* come back and \* and erm let me see it \*

75 NNS: yea yeah

76 NS: and er then I'll - I'll either give you cash or or a cheque you

77 know \* or you know we go the insurance people

78 NNS: first thing I - I \* I take my - my car to the workshop first

79 then I ask for the the cost then

80 NS: right

81 NNS: and tell you

82 NS: then you tell me yes that's it, yeah, so \* get - find out how

83 much it'll be, come back to me, and then \* I'll er work out how to

84 pay you

85 NNS: yeah

86 NS: you know, insurance or \* just cash

87 NNS: yeah

88 NS: yeah

89 NNS: thank you sir

90 NS: okay well thanks a lot I'm really sorry \* (about this

91 NNS: yeah)

92 NS: but er I mean you know \* you \* you come - come back to me

93 as soon as you know

94 NNS: yeah

95 NS: how much it costs

96 NNS: yeah  
97 NS: okay?  
98 NNS: okay  
99 NS: right okay, bye  
100 NNS: bye

## SITUATION A1(1) +P/+D

NNS: Malay Male (M)

NS: English (Canadian) Female (F)

- 1 NS: Hello everyone! \*\*\* You grabbing a cup of coffee? \*\*\*  
 2 NNS: You want a coffee?  
 3 NS: No, I don't drink coffee. So er what is everyone doing for the  
 4 weekend?  
 5 NNS: well \* er \*\*\* actually I'm trying to organise, er \* some party.  
 6 NS: Oh really? (When?  
 7 NNS: Yes) er \* it's just between the staff and er \* and I would like  
 8 to, if you're not busy, to invite you.  
 9 NS: Oh that sounds like a nice idea. Where are you having it?  
 10 NNS: Um \*\* well \* I haven't decided where to \*\* organise this  
 11 party but um \* probably \*\* at er Brunei Hall in London.  
 12 NS: Oh that sounds very nice. And when do you think you'll have  
 13 it? What night? Saturday? Sunday?  
 14 NNS: Um my plan is to organise it on er Saturday night.  
 15 NS: Saturday night.  
 16 NNS: Yes  
 17 NS: Oh, it might be difficult. I have a dinner with my in-laws. I  
 18 don't know how late that will go. When do you think you'll have  
 19 the party, for how long will it be?  
 20 NNS: Well at start at at seven and um \*\* and  
 21 NS: And. It is a supper party or just for...  
 22 NNS: Sorry?  
 23 NS: Is it going to be a supper party or - an eating party to have  
 24 something to eat, or just, well, er, socialising?  
 25 NNS: Yea, it's just for socialising (yea.  
 26 NS: Oh) Well, that that shouldn't be too hard to arrange. We're  
 27 supposed to go over to \* my in-laws place at about six-thirty for  
 28 supper. We'll make it fairly early and I think we can make it there  
 29 for about nine, at least for the last hour of the (party.  
 30 NNS: Yes), the the main reason I have organised this party is  
 31 actually that I am new here...  
 32 NS: Mhm.  
 33 NNS: and I need to \* sort of \* to be \* in a way \* socialise with the  
 34 other members of the...  
 35 NS: Oh. That's really nice Haji because we've been  
 36 so busy we just haven't had time to get together...  
 37 NNS: Yes.  
 38 NS: as a company just for a company do. That would be really  
 39 good. And everyone can bring their spouses or \*\* girlfriends and  
 40 boyfriends...  
 41 NNS: Yes

42 NS: get to know each other. That's really nice Haji. Okay well you  
43 work on it \*\* and give me the details but we will try to make it on  
44 Saturday night and we'll just try to leave the dinner early, it's  
45 nothing special. It's just a supper with the in-laws.  
46 NNS: Yea, I'll appreciate it if you could come.  
47 NS: Oh! Okay! Well, we will. Don't worry! Alright Haji.

## SITUATION A1(2) +P/+D

NNS: Malay female

NS: English (Scottish) male

- 1 NS: Have you got your coffee, er, Noorqamar, er, that, that was  
 2 poured for somebody else (but,er  
 3 NNS: Oh, I need) not because I'm full because I've just eat.  
 4 NS: You've just eaten  
 5 NNS: Yeah (laughter)  
 6 NS: Ah, I, yea, well, erm, we like, you know we like to get  
 7 together over coffee in this, er, agency because, I feel, well, it's  
 8 important that we get to know one another \* well, and it should  
 9 be, everybody should feel they're a part of the team...  
 10 NNS: Oh yes.  
 11 NS: ...and, er, since you, you're the newest here aren't you? (You...  
 12 NNS: Yes)  
 13 NS: ...just started a month ago.  
 14 NNS: Uh-huh.  
 15 NS: Are you enjoying working here?  
 16 NNS: Yea, I really enjoy working here. In fact, as being a  
 17 Bruneian, at first I feel quite, I feel quite an outsider working in  
 18 this agency...  
 19 NS: Uhu.  
 20 NNS: ...but, but I'm quite, I'm not adjusting to the situation.  
 21 NS: Uhu.  
 22 NNS: Ah, before I forget, Mr Swan, Sir, er, er, I'm at this instant,  
 23 I'm organising a, a party for our agency, so, you are the last  
 24 person that I would like to invite, because, because I'm new  
 25 around here and I'm quite afraid to approach you, so, I would like  
 26 you to come to this, to this party, which (will be...  
 27 NS: Well, well) when is the party?  
 28 NNS: Sorry?  
 29 NS: When is the party?  
 30 NNS: Oh, it's on Saturday evening.  
 31 NS: Oh, this coming Saturday?  
 32 NNS: Yes.  
 33 NS: Ah, well now that's a problem for me because, er, my wife  
 34 has, er, organised a dinner party...  
 35 NNS: Oh I (see.  
 36 NS: ...for) this Saturday, for her mother and father...  
 37 NNS: Mm.  
 38 NS: ...I don't really like them very much but, er, they, er, they've  
 39 been invited round to our house on, on Saturday of this week.  
 40 NNS: Oh.  
 41 NS: And, er, I don't really think I can get out of that, er, as much  
 42 as I would like to get out of that, and...  
 43 NNS: Yea.  
 44 NS: ...I'm sure your party would be much nicer to go to!  
 45 NNS: Yea.

- 46 NS: But, er, I think I would have to apologize and erm, perhaps,  
 47 er, perhaps another time, would that be, would, would there be  
 48 another party sometime, that I could come to?
- 49 NNS: I hope so, but, mmm, maybe there will be another party  
 50 which will, be held perhaps next month. Maybe you could come  
 51 for the next party, along with your wife and, er, we can, mix, mix  
 52 with...
- 53 NS: Yea.
- 54 NNS: ...the rest of the, er, our workers and...
- 55 NS: Right.
- 56 NNS: ...families, yea.
- 57 NS: Could, maybe you could give us some warning next time you  
 58 could give us (longer...)
- 59 NNS: Yea)
- 60 NS: I can, I'll put it on my calender.
- 61 NNS: That's my mistake anyway. I should have invited you  
 62 earlier because, I'm, I'm quite new around here as I said so I'm  
 63 afraid to approach you...
- 64 NS: Mm.
- 65 NNS: ...(after all
- 66 NS: But you shouldn't) be, I mean, everybody here should be able  
 67 to come and talk to Uncle John and er, you know, this is this kind  
 68 of agency where we like people to be, good friends and, er, if  
 69 you've got a problem or if you've got something to discuss, come  
 70 in, erm, mind you, I must admit I'm always busy...
- 71 NNS: (Yes
- 72 NS: and) er, in fact, er, I have somebody, I have to see in a few  
 73 minutes now but, er...
- 74 NNS: Yea.
- 75 NS: but you should feel free to come anytime, erm, I'm not with a  
 76 client, or if there is something that, er, you want to discuss...
- 77 NNS: Yea.
- 78 NS: certainly if you've got an invitation...
- 79 NNS: Yes, I will do it.
- 80 NS: I'd be pleased to accept it.
- 81 NNS: mm, so I will be here for about two months...
- 82 NS: Aha.
- 83 NNS: I'm just on, you know, on a temporary basis.
- 84 NS: Right.
- 85 NNS: I'm a student from Brunei just doing an economics course  
 86 here, so maybe **next month** I will approach you. That's, that will  
 87 be on my final, final, I mean I will be here, I'll be working at this  
 88 agency for the last time.
- 89 NS: Right.
- 90 NNS: Yea, I will, I will approach you **earlier** (laughter)
- 91 NS: Erm.
- 92 NNS: So that I can (warn you



- 93 NS: So, so that's) a **promise** is it?  
94 NNS: Yes, yea, that's a (promise  
95 NS: Alright) good, thank you.  
96 NNS: Thank you.  
97 NS: Alright.  
98 NNS: (laughter)

## SITUATION A2(1) +P/+D

NNS: Malay Female

NS: English (Scottish) Female

- 1 NNS: Anybody in?  
 2 NS: Oh. Hello.  
 3 NNS: Uum, er, do you remember me?  
 4 NS: Uum, you're the Bruneian girl who lives with Mrs Johnson?  
 5 NNS: Yes, I do.  
 6 NS: Aha, yes.  
 7 NNS: Uumm, I would like to ask you whether, er, whether you  
 8 have got a replacement for the, er, for babysitting your babies?  
 9 NS: uuh, that's awkward, er \* well, I've asked the girl down the  
 10 road...  
 11 NNS: Oh I (see  
 12 NS: ...only) only problem is \* she's fourteen \*\* and well...  
 13 NNS: Yes, she's too young for you.  
 14 NS: Yes \* but, what, what to do I mean  
 15 NNS: Would you like me to - would you like me to babysit for the  
 16 baby with her along \* I could stay (inaud.)  
 17 NS: Oh, that means paying two people \* that's, you see my  
 18 husband and I were going out, and \* well with having two little  
 19 kids anyway, things are a bit expensive and if I have to pay two  
 20 babysitters.  
 21 NNS: Yes, erm.  
 22 NS: It's a bit...  
 23 NNS: You don't have to pay me.  
 24 NS: Oh, but I can't expect you to come and babysit and not pay  
 25 you, I mean, ah no! I mean, we don't do that. (5 seconds)  
 26 NNS: Do you mind if I ask, ask you something?  
 27 NS: No, not at all, go ahead.  
 28 NNS: Actually, er, actually I wonder if I could use your, your TV  
 29 or video, it's er, just, then you don't have to pay me.  
 30 NS: Uuh.  
 31 NNS: since, I am in a desperate - I'm very desperate to see er this  
 32 Brunei programme...  
 33 NS: Ah.  
 34 NNS: ...on the TV. I'm very desperate to watch it.  
 35 NS: Aha,  
 36 NNS: So I would, er, I think its only appropriate if \* you let me to  
 37 see, to watch the TV and don't have to pay me. Do you like the  
 38 idea?  
 39 NS: Ah, yes, er, well that sounds good to me, but, well I don't  
 40 well, if you'd get on with this fourteen-year-old yea you see \*\*  
 41 NNS: Yea?  
 42 NS: you know, you're a nice Bruneian girl, she's a punk rocker.  
 43 NNS: Oh, I think I can cope with...  
 44 NS: (laugh)  
 45 NNS: ...with her

46 NS: You think you can cope with her and my two little children?  
47 NNS: Yes, yes, I've seen them around...  
48 NS: Yea?  
49 NNS: ...such people, I mean, I've seen such people around even if  
50 they dress like that!  
51 NS: Yes, okay, I tell you what \* if you come round tomorrow  
52 night and she's here I will give you, maybe, ten minutes, and if  
53 you don't like each other...  
54 NNS: Okay.  
55 NS: ...then you're free to go, okay?  
56 NNS: Yea, that would be fine.

## SITUATION A2(2) +P/+D

NNS: Malay Female

NS: English (English) Female

- 1 NS: Hi! How are you?  
 2 NNS: Oh, fine thank you.  
 3 NS: Good, are you enjoying yourself?  
 4 NNS: Oh yes I **am**.  
 5 NS: Working hard?  
 6 NNS: \*\* Yes, it seems like that (laughter)  
 7 NS: So, uum, I asked, er, one of - someone you know, Mrs  
 8 Johnson..  
 9 NNS: Uhu.  
 10 NS: ...to ask you to come and babysit for me. But she says that  
 11 you won't come.  
 12 NNS: Yea, but I have something to do. I have to watch, I'd like to  
 13 watch the, er, the documentary film on Brunei.  
 14 NS: Well, couldn't you come and watch it at my house while  
 15 you're babysitting?  
 16 NNS: uum, well uum \*\* er, actually its like this you see (laugh)  
 17 uum, I like to do my homework, I hate to go - I hate to carry my  
 18 books to (laughter) some other places, you see.  
 19 NS: (Why?)  
 20 NNS: for) I prefer to \* just to stay in one place. While watching the  
 21 video then I do, at the same time I do my work.  
 22 NS: But are you sure you couldn't bring your work with you?  
 23 Because it would be very easy just to bring it.  
 24 NNS: No, I don't think so.  
 25 NS: Why?  
 26 NNS: (laughter) that's what I told you just now (laughter)  
 27 NS: Why couldn't you bring it with you, I mean, you can just pick  
 28 them up and carry your books and then sit down in front of the  
 29 television, watch the film, solve all my problems for (me).  
 30 NNS: Well) if I study I like to, I prefer to study, with, er, in the  
 31 place which I'm familiar with. So your place seems to be new to  
 32 me (laughter) er.  
 33 NS: Uum.  
 34 NNS: (inaudible) I prefer to stay at Mrs Johnson's.  
 35 NS: But isn't her place quite strange to you as well?  
 36 NNS: No, because I've been staying there for a month.  
 37 NS: Are you, I suppose so (huh...  
 38 NNS: Yes  
 39 NS: ... well, are you sure you couldn't just come and do the work  
 40 at our house or couldn't you leave your work for another  
 41 evening?  
 42 NNS: Uum, how about your **children**?  
 43 NS: What about them?  
 44 NNS: Er, how old, how old are your children?  
 45 NS: Uum, Mick, as you should know is two and...

46 NNS: Mm.  
47 NS: ...and Pete is four.  
48 NNS: Ah \*\* two and four.  
49 NS: So they wouldn't be much trouble. They'd just stay in bed  
50 while you do your work and watch the television downstairs.  
51 NNS: Well, let's see if I can make it. And you have a video in your  
52 house?  
53 NS: Yes, of course.  
54 NNS: Yea, if \*\* if Mrs Johnson, now, won't be going away, I mean  
55 if the family isn't going anywhere, I think, yea, probably, I can  
56 come to your house...  
57 NS: Oh (great  
58 NNS: and babysit).  
59 NS: Oh, that's brilliant because the other girl that...  
60 NNS: Mm.  
61 NS: ...Mrs Johnson (inaudible) is a bit young, so...  
62 NNS: Mm.  
63 NS: ...so I think it would be better if you came. Oh, that's great.  
64 Thank you very much.  
65 NNS: Mm. okay, welcome, I can see you (laughter).  
66 NS: (laughter) Bye.  
67 NNS: Bye.

## SITUATION A3(1) +P/+D

NNS: Malay Female

NS: English (Australian) Female

- 1 NNS: I have something, could I speak for - to you for a while?  
 2 NS: Yes, right, come in.  
 3 NNS: Okay, umm \*\* well I well erm (6 sec.) can I get straight to  
 4 the point?  
 5 NS: Yes, there's something I want to talk to you about too,  
 6 actually.  
 7 NNS: Umm \* I heard from \* one of the lecturers said er \*\* that  
 8 tomorrow is supposed to be my holiday and \* then I heard that  
 9 it's \* going to \* erm \* it has been put off \* and \* can I know the  
 10 circumstances?  
 11 NS: Well, actually that's what I was going to be - speak to you  
 12 about. I was hoping that you would be able to help me out  
 13 tomorrow. Erm, by coming in tomorrow and perhaps having  
 14 another day off during the week, any day of your choice.  
 15 NNS: So, er (what will  
 16 NS: Is there) a problem with that?  
 17 NNS: Yes, erm, but the first thing I want to do, you will be doing  
 18 tomorrow?  
 19 NS: What will I be doing tomorrow?  
 20 NNS: Er \*\* in this case I think to discuss what we will do  
 21 tomorrow to see if erm \*\* since it's \* er \* whether it it has been  
 22 necessary to put off to some other date for \*\*\* so, erm, I'll be doing  
 23 my normal work or?  
 24 NS: Oh. Well I thought you'd be able to generally help me out  
 25 tomorrow, just, er \*\* er \*\* you know \*\* just be here. It's your  
 26 normal day's work.  
 27 NNS: So, what, no other duties?  
 28 NS: Well, I have, I have a bit of a problem actually \* erm \* things  
 29 are, are just getting on top of me at the moment. I just I just need  
 30 your help that's all. You're very good umm in a task like that and  
 31 I hope tomorrow you'll, you'll be able to erm just do a few jobs for  
 32 me. \*\*\* I really need a day off tomorrow and it would really help  
 33 me if you could come in. Is that, is that a problem?  
 34 NNS: Yes, because I have made erm \* a plan to be with my friend.  
 35 We, er, we plan to go somewhere and then er \* I think its (inaud.)  
 36 already this date, and then, I promised my friends that I'll be sure  
 37 to be with them tomorrow.  
 38 NS: Could you get in touch with her? This is really important to  
 39 me that, that I have the day off tomorrow.  
 40 NNS: But isn't it I mean we have arrange it er, quite a long time  
 41 already  
 42 NS: You couldn't, you couldn't change your plans for another  
 43 day, er, any other day of the week but I desperately need you in  
 44 tomorrow. It's really important for me. \*\*\*  
 45 NNS: Actually, I was er \* asking \*\* erm, if you can consider it like

46 this. first er (5 sec.) I don't know, let me tell you the truth \*\* er, so  
47 \* I think that er \*\* I think that I need a holiday so that even if it's  
48 only for a day er \*\* I've been working very hard.

49 NS: Yes, yes.

50 NNS: Yes.

51 NS: And I appreciate the work you've done but its a...

52 NNS: Yes but sometimes er \* I'm not, happy with the situation \*\*  
53 because erm \* but I think er \* I hope that you, you won't be very  
54 angry with what I have to say.

55 NS: No. Come on. Be honest.

56 NNS: It's just that erm \*\* well I know that I have to do a lot of  
57 work here.

58 NS: Yea.

59 NNS: erm, have to feed all the animals er \*\* and the many other  
60 things.

61 NS: Yes.

62 NNS: But apart from that \* er I'm asked to do some other works  
63 which, which are not relevant to to I mean to why I come here...

64 NS: Yes.

65 NNS: ...to study.

66 NS: Only you don't like that?

67 NNS: er, not really. I like, I like, I like your two children but, but  
68 then \* erm \*\* sometimes, erm, I don't like being forced to do  
69 things er that I don't - not, not (part of

70 NS: not part of your job). Okay (fair enough

71 NNS: I don't)

72 NS: Fair enough. Well let me be honest with you.

73 NNS: Okay.

74 NS: If, if I \* can impose upon you to to come in tomorrow \*\*  
75 perhaps all our problems will be solved. I'm going for a job  
76 interview \*\* which is closer to my family. If I get this job \*\* erm  
77 then perhaps \* I'll be out of your hair \* and you won't need to do  
78 these things. If I could just \* ask you to come in tomorrow as I  
79 say, it's, it's very very important to me. If I get this job \*\* our  
80 problems are solved.

81 NNS: Even if my (inaud.) er, its very difficult for me to contact all  
82 my friends that I have met here I have to \* er \*\* have to tell them  
83 the news so they won't get disappointed and perhaps we can  
84 arrange for another day but erm the trouble is that \*\* erm \*\* for I  
85 have to \* erm to talk to them this afternoon. So can I just leave  
86 work already, a few hours and try to find them?

87 NS: This afternoon?

88 NNS: Yes.

89 NS: Yes, that will be fine this afternoon. Please try hard to and try  
90 and help and get to get into work tomorrow and then perhaps  
91 you know, I won't have to call on you again. If I get this job \* I'm  
92 away.

93 NNS: I don't know. I mean why you're going to leave this place?

94 NS: It would solve a lot of problems if I could get away. All my  
95 problems would be solved. And perhaps yours too, you, you

- 96 won't have to work in the garden or with the children anymore.  
97 NNS: But I love working in the garden and \* looking after the  
98 children, I should, I miss them so much.  
99 NS: Yea, if you could keep that that confidential though. I don't  
100 want anyone else to know. But, er, I'll have all sorts of problems if  
101 you can't come in tomorrow, because I'll have to miss the  
102 interview.  
103 NNS: Okay, okay that will be fine.  
104 NS: Great. Thank you very much Aini.  
105 NNS: Same to you.



## SITUATION A3(2) +P/+D

NNS: Malay Female

NS: English (English) Female

- 1 NS: Hi! How are you? Have you had a good week?  
 2 NNS: No.  
 3 NS: Why?  
 4 NNS: You've been asking me to do a lot of work to do.  
 5 NS: Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't realise I'd asked you to do that much.  
 6 Have I been over-working you?  
 7 NNS: Yea.  
 8 NS: Oh, I'm really sorry. What, what do you think I've given you  
 9 that's too hard?  
 10 NNS: You give me my work, then, you make sure that I do things  
 11 in between, like...  
 12 NS: Umm, I (don't  
 13 NNS: ...looking) after your children, like, er, working on the  
 14 garden.  
 15 NS: Well, I'm afraid I've got something else to tell you. Uum, I  
 16 have to go for a job interview and I won't be able to work full time  
 17 this week, so \* uum \* do you think you could work on your days  
 18 off and I'll give them to you another week?  
 19 NNS: No!  
 20 NS: Why?  
 21 NNS: Because tomorrow, Wednesday, is my day off and I really  
 22 want it very much.  
 23 NS: Why do you want it very much?  
 24 NNS: Because I promised my mother to go shopping \* with her.  
 25 NS: Why can't you go shopping with her on Thursday?  
 26 NNS: I, because I already promised her.  
 27 NS: But surely you could make it Thursday I'm (in a...  
 28 NNS: No, I can't)  
 29 NS: ...real trouble here, I can't come to work on Wednesday.  
 30 NNS: You can ask somebody else. If (you're  
 31 NS: No, there's)  
 32 NNS: (asking me  
 33 NS: no one else) to ask.  
 34 NNS: It shouldn't be too much.  
 35 NS: Well, I'm sure you wouldn't mind just one (extra day  
 36 NNS: Ah, I do) mind.  
 37 NS: (Why.  
 38 NNS: because) tomorrow I promised my mother.  
 39 NS: but why can't you (shop on Thursday?  
 40 NNS: to do shopping, lah) cannot, 'cause she won't be here on  
 41 Thursday.  
 42 NS: Why? What, is she going somewhere?  
 43 NNS: Yes (inaudible) she's not staying here, she's in K.B.  
 44 NS: Ah, I see, well, couldn't you just try because I mean, I am  
 45 your boss.

- 46 NNS: Yea, you're my boss but you've been working me too hard.  
47 NS: Oh, I don't think so.  
48 NNS: Yes, you do.  
49 NS: No, no one else has complained and I work them the same as  
50 (you  
51 NNS: because) they don't dare to, to tell you, what they want to  
52 tell you.  
53 NS: I'm sure that's not true.  
54 NNS: Ah, that's true, you've been working me too hard.  
55 NS: Maybe you're just lazy?  
56 NNS: **YOU ARE** the one who's lazy. You've been asking me...  
57 NS: No.  
58 NNS: ...to do your work!  
59 NS: Yea, but I'll give you Thursday off instead which is usually...  
60 NNS: Aha.  
61 NS: ...my day off.  
62 NNS: No, because it's my day off tomorrow, I can't, I can't  
63 cancel it.  
64 NS: But usually, since - as we're friends, I mean you can easily  
65 change it.  
66 NNS: No, I can't because I promised my mother.  
67 NS: Tuh!  
68 NNS: It's hard to break promises with her.  
69 NS: Ah, it's hard, ah yea, (laughter)  
70 NNS: Ah.  
71 NS: Urm \*, but  
72 NNS: What are you doing tomorrow?  
73 NS: Tomorrow, I have a job interview.  
74 NNS: Why don't you cancel it then?  
75 NS: **I CAN'T. IMPOSSIBLE** (I can't  
76 NNS: You see?) It's impossible for me too.  
77 NS: No, it's more impossible for me, I'm sure. This is just your  
78 mother, this is a job interview that (I have to  
79 NNS: This is er) I'm obliged to, I'm obliged to make her happy.  
80 NS: Yes \* (laughter)  
81 NNS: (laughter)  
82 NS: So, you couldn't even just work for half a day tomorrow? I  
83 mean it doesn't take you (all day...  
84 NNS: Positively not).  
85 NS: I mean it doesn't take you all, the whole day (to shop.  
86 NNS: because) I have to, be, er, we plan to go shopping a lot.  
87 NS: Well, there's so few shops in Brunei it won't take you the  
88 (whole day.  
89 NNS: I'm going) to the four districts. I know my mother, she's  
90 very choosy.  
91 NS: Very choosy?  
92 NNS: Yea.  
93 NS: But it doesn't take you the whole day I'm sure.  
94 NNS: Yes it will.  
95 NS: I mean (you're

96 NNS: If it only) it takes a half a day then I'll be exhausted by then.  
97 Couldn't even do my work.  
98 NS: Not if you work in the morning and shop in the afternoon,  
99 you won't be exhausted.  
100 NNS: Mm, I don't think that's possible.  
101 NS: Why?  
102 NNS: Because I want, I want to take off tomorrow and I want to  
103 start work, I want to start shopping early morning.  
104 NS: Well, how about if I give you, if you work for half a day  
105 tomorrow and then I give you the whole day Thursday off.  
106 You've really gained half a day.  
107 NNS: No thanks, that's very kind of you but no thanks (laughter)  
108 NS: Ah, okay, well I'll try and find someone else to work for me.  
109 NNS: Yea (laughter)  
110 NS: Okay, thanks, bye.  
111 NNS: Bye, thanks.

## Role descriptions of simulation tasks

### Situation S1 (-P/-D)

#### NNS

You \_\_\_\_\_, a Brunei student of English, are on a six-week language course at the University of Berkeley, California. This is a course intended for overseas students. You live on campus. You have made very good friends with one of the American students on the campus, \_\_\_\_\_. She studies literature and also lives on campus. You often go out together in the evenings, to the cafeterias, cinemas, concerts etc. \_\_\_\_\_ knows all the best places to go to and seems to know a lot of nice people.

You have a slight problem, however, because \_\_\_\_\_ sometimes forgets things. She is not very particular about possessions and such things. On Monday night you went out with her to the cinema and \_\_\_\_\_ asked if you could lend her \$40 because she had run out of money herself and the banks were closed. You let her have the \$40. On top of this she also borrowed a pair of special earrings from you to wear that evening.

Today is Friday, and you are anxious to get both the money and the earrings back soon. This week has been very busy and you have hardly seen \_\_\_\_\_ at all, and have not been able to ask her about this business. You know she goes to the coffee bar often at noon, so you go there too and see her sitting at one of the tables.

#### NS

You, \_\_\_\_\_, a student of literature at the University of Berkeley, California, are taking some summer courses during the summer semester. You come from out of town and live on campus. This is your third year here, and you have decided to take courses in the summer because you enjoy the atmosphere at the University in the summer and enjoy meeting people from all over the world who come here on various courses. You consider yourself a very broadminded person and find it interesting to get to know people from different cultures. You also have circle of friends who share your broadminded and 'artistic' outlook on life. (In fact some of your friends have said that you are not the most punctual and reliable person in the world when it comes to keeping appointments and paying back small debts.)

One of the most interesting people you have met this summer is \_\_\_\_\_, a Brunei student of English, who is in Berkeley on a language course. She is a very pleasant person, rather quiet and very different from some of your other friends. First she was quite shy and quiet with you but when you got to know each other you began to enjoy each others company a lot. You have shown her around a lot and also introduced her to many of your friends.

Today is Friday and you are sitting at the student cafeteria and having a cup of coffee. This week has been very busy for you and you have not seen \_\_\_\_\_ since Monday, when you went to the cinema together. You remember that you had a good time, and that you went to the student club afterwards and stayed up rather late. You expect to see her any time now, as you often meet her here on Fridays.

**Situation S2 (-P/-D)**

NNS

You are a graduate student of Malay language at the University of Brunei Darussalam. At present you are not working but hope to take up a teaching position in Tutong in the next three months. You hear that \_\_\_\_\_, a friend of yours who is a teacher in the English Department at UBD, has been trying to find somebody to teach him Malay. It so happens that another English guy (Tim) has asked you many times to help him with learning Malay. You have not had time for this before, but now it seems that you have more time and that some teaching experience would be useful for you, and also an opportunity to earn some extra money. You think that it would be a good idea to teach the two men at the same time in one group. This would be cheaper for your friends and would take less of your time. You happen to be at UBD and decide to go and see \_\_\_\_\_ to find out what he thinks about your plan. You see him in his office and decide to drop in.

NS

You are a lecturer at the university of Brunei Darussalam. You have decided to work in Brunei for some years and consequently would like to learn some Malay language. However, you have experienced difficulty in finding a suitable teacher. UBD does hold a course in Malay language for foreign lecturers but the classes are held at times when you are unable to attend. There are certain restrictions which seem to make it difficult for you to find a teacher.

1. You want to have a private tutor.
2. You yourself can only speak English.
3. You don't want to spend too much money on your lessons.

Now you are working in your office when a friend of yours, \_\_\_\_\_ drops in to see you.

**Situation S3 (-P/-D)**

NNS

You, \_\_\_\_\_ a fifth year student of Social Policy at the University of Brunei Darussalam, have been granted a scholarship to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Boston, U.S.A. for a year. You came here three months ago and will stay on for another nine months. You are mainly taking courses in the social sciences, but you've been able to include a couple of English language courses in your programme as well. Since scholarships like this are generally very hard to get, you have decided to make the most of the year, no matter how hard it is going to be.

You live on campus and share an apartment with another girl, \_\_\_\_\_. She is a third-year student, doing psychology. On the whole you get on very well together. She hasn't been terribly hard-working as far as you can see, since she has a wide circle of friends and is always busy doing things. She has organized parties a couple of times, with some very nice (and noisy!) people coming over to your place. You were in fact a bit upset that she didn't talk to you first before inviting them, but in the end you decided to not to make a fuss about it.

Yesterday you happened to hear \_\_\_\_\_ talking on the phone to some friends of hers and it seems that she is planning a party for tomorrow night. Today is

Wednesday. As it happens, you have to finish off another project report by Friday and you haven't even started writing it yet. You are beginning to get worried about the situation, because you suspect that she may have forgotten to even mention this party to you. You will have to take up the matter with her yourself as soon as possible.

NS

You, \_\_\_\_\_, are studying Psychology at the MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) in Boston, U.S.A. This is your third year here, so it is not until next year that you have to take all the tests for graduate school. This year hasn't been particularly busy for you. Anyway, you find studying for exams and writing reports etc. fairly easy, so you don't spend much time on homework.

For the last three months you have shared an apartment with a Brunei girl, \_\_\_\_\_, who arrived to spend a year here on scholarship. She studies Social Policy at the University of Brunei Darussalam and is taking various courses at the MIT this year. She seems to be working very hard. On the whole you get on very well with her and like to spend time together whenever you can.

Once or twice you've given a party for your friends at your place and \_\_\_\_\_ seemed quite pleased to join in. You always organize parties in a very spontaneous manner, it seems to you that any day is as good as the next as far as \_\_\_\_\_ is concerned, because she is always too involved with her studies. In fact you decided to give another party tomorrow night (today is Wednesday), and yesterday you phoned some friends and they were all eager to come. You are now wondering how best to approach \_\_\_\_\_ to ask her if you could use her stereo in the living room tomorrow.

#### Situation D1 (-P/+D)

NNS

You, \_\_\_\_\_, are a student of Management Studies at the University of Brunei Darussalam. You have invited some friends of yours (also students from UBD) to a party on Friday evening. You have seen a young Australian man around the house next door to your parents' place, and heard from your parents that he is visiting Brunei on holiday because his parents are working in Brunei (they live next door to your parents). You also heard that \_\_\_\_\_ plays the guitar and sings and has been playing in some other parties recently. You think it would be nice to invite him to the party. You are doing some shopping in the centre of Bandar Seri Begawan when you see \_\_\_\_\_ sitting in a coffee bar and decide to approach him.

NS

You, \_\_\_\_\_ are a student from Australia, who is visiting Brunei on holiday. Your parents are living and working in Brunei and want to see you whenever they can. You are good at singing and playing the guitar. That's why you've been invited to several parties recently and by now you are getting rather tired of being a 'performing star'. Your parents also frequently organize parties with people they know and want you to be there to meet their friends. In fact, there has been some talk about a party this weekend. You've been doing some shopping in town and stopped in a coffee bar for a cup of coffee when a young Brunei man comes to talk to you.

**Situation D2 (-P/+D)**

NNS

You are taking an English course at the University of Cambridge in England. You arrived two weeks ago and are planning to stay here for two months during the English summer. You live in the student hostel.

Today you are sitting in the lounge in the hostel reading a newspaper when you overhear a piece of conversation between two female students who are also sitting in the lounge a bit further off. It seems that one of them is inquiring of the other whether she knows of anyone who speaks a language called Dusun. Apparently she is an anthropology student and is studying something on Borneo for her Ph.D. She has received some information from Sarawak which is in Dusun and she is desperate to get it translated soon. The other girl leaves the room unable to help her friend, while the student in trouble remains there and starts reading a newspaper. Your language of study at the university is English and at home you speak Malay. But you have had contact with Dusun speakers in the past and now have a good command of the language. You decide to approach the student in question.

NS

You are a student of anthropology at the University of Cambridge and your field research is on aspects of the people of Niah in Sarawak. You live in the student hostel at the university and are now spending the English summer months on campus because you are anxious to complete your Ph.D. thesis. During the summer there are often foreign students staying in the hostel whilst they are on a language course. You have received what you may think may be an important article from an academic source in Brunei. Your professor has suggested that it may be written in Dusun language but doesn't know anyone in the university who might be able to help translate the article. You decide to ask around.

Today you are sitting in the lounge at the student hostel where you speak to another anthropology student about the problem of translating the article. This student is unable to help and suggests you send it back to Brunei to be translated. But you don't have time for this. When your friend leaves the room a stranger who has been sitting reading a newspaper on the other side of the room approaches you.

**Situation D3 (-P/+D)**

NNS

You are a student at UBD. You live in a flat in the Seri Complex. You have just moved in, and have borrowed your father's car (a blue Mercedes) for the weekend. This afternoon something happened which upset you. You were in the kitchen of your flat when you saw through the window a 4-wheel drive Land Cruiser back out of the parking space next to your father's car. You saw the driver open the front door to see where he was going, and you're sure that he scraped the door of your father's Mercedes.

The Land Cruiser stopped for a while and drove away. You went to the parking lot and found a scratch in the left hand door of the Mercedes. You find out from a neighbour that the Land Cruiser belongs to an Australian who lives just above you. An hour later you see the Land Cruiser back. You decide to go and talk to him. You knock on the door of the flat where you believe he lives.

NS

You are an Australian living in Bandar Seri Begawan. You work at the Australian High Commission and live in a block of flats in the Seri Complex. This afternoon you were late for a squash match at the stadium. You reversed your car (a four-year-old Land cruiser) out of the parking space in a hurry, You had to open a front door to see where you were going because the rear window was covered in mud. You saw that another vehicle, a blue Mercedes, which was parked on your right was dangerously close, and you realized that the door may have scraped the other car slightly. You didn't have much time to think, however, and you decided to drive away for your squash lesson and check whether there was any damage when you got back.

You have just got back from your squash match. There was a small scratch in the left hand door of the Mercedes but you decide it's not worth going to any trouble over. Your own car, by the way, is covered in dents and scratches, the results of many trips to the jungle. You decide to forget about the incident, when there is a ring at the door.

### Situation A1 (+P/+D)

NNS

You, \_\_\_\_\_, are a Brunei student of Economics. You have started a holiday job working in an advertising agency in London. You've been working for a month now. The agency is a small one, only ten employees altogether. You get on well with them. However, to some extent you still feel an outsider; it seems to you that there are not enough opportunities to communicate with your colleagues during working hours.

You decide to organize a party on Saturday evening where all your colleagues would meet in an informal setting. You've already invited everyone except one: you have been wondering how to put the invitation to your boss, \_\_\_\_\_, who always seems very busy. On Wednesday you are having coffee in the coffee room and even your boss seems to have a spare moment as s/he is joining you. You decide to approach your boss with the invitation.

NS

You, \_\_\_\_\_ are the owner of an advertising agency in London. You've wanted to make your agency a friendly little community where every employee can feel comfortable. However, you have regretted not having enough time to establish closer contact with your employees. You have ten people working for you, and a month ago you employed a Brunei student, \_\_\_\_\_ to work as a secretary for the summer.

This week has been exceptionally busy for you, and moreover, it seems that you cannot relax until Sunday, because your wife is planning a family dinner with her parents on Saturday. Today is Wednesday, and you are having coffee with your employees. However, you do not have very long to spend with them: in 15 minutes you have an appointment with a client.



**Situation A2 (+P/+D)**

NNS

You, \_\_\_\_\_, are a student from Brunei. You have come to England for the summer to learn English; you are doing an intensive language course and you are staying with a family who are friends of your parents. Sometime ago your landlady, Mrs Johnson, asked you if you could baby-sit for a friend of hers, \_\_\_\_\_, who has an important commitment for Saturday evening. When Mrs Johnson asked you, you felt you couldn't agree because you had a lot of homework to do for your course, and you were also looking forward to watching a documentary on Brunei on TV on Saturday evening.

Today (Wednesday) you have found out that the Johnsons' TV set is broken and you can't watch the documentary after all. Suddenly you remember Mrs \_\_\_\_\_'s request to baby-sit, and realize that if you had agreed to her request you would probably be able to see the programme on her television. You decide to go and see Mrs \_\_\_\_\_ to find out if she has made other plans.

NS

You, \_\_\_\_\_, are a house-wife and mother of two children (2 and 4 years old). You have a very important engagement on Saturday evening and need a baby-sitter. You have heard that your friend, Mrs Johnson, has a young student from Brunei staying with her. Some time ago you asked Mrs Johnson to ask her if she would be able to baby-sit for you. Unfortunately, your friend tells you that the Brunei girl is not keen on the idea. You decide to make alternative arrangements and have asked another young girl who lives next door to come and baby-sit. You are not very happy about this arrangement, however, as the girl is very young (14) and you don't know her very well. It is now Wednesday, and to your surprise, you see that the Brunei girl who is staying with Mrs Johnson, has come to see you.

**Situation A3 (+P/+D)**

NNS

You, \_\_\_\_\_, a student of biology at UBD, have started a vacation job as laboratory assistant at the university of Cambridge. You took the job for two months to help improve your English and get some experience of working in a foreign country. Your tasks include various duties such as feeding animals, checking temperatures of fish tanks and filling in data on a computer.

You get on fairly well with the head of the laboratory, \_\_\_\_\_. Recently, however, she has started imposing more obligations on you, such as cleaning work, and sometimes even looking after her children and doing work in her garden. You are not very happy about this. In addition you heard from one of the lecturers that your day off, which was supposed to be tomorrow, has been cancelled. You had already made plans for tomorrow. You feel you are being badly treated and decide to take the problem up with the head of the laboratory.

NS

You, \_\_\_\_\_, are a 40-year-old university lecturer at the Department of Biology, University of Cambridge and are presently head of the Biology laboratory. You are having some problems in your personal life. Financially, you are not very well off; your husband has left you and you are trying to bring up two children on your own. You also feel discontent with the demands of being in charge of the laboratory.

A Brunei girl started working in the laboratory recently. She is working as a laboratory assistant for the summer vacation. You are pleased with her work and have found her a great help. In fact, you've seen this as an opportunity to ask her to help with things in your personal life too. On occasion she has been looking after your children and doing little jobs in your garden.

You have applied for a job in Edinburgh so that you could be near your parents who could then share some of the responsibility of looking after their children. You have been suddenly called for an interview on Wednesday (it is now Tuesday). Because of this interview you have to postpone \_\_\_\_\_'s day off this week, but you haven't told her about this yet.

## YHTEENVETO

### Kasvot ja kohteliaisuus oppijan ja syntyperäisen puhujan keskustelussa

#### 1 Tausta ja tavoitteet

Tutkimus käsittelee lingvistisen kohteliaisuuden ja kasvojen suojelun osuutta ja ilmenemismuotoja kielenoppijan ja äidinkielen puhujan englanninkielisessä keskustelussa. Kohteliaisuudella tarkoitetaan kielenkäyttöä, jonka avulla vältetään konflikteja ja ongelmia vuorovaikutuksessa. Kyseessä on kielenkäytön ulottuvuus, joka liittyy siihen, miten kielen sosiaalisia ja interpersonaaalisia päämääriä tuodaan esiin ja käsitellään viestintätilanteissa. Tutkimuksen lähtökohdat ovat pragmaattisessa kohteliaisuuden tutkimuksessa, erityisesti Brownin ja Levinsonin kehittämässä lingvistisen kohteliaisuuden teoriassa, jonka keskeiset elementit ovat Erving Goffmanin kehittämä kasvojen käsite, kielellinen toiminta ja sen ilmenemismuodot sekä keskustelun rakentuminen vuorovaikutustilanteessa.

Kasvojen käsite tarkoittaa yhteisön jäsenen käsitystä omasta sosiaalisesta arvostaan vuorovaikutuksessa. Brownin ja Levinsonin kohteliaisuusteorian mukaan voidaan erottaa kahdentyyppisiä sosiaalisia tarpeita, joita kasvojen käsite kuvaa. Yhtäältä yhteisön jäsenillä on tarve liikkumavapauteen ja päätösvaltaan oman toimintansa suhteen (negative face). Toisaalta heillä on tarve tuntea yhteenkuuluvuutta ja saada hyväksyntää, arvostusta ja myötätuntoa (positive face). Lingvistinen kohteliaisuus koostuu niistä kielen ja vuorovaikutuksen keinoista, joiden avulla kielenkäyttäjät ottavat huomioon, pitävät yllä ja suojelevat omia sekä vuorovaikutuskumppanin kasvoja eri sosiaalisissa tilanteissa. Kulttuurienvälinen tutkimus on osoittanut, että

kohteliaisuus tässä merkityksessä on yleismaailmallinen ilmiö. Sen ilmenemismuodot kuitenkin vaihtelevat sosiaalisesta tilanteesta ja kulttuurista toiseen.

Tässä tutkimuksessa tarkastellaan kohteliaisuuden muotoja kulttuurienvälisessä vuorovaikutuksessa oppijan ja syntyperäisen puhujan välillä. Kohteliaisuus käsitetään dynaamisena vuorovaikutusprosessina, joka vaikuttaa esimerkiksi keskustelutilanteen kulkuun heijastamalla puhujien odotuksia ja käsityksiä keskinäisistä suhteistaan, tilanteen tarkoituksesta ja toimintansa tavoitteista.

Kielenoppimisen tutkimuksessa ja oppijadiskurssin tutkimuksessa on viime vuosina kiinnitetty yhä enemmän huomiota siihen, miten oppija selviytyy vuorovaikutustehtävistä ja -tilanteista ja kykenee ottamaan huomioon kielenkäytön interpersonaalisia piirteitä omassa tuotoksessaan. Tutkimuksissa on havaittu tämän kielenkäytön osa-alueen tuottavan vaikeuksia myös edistyneille kielenoppijoille ja aiheuttavan ongelmia kulttuurienvälisessä vuorovaikutuksessa. Kohteliaisuuteen ja kasvojen suojeluun liittyvät kielenkäytön piirteet ovat olleet tutkimuksen kohteena kolmella kielenoppimisen tutkimuksen alalla. Pragmatiikan alaan sijoittuva interlingvan eli välikielen tutkimus on selvittänyt lähinnä kulttuurienvälisiä eroja puheaktistrategioissa sekä oppijoiden kykyä tuottaa tiettyihin tilanteisiin sopivia puheakteja. Kontrastiivisen diskurssianalyysin keinoin on selvitetty kielenoppijoiden selviytymistä erilaisista puhetilanteista sekä pyritty löytämään oppijoille tyypillisiä kielenkäytön ongelmia ja selittämään niitä heidän äidinkieltensä ja kulttuurinsa lähtökohdista. Viime aikoina myös kulttuurienvälisen viestinnän ja oppijavuorovaikutuksen tutkimuksessa on kiinnitetty enemmän huomiota siihen, miten tärkeä osuus puhujien sosiaalisilla suhteilla ja niiden ylläpitämisellä on kielenkäytössä ja viestinnässä.

Siitä huolimatta, että kohteliaisuus on saanut yhä enemmän huomiota kielenoppimisen ja kulttuurienvälisen viestinnän tutkimuksessa, siihen liittyvää kielenkäyttöä on tutkittu varsin suppeasta näkökulmasta. Eniten tutkimustietoa on puheaktien erilaisista ilmenemismuodoista eri kulttuureissa ja eri sosiaalisissa tilanteissa sekä kielenoppijoille tyypillisistä vaikeuksista puheaktien tuottamisessa. Sen sijaan kohteliaisuuden osuutta vuorovaikutuksessa ja sen merkitystä erilaisissa puhetilanteissa on tutkittu vähän. Tästä syystä myös kielenkäytön kuvaamiseen tarkoitettut käsitteet ja mallit ovat rajoittuneita: ne perustuvat lause- tai lausumatason ilmiöiden, kuten puheaktin rakenteen, muodon ja funktion tarkasteluun.

Tällä tutkimuksella on kaksi päätavoitetta. Se pyrkii selvittämään millaisin kielellisin ja vuorovaikutuksellisin keinoin oppija ja syntyperäinen kielenpuhija selvittävät ongelmallisen vuorovaikutustilanteen. Lisäksi se pyrkii kehittämään keskusteluvuorovaikutuksen tarkasteluun soveltuvan analyysikehyksen, jossa yhdistyvät aiemmassa tutkimuksessa kehitetyt lausumatason kuvauksen käsitteet sekä oppijavuorovaikutuksessa ja keskusteluntutkimuksessa keskeisiksi havaitut vuorovaikutusilmiöitä kuvaavat käsitteet.

## 2 Aineisto

Tutkimusaineisto koostuu malajia äidinkielenään puhuvan oppijan ja äidinkielen englannin puhujan kahdenkeskisistä keskusteluista. Keskustelut ovat ns. simulaatiomenetelmällä kootusta korpuksesta ja edustavat kolmentyyppisiä tilanteita: (i) tilanteita, joissa puhujien välillä vallitsee tuttavallinen ja tasapuolinen suhde (ei valtaeroa eikä merkittävää sosiaalista etäisyyttä puhujien välillä; symmetrinen tilanne), (ii) tilanteita, joissa puhujat eivät tunne toisiaan (etäisyyteen perustuva symmetrinen tilanne) ja (iii) tilanteista, joissa toisella puhujalla on esimerkiksi institutionaalisen asemansa perusteella valta-asema toiseen nähden (epäsymmetriset, valtaeroon perustuvat tilanteet). Keskustelut ovat luonteeltaan potentiaalisesti kasvoja uhkaavia: niihin sisältyy kielellisiä toimintoja, jotka voivat rajoittaa kuulijan valinnanmahdollisuuksia ja siten toiminnan vapautta (esim. pyynnöt ja valitukset) tai jotka kohdistuvat kuulijan haluun olla hyväksytty (esim. arvostelu).

Vaikka keskustelut ovat elisitoituja eivätkä luonnollisista vuorovaikutustilanteista koottuja, aineistoa voidaan pitää riittävänä tämän tutkimuksen tarkoituksiin. Keskustelut ovat avoimia vuorovaikutuksellisia viestintätilanteita, joiden kulkua tai lopputulosta ei ole määrätty ennalta käsin ja jotka vaativat samantyyppistä spontaania sopeutumista vuorovaikutustilanteeseen ja -kumppaniin kuin autenttinenkin keskustelu. Aineistoon sisältyy runsaasti sellaisia vuorovaikutuksen rakentumiseen ja interpersonaalisten suhteiden neuvotteluun liittyviä piirteitä, joita tutkimus pyrkii kuvaamaan. Voidaan myös olettaa, että pääosin tiedostamattoman ja usein automaattisen luonteensa vuoksi nämä kielenkäytön piirteet eivät olennaisesti poikkea vastaavissa luonnollisissa tilanteissa esiintyvistä vuorovaikutuksen keinoista. Simulaatiomenetelmä ei kuitenkaan tuota täysin luonnollista keskustelua, eikä aineiston pohjalta pyritäkään luonnollista diskurssia koskeviin yleistyksiin. Pikemminkin tarkoituksena on lisätä tietoa kielenkäytön ilmiöstä, jota on tähän saakka tutkittu enimmäkseen ilman vuorovaikutukseen perustuvaa aineistoa. Kehittämällä nimenomaan keskustelun kuvaukseen sopiva analyysikehys laajennetaan sitä näkökulmaa, josta käsin ilmiötä on tarkasteltu, ja käsitteistöä, jota on käytetty sen kuvaamiseen.

## 3 Analyysimetodit

Keskusteluaineiston analyysi perustuu pragmatiikassa, etnometodologisessa keskusteluntutkimuksessa ja vuorovaikutuksen sosiolingvistiikassa kehitettyyn käsitteistöön ja metodologiaan. Keskustelujen keskeisiä toimintoja analysoidaan tarkastelemalla systemaattisesti sekä kielellisiä strategioita että vuorovaikutuksen rakentumista. Kielellisten strategioiden tasolla kiinnitetään

huomiota siihen, miten puhujat tekevät viestinnällisiä päämääriään tunnistettaviksi keskusteluissa ja miten he modifioivat kielenkäyttöään tehdäkseen nämä päämäärät hyväksyttäväksi ja välttääkseen näin kasvovuhkaa. Keskustelun dynaamista etenemistä tarkastellaan kvalitatiivisen mikroanalyysin menetelmin kiinnittämällä huomiota molempien osanottajien tuotoksiin, niiden ilmentämiin tulkintoihin ja yhteiseen merkityksen neuvotteluun keskustelun eri vaiheissa. Tämä analyysikehys mahdollistaa yksityiskohtaisen ja monitasoisen kuvauksen, jossa kielenkäytön piirteet (esim. modifiointikeinot) voidaan nähdä vuorovaikutuskontekstin tuotteina. Siten voidaan kiinnittää huomiota esimerkiksi siihen, miten kielelliset strategiat ovat sidoksissa keskusteluun osallistumista sääteleviin tekijöihin, kuten vuoronvaihtoon, ja sitä kautta vastuun jakautumiseen keskustelussa. Lisäksi voidaan tehdä havaintoja siitä, miten kielitaidon puutteet rajoittavat puheenvuorojen ymmärrettävyyttä ja miten merkityksiä ja päämääriä neuvotellaan spontaanisti.

### 3 Tulokset

Tutkimuksen tulokset toisaalta tukevat aiempia tutkimuksia, toisaalta tuovat uusia näkökulmia kohteliaisuuden tutkimukseen. Kuten aiemmat, muita kieliryhmiä käsittelevät tutkimukset ovat osoittaneet, kielenoppijoiden käyttämät strategiat ovat puutteellisen kielitaidon takia ilmaisukeinoiltaan suppeampia ja yksipuolisempia kuin vastaavat syntyperäisten strategiat. Oppijoiden vaillinaiset resurssit niin kielitaidon kuin sosiokulttuurisen tiedonkin tasolla aiheuttavat kömmähdyksiä ja tekevät ilmauksista selkeästi natiivikielenkäytöstä poikkeavia. Tilanteen epäsymmetria näkyy myös siinä, että erilainen kulttuuritausta ja kielitaito saattavat vaikeuttaa oppijan osallistumista keskusteluun: oppijoille on joskus vaikeampaa toimia aloitteellisesti ja tuoda aktiivisesti esiin omia tavoitteitaan keskustelussa tai seurata ja ymmärtää syntyperäisen puhujan puheenvuoroja. Toisaalta syntyperäiset puhujat selvästi sopeuttavat omaa kielenkäyttöään oppijan puheeseen ja ottavat siten huomioon tilanteen vaatimukset.

Tutkimus osoittaa myös, että oppijoilla selvästi on pragmaattista tietoa kielenkäytön vaihtelusta eri konteksteissa ja he pyrkivät käyttämään tätä tietoa luovasti hyväkseen: kasvovuhkaa pyritään välttämään erilaisten kielellisten ja vuorovaikutuksellisten keinojen avulla. Aineistossa esiintyy runsaasti epäsuoraa kielenkäyttöä, monimerkityksisiä puheenvuoroja, erilaisia valmistelevia tai pohjustavia vuoroja sekä vaikeita puheenaiheita vältteleviä jaksoja. Keskustelujen mikrotason analyysi paljasti kiinnostavia yhteyksiä lingvistiseen kohteliaisuuteen ja keskustelun rakentumiseen liittyvien strategioiden sekä ns. kommunikaatiostrategioiden välillä. Esimerkiksi erilaisia välttämistästrategioita ei voi pitää pelkästään osoituksena puutteellisista kielen keinoista, vaan ne liittyvät olennaisesti keskustelukontekstiin ja niihin valintoihin ja ongelmiin, joita kasvoja uhkaavat puheenaiheet ja toiminnot aiheuttavat.

Tutkimus tuo myös lisävalaistusta oppijakeskustelun tutkimukseen ja kohteliaisuuden osuuteen sen kuvauksessa. Oppijavuorovaikutuksen tutkimus on viime vuosiin saakka keskittynyt pääasiassa kahteen keskeiseen seikkaan: viestinnän ymmärrettävyyteen ja toisaalta keskustelujen epäsymmetriasta johtuviin diskurssin rakenteellisiin poikkeavuuksiin verrattuna syntyperäisten puhujien väliseen keskusteluun. Tässä tutkimuksessa on ollut mahdollista tarkastella keskusteluviestinnän ymmärrettävyyttä ja järjestyneisyyttä kielen sosiaalista luonnetta painottavasta kohteliaisuuden tutkimuksen näkökulmasta. Esimerkiksi ymmärtämisvaikeuksilla on selviä yhtymäkohtia kasvojen suojeluun: vääriymmärryksistä voi muodostua kasvouhka tai toisaalta puhujat voivat välttää ymmärtämisvaikeuksien esille tuomista juuri kasvojen suojelun takia. Ymmärtämisvaikeuksien neuvottelu voi myös saada erilaisen muodon eri tilanteissa: siihen vaikuttavat puhujien väliset suhteet, keskustelun tavoitteet ja kulku sekä se keskustelun kohta tai jakso, jossa ymmärtämisvaikeuksia esiintyy. Oppijadiskurssin tutkimuksessa voisikin jatkossa kehittää uutta näkökulmaa, jossa huomion kohteena ovat tasapuolisesti diskurssin ymmärrettävyys, järjestyneisyys ja sosiaalinen ulottuvuus, johon myös kohteliaisuus kuuluu.

Tutkimus toi esiin useita jatkotutkimusta kaipaavia seikkoja. Lisävalaistusta kaipaavat muunmuassa jotkut puhujien erilaisesta kulttuuri-taustasta mahdollisesti johtuvat ongelmat, esimerkiksi keskustelutoimintojen ja puheenaiheiden ajoitukseen liittyvät epäselvyydet. Joissakin keskusteluissa puhujilla näytti olevan selviä vaikeuksia päästä yhteisymmärrykseen siitä, milloin uusia keskeisiä puheenaiheita otetaan keskustelussa esille. Jotkut oppijat viivyttivät keskeisiä keskustelutoimintoja, mikä aiheutti syntyperäisen puhujan kannalta hämmennystä ja epätietoisuutta keskustelun tarkoituksesta. Toinen lisäselvitystä kaipaava seikka on se, mistä puhujien melko vähäinen eksplisiittinen neuvottelu merkityksestä ja ymmärtämisvaikeuksista johtui. Syntyperäiset puhujat korjasivat harvoin oppijan selvästikin puutteellisia puheenvuoroja, eikä kumpikaan osapuoli tehnyt monta aloitetta mahdollisten ymmärtämisvaikeuksien selvittämiseksi. Joissakin keskusteluissa tämä näytti liittyvän tilanteen kasvouhkaan: kasvouhkaa välttääkseen keskustelijat eivät aina ilmaisseet tarkoitustaan tai päämääriään selkeästi, vaan käyttivät epäsuoria tai monimerkityksisiä ilmauksia. Yhtenä syynä saattaa olla myös se, että puhujat olivat jossain määrin sopeutuneet toistensa viestintäkäyttäytymisen eroihin ja pitivät niitä normaaleina ja odotuksenmukaisina keskustelun piirteinä.

Tutkimus nostaa esiin myös joitakin toisen ja vieraan kielen oppimisen ja käytön tutkimukseen yleisemmin liittyviä kysymyksiä. Koska aineisto koottiin Kaakkois-Aasiassa, jossa englannin kieli on monin paikoin yleinen kommunikaation väline, eräänlainen lingua franca, tarkastelun kohteena oli hieman erilainen natiivin ja oppijan viestintä kuin useimmissa muissa oppijavuorovaikutuksen tutkimuksissa. Kielenoppija ei tässä aineistossa ole maahanmuuttaja ja vähemmistön edustaja, vaan valtaväestöön kuuluva paikallisen kulttuurin jäsen. Syntyperäiset englannin puhujat taas edustavat tässä ympäristössä erilaista kielenkäyttäjätyyppiä kuin englantia kotimaassaan äidinkielenään puhuvat henkilöt. Tällaisissa viestintätilanteissa myös

kielenkäytön normit ja odotukset ovat erilaisia, eikä oppijan puheen mallina tai vertailukohteena voida käyttää syntyperäisen kielenpuhujan kielenkäyttöä. Onkin syytä pohtia pitäisikö kielenoppimisen ja -käytön tutkimuksessa kiinnittää entistä enemmän huomiota siihen laajempaan sosiaaliseen ja kulttuuriseen kontekstiin, jonka kielenkäyttöä tutkitaan. Tämä edellyttää, että kielenoppimisen ja kaksikielisyystutkimuksen sekä kulttuurienvälisen viestinnän tutkimuksen väliltä pyritään löytämään entistä enemmän teoreettisia ja empiiriaan perustuvia yhteyksiä.